



Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Mandolin and Guitar*, 1924.

The Modern Novel

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1. The origins of the English novel

The English novel



bourgeois in its origin.

Its favourite theme



the gain or loss of a social status.

The novelist



a mediator between his characters and the reader.

Events and incidents



related in a more or less objective way in **chronological order.**



2. The shift from the Victorian to the modern novel

Caused by

a gradual but substantial
transformation of British society

the pressing **need for different forms of expression**

They forced novelists into a position of moral and psychological uncertainty.

The novelist → became a mediator between the solid and unquestioned values of the past and the confused present.

This new 'realism' shifted from society to man → a limited creature whose moral progress was inferior to the advances in technology.



3. The birth of the modern novel

The **new concept of time** and the **new theory of the unconscious** contributed to the birth of the modern novel.

At the beginning of the 20th century the modern novelist:

- **rejected omniscient narration**
- experimented with **new methods** to portray the individual consciousness
- gave more and more importance to **subjective consciousness**
- understood it was **impossible to reproduce the complexity of the human mind** using **traditional techniques**

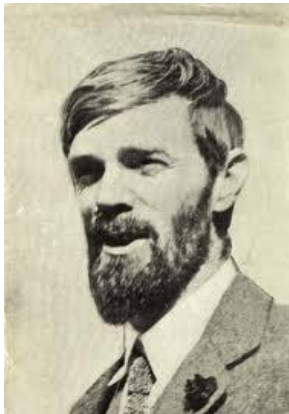


4. The psychological novelists

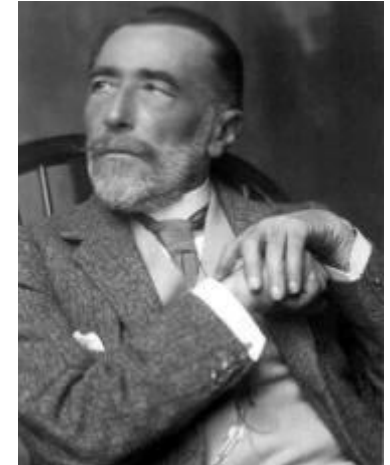
They were interested in the **development of the character's mind and human relationships.**

The most important are:

- **Joseph Conrad**, who tried to record the mystery of human experience.
- **David Herbert Lawrence**, who centred his work on the liberating function of sexuality.
- **Edward Morgan Forster**, whose recurrent theme is the complexity of human relationships and the analysis of the contrast between two different cultures.



D.H. Lawrence.



Joseph Conrad.



E.M. Forster



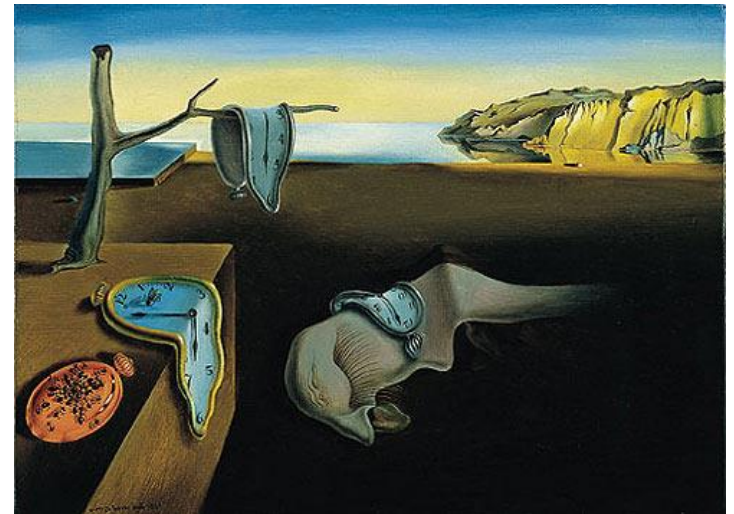
5. The new concept of time

Time was perceived as **subjective and inner** →
the distinction between past and present was meaningless
in psychological terms.



Absence of a well-structured plot
with a chronological
sequence of events.

It was not the passing of time
that revealed the truth about
characters.



Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931.

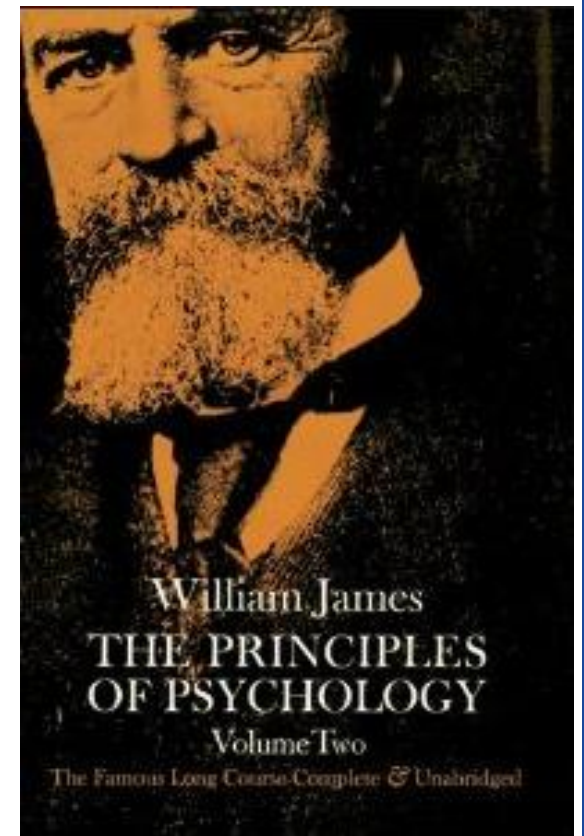
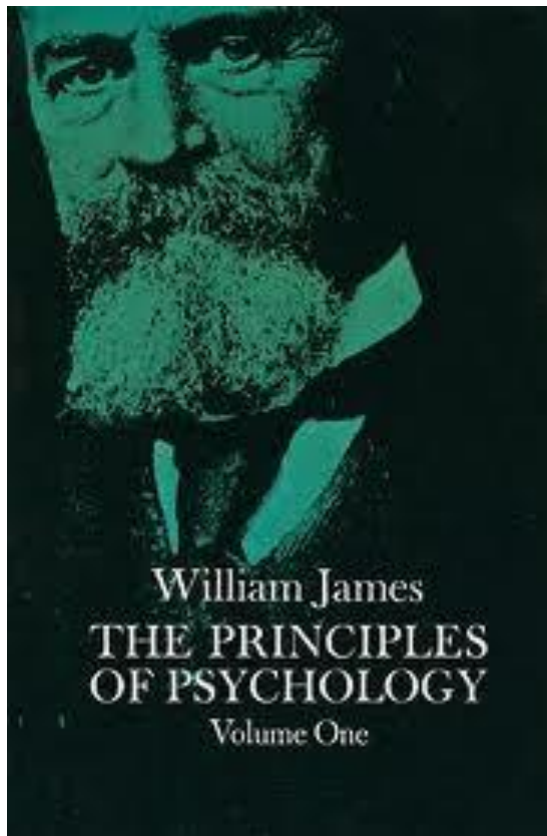


6. The stream of consciousness

It was the American psychologist **William James** who coined the term '**stream of consciousness**' in *Principles of Psychology* (1890)



The continuous flow of thoughts and sensations that characterise the human mind.





7. The interior monologue

Writers, like **James Joyce** and **Virginia Woolf**, adopted the **interior monologue** → to represent the unspoken activity of the mind.

**INTERIOR
MONOLOGUE**
→ the verbal
expression of a
psychic phenomenon

**STREAM
OF
CONSCIOUSNESS**
→ the psychic
phenomenon itself



Virginia Woolf.



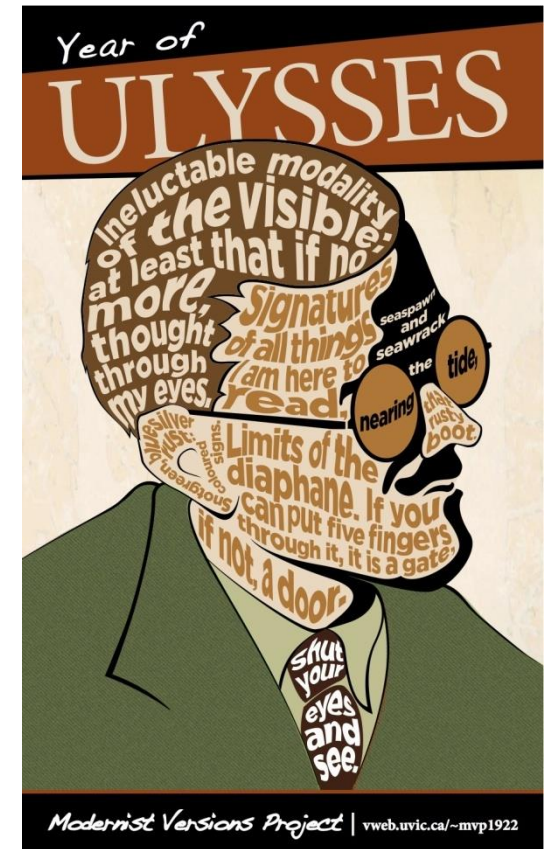
8. The main features of the interior monologue

- Its **immediacy**; this distinguishes it both from the soliloquy and from the dramatic monologue, where conventional syntax is respected.
- Absence of **introductory expressions** like ‘he thought, he remembered, he said’.
- The presence of **two levels of narration**: one external to the character’s mind, the other internal.



8. The main features of the interior monologue

- The **lack of chronological order**
- Use of **subjective time**
- The **absence** of the rules of **punctuation**
- The **lack of formal logical order**





9. Indirect interior monologue

It is characterised by the following devices:

- **the author is present within the narration** →
the character's thoughts are presented both directly and by adding descriptions, appropriate comments and introductory phrases to guide the reader through the narration
- **the character stays fixed in space** while his/her consciousness moves freely in time
- everything happens in **the present** in the character's mind.



'Inner time' preferred to 'external time'



10. Interior monologue with two levels of narration

The extract from James Joyce's *Ulysses* (→ 14.9) is characterised by **two levels of narration** → **one external to the character's mind, the other internal.**

'Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liverslices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods' roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine.'



10. Interior monologue with two levels of narration

Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly, righting her breakfast things on the humpy tray. Gelid light and air were in the kitchen but out of doors gentle summer morning everywhere. Made him feel a bit peckish.

The coals were reddening.

Another slice of bread and butter: three, four: right. She didn't like her plate full. Right. He turned from the tray, lifted the kettle off the hob and set it sideways on the fire. It sat there, dull and squat, its spout stuck out. Cup of tea soon. Good. Mouth dry. The cat walked stiffly round a leg of the table with tail on high.

- *Mkgnao!*
- *O, there you are, Mr Bloom said, turning from the fire.*

Objective, external level of narration, use of third-person narrator.

Regular sentences with subjects, verbs and complements in the right order.

Second level of narration which takes place within the character's consciousness

Irregular statements with elision of subjects, auxiliary verbs and reversal of the normal order of words.



11. Interior monologue with the mind level of narration

In this kind of interior monologue **the character's thoughts flow freely, not interrupted by external events**. From the first to the last word no external element interrupts Molly's monologue in the final chapter of Joyce's *Ulysses* (chapter 28).

Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the City Arms hotel when he used to be pretending to be laid up with a sick voice doing his highness to make himself interesting to that old faggot Mrs Riordan that he thought he had a great leg of and she never left us a farthing all for masses



- The narrator disappears
- Molly's thoughts are free to move backwards
- Absence of punctuation