

THE EDWARDIAN AGE

The **Edwardian Age** comes after the Victorian Age. After **Queen Victoria's** death his son became King.

King Edward VII reigned from **1901** to **1910**.

The Edwardian Age was a period which actually extended to the beginning of the First World War. At that time Britain was one of the richest nations not only in Europe but also in the world, the British empire covered at least one fifth of the whole globe.

1901= it represents the border between the two ages.

British economy was challenged by other economical forces like Germany, France and the US.

King Edward 7 proved to be a skilled diplomat because in this situation, in 1904, he signed an agreement which is called "**Entente Cordiale**" and it was signed by Britain and France. Both Britain and France had colonial expansion. They decided that the UK could pursue his interest in Egypt whereas France could pursue his interest in Morocco.

This agreement was later included in an other crucial agreement which was the "**Triple Entente**", it was an agreement among the UK, France and Russia.

It was similar to the "**Triple Alliance**" which was made among Germany. Britain could count on France and Russia in any conflict against Germany, Austria or Italy.

SOCIETY

In terms of society there is no different between the Victorian Age and The Edwardian Age. We still have a social distinction and a widespread poverty.

In **1906** there were the political elections. The elections were won by the Liberals, they made significant reforms. At the time the Liberals were internally divided into 2 groups:

1. Liberals who supported the traditional liberals values like self-health so they didn't want the State to intervene in social affairs.
2. Liberals which came under the name of "New Liberalism" which was in favour of a certain form of state intervention in social life. Among the New Liberals there was an important figure who was **DAVID LLOYD GEORGE** who was the Chancellor of the Exchequer, so the man who managed the country's finances. They decided to make significant reforms like the foundation of the Welfare State. Some sickness benefits for workers were introduced.

When King Edward died in 1910, his son **George V** came to the throne. The first decade of the 20th century was a period of political, social and cultural ferment.

THE SUFFRAGETTES

The SUFFRAGETTES was a new movement.

Women didn't have the right to vote so women started to fight because they wanted to be equal to men. In Great Britain the leader of the Suffragettes was **EMMELINE PANKHURST**, founder of the **WOMEN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL UNION**.

The name Suffragettes comes from the word "suffrage".

At the beginning they fought peacefully but they were not successful.

So they started to fight in a more violent method. They chained themselves at fences, they carried out attacks on shops, they broke windows, sometimes they spat at policemen.

So for that reason many of them were sent to prison. In prison they went on hunger strikes and eventually in **1918** women over thirty years of age obtained the right to vote.

In **1928** all women obtained the right of voting.

FIRST WORLD WAR

The event who led to the outbreak of the First World War was the **murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand** in Sarajevo by a Serbian nationalist.

After this event:

- Austria started bombing Belgrade which was the capital of Serbia
- Germany decided to invade Belgium in order to attack France
- The UK declared war.

The UK soon understood that this war wasn't going to be a short war and so, in order to win a war, they understood that they needed soldiers and a stronger army.

For that reason the UK introduced the CONSCRIPTION (leva militare) and when they did that a lot of women replaced men in many social jobs and they proved to be equal to men at working.

So this event helped to reach the universal suffrage.

BRITAIN AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

"IRISH QUESTION" = tragic events regarding the fight for Irish Independence, due to the fact that home Rule, voted by the Commons in 1914, had been suspended until the end of the war.

The Irish Republican party Sinn Féin, which was fighting for the reunification of Ireland, began to grow in popularity exploiting the fear the Irish had that military conscription might extend to Ireland.

The United States joined the war in April 1917 on Britain's side.

THE END OF THE WAR

Britain and France decided to sign an agreement for fear that American power might increase if war continued. On 11th November, at 11 o'clock, the guns fell silent and the day has forever been commemorated as Armistice day. It was also called "Remembrance Day" or "Poppy Day" as, once the war was over, the poppy was the only plant to grow on the battlefields.

The peace treaty was signed at Versailles in 1919.

THE AGE OF ANXIETY

The First World War left Britain in a disillusioned and cynical mood: some soldiers celebrated their return home with a frantic search for pleasure; others were haunted by a sense of guilt for the horrors of trench warfare, or missed the sense of purpose the war years had given them.

SIGMUND FREUD

He was an Austrian psychologist, founder of psychoanalysis. He published the INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS in 1900: in this essay he analyses the unconscious. There are 2 components and the unconscious is much more important. There is something inside us that pushes us to do or not to do something, this hidden force operates somehow in an unconscious way so his theory was quite disturbing at that time because he stated that we are in some way non-controlled.

Human mind is formed by the ID, the EGO, and by the SUPEREGO.

- The ID is the most instinctual part and the most primitive where we have our impulses.
- The EGO is part of our mind related to rationality.
- The SUPEREGO is divided into 2 components: moral conscience which has the role to make us feel guilty, instead the role of the ideal self is to show how we should behave.

The ego has a mediation role between the impulses and our morality.

According to him the unconscious is the most important part and dreams are the key to access and to analyze our mind, and in particular the unconscious component of our mind.

He used a method called "FREE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS" in order to investigate our mind, this concept strongly influenced the modern age.

CARL GUSTAV JUNG

Another important figure who continued Freud's study is JUNG.

He was a Swiss philosopher and he developed the theory of the "COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS". According to him everyday objects had the power to influence us.

He continued Freud's studies. He introduced the concept of the "COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS", it is a virtual store where we have all the symbols that we inherited from generations and generations.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

He was a scientist. His main theory is the "THEORY OF RELATIVITY". It is important because he said that there are subjective dimensions and this is a huge revolution, in fact according to him also in time and space there is a dimension component.

HENRI BERGSON

He was a French philosopher who said that time can be divided in :

- The historical time that is the external time and it is objective.
- The physiological time can be measured by the intensity of emotions.

He introduced the concept of DURATION: it is a concept introduced in order to highlight the subjective part of time. We can't measure time in terms of hours, time is a flow and so we do not experience the world moment by moment.

Past, present and future overlapped.

We can compare time to a melody.

DAVID HUME: swiss psychologist and philosopher, he continued Freud's studies and introduced the concept on "COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS" which is a sort of virtual store where can find all the archetypes and symbols that we inherited from generation to generation

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

He questioned the objectivity of truth. In "Thus spoke Zarathrusta " he said that God was dead which means that there is not a universal truth.

WILLIAM JAMES

He was ad American philosopher and he discussed the concept of the stream of consciousness. This is a psychic phenomenon referred to this endless flow of thoughts, emotions, memories and feelings that occurs in the human mind. We can compare this flow of emotions and feelings to a river.

INTER WAR YEARS

It is a short period between WW1 and WW2. It was a period of significant changes and important events. First of all after WW1 a lot of British dominations finally got their independence (for example Canada).

Also India made an important step towards independence, in fact there was a movement of non-violent protest led by Gandhi.

Also Ireland became independent: in the b1918b Uk ha elections and the Sinn Féin party, which was an Irish nationalist party, won almost all the seats. This party established an independent government for Ireland. Then, thanks to the support of the IRA, this party led a sort of civil war which finally brought Ireland to independence in 1921 according to the Anglo-Irish Treaty which signed the birth of the Irish Free State.

Only the region of Ulster remained under Britain.

WW1 had a huge financial cost. Britain, France and Germany were almost in ruins financially speaking.

The only country that gained economic superiority was America. The Us didn't join the war immediately but they joined the war in 1917. In fact the second decade of the 20th century is remembered as the "ROARING TWENTIES" because of the strong economic boom.

But this led to excessive speculation, which ended with the economic depression in 1929 with the **WALL STREET CRASH**. This produced an economic digression all over the world.

In this context of difficulty there was Hitler who took the power; he wanted Germany to take back the lost territories after WW1.

The **League of Nations**, a peacekeeper organisation, followed a policy of conciliation, it didn't want another war to break out so it didn't intervene at the beginning.

But then Germany decided to invade Poland which was the reason why the outbreak of WW2.

Britain and France declared war on Germany as a necessary consequence to stop Hitler and the spread of the Nazist party. At the beginning WW2 was an European conflict but in 1941 Japan bombed Pearl Harbour. For that reason the US joined the war against Japan and Germany declared war on the USA.

Germany wanted to destroy Britain so it attacked by air and bombed London, bringing a lot of civilians to death.

In 1941 Hitler decided to dissolve the **MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT**, which was a secret pact between Germany and Russia, because Hitler was interested in Russian territories.

So Germany decided to attack Russia and in 1942 we finally had a turning point in WW2: the first german defeat with the **BATTLE OF STALINGRAD**.

The final german defeat was the so called "**operation overlord**", a military operation led by the allow power who invaded Germany through France on the D-DAY landing (SBARCO IN NORMANDIA) which is a military term.

1945= the final defeat of Germany and Hitler committed suicide
2 atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

1. **OPERATION SEA LION**

It was the German code name for the invasion of England, planned during World War II by Nazi Germany.

2. **OPERATION BARBAROSSA**

It was the German code name for the invasion of the Soviet Union during World War II; this name was inspired by the exploits of the emperor Federico Barbarossa.

3. **OPERATION OVERLORD**

It was the codename that identified the invasion plan of Europe, which began on 6 June 1944, with the aim of establishing a bridgehead on the mainland and then invading Normandy and, therefore, liberating France.

PROGRESSIVISM

Progressivism: It's a new policy adopted by the US by Theodore Roosevelt, based on a series of reforms on the social and economic spheres.

The position of the US during WWI was at the beginning of not intervening; they only took part in 1917: this allowed the US to gain economic superiority, since the costs of the war were different from the other countries.

In Fact in the end of the Great War US was one of the richest country of the world: this period will be called the Roaring Twenties, whose main characteristics are:

- There was an **economic boom**
- **Red Scare:** was the fear of socialism spread through the US; a lot of political activists were seen as Communists sympathiser, and they were killed.
- **Prohibition:** It's referred to a ban of the government, about production, importation and distribution of alcohol; there was a problem of alcohol addiction among the poor. This led to an illegal market of alcohol.
- **Feeling of xenophobia** spread among the people; previously the US followed an open door policy, but now we have a different approach with a series of restrictions on immigration, with the segregation of minorities.

The economic boom of the twenties led to an excessive speculation, which led to the Wall Street crash of the 1929: it produced a strong economic crisis all around the world.

There was also an environmental disaster, the so-called Dust Bowl, which is used to refer to a series of dust storms that took place in some place in the US, following a period of drought.

After this period of crisis there was the period of the New Deal in the 1930s: it's a series of reforms by Franklin Roosevelt: based on Relief, Recovery and Reform. Historians used this expression and said that the New deal is based on 3 Rs.

1. **RELIEF** is related to the poor.
2. **RECOVERY** of the economy
3. **REFORM** of the financial system in order to prevent future crisis.

INFLUENCES OF MODERNISM

In the first half of the 20th century there were a series of innovations like:

- **TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION**
- **INTRODUCTION OF ELECTRICITY** which had a huge impact on life.
- **IMPROVEMENT IN MASS TRANSPORT**
- **ADVENT OF THE RADIO, THE CINEMA.** Thanks to the radio people could dare information more easily which produced a feeling of cohesion.

MODERNISM

It refers to an international movement that involved different types of artistic expression: it wasn't only a literary movement because it also involved music, cinema, the visual arts. For that reason it was a **transversal movement** also because it covers a wide variety of attitudes.

The epicentre is considered to be Paris. Modernism drew inspiration from everywhere: past, foreign literature for artistic expressions.

KEY CONCEPTS

As a literary movement modernism is typically associated with the period of WW1.

The Modernist expressed the desire to break with the past and find new fields of investigation, such as urbanatio, technology, war, speed and mass communication.

- In this context there is an element that is common to all the modernists that is **the desire to break with traditions and experiment new ways of expressions** in order to break with the past.
- They rejected the typical **narrative techniques** of the past.
- **SUBJECTIVISM**: they found a solution in the inner world, so they wanted to emphasize the subjective dimensions.
- The importance of unconscious as well as conscious life.

ARTISTIC MOVEMENTS

- **DISTORTION OF SHAPES**: it is particularly visible in arts as cubism of Picasso and Georges Braque who introduced this new way of representing the world.
- They didn't want to reproduce reality as it was but they tried to rebuilt reality with a series of geometrical shapes such as cones, cylindres, spheres, cubes and reassembled them offering a new vision of the world, to highlight that there is not just a single reality, there is no objective truth.

MUSIC MOVEMENTS

In music we have STRAVINSKY. He was famous because he put into a dialogue different styles from different epoques.

MODERN POETRY

At the turn of the century poetry was characterised by an high degree of fragmentation:

poetry developed in different paths and different branches; some were more traditional, and others were more experimental.

MORE TRADITIONAL

GEORGIAN POETS

Talking about the more traditional branch of modern poetry there are the so called GEORGIAN POETS.

This name comes from the title of an anthology which was published during the reign of George V who came to the throne after Edward VII.

This name was associated with tradition and to convention, to the style and narratives techniques of the previous centuries. they did not experiment with poetry. They were almost hostile to any possible form of innovation or experimentation.

THE WAR POETS

They focused on war but they dealt with this concept in very different ways. Among them we can identify a more **traditional branch** and a more **experimental branch**:

1. MORE TRADITIONAL BRANCH: poets who exalted the glories of the war, they were moved by a sense of patriotism. The most representative poet is Rupert Brooke.
2. MORE EXPERIMENTAL BRANCH: poets against this false propaganda of the political authorities of that time. The political authorities of that time pushed young men to join the army, to fight for their country and war was felt as a good cause.
They showed the horrors of wars, the terrible condition of the soldiers in trenches. Many of them took part in the First World War.
The most representative people of this movement were Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sasson.
They were totally against war, they had fear of bombs, they were innovators, their poetry was characterised by innovation and they paved the way for the modern age.

IMAGISM

The imagists focused on a **single object**, they were characterised a sense of **complete freedom in the choice of subject matter**.

The most representative is Ezra Pound, an American poet. The imagists were considered the most modern poets of that time.

The main features are:

- They focused on a **single scene**, on a single object.
- They felt **completely free in the choice of subject matter**.
- They used a **harsh (aspro) language**.
- Their poems were very **short** because they focused on a single image.
- Their **language was precise** and clear because their aim was reaching the truth of the object.
- They rejected the conventions of the past and they adopted **FREE VERSE**, they didn't follow a metrical regularity.

Some of these features became some of the most important characteristics of the modern poet in general.

OXFORD MOVEMENT

In the 30's another group of poets came to prominence: they were called the **OXFORD POETS** because all of them studied at Oxford.

The Oxford poets were politically **active on the left**, the main theme were the sense of community, social justice and social injustice. They were socially and politically committed because their main focus was that of **communicating with their fellow men** and in fact their style was simpler in comparison to the style used by the symbolist.

They were afraid that the fascist and the nazist would spread all over the world and so they wanted to point out a moral course of action that completely contrasted those tyrannys.

The most representative was the British **AUDEN**.

SYMBOLISM

It was another branch of modern poetry.

The main representatives of the symbolism were **THOMAS STERNE ELIOT** and the Irish **WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS**.

It was a loosely organised literary and artistic movement that originated with a group of French poets around the end of the 19th century. The most important French poet was **Charles Baudelaire**.

MAIN FEATURES:

- The symbolist preferred to **evoke rather than to state** and for that reason they made use of a highly subjective evocative language. They prefer indirect statements rather than direct statements.
- Their style was indirect and their language was highly evocative.
- Each poet creates his own system.
- The symbolist wanted the reader to attribute his or her own meaning to their poems.

NEW ROMANTICS

In the 40's we have another group of poets: they were called the **NEW ROMANTICS** because they rejected both the intellectualism of the symbolist and the social and political commitment of the Oxford Poets.

FEATURES:

- They focused on **EMOTIONS** and the main themes of their poems were love, birth, death, even sex.

MODERN NOVEL

The **First World War** represents a significant break from the past.

The novel was essentially bourgeois in its origin which means that when the novel emerged as a new literary genre it was meant as a mirror of society.

In the 18th century there was the rise of the novel and the main theme was **social mobility** either upwards or downwards(the gain or loss of social status).

Usually the novels had a linear structure with a chronological sequence of events and their plots were well-structured.

But then with WW1 things changed: the War shattered people's consciences so the modernist could no more represent society after these events because all the pillars on which previous society was based on collapsed.

In this period of contrast they were somehow forced by the circumstances of the time to focus on their **inner world**:

- they emphasised **subjectivity** and they were **deeply influenced by Freud's theories**.
- Modernist novelists were very interested in the **existence of different levels of consciousness and unconsciousness**.
- They were very interested in the influence that **past experiences can have on adult behaviour**.

In order to deal with subjectivity they rejected the narrative technique of the past, they were forced to do that because it was not possible to represent the working of the mind using the narrative technique of the previous times.

The technique they used to **represent this constant flow of feelings, thought, emotions that takes place in our mind** was the **INTERIOR MONOLOGUE**.

The interior monologue was the stylistic translation of the psychic phenomena called "**STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS**".

This psychic phenomena is based on the idea that **thoughts bumped from past to present and future at the same time**.

As a consequence the modernist rejected linear plots in their novels, the events were not narrated according to a chronological order.

Since they focused on subjectivity and on the working of the mind, in order to represent this unspoken activity of the mind, they were forced to mix past, present and future and the easiest way to translate this psychic phenomena in their novels was the adoption of the "**INTERIOR MONOLOGUE**".

There are different types of interior monologues: indirect or direct interior monologue.

- **INDIRECT INTERIOR MONOLOGUE**

In the case of the indirect one we still have the **guiding present of a narrator**, they rejected the use of a third person omniscient narrator. This narrator's role is that of a filter: before giving directly the thoughts of their characters the authors introduce some explanations and comments that introduce the character's flow of thoughts. It is easier to read because the narrator provides the reader with some explanations and descriptions that helped the reader to understand the plot. The main modernist writer who adopted this technique is Virginia Woolf. She was a modernist writer.

- **DIRECT INTERIOR MONOLOGUE** : With the direct interior monologue the character's thoughts are given directly to the reader without any filters. The character's thoughts are directly given to the reader without the guiding presence of a narrator. That's why the direct interior monologue is more difficult to read than the indirect interior monologue. We have no filters. The most important writer who adopted this technique is James Joyce.

We can make a further distinction within the direct interior monologue:

- **THE DIRECT INTERIOR MONOLOGUE WITH 2 LEVELS OF NARRATION:** we have the internal time related to the character's mind but we also have an external time related to the event that takes place during the character's flow of emotions and feelings.
- **THE DIRECT INTERIOR MONOLOGUE WITH 1 LEVELS OF NARRATION:** we only have the internal time of the mind without any external events.