

Definition of Modernism:

"The term modernism is often used to identify what are considered to be distinctive features in the concepts, sensibility, form, and style of literature and art since World War I. The specific features signified by "modernism" vary with the user, but most critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bases both of Western culture and of Western art. The modernist revolt against traditional literary forms and subjects manifested itself strongly after the catastrophe of World War I shook men's faith in the foundations and continuity of Western civilization and culture. T.S. Eliot stated that the inherited mode of ordering a literary work, which assumed a relatively coherent and stable social order, could not accord with 'the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.' Major works of modernist fiction, then, subvert the basic conventions of earlier prose fiction by breaking up the narrative continuity, departing from the standard ways of representing characters, and violating traditional syntax and coherence of narrative language by the use of *stream of consciousness* and other innovative modes of narration." (Abrams 108-109)

Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 5th ed. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc. 1988.