**“Gabriel’s epiphany” James Joyce**

How does the use of language and narrative technique express all that troubles in Gabriel’s mind?

The incipit is very short “She was fast asleep”. Gretta is relaxed in cause of she sleeps differently by Gabriel who can’t sleep and so he reflects about his life. Gabriel feels in troubles, for this reason he cannot sleep. This scene is similar to Leopardi’s “La sera del dì di festa” where there is a girl who sleeps serenely, while the poet who during the morning was fascinated by the girl cannot sleep and so he reflects about his life.

The figure of Gretta is not important for Joyce’s aim, in fact the poet in this scene wants to analyzes Gabriel’s consciousness, in fact he never recalls the name Gretta and he also describes her through Gabriel’s eyes. So reader’s mind is focused on Gretta who sleeps through Gabriel’s mind and so the vision of Gretta is filtered by Gabriel.

The narrator is creating a contrast between Gabriel and Gretta, for example Gretta is sleeping and Gabriel is awake, Gretta had her romance, Gabriel not, Gabriel is aware he is not able to feel deep emotions (love) like Furey, Gretta instead felt. In addition the poet uses also the details of the description to underline the contrast between Gabriel and Gretta, for example the description of two Gretta’s boots: the first one, which is upright and represents Gretta, while the second one, which is laying down represents Gabriel who is reflecting.

Gabriel feels himself sad but he doesn’t know why. In the end he neither knows what love is.

The result is that Gabriel is confused and mixed up and this is emphasized by the the change of time: the past (Gretta’s past life and Michael Furey), present (Gabriel’s life) and future (Gabriel’s aunt death).

Joyce underlines the dramatic scene characterising it by the colour black, in fact there is no light in the room, it is dark and there are only shades, indeed when Gabriel thinks about the future funeral of his aunt, he says “dressed in black”. This colour is connected to death and so anticipates the end of the extract when Gabriel says that alive and dead are mixed up and confused, no one will be able to distinguish them.

In addition another used by the poet is the cinematographic one, in fact he focuses reader’s mind to some details which are symbols which stands for something different, for example “she was fast asleep” stands for the tranquillity of Gretta, or the detail of the two Gretta’s boots are the metaphor for her and Gabriel.

Indeed he alternates Gabriel’s reflections to the description of room and characters and the past (Gretta and Michael Furey’s past life) to the present (Gabriel’s reflection and consequent epiphany) to focus on the scene in the reader’s mind.

When he has the epiphany the dark which characterised the scene weakens “partial darkness”.

During the epiphany Gabriel understands that all his life was an illusion, he lived like in a dream, in fact all he thought, all his certainties were illusions (Gabriel and Gretta as Joyce writes “had never lived together as man and wife”) This is the typical feeling of the man of the first 1900. The poet uses in this passage another technique, that is the paralysis. In fact Gabriel is paralysed in cause of all his convictions are destroyed. Gabriel understands also that life has no sense, that is an illusion which is similar to the view of Pascoli’s Ulysses who understands that all the adventures he lived were illusions.

Finally the poet underlines his negative vision through the image of the snow which covers the city and dead and alive who are confused.