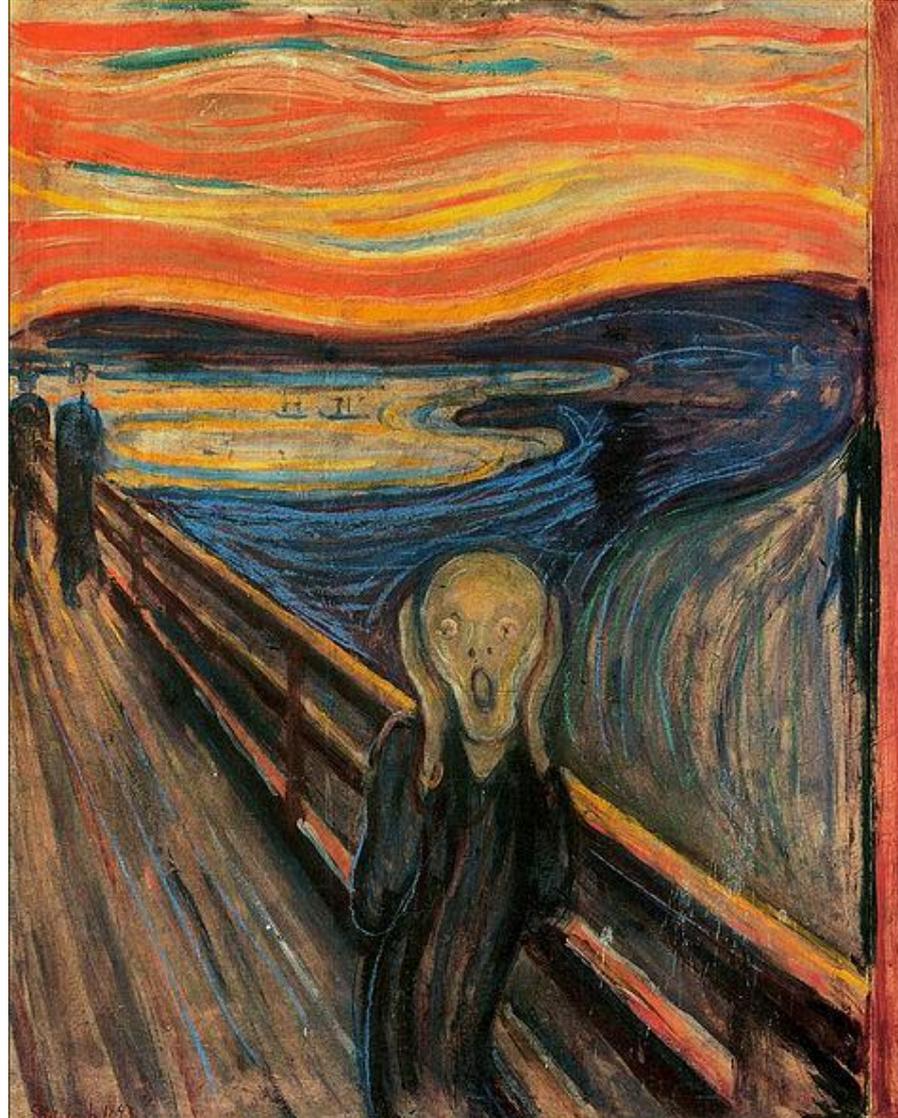


Uncertainty in the Age of Anxiety



The Age of Anxiety

- “The storm has died away, and still we are restless, uneasy, as if the storm were about to break. Almost all the affairs of men remain in a terrible uncertainty. We think of what has disappeared, and we are almost destroyed by what has been destroyed; we do not know what will be born, and we fear the future, not without reason...Doubt and disorder are in us and with us. There is no thinking man, however shrewd or learned he may be, who can hope to dominate this anxiety, to escape from this impression of darkness.”

Paul Valery

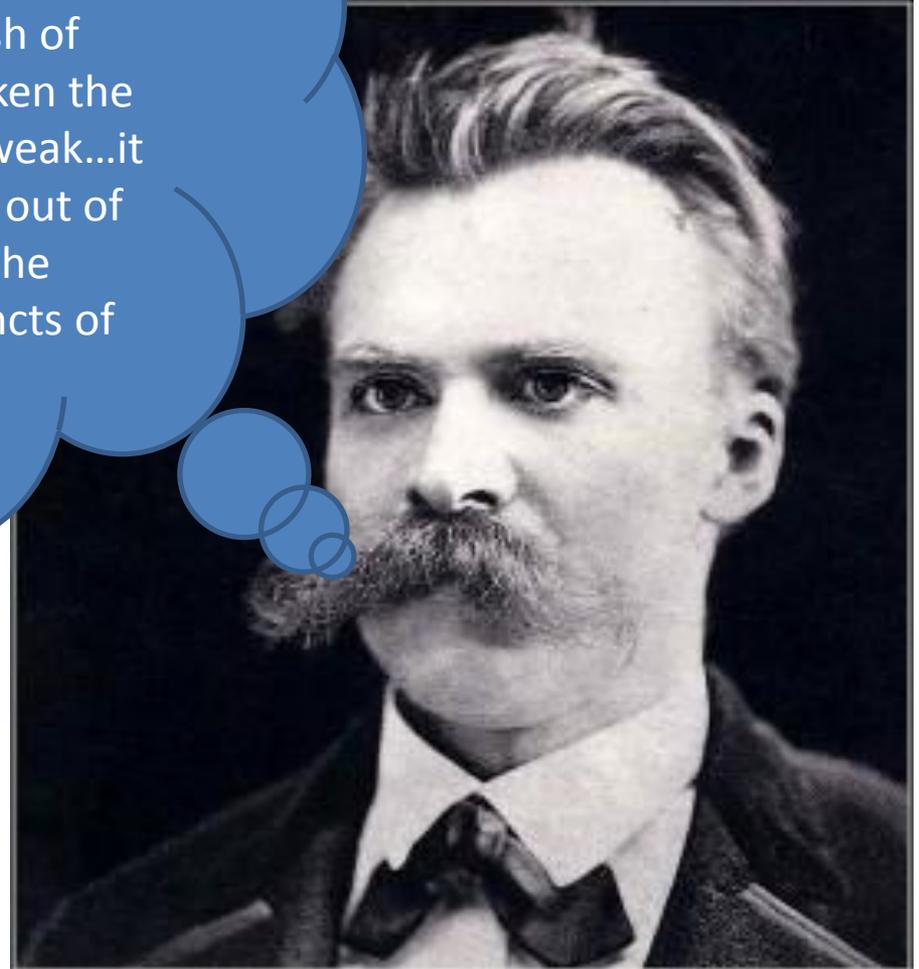
Turning Point: WWI

- Prior to WWI, most people were optimistic about the future for good reason!
 - Rise of democracy
 - Rise of living conditions
 - Rise of working conditions
- “Their [the critics] views were greatly strengthened by the experience of history’s most destructive war, which suggested to many that human beings were a pack of violent, irrational animals quite capable of tearing the individual and his or her rights to shreds.”

Challenging Civilization

I call Christianity the one great curse, the one immortal blemish of mankind...it has taken the side of everything weak...it has made an ideal out of opposition to the preservative instincts of strong life.

- Friedrich Nietzsche
 - Western idealism stifled creativity and imagination
 - “God is dead”
 - Desired a revaluation of values of pride
- Henri Bergson
 - Experience triumphed over rationality
- Georges Sorel
 - Predicted Lenin’s style of one-party communism

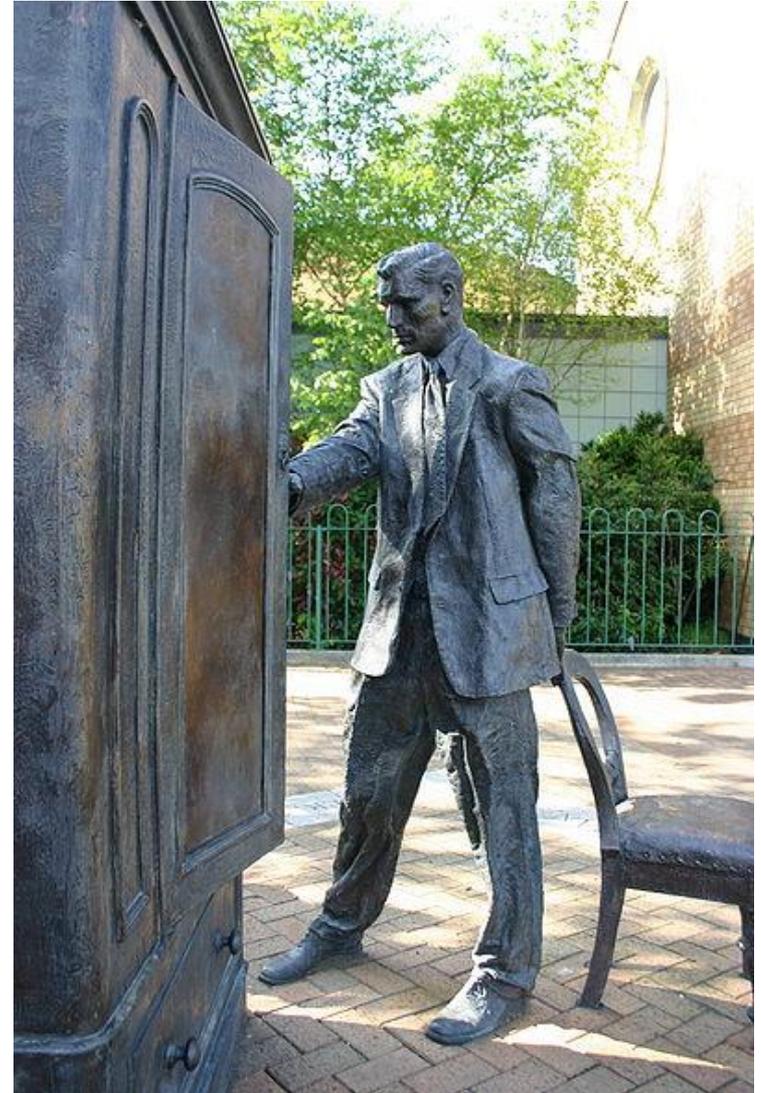


Impact of World War I on Modern Philosophy

- Logical Positivism
 - Ludwig Wittgenstein
 - Rejected all concerns of philosophy as essentially unknowable
- Existentialism
 - Influenced by Nietzsche
 - No universal meaning to life
 - “Man is condemned to be free.”
 - Jean-Paul Sartre

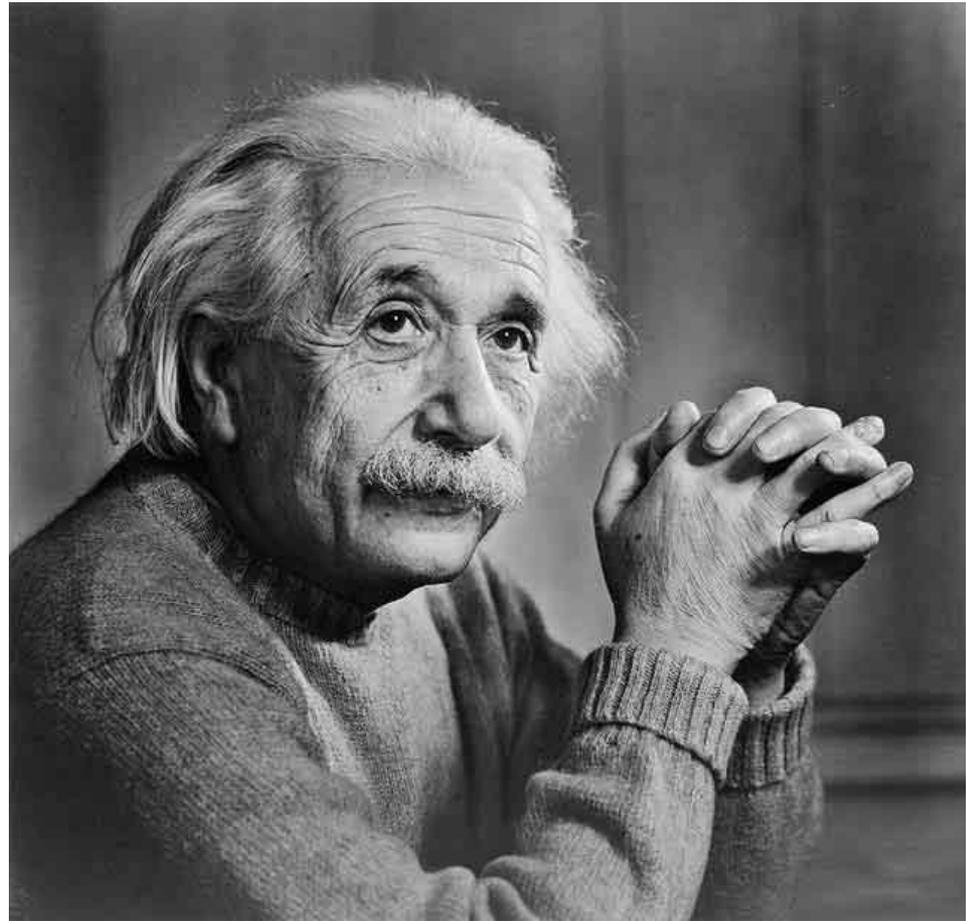
A Third Christian Revival

- Cause: Rejection of late 19th century religious Modernism -- attempts to humanize or rationalize Christ
- What: Rebirth of religious intensity and the mystery of God
 - Influenced by Soren Kierkegaard
 - Promoted by Karl Barth
- Converting power of WWI!
 - “One began to believe in heaven because one believed in hell.”



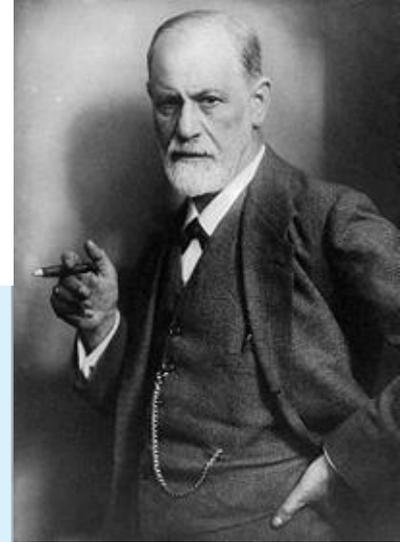
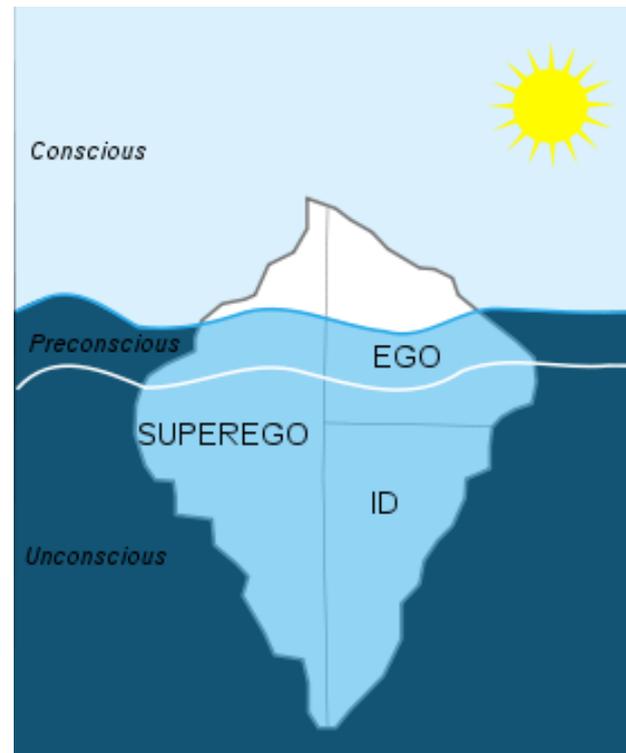
“New Physics” Destroys Newton

- Marie and Pierre Curie
 - Radioactivity
- Max Planck
 - “Quanta”
- Albert Einstein
 - Special Relativity
- Ernest Rutherford
 - Atom could be split
 - Road to A-BOMB!
- Werner Heisenberg
 - “Principle of Uncertainty”



Triumph of the Subconscious

- Sigmund Freud
 - Largest part of the mind is the subconscious (Id), driven by sexual instinct
 - Believed that the ego and superego could become too strong!
 - Repression of instinct leads to mental issues!
 - Rise of psychoanalysis
- Carl Jung
 - Part of the subconscious was “collective” – memories that all human beings share
- Impact: Contributes to this age of irrationality and the free spirit of the Roaring 20s



Disillusionment in Literature

- Influenced by Freud, stream of consciousness writing develops to explore the human psyche
 - Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, and James Joyce
- The brutality of WWI caused people to question Western ideals and to fear an uncertain future
 - T.S. Eliot: World was a “barren wasteland” drained of hope and faith
 - Anti-Utopia Literature
 - Oswald Spengler
 - Franz Kafka
 - George Orwell
- “Lost Generation”
 - Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Stein
 - Wrote about a life empty of meaning

