

# WESTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY – 20<sup>th</sup> Century

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## POLITICAL HISTORY

### GOVERNMENT

Parliamentary fine points, within the governments of Western Europe in the twentieth century, were destined to be overshadowed—because of the nature of the news, not because of inherent significance—during the eventful first half of the twentieth century. In our remarks on France and England, in the nineteenth century, we found ourselves dwelling on governmental issues like voting participation, parliamentary representation, and the balance of the classes; issues of substantial importance for governments treading into the complexities of a modern state.

**Sources of war.** These micro issues were not less important in the first decade of the twentieth century, than they were in the preceding century, but the conjunction of macro forces—the Prussian juggernaut forming into the reminiscence-filled German Empire—and the buildup of territorial appetites in a Western Europe widely empowered, increasingly well armed—and fully conscious of the mutual wrongs done one another by the states (in Alsace Lorraine, the Balkans) jammed up against one another in the corner of Western Europe. Given this set of affairs the conditions for armed conflict, but conflict with unprecedented implications, were satisfied, and needed just the spark of a royal murder to set fire to them. Governments were going to be dependent, for a few decades, on the capacities and endurance of their people, as well as on the potent leadership of their administrators; among whose main actors—Chamberlain, Churchill, Petain, De Gaulle, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Goebbels—were to be cowards, madmen, perverts and visionaries rich enough to people the greatest of Shakespearian dramas.

**Government.** Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, Western European society continued to develop around the governmental issues defining themselves in the previous century—issues of the vote and the processes of political representation, of armaments and their funding, of rights for women, of choices among economic systems---of the government's degree of responsibility to its citizens, its welfare policies. Needless to say, the reigning ideologies of the major nations involved—France, England, Germany—diverged sharply, as did, accordingly, the kinds of governmental style they found themselves choosing. Apart from their seeming agreement on mutual battlefield self-destruction, and their mutual disagreement on major issues of social policy, these mega states continued rendering themselves candidates for an oncoming fifty years in which compellingly global issues seemed destined to consume all local national issues.

**Future.** The governments of Western Europe recovered from the fury of two wars, to find many cities—especially in Germany and England—flattened, a consumer class in full fervor, hungry for goods that wars had made unavailable, and a population explosion. While coping with the public events that made for this new social cocktail, the governments of Western Europe prosecuted diverse directions—steering through a *Wirtschaftwunder* in Germany, adjusting to the reality of loss of Empire in England, and, in France, taking on the first challenges of the immigration issues (out of Algeria) which were destined—along with nuclear destruction, Cold War, and Integrated Global Technology—to trademark the second half of the century for Western European Governments.

## MILITARY

### 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

**Trenches.** Wars and the technology of war proliferated in the twentieth century. There were many wars in the century, and with each, especially toward the end of the century, the 'experts' learned more about how to use their weapons. While in the earlier wars of the century, notably the First World War, technology honed in on making trench warfare more enduring and impregnable--improvement in machine guns and artillery--and on the development of nerve gasses, the latter part of the century, the period of the atom and nuclear bombs, was the era of physics.

**Bombs.** In the latter period, both in Britain and the United States, whose experts were in close collaboration, emphasis was placed on the destructive powers of atomic and nuclear weaponry, with vast destructive powers, as the world saw at Nagasaki. The desired result, of the concentrated scientific effort at defeating the enemy, was the huge number of deaths which resulted from the century's wars:. Samples: WW I 20 million deaths; WW II. 62-78 million dead; influenza epidemic in the United States, brought back by returning GI's after WW II, 50 million dead.

**Proliferation.** As the hardware of war grew harder, more readily available, and more conveniently packaged inside the marketing system, of the military industrial complex, the number of wars dominating the globe—and some in Western Europe—increased; the two World Wars were unprecedented to their date in casualties and brutality to the civilian population; the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) and the French War in Algeria (1954-1962) were both notorious for ferocity. It was as though the appetite for global war simply whetted the taste for war in general, which—though not all in western Europe—was multiplying across the globe, involving the West with Vietnam, Korea, and China. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were made possible by international efforts involving the top scientists of post war England and Germany.

**Why?** Why was there so much active warfare in twentieth century Europe—so much more than in the previous century, and so much more devastating than at any time in human history? How was it possible that western European (and global) man would wish to inflict on himself the increasingly devastating damage of modern war? Is it that man does not pose that entire question to himself? That he thinks first of all on what he needs, or wants, or dreads, and that he tries to interpret his actions later, after the war(s), if at all? And that by that time our fellow men and women lie dead on all aides of us? In retrospect we will tot up our losses and gains, lick our wounds while we justify our behaviors, and, now, because we have inextricably entangled ourselves with one another, as nation states, we will start settling down to compromise with one another, and to see how we can turn the other's needs to our advantage.

## SOCIAL HISTORY

### SOCIAL STRUCTURE

**Class structure.** From the firm but changeable social class structures, of the Roman Empire, and then the estate-based social classes of the mediaeval period, we have hastily surveyed the advent, in the Early Modern period, of what we would have to consider the dwindling vestiges of a class system, as they morph into a more fluid skill and contribution based society, with, for its historical roots, the industrialization and globalization of the early nineteenth century. Few class rigidities adhere to the twentieth century societies of France and England.

**Norms.** If Victorian England developed norms of behavior—middle class norms of decency, prudishness, honesty, and uprightness—it was in part because the world in which those norms were being formed was on the whole peaceful and disciplined, even in France, which experienced a wide variety of political positionings. What, conversely, could be expected for the class structures of nations, in

the twentieth century, which experienced two World Wars and a great Depression in the course of thirty years, and in the second half of whose century sexual experimentation, women's liberation, incessant global bushfires, unprecedented storms of migration, and a wide tolerance for individuality have thoroughly modified the design of social relationships, both in the world and in the Western European corner of it.

**Literature.** What better mirror to hold up to the quick kaleidoscope of twentieth century culture than the novel? The Early Modern World reflected bright facets of its inner spirit in Cervantes, Moliere, Jonson. We could equally well have called in Balzac, Flaubert, Jane Austen, or George Eliot to help us clarify the tenor of nineteenth century social classes. When it comes to the century we have just lived, and can see slowly retreating in the rear view mirror, we could find in the world of English and French novelists camera shots deeply reminiscent of the world we have been and the class roles we have been playing in it: Ulysses, ourselves fractured into the social role of what we say, ourselves as language; Camus' *The Stranger*, ourselves as our own disorientation; Proust, *Swann's Way*, the wandering corridors of memory as it constructs us, making us citizens of time. The deep class participant I, not simply a rebel but a new birth from language and risk, becomes the social participant to whom I once belonged like the definition of my name.

## **GENDER RELATIONS**

**Birth.** Despite the new century's overwhelming prominence in war, international conflict, genocide; despite the amazing advances of twentieth century 'mankind' in plumbing the atmosphere and the atom; despite world-changing social experiments like Communism and renovation within the Catholic Church: despite these factors of secular change, the overall changes in twentieth century women's lives, in at least the western corner of Europe, were of unique importance, given the central importance of 'the lady who gives us birth.,' and makes it all possible.

**Liberation.** It has been a cliché of the century, applicable here and there, and since WW II especially in Europe and North America, that women have become relatively 'liberated .' We are, after all, in the century in which, among educated women, European and American, the thinking of such freed and brilliant women as Simone de Beauvoir (*The Second Sex*, 1949) and Germaine Greer (*The Female Eunuch*, 1970 ) has seemed to point the way to a new and newly realized woman. And this seeming achievement, clearly, was based on the emergence of a technologically upgraded domestic world, in which women (as well as their spouses) were freed from servitude to the sink, the laundry basket, and the soaking pail of baby's diapers.

**The world.** Milestones of technical and social development have accompanied, and seemed to support , this new perspective: since WW II, especially, women have found themselves employed outside home, as participants in the visible productive world—not behind the curtains in the living room; women have gained prominence in academia, medicine, and politics—Western European women rising to prominence in all these fields; environmental conditioning, for these dramatic advances, being provided by the introduction of the birth control pill (1960) and in many places the ready and sanitary availability of abortion, one more milestone of seeming advance, on which women have been able to rely, for the creation of independent lives. Western European women, thanks to the wars their men fought for them, have won the right to fight right beside Joe and Bill, to share the burden of defending the flag with your last breath.

## ECONOMIC HISTORY

### INNOVATIONS

**Renovation.** It is as if, with the twentieth century, Western European (and American) sculpture finds out how to shed some of its material bulk, and, at the same time, its rather limiting dependence on institutions for commissions. A reconception of sculpture is underway, which will sidestep some of the mass problems that shadowed the traditional sculptor's trade.

**Revolution.** The 'anthropological' put ups of such sculptors as Constantin Brancusi and Naum Gabo, portable and tactile, often wry, change the weight of the action of sculpture, which becomes less a statement than an offering. Wit is given room to enter the discourse. It might be mentioned, in relation to this turn of lightening in sculpture, that concurrently the *Ecole de Paris*, an influential working crossroads for European sculptors, was actively open to the impact of African sculpture, which was widely on view in earlier twentieth century Paris, and which opened for Western Europeans rare vistas of sculpture as color, humor, and movement.) Such Westerners as would have experienced African sculpture had been readied for such attacks on the expected, by the assaults Picasso and Braque had already undertaken, against all the canons reigning in western European art, at the time when they tossed a truly revolutionary Cubism into the ring of Western European perspectival options. Among those options, seized by many European sculptors, was the path of abstract and super real sculptures, sculptures of breakfast made of fur, mobiles that mocked the traditional weight of the sculptor, or, as in the work of Louise Nevelson, 'assemblages composed of found objects, mostly wood, sprayed in white, black, or gold paint and arranged in box like shelves occupying a wall...'

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### TRADE

**Instability.** From the vantage point of the century Western European economies, one would have to say that the first half of the twentieth century, in Western Europe, was unstable, dangerous, and unfriendly to extensive international trading relations, or even to robust trading within countries. Two world wars, which reduced the major European cultures to rubble and distress, were a disaster from the viewpoints of commerce, trade, or exploration. A worldwide depression in the thirties sealed the fate of these cultures, and heralded a crisis point, their fight to the death which ended only in 1945, and which added another major player, the Soviet Union, to the ranks of semi-antagonistic players who faced off against one another by mid-century.

**Wars.** The shortcut of the present conversation will have brought us In one leap from the formative centuries of west European economy and trade—the signature step forward of late mediaeval France and England—to the Industrial Revolution—especially in 19th century England—which increased national economic power, and readiness for goods trades on a soon to be global basis. This pattern of 'progress,' if one is ready to equate economic trade with progress, is soon enough to run into a roadblock as intransigent as the plagues and civil wars of the fourteenth century, which took their terrible, if temporary, vengeance on the development of early modern Europe. The roadblock is the devastation of the European economy, thus trading power, after two destructive world wars, which brought the growth of Western European civilization to a halt. We may conclude by drawing attention to a positive dimension to the conclusion of the cruel first half of the twentieth century, as it involved trade among partners—Western European, and now the larger world. I mean the *Marshall Plan*, the predecessor of a number of supra national trade and military partnerships which were to build eventually toward the multiple organizations of the European Union at the end of the twentieth century.

**Marshall Plan.** The Marshall Plan, 1948-51, was an American instigated post-WW II aid package designed to help postwar Europe rebuild and reconstruct after the war. The argument behind this plan was healthy; it was evident in the United States that only a vigorous Europe could prove itself a creative trading partner in the future. Mutual benefit was at hand here, as the British and French governments cooperated intensively with the American initiative. All the lessons of mutual international trade were implicit in the Marshall Plan thinking and negotiations.

**European Union.** The European Union will, in different stages, have been developing through the second half of the twentieth century, and will have brought with it a growth in regularized trade among all nations. Trade with a vengeance unites post-1950 Western Europe to the nations and products of previously untried partners: Japan and China, as well as the burgeoning economies of southeast Asia. The natural dynamic of industrial growth has expressed itself at all points in the Western European economy, but we should perhaps mention a trade and economic stimulus package of great effect which in its way underlay the ability of Western Europe to find its new post-1950 modalities.

## CULTURAL HISTORY

### VERBAL ARTS

#### Literature

**Introduction.** Into a century concealing within itself the forecast of two massive wars, the global threat of nuclear annihilation between two 'super powers,' and the civil extravaganza of the internet, with its startling possibilities (and threats) for the human community—into this apocalyptically pregnant century the preceding century made a fairly stately entrance. Novels, both experimental and technically daring, were offering promise of an upgrade in artistic expressiveness, an upgrade still not toxified by the odor of gasses and the stench of trench warfare: we talk Marcel Proust, whose *Remembrance of Things Past: Swann's Way* (1913) celebrates memory and the intricate hold it has, on the elaborate mini-ceremonies that compose upper middle class life; James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), the verbal tapestry constituting one ordinary guy's single day in Dublin, a day filled with the ordinary but as unordinary as any construction in language pushed to the point where it plays ruthlessly with its own meaning; Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* (1924) in which room still abounds for reflection on man's nature and destiny, albeit under the shadow of a war still being anticipated. If these texts herald a stately entrance, it is not that they do not have, behind them, a peace-shattering World War I, but that total war, globally comprehensive, is still (probably) unimaginable to these inheritors of a quieter century; inheritors still swathed in the intellectual disputes and inspirations generated by such as Nietzsche and Freud, and joined by poets of the greatness of Eliot (*The Waste Land*, 1922), and Rilke (*Sonnets to Orpheus*, 1923).

We have already named, in introducing the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some of the literary creators who most shaped the imaginative work of the entire century. Taking the pulse of the century, many critics have gone on from the point where we were simply introducing it, and opined that the literary greatness of the century headed for decline by the thirties. To claim this would of course have meant ignoring splendid writers who speak to our lived condition as eloquently as (and often more interestingly than) Homer himself. We are in the biggest of leagues, however, when we jump into the present calculation, and had best watch our words, before including with the greatest even a sturdy list like Huxley, Sartre, Grass, Kundera, Beckett, and Camus.

**Where we are.** Actually we have this time added another century, possibly, by a certain perspective, further depicting the chart of decline. We are deeply invested, now in a twenty first century dominated by the internet, the internet publishing business, the vulgarization of the creative literary process, which has been entrusted to innovators with little foundation, and the hot blooded industry of the best seller. An old fogey perspective, this, but meant to provoke, while shaking the dust off the lumpy bodies of anitiquity.

#### Language

**Evolution.** Nothing we have said about language evolution in the nineteenth century would not apply to what we have to say of the twentieth. Of the twentieth century in Western Europe, however, we will want to make the global statement that television, radio, the internet and its social media have greatly intensified the presence of language in the world of the individual citizen. The Western European is saturated with language, from waking to sleeping, or arguably while sleeping. The language he/she is constructing him/herself of is not the static challenge posed by written symbols to the monk in mediaeval Rouen, the shimmering word-tumult that a Renaissance dramatist like Marlowe might adore to see emerge from his pen, or the hewn marble of academic prose that a scholar like Peter Brown offers us as he dissects the mindsets of early Christian intellectuals like Augustine or Cassiodorus; the language the West European of our time is made up of the language of opinion surveys, podcasts, twitter feeds, ten minute read politics surveys, and then, over on the more personal side of the ledger, of the language of daily life, his daughter's upcoming trip, his mom's arthritis, and then of course the news, the news which is basically language and which forever constitutes and reconstitutes us.

**Babel.** If the above makes sense, it touches the way the language of Western Europe varies from the languages of the same area in the past when verbal symbols had the weight of execution and initiation behind them. It also touches the multiplication and diversification of identified and studied components in the makeup of western Europe. Not only is population explosion decisive for the issue in question, but also nationalism and the social self-awareness that goes with the mindset, the pleasure of being a located culture in a jigsaw puzzle of verbal schematics. (Is this not an identity gratification—think Estonian or Albanian, or the Turkic or Uralic components of the western European maze, languages as glad to be part of the whole verbal achievement of mankind as they had been assured, on the Tower of Babel, would one day be the case.)

**Literature.** And from the midst even of these twentieth century drivers of language change comes the fertile and tireless imagination of man, which in turns of skill like literature sets itself the challenge of inventing new ways for language to remake itself. To illustrate by a single case, what could be a continent wide instance of how imaginative language builds language itself, consider what James Joyce did for English by dismembering, reestablishing, and then representing the English language in the form it assumes in *Finnegans Wake* (1939), or even in Molly Bloom's soliloquy in *Ulysses*. In the latter instance Joyce makes us discover a kind of new language inside language, and through that discovery makes us restore the life giving sense of language as free possibility for mankind—always a tonic for writers, and eventually for new users; from whom even newer readers emerge, whether or not they read this or that particular text. So much for wide scale enrichment through language, as we find it in *Finnegans Wake*. The offering up of Joyce's *Ulysses* to his culture, to his language, and then, through translation, to every written language in Europe, was a much less recondite example of enabling. *Scandal* creating by its subject, a lady having an orgasm, the soliloquy of Molly Bloom lived, at its time, as the once unspoken possibility of saying it all out, of breathing forth your life through the energies of your language. Whether in high brow examples, like Joyce, or in high brow pop culture examples like those Jerry Seinfeld created—in christening *regifit*, *lowtalker*, *Jimmy legs* or *anti-dentite*—the growth points of language will continue to self-regenerate, like dendrites, from their own follicles.

Script

**Typefaces.** By 1900 there were two main typeface alternatives, for the Latin alphabet, in use in Europe. These were *Antiqua* and *Fraktur*. *Fraktur* was in use for German, the Baltic languages, Norwegian and Danish, while *Antiqua* was prominent in English and the Romance language speaking nations. Hitler banned the use of *Fraktur*, as a Jewish form of lettering. The simplification of formats—though they proliferate on the editing drop-down bar of my Mac—is evidence that for the majority of script users today the message has decisively conquered the medium, to circle back on Marshall McLuhan's thinking. In an age when the learning and use of cursive have sharply declined, when the writing act has been stripped of most of its existential features, and when the printed script loses all visual identity, and becomes simply a vehicle of thought (thought?) construction.

**The aesthetic.** Or is it so simple? Edward Johnston, an English designer working in the milieu of the Bloomsbury Group at the end of the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth, carried into his philosophy of calligraphy the spirit of traditionalism and authentic care, which he felt being drained from

the script-instruction of his own time. In his *Writing and Illuminating, and Lettering* (1906) Johnston created a manifesto of traditionalism in the practice of the finest traditions of cursive writing, and proposed ways in which the youth of his culture could once more write with style. That plea came out of the world of Bloomsbury, and yet it falls still today on the ears of the beleaguered proponents of cursive in the elementary schools of Western European democracies.

## Mythology

As puzzling as is the meaning of many ancient Norse tales, even more puzzling is the explosion of Norse culture into twentieth century popular culture in Europe—and worldwide, for such cultural waves don't even pause at national borders. We are speaking both high culture and low culture. Low culture might refer to the hundreds of video games now dominated by the figures—Thor, Odin, Freyja, Freyr—who slip easily into the tracer-violent scenarios that drive a wired youth culture into frenzies of simulated emotion. High culture could carry us all the way to the deep engagement with the Norse in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, or Rowlings' pick-ups on the werewolf Fenrir Greyback, in *Harry Potter*, or Ingmar Bergman's pained reflections onto Norse paganism in *Virgin Spring*. We will have to conclude, on this one, that the superheroes of Norse legend are among the world's greatest gifts to pop culture.

## Folklore

**Revival.** The British folk revival (first version, 1890-1920; second 1945-1969) was one direction taken by folklore studies in the twentieth century, while a quite different direction was taken by the scientific classifiers working out of University studies.

**Rock.** The folk revivals of British traditional music illustrate a new phase of folklore studies, in which the students are becoming participants in the original work, as they study. The second phase of revival, in fact, leads us to focus on major British rock groups, who were working through their inspiration by traditional British folk music. The Beatles, as one startlingly successful example of this trend, worked their way through traditional British music traditions, enriched as we know it was by such diverse themes as Hindu chants, in order to become, themselves, some kind of folk legends of their own.

**Aarne-Thompson.** So profoundly different was the academic scholarly route, into and then becoming folk legends of their own, that one might rightly deduce that the presence of folk issues was uniquely fructifying to a nation's intellectual culture. For at the same time, in the early to mid twentieth century, that the second version of the British folk revival was exploding, so was the systematic study of folk lore motifs, initially the classificatory theme-index made by the Finnish scholar, Antti Aarne, and then translated and reclassified by the American folklore scholar, Stith Thompson, whose thematic folk lore index, the Aarne-Thompson-Uther index, was published in its first version in 1928. Criticisms of the system have abounded, but to this day we live with a feasible classification for identifying and inter relating patterns of world, not just British, folklore.

**Folk museums.** It might finally be noted, in connection with the living relation between culture and its lore, that there has long been an active movement, among British museologists, to increase the number and quality of folklore (or folkways) museums in Britain. The very vigor of this discussion, growing as it is from an already vibrant British museum culture, underlines the importance of folklore, in any of the senses we have given it, to the self-understanding and imaginative projections of a people.

## VISUAL ARTS

### Painting

**Revolutions** The rash of revolutions, which from the late eighteenth century were to tit-tat across the face of the industrialized world, from Mexico City to Saint Petersburg, by way of Paris and Washington, was to be part of yet another mind set reshape—postclassical, Renaissance, Early Modern, Modern—which have had their repercussions in painting, an art which prides itself on its inability to hide anything. This new world, which to the parents of a child born in 1930 seemed the 'modern world,' was to contain as many surprises in the art gallery as in the streets or the battlefields, and those surprises were all

interconnected. Let's think of a few of the things we saw in the gallery, while we were watching the news (or listening to it) with increasing astonishment. Let's call those things by the names of their painters: Ernst, *Ubu Emperor*, 1923; Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937; Chagall, *I and the Village*, 1981; Hockney, *A Bigger Grand Canyon*, 1998.

**Paintings** Is there anything revolutionary about the four paintings chosen above? Ernst, because he was a wit as well as a social critic, chose to make his parody of the grand dictator fit the comic mode of a top spinning in the sand. Nuff said. He mocks authority. In 1923 that might still have seemed naughty, but hardly dangerous. And yet there was a danger, for sure, involved with the statement Ernst was making. If you were a fellow mocker you were headed for political danger down the road. Look out! Picasso strikes out at the dictators, as Ernst mocked out. Ernst worked a cartoon, Picasso presented a torn and bloody screen covered with the ruins of a bombed Spanish village. Chagall, in 'I and the Village,' fills us in on the gentler side of political harshness, but in the way he makes the eyes of a man and of a goat fuse, he makes it clear that the modern painterly eye must be at home in the full range of imaginative settings. Hockney tweaks. Like Chagall he wants a revision of perception, but he does not give it to you, he proposes it. Bigger Grand Canyon, eh? Always adroit and at an angle, Hockney makes us see a strange world in a familiar way. Four small revolutions.

**Modern.** Modern goes on, demanding reasons why it should exist, at the same time that the immense ocean of visual symbols, the mirrors mirroring mirrors effect of our time, keeps slurping up the latest shocker with no apparent indigestion. True while it is, that painting— good painting-- reflects its time, it is nonetheless true that the historical categories in which painting develops are not fixed, even in hindsight. Where we are going in painting now, will to some extent depend on where we are going as a culture. Is it plausible that painting might, given its embeddedness in a world made of camera images and instant digital copies—not to mention competitor arts like the video—that painting might be replaced in the repertoire of human creations? The opposition will cry that nothing could replace the visual imagination, as a maker of worthy images of man. The journey charging forward at Lascaux, by that account, is destined to continue, by some creative mandate that is part of being human. A selfie and a self-portrait have nothing to do with one another.

## Sculpture

**Renovation.** It is as if, with the twentieth century, Western European (and American) sculpture finds out how to shed some of its material bulk, and, at the same time, its rather limiting dependence on institutions for commissions. A reconception of sculpture is underway, which will sidestep some of the mass problems that shadowed the traditional sculptor's trade.

**Revolution.** The 'anthropological' put ups of such sculptors as Constantin Brancusi and Naum Gabo, portable and tactile, often wry, change the weight of the action of sculpture, which becomes less a statement than an offering. Wit is given room to enter the discourse. It might be mentioned, in relation to this turn of lightening in sculpture, that concurrently the *Ecole de Paris*, an influential working crossroads for European sculptors, was actively open to the impact of African sculpture, which was widely on view in earlier twentieth century Paris, and which opened for Western Europeans rare vistas of sculpture as color, humor, and movement.) Such Westerners as would have experienced African sculpture had been readied for such attacks on the expected, by the assaults Picasso and Braque had already undertaken, against all the canons reigning in western European art, at the time when they tossed a truly revolutionary Cubism into the ring of Western European perspectival options. Among those options, seized by many European sculptors, was the path of abstract and super real sculptures, sculptures of breakfast made of fur, mobiles that mocked the traditional weight of the sculptor, or, as in the work of Louise Nevelson, 'assemblages composed of found objects, mostly wood, sprayed in white, black, or gold paint and arranged in box like shelves occupying a wall...'

**The horizons.** Obvious we have been moving, here, into an horizon unanticipated by the depictive, though very diversely so, prior history of Western European sculpture. We could go on. But the dramatic point makes itself clear before us, that sculpture is only by tradition, not by necessity, limited to the stolid,

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## Architecture

**Modernity.** A brief summary can hardly cover the culture gaps that lead from Neoclassicism, the late Gothic, to the international modernity which had swept over Europe by the early nineteenth century. The best we can do is to let contrast underline the intensity of the transition, throughout western Europe, from a culture working off a classical base to a culture winging it with experiments in all the arts—sculpture, architecture, and painting.

**Experimentation.** Architecture's version of the Expressionism which moved Western painting was expressed—for example in the *Goetheanum* of Rudolf Steiner (1923)—by the use of new natural materials for construction, and by the incorporation of broad natural forms, often associated with broad socialist agenda. So called Art Déco was taking off in the mid twenties, with its reinforced concrete skyscrapers, vertical lines, and geometrical forms attached to the outside of the structure; buildings like the Art Déco Chrysler Building, in New York City (1930), put such public structures right in the public's eyes, where one hundred and fifty years earlier there would have been a sleek neo gothic cathedral. By the end of the decade of the nineteen thirties—and this indicates how rapidly 'modernist' styles were changing—the Great Depression and the critiques leveled by architects like LeCorbusier, had concluded that Art Déco was far too 'fancy'. This verdict and hinted at the speed with which, in the late thirties, the German Bauhaus movements—Gropius, Mies van der Rohe—was promoting a newly convincing streamlined style of public architecture, the style that marks the wonderful skyline of Chicago.

**Philosophies.** Some critics, tired of the self-conscious sparseness of Modernism, drifted in the direction of Regionalism—an effort to create historically lodged buildings inside universal settings; to follow Paul Ricoeur's question of 'how to become modern and to return to sources, how to revive an old, dormant civilization, and take part in universal civilization.' (An outstanding ideologue of this quest was Kenneth Frampton, whose 'phenomenological architecture' sought for the philosophical underpinnings of his constructions.)

**Frampton.** One might say that Frampton was concerned chiefly with reference in architectural structure, and thus came up against the then newest movement to deepen and change the presence of architecture in fast changing urban societies. *Postmodernism*, in the mid twentieth century sense, was broadly concerned with 'wit, ornament, and reference,' in architectural style. With Postmodernism enters the architectural debate about historicism and newness in architecture. On the horizon of this debate lie movements like New Classicism and New Regionalism, and ultimately—but there is no such thing in architecture—the wide movement of Deconstruction, which counts on careful undermining of classical structures, from within those various structures, and which thus explicitly invokes the collaboration of philosophers, like Jacques Derrida, with architects interested in buildings as works of thought.

## PERFORMING ARTS

### Dance

**Ballet**, immense and popular, was the strongest of the art forms to address the western dance public, at the outset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the fresh impulses renovating Western ballet were Russian. The influx of dances and dancers from Diaghilev's Ballets Russes were felt most stunningly on the Paris stage, from where they spread throughout the continent, giving Western European ballet a glimpse of such transcendent dancing as that of Nijinsky, or directing on the level of that of Michel Fokine (1880-1942). (Interestingly enough the dancers of the Ballets Russes never performed in Russia, where they were seen as worse than bourgeois.)

**Jazz.** As the twentieth century unfolded, Latin-American and Jazz dances, imported from Afro-American and African cultures, and passing often through Spain, whose native culture was receptive, entered into the European dance world. That world was already opening out from inside into such civilized, and calmly bourgeois pleasures as tango teas, dance clubs, family style dance holidays. The English Style of dancing, as it came to be called, sanctioned five standard dances, which would be the hits of the first half of the century: quick step, waltz, foxtrot, tango and blues. My Mt. Vernon Iowa, U.S.A., neighbor, Dale—and his wife, Eileen—are my age; their chief recreation is trying to figure out how to handle these steps at dance night uptown every Friday. I can't hold a candle to them; scary octogenarians.

**Folklore.** The urbanization of major European cities, the invasion of radio and eventually television, into the sphere of the man on the street's musical life; all these factors militated against the traditions of folkdance which were rapidly enough fading in the Europe ripped from its roots by two World Wars. There were pockets of historical resistance, throwbacks reminding us of the old world—Basque country, Hungary—but soon (like right now) they had little left except to be 'picturesque.'

**Academia.** Interestingly enough, although there is much more to say about the explosions in dance theater, ballet ensembles, and intercontinental blending of ballet companies, bringing to the hometown in Europe strands of another and usually fascinating performance culture, it is less observed that in University cultures, from one point in Europe to another, there have been hitherto little noticed experiments, researches, and historical inquiries into the nature and history of dance that 'Departments of Dance' have become broadly staffed and innovative origin points for new understandings of dance in our lives. Does the work carried on in those centers suggest the kind of pause for rethink, of the nature of the Humanities, that the Enlightenment century offered to the European cultural conscience in general?

## Music

**Contrasts.** With the modern period a great diversity of musical styles wins public favor. The contrast between them can be illustrated by a pairing off the Romantic tone poem composers, Debussy and Ravel, against the atonalists Schoenberg and Stravinsky.

**Schoenberg; Stravinsky.** Arnold Schoenberg stands out for his adoption of a twelve tone scale, in which all tones of the octave are serialized. The result is instrumental music which to the ear trained on the classical octave, seems harsh and discordant. Stravinsky, daring both in atonal experiments and in unprecedentedly brilliant and dashing collisions of sound and color, is the man whose *Rite of Spring* drove Parisian audiences dashing into the streets—so chromatic and surprising was that operatic work. By contrast with these two experimenters—and allies like Hindemith, Berg, Bartok—there were dream like composers of infinite charm—like Debussy and Ravel—who enchanted audiences with romantic inner poem landscapes. Multiple varying cultural milieux and ever wider choices for instrumentation both contributed to the broad palette of new experiences awaiting the growing musical audience during the first half of the twentieth century.

**Johnny.** Your son, Johnny, with his ear phones and his smart phone is not likely to be listening to Stravinsky, when his face fills with that distant look. For between the tonalists we cited here, as heralds of the new century, and the world of jazz, bepop, rock, and their innumerable offspring, there runs a gamut of 'modern music,' which is as different from Stravinsky as is the electronic and now digitalized world of our society and culture. Johnny is listening to the echoes of the digital revolution, as they play out in the difference between him and say his granddad, who may still enjoy opera, may even—possibly—enjoy Beethoven or Mozart, but who has no clue, and wants no clue, of the exquisite musical journey that has brought him to where he is.

## Theatre

**Change.** Twentieth century rebellions in stagecraft, and in the very conception of what theater is, remind us that the 'performing arts' dimension of western drama has, until the twentieth century, and throughout such vivid changes as that from High Mediaeval to Renaissance theater, based itself on a fairly stable concept of what a theater is: a centrally focused tableau for representations of narrative

action—no different from what the earliest Greek playwrights presented to their avid audiences. By the twentieth century, in Western Europe, it was clearly time to reconsider this ancient notion of stage and performer; in the poetic dramas of Yeats and the later Ibsen, for instance, there was already abundant evidence of the readiness for change in stage, narration, and acting. We move into an era, starting in the late nineteenth century, in which new techniques of stagecraft, hostility to theatrical realism, and directorial inventiveness have started to remake the theater. In a twentieth century risking all on the battlefield, opening up and revaluing all its social assumptions, and inventing a technological framework for its self-image, it is no wonder that the performance arts of theater reflected the new world creating them.

**Stagecraft.** Daring new stage designers—the Swiss Adolph Appia, the British Edward Gordon Craig—led the way into a new theatrical aesthetic: according to Craig's *Art of the Theater* (1905) 'the stage director alone would be responsible for harmonizing every aspect of the production—acting, music, colour, movement, design, make up, and lighting...' The path was henceforth open for a wave of new conceptions of stage and what occurs on it. In what turns out to be the century of the director—as far as the theater is concerned—we see a succession of brilliant experiments: Max Reinhardt's sense of the open theater, which led him to stage some of his finest Berlin work out in the air, in circus lots or empty urban spaces; the openness of Italian Futurism, in which Pirandello could reclaim existential mystery for the very thing a play is, and the stage itself, among some of its directors, could become a playground for acrobatics; Erwin Piscator's expressionist theater in Germany (1920's), with its use of expensive machinery like escalators and moving stairways, or cantilever bridges moved up and down; the new (mid-century) French theaters which surrounded the audience on three sides. This is not to say that the century that created Beckett and Brecht, Pirandello and Shaw, was all about technique, but that the European theatrical tradition had settled down to review and revise some of its major characteristics.

Cinema

### **The Years of Launching.**

#### EARLY STAGE: LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO WW II

**Light.** Already as early as 1802 Humphrey Davy had experimented with electric light bulbs, and had devised a practical way to illuminate a room. There were experiments galore, throughout the century, leading up to what is acknowledged as the birthday of the movies, the Lumière Brothers' presentation of the first paying film, on December 28, 1895. The film was entitled *Workers leaving the Lumiere Factory*, and was shown in the basement of the Grand Café in Paris. What had in effect been an army of scientific workers and brilliant tinkerers (like Thomas Edison), in Europe and the United States, had achieved a result with consequences which none, even at the end of the nineteenth century, had been able to imagine—the launching of an industry which would prosper at least through the next century—who knows how much longer—and would enrich/modify/and exploit the possibilities of human artistic expression. It was not long, of course, before the greed of an industry in formation had taken charge of the destiny of an invention.

**France.** The essential inventions, for establishing the new industry, had been mastered by the first World War, and the Europe which had settled on the path of nationalism, and war, was quick to lay its diverse claims to film mastery. The French patriotism, to which Napoleon had long before given the go ahead, had been sharpened by advances in math, physics, and biology, in the course of the nineteenth century, and was a natural launching pad for French cinema, in which the founding achievements could reasonably be claimed by Paris. Prior to WW I, consequently, French cinema dominated the European scene, making itself particularly known for brilliant comedy, as well as for the *Film d'art* movement, founded in 1908, which produced a large flurry of films dealing with everyday life in France.

**Competition.** Before the start of the First World War, almost seventy per cent of global films derived from studios in Paris. Importantly enough, though, the War itself depleted the growing French film industry, which was gradually pushed aside both by Hollywood, which was not screening seventy percent of its films in Paris, and by the burgeoning German film industry. We are on the cusp of a film world in

which national competition will drive many of the gestures, of what is in itself a kind of world war for public attention. We are still in a film world, however, in which the prestige of the French film achievement is highly respected, even by its competitors. Between 1920-1930, and despite the exhausting aftermaths of WW I, French cinema (the so called New Wave) had been making quiet and forceful advances: with jump cuts that gave the director new freedom, with wide lenses and hand held cameras, that reduced cost and maximized 'the sense of actuality,' and with new freedoms in shortcutting narrative developments—freedoms from too much 'telling the story.'

**Italy.** From 1922-1943, Italy developed under the thumb of a rigid dictator, Benito Mussolini. It was the promotion of a national film industry, under Mussolini, that led Italians into the streets, in the thirties and forties, not simply to view and film, but to size up the ravages of war torn cities, the kind of sizing up that was to lead into the world-influential Neo realism of Italian cinema. Pre WW II Italian realism was on the street realism, the results of free inquiry with hand held cameras, into the many impoverished areas of Italy, and, after the second War, into the culture of the streets which we see so unsparingly (and often touchingly) outspread before the lenses of Rossellini, Fellini, and Antonioni. To these great directors the working class is the only cinematic hero, and a tough one at that. In 1932 the Italian cinema elite established the first Venice Film Festival, while *Cinquecitta* was active, throughout the 1930's, as the first film studio complex, and the working milieu for Italy's star directors.

**Germany.** Expressionism—which has such forefathers as Edvard Munch, August Strindberg, and Sigmund Freud—emerged as the dominant practice of German film in the early part of the twentieth century, as well as one of main modernist thrusts of German music, painting and poetry. Where French film of the twenties highlighted the realism of the streets of France, and Italian Neorealism discovered the unique beauty and pathos of those streets, and of many of the people who live in them, German film—check out Fritz Lang and his *Dr. Mabuse*—was fixated on film noir and horror (of the *Nosferatu*, vampire sort).

#### FROM THE END OF WWII TO 2100

**Classics.** It is not easy to wrap and package a living tradition like that of Western European film, especially at a particular period in its development. We have made some initial notes on the early stages of Western European film, through the cataclysmic World Wars that both allowed for rapid film development, and left conscientious auteurs—Godard, Bergman, Fassbinder—wondering how to deal with the individuals who have come out on the other side of war. Perhaps we should take this second stage, of our observations, to reflect on the directions adopted by national film industries in the years from 1950-2000. We find that the influence of Hollywood has grown in Europe, far out of proportion to the smaller budgets of the European national film industries, that we live, today, in a cinema climate in which most of the well heeled filming in the world is bankrolled out of California, but in which independent (and nationally backed) European film industries consistently generate the highest level of auteurship.

**Germany.** Fassbinder and Herzog are living sensibilities of the postwar. Close up to their societies, these auteurs live as awareness of the hurt around them—drug trafficking, purposelessness, alienation, sexual dysphobia, infinite loneliness; the whole package of post war urban ills for which we have to blame a half century of large scale wars—and for which we are still paying the penalty in our contemporary world. Take a run of five films, for example: 1969 (*Katzelmacher*, Fassbinder); 1969 (*Gods of the Plague*, Fassbinder); 1973, *All Fear eats the soul*, Fassbinder; 1974 (*Kaspar Hauser*, Herzog); 1975 (*Fox and Friends*, Fassbinder). Unemployment, immigration pains, social maladjustment, underworld corruption on the bar stool and police raid level, blank social disorientation: the ills of the post war bust in central Europe. There is much else of high value: the salutes to the America of trends and dreams—Wim Wenders' *Kings of the Road* (1976) or *Alice in the Cities* (1977)—a salute which flashcards the dreams and hopes of a society still on its knees from defeat, and looking to potential. There is the off the charts dreaming of Werner Herzog, who in *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) or *Heart of Glass* (1976) evokes heroisms, tragic senses of human evil, and transcendent moves in soul which dwarf the social evils that surround them.

**France.** Grab a seventeen year period out of French film, from the second half of the twentieth century. Isn't there a consistency, as we suspected there was among the grab bag of terrific German films we

highlighted in the previous section? Cocteau, *Orphée*, 1950; Bresson, *Diary of a Country Priest*, 1951; Bresson, *A Man Escaped*, 1957; Resnais, *Hiroshima mon amour*, 1960; Godard, *Week End*, 1967. In the crush of post war anomie, the individual thrashes through a life looking for identity points, for 'what he is.' Unsatisfied with viewing himself as a set of information points in a bureaucratic file, condemned to death for an answer, he claims his *Existenz*, as the war time French existentialists cared to put it: he is that evanescent soul inside us, which is looking for reassurance. Bresson hits it on the head—as does Bergman in *Winter Light* (1963)—when he takes us inside the mind of a believer, in fact a pastor, who can no longer summon his faith clearly. (In literature he reminds us of Unamuno's priest, in *San Manuel Bueno Martir* (1931), who has lost his faith but cannot bring himself to confess it to his congregation, and therefore has to live a long priestly life as a lie.) The world crushing the individuals in these five films is a world Godard stares in the face in *Week-end*, the portrait of a society in a sustained downspiral, the highways no longer functional, personal values no longer operative, societies reduced to armed camps.

**Italy.** Three films from 1949: Rossellini, *Germany, year 0*; *Bitter Rice* directed by De Santis; de Sica's *Bicycle Thief*. Only four years after the end of the war that left Italian cities in conditions ranging from rubble to chaos. And add two films from a little later: *La Strada* (1956) and *Amarcord* (1974), both directed by Fellini. A five film sample of the Italian turn in postwar suffering. Just look at the urban streets in three of these films. Just look at the havoc of time for the little guy or gal on those streets, just look at the working man or woman's condition, if he loses a precious bicycle, if she is broken down to working in the literally killing rice fields of the north. Fellini flavors this bitter historical sociology with a retrospective film like *Amarcord*, which rehearses his own boyhood. The sweetness of time is greatly spread across us, as we walk again the streets and familiar practices of his own home town.

**Sweden.** Sweden means Bergman (1918-2007), and Bergman means a voluminous statue of strong, searching, daring, experimental films, a few of them turned on a spit of wit, a few tragic, very few that do not surprise and provoke. 1951 *Summer Interlude*; 1955 *Smiles of a Summer Night*; 1940 *Virgin Spring*; 1962, *Winter Light*, and *The Silence*; 1966, *Persona*. Bergman is capable of a light turn—*Summer interlude* evoking a summer of young love, but one overshadowed by the sense of doom, and by the death of the protagonist's lover—a film thus about the interhatching of tragedy and joy-- while Bergman's *The Silence* arrates the trip of two sisters and a child through a mysterious post war city, with which they cannot communicate, while the sisters' alienation from one another grows silently toxic, in the halls of a vast and almost unoccupied hotel. These films are Bergman, his step into the dark regions his time was opening up to him. *Persona* takes the adventure into the mysteries, and terrors, of personal identity, while *Virgin Spring* is a kind of mediaeval horror tale, about the rape of an innocent girls, and the long trip grace must take, to restore beauty to a destroyed world.

**The Launching of great art.** Western European postwar cinema, like world cinema, is of global extent and power. It expresses nationalisms, gives a voice to spokespeople who are far ahead of their time's insight, opens up opposition view points, and performs all of these achievements in a public arena—a film is not a book that you take into your study and meditate with—which is a full time scenario for debate. Without question the post war European film serves all of these essential functions, opens all these avenues for social growth and intelligence. It stops nowhere, and in our latest time, the productive time engulfing us we inscribe these words on screen, Western European cinema, which has long felt the financial support of the Hollywood Industry, feels the dramatic breath of new technologies—shall we say **digital cinema**, for shortcut—and more broadly for streamlined ways to guarantee the commercial profitability of film distribution. One point to be made, in the face of this inevitable economization of an Industry, which is more directly a public commodity than is literature, is that great film looks to be created into an existentially pressing situation. This is no prophetic weisheit, but still it appears to be borne out by the example of the major postwar cinema sampled above. The special roughness of the twentieth century clearly demanded existential art, and got it. The same cannot be assumed for today's western European (or any other) cinema, that gets involved with itself as technique, and loses its status as a deep response to life.

**Science.** Film has its deep origins in the electricity experimentations of such British scientists as Michael Faraday and Humphry Davy, in the nineteenth century. These men opened up the processes by which eventually, around 1900, photography would be made possible in all its fantastic ramifications. Is film

essentially tied to its mechanical facilitation processes? Is its destiny more closely related to technique and materials than to 'movements of spirit'? How does film relate to literature in this regard?

**Nationalism.** What is the relationship of nationalism to the development of film in Western Europe? Was nationalism a stimulus to competition, or a drag against cooperation and alliance?

What is the relation of the film industry in Europe to the formation of the European Union in 1993? Is the quality level of the Western European film closely involved with the members' relation to the EU? On a broader level, would you say that independent film enterprises are more likely to succeed than institution-backed efforts?

## WORLDVIEW

### Philosophy

**Themes.** Many themes share high prominence in twentieth century philosophy; themes with ample but intertwined roots in the thought of earlier centuries. Among these themes are *analytical philosophy*, particularly practiced in England, and *existential philosophy*, prominent in Western Europe with our previously discussed Kierkegaard and Nietzsche among its antecedents. Movements like *Thomism* pronounce their continuing energy, rooted in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, while both *phenomenology* and *poststructuralism* play unexpected riffs on the classical problem of how we know. It is worth note that the issues arising, in most of these 'movements,' find language at their center., and time and again revert to the question of 'what language is.'

**Existentialism.** Existential philosophies take it as their starting point that the engagement of the thinker's self is already, from its thought act, a powerful component of the thinker's position. We always think, Existentialism puts it, 'in a situation,' as historical beings fraught with unsureness but impelled to formulate. We have linked Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to the foundations of this kind of philosophy as action; for both men the discovery of personal authenticity, in the knowing act, has much to do with the quality of that thought. Of the western European thinkers, whom we would link to this movement, are the French Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1960), Albert Camus (1913-1960), and Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973).

**War.** It will be no surprise, given the thrust of this philosophy and the fact that it was particularly generated by participants in the second World War, who were by definition engaged by their situation in the actions of their minds, that the participants in this movement were also writers—in whose novels they embedded individuals faced with the basic conditions of daily life—boredom, anxiety, and hope.

**Analytic philosophy.** The movement we now call Analytic philosophy takes its impulse from German philosophy, but for the most part, after it finds its power, remains on the British side of the channel. At the roots of the movement lies the thinking of the Logical Positivists, much of it generated in Berlin and Vienna in the first quarter of the twentieth century, fundamentally aligned with the assumptions of empirical science, and in particular with the niceties of verification. Such logicians and mathematicians as Rudolf Carnap and Bertrand Russell led the way to the use of symbolic logic and mathematics to dissect thought structures. The analytic movement was given great impetus by the work of the Oxford professor Ludwig Wittgenstein—*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922)—which laid the foundations for what became called 'ordinary language philosophy,' and was furthered by British thinkers like Gilbert Ryle and J. L. Austin.

**Phenomenology** was developed by Edmund Husserl (*Ideas*;1913), who generated many precise and original innovations in the study of consciousness and doing, attaining new levels of analysis of the phenomena of mind. The phenomena of mind capture the central attention of many productive successors: Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) whose *Being and Time* produced a lucid and detailed analysis of the role of mind in formulating the position of thought in Being; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose *Phenomenology of Perception*(1945) continually blends innovative perspectives in empirical psychology with precise methods for examining phenomena in mind.

**Post structuralism**, whose deepest triggers lay in the work of the Frenchman Jacques Derrida (*On Grammatology*, 1967), came onto a continental scene in which Structuralism (Levi-Strauss; de Saussure) had barely completed its renovations of the ways we format the structures of our thinking, stressing the constructive manners in which sign and signifier are interwoven for the construction of meaning. Deconstruction reversed the implications of Structuralism, positing a reality in which mind never reaches the signified, but in each quest for the stability of the signified ends up generating new signifiers, placing the object to be known at the end of an ever unreached quest. In this quest, man the *maker* of language is converted into man the *product* of language.

**Thomism.** Though the revival of Thomism, a contemporized remodel of the thinking of Saint Thomas Aquinas, is hardly a full scale movement, within twentieth century thinking, it is worth attention for two reasons. Its proponents—both theist and atheist—have advanced stunning philosophical perspectives. And, reason two, by attending to this development we can illustrate the richness by which the Western European philosophic (and in this case Classical) tradition can at times return onto itself enrichingly. In the present instance, a variety of thinkers, both British and American (MacIntyre, Anscombe, and Foote) work with the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas to reformulate a world-explanatory account, by which to give the meaning inherent to it, to a world-view that orthodox Christian theology established long in the past.

## Religion

The 20<sup>th</sup> century proved dangerous, eventful, and full of new moves, within the religious orbit of Christianity. It also bore abundant testimony to the presence of other faiths than the Christian—Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish-- in the formation of the Western European religious landscape.

**Danger.** It was the stated goal of Soviet Communism, after the October Revolution of 1917, and until the Fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1989, to eradicate religion from society, and to this end the Russian government applied its full force, for much of a century, to reduce the number of priests and churches in Soviet held territories—which included many of the countries of Western Europe—and to suppress religious thought and expression in every possible way. (Many of the surviving victims of this policy emigrated to Western Europe.) At the same time—from the 1920's to the end of WW II in 1945—persecution of Christians who defended the Jews advanced harshly under Nazism, many of whose foes, in this matter of genocidal survival, were Christians, often martyrs to their faith by saving individual Jews, or on the official level, and especially through the proclamations of Pope Pius XI, whose actions saved hundreds of thousands of European Jews.

**Events.** Secularism, as would be expected given its growth in 19th century Europe, continued apace, with polls abundantly verifying the facts, that the majority of Europeans were neither believers in God, Christians, nor church goers, a state of affairs which provoked serious theological and liturgical rethinking throughout the western European Christian world. At the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) Pope Pius VI and the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch, Athenagoras, met to repair the historically strained relations of their two churches—a defensive move for the traditional Christian community, as it prepared itself to resist the ever rising tide of secularism. The Second Vatican Council itself went on to implement a number of the changes, in Catholic liturgy and international relations, which were directed at enriching the interface between the Church hierarchy and its worshippers: the text of the mass itself was freshly translated/edited for user clarity; permission was given for the mass to be given in vernacular languages—at the decision of the local bishop; the position of the priest, in offering up the mass, was changed, so that, with his face to the congregation—instead of to the altar—he was in direct contact with the congregation, as he carried out his sacrifice. This example is offered as an indicator, of the details into which the Catholic Church was prepared to reach, in its efforts to stem the tide of religious indifference in Europe. The Protestant Churches, faced with the same issues of secularism, may be said to have responded with particular brilliance in the abundance with which they opened to new versions of evangelical fervor, as well as in the creation of a body of theological writings—by such brilliant thinkers as the martyred pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and by daring academic thinkers like Karl Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Rudolf Bultman.

## Science

**Globalism.** The omnipresence and often culturally modifying presence of science, and of what science makes possible, is perhaps the determining characteristic of the history of Western Europe. (We will stick with European examples, here, but it should be noted that the scientific achievements of the United States—and many other developed countries—were by the twentieth century completely intertwined with those of Europe.) The internet, one of those creations of science, is one forceful reason why work in the sciences is no longer confined to any single nationality.

**Immersion.** The immersion of the twentieth century citizen, in the complex discoveries and creations of science, can for our purposes divide into two categories of experience: ‘discoveries’ and ‘technologies,’ where technologies will mean tools, and ‘discoveries’ will be new knowledges or programs of understanding.

**Technologies.** For the ancient Greeks, *techne* (art, skill) and *technologia* (technology), denoted lesser accomplishments, like the makings of the person who works with his hands. This kind of labor, readily contrasted with work of the mind (*nous*), was expected of subordinates, or at best of what at the time would have passed for engineers, who worked with the face of nature, to modify it. The work of wisdom, theory or *philosophia*, was devoted to gaining intellectual grasps of the human condition or of the broad world of the human. In the terms of our own day, which has revalued the relation of tech to wisdom and understanding, both theory and tool are treasured, but what strikes us most is the proliferation of the tool—which of course impacts us where it counts, in our adjustment to the practical uses of ‘being-in-the-world.’ As we sit plucking at our laptops, reaching out for a sip of powdered java from our plastic cup, then rise to turn off the light in the study and to toddle upstairs to our nylon pajamas and processed cotton bedsheets, we harvest the labor of many cunning ‘technologists,’ the men and woman paid for their labor, in our time, to fashion matter into useable new life-tools for a facility-loving new version of *homo sapiens*.

**‘Higher sciences,’ ‘Discoveries.’** Experiments devoted to ferreting out the human genome and tracking DNA; observations and conclusions concerning the nature of time and the relativity of time to the position of the observer; the exploration of the foundations of geometry and algebra; the parsing of the implications of quantum mechanics which, like relativity theory, requires readjustments of perspective even on the ‘common sense’ level of daily life-interpretation: all these upgraded expectations, for those who want to understand and in many instances to employ, the world we’re in, derive from great scientific pioneers, the majority European, who in the twentieth century carried their post-Renaissance history to formerly unimagined limits.