EPISODE 31
ROMANCE & PEACE

Hi there. Welcome to the end of the world. My name is Michael Folz. And this is Episode number 31 of my podcast Dial It Back Or Die. And we've finally come to the end of the 18th Century. And what it wrought. So today we're going to see how the world reacted to all of that as the 19th Century took hold. Although I'll caution you that this episode will be a little longer than usual. But, hey, we're trying to cover an entire century here.

So first, let me remind you once again that, throughout all periods of history, there has almost always in practice been a whole spectrum of ideas out there. And that to a large extent History only remembers and labels that part of the spectrum which, in the rear view mirror, appears to be the most dramatic and important.

Further, let me remind you that if we look back at the last few hundred years, we can trace what I have called two broad streams of thought. And we can label these, in philosophical terms, as essentialist and existentialist. Or, in political terms, as conservative and liberal. Although, as previously cautioned, these labels have to remain vaguely defined at best. Because, of course, since these categories have been created after the fact, many of the thinkers back then won't oblige us by being easily pigeon holed in one box or the other.

And one of the most important of these thinkers back then was a man named Edmund Burke.

Born in Ireland in 1729, by 1766 he was both a member of Parliament and also widely recognized as a brilliant writer and speaker. A friend of Adam Smith and of the theory of free markets, he was the strongest British defender of the right of the American Colonies to declare independence in the 1770s. He also railed against British behavior both in India and in Ireland, and, although Protestant himself, campaigned for better treatment of the Catholics.

Okay, another 18th Century liberal, right? Well, not exactly. Because when it came to the critical issue of whether culture, tradition, authority, and religion had more or less haphazardly arisen, and whether it would therefore be a relatively simple matter to change them out for some sort of new quote/unquote 'scientific' model, he was definitely on what we would now call the conservative side of the argument.

Now his enemies claimed that he was merely a brilliant propagandist who could and would make the case for whoever paid him the most. But even if that were true, the argument which he used in his most famous book, 'Reflections on the Revolution in France', which was a fiery denunciation of said revolution, was a pretty good argument. And in actuality it turns out to have been much more truly scientific than was the pretension of the liberals. For he made the point that (to use modern terminology), since systems can go wrong many more ways than they can go right, that therefore any society which does exist, simply by the fact of its continued existence, means that it had to necessarily have evolved through a process of trial and error in order to so exist. And this insight is in fact also what present day biology has definitively shown. Namely, that Nature and Evolution are inherently incredibly conservative processes.

Not that Burke, back in the 18th Century, ever posited that his present day society was therefore perfect, or that it was unnecessary or impossible to change anything. First, though, he pointed out that one should never start out with a disdain for the way things are, because it is always more likely than not that they are that way for a good reason. Second, he noted that one should always be aware of that delicate balance which is required for civilization to exist at all. And that therefore one should go out of their way to be humble and cautious when setting about to quote/unquote 'improve' it.

In other words, just as modern conservationists want us to deeply appreciate the natural environment that we were born into, so too did a Burkean conservative want us to deeply appreciate the cultural and traditional environment that we were born into.

And the fact that he wrote his book in 1790, at the beginning of the French Revolution, when most observers were still praising the imminent triumph of liberalism, and that then his dire predictions were more than borne out by the descent into chaos and terror, the rise of the dictator Napoleon, and then a decade of world war, all of this certainly didn't hurt the public's growing acceptance of the main thrust of his thesis. So it is not surprising that the general enthusiasm for liberal ideas which immediately preceded the events of 1789 should change to a general enthusiasm for conservative ideas with the fall of Napoleon in 1814.

Although in general that's not how 'modern' history has taught us about the 19th Century.

Because I remember how, even way back in 1962, in my tenth grade world history class, the party line was that the 19th Century in Europe was this horrible reactionary, conservative era which not only squashed all the wonderful dreams of liberty from the 18th Century, but then succeeded, with police state efficiency, in making sure that such dreams would continue to be dashed for the next hundred years. After all, as the textbook tried to drum into me, wasn't 'freedom' not only humanity's birthright but also its most deep seated hunger?

But if you had been a citizen back then—and I don't care what your political beliefs are now—but if you had been a citizen back then, and you had just seen how the liberal vision of 'freedom' had almost immediately descended into trials without evidence and heads rolling off of guillotines in front of thousands of spectators, not to mention the millions killed during the Napoleonic Wars, I think that you might well have become 'conservative', too.

The larger issue, though, about the entire 19th Century is that the narrative that it was somehow this repressive, uptight, unprogressive span of years is almost entirely utter baloney. And, in point of fact, almost the exact opposite is true. Indeed, a good argument can be made that there was as much, if not more, scientific, technological, and cultural change between the year 1800 and the year 1900 as there was between the year 1900 and the year 2000.

Nor were people unaware of alternatives to so-called 'Victorian sensibilities'. Politically, as we shall see, you had every possible ideology imaginable, from Anarchism to Marxism. In the arts you had examples of the ultra-Bohemian, sexually daring, thumbing one's nose at society types stretching from Byron and Shelley at the beginning of the century, to Rimbaud in mid century to Oscar Wilde at the end of the century.

The plain fact of the matter, however, was that the vast majority of people in the 19th Century, when presented with these alternative visions, just flat out did not buy into them. Instead it was like they were all heeding Edmund Burke's advice, and were content in progressing slowly and steadily, and in making a virtue of being virtuous. It's kind of as if, to use my analogy from a few episodes ago, that Western world which was now a young adult wasn't quite as infatuated with those half thought through ideas as it had been as a teenager just a few years earlier.

In other words, humanity had actually learned a lesson from the abject failure of the French Revolution. Now how often does that happen?

So now let's do a quick survey of the various threads of the 19th Century, the political, the technological, the artistic, the religious, and the cultural, to see what really was going on back then. And let's start with the political.

Now you may remember from your history classes that in 1814, once it looked like Napoleon had been totally defeated, the great Congress of Vienna was held. Called by the Austrian diplomat Count Metternich, it was attended by virtually every leader in Europe, whether from a country great or small or even tiny. Although in practice only the four victorious powers, Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria, actually called the shots.

And it really was a big deal as regards world history. Because, while turning its back on all of those newfangled ideas and ideologies, it then redrew boundaries, made sure that existing authorities remained authoritative, and established stable spheres of influence. So stable, in fact, that for the next 99 years there were no major wars on the continent.

Well, as I've already said, liberal historians for the next century and a half didn't like this arrangement one bit. After all, it flew in the face of all liberal theory. But the plain fact remains that, for the first time since the 13th Century, Europe was calm for three entire generations. And please keep this result in mind when in the future we go over what happened at the end of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles.

And unfortunately I don't have the time to dwell on all the particular details of the history of 19th Century Europe. But I will very briefly cover two points of objections which you, if you have some knowledge of this period, might come up with.

First: Yes, there were a few minor wars during this time, most prominently those started by Otto Von Bismarck during his creation of the modern country of Germany around the year 1870. But these were short, and were halted as soon as Bismarck had attained his limited goals.

Second: Yes, there were economic upheavals, primarily during the 1830s and 1840s, when the entire continent started rapidly industrializing. And these led to a year of so-called liberal revolutions in 1848. But these uprisings were rather easily put down, and whatever permanent changes which developed after them were mostly incremental.

And, considering the absolute level of technological and social change in the 19th Century, it's kind of amazing that there was so little unrest. After all, in 1800 travel on land was either by foot or by uncomfortable carriage on bad roads, and on sea by relatively small wooden sailing vessels. By 1900 a

dense network of railroads connected almost all of civilization, and giant steel steamships circled the globe. What's more, that globe had been thoroughly explored and mapped. Electricity, which had been an almost mystically unknowable substance at the beginning of the century, was now thoroughly described, and was now lighting cities and powering networks of telephones. Photography had come out of nowhere and had now advanced to the point of producing the first primitive movies. The understanding that germs cause disease, indoor plumbing, refrigeration, elevators and their attendant skyscrapers, public sanitation, all happened then. And although improvements such as these don't seem as snazzy or dramatic as, say, email or microwave ovens or jet travel, still these were *the* major factors in the large scale decrease in childhood deaths and consequent increase in life expectancies. So that, in terms of pure, unadulterated human progress, the 19th Century might well have been our greatest leap forward ever. Especially when you consider that these pluses weren't offset by minuses like the Nazis and Commies and atom bombs and global depressions which kind of took the shine off of the 20th Century.

Of course, your vision of the 19th Century might not be that of peaceful, easy progress. Rather it might be one of factories spewing soot and of endless rows of workers toiling away at clanking machines. And of all those downtrodden poor that Charles Dickens championed.

Well, first of all, one doesn't want to sound harsh. But the sad truth is that the poor have always been with us. So that whether we're talking about the thoughts of an ancient Chinese philosopher, the theology of Saint Augustine, the paintings of Michelangelo, or the plays and novels of Voltaire, the vast majority of people who surrounded all of them were also poor and struggling. So that if we are going to invalidate the dominant worldview of the educated middle class of the 19th Century because there were still a lot of poor people amongst them, then we would also have to invalidate all other thoughts and worldviews which have ever taken place. Including those of today.

More to the point, though, this was the first time in the history of the world where the lot of the poor was getting substantially better. And to our eyes the picture of an illiterate woman working twelve hours a day at a mechanical loom is justifiably pitiful. But to most of their eyes such a job was actually preferable to the even emptier poverty which their rural villages had offered. Now at least they had a chance to take part in some of the rewards that all the new inventions and industries were bestowing. For instance, all those textile mills meant that any and all kinds of woven clothing were now much more affordable for everyone.

Further—and this is very important—in general the educated middle class of the 19th Century was extremely concerned about the fate and the lives of the poor among them. Which is one reason why Charles Dickens became such a literary and cultural hero. Indeed, this was no doubt the first time in human history that the better off put any sort of serious effort into solving the problem of those poor who were among us.

So now let's turn our attention to the social, artistic, and cultural outlook of the 19th Century. And let's start with, as it were, the poetical.

Because just as the results of the French Revolution succeeded in replacing an infatuation with liberal ideas with a full scale retreat to a conservative mindset, so, too, did the French Revolution herald a sudden and complete end to the Age of Enlightenment and the so-called Age of Reason. And almost in a flash this mental construct was replaced by Romanticism.

Now back then the definition of 'romantic' had much more to do with meaning 'in and of nature' than it did with any notion of affectionate love. Further in reality the change to Romanticism wasn't quite as drastic as it might first seem. After all, as I keep saying, for the past several centuries there have been those two streams of thought. And, as already noted, Rousseau's Back To Nature campaign had had an immense following before the Revolution. And concepts like Authenticity, Sincerity, and Sensibility, for better or worse, had each stirred French and English souls. Further, in Germany the great writers and philosophers, such as Goethe and Schiller and Kant, had never remotely bought into any vision which was remotely utilitarian. Indeed the Transcendental Idealism which dominated German thought was utterly opposed to the pseudo-scientific rationalism pursued in France and England.

Nonetheless, it is also true that as the horror of the Reign of Terror sank in with everyone, suddenly the spiritual barrenness of the Age of Enlightenment also seemed to become universally apparent. The 18th Century liberal's prescription for happiness—the atheistic accumulation of goods and services—now seemed empty and useless.

And thus began the reign of the Romantic poets, as best exemplified by William Wordsworth.

Born in 1770 (the same year as Napoleon), Wordsworth had started out an enthusiastic backer of Freedom and Revolution. But as the French one turned ugly he became repulsed by the whole idea. Instead he turned his attention to those Germans and their ideas of the purity of Nature, their honoring of the Medieval and of tradition, and their belief in the possibility of eternal souls. In 1798, along with

his good friend Samuel Coleridge, he published a book of poems called 'Lyrical Ballads', and this event is generally seen as the beginning of the Romantic Age.

Now the so-called Age of Reason had featured men (almost always without women) socially intermingling in coffee houses and the like, getting high off of snorting snuff and super strong coffee, and seeking to 'rationally' redesign humanity so that it fit into some sort of self-declared 'scientific' schemata. Now there was a new vision: The individual artist, off by himself and surrounded by a Nature which inspired awe and majesty. And this idealized person was then led to a deep personal truth (which is nonetheless universal) through a process of intuition, imagination, and inspiration.

And William Wordsworth more or less lived this vision. Happily married, and also extremely close to his sister, he lived most of his life in a house in the Lake District, an area of far Northern England which is renowned for its stunning natural beauty of lakes, mountains, and moors. From there he continued to write poetry, including his masterpiece, 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality'.

Compared to the relatively sterile positive Deism of a few decades earlier, the name says it all.

At least for a while, Coleridge and another friend, Robert Southey, were also 'Lake poets'. Then about a decade later Lord Byron, Shelley, and Keats all became immensely famous. Meanwhile a Scotsman named Walter Scott invented the historical novel, and his romantic stories from Medieval times and earlier, which glorified honor and justice and all sorts of other traits that had been rejected by 18th Century thinkers, were incredibly popular.

In music the overwrought Baroque style of Vivaldi and the precision of Mozart gave way to the relatively wild exuberance of Beethoven. In art the formal classicism of portraiture and historical depiction was replaced by the relatively passionate landscapes of Constable and Turner.

Nor was this new emphasis on the human part of the human being, and the suggestion that perhaps this human being might even contain elements of the transcendent, merely a passing phase. In the 1830s Charles Dickens, probably the greatest novelist ever, burst upon the scene, and his carefully constructed narratives touched both hearts and minds, and depicted and celebrated a world about as far removed as possible from the 'utiles' and 'greatest good for greatest number' formulations of fifty years earlier. Indeed, with 'A Christmas Carol' he not only thoroughly skewered those who saw happiness as merely an accumulation of money or of goods and services, but he also basically invented Christmas as the emotionally warm family holiday that we presently know.

And, speaking of Christmas, I should mention that in the 19th Century religious belief once again regained its position as the default value of Civilization. Not that, in practice, religious belief had

ever gone away among the masses. But, as I mentioned so many times, in the 18th Century the traditional, emotive religious experience had been looked down on, with various levels of disdain, by the Deists, by the new sect of Unitarians, and most especially by Voltaire and the other philosophes and radicals. Certainly, for someone like Jeremy Bentham, the spiritual literally did not compute.

Well, along with the flowering of the Romantic Era in the 19th Century with its emphasis on Truth and Beauty came a rebirth of that religious spirit. For instance, Charles Dickens was an intensely Christian believer his entire life, and he intended for all of his novels, not just 'A Christmas Carol', to be moral parables in which the Christian virtues of modesty, charity and forgiveness triumph over vices like selfishness and greed.

Nor was the religious spirit of the times limited to traditional Christianity. For this was the era in which Eastern religious thought first found wide exposure in the West. In America the Transcendentalist movement of Emerson, Thoreau, and their friends drew heavily from Hinduism. And later in the century the Impressionist painter Monet, among others, would be heavily influenced by Buddhism.

And this openness to a world of Spirit also manifested itself in the world of Science. Not that Mesmerism—which was a forerunner of hypnotism—in the beginning of the century, nor seances, towards the end of the century, were ever proven to be scientifically true. But at least certain scientists and intellectuals of the time were open to the idea that perhaps such ideas as clairvoyance or the existence of ghosts were plausibly real.

Now did atheists still exist? Of course. And we'll be getting to that in the next episode. But it was certainly no longer what you might call cool or hip to be one. And most of those people who chose to be atheists in general kept it to themselves. As an example, today Charles Darwin is kind of a hero to those who are outspoken atheists. But he himself was a very reluctant one. And the last thing he would have ever wanted would have been to hurt the sensibilities of a believer.

Anyway, now this brings us to the final, and one of the most significant, hallmarks of the 19th Century: The veneration of the Feminine.

Because whatever your current political position is, whether you consider yourself socially conservative or totally postmodern, whether you are totally taken in by Pre-Raphaelite paintings and Victorian Christmases, or whether you think all of that is unmitigated schmaltz, anyone who has even a

passing knowledge of the actual 19th Century would find it difficult to deny that this was the time that most honored what is now called the traditional understanding of the Feminine.

It started at the beginning of the century when Romanticism arose with its emphasis on intuition, imagination, and inspiration. All traits which had virtually always been represented by the female goddesses and muses. And then there was Poetry, not to mention Beauty itself. Because now the inability to precisely quantify concepts like these made them all the more attractive. And the Middle Ages, with its emotive religious faith and its codes of chivalry, was suddenly the part of history that people honored most.

And even though the Romantic period is generally acknowledged to have ended around 1840, it blended seamlessly into the Victorian Era, which held sway until the end of the 19th Century. And if there's one thing that you can say about the Victorian period it is that the family and domesticity were the most important elements in it.

Most critically, gentlemen were expected to be just that: Gentle men. For although we might caricature Victorian males as being harrumphing imperialistic Rudyard Kipling types, the reality was quite different. After all, poetry and art were actually seen as manly and noble pursuits. Being the head of a happy, healthy family was thought of as much more worthy a goal than becoming a success in business. And it was perfectly acceptable back then for a man to cry in public when at the theater.

In fact, the observation was commonplace back then that the entire purpose of Civilization itself was to provide a soft place for the feminine to exist.

But weren't the Victorians all sexually repressed? Not at all. Again, as I said, the sexual propriety of the time can be more properly seen as a corrective reaction against what was widely seen as the real results of the 'sexual revolution' of the 18th Century: Rampant illegitimacy, unhappy homes, and all of the horrible excesses of the French Revolution. And perhaps it was difficult to prove the connection between sexual license and the revolutionary license that led to lives being killed so casually. But the correlation was way too scary. At any rate, nobody wanted to relive any of *that*. And it's not like no one was aware that sexual looseness still wasn't possible; again, it's just that there were very few, if any, takers.

Which brings up the topic of the politically radical and/or sexually promiscuous artist. Because one of the cliches that we are taught is that, especially from the 19th Century on, everyone with a truly artistic temperament has totally rejected the world of the straitlaced bourgeoisie and has lived a life out

on the cultural edge. And it is true that Byron and Shelley and, later, Baudelaire and Rimbaud do fit that image.

But the reality is that they were actually the exceptions. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge were conservatives. Dickens, for all of his intense empathy for the downtrodden, was also a political conservative.

Indeed, this new fervent devotion to Beauty as an end in and of itself irrespective of radical politics or lifestyles can best be seen by the mid 19th Century artistic movement known as the Pre-Raphaelites. Consciously doing away with the technique of perspective (which you'll recall was *the* benchmark of Renaissance painting) Pre-Raphaelite painters used lush colors and intensely dramatic scenes to depict (mainly) fabulously and intricately beautiful women, their luxurious hair, and the elaborate clothing that they wore.

In fact, probably more so than at any other time or place, one can even say that the 19th Century was an exaltation of the Feminine. The Ideal Woman really was placed upon a pedestal. Childbearing and child rearing were considered sacred duties and essential to the furtherance of civilization, and many scholars point to that era as the time when childhood started to be seen as a wonderful end in and of itself. As already noted, the ideal man no longer sat in coffee houses or salons discussing political issues with other men, but hurried home for the hoped for warmth of domestic tranquility. Which, by the way, is how the word 'romantic' changed from meaning 'surrounded by nature' to meaning 'the close and sweet affection between a fully committed couple'.

And you might say that the exaltation of the Feminine reached its peak, towards the end of the century, with the overwhelming enthusiasm for Impressionist painting. Here the beautiful, charismatic woman was again idealized, along with her gentle surroundings.

Or take the decorative style known as Art Nouveau which, even though not focusing exclusively on women per se, still luxuriated in the soft curves and flowing lines traditionally associated with the feminine.

But even though the Feminine was no longer denied, but was actually celebrated, this doesn’t mean that women were necessarily cosseted. Because when one looks at the actual historical record, and contrary to what our postmodern history tries to tell us, one can find few if any examples of women complaining that they weren’t being allowed to become lawyers or business executives. Rather they were overwhelmingly quite content to be members of the fairer sex, the kinder sex, free from the

pressures of having to make a living, and glad to be afforded the dignity and the respect shown them by the gentlemen which the 19th Century had gone to such trouble to fashion into gentle men.

But perhaps the most interesting, and impressive, aspect of the 19th Century, and especially of the latter part of it, was the almost unbridled optimism about the future which almost everyone shared. Because of course there were still problems in this world. But then there had always been problems. The big change was that now, finally, so many of those problems were in the process of being solved. First, the particular problems of economic and sociological disruption which had dominated the mid-century, and which had brought forth Karl Marx and the so-called Revolution of 1848, had been largely ameliorated. More broadly, as previously mentioned, this was the time when so many of the basics which underlie modern living, from indoor plumbing to the eradication of childhood illnesses to mass transit to the harnessing of electricity, all took place. Surely, the feeling was, all of the remaining unsolved problems would be taken care of in due course.

Next there was the plain fact that Europe had, by and large, been at peace, and also had been so stable for so long. And now, even though nations and national boundaries obviously still existed, it was still quite common, especially for artists and intellectuals, to travel freely and without concern from one country to the other, and to think of themselves as humans first and as citizens of whatever country second. In fact, the vision of lasting peace was so in the air that in 1899 a giant voluntary peace conference was held at The Hague in the Netherlands at which rules were established so that if a conflict ever were to arise it would be prosecuted in as civilized a manner as possible.

Finally, although there were of course still many working people slaving away in mines and factories, the plain fact is that the middle class was both much larger and way more prosperous than ever before. And the contentment of this bourgeoisie, along with the respect with which they carried themselves, can be readily seen in so many of those Impressionist and other paintings of the time.

So it shouldn't surprise you that most of the visions that writers and serious thinkers held for the upcoming 20th Century were downright Utopian. This was going to be a time when the grubby selfishness of the marketplace would be gently replaced by an economic system which was more cooperative, more humane, and more Christian. Leisure time would greatly expand because of all the new labor saving inventions. Education and the arts would triumph. And urban spaces would be filled with many more parks and gardens.

After all, the hedonism and self-centeredness implicit and explicit in the 18th Century's liberalism had produced a mindset which only ended up creating chaos and terror. Whereas the 19th Century's relative discipline and moderation had actually produced the Progress that the previous century's philosophes had only talked about.

And now, here on the cusp of a new era: What possibly could go wrong?

Okay. That's what was happening in Western Europe. Now let's very briefly look at what was happening in America.

The first thing to point out—and this might really surprise you—is what a dud Democracy was turning out to be. For instance, a falsehood that you often hear mentioned is that two democracies never go to war with each other. Yet in 1812 there were only two democracies in the entire world: The United States and Great Britain. And the U.S., primarily in an attempt to conquer and absorb Canada, unilaterally declared war on Great Britain. Then in 1861 the Civil War, which was by far the most destructive one in 19th Century Western Civilization, took place between two out-and-out democracies, the North and the South. (Because, yes, blacks in the South couldn't vote. But then most blacks in the North couldn't vote, either. And historians agree that one of the reasons that the South ended up losing the war was because it was *too* democratic.) And then, in order to grab territory, the United States also manufactured a war with Mexico in 1848. And, in order to grab even more territory, it manufactured a war with Spain in 1898.

Nor was democratic voting the wonderful panacea that our American History classes taught us that it was. For instance, even as late as 1820, with a population of over nine and a half million, only 108,000 people bothered to cast a ballot. And even if you estimate that only three million white males had the franchise, that's still a participation rate of around 3%. Further, when the participation rate did greatly expand in 1828, who was elected? Andrew Jackson, the frontier yahoo who didn't even have a high school education.

And then during the rest of the 19th Century things got even more cynical. In fact, when the young upper class Theodore Roosevelt decided to run for public office, everyone in his social class was shocked that anyone who had any culture or education would ever want to take part in such a sordid business.

So the exercise of democracy was not a major concern in 19th Century America.

On the bright side, though, nor, however, were the large class divides and wrenching social changes which Europe had to deal with. After all, what with its ever expanding frontier, the U.S. would always have a relative labor shortage, which would keep wages and working conditions relatively benign. And, in general, even with all of the conflicts which our history books tell us about, life in these United States was a pretty comfortable existence.

Nor, as the 19th Century came to an end, were we that different from the Europeans as regards to our optimism towards the future. If anything, our generalized belief in a 20th Century filled with peace and ease and comfort was even more deep seated. Because, even though we were still not producing that many world beating writers or poets or artists, still outside observers were always remarking about our enthusiasm, our can do attitude, the emancipation of our women, etc.

And here's something which you might really find interesting: A number of years ago a panel of historians surveyed a whole ream of memoirs and reminisces of growing up in Middle America circa 1890. And they couldn't find a single example of anyone reporting an unhappy childhood.

Okay. And I totally agree that it is ridiculous in the extreme to try to summarize an entire century in forty minutes or so. Especially a century which was as dramatic and complex as the 19th. But the part about Science is beckoning me ever stronger and stronger. And anyway this podcast is specifically about the bad ideas of the 18th Century.

But what I wanted to show you was that, far from there being some sort of unbroken chain of thought between the Age of Enlightenment and today, instead the 19th Century was a direct refutation of those ideas and that attitude. And that the relative peace and relative success of that era stood in direct contrast to the collapse in morals and the collapse in functioning society which those 18th Century ideas had engendered.

And I am enough of an aficionado of 19th Century history that I *could* probably do at least 20 more episodes on it. But I'm only going to do one more. And that's going to be on how liberalism, which seemed to be down for the count at the beginning of the century, made its resurgence in England in the middle of the century. Which then set the stage for its ideas insinuating themselves into the modern collective consciousness just as the 20th Century started to unfold.

But, again, that's for next time. For this time, once again I thank you for so far having listened.