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1

Introduction

'THE WEST'

'Only where the word for the thing has been found is the thing a thing [. . . ;] the word alone gives being to the thing.'

MARTIN HEIDEGGER, 'THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE', P. 62

'Words are not definitions of the meanings to which they refer. The meanings of the words cannot be discovered by simply knowing their etymologies.'

ZIYA GÖKALP, *THE PRINCIPLES OF TURKISM*, P. 298

THIS IS A HISTORY of the idea of the West. It does not purport to be a history of 'the West' per se. It does not take for granted any unit in history or part of the world as being 'the West' and study 'its' history. Instead, the book first seeks to understand when, how and why the term 'the West' came to be used to refer to a social or political entity based on cultural commonality. It then follows the many and often surprising changes in the uses and meanings of the term, and the different intentions and important repercussions related to contested uses, definitions and membership lists.

I take issue with two different extreme positions. There are those who assume that people have always talked of 'the West' as a civilisational and sociopolitical concept (or at least, have done so since the time of the ancient Greeks or the Romans) and hence take the term and its meaning to be more or less eternal. A recent example (among many) of how an East–West distinction is projected onto ancient Greek texts can be observed in the following instance of translation: 'πῶς εἶπας; οὐ γὰρ πᾶν στράτευμα βαρβάρων περᾷ τὸν Ἕλλης πορθμὸν Εὐρώπης

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ἄπο;' This has been translated as, 'What do you mean? Hasn't the whole of the Eastern army crossed back from Europe over the straight of Helle?'[1] Aeschylus wrote 'barbarian army'. The reader of the translation is told that he wrote 'the Eastern army'. The two words do not mean the same thing, and Aeschylus would as likely have called 'barbarian' an army coming from west of Greece as any from the east. Through an anachronistic translation, however, a distinction from an 'East' is projected, and an entirely unwarranted sense of Aeschylus's own 'Westernness' is assumed. No wonder it can still be asserted in a serious (and otherwise fascinating) recent book that 'Athens saw in itself a West opposed to the despotic Persian East'.[2]

There are also those who argue, by contrast, as Kwame Anthony Appiah recently did, that 'the very idea of the "West", to name a heritage and object of study, doesn't really emerge until the 1880s and 1890s, during a heated era of imperialism'.[3] As we will see, Appiah follows the now established scholarly orthodoxy with regard to the timing of the emergence of the idea of the West. Both approaches described above are flawed. I will establish both the correct timing and the reasons behind the emergence of the idea of 'the West' in the modern world. But that will be only the beginning of this book's contribution to the subject. The full intellectual history of the idea of the West that I pursue here permits both its current plethora of meanings and its potential for future meanings to be brought to the fore. The majority of current theories as to when 'the West' began and what it is can be shown to be emphasising, selectively, disproportionately and often polemically, only particular layers of the different meanings of the concept during its protracted history. By the end, this book will have produced a variety of recommendations for the present and future, arising from its critical study of the long journey traced in these pages.

The book distinguishes between 'the West' and 'Europe'—partially overlapping concepts, but by no means identical. Indeed, it shows that the use of 'the West' emerged precisely from the need to avoid the confusing or unwanted consequences of the use of 'Europe', as perceived by those who began deliberately to employ and promote the alternative term. For, from the 1820s and 1830s, 'the West' was beginning to be employed more and more frequently, and for a particular reason: that is, the elephant, or rather the bear, in the room at the Congress of Vienna—Russia. The standard distinction within Europe until the eighteenth century had been between North and South. Russia was, since it joined the 'European' system under Peter the Great, a 'Northern' power. That began to change in the couple of decades following the end of the Napoleonic wars. Most of those who would begin talking of Russia as 'Eastern' after the Congress of Vienna were invoking its Easternness

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in order to defend themselves against Russian domination of Europe, by creating a new, 'Western' alliance against what they saw as the Russian menace.

The persistence of the importance of Russia for the idea of the West is one of the themes that the *longue durée* approach of this book will allow me to highlight. There were of course various 'others' against whom the peoples now seen as 'the West' collectively defined themselves at different stages, or even, often, simultaneously. But to all these different 'others' (Arabs, Ottomans, indigenous Americans, Islam, China, India, Africa; to name but a few) it was, until the early nineteenth century, still possible, and common practice, to juxtapose 'Europe' or 'Christendom' as the unit or identity encompassing those who observed or opposed them. It was only when a differentiation was deemed necessary in opposition to 'others' who could also be called Christian, and part of Europe, that the need for a novel concept arose: hence the need for the invocation of 'the West', vis-à-vis the Eastern Roman (later baptised 'Byzantine') Greek Orthodox Christians, first, and Orthodox Russia subsequently. And it was this latter distinction, vis-à-vis Russia, that resulted in the modern idea of the West.

I show that, after some early attempts by others in the 1820s and 1830s, it was the French philosopher Auguste Comte and his successors who first consciously and systematically made such a choice. (That, far from 'the West' being invented in the 1880s–1890s to cater to the needs of British imperialism, as current scholarship tends to argue, Comte's 'Western Republic' was designed in the 1840s to abolish all empires of conquest and be an altruistic peaceful federation, is one of the many interesting twists in the story). Comte's Positivists were explicit that 'Europe' was confusing, because it included Russia, and hence a different name was needed. So was Oswald Spengler, when he argued, seven decades later, that the word 'Europe' ought to be struck out of history, because it had led people to associate Russia with the West in an utterly baseless unity.

But there were other agendas as well. For many French authors and politicians, a major factor was fear of German ascendancy (and already in the 1730s, Montesquieu was noting that 'France is no longer in the middle of Europe; it is Germany').[4] That fear intensified with the rise of Prussia and subsequently with German unification in 1871. Such anxieties led to recurring attempts by French (and Francophile) authors to promote an idea of a 'West' that put France at its centre—as opposed to a 'Europe' whose centre would inevitably be Germany. I analyse many such instances in this book (including even within German-occupied and Vichy-governed France during World War II).

Meanwhile, intra-German debates as to the meaning of 'the West' and whether Germany was part of it have been long and fascinating. Thomas Mann was not

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untypical when, in his 1918 *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (*Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*), he proclaimed Germany and its *Kultur* to represent the eternal 'protest' and resistance to the universalising/homogenising tendencies of Rome and then of 'the West'. Much was to change after systematic Westernisation efforts following World War II. The German Federal Republic's *Westbindung* has had many valiant defenders, including Jürgen Habermas, Ralf Dahrendorf and Heinrich August Winkler. (Meanwhile, however, the fact that the members of Patriotische Union—arrested in December 2022 for plotting a coup d'état to subvert the Federal Republic and restore the German Reich—evoked, as Thomas Mann had done, the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest [9 CE], when Germanic Hermann/Arminius defeated the Roman legions, may mean that the idea of German 'protest', against 'the West', the EU or the modern world, has not completely disappeared.)

The book also analyses the alternatives proposed in each phase of the story. These have involved various proposals for the unity of 'Europe' rather than 'the West', and often included Russia in that Europe. For a while—very briefly—Russia was even included in what was meant by 'the West'. Such an exception lasted for a handful of years, during and immediately after the Second World War. The Soviet Union, as an indispensable ally and then a crucial contributor to victory, was then widely talked of as part of 'Western civilisation'. The onset of the Cold War as of 1947 changed all that very fast. And for the bulk of the past two centuries, Russia—imperial, Soviet, or post-Soviet—has not been considered part of the West, within the West, but rather as the 'other'. Thus, in the overwhelming majority of cases 'the West' was used in contradistinction to Russia, while it usually included some Slavic-speaking countries but not others. The list of the latter varied, but a country almost always included as 'Western' was Poland. This book's long-term approach allows it to highlight the importance of constantly recurring themes such as the role assigned to Poland and other Central or Eastern European countries as 'Western' and as ramparts of the West against 'Eastern' Russia. During the Cold War they could be seen as a 'kidnapped West', as Milan Kundera famously put it. Meanwhile the role of Eastern or Central European (including some Russian-born) thinkers and émigrés in definitions and understandings of 'the West' is one of the major themes throughout the book: from the relentless activism of Polish refugees such as Adam Czartoryski and many others in London, Paris and German lands in the 1830s to the impact in more recent times of Czesław Miłosz and many others in Paris, London and the USA. And one of the themes in the concluding chapter will be that of how definitions and membership of 'the West' have been reassessed, since February 2022, to consider Ukraine, and the potential for future redefinitions.

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I. The West, 'from Plato to NATO'?

The concept of 'the West' was not used by Plato, Cicero, Locke, Mill and other canonised figures of what is today called the 'Western' tradition. While 'west' pertaining to geographical location is as old as any language, use of 'the West' to refer to a sociopolitical concept or a political association based on cultural commonality is relatively modern. (I am referring to uses of 'the West' as a sociopolitical category rather than to whether or not there was an east–west orientation in people's geographical consciousness. The latter was the case in Greek and Roman antiquity, when 'from Cadiz to the Ganges' was the usual way of speaking of the whole *oikoumenê*.[5] But by the early modern era, and emphatically throughout the eighteenth century, it was a distinction between North and South that dominated people's mental horizons).

There were of course earlier uses of the word in different senses, that were later to be co-opted as historical antecedents of modern identities. For 'the West' came to be employed as of 395 CE to describe the Western Roman Empire, once the Empire was divided between the two sons of Emperor Theodosius. But the Western Empire collapsed not long afterwards, conquered by Germanic so-called 'barbarians'. Later, as of 800 CE, the empire of Charlemagne claimed to be the successor to the Roman Empire. However, there was already in existence another Roman empire, the part of the two earlier-divided entities that had not been conquered by Germanic invaders, with its capital in Constantinople. That it was briefly (797–802) headed by a woman (Irene of Athens) was used in an attempt to delegitimise that empire. But success in this was limited, not least when she was succeeded by a man. At best, Charlemagne's empire could only call the Eastern Roman Empire of Constantinople the 'Greek' empire, and claim the mantle of the Roman Empire of the West. Charlemagne's empire thus began to be referred to as 'the Empire of the West', or, simply, 'the West'. By the eleventh century, with a definitive schism occurring between the churches of Rome and Constantinople, 'West' could also refer to the Latin (Catholic) Church as opposed to the 'Eastern' Greek Orthodox Church. The different (and limited) meanings of such earlier uses can be found in dictionaries in their entries for 'the West', 'l'Occident' or 'das Abendland' (and the differences between the very short entry 'L'Occident' in the eighteenth-century *Encyclopédie*, written by its co-editor d'Alembert himself, and the much longer entry in Larousse's dictionary of 1866–79 are telling as to when the concept began to acquire its sociopolitical meanings).[6]

These earlier uses, though they may have provided the word with useful historical antecedents for later adoption through elective affinities, do not amount

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FIGURE 1.1. Map of the western and eastern parts of the Roman Empire at the time of Theodosius I (379 CE). Created by NeimWiki. *Source:* https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:4KTHEODOSIAN.png

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to the same concept as 'the West' of today. According to Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen, '[t]he East–West division is many centuries old, and has had at least three distinct referents'. The first of these—'[t]he original and persistent core of the West', is said always to have been 'Latin Christendom, derived ultimately from the Western Roman Empire—with (ancient) Greece included whenever the search for origins goes deeper'. Thus 'the most significant historical divide across Europe was that separating the Latin church's *Europa Occidens* from the Orthodox lands of the Byzantine and Russian spheres'. As for the 'second referent', it arose as a result of the European expansion and diaspora from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, when 'divisions within European Christendom began to recede in importance' and instead 'the idea of a supra-European West, encompassing European settler colonies across the Atlantic, increasingly took hold'. The authors add that '[t]his sense of an expanded West was greatly strengthened after World War II'.[7] Now, it is a sweeping leap from the medieval division between Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians to the 'expanded West [. . .] after World War II'; and, while it may be broadly true that 'the idea of a supra-European West, encompassing European settler colonies across the Atlantic, increasingly took hold', the questions then arise of when, why and how exactly this came about. It may seem to us now obvious that, once the New World had been discovered, some term or concept like 'the West' would be invented; but was it indeed inevitable? And if so, was it equally inevitable that that particular name should be adopted? In this book I explore the when, the why and the how of this, and what the alternatives were. For no matter how much sense it may make to us, retrospectively, it did not occur to people in the newly independent United States to talk of themselves as part of a 'West' that included themselves and the Western Europeans. And it did not occur to Western Europeans to talk of themselves and their cousins in the New World as 'the West' until well into the nineteenth century. This book begins by tracing the crucial missing links between the medieval Catholic *Europa Occidens* and 'the idea of a supra-European West, encompassing European settler colonies across the Atlantic'.

There were many uses of the term 'the West' in the eighteenth century and in the early decades of the nineteenth century. But in almost all cases, with variations of greater or lesser inconsistency, authors were using 'the West' either in purely geographical terms, or as a historical term, when discussing previous centuries of European history, in reference to the Western Roman Empire and its successor states in the same geographical area. But that was not 'the West' as understood today. It was a historical use, not a term describing a politico-cultural community in the present or a programme for a common future.

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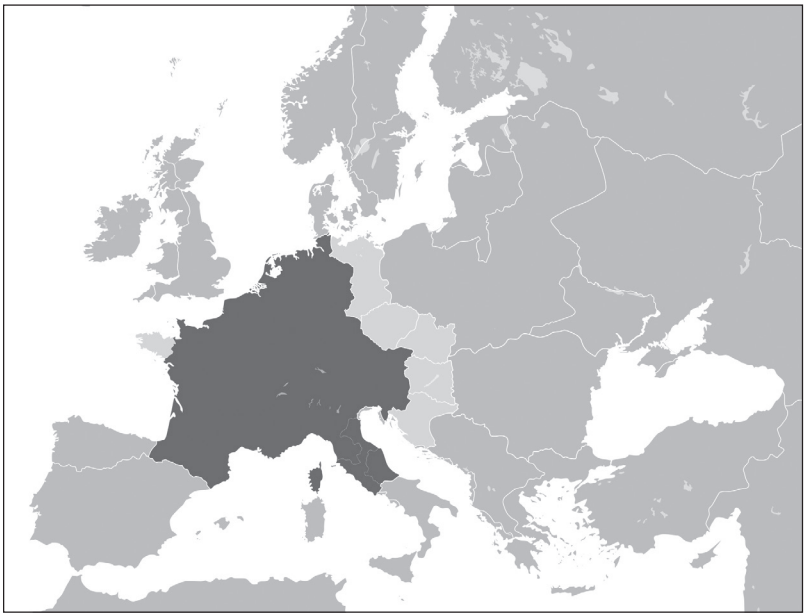


FIGURE 1.2. A map of the Carolingian Empire (a.k.a. Francia; the Frankish Empire) within Europe, ca. 814 CE. Created by Alphathon. *Source:* https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/6/66/Francia_814.svg/1920px-Francia_814.svg.png

This latter use began to emerge gradually from the 1820s in the writings especially of French and German thinkers—though still interchangeably with 'Europe'. The deliberate substitution of 'the West' for 'Europe' was then made for the first time explicitly and thoroughly (too thoroughly, in exasperating detail) in the voluminous writings of the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857). We can follow in Comte's writings the gradual abandonment of 'Europe'—which he employed in his earlier works—and its replacement by 'the West', as well as his reasons for consciously deciding that a new term was needed: because 'Europe' was too confusing for what he was describing (as well as prescribing).

To put it simply, for now, let us go back to Lewis and Wigen's first two referents: the Latin church's *Europa Occidens*, and a 'supra-European West, encompassing European settler colonies across the Atlantic'. Wishing to propose a particular reorganisation for the latter, Comte decided that the name of the former would suit his proposed new entity, and the specific identity he wanted to cultivate for it, much better than the available alternatives, 'Europe' or 'Christendom'. (Typical

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was the title of Novalis's essay of 1799, 'Christianity or Europe'.)[8] Up to, and during, his own time, when people wanted to talk about both sides of the Atlantic, they talked of 'Christendom', or 'the civilised world'. Meanwhile, for Americans themselves, 'the West' meant something different, located on their shifting frontier. In Europe 'the West' was available as a historical term to refer to the Western Roman Empire or Charlemagne's later empire, but—casual instances here and there notwithstanding—it had not been explicitly or consistently adopted to describe a clearly defined contemporary and future sociopolitical entity until Comte chose to promote its use in this sense assiduously; indeed, relentlessly.

Before we go into more detail as to how these changes came about, it should be noted that some fascinating definitions of, and debates about, 'the West' are to be found among thinkers and writers in China, Korea, Japan, India, Turkey or Russia. However, my focus here is upon 'the West' as a self-description: 'the West's West'. When, and why, did thinkers and writers in the core of what others saw as 'the West'—France, Britain, the German lands and America—start referring to such an entity and calling it 'the West'? For most of their history the peoples now retrospectively seen as constituting the West referred to themselves by other terms—latterly 'Christendom', 'Europe', or 'the civilised nations'. And yet it is commonplace to find self-styled histories of 'the idea of the West' anachronistically projecting what nineteenth- or twentieth-century thinkers and historians co-opted as their preferred collective past and referring to it as 'the West', no matter what the self-identifications of the earlier people concerned might have been. (This is often referred to as the 'from Plato to NATO' narrative.)[9] That said, when the ideas of people from outside 'the West' become involved in or impinge upon debates and definitions within it, these will be analysed in the relevant parts of this book. Thus, in some of the chapters that follow we will consider too some highly interesting Russian, Greek, Turkish, Indian, Caribbean, African, Chinese and Japanese contributions to the discussion.

II. A Russian Import, or a Substitute for 'Whiteness'?

There are a very few works that do not succumb to anachronistic accounts such as those I complain of above, and instead try to study the actual uses of 'the West' historically. But even these still fail to trace the concept's history accurately. Thus, it has been repeatedly asserted that the first sustained elaboration of 'the West' as a politico-cultural entity was that found in books published by the British Social Darwinist thinker Benjamin Kidd in 1894 and 1902. Moreover, some of the scholars in question attribute the emergence of the idea of the West to causes that

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may indeed have conduced to an expansion in its uses, but by no means account for its emergence, as they argue. One such claim was made, influentially, by Christopher GoGwilt, who maintained that '[t]he idea of the West has a recent history, emerging around the turn of the [twentieth] century from the combined and related phenomena of European imperial expansion and the crisis of democratic politics'. In trying to explain 'the shift from a European to a Western identity', GoGwilt, besides attributing that shift to the needs of imperialism, also asserted that it was the Russian debates between Slavophiles and Westernisers, most notably as of the 1860s, that decisively influenced the self-descriptions of Western Europeans in the following decades, and led to their adoption of the term 'the West' in place of 'Europe'.[10] According to GoGwilt, it was 'only relatively recently—between the 1880's and the 1920's—that formulations of "the West" came to mean a relation between a structure of international political power, an imagined cultural identity, and a discrete historical development within world history'. GoGwilt is in no doubt that he has an explanation for 'the invention of the West': 'With both Toynbee and Spengler there is good reason to emphasize [. . .] the deciding factor of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 in determining the boundaries—both political and historical—of "the West."' Thus he argues that '[r]eaction to the Bolsheviks crystallized an idea of the West that had, already since the 1880's, begun to emerge from responses to Russian ideas'.[11]

A similar claim about the importation of the concept of 'the West' from Russian debates was advanced by Peggy Heller.[12] Her argument is, *prima facie*, most appealing. It corresponds with our wish 'to be open to the possibility that "non-Western" discourse is contributive as well as derivative'.[13] It is, however, misleading as far as the emergence of the modern concept of the West is concerned. The Russian debates of the mid-nineteenth century in which, it is claimed, the concept of 'the West' finds its origin, were themselves heavily influenced by Western European thought.[14] Moreover, the very thinker taken in recent scholarship to have initiated the use of 'the West' (that was then to permeate the later fierce debates between Westernisers and Slavophiles), Petr [Peter] Chaadaev (1794–1856),[15] was clearly strongly influenced by French philosophy and philosophy of history (not least by de Bonald, Balanche, de Maistre, Chateaubriand and Lamennais).[16] Chaadaev was also following François Guizot in his main argument about the causes of Russian stagnation and about the family resemblance of 'the European peoples'. (Guizot's *History of Civilisation in Europe* had been published in 1828, the year before Chaadaev's 'First Philosophical Letter' was written.)[17]

Use of 'the West' was not, then, Chaadaev's invention, to be succeeded by the Slavophiles-versus-Westerisers debates, and then exported to the West, as Heller

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has claimed (and others have followed her in asserting).[18] Chaadaev, besides the impact of his own sojourn in Western Europe, was deeply influenced by the Catholic thinker Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821), whom he had probably met in person when de Maistre lived in St Petersburg.[19] For de Maistre spent fourteen years (1803–17) in Russia as ambassador of the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, and had reflected and written extensively on the differences of Russia and its Orthodox Church from Western Europe.[20] In his book *Du pape*, whose manuscript he had completed whilst in Russia, and then published in 1819, de Maistre used the terms *Occident* and *les Occidentaux* extensively. (In just one of many such instances he complained as follows, in the last chapter of the book, of the modern Greece that he expected was about to emerge: 'It styles itself *the East*, whilst as regards the real East, it is only a point of the West, and to us it is scarcely visible.').[21]

In fact, there was another, unnoticed, Russian (or at any rate Orthodox) connection, much earlier than Chaadaev's 'Letter'. De Maistre was clear in his correspondence that he wrote Book 4 of *Du pape*, where most of his references to '*l'Occident*' occur, as the 'anti-Stourdza', as he put it. Alexander Stourdza, son of a Moldovan father and descended on his mother's side from a Constantinople Greek aristocratic ('Phanariot') family, was an adviser to the Russian czar. In 1816 he published, in French, a book on the doctrine and the spirit of the Orthodox Church.[22] The book had been written at the request of Czar Alexander I, who paid 20,000 rubles for its publication.[23] Among other things, Stourdza's book was intended as a deterrent to Catholic conversion temptations (promoted by de Maistre whilst an ambassador in St Petersburg) in Russian high society. It was vehemently critical of Catholicism, 'l'église d'Occident', 'l'Occident' and 'les Occidentaux'. Among other accusations, Stourdza claimed that 'the blind hatred of the barbarians of the West' (la haine aveugle des barbares de l'Occident) had contributed to the fall of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire. De Maistre felt obliged to respond; hence the passionately anti-Eastern Church and particularly anti-Greek tone of Book 4 of *Du pape*. In his correspondence he had explicitly noted the East–West division highlighted by Stourdza and the anti-Western language the latter had employed. Referring to Stourdza he wrote that '[a] man whom I esteem immensely, who belongs to Greece by birth [. . .] has just published against the Catholic Church a work written with remarkable bitterness'. For example, he went on, 'to express [. . .] our well-known incapacity in any kind of science, he calls us the SIMPLE-MINDED Westerners'.[24] All this does not mean that 'the West' was 'invented' by Stourdza either, of course. The ecclesiastical distinction between Eastern and Western Christian churches was centuries old,

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and the Greek Orthodox spoke of 'Western' 'Franks' long before Stourdza or de Maistre.[25]

In any case, the novelty of Chaadaev's use of 'the West' has been greatly exaggerated. Although he did use the term in the 'First Philosophical Letter' (written in 1829 and first published in Russia in 1836), it was employed interchangeably with 'Europe', and the terms 'Europe' and 'European' were used vastly more often than 'the West' in that text.[26] Others had done likewise long before him, in France in particular. Moreover, given that GoGwilt's argument is that it was the later debates (ignited by Chaadaev) between Westernisers and Slavophiles in Russia in the 1860s that first alerted Western thinkers to the potential of the term 'the West', it may not be out of place to mention that those Russian controversies were themselves very much influenced by French and German philosophers and debates. One of the strongest influences by then, moreover, was that of Auguste Comte, whose positivist philosophy was being widely discussed by the 1850s and 1860s and had been making converts in Russia for some decades prior to that. Besides Comte's claim later that he had been informed already in 1836 of the impact his ideas were having in Russia, we know that Valerian Maĭkov (1823–1847) had been promoting Comte's thought in Russia in the 1840s. His influence clearly had become very widespread by the late 1850s and 1860s, and continued spreading thereafter.[27] As I will show in the next chapter, Comte and his disciples had been elaborating upon and propagating his detailed definition and analysis of 'the West' for quite some time before the Russian debates of the 1860s and 1870s intensified. And he had no need of Russian predecessors to inspire him in the use of the term. Condorcet and de Maistre, as well as one of his favourite historians, Arnold Heeren, had done so much earlier, as had his erstwhile friends and collaborators, Henri de Saint-Simon himself and the Saint-Simonians.[28]

In saying all this, I am not suggesting that the debates between Slavophiles and Westernisers and the prodigious philosophical and literary output in nineteenth-century Russia had no influence in Western Europe, especially Germany, later in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. (Nikolai Danilevsky's thought and its echoes in Oswald Spengler would be one of several examples, as we will see in chapter 6; and Czesław Miłosz was not necessarily exaggerating when he wrote that Dostoyevsky 'had an influence like none of his contemporaries, with the exception of Nietzsche, on the thinking of Europe and America'.)[29] But I am arguing that it is far from being the case that Chaadaev was the first author to use 'the West' in the sense the term acquired in the following two centuries. My claim is that Chaadaev himself had found uses of the term among French and German authors who wrote before him, and that it was

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available before he wrote his 'First Philosophical Letter'. Thus the early cases of uses of 'l'Occident' that we will discuss in chapter 2, by people such as—to name but a couple of examples—Benjamin Constant in 1825 or Dominique de Pradt in 1822, 1823, 1824, 1825 and 1828, did not owe anything to a piece that Chaadaev wrote in 1829 and which was not published until 1836.

Another argument regarding the emergence of the idea of the West has been contributed by the geographer Alastair Bonnett, who agrees with GoGwilt's assertion that the first sustained elaboration of 'the West' as a politico-cultural entity was that of Benjamin Kidd, and then attributes the emergence of the idea at that time to the impasses into which 'narratives of racial whiteness' had run. Thus, according to Bonnett, 'the West, in the West, emerged in the context of the inadequacies and contradictions of a more racially explicit discourse' between 1890 and 1930.[30] Again, this may be an interesting contribution to explaining the increase in the employment of the term, but by no means establishes the origin of the idea of the West in English, let alone in 'the West' more generally. As I will show in chapter 3, sustained elaborations of 'the West' in English had been supplied by Comte's British disciples for some decades before Kidd (himself steeped in Comte)[31] wrote the works that Bonnett focuses upon.

The periodisation proposed by GoGwilt and Bonnett, and the claim that '[t]he category of "the West" or "the Western world" [. . .] does not appear [. . .] before the 1890s', were also adopted recently by Jürgen Osterhammel, who references Bonnett specifically.[32] Similarly, Arthur Herman, speaking of 'Arnold Toynbee, Oswald Spengler, Benjamin Kidd, or any number of other gloomy prognosticators' in the first decades of the twentieth century, claimed that those very writers, 'in fact, had *originally coined* the term "Western" to describe a faltering European civilization that, they believed, was steadily fading away'.[33] Much more recently, Naoíse Mac Sweeney has stated that 'the rise of the West as a concept, and the invention of its history as Western Civilisation, was at the outset [. . .] an ideological tool deployed in the service of empire'; and as we have already seen, Kwame Anthony Appiah has also argued that 'the very idea of the "West," to name a heritage and object of study, doesn't really emerge until the 1880s and 1890s, during a heated era of imperialism'.[34]

III. A Gradual Growth, Consummated in Paris, rue Monsieur-le-Prince

I take issue with the assertions cited above, and will show that the use of the idea of the 'West' to name 'a heritage and an object of study', as well as an elaborate and detailed political project, arose much earlier in the nineteenth century and

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in a very different historical and intellectual context—with different causes, intentions and implications. As should be clear by now, I make no claim that there was but one idea of the West, fully articulated at some point by a single individual. My endeavour is rather to study different uses of 'the West', the intentions with which the relevant ideas and terms have been employed, and the implications in each case.[35] But certain steps and contributions were nevertheless decisive. There have been related myths, such as the tradition of *translatio imperii*, or heliotropic myth (the notion that human beings and their civilisation are involved in the movement of the sun from east to west), with its origins in the early Christian era, when the linear theory of historical progression replaced the cyclical theory of the ancients.[36] Use of 'the West' to describe the Western Roman Empire, or the Latin (Catholic) Church as opposed to the Greek ('Eastern') Orthodox Church remained significant, too. But these differed greatly from what 'the West' came to mean in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

'The West' as a potential political entity based on civilisational commonality is a modern idea that arose in the first half of the nineteenth century. I will show in chapter 2 that, after some incipient uses of 'the West' by various authors in the 1820s and 1830s, the first elaborate articulation of such a concept was provided by Auguste Comte, writing reclusively in his rue Monsieur-le-Prince flat in Paris.[37] Before then, and still in the eighteenth and much of the early nineteenth century, the terms 'Christendom' or 'Europe' were those used in the main to self-identify a cluster of like-minded peoples who wished to differentiate themselves from the rest of the world. One book that arguably influenced the historical imagination decisively for some decades was François Guizot's *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe*, first published in 1828 and translated into several languages. Besides contributing a highly influential definition of 'civilisation', it offered an equally influential argument as to what had made the civilisation of Western Europe 'steadily progressive' for the past fifteen centuries, since the fall of the Western Roman Empire.[38] Guizot was talking of the history and civilisation of the very part of the world—Western Europe—that constituted the core of what would soon, with increasing frequency, be referred to as 'the West'. But he used what was then (and would continue to be for some more time) the standard name for it, 'Europe', and called its civilisation 'European civilisation'. (Meanwhile, in 1851, the Spanish Catholic thinker Donoso Cortés's main complaint against Guizot's book was that the French Protestant historian ought to have acknowledged that it had been 'the Church alone' that 'had made it one' and 'gave it its essential character'. Hence, Donoso Cortés argued, 'it was and is called Catholic civilisation'.)[39].

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FIGURE 1.3. Auguste Comte. Lithograph by Johan Hendrick Hoffmeister, known as the 'Dutch portrait' (*portrait hollandais*), from a daguerreotype of 1849 (Den Haag, 1851). Maison d'Auguste Comte collection, Paris. *Source:* https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Auguste_Comte.jpg

There have in fact been various versions of the 'from east to west' tradition previously mentioned. The best known is the formulation by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who wrote that '[w]orld history travels from east to west; for Europe is the absolute end of history, just as Asia is the beginning.'[40] Yet 'west' was used in a geographical sense here, and it was 'Europe' that was claimed to constitute the culmination of history in the very same sentence. As Alastair Bonnett correctly remarked, 'despite elaborating at length on the Oriental world,

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Hegel had little to say about the West as a unity'. Thus Hegel 'had scant interest in developing an explicit or overarching sense of Western identity' (though he did have strong views on what he called 'the Germanic World', as the group of nations that shaped modern Europe).[41] We will see in the next chapter that what has thus been remarked of Hegel cannot be said of Comte, who had rather a lot to say about the West as a unity, and a more than pronounced interest in developing an explicit and overarching sense of Western identity. He even coined a word for this latter: *occidentalité*. Comte's writings have been completely ignored in existing histories of 'the idea of the West'; yet, in what was the very core of what outsiders saw as 'the West', it was Comte and his followers who first adopted the term deliberately and programmatically in order to describe in great detail (as well as prescribe) a political entity, based on cultural commonality.

Before the nineteenth century, however, when people made distinctions *within* Europe it was decidedly a North–South division that prevailed.[42] By the eighteenth century, with people clear by then about the locations of the North and South poles, Edward Gibbon could confidently write (in 1790 or 1791) in the margin of his own famous book, 'The distinction of North and South is real and intelligible; and our pursuit is terminated on either side by the poles of the Earth. But the difference of East and West is arbitrary, and shifts round the globe.'[43] And such statements are redolent of a long tradition. In 1576, Jean Bodin was merely rehearsing, and summarising longstanding medieval theories when in his *Six Books of the Republic* he insisted that (and explained why) the North–South divide was much more significant than that between West and East.[44]

It cannot indeed be emphasised enough that the transitions (from 'Europe' to 'West' and from North–South to East–West distinctions) were not sudden, straightforward, coherent or unanimous.[45] The same Alexander Stourdza whom we saw making distinctions, in 1816, between East and West while focusing on the churches, their doctrines, and the historic grudges of post-Byzantine Greeks and Russians against 'les Occidentaux', would still refer to Russia as 'North' many years later in his memoirs.[46] In French writings, references to Russia as part of 'Northern Europe' continued to be very common well into the 1880s.[47] Similar attitudes were typical of British thinkers, too. When the former Saint-Simonist Gustave d'Eichthal sent his friend John Stuart Mill his book *Les Deux Mondes*, the two worlds alluded to in the title were *l'Orient* and *l'Occident*. And yet, so deeply ingrained in Mill's mind were the notions of Europe, 'European' and the north–south distinction that, in acknowledging receipt of the book he commented, '[Y]our views respecting the differences between the Oriental and the *European* character, seem to me perfectly just. I quite agree with you that an

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infusion of the Oriental character into that of the nations of *northern* Europe would form a combination very much better than either separately.'[48] Mill was typical. 'The West' and 'Western' were used rarely in English in the early to middle decades of the nineteenth century. Where 'West' and 'Western' might have been expected to feature *par excellence*, given the Crusading theme of the novel, in Disraeli's *Tancred*, the terms used most often to denote the antithesis of the East are mainly 'Christendom', and 'the north' or 'the northern tribes'.[49]

However, there was a difference in France, where *l'Occident* and *occidental/e* were used much more often than the equivalent terms in English. France had been at the heart of Charlemagne's 'Empire d'Occident' and thus the latter word was more familiar and available in French, being integral to what the French saw as their own history. Henry Laurens has argued that Nicolas de Condorcet was probably the first to use the term in its modern sense, at the end of the eighteenth century.[50] But this use was interchangeable with that of *l'Europe*, which appeared overwhelmingly more often than *l'Occident* in Condorcet's *Esquisse*.[51] It is also rewarding to pay close attention to exactly how and where 'the West' was used in this work. Almost all references appear in the parts of the essay dealing with 'the sixth epoch' and 'the seventh epoch',[52] concerning the fall of the Western Roman Empire ('the West') to the Germanic 'barbarians', and then the Crusades. More generally, the term is used primarily to distinguish between developments in the two parts of Europe at particular times in the past. Meanwhile, neither in the *Esquisse* nor in any of his writings directly dealing with America and its influence on Europe did Condorcet (though he was 'perhaps the most brilliant of all the Americanists')[53] refer to 'the West' in any sense that included both Europe and America.[54] Similarly, the term *Occident* appears only once in the whole third volume of Diderot's *Œuvres* (on *Politique*)—in his *Encyclopédie* entry on the Crusades, to distinguish the western Christian crusaders from their eastern Christian brethren. The term *Europe*, on the other hand, appears sixty-eight times, and *européen*(*s*) at least fourteen.[55]

Even earlier, Montesquieu had sometimes used *Occident* when the contradistinction was with the *Orient* and the person speaking was purportedly an Oriental—this was the case particularly in his epistolary novel *Lettres persanes* (*Persian Letters*).[56] However, that did not alter the fact that whenever he spoke of the supranational entity, culture or wider society that he lived in, he would call it 'Europe': 'A prince thinks he will be made greater by a neighboring State's ruin. On the contrary! Things in Europe are such that States depend on each other. France needs the opulence of Poland and Muscovy, just as Guyenne needs Brittany, and Brittany, Anjou. Europe is one State composed of many provinces.'[57] And the main

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distinction within 'Europe', was clear: 'In Europe, there is a sort of balance between the peoples of North and South.' The vast majority of eighteenth-century thinkers and writers would go on thinking and speaking in terms of North and South. Another characteristic example was the—highly influential—Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803). Some interesting instances occur in his 1774 *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* ([Yet] another philosophy of history for the education of mankind), where such language was conspicuous.[58]

The most fascinating case in the eighteenth century, however, is probably that of Voltaire. Larry Wolff, whose *Inventing Eastern Europe* was an attempt to show that an idea of Eastern Europe was invented in the eighteenth century, was surely right in observing that '[n]o one held more tenaciously to the rubric of "the north" than Voltaire, who himself emptied the concept of its significance in discovering Eastern Europe'.[59] And that is characteristic more generally of the state of play in the eighteenth century. Many authors and travellers had begun to stress differences between what they called 'Europe', by which they usually meant (geographically) western, or north-western, Europe, and another 'Europe' to their east, that they considered alien, or at least insufficiently 'European'. They had not, however, come up with neologisms that would express in concrete terms the differences so inchoately conceived. Thus, Voltaire was typical in speaking constantly of 'North' and 'South' when he was dealing with Europe. He wrote a sympathetic history of the Russia of Peter the Great, celebrated Russia's advances in civilisation, and was notorious for flattering the empress Catherine the Great in their correspondence:[60] he was not likely to envisage and articulate a 'West' that would exclude Russia. (Meanwhile, Voltaire is unusual among eighteenth-century authors in another respect. He did use the words '*Occident*' and '*occidentaux*' extensively when he was differentiating between Western Europe, on the one hand, and China, the Arabs or the Ottoman Empire on the other. In making such distinctions most people in his century would differentiate rather between 'Europe' and 'the East'. Voltaire would do so as well at times, but he would also, quite often, use *Occident* rather than *Europe*.[61] In many such comparisons Voltaire was determined to highlight positively the cultural achievements of the Chinese in order to hit hard at Bible-centric, so-called universal histories.[62] And although some of his uses of *Occident* might be taken to be primarily geographical, in others a sense of civilisational commonality is implied.)[63]

Though Voltaire did not deviate from the standard categorisation of Russia as 'Northern', others would soon begin to do so. As we will see in the next chapter, references to Russia as 'oriental' or 'semi-Asiatic' were to intensify spectacularly in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

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IV. This Book

In what follows, I will first (chapter 2) trace the gradual emergence of 'the West', particularly in continental European languages and writings, where it first started to be employed, during the nineteenth century—from its first more or less casual appearances in the 1810s, through the intensification of such uses, especially in juxtaposition to Russia in the 1820s and 1830s, to its omnipresence by the end of the century. A number of thinkers, especially writing in French or German, will be studied, with some excursions also into Russian and Greek authors and arguments. They include Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren; Mme [Germaine] de Staël; Henri de Saint-Simon and some Saint-Simonians, not least Gustave d'Eichthal and Michel Chevalier; Benjamin Constant; the abbé Dominique de Pradt; the Marquis [Astolphe] de Custine; Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer; Gustav Diezel; Friedrich Nietzsche; Aleksei Khomyakov; Markos Renieris; Auguste Comte; Émile Littré; and Pierre Laffitte. In the latter part of the chapter, I analyse in particular, and in detail, the writings of Comte, the French philosopher and founder of Positivism and sociology, and subsequently those of some of his French disciples. It was in an attempt to preserve the cultural coherence of the entity they were proposing (and for that reason primarily to exclude Russia from it) that Comte and then his followers insisted on the name 'the West'—*l'Occident*—as opposed to 'Europe'—which latter, to their chagrin, was seen as including Russia since the time of Peter the Great.

In chapter 3, we cross the English Channel to focus on when and how 'the West' began to be used in Britain. A brief pre-history identifying a few rare seventeenth- and eighteenth-century instances is followed by an analysis of the intensification of use that occurred as of the 1830s, and increasingly thereafter. Alternative (and sometimes contradictory) uses of the term, during a time of inchoate early meanings, are juxtaposed. Authors or politicians discussed in the chapter include John Milton, Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Toland, Adam Smith, Oliver Goldsmith, Edward Gibbon, Thomas Arnold, Lord Palmerston, Henry Thomas Buckle, David Urquhart, Karl Marx, George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), Harriet Martineau, Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), Edward Augustus Freeman, Henry Maine, Richard Congreve, Frederic Harrison, F. S. Marvin, James Ramsay MacDonald, Benjamin Kidd and others. The bewilderment with which both translators and reviewers initially reacted to the neologism 'the West' when it was first promoted explicitly and vociferously by the British Comtists is underscored, with some striking examples. The crucial role of intellectual and cultural exchanges and interactions with continental Europe is highlighted.

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Chapter 4 takes us on a transatlantic journey, to the United States—and back to Europe, from time to time, given how interconnected American culture was, during the nineteenth century, with European (not least German) universities. The peculiarities of America's situation are highlighted first. 'The West' meant something else in America, referring to its own ever-shifting western frontier and the ideas associated with those who lived there. And a strong sense of American exceptionalism and difference from European imperialistic and aristocratic states also prevented any notion of a transatlantic 'West' from emerging during the first decades of the American republic's existence. But things started to change as the nineteenth century advanced. Many thinkers are discussed who were important in the development of the concept of the 'West' in the sense of a transnational cultural and potentially political entity that included the Americas (or North America, at least), Europe (or at least Western and Central Europe) and other settler populations with a European core origin. The chapter makes the case that most of these thinkers were either themselves born and raised in Europe before they migrated to America, or were Americans who had studied in European, and particularly German, universities. Francis (formerly Franz) Lieber receives particular attention, precisely because of how explicit he became about the need for a distinct name for the group or civilisation in question, and his own assiduous attempts at defining it. There were a number of visions for the future of America in the nineteenth century and until the Great War, and most of these, until the late nineteenth century, posited an America that was born of principles different to those of the states of the Old World; hence its exceptionalism, rather than its commonality with Europe, tended to be stressed. There were others—fewer—who highlighted affinities with Europeans; and others still who sought to increase, celebrate and entrench those commonalities in people's consciousness. Nobody was a more ardent member of this last category than Francis Lieber; and given his multiple important roles in American intellectual life, his role is not a negligible one. It is very telling, meanwhile, that in 1853 and in 1859 he complained as explicitly as he did of the absence of a commonly agreed term to describe the civilisational grouping for whose existence he always argued, and which comprised the Europeans, the Americans and other peoples descended from European settlement.

Chapter 5 studies the crucial developments in the meanings and uses of 'the West' and 'Western civilisation' from the outbreak of the Great War in the summer of 1914 to the first phase of analysis of its repercussions at the time of the peace treaties in 1919. The 'war of words' between German academics and official propaganda and their counterparts in France, Britain and America was heated. But

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above and beyond the exploitation of words and concepts by the two sides in order to gain advantage, a number of contributions were articulated by both 'Western' and 'non-Western' people, who began to reconsider the very validity, as well as the actual meaning, of 'Western civilisation'. The chapter begins and ends with juxtapositions of German self-perceptions as bearers of a deeper 'culture' [*Kultur*] as against a superficial 'civilisation' [*Zivilisation*] that they saw as characteristic of their Western neighbours. Even if the manifestos of German academics for the purposes of the war effort were to be dismissed, the passionate outpourings of Thomas Mann in his wartime writings arguably had deeper roots, as well as an afterlife. German ambivalence about, and resistance to, 'the West' became major topics of discussion in France, Britain and in the (initially neutral) United States. During such discussions, some American commentators passionately pleaded for America to stop boasting about its exceptionalism and 'return to the fold' of Europe and its civilisation, with John Jay Chapman being the most vociferous among them. Meanwhile the most consequential advocate of America's alignment with the Entente allies in a 'Western' or 'Atlantic' community turned out to be the young Walter Lippmann. Undoubtedly the longer-term consequences of the Great War were game-changing. The unprecedented scale of its mechanised slaughter discredited the standing of 'civilisation', along with the related notion that 'Western civilisation' in particular was superior because it was technologically so advanced. The terrifying results of those technological advances as displayed during the war turned the tables for many, both within 'Western' countries and beyond. Something was wrong with Western civilisation as a whole, many thought, and the industrial-scale massacre that started in August 1914 was the most striking proof of that. Some of these critics came from colonised peoples, or from groups that felt marginalised in their own countries, not least in the United States. They were all inspired by Rabindranath Tagore's utterances during his widely publicised series of lectures on nationalism around the globe in 1916–17. And some serious rethinking began among Afro-American thinkers, from the beginning of the war. Of these, the chapter pays particular attention to the contributions of Alain Locke and W.E.B. Du Bois.

Chapter 6 analyses the consequences of these initial debates and challenges for the interwar period, which proved to be profound. The publication of Oswald Spengler's *Der Untergand des Abendlandes* (*The Decline of the West*), and its spectacular popularity in Germany and later elsewhere, both captured and further galvanised the *Zeitgeist*. Spengler came at the end of the Great War to say that not just defeated Germany, but the whole of the West (which, for him, included Germany), was already in its phase of decline. It had stopped being a

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living, organic 'culture', and had passed to the stage of a petrified 'civilisation'; it was thus inexorably on its way to being superseded by another culture eventually (probably the Slavic). The debates and reactions Spengler's thesis generated were immense. It also provoked, in 1927, a vociferous and sustained response from the pen of the French conservative Catholic intellectual Henri Massis, *La Defense de l'Occident*. Already before the publication of his book, Massis had been writing articles advancing the idea that Germany and Russia were not parts of 'the West', but rather semi-Asiatic Trojan horses posing lethal threats to it. Massis defined the West as Mediterranean, inspired by classical Greece and Rome, and Catholic—and, needless to say, with France as its core. The chapter will follow the impressive diffusion of Massis's ideas in many countries and the reactions of followers and critics. Related pronouncements of a number of fascinating characters and authors are analysed in the rest of the chapter. W.E.B. Du Bois, Jessie Fauset, Alain Locke, Leo Frobenius, Madison Grant, T. Lothrop Stoddard, José Vasconcelos, Antonio Gramsci, T. S. Eliot, John Gould Fletcher, Max Rychner, Ernst Robert Curtius, Georg Moenius, Ernst Troeltsch, Carl Schmitt, Jane (Jeanne) Nardal, René Maran, René Gillouin, Wyndham Lewis, René Guénon (Abd al-Wāḥid Yaḥyá after his conversion to Islam) and Aurel Kolnai, among others, will command attention.

Chapter 7 moves to debates about and articulations of the meaning of 'the West' or 'Western civilisation' during the Second Word War. The tables were turned between the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939 (at which point the Western democracies could argue that the totalitarian dictators were all on the other side) and Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 (which turned the latter into an inevitable as well as indispensable ally of those same Western democracies). These developments, as well as the shockingly rapid defeat of France in the summer of 1940, the subsequent collaboration under the Vichy government, the entry of the United States into the war and plans for a postwar world that would avoid repetition of the destructive patterns of previous decades, were all elements of the context in which 'the West' and 'Western civilisation' were discussed between 1939 and 1945. The chapter focuses on the perspectives of different thinkers, from highly established figures to some of the most marginalised, including in particular analyses of contributions by, among others, Walter Lippmann, Simone Weil, Alain Locke, Jacques Maritain, Louis T. Achille, Gonzague de Reynold, André Siegfried, Albert Camus, Raymond Aron, Alexandre Kojève, Hannah Arendt, Paul Valéry, George Orwell and Aldous Huxley.

Chapter 8 analyses the multiple and decisive ways in which the Cold War impacted definitions, and 'membership lists', of 'the West'. The chapter pays

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particular attention to the early years of the Cold War, and shows how inchoate and fluid uses and definitions of the term were at that time, before the crystallisation of the binary distinction that later emerged as a result of the Cold War confrontation. Sources of different genres from several different countries are cited in order to make sense of the fermentations that took place at that turbulent time. From government policies in foreign ministries and diplomatic planning; through highly influential highbrow journalism; best-selling novels expressing the main anxieties of European or American readers; a young Henry Kissinger's Harvard Summer School planning; the widely publicised historiographical and public pronouncements of Professor Arnold Toynbee; the cultural Cold War conducted by networks such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom; the writings of European émigrés turned influential American academics such as Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss; the relentless activism and writings of Raymond Aron; the ever-increasing disillusionment with 'the West' manifested by W.E.B. Du Bois, and his role during the early Cold War; the passionate quest of Afro-American novelist Richard Wright to understand the deeper meaning of 'Western civilisation' and to warn 'the West' not to waste its last chance; James Baldwin's early Cold War reflections; James Burnham's denunciations of Liberalism as the 'ideology of Western suicide'; Milan Kundera's and Czesław Miłosz's laments for the 'kidnapped West' of Central and Eastern Europe; through to the student revolts of the 1960s and the reactions to them of the likes of Allan Bloom and other followers of Leo Strauss, who warned that defeated Germany had conquered America through its pernicious intellectual influence: a cornucopia of arguments will be scrutinised, and the multiplicity of meanings and evaluations of 'the West' will be brought into sharp relief.

Chapter 9 focuses on the changes to the meanings of 'the West', and the widely differing prognoses as to its future, once the Cold War was over. The initial relative optimism (though not without some hints at drawbacks) associated with Francis Fukuyama's 'triumph of the West' and 'end of history' thesis was very soon challenged from various quarters. Besides an early warning from veteran academic and political insider Arthur Schlesinger, who focused on culture wars within the United States, the most influential response came from Fukuyama's former teacher, Samuel Huntington, with his 'clash of civilisations' thesis. Huntington's recommendation was that 'the West' should be seen and cherished as a unique civilisation that had to learn how to live in the midst of other (increasingly powerful and assertive) ones, and that beliefs in the universalisability of Western civilisation were to be regarded as dangerous chimeras. Meanwhile, the chapter also analyses the arguments with respect to what was peculiar about the

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West, among thinkers as diverse as Cornelius Castoriadis, Jürgen Habermas and Heinrich August Winkler—the latter two considered in the highly interesting context of German debates about their country's *Westbindung* during and after German reunification. The fraught issue of American leadership or conversely abandonment of the West after the Cold War is then analysed from various angles, including some fascinating debates that arose after a controversial speech by President Trump in 2017—which in some sense brought the discussion back to the Fukuyama-versus-Huntington dilemma as to whether the West should look after itself and its interests or aspire to universalisation of its model and principles. Some important themes addressed not just in chapter 9 but in the book as a whole are brought together in the final section of the chapter, which focuses on the notion of the end of Western civilisation that has been omnipresent in Michel Houellebecq's novels during the past decades. That Houellebecq takes us back not just to René Guénon, but also all the way to Auguste Comte and Joseph de Maistre, is another reminder of the rewards of the *longue durée* approach adopted here.

In the concluding chapter, I highlight further advantages to be derived from that *longue durée* perspective. I discuss examples of arguments, debates, stereotypes and much else, that can perhaps only be truly understood and appreciated after having absorbed what the book has to say. Some of the issues analysed in earlier chapters will be revisited, and arguments presented concerning the best way forward. A final discussion follows, about 'the West', 'Western values' and our potential futures. An argument is advanced regarding realistic ways of defending desirable principles, without the distortions caused by disputes over the ownership of such principles or values; accompanied by a further argument, about the dangers of throwing away babies along with the bathwater. The repercussions of the war in Ukraine since February 2022 are then assessed. Finally, we will return to some reflections of the French philosopher Raymond Aron, as well as to some of the far-sighted thoughts articulated by Richard Wright, the Afro-American self-defined Westerner who thought that he was 'more advanced than the West'.

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