

Chapter 5 – Realism, modernism, postmodernism

2 types of realism

- **Formal realism**
 - “invisible” style
 - Continuity editing
 - Does not direct attention to its style
 - The story receives most of the attention, not the style
- **Social realism**
 - Common sense understanding of everyday reality
 - Rising middle class and their private and public struggles
 - Working class, issues of poverty, injustice, and crime
 - Ordinary people in ordinary situations (vs fantasy or superhero movies)
- Lumiere brothers -> social realism
 - Everyday events, ordinary people
- Georges Melies -> formal realism
 - Fantastical worlds
 - Use of “invisible” storytelling

2 types of modernism

- Formally, uses collage and montage
 - Noticeable storytelling, replacing the effort to make it seem the story world exists on its own
 - “visible” style
- Socially, an exploration of the interior, subjective life of characters in which characters drift into their own imagined worlds regardless of their surroundings
 - Themes of consciousness, memory, and desire

Modernism

- Critique of modernity
 - Conditions of life in 20th century capitalist society, especially in urbanized centres of industrialized nations
- Questioned the independence and wisdom of the individual
- Fragmentation, disconnection, alienation
- Rejected conventions of 20th century art
 - Novels did not need to have perfectly rounded characters
 - Paintings did not need to offer realistic depictions of external reality
 - Architecture did not need to disguise building’s function with embellishments of form

Stylistic variations in modernism

- **Collage**
 - Combining different types of materials in the same work
- **Montage**
 - A form of discontinuity editing
 - Brings individual shots together to create a shock, strange juxtaposition, or new idea
 - Advanced by Soviet cinema and by Sergei Eisenstein in particular
- **Surrealism**

- Used collage principles
- Rejecting realism
- Bizarre, fantastic principles of dreams
- **Dada**
 - Shock, strange juxtapositions, collage to create political overtone
 - Attacking the status quo
- **Constructivism**
 - A movement peculiar to the Soviet Union
 - Began before the revolution in 1917 and continued in different forms after
 - Helped pave way for the great silent films of Soviet cinema
 - Focus on form and physical materiality of objects
- **Expressionism**
 - Arose in Germany, spread to many other countries
 - Gave visual expression to inner, typically conflicted or disturbed states of mind

Characteristics of modernist style

- Fragmentation of space and time
- Formalism
- Heightened subjectivity

Postmodernism

- Formally, draws attention to itself with use of high degree of quotation, homage, borrowing, copying, or otherwise recycling previous works
 - Mixes popular and high art references, traditions, and conventions
 - Immersive, 'busy' space
 - Blatant artifice of film world
- Socially, emphasises how imagined worlds are like other imagined worlds more than reality itself
 - Addresses issues of transnational globalization
- Radical transformation of realism, rejection of modernist elitism
- Fragmented, disjointed plots

Characteristics of postmodernist style

- Mixing and matching source material
- Questioning individualism
- Allusion and citation
- Rejecting subjectivity
- Stresses the surface of things