

## Modernism: What is it?

- The term modernism refers to the radical shift in aesthetic and cultural sensibilities evident in the art and literature of the post-World War One period.
- Modernism thus marks a distinctive break with Victorian bourgeois morality; rejecting nineteenth-century optimism, they presented a profoundly **pessimistic picture of a culture in disarray**. This despair often results in an **apparent apathy and moral relativism**.

### The Authors



- In literature, the movement is associated with the works of (among others)
  - Eliot,
  - James Joyce,
  - Virginia Woolf,
  - W.B. Yeats, in Great Britain;
  - Ezra Pound,
  - Gertrude Stein, in America;
  - the Czech Franz Kafka and
  - the Norwegian Knut Hamsun.
- Modernism had to wait until AFTER the SECOND WORLD WAR before it had its great impact on the English theatre.
- The most influential figure in the field of drama was the Irishman SAMUEL BECKETT.

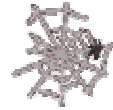
## Literary Devices

- In their attempt to throw off the aesthetic burden of the realist novel, these writers introduced a variety of literary tactics and devices:
  - the radical disruption of linear flow of narrative
  - the frustration of conventional expectations concerning unity and coherence of plot and character
  - the opposition of inward consciousness to rational, public, objective discourse

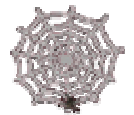
## Traditional literature

### Modernism

- It's meaningless;
- It has little importance;
- There isn't real plot.



- In Dickens it was complex (plots and sub-plots);
- in Lawrence it was autobiographical.



## Traditional literature

- Realistic characters: they are described both in their physical and psychological features.
- We may have flat characters or round characters.

### Modernism

- Physical descriptions are absent;
- People are represented only by their

thoughts.





## Traditional literature

- Real setting, well described;
- in Dickens it is consistent with the subsequent action.

### Modernism

- There is only a general idea of setting; Little importance is given to it;
- Sometimes it has only a symbolic function.






## Modernism

- o Depending on the subject's mind;
- o Fading and dissolving;
- o Both "Ulysses" and "The Waste Land" deal with a single day.

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## Traditional literature

- o The events are generally related in a chronological order or with the use of flash backs.


## Modernism

- o New language to describe the thinking process; association of ideas;
- o use of the STREAM of CONSCIOUSNESS expressed through the INTERIOR MONOLOGUE technique.

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## Traditional literature

- o Traditional language and traditional punctuation; sometimes used in a highly poetical way (Lawrence)





## Modernism

- o The reader has an active role and has to give his own subjective interpretation.

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## Traditional literature

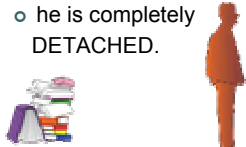
- o His role is passive: he is taught, entertained, emotionally involved.

## Modernism

- o The author stands apart from his work,
- o he is completely DETACHED.

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## Traditional literature

- o We have omniscient narrators (Dickens) and non-omniscient ones; we also have intruding and non-intruding narrators.