Stroupe

WRIT 1506

**Modernism**



Juan Gris, “Picasso” 1912, as example of the Cubist style of Modernist art

**Dates as Current Style: 1900 - Present**

*“Make It New.” – Ezra Pound 1935*

*“On or about December 1910, human character changed.” - Virginia Woolf, “Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown.” 1924*

*“I mistrust all frank and simple people, especially when their stories hold together.” - Ernest Hemingway* (as narrator)*,* The Sun Also Rises*. 1926.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Characteristics**1. Belief in the **nuance of psychological experience and the multiplicity or “fragmentation” of self** (Cobley 113)—in contrast to the possibility of a stable, unified, rationalistic viewpoint or identity posed by previous -isms.
2. **Rejection of the past** as a guide for solving contemporary problems or representing modern experience.
3. Skepticism toward **mass culture and social institutions**, which are contrasted to the authenticity of a reflexive self which is “closed, autonomous, antagonistic” and often alienated (Cobley 135)
4. Distrust of **official truths or communal, common-sense assumptions.**
5. Recognition of the primary role of the **unconscious** in identify and the experience of life (Freudian repression, for example): “the human ego is not even master of its own house” (Cobley 137)
 | **Causes and Conditions (20C)*** expansion of society to a vaster **scale**: “industrial acceleration” (qtd. in Cobley 136), globalization, economic competition, imperialism, and world war
* rise of **mass politics** conducted through media and the techniques of designed public spectacles, propaganda, public relations, etc.
* the “**imperialist” phase of capitalist** development resulting from growth in the scale of economic activities beyond national boundaries and politics (Eagleton qtd. in Cobley 88).
* a **reaction against realist styles**, which were seen as inauthentically objective, politically uncritical, and psychologically unaware.
* **rationalization** of life through the increasing influence of science and technological standardization: psychology, economics, corporatization, media networks, surveillance, etc.
 |