

English 2120:  
Survey of British Literature

Lecture 7

The Modern Era (1920-1945)

Chaotic and Tumultuous Change:

- Breakdown of family structure
- Economic depression
- Increased industrialization
- Death of Queen Victoria (1910)

An Age of New Ideas

- Psychology - Sigmund Freud
- Philosophy - William James, Henri Bergson
- Science - Albert Einstein
- Anthropology - Sir James Frazer

Collapse of the Empire

- Nationalism
- World War I (1914-1918)
- Women's Suffrage (1918)
- World War II (1939-1945)

Modern Literary Style

- Pessimistic, fatalistic
- Quest for order in a chaotic world
- Imagery, symbolism
- Colloquial language
- Experimentation in form, style, and technique

An Age of -Isms

- Impressionism
  - Symbolism
- New Classicism
- Expressionism
  - Surrealism
  - Absurdism

### Postmodernism (1950-present)

- Electronic media
- Global economy
- Multiculturalism

### Postmodernist Literature

- Stage, cinema, and television emerge as viable “literary” media
  - Novels supplant poetry
    - Nostalgia