

### Modernism: Background

- ❖ By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, artists and novelists were already becoming unsatisfied with realism.
- ❖ Rejection of Realism and Naturalism became common.
- ❖ a wide range of experimental and avant-garde trends (all the –isms: dadaism, surrealism, expressionism, futurism, etc.)
- ❖ A reaction to the modern, urban experience
- ❖ A rejection of the bourgeois values

### Discontinuity and Fragmentation

- ❖ Realism stressed the role of art as a mirror of social reality, the values of bourgeois society, and notions of progress.
- ❖ Modernism questioned art's capability to reflect reality, questioned the coherence of that reality, the bourgeois values of society and the notions of progress and happiness.
- ❖ Life and reality are not coherent or simple and it is an illusion to think that the novel or art in general can simply depict them like a mirror.
- ❖ Bourgeois values and morality are fake and superficial

### **What modernism stressed instead was:**

- ❖ Discontinuity and fragmentation
- ❖ Juxtaposition and multiple points of view
- ❖ Emphasis on individualism
- ❖ "Self" is seen as artificial, a social fiction
- ❖ The individual is stripped of the traditional defining categories of personhood

### Modernist fiction

#### **Stressed:**

- ❖ Crisis rather than coherent reality
- ❖ Attempts to represent multiple truths as reflected in consciousness and the psyche
- ❖ Rejection of external, unitary, coherent appearance of realist conventions
- ❖ Stresses a lack of causality (chaos)
- ❖ Insufficiency of language (incapability to represent)
- ❖ Oppositional relations between the individual and the social, (the alienation of the individual in his/her social environment)
- ❖ Antibourgeois (because bourgeois values and lifestyle are fake and superficial)
- ❖ Uses first person narrator, and he/she is often unreliable, reflecting the difficulty to represent reality
- ❖ Reflects a sense of urban dislocation and alienation
- ❖ Works by male writers tend to be misogynistic

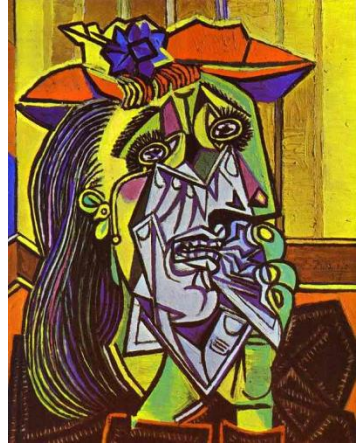
Compare: Édouard Manet, "Breakfast in the Studio"

- ❖ (Realist Art)



With: Picasso “Weeping Woman” (Modernist Art)

- ❖ Discontinuity and fragmentation
- ❖ Juxtaposition and multiple points of view
- ❖ “Self” is seen as artificial, a social fiction of undetermined status
- ❖ Individual is stripped of the traditional defining categories of personhood

Or Picasso’s famous Guernica 1937Or any of Salvador Dali’s work

