13: The Challenges of Modern Europe, 1850-1914

By 1914, Europe had reached the zenith of its power and influence in the world. Many observers hailed this era of technological advance, scientific discovery, democratic reform, and creativity in the arts as *la belle époque*, the golden age. Optimists proclaimed a coming utopia in which problems would be solved by application of the scientific method and tapping the energies of Europe's industrial and political structures. Concurrent with Europe's greatest accomplishments, modern trends toward mass politics, mass society, and mass production threatened to overwhelm classical Liberal ideas of individualism and rationality. Outsiders demanded inclusion in the political process and often used violence to liberate themselves from traditional restrictions. Ideas emphasized themes of struggle, the irrational, and glorified violence and war. Art moved from the objective portrayal of reality to subjective emotional states and abstraction. Amid the power and prosperity, many sensed an impending explosion of either revolutionary violence or war. This fear provides a contrasting pessimistic perspective on this era of plenty – the *fin de siècle*, or the end of an era.

Chapter 13 covers the following Key Concepts from the Course Description:

- **Key Concept 3.2:** The social impact of industrialization, including on class, gender, family, and consumption
- **Key Concept 3.3:** State, reform, and ideological responses to the problems of industrialization and urbanization
- **Key Concept 3.3:** Growth of mass politics and movements for political equality
- **Key Concept 3.5:** Impact of encounters with non-Europeans on culture and ideas
- **Key Concept 3.6:** Modern trends in the sciences, social sciences, ideas, and arts

Mass Society

Demographic Trends

From 1850 to 1914 industrialization and improved public health and medicine supported a rapidly expanding European population. During the period, Europe's population soared by 75% from 260 to 450 million. Much of the increase was fueled by a drop in the death rate, not a rise in the birth rate. Europe began to adopt the modern population trend of smaller family sizes with an increasing life expectancy. In addition to the rising population, more people congregated in industrial cities. By 1914, Great Britain housed more than half its population in urban areas. Cities ballooned in size, taxing infrastructure and causing a myriad of problems for governments to address. This new urban context formed the breeding ground for a culture of mass leisure and mass politics.

Medicine

The late 19th and early 20th centuries stand as the heroic age of medicine. Central to this breakthrough was the discovery of bacteria and the germ theory of disease. Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) demonstrated how microorganisms caused disease and devised a method for killing them in liquids, called pasteurization. To combat infectious diseases, Pasteur advanced the field of vaccination, developing a rabies vaccine, and helped to create the modern field of immunology. Using Pasteur's ideas, Joseph Lister (1827-1912) developed the first antiseptic treatment for wounds and for use by physicians before surgery. Surgery itself became safer with the development of anesthetics by American William T.G. Morton, who pioneered the use of ether. Improved clinical training allowed for the continuation of such discoveries. In the United States, Johns Hopkins University was incorporated in Baltimore along the German university model, with a focus on research; its medical program and associated hospital set the standard for a new scientific and clinical approach to medicine. Governments recognized the importance of public health in an urban setting, wishing to avoid infectious disease outbreaks and potential unrest among the working classes. The British government, for example, tracked the spread of disease, established public health boards, sponsored vaccinations, and introduced modem sewage and sanitation.

• THEME MUSIC
Modern societies produce a particular demographic profile. As efficiency and wealth increase, and state power penetrates more areas of life, populations tend to evolve toward smaller family size with increased life expectancy. These trends over time (CCOT) can alter the relationship between the individual and Society (IS)-for example, with family life geared toward consumption (rather than production) and high expectations for state involvement in social life (e.g., universal schooling and regulation of business).

Urban Reform and Mass Leisure

By 1870, most governments recognized the need for urban reform. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, states began to address pollution, working and living conditions, and transportation needs. Moreover, urban planners advocated for development of public parks, architectural attractions, and cultural amenities. We have already addressed how Baron von Haussmann (1809-1891) helped rebuild Paris to include grand boulevards, opera houses, theaters, shopping areas, and modem sewage and sanitation to make it the cultural center of France and a venue for consumerism. In the process; many workers and

poorer residents lost their housing to the new grandiose buildings. This Haussmannization was completed in other European major cities, notably in Vienna with its *Ringstrasse*, a famous boulevard circling the city and an attraction with its architecture, history, and shopping. New technological developments, such as electricity, provided cleaner power sources and allowed for the construction of subways and streetcars. Social reformers addressed the need for public housing for the poorer classes, and though states responded slowly, they did provide increased regulation and higher minimum standards. They also encouraged municipal and private charitable efforts. In Britain, Octavia Hill symbolized a new public spirit by championing local associations in providing social housing for the poor.

An increase in leisure time coincided with urban reform. With the recognition of unions and protective legislation by governments, workers began to see improved wages and shorter working hours. Many reformers were concerned about the lower classes using this time for excessive drinking, crime, or revolutionary agitation. Cities created organized leisure pursuits to meet this need, such as dance halls, amusement parks, and sporting contests. With their competitive ethos, team spirit, and regimentation, sports teams paralleled military discipline. Rules for soccer, tennis, cricket, and others were formalized in this period to allow for orderly play and avoid violence. Nationalists created gymnastics associations to promote discipline and physical fitness. The ideas of Racial Darwinism influenced notions of national health and spurred the physical fitness ethos. Not surprisingly, the competitive nations of Europe established the modem Olympiad, first held in 1896 in Athens.

Education and Literacy

Literacy rates increased markedly in the period 1850--1914, with some states in western Europe achieving nearly universal literacy. Governments came to view state-supported compulsory education ‘as essential t() their national interests. Educated citizens could handle the more complex demands of an industrial and increasingly service-oriented economy. Under the Liberal administration of William Gladstone, the Parliament passed the Education Act of 1870, establishing the basis for elementary education in Britain. For nations like Germany, the traditional *Gymnasia* and *Realschule* systems were expanded and extended to all classes. Literate citizens held political opinions and could read dissenting opinions; however, governments increasingly exploited nationalism and xenophobia for purposes of national unity.

Family and Childhood

In Britain, Queen Victoria (1837-1901) became the model of domestic propriety; this Victorian ideal reflected distinct gender roles for men and women. Males were to dominate the rough-and-tumble public sphere of business, politics, and war while women managed the domestic sphere. In this model, the home was viewed as a refuge from the harsh world outside and women its moral guardians. Isabella Beeton published her *Book of Household Management* (1859) to introduce women to domestic engineering, reflecting this cult of domesticity.

With the decline in birth rates, European families invested increasing resources in the upbringing of their children. Enlightenment attitudes of childhood as a distinct phase of development seeped slowly down to all classes. New attitudes were reflected in governmental legislation restricting child labor and providing for compulsory schooling. Reformers and educators created special games, toys, books, clothing, and activities for children. Reflecting the trend toward mass leisure and physical fitness, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts were both founded in the first decade of the 201h century.

Mass Politics

Historians speak of the rise of mass politics in the second half of the 191h century. Mass politics arose from the Dual Revolution-the ideal of representative government and public opinion as reflected in the French Revolution AND the development of transportation and communication technologies as a product of industrialization. Three basic features characterize mass politics in the period 1850-1914:

Mass communication – With telegraphs, telephones, radios, and cheap newspapers, governments both responded to and manipulated public opinion. Literate and educated citizens demonstrated awareness of political issues and expected governments to reflect national interests.

Democracy AND Authoritarianism – Despite democratic forms such as elections, representation, and constitutions, authoritarian structures (ruling dynasties, bureaucracies, the military) continued to play the decisive policy-making role in most states.

Increase in conflict – Public opinion also sharpened ethnic and class conflict. Outsiders, such as women, workers, and ethnic/religious minorities demanded inclusion in the political process while demagogues (those who appeal to prejudice and fear) fanned popular hatreds like anti-Semitism and extreme nationalism.

Liberal Accomplishments and Challenges

• THEME MUSIC

You may be familiar with political labels like "liberal" and "conservative," but note that the usage of these labels has mutated over time. Classical liberals (of the 19th century) were closer to present-day libertarians. With the expansion of industry and cities, most liberal parties adopted a social welfare approach around the turn of the 20th century to promote equality through state action. This shift reflects a new conception of the state's power (SP) and of how progress can be accomplished through science and technology (OS), rather than the "hands-off" view prior to 1870.

The 19th century marked the high tide of classical Liberalism. By 1880, Liberals had accomplished many of the items on their economic, social, political, and religious agenda. Symbols of the Liberal achievement include:

- Constitutional government
- Representative assemblies
- Free trade
- Expansion of suffrage (the vote)
- Guarantees of rights (though not always observed)
- Middle-class influence in government
- Spread of education and literacy
- Weakening of established churches
- Self-determination for nations (though not for all)

Most of the above reflects. the Liberal concern for individual rights, representative government, economic freedom., and the expansion of opportunity. Despite these significant outward achievements, classical Liberalism was already weakening by 1880. Mass politics mobilized citizens in large groups and allowed authoritarian leaders to manipulate public sentiment; individual and minority rights were often threatened by this trend. With an increasingly complex industrial economy, it became difficult to sustain a *laissez-faire* approach to the side effects of industrialization – urban blight, crime, poor working conditions, and boom-and-bust cycles. Already by 1880, many governments had abandoned free trade in favor of protecting domestic markets. Many Liberal parties had by 1900 abandoned the notion of pure capitalism in favor of extending social welfare benefits to those in need. Finally, rising nationalism, imperial conflicts, and the militarization of society strengthened the hand of authoritarian interests, who seemed ready to subvert Liberal ideas and institutions in times of crisis or emergency. Next, we'll look at how mass politics played out in several nations.

France and the Tensions of the Third Republic

Ideological conflicts have marked French politics since 1789, and the Third Republic (1870-1940) proved no exception. You may recall the poor start to the Third Republic – class conflict followed the end of the Second Empire and loss in the Franco-Prussian War. Moderate republicans crushed the revolutionary government of the Paris Commune and either shot or exiled 30,000 of its participants. By 1878 and after exploiting divisions within the royalist camp, moderates had succeeded in establishing the basis for a parliamentary democracy. Nonetheless, important groups, like the Catholic Church and monarchists, never reconciled themselves to the existence of republican government, which they associated with the worst excesses of the French Revolution.

The Dreyfus Affair, a highly publicized scandal, highlighted the divisions within the Third Republic. In 1894, a French military court found Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer, guilty of treason on thin evidence. Despite indications Dreyfus was innocent and was the victim of anti-Semitism, he was sent to Devil's Island, and the army refused to reopen the case. Republicans and even foreign governments rallied to Dreyfus's cause, which became the legal case of its day. French author Émile Zola (1840-1902) condemned authoritarian institutions in his pamphlet *J'Accuse* ("I Accuse") and made the issue a test of republican strength in France. Eventually the government pardoned Dreyfus, but the fallout grew. Republicans conducted an anticlerical campaign culminating in the complete separation of church and state in 1905 and the secularization of education by the state.

Parliamentary Democracy in Britain

Britain's Victorian Age represented prosperity, imperial greatness, and evolution toward genuine parliamentary democracy. Unlike the continent, reform in Britain was driven by the competing visions of two mass political parties-the Conservatives and the Liberals-and was implemented locally rather than by a centralized bureaucracy. Parliament passed two further reform bills in 1867 and 1884, expanding the vote to almost all adult males. The brilliant though occasionally arrogant William Gladstone (1809-1898) led the Liberal reform effort, geared toward expanding opportunity and lifting religious and political restrictions on citizens. Under Gladstone's first prime ministry, the Parliament enacted universal schooling, the secret ballot, and legalized unions; introduced civil service exams; and lifted religious requirements for universities. Conservatives under Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) pursued a philosophy of protecting workers from the worst effects of industrialization, passing acts regulating public housing and sanitation.

By 1900, the Liberal party had abandoned its laissez-faire economic approach, and in an effort to combat

support for the new Labour Party (see below) moved toward the development of a social welfare state. Between 1906 and 1916, the Liberal Party initiated a wide-ranging system of sickness, accident, old-age, and unemployment insurance (National Insurance Act-1911). To conciliate labor, restrictions on strikes and unions were lifted. To pay for these programs, the Parliament passed progressive income and inheritance taxes. When the House of Lords attempted to block the legislation, its veto power was removed with the Parliament Act of 1911. Despite these efforts, workers continued to agitate. for improved working conditions, initiating a wave of strikes in 1911 and 1912. Moreover, women's groups, called suffragettes (see below), pushed for the vote, using militant tactics to gain publicity for their cause and provoking embarrassing conflicts with police and government. Britain's most difficult issue, however, continued to be the situation in Ireland. Though Gladstone had disestablished the Anglican Church in Ireland and assisted tenant farmers there, the Catholic Irish demanded home rule. Home Rule split the Liberal Party and was not granted until 1914, but implementation was delayed until 1922 because of the outbreak of the First World War. Though an age of greatness, the Victorian Age also saw Germany and the United States surpass Britain in industrial production and the increased tensions of mass parliamentary democracy.

Germany's Growing Pains

After its unification, German industrial, political, and military power soared. However, this rapid development placed great strain!; on an authoritarian political system struggling to incorporate democratic principles. One figure dominated German imperial politics until 1890 – Chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815-1890). Bismarck successfully manipulated democratic politics and the party system in the Reichstag to enact his policies. First, Bismarck allied himself with the Liberal Party, who supported his attack on the Catholic Church in Germany. The *Kulturkampf* (struggle for culture) arose from the complex situation surrounding Italian unification. Pope Pius IX (r. 1846-1878), who lost the Papal States in 1870, condemned modern ideas such as religious toleration, nationalism, and Liberalism, in his *Syllabus of Errors* (1864), and in 1870 called the First Vatican Council to enunciate the doctrine of papal infallibility (the acceptance of papal decrees on doctrine without question). In response, Bismarck pushed laws through the Reichstag restricting the powers of the clergy, expelled the Jesuits, and jailed a number of bishops. When the campaign proved unsuccessful, and after Pius died in 1878, Bismarck abandoned it and formed an alliance with the Catholic Center Party.

• EXAMPLE BASE

This section on mass politics offers numerous specific examples. As you read over each nation, focus on how it illustrates the features and tensions that define mass politics. Consider similarities between states and unique features within each nation. Also, these conflicts will influence decision-making and strategic concerns as each nation enters the First World War (1914).

Bismarck then moved to restrict the power of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Though Marxist in theory, the SPD; in fact; operated as a moderate socialist party interested in obtaining benefits for the working class through the exercise of political power. Using several assassination attempts against Kaiser William I (r. 1861-1888) as pretext, Bismarck won approval for several Anti - Socialist Laws, which restricted the ability of the SPD to meet and publish its newspaper. To win over workers, Bismarck initiated a welfare program (what he termed "state socialism"), the first in Europe, of old age, accident, unemployment, and health benefits. Despite these efforts, support for the SPD continued to grow. To appease extreme nationalists like the Pan~German League and industrialists, Bismarck moved further away from Liberalism in the 1880s with protective tariffs and the pursuit of colonies in Africa. When the young, erratic, and ambitious Kaiser William II (r. 1888-1918) ascended to the throne after his father's sudden death, he dismissed Bismarck and embarked on a more conciliatory policy toward the SPD at home and a more aggressive foreign policy abroad. With immense potential power, emerging conflicts at home, and an insecure ruler, Germany was poised for entrance into the First World War.

Austria-Hungary: Ethnic Tensions

Austria-Hungary continued to experience ethnic tensions after the creation of-the Dual Monarchy in 1867. Within Hungary, large landholders continued to dominate, and the Magyars imposed their language and culture on the many Slavic minorities in their half of the empire. To manage the political situation in Austria, the government expanded voting rights and tried to win over the Czechs, Slovaks, and Poles by including them in the Imperial Parliament (Reichsrat) and appealing to their loyalty toward the Habsburg emperor. German nationalists resented these policies, and the resulting tensions often led to the breakdown of parliamentary function. Anti-Semitism emerged as a political force in Austrian politics with the rise of the Christian Social Party. From 1897 to 1910 (when Hitler lived in the city), Karl Lueger (1844-1910) served as mayor of Vienna and pursued policies of restriction and exclusion against Jews. It seemed that on the eve of the First World War, the Habsburg Empire was fracturing along nationalist and ethnic lines.

Other Areas and Developments

As noted in the previous chapter, Italy faced a rocky road after unification. Liberal parties in the parliament engaged in the suspect practice of *trasformismo*, whereby political leaders attempted to keep out extremist nationalists on the right and socialists on the left by use of bribery and personal alliances. As a result, Italy did not develop political parties around consistent ideas or programs but along shifting personal relationships. To illustrate, the leader most associated with the practice of *trasformismo*, Giovanni Giolitti, served as prime minister five different times between 1892 and 1922. Economically, northern Italy industrialized while the south remained mired in poverty and illiteracy. Irrational anti-parliamentary ideologies and an active anarchist movement also plagued Italian political life.

Spain lingered on the periphery of European events in 19th century. Despite its constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, Spain continued to be dominated by conservative interests, such as large landowners and the Catholic Church. Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War (1898) led to a loss of its empire and calls for social reform, urged by a group of intellectuals known as the Generation of 1898. Like other less-developed nations, Spain encountered anti-state violence. In 1909, anarchists in Barcelona resisted government efforts to call up army reserves, leading to an armed clash. Because of its preoccupation with internal divisions, Spain did not enter either of the world wars in the 20th century.

Parliamentary democracy had taken root in most European nations by 1914. All but Romania and Hungary allowed universal male suffrage prior to the First World War. Political parties developed modern techniques of electioneering, communication, and institutional organization. In short, political life in many ways was more institutionalized and democratic than it had ever been. However, many still felt excluded from the political process and agitated for change, often straining the new foundations of democratic government.

Outsiders in Mass Politics

Workers and Socialist Variants

By the late 19th century, workers leveraged their growing numbers into political influence. Early unions faced the difficulties of government opposition and small numbers. By the 1870s and 1880s, most states had recognized the rights of unions to bargain collectively for better wages and working conditions. Many trade unions supported such a "bread-and-butter" approach. Workers suffered from the boom-and-bust cycles of the period 1873-1896 and used strikes to. achieve their demands. Strikes became more violent and persistent in many nations on the eve of the First World War.

With the expansion of suffrage, the working classes also created political movements to agitate for change. One of the more successful efforts occurred in Germany with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), founded in the 1870s by moderate socialists. Though officially adhering to the Marxist doctrine of class warfare, the SPD in reality functioned as a mass-based political party dedicated to winning seats in the German Reichstag. Despite Bismarck's efforts to eliminate the party, the SPD grew into the largest party in the Reichstag by 1912. Other socialist parties were founded in France, Italy, and Russia in the late 19th century. To organize for the coming socialist revolution, the leaders of these parties formed the Second International in 1889, which eventually broke up amidst the nationalism unleashed by the First World War. British labor leaders and intellectuals, such as H.G. Wells (1866-1946) and George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), advanced a more moderate, or Fabian, socialist movement. In 1900, Scottish worker James Kier Hardie (1856-1915) helped organize the movement into the Labour Party, which won 29 seats in 1906 and eventually became Britain's second political party.

By 1900, it was clear to many socialists that the Marxist prediction of impending revolution was a way off. In addition, many believed that participation in democratic processes might better secure workers' rights than violent means. These insights led to the development of Revisionist socialism, or the brand of socialism represented by most of the western and central European socialist parties. In Germany, the primary voice of this evolutionary pa~ was Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), and in France, Jean Jaures (1859-1914). Militant socialists condemned this "sell-out" to capitalism and worked to expel them from the International.

In less-developed nations where workers were smaller in numbers, revolutionary movements focused more on violent tactics or mass political agitation. French workers boasted a strong tradition of militant action stemming from the French revolution. Influenced by the ideas of French philosopher Georges Sorel (1847-1922), anarcho-syndicalists worked to create a single industrial union aimed at shutting down the nation through the General Strike, an act that gained the force of mythological proportions. Pure anarchism arose out of the Russian experience-no democratic tradition or social institutions. Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) opposed all governmental systems as a corruption of human freedom and a tool of the privileged classes. Anarchists believed that assassination (the Act) would sever the head (the leader) from the body (the state), thus opening the way for voluntary and mutual associations of free individuals. Despite thousands of assassinations across Russia and of

other European leaders, anarchism seemed only to deepen government repression in the face of such terrorism.

The New Woman and Feminism

During this period, feminists articulated a clear agenda for change and achieved some significant economic and political gains. Economic developments, during the Second Industrial Revolution allowed women to establish a measure of autonomy. White-collar jobs in new economic sectors-telephone operators, clerks,. nurses, teachers-provided many women with income and better working conditions. However, many working-class women found themselves strapped with the dual responsibility of raising children at home while aiding the family income through the assembly of simple items, known as "sweating." The measure of autonomy from these jobs led many women, particularly those in the middle -class, to demand economic and legal reforms.

The first area women targeted for reform was the legal system. In some western nations between 1850 and 1914, women won the right to control property, divorce, and gain custody of their children. Most states prohibited the publication and distribution of information regarding birth control. Annie Besant of Britain (1847-1933) and Margaret Sanger of the United States (1879-1966) both championed the cause of birth control in the face of obscenity laws, believing female control of reproduction a vital element of the feminist program. Reflecting the double standard regarding sex, the British Parliament in the 1860s passed the Contagious Diseases Acts, which required prostitutes to submit to tests for venereal disease and be confined to prison hospitals if found to be infected. Due to the unyielding efforts of reformer Josephine Butler (1828-1906), Parliament repealed the laws in 1886.

Some women viewed the vote as the logical culmination of the advance towards women's equality. Suffragettes, as they were called, established a transatlantic movement to push for the right to vote. These suffragettes were led in Britain by the Pankhurst family – Emmeline (18581928) and her daughters Christabel and Sylvia (1882-1960). The Pankhursts' organization, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), participated in militant actions to gain the vote: throwing eggs at public officials, arson, chaining themselves to public buildings, engaging in hunger strikes, and in the case of Emily Davison, throwing herself in front of the king's horse at a racing event. Government officials even attempted to force-feed the jailed protestors. Eventually, many nations in western arid northern Europe granted women the vote immediately after the First World War, a recognition of their contributions to that conflict.

The independent figures highlighted above earned the designation of New Women. Though many if not most women accepted as natural the dependent and domestic role prescribed by tradition, the New Women articulated and lived an autonomous existence. They were not confined to an explicitly feminist agenda. Italian education reformer Maria Montessori (1870-1952) pioneered a child-centered elementary curriculum. Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) and others founded the modern nursing profession. British-born Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910) became the first woman in the United States to earn an M.D. degree and established a hospital for the poor in 1857. Literature also reflected themes of independent women. In Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House*, his character Nora Helmer eventually leaves her traditional marriage and children to establish her own personhood; the play provoked controversy for its scathing critique of the sexual double standard inherit in the Victorian ideal.

Jews, Anti-Semitism, and Zionism

• THEME MUSIC

Another expression for those addressed in this section on political outsiders is the Other (IS). Otherness Is created by cultures as they establish values and norms regarding behavior. For' example, a male-dominated culture defines women in reference and opposition to masculine traits of dominance, rationality, and leadership. Of course, similar strategies can be used for any minority groups to normalize their exclusion from decision-making and equality-for example, Jews, unskilled laborers, or ethnic minorities.

With the Enlightenment and French Revolution, many governments liberated Jews from their segregated existence in ghettoes and from legal restrictions. Throughout the 19th century, this emancipation led to the assimilation of Jews into business, medicine, law, and academia. Prominent Jewish intellectuals., such as Marx, Freud, and Einstein, not only contributed significantly to developments in the period but also seemed to provoke a backlash of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism was nothing new to Europe and traditionally was based on religious discrimination. In the late 19th century, anti-Semitism took on a new racial tone, indirectly influenced by Charles Darwin's ideas of struggle among species. Mass politics fed the creation of popular anti-Semitic political movements, especially strong in central Europe. In response to anti-Semitism, some prominent Jews called for the creation of a Jewish homeland. Appalled by the Dreyfus Affair in France, Austrian journalist Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) founded Zionism in the 1890s, which resulted in the immigration of thousands of Jews to Palestine, then controlled by the Ottoman Empire. Some nations, such as Russian, organized persecutions against Jews, called pogroms, to divert popular energies away from potential anti-state activities. Despite the assimilation of millions of Jews into European cultural and economic life, they remained a vulnerable religious and ethnic minority.

It is not difficult to see the outlines of the future Holocaust already taking shape in the 19th century.

Modern Ideas

As an intellectual framework, modernism was born in the period 1850-1914. In philosophy, the sciences, and the social sciences, thinkers fulfilled the Enlightenment project of using reason to discover the laws of nature in various fields. However, many cherished Enlightenment notions were called into question by the emerging trends of irrationality, subjectivity, randomness, and struggle.

New Ideas in Science

Darwinian Evolution

Theories of evolution predated the 19th century. Previous versions explained evolution by the inheritance of acquired characteristics. After studying the diversity of finches on the Galapagos Islands (off the coast of Ecuador), Charles Darwin (1809-1882) concluded that the species he observed descended from a common ancestor. Knowing his theory would be controversial, Darwin Waited 25 years to work out the details before publishing *On the Origin of Species (*1859), one of the most influential scientific works ever written. Darwin borrowed from Malthus's population theories to argue that species are locked in a constant struggle for resources and survival. Through random variations (what we would call mutations, but Darwin did not understand the mechanism that produced them), some organisms gained a survival advantage in a local environment. If an evolutionary change was adaptive, the mutation would spread within a species population through reproduction, eventually producing new species. What Darwin called natural selection, and others later termed "survival of the fittest," suggested that biological development occurred randomly, not through design or purpose. All of nature seemed in chaotic flux, with no role for the permanent and the good, as defined in theological terms.

Darwin's theory caused an immediate uproar and was condemned by religious figures, particularly those committed to biblical literalism. Not only did Darwin reject the hand of God in creation, his theory suggested that the earth was millions, not thousands, of years in age. Geological developments in the 19th century lent credence to Darwin's rejection of a young earth. Many scientists and intellectuals, such as T.H. Huxley (1825-9184), known as Darwin's Bulldog,. rushed to Darwin's defense. Austrian monk Gregor Mendel (1822-1884) later provided additional support for natural selection by articulating the gene theory of reproduction. With The Descent of Man (1871), Darwin applied his theory to the evolution of the human race from earlier primate species, once again undermining humanity's special place in the universe. Though some counseled dialogue between religion and science, partisans on both sides drew the cultural lines sharply between "atheistic science" and "superstitious religion."

The New Physics

Newtonian physics ruled science for two centuries. In addition to providing accurate explanations of natural phenomena, Newtonian mechanics offered an appealing vision of the cosmos as orderly and predictable. Quantum mechanics and relativity theory undermined this confidence. Accepted theory held that the atom was the simplest particle and indestructible, the fundamental building block of reality. Accumulating scientific evidence proved this atomic theory incorrect. Marie Curie (1867-1934) demonstrated how atoms emitted radioactive energy as they disintegrated" British scientists J,J. Thomson and Ernest Rutherford elaborated a more complex view of the atom as made up mostly of empty space and comprising subatomic particles. Such discoveries provided practical applications, as with William Rontgen's (1845-1923) discovery of the X-ray and its ability to see within the human body.

German physicist Max Planck (1858-1947) in 1900 articulated the quantum theory. According to Planck, particles did not emit or absorb energy in constant streams but in packets of energy. Further, experiments demonstrated how light acted sometimes as a particle and sometimes as a wave, depending on the circumstances of observation. More jarring to the Newtonian view, it was demonstrated that the behavior of many particles could only be expressed by probability, not with objective certainty.

It took the great physicist Albert Einstein (1879-1955) to transform our co~oI1sense assumptions regarding time and space. Through a series of scholarly articles, Einstein argued that absolute time and space do not exist, but rather are relative to the observer and their status of motion. for example, Einstein showed how for objects that traveled at or near the speed of light, time slows down relative to a stationary observer. To our three-dimensional universe, Einstein's relativity theory thus added another dimension-space-time. In the presence of a massive object, such as the sun, space and time both curve, as was confirmed from observations of a solar eclipse in 1919. In addition, Einstein expressed how matter and energy were interconvertible in the famous formula, $e = mc^2$. This discovery suggested how the destruction of an atom might potentially liberate massive amounts of energy and/or destruction.

Advance of the Social Sciences

As European civilization became more complex, the social sciences offered further explanation for human

behavior. Many of the social sciences were born during the Enlightenment but reached their modem expression during this period. Psychology, political science, anthropology, criminology, and sociology each demonstrated how human behavior resulted from impersonal economic, political, and social forces. And many of these theories radically altered Europeans' conception of human nature.

Freudian Psychology and the Irrational

Enlightenment *philosophes* glorified human reason. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), in contrast, revealed the instinctual and unconscious nature of human behavior. Based on his systematic clinical studies, Freud developed his theory and practice of psychoanalysis, wherein the therapist attempted to unlock the hidden desires, fears, and memories of the patient that had caused his mental illness: Freud divided the psyche into the id (the pleasure principle), the ego (reason), and superego (conscience), and claimed that unresolved conflicts among these parts created neuroses. Unpleasant or painful memories might be buried in the subconscious, though such memories could be explored through hypnosis and analysis of the patient's dreams, a conclusion articulated in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). Perhaps most controversi1 1y, Freud claimed that sexual feelings occurred early in life, with children developing through a series of stages, each marked by a conflict, such as the hidden desire to replace the parent of the same sex in the eyes of the parent of opposite sex (the Oedipal or Electra complex). Freud's ideas gained increasing currency during the 20th century and added a new psychological vocabulary to everyday experiences.

• SKILL SET

The period 1850-1914 represents one of most significant in the course, as you can confirm by noting KC 3.6. As you consider the methods and ideas of modernism, you may want to formulate an argument for how and why this era represents a turning point (PER) in the history of Europe and Intellectual life.

Sociology

Freud's work showed that human action often resulted from factors other than human choice. His work found support with further discoveries. Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936) famously demonstrated how he could condition dogs to salivate automatically at a particular signal, and suggested that human behavior could also be controlled through appropriate stimuli. Criminologists gathered statistics and performed studies to show that criminal behavior might result from genetic inheritance rather than deliberate choice, a conclusion subversive to the cherished notion of free will. Sociologists such as Max Weber (1864-1920) and Émile Durkheim explored the influences of impersonal bureaucratic structures and crowd mentalities on the individual. In Weber's study, he determined that only a charismatic individual could overcome the inertia of large institutions.

Social scientists borrowed the methods and ideas of science. Many recognized the power of Darwinian theory to explain cultural and historical evolution. British sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) applied Darwin's ideas to society with Social Darwinism. Spencer argued that inequalities and divisions with classes or races resulted from the same process of natural selection when applied to human affairs. Public aid and charity for the destitute would only weaken the genetic pool and cause more suffering in the long run; it was Spencer who coined the phrase "survival of the fittest." Nationalists distorted Darwinian science to advance their ideas of racial inferiority, producing support for European imperialism of Africa and Asia. Francis Galton, a half-cousin of Darwin's, developed the pseudoscience of race, known as eugenics, in an attempt to better the human race through selective breeding. In the context of competitive nation-states, Darwin's ideas eventually found their way into justifications for war as a natural mechanism to separate the fit from the unfit.

Philosophy: A Flight to the Irrational

Philosophy had long upheld reason, but in the late 19th century, the most influential philosophers showed the power of irrationality. French thinker Henri Bergson (1859-194-1) introduced his theory of vitalism, which held that nature could not be divided into analyzable units or discrete parts, as premised in the scientific method. According to Bergson, irreducible vital forces pervaded the natural world, suggesting that human behavior was driven by the same forces and therefore not capable of being reduced to any set of explanatory factors.

Beginning with the provocative assertion "God is dead," German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) embraced the chaos and flux inherent in nature. Ideas did not actually represent reality, which was inaccessible to human reason. Human systems of thought and morality represented a "will to power" and constituted tools for the individual to overcome himself. Nietzsche also recognized that human nature comprised both the rational and the instinctual. Christianity twisted human nature by teaching people to suppress their natural tendencies toward domination and self-assertion. Morality, for Nietzsche, was personal and beyond common conceptions of good and evil. Ultimately, Nietzsche called on the best Europeans – not the "herdlike masses" – to create a new, more honest system of values and to make of their lives a "work of art."

Religion: The Challenge of Modernism

Modern ideas produced a crisis for Protestant and Catholic Christianity. As is clear from the above descriptions, scientific and philosophical works stressed secular if not openly anti-Christian approaches to knowledge. Even within religious communities, some scholars attempted to update religious beliefs to reflect modern techniques' of understanding. French historian Ernst Renan (1823~1892) in his Life of Jesus explained the. origins of Christianity as if Jesus were merely human and a result of historical, not providential, forces. Being more committed than Catholics to the Bible as the source of authority, Protestants found it difficult to shield members from such ideas. As a result, Protestant denominations began to split between modernists and fundamentalists, as church attendance declined or merely expressed adherence. to customs.

The long and conservative pontificate of Pope Pius IX (r. 1846--1878) represented the high tide of the Catholic Church's negative reaction against modernism and the perceived new relativism in values. His successor, Leo XIII (r. 1878-1903), attempted to tone down anti-modern attacks and advance the cause of social justice. Leo ended the prohibition of Catholics' participation in Italian politics and formulated a social doctrine that combined a belief in private property with a concern for poverty and inequality. In the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* ("of modern things"), Leo suggested that much in socialism reflected Christian teachings, but he firmly rejected Marxist ideology as materialist and antireligious. Perhaps with the Galileo incident firmly in mind, the church refrained from issuing any condemnations of Darwinian theory, adopting a wait-and-see attitude. Catholic Church attendance remained fairly stable through the period, but the Church's full reconciliation with modern trends would not occur until the second half of the 20th century.

The Avant-Garde in the Arts

A diversity of cutting-edge artistic movements marked the period 1850-1914. Artists placed a premium on experimentation and self-expression within the media of paint, architecture, print, and music. As you review below, keep in mind the dominant themes of industrialization, nationalism, mass politics, and imperialism.

> **• EXAMPLE BASE**
>
> For Contextuallzatlon (CTX) practice, find some of the works of art mentioned here and analyze them in more detail, attempting to connect the subject matter and style to other developments in the 1850-1914 era.

Painting: Beyond Representation

Photography altered the purpose of the artist. By 1860, the technology of picture-taking was perfected, and photography emerged as both an artistic medium and a means of photojournalism. Danish-American Jacob Riis (1849-1914) used his camera to document the underworld of New York City's slums and back alleys in his book *How the Other Half Lives*. While photography provided new tools to journalists, it seemed to undermine a traditional purpose of painting – to represent life and nature – as the camera could accomplish this more directly.

Impressionism

The first major artistic trend following the invention of photography was Impressionism. A self-named movement, Impressionism attempted to capture how the eye really sees, with off-center positioning, visible brushstrokes, fleeting glimpses of street scenes, and exploration of light and shadow. Claude Monet (1840-1926) named the French-centered movement and became famous for his depictions of water lilies, haystacks, and the Notre Dame Cathedral at different times of day or year. For depictions of the Impressionist interest in middle-class scenes of urban life and its interest in glimpses of reality, see Renoir's (1841-1919) *Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette* or *Luncheon of the Boating Party*. In Edgar Degas's (1834-1917) paintings of ballet studios, we appreciate the Impressionist experimentation with perspective and off-centered framing. Demonstrating the international flavor of the movement, American Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) exhibited her works of domestic scenes, such as a mother bathing her child, with her European compatriots in Impressionism.

Postimpressionism

Postimpressionists moved away from the Impressionist fascination with light and shadow. More interested in form and structure, major postimpressionist painters included Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890), Paul Cezanne (1839-1906), Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), and Georges Seurat (1859-1891). Though Van Gogh sold only one painting in his lifetime, his paintings today garner tens of millions of dollars at auction. Expressing his inner psychological torment, Van Gogh painted with swirling brushstrokes and, showing the influence of Japanese woodblock prints, distorted perspective and a strong palette of yellows. Van Gogh's unique style is best seen in *Starry Night* and the *Night Cafe*. Van Gogh's suicide in 1890 seemed to capture the archetype of the tortured artist. Cezanne incorporated a geometric approach in his paintings and with his still lifes, how depth and the passage of time might be captured if we look at an object with a binocular vision, first with one eye and then the

other. Frustrated by what he considered the overly artificial nature of European painting, Paul Gauguin traveled to Tahiti and developed a primitive style of bulky figures and simple lines reminiscent of the artistic styles of the Pacific. Georges Seurat created a related movement named pointillism, after the small dots of color, which when combined, formed a clear picture of shadow and light. Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* provides a view of the individualistic leisure of the modem city.

Expressionism

Near the tur of the century, artistic experimentation accelerated. A group of French painters known as the Fauves, or "wild beasts," emphasized strong fields of color and simple lines to convey expression over detail. When Henri Matisse (1869-1954) received criticism for his work *Green Stripe*, a portrait of his wife with a green stripe down the middle of her face, he replied, "I have not made a woman, I have painted a painting." Like the later Expressionists, Matisse demonstrated that the key task of the artist was not to represent nature but to convey an emotional stance. To appreciate the intensity of expressionist distortion and use of color to capture the angst and alienation of modem Europe, one must view Norwegian Edvard Munch's (1863-1944) *The Scream*, in which a ghostly figure's silent scream wafts into an ominous red sky. Painting gradually moved toward abstraction, as with the Russian Wassily Kandinsky's (1866-1944) canvases exploding with color, designed to convey musical compositions in visual form-a genre known as abstract expressionism.

Cubism and Futurism

Prior to the First World War, the movements of Cubism and futurism most directly show the influence of technology on artistic representation. Founded by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Cubism broke apart scenes into analyzable parts and reassembled them in unique ways to provide the viewer with simultaneous multiple perspectives. In this way, Cubists employed the revolutionary insights of Einstein's theory of relativity to art. One of the first paintings in the Cubist style was Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), which stirred controversy for its unconventional depiction of female beauty by portraying a group of prostitutes with African and Oceanic masks for faces. Picasso painted in many styles, creating one of the most prolific and influential collection of works by any artist. The Italian futurists F.T. Marinetti and Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916) glorified speed and technology in art as a means to achieve political change. Not content simply with artistic creation, the futurists published manifestoes calling for the abolition of traditional aesthetics (such as nudes, religion, and historical paintings) in favor of automobiles, airplanes, and industrial plants, though many of Boccioni's works, like *Dynamism of a Cyclist*, portray motion as their subject. Futurism fizzled out in the technological nightmare that was World War I.

Modern Architecture

Modem buildings express the ideal that "form follows function." Instead of employing ornamentation or classical motifs, modem architects allow the functional requirements of a building to determine its shape and logic. The first modem architects were American and used the new building materials of concrete, reinforced steel, and glass. Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) created the first skyscrapers and designed buildings with simple, clean lines and few decorative elements. Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) strove to create a new aesthetic for single-family homes, replacing "Victorian monstrosities" with horizontal lines and earth tones, in his Prairie Style homes. After the First World War, modernism emerged as the dominant architectural style.

Literary Trends

Like art, literature reflected the larger social and intellectual context of the time. Darwin's ideas influenced the literary movement of Naturalism. French author Emile Zola (1840-1902) wrote a series of novels portraying the destructive influence of heredity on the lives of his characters, as they seemed unable to choose their actions freely. Zola's frank depiction of sex, alcoholism, and violence brought him condemnation from traditionalists. This period also represents the great age of Russian literary genius, best shown in the works of Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) and Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881), both of whom explored the themes of suffering and spirituality. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* presents the reader with a tapestry of events and characters designed to show how social and economic forces' override the designs of great men. In *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky raised the moral dilemma of whether good ends justify evil acts. Dostoevsky's lifelong theme of the individual struggling to find meaning in a world of suffering and alienation helped lay the foundations for existential philosophy in the 20th century.

Music: Romanticism and Nationalism

Romanticism did not die in music after 1848. Many composers worked to establish national styles and continued to explore national traditions. The most influential of these figures was the German Richard Wagner (1813-1883), who used his music to express a vision of a revolutionary and nationalist Germany. Wagner envisioned music as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total work of art, combining all artistic genres and capable of transforming national culture. Wagner synthesized music

and drama through the use of leitmotifs – musical themes that coincided with particular characters or plot lines. *The Ring Cycle*, a series of four operas spanning 16 hours, represents the culmination of Wagner's grandiose vision and is one of the most ambitious pieces of music ever written. Russian Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) also explored national themes in his *Rite of Spring*. When the ballet was first performed in 1913 in Paris, its theme of pagan fertility rituals, dissonant primitive music, and unorthodox dance maneuvers caused a riot in the theater.

Postscript – The Road to World War I

The riot following the performance of *Rite of Spring* demonstrates the divided legacy of modernism. On one hand, advances in industry, technology, ideas, and the arts demonstrate the intense dynamism of modern European civilization. On the other hand, the themes of revolutionary liberation, racial and national struggle, and the glorification of the irrational reveal the destructive potential of Europe's modern achievements. These two themes would merge tragically in the First World War.