

ENGLISH WRITTEN TEST III

II PERIOD

In characterizing the figure of the wife, the three novels, David Lodge's "Nice Work" and James Joyce's "The Dead" (a short story belonging to "Dubliners") and "Ulysses" (in particular, the monologue of Molly Bloom) are focussed on different aspects of female nature. Indeed, all the texts have in common the theme of sexuality.

In "The Dead", the figure of the woman, Gretta, comes to life as a character linked to the past, to her lover dead for her when she was only a girl. Here, the husband's expectations on her fail in front of the discovery of her secret, making Gabriel revealing the illusions of all the years passed and of the passion that he believed it was love. The female nature here is represented as hidden, unreachable covered by a veil of mystery, that the man is not able to discover completely.

While in this short story the point of view is a man's (Gabriel), in the monologue of Molly Bloom of "Ulysses" the speaking voice becomes the one of the woman herself, inviting the reader into her mind, into her private thoughts. They not only reveal her characterization but the true nature of the female character. Molly Bloom appears very different from Gretta: while the latter is sexually repressed because she is in love with that young boy who died for her, Leopold Bloom's wife is not linked by feelings with any man of her life, considering all her relationships only a way to reach sexual pleasure and for the apparent freedom that she remembers to have felt when she was younger. Thanks to seduction, she is able to get round the men to obtain what she wants, thus feeling the illusion of being powerful.

The narrative technique of the stream of consciousness helps the writer to unveil the character's nature, Molly's way of life focusses on little things, not on important matters and thus making the reader understand that her life is not lived deeply, but rather covered with meaningless trivialities. The language of sense impressions adds to highlight the vacuum of her life, focussing on the atmosphere of the records and not on their true essence.

In David Lodge's "Nice Work", sexuality is treated in a different way. Even if also here the actual relationship between husband and wife is poor, the image of the wife (Marjorie) is expressed from the point of view of Vic is not at all attractive or fashionable, but, on the contrary she appears a bit repelling. David Lodge uses "limbs", "plump body", etc... to describe the woman, making evident the physical aspect now ruined from the passing of the time. Here, the husband is the one who refuses the wife, and not the contrary.