Ap euro identifications

Chapter 16: The birth of modern European thought

Section I. *Identify* and state the *Historical Significance* of the following:

1. August Comte **(positivism)**
2. Charles Darwin, Jean Baptiste Lamarck, Charles Lyell, Alfred Russell Wallace
3. Friedrich Nietzche
4. Sigmund Freud
5. Max Weber
6. Count Arthur de Gobineau
7. Houston Stewart Chamberlain
8. Theodor Herzl
9. Virginia Woolf

Section II. *Define* and state the *General Significance* of the following:

1. Natural selection
2. Racism

Section III: *Describe* and state the *Historical Significance* of the following:

1. Social Darwinism
2. Intellectual skepticism
3. Kulturkampf
4. Papal infallibility
5. Realist literature
6. Modernist literature
7. Impressionism
8. Post-impressionism
9. Cubism
10. Id, ego, superego (psychoanalysis)
11. The Dreyfus Affair
12. Zionism
13. Anti-feminism

***TIMELINES DUE THE SAME DAY***

**CHAPTER 16 – THE BIRTH OF MODERN EUROPEAN THOUGHT**

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter surveys the intellectual developments of the late nineteenth century, a period in which the European mind took on many of the characteristics that mark it today. Its changes arose from earlier patterns of thought. The Enlightenment provided a heritage of rationalism, toleration, cosmopolitanism and respect for science. Romanticism placed a high value on the feelings, imagination, national identity, and the experience of the artist. By 1900, thinkers had drawn new conclusions for traditional problems. Christianity underwent the strongest attack in its history. Scientists made major changes in the Newtonian picture of the physical world. Darwin and Freud challenged the special place the West had assigned to humankind. A new aggressive nationalism replaced the humanitarian ideals of liberalism and socialism. Though more daring than ever, Europe’s intellectuals were less certain and less optimistic.

The social context of intellectual life changed during this period. For the first time, Europe had a mass reading public, with literacy improved by proliferation of state-financed education. The expanding literate population generated a vast explosion of printed matter including the first cheap mass circulation newspapers.

In science, the experts of 1850, as in Newton’s day, regarded the physical world as rational, mechanical, and dependable. Their views, however, were to undergo great challenges. A number of scientists, the most famous of which is Charles Darwin, contributed to the creation of an evolutionary theory of biological change. Because of its great prestige, science became the model for work in other fields. The British philosopher Herbert Spencer and others applied, or more accurately misapplied, the idea of natural selection to human social and cultural developments. In literature, the movement of realism owed much to science’s emphasis on observation and experiment.

The progress of science was only one of the intellectual developments that undermined Christianity. Historical scholarship questioned the veracity of the Bible. Philosophers (especially Nietzsche) cast doubt on the morality of Christianity. The church also came under attack from the secular state, primarily because of government’s expanding role in education. In spite of its enemies, however, Christianity experienced a religious revival. Most striking was the resilience of the papacy led by Pius IX, who declared the doctrine of papal infallibility when speaking on matters of faith, and Leo III, who addressed the great social issues of the day, condemning socialism but urging improvements in the condition of labor.

European intellectual affairs in general underwent a fundamental reassessment between 1875 and 1914, a period that was the crucible of contemporary thought. New concepts and technology challenged the basic presuppositions of science, rationalism, liberalism, and bourgeois morality. The discovery of X-rays in 1895 and the exploration of radioactivity at the same time destroyed the comfortable world of “complete” nineteenth-century physics. Max Planck, Albert Einstein, and Werner Heisenberg followed with revolutionary theories that threw into doubt theories earlier deemed unquestionable. Writers such as Emile Zola, Gustave Flaubert, Henrik Ibsen, and

G. B. Shaw rejected Romantic idealism of nature, the poor, love, and polite society. The realists also undermined belief in human freedom, portraying it as subject to great physical or historical forces of determinism. The new movement, Modernism, was deeply concerned with social issues, and touched all of the arts. The Bloomsbury group challenged the values of the Victorian Era. Modern art, including impressionism, post-impressionism, and cubism, sharply reconceptualized life in the modern era.

In philosophy, the adequacy of reason itself was being questioned. Nietzsche exemplified this new attitude. In psychology, Sigmund Freud instituted a revolution. His theory of psychoanalysis has been the single most important idea whereby twentieth-century men and women have come to understand themselves and their civilization. In political theory, major thinkers (such as LeBon, Durkheim, and Weber) questioned the rational assumptions of liberalism. They each emphasized the role of collective groups in politics rather than the individual.

In wider terms, an aggressive nationalism spread in the late nineteenth century, becoming, for the first time, a mass movement. This aggressive nationalism was often fueled by racial theories that would be used to justify the imperialism that ensued. The racial theories of Herbert Spencer and Count Arthur de Gobineau allowed Europeans to believe that they were somehow inherently superior to other peoples and cultures in the world. Such racial thinking fostered anti-Semitism and discrimination against other ethnic groups. Theodor Herzl’s Zionist movement, which called for the establishment of a Jewish state, can be viewed as a reaction to the growing pressures on Jews experienced during the Dreyfus affair in France.

The chapter concludes with a section on late-century antifeminism and the revival of feminist thought and action that continued to grow during the twentieth century.

OUTLINE

I. The New Reading Public

A. Advances in Primary Education

B. Reading Material for the Mass Audience

II. Science at Midcentury

A. Comte, Positivism, and the Prestige of Science

B. New Theories of Evolution: Lamark, Lyell, Darwin, Wallace

C. Science and Ethics: Social Darwinism

III. Christianity and the Church Under Siege

1. Intellectual Skepticism
2. Conflict Between Church and State
3. Areas of Religious Revival
4. The Roman Catholic Church and the Modern World
5. Islam and Late-Nineteenth-Century European Thought

IV. Toward a Twentieth-Century Frame of Mind

A. Science: The Revolution in Physics

B. Literature: Realism and Naturalism

C. Modernism in Literature

D. The Coming of Modern Art

E. Friedrich Nietzsche and the Revolt against Reason

F. The Birth of Psychoanalysis

G. Retreat from Rationalism in Politics

H. Racism

I. Anti-Semitism and the Birth of Zionism

V. Women and Modern Thought

A. Antifeminism in Late-Century Thought

B. New Directions in Feminism

VI. In Perspective

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. What effect did state-financed education have on literacy in late-nineteenth-century Europe?
2. What role did science play in the second half of the nineteenth century?
3. What challenges did European Christianity face in the late nineteenth century?
4. How did developments in art, psychology, and science reflect a profound shift in Western thought?
5. How did women challenge gender stereotypes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why was science dominant in the second half of the nineteenth century? How did the scientific outlook change between 1850 and 1914? What was positivism? How did Darwin and Wallace’s theory of natural selection affect ethics, Christianity, and European views of human nature?

1. Why was Christianity attacked in the late nineteenth century? Why was Leo XIII regarded as a liberal pope? Why was the papacy itself so resilient?
2. Why did Europeans feel superior toward Islam? How did Islamic thinkers respond to the European challenge?
3. How did social conditions of literature change in the late nineteenth century? What was the significance of the explosion of literary matter? How did the realists undermine middle-class morality? How did literary modernism differ from realism?
4. What were the major movements associated with the rise of modern art?
5. How did Nietzsche and Freud challenge traditional morality?
6. Why were many late-nineteenth-century intellectuals afraid of and hostile to women? How did Freud view the position of women? What social and political issues affected women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? What new directions did feminism take?
7. What was the character of late-nineteenth-century racism? How did this character become associated with anti-Semitism?
8. How did many ideas associated with modernism conflict with feminist goals? What were new departures in turn-of-the-century feminism?