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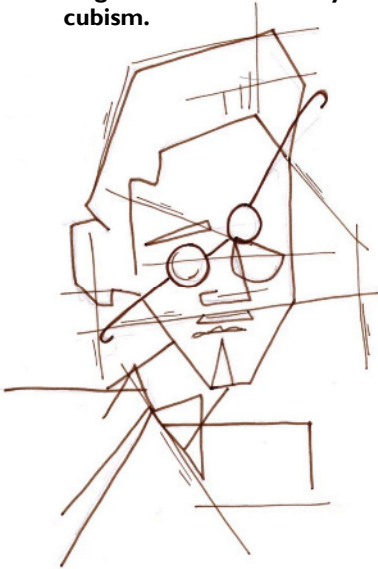
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Modernism was an intellectual and artistic movement that developed alongside modernity (think industrialized capitalism, standardization, Darwinism, Enlightenment rationalism) and ultimately railed against it. Modernist artists, writers and thinkers often played with structure as a means of coming to terms with the difficulties that modernity presented. They often took linguistic and narrative structures apart in an attempt to understand them—sometimes they would even put them back together. For Modernists, fragmentation represented a problem that had to be solved. Post-Modernists, by contrast, accepted the absurdity of modern fragmentation. They reveled in it without looking for conclusions, often using the forms of pastiche and parody.

We can think about fragmentation as literary cubism.



Fragmentation often forces a reader into a certain mindset—that of the author, main character, or narrator. As readers, we may not know exactly what is going on, but we are aware of some kind of struggle taking place. The writer gives us the challenge of reassembling a narrative—our success or failure is mutually dependent on our reading and the author's writing.

Here is a fragmented narrative, modernist-style:

Sainsbury's had everything she required. But would it rise? The bubbles wouldn't appear. She had bragged and talked the talk and they would be utterly disappointed, or perhaps pleased at her failure. Yeast. Sugar. The water would be too warm and she would kill it it would be flat it would not rise. Even the checkout girl looked cynical.

Here is a pastiche of a post-modern fragmented pastiche (get your head around that one!):

Sainsbury's had everything she required. Our yeast is of exceptional quality, organically bread for organic bread! No knead to knead—it's a full-proof proofing miracle! Choose Yoruba yeast! She still wasn't sure. She needed to calm her nerves. Could she trust Yoruba? Could she trust the checkout girl to keep her secret? She was a cheat. It isn't cheating—it's making life easier, helping you rise to every occasion! They would know.