

A PERIPATETIC AND PREPOSTEROUS GUIDE TO THE VEXATIOUS COMPLEXITIES OF FRENCH HISTORY

Part One: To 1945

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*** Note: This document is intended as a flying overview of French history for those attending Paris lectures or joining the Paris tour. It is intended as a courtesy document for those who might feel that they are unfamiliar with the course of French history. Those who are well-read in France's history will, I hope, understand the purpose of such a simplified account, and forgive its inevitable omissions and opacities.**

Introduction

Historians relish telling the story of a French aristocrat in the 19th century who was once interviewing an applicant to be his manservant. The applicant answered all questions put to him dutifully and well, and was duly told that he was employed. After a short silence, he cleared his throat, and meekly asked what exactly his duties would be for sir. The fastidious aristocrat thought for a moment, and then said, in a voice dripping with disdain, *“My dear chap, when you awaken me in the morning, you are to tell me first, what date it is; second, what the weather is like outside; and third, what particular form of government – monarchy, empire or republic - we happen to be living under this day.”*

His quip is an exaggeration, of course, but only slightly so: that nobleman was in fact living in a century in which nearly all political regimes lasted less than two decades. French history *is* turbulent, volatile and confusing. Even the voluble and self-opinionated art critic, Robert Hughes, could fall into the trap of talking about ‘the Third Empire’ (which never existed, there were only two in France. He meant the Third Republic, a big difference.) If a scholar such as this can falter, we mere mortals can surely be forgiven for the odd slip as well.

Many people feel that we come out of life equipped with a reasonable sense of Australian and British history, but that French history remains a foreign ground for them. Let us, then, roll up our sleeves and go for a magic carpet ride. We so often talk of survey history courses that cover ‘from Plato to Nato’, so let us in turn try to quickly cover French history from ‘the Gauls’ to ‘de Gaulle’...

Please forgive me if, in this flying overview, I simplify things, as I must necessarily do.

Prehistory

Woolly mammoths once roamed where the Eiffel Tower now stands. Paleolithic tribesmen once hunted animals here, and left bone remnants and stone axe fragments in the same place.

By the Neolithic Age (New Stone Age, permanent villages, use of agriculture, command of weapons technology of polished stone) the banks of the River Seine have wood-and-thatch cottages forming a village. Inevitably, Paris now assumes its true identity around its rivers, the Seine and the Bièvre (but where is the Bièvre today?). Both fishing and riverine transport are important parts of the economy. People are making canoes out of large trees. When the boats sink, they are entombed in the mud of the river, which preserved them for millennia; such boats have just recently been excavated near Bercy, and are on display at the Carnavalet Museum ...

The Celtic societies of the Iron Age

The Celtic tribes that emanated outwards from central Europe colonised France as they had colonised England. These were tribal farming societies, with command of the technology of iron making, and a tendency to live in fortified settlements, often on hilltops, known as *oppida*. We like to think we know a great deal about the Celts – courtesy of Asterix and Obelix – but they remain largely a mysterious people, having left few written records of their own. Most of what we know of them is extrapolated from physical artifacts, many of which have survived through the general custom of burying the dead with their possessions, and also because of their very specific custom of throwing precious items such as jewelery into sacred pools and wells to placate the gods.

The main written records of the Celts were in fact made by classical Greek and Roman writers, whose observations were necessarily those of outsiders to the society, uncomprehending foreigners. Even their own name has not been recorded by them: the modern world now naturally pronounces Celts and Celtic with an ‘s’ (as in the modern sporting team in England, pronounced ‘Seltic’), which is quite correct by the logic of modern English. Scholars remain divided, but it does seem that, at some points in the past, when a visiting Greek or Roman asked these people what they were called, they made a sound which was recorded more like ‘Keltoi’, with a hard ‘k’ that might even have tended towards a hard ‘g’. The evidence lies in remnant place names where they settled: Galicia, Gaul...

The ancient Greeks were, it must be said, fascinated by the impulsive ‘wild men’ of Gaul. The Greek traders found they could sail their ships up the rivers of France, loaded with a cargo of great pottery vessels (amphorae) of wine, for which the Celts rapidly gained an immoderate appetite. The Greeks were scandalised to discover that the Celts would even sell a grandmother or a mother-in-law into slavery to secure one such amphora. Curiously, the chorus of condemnation of this barbaric practice has been strangely muted amongst subsequent historians ...

The Roman Empire

Julius Caesar conquered Gaul in 58-54 BC, establishing first a southern *provincia* (the origin of the modern regional name Provence) and then expanding his control over most of the area we now know as France. We may judge the true extent of the city building and monument construction in southern French provincial towns such as Arles or Nîmes, where in many cases we find triumphal arches, temples and amphitheatres still standing, often in better conditions than those of the devastated

forum in Rome. The temple at Nîmes, for example, is an almost completely preserved structure, one of the best from the classical world.

Paris is a different matter, and with one remarkable exception you will look in vain for anything Roman visible above ground. Yet Paris *was* an important Roman city, as we can see by reconstructions in the form of architectural models. It was then named Lutetia, and was built on the classic Roman grid pattern. But that grid is now many metres below street level; the only trace of it is the roads built exactly above their Roman predecessors. For example, when you walk along the rue St. Jacques – which is still as straight as an arrow – you are actually following the path of the old Roman road that crossed the city and led to the city gates and thence out to the provinces.

On one brief occasion, through the eccentricity of a Roman emperor, Paris became the capital of the Roman Empire. It was, indeed, a very well-appointed city. We can get very close to this city by entering **the Archeological Crypt**, which is below the forecourt of Notre-Dame. This was discovered when excavations began for an underground car park. It is now a vault of a museum, in which you can see the actual Roman streets – their paving stones deeply rutted by cart wheels – and the successive layers of houses of the Renaissance, the Middle Ages and Roman times, a sort of layered cake of two millennia of urban history.

The one exception to the general rule of ‘underground Lutetia’ is in fact absolutely stunning: in the very centre of the Latin Quarter of central Paris, there rises from the ground a complete Roman bathhouse, now known as **the Cluny Baths**. There were originally at least three complexes, but the Eastern Baths (buried under the College of France, Science Faculty) and the Southern Baths are no longer extant. The Northern Baths, by contrast, were preserved because they had been integrated into the Hotel de Cluny in the late 15th century; the good abbots put their wine cellar there! The complex covers 100 x 65 metres, hence some 6,500 square metres.

When one visits the Cluny Museum (of Medieval Art), one may descend a set of steps and walk back millennia. It is true that what we see now is a ‘naked’ building, that is, it has been stripped of the gleaming white and pink marble that originally covered it. The walls we see now are the inner structure, made up of the classic late Roman combination of stonework stabilized at intervals by horizontal courses of flat terracotta tiles or bricks. The Romans, in other words, would never have seen what we now see.

The construction of the walls was known as *opus mixtum*, that is, a composite of stonework interrupted by bands of four layers of brick. This allowed the better management of both weight and the humidity from the baths. The technique also dates the structure to the late 2nd century AD or the early third century AD, and hence the colloquial name of ‘the Baths of Julian’ is incorrect; they are earlier. This also means that the vast complex was probably the last major public monument built on the Left Bank before the invasions of the 3rd century AD necessitated its abandonment. It must have been just completed when the Left Bank part of the city was devastated by invaders.

The baths are unusual because certain rooms, notably the *frigidarium*, have survived almost intact. In particular, the ceiling vault of this room is a very rare survival: this is

one of the few places in the world where one may walk into a Roman room still covered by its original ceiling. The room is an impressive 13.85 metres high.

These baths also display a number of sculptures which go right back to the interface between the Roman invaders and the local Celtic people. One of these is *The 'Pillar of the Boatmen'*. The Roman rulers of Lutetia allowed the local Celtic people to continue their own culture and religion. **The guild of boatmen**, known as the '**nautes**', had sufficient wealth to commission a five-metre sculpted pillar, featuring a fusion of both Celtic and Roman gods. This dates to c. 14-37 A.D.

The pillar became part of the later process of the triumph of Christianity over pagan religions. It may have originally stood in the Roman Temple to Jupiter located on this site. When a Christian church was built in its place in the 6th century, the column was dismantled and its pieces re-utilised as part of a wall. It was thus preserved by being built into a later structure, which itself was then built over by the cathedral. It was re-discovered buried under the chancel of Notre-Dame Cathedral in 1711. Thus, those who would have liked to destroy this had, paradoxically, preserved it.

* **Search on internet:** There is a magnificent **National Museum of Antiquities** located in a chateau out at **St. Germain-en-Laye**, which is a short train trip to the outskirts of Paris. For those wishing to explore France's ancient history, this is a rich and beautiful collection, with some superb Celtic work in gold.

France in the Middle Ages (9th-15th centuries)

During the early Middle Ages, much of France was a part of the empire built up by Charlemagne, and ruled by successors known as the Carolingian dynasty.

France experienced a fundamental change when **the Capet Dynasty** came to power in 987, and remained so until 1328. Of these kings, Phillip II Augustus was arguably one of the most important – closely followed by Louis IX – in terms of beginning the process of asserting royal administrative control over these lands.

King Philippe-Auguste II would prove particularly important to the development of Paris. He reigned as King of the Franks from 1180-1190, then as King of France from 1190-1223. Once the Capetians were in power, and the threat of Viking raids diminished, the city began to move outwards again from its island base, at least in the form of farms and vineyards. Almost instinctively, the Parisians built a very basic fortification by manual labour, digging out a ditch and piling up the soil to make a low wall or rampart. However flimsy, this ghost of a fortification at least redefined the city as being both the island and the left and right bank land. Paris had resumed its rippling outward growth of concentric rings of fortifications, one that would not stop until the removal of the outer fortifications in 1919.

The Philippe-Auguste Wall was begun in 1190. Rapid construction had fully enclosed the right bank of Paris by 1208. It would remain the protective wall of the city for about 150 years, until the construction of the Charles V wall from 1367 onwards. The structure, built by royal funds backed by taxes on local merchants, was a solid one: it was 30 feet high and 10 feet thick, and was built of properly dressed stone. It was punctuated by round fortified towers every 200 feet. There were at least 30 watchtowers on the right bank. In a few places, remnants of towers still protrude

above modern ground level. The so-called wall is actually two walls of dressed stone, with the space between them filled with rocks and mortar.

Philippe-Auguste also turned his attention to **the Left Bank of Paris**. This area, which had once been the absolute centre of Roman Lutetia, had degenerated into a wasteland in the early Middle Ages, the period between the early barbarian raids and the last Viking raids. Once the Viking menace had receded at the end of the 9th century, this area took on a new life, as monastic foundations began to buy large tracts of land. We can still visualise the non-urban character of the Left Bank from vestiges left in names: one monastery, for example, was St. Germain des Prés. (St Germain in the Fields, literally). The second stage of Philippe-Auguste's walls started near the river at the Tour du Nesle, and enclosed what we now know as parts of the 5th and 6th arrondissements (ie. St. Michel and St. Germain). It enclosed the hill of St. Genevieve and then ran down the valley of the River Bièvre.

Of apparently lesser import was Philippe-Auguste's decision **to pave the streets of Paris**, but this too provided an important landmark in the emergence of both Parisian civic identity and practical amenity. This created a sense of urban refinement more advanced than the muddy confusion of medieval village streets. The merchants of Paris, in particular, were grateful for the easier movement of goods and of customers. The King did, however, duly tax them for these improvements on the grounds that their trade benefited directly from them!

The 13th century would prove to be especially important to **French architecture and art**. Between about 1150 and 1250, **the first great sequence of Gothic cathedrals** was constructed, of which Notre-Dame of Paris was one. Cathedrals were also erected in France's regional towns, most notably at Rouen, Reims, Chartres, Soissons, Beauvais and elsewhere. In these towns, the Christian Faithful donated money; in particular, the city's trades associations (or guilds) might donate an entire stained glass window, simply to assert their prestige. The window of the tailors, for example, would feature an image of the tailors at work.

Other art forms flourished in Paris: panel painting, luxury gold and silver work, tapestries and, most especially, illuminated manuscripts. We tend to think of these manuscripts as having been written by pious monks in monasteries, and this was certainly so earlier in the Middle Ages. By the 13th century, however, a secular industry of manuscript production had evolved in Paris, driven by purely commercial rather than spiritual concerns. In a development that would have delighted the modern industrialist Henry Ford, whole streets became devoted to one aspect of production, and they bore the names of the craft practised there: for example, one whole street was devoted to the workshop that simply produced the parchment pages, which were made from the skin of lambs; if you search hard, you can still find the **rue de la Parcheminerie** in Paris today, although the workshops are long gone. Another street was reserved for the scribes who wrote the texts, another for the illuminators who painted the pictures, and so on.

Later, a second royal dynasty emerged in France, that of **the Valois**, which lasted from 1328 to 1589. These were luxury-loving monarchs, and the arts in France flourished under opulent royal and princely patronage. Nonetheless, these were troubled times: France was enmeshed in the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) with

England, at the same time as experiencing the Bubonic Plague (or Black Death) in 1348.

The French Renaissance (16th century)

The French Renaissance is a quite distinctive chapter of European history. First, it was not primarily situated in Paris; although there *are* some Renaissance gems to be seen in Paris, the major sites are quite elsewhere, especially in the Loire Valley in Central France.

Second, the French Renaissance occurred much later than that of Italy (the latter being, broadly, 14-15th centuries), but much of its architecture and art was imported from the last stages of the late Renaissance (16th century) in Italy. It is typical that the French king, François I, could only import a very aged Leonardo da Vinci – who did little work for him, apart from bringing *The Mona Lisa* with him to France, which is why it is in the Louvre – and a bevy of quite minor late-Renaissance painters, such as Niccolò dell'Abate.

Third, the French Renaissance was definitely *not* a solely cultural phenomenon, the affair of inspired writers and creative artists. While the Renaissance in Italy was a political/cultural instrument of princely court, popes and city-states, the Renaissance in France was most definitely an instrument of the creation of the absolute monarchist state that emerged in France at that time.

This contention will come as a surprise to many. We are all familiar with the reputation of Louis XIV as ‘the Sun King’, an exemplar of absolute royal power, as embodied in his Palace of Versailles, another instrument of power. It is true that Louis developed absolute monarchy to its highest point, but he definitely did not *create* it: this had previously been done in the 16th century, primarily under François I, who was good mates with Henry VIII of England.

During the 16th century, the French royal court was by no means anchored in Paris, but tended to be nomadic: the entire court would move, in a massive train of baggage and servants, from town to town and also from chateau to chateau, presuming upon the hospitality of a noble until his kitchens had been eaten bare, his moats filled with excrement and his hunting grounds left empty. More, as François I created his new bureaucracy and royal court, the new men of power – high government officials - began to use their wealth to build splendid chateaux, especially in the Loire Valley area. Between kings, nobles and officials, the Loire region was quickly populated by splendid chateaux such as Chenonceau(x), Chambord, Azay-Le-Rideau

In 1526, François suffered a double military disaster: defeat in the Battle of Pavia, followed by his capture in Spain. Upon his return to France, he decided that it was politic to live in or near Paris. This would have two important outcomes. First, he demolished the medieval palace of the Louvre, and began the construction of the building we now know as the oldest part of the present-day Louvre.

Second, he sought a site for the construction of a new and imposing palace, close to Paris. By 1528, Fontainebleau had become his preferred residence. In building the new Palace of Fontainebleau outside of the capital, he was anticipating what Louis

XIV would later do on a grander scale at Versailles. Fontainebleau was an early 'essay' in royal power, expressed through a new visual culture. Specifically, the Italianate language of the Renaissance was a sort of expensive status symbol by which this new royal bureaucracy expressed its difference to the 'common herd'.

THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV, THE 'SUN KING' (17th CENTURY)

The France of the Thirty Years War

When Louis XIV was born (5 September 1638), France was already in a state of war: the series of conflicts known generically as the Thirty Years War had begun in 1618. France had finally entered the conflict between European powers in 1635, when it declared war on Spain. This positioned France on the 'Protestant' side (the German Protestant princedoms and their allies in the Scandinavian states) against the 'Catholic' side, consisting of Austria, Spanish Hapsburg states and German Catholic princedoms.

For France, Spain was a concern partly because of its enormous military and economic power, but also because its steady acquisition of territory on some of France's borders was amounting almost to encirclement. For example, Spain controlled the provinces of Cerdagne and Roussillon, as well as significant areas of Italy such as Sicily, Naples, the ports of Tuscany and the powerful northern duchy of Milan. France's northern border was similarly threatened: the former Burgundian lands had passed by inheritance to Spain, which controlled the Franche-Comte, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The northern Netherlands, it is true, had fought Spain and secured the independence of the Dutch Republic, but the southern Netherlands were largely under Spanish rule. The presence of the Spanish army there posed an obvious and imminent threat to Paris, which was quit close to the border and devoid of any natural forms of defence. The Spanish demonstrated their mastery of the region by capturing the French town of Corbie, a mere 140 kilometres from Paris (1636).

The minority of Louis XIII

In 1610, France's King Henri IV was assassinated by a religious extremist. He had only one child, and Louis was then only nine years of age. Henri's queen assumed regency for the remainder of the royal minority, but immediately faced challenges from France's powerful noble families, who resented the centralisation of royal power, and who contended that the proper government of France was to be by the great nobles, with the king a mere figurehead. The queen stared them down and paid them out, and upon the accession of Louis XIII the problem receded somewhat.

The Legacy of Cardinal Richelieu

This episode, however, created the need for a powerful advisor and statesman who could guide the king, especially in managing the ever-present threat of noble insurrection.

During the reign of Louis XIII, **Cardinal Richelieu** rose to prominence and became a vigilante for any subversion or rebellion by the great nobles. By the time of his death, in 1642, he had already started the process of centralising the French state, and of asserting its authority over the particularist interest of the nobles.

Royal decrees forbade the fortification of noble chateaux, and outlawed the noble practice of duels on points of honour. When the nobles disobeyed, duelists were executed, and fortifications torn down by force.

Richelieu had also done much of the formative work of equipping France with a significant army, consisting of some 150,000 infantry and 30,000 cavalry. It is true that this came at a cost to the national purse, with military expenditure doubling over the decade.

Childhood

Louis married the Spanish Anne of Austria, but for a time seemed indifferent to her and hesitant to produce an heir, but in 1638 the Queen bore him a son. Louis was born strong and healthy and, remarkably, with two fully-formed front teeth. A second son, Philippe, was born in 1640. She pursued a policy of protecting Louis from the possible threat of a younger brother by developing his independence, allowing him his own apartments and staff at age seven. By contrast, she kept Philippe under close check, retaining him amongst the women at court, and even infantilising him by keeping him in petticoats well beyond the usual age of seven. The younger brother developed very feminine tastes, and soon proved to be distinctly homosexual in his love life. He did, nonetheless, unwittingly cause one challenge to the young Louis XIV: it was Philippe who first demonstrated real military valour in battle, when he took the risk of personally commanding French forces at Mont Cassel in the Dutch War (1672-1678), leading his troops in a daring and quite dangerous manouvre. Louis, by contrast, had been firmly instructed never to put the monarchy at risk by going into battle, and had obeyed, but was now fearful that his younger brother might gain a reputation for military valour.

Louis proved, however, to be not averse to a military formation. Traditional theories of 'the education of a prince' emphasized martial training as an important component, but Louis himself enjoyed physical exercise. He began riding lessons quite young, and was soon inspecting French troops on parade. A model fortress was constructed in Paris, complete with a small-scale cannon with blank shots. He improved his physical fitness in morning visits to the gymnasium, and was trained in the arts of horsemanship by the finest and most demanding trainers.

Anne of Austria also chose his teachers carefully, and bent his education towards a definite political vision. Her ladies in waiting first told him 'moral' fairytales, then after 1645 his servant La Porte read him anecdotes from the history of France, all of them emphasizing the importance of not being a 'do-nothing king', and of being powerful and independent as a ruler. When he progressed to the formal study of history, his teacher, Perefixe, emphasised the model of Louis' grandfather, Henri IV, as a model of an active ruler who ruled wisely and firmly, actively seeking to improve the lot of his people.

In order to fully understand the purpose of Versailles, we need to correct the natural assumption that the Bourbon monarchy had always enjoyed absolute power. In previous centuries, monarchy had existed, but it was by no means all powerful, balanced as it was by the very considerable power of the great noble families of France.

The previous king, Louis XIII had died in 1643, when the dauphin (his successor) was only five years of age. A **regency** inevitably followed (1643-1654), during which time Cardinal Mazarin conducted the affairs of state.

Political biographer J.B. Wolf affirms that the experience of regency had a profound effect on the future Louis XIV for two reasons. As a child, Louis was educated from birth until the age of seven by the Queen Mother and the women at court; thereafter, he was given into the care of men, primarily Cardinal Mazarin. First, he witnessed a **political rebellion** (named in French *La Fronde*) during which the law courts and some nobles attempted to challenge the authority of the monarchy. The struggle had begun in 1648, and was only repressed in 1653.

The second great influence on the young prince was that of the statesman, **Cardinal Mazarin** himself, who schooled him in the art of politics. Mazarin's advice was clear and emphatic: "*God has given you all the qualities of greatness. You must put them to good use.*" First, he should exclude the aristocracy from royal government, and grant them primarily honorific privileges. Second, he should choose ministers from capable members of the wealthy bourgeoisie, who will be so grateful for the honour that they will serve the ruler loyally. Third, he should prepare himself to rule personally, to have a limited number of ministers and to not rely on a first minister once Mazarin had left the scene. All ministers must be made to understand that they were personally responsible to the King, who issued them instructions.

Louis XIV ascended the throne in 1654. The majestic coronation portrait by Hyacinthe Rigaud suggests an assured and supreme authority that did not, at that point, actually exist. It is perhaps more an image of the personal power that Louis *hoped* to create, rather than of the actual state of his authority at this point. Louis XIV's great achievement would be to create a system of personalised power in which the king's will, expressed in documents a "*De par le roy*", had the force of law. One official statue, representing a triumphant Louis XIV crushing the civil war of the Fronde, is a clever piece of propaganda that hides the true nature of the protracted struggle.

The death of Cardinal Mazarin in March 1661 opened the way for Louis to choose a new advisor who could help him construct a new state system. His existing Treasurer, **Nicholas Fouquet** was convinced that he would be next in line as the main minister, this being part of the motive for his lavish spending on his own chateau at Vaux-le-Vicomte. While Louis' courtiers speculated that Fouquet would be the obvious successor to Mazarin, the young king announced that he would rule without a first minister at all. It is a sign of the modest status of the monarch that when Louis XIV made his declaration of 'Ruling in his own right' at court (1661), this caused undisguised amusement amongst his courtiers, some of whom dared to laugh in his face. They would soon learn otherwise ...

Political power play: Eliminating Nicholas Fouquet

When Lebrun painted his early portrait of Louis XIV in 1661, the King was still quite young and still not entirely sure that he could transform French government by ruling in his own right. He still had good reason to fear the influence of powerful nobles and ambitious ministers, and hence of men like Fouquet. Louis XIV understood that he would need to break the power of the influential Fouquet, whom most courtiers still assumed would be first minister. He began by lulling Fouquet into a sense of security by praising his work as treasurer, and pretending not to notice the financial irregularities.

Louis XIV laid his political trap carefully. He cunningly persuaded Fouquet to sell his title of Procurator, which carried the special privilege of being tried by his peers in the high law courts. Without this title, Fouquet could, if charged, be tried in a common court. Surprisingly, Fouquet did not see the trap, and sold his position as the king advised. Louis enlisted a powerful new ally in his struggle to break the power of influential men like Fouquet: Jean-Baptiste Colbert, who had previously been an official in Mazarin's administration.

The 'architect' of French absolutism: Jean-Baptiste Colbert

Colbert may be described as **'the architect of French absolutism'** in the double sense that he developed the political theory of absolute royal power, as well as literally guiding the construction of the palace at Versailles, which would be the stage for the display of complete personal power.

Thus, from 1661 until 1683, Jean-Baptiste Colbert was "the engineer of the state machine on which the greatness of the King was based." (Blunt, p. 225). He seemed to be the man who could do anything, assuming gargantuan tasks and carrying them to completion with absolute assurance. Indeed, one contemporary engraving depicts him as the Atlas of the 17th century, holding the entire globe on his back. When we consider the vast extent and duration of the works at Versailles, the analogy is by no means unsuitable.

Almost immediately, Colbert was given the task of finding evidence of Fouquet's embezzlement of state funds. Fouquet's behaviour at this time is puzzling. He seems to have sensed some threat, because he started fortifying his castle on Belle-Ile, and yet he seems to have no sense of the forces gathering against him. It was at this very point that he unwittingly provided the catalyst for his own demise, by providing a spectacle that, in earlier days, would have been a fitting assertion of his ministerial power. On 17 August 1661, he invited a vast cohort of some 6000 visitors - virtually the entire court - to his estate at Vaux. Fouquet personally conducted the King around the chateau, explaining the elaborate allegories in Lebrun's paintings.

The royal retinue then sat down to a lavish dinner served by the great chef Vatel. The dinner cost 20,000 French pounds, and was served on 430 solid gold plates. After dinner, they attended a performance of Molière's latest play at a special theatre built in the gardens. The evening concluded with a fireworks display over the gardens. Fouquet felt that he had reached the pinnacle of success, and apparently did not notice that, with each new splendour, Louis XVI became more and more morose. The unspoken understanding at work in this situation was that courtiers were expected to

emulate the King, but never to outshine him. It was a compliment to copy what the King did, but it was an insult to outdo him. Louis XIV possessed royal palaces, but the residence of the Louvre in Paris could not compete with this magnificence.

Foucquet was unaware that, when the King mounted his carriage to return to Fontainebleau, he turned to the Queen Mother and commented “We really have to be finished with this sort of person.” Foucquet was tried by a court, which found so little evidence of embezzlement that it could only exile him. We can gauge the extent of the royal displeasure by the fact that the disgraced official was recalled and arrested by d’Artagnan of the musketeers. Louis’ firm handling of Foucquet sent a message to all courtiers that the King was serious about personal rule.

The absolute ruler

By 1666, when Lebrun painted his portrait of Louis XIV with his minister Colbert, the political situation of the king had changed completely. He is now more poised, more assured, and he is confident of the absolutist system of rule that Colbert had created for him. The precedent of Vaux not only gave Louis XIV the concept for a monumental ensemble, but provided him with the instruments to realise it. The painter Charles Lebrun had shown that he could direct a massive program of decoration. In executing his superb program of allegorical paintings at Vaux, he had virtually already invented what later became known as ‘the Louis XIV style’. Louis also took **the architect Le Vau, the gardener Lenôtre** and many of their skilled workers, and set them directly to the task of building Versailles. When Foucquet was arrested, his entire property was sequestered. Louis requisitioned some of the best paintings, statues, tapestries and furniture for Versailles. The chateau itself was later returned to Foucquet’s wife (1673).

The great building campaign

In 1661, Louis instructed Louis Le Vau to commence a great campaign of construction at Versailles. He directed the building from 1661 until 1677, when he was succeeded by Hardouin-Mansart. Mansart pushed the project to sufficient completion that the court could move into residence here in 1682, although he was in fact still finishing some apartments as late as 1701. A third and final stage was completed after his death in 1708 by his brother-in-law, Robert de Cotte, who completed the chapel Mansart had begun.

The sheer pace and pressure of this ambitious building campaign had two important effects. First, it consumed vast amounts of the state’s revenue, so much that when France was also at war, the building at Versailles perforce had to slacken to allow for military expenditure.

Second, tragically, the campaign of building took an unknown but heavy toll on the lives of workers. Contemporaries such as Madame de Sévigné commented that the workers killed in building accidents during the day were taken to a hospital, then piled high on carts at night to be taken away secretly. In addition to deaths, there were countless injuries to limbs causing disabilities and loss of income.

France during the Age of Enlightenment (18th century)

The Europe-wide intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment took place during the 18th century, and was a crucial turning point in the history of western thought, literally shaping the world in which we now live. It was a powerful movement, carried forward by an eruption of new ideas and new ways of thinking about government and society, and about knowledge itself. Indeed, the Enlightenment has not just shaped the modern world; it has also shaped us. In it, we discover the origins of many of our own key ideas about the world, and many of our core values.

The Enlightenment's main idea was that human beings should use the Reason that God had given them to look afresh at the world, and try to use science to improve the lives of people, and to solve social problems. The Enlightenment's more 'moderate' thinkers did not think that it was necessary to cause a political revolution in order to achieve change; they firmly believed that peaceful reform of the existing order could lead to a better world.

The Enlightenment was centred in Europe, particularly in France, but had a number of other very active centres, including **Scotland** and **the Republic of Holland**. Elsewhere, states such as **Prussia** and **Russia** hosted Enlightenment thinkers because their rulers hoped to use enlightened thought for their own purposes of improving their country. The Enlightenment affected many other countries such as England and Italy and even extended to **the American colonies**, where Benjamin Franklin became a home-grown *philosophe*. It is also common to speak of '**Enlightenment Australia**', meaning that the British and European mariners, explorers and artists who explored our coasts and recorded the exotic flora and fauna were essentially driven by Enlightenment values.

The Enlightenment caused controversy, however, because it also revolutionised the way we think about knowledge itself. It boldly questioned all existing knowledge, and was particularly critical of the teachings of official religions such as the Catholic Church. Perhaps because Christian belief had been so powerful until then, this new generation of thinkers felt the need to reject all existing teachings, and to observe the world directly in order to understand it properly. Many denied that churches, priests and prayers were necessary at all; some even denied that God exists. The Enlightenment contained many different strands of thought, and never became a single organisation, or an organised political party or a single ideology; indeed, many of its thinkers argued fiercely over certain key issues. The Enlightenment also occurred in a number of very different countries, and so it tended to vary according to the conditions within those countries.

A coup d'état upon knowledge itself: The Encyclopaedia

In the year 1751, the French writers Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert published the first volume of their great *Encyclopaedia*. This is now seen as one of the greatest works of the intellectual movement of the Enlightenment. The books themselves were full of useful factual knowledge about trades and industries, but they did more than provide information. They also helped define what he and people at the time thought the Enlightenment actually was. Historians who want to understand the Enlightenment know that they must first look, critically, at what these main figures of that intellectual movement thought they were doing.

In 1772, Diderot commissioned the artist Charles Cochin the younger to design the front page picture for a later edition of his *Encyclopaedia*. He would almost certainly have discussed the image with the artist, and may even have instructed him what he wanted it to show. The drawing was then engraved by Benoît-Louis Prévost. This is therefore very much the editor Diderot's statement, and we need to listen to what he is trying to tell us.

The picture is not easy for a modern person to 'read', but it is an important source for the historian because it is a statement of what this group of thinkers thought they were doing. This does not mean that it is necessarily true, but it does give useful evidence about what they themselves thought.

What is Diderot trying to tell us? We look into a great building with classical style columns. Look at the top of the picture. A female figure, representing Reason, is pulling away a veil to reveal the naked female figure of Truth. As she does so, a brilliant burst of light shines out, driving away dark clouds. There are more than thirty other smaller figures below them, many of whom carry scientific instruments, or work machines such as a printing press, seen at the left.

There is no doubt that Diderot had published an important collection of informative books, but why did he seem to think that he and his writers had helped 'Reason' (the rational use of human intelligence) to uncover the Truth? What exactly was the Truth that he had uncovered? Why did he think that Truth had been covered until then? Who did he think had covered up the Truth? And how exactly did scientific instruments and printing presses help in this process of driving out the dark clouds of Ignorance, and creating the clear, bright light of knowledge?

We can start to find answer to these questions by reading what Diderot himself wrote about this image:

"You can see at the top Truth between Reason and Imagination: Reason tries to pull away the veil from Truth, and Imagination gets ready to make Truth beautiful. Below this group is a crowd of speculative philosophes, and below them a group of artists. The philosophes have their eyes fixed on Truth; proud Metaphysics does not look directly at Truth. Theology turns its back on Truth and waits for light from above."

Key Enlightenment Figures in France

Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717-1783) was a famous mathematician and later co-editor of the *Encyclopaedia* with Diderot from 1751 to 1758. He had a broad and varied intelligence, and wrote some 1,400 articles on a wide range of subjects. His writing would lead him into conflict with Rousseau. He was appointed secretary of the Royal Academy of the Sciences in 1779.

Georges Louis Leclercq, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) contributed to the Enlightenment by writing a massive fifteen volume book of *Natural History*, published between 1749 and 1767. He shocked contemporaries, particularly churchmen, by suggesting that the Earth was much older than the dates suggested by the Bible, and by arguing that human beings were a part of the natural world, not

above it. He was also director of the Royal Botanical Gardens in Paris, where the people could go to study the animals and plants he described.

The Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794) was one of the first writers to argue in favour of equal rights for women, in works such as the *Essay on the Admission of Women into the Republic*. He was one of the few *philosophes* to live long enough to see the French Revolution. He later became a victim of the Terror, and ended his own life in protest against being sent to the guillotine for crimes he had not committed.

Denis Diderot (1713-1784) is best known as the editor of the great *Encyclopaedia*, but he should also be seen as one of the most active and varied writers in French literature. Apart from writing treatises, such as his *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville* (1796), he proved to be a brilliant writer in genres as varied as art criticism (his *Salon* reviews), avant-garde novels (*Jacques the Fatalist*) and even pornography (*The Indiscreet Jewels*). His first key belief was that there was no God in a personal sense, and that the natural world was simply driven by great forces. His second great theme was pleasure, and he attacked narrow-minded people who objected to sexual freedom and enjoyment.

Paul-Henri Thiry, Baron d'Holbach (1723-1789) was one of the Enlightenment's most radical critics of organized religion. He was the centre of a group including Diderot, d'Alembert, Rousseau and Buffon. He was an atheist. In his *The System of Nature* (1770), he attacked organised religion, and argued that the only reality was the natural world itself.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was born in Geneva, and came to Paris in 1742. He was quickly influenced by the *philosophes*, and made his first contribution to the Enlightenment by writing articles for the *Encyclopaedia* for his friend Diderot. His first 'discourse' (critical essay on a topic) was the *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts* (1750); more significant was his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality in Man* (1755). His ideas soon led him into conflict with other *philosophes* such as Diderot and Voltaire. His most important political work was *Of the Social Contract* (1762), which followed John Locke's idea that rulers – even kings – only rule because they have an agreement to look after the wellbeing of their people. If a king ceases to do this, and oppresses his people, then the 'contract' is broken. Rousseau also recorded his thoughts, experiences, emotions and even sexual experiences in his very explicit diary, *The Confessions* (published after his death, 1782-1788).

Francois-Marie Arouet, called Voltaire (1694-1778) was one of the most important drivers of Enlightenment thought: he enjoyed a long life, wrote numerous works, and was very effective in stirring up public opinion on important political and social issues. As a young man, he enjoyed courtly society and the salons, and wrote poetry and plays. After a stay in England from 1726-1729, he turned to serious political and social commentary, criticising France by praising England in his *Letter from England* (1734). He had powerful friends, ranging from Madame de Pompadour in France to King Frederick II in Prussia, where he visited from 1750 to 1753. He settled in Geneva in 1755, then lived at Ferney from 1760, becoming the guiding spirit of the 'philosophic' movement. He wrote many articles on liberal ideas such as tolerance, and supported the idea of deism, or 'natural religion'. Above all, he could translate his principles from his books (*The Treatise on Toleration*, 1763) into reality by helping

families – such as the Calas family and the Sirvin family – who had suffered seriously from prejudice and victimization. He returned to Paris as an intellectual hero, but died soon after in 1778.

Summing up the Enlightenment

Peter Gay (born 1923) is one of the most important historians of the Enlightenment. His key works are *The Party of Humanity: Essays in the French Enlightenment* (1964) and *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (1966). As his titles suggest, he tends to see the Enlightenment as an early example of the liberal and humanistic tradition of the modern western world.

Gay has written:

“The Enlightenment was a great revolution in man’s style of thinking that came to dominate the Western world in the eighteenth century. It was composed of the interplay between ideas and events, inventions and expectations; its raw materials were the triumph of Newtonian science, striking improvements in industrial and agricultural techniques, a widespread loss of religious fervor and a corresponding rise of ‘reasonable’ religion, an even bolder play of the critical spirit among the older mysteries of church and state which had for centuries escaped criticism, a new sense of confidence in man’s power over his worldly destiny.”

* **Must visit:** The Café Procope was the beating heart of Enlightenment Paris; it was where Voltaire retired to write, as well as to drink thirty cups of coffee a day. The café still exists as a working restaurant, and is exquisitely atmospheric, its walls hung with portraits and documents from the 18th century. Here, too, the Symbolist poet Paul Verlaine wrote his poems whilst awaiting his young, rebellious lover, Arthur Rimbaud.

The French Revolution, 1789-1795

The French Revolution is one of the most complex – and consequently misunderstood – events in history, and remains shrouded in absurd myths. Victorian era novelists have done a lot of conceptual damage, and so too, more recently, has Hollywood.

Myth 1: The French *did not* introduce the guillotine as torture; it was designed by a Dr. Guillotin, a gentle man inspired by the Enlightenment ideal that if a government really has to execute a criminal, this should be done as humanely as possible, instead of using barbaric medieval punishments such as breaking on the wheel.

Myth 2: The French *did not* immediately start guillotining everybody in sight; the guillotine was not introduced until some years after the revolution of 1789, and it was used legally, specifically to deal with those who committed treason in the war of 1792. In this respect, it was no different than the penalty for treason during World War One and Two, albeit vastly better than the firing squad.

Myth 3: Marie-Antoinette *never* said “Let them eat cake”; this was a line from a frivolous comedy staged a decade earlier, in which a dippy character amused the audience with brainless comments like this, much as the comedy act ‘Kath and Kim’ does today. In reality, Marie-Antoinette was absurdly generous, and had to be trained not to give her purse of gold coins to the first beggar she saw.

Myth 4: The Parisian crowd was *not* the slobbering, bestial mob rising out of the gutters and sewers of Paris, as per the novelists' fevered imaginations. The revolutionary crowd was made up of solid, self-respecting citizens, ranging from manual labourers, to artisans, to master artisans, to shopkeepers.

Myth 5: The French Revolution was *not* a bloody war on an oppressed nobility: many 'liberal' nobles supported the great principles of 1789, and many other nobles simply retired to their estates and lived quietly until the revolution had finished, only to re-emerge safely as notables in the new society of Napoleonic France. Nobles who fought on the side of France's enemies were, however, legally tried for treason, and executed for the same.

Myth 6: And, no, the French Revolution was *not* caused by an outbreak of madness caused by ergotamine mold in the grain supplies. The actions of leaders and the crowds who supported them were based on reason and principle.

Myth 7: The French Revolution *was not* an outbreak of destructive fury, aimed at wrecking all that was noble and good about Old France. It was an intensely constructive and rational process, as is proven by the first few years in which the men and women of 1789 forged a new nation, by eliminating old privileges (such as special law courts for nobles and priests) and creating a system based on personal liberty and legal and fiscal equality.

What the French Revolution was really about

The French Revolution began as an essentially political and constitutional event. The French nation was sliding towards bankruptcy, unable to service a massive national debt caused by France's involvement in a number of wars, the most recent being supporting the American War of Independence. The French monarchy had had financial crises before, but always behind closed doors, and always with the outcome that something was found to solve the problem, such as selling new noble titles. The tragedy of Louis XVI was that he stepped up to the plate when a) there were no more revenue options left and b) the debt became a matter of public debate ('the birth of public opinion'). Worse, there were no options for new taxations: indirect taxes on food and produce were at their max, and so was the personal direct taxation on the Commons (the Third Estate) who formed about 98% of the nation. The remainder – the clergy and nobility – *did* pay some tax, but relatively little in proportion to their massive wealth. But this was not corruption, it was 'privilege' ('privi legum', private law), the result of perfectly legal concessions made by previous kings; to impose new taxes on the privileged would be to violate their rights. Louis XVI was therefore in a catch-22 when his treasurer, Calonne, informed him that France was sliding towards inevitable bankruptcy, and could only be saved by tax reform, creating a single, universal, proportional tax system that would be paid by all without exception.

From this point on Louis XVI was caught in a nightmare with no exit: he first attempted to persuade an elite group, the Assembly of Notables, to agree to a universal direct tax, but this failed. He then convened another group, the judges of the High Courts, to ask them to approve the same reform, but also failed. These liberal nobles were now speaking a new language, derived partly from Locke and Montesquieu, partly from the ideas of the American Revolution, that no tax may be

imposed upon a people unless it has been done by representation; they now called arbitrary taxes 'despotism'. They even dared to demand that the nation be allowed to see France's national accounts. In desperation, as bankruptcy now loomed, Louis XVI summoned the last available body, the Estates-General. This was not a parliament in any form: it was an advisory body that could be called to inform the king of problems, but it had no power, and indeed had not been consulted in 1614. When called for May 1789, it became clear that it no longer suited the France of the 18th century. The deputies met in their three estates: Clergy, Nobles and Commons, and voted as a single order. Thus, the first two privileged estates would always outvote the Commons 2:1. However, the first two estates represented a tiny minority of the nation, about 1% at most, while **the Commons** (the so-called **Third Estate**, virtually 'everybody else') represented between 98-99%. Debate soon raged about voting, and in the 'pamphlet war' that followed, it was suggested that the number of deputies for the Commons should be doubled, and that voting be done by head, giving the Commons proper weight in decisions. Absurdly, Louis XVI granted the doubling of the Commons, but still insisted on voting by order, rendering the whole reform useless. The deputies of the Commons (Third Estate) descended into protracted and fruitless debate, until a political pamphleteer, the abbe Sieyes, wrote his work *What is the Third Estate?* In it, he 'cut through the Gordian knot', short-tracking the convoluted debate, pointing out that since the Commons represented the near totality of the nation, the deputies of the Third Estate already *were* the representatives of the French nation. He pointed out that, if they simply convened themselves in their own meeting space, they *already were* a parliament or, as the French called it, **a national assembly**.

Naturally, Louis tried to obstruct this development, and on 20 June 1789 the deputies of the Commons stormed out of Versailles, looking for a venue in which to meet. Problem was, a country that does not have a parliament also does not have a parliament-sized building, so the only options were sporting venues. The deputies decided upon the tennis court ('Royal' Tennis, quite different to modern tennis Tennis) in the nearby town of Versailles. There, Jean-Sylvain Bailly stood and took an oath that this new national assembly would not disband until it had secured its own existence, guaranteed by a constitution. That **Tennis Court Oath** had secured a political revolution without a shot being fired.

It is commonly said that **it was resistance that made the revolution become violent**. So it was. The King, or perhaps one of his generals, flooded Paris with some 30,000 troops, the only possible purpose being to intimidate the new national assembly and to close it down by force. On 12 July 1789, journalist **Camille Desmoulins** called upon the people of Paris to arm themselves, and on 14 July a crowd strategically attacked **the military hospital of Les Invalides**, seizing cannon and rifles. The governor, anticipating the event, had pre-emptively moved the gunpowder and shot to a vast 13th century prison called **the Bastille**. The crowd proceeded thence, with the almost impossible aim of capturing the massive, heavily-armed prison. The Bastille guards opened fire on the crowd below, killing some seventy people. When however, some Royal Guards joined the crowd and started to show them how to line up the cannon, the commander, de Launay, recognized defeat, and surrendered. The crowd closed in on him, sawed his head off with a pen-knife, impaled it on a pike (spear) and carried it in triumph through Paris. The middle-class people – lawyers, doctors, bureaucrats – who had supported this revolution were horrified by this violence, and now

understood that they needed the power of the crowd to protect the revolution they had created. As one historian put it, they came to the uncomfortable realisation that, in revolutions, the bullet is as important as the ballot. Or, as another historian put it, from now, the spectre of popular revolution haunted the battlements of bourgeois revolution.

* **Must read:** Michael Adcock, *Analysing the French Revolution* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press). A corker of a read. Lifts the lid on the French Revolution. Apparently the author is good bloke too ...)

* **Must visit:** A little-known museum in Paris is **the Museum of the Conciergerie**, a beautiful 13th century building that was used as a prison during the Terror of the French Revolution. Thousands of prisoners were kept here before the final ride by cart to the guillotine on the Place de la Concorde.

The Nineteenth Century

It is a startling fact that, during the 19th century, France experienced a number of regime changes, almost all of which lasted less than twenty years. Ironically, the one political system that was set up to be a temporary expedient – the Third Republic – ended up being the most long-lived, lasting from 1870 until the Nazis overthrew it in 1940. This means that French history is far more complex than that of England, which has some unity due to the long reign of Queen Victoria.

The Bourbon Restoration, 1814-1830

Once the Allies had defeated Napoleon Bonaparte, they organised a restoration of a member of the French Bourbon royal family, who was duly dubbed Louis XVIII (a respectful recognition that Louis XVI's son had died in prison during the French Revolution in 1795; technically, however, he never actually became Louis XVII, because he was never crowned).

The royal government was therefore theoretically a (constitutional) monarchy, although it could not bring itself to use the ghastly democratic word 'constitution', and called it a 'charter' instead. If we judge by appearances – such as the coronation portrait of Louis XVIII – it would appear that everything had rolled back to the old regime prior to the French Revolution.

In reality, Louis XVIII returned to a France that had been profoundly changed by the French Revolution, creating a nation of people who regarded themselves as human beings with innate rights and as citizens with legally defined status. Louis XVIII was merely laying a shallow facade of royalist whitewash over a country that would never go back to true absolute monarchy; in due course, the whitewash would fall away.

Louis XVIII (a brother of Louis XVI, who had escaped the guillotine by going into exile as soon as the revolution broke out in 1789) faced a difficult task: the French people had been transformed by the French Revolution into free citizens, and society was based on merit, no longer on aristocratic birth. Besides, nobody likes a monarch imposed by foreign invaders. Louis XVIII prudently avoided any show of power; he is one of the rare French kings who avoided having the traditional coronation in Reims Cathedral.

The last two Bourbon rulers of France faced an impossible situation: they were puppets in a show of renascent monarchy, in a country where the audience had been changed forever. In reality **Louis XVIII's Charter of 1814** had to recognise the political, legal and civic rights created by the French Revolution and compounded by Napoleon Bonaparte, himself a man of 1789.

Yet this shallow masquerade was not sufficient to satisfy the general French population, while it outraged the political faction known as the Ultras, who constantly pressured Louis XVIII to reassert true absolutist monarchy, to restore the nobility to its old eminence, and above all to reconstitute the many noble properties that had been seized and sold during the French Revolution. The latter could never happen, and Louis XVIII could do no better than to declare that the properties could never be returned, and to set up a fund to compensate nobles for the property they had lost. He was succeeded by another royal brother, who less wisely tried to appease the Ultras, and published **the July Ordinance of 1830**, a retrograde attempt to return to the past, almost a royal coup d'état. Not a good move.

The Romantic Movement in Art and Literature

In France, as in Europe, the early 19th century was dominated by **the Romantic movement** in literature, music and art. Like all other art terms, this convenient label falls apart the moment one examines it closely. European Romanticism is deeply complex and varied.

In France, most people would most readily associate the movement with poets such as **Victor Hugo, Alphonse de Lamartine** and **Alfred de Vigny**, and, in the visual arts, with the painter, **Eugène Delacroix**.

From a personal point of view, I am also interested in an artist who was a precursor of Delacroix, one who did not live long enough to match the latter's career. This was **Théodore Géricault**. I had been fascinated in his work as early as 1975, but it was in 2015 that I came to the dreadful realisation that I did not actually *understand* what he was doing, what his work 'meant'. It took some more drilling down to discover that Géricault is the perfect example of an artist caught in the disjunction between one political epoch and another, and that this is what drove his work. Indeed, we can only make complete sense of him when we turn from his paintings to the political and social conditions in which they were created.

On the cusp of an epochal change in French art

Thus, greater sense can be made of Géricault if we situate him more broadly in the development of French art in **the post-Napoleonic era**. When the great army was finally and definitively halted in 1815, artists were deprived of both the monumental genre of the battle painting – a ready key to critical and financial success – as well as the stunning series of victories that had continuously produced new events and new situations to depict.

In this respect, we are using the word 'post-Napoleonic' as far more than a mere chronological indicator, but rather as **a socio-cultural one**: we must imagine the 1810s and 1820s as a sudden vacuum, caused by **historical changes** but also by

generational changes, as a new generation of young artists struggled to define what one could paint, apart from grandiose battle scenes.

Once we adopt this optic, the brevity of Géricault's career ceases to be an issue – although it remains a tragic loss – because his function was to provide a signpost in the haze of this cultural vacuum, and he was able to do so with one completely individual, incomparable monumental work. It does not matter that Géricault was not able to do other variants developing on *Le Radeau de la Méduse*, in the way that Delacroix would do in his series of monumental paintings on contemporary history: this one vast canvas tilted French art off into a completely new trajectory, rather like an earthquake creating a seismic shift in landmass.

The genre noir of Romanticism

Art historian Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer is rather more specific about one important aspect of early Romantic culture, namely, the so-called 'genre noir' of horror and suffering.

We are perhaps more familiar with the Romantic themes of a Delacroix, who certainly depicts violent action and human drama, but whose works are highly-coloured with rich, warm tones. Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, however, contends that there was another much darker strand of Romanticism, one that has received less attention. She refutes the idea that Géricault's dark themes and dark painting are solely the product of his reputedly morbid character. These themes were in the air, all around him, and he naturally imbibed them and essayed them in his own way.

For her, Géricault's works spring from:

“a specific cultural strand of Romanticism called frenetic or genre noir: the taste for the horrific, the macabre, the repulsive and the uncanny that invaded the blossoming mass culture of the restoration and was embraced by the Romantics in the 1820s and 1830s. Crime, sickness, abduction, rape, murder, the prison and the guillotine became favourite topics in art, literature and the theatre. English ‘Gothick’ tales with their mix of suspense, terror and magic, by Mary Shelley, Ann Radcliff and Matthew Gregory Lewis, were read avidly, and lurid plays called ‘melodramas’ brought the crowds at Le Boulevard du temple [...] A significant feature of that trend was its use of strategies of suspense, in which the ordinary or real was suddenly transformed by the intrusion of horrific or supernatural happenings. [...] Horror was in fashion and people from all walks of society delighted in it, from the sophisticated intellectual to the kitchen maid.” (Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, p. 118.)

This might be merely popular mass culture, but it was for this reason very pervasive and influential, a significant strand in contemporary sensibilities, meaning that Géricault's great work was by no means an unprecedented or startling individual manifesto of horror and suffering. It is easy to miss the importance of this strand of culture, simply because these popular works have generally not passed into the canon of great literature and, had they done so, modern readers would probably find the excessive melodrama unconvincing and ridiculous. We need to remember that Géricault lived and moved in a society in which, for some reason, horror was – as cultural historians like to put it - 'good to think with'. What he had done, though, was

to present a scene worthy of the stage of some popular theatre in a monumental painting, itself the key form of High Art, and to display it in that temple of High Art, the Paris Salon.

The political dimensions of Géricault's famous 'Raft of the Medusa'

The explanation provided above still locates horror scenes in the *aesthetics* only of Romanticism, but I was left with a feeling that there was still something missing. I slowly came to realise that Géricault's magisterial painting, ***The Raft of the Medusa***, depicting a tragic shipwreck episode, also had bite because of the political moment in which it was produced. Thus, we may well stand in front of the painting in the Louvre and be overwhelmed by its scale and horror, yet our modern eyes are just not 'seeing' *all* of what people at the time saw; we are only seeing the *visual text*, paint on canvas, not the *meta-text*.

The traditional sublime scene of storm or shipwreck did not previously usually have any textual or implied political dimension. Painters such as Claude Vernet were previously dramatising the brute forces of nature, not the follies of human society.

But this was to change in the years after the fundamental political changes that shook France after 1815. In essence, the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte's First Empire in 1815 did not merely change a political system, but caused a whole change of political personnel. Put simply, those who were *in* now generally found themselves *out*, and vice versa. The many brilliant administrators and officers who had helped build Napoleonic France now lost their leader, hence their influence and, in some cases, their careers. This was because the returning Bourbon kings – first Louis XVIII and then Charles X – often took appointments and gave them to supporters of royalty. The problem was, in the case of the army and the navy, that the royalist officers, who had been in exile during the French Revolution, had generally not had any recent experience of command; the outgoing Napoleonic officers, by contrast, had just seen a decade of active service, and were highly competent. Thus, people could rightly object that officers were being appointed not according to merit, but according to their noble birth.

The dangers of this situation were vividly demonstrated in the case of the French navy frigate 'Medusa'. It was only on a low-level operation – simply taking French passengers to Senegal to resume ownership of the trading posts there, after the treaties of 1815 had acknowledged France's original right to them.

As they approached the country now known as Mauritania, the ship ran aground on a *known and charted* sandbank and could not be moved. The ship only had six lifeboats – sufficient for only a small faction of the passengers – and so the lifeboats were joined in convoy, and towed a large raft that was hastily made for the purpose. When it became obvious that the convoy would take too long to reach land, the people on the lifeboats cut the ropes to the raft, leaving one hundred and fifty people to drift helplessly. Their sufferings lasted thirteen days, during which time all order and even humanity broke down: there was a mutiny against the officers, a massacre, suicides and even episodes of cannibalism. The physical sufferings were extreme, resulting in sunstroke, hallucinations, madness and some suicides. By the time the British brig

‘Argus’ arrived, only fifteen of the original one hundred and fifty were alive, and only ten of these survived the experience thereafter.

In ordinary times, such a disaster would naturally have resulted in questions about the captain’s training, actions and judgment. But in the atmosphere of resentment of the royalist return, the fact that this captain was a recently appointed returned royalist immediately led to the public perception that the disaster had happened because he was an inexperienced commander. The captain, Hugues Duroy de Chaumareys, was indeed a noble émigré who would have sat out the Napoleonic era in exile, and then returned promptly to France as soon as the return of the Bourbons was assured in 1815. It was believed that his lack of recent experience accounted for the grounding of the ship on the Arguin sandbar in *fully chartered waters* near Cap Blanc.

By February 1817, Chaumareys was put on trial and found guilty of incompetence. He was, however, merely given a quite light prison sentence. The trial also specifically raised the issue of the monarchy’s behavior in giving posts to returned émigrés, at the cost of losing existing leaders of proven capacity and competence. Public opinion was outraged. Naturally, the disgruntled Napoleonic officers were delighted to have an example of the perils of appointments by birth rather than merit and experience, and eagerly fanned the flames of public anger. In effect, this tragic accident at sea had become the burning focal point of liberal opposition to the returned Bourbon monarchy, and to the more general feeling that, after all the achievements of the French Revolution (1789-1799) and the Napoleonic era (1799-1815), France was slipping back to the old regime, under an unpopular Bourbon king who had been placed on the throne by the allies who had defeated Napoleon.

Late in 1817, the story received even more attention when two survivors, Savigny and Corréard, published their account of their experience, providing even more horrific details. In 1818, Corréard actually opened a bookshop in the Palais-Royal called ‘At the Survivor of the Raft of the Medusa’ and used it to sell pamphlets about the disaster, as well as other subversive writings by the liberal opposition. Corréard also sold some of Géricault’s more radical lithographs.

In 1819, he wrote to the two chambers of the legislature claiming that Chaumareys’ penalty was too light, and that he deserved a death sentence. Finally, he made public the fact that the slave trade was still continuing in Senegal and elsewhere, despite an official law banning it. Corréard and Savigny were both charged with subversion by the government, fined and jailed. They then became the focal point of a campaign by the liberal opposition to raise money for the survivors, which included the duc d’Orléans, General Bro, General Lafayette, the politician Benjamin Constant and the artists Eugène Delacroix.

Géricault must have read these accounts, and he also spoke in person to both men, either late in 1817 or early 1818. He must have conceptualized a gigantic painting of some sort by February 1818, when he purchased the five-by-seven metre canvas and hired a vast studio in the rue du Faubourg du Roule. There is no doubt that he was siding now with the liberal opposition, and that he knew that his painting would have an intense political meaning quite different to that of Napoleonic battle scenes. Indeed, his initial use of a quite general title – *Le Radeau de la ‘Méduse’* – suggests

that he was aware how very political this would be, and wanted to avert any censorship that might interfere with the display of the work.

* **Must visit:** A little-known museum in Paris is the **Eugene Delacroix Museum**, a small but exquisite museum in the centre of Paris, set in the artist's own house and, out back, his studio. It has a significant collection of works by Delacroix, and regularly hosts visiting exhibitions that bring in stupendous examples of his work. This physically small site packs a punch well above its weight...

* **Must visit:** There is also a **Museum of Romantic life**, a smaller collection based largely on literary exhibits.

* **Must read:** Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables* (English translation, Penguin Classics).

* **Must see (in the Louvre):** Géricault's '*Raft of the Medusa*'

The Revolution of 1830

There was by now a growing swell of criticism of the monarchy and a movement towards liberalism and democracy. The Bourbon monarchy responded by attacking opposition newspapers. Inevitably, protest led to repression – and to an accidental shooting - then in turn to revolutionary action, and the Parisian crowd expeditiously overthrew the monarchy in the so-called Three Glorious Days. King Charles X unexpectedly fled France. By now, the revolutionary crowd was well and truly ready to return to a republic (the First Republic had been during the French Revolution, from 1792 onwards). By a sleight of hand, however, a prince of another branch of the French royal family, the Orléans, King Louis-Philippe, managed to take power, proclaiming that he would be a new type of 'liberal' monarch, as opposed to the repressive Bourbons.

The government was now a **constitutional monarchy** and, admittedly, based on a **quite broad, albeit property-based, electorate**. He also granted a **Charter** guaranteeing certain democratic freedoms. He also appeared, initially, sympathetic to measures to help working people, including the veterans wounded in the fighting of July 1830. Nonetheless, disenchantment rapidly grew, and erupted in the abortive **Revolt of 1832** (romanticised in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and, more recently, by the musical of the same name). By the 1840s, there was a very substantial democratic/republican/socialist opposition, which only led Louis-Philippe to become more overtly repressive.

The July Monarchy, 1830-1848

The July Monarchy is one of the most mocked and derided of France's monarchies. Louis-Philippe eschewed the royal grandeur of the Bourbons, naming himself King of the French (instead of King of France) and styling himself as the Citizen King, often strolling the street of Paris with an umbrella tucked under his arm. The regime was a constitutional monarchy, supposedly of a liberal persuasion. **The term *juste milieu*** was used to give the impression that this was a most sensible 'middle road' between the old ultra-conservative monarchy and the radicals on the left of politics. In truth, Louis-Philippe juggled a centre-left faction and a centre-right faction, the latter led by **François Guizot**. By the 1840s, the right faction was entrenched in power, and could therefore enforce the conservative idea that political participation should be restricted to those who owned substantial property. Dreams of a liberal monarchy evaporated, and France became frankly and blatantly a regime of landlords.

Socially, the period was seen as **the apogee of the French bourgeoisie**, and a renaissance too for former Napoleonic notables, who had until now been frozen out under the restored Bourbon kings. The dominant politician, the wily Francois Guizot, urged his compatriots to “Enrich yourselves”, and they did. France prospered – with an economic growth rate of 3.5% per annum in the 1840s - partly because Louis-Philippe cultivated trade relations with England, partly because he acquired **Algeria as a colony**. On the face of it, France seemed to be developing: its infant railway network grew to some 1,850 kilometres, substantially reducing provincial isolation. (This would have real impacts not only on society but on the arts: landscape painters now discovered that they could travel quickly by train to remote rural regions, and could carry their equipment on the new trains. Later, the entire Impressionist movement was facilitated by virtue of this facility).

France was by now experiencing the sort of **Industrial Revolution** such as Britain had experienced in the 18th century. Accordingly, it also experienced increasing levels of poverty, indigence and destitution. In particular, the rural-urban population exodus increased the number and severity of the unemployed. Those who were employed worked for 10-12 hours per day, and earned 20 centimes per diem. According to registration records, France had 250,000 beggars, but there were probably many more.

A government of wealthy landlords is not likely to have a strong social conscience, and this one certainly did not: it passed virtually no social welfare legislation except some watery laws on child labour, which were never in any case enforced. The spectacle of increased poverty did, however, spark the imagination of humanitarian theorists, and the 1840s saw a flourishing of liberal thought – some of its seeking socialist alternatives or at least co-operative social groupings and communities – by the likes of **Saint-Simon** and **Fourier**. Others, such as **Blanqui**, thought more actively of socialist revolution, while **Proudhon** went so far as to conceive the theory of **anarchism** (not chaos, as in popular usage, but citizens who live freely and reasonably with a complete absence of any form of government).

In literature and the arts, the Romantic movement reached its full development, but as the 1840s progressed some visual artists also began to turn their attention to social themes related to poverty; **the Realist movement** was just over the horizon. Others, such as **Henri Murger**, sought refuge in the Bohemian Movement, cultivating a disdain for the triumphant bourgeoisie (from which they actually came) and cultivating an ostentatious poverty (which was always comfortably underwritten by moneys from middle-class mummies and daddies, so nobody ever *really* went hungry). In one sense, this was all posturing, but it did produce a counter-ideology to the dominant one of ostentations wealth and possession. The gentle hippies of the 1960s were not the first to (pretend to) ‘drop out’ ...

* **Must read:** Henri Murger, *Scenes of Bohemian Life* (1849-1851).

The Revolution of 1848

The liberal opposition movement had by this stage noticed that it was not technically illegal, under the July Monarchy, to hold banquets in public streets, so they organised a series of **massive banquet/meetings** where their liberal political

ideas were delivered in the form of toasts and speeches. The July Monarchy was finally overthrown in the **Revolution of February 1848**. A Provisional Government was formed, which set up the Second Republic (the first having been during the French Revolution.) It was riven, however, between the moderates who only envisioned political reform, and the radicals who envisaged social reform, notably, social services and National Workshops (work for the dole, in modern terms).

By April-May 1848, the radical workers had come to feel that this republic had not served them – especially when they demanded social welfare measures such as National Workshops – and in **June 1848** staged their own rebellion, using barricades in the narrow streets of Paris. This was crushed by the republic's forces of order. The Republic's troops used cannon to smash the barricade to splinters, with murderous results. One painting by **Ernest Meissonnier**, *The Barricade (Louvre)* captures a glimpse of the resultant carnage. Meissonnier himself was one of the responsible citizens who donned a uniform to defend order and fired the cannon that shredded the workers whom he here depicts

* **Must read:** Gustave Flaubert, *A Sentimental Education* (English translation, Penguin Classics)

The Second Republic, 1848-1851

The Second Republic was a republic based on **universal male suffrage**; the French were almost the last to get their minds around female suffrage, not establishing it until 1940 (!) After the 'fright' of radical revolution in June 1848, the propertied classes looked for reassurance. At this point, one **Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte** appeared on the scene and, riding a crest of popularity in the wake of his alleged forebear, was elected President of the Republic. Constitutionally, however, he was only allowed one term of office and – with his eyes on greater glory – began to plan a coup d'état. In **December 1851**, he declared the republic suspended.

The Second Empire, 1851-1870

The Second Empire was, for some time, one of the most maligned regimes in French history, partly because later republicans castigated it, moralistically, as a 'carnival empire'. Similarly, Napoleon III has been mocked, especially for the disastrous episode with **Emperor Maximilian of Mexico**, not to mention his final catastrophic decision to go to war against a militaristic **Prussia**. Others, with an antiquarian nostalgia for the old Paris that was torn down under Napoleon III's orders, reproached him with the creation of a more sterile, regimented and regulated urban fabric.

More recently, historians have revised their views of Napoleon III. They acknowledge, in particular, that his grandiose plan to rebuild Paris – though aesthetically unpleasing – did convert the city into a capital that would be able to function in the modern world. These historians would argue that Napoleon III understood the implications of the Industrial Revolution – which in France began in the 1840s – and realised that he needed to create a modern capital city capable of sustaining a modernising society.

The imperial court of the Second Empire did, admittedly, attract some people with the most dubious and fanciful nobles titles, but this was because Napoleon III was obliged to convene whatever glittering court society he could manage, given that the ancient French Bourbon nobility tended to boycott the newcomer, as did even some of the more recent Orleanist nobility. Continuing the tradition of the former kings, Napoleon III carefully created propaganda paintings to commemorate scenes demonstrating his international prestige, such as the visit of Queen Victoria to Paris, or the arrival of Siamese ambassadors at court.

The rebuilding of Paris under Baron Haussmann, 1852-1870

This was the vast program of **urban renewal** undertaken by the command of Napoleon III, and carried out by his **Prefect of Paris, Baron George Haussmann**, between 1852 and 1870. It is difficult, now, fully to understand the massive scale and excoriating nature of the onslaught on the fabric of the city. There are also different theories as to why Napoleon III chose to implement this plan. Some historians have suggested that his aim was **primarily military**, in order to control the ever-restive and radical city of Paris, whose radicalism had previously forced Louis XIV to flee to the safety of Versailles. Others have suggested that Napoleon III was in dire need of **political prestige**, given that he did not have his predecessor's flair for glory based on military conquest. Others have seen the influence of new medical and scientific discourses, such as **the hygienist movement**, which saw the city in terms of a body that had to be cleansed of its waste. These ideas of urban renewal and re-ordering were not entirely new – the first efforts had been made much earlier, under King Henri IV and Louis XIV, when hygienist ideas prompted the removal of the houses that used to crowd the bridges of Paris – but it was their sheer scale that set this new program quite apart. The result was the creation of the modern Paris we know today. For some critics, this came at the cost of losing the beautiful old suburbs of an essentially medieval Paris, as seen in the atmospheric and sensitive photographs of **Charles Marville**. For its supporters, the vast campaign freed the city of impediments that would have choked its further development. And for the artists of the time, such as **Gustave Caillebotte** and **Claude Monet**, the new, regulation balconies of Haussmann's Paris afforded them the first novel views of the metropolis, seen from above, inspiring bold new developments in the emerging Impressionist movement. Such was 'the shock of the new' that, when Caillebotte painted a perfectly accurate view of a tree seen from above, from a balcony, the critics declared that he must be insane. Thus, new urban spaces, such as the regulation balconies, actually pump-fed artistic developments.

* **Must read:** Emile Zola, *The Hunt* (English translation, Penguin Classics)

The Realist Movement in Art and Literature

All art movement terms tend ultimately to be problematic, and Realism is no exception. It is generally dated to the middle decades of the century, but then we find instances of realism earlier in the century, as well as later. It is most usually associated with the career of **Gustave Courbet** – who at least applied the term to himself, giving it some validity – but he did not create a 'school' of close followers. Art historian Linda Nochlin suggests that there were two stages of Realism: one was

the **socially-conscious protest art** of **Honoré Daumier** and **Gustave Courbet**, implicitly sympathetic to working people and outraged by political repression and social injustice. The second stage was a more **dispassionate, stylish, detached view of modern city life as a spectacle**, as recorded by **Edgar Degas** and **Edouard Manet**. This is sometimes described as **flâneur realism**; in French culture, ‘flâneur’ literally means ‘the stroller’, but it has the deeper implication that the creative artist prowls through the city, dispassionately observing its life, but remaining detached, apart from and rather above it. Once again, even this label falls apart in our hands: both of these artists *did* immerse themselves in the life of the city, believing in Baudelaire’s credo of the ‘**heroism of modern life**’, and yet a painting of a figure by Degas or Manet can also be adopted from a figure in an Old Master painting in the Louvre, such as Rembrandt.

Indeed, it is almost more useful to forget the broadbrush art-book generalisations, and to look at specific, defined groups, such as **the Café Guerbois group** – important precursors of the better-known Impressionists, and contemporary concepts such as the Heroism of Modern Life.

In the year 1846, the poet and art critic Charles Baudelaire wrote a truly visionary essay titled *The Heroism of Modern Life*. He wrote “*The nude – that darling of the artists, that necessary element of success – is just as frequent and necessary today as it was in the life of the ancients; in bed, for example, or in the bath, or in the anatomy theatre. The themes and resources of painting are equally abundant and varied; but there is a new element – modern beauty.*” (*Salon of 1846*).

In it, he urged French painters of his century to avoid traditional themes from ancient history and the bible, and to paint scenes from the modern city around them. His suggestions were realised during the 1850s and 1860s by realist painters such as Gustave Courbet, and then by a fascinating group known only by the name of the café where they met: **The Café Guerbois Group**. This included **Edouard Manet** and **Edgar Degas**, as well as a host of less well-known painters such as **Henri Fantin-Latour** and **Alfred Stevens**. These painters were at the cutting edge of what we now term of the ‘modernist’ movement.

Edgar Degas is arguably the least understood of these painters: his name is most associated with the glittering images of ballet dancers that dominate his work, and which can seem to be merely pretty. They are reproduced everywhere, they are often the first work by Degas that young people see and love, and they are undeniably beautiful. And yet even these images were a part of Degas’ campaign to embrace the ‘heroism’ of modern Parisian life, for the Paris Opera was the scene of exploitative sexual commerce rather than of high art. The mothers whom Degas depicts waiting upon their dancing daughters were not there to prevent them from selling their bodies, but rather to ensure that they got a good price.

In literature, Realism is superbly represented by **Gustave Flaubert**, whose masterpiece is the novel *Madame Bovary*, evoking, with deadly acute observation, the society of a small French town, and the tragic story of a Romantic young woman who seeks romance, with disastrous results. Flaubert’s sensuous writing about sexual pleasure led to the book being condemned in the courts.

* **Must read:** Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* (English translation, Penguin Classics)

The Franco-Prussian War, 1870

Emperor Napoleon III, attempting to embark upon the path of military glory associated with his uncle, unwisely declared war on the emerging new nation soon to be named Germany, which was guided by the redoubtable statesman **Otto von Bismarck**. It was a conflict desired by both statesmen: Bismarck saw it as a useful way of furthering the unification of the German states, while Napoleon III saw it as a way of restoring his declining political popularity in France.

Napoleon III had calculated that the French army could defeat the Prussian army. His judgment in this matter is as incomprehensible as it was to be disastrous. The signs were bad from the start. The Empress had encouraged Napoleon III to assume a glorious personal command and yet, seriously ill with kidney stones, he could barely ride a horse. The French forces mobilised more slowly than the Prussian army, and advanced slowly, while the Prussians made superb use of an efficient railway network. The French military plan was outdated, and some generals proceeded without even adequate maps.

The French army itself was largely made up of poor peasants, who had been paid to stand in for wealthier citizens who could legally avoid conscription in this manner. Within weeks, the French army had suffered the shock of contact with the far superior Prussian army.

By August 1870, the Prussians had divided and isolated the French forces into two groups. With stunning speed, they defeated the Emperor's army at **Sedan on 2 September 1870**. The Emperor surrendered personally, amidst 84,000 French troops who were so disgusted with him that they turned their backs on him as a traditional military sign of disgrace.

The Paris Commune (Revolution), 1871

By 3 September 1871, the people of Paris had heard the shocking news of defeat, and instinctively gathered to demand a republic; on 4 September, the crowd, led by National Guards, broke into the National Assembly (parliament) building and prepared to declare a republic. Some moderate republicans, Jules Ferry and Jules Favre, managed to redirect the crowd to the Paris Town Hall – the traditional focus of revolutionary events – where another crowd was already greeting more radical republicans, such as **Leon Gambetta**.

Historian Charles Sowerwine makes the point that the men who stepped forward to assume control – the so-called **Government of National Defence** – nominally accepted a republic, but were otherwise fairly conservative in their outlook; one of them, General Trochu, was actually a monarchist. Only Leon Gambetta was a true radical, and he was to have limited influence.

They also accepted the task of trying to defend Paris against the advancing Germans. This too was a hollow conviction, and they did so solely because the popular movement of working people wanted to pursue the defence of Paris.

By October, the new government had troops in the field again but the officers commanding them were convinced that they were fighting a hopeless battle. Shortly after this (31 October), the government secretly asked the Prussians for peace terms, but when this became known the Parisian crowd erupted into rebellion.

The Prussian army arrived at Paris on 18 September 1871. The German siege was of supplies, not people. They let people leave Paris, with the effect that well-to-do citizens simply left for a quiet stay at their country residences. On occasions, people could also enter Paris. The blockade was on food supplies.

Meanwhile, France was slipping into the coldest winter in memory. The new government made the disastrous mistake of allowing food to be sold, rather than rationed, so the rich could eat quite well. Men in the National Guard got adequate food supplies. Women and children did not, and were threatened by starvation. Prices skyrocketed. The Parisians killed and ate all livestock in the city, then they killed the cart horses, then they slaughtered the elephants and tigers in the zoo, and then descended to eating cats, dogs and finally rats.

Gradually, **political clubs** sprang up, and the idea of a revolutionary uprising emerged. As early as January 1871, one club had warned people to make way for a revolutionary government that would be called **The Commune**.

France finally signed **an armistice in January 1871**, which allowed the French to elect a new government in February and proceed to formalise the end of the war. The elections were now done on the basis of 'universal suffrage', but applied only to men. They allowed the vast mass of provincial voters to overwhelm the more radical sentiments of the Parisians: the elections returned a very conservative assembly of 750 deputies, of whom 400 were monarchists, and only 200 were republicans, many of them quite moderate.

The wily old politician **Adolphe Thiers** was given the ambiguous title of **Head of the Executive Power**. While Paris seethed with radicalism, the French nation, stunned by the shock of defeat, put its faith in one of the most conservative governments ever elected. This assembly signed the humiliating truce with Prussia (26 February 1871), losing **the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine**, agreeing to pay **5 billion gold francs**, and allowing Prussian troops to parade through Paris.

During February and March, Parisians watched in dismay as Prussian troops paraded triumphantly through the city. Worse, the new government, fearing the radicalism of Paris, moved out to Versailles, for exactly the same reason as the French monarchy had done.

The flashpoint came when the new government decided it was time to break the power of the radical battalions of **National Guardsmen**, first cutting off their pay, and then trying to disarm them. In particular, Thiers wanted to seize their cannon. The radical National Guards has already seized a number of pieces of artillery, many of

which were now mustered in **Montmartre**, a point from which they could have bombarded the wealthy parts of the city.

On 17 March, his troops tried to stage lightning raids on Montmartre and other locations. In Montmartre, Louise Michel and other revolutionary women discovered the plan, and raised the alarm. Radical Guardsmen streamed out to defend their cannon. Historian Charles Sowerwine recounts how cleverly the women of Montmartre befriended the wretched soldiers, chatting with them and offering them food. By the time Thier's General (Lecomte) tried to order his men to shoot, they simply turned their rifles upside down – a sign of refusal – and the Guardsmen then captured the general. His own troops, now well-regaled on food, wine and friendship, simply cheered as he was led off.

When news of this spread, two things happened. First, the people of Paris began quietly and efficiently taking over the city, using techniques of insurrection perfected over many successive revolutions. At the same time, **General Lecomte's army** started to dissolve. When he tried to call out the 'reliable' National Guard battalions, only 500 troops reported for duty, and even they were in no mood to shoot at the crowd. By the afternoon of the same day, the government was panicking at the sight of demonstrations, and Thiers quickly ordered his government to flee Paris for Versailles. By the late afternoon, the crowd was taking violent action: they shot General Lecomte, and also executed General Clement Thomas, an officer who had previously led the brutal repression of revolution in June 1848. By evening, the revolutionaries had occupied the Town Hall and the Police Headquarters.

On 26 March, the people of Paris voted for a government to be called The Commune. By now, many members of the bourgeoisie had prudently left Paris; those who stayed, simply stayed inside. The working people of Paris now dominated the city, and they dominated the elections. Professor Sowerwine sees the government as being called generically 'republican', but as containing a heady mix of revolutionary ideals. Twenty-eight of them were members of **the Communist Internationale**. Some even called themselves **Jacobins**.

The Commune was duly proclaimed on 28 March. It would last only 54 days, but it would prove to be crucial in French history. Now, as in 1848, a group of radicals tried to explore what could be done with the idea of a 'social' republic. Karl Marx, observing from afar, saw it as a first model of a dictatorship of the proletariat, thus starting a debate that continues to rage this day: was the Commune the first great proletarian revolution in Marxist terms, or were its social dimensions more subtle than that?

The propertied classes tended to detest this government of workers. If anything, they detested even more a situation in which women engaged in political activism. Leaders such as **Elizabeth Dmtrieff**, and her **Union of Women for the Defence of Paris**, horrified conservative observers, because their activism broke all the gender rules about women's role in society. Women also organised some 43 co-operatives, for example, making cartridges for the war effort.

The Prussian army besieged Paris itself, and started pounding it with cannon located on the hilltops around the city. In the government, the propertied classes were

generally in favour of making peace with the Prussians, partly to avoid further human loss, but also to avoid massive damage to the city and destruction of valuable real estate... theirs. The working people of Paris, however, were patriotic, and wanted to continue fighting the invaders. In due course, they rose in revolt and declare a revolutionary commune. Confronted by worker radicalism, much of the propertied class fled Paris, either for the provinces or for nearby Versailles. There, the conservative politician Thiers formed an emergency government, rallied the French army, and prepared to retake Paris by force. In the ensuing battle, some 30,000 workers died. Only a small proportion of those actually died, however, gun in hand, in active rebellion. The vast majority died by summary and unnecessary execution in the ensuing slaughter known as '**Bloody Week**', as government troops carried out mass murders in the streets of Paris just to show the workers who was in charge. These were arbitrary executions: a squad of soldiers would arrest any worker they found, ask him or her to account for themselves; they also inspected hands to look for black stains left by gunpowder. If found, such stains were deemed proof positive that that worker had engaged in rebellion, and they were put against a wall and shot without further trial. This was particularly deadly for innocent workers from the printing industries (hands stained black by ink) and from the engineering industries (hands stained black by sump oil.) One final mass slaughter occurred in Père Lachaise Cemetery, where the remaining workers were gunned down in front of a wall called the Wall of the Confederates. For years, this place was contested: when a left-wing government was in power, a commemorative plaque was placed on the wall; when a right-wing government was in power, it was again taken down. The site remains Holy Ground for all those on the left, from republicans to socialists and communists in France.

The Third Republic, 1870-1940

After the psychic shock of 1871, the French nation sank into a profound state of conservatism. A 'republic' was declared, but it was really designed only as a house of cards, to last for a few months while a monarchist restoration was planned. When elections were held, there was a massive pendulum swing to the right, partly from a fearful provincial France terrified by the **Red Spectre of the Paris Commune**. Suddenly, everybody was nominally a 'republican', but never have so many 'republicans' been so utterly indifferent to democratic ideals. Most ran for office as republicans with the fierce cynicism that power would soon be back in the hands of the kings and those who supported them. Meanwhile, the real republicans suffered electoral eclipse: they were reviled and blamed for the disaster of 1871. Strangely, the **monarchist Restoration** was delayed: there were two candidates, and they immediately fell out over profound issues such as whether the colour of the French flag should revert to white or not. The delay proved fatal to them. The '**true republicans**' worked hard to claw back electoral success, and step by step began to win municipal elections and then even some national elections. By about 1879-1880, they had capitalised on the monarchists' delay, dominated national elections, and turned the house of cards into a true republic, dubbed '**the republic of republicans**'. It was not just that they were politically democratic; they were also socially savvy. Having seen the worst of class warfare, this generation of politicians and also of France's industrialists had realized that they needed to forge a regime that could draw the rebellious workers into a peaceful society in synthesis with the propertied classes.

This was, in a sense, **the Golden Age of republicanism in France**. The First Republic (during the French Revolution) had been blighted by the crisis of war and counter-revolution, and expended a great deal of its effort on the horrific process of the Terror. The Second Republic had attempted social welfare, but had split and foundered over this very issue. But by the 1880s, the French propertied classes had matured, sobered by the threat of both socialist revolution on the left, and by the threat of militarist counter-revolution from the right (the so-called **Boulangier Affair**, a pathetic grab for power by a two-bit would-be-Bonaparte). He failed, and ended up shooting himself on the grave of his mistress, but the farcical attempt did prove that a military leader could still whip up a crowd.

First came a series of **Symbolic Acts**, whereby the Third Republic tried to signal that it wanted peace with working people. There was no need – the Republic argued - to follow socialism on the left or militarism on the right if, in the middle, there was the option of the Benevolent Republic. The acts were symbolic, but potent. Previously, the celebration of the true **Bastille Day** (14 July) had been banned, replaced by a meaningless 30 June National Holiday, meaning nothing. Now, the Republic reinstated Bastille Day, and even celebrated its centenary at the Universal Exposition of 1889 with a vast model of the Bastille. Previously, one could be arrested for singing the revolutionary song, **the Marseillaise**; now it became the national anthem. Previously, places of popular entertainment were strictly policed to avoid their becoming places of sedition; now they were liberated, and the benevolent Republic urged workers to be festive at their ease.

But symbolic acts remain slender if **real social legislation** does not occur. This was the moment when dreamers became visionaries. Under the leadership of **Jules Ferry**, a generation of inspired young republicans implemented a massive transformation of the education system, creating **free, universal, compulsory and secular primary education for every child in France**. Young men and especially women became the new generation of schoolteachers of the Republic. Jules Ferry stipulated every physical detail of the new schools: they must have lavabos with clean running water, they must have windows of minimum dimensions. Children would not be whipped into submission to learn obscure Latin, but encouraged to explore the world of learning and to draw their own conclusions. Within a generation, every child in France had received an intelligent primary education in good conditions, this being a more profound revolution – in terms of empowering the disempowered – than all the barricades and battles one might dream of. Other social welfare included the similar setting up of **government regulated clinics for infants**. No Communist Manifesto here, no Dictatorship of the Proletariat, but fewer children in poor families died of completely preventable diseases.

The picture was not completely rosy, however. In the 1890s and 1900s, the Third Republic embarked upon a new program to secularise the state, by breaking down the influence of the Catholic Church. Republicans may well still sympathise with this today – in Australia we have the full separation of Church and State – and yet even the most secular cannot deny the devastating impact upon the Catholic clergy of these reforms, which had to be carried by force.

The Birth of Impressionism, 1860s-1870s

Many people would claim the Impressionists as their favourite group of painters. The works of Monet, Renoir, Pissarro and Sisley are well known. There are, however, other painters who richly deserve our attention. One precursor of the movement was **Eugène Boudin**, who painted splendid *plein-air* works (ie works painted in the open air, not the studio) of the Normandy Beaches. Another was **Johann Bathold Jongkind**, whose example similarly inspired the young Impressionists. One of the actual Impressionist group, **Frédéric Bazille**, is less well-known, simply because his career was so short: he died in the Franco-Prussian War. His surviving works are tantalising, because they bespeak a truly wonderful talent, and we can only imagine what more he might have contributed to the Impressionist movement had he lived. Possibly one of the most under-rated of the Impressionists is **Berthe Morisot**, who seems to be relegated – absurdly – to a special subsection labelled ‘women Impressionists’... which presumably means ‘not really a real Impressionist’. Her painterly skill is astonishing: she paints with absolute assurance and brio, in bold strokes of paint that seem so free that they might fall off the canvas. For my money, she is more technically proficient than the ever-popular Renoir, some of whose work is also loose, but quite sloppy. A significant corpus of Morisot’s work can be seen usefully gathered in one place at the **Marmottan Museum**.

It was Camille Pissarro who turned his attention to organising the business aspect of painting and, in doing so, launched the movement. He had met **the art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel** in London in 1871, and had achieved a few sales with the paint-dealer Pere Tanguy in 1872. By 1873, he had also attracted some private collectors, both in the world of the arts, such as the singer Faure, and in the business world, such as the merchant Albert. He enjoyed dealings with the critic Duret, who introduced him to the novel influence of **the Japanese woodblock print**, and who also bought some of his works. This was a promising start, but it was not enough. By 1874, Pissarro saw five works bought at the substantial sum of 1,850 francs by a dealer; yet, at the same time, the dealer Durand-Ruel announced that he would not buy any more paintings due to an economic recession in France.

Pissarro also began to reflect on the actual business structure of the art world. The influential landscapist Daubigny had commented to him that the restrictive policies of **the Salon jury** (an official body which only admitted paintings in the approved academic style, and blocked any paintings in an avant-garde style) were simply absurd, and Claude Monet had worked with him to imagine how the art world might be changed if painters formed **a co-operative society**, like a traditional trade guild, to make common cause in the business of exhibiting and selling art.

By the 1870s, Camille Pissarro was becoming an organiser and a facilitator for the Impressionist movement, recommending friends such as Cézanne to art critics and to private collectors. As Gerard Vaughan notes, he was the member who held the Impressionist movement together, and the only one to exhibit at all eight exhibitions. He also played a significant role in the exhibition that led to the historical birth and critical acceptance of the Impressionist movement.

Late in 1872, Pissarro, Degas and Monet began to consider a bold plan to hold a **group exhibition** that would be totally discrete from the annual government-run Paris Salon (art exhibition). Far from being the ‘refused ones’ from the Salon, it would be the artists who would refuse the Salon system and show that they could go it alone.

The best account of this new form of institutional rebellion has been given recently by art historian Jane Mayo Roos, in her study *Early Impressionism and the French state, 1866- 1874*.

The Société Anonyme was constituted as an artists' co-operative in December 1873, and their first group exhibition opened in April 1874 (to May 1874) in the studio of the photographer Nadar at 35 the Boulevard des Capucines.

Everything about the exhibition showed how shrewd these artists were becoming in out-manoeuvring the art establishment: for example, the opening date was two weeks *before* the opening of the official Paris Salon, when the Jury was only just announcing its decisions, and so it was perfectly clear that this was not the traditional Salon of Refused Works. They also understood the importance of feeding information to the press at just the right moment: the newspapers would be starting to print articles about the coming Salon, so interest in art would be high, but as yet the Salon choice could not dominate their columns, and so the Society gained a lot of press coverage. This would be the first of eight Impressionist exhibitions, each of which gave new challenge to the art establishment and new formulation of the direction, and the decline, of the movement. These are the milestones of the movement's development, and I should mention that they have been properly studied thanks to the work of art historian Charles Moffett, who gathered as many paintings as he could to reconstruct the contents of these exhibitions in a modern exhibition held at the National Gallery of art in Washington in 1986. The catalogue *The New Painting, Impressionism 1874-1886*, remains one of the best references on the subject, reproducing the catalogues of each exhibition and quoting a number of critical reviews of each painting.

This **First Impressionist Exhibition** included 30 artists, about 165 works, spread through the seven rooms on the upper floors of the building. Technically, the exhibition was a triumph, and even opponents had to admit that Nadar's careful creation of a good exhibition space for his photographs worked well for paintings too. The exhibition cheekily mimicked the Salon by having a background of dark red fabric, but it flouted the Salon by hanging the works much more respectfully, in just two rows, so each work could be considered in itself, not amidst the dizzying jigsaw puzzle of the annual Salon. It was a large exhibition, but at the same time it was intimate, and some critics felt that they this was like viewing a private collection in a collector's home or private studio. This was quite a challenge to the Salon: in 6 weeks, the Salon might welcome several hundred thousand visitors; this exhibition ran for four weeks, and took in just 3,500 visitors, or about 100 a day. This became the organizational motor of the Impressionist movement.

* **Must read:** Pierre Assouline, *Discovering Impressionism. The Life of Paul Durand-Ruel* (New York: The Vendome Press, 2004)

* **Must read:** Ross King, *The Judgement of Paris. Manet, Meissonnier and an artistic revolution* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2006).

The entre deux guerres, 1919-1939

The interwar period in France continued the tumultuous tenor of French history. France came out of World War I an exhausted nation, having borne the brunt of much of the fighting on its own territory. It had lost 1,300,000 men, about one tenth of its male population, leaving 600,000 widows. Another 300,000 men were classified

as ‘mutilated’, that is, unable to work. Then there were the ‘men with broken faces’, those who had suffered horrific injury that surgery could not repair. France’s sculptors were called upon to turn their craft to making prosthetic faces to repair those of men whose faces had been ripped off by high explosives and shrapnel. Meanwhile, the former battlegrounds became the sites of a lingering torment, as fathers, mothers, wives and girlfriends walked, like lost souls, from one village to another, looking at tables laid out with items found by villagers in the mud, hoping to find closure by recovering an identifiable personal item. For many, there would be no such closure.

Demographically, France suffered a definite population anomaly – the opposite of a baby boom - referred to by the French as *les classes creuses* (the hollow generations): the absence of men from 1914-1918 led to a severe dip in the birth rate, and this was continued when so many men failed to return.

Financially, France was exhausted: the cost of fighting a modern industrial war had consumed sixteen times the normal national budget of the pre-war years. Not surprisingly, George Clemenceau would demand crushing reparations from Germany at the negotiations of the Treaty of Versailles.

Politically, France became polarised: on the left, a radical worker movement had revived, leading to strikes and socialist agitation, while an alarmed right wing raised the spectre of Bolshevik revolution in France. The result was the most heavily right-wing regime for some time, with Presidents Deschanel and then Millerand guiding the National Bloc to political dominance. **Economically**, however, France appeared to have recovered by the mid-1920s.

In 1936, the unexpected victory of **The Popular Front** introduced a whole new dimension into French politics. A coalition of three left-wing parties would seem perfectly logical to our eyes, but in the France of the 1930s a coalition of Socialists, Communists and the so-called Radical Republicans, led by Léon Bum, was almost undreamt-of. What is more, the coalition lasted long enough to start a program of genuine social reform. After a massive general strike by workers from May to June 1936, the new regime came to the table with the famous **Matignon Accords**, which were arguably one of the most important rafts of social legislation in French history. In a mood perhaps similar to that of Australia during the innovative Whitlam Era, leaders such as the socialist Pivert could proclaim “*Everything is possible from now on.*” The **Trades Union** were given greater legal rights and protection. All workers were guaranteed **two weeks paid annual leave** and, for the first time, laboring people could enjoy the luxury of recreational travel, hitherto reserved to the wealthy middle classes. It is true that the project was finally brought to a halt, partly by defensive actions by industrialists who moved their funds offshore, partly by obstruction in a conservative-dominated upper house. Of course, the episode had thoroughly frightened France’s right-wing and conservative forces, and there would in due course be a counter-reaction.

The Mad Years: Modern Art, 1900-1939

The early decades of the 20th century were the heyday of European modernism, and Paris was one of its epicentres. These modernists are not referred to as ‘the French School’, but as ‘the School of Paris’, in recognition of the fact that French artists were

quickly joined by many others from foreign nations: Picasso from Spain, Modigliani from Italy, Lipchitz from Russia and so on. In addition, many Americans found in Paris a haven from the relative conformism of their own country, and relished in the lively artistic and literary life of the capital. This created a superheated artistic atmosphere in which the pace of artistic development seemed to quicken: exhibitions of works by post-impressionists such as Gauguin and van Gogh inspired the Fauves (Matisse, early Braque, Camoin, Manguin, Derain) to use broad brushwork and strong, non-naturalistic colours. Exhibitions of the works of Cézanne in turn inspired the Cubists (Picasso, Braque, de la Fresnaye, Gris et. al. to violate the whole tradition of western three-dimensional illusionism and to fragment and diffract forms. The rapid speeding up of the pace of modern life inspired the Orphists (Robert Delaunay, Sonia Delaunay) to create dynamic semi-abstract and then abstract compositions in lyrical colours. The psychic shock of World War I was also registered in culture in the subsequent Dada movement (Duchamp, Picabia, early Ernst) which went much further and aimed to destroy the very idea of art whilst, paradoxically, still creating new art forms to proclaim the end of art. This movement subsequently morphed into the Surrealist movement (Dali, Miro, Ernst) in painting, paired with the Surrealist movement in literature (Paul Eluard, André Breton, Philippe Soupault), with Breton also providing the manifestoes that articulated the theoretical underpinnings of their movement. In essence, they hoped to access the subconscious levels of the human mind through the exploitation of dreams and visions; again, paradoxically, their art was a self-contradicting tautology, given that one must actually be conscious to create a work of art manually. There were extraordinary explosions of creativity and innovation all round: **Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes** came to Paris – despite their name, they never actually performed in Russia – and drew on all these strands of modernism to create some of the most extraordinary costumes and stage sets the theatre world has ever seen. Another hub of creativity was **the Shakespeare and Company Bookshop** opened by the American Sylvia Beach, who would in due course help James Joyce publish his extraordinary novel *Ulysses*. A distant cousin of that famous bookshop can still be visited in Paris today.

These decades were later overshadowed by **the Great Depression** (1930 onwards) and by **the rise of Fascism in Europe**. War was declared in 1939, only to be followed by the '**Drôle de Guerre**' (the 'Phoney War') when, for a time, hostilities seemed not to begin. In 1940, however, Hitler's forces smashed through French defences using **blitzkrieg tactics** ('Lightning War'), simply bypassing France's mighty linear fortress, the Maginot Line. One young officer had tried to warn the generals that the fighting would take this form, and that they needed to mass heavy tanks and vehicles along the frontier with Germany, but had been duly reprimanded for presuming to tell his superiors how to fight a war. Thus it was that **Charles de Gaulle** watched in despair as his men fought bravely, only to be decimated by the very tactics he had correctly predicted.

The Vichy Regime, 1940-1945 - Acknowledging the French Holocaust

It is often said that history is written by the victors. In the case of France, this is certainly so, especially in the tragic story of **the Vichy regime**. This was a French government that was established after Hitler's forces had invaded France in 1940. The Nazis occupied Paris and the north of France (for its industrial base in the northern

towns), but allowed the southern part of France to be ruled by an interim French government, at least for a few years. The name of the regime derives from that of the town in which it met, Vichy. The hero of the First World War, **Marshall Pétain**, stepped up to the plate to head this government, claiming: "*Having failed to be the sword of France, I can only now try to be its shield.*" A noble sentiment, perhaps, but the brutal truth was that right-wing forces amongst the nationalists and some elements of the high clergy of the Catholic Church relished the collaboration, and set about building their own version of a regimented totalitarian society. Thus, the French Third Republic was terminated, and the authoritarian **French State** put in its place.

After the conclusion of the war in 1945, the German nation had had to look squarely at the vast evil committed by the Nazi regime, and had atoned for it by eschewing all forms of militaristic spirit, even to the extent of banning Boy Scouts from wearing uniforms and badges, in case they looked like Hitler Youth.

But the French, being amongst the victorious allies, had had the luxury of spreading an **'official' explanation**: that the powerful Nazi forces had smashed into France in 1940, causing crippling defeat, and General Pétain had said that he would most reluctantly collaborate to mitigate the severity of Germany's treatment. It is true that Philippe Pétain was sentenced to death for collaboration, but in the light of his role as the hero of the battle of Verdun, this was commuted to life imprisonment; he died in prison in 1951. Less fortunate was his Head of Government, Pierre Laval, who was arrested and accused of collaboration and executed by firing squad.

According to the official French mythology, *all* French people had dutifully resisted the jackbooted occupier as best they could – at least in the face of machine guns – and many brave people had joined the Resistance. The **Memorial to the Deported Jews** on the Ile de la Cité maintains this myth, paying tribute to victims taken away by the jackbooted enemy. Some decades went by before the first modification of the story occurred. This was like a tug of war, pulling one way inch by inch. One President dared to say that the evil Nazi occupier, *aided by a small minority of misguided French people*, committed France's own holocaust of 60,000 Jews. Then, a bombshell arrived from abroad, when two scholars, Marrus and Paxton, made the astounding proposition there is not a single shred of evidence that Hitler or the Nazi administration had even issued a single instruction demanding that French Jews be sent to Auschwitz. The awful realisation dawned that, if the Germans had not demanded it, then it must have been the French authorities, using their dreaded black-shirted police **the Milice**, or Militia, to round up Jews in **'La Rafle'**, ('the Sweep') and send them to their deaths. This remained a most sensitive issue: one film-maker who produced a film about Occupied France dared to actually show the French Militia rounding up Jews in Paris, and found that the government banned his film from screening until he removed the offending scene. France had, indeed, independently staged its own Holocaust, voluntarily sending its Jews to concentration camps, whence most of them never returned. Step by step, inch by inch, official admissions followed at five-year intervals, until French officials recently met with Jewish representatives and made a full and formal admission of complete responsibility for the French Holocaust.

One may still make a respectful pilgrimage to the dreadful site where those 60,000 Jews were rounded up and imprisoned in a sporting stadium known as **the**

Velodrome d'Hiver (Cycling Stadium), before being sent on to a concentration camp at Drancy, and thence to the gas chambers in Poland. The Velodrome was torn down after the war, as if to expunge the memory of its role but, for some time, nobody was prepared to buy the land. Finally, a buyer was found ... and it is now the site of the Australian Embassy in Paris ...

* **Must see:** The film *La Rafle* (*The Sweep*).

* **Must see:** The film *Nancy Wake*

***THE ACADEMY ARMCHAIR TRAVELLER'S GUIDE TO
BOOKS ON PARIS***

Please note that these readings are provided purely for your possible interest and enjoyment, in case you feel that you would like to do some pre-reading. There is absolutely no requirement to come to the tour with a background in French history. We will address the history of Paris with readings and powerpoint slide shows in the course of the tour itself.

Because tour members often have a quite specific focus and quite definite fields of interest, I have grouped the references according to some of the most common areas of interest: Music in Paris, Literature in Paris, Shopping in Paris, and so on.

***FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN THE GENERAL HISTORY
OF PARIS ...***

ANDREW HUSSEY: *Paris. The Secret History*

(London: Bloomsbury, 2006).

A comprehensive survey of the entire history of Paris.

JAMES MCGREGOR: *Paris from the Ground up*

(Harvard: Belknap Press, 2009).

An elegant and assured survey of the history of Paris.

GRAHAM ROBB, *Parisians. An Adventure History of Paris*

(Oxford: Picador, 2010).

An alluring collection of absolutely astonishing historical stories, including the that of the eccentric who built an underground cavern-city below the capital, and of a young corporal named Napoleon Bonaparte visiting Paris and wondering how to approach women in the Palais-Royal.

JOHN HAYCRAFT, *In Search of the French Revolution*

(London: Secker and Warburg, 1989).

Not currently in print: you may have to use sites such as Amazon.com. This wonderful and evocative book brings you right down to details such as where Marat's apartment was actually located.

[AUDIO-VISUAL/DOCUMENTARY]

SANDRINE VOILLET: *An Insider's Guide to Paris*. (Roadshow Entertainment, BBC, 1996).

This is a most genial, enjoyable and witty introduction to the many aspects of Paris, from the most august bookshops to the deepest of sewers, all carried off with the Parisian flair of Sandrine Voillet.

***Please note: I will have a copy of this DVD with me in Paris should you wish to view it on your computer.**

SOME FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR THE AVID READER:

INA CARO, *Paris to the Past* (New York: Norton, 2011) is the author's intriguing account of her explorations of aspects of French history by taking twenty-five train trips from central Paris.

PATRICE HIGONNET *Paris. Capital of the World* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press 2002) explores and unpacks many of the mythologies of Paris with thematic chapters such as 'The Mysterious Capital of Crime'.

ALISTAIR HORNE'S *Seven Ages of Paris* (New York: Knopf, 2003) is a lovely general survey of French history, although it must be said that it is woefully brief, and occasionally misguided, in the section on revolutionary Paris.

COLIN JONES has published both a picture book version (Allen Lane, 2004) and a paperback version of his ***Paris: Biography of a City*** (London: Penguin, 2006). It is an awesome compression of French history from Roman times to 1995, which makes it a dense but intellectually satisfying overview of the full scope of French history.

ANTONI JACH has published an interesting novel called ***The Layers of the City*** (Sydney: Sceptre Books, 1999), which pursues the same theme as our tour, that is, the sense of Paris being a text made up of accreted layers of history and events.

Many readers have also mentioned how much they have enjoyed **Marge Piercy's** novel ***City of Darkness, City of Light*** (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1996), which is specifically set in Paris during the French Revolution.

MICHAEL KERRIGAN, *The Best-kept Secrets of Paris*
(London: Flame Tree, 2012)

This is a delightful glossy picturebook designed to introduce prospective visitors to some of the extraordinary places in the capital.

GILLIAN TINDALL, *Footprints in Paris. A few streets, a few lives*
(London: Pimlico, 2009).

Analyses the inner life of the city through an intriguing study of five lives that have been profoundly changed by the experience of living in Paris.

***FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN THE LITERARY
HISTORY OF PARIS ...***

SYLVIA BEACH: *Shakespeare and Company – Memoirs.*

SYLVIA BEACH: *The Letters of Sylvia Beach.*

NOEL FITCH: *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation.*

JANET FLANNER, *Paris was Yesterday.* (London: Angus and Robertson, 1972). Janet Flanner worked as a foreign correspondent in Paris, sending her fortnightly ‘Letter from Paris’ to *The New Yorker* from 1925 to 1939.

LUCINDA HOLDFORTH: *True Pleasures. A Memoir of Women in Paris* (Sydney: Vintage, 2004).

This is an impressive and charming book. Written by an Australian author, it recounts her search for a new life after a high-octane career in national politics, and her quest to redefine herself by tracing the existences of some of the great women in French history whilst visiting Paris. Its cool intellectualism and sophisticated observation of the French make it a delight to read.

HERBERT R. LOTTMAN: *The Left Bank. Writers, artists and Politics from the Popular Front to the Cold War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982).

The author contends that the intellectual life of the Left Bank in Paris over two decades was arguably the most important intellectual moment in the history of the 20th century. From the 1930s to the death of Stalin, he claims, a relatively small group of writers and intellectuals, not all of them French, held the attention of what was then the literate universe.

MARY LOUISE ROBERTS, *Civilisation without Sexes: Reconstructing gender in post-war France 1917-1927.*

Roberts argues that, in the wake of World War One, the gender boundaries between men and women became blurred, creating displays of newly independent behavior and assertions of women’s agency and, inevitably, public debate about the role and place of women in French society.

WILLIAM WISER: *The Crazy Years. Paris in the Twenties* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1923).

This is a wide-ranging survey of the fruitful interaction between literature and the

visual arts in Paris during the 'crazy years'.

[AUDIO-VISUAL/DOCUMENTARY]

Documentary: *Paris was a Woman*, ABC, broadcast February 2007.

A relatively old documentary, a little wooden in places, but featuring some thrilling footage of people like Gertrude Stein, Janet Flanner and Sylvia Beach being interviewed about their memories of Paris in the heady 1920s. The contention of the documentary is that these women did not merely happen to go to Paris, but actually used it as a space to create their own professional life in publishing and writing. But does Sylvia Beach ever reveal which famous author used to steal her books at Shakespeare and Company? (I will have a copy of this in Paris if you wish to view it on your computer).

***Please note: I will have a copy of this DVD with me in Paris should you wish to view it on your computer.**

A useful walking tour of literary Paris is online at:

<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/france/paris/articles/in-the-footsteps-of-the-fl-neur-a-literary-tour-of-paris/>

*FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN THE ARTISTIC HISTORY
OF PARIS ...*

THE IMPRESSIONIST REVOLUTION

PIERRE ASSOULINE, *Discovering Impressionism. The Life of Paul Durand-Ruel*
(New York: Vendome Press, 2004).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

ROBERT HERBERT, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure and Parisian society*.
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

PATTY LURIE, *A Guide to the Impressionist Landscape. Day Trips from Paris to sites of Great Nineteenth Century Paintings*

(Boston: Bulfinch, 1990)

[Access: Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

FRANÇOIS MATHEY, *The World of the Impressionists*.

(London: Thames and Hudson, 1966).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

LINDA NOCHLIN, *Realism*.

(Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

LINDA NOCHLIN, *The Politics of Vision. Essays on Nineteenth-Century art and society*.

(New York: Harper and Row, 1989).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

LINDA NOCHLIN, *Realism and Tradition in Art, 1848-1900. Sources and Documents*.

(Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

BARBARA E. WHITE, *Impressionism in Perspective*.

(Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1978).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

ELLEN WILLIAMS, *The Impressionists' Paris. Walking Tours of the Artists' studios, Homes and the Sites they Painted*

(New York: The Little Bookroom, 1997)

[Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

CLAUDE MONET

ANDREW FORGE AND ROBERT GORDON, *Monet*.

(New York: Abrams, 1993).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

FRANÇOISE HEILBRUN, *Les Paysages des Impressionistes*.

(Paris: Union of National Museums, 1986).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

MICHAEL HOOG, *Les Nymphéas de Claude Monet au Musée de l'Orangerie*
(Paris: Editions of the Union of National Museums, 1984).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

ROSS KING, *Claude Monet and the painting of the Water Lilies* (London: Bloomsbury Circus, 2016).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

CHARLES MOFFETT, (et.al.), *Monet's Years at Giverny. Beyond Impressionism*
(New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1978).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

VIRGINIA SPATE, (et.al.). *Monet and Japan*

(Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2001).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

PAUL HAYES TUCKER, *Monet at Argenteuil*

(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

PAUL HAYES TUCKER, *Claude Monet, Life and Art*

(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

PAUL HAYES TUCKER, *Monet in the '90s. The Series Paintings.*

(Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1990).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

THE ORSAY VISION: THE 'OTHER' 19TH CENTURY

RACHEL KAPLAN, *Little-Known Museums in and Around Paris*

(New York: Harry Abrams, 1996)

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

CAROLINE MATHIEU, *The Musée d'Orsay. A Guide*

(Paris: Union of National Museums, 1986)

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

ROBERT ROSENBLUM, *All the Paintings in the Musée d'Orsay.*

(Paris: Nathan, 1989 and subsequent editions)

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

'THE REPUBLIC OF PLEASURE': PARIS DURING THE BELLE EPOQUE, 1875-1914

MIRIAM LEVIN, *When the Eiffel Tower Was New. French Visions of Progress at the Centennial of the Revolution.*

(Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989).

[Access: Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

CAROLINE MATHIEU, 1889. *La Tour Eiffel et l'Exposition universelle.*

(Paris: Éditions des Musées nationaux, 1989).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

BARBARA SHAPIRO, *Pleasures of Paris: Daumier to Picasso.*

(Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1991).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

CAROLINE TURNER, et al.: *Toulouse-Lautrec. Prints and Posters from the Bibliothèque nationale.*

(Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1991).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

PHILIPPE JULLIAN, *Montmartre.*

(Oxford: Phaidon, 1977).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

JEAN-MARIE MAYEUR AND MADELEINE REBÉRIOUX, *The Third Republic From its Origins to the Great War, 1871-1914.*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1984], 1987).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

JEAN-MARIE PÉROUSE DE MONTCLOS, *Paris, City of Art*
(New York: Vendome, 2003).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

CHARLES REARICK, *Pleasures of the Belle Époque. Entertainment and Festivity in Turn-of-the-century France.*

(New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

RAYMOND RUDORFF, *Belle Époque. Paris in the Nineties.*
(London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

ROGER SHATTUCK, *The Banquet Years. The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France: 1885 to World War I.*

(London: Jonathon Cape, 1969).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

CORNELIA OTIS SKINNER, *Elegant Wits and Grand Horizontals. Paris-La Belle Époque.*

(London: Michael Joseph, 1963).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

EARLY MODERNISM IN PARIS

NIGEL GOSLING, *The Adventurous World of Paris, 1900-1914.*

(New York: William Morrow, 1978)

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

CHARLES REARICK, *The French in Love and War. Popular Culture in the era of the World Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997)

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

SUE ROE, *In Montmartre. Picasso, Matisse and Modernism in Paris*

(London: Fig Tree, 2014)

This is a recent publication and a breathtaking survey of the many strands of artistic activity that created the maelstrom of creativity in Paris before the First World War.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

SEBASTIAN SMEE, *The Art of Rivalry: Matisse/Picasso, Manet/Degas, Bacon/Freud, De Kooning/Pollock.*

(Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2016).

Smee's study is not a survey of modern art, but an examination of how some modern artists become locked into a dual dynamic of rivalry and emulation, which actually drives and informs their artistic development. To see an example of this, just have a look at the Picasso's *Nude in a Rocking chair*, in the Art Gallery of New South Wales, where Picasso tries to out-Matisse Matisse!

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

WILLIAM WISER: *The Crazy Years. Paris in the Twenties*

(London: Thames and Hudson, 1923).

This is a wide-ranging survey of the fruitful interaction between literature and the visual arts in Paris during the 'crazy years'.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

PABLO PICASSO

Picasso: Primary Sources

Dore Ashton, *Picasso on Art*

(London: Thames and Hudson, 1972)

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Picasso: Exhibition catalogues

Exhibition catalogue. Melbourne 2006, *Picasso. Love and War.*

(Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2006).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Exhibition catalogue, London, 2002, *Matisse/Picasso*

(London: Tate Modern, 2002).

This is a crucial catalogue from a truly seminal exhibition held in London in 2002. The point of this exhibition was not just another retrospective of Picasso's promethean creation, but an acknowledgement that he was actually in dialogue with another promethean figure, Henri Matisse, the only artist whom Picasso deemed to be worthy to be his rival. Throughout their careers, Picasso often 'did a Matisse', and Matisse for his part often 'did a Picasso', each artist effectively firing a shot over the bows of the other by quoting their respective works.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Exhibition catalogue, Queensland 2011, *Renoir to Picasso. Masterpieces from the Musée de l'Orangerie*

(Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 2001).

This important exhibition brought a substantial part of the Orangerie collection to Australian audiences in 2001, and included seven significant works by Picasso. While the catalogue entries are somewhat brief, the reproduction of works such as *Nude on a red background* and *The Adolescents* serve to remind us of the importance of some of these works in Picasso's early development.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Exhibition catalogue, London, Tate Gallery, 1994. *Picasso: Painter/Sculptor*

(London: Tate Gallery, 1994).

This crucial exhibition, and the lavish catalogue it created, is one of the best scholarly surveys of Picasso's extraordinarily inventive sculptural work. This is one of the most neglected aspects of Picasso's work, and yet these 'primitive' sculptures are arguably the most powerful and compelling proof of Picasso's sheer genius when working with simple raw materials. This catalogue also establishes links between the sculptures and

paintings produced at the same time. It is worth remembering that one could almost do an 'alternative' visit to the Picasso Museum, and look at nothing but Picasso's art in object form.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Exhibition catalogue, Paris, 1988, *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*

(Paris: Picasso Museum, and National Reunion of French Museums, 1988), 2 vols.

The French museum system certainly excels in producing magnificent catalogues. This two-volume publication documents a vast number of drawings and paintings associated with the *demoiselles* project.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Exhibition catalogue, London 1981, *Picasso's Picassos. An Exhibition from the Musée Picasso, Paris.*

(London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1981).

This is now an elderly publication, but it has the advantage of being a detailed summation of the Picasso Museum collection compiled for its exhibition in New York. The entries are all usefully focused on the Paris Picassos.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Monographs

Barr, Alfred. *Picasso. Fifty Years of his art*

(New York: Arno Press, for the Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 50.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Roland Penrose, *Picasso. His Life and Work*

(London: Gollancz, 1958).

This is one of the classic biographies of Picasso, written by his very close friend and associate, Sir Roland Penrose. It is deemed to be the work of an apologist and defender of Picasso, and to benefit more from the author's close personal knowledge of the artist more than it suffers from the inevitable bias in his favour.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

PIERRE BERNADAC, *The Picasso Museum, Paris. The Masterpieces.*

(Paris: Prestel, for the Réunion des Musées nationaux, 1991).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Moffitt, John. *The Arts in Spain*

(London: Thames and Hudson, 1999.)

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Studies of specific works

Exhibition catalogue, Paris, 1988, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*

(Paris: Picasso Museum, and National Reunion of French Museums, 1988), 2 vols.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

Exhibition catalogue, London, Tate Gallery, 1994. *Picasso: Painter/Sculptor*
(London: Tate Gallery, 1994).

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; Historical Library of Michael Adcock]

COLIN RHODES, *Primitivism in Modern Art*
(London: Thames and Hudson, 1994)

This thematic study is an in-depth analysis of the real nature of the way the art of 'primitive' cultures has influenced the development of modern art in the 20th century. While this influence is routinely mentioned in art histories, the explanation of its impact tends often to be cursory, and Rhodes subjects the nature of the interaction to closer scrutiny.

[Access: State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Victoria; History Library of Michael Adcock]

[AUDIO-VISUAL/DOCUMENTARY]

Documentary: *Paris: The Luminous Years*, Madman films, Special Broadcasting Corporation 2011, two episodes, 106 minutes total.

Director Pery Miller Adato has done a superb job in evoking "the storm of modernism which swept through Paris between 1905 and 1930". This is an intelligent and engaging overview of the early modernist movement.

Documentary: *The Impressionists*, ABC DVD Entertains Me 2014, two episodes, 106 minutes total.

Waldemar Januszczac has the advantage of going beyond the textbook explanation of an artist or movement, and of pursuing a quite personal, acute and sophisticated reading of the works we thought we knew well. It is true that his heavily assertive and theatrical style will not appeal to all – I personally see no need to huff and puff and stamp when I am lecturing - but his content is still excellent and thought-provoking.

Documentary: *Manet*, ABC DVD Entertains Me 2014, two episodes, 106 minutes total.

Waldemar Januszczac again uncovers some most unusual aspects of Manet, 'the man who invented modernity'.

Documentary: *Matisse, The Years in Nice* SBS Broadcast, 27/3/1995, 55 minutes.

***Please note: I will have a copy of all these DVDs with me in Paris should you wish to view some of them on your computer.**

*FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN THE MUSICAL HISTORY
OF PARIS ...*

Many Academy travellers bring to our tours their deep love of and knowledge of music and theatre. Some have strategically used free evenings to organise extra activities such as concerts and operas. Using the weekly magazine *Pariscopes*, we can quite easily locate the full offering of concerts in Paris each day, some of which are very low-priced and even free.

Here is a selection of readings on music in Paris for your possible interest.

ROBERT BELL: *Ballets Russes. The Art of Costume*

(Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2010).

Diaghilev's Ballets Russes never performed in Russia itself, but created an explosion of modernist creativity in Paris. While the performances can never really be repeated, they have left one legacy, that of the extraordinary costumes created at the time. Because of the organisation of our museums, 'costume' tends to be in a category by itself, apart from 'art'. But the Ballets Russes fused the two, by employing some of the greatest artists of the time – de Chirico, Goncharova, Matisse, Picasso – to design costumes, and in some cases stage sets, for the performances. When seen together, these theatrical sets comprise a virtual alternative history of modern art in fabric. The exciting thing is that we do not need to depend on some visiting exhibition to view this Other Modernism, because Australia owns its own collection. The National Gallery of Australia purchased a set of costumes that appeared to be quite late pieces, and hence of lesser artistic importance. When subjected to curatorial care, however, it became clear that the late costumes had simply been sewn over earlier garments, some of which were major pieces. When shown together in Canberra – only, alas, in special and temporary exhibitions – they plunge the viewer into the breathtaking world of theatrical creativity that Diaghilev orchestrated with such brilliant results.

See also: Prince PETER LIEVEN: *The Birth of the Ballets Russes.

[London: Allen and Unwin, 1936]. (Reprinted New York: Dover, 1973).

The memoirs of a Russian prince who witnessed the flourishing of the Ballets Russes in Paris.

ELAINE BRODY: *Paris. The Musical Kaleidoscope.*

(London: Robson, 1988).

This work examines the musical life of Paris from the death of Berlioz to the careers of Ravel and Debussy. The author also focuses upon the rich interaction between poets who wrote music, composers and artists who illustrated musical works and designed art works for musical performances.

CHARLES CASTLE: *Paris. The Folies Bergère*

(London: Methuen, 1982).

A history of the famous institution.

MARGARET CROSSLAND: *Piaf*

(New York: Fromm, 1985).

The classic biography of the great singer.

See also: EDITH PIAF. *My Life. (London: Penguin, 1992).

MARTIN COOPER: *French Music from the death of Berlioz to the death of Fauré*

(London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

A panoptical survey of fifty years of French music which, controversially, identifies only one of its subjects – Debussy – as a great composer, and judges the remainder of the survey merely as composers of 'important and enduring works'.

JAMES JOHNSON: *Paris. Listening in Paris. A Cultural History.*

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

The author starts by posing a most enigmatic question: Given that French audiences at operas and concerts were traditionally quite noisy, why was it that, between 1750 and 1850, they became silent and actually listened in the way modern audiences still do? In unpacking this query Johnson traces a paradigm shift in the social history of performance.

DEBORAH MAWER (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

A selection of critical essays on aspects of Ravel's work.

MICHAEL OLIVER: *Ravel*

(London: Phaidon, 1995).

An illustrated survey of the musician's main works.

PAUL ROBERTS: *Claude Debussy*

(London: Phaidon, 2010).

A useful and compact illustrated biographical survey of the composer and his works.

PHYLLIS ROSE: *Jazz Cleopatra. Josephine Baker in her Time* (New York: Doubleday, 1989).

This biography looks beyond the superficial scandal of this African American's nude dancing in Paris – just look at her famous banana dance, which actually has *very few* bananas for that matter – and acknowledges that, like so many other women, Baker found a career and a new freedom in Paris.

[AUDIO-VISUAL/DOCUMENTARY]

SIMON CALLOW: *Classical Destinations II.* (Decca Music Group, SBS, 2009).

This most pleasant documentary series – one of three - is hosted by Simon Callow, while the musical pieces are beautifully performed by the Australian Chamber Orchestra. For those with a deep knowledge of classical music, this series may seem a little light-weight compared with more academic, in-depth studies of individual composers.

As a tour guide, however, I am very much taken by the clever *modus operandi* of the series, which is to strategically combine beautiful colour photography to evoke the essence of a European city, and to then relate it, by virtual visits to composer-museums and by live performances of excerpts of music, to the life of the composer who worked there. In the second series, this technique is used to explore the Paris of Debussy and Ravel (Episode 4) and of Bizet and Saint-Saens (Episode 11).

***Please note: I will have a copy of this DVD with me in Paris should you wish to view it on your computer.**

[AUDIO-VISUAL/DOCUMENTARY]

DAYNA GOLDFINE: *Ballets Russes*. (Hopscotch Entertainment, Zeitgeist Films, SBS, 2005).

A documentary offering a lavish smorgasboard of “fame, glamour, ego, politics, money, war, love ... oh ... and dance”.

*Please note: I will have a copy of this DVD with me in Paris should you wish to view it on your computer.

*FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY OF
SHOPPING IN PARIS ...*

THE HISTORICAL DIMENSION OF LE SHOPPING

MICHAEL MILLER, *The Bon Marché. Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

Miller is one of a generation of cultural historians that has explored the origins of modern shopping. He establishes that the department store we know today did not always exist: it had to be created.

ROSALIND WILLIAMS *Dream Worlds. Mass Consumption in nineteenth-century France* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1982).

Focus author: Emile Zola, chronicler of Parisian life

EMILE ZOLA, *The Ladies' Paradise* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1992).

PRACTICAL GUIDES TO SHOPPING IN PARIS

For those with a love of the refinements of Paris, particularly in terms of cuisine, consult **Shannon Bennett's *Paris, a personal guide to the city's best*** (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2009). More commonly available is *Best Restaurants, Paris* (2009) (no author, no publisher given).

MARIBETH CLEMENTE, *The Riches of Paris. A Shopping and Touring Guide* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002).

This work is a practical manual and guide to shopping in Paris. Lasted printed in 2002, it is reasonably up-to-date and would provide a good guide to those wanting to explore the shops of Paris in a serious way.

JANELLE McCULLOCH, *Paris, a guide to the city's creative heart* (Melbourne: Pan Macmillan, 2014) is an elegant and authoritative guide to shopping precincts,

fashion, food and artisanal production and food in Paris. It covers everything from whimsical stores to bookshops to stylish tea salons. For those who live by the French motto – ‘Je shop, donc je suis’ – this is an indispensable guide.

GERSHAMN, SUZY, *Frommer's Born to Shop Paris* (London: Macmillan, 1998).

This guide is recommended by travel writer Judith Elen, on the grounds that it is comprehensive and useful, albeit prone to some unfortunate Americanisms and a degree of gush.

Supplementary references for French speakers

FLEURY, MICHEL, *Paris, de Lutèce à Beaubourg* (Paris: Flammarion, 1974), pp. 115-122.

DE MONCAN, PATRICE, *Les passages couverts de Paris* (Paris: Mécène, 1995).

[AUDIO-VISUAL/DOCUMENTARY]

SALLY AITKIN: *Seduction in the city. The Birth of Shopping*. (Special Broadcasting Corporation, SBS, 2011).

This most alluring documentary (2 x 53 minute programs) explains the way in which modern shopping developed, with the introduction of the most simple amenities, notably public toilets, meaning that shoppers did not have to return home to relieve themselves, and could continue shopping for longer. The division of the floor space into ‘departments’ was another quantum shift, as was the laying out of goods on tables, where they could be handled and examined. The invention of the bargain was another major consumer hook-device. Aitken explore the impact of this technology of seduction by creating three characters – one of them the compulsive shopper, another the prudent purchaser – and by tracing the way they responded to these new techniques.

* Please note: I have found that this brilliant DVD has, alas, been deleted from normal commercial sale, but it can be purchased on Amazon at a modest price.

** I will also have a copy of this DVD with me in Paris should you wish to view it on your computer.

A NIFTY CRASH-COURSE IN FRENCH CUISINE

For those who would like to deepen their knowledge of French cuisine, you may well find value in **Steve Fallon's** useful little manual, ‘**World Food: France**’ (Hawthorn, Victoria: Lonely Planet, 2000, or subsequent editions). Like all the books in the series, this little publication is designed to be portable, but also a goldmine of information. Apart from factual information about the regional cuisines, the practical

information about restaurant precincts and especially market areas may well be useful.

A STUDY OF HAUSSMANN'S TRANSFORMATION OF PARIS

David Jordan, another eminent and authoritative Francophile, has published an excellent study of the crucial stage of the development of modern Paris by the Baron Haussmann during the Second Empire (1851-1870): *Transforming Paris. The Life and Labours of Baron Haussmann* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).