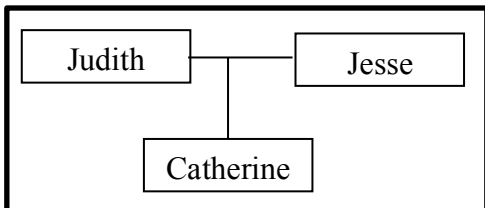


WESTMAN

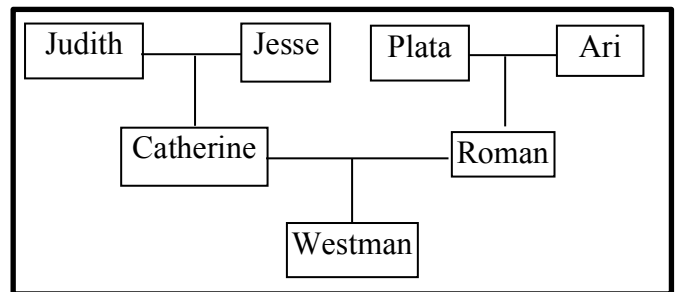
We begin our story with Judith waiting impatiently for the man that she is sure will one day come to rescue her from her difficult life. When Jesse appears and announces that he is the one, she believes that he is. A night of passion ensues in which each promises everlasting dedication to the other.

But at morning's light Judith wakes up, takes one look at Jesse beside her, and decides that this is not the man after all. She wakes him up, hands him his shoes and sends him packing over his confused objections. She returns to waiting, only to discover that she is pregnant.

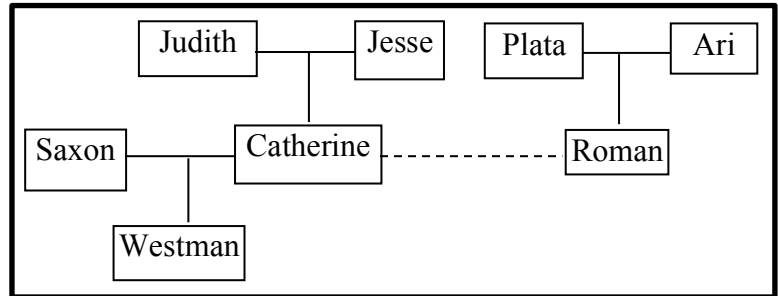


Judith will have nothing to do with her daughter Catherine who very nearly dies at a young age but somehow manages to survive alone on the streets, nurtured by the belief that her father will some day return for her, and hating her mother for sending her father way. Catherine ekes out a scruffy existence, eventually blooming into a tough, beautiful young woman.

Roman, the richest, finest man in town, at last truly sees Catherine and, the difference in their ages and stations notwithstanding, falls completely in love. He takes her in, introduces her to his parents Plata and Ari, and together they make a lady of her: a powerful and imperious lady at that. Judith is deeply attracted to her mother-in-law Plata's description of higher abstract truths that we can only glimpse. Their child is named Westman.



Shortly after Westman's birth, Saxon appears. He is a field hand working for Roman: nasty, brutish and tall. Engaging Roman in a fight he scores an impressive win and takes Catherine and Westman as his prize. In humiliation, Roman leaves his wife and child and moves east to set up new lodging close to his parents. Catherine sets about civilizing Saxon.



Growing up under Catherine and Saxon, Westman is a quiet and respectful child in his younger years. Things begin to change when Westman is ten years old and Catherine informs him that they must take a journey east, towards where Roman lives. She says that something was stolen from them by a bad man named Aran and that they must go to get it back. Westman is unsure of what this means but he obeys. Arriving at their destination they find Aran taking care of Plata and Ari. The trip is unsuccessful at returning the 'stolen' goods and is repeated several times with the same lack of success, but the contacts with Aran, Plata and especially Ari, have a profound effect on Westman. Not only is the world a bigger place than he ever imagined but his venerable grandfather amazes him with his deep wisdom. While Plata continues to talk of abstract reality, Westman is more attracted to Ari's teaching that the things worth learning about are personal and in the present.

Tensions between Saxon and Westman boil over when Westman is twelve, armed with his grandfather's inspiration. Though young he is aggressive and assertive and forces Saxon to sign a paper saying that he, Saxon, will be more attentive towards Westman's desires. Saxon thinks it's a bit of a joke but it represents a shift of power nonetheless.

Over time the marriage of Saxon and Catherine is increasingly fraught. While she was initially the dominant partner, over time Saxon progressively asserts himself. Westman's thirteenth year is brutal. His parents are

constantly and violently feuding and Westman falls seriously ill, enough to question whether he will survive at all. He turns to his parents but they let him know they are too busy bickering to attend to him. On regaining his health Westman realizes that, between the feuding and his illness, much work has gone undone. His parents now turn to him to help them with the necessary chores. He gets to work, but another shift of power has taken place. It is now understood that they need him and that provides him confidence and leverage.

Having survived the illness, Westman begins to bloom. He turns his attention to art and music. His mother is proud and supportive, but worries about his increasingly independent, even rebellious, attitude.

At age fourteen a minor but significant change occurs: Westman's voice changes from that of a boy to that of a man. Henceforth when he speaks he will be heard more clearly and taken more seriously. Later, near the end of his fourteenth year, Westman begins to explore beyond the confines of his world. In doing so he meets Iberia. Since this story is a significant detour we will leave it for now and return to it later.

At age fifteen, Westman gets a girlfriend. Lucy is dour and humorless, but smart, strong and supportive of Westman's growing assertiveness. He proudly takes her home to Catherine who absolutely hates her. She cannot believe that this shallow girl she is replacing her in her son's affections. Saxon, on the other hand, is quite taken with Lucy; she is the perfect ally in his on-going battle for dominance with Catherine and the ideal lever to separate Westman from his mother. Saxon genuinely likes Lucy and, if she annoys Catherine, so much the better. At some psychic cost Westman clearly changes his primary allegiance from Catherine to Lucy and Saxon.

At age sixteen Westman begins to closely examine the material world around him. He searches and experiments and to a significant extent begins to unravel the laws that govern the material world around him. In some confusion he learns that much of what he learned from his grandfather, Ari, is simply not true. Taking that in stride he doggedly pursues his examinations and his studies.

Next year, at seventeen, he begins to wonder whether the laws of nature that he has discovered do not, perhaps, suggest laws of interpersonal relationships. One of these laws, he surmises, is that he was not intended to be a subservient. This leads to violent conflict with Saxon, and is fairly successful at establishing Westman's dominance in their relationship. The fights are bloody and expensive, and never entirely resolved.

During his eighteenth and nineteenth years, Westman pursues a program of making things. He proves himself the most hard-working and creative inventor anyone has ever seen. He succeeds in surrounding himself with a stunning array of new and useful things and elevating the creature comforts of his life to levels unknown by anyone else.

He has further adventures of exploration in which he meets the exotic Madam Solé. But this is another detour to which we will return.

But advancement comes at a cost, most obvious at night when dreams and apparitions haunt him. Three specters come to convince him that, for all the progress he is making, what he is losing is a sense of certainty – the belief that he can trust what he has always known. He realizes that living a life of continual change and progress comes with a psychic price. There is no longer solid ground beneath his feet. He undergoes a wrenching period of internal conflict, leaving him debilitated and torn, though he fairly quickly puts it behind him and continues.

Westman is now twenty, making him that most dangerous thing – a young man with more strength than wisdom. It remains to be seen if he survives.

OTHER CHARACTERS and DETOURS

ARAN, IBERIA and SAM

Aran lived as a wild free spirit until his adolescence when Jessica visited him. (Some suspect that this was Jesse

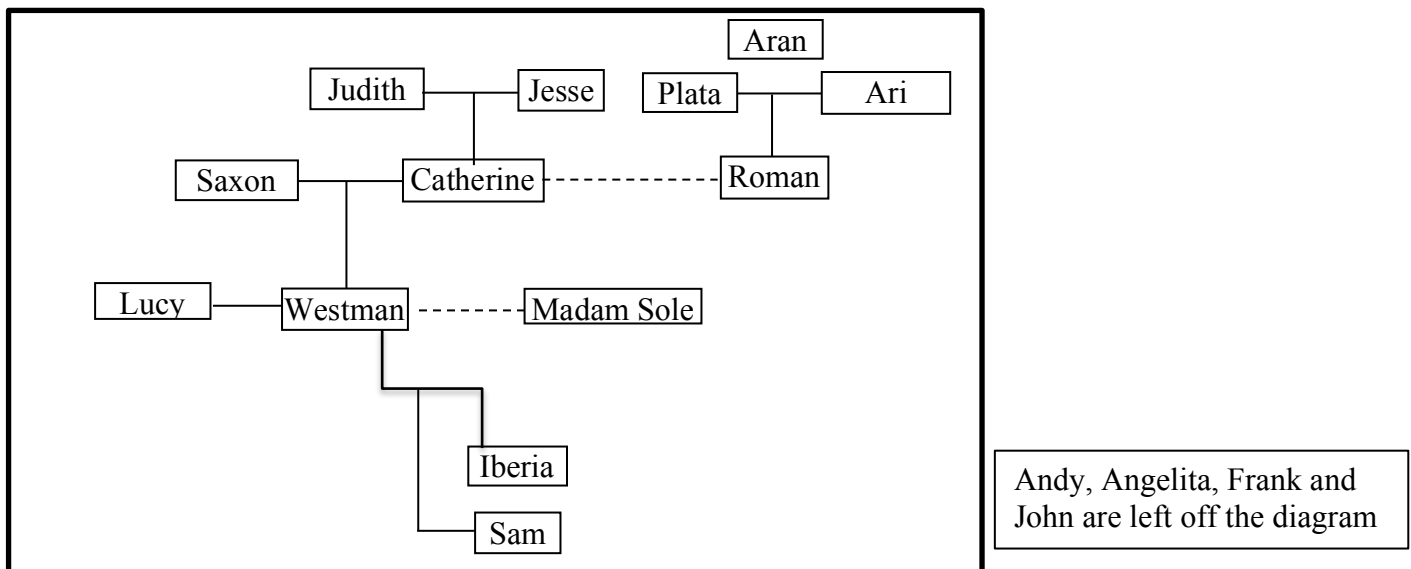
returned in female form). She appeared briefly and left suddenly, but the encounter completely focused and energized Aran who proceeded to tell everyone he could about her. In his travels he met Iberia. She was distinctly different and “less” than he -- more solid, more earthly, but less profound, less real. He was to her as a god is to a mortal, yet he was immensely attracted to her. He approached her to join him as a mate in his quest to spread Jessica’s message but Iberia spurned his advances with considerable difficulty. At the moment when she finally convinced Aran to leave her be, Westman appeared. He was only fourteen and exploring when he met Iberia, though ‘met’ is not the exact word. Like Aran, Westman was essentially a god to her mortal. He pursued her and succeeded in breaking through her tattered defenses. She could fend off one god, but not two. Despite their dissimilar natures Westman did manage to demonstrate his affection concretely enough to leave her with twin children. To Iberia, it consisted of a mystical, dream-remembered experience and the virgin births of Sam and Andy. From the ancient house she had been exploring, Iberia also took a young girl, Angelita, whose lot was changed from free spirit to maid, unwillingly pressed into Iberia’s service.

Iberia returned to her hometown with the three children. Frank and John, the town’s outstanding citizens and most bitter rivals, were both immediately struck with the promise of the boys. After considerable conflict and cajoling, John took over as foster father to the boys. He raised them until Sam, in his adolescence, began to chaff under John’s stern command, and wrestled himself free, by trouncing John. This looks rather like what happened between Westman and Saxon. Westman knew that Iberia and the children had no place in his world, and left her and his sons to navigate their own way. So that’s another story (called *SAM*).

MADAM SOLÉ

At age seventeen Westman’s further exploring took him to meet Madam Solé, an earthy, exotic woman. He wooed her resolutely but clumsily and won her more through intimidation than through reciprocal sentiment. What she saw as an inability to get rid of him, he saw as evidence of her affection. Since Westman was married to Lucy, Madame Solé remained an unspoken, if open, secret. When he was 19, distracted by the angst of his uncertainty, Madame Solé took the opportunity to walk out on him. Her departure left him confused -- he had fancied that he treated her well and she was appreciative -- but he carried on without ever really bothering to understand why she left, determined that he would succumb to neither self-pity nor guilt.

THE CHARACTERS

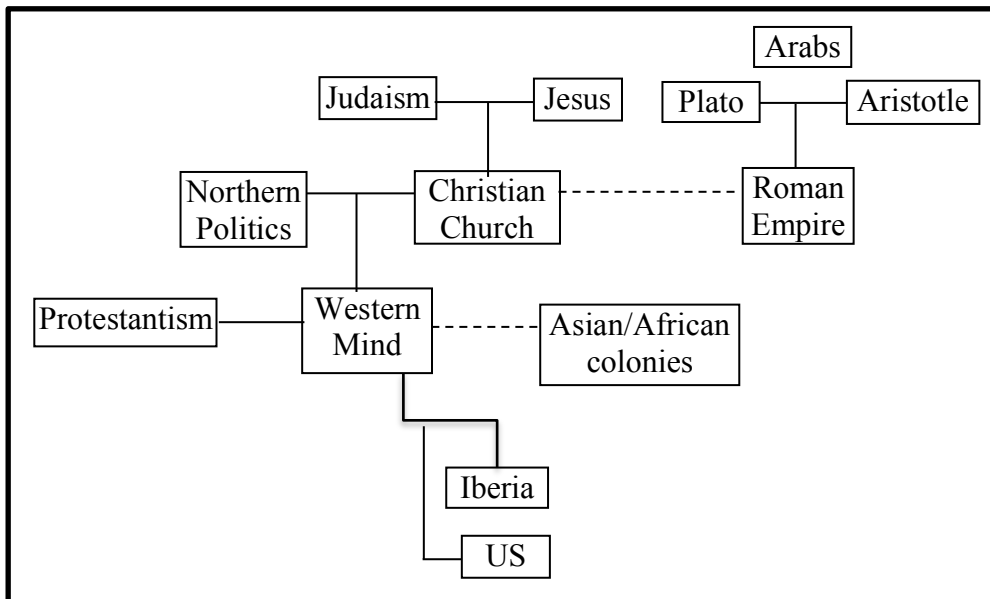


THE ALLEGORY. Westman is my version of a history of western philosophy. The people in the following key refer not so much to the people themselves as to the ideas they bequeathed to the west, typically through a massive network of other human beings.

Westman = the western mind
 Judith = Judaism
 Jesse = Jesus
 Catherine = Christianity, the church
 Roman = the Roman Empire
 Ari = Aristotle; humanist, scientific thought
 Plata = Plato; more mystical thought
 Saxon = northern Europe and politics.

Aran = Arabs
 Iberia = Spain/Portugal
 Sam = US
 Andy = Canada
 Angelita = Latin America
 John = England
 Frank = France
 Madam Sole = African and Asian colonies

THE CHARACTERS



THE YEARS. Starting with the trip to Aran, we can imagine Westman’s life as proceeding at one human century for each of his years, starting at the year 1000, when he was 10 years old.

Westman’s Age = Our century ¹	Westman’s Event	Our Event
10	the trip to Aran	the Crusades
11	meeting Ari	rediscovery of Aristotle
12	the paper with Saxon	the Magna Carta
13	illness	the plague
14	voice change	the printing press
15	Lucy	Protestant Reformation
16	learning the world	the scientific revolution
17	fight with Saxon	political revolutions
18, 19 day	inventions	technology
18, 19 night	doubts the three specters	modern man’s lose of certainty Darwin, Marx and Freud

¹ Note that 10 refers to years 1000 to 1099, not ‘the tenth century.’

The theme of the second millennium CE was the growth of the individual, the movement of power from the center to individuals. What appears in the allegory as Westman's coming-of-age is intended to depict this. We now find ourselves dedicated to individualism, waiting to see whether the benefits outweigh the costs.

Music and more at:

<http://hannesk.com/Westman>

The table of years is done musically at the link above under: [The Years -- a musical movie](#)