



The Vertigo Years: Change and Culture in the West, 1900-1914

Philipp Blom

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The most breathtaking work of history since Paris 1919.

Europe, early in the 20th century: a world adrift, a pulsating era of creativity and contradictions. The hot topics of the day — terrorism and globalization, immigration, consumerism, the lack of moral values, and rivaling superpowers — could make one forget that it is a century ago that this era vanished into the trenches of the Somme and Vimy Ridge.

Or did it? The closer one looks, the more this world seems like ours, the more one sees that the questions and realities shaping our lives and thoughts were formulated and laid down at the beginning of the 20th century: feminism, democratization, mass communication, commercial branding, consumerism, state-sponsored genocide, and psychoanalysis were all concepts birthed in this period. This was a time radically unlike the Victorian era that preceded it, a time in which all the old certainties broke down. Philipp Blom succeeds in bringing to life the immediacy of the lives and issues of this fascinating, flawed pre-war period.

Through a series of historical vignettes, each chapter focusing on one particularly telling event for every year from 1900 to 1914, **The Vertigo Years** discovers the great people, powers, and ideas of Europe after 1900. The approach is eclectic, brilliantly combining the novelist's eye with the craft of the historian. It opens up this era in all its contradictions and similarities to our own.

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