

- William Blake 1757-1827: was an artist not only a poet. A political free thinker, supported the French revolution. He witnessed the evil effect of industrial development on man's soul, he was convinced that the artist should have a new rule, the guardian of the spirit of imagination. The most important literary influence in his life was the bible. Blake was a visionary, in fact began to have visions of his dead brother. He frequented a drawing school, then became an apprentice to a famous engraver. Blake created a new form of art which emphasized the power of imagination. He made prints that combine picture and poetic text called illuminated printing. His poetry was influenced by his visions and experience as craftsman. Poetry is regarded as early romantic poetry because reject neoclassical style. Experience of Innocence (written before outbreak French revolution) in pastoral mode, the shepherd-narrator celebrated the Divine in all creation. Childhood is the symbol of innocence. Language simple and musical. Songs of Experience written during the terror period created the contrary of precedent songs. Poet questions the themes of previous collection. Experience, identified with adulthood, coexists and completes Innocence. The two states coexist not only in the human being but also in the figure of the Creator who can be at the same time the God of love and innocence and the God of energy and violence (lamb, tyger). Blake also published prophetic book in which he created personal mythology. Blake considered imagination, and not sense perceptions, as the means through which Man could know the world (Divine vision). After the French Riv., disillusioned, he focused his attention on the effects of industrial revolution: injustices caused by a materialistic attitude. The victims are children and prostitutes, victims of oppressions by institution.
- London: show the dramatic situation of London in that period. describes a city where everything has rules. We can see this where Blake tells us of the "chartered street" and the "chartered Thames". The term "chartered" express a situation of oppression and lack of freedom. In these streets the people are trapped in the prison of society, which is described in the 8th line: "The mind-forged manacles I hear". Blake goes on to describe the corruption of the Church of England (blackening) and government Palace. He sets the scene by mentioning the chimneysweeper boys. In the final stanza, Blake writes about the prostitutes (Harlot), who roam along the streets of London.
- The Aestheticism movement developed in the universities and intellectual circles in the last of 19th century. Originating in France with theophile Gauti the exponent of parnassanism movement. It is the reaction to the restrictive moral code of bourgeois, consisting in the redefinition of art's task. The slogan is "Art for Art's sake". Life must lived cultivating art, beauty and experiences. Escape of artist from reality, isolation from industrial society. The writer John Ruskin(essayist, commented painting and painters, attacked renaissance in favour of Gothic, exalted beauty of hand-made product as opposed to the machine-made.) in his search for beauty in life and art, but insisting on moral values, made way for the works of theorist of English aesthetic movement, Walter Pater. He think art was the only means to stop time, the only certainty. Life should be lived in the spirit of art (as a work of art), searching intense experience, all kind of sensations. The task of artist was to feel sensation not to describe the world. Art haven't a didactic rule or moral qualities. Oscar Wilde was most influenced by pater work, in fact in 1991 introduced the Preface to Dorian gray that is considered the Manifesto of....(in which he said not exist moral or immoral books, sensous language, hedonistic attitude.) In Italy D'annunzio will be the exponent of decadentism.