**Modernism**

Kafka's story is typical of the fiction we associate with Modernism. Like other Modernist works from the same time period, such as James Joyce's [*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*](https://www.shmoop.com/portrait-of-the-artist-as-a-young-man/)or Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, the story takes place in an easily recognizable, almost ordinary metropolitan setting. Like these other famous works, it also weaves complex social, political, and philosophical themes into its narrative. Kafka's story also shares the Modernist preoccupation with the relationship between high art – "great" literature – and popular culture. The hunger artist insists on his artistry as distinct from mere entertainment, such as the circus, but his performance certainly borrows some of the theatricality and promotion strategies of popular culture.