21st-Century Narratives of World History

Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives

Edited by R. Charles Weller

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Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives

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In hopes of fostering greater understanding of our shared world,
for its ultimate betterment both humanly and environmentally,…

….and in loving memory of:
Robert Edward Taylor
Feb 12, 1938—Mar 4, 1990
American and world historian,
Loving and devoted husband to his wife,
and father to his children

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Foreword

Organizing an approach to world history presents some interesting challenges, for scholars, teachers, and students alike. The subject is vast, and some principles are essential in figuring out what to emphasize, and what can safely—if sometimes painfully—be omitted. Unless world history is to be simply one thing after another—always a risk to be avoided—major themes must be identified. Decisions about change over time are unavoidable: are there particular turning points, amid which more stable patterns can be explored? What factors promote change on anything like a global scale? Finally, geography requires its own priorities. How is the "whole world" most adequately, yet manageably, represented? What regional definitions work best in deploying a world history framework?

There is no magic formula, which means that different choices will emerge. Successful world history frameworks reflect disagreements over when world history effectively begins, and discussions on this crucial point have become more lively with growing attention to the importance of environmental factors. The issue of regional coverage is inevitably challenging, because of the huge range of relevant examples and identities. Change and continuity properly provoke debate, depending both on how much detail can be handled successfully and, more fundamentally, on what kinds of factors prompt the most fundamental changes on something like a global scale. While some themes are probably unavoidable—it's hard to imagine a world history program without some attention to governance structures—thematic opportunities have been

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expanding as the world history domain becomes more familiar, more open to interactions with crucial topics historians have been exploring in more limited contexts.

Different vantage points deserve juxtaposition and interaction. For many people, students particularly but even some instructors, world history as a subject area suggests a textbook, often a large textbook, and little else. But the textbook approach, though a valid first step, too often makes it difficult to challenge and question the choices that have been made about basic frameworks. Regional and chronological definitions are taken as givens, rather than as starting points toward exploring and evaluating other alternatives. The opportunity, as in this volume, to compare fundamental orientations, to highlight different options and strengths, is thus particularly welcome. Any practitioner, even the most experienced, will emerge with some new possibilities to consider, with new arguments to explore even when existing choices are defended. The chance to weigh alternatives, and the reasons that underlie the principal choices, is particularly liberating.

The essays collectively also take up another issue with which any world history program must contend: the issue of cultural perspective. Most contemporary world histories, until very recently, have emerged in the United States, Australia, or Western Europe. Many, as a result, conform directly with an older tradition that emphasized Western civilization. A few world history labels, indeed, pin to products that are only slightly modified from the Western civilization program: a chapter or two on African kingdoms and a bow to non-European religions, adorn a structure that is otherwise European to the core. This "West and the rest" approach is not, it is vital to note, represented in the present collection, where the entries all deal with world history far more directly and genuinely.

Still, world historians properly worry that even the most conscientious effort to free world history from a Western standard of judgment will fall short—will inevitably incorporate measurements and definitions that, while unquestionably extended to a global scale, still privilege a Western framework. One antidote is obvious: try harder to consider world history approaches that reflect other historiographic traditions—from Islam, for example, or East Asia or Africa, particularly as these regions begin to build their own contemporary approaches to the field. Several essays in this volume offer this welcome opportunity directly, giving readers a new chance to consider cultural alternatives as part of their decisions about appropriate frameworks.

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The volume does not, however, merely highlight differences. Along with the deliberate and desirable effort to highlight some variety of analytical options in addressing world history, the essays in this collection display important areas of agreement on several key topics and issues. A focus on the advent and ramifications of agriculture—to take an admittedly obvious but essential example—is clearly going to be part of any world history narrative, no matter what its distinctive features in other respects. The collection will repay reading that not only highlights debates and alternatives, but also identifies shared understandings and approaches.

Ultimately, of course, choices must be made. Any world history experience should maintain a sense of options, an ability to debate and defend the selection of time periods or regional clusters or major themes. But it must also reflect at least tentative judgments about which emphases make most sense, what themes best capture the most fundamental features of the human experience. The judgments should always be open to revision, always tested against relevant counterarguments—but they cannot be suspended indefinitely. Collectively, the essays in this volume highlight historians who have some experience in debate and even uncertainty, but who have figured out at least one acceptable path. The goal is flexibility and openness, but not irresolution.

Finally, world history, whatever its specific contours, is a decidedly contemporary subject. Of course it deals with the past. Many of the essays in this volume stress how far back in time a valid world history approach must go. Many, also, legitimately highlight how much world history has contributed to a better understanding of past periods—for example, the role the Mongol centuries play in exchanges; the complex trade history of the early modern period, including European–Asian relations.

Nevertheless, world history has gained ground because it sets a historical basis for the world we live in, and the world today's youth will inherit. It explores the trajectory of regional interconnections, right up to today's globalization—and helps make sense of different cultural reactions to the same patterns. It invites fuller understanding of different regional traditions, along with some unexpected underlying similarities—again a vital aspect of global understanding. World history is the history we need to frame our own lives, at a time when interactions and comparisons impinge on literally every region and on most individuals. This means, in turn, that debating and refining the way we do world history

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contributes directly to our contemporary capacity to work toward a more knowledgeable society. As a result, improving our grasp of the increasingly complex world we must all navigate becomes both a joy and a necessity.

Fairfax, VA, USA Peter N. Stearns

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Preface

In both compliment and contrast to important recent literature in the field,[1] ~~*21st Century Narratives of World History: Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*~~ makes a unique and timely contribution to world/global historical studies[2] and related fields. It addresses essential theoretical, methodological, organizational and interpretational questions through direct engagement with the practice of world history.[3] It achieves this by providing concise summaries (i.e., essential frameworks) of various world historical narratives[4] representing well-established and influential approaches and paradigms impacting the field today.[5] These summaries are written by the authors of the original world historical narratives themselves. By placing these narrative summaries in clear, direct relation to and conversation with each other, they are offered the opportunity to enrich, elucidate and, at times, challenge one another in ways otherwise difficult to achieve. This approach likewise raises, at its most acute and critical level, the question of the feasibility, viability, and need for providing historians as well as other scholars, students, local and world leaders, and the general reading public with such frameworks in relation to their research, study, teaching, and/or general understanding of the world and its history.

Building from this foundation, the present volume aims to: (1) offer world historians an opportunity to critically reflect upon and refine their essential interpretational frameworks, (2) facilitate more effective and nuanced teaching and learning in and beyond the classroom with an emphasis on comparative critical thinking, (3) provide accessible world

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historical contexts for specialized areas of historical as well as other fields of research in the humanities, social sciences and sciences,[6] and (4) promote comparative historiographical critique which (a) helps identify continuing research questions for the field of world history in particular, and (b) fosters global dialogue in relation to varying views of our ever-increasingly interconnected, interdependent, multicultural, and globalized world and its shared though diverse and often contested history.[7]

The importance of the latter is grounded in recognition of the fact that an individual's or, likewise and relatedly, an entire ethnic, cultural, religious, political or other social group's understanding of world history significantly shapes their response to and, thus, course of action within the world (i.e., their impact on world history). This includes their (perceived) relation to and relations with all 'others' who share in that history.[8] In this sense, the volume takes up "some weighty problems surrounding the nature of historiography as a sociological phenomenon and epistemological endeavor,"[9] though it takes up much more as well. It is through ongoing study of our past—especially in its fullest, broadest context, i.e., 'grand narrative' world history—that we come to understand ourselves and those we share that world with better. With respect to the present volume, this is not, as Edward Said highlighted, for purposes of domination and exploitation, but humanitarian goodwill.[10] Indeed, it is in attempting to articulate our understanding of our history that we clarify it, for ourselves and for others. The more we are willing to articulate those understandings in earnest dialogue for the sake of ourselves as well as our global neighbors, the greater our chances of at least understanding one another and providing a clear point of reference and context for trying to correct whatever misunderstandings we may have. As J.M. Roberts notes in the Preface to his *History of the World*:

> Even if we do not know it, …[world] history is part of our mental furniture. As most men and women have some notions, however inadequate, about the way the world came to be what it is, it is all the better if they are made explicit. …We in fact make judgments about world history all the time. All the better then to make them as seriously and as consciously as possible.[11]

Political, social and religious contexts do not, of course, always provide individuals with the freedom to explore, articulate and dialogue on their understandings of the world and its history.[12] One can only wonder how much that reality determined the response, or non-response, of

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some of those who were invited to contribute to this volume. Or perhaps they declined because the project was headed up by a 'Westerner'? Some of course declined simply due to time constraints. Others accepted the offer, pledging themselves to the project, only to drop out late in the publication process, leaving the volume without representation from their world cultural point of view. Yuval Noah Harari, professor of history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, submitted a narrative summary of his *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, but agreement over terms of contract could not be reached between the respective publishers, forcing him to withdraw his chapter from the volume.

One thing is certain: efforts have been made to include representatives from as many world cultural and linguistic points of view as possible, within the limited space afforded. Invitations were thus sent to qualified scholars representing Pacific/Australasian, East, South, Southeast and Central Asian, Middle Eastern, Sub-Saharan African, Latin American, Slavic/East European, West European and North American cultural backgrounds. Specifically, I contacted scholars from Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Afghanistan, India, Japan, China, Korea, the Philippines, Nigeria, Ghana, Argentina, Israel, Germany, UK, USA and Australia. Efforts were likewise made to include varying world historical viewpoints, including Western democratic, neo-Marxian leftist, civilizational, world-system theory, gender, cross-cultural, global-multicultural, and more. That the volume lacks certain representation is not to be attributed to any narrowness of vision or prejudice of effort. All those who were invited to contribute were carefully selected for their unique world cultural-linguistic vantage, their specific area of world historical expertise and the distinctiveness of their approach. In the absence of those who, for whatever reason, have not joined the project, those who have provide, within the necessarily limited scope, a well-rounded representation of an array of cultural-linguistic backgrounds, areas of expertise and uniqueness of approach. While most (though not all) of the contributors are physically located within 'the West', their personal cultural and religious backgrounds include Afro-Caribbean, Spanish, Middle Eastern, Central Asian, Russian, Australasian, West European, and North American as well as Christian, Muslim, religious humanist, secular, and possibly atheist.[13] To their diverse cultural backgrounds and linguistic abilities could be added their international travel experience. From this vantage, the volume not only merits the subtitle *Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*,[14] but provides source material for comparative cultural, religious, sociological and political research concerned with major world

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historiographical traditions informed by multiple world cultural traditions in the early 21st century. Areas of expertise, likewise, range from women's and gender history, to big history, cultural history, religious-cultural-national history and identity, and food history, as well as African, Russian, Central Asian, Middle Eastern, Islamic, East Asian, Latin American, Afro-Caribbean, and Indian Ocean history. Beyond this, each of the world history narratives is informed by some 30–50 years and the comparative critiques some 15–20 years of research and writing, all enriched by an equal depth of cross-cultural and international experience. The editorial dimensions of the volume are, likewise, informed by some 25 years of research, translation, teaching and publication work, including a total of 14 years of residence in Asia, namely Kazakhstan and Japan.

It is hoped that these multiple world cultural backgrounds, diverse fields of expertise, varying approaches and long years of experience in the field of world history have all merged together to produce a high quality work 'worth its weight in salt', though judgment of that must be left to each reader. No doubt, certain weaknesses will be identified in due course. Whatever they prove to be, it would be, as highlighted immediately above, unfair to call the volume 'U.S.-' or 'Eurocentric' simply because of the residential location of the majority of contributors. While the introductory and concluding sections may focus on the Western tradition of 'grand narrative' and 'new' world histories, this is only due to the nature of the subject matter as well as the intended aims of those chapters. That the main narratives and critiques of Parts Two and Three should be called 'Eurocentric' in some fashion would be contested by all the various contributors as well as the editor. Indeed, 'Eurocentric' as a term typically refers to historiography, not (the location of) the people writing it. Beyond this, in order to help round out the global scope of the volume, I sketch, in Appendix One, a select number of 'grand narrative' world histories which have been published since 1990 in Russian, Polish, Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Kazakh, Hindi, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese and Japanese.

In terms of the volume's research profile, there is one thing to bear in mind: the contributors to the Part II narratives were, based on their many qualifications and previous publications, explicitly requested to keep their references to a minimum. The main aims of the volume are to facilitate comparative critique of major 21st-century world history narratives while also supplying substantially informed yet readily accessible world history frames to supply context for various settings of research

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and teaching, not to provide endless references to every detail of their interpretational schemes. This is sufficiently achieved through reference to their many previous (or forthcoming) publications. Meanwhile, the Part Three authors were asked to anchor their critiques through reference to as much of the scholarly literature as they were reasonably able within the limited scope of their essays. Their accomplishments in this regard are reflected in their respective chapters.[15] The chapters of historical background (Part I) along with Appendix A comprise the main research contributions of the volume.

All things considered, if this work furthers the cause of world historical research, teaching and dialogue, it will have accomplished its main aims. Only time will tell how effectively it achieves those ends.

Pullman, USA R. Charles Weller

Notes and References

1. In comparison to the present volume, see esp. Dominic Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); K.R. Curtis and J.H. Bentley, eds., *Architects of World History: Researching the Global Past* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Blackwell, 2014); UNESCO's seven-volume *History of Humanity* (Paris: UNESCO, 1994–2008); and Georg G. Iggers, Q. Edward Wang, and Supriya Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (Harlow and New York: Pearson Education, 2008). See also: Ross E. Dunn, Laura J. Mitchell and Kerry Ward, eds., *The New World History: A Field Guide for Teachers and Researchers*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016); Jerry H. Bentley, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of World History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Kojin Karatani, *The Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange*, tr. M.K. Bourdaghs (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Diego Olstein, *Thinking History Globally* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
2. I am in essential agreement with those who find no clear, technical distinction between 'world' and 'global' history; see esp. Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *A Concise History of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 6; Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History*, notes that "the research commonly subsumed under 'global history' is so

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diverse that it cannot possibly be pinned down through exact definitions and precise categorizations. It is also not feasible to properly separate 'global history' from several other terminological options such as 'world history' or 'transnational history'" (pp. 2–3); See also: G.G. Iggers, Q.E. Wang, and S. Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (Harlow and New York: Pearson Education, 2008), pp. 389–390; and Arif Dirlik, "Confounding Metaphors, Inventions of the World: What is World History for?," in *Writing World History, 1800–2000*, ed. B. Stuchtey and E. Fuchs (London: Oxford University Press on behalf of the German Historical Institute London, 2002), p. 91, fn1. See also Q. Edward Wang, ed., *World History vs. Global History? The Changing Worldview in Contemporary China*, Special Issue, *Chinese Studies in History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2009); Pamela Crossley, *What is Global History?* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2008); and Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016). *If* any distinctions between 'world history' and 'global history' are to be made, I suggest the following: 'world history' is the diachronic study of the way in which world connections have taken shape across time, whether these be limited, select connections or all known connections either within or between distinct, defined eras of 'world history' or across the entire span of that history; 'global history' is the synchronic study of either limited select or all known global connections at more specific points of time within that history. There are bound to be points of debate between these proposed definitions, particularly in allowing more narrow definitions of 'world history' to include studies of world connections "within or between distinct, defined eras of 'world history'." But if these definitions were upheld, those debates would be more about periodization and would, in fact, contribute to continuing refinement of world (and thus contextually all) history periodization, sharpening focus and thus expertise, as well as possibly methodology within both fields in the process. Note that there must necessarily be a diachronic dimension to every synchronic study and a synchronic dimension to every diachronic study. This reflects the tension between change and continuity, fleeting moments vs. long durations. The historian, while concentrating on 'change', must at the same time acknowledge the real historical relation of the past to the present, i.e., some aspect of the past preserved in the present, transformed though still containing real historical remnants of the original form resulting in both continuity and change (cf. humans themselves as ever-transforming yet remaining integrally themselves). But no sense of 'superiority' of one approach over the other should be posited at the other's expense. Both are vital and essential to the continuing task of historical study.

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3. Part of the conviction behind this volume is that theorizing or philosophizing about history means little until put into practice. Theory and philosophy must be tested by attempts to apply them through the actual writing of history. Indeed, the best theorizing and philosophizing derives from the actual practice of writing history, as opposed to the imposition of theoretical or philosophical frameworks upon historical narratives. Cf. Paul Costello, *World Historians and Their Goals: Twentieth-Century Answers to Modernism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), p. 221, who insists on the actual writing of world history as opposed to merely theorizing about it as one of the criteria for inclusion in his study.
4. Among the numerous kinds of 'world history' which have been both proposed and undertaken in recent decades—including 'global', 'transnational', 'transregional', 'comparative', 'crosscultural', oceanic, and the like—'world histories' for our purposes within this volume, refer specifically to what critics have categorized as 'meta-', 'grand', 'all-encompassing', or 'totalizing' narratives (cf. also 'macro-histories'); that is, narratives which attempt to cover the entire history of…what? 'The history of humanity'? 'Deep history'? 'Life history'? 'Earth history'? 'Big history'? In fact, these five distinct types of 'meta-narrative' are vastly different in scope and range, each 'all-encompassing' and 'totalizing' in their own 'grand' way. (Note that Breisach is too narrow and even misleading in suggesting that "[s]ince the 1980s, the term metanarrative has replaced the formerly used phrase philosophy of history." Ernst Breisach, *On the Future of History: The Postmodernist Challenge and Its Aftermath*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 122).
5. Providing an essential framework for understanding world history was a chief concern in the keynote address by Bob Bain, "Parachutists and Truffle Hunters: Meeting Student Challenges with Scale and Agency in World History," at the 22nd Annual World History Association Conference (North Hennepin Community College, June 26–29, 2013, Minneapolis, MN).
6. Ongoing dialogue between history and science, both with respect to overall frameworks for understanding our world as well as specialized areas of research, is both valid and vital. This is especially true in relation to the still-emerging fields of 'Big history' and 'Deep history' as well as more established fields such as 'Life history', 'Earth history' and evolutionary human history.
7. See esp. D. Sachsenmaier, "World History as Ecumenical History?," in *Journal of World History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2007): 465–489. Cf. also the concern and vision expressed in one of UNESCO's current history projects, "Promoting Intercultural Dialogue and a Culture of Peace in

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South-East Asia through Shared Histories": "Events in recent years have pointed to some contradicting understandings of the past which have led to tensions between various countries in the sub-region. Some of these tensions can be seen as grounded in the way past events are taught in schools and the lingering influence these lessons have on the mind sets of people. If we wish to change the attitude of the younger generations towards each other, transformations in the way the history of South-East Asia is taught at national levels could play a vital role in promoting mutual understanding and peace among future generations." UNESCO Bangkok (URL: http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/heritage/shared-histories-sea/; last accessed: May 26, 2015). This same concern and approach has been advocated in relation to Jewish–Christian–Muslim and other international, intercultural, and interreligious relations contexts.

8. Cf. Paul Costello citing W.H. McNeill: "unalterable and eternal Truth remains, like the Kingdom of Heaven, an eschatological hope. Mythistory is what we actually have—a useful instrument for piloting human groups in their encounter with one another" (*World Historians and Their Goals*, p. 222); cf. also Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, *Myth and Narrative in International Politics: Interpretive Approaches to the Study of IR* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
9. Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History*, p. 6.
10. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 25th Anniversary Edition (Penguin Books, 2003), p. xix.
11. J.M. Roberts, "Preface," in *A History of the World*, Updated (Ashland, OR: Blackstone Audio, Inc., 2005), ch. 1, 3:25–4:23. Note that the Preface which was used for the 2005 audio edition was from the 1987 edition of Roberts' book.
12. Making a slightly different but related point, cf. Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History*, where he takes concern for "factors such as the international academic settings underlying the field, for these doubtlessly influence the ideas of historians" (p. 3).
13. These observations are based on public knowledge available through (auto-)biographical or professional reference, not on any explicit attempt to inquire regarding either their cultural or religious identity. Use of the term 'background' also reflects a conscious choice to avoid assigning a particular ethnic, cultural, religious, national or other identity, instead emphasizing the historical context which has shaped and informed the various contributors.
14. The term 'multidisciplinary' was chosen for two reasons: One, while most of the contributors are situated professionally within the discipline of history, a number of them, including the editor, have formal training in other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, religious studies,

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cultural studies and so on. Two, the term 'multifield' is not used to describe multiple fields of expertise. In this sense, 'multidisciplinary' is being used in a broader sense.

15. Note that I have added, by his consent, all the references to the chapter by Diego Olstein.
16. "A World History Skeleton," in *World History: The Basics*, by Peter N. Stearns (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 17–47.

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Within the U.S. context, Al Andrea was one of the first to welcome me to the World History Association (WHA), and one of the first in WHA with whom I had the pleasure of working by virtue of his invitation to contribute to the ABC-Clio *World History Encyclopedia* for which he served as editor-in-chief. He has continued to provide support, guidance

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PART I

Historical Background

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CHAPTER 1

'Grand Narrative' and 'New' World Histories: Their Historical Challenges and Contributions in Western Scholarship

R. Charles Weller

Certain debatable assumptions are already evident in the main title of this volume: *21st-Century Narratives* assumes a Western Christian (Gregorian) calendar, as opposed to Chinese, Japanese, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Mayan or other approaches to mapping time.[1] If following the Islamic calendar, the book should have been titled *14th-Century Narratives of World History*, if the Jewish, *57th-Century Narratives*, the Japanese, *Hesei-Era Narratives*, and so on. Whichever frame of reference

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we use, the intended focus is on narratives of world history that both reveal and continue to shape *present* understandings of the world and its history, with a view to the context of debate in which these present narratives have been forged.

The most immediate context of debate, and not unrelatedly the one most recently reinvigorating the ongoing reception of world/global histories in our own day, is that paradigmatic buzzword of late—globalization. Growing recognition—enthusiastic or otherwise—of the interconnectedness and interdependence of the 'global village' we all now (supposedly) inhabit has given the task of world history new significance and vitality, not to mention new shapes and approaches. Of course, as Lynn Hunt has highlighted in her reflections on *Writing History in the Global Era* (2015), "globalization did not suddenly attract attention in the 1990s because it arose then."[2] Interest was rather stimulated by what Francis Fukuyama and other Western democratic capitalist advocates prematurely interpreted to be "the end of history," that is, the implosion of the Soviet Union between roughly 1985–1991.[3] This left 'globalization' (as well as the later 'War on Terror') to fill "the ideological vacuum created by the end of the Cold War division between capitalism and communism."[4] To be sure though, numerous competing interpretations of world/global history have arisen, in close connection with older schools,[5] including revamped democratic-capitalist, Marxian-communist, dependency and world-system theory, Christian and ecological apocalyptic, and more. Along with these older schools however, and certainly drawing, with significant revision, from them, come newer schools, or more precisely, 'new world histories'. In many (though certainly not all) ways, it is precisely these new world histories which *21st-Century Narratives of World History* is all about.

But are the so-called new world histories really all that new? Jerry Bentley asserts that, "[a]s it has developed since the 1960s and particularly since the 1980s, the new world history has focused attention on comparisons, connections, networks, and systems rather than the experiences of individual communities or discreet societies."[6] The study of world history in relation to many of these themes and issues is, however, closely linked to ideas of 'cosmopolitanism'[7] and 'internationalism' (as well as concern for humans and the environment expressed through 'anti-modernism' and 'anti-technocracy') as they have taken shape historically across 'the long 20th century' (c. 1870–2000). Interest in various themes and foci has coincided with key historical phases along the way: the era of nineteenth-century globalization and corresponding 'Great

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Game’ between the ‘Great Powers’ (1870–1914),[8] the post-World War I and subsequent interwar epoch (1918–1939), the post-World War II (Cold War) period (1945–1991),[9] and, more recently, the post-Cold War and now post-9/11 era. Similarities along the lines Bentley suggests can even be discerned between the new world histories and some of the initial (as opposed to later) universal histories of the late Enlightenment period, because as Hans Erich Bödeker highlights, “the publication of many works on universal history…tried to present the history of mankind in its total chronological as well as global-spatial extent, and, finally, also in all its cultural diversity.” He goes on to note that

> [f]or Schlözer, who expressed the principles of Enlightenment universal history most concisely, ‘to study world history means thinking connections between the main changes on the earth and within the human race in order to recognize how conditions today derive from both causes’. Thus Schlözer identified the two criteria which distinguished the new universal history: spatially, it related to the whole globe, and temporally, to the whole of the human race, whose interrelations were to be recognized and explained in relation to the present.[10]

Even beyond this, some of the new world history themes (and a related interest in broader human history) could, in fact, be traced back to the cosmopolitan ideas espoused in Classical and post-Classical city-states and empires.[11] None are static, each taking on new meaning in relation to each new historical context, but neither are they entirely novel; they, like the new world histories, all have historical roots.[12]

One thing is clear: well before the new world histories emerged, the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) and its journal, *Numen*, established in 1950 and 1953 respectively, began focusing on topics of comparative and cross-cultural history. Likewise, the journal *Comparative Studies in Society and History* took up a similar task in 1958, while the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC) was founded in 1961.[13] The IAHR can be traced back to the ‘comparative origins and history of religion(s)’ school(s) which took shape in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as reflected in the work of F. Max Mueller, James Frazer, E.B. Tylor, and others.[14] Along with a primary focus on comparative religious traditions across the world both historically and geographically, studies have embraced cultural, economic, social, and political

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factors transcending singular communities and/or states. ISCSC is very similar in this respect, though each has their own distinct angle of approach and emphasis. Along with both comparative religious-cultural and civilizational studies, the fields of international relations and diplomatic history as well as the later emerging world-systems school should also be noted here.[15] All of these by their very nature "transcend single states, regions, and cultures" and treat various aspects of "cultural contact and exchange," focusing ultimately on subjects which "have had a global or at least a transregional impact."[16] Even before these though, and integrating many of them, was *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale*, known by its English title *Journal of World History*. It was published under the auspices of UNESCO from 1953 to 1972. Indeed, as Poul Duedahl makes plain in his treatment of "UNESCO and the Invention of Global History, 1945–1976," it was in fact UNESCO's vision for world/global history, taking shape as early as UNESCO's inception in November 1945, which first began "emphasizing the mutual indebtedness and interdependence of the peoples of the world" by "stressing cultural interchange" via "'culture contacts,' 'interrelations of cultures,' 'interchange between peoples,' and 'cultural exchanges and transmissions'."[17] Duedahl is correct, therefore, to "regard the project as the earliest expression of a new trend of writing, so-called global history—the history of globalization—that came in the wake of World War II."[18] UNESCO's *Journal of World History* was published to that end.

Along with these prior organizations and journals, a list of various articles and books could be compiled from multiple languages across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and even earlier, to show that most, if not all, of the transnational, cross-cultural, comparative and even gender and environmental themes and foci of the new world histories are not all that new.[19] To the point: *if* all there is to practicing 'world' or 'global history' is to undertake any *one* study according to any *one* of the specified themes or approaches, then certainly advances have been made in terms of comprehensiveness and complexity as well as the unearthing of new threads and topics, but there is nothing really startlingly new about world/global history studies in the post-1960s or post-1980s/1990s phase of globalization, at least not in terms of the identified themes and approaches.[20] One argument I wish, then, to make here is this: world history must preserve an *explicit* commitment in both theory and practice to grand narrative as the overarching frame and ultimate goal of all these various themes and approaches, otherwise

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it loses its distinctiveness as a field. Indeed, these historical predecessors and shared approaches are fundamental to why a debate continues over properly defining 'world history' as well as 'global history', especially in relation to overlapping fields and disciplines.

While the attempts to respond to essential challenges raised by Eurocentrism and globalization are entirely valid and integral to the field, this blurring of definitional boundaries and resulting confusion has also arisen as part of a two-pronged strategy by world historians to respond to increasing criticism in the post-colonial, post-modern era against world history as grand narrative.[21] The six main interrelated yet distinct arguments against (Western) grand narrative world histories can be summarized as follows:

1. Existentialists and Nihilists critique Christian, Enlightenment, Social Scientific and other 'confused dreams of humankind' (i.e., grand narrative world histories) for allegedly extinguishing common, individual existence and thus its significance. They also allegedly strait-jacket individual human freedom, through alleged grand schemes governed by strict teleological, rational-philosophical or scientific 'laws of history' (cf. 3 and 4)[22];
2. 'Guild' historians[23] tend to reject the allegedly over-generalized nature of world histories, looking down upon them as too broad, i.e., not specialized enough, and thus not conducive to sufficient depth and focus of research evidenced by a(n alleged) lack of grounding in archival and primary and/or over-dependence on secondary sources; at best, world history *as grand narrative* has come to be viewed as the almost exclusive domain of non-specialist undergraduate survey courses and their typically graduate student, post-doctoral or non-tenured instructors, with a possible trend over the last several years to consider grand narrative approaches to world history unnecessary (cf. 5 and 6)[24];
3. Post-colonialist scholars critique 'hegemonic' Christian, Enlightenment, Social Scientific, Western Democratic Capitalist, Modernization, or Multiculturalist, Soviet Marxist Communist, and post-Soviet Multiculturalist grand narratives for assigning, in various ways, dominant roles to Western and subordinate roles to non-Western peoples, thereby promoting and justifying Western 'world conquest', or for promoting agendas of 'multiculturalism' and 'pluralism' via globalization as a means, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to justify ongoing Western penetration

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(cf. access via multicultural and pluralistic openness) and thus dominance of non-Western peoples and nations, including the imposition of *Western* multicultural and pluralist norms in the form of 'international' or 'universal human rights' (cf. 1, 4 and 5).

4. Edward Said-type critiques of 'orientalist' Western constructions of non-Western civilizations, which have been typically comparative using 'the West' as the standard against which the non-Western civilizations are judged. This implicitly critiques Western attempts to write and teach about comparative world civilizations properly and adequately (cf. 3 and 5);
5. Post-modernist, deconstructionist (cf. post-structuralist) scholars critique modernist scientific order, meaning, structure, purpose, and direction (cf. scientific and social diachronic progress, especially linear evolutionary progressive development), with Western grand narratives representing the most all-encompassing, totalizing expressions of these; such critics advocate instead more personal (cf. intersubjective) and synchronically focused micro-histories (cf. 1, 2, 3 and 4);
6. 'Western (including at times 'white nationalist') Civilization' advocates oppose new, that is, post-colonial, non-Eurocentric multicultural world history narratives because they are considered too critical in their representation of the West as well as too inclusive and affirming in their representation of the non-West,[25] thus undercutting Western Civilization narratives, whether explicitly packaged as such or disguised as 'world' histories which are predominantly Eurocentric (i.e., 'Western Civ. plus' approaches; Chap. 2 is devoted almost entirely to this point of debate).[26]

In response to this ongoing "siege,"[27] the field of world history in the West (1) has—to borrow language from my financial advisor—sought to "diversify its portfolio in order to maximize as well as protect its assets", that is, it has expanded and multiplied its definitional boundaries, providing numerous options for understanding world history; with multiple ships in its navy, it cannot be sunk through one direct hit; at the same time, the more narrowly focused themes and clarified methodologies offer greater support for recognition of world history as a field of specialists (as opposed to generalists)[28]; and (2) it has also sought to break away from Eurocentric or European nation-state-centered approaches, particularly avoiding historical narratives which smack of teleological, Enlightenment, Social Scientific or Cold War progressivist (i.e., Christian, Western Democratic Capitalist and Modernization as well

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as Soviet and Chinese Marxist) philosophies of history or are, likewise, based on alleged 'laws of history'.[29] The second strategy applies to the broader discipline of history as a profession, since much of the critique is aimed at Western historiography and method in general. In world history specifically, the aim has been to transform the overarching narrative from one recounting the history of each nation successively to one emphasizing connections and interactions which transcend national boundaries.

The summaries above are, of course, simplified, not only in the amount of detail provided, but their separation into distinct categories. They dynamically interact, providing mutual reinforcement and even fusing together within various individual positions. Varying degrees of intensity may also exist. And all these factors can shift across time, at individual as well as broader social levels. They should rather be viewed, therefore, in dynamic, complex relation to one another (as indicated in the parenthetical references provided), distinguished here only for purposes of analysis.

Against this background, the remainder of chapter one as well as chapter two will *not* address each of the six criticisms one by one, point by point. They will instead attempt to place these critiques and related matters in historical, social and political context.[30] While all of the critiques will be touched upon, special emphasis will be given to the tension between Eurocentric and nationalist versus more inclusive humanistic (i.e., multicultural, peace-oriented and/or global citizenship-oriented) world histories.

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First then, a number of themes embedded within these critiques can be traced out and linked across historical periods. Criticism of European colonialism, for example, can be traced back as far as Bartolomé de las Casas, *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542).[31] Within later Enlightenment visions of human history, Condorcet (1743–1794), writing in 1793–1794 while in hiding during the French Revolution, offers the following comments in a treatise titled *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*:

> Survey the history of settlements and commercial undertakings in Africa or Asia, and you will see how our trade monopolies, our treachery, our murderous contempt for men of another colour or creed, the insolence of our usurpations, the intrigues or the exaggerated proselytic zeal of our priests, have destroyed the respect and goodwill that the superiority of our knowledge and the benefits of our commerce at first won for us in the eyes of

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> the inhabitants. But doubtless the moment approaches when, no longer presenting ourselves as always either tyrants or corrupters, we shall become for them the beneficent instruments of their freedom.[32]

Like Casas, Condorcet thus sorely criticizes *the means and methods* of European colonial expansion in Africa and Asia though he retains a belief in the superiority of European ways and the necessity of their spread among non-European peoples.[33] Similar criticisms of European colonialism were voiced by other Enlightenment thinkers such as Diderot and Kant and, later, the German romantic Herder.[34] Herder, himself religious, was also joined by nineteenth-century German Protestant missionaries who protested, saying: "Nowhere has a European colony come into being without grave injustice. Portuguese and Spaniards, Dutchmen and Britishers have been more or less alike in this respect. The Germans will hardly be any better."[35]

Meanwhile, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italian, Spanish, pre-Napoleonic French and English merchants, missionaries and emissaries as well as Enlightenment thinkers such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Benjamin Franklin and others expressed admiration for the non-European civilizations of China, India, Persia, the Ottomans, Mali and Peruvian South America, among others, placing them at times comparatively on a par with or, in some cases, even above Europe.[36]

What we have here in various fragments within European thought itself between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries are thematic concerns which would eventually surface in anti-colonialist critiques of the West, including late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Asian and African reformers (e.g., al-Afghani, Gasprali, Iqbal, Tagore, Gandhi, and Nehru)[37] as well as later subaltern and post-colonialist scholars such as Chakrabarty, who emerged in the post-1960s period.[38] They are likewise threads of concern woven into many historical, anthropological, sociological and other studies published by Western scholars in the post-1960s, including some of the 'new world histories'. In spite of having a long history of precedence among well-known and highly respected European figures within the Western Civilization tradition, such approaches would, by virtue of sharing many of their thematic points of concern with later anti-colonial reformist and post-colonialist (cf. non-Western) critiques, elicit a reaction from defenders of Western Civilization (see Chap. 2).[39]

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Another theme which can be traced out and directly related to ideas of safeguarding Western civilization is the tension between inclusive humanistic and/or global-multicultural world histories on the one hand and Eurocentric or national-centric (world) histories on the other. With this tension in view, three broad types of world history within Western historiographical traditions may be identified: (1) humanistic world history, as defined here, is concern with all known social, cultural, religious, ethnic and other human groups and their relation to both one another and their ecological environments, undertaken with an aim to learn from one another and about one another for mutual betterment of our shared world and peaceful and mutually prosperous coexistence within it; (2) ethnocentric-nationalistic world history, within a broader Eurocentric frame, is concerned with situating one's own *contemporary* ethnic or national group in an exceptionalist manner within the history of the world, highlighting its place of importance and inculcating nationalist (cf. patriotic) allegiance; (3) colonialist-imperialist world history, within a broader Eurocentric frame, is concerned with what can be learned about 'others' and their environments (cf. natural resources) across the globe in the present, by way of historical study, in order to maintain superiority and world domination, often resulting in exploitation and/or subjugation of those 'others'.[40] In both of the latter forms, which often work hand in hand, the nation or empire must be favorably contrasted through comparative means with the 'others' in relation to whom it situates itself.[41] Viewed from this angle, humanistic world history poses a threat to both ethnocentric-nationalistic and colonialist-imperialist world history agendas. As the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, this appears as a recurring tension across the centuries, from at least the Renaissance down to the present.

Within the Florentine Renaissance, Manning, drawing from Bartlett, contrasts the approaches of Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527) and historian Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540). Guicciardini was ready to reconceptualize the past by including the newly discovered native peoples of the Americas, while Machiavelli "centered on the issues and values of the classical era." Manning thus suggests that, "[i]n a sense, Machiavelli took the Western Civilization approach to the world, and Guicciardini took the world historians' approach. Jacob Burckhardt,… whose *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* crystallized the historical vision of the Renaissance (and also the canons of modern cultural history), adopted the same humanistic vision as Machiavelli."[42] Several decades after Guicciardini and Machiavelli, from within the Spanish imperial

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context, a similar tension can be detected in the debate between Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490–1573), with Casas wishing to integrate, in relatively respectable fashion, the newly discovered peoples of the Americas into his historical account, whereas for Sepúlveda "the growth of Spanish world monarchy was most important and the Indians, never fully human, were irrelevant."[43]

Some two centuries later, spurred on by the emergence of Enlightenment progressivist narratives of human history in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,[44] a debate over universal versus national history arose among German scholars.[45] Eschewing "traditional historiography as a history of kings and dynasties," world historians in the German context, working in the latter part of the eighteenth century, based their broader, inclusive human histories on travel reports supplemented by anthropological and ethnographical studies.[46] But as Bödeker demonstrates in analyzing the debate, "[t]he change in theory from universal to national history…was not only the result of methodological or intra-disciplinary consistency, but reflected nationalisation." Nationalist "'patriotic history' came about as a form of specialist history under the specific conditions of the Holy Roman Empire and the particular processes of nationalisation which emerged after the end of the eighteenth century."[47] Indeed, Christian Friedrich Rühs, who first drew attention to the challenge which these inclusive humanist histories posed to German national history and identity, was professor of history and historiographer of the Prussian state. In working to define that state after Napoleon's defeat, Rühs opposed political and civil rights for Jews, arguing that they did not qualify for citizenship by virtue of their foreign language, religion and allegiance. In formulating his argument, Rühs appropriated much of the medieval European rhetoric against Jews, helping sustain and even revive a tradition which would later inspire Nazi Germany.[48] His stance against inclusive humanist world history seems, likewise, to have carried nationalist, even racist, overtones.

With this nationalist reaction,[49] the stage was set for the eventual convergence across the nineteenth century of the emerging 'science' of historical studies. These included not only European Christian and secular nationalist agendas, but white racist ideologies, with both social Darwinian theories and the founders of comparative philology helping forge those ties.[50] This convergence deepened through emphasis, between the 1840s and 1920s, on alleged varieties of 'whiteness' among various European nations, that is, their historically-based ethnonational

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distinctions framed in relation to the two main white lineages, Aryan and Caucasian.[51] This was the same era that white nationalist/racist immigration laws were put into effect within the U.S., namely the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century (c. 1880–1965). Those laws—ultimately codified as the Immigration Act, the National Origins Act and the Asian Exclusion Act (1924–1925)—aimed explicitly at preserving a white European majority demographically within the U.S. in order to preserve white American/Western values, ideals, and identity. Similar immigration laws were enacted in various European nations during the same period. European or Western civilizational history became grounded in and inseparably linked to the history of white Europe or America and then made central to world history.[52]

Johann Gottfried Herder had already begun moving the debate in this direction as early as the 1780s by interpreting history as a story line ultimately leading to "the splendor of Europe." One of his chief questions, therefore, was: "How…did Europe attain its civilization and the rank due to it above other peoples?" Therein he asserted in typical Eurocentric fashion that "there is no other region of the world other than Greece and Rome that has invented and prepared as much for Europe and through it for all nations on earth."[53] Likewise, in the 1822 revised expansion of Alexander F. Tytler Woodhouselee's *Elements of General History*, Edward Nares, regius professor of modern history at Oxford, claimed: "Civilised Europe is the only part of the world that can claim the credit of all that has been done towards the advancement of knowledge since the commencement of the eighteenth century, and only a few parts after all of civilized Europe itself."[54] But perhaps as Teshale Tibebu highlights in *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History*,

> Hegel, more than any other modern Western philosopher, produced the most systematic case for the superiority of Western white Protestant bourgeois modernity. He established a racially structured ladder of gradation of the peoples of the world, putting Germanic people at the top of the racial pyramid, people of Asia in the middle, and Africans and indigenous peoples of the Americas and Pacific Islands at the bottom.[55]

Thus, while world history projects continued, amid ongoing debate, to be pursued across the nineteenth century in Germany as well as the broader Euro-American world,[56] there was a shift from broader humanist to more narrowly focused Eurocentric narratives, with various white

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European national histories featured as the 'cultured, civilized peoples' providing the primary content and scope of 'world civilization'.[57] In their most extreme forms were the explicitly white supremacist histories exemplified by J.A. de Gobineau, *The Inequality of the Human Races* (1853), Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899)—officially commissioned as it was by future Nazi leaders—and Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race: The Racial Basis of European History* (1916).[58] However, less conspicuous European and world histories were still often grounded in notions of white European race linked closely to ideas of European or Western civilization.[59] This proved the case for both the world history and Western Civilization models developed in the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, for example, William Swinton, in his *Outlines of the World's History: Ancient, Medieval and Modern, with special relation to the History of Civilization and the Progress of Mankind* (1874), argues that

> far more valuable and more lasting results can be secured by giving scholars a vivid general view of the institutions and civilization of the greater nations than by cramming the memory with ever so imposing an array of isolated facts and dates. …It is of interest to know that the race to which we belong, the Aryan, has always played the leading part in the great drama of the world's progress. …If we trace back the present civilization of the advanced nations of the world, – our own [American] civilization, and that of England, Germany, France, Italy, etc., – we shall find that much of it is connected by direct and unbroken line with the Roman. The Romans, in turn, were heirs of the Greeks. Now, all this is *Aryan*; …Thus we are fully authorized to say that the Aryans are peculiarly the race of progress; and a very large part of the story of the world must be taken up with an account of the contributions which the Aryan nations have made to the common stock of civilization.[60]

In like manner, Philip V.N. Myers, *A General History for Colleges and High Schools* (1889), "continued the racial theme that gave justification to the old preoccupation with European history. 'Of all the races,' he explained, 'the White, or Caucasian, exhibits by far the most perfect type, physically, intellectually, and morally.'"[61] True, in the face of increasing liberal internationalism and black identity movements such as those spearheaded by W.E.B. Du Bois, Myers excised most references to race from his 1906 edition. But the white racial underpinning remained implicit as the main source of Western civilization which was central to his narrative.

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Both white as well as other voices of protest were certainly raised, but white racial-civilizational theories of varying shape and degree—whether overt or covert—remained the socially and politically dominant discourses undergirding imperialist European nationalisms and their corresponding versions of world or European/western civilizational history.[62] "World history became relevant to the imperial policies of the great powers, and the colonial empires needed knowledge about their colonized people."[63] The second wave of the Industrial Revolution only confirmed these 'advanced, progressive and salvific' narratives and, with them, ongoing subjugation of non-white, non-Western peoples in 'the struggle for Asia' and 'scramble for Africa', leading to a new, intensified phase of globalization between approximately 1870 and 1914.[64]

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It is within this atmosphere of not only European world dominance, but social scientific evolutionary theory, scientific history, scientific philology, and scientific advances in industrial technology—all providing clear scientific structure, order and certainty to the progressivist claims delineated in the predominating Eurocentric world histories—that existentialist and nihilist critiques of these well-packaged interpretations were given voice by figures such as A. Schopenhauer (1788–1860), S. Kierkegaard (1813–1855) and F. Nietzsche (1844–1900).[65] Their critiques arose in tandem with anti-colonial reform movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Another debate between Eurocentric-national versus broader inclusive world history also arose at this time within the post-unification German context.[66] While Germans thus debated national versus world history and non-Western reformers produced anti-colonial independence narratives of (world) history from within their respective colonial contexts, the existentialist response would, true to its name, emphasize defining our identity not through history and science, but in the present moment of our existence, 'being' and not 'becoming', subjectively determining our own meaning for our own individual lives. And just as the early anti-colonial critiques served as forerunners to later post-colonialist critiques, late nineteenth-century existentialist and nihilist critiques would share much in common with post-modernist existentialist deconstructionism and its very similar assault on the scientifically undergirded Western democratic capitalist and modernization, as well as Soviet Marxist, histories. This would hold true for those histories which were nationally-oriented, but even more so for 'totalizing' world history narratives.

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Meanwhile, between 1890 and 1920, the newly formed Conference on History, Civil Government, and Political Economy and the American Historical Association (AHA) both joined the rising chorus against world history by expressing their official opposition to the teaching of even standard Eurocentric versions of world history in U.S. high schools. By the end of World War I the course had all but disappeared from the high school curriculum. Ostensibly it was labeled disorderly, ineffectual, and unprofessional, lacking in archival and documentary specialization. But the close association which had been forged between national agendas and professional history within the Western tradition factored significantly into the opposition.[67]

The professional historical establishment was equally opposed to internationalist-cosmopolitan interpretations of world history which gained credence in the aftermath of the Great War. Of the internationalist-cosmopolitan variety, H.G. Wells, *Outline of World History*, stands out as the most popular. It was originally published in 1919, immediately following World War I, but the AHA, among others, turned a deaf ear to Wells' call for such an approach to world history to be incorporated into the secondary educational curriculum.[68] It was not just the AHA that stood against such a vision of world history, however. Wells' argument for a world state as the basis for world peace and unity prefigured and even helped shape, through direct correspondence, Woodrow Wilson's idea for the League of Nations.[69] As is well known though, the U.S. voted against joining the League of Nations. Among other factors, one major debate underlying this shift in U.S. perspective was the liberal-fundamentalist controversy taking shape among American Christians. It is here that M. Ruotsila exposes *The Origins of Christian Anti-Internationalism: Conservative Evangelicals and the League of Nations*.[70] Although Ruotsila does not explicitly treat fundamentalist Christian rejection of universally inclusivist world histories like those of Wells, the implications are clear. The fundamentalist doctrine of a world state founded on promises of world peace and unity under the leadership of the anti-Christ in 'the end times' serves, in their eyes, as due grounds for opposing any vision of inclusive world peace, unity and cooperation, particularly when seen as somehow supporting or linked to ideas of a world governing body such as the League of Nations. This is not to suggest that humanistic world histories all espouse such visions, but even the (perceived) resemblance was (and remains) sufficient to evoke deep suspicion, if not outright rejection. All in all, both Christian and secular

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anti-internationalist sentiment which solidified in the post-World War I period—in connection to fears of potentially undermining U.S. political sovereignty and emerging world super-power status or facilitating the prophesied rise of the anti-Christ's one world government—contributed notably to resisting internationalist-cosmopolitan global histories within the U.S. context in particular.

But if world history within the American educational system was, between the late 1800s and early 1900s, "[s]wept from the schools during the rise of history professionals, the course returned with the rise of professional educators" and their defined break with those history professionals in the 1920s. Thus while "the passing of General History marked the rise of AHA influence in secondary education, this second coming of world history was a sign of its decline." World history's successful reinstatement into the high school curriculum—with enrollments among all high school students increasing from 12% in 1934 to 16% in 1949, and among 10th graders specifically from 59% in 1949 to 69% by 1961—did not, however, indicate its popularity or success as an effective course. "Students declared it to be too aimless; teachers, too boundless; educators, too stale. In 1949, NCSS president Dorothy McClure identified the course as the sick man of the social studies curriculum. …James Bryant Conant in 1958 reported 'widespread disappointment' with the class." This would provide the background for attempted reform efforts led by Leften Stravianos and William H. McNeill from the late 1950s onward, giving birth to the World History Association in 1982.[71]

Meanwhile, the mid-twentieth century would also witness the protracted, calculated production of Arnold J. Toynbee's magnum opus, a 12-volume *Study of History* appearing between 1934 and 1961. In 1956, following publication of the 10th and final main volume in the series, M.F. Ashley Montagu edited a work entitled *Toynbee and History: Critical Essays and Reviews*. He therein asserted: "It is scarcely possible that there is anyone living who, from the matrix of his own knowledge, could deliver an authoritative verdict on the work as a whole—such polymaths are no longer among us."[72] G.J. Renier, one of Toynbee's sharpest antagonists, likewise noted that "the first really critical reviews of the system of Mr. Toynbee appeared when a less forbidding abridgment of the work was published in 1947." Renier's own critique of Toynbee was that "he remains superficial and approximate, when he is not actually ill-informed." He added elsewhere: "I condemn his condemnation of the treatment of problems of nationhood by historians because it is illiberal." Indeed, he

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considered Toynbee's entire undertaking "the supreme embodiment of what I call 'left-wing deviationism'."[73] As reflected in Renier's condemnation of Toynbee's critique of "problems of nationhood," Toynbee's post-war internationalist cosmopolitanism did not sufficiently toe the white Eurocentric-nationalist line. Thus H. Michell saw "Mr. Toynbee's reference to the hope of civilization resting upon some presently 'backward' people" so that "[o]ur civilization is doomed, and in his despair he turns from his own peoples, the nations of the Western world who have brought mankind to its present desperate state."[74] Toynbee himself was well aware that his non-Eurocentric interpretation of world history made his "whole scheme…wrong" in the eyes of many of his Western colleagues who were, in Toynbee's own assessment, "apt to see History mainly as the documentary history of Western national states" or Western civilization.[75] Thus, the British philosopher and historian of ancient Greek civilization, Edwyn Bevan, wrote personally to Toynbee sometime between his third and fifth volumes (1934–39) to counter Toynbee's narrative, arguing that,

> while your attention and interest is directed mainly to the common characteristics, it is the uniqueness which impresses me. …behind our modern world in time is the ancient Greco-Roman Civilization, the 'Hellenic Civilization', as you call it, which I see not simply as *a* civilization, but as the unique beginning of something new in the history of Mankind. Yet rationalist civilization in its first embodiment came to grief and was overrun by primitive barbarians. Then, when it had gradually worked its way up again through the barbarian mass, it got a fresh embodiment in our modern 'Western' Civilization.[76]

Toynbee held it was inconsistent to write off all other offshoots of ancient Hellenic civilization—such as Byzantine, Russian and, by extension of his argument, Islamic—as being 'dead' and static, attributing dynamic life to Western Civilization alone.

According to Allardyce, the work of Toynbee (as well as Spengler) not only elicited critical responses from multiple European and American historians, but made "universities hostile ground for world history in the United States."[77] Part of this was no doubt a reaction to the decentering of Europe in both men's work. Toynbee's take on the matter was that

> [o]ne cannot be a historian without both taking general views and verifying particular facts. But each individual and each generation is apt to throw

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> more weight into one of these two complementary [sic.] scales of the historian's balance than the other. The balance is always fluctuating and is therefore always needing to be readjusted; and, in the generation in which I happen to have been born, most Western historians have been throwing most of their weight into the study of details. They have been exploring the vast surviving archives of the local governments of our Western World, and they have therefore been apt to see History mainly as the documentary history of Western national states. …[a world] historian…can help his fellow men of different civilizations to become more familiar with one another, and, in consequence, less afraid of one another and less hostile to one another, by helping them to understand and appreciate one another's histories and to see in these local and partial stories a common achievement and common possession of the whole human family. In an age of atomic weapons and supersonic guided missiles, Mankind must become one family or destroy itself. And it is one family; it always has been one family in the making. This is the vision which one sees when one focuses one's gaze on the whole world today. I do believe that synoptic view of History is one of the World's present practical needs.[78]

Despite Toynbee's efforts, various strands of Christian and secular history in the West would continue to follow Eurocentric models across the twentieth century, both in and out of the educational system.[79] In the U.S., this held true for both the Western Civilization and world history courses, remaining closely linked as they originally had been to white-dominated national agendas and related government funding.[80] In a chapter entitled "The Defense of the West," Peter Novick highlights how, "[b]oth in its remote and immediate origins, 'Western civ' was a war baby," taking shape within the U.S. educational context in the immediate aftermath of World War I. Originating at Columbia University in 1919, variations of it appeared at the University of Chicago in 1931 and Stanford in 1935. Though initially slow to spread, "it became the most widely taught history course on American campuses" in the post-World War II period, at least until protests against it reached insurmountable levels in the 1960s. Among others, a prime motivation for offering such courses, as expressed by Harvard's General Education Committee in 1945, was "to fortify the heritage of Western civilization," namely, "the traditions of the West…for which the Allies had fought." Much of what they came to reflect were "the values of cold war America" defined culturally and historically via Greece, Rome, Western Europe and North America, particularly the United States.[81] These

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narratives were reflected, for example, even in the speeches of the great leader of the Black Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King, Jr., who had received his education in 1940–1950s America. In the final speech of his life given on April 3, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee—alternatively titled "I've Been to the Mountaintop" or "I See the Promised Land"—King rehearsed the standard Western Civ approach to world history as follows:

> As you know, if I were standing at the beginning of time, with the possibility of general and panoramic view of the whole human history up to now, and the Almighty said to me, "Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?"– I would take my mental flight by Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness on toward the promised land. And in spite of its magnificence, I wouldn't stop there. I would move on by Greece, and take my mind to Mount Olympus. And I would see Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Euripides and Aristophanes assembled around the Parthenon as they discussed the great and eternal issues of reality. But I wouldn't stop there. I would go on, even to the great heyday of the Roman Empire. And I would see developments around there, through various emperors and leaders. But I wouldn't stop there. I would even come up to the day of the Renaissance, and get a quick picture of all that the Renaissance did for the cultural and esthetic life of man. But I wouldn't stop there. I would even go by the way that the man for whom I'm named had his habitat. And I would watch Martin Luther as he tacked his ninety-five theses on the door at the church in Wittenberg. But I wouldn't stop there. I would come on up even to 1863, and watch a vacillating president by the name of Abraham Lincoln finally come to the conclusion that he had to sign the Emancipation Proclamation. But I wouldn't stop there. I would even come up to the early thirties, and see a man grappling with the problems of the bankruptcy of his nation. And come with an eloquent cry that we have nothing to fear but fear itself. But I wouldn't stop there. Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, "If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the twentieth century, I will be happy."[82]

But not all great anti-colonial reform leaders across the globe viewed world history in these terms. Continuing the tradition begun in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Muhammad Iqbal, Jawaharlal Nehru and other Middle Eastern secular and Islamic as well as broader Asian and African reform leaders of the interwar and then post-World War II period offered critiques of these Eurocentric and nationalist world history narratives by producing counter-narratives of their own. These served to

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critique Western interpretations while also affirming the importance and validity of world history as a means of shaping global perspective and fostering global dialogue. Grand narratives of 'advanced (white) Western peoples' and their 'civilizational progress' in the mid-twentieth century Nazi German[83] as well as U.S. Segregationist and Apartheid South African contexts would drive not only Asian and other post-colonialist critics, but advocates such as Karl Popper to argue against grand narrative approaches altogether.[84] They came under sharp criticism for their totalizing, hegemonic tendencies. In tandem, it is not surprising that post-modernist deconstructionism arose, like its original inherited tradition *a la* Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, amid not only rising protest against Western domination of the new world order and the threat of impending nuclear annihilation, but in response to heavy-handed Cold War propaganda promoting Eurocentric and nationalistic interpretations of both Western and world history in and beyond the McCarthy era. Indeed, world history became dominated by modernization theory built upon Western national models, particularly the U.S., in the 1950–1960s.[85] Post-modernist deconstructionism opposed both Eurocentric and cosmopolitan-internationalist versions of world history. This would eventually give rise to 'micro-history', which would form a curious, if uneasy, alliance with more nationally-focused 'area studies' and other fields of 'specialization' against ideas of grand narrative.[86] Meanwhile, the development of area studies coincided with opposition to cosmopolitan-internationalist 'cultural relativism', espousing instead Western civilization as the fountainhead of universal human rights and values. Thus, as Novick lays bare, "[c]ultural relativists were on the defensive within anthropology during the postwar decades," though "on the whole, after 1945, explicit attacks on moral relativism in scholarship came only from the conservative fringe of the academic world."[87] Indeed, as the following chapter reveals, this would prove to be the case among those defending Western Civilization over against multiculturalism and diversity in the ensuing 'culture wars' in the post-1960s period and beyond.

Notes

1. See esp. Jörn Rüsen, *Time and History: The Variety of Cultures* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008). For a post-Classical (i.e., Medieval) treatment of various world cultural calendars, see Albiruni, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations* (*Vestiges of the Past*), tr. C. Edward Sachau

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(London: W.H. Allen & Co for The Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain & Ireland, 1879).

2. Given that works were already being published to explicitly address 'globalization' as early as 1990, then the 1980s should be included as marking the upsurge of interest; cf. e.g., M. Featherstone, ed., *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990). A brief, advanced search for works published in or prior to 1990 with 'globalization' or 'globalisation' explicitly in the title reveals a number of them appearing as early as 1987. One of the earliest uses of the term "globalisation" (placed in quotation marks in the original) occurs in the article "Shock Therapy For The Peseta," *Economist* (1 July 1961): 60, where it is defined as "(freeing from bilateral quotas)."
3. Cf. 1985 as the beginning of Gorbachev's *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (reform, restructuring), with those developments of course having their own historical roots. See V.M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Charlotte, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) and R. Strayer, *Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse? Understanding Historical Change* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998).
4. Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2015), pp. 45–46.
5. See esp. W.H. McNeill and J.R. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of World History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003), which interprets world history in terms of globalization history: "It is the career and development of the various webs of communication and interaction emerging from an original loose, widespread, and occasionally interactive worldwide web forming into a deeply integrated, interdependent, and continuously interactive 'globalized' web which comprises the overarching structure of human history" (p. 5). Tamim Ansary's contribution to this volume in Section Two takes a similar approach.
6. Jerry H. Bentley, "The Task of World History," in *The Oxford Handbook of World History*, ed. J.H. Bentley (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 2. According to the World History Association (WHA)—"founded in 1982 by a group of teachers and academics," including Bentley, "to address the needs and interests of what was then a newly emerging historical sub-discipline and teaching field"—"the world historian studies phenomena that transcend single states, regions, and cultures, such as cultural contact and exchange and movements that have had a global or at least a transregional impact. The world historian…focuses on the big picture of cultural interchange and/or comparative history" (World History Association website, URLs: http://www.thewha.org/about-wha/history-mission-and-vision-of-the-wha/

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and http://www.thewha.org/about-wha/what-is-world-history/; last accessed: July 31, 2016 and Jan 2, 2017, respectively). If we go by the official website of the *Journal of World History* (JWH), which was launched in 1990 as the official journal of the WHA, it deals with "historical questions requiring the investigation of evidence on a global, comparative, cross-cultural, or transnational scale. …phenomena that transcend the boundaries of single states, regions, or cultures, such as large-scale population movements, long-distance trade, cross-cultural technology transfers, and the transnational spread of ideas" (*Journal of World History* website, URL: http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/t-journal-of-world-history.aspx; last accessed: July 31, 2016). The European Network in Universal and Global History (ENIUGH), founded in 2002, "welcomes all who are engaged in transcending national history" (The European Network in Universal and Global History (UNIUGH) website, URL: http://research.uni-leipzig.de/eniugh/; last accessed: Jan 2, 2017). The *Journal of Global History*, introduced in 2006, "addresses the main problems of global change over time, together with the diverse histories of globalization," seeking also, among other things, to "straddle traditional regional boundaries" (*Journal of Global History* website, URL: http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=JGH; last accessed: July 31, 2016). The Asian Association of World Historians (AAWH), founded in 2008, together with its journal *The Asian Review of World Histories* (ARWH), promotes the work of "'global', 'world', 'transregional', 'comparative', 'international', and 'big' historians, and all others with interest in 'connected' study of the past" (*The Asian Review of World Histories* website, URL: http://www.thearwh.org/; last accessed: Jan 2, 2017). The Network of World and Global History Organizations (NOGWHISTO), founded in 2008, is concerned with "the global dimensions of the past, be it by researching humanity's tradition at large or by reconstructing the entanglement of various scales of human action" (The Network of World and Global History Organizations (NOGWHISTO) website, URL: http://research.uni-leipzig.de/~gwhisto/home/; last accessed: Jan 2, 2017). *Entremons: UPF Journal of World History*, a digital journal of Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona first issued in 2011, traces "the historical networks between the global human community" (*Entremons: UPF Journal of World History* English website, URL: https://www.upf.edu/entremons/en/; last accessed: Jan 2, 2017).

7. Cf. Bentley's use of this term in "Myths, Wagers, and Some Moral Implications of World History," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Mar 2005): 51–82.

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8. For the close connection between the 19th-century Great Game (Russia vs. Britain) and 20th-century Cold War (Russia vs. the US), see esp. David Gillard, *Struggle for Asia, 1828–1914: A Study in British and Russian Imperialism* (London: Methuen, 1977). See also Evgeny Sergeev, *The Great Game, 1856–1907: Russo-British Relations in Central and East Asia* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013) and my extended critical review of Sergeev's work, R. Charles Weller, "Review of *The Great Game, 1856–1907: Russo-British Relations in Central and East Asia*," *Reviews in History*, June 2014 (URL: http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1611; last accessed: July 27, 2016).
9. On world history addressing many of these themes and issues across the 20th century, see esp. Paul Costello, *World Historians and Their Goals: Twentieth-Century Answers to Modernism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994).
10. Hans Erich Bödeker, "The Debates about Universal History and National History, c. 1800: A Problem-oriented Historical Attempt," in *Unity and Diversity in European Culture c.1800*, ed. Tim Blanning and Hagen Schulze, pp. 135–170 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2006); quote from pp. 138–139, citing from August Ludwig Schlözer, *Weltgeschichte nach ihren Hauptheilen im Auszug und Zusammenhang*, 2 parts (Göttingen, 1785/89), i, pt 1, p. 70. Cf. Diego Olstein, "Eight World Historians," in Chapter 13 of this volume, who says: "Three commonalities stand out in [the Section Two] essays [of this volume] that make them very indicative of the new world history that emerged in tandem with the global turn. These are: the adoption of the world as the ultimate space unit, attention to humankind at large as its agency, and the inclusion of the entire span of its existence as the chronological framework."
11. See A. Pagden, "Stoicism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Legacy of European Imperialism," *Constellations*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Mar 2000): 3–22 and J.H. Marks, *Visions of One World: Legacy of Alexander* (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters Publishing Co., 1985).
12. On this overall point, see esp. Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). Cf. also G. Sluga and J. Horne, "Cosmopolitanism: Its Pasts and Practices" and G. Sluga, "UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley," Special Issue: "Cosmopolitanism in World History," ed. Sluga and Horne, *Journal of World History*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (2010): 369–373 and 393–418; also R. Wolin, "The Idea of Cosmopolitanism: from Kant to the Iraq War and beyond," *Ethics & Global Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2010): 143–153.

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13. See: the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) website (URL: http://www.iahr.dk/) and their journal *Numen* (URL: http://www.brill.com/numen), *Comparative Studies in Society and History* journal website (URL: http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=CSS), and the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC) website (URL: http://www.iscsc.org/), with a link to their publication, *Comparative Civilizations Review* (CCR). (All URLs last accessed: July 31, 2016.)
14. See J.M. Kitagawa, ed., *The History of Religions: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Macmillan and London: Collier Macmillan, 1985) and E.J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religions: A History*, 2nd edn (Bristol, England: Bristol Classical Press, 1994).
15. See esp. B. Buzan, *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
16. For in-depth discussion of the '12 branches' of global historical study and the history behind them, see ch. 2 "Thinking History Globally: 12 Branches in Their Singularities, Overlaps, and Clusters," in Diego Olstein, *Thinking History Globally* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
17. Poul Duedahl, "Selling Mankind: UNESCO and the Invention of Global History, 1945–1976," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Mar 2011): 101–133, quoting from pp. 102, 104, 112–113. Duedahl contrasts this point with that of Allardyce (cf. also Bentley), who "ended up giving a few American historians of a slightly later period credit for the postwar showdown with Eurocentrism and the introduction of global history as a discipline" (see Gilbert Allardyce, "Toward World History: American Historians and the Coming of the World History Course," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1990): 23–76); cf. Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era*, p. 46. See also Paul Betts, "Humanity's New Heritage: UNESCO and the Rewriting of World History," *Past and Present*, No. 228 (Aug 2015): 249–285 and Sluga, "UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley."
18. Duedahl, "Selling Mankind," pp. 101–102.
19. Cf. Dominic Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): "it would be far too simplistic to treat the Anglo-American academic world or any other part of 'the West' as the main originator of the current wave of transnational scholarship. At a closer look it turns out that the main forces behind the growing weight of translocal historical thinking did not emanate from a clearly recognizable epicenter" (p. 4).

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20. On world history from a gender perspective, see e.g., Nina Baym, "Onward Christian Women: Sarah J. Hale's History of the World," in *New England Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (1990): 249–270. Baym discusses how, "[a]s the editor (from 1837 to 1877) of Godey's Lady's Book, Sarah Hale exercised considerable power over emergent middle class American culture. Her vision of world history conflated the progress of Christianity with that of women" (quoted from article abstract). On world environmental history, Iggers, Wang and Mukherjee suggest, in relation to W.H. McNeill's *Plagues and Peoples* (New York: Anchor Books, 1976), that "[h]ere, for almost the first time, a theme was addressed involving biological and environmental factors that had been largely neglected by historians" (Georg G. Iggers, Q. Edward Wang, and Supriya Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography*, Harlow and New York: Pearson Education, 2008, p. 388). What, then, about prior studies such as: G. Fleming, *Animal Plagues: Their History, Nature, and Prevention* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1871), which is world historical in scope, covering 1490 BCE to 1800 CE; the journal *Public Health Reports* published 1896–1970, featuring, among other 'transnational comparative' studies, "Germany: Report from Berlin. Plague and Cholera in Various Countries. …Comparative. Plague in Central Asia," Vol. 18, No. 10 (1903); *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, published since 1948, including issues such as R. Pollitzer, "Plague Studies: A Summary of the History and Survey of the Present Distribution of the Disease," Vol. 4, No. 4 (1951): 475–533; E.W. Ackerknecht, *History and Geography of the Most Important Diseases* (New York: Hafner, 1965), a translation of his original German work *Geschichte und Geographie der wichtigsten Krankheiten* (Enke, 1963); M.A. Machado, "*Aftosa: A Historical Survey of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Inter-American Relations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1969).
21. Cf. R.J. Evans, *Rereading German History: From Unification to Reunification 1800–1996* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1–2.
22. See esp. H. Rayment-Pickard, "Suprahistory," in *Philosophies of History: From Enlightenment to Postmodernity*, ed. R. Burns & H. Rayment-Pickard (Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 131–54, p. 131 in particular. The chapter discusses A. Schopenhauer (1788–1860), S. Kierkegaard (1813–1855) and F. Nietzsche (1844–1900). The phrase 'confused dreams of humankind' is adapted from A. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), Vol. 2, pp. 442, 444, cited by Rayment-Pickard, p. 142.
23. Following other authors, I distinguish 'guild (i.e., professional) historians' from 'post-colonialist' and 'post-modernist' only for purposes of

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highlighting particular issues. In fact, many 'guild historians' are 'post-colonialists' and/or 'post-modernists', so the distinction is not intended to suggest they should always be separated so conveniently.

24. See in this volume, "Concluding Reflections."
25. Cf. Arif Dirlik, "Performing the World: Reality and Representation in the Making of World Histor(ies)," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2005): 391–410. See also discussion in Chap. 2 of this volume.
26. Cf. Stuchtey and Fuchs, "Introduction: Problems of Writing World History: Western and Non-Western Experiences, 1800–2000," in *Writing World History, 1800–2000* (London: German Historical Institute London, 2003), p. 37.
27. Cf. Bentley, "World History and Grand Narrative," p. 47.
28. Cf. Peter Claus and John Marriott, *History: An Introduction to Its Theory, Method, and Practice* (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2012) who say: "Less concerned with broad synthesising narratives covering long historical periods, or with the articulation of overarching themes such as progress, spirituality and reason, its [the new world histories] protagonists chose rather to focus on more discrete historical problems within a global context, using as evidence fairly conventional documentary sources" (p. 243).
29. Cf. Costello, *World Historians and Their Goals*, p. 222–224, on the progressive underpinning of world-system theory approaches.
30. See also Michael Bentley, "Theories of World History since the Enlightenment," in *The Oxford Handbook of World History*, ed. J.H. Bentley, pp. 19–36. Cf. Dominic Sachsenmaier, "The Evolution of World Histories," in *The Cambridge World History: Volume One: Introducing World History, to 10,000 BCE*, ed. David Christian, 41–55 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
31. B. de la Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, ed. and tr. N. Griffin (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1992). Cf. Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, 3rd edn (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 179.
32. Antoine-Nicolas de Condorcet, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, tr. J. Baraclough (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1955), p. 175, cited in *Philosophies of History*, p. 49; cf. E.M. Wood, *Liberty and Property: A Social History of Western Political Thought from the Renaissance to Enlightenment* (New York: Verso, 2012), p. 303.
33. Condorcet's views differ little here from those of, say, Thomas Jefferson during the same period in the U.S., who decried slavery and looked to a future day of its demise, but justified its ongoing practice in his own day, even on his own plantation, believing that *in spite* of such cruelties and oppression, the benefits of white European civilization would be brought

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to the still 'less advanced' black slaves. He held much the same view toward the Native Americans. See L.C. Stanton, *"Those Who Labor for My Happiness": Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

34. See S. Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).
35. H.W. Gensichen, "German Protestant Missions, "in *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era, 1880–1920*, ed. T. Christensen and W.R. Hutchinson (Aarhus: Aros, 1982), p. 183.
36. See R. Murphey, "The Shape of the World: Eurasia," in *Asia in Western and World History: A Guide for Teaching*, ed. A.T. Embree and C. Gluck (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), pp. 11–12; J. Daly, *Historians Debate the Rise of the West* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 1–12; and R.A. Stack, *Dead Wrong: Violence, Vengeance, and the Victims of Capital Punishment* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), p. 113. De la Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, offers elevated treatment of Native American peoples; Breisach highlights Voltaire's *Essay on the Manners, Customs, and the Spirit of Nations* (1754) for "sympathetically treating the Chinese, Indian, Persian, and Islamic civilizations," though "he nevertheless held fast to a universal human progress, thereby affirming, for him, the obvious contemporary superiority of the West" (*Historiography*, p. 206).
37. For primary source material with roots as far back as the 1857 Sepoy Uprising, see N.R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din 'al-Afghani'* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983); see also C. Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) and P. Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Intellectuals who Remade Asia* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2012).
38. D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, new edn (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007, originally published 2000).
39. For the most recent resurgence of opposition, see J. Pincince, "Jerry Bentley, World History, and the Decline of the West," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Dec 2014): 631–643. Chapter two in this volume discusses this topic at length.
40. These three types reflect Edward Said's observation that "there is a profound difference between the will to understand for purposes of coexistence and humanistic enlargement of horizons, and the will to dominate for the purposes of control and external dominion" ("Preface to the 25th Anniversary Edition," in *Orientalism*, 25th Anniversary edn, New York: Vintage Books, 2003, p. xix).

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41. See esp. Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). Cf. the chart in Appendix Two in this volume.
42. P. Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 18. Note that in Ranke's "Critique of Guicciardini" he asserts that Guicciardini was one of "those historians who appear to be at once the most comprehensive and the most famous. Guicciardini is the basis of all the later works about the beginnings of modern history and easily has precedence" (Leopold von Ranke, *The Secret of World History: Selected Writings on the Art and Science of History*, tr. and ed. R. Wines (New York: Fordham University Press, 1981), p. 75.
43. Breisach, *Historiography*, p. 179.
44. See esp. M. Harbsmeier, "World Historians before Domestication: Writing Universal Histories, Histories of Mankind and World Histories in 18th-Century Germany," *Culture and History*, Vol. 5 (1989): 93–131.
45. Cf. Sachsenmaier on "the thin presence of non-European and global history in German academia" (*Global Perspectives on Global History*, p. 110).
46. See Stuchtey and Fuchs, "Introduction," in *Writing World History*, p. 3. Cf. Herder's theoretical affirmation of anthropology and his employment of travel accounts in constructing world history (Johann Gottfried Herder, *On World History: An Anthology*, ed. Hans Adler and Ernest A. Menze with Michael Palma, Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1997, pp. 13 and 18).
47. Hans Erich Bödeker, "The Debates about Universal History and National History," pp. 136–138. See also: Matthias Middell, "World Orders inWorld Histories before and after World War I," in *Competing Visions ofWorld Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s–1930s*, ed. SebastianConrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier (New York and Basingstoke: PalgraveMacmillan, 2007), pp. 97–117.
48. Gotthard Deutsch and S. Mannheimer, "Rühs, Christian Friedrich," in *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1906): URL: http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12933-ruhs-christian-friedrich; last accessed: Aug 5, 2016. Note this article discusses Rühs in the pre-Nazi and even pre-World War I period (1906).
49. Cf. Harbsmeier: "Peter Burke (1988) has argued that Ranke, and – so at least he seems to imply – to a large extent the historiography of his century in general, from the point of view of modern social and cultural history qualifies as 'counterrevolutionary.' Seen against contemporary concerns with 'the peoples without history', the almost ubiquitous critique of ethnocentrism and eurocentrism, and the concomitant attempts to redress the balance in favour of 'the other', the Orient, Black Africa or

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whatever, the late eighteenth century likewise stands out as much more contemporary" ("World Historians before Domestication," pp. 94–95).

50. See M. Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century*, tr. A. Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
51. See B. Baum, *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), pp. 5–6.
52. See Chap. 2 on the correlation between white nationalism and efforts to revive the study of 'Western Civilization'.
53. Herder, *On World History*, pp. 309 and 17, respectively, citing, in the latter quote, Herder, *Sammtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan, Vol. 14 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1887), p. 42.
54. (Lord) Alexander Fraser Tytler (Woodhouselee) and Edward Nares, *Elements of General History, Ancient and Modern*, new revised edn (London: T. Cadell, [1822] 1840), p. 533. (Available on Google Books.) See Jeremy Black, *Clio's Battles: Historiography in Practice* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2015), p. 74.
55. Teshale Tibebu, *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2010), front jacket flap and SUP website (URL: http://www.syracuseuniversitypress.syr.edu/fall-2010/hegel.html; last accessed: Jan 20, 2017).
56. See references to various works in Stuchtey and Fuchs, "Introduction," in *Writing World History*, pp. 5–9 and Manning, *Navigating World History*, p. 25.
57. Stuchtey and Fuchs, "Introduction," in *Writing World History*, p. 4.
58. J.A. de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853), tr. variously but most commonly as *The Inequality of the Human Races*, URL: https://archive.org/details/inequalityofhuma00gobi, and H.S. Chamberlain, *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, tr. as *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899), URL: https://archive.org/details/FoundationsOfThe19thCentury.
59. Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004) argues that, even though the term itself was not explicitly used at the time, 'racism', particularly in its Western civilizational form, in fact began with the Greeks and Romans. Thanks to Jared Secord for drawing my attention to this work. Notwithstanding debates over the dating of various canonical works within the Hebrew Bible, pre-Greek and Roman proto-racist views can be traced in the Western tradition to the Judeo-Christian scriptures as well. Cf. David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

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60. W. Swinton, *Outlines of the World's History: Ancient, Medieval and Modern, with special relation to the History of Civilization and the Progress of Mankind* (New York and Chicago: Ivison, Blakeman & Co., 1874), pp. iv, 3–4, original emphasis; cf. Allardyce, "Toward World History," pp. 45–46.
61. Allardyce, "Toward World History," pp. 46–47, citing Philip V.N. Myers, *A General History for Colleges and High Schools* (Boston, MA: Ginn & Company, 1889), p. 2.
62. Cf. Clif Stratton, *Education for Empire: American Schools, Race, and the Paths of Good Citizenship* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016).
63. Stuchtey and Fuchs, "Introduction," in *Writing World History*, p. 5.
64. Among other things, scientific and technological advance helped reinvigorate progressivist 'post-millennial' world history interpretations among American Christians in particular.
65. See Burns and Rayment-Pickard, *Philosophies of History*, pp. 131–154; Paul Gottfried, "Arthur Schopenhauer as a Critic of History," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Apr–Jun 1975): 331–338; Harry J. Ausmus, "Schopenhauer's View of History: A Note," *History and Theory*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (May 1976): 141–145; Georgias Patios, *Kierkegaard on the Philosophy of History* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, tr. Peter Preuss (Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc., 1980); Anthony K Jensen, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
66. On the debate over national versus broader inclusive world history within the post-unification German context, cf. John Borneman, "Uniting the German Nation: Law, Narrative, and Historicity," *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (May 1993): 288–311, esp. p. 292; cf. also Evans, "Part 1: Parade of the Grand Narratives," in *Rereading German History*, pp. 1–64.
67. Allardyce, "Toward World History," pp. 47–48.
68. Allardyce, "Toward World History," pp. 48–49.
69. See J.S. Partington, "H.G. Wells and the World State: A Liberal Cosmopolitan in a Totalitarian Age," *International Relations*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2003): 233–246.
70. M. Ruotsila, *The Origins of Christian Anti-Internationalism: Conservative Evangelicals and the League of Nations* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008).
71. Allardyce, "Toward World History," pp. 53–55.
72. M.F. Ashley Montagu, ed., *Toynbee and History: Critical Essays and Reviews* (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1956), p. viii.

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73. All quotes from: G.J. Renier, *History: Its Purpose and Method* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1950), pp. 216–218, reprinted in Montagu, ed., *Toynbee and History*, pp. 73–75.
74. H. Michell, “Herr Spengler and Mr. Toynbee,” in *Toynbee and History*, ed. Montagu, pp. 79, 81.
75. A.J. Toynbee, “A Study of History: What the Book is For, How the Book Took Shape,” in *Toynbee and History*, ed. Montagu, p. 10.
76. A.J. Toynbee, *A Study of History: Vol V*: *The Disintegrations of Civilizations*, Part One (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 5–7; cf. G.J. Renier, *History: Its Purpose and Method*, p. 217. Toynbee himself, in fact, had served as a professor of Byzantine and Greek studies in his earlier days. However, in A.J. Toynbee, *Greek Civilization and Character: The Self-Revelation of Ancient Greek Society* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd and New York: Mentor Books, 1953), he made no suggestion to the effect that Greek civilization was superior, although he recognized its contribution, both positive and negative, to Western culture.
77. Allardyce, “Toward World History,” p. 25.
78. Toynbee, “A Study of History: What the Book is For, How the Book Took Shape,” in *Toynbee and History*, ed. Montagu, pp. 10–11.
79. See esp. James M. Blaut, *Eight Eurocentric Historians* (New York: Guilford Press, 2000).
80. See esp. Roxann Prazniak, “Is World History Possible: An Inquiry,” in *History after the Three Worlds: Post-Eurocentric Historiographies*, ed. Arif Dirlik, Vinay Bahl and Peter Gran, 221–239 (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000).
81. P. Novick, “The Defense of the West,” in *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 312–313 and Herbert Lindenberger, “On the Sacrality of Reading Lists: The Western Culture Debate at Stanford University,” in *The History in Literature: On Value, Genre, Institutions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990). (Available at: http://www.pbs.org/shattering/lindenberger.html; last accessed: Dec 28, 2016).
82. See Martin Luther King, Jr., *I Have a Dream: Writings & Speeches That Changed the World*, ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2003), pp. 194–195. Also available on the Stanford University *Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Global Freedom Struggle* website (URL: http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/ive_been_to_the_mountaintop/; last accessed: Jan 21, 2017).

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83. Cf. R.J. Evans, *Rereading German History*, p. 120, who highlights Hitler's view of world history as "a struggle for survival between the races," particularly between the German 'Aryan race', the Jews and the Slavs.
84. See Ernst Breisach, "The Metanarrative Controversy," in *On the Future of History: The Postmodernist Challenge and Its Aftermath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p, 125; cf. Philip Pomper, "Introduction: The Theory and Practice of World History," in *World History: Ideologies, Structures, and Identities*, ed. P. Pomper, R.H. Elphick and R.T. Vann (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 2.
85. See esp. Jerry Bentley, *Shapes of World History in Twentieth-Century Scholarship* (Washington DC: American Historical Association, 1996).
86. See esp. Breisach, "The Metanarrative Controversy," pp. 122ff.
87. Novick, "The Defense of the West," pp. 283–287.

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CHAPTER 2

'Western' and 'White Civilization': White Nationalism and Eurocentrism at the Crossroads

R. Charles Weller

Eurocentric and nationalist interpretations of world history continued to prevail over internationalist–cosmopolitan and globalist–multiculturalist visions and their respective aspirations for world peace in the post-World War II era. This was witnessed most vividly in French, U.S. and other nationalist rejection of UNESCO's attempts to rewrite both national histories and the overall history of humanity from a 'multicultural global connections' point of view in the post-World War II, post-colonial setting. With respect to UNESCO's world history project, the

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explicit aim "was to distinguish it from the ethnocentric and especially the Eurocentric world histories of the past" in order to overcome "the obstinacy with which so many representatives of so-called 'European' or 'Western' civilization regard the latter – their own – as the only true civilization."[1] Much the same applied to UNESCO's efforts to rewrite various national histories from a cross-cultural and transnational point of view. As Hunt highlights however, the UNESCO history of France written from this vantage in the 1950s was not published until 2012 due to French nationalist opposition.[2] Likewise, the only American historian appointed to write a volume for the UNESCO *History of Humanity* series, Louis Gottschalk, having finally overcome his own Eurocentric bias, was criticized by not only American counterparts and reviewers, but the French Sorbonne historian Roland Mousnier, who "objected that this kind of separate-but-equal approach obscured the most significant world development of the period 1300 to 1775 – the rise of the west."[3]

And so we come full circle back to the so-called 'new world histories', emerging as they did from out of this post-World War II, post-colonialist trend. Like Gottshalk and Stravianos before him, William H. McNeill, one of the chief pioneers and inspirations of the new world history movement, himself modeled the called-for transformation by shifting his focus across the span of his career from *The Rise of the West* (1963) to a more nuanced and balanced view of *The Human Web*: *A Bird's-Eye View of World History* (2003).[4] Global, multicultural, transnational approaches to world history, and to history in general, were on the rise. But while McNeill and others were embracing this trajectory, disparate voices were lamenting and fighting to save *The Vanishing West: 1964–2010*: *The Disappearance of Western Civilization from the American Undergraduate Curriculum*.[5] They faced major obstacles, however. One of the most formidable was the ongoing conflation of Western/European Civilization with white civilization and accompanying charges that Western Civilization was inherently racist. Indeed, the Nazi and other fascist-nationalist atrocities had, on top of the nationalist violence of World War I, placed increasing strain upon Eurocentric, nationalist and racist interpretations of both Western and world history (not to mention European, American, Japanese and multiple other national histories). But it would be naïve to suppose that the mere absence of explicit references to white racist ideas within the continuing narratives of 'advanced Western civilization' in the post-World War II, post-colonialist era indicated a complete

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and genuine break between the two. On this matter, Malcolm X, in stark contrast to Martin Luther King, Jr's views (see end of Chap. 1), said:

> I've got to point out right here that what I'm saying is not racist. I'm not speaking racism, I'm not condemning all white people. I'm just saying that in the past the white world was in power, and it was. This is history, this is fact. They called it European history, or colonialism. They ruled all the dark world. Now when they were in power and had everything going their way, they didn't call that racism, they called it colonialism.[6]

Certainly Truman's executive order to desegregate the U.S. military in 1948, the *Brown versus Topeka, Kansas Board of Education* decision of the Supreme Court in 1954 (which effectively overturned the 1896 Supreme Court segregationist ruling of 'separate but equal'), and President Johnson's signing of several civil rights and immigration acts between 1964 and 1967 all reflected various degrees of sincerity and achieved various levels of practical effect. But the Detroit and Chicago race riots of 1943 and 1968 respectively, the ongoing racist treatment of Carl Brashear and others like him in the military, the need to deploy National Guard troops to desegregate public schools and universities in the face of angry white racist mobs, and the countless other instances of white racist opposition to the Black Civil Rights Movement in the 1950–1960s all testify to the continuing presence and power of white racist ideas of varying degree within the U.S. Apartheid in South Africa was also alive and well, though coming under greater international scrutiny while experiencing similar domestic protests. Likewise, white nationalism and accompanying expressions of racism[7] were by no means dead in Britain or elsewhere in Europe. Robert Young thus begins his study of *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, with a quote from the Algerian French feminist writer Hélène Cixous, who, from her vantage, "saw how the white (French), superior, plutocratic, civilized world founded its power on the repression of populations who had suddenly become 'invisible', like proletarians, immigrant workers, minorities who are not the right 'colour'."[8]

Along, therefore, with the growing impact of the Vietnam War as well as the women's and gay liberation movements and other similar forces on the rise in the 1950–1960s, it was, within the U.S., precisely these lingering, albeit now discreet associations of Western Civilization and white civilization and their alleged advanced standing in the world which

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came increasingly under attack in the face of both domestic and international pressures. Professors such as Frederic L. Cheyette at Amherst began to insist, therefore, that, "[d]espite its claim to be universal, … Western Civ in truth was limited and provincial, a history of those who were men, white, Christian, and European."[9] Likewise:

> In rejecting the [Western Civ] course, Harvard faculty members, in principle, rejected the historical pre-eminence of Western man. …This breakup of an educational creed coincided with the breakup of the world that inspired it. …the rise of the Third World confronted the United States with an international environment of polycentrism and cultural diversity. Europe was no longer the world. Emerging were other peoples, other histories, a globe of historic diversity beyond the imagination of earlier Westerners, …As educators came to recognize the world in this way, they recognized, at the same time, the poverty of the Western Civ course.[10]

Indeed, Malcolm X, in the speech cited above, had noted that "as the base of power shifts, what it is doing is bringing an end to what you and I know to have been white supremacy. …[T]he white world, or the Western world, is having its power curtailed."[11] And with that, the Western Civilization course was phased out in most colleges and universities by the early 1970s.

But the lingering problem of conflation between Western and white civilization was not therein resolved. It continued to haunt national debates which arose in the 1980s over Stanford's Western Civ replacement course, now repackaged as 'Western Culture'. The proposal for the new 'Western Culture' course was first put forward by the Committee on Reform and Renewal of Liberal Education in January 1976. No references to the problem of Western civilizational and white racial conflation, or of racism, appeared within the report, only the recommendation that the new course would "cover many of the important cultural creations and movements in Western civilization and, at least, sketch the social and political history."[12] After a decade of debate however, Stanford American history professor Carl Degler summarized things quite accurately before the faculty senate in 1988, saying: "The principal objections, I gather, are that it is…too narrow in its focus since it fails to include writings from cultures outside the West, or by persons who are not white males." But however covertly it may have been shrouded in more politically correct language, Degler himself, in fact, exemplified this dilemma.

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In opposition to yet another newly proposed replacement course on Culture, Ideas, Values (CIV), he immediately went on to assert:

> As a historian of the United States I would be the last person to deny the ethnic, racial, and cultural complexity of American society. But, from the same perspective, I find it puzzling, if not troubling, to learn that some of the dominant and influential ideas in modern America are to be seen in CIV as originating outside the West. Few historians of the United States believe that the culture of this country has been seriously influenced by ideas from Africa, China, Japan, or indigenous North America, to name the more prominent non-Western sources of the present population of the United States.[13]

Such a view leaves few other options than white Americans to serve as the sole sources for "the dominant and influential ideas in modern America." And this was precisely the complaint of Bill King, President of Stanford's Black Student Union, who raised the original objection to the Western Culture course. He suggested instead courses which would make clear "that they [the white Europeans] were just as indebted to my [black] ancestors as they were to their own."[14] In this, King was in essential agreement with Malcolm X, who said: "once you see that the condition that we're in is directly related to our lack of knowledge concerning the history of the Black man, only then can you realize the importance of knowing something about the history of the Black man."[15] George Reisman therefore recognized that "[i]n these statements, Western civilization is clearly identified with people of a certain type, namely, the West Europeans and their descendants, who are white." Attempting to shift the focus from race to intellect however, he continued to contend that "the intellectual substance of Western civilization is nothing other than the highest level of knowledge attained anywhere on earth, in virtually every aspect of every field, and if the purpose of education is to impart knowledge, then its purpose is to impart Western civilization."[16] In making this argument, Reisman neglected, however, to address the historically problematic association of alleged 'white superiority' with 'intellectual superiority'. Meanwhile, associate professor of English Barbara Gelpi believed the aim should be "laying bare the racist and sexist assumptions within the very foundations of Western culture."[17] Attempting to shift the focus from a racially oriented to a 'culturally heterogeneous' perspective, Herbert Lindenberger, reflecting back on "On the Sacrality of Reading

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Lists: The Western Culture Debate at Stanford University," summed up the Stanford decision to do away with its Western Culture curriculum and institute the new CIV curriculum as follows:

> The institution of Western civilization courses in America in the wake of the First World War responded not only to the European sense of cultural crisis, but, coming as it did precisely at the time that the United States first felt itself a world power, served to portray this power as heir to that whole tradition we came to call Western. Stanford's recent move toward a more globally oriented [CIV] course recognizes at once the increasingly heterogeneous make-up of the country's college-student population and America's entanglement in a world economy over which it can no longer exercise the control it once enjoyed.[18]

In the midst of it all, William J. Bennett, appointed chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) by President Ronald Reagan in 1981, made a national issue of the Stanford case. He put together a 'study group' made up of 31 scholars, most of whom were white,[19] to inquire into "the State of Learning in the Humanities in Higher Education." In 1984 he thus published *To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education* in which he made the following impassioned plea:

> We are a part and a product of Western civilization. That our society was founded upon such principles as justice, liberty, government with the consent of the governed, and equality under the law is the result of ideas descended directly from great epochs of Western civilization – Enlightenment England and France, Renaissance Florence, and Periclean Athens. These ideas…are the glue that binds our pluralistic nation. The fact that we as Americans – whether black or white, Asian or Hispanic, rich or poor – share these beliefs aligns us with other cultures of the Western tradition. It is not ethnocentric or chauvinistic to acknowledge this. No student citizen of our civilization should be denied access to the best that tradition has to offer.
>
> Ours is not, of course, the only great cultural tradition the world has seen. There are others, and we should expect an educated person to be familiar with them because they have produced art, literature, and thought that are compelling monuments to the human spirit and because they have made significant contributions to our history. Those who know nothing of these other traditions can neither appreciate the uniqueness of their own nor understand how their own fits with the larger world. They are less able to

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> understand the world in which they live. The college curriculum must take the non-Western world into account, not out of political expediency or to appease interest groups, but out of respect for its importance in human history. But the core of the American college curriculum—its heart and soul—should be the civilization of the West, source of the most powerful and persuasive influences on America and its people.[20]

The report thus reflected an appreciable measure of balance, especially in its genuine respect for the non-Western world and its "significant contributions to our [world's] history." Like Degler, the report even acknowledged "our pluralistic nation…black or white, Asian or Hispanic, rich or poor," but it nowhere affirmed any contribution on the part of such peoples to 'the Western tradition'. Indeed, the author of the report, Bennett, had coauthored a book in 1979 entitled *Counting by Race* which spoke out against Affirmative Action, i.e., against foundational Civil Rights legislation.[21] Bennett's racially-colored views also found expression elsewhere over the years, as seen for example in his genocidal comment in 2006 that "you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down." He was condemned for his 'racial' statement by both President Bush and New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.[22]

Allan Bloom then took up the matter in his 1987 best-seller, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students.* He mocked the idea that "Black students are second-class…because they are being forced to imitate white culture," suggesting that "[r]elativism and Marxism made some of this claim believable." He implied instead that it was "because they are academically poor."[23] He likewise "wrote a letter to the *Wall Street Journal* editor in 1989," making "a rigorous if eccentric case for a classic liberal education rooted in the Western canon – in which he argued that the Stanford revisions were a travesty."[24]

Following closely behind, the February 1988 U.S. edition of *Newsweek* magazine carried an article by David Gates and Tony Clifton titled "Say Goodnight, Socrates: Stanford University and the decline of the West."[25] Six years later, in 1993, Bernard Knox published *The Oldest Dead White European Males and Other Reflections on the Classics.* There he argued that

> the Greeks and the heritage they have handed down to our Western Civilization…is today a controversial theme, as the deliberately provocative title of the first essay ["Homer is Dead"] suggests. Advocates of

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> multiculturalism and militant feminists, among others, have denounced the traditional canon of literature that has so long served as the educational base for Western societies, repudiating it not only as sexist and racist but even as an instrument of ideological *Gleichschaltung* [standardized authoritarianism] used by a ruling class to impose conformity.[26]

David Sacks and Peter Thiel—the latter a former speech writer for William J. Bennett—followed in 1996 by publishing *The Diversity Myth: 'Multiculturalism' and the Politics of Intolerance at Stanford*. The title was slightly revised and broadened for the paperback edition, appearing in 1998 as *The Diversity Myth: 'Multiculturalism' and Political Intolerance on Campus*. Both authors were graduates of Stanford now working together at a conservative think-tank, the Independent Institute, in Oakland, California. Chapter 1, "The West Rejected," started with an italicized quote from columnist Charles Krauthammer: "*First, Stanford capitulated to separatist know-nothings and abandoned its 'Western Civilization' course because of [the course's] bias toward white males (you know: narrow-minded ethnics like Socrates, Jesus, and Jefferson)*." In polemical overstatement of the case, they went on to portray the curriculum change at Stanford as

> an unqualified denunciation of the West. …It referred not just to a single class at Stanford, but to the West itself – to its history and achievements, to its institutions of free-market capitalism and constitutional democracy, to Christianity and Judaism, to the complex of values and judgments that help shape who we are.[27]

In defense of classical Western Civilization, they argued against emerging ideas of 'multiculturalism' and 'diversity', condemning them as neoliberal covers for anti-right-wing political intolerance.

In 1997, Gary Nash, Charlotte Crabtree and Ross Dunn intervened in the debate with *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past*. They advocated in defense of multiculturalism and diversity, decrying what they considered to be a "right-wing assault" in the course of attempting to set national history standards. All of them had participated in a two-year effort (1992–1994) to establish recommended standards, only to watch the U.S. Senate vote in early 1995 to "condemn" them.[28]

Meanwhile, two other graduates of Stanford, Victor Davis Hanson and John Heath, added their voices to the debate in 1998 with a book

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entitled *Who Killed Homer? The Demise of Classical Education and the Recovery of Greek Wisdom*. From their vantage,

> every American should care. The demise of classics means more than the implosion of an inbred academic discipline, more than the disappearance of one more bookosaurus here and there. For chained to this sinking academic bureaucracy called classics are the ideas, the values, the vision of classical Greece and Rome. These are the ideas and values that have shaped and defined Western civilization, a vision of life that has ironically come under increasing attack here in the elite universities of the West just as its mutated form is metastasizing throughout the globe.[29]

But the U.S. was not the only place where Eurocentric visions of the preeminence of Western civilization continued to vie for interpretational merit while retaining implicit or, in more extreme form, explicit association with white civilization. The British historian J.M. Roberts maintained a classic Western Civ plus approach to his *History of the World* without essential revision from 1976 until his death in 2003. There he argued that, "as a way out of their troubles," peoples everywhere across the world "look…to the West" as "the master-source of the modern world." Surely a historian of the caliber of Roberts must have been aware just how closely his latter reference resembled historically white supremacist ideas of a 'master race'. Whatever the case, he was clear in asserting that "no other tradition has shown the same vigour and attractiveness in alien settings as the European: it has no competitors as a world shaper." Against this background, he contends, in support of his thesis, that "[o]ne reason why so many black men clamour vociferously against the white-dominated societies they live in is" not because they have been so oppressed and violated, but "that they in fact wish to realize the ideals of human rights and dignity evolved by European civilization." Not only does his choice of descriptive language here—clamour vociferously—cast 'black men' in a less than positive light; European civilization is, in his eyes, exclusively associated with and 'evolved by' the white societies which 'dominate' them. Indeed, Roberts' singling out of 'black men' here in juxtaposition to white Europeans indicates that he views them, within the larger context of his argument, as one of the 'alien settings' (cf. African heritage as non-European) in which his white-dominated European tradition serves to provide them "a way out of their troubles," namely the troubles they "clamour vociferously" about.[30]

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The Post-Cold War and Post-9/11 Turn

Notwithstanding ebbs and flows as well as variation across regions, opposition to racism, ethnocentrism and nationalism continued to mount from World War II down to 9/11, at least within the Western world. This environment, enhanced by the end of the Cold War—i.e., a sudden surge of globalization across a vast international space of formerly closed boundaries—as well as the crumbling of Apartheid all favored 'neo-liberal' ideas of pluralism, multiculturalism, diversity and globalism. 9/11 significantly reversed that trend. While Middle Easterners and Muslims became the primary targets of anti-foreign, anti-pluralist sentiment, long-standing disgruntlement with increasing cultural relativism and the alleged breakdown of Western values in an ostensibly post-racist, post-colonialist world revitalized neo-conservative sentiment.[31] Within this environment, multiculturalism, already long resisted at many turns since its rise in the mid-twentieth century, became increasingly challenged, even declared a 'crisis' reflecting the alleged failure of neo-liberal policy. Anti-immigration rhetoric has garnered growing support while denials of race as a valid construct and the accompanying shift to a focus on culture have served to cover over a resurgent racist discourse. 'Displaced' white Euro-American societies have reasserted their need to protect and defend themselves and their Western civilization via increasing political as well as cultural 'securitization'. These developments constitute, as Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley title their edited volume, *Crises of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age*.[32] Within the U.S. in particular, the Obama presidency provoked white racist reaction while the campaign and election of Donald Trump was both a product of and, in the eyes of many who voted for him, a significant endorsement of such reactionary trends. At the far right, white nationalist and 'alt-right' leaders espousing anti-multiculturalist rhetoric supported Trump for his hardline stance on immigration and refugees, particularly in connection to Mexicans and Muslims.[33]

Indeed, Jay Reeves noted in June 2016 how "Klan leaders said they feel that U.S. politics are going their way, as a nationalist, us-against-them mentality deepens across the nation. Stopping or limiting immigration—a desire of the Klan dating back to the 1920s—is more of a cause than ever."[34] Connected to but going beyond controversies over immigration, it was no coincidence that, following the U.S. presidential election in November 2016, the "'Trump effect' led to [a] hate crime

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surge." This accompanied graffiti, in one case painted on a wall displaying the swastika sign amid the declaration "Make America White Again."[35] Echoing that sentiment, the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan claim divine authority in their shared racist vision "to help restore America to a White Christian nation."[36] A number of other KKK groups across Europe and North America espouse similar agendas, including the Imperial Knights of the UK Church of the KKK and the European White Knights of the Burning Cross. Likewise, White Aryan Resistance headed by Tom Metzger espouses "the benefits of racial separation, highlighting the dangers of multiculturalism and promoting racial identity and a territorial imperative."[37] The latter phrase is tied closely to the Northwest Territorial Imperative promoted by Aryan Nations founded in the early 1970s from their former compound in Hayden Lake, Idaho.[38]

Leonard Zeskind has provided one of the most detailed studies to-date of the history behind this phenomenon in *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream* (2009). In it he ties together neo-Nazi skinheads, Holocaust deniers, Christian Identity churches, the renewal of the Ku Klux Klan, and more. He identifies opposition to foreign (i.e., non-white) immigration as a primary aim of all these organizations in the post-Cold War era, with accompanying concern over whites losing their majority status in the face of globalizing trends.[39] Earlier, in a 2005 documentary entitled *White Terror*, Daniel Schweizer traced the rise of white "extremists' networks in Europe, North America and Russia" which promoted, among other things, ideas of segregation and anti-immigration. Some of them also promoted educational agendas which included "training our young people in the basic skills of civilized life and giving them pride in their racial, cultural, and national heritage." This is the vision of the National Alliance which holds that "[a]ny White person [but] no person with a non-White spouse or a non-White dependent…may be a member."[40] The close link between (what is presumably Western Euro-American) civilization and racial pride should be noted. Much like the white racist rhetoric of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these various groups consistently reference not only Blacks and Muslims, but Jews and Asians.[41]

Against this backdrop, Ricardo Duchesne, an associate professor of sociology at the University of New Brunswick in Canada, has taken up the cause of "defending the rise of western culture against its multicultural critics."[42] He thus invested ten years of research into his magnum opus on *The Uniqueness of Western Civilization* (2011) with the

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primary aim of countering "the multicultural effort to 'provincialize' the history of Western civilization."[43] Earlier in a 2005 chapter titled "Centres and Margins: the Fall of Universal World History and the Rise of Multicultural World History," Duchesne explained that

> this emphasis on the interactions of communities and cultures in the past has produced indispensable insights about the worldwide impact of not only modern but premodern forces and movements. The trend toward a more even-handed evaluation of non-European voices and the history of women and minority groups also deserves to be celebrated. …But it is my view that a narrow-minded, anti-Western ideology has taken hold of much of world history writing in recent decades, a new orthodoxy…[which] encourages students to place the intellectual achievements of all cultures on the same moral and rational level, and discourages the so-called 'triumphalist' idea that Western civilization has made the major contributions to the ideals of freedom, democracy and reason. …This discursive shift away from the great themes of freedom and rationality which students learned from traditional Western Civ courses and which world historians still accepted in the 1960s was perhaps the most important event in twentieth-century historiography.[44]

Under attack in all Duchesne's works were figures such as Franz Boas and Immanuel Wallerstein as well as William H. McNeill, Ross Dunn, Jerry Bentley, Patrick Manning, David Christian "and others who took over the cause of world history in the 1980s." For Duchesne, "the main question [of history remained] why the great accomplishments in the sciences and arts have been overwhelmingly European." This, for him, constituted a 'higher cultural legacy' in comparison with all other cultures and civilizations within the world historical record. Never mind that he, by his own confession, "risked making arguments about areas of history I know little about," 'the uniqueness of the West' was to be defended at all costs.[45]

Part of this defense, it turns out, includes an anti-immigration stance which bears an uncanny resemblance to white nationalist and racist anti-immigration laws of the interwar period aimed at maintaining a white majority, such as those enacted by the U.S. between 1880 and 1965 (see Chap. 1). Indeed, along with his publication and teaching work, Duchesne is co-founder of the Council of European Canadians (CEC). In its vision statement, the group declares that it "oppose[s] all efforts to deny or weaken the European character of Canada, [that] Canada should

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remain majority, not exclusively, European in its ethnic composition and cultural character [because] Canada is a nation created by individuals with an Anglo/French/European heritage, not by individuals from diverse races and cultures."[46] For Duchesne, therefore, "[t]he incoming in Vancouver of Asians and Chinese was too fast, too quick. …within a matter of a few years, a very British city, a beautiful British city, took on a strongly Asian character." These comments sparked national controversy. In spite of Duchesne being condemned by a number of public officials and university colleagues for racism, his university defended his right to 'freedom of speech'.[47] Meanwhile, his own brother made clear that

> [a]s a member of the Duchesne family, I totally repudiate my brother's white supremacist crypto-Nazi positions. We are a family of Puerto Rican, Caribbean heritage. Our father is Puerto Rican, our grandfather was of mixed Afro-Puerto Rican and French descent, our mother was a British citizen of Anglo-Indian descent, born in Calcuta [sic]. Ricky was born and raised in Puerto Rico with us. We are proud of our cosmopolitan, plural ethnic heritage. …We cannot explain our brother's absurd racist politics except as a form of the typical self-hatred or wannabe White anxiety provoked by colonial prejudice suffered by Puerto Ricans who have been historically racialized by U.S. colonialism.[48]

Duchesne became a hero, however, to white nationalist and racist groups sharing his commitment to protect and defend predominantly white Western civilization. Thus Kevin MacDonald, one of the founders of *The Occidental Observer* (*TOO*), which publishes "original content touching on the themes of white identity, white interests, and the culture of the West,"[49] published an article in another white nationalist mouthpiece, *The Daily Stormer*, entitled: "Council of European Canadians: An Excellent Website in Defense of the [White] People and Culture of the West." Therein he noted that Duchesne and his work were "well-known to TOO readers." He understood Duchesne to promote "ethnic homogeneity within Western societies [as] a key antecedent for Western endorsement of moral universalism and individual rights," thus opposing "the current push for multiculturalism [as] a disaster for European Canadians."[50]

A number of similar groups have arisen in response to the multicultural surge of globalization. In addressing the issue of "Immigration and the Demographic Transformation," American Renaissance, founded in 1990, claims that "[t]he single greatest threat facing whites is mass immigration of non-whites into white homelands. If it continues, …[t]he culture of the

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West will not survive the disappearance of the [white] people who created it." Their "Philosophy of Race Realism" holds that "it is entirely normal for whites (or for people of any other race) to want to be the majority race in their own homeland. If whites permit themselves to become a minority population, they will lose their civilization, their heritage, and even their existence as a distinct people." The language here echoes not only that of the KKK, but Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race: The Racial Basis of European History* (1916). Accordingly, Christopher De La Viña, in an American Renaissance article titled "White Man: Why Are You Giving Away Your Country?" (2015), recounted how

> [a]s a child in public schools and now as a graduate student in history, I have learned one thing to be true about the United States: It is a white country. The founders were white, white men established its core principles and political system, and white men and women built the nation into what it is today. …America has always been a white country and always should be.[51]

From the opposite angle, one of their founders and chief spokespersons, Jared Taylor, in a piece entitled "Africa in Our Midst" (under the topic of 'Crime and Disorder'), argues that "[w]hen blacks are left entirely to their own devices, Western Civilization—any kind of civilization—disappears." Blacks thus remain 'uncivilized', presumably primitive and barbaric, in his view.[52]

The New Moderate shares the view that "*[w]hite people of European stock have a right to look after their interests, especially in light of current demographic trends in the U.S. and Western Europe.*" They lamented, however, that "*[u]nfortunately, virtually every 'white rights' movement has been laden with racism*" (italics in original). While ostensibly disavowing such a racist view themselves, they summarized the perspective of what they called 'Righty' in terms very similar to those described by De La Viña, namely that

> [w]hite people created Western Civilization and all its wonders. We built everything of note from the Parthenon to the personal computer. We explored the world from top to bottom, delivered most of it from ignorance and savagery, spread the Gospel, advanced the frontiers of science, discovered cures for dreaded diseases, and founded numerous great nations, including, of course, the United States. White people were designed by nature to rule.[53]

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Preserving Western Civilization was a group founded in the mid-2000s by Michael Hart because "our glorious Western civilization is under assault from many directions." The three main threats identified are: "the massive influx to the United States and Europe of Third-World immigrants who do not share our fundamental political and cultural values, …the threat from Islam, a militant ideology that is hostile to our society and, in principle, committed to destroying it, [and] the persistent disappointing performance of blacks (which many whites mistakenly blame on themselves), [so that] many whites have guilt feelings that undermine Western morale and deter us from dealing sensibly with the other threats."[54] With such 'threats' in view, Hart, a Ph.D. in astronomy, has published several white supremacist books, including *Understanding Human History* (2009) and *Restoring America* (2015).[55] The group does not seem to be very active, however, as its last conference appears to have been in 2009 when the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported that "Racists Gather[ed] in Maryland to 'Preserve' Western Civilization." Speakers at the time included "Patricia Richardson, a member of the far-right British National Party (BNP), whose leader, Nick Griffin, has traveled to the United States to speak at a conference convened by American Renaissance. Richardson spoke about the 'Colonization of Britain,' which focused on Muslim immigration to that country." Others were Steve Farron, formerly a professor of Classics at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa; Lino Graglia, a professor of law at the University of Texas in Austin; Henry Harpending, an anthropologist at the University of Utah; and "J. Philippe Rushton, a Canadian professor of psychology, who has, for many years, been one of the primary voices arguing that races differ biologically in intelligence." Another speaker, Peter Brimelow, founder of the white nationalist VDare which published Hart's *Restoring America*, "argued that the influx of 'non-traditional' immigration is a problem all over the Western world and that the loss of control over the country by 'white Protestants' will mean a collapse of the American political system." The solution, he urged, was "that whites respond by creating an explicitly white nationalist political party." Richard Spencer was not mentioned, though he is president of the National Policy Institute as well as Washington Summit Publishers, both of which promote white nationalist views, including the publication of Hart's book *Restoring America*.[56] The ADL article did, however, reference "white supremacists on forums like *Stormfront* and the *Vanguard News Network*" in connection with the conference and its speakers.[57]

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Students for Western Civilization is "based out of Toronto and is composed primarily of students and alumni of Toronto universities," but invites all "young people across North America" to join them. According to their mission statement, the goals of the organization include: "To organize for and advance the interests of Western peoples" and "To promote and celebrate Western Civilisation." In order to accomplish these goals, they urge that "York [University] Needs a White Students Union!" This, they insist, "would serve to promote and celebrate the culture of Western Civilisation [and] advance the political interests of Western peoples."[58]

Youth for Western Civilization was a trans-Atlantic student organization seeking to influence college and university campuses across the Western world. Their Facebook page has been removed and they appeared to have no website presence in 2017.[59] However, their influence has, as intended, extended beyond campuses into political realms. Thus in October 2016, during Donald Trump's presidential campaign, David Neiwert reported how "Montana Republicans Warmly Embrace a White Nationalist's Legislative Candidacy." Neiwert is referring to Taylor Rose, who "first came to enter the movement in 2011 when his activities on behalf of the white nationalist Youth for Western Civilization were reported by the Center for New Community."[60] Rose' views were well-known to Montana Republicans because he had authored a book in 2012 on the *Return of the Right: How the Political Right Is Taking Back Western Civilization*. The heart of the book aims to expose and counter a "very aggressive and dedicated" neo-liberal utopian "vision to destroy the nation-state, eliminate religion, [and] break down all defined barriers in society [so as] to eliminate western civilization from the face of the earth in the attempt to institute a radical, multicultural, New World Order agenda." It is a "radical Leftist, post-modern philosophy"—elsewhere called Fabian Socialism—"emanating from Hegelian and Marxist belief systems." The three key American presidential figures who have promoted this leftist downfall of Western Civilization are Woodrow Wilson and his internationalist League of Nations, Franklin Roosevelt and his socialist New Deal, and Barack Obama. This 'crisis' is "the great expression of the consequences of the abandonment of traditionalist, Christian, and Enlightenment principles being applied in the West." He thus calls for a return to "the traditional institutions of the Western Christian society: God/church, family and country." His vision for "all members…working together for the common interest of

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the nation, not the 'global community'" includes the "[r]ejection of multiculturalism," the concerted effort to "[s]top the Islamization of the Western world," and "[f]ighting for the defense of Western traditions and cultural identity." With regard to the latter, "Westerners must never be afraid to use the terms of 'miracle' and 'exceptionalism' in describing their homelands, …understanding their own unique place in the history of the world." This is all a "noble crusade" in which "[c]onservatives of the Western Civilization unite together…without apology and without fear." It is a fight against "one world humanist[s]" who establish their vision upon "the corpses of…national and ethnic identity."[61] In summing things up at the end of his first chapter, in a paragraph repeated on the back cover, Rose warns that "Europe is the cradle of Western Civilization. …Europe's last hope lies in a renaissance of Christianity and a revival of national and ethnic pride to counter the determined will of fanatics of Anatolia, Mesopotamia and Arabia and the suicidal notions of internationalist ideologues." While Rose thus avoids the terms 'white' and 'race', his implicit references couched in terms of ethnic pride in 'ethnic identity', tied as they are to political power in the nation-state, are clear. As a graduate of Jerry Falwell's Liberty University, Rose illustrates the way in which neo-conservative Christianity retains elements of old WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) notions which also intersect with the white supremacist Christian Identity movement and their Euro-white nationalist revival of Western Civilization.[62]

Rose, however, was not the only one during the 2016 Trump campaign who voiced Republican support for such a vision. As Nick Visser reported in an article titled "A GOP Congressman Just Made an Argument for White Supremacy on Live TV," "Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) made an outrageous statement about the contributions of Western civilization—i.e., the one crafted primarily by white people—over 'any other subgroup' during an appearance…on MSNBC."[63] Daniel Victor, writing for the *New York Times*, reported the incident in an article titled: "What, Congressman Steve King Asks, Have Nonwhites Done for Civilization?"[64] King's assertion in July 2016 sparked national, even international debate over the entire question of race and civilization within Western and world history.

The rise of such white nationalist and racist groups vocally advocating a necessary, vital association between Western civilization and white civilization with accompanying arguments for their supremacy in world history coincides with a resurgent trend among Western academic

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historians that John Pincince has identified as an "exceptionalist history of the 'West'" coupled with "a declinist narrative of a once triumphant Western civilization."[65] Among these, Pincince discusses two examples: a 2011 study by four scholars—all part of the core leadership of the National Association of Scholars (NAS), all of whom happen to be white[66]—entitled *The Vanishing West: 1964–2010*: *The Disappearance of Western Civilization from the American Undergraduate Curriculum*, and Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (2011).[67] Going directly to the sources themselves, *The Vanishing West* counsels that "to revive the study of Western Civilization" (v) "would require synthesizing new scholarship and taking into account the themes of globalization and the claims of 'world history'" (21), "including knowledge of the West's interactions with other civilizations and cultures" (vi). But those interactions are viewed, much as in J.M. Roberts' historiographical interpretation (see above), as "their civilization's great story, its triumphs, its vicissitudes, and its singular role in transforming the human condition, …a historical overview of the Western ascent toward freedom, scientific and technology mastery, and world power" (v–vi). In a word, to study Western Civilization is to study "the rise of the West" (v). For those who oppose this approach, "[t]he widespread emphasis on 'multiculturalism' is an inadequate answer" (vi). Indeed, advocates of "multiculturalism and diversity" have historically been responsible for the 'demotion' of Western Civilization as a form of oppressive "racism, imperialism, sexism, and colonialism" (14–15). While no explicit approval of a white nationalist or racist agenda is expressed, the subtle, persistent critique of multiculturalism juxtaposed against a vision of Western 'world power' (cf. supremacy), endorsed by an opening citation from Ibn Warraq, a well-known anti-Muslim Christian apologist,[68] all share much with white nationalist and racist attempts to revive Western Civilization narratives in recent decades.

As for Niall Ferguson in *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (2011), he argues that "Western civilization's rise to global dominance is the single most important historical phenomenon of the past five centuries."[69] Ferguson's work was reviewed by Pankaj Mishra in *London Review of Books* (*LRB*).[70] Ferguson himself, in a lengthy retort to Mishra, summarized quite accurately the main point of concern:

> Mishra begins by insinuating a resemblance between me and the American racial theorist Theodore Lothrop Stoddard. Stoddard, the author of *The*

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> *Rising Tide of Color against White World-Supremacy* (1920), was an out-and-out racist, a firm believer in "Aryan" racial superiority, an opponent of unrestricted immigration and a Nazi sympathiser. Mishra describes my book *The Pity of War* as "Stoddardesque". He goes on to say that my 2003 book Empire "belonged recognisably to the tradition of … 'white people's histories'."[71]

Ferguson flatly rejected Mishra's depiction of him as a racist of any sort, demanding an apology in the process. The two went back and forth in several exchanges. Mishra replied: "Hardly anyone is a racist in the Stoddardian sense today, even if they raise the alarm against Muslim 'colonisers' of a 'senescent' Europe, or fret about feckless white Americans being outpaced by hard-working Asian-Americans. Ferguson is no racist, in part because he lacks the steady convictions of racialist ideologues like Stoddard." Indeed, Mishra never explicitly or directly labeled Ferguson a 'racist', he simply said his writings were "Stoddardesque." What he meant by that was made clear in what immediately followed within the review, namely a critique of Ferguson's pro-Western imperialist and supremacist position which, Hegelian style, leaves Asian, African and other non-Western peoples 'historyless':

> This wistful vision of an empire on which the sun need never have set had an immediately obvious defect. It grossly underestimated – in fact, ignored altogether – the growing strength of anti-colonial movements across Asia, which, whatever happened in Europe, would have undermined Britain's dwindling capacity to manage its vast overseas holdings.

In his later reply, Mishra likewise cited Ferguson's comments in the April 2003 edition of the *New York Times Magazine*—"Let me come clean, I am a fully paid-up member of the neoimperialist gang"—which was published "a few weeks after the shock-and-awe campaign began in Iraq." To this Mishra added another comment by Ferguson, appearing in *The Guardian* just before his *LRB* review was published, where Ferguson suggested of Native Americans that, "had they been left to their own devices, I don't think we'd have anything remotely resembling the civilisation we've had in North America." All this, in Mishra's eyes, constituted Ferguson's "views on the innate superiority, indeed indispensability, of Western civilization [which] can be easily ascertained from his published writings and statements." Mishra then added

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for good measure: "It says something about the political culture of our age that Ferguson has got away with this disgraced worldview for as long as he has." Indeed, the question is rightly posed: Do historiographic interpretations of "the innate superiority, indeed indispensability, of Western civilization" not resemble the 'classic' white supremacist claims of days gone by, simply sanitized of the old biological racist views?[72]

All this, combined with post-9/11 Islamophobia, increasing concern over the disproportionate incarceration of Blacks within the U.S. prison system, the spike in white police brutality incidents against Blacks, racist shootings, racist reactions against the Obama presidency, white nationalist and racist support of Donald Trump, white nationalist and racist incidents across Europe and European offshoot nations, and related social tensions, has led universities to hold forums on the issue. For instance, Columbia held an event, "Race, Ethnicity and University Life," in November 2015. The event "was organized by the Office of University Life to address institutionalized racism in light of nationwide protests regarding the experiences of students of color on college campuses." One of the topics addressed there by one of the students was how "'the Core Curriculum,'" which requires six courses on Western and European Civilization, "'further silences students of color by requiring students to read texts that ignore the existence of marginalized people and their histories. …We are looking at history through the lens of these powerful, white men.'"[73] This view was shared by Eric Hirsch, a sociology professor, during a similar forum on racism held at Providence College (PC) in Rhode Island in February 2016. Hirsh

> said he began speaking out at PC about how the Western Civilization curriculum favored "dead white males." He found it racist that "the core of our curriculum" involved the justification of colonialism, slavery and genocide. Hirsch sees the vote that first denied him tenure as an act of repression prompted by his activism.[74]

Anthony Monteiro—a former professor fired from Temple University's African American Studies Department for, he believes, his activism on this and related issues[75]—views matters in much the same way. In a March 2015 essay on his *African American Futures* website entitled "The Racist Foundations of Western Civilization and the White

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Working Class," he argues that "Western civilization is inherently racist. Put another way Western Civilization is white civilization."[76]

Against the backdrop of these (and other) sentiments, students once again voted down, by a margin of 1,992 to 347, a proposed reinstatement of the Western Civilization requirement at Stanford University in May 2016. This was in spite of the attempt by Executive Director of the National Association of Scholars and co-author of *The Vanishing West*, Ashley Thorne, to encourage "[t]he drive to put Western civ back in the college curriculum," which was the title of her Op-Ed piece published in the *New York Times* in March 2016.[77] After the vote failed to pass, *The Stanford Review*, which had advanced both this and the earlier 1980s proposal, issued the following statement maintaining its historic position:

> While the proposed requirement was arguably different from the previous one, these students resisted choosing the West over other civilizations. Their rhetoric was dominated by the left-wing perception that Western Civilization is wholly oppressive. *The Review* answered this objection by pointing out that we can only critique Western culture's legacy when we know it, and that the impetus to end slavery and secure equal rights for women and minorities came from Western values.[78]

Drawing from the 1996 work by Sacks and Thiel, *The Diversity Myth: 'Multiculturalism' and the Politics of Intolerance at Stanford* (see above), Daphne Patai likewise joined in condemning the vote with a September 2016 article entitled "How Diversity Came to Mean 'Downgrade the West'." The article was originally posted on the Minding the Campus: Reforming Our Universities website and then cross-posted on the National Association of Scholars website, the organization which sponsored and published the study on *The Vanishing West* (see above).[79] Others joined "In Defense of Western Civilization" as well, such as Richard Finger in *The Huffington Post*. After dismissing the criticisms expressed in the forums at Columbia, he made clear his own view on the matter:

> For better or worse, Western civilization was built almost solely by white men in Europe; the greatest invention of mankind, condoning freedom of expression and creativity like no others. There I said it. Western civilization is superior. Though this truth can be inconvenient, it makes for no obstacle on any campus of higher learning.[80]

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In general response to these overall historical developments, Kehinde Andrews, associate professor of sociology at Birmingham City University (UK), offered these summary thoughts in a video released on *The Guardian* newspaper website on January 2017:

> The West was built on racism. It's time we faced that. In schools and at universities we are sold a lie. It is the lie that the three great revolutions of science, industry and politics are solely responsible for the advancement of the West. But in truth, none of this so-called "progress" happened without the genocide in the Americas, the barbaric slavery of African people, and the colonization of most of the world by European powers. The dead white men we are trained to revere created the knowledge that justified this conquest and murder. But the narrow, Eurocentric parade of "dead white men" as the center of knowledge is finally being challenged in our institutions. And this is not a battle about "inclusion" or "diversity". It is not a debate that is simply academic. The knowledge that the establishment is so quick to defend produced the racism that has shaped the unjust world that we live in today.[81]

Regardless of what one concludes about this long-standing debate,[82] these developments within the context of the U.S. are a major reason why—as Ama Mazama has highlighted in both the *Journal of Black Studies* and *The Washington Post*—"Racism in schools is pushing more black families to homeschool their children."[83] Meanwhile, in imitation of the anti-immigration (i.e., anti-Syrian refugee) laws in Europe, the new U.S. administration seems bent on returning to the racist-inspired anti-immigration and deportation policies of the 1880–1965 post-Reconstructionist era by issuing a new 'national (and religious) origins' immigration act signed into power by executive order of the newly elected President Donald J. Trump on January 27, 2017. The executive order was titled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States," with its central justification explained as follows:

> The United States cannot, and should not, admit those who do not support the Constitution, or those who would place violent ideologies over American law. In addition, the United States should not admit those who engage in acts of bigotry or hatred (including "honor" killings, other forms of violence against women, or the persecution of those who practice religions different from their own) or those who would oppress Americans of any race, gender, or sexual orientation.[84]

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The Muslim focus of this order is clear from not only the language used, but the specific list of seven countries whose citizens were banned from entry, i.e., all Muslim-majority countries. This is in spite of the fact that there is no factual data to support the idea that immigrants or refugees from these particular nations pose more of a threat to the U.S. than multiple other nations which could have been listed. Regardless, according to this rationale, numerous white nationalists, neo-Nazis and fundamentalist Christians, together with perpetrators of domestic violence against women, should potentially, for the safety and well-being of the United States, have their citizenship revoked and be deported. In suggesting this, it should be noted that the concerns identified by the executive order are more than simply 'terrorism'.[85] They include "acts of bigotry or hatred" and "forms of violence against women," along with persecution or discrimination against others based on religious, racial, or gender identity, or sexual orientation. Indeed, amid national and international pandemonium over this executive order, what escaped the attention of the media and broader public was the fact that two days earlier, Trump had signed another executive order aimed at "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States." Along, therefore, with restricting entry to the U.S. based on national (and religious) origins, the prior order declared that,

> [i]n executing faithfully the immigration laws of the United States, the Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary) shall prioritize for removal those aliens described by the Congress…in [the stated sections of] the INA [Immigration and Nationality Act][86]…as well as removable aliens who…[i]n the judgment of an immigration officer, otherwise pose a risk to public safety or national security.[87]

In both of these executive orders, the right to exercise judgment of both intentions and risk provide for highly arbitrary executive decisions to be made by those entrusted with such power. Some see the latter order as "targeting up to 8 million people for deportation," mostly Hispanics and Muslims.[88] True, a federal judge in New York intervened on behalf of multiple people trapped at airports across the U.S. after Trump's immigration order was met with strong protests around the globe. But he made no ruling on the constitutionality of the order.[89] Washington State then set out to sue Trump for disrupting their economy and society, with the Washington State Attorney General successfully convincing a federal judge in Seattle to place a national stay on Trump's executive order, calling into question its very constitutionality. The appeal of the Justice Department to rescind the

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stay was "denied" by the ninth circuit federal appeals court, who upheld instead the concern for the constitutionality of the order.[90] Along with these legal moves and mass international protests, multiple statements opposing the legislation were issued across the globe. In spite of this, Trump signed a new executive order on Monday, March 6, 2017, which accomplished the same essential aims as the original order, making only minor revisions in an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of the first one.[91]

Whatever the outcome of this debate, one thing is historically clear. It was, no doubt, white nationalism and racism which played a significant role in pushing through the Page Act of 1875, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Asiatic Barred Zone Immigration Act of 1917, and the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, all culminating in the Immigration, National Origins and Asian Exclusion Acts of 1924.[92] In conjunction with these externally-oriented immigration acts, all of which were aimed at keeping "undesirable" aliens from entering the United States, "increasing use of deportation supplemented the quota system in reducing the nation's alien population" in the decades which followed.[93] It is no coincidence that Trump's national (and religious) origins-based immigration and deportation policies, both in their original and revised forms, have paralleled these earlier racist-based policies in close conjunction with a revival of white nationalism and racism across the United States, Canada, Europe and the broader Western world.[94] Trump's executive orders effectively reversed L.B. Johnson's Immigration Act of 1965, which was signed together with Civil Rights legislation in order to intentionally overturn the racist, discriminatory immigration laws of the 1880–1965 era.[95] They are part of the trends identified by Marisa Abrajano and Zoltan L. Hajnal in their book addressing *White Backlash: Immigration, Race, and American Politics*.[96]

In seeming retaliation for their coverage of these and other issues in his campaign and early presidency, Trump blocked some of the most important American- and European-based world news sources from White House briefings. Following on this "[t]he Associated Press and *Time* magazine both boycotted the gathering."[97] Trump's move raised serious questions about the transparency of the Trump administration and its commitment to upholding Western democratic values and ideals.[98]

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Among numerous other issues emerging from the historical overview provided in both chapters of this opening section, eight points can be

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made regarding the lingering problem of the relation between Western Civilization and white civilization:

1. Western Civilization narratives originally took shape within a historic context when white racist thinking was accepted and predominant (late 1800s, early 1900s).
2. Whether 'racist' or not, there has been a long-standing, historic tie between white civilization and Western civilization in original and early Western Civilization and world history narratives (late 1700s to mid-1900s).
3. White racist interpretations of Western Civilization and world history were produced during the heyday of white racist ideology (mid-1800s to mid-1900s).
4. There has been a resurgence of white nationalist and racist promotion of 'Western Civillzation' over the past 2–3 decades as a response to (neo-)liberal pluralist and multiculturalist ideologies and policies, especially in the post-Cold War era as evidenced in the work of American Renaissance, Preserving Western Civilization, Youth for Western Civilization, Students for Western Civilization, *The Occidental Observer*, Ricardo Duchesne and the Council of European Canadians, and others.
5. Academic and political efforts to revive the teaching of Western Civilization in colleges and universities do not explicitly identify nor necessarily even intend their agendas as 'white nationalist' or 'racist', but they nonetheless coincide historically with and have much in common by way of themes and concerns with parallel white nationalist and racist attempts to revive and promote Western Civilization in recent decades.
6. There remains an implicit, even if unintended, connection between white civilization and Western civilization in some (though not all) Western Civilization texts (and presumably courses) over the past several decades, especially those emphasizing internal over external factors of influence and development. These are both perceived by non-white, non-Western peoples as being inherently racist (i.e., histories of 'dead white men') and raise the legitimate question of whether, if not racist, then at least racial connotations, implications, or associations can legitimately be discerned within them, however naïve, innocent, or unintentional such connotations or implications may be.

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7. There is a legitimate research question of what racial relation exists between the authorship and/or promotion of Western Civilization narratives and 'white' peoples. This is not to automatically insinuate white nationalism or racism on the part of all white people who advocate the revival of Western Civilization, but it raises a legitimate historical and sociological inquiry. Though there are certainly non-white advocates to be found (such as Ibn Warraq, Dinesh D'Souza and others), their work raises the historic problem of the 'white Western civilizing mission' which aimed to convert Native Americans and other non-white, non-Western peoples to what continued to be viewed, at its sources and foundations, as white Western civilization.[99] Thus, figures such as the Cherokee advocate of Western Civilization, Elias Boudinot, or the Lakota (Sioux) advocate, Charles Eastman, or the advocate of Russian civilization, Shokan Ualikhanuhli, were all viewed as prized 'converts' and proofs of the superiority of white Western civilization, not as demonstrations of the dissociation between white and Western civilization.[100] While most are eager to deny any and all associations of 'whiteness' in the allegedly 'post-racial' (cf. post-Nazi, post-Civil Rights, post-Apartheid) era, the lingering historical and implicit relationship remains problematic. Genuine transcendence of the problem requires not merely conversion of non-white, non-Western peoples to the alleged superior ways of white Western civilization, but Western Civilization narratives which clearly and authentically showcase and demonstrate non-white, non-Western contributions to, as primary sources of, what is defined as Western Civilization (cf. the UNESCO vision for world history discussed above).
8. In tandem with the 'new world histories', a number of Western Civilization narratives have, in fact, responded to this half-century of debate by adopting a more global, cross-cultural, multicultural, transnational, and/or transregional approach. They place Western Civ within broader world historical context by emphasizing non-white, non-Western contributions. This has been most notably illustrated in the *Columbia Project on Asia in the Core Curriculum: Asia in Western and World History*.[101] In a word, such approaches have moved away from Eurocentric and (white) nationalist or racist interpretations. They recognize that all civilizations contain both positive and negative legacies and features; that the issue

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> is not 'either/or', as if only one civilization must be made to stand superior over all others within the world historical record, that approaches which 'demote the West' from this privileged position should not simplistically, automatically be condemned as promoting an 'anti-Western cultural relativism'. Each civilization can be recognized for both its strengths and weaknesses as well as its contributions to world heritage, including universal human values and ideals.

All of this remains part of an ongoing debate in which various competing religions, cultures, ethnic groups, races, nations, civilizations, genders and others each—as contested constructs—claim to be the fountainhead of beliefs, values and practices foundational and essential to human civilization which all others should then adopt, whether voluntarily or coercively. While the focus here has been on ethno-racial and socio-political forms of the debate, Christianity's perceived role, as an essential source undergirding and inspiring Western Civilization, surfaces along the way. This is in spite of the fact that Christianity was, in fact, originally a Middle Eastern religion, and thus reflects the way that Western Civilization contains significant influence from Middle Eastern (and other non-white, non-Western) sources historically. An entire book could, in fact, be written focusing on the religio-cultural dimensions of this debate. This is reflected, for example, in the post-9/11 resurgence of the debate over Islamic influence on Western Civilization. Thus, Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan has edited a volume titled *The Role of the Arab-Islamic World in the Rise of the West: Implications for Contemporary Trans-Cultural Relations* (2012).[102] The mass of evidence compiled in Al-Rodhan's edited volume challenges works like *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism and Western Success* published in 2005 by professor of historical sociology at Baylor University, Rodney Stark. In response to claims such as those made in Al-Rodhan's volume, Stark followed this work in 2014 with *How the West Won: The Neglected Story of the Triumph of Modernity*.[103] Meanwhile, reviving some of the early 20th-century Catholic interpretations of Christopher Dawson, Thomas E. Woods, Jr. seeks to show *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (2005).[104] And even before 9/11, Abdulaziz Sachedina, a professor at the University of Virginia, was attempting to demonstrate *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (2001).[105] Whatever form they take though, the depiction of these debates as a simplistic dichotomy—i.e., whether there will or will not be a 'clash of civilizations'—is misleading at best. The question is far more

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complex, namely whether all the diverse groups of the world will live in conflict, conversion or co-existence? And even here the range of options should be viewed more as a continuum on a sliding scale, with all three in effect simultaneously around the globe and throughout history in varying balance and degree.

But white nationalists and racists, in tandem with academic and political advocates of traditional Western Civilizational superiority, are not the only ones who voice opposition to the multicultural global connections approach of the new world histories. Such world histories, mostly emanating from the West—particularly one of the world's remaining superpowers, the U.S.—are rejected by subaltern and post-colonialist critics for, rather ironically, their (perceived) Eurocentric and nationalist agendas.[106] From the subaltern and post-colonialist vantage, the attempt to promote multiculturalism and pluralism as ethical norms based in some kind of natural law evidenced through globalization represents a distinctly Euro-American and Euro-Slavic strategy to retain dominance in global affairs in the post-Cold War period. Not only are the imperialist roots of globalization glossed over,[107] but there is lack of appreciation for the multiple angles from which globalization is viewed and thus interpreted, by virtue of its uneven rates and extent of spread across differing regions of the globe.[108] Multiculturalism and pluralism are realities which have been forced upon many of the Western imperial powers by virtue of having subjugated so many non-Western peoples under their colonial rule only to find it necessary to integrate them as full citizens in the aftermath of their crumbled racist empires. That they now expect all peoples and nations across the globe to embrace these same conditions is presumptuous at best, especially given that Western understandings of multiculturalism and pluralism are again conditioned by their own unique historical contexts. This raises important questions of how to translate and appropriate these (and other) concepts across linguistic-cultural boundaries, a feat certainly possible, but by no means simple.[109] We must also ask whether it is simply coincidental that multiculturalist and pluralist rhetoric has, among other purposes, served since the 1960s to undercut the power of anti-colonial movements, most of which have been carried out as 'national(ist)' independence movements? Meanwhile, such rhetoric also provides a means, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to justify ongoing Western penetration (cf. access via multicultural and pluralistic openness) and thus dominance of non-Western peoples and nations—economically, politically, culturally and otherwise.

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Under the influence of Frantz Fanon's ideas regarding 'black consciousness' within decolonization struggles, Malcolm X in the U.S. and Steven Biko in the South African context spoke poignantly to these issues. As Malcolm X saw it:

> The so-called liberal element of the white power structure never wants to see nationalists involved in anything that has to do with civil rights. And I'll tell you why. Any other Black people who get involved are involved within the rules that are laid down by the white liberals. And as long as they are involved within those rules, then that means they're only going to go as far as the liberal element of the power structure will endorse their activity. But when the nationalistic-minded Blacks get involved, then we do what our analysis tells us is necessary to be done, whether the white liberal or anybody else likes it or not. So, they don't want us involved.[110]

Steven Biko made much the same point: "True to their image, the white liberals always knew what was good for the blacks and told them so. … Thus in adopting the line of nonracial approach, the liberals are playing their old game. They are claiming a 'monopoly on intelligence and moral judgment' and setting the pattern and pace for the realisation of the black man's aspirations."[111] In all these references, 'Blacks' can easily be interchanged with 'non-Whites' and 'non-Westerners'. These are unsettling points which many (predominantly white?) Western scholars must come to terms with, particularly those who are hopeful of what new world histories can potentially accomplish along these lines.

A closely related matter which needs greater critical attention in new world histories is the ongoing debate over ethnicity and nationhood, including (ethno)nationalism, and how these concepts relate to ideas of race, culture, religion and civilization as well as economy, gender and the like. As with W.H. McNeill, there appears to be too much uncritical adoption of the Western modernist assertion that ethnicity and nations as well as their corresponding (ethno)nationalisms are European constructs closely tied to modernity (cf. the work of E. Gellner, B. Anderson and E.J. Hobsbawm[112]) and then disseminated across the globe via European imperialism. McNeill, for example, in *Polyethnicity and National Unity in World History* (1985), framed his entire interpretation of world history around his presumption of the Western modernist view, placing "The Triumph of Nationalism, 1750–1920" in the center

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of a three-chapter work which then climaxed, in chapter three, with "Reassertion of the Polyethnic Norm since 1920." He, thus, employs a Western modernist reformulation of a liberal cosmopolitan argument which originally gained momentum in the post-World War I aftermath, appearing for example in H.G. Wells' *Outline of History* (1919).[113] McNeill uses standard Western civilizational comparative dichotomy to persuade readers that "the historical record shows that ethnic homogeneity was a barbarian trait; civilized societies mingled peoples of diverse backgrounds into ethnically plural and hierarchically ordered polities."[114] While such a simplistic interpretation may serve socio-political agendas, it fails to do justice to the complexity of the subject in world history. As Anthony Smith has amply demonstrated, historians and other scholars who are anticipating the eventual demise of ethnic and national identities and their *historically recurring* (ethno)nationalisms are bound to be disappointed,[115] and (world) historical interpretations which construct their narratives around such uncritical hopes are, at best, on shaky ground. Indeed, as Smith points out in his study, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, "[t]hese are the very dimensions of nationalism that even so eminent a world historian as William McNeill overlooks."[116] To the point: "For at least 150 years liberals and socialists confidently expected the demise of ethnic, racial, and national ties and the unification of the world through international trade and mass communication. These expectations have not been realized. Instead, we are witnessing a series of explosive ethnic revivals across the globe."[117] It is unfortunate that, although a chapter by Charles Tilly on "States, State Formation, and War" was included in the *Oxford Handbook of World History*, no chapter was devoted specifically to such a central subject of debate and consequence for world history as ethnicity, nations and nationalism. Much work remains for new world historians in this specific field.

Numerous other issues could of course be raised in treating the historical, social and political challenges and opportunities facing grand narrative and new world histories. They are covered sufficiently, however, in the literature referenced within these opening chapters. Let the above therefore suffice as, not comprehensive, but nonetheless essential historical background for understanding twenty-first-century narratives of world history, including those featured within this volume.

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Notes

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2. Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: W.W. Norton, Inc., 2015), p. 47.
3. Gilbert Allardyce, "Toward World History: American Historians and the Coming of the World History Course," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1990): 28–35.
4. W.H. McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), "*The Rise of the West* after Twenty-five Years," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1990): 1–21, and W.H. McNeill and J.R. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2003).
5. Glenn Ricketts, Peter W. Wood, Stephen H. Balch, and Ashley Thorne, *The Vanishing West: 1964–2010*: *The Disappearance of Western Civilization from the American Undergraduate Curriculum* (Princeton, NJ: National Association of Scholars, 2011).
6. Malcolm X, *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*, ed. Betty Shabazz, 3rd edn (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1990), p. 19.
7. I use both 'white nationalist' and 'racist' in close connection, though not as interchangeable synonyms with one another. This recognizes that 'white nationalists' typically deny that they are 'racist', while many others consider them to be inherently 'racist' in their ideology as well as practice.
8. Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), p. 1, citing Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, tr. Betsy Wing (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 70.
9. Gilbert Allardyce, "The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course," *American Historical Review*, 87/3 (June, 1982): 719.
10. Ibid., p. 717.
11. Malcolm X, *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*, pp. 19, 24.
12. "Text of report from Committee on Reform and Renewal of Liberal Education at Stanford recommending new Western Culture course requirement, Honors in Liberal Studies option," *The Stanford Daily*, Vol. 168, No. 62, 21 January 1976, p. 4. (URL: http://stanforddailyarchive.com/cgi-bin/stanford?a=d&d=stanford19760121-01.2.23&srpos=1&e=--1976---1990--en-50--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22Western+Civilization%22------#); see also Kathy Trafton, "ASSU Senate votes down Western Civ resolution," *The Stanford Daily*,

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Vol. 170, Issue 45, 30 November 1976 (URL: http://stanforddailyarchive.com/cgi-bin/stanford?a=d&d=stanford19761130-01.2.6&srpos=12&e=--1976---1991--en-50--1-byDA-txt-txIN-%22Western+Civilization%22------; both last accessed: Jan 11, 2017).

13. Judith Brown, George Dekker, Bill King, William Chace, Carlos Camargo, J. Martin Evans, Ronald Rebholz, Carl Degler, Barbara Gelpi and Renato Rosaldo, "Statements Delivered to the Meeting of the [Stanford] Faculty Senate on 4 February, 1988," *Minerva*, Vol. 27, No. 2/3 (June 1989): p. 312. Cf. Mary Louise Pratt, "Humanities for the Future: Reflections on the Western Culture Debate at Stanford," in *The Politics of Liberal Education*, ed. Darryl Gless and Barbara Hernnstein Smith (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 13–32.
14. King et al., "Statements Delivered to the Meeting of the [Stanford] Faculty Senate," p. 301.
15. Malcolm X, *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*, p. 30.
16. George Reisman, "Education and the Racist Road to Barbarism" (The Jefferson School of Philosophy, Economics, and Psychology, 1992). URL: http://www.capitalism.net/Education%20and%20Racism.htm; last accessed: Jan 8, 2017.
17. Gelpi et al., "Statements Delivered to the Meeting of the [Stanford] Faculty Senate," p. 314.
18. Herbert Lindenberger, "On the Sacrality of Reading Lists: The Western Culture Debate at Stanford University," in *The History in Literature: On Value, Genre, Institutions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990). (Available at: http://www.pbs.org/shattering/lindenberger.html; last accessed: Dec 28, 2016).
19. See points five and seven of the eight concluding points later in the chapter.
20. William J. Bennett, *To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education* (Washington D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1984), p. 30. See also: Lloyd Kramer, Donald Reid, and William L. Barney, eds., *Learning History in America: Schools, Cultures, and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994). Thanks to Peter Knupfer for the latter reference.
21. Terry Eastland and William J. Bennett, *Counting by Race: Equality from the Founding Fathers to Bakke and Weber* (New York: Basic Books, 1979). Cf. W.A. Alstyne, "Making Sense of Desegration and Affirmative Action," *Texas Law Review*, Vol 57 (1979): 1489–1498, which reviews Eastland and Bennett's book alongside a related volume.
22. "White House Condemns Bennett's Remark," *New York Times*, Oct 1, 2006 (URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/01/politics/white-house-condemns-bennetts-remark.html) and Jim Rutenberg

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23. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1987), p. 94. See also Roger Kimball, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Higher Education* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990).
24. Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 228–229.
25. David Gates and Tony Clifton, "Say Goodnight, Socrates: Stanford University and the Decline of the West," *Newsweek*, U.S. edition, February 1, 1988, p. 46.
26. Bernard Knox, *The Oldest Dead White European Males and Other Reflections on the Classics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1993), p. 12. Thanks to Jared Secord for drawing my attention to this book.
27. David O. Sacks and Peter A. Thiel, *The Diversity Myth: 'Multiculturalism' and Political Intolerance on Campus* (Oakland, CA: Independent Institute, 1998), pp. 1–2. See also idem., *The Diversity Myth: 'Multiculturalism' and the Politics of Intolerance at Stanford* (Oakland, CA: Independent Institute, 1996).
28. Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Crabtree and Ross E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997); ref. to U.S. Senate vote taken from p. x.
29. Victor Davis Hanson and John Heath, *Who Killed Homer? The Demise of Classical Education and the Recovery of Greek Wisdom* (New York: Free Press, 1998), p. xxiii. Another proponent of Western Civ from the same period was Michael F. Doyle, "'Hisperanto': Western Civilization in the Global Curriculum," *Perspectives on History*, May 1998 (URL: https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-1998/hisperanto-western-civilization-in-the-global-curriculum; last accessed: Jan 4, 2017). The article was originally published in late 1997 in a local journal.
30. All quotations from J.M. Roberts, *A History of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 916–919. The same precise phrasing was retained in his 2005 revision which is still available in audio format. Apparently not comfortable with such language, O.A. Westad, who took over revisions of the volume after Roberts' death in 2003, either significantly revised or, in some cases, dropped altogether Robert's racist phrasing, at least in the 2013 edition. Following Roberts however,

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Westad continued to espouse the idea that the world's "master ideas and institutions…always turn out to be derived from the Western European tradition" (J.M. Roberts and O.M. Westad, *The History of the World*, 6th edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 1179).

31. Cf. P. Novick, "The Defense of the West," in *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 281–319, which highlights a similar mid-20th-century reaction to 'cultural relativism'.
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101. Ainslie T. Embree and Carol Gluck, eds., *Columbia Project on Asia in the Core Curriculum: Asia in Western and World History: A Guide for Teaching* (Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1997).
102. Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan, ed., *The Role of the Arab-Islamic World in the Rise of the West: Implications for Contemporary Trans-Cultural Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
103. Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism and Western Success* (New York: Random House, 2005); *How the West Won: The Neglected Story of the Triumph of Modernity* (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2014). J.M. Roberts would, likewise, seem to be among those who associate Christianity in some special way with "the European tradition." Thus he reasons that: "Female liberation, indeed, has taken a long time to come as far as it has

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done in western countries. Christianity had from the start a fundamental (even if at first sight barely visible) bias towards the improvement of the lot of women, because it took for granted that they, like men, had souls of infinite value in the eyes of God. On this was to be built the modern freedom of women in societies in the Christian tradition" (*A History of the World*, p. 918).

104. Thomas E. Woods, Jr., *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (Washington DC: Regnery History, 2005)
105. Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
106. Cf. Arif Dirlik, "Performing the World: Reality and representation in the making of world histor(ies)," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2005): 391–410. Dirlik criticizes "the naive political and ideological hopes invested in world histories, motivated most recently by visions of a global multiculturalism, that perpetuate those presuppositions unreflectively and contribute to the very problems that they wish to overcome" (p. 392).
107. Cf. A.D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (Routledge, 1998), p. 12.
108. See M. Featherstone, ed., *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London: Sage, 1990), p. 11.
109. See esp. J. Kearns, ed., *Translator and Interpreter Training: Issues, Methods and Debates* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008); Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill Academic, 2003); John Biguenet and Rainer Schulte, eds., *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); see also "Part III: Translations of Concepts," in *Global Conceptual History: A Reader*, ed. Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), pp. 149–336.
110. Malcolm X, *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*, p. 60.
111. S. Biko, *I Write what I Like*, ed. A. Stubbs (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) as cited in R.W. Bulliet, P.K. Crossley, D.R. Headrick, S.W. Hirsch, L.L. Johnson and D. Northrup, *The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History*, 6th edn (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2014), pp. 952–953.
112. E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983); B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (New York: Verso, [1983] 2006); and E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

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113. Cf. also e.g., H.J. Cadbury, *National Ideals in the Old Testament* (New York: Scribner's, 1920).
114. W.H. McNeill, *Polyethnicity and National Unity in World History* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. i and back cover.
115. Among his many other works, see esp. A.D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, England and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1989).
116. A.D. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover: University Press of New England, Brandeis University Press and the Historical Society of Israel, 2000), p. 60. Smith goes on to critique McNeill's world historical interpretation in greater detail.
117. J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith, eds., *Ethnicity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. v.

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PART II

21st-Century Narratives of World History

Ah Love, could you and I with Him conspire,
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!
…
The sages who have compassed sea and land,
Their secret to search out, and understand, —
My mind misgives me if they ever solve
The scheme on which this universe is planned.

Omar Khayyam, The Rubaiyat[1] *(12th c.)*

Notes

1. Omar Khayyam, The Rubaiyat, in *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam: Comprising the Metrical Translations* by Edward Fitzgerald & E.H. Whinfield, and the Prose Version of Justin Huntley McCarthy, ed. Jessie B. Rittenhouse (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1900), pp. 44 (Fitzgerald Version) and 172 (Whinfield Version). The poem was originally written in 1120 CE, and first translated into English by Fitzgerald in 1859. In a version designed for reading aloud, "Him" in the first line is translated "Fate" (http://w.okdac.net/docs/PERFORMANCE_SCRIPT.pdf; last accessed: July 28, 2016). I intend no suggestion that world history is necessarily based on 'intelligent design' in quoting this passage, only intimation of its complex and continually contested interpretation.

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CHAPTER 3

Periodization in World History: Challenges and Opportunities

Peter N. Stearns

Introduction: Issues and Criteria

Periodization represents the historian's effort to manage time, to make change and continuity over time both more intelligible and more manageable—as opposed to the incoherence of simply listing one development after another.[1] Recognizing that the choice of a periodization scheme is just that—a scholarly choice, open to debate—there are some common elements in selecting chronological frameworks. To identify the beginning of a period, the historian looks for some significant changes taking shape that introduce several new, basic themes that had not been in operation at this level in the previous era. Sometimes this is conveniently accompanied by striking major events—such as the fall or decline of the great classical empires. Correspondingly, themes that had previously shaped major trends now recede in importance, without necessarily disappearing—that is, without eliminating some continuities. For example, after about 1450 missionary religious expansion becomes less significant on a global basis, though of course it remains vital in certain specific regions; the rise of gunpowder empires in some ways takes its place.

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Identifying and then exploring the new period on the basis of introductory events and a reshuffling of fundamental themes do not preclude further change—change that amplifies the new themes or introduces other developments that do not, however, immediately take center stage. Thus arguably, as we will see below, a Mongol sub-period, though new and significant, does not necessarily require a full periodization adjustment, because basic themes, of missionary religious and transregional trade expansion, persisted. Finally, a period ends when the basic themes play out, to be replaced by a new set—again, sometimes around some particularly sweeping event.

World history periodization, not surprisingly, offers some special challenges, simply because of the dimensions of the subject—though in broad outline it can fit the basic definition of the art of periodization more generally, and is certainly designed to help scholars and their audiences manage change without being overwhelmed by detail. Two common features are particularly messy. At least until one reaches the nineteenth century, world history periods invariably work better for some regions than for others. The Americas, not surprisingly, simply do not fit the major periods that apply to Afro-Eurasia until after 1492 because they were following their own, separate dynamic. Some Chinese historians have worried that the common start date for the early modern period, around 1450, inconveniently ignores the Chinese emphasis on the beginning of dynasties—in this case, the Tang—though their concerns may be misplaced. But the basic point about different regional applicability must be recognized. A second problem, that simply has to be acknowledged, is that the best choices for world history periods do not uniformly fit all the major topical themes. For example, there is no common global political trend in the period that develops after the fall of the classical empires: there are important developments, new, loosely organized states in several regions including feudalism in two cases, the revival of the Chinese imperial system, the rise of the Caliphate—but no common pattern.

Balancing these undeniable complexities is the fact that key world history periods, at least from the early civilization era onward, all feature one common characteristic: they will always be partly defined by new patterns of inter-regional contact, focused particularly though not always exclusively on trade. Most, further, will also see some shifts in

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regional power balances—such as the rise of the Arabs as a key part of the post-classical period. Having two predictable keys—along, however, with other, more varied criteria that apply to individual periods—already helps considerably in clarifying a world history frame. Defining world history periods, despite the regional and topical challenges, is not a random exercise.

Finally, most scholars who deal with world history have been fairly comfortable with a rather small number of key periods, as the following sketch will illustrate. There are some choices and debates, of course, but from the rise of complex societies or civilizations onward—5500 years ago—six periods often do the trick, and some scholars might reduce this to five: (1) the early civilization era itself; (2) classical societies; (3) post-classical developments; (4) the early modern; (5) a long nineteenth century; and then (6) contemporary. This surprising simplicity must be assessed, and perhaps additional research will make the schema more complicated in the future. For the moment, however, world history periodization normally passes the test of manageability.

At the risk of over-simplification, it is even possible to venture something of a checklist to apply to world history's change and continuity over time. The checklist does not make the periodization decisions—this is still up to practicing world historians as well as their audience—but it does offer some convenient guidelines and assessment tools.

Checklist on Periodization:

1. Have the themes of the prior period been noted, and a change in their nature or importance identified? In other words: defining a new period depends on making its contrast with the previous period explicit.
2. (a) Have the themes of the new period been identified? (b) Are shifts in power balances and contact patterns identified? What other new themes must be added to these (from a list that can variously include demography, technology, culture, politics, social structures)?
3. Are there marker events or processes both at beginning and end of the period, and if not, are the signs of change adequate anyway?
4. Is there clear evidence that the new periodization applies to a number of societies and regions, not just one or two?

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Secondary List:

1. Are there important topics to which the definition of a particular period does *not* apply (as in the example of political patterns in the post-classical centuries)?
2. (a) Are there some regions or societies to which the periodization does *not* apply? (b) What are the main comparative differences in regional responses to the new comparative framework?
3. Are there some transitional complexities at the beginning or end of a period, or both?
4. Are there alternative options that might be advanced instead of this periodization?

This secondary list suggests some of the analytical tests that should be applied to any world history periodization scheme.

Developing Critical Thinking Skills Through Debate Over World History Periodization

This essay focuses on world history periodization issues that relate to pedagogy–to chronological divisions within world history texts, classroom syllabi (as with undergraduate surveys, or more specialized graduate courses), or other mechanisms materials which convey a world history framework to particular audiences, including the broader public. The results are often applicable to research as well. Thus many thematic efforts in world history—examining food history or the history of war on a global scale—end up employing a schema similar to the approach needed for coherent teaching—though they will usually highlight particular points of emphasis, making some of the conventional periods more important than others. World history as both a teaching and a research field offers unique opportunities for scholars and other teachers, and a wider reading public as well, to interact around shared issues, and this service certainly continues.

World history authors and teachers do not, of course, pull a periodization scheme out of the blue. They use research findings and scholarly syntheses. Indeed, one of the most exciting aspects of the rise of world history since the 1980s has been the substantial redefinition of key periods (for example, what is commonly called the 'Early Modern,' running from about 1450 to about 1750), which is where world history presentations draw in new analysis to serve and challenge the students or other audiences involved.

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Periodization in world history research and teaching does, however, have a few special general features, that can be noted before laying out a possible framework more directly.

- First, the manageability factor looms large. World history scholars, teachers and users need to make choices that will leave some specialists grumbling a bit, not because they make wrong decisions but because they may need to be particularly selective simply to make sure they and their audience can process all the material successfully. This issue will show particularly in discussions about when to launch the world history story in the first place—and of course the results can always be debated.
- Second, and this follows from manageability: the basic themes of each period need to be made very explicit, so that the intended audience can both follow and assess them. Sometimes historians—in various fields; not just world history—select a chronological framework but leave it in the background in their eagerness to get started on some illustrative data and intriguing stories of the past. This should not happen in world history, lest the audience feel adrift—another reason to keep the checklist in mind. Explicitness also means that some of the problems with the schema chosen—the extent to which it works less well for some regions or topics than others—need to be carefully noted as well.
- Third, the periodization framework selected must not be too complicated. An effort, for example, to pull out every century as a special case—as in modern American history, where indeed every decade may be lovingly detailed—simply will not work on the world history level.

It is, however, the fourth feature of approach to world history periodization that deserves particular attention, because it is harder to pin down and more difficult to resolve.

- Fourth, world history users—from scholars to students to a wider public—ought to gain some level of comfort in raising questions about the periodization scheme they are offered, at least as they begin to get the hang of what periodization is all about. In educational settings, world history authors and teachers in particular solemnly intone that they want their texts and courses to help develop analytical skills, including the capacity to assess change and continuity.

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> This is of course what periodization centers on—decisions about when change overwhelms continuity, without entirely erasing it. But whether in a scholarly synthesis, a text or a class (or video or other form of media presentation), producing a sense of debate about framework while the audience still feels a bit shaky about even the facts they are supposed to know is, frankly, very challenging. With respect to the classroom (whether undergraduate or graduate), students should become proficient enough in debating periodization choices that when they get to the twentieth century—which as we will see raises all sorts of issues—they can apply their analytical skills to an intelligent debate about the best options. This is after all where their history learning will touch base with the kind of skills they ought to be able to apply to the world around them, to help sort out patterns and distinguish between big changes and smaller ones—even after their world history courses are long over. But achieving this balance, between presenting a manageable periodization scheme and opening it to some critical discussion, is really hard, for world historians themselves as well as their audience—which means that the whole approach, in trying to organize change and continuity in world history, needs to be enlivened a bit.

The open-ended approach, the need simultaneously to present a workable framework and to accept challenges, deliberately pokes at established conventions. Both world historians and their audiences, each within their respective cultural contexts (e.g., Western, Chinese, Islamic and so on), have often become so familiar with one defendable periodization scheme that they actually resist alternatives. They find world history challenging enough without going out of their comfort zone. But there are some options at various points that deserve at least some attention, particularly as the field continues to strive for global rather than region-centered coverage.

There is no magic solution to the issues raised in this final category. The risk of disrupting manageability with too much emphasis on debate, analysis, and options needs to be taken seriously. But the challenge should not be ignored. As a result, in the schema that follows, a common periodization framework for world history will be presented, one that has emerged out of a deliberate transition from a Western to a world historical context, but key questions will also be raised—some more familiar than others—which reflect continual striving for a more authentically

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global view. These questions in turn, depending on audience capacity, can be developed into more productive interactions with any periodization approach.

What follows, then, represents something of an effort to have cake and eat it too. We need a clear, usable periodization framework in order to convey world history well, lest the narrative simply become one thing after another with no highlights, no sense of basic change, no themes that unify different regional stories. But we should also encourage the audience to raise questions and debate alternatives—so that, again, when they get to our own era, at the end of any systematic world history exercise and beyond the exercise, they have some experience in assessing the kinds of factors involved in deciding about change on a global scale.

A Periodization Framework

Getting Started

Several essays in this volume will make it clear that world historians differ considerably over when the process of world history effectively begins. 'Big History' advocates want it to start long before the emergence of the human species, so that world history is integrated with the evolution of the earth from the outset. Conventional historians may long for the time when history began with writing—with the ability to keep records—though this preference has faded considerably with the recognition that the old history–prehistory distinctions make little sense.

Any decision must be based in part on practical considerations, especially when periodization is considered from a teaching standpoint. While there are history purists who insist that details about the remote past are vitally important, it arguably remains of particular importance to make sure there is enough time and space within a world history presentation to deal adequately with the more recent slices of the human experience. This may mean cutting back on early coverage and data.

Leaving aside the important challenges raised by Big History, a world history periodization scheme logically begins with some assessment of the many millennia in which people lived in hunting and gathering societies. Coverage might of course include some assessments of human evolution, between African origins, about 2.5 million years ago, and the emergence of *Homo sapiens sapiens* plus some further developments such as the capacity to speak. It could embrace some of the main stages

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in technology development, from the simplest tool use to deliberately fashioning objects during the Mesolithic and Neolithic eras. The early domestication of dogs might be more than an interesting sidelight, while assessment of how early tools diffused—for example, the arrow—involves undeniably important features of the early human experience. Coverage could even embrace some anthropological work on contemporary 'primitive' societies, to help establish a base line against which later forms of human organization could be compared.

Again, there are many options. More knowledge is in principle better than less, but it is also important not to overwhelm the audience at the outset and again, pragmatically, to make sure that enough time is left for the major stages of human activity after the emergence of more complex societies.

At least two foundational elements seem vital, though both can be handled fairly quickly. First, a world history audience needs to know a bit about the dynamics of hunting and gathering societies, including gender roles, population structures, size of groups, maybe even the debate about proclivities for war. This material, interesting in itself, is a vital baseline from which subsequent change can be assessed.

Second, an audience needs to know the patterns of early migration by *Homo sapiens sapiens*—what motivated it and above all where, geographically, it had led well before the advent of agriculture.

No matter how else the long early stages of the story are handled, in other words, periodization in world history demands a sense of basic human features around 10,000 BCE, before agriculture: what the major economic and social systems were, plus the degree of human dispersion and what this suggested about later opportunities for, and barriers to, contact.

Agriculture

Opportunities for periodization obviously improve hugely with the great agricultural or Neolithic revolution, from about 9000 BCE onward. Settled communities began to leave larger amounts of material evidence for later analysis, including more varied works of art but also materials used in production and trade.

Most important, with due respect to the important developments that occurred, however gradually, before the advent of agriculture, the Neolithic revolution introduces one of the great changes in human

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history—a clear periodization marker. Obviously there is complexity. We don't have the records that allow close discussion of the transition to agriculture, including the probable role of women. Causation, that crucial component in the analysis of change, has to be treated a bit warily. More important as a practical matter, agriculture did not conveniently originate only at one particular time and place, and it spread gradually—for reasons that are worth exploring. But integrating an understanding of agriculture's several regional dates of origin (and the staple crops involved) is not too difficult, and need not distract unduly from a basic characterization of change.

The main point, in this first exploration of major change in human history, is to tease out what agriculture generated that differed from the patterns of hunting and gathering peoples—without jumping too quickly into the emergence of more complex societies or civilizations. This requires attention to population structures, residence patterns and gender relations, at the very least, with some consideration as well of potential environmental impact.

Debating the Scope of the Agricultural Age. There is a chance for more as well, because though it is still early in a world history narrative, the audience can be prepared for a certain tension between basic characteristics of agricultural societies and the more familiar periodization that will await them when definable civilizations begin to emerge. As Big History has helped point out, once agriculture originated and began to spread, most people—not all—would be living in a form of agricultural society that would remain into the eighteenth century at the earliest. Realizing that much of the substance of world history occurs during a single Agricultural Age may encourage a more extensive discussion of common characteristics than usually occurs—a first challenge, indeed, to conventional periodization. For all the splendor and differentiation of great civilizations to come—China, India, the Mediterranean, Islam—they would all share fundamental agricultural features.

There is an opportunity, then, to talk about the implications of agriculture for political and cultural structures, jumping the gun a bit on the advent of more complex societies. Did agriculture make some kind of democracy a relatively rare option, and if so why? What kinds of science would agriculture encourage? Did agriculture encourage any particular new religious trends?

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But it is the common social features that draw particular attention, helping along the way to bridge an unfortunately frequent gap between social history and world history in the bargain. Age structures, including childhood, as well as patriarchal gender relationships fall into this category. Social inequality and the standard predominance of a landowning elite are legitimate targets for analysis as well, along with the limits agricultural society would impose on urban opportunities and the interesting tensions that often developed around the role of merchants.

In other words, there is a chance here to go beyond a brief bow to agriculture, to set up some categories that can be revisited, that legitimately embellish some of the standard comparisons among individual agricultural societies. The result, as well, sets up important opportunities, later on, to explore more fully what the advent of industrialization does to the long-established, familiar features of agriculture—an upheaval that still defines much of contemporary world history even today. The transition to agriculture, and then to industry, constitute two of the really big changes in the human experience that sometimes are unduly downplayed in the rush to move on to more familiar material—in this first case, the rise of civilization.

The Early Civilization Period, 3500–600 or so BCE

The emergence of complex societies or civilizations as forms of human organization constitutes the next period of world history—though one with limited geographical applicability. The overall river valley civilization period, from 3500 to about 800 or 600 BCE, can be broken down into much more precise statements about changes and continuities in particular societies such as Mesopotamia and Egypt, where internal periodization schemes are quite elaborate, but at the same time this level of detail may not be necessary.

The main point—following on from the reasons for periodization in the first place—involves discussion of what changes these complex societies introduced, compared to earlier agricultural structures, and what the causes were of the most important innovations. Social structure is still involved (including, now, the importance but also the limitations on literacy), but attention to trade, cities and political patterns, plus related implications of writing, now take center stage. At this point comparison becomes more feasible as well, juxtaposing the common features of agricultural civilizations with the clear emergence of different regional identities based on separate dynamics.

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Constraints remain, however. Far more is known about the Middle East and North Africa than about Harappa or even early China, which hampers larger statements about world history developments in the early civilization period. It is also possible to talk about trade outreach and the resultant first examples of regular contacts, particularly in and around the Middle East but also between Indonesia and Madagascar, in ways that evidence from the other early civilizations does not allow. The timing of other major developments varied considerably still by region. While Shang China fits the river valley civilization model, it emerged quite a bit later than earlier exemplars farther west—just as dates of initial agriculture had varied greatly by region. The question of whether or not, at this point, to encompass the early civilization period in the Americas—chronologically different as well as entirely separate, needs attention as well.

From a periodization standpoint, some debate about when and why this early civilization period ended, in Afro-Eurasia, forms an obvious though difficult challenge. Because of the pronounced separation of most regional developments during these centuries, it is difficult to generalize much about the end of the river valley period. The collapse of Harappan society and then the influx and very gradual adaptation of Indo-European hunter-gatherers contrasts with the smoother transition from the river valley to the early classical period in China, which was different again from the gradual decline of the Egyptian kingdom. Using roughly 600 BCE to mark the transition from river valley to classical is really just applying a date of convenience, not a solid periodization boundary that cuts across regional differences. There is also the need to work several specific developments into the picture in these transitional centuries, such as the emergence of Judaism, even though they did not immediately generate larger patterns of change.

Finally, periodization discussions in the early period, after the advent of agriculture and even civilization, are always complicated by the need to keep in mind the continued viability and importance of alternative systems, particularly the nomadic economies but also agricultural regions in which complex societies and formal states did not emerge. Here, detailed periodization schemes do not work well at all, save when the migrations or invasions of a particular nomadic group, such as the Indo-Europeans or the Huns or still later the Mongols, broke into the historical record of other societies. Yet key nomadic areas not only existed but could generate considerable historical impact. They constitute another sign of the

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human and regional variability that bedevil any periodization statements into fairly recent times.

World History Periodization in the Past Three Millennia

Periodization difficulties hardly crumble away with the development of the great classical societies, but they begin to take on different contours. Evidence improves; regional variety, though still great, diminishes a bit, particularly in key parts of Africa, Asia and Europe; patterns of exchange and balance among major societies begin to provide the markers that permit more coherent analysis, to some extent across regional lines. At the same time, some debates about periodization options emerge more clearly as well, improving the balance between a coherent framework and exploration of options.

The Classical Period

The most important overall pattern, at least by 600 BCE, centers on the development of some new parallelisms among major areas in Asia, southern Europe and North Africa, based on the use of iron tools and weapons and the related opportunities for expanded regional zones of operation. The emergence of more regular and identifiable interregional trading connections, among the same areas, allows much clearer analysis of this aspect of world history periodization. Even as major regions were defining very different sets of characteristics, some larger world history patterns were becoming clearer, which in turn allows for meaningful and extensive use of periodization techniques—including some really clear-cut differentiations from the previous period.

To be sure, the classical period echoes some of the earlier issues. The classical societies hardly embraced the whole world, which limits the geographical application of classical periodization. Large stretches of northern Europe and much of sub-Saharan Africa moved according to different dynamics, where key themes involve the spread of agriculture or new movements of peoples, as in the great Bantu migrations or the arrival of Slavic peoples in new sections of east central Europe. The Americas, also, continued to follow unconnected patterns that again are interesting and important (the Olmec period and then the early Mayans, in the case of Central America) but that do not fit a periodization scheme based on the

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patterns of the classical societies. Without question, the American societies meet the larger criteria for complex agricultural societies. But they did not generate either the technologies or the cultural structures of the classical civilizations in Afro-Eurasia, quite apart from their distinct chronologies.

Though the impact of the Indo-Europeans on India and also the Middle East and southern Europe counts for something, the fact that, even for the major societies, the classical period begins without major transregional events or signals adds more than the usual transitional complexity to this aspect of analysis. We can define the classical period easily enough, but it emerged somewhat differently in each major region. The end of the period is more definable, with the common involvement with new challenges of invasion, societal decline, and disease—but, just to remind us all that world history is hardly conveniently packaged at this point, the developments involved—namely the death throes of the classical period—extend over three or four centuries, with different specific chronologies and significantly different specific outcomes in each region.

The sheer length of the classical period is also a challenge. Separate sub-periods may be identified for each region, depending on the amount of time available for detail. The movement from later Zhou to Han dynasty, and related institutional and cultural change, is hardly a simple progression; Indian history is marked by several separate intervals, including the Mauryan and, later, the Gupta dynasties; the distinctive Persian dynamic has to be noted in the Middle East. In the Mediterranean, the passage from Greece through Hellenism to Rome involves significant shifts in geographical base and focus, as well as important changes in characteristics. In strictly Western history this long period is conventionally broken up into the two or three chunks (Greece, Rome, and sometimes a separate intermediate pause for Hellenism), but most world historians shy away from this level of detailed treatment. Nevertheless, the challenge of internal change during the period is quite real, and not just for the Mediterranean.

The idea of the classical period is so enshrined in our historical assumptions—first from Western and Eastern European civilizations' veneration of Greece and Rome, and now in world history more generally—that raising debate challenges may seem artificial. Indeed, leading issues do not really involve the periodization itself. Tensions between similarities and differences deserve more attention than they sometimes receive. The period readily lends itself to comparison, with just the

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three or four major regional cases. But the legitimate emphasis on separate regional dynamics encourages both scholars and their audiences to (over?)emphasize differences, without remembering that they are also talking about some features shared by agricultural civilizations generally and by the expansion and integration opportunities of the classical period specifically. Continuing the comparisons to the shared factors but also the very different patterns and results in the centuries of classical decline is a logical, and important, extension of this more nuanced effort.

Balance between the opening of more regular channels for transregional trade (both in the Indian Ocean and through Central Asia) and the separate regional dynamics of the major societies is an increasingly common part of the treatment of the classical period, but it deserves a highlight. There is arguably a straight line between trade in this period and the more complex kinds of connections that would emerge later on, and the exploration of separate regional dynamics should not obscure this. We are reasonably well attuned also to the two cases of significant interregional and cross-cultural contact, with Alexander penetrating into Bactria and then the Chinese Buddhist importation—an important but manageable challenge to the larger emphasis on regionalism. Nevertheless, the limitations of contact remain important as well, in a period that revolves above all on the expansion and solidification of crucial regional dynamics.

Post-classical, 600–1450

The most obvious complication in the next world history period is simply the expansion of the geographical range of different civilizations, now embracing more of Africa and northern Eurasia, and the expansion as well in the definable number of separate regional cases. It is still true that key parts of the world are not embraced by the themes of the post-classical era, but the expansion of common civilizational forms in northern Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia and Japan reduces the scope of this problem. A bit of debate attends the date chosen to launch the period. Some world histories start the period in 500, to capture developments in China, Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire, including the expansion of Buddhism and Christianity, while others urge 600 and the rise of Islam, which undeniably becomes a central feature.

The big challenge would seem to be the identification of major themes. Empire formation receded and, while important cases remain,

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this is one of several contrasts with the preceding classical period, though as noted above it is hard to pick out a common political theme of any sort given the regional divisions.

But the themes are there, making the period in fact a vital one in world history as a whole. There is the rise and/or spread of the three major world, or missionary, religions, and the impact they had on politics, art, and philosophy beyond the strictly religious sphere. It was a period of widespread cultural change, with tens of thousands of people in the major regions of Asia, Europe and much of Africa significantly modifying their outlooks and values.

A second key theme emerges clearly as well. This was also a period of rapidly expanding trade, with new trade networks now embracing both East and West Africa, Russia, northwestern Europe and Japan, while accelerating for those other regions that had already been heavily involved, including southeast Asia. Often, of course, trade and missionary activity directly linked, extending the nature and impact of contact. Further, new navigational and shipping technologies both built on trade growth and accelerated it still further. Indeed, one historian, David Northrup, has argued that developments around the year 1000 CE form a watershed point in world history, before which most key developments were regional, or divergent, but after which contact and convergence would steadily gain the upper hand.

Finally, and to an extent in related fashion, this was the period in which great traditions, built in places such as China and the Middle East, began to extend influence into areas that would receive, adapt and sometimes combine them into their own regional identities—a process involving, in different ways, Japan, southeast Asia, parts of sub-Saharan Africa as well as Russia and Western Europe. The process of deliberate imitation, and its limitations, forms a significant theme in its own right, for a growing number of regions.

Opportunities for Debate

Far more than with the classical period, the post-classical centuries provide the chance for at least four important periodization discussions. The first involves the pattern of religious conversions and its impact. How much did these undeniably important cultural developments affect the way people actually lived? What was the impact on social and gender structure—compared, for example, to the earlier advent of agriculture?

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Does religious change make the post-classical era not just a new period, but a major divide from what had preceded, in society and politics as well as religion itself?

The second discussion builds on the idea of a major new pattern of convergence, which arguably would extend—with important subsequent modifications—from this point to the present age of globalization. How does this dividing line compare to the dividing line earlier created by the advent of agriculture? Is this really, as some have argued, a comparably fundamental turning point in the nature of world history?

The third decision set revolves around the question of whether the period itself should be divided, not only to take into account greater convergence around 1000 CE but to accommodate Arab decline, the new roles assumed by China, and the vital Mongol interlude. There is no particular factual quarrel in this potential discussion, though fitting the 'rise of Western Europe' appropriately into the mix can cause some distortions. The question, purely and simply, involves deciding whether common themes from about 600 to 1450 outweigh the undeniably complex specific developments from the rise of the Mongols to the Chinese decision to abandon the great shipping expeditions (late 12th to mid-15th centuries).

Finally, discussion of the post-classical period must include the need to take continuities into account. New periods do not destroy all vestiges of the past, and a debate over what elements inherited from the classical period or before persisted, even in regions like the Mediterranean which were subjected to particularly dizzying change, sets up a standard tension that should be explored in the subsequent periods as well—including the contemporary. The legitimate emphasis on periodization in world history risks overemphasizing change at the expense of persistence from the past, and the post-classical period offers a clear opportunity to begin to address this reality explicitly.

Early Modern, 1450–1750

The greatest conventional challenge of the early modern period is the fact that it corresponds so closely with standard periodization in Western history, capturing the full flowering of the Renaissance and running through the Enlightenment, which deepens the danger of seeing the period excessively in Western terms. The challenge can be met, but it requires deliberate effort. Some world historians have been concerned about the

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convenience of the date 1450 as the period's launch, arguing that the early 1500s would be better in highlighting the facts that the inclusion of the Americas was underway, that the importance of the Ottoman Empire was confirmed and extended by the victory over an Egyptian army (defeat of the Mamluks, 1517), and that the other great Muslim empires were beginning to emerge. As noted earlier, Chinese historians have long pointed out that the 1450 date does not coincide with Chinese periodization, which more commonly would look to the establishment of the new Ming dynasty in the late fourteenth century. But while this kind of messiness can be noted—specific regional dynamics routinely differ from world history periodization choices—it hardly requires a different choice of date. Indeed, the Chinese decision in 1439 to halt its great trading expeditions adds to the importance of the mid-fifteenth century as the beginning of a major new world history transition which would include new Western, Russian, and Ottoman activities as well.

The obvious early modern themes, building on those of the post-classical period but clearly differentiating, involve the inclusion of the Americas in both trade and biological exchange—another illustration of how each major period sees a major redefinition of transregional contacts, supplemented again in this case by new developments in shipping and navigation; the global as well as regional effects of the Columbian exchange, including of course the new Atlantic slave system; and the construction of new, 'gunpowder' empires—both the colonial, overseas variety and the great land-based Muslim and Russian empires in eastern Europe and key parts of Asia. Empires were not, of course, new, though it had clearly been difficult for some regions in the post-classical period to revive or emulate an imperial structure. But they become more significant and widespread than ever before, throughout much of the world, after 1450. New food and disease patterns; the massive expansion of global trade; the formation or revival of empires in key parts of Asia, eastern Europe and the Americas—here is a trio of developments that, in combination, reshaped major societies in various ways.

Recently, a social scientist/historian, Jack Goldstone, has raised an additional possibility for defining the early modern period. He sees these centuries as the beginning of the end for pre-modern, or agricultural patterns. Goldstone even wonders if world history periodization as a whole could be rethought: a new and longer ancient or pre-modern period would capture the heart of the agricultural experience, from the early civilizations in 3500 BCE onward to the end of the post-classical period. Then the next chunk

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of time, from the end of the post-classical all the way to 1900, would be grouped as the 'late pre-modern.' Obviously this alternative is partly a matter of labeling. But it also urges attention to the centuries after 1400, and not only in the West, as the seedbed for tentative innovations that would ultimately overturn the long-established agricultural patterns in politics and culture as well as the economy.

Indeed there is every indication that discussion of the early modern period needs to take greater account of the overall acceleration of commercialization—with the West and its unprecedented trading companies taking a new lead, but with China, India, and separately Japan involved as well. A number of historians have argued that, as a result, the pace of work accelerated in a number of regions. New regional inequalities resulted, particularly between Europe on the one hand, and many parts of the Americas and Africa on the other. Environmental change intensified, with unprecedented species depredation as well as new levels of deforestation. Establishing appropriate comparisons, particularly between China and India, on the one hand, and the West on the other has obviously stimulated great debate and can easily be extended to draw the audience into further analysis. Finally, particularly but not exclusively in the West (some similar claims have been made for Japan), the idea of an 'industrious revolution' beginning to emerge from the new commercial patterns raises interesting possibilities for discussion, and for linkage to the next chronological period when outright industrial revolution begins to take command.

Other Opportunities for Debate

Early modern periodization itself can also feed debate of the sort that increases understanding of the period, and particularly its clear differentiation from the post-classical, but that also allows the audience to consider some key analytical problems, and possibly some alternative schemes as well.

The complexities of the Western role demand some open-ended analysis. The West became more important in many ways, particularly of course in the Americas and on the seas. But its activities did not overwhelm independent dynamics in Asia or even key parts of Africa. In many ways, into the eighteenth century, the West itself was continuing to try to catch up to achievements already established in Asia, in terms of political structures and manufacturing technologies alike.

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Culture is another obvious target. This is not a period in which global cultural patterns can be identified. Increased contact, indeed, may have encouraged societies to double down on their separate identities—a decision clearly made in Japan, and in a different way in the Safavid Empire. But the period also saw a huge cultural change in the West's Scientific Revolution—and exploring how other societies ignored or tentatively began to respond to this development is a challenging comparative exercise in dealing with the final decades of the early modern period. Of course the 'revolution' itself must be compared to earlier periods of scientific creativity elsewhere—in China, in the Islamic 'golden age'—but the scope was arguably rather different, which is why reactions to Western science would prove to be a significant global theme into our own day.

A final analytical challenge for the period—indeed a potential vulnerability for the concept itself that calls attention to the period's brevity and spills over into definitional issues for the next period, the long nineteenth century—is the lack of any clear marker for the period's end. The Seven Years War (1756–1763) rebalanced power relations in Europe, shifted British policies in North America and, above all, cleared the way for growing British control of India. It was a geographically extensive conflict that both revealed and promoted growing European world power. And at some time around 1750 (though the 1770s are probably a better choice), the first clear signs of British industrialization began a vital economic and social transition in Europe and the world. On the other hand, it was not until around 1840 that Europe's economic relationship with China really changed, to Chinese disadvantage. And there is the whole question of how to fit in the French, Haitian and American revolutions, and the Latin American struggles for independence. Where in fact is the key eighteenth century break, on a global scale? Choosing an end to the early modern period and defining when new themes begin to seize center stage—crucial for defining the long nineteenth century—is a work in progress. There is no bitter debate here. Goldstone's interesting proposal deserves attention, but it would be possible to argue for a somewhat different set of periodization choices—a point to which we must return.

The Long Nineteenth Century

To date, however, world historians are in the main fairly attached to defining a separate 'long nineteenth century', even though the period

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is quite short and many of the clearest new themes, including the full global impact of industrialization and the emergence of key characteristics of globalization, did not emerge clearly until the 1850s or so. This is one case, at least, where rooted habits may have inhibited the exploration of alternatives—but before beating this drum, the standard claims themselves must be examined, for they are not without merit.

If major emphasis rests on Europe's growing world role and the related rise of settler societies such as the United States, and the relative or absolute decline of most other areas, the long nineteenth century works well enough as a period, and the fact that it was a brief episode, with its end foreshadowed by the experiences and consequences of World War I, is part of the definition. This is a period shaped by power dynamics above all, and undone as the power dynamics began to change in the early twentieth century.

The dynamic of the long nineteenth century is basically set by Europe's continued economic advance, including its brief but decisive monopoly over the new industrial revolution, and the related extensions of European military supremacy and the final, dramatic explosion of imperialism. Different societies reacted variously—this was an interactive process, not just a Western march—and important comparative opportunities emerge. Continuities from earlier civilizational patterns remain. But the emphasis on the redefinition of regional economic balance, with its further effects on military and political relationships, is the basic organizing principle. The same overall process led to new levels of environmental change, both in industrial centers and in regions now being exploited for natural resources such as rubber or cotton.

A few other global developments, not entirely inconsistent but less fully predictable, must of course be combined with the basic pattern, and raise additional opportunities for debate. The long nineteenth century sees the essential global movement to end formal slavery and many forms of serfdom, and discussing how this combines with the other themes of the period is not an easy exercise. (It requires among other things some explicit attention to global demography and migration patterns, as well as new humanitarian ideals.) This was also the period when nationalism, as a new form of political loyalty, began to spread widely from its initial European base, another process with important implications not only for the period itself, but for the future.

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Some Inescapable Debates

At least three other major issues hover over the long nineteenth century, and two of them may ultimately point to some different periodization decisions.

1. Dealing with the global legacy of the age of Atlantic revolutions and independence movements is not an easy task. The upheavals occurred, and introduced major changes through the Americas and much of Europe. They help explain the beginnings of the spread of nationalism, and indeed the kinds of new ideas that would help attack slavery and serfdom. But they did not, quickly, have huge impact in Africa or Asia otherwise. Two factors inhibited: first, the gap between revolutionary political principles such as liberalism or republicanism and established patterns in other cultures; and second, and probably more important, the massive contradiction between European imperialism and these same principles. There is no easy march from the Atlantic revolutions to global change, and arguably it is only in the early twentieth century—with the upheavals in Mexico, China and Russia, and some additional ideological elements tossed in—that the global history of modern revolution begins to take shape.
2. The Industrial Revolution, which undeniably began during the long nineteenth century, needs to be seen in two ways—and frankly, world historians often drop the ball on this. For the period itself, the power relationships that the Western industrial lead generated are the main, short-term point, including some quick damage to traditional manufacturing in places like Latin America and India. But in the longer run, the wider changes that industrialization required—in technology, the economy, family and population structure, education, the list is huge—really deserve primary attention. And these developments, ultimately, were truly global, despite the fact that Europe and the United States generated the initial examples. The global experience, and the comparison between industrial society and agricultural society, requires serious analysis, and this requires explicit bridging between the nineteenth century and the contemporary era. Treating the process as a mainly Western event, tucked into a few nineteenth-century decades, probably distracts.

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3. And finally there is an increasingly good case to be made for seeing the mid-nineteenth century (not the whole 'long' span) as the beginning point of the process of globalization. Key developments in transportation and communication—the steamship because it finally could cover long distance, transcontinental railways, Suez and later Panama Canals, the telegraph—set the stage. Rising levels of world trade, however inequitable, were matched by new forms of international political agreement and the beginnings of the globalization of sports. Obviously, globalization would develop further later: a claim for origins is an invitation to focused analysis, not docile memorization. But it is really mid-nineteenth century, more than later eighteenth century, that sees a sharp redefinition of patterns of global contact—and this, we have suggested, ought to be the most standard criterion for world history periodization overall.

And these key points, particularly around the Industrial Revolution as a new phase of the human experience and around effective globalization, really do raise a question about whether the division between long nineteenth century and early modern on the one hand, contemporary on the other, is the best way to organize the most recent phases of world history. What might be gained by extending early modern to around 1850, and beginning contemporary at that point? What would be lost (for there would unquestionably be some new problems, particularly in chopping up Western imperialism)? At the least, world history presentations need to raise the issue, so that the familiar long nineteenth century does not become an analytical straitjacket.

The Contemporary Era

The final standard world history period—the contemporary era still unfolding—inescapably involves different analytical issues from those surrounding other major periods because we do not know the end of the story. Definitions of new themes are inherently more tentative, alternative conceptualizations perhaps unusually obvious.

Some world historians, facing the twentieth century and its particular complexities and uncertainties, simply accept a choppy periodization approach, noting the interwar decades as bookended by two major wars and embellished by the Depression, then turning to the Cold War

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and decolonization framework for the four decades after World War II, then talking about recent trends in a more open-ended fashion. Another group of historians, fascinated by the innovative force of globalization (and, obviously, ignoring the mid-nineteenth century alternative), downplay the first half of the twentieth century and see the 1950s as the turning point to the new era with globalization as its organizing principle. There is, in sum, far less agreement about this most recent turn in world history periodization than about the issues involved in the earlier timeframes.

The key point, in this final exercise in world history periodization, is to know what the issues are in various options and, above all, to apply analytical criteria derived from earlier periodization assessments to the contemporary experience. The guidelines are clear: look for a reduction in the force of prior themes—most obviously, the themes of the long nineteenth century—and simultaneously define new themes, including changes in power relationships and interaction patterns.

It is worth noting several themes that do begin to take shape relatively early on and thus cut across what is probably a needlessly distracting division between interwar, Cold War and so on.

The first is the population explosion, and its impacts on urbanization and migration; and the related but larger process of environmental change.

The second is the obvious process of the rebalancing of power, the most discernible difference between the contemporary period and the long nineteenth century. Decolonization, revolution, and ultimately more dynamic regional economic change redrew the world's imperial, military, and economic map, a process that arguably begins with Japanese industrialization and the devastating effects of World War I on the West, but is still continuing. The relative importance of the West, such a crucial theme for the long nineteenth century, now began to recede—though with many ongoing aftereffects.

The third theme is a broad process of change that might be summed up as the 'industrialization of the world'. Traditional political forms, not only empires but also most monarchies, were dismantled, though there has been no global agreement on exactly what should replace them. Aristocracies, still ruling the roost in 1900, have largely ended, in favor of a global upper middle class (including top communist officials in some cases), and of course predominant peasantry has been replaced by majority urbanization. Patriarchal gender relations, another staple of

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the Agricultural Age, have been challenged and at least partially replaced, though here too we do not yet know end results. Childhood has shifted from labor to education.

Fourth—and this one obviously depends heavily on earlier decisions about handling this aspect of the later nineteenth century—globalization either takes hold or is renewed. Several societies pulled back from globalization in the decades after World War I, but a steady stream of innovative technologies in transportation and communication, decisions in international economic policy, and finally changes of heart in key cases such as China and Russia not only resumed the process of global connection in the decades after 1945, but brought it to new levels.

For Debate

This is a manageable periodization package for the past century plus. But of course it should be played against some issues and options. It does not yield a tidy cultural definition. Science, consumerism, and at some points Marxism have gained ground. But they interact diversely with the continued power and adaptive capacity of religion, and with particular popular concerns about the cultural impact of globalization.

The issue of continuity must not be neglected. There is a danger that so much will seem new in the contemporary period, along with so many details to master, that connections with prior developments will be ignored. Virtually every region changed considerably, and no contemporary region should be trapped in some stereotypes of the past. But regional reactions and relationships are not all brand new, and the point deserves some discussion even as one rushes to finish a world history program.

And of course there must be questions about the four criteria suggested above: do they all deserve a place in defining the basic themes of the most recent phase of world history? Should other elements be added? (The list does not directly address war, for example, and it subsumes the leading developments in technology under the heading of globalization; it also does not pick up on further changes in demography as more and more regions underwent the demographic transition in the later twentieth century.)

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The End of the Contemporary Era

There is one final option—and it is an option not a necessity, by definition entirely speculative. If a new period in world history opens in 1850 or around 1900, when and on what basis will it end—and are there any symptoms around us worth discussing?

The conventional periodization of world history obviously suggests that the process of basic change in world history has accelerated: a thousand years for the classical and almost as long for the postclassical, but then 300 for the early, 150 for the long nineteenth century—and now? But of course there is no inherent reason to assume fundamental dynamics will necessarily yield so quickly, which makes a final periodization—when will our own age end?—even more tentative.

But a discussion still might be useful as a final chance to remind ourselves of what kinds of basic features we now look for in deciding on real framework shifts. We normally expect to see a definable change in international contacts—part of the periodization decisions and debates from the early civilization period onward. Are these taking shape around us now (quite possibly yes, even granting the probability that an uncritical audience, including students, will be prone to exaggerate). We often expect a new period to reflect shifts in power balance, and here there are clear opportunities for debate now that the Cold War experiment has yielded to the—possibly brief—role of the United States as the World's Only Superpower. But periods are also, usually, defined by some additional factors, that have the capacity to alter institutions and ideas across regional lines. Options here might be:

- the anticipated impact of environmental change—how much innovation will it require?
- the anticipated global impact of the slowing of population growth and the aging of many key societies—a prospect worth more discussion than it usually receives in world history?
- some larger, yet-to-be-defined religious surge, beyond current, largely regionally-defined patterns?

There are, obviously, no right answers here, and a brief exercise is useful only in reminding ourselves that world history periodization, properly debated, does provide some analytical tools that can be applied to further

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developments and prospects, connecting world history experience to ongoing global analysis.

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World history periodization rests on decisions scholars, students, and the general society or culture make about how best to define time, and change within time. As with any set of decisions, alternatives can and should be discussed. Even if conventional definitions—as set forth, for example, in standard world history texts—seem fully acceptable, they must be examined, and their bases understood. The result will spill over directly into the nurturance of appropriate habits of mind, and it will make the task of assimilating world history data—the factual materials—not only more meaningful but ultimately, by providing key highlights in advance, easier as well. They also contribute to decisions about place and comparison: key world history periods must apply to a number of regions—that's part of the checklist—but the overarching themes will be handled differentially, depending on context and tradition. Good periodization discussions thus lead directly to good comparative discussions, including the ongoing role of continuities from prior developments. The key always is balance: between the clarity and manageability that clear periodization decisions can provide, and the need to subject decisions to critical scrutiny, as part of gaining analytical experience in dealing with the complexities of global change.

Finally, at the end of a world history narrative—whether textual, course-based, or otherwise—whether or not the question of when and why the contemporary period will end is indulged, a periodization review is possible—not as a matter of regurgitating the list, but toward recapturing the sense of debate. How many basic points of change in world history have there been? Just agriculture and then industrialization might be one answer. Or those two plus the slightly less familiar shift from divergence to convergence—a threefold division of the human experience. But then, what to do with the impact of 'great traditions' and the major religions, and the global commercialization associated with the early modern centuries? Good questions, and the ability to come up with defendable answers, will ultimately matter more than any single periodization list.

In order for world history scholars and teachers to fulfill their mandate and equip members of their respective societies with critical thinking

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skills shaped by global awareness and concern, these debates over periodization within frameworks, narratives, courses, and other presentations of world history need to be adequately addressed and engaged by a variety of participants: by research scholars, by authors of various kinds of world history texts (whether surveys or more specialized studies), by undergraduate and graduate students, as well as by the broader public. With respect to students in particular, the debates should of course be tailored to their particular levels of education, moving from introductory discussions in the undergraduate survey domain to more extended, detailed debate among graduate students, with the latter, particularly those within world history programs, achieving measurable degrees of expertise. The world history narratives which follow, especially when read comparatively, provide ample opportunity to move in this direction.

Note

1. For further reading on this topic, see: Craig Benjamin, "Beginnings and Endings," in *World Histories*, ed. Marnie Hughes-Warrington (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 90–111; Luigi Caiani, "Periodization," in *The Oxford Handbook of World History*, ed. Jerry H. Bentley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 54–71; David Christian, "Scales," in *World Histories*, ed. Hughes-Warrington, pp. 64–89; William A. Green, *History, Historians, and the Dynamics of Change* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993) and "Periodizing World History," in *World History: Ideologies, Structures, and Identities*, ed. Philip Pomper, Richard H. Elphick, and Richard T. Vann (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 53–68; Marshall G.S. Hodgson, "On Doing World History," in *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam, and World History*, ed. with an Introduction by Edmund Burke III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 91–94; Patrick Manning, "Scale in History: Time and Space," in *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 265–274; Stephen K. Sanderson, ed., *Civilizations and World Systems: Studying World-Historical Change* (Walnut Creek, CA, London and New Delhi: AltaMira Publications, 1995); Peter Stearns, *World History in Brief: Major Patterns of Change and Continuity, Combined Volume*, 8th edn (Penguin Academics, 2012) and *World History: The Basics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011). Cf. also P. Stearns, *Globalization in World History*, 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

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CHAPTER 4

"Complexity, Energy and Information in Big History and Human History"

David Christian

Introduction

Big History asks what human history looks like when embedded within the larger histories of the Earth and the Universe. So it is not just about humans, but about the history of everything. How does human history fit into this larger story, and what can we learn about human history by viewing it as one chapter of a modern, science-based 'origin story'?

I have already written a brief history of humanity informed by the big history story.[1] This chapter focuses on some large features of human history that stand out when we see human history as one part of a larger historical narrative. It will concentrate on three large concepts that have much to tell us both about big history and about human history. They are: (1) **increasing complexity**, and the flows of (2) **energy** and (3) **information** that allowed complexity to increase, eventually creating the staggeringly complex global society of today.

One main idea distinguishes Big History from other approaches to the past: if it is helpful to study the past, it may also be helpful to study the

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whole of the past. So Big History begins almost 14 billion years ago, and embraces cosmology, geology and biology, as well as human history.

It may seem that these vast scales must belittle human history. From some perspectives our planet and our species do seem insignificant on cosmological scales of time and space. Yet big history can also highlight features of human history that are remarkable even within the vast scales of cosmology. Even on these scales, our species stands out for its extraordinary creativity, and its capacity to generate new types of complexity by managing increasing flows of information and energy that make us, today, the dominant species on this planet. So far, attempts to detect the presence of similar species around nearby star systems have all failed, which suggests that species such as us may be rare on cosmological scales. Whether we focus on our insignificance or on our extraordinary creativity, the big history perspective can help us see human history in new ways.

Though most human societies have taught origin stories that try to embrace the whole of space and time, modern, science-based origin stories are very recent, and the big history story itself has evolved in just a few decades. The science has evolved rapidly, but so, too, has the way we understand the science. The version of big history that I now teach has come into focus over more than 25 years. I first taught Big History in 1989. The project was as naïve as it was ambitious. I wondered if I could map out (and help my students map out) the whole of history, or rather the whole of the past. So the course included lectures on cosmology, geology and biology as well as on human history. It brought together all the historical 'sciences', all the many disciplines that try to reconstruct a vanished past. We crossed our fingers and hoped something coherent would emerge. That turned out to be overoptimistic.

But even our first attempts to teach big history raised wonderful and deep questions, questions that are hard to even ask within the borders of individual disciplines. What makes humans different? Should we count cosmology, geology and biology as historical disciplines? Lurking behind these questions was a deep problem about the unity of knowledge. Could we find links between the two 'cultures', as C.P. Snow called them, of the Humanities and Sciences? Could we glimpse the intellectual unification that E.O. Wilson has described as 'Consilience'? Or is each scholarly discipline a separate island of knowledge, with little connection to other knowledge islands?

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These rich discussions persuaded me of the value of trying to teach big history, but our first attempts lacked coherence. We offered our students a patchwork of stories, stitched together from mutually uncomprehending scholarly cultures. Students heard superb lectures on cosmology or geology or biology, or on the evolution of modern human societies. But it was hard to see the links between these stories. Then, over several years, like watching a photographic film developing in a bath of chemicals, we began to see more and more links between the questions, paradigms and insights of different disciplines. A coherent story began to emerge. Though it ranged over vast scales in time and space, it also offered many new insights into the distinctive nature of human history.

I soon realized that other scholars had already glimpsed some of the story's more interesting plotlines. They included the Austrian-born American astrophysicist, Erich Jantsch, and the American astronomer, Eric Chaisson. A coherent universal story also lies behind the work of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme. And since the 1990s, many other scholars have added elegantly to the big history story, including Fred Spier, who brought to it the insights of a scientist turned anthropologist.

A Big History Storyline: Increasing Complexity and Flows of Free Energy

Big History now comes in several overlapping versions. But the version I teach offers a science-based story line that I find compelling, coherent, and illuminating. Its main plotline is the idea of increasing complexity. To understand the story, you will need to grapple with a few basic scientific concepts, beginning with the idea of complexity.

Complexity, like many scientific concepts, is tricky. Indeed, an entire institute, the Santa Fe Institute, has been dedicated to studying what complexity means. But though we lack a rigorous definition of complexity, it seems impossible to live without the idea. As John Holland writes: "[complexity] like *life* and *consciousness*, does not have a rigorous definition. However, as with life (biology) and consciousness (psychology), this lack does not forestall a rigorous approach to the subject matter."[2]

A simple working definition of complexity will take us a long way. We can define complex systems as *structures with diverse components, arranged in precise ways, so they give rise to new emergent properties that can be used to build even richer forms of complexity*. A water molecule

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provides a simple example. It consists of three atoms of hydrogen and oxygen arranged in a very precise way that gives rises to the quality of 'wateriness', a quality that cannot be found in the individual atoms. Water, in turn, can be used to create other, more complex chemical structures. The big history story describes this increase in complexity, from the emergence of the first stars, to the creation of new forms of matter and new types of planetary bodies, on some of which life appears. The story ends by discussing today's global human societies, which are among the most complex phenomena we know.

But there is a deep puzzle about complex things. The second law of thermodynamics, one of the most fundamental laws of physics, tells us that the Universe tends to distribute matter and energy in random and disordered configurations, as if it were shuffling a vast pack of cards. That is why physicists say that 'entropy', or random disorder, tends to increase. But if this is true, how did more complex things appear in our Universe, from stars to scorpions to smartphones?

Complexity, Free Energy and Entropy

We know some reasons why order can sometimes increase.

First, basic principles of order were built into the Universe in the first second after the Big Bang, as distinct forms of energy and matter emerged with specific operating rules. For example, gravity always pulls things together, with a precisely defined strength; protons have c. 1836.15267245 the mass of electrons, and so on. These are the rules of physics—the operating system for our Universe—and their existence guaranteed a minimum of order and structure. Our Universe was never destined to be pure mush. Given these basic rules, even random fluctuations in the distribution of energy and matter were bound to generate the occasional interesting, non-random arrangement of matter and energy. Like whirlpools in a stream that twist *against* the current, these patterns appear despite entropy.

Second, complex systems depend on flows of what physicists describe as 'free energy'. Free energy is energy that can change things or do 'work', like the steam that drives a steam engine. Here, too, we need a working definition for an important technical term. Not all energy can do work because energy, like matter, is normally distributed randomly. In a hot gas, atoms jiggle around aimlessly, pushing in all possible directions at once, so that nothing particular happens. This is heat energy.

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But sometimes local structures, like the pistons of a steam engine, arrange energy in more orderly patterns, so that more energy pushes one way than another. This is organized energy, and this (confusingly) is what physicists mean by 'free energy'. *Free energy, unlike heat energy, is arranged and channelled non-randomly, so it can do work, it can re-arrange matter and energy in non-random patterns.* Because it can do work, it seems to push against entropy and create more complex things.

So, whenever we see increasing complexity we know that work is being done, and that means there must be flows of free energy in the background. Indeed, Eric Chaisson has argued that, as a general rule, you need *denser* flows of free energy (more energy per gram per second) to build and sustain more complex things, just as a jumbo jet needs more powerful engines than an Ultra-Light. Chaisson estimates that the energy flows through simple animals may be a thousand to a hundred thousand times as dense as those in stars such as our sun; while the energy flows through modern human societies may be more than one million times as dense. So it looks as if more complex things depend on more concentrated flows of free energy, and modern human society depends on exceptionally concentrated flows of free energy.

Building Complex Physical Systems

Now I want to briefly tell the story of increasing complexity. It begins as awkwardly as any traditional origin story, because no one really understands how a Universe can come from nothing. The modern origin story begins with the Big Bang, a starting point we still don't fully understand. As Terry Pratchett puts it: "The current state of knowledge can be summarized thus: In the beginning, there was nothing, which exploded."[3]

In the first second after the big bang, the main components of our Universe separated out from the primeval fireball. As the Universe expanded and cooled, these components, with their own built-in operating rules, would be arranged to form everything we see around us, both the rare interesting structures and the cold, empty space deserts that fill most of the Universe today. Big History tells the story of how, in a few privileged environments, matter and energy were arranged in increasingly interesting and complex patterns.

The infant Universe was simple. Time-traveling to half a million years after the Big Bang, you would have found a pale mist of hydrogen and helium atoms, embedded in 'dark matter' (which we don't

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yet understand, but it doesn't seem to do much), and all at the same pressure and temperature. Study of the cosmic microwave background radiation, energy released c. 380,000 years after the big bang, shows temperature variations of no more than 1/100,000 of a degree Celsius.

How did more complex things arise from such a simple universe? As we have seen, the crucial drivers of increasing complexity were the basic operating rules of the Universe and flows of free energy. At first, gravity, the weakest of all the fundamental forces, provided the necessary free energy. Though weak at atomic scales, at large scales gravity is powerful because, unlike electromagnetism, it always acts in the same way, pulling together anything with mass. So, like a piston, it could organize energy and matter. Newton showed that gravity is more powerful where there is more stuff, so gravity tends to clump things together. Gravity split the primordial clouds of hydrogen and helium atoms into billions of separate cloudlets and compressed them into smaller and smaller spaces. As they got denser, each cloudlet heated up until its core was so hot that protons (hydrogen nuclei) fused to form helium nuclei, just as in an H-bomb. Fusion released huge flows of heat and light that prevented each cloud from collapsing further. And that is how the first stars emerged, within a billion years after the Big Bang.

A universe with stars was already more complex, and displayed new 'emergent' properties. Stars have structure; they gather in galaxies, which also have structure; and they generate new gradients of density, heat and gravity, down which flow vast rivers of free energy. Today, we humans feed off that energy, as do all other organisms on planet Earth.

Eventually, dying stars increased the chemical complexity of the Universe by forging entirely new elements. Once stars had used up their supplies of unfused protons, fusion shut down, and they could no longer hold out against gravity. If they were large enough, gravity now smashed them together so violently that temperatures rose high enough to fuse helium nuclei into new elements, from carbon to oxygen and iron. In their death throes, the largest stars exploded in supernovae, creating even higher temperatures so that in minutes they created all the elements of the periodic table and scattered them into the space between stars. Here, electric charges locked some of them into chemical molecules, forming new types of matter, from snowflakes to dust motes to the raw materials for life itself. Rearranged by the gravitational energy around young stars, and the chemical bonds between different atoms, these new forms of matter would eventually form new types of astronomical bodies:

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asteroids, comets and planets. A more chemically complex universe could create entirely new types of objects, such as our solar system, which appeared about 4.567 billion years ago around our local star, the Sun.

Stars, planets and new forms of matter represent new forms of complexity, with new ‘emergent’ properties. But they are relatively simple forms of complexity. In the jargon of complexity theorists, these are all ‘complex physical systems’: systems made from components such as protons and neutrons that have predictable qualities, because their behavior is determined by the basic laws of physics. That is why such structures emerged throughout the Universe. We find stars everywhere, and it now seems that planetary systems can appear wherever there are stars.

Life and Information

Now we meet a very different type of complexity, known to complexity theorists as ‘complex adaptive systems’. Complex adaptive systems include living cells, human societies, and even modern financial markets. They differ from complex physical systems because they and their individual components react much less predictably. The basic laws of physics are no longer quite enough to explain their behavior. Indeed, their behavior is often so quirky that they seem to be acting with purpose. So this is the point at which purpose, agency, and even ‘meaning’ seem to gate-crash the big history story.

Information: Universal and Local

To understand complex adaptive systems, we need to introduce another fundamental idea: that of information. There is no universally accepted definition of information, so here, too, we will need a working definition tailored to the big history story. While matter provides the raw material for big history, and free energy drives change, information consists of the rules that arrange matter and energy in particular ways.

It helps to distinguish two different types of information, which I will call ‘universal’ and ‘local’ information. Universal information is everywhere, and it counts as information whether or not it is detected or read. It consists of the fundamental operating rules that appeared in the first second after the big bang. So we can say that: *universal information consists of the basic structures and rules that determine what is possible, what can happen, and what sorts of complexity can emerge in our Universe*. You

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do not have to *read* universal information because it is present in everything. Indeed, so pervasive is universal information that the concept of information overlaps with the idea of physical laws and even with the idea of causation. An electron does not 'read' its environment; it reacts mechanically, according to the universal operating manual built into its structure. Universal information is both necessary and sufficient to explain the emergence of the complex physical systems we have discussed so far, from stars to planetary bodies to quite complex molecules.

More commonly, though, we humans think of information as structures or rules that have been detected or read or used by some entity, whether it is an amoeba looking for the light, or a student reading a textbook. Information needs to be read and stored only if it is *not* embedded in everything. So the distinguishing feature of this second kind of information is that it exists only in particular environments, such as the surface of a rocky planet like ours, or in particular sub-environments such as the "warm little pond with all sorts of ammonia & phosphoric salts,—light, heat, electricity &c present", in which Darwin speculated that life might have appeared.[4] This is *local* information. We can say that: *local information consists of the specific structures and rules that determine what is possible, what can happen, and what kinds of complexity can emerge in a particular local environment.*

The idea of local information can help us explain many aspects of complex adaptive systems, from amoebae to human societies. Living things appear only in very specific environments, and they will survive only if they can 'read' the local information. So, in order to manage the local flows of energy they need to support themselves (to get food, for example), living creatures need special mechanisms for reading their environment, from heat sensors to eyes to brains. These special mechanisms for reading, storing and responding to local information add the new levels of complexity and unpredictability present in complex adaptive systems.

The distinction between universal and local information will help us understand the new threshold of complexity that we call life. Living organisms are complex adaptive systems that exist on our earth (and perhaps elsewhere) because they have the machinery needed to read and store local information, and use it to manage the local energy flows they need to survive. As Richard Dawkins writes: "What lies at the heart of every living thing is not a fire, not warm breath, not a 'spark of life'. It is information, words, instructions…If you want to understand life, don't

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think about vibrant, throbbing gels and oozes, think about information technology."[5]

Local Information and the Evolution of Life

How did life acquire the machinery needed to detect, store and use local information in order to manage local flows of energy and build the complex biological structures we see today?

At present, we only know of life on this planet, though life may well exist on millions of other planets in our galaxy. If life-like systems have emerged elsewhere they will surely be very different in their details, because they will have emerged in different local environments, and we know, even from our own solar system, that planetary environments vary greatly. Nevertheless, we can be confident that wherever life-like systems evolve, they will have evolved in 'Goldilocks' environments with distinctive local rules that allowed atoms and molecules to combine in exceptionally complex ways.

Our solar system formed 4.56 billion years ago. Its inner rocky planets may all have provided Goldilocks conditions for the exuberant chemical experimentation that generated life on earth. The inner planets were chemically rich, because bursts of energy from the young sun had driven away from the inner solar system most of the hydrogen and helium that make up about 98% of all atomic matter, leaving behind environments of exceptional chemical diversity. Because they were at the right distance from the sun, Venus, Earth and Mars may all have had liquid water on their surfaces, providing an ideal medium for exotic chemical reactions. And they all bathed in gentle flows of free energy from the sun and their own interiors, which powered chemical experimentation. Life may have evolved on all three planets, but at present we can only be sure that it evolved on Earth; on Venus and Mars conditions soon became hostile to life.

We do not yet understand all the stages by which life emerged on earth. But we understand some of them. Somehow or other, large and relatively stable complexes of interacting molecules evolved. Some were protected within membranes that allowed the entry of energy-carrying molecules and the removal of harmful molecules. Some of these complex chemical packages could surely detect and react to simple local information by only allowing useful molecules to cross their membranes, or perhaps, even, by moving away from uncomfortable environments.

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Many such reactions would have been the results of simple chemistry, such as the hostility of some molecules to water. But *storing* information about their local environments was a more complex task. Even before the discovery of how DNA works, the physicist, Erwin Schrodinger, theorized that long-term information storage had to involve solids, because solids, unlike liquids and gases, can preserve a particular structure for long periods. And it had to involve solids that could take many slightly different forms: 'aperiodic crystals' he called them.[6] We do not know exactly how such molecules evolved, but we know that molecules of RNA (DNA's close chemical relative) evolved early in the history of life on earth, and minute changes in their structure allowed them to encode local information.

Much of the local information these molecules stored consisted of recipes for manufacturing other useful molecules. Even today, within the protected environment of each cell of our bodies, RNA continues to encode and translate local information into the proteins and other catalysts needed for cells to function. But RNA molecules did not just store and use information; they could also duplicate and disseminate that information, like Xerox machines, by making copies of themselves and all the information they contained. Biologists call this 'reproduction'. Eventually, DNA would take over the task of reproduction because it handled it with more precision than RNA.

One final twist completed this evolving machinery for storing, using, and disseminating local information: the copying was not always perfect, so slight variants emerged, creating slightly different biological packages that could experiment with slightly different ways of surviving in particular environments. When these variants worked, the effect was to create new species of cells, allowing life as a whole to diversify and flourish in an increasing number of local environments. With this addition, we have the entire machinery of natural selection, which allowed living organisms to encode and store local information, to use that information for their own maintenance and survival, and to multiply and diversify so they could exploit the resource and energy flows of many different local environments. Each organism contained in its genes the information needed to survive and manage the energy flows it needed in a particular locality, because its body was built according to the well-tested local rules stored in its DNA.

The elegant machinery of natural selection allowed species to change over time so they could track environmental changes as the biosphere

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itself evolved. The same evolutionary machinery also allowed a gradual refinement in the methods of short-term information detection, as sense organs such as eyes or feelers evolved, along with new and more complex contraptions for reacting to information, such as nervous systems and brains. In this way, over 4 billion years, individual organisms got better at reading, storing and using information about their local environments, and more information gave them more control over the resources and energy flowing around them. As organisms got larger and more complex, they devoted more of their energy to the task of acquiring information. The much studied bacterium, *E. Coli*, devotes only about 5% of its molecular resources to movement and perception, while in humans, most of our body weight consists of organs for perception or motion, from brains to eyes to muscles.[7] At the level of the biosphere as a whole, the increase in information storage is reflected in the increasing size and diversity of DNA molecules and in the evolution of billions of different species.

However, there were always limits to information storage, because acquiring and storing information takes up energy and other resources. Human brains account for about 2% of human body weight, but suck up about 20% of the energy needed to maintain our bodies. The costs of information storage explain why, for every species or lineage, there are limits to information storage. That is why particular species flourish only in specific local niches, those for which they have the necessary information and the necessary biological equipment. Koala, for example, can digest eucalyptus leaves, which are poisonous to most other species, and they learn where to find them. This means that once a new species emerges, its numbers will multiply until its populations are tapping most of the flows of energy and resources available to them. Then the growth of the species will stall, and its populations will fluctuate, wobbling randomly or in response to environmental changes. Eventually, thousands or sometimes millions of years after it evolved, a species will find it can no longer manage the necessary energy flows, perhaps because its environment changes, or because other species cut in on its niche. Then it will go extinct or maybe evolve into a new species.

This discussion of the relationship between increasing complexity, energy and information, can help us understand what makes our species so unique. We humans seem to have broken through the limits on information accumulation and storage that set limits to the power of all other species. As a result, we have gained increasing control over our

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environments until, today, we have become the first species in the history of our planet to dominate the biosphere. This is a remarkable change. It is significant on planetary scales and it laid the foundations for human history. How did humans become so powerful?

Human History: Information Unleashed

Homo sapiens evolved between 250,000 and 70,000 years ago. To an alien visitor 100,000 years ago, our earliest ancestors would have seemed just one of several species of large African primates. By 10,000 years ago, things already looked different. Now humans could be found on every continent except Antarctica, and in some regions they were transforming their surroundings by clearing forests, diverting streams and rivers for irrigation, and altering species such as wheat or cattle by domestication. And today, while our relatives, the chimps and gorillas, number in the thousands, there are 7.3 billion humans on earth, organized into social, political and technological networks of staggering complexity that depend on world-wide flows of energy and information.

Evidence of our power is everywhere. If we were foolish enough, we could degrade the biosphere in just a few hours with nuclear weapons. We now use energy, resources, land and water on such a scale that we are driving other species to extinction at rates not seen since the extinction of the dinosaurs after an asteroid impact 65 million years ago. We are transforming the oceans and the atmosphere by pumping carbon dioxide into them, and fertilizer production and use is destabilizing the global nitrogen cycle. We are introducing thousands of new materials into the biosphere, including plastics, and a new type of rock that we call concrete; today, there are already three tons of concrete for every square meter of land on Earth.[8] Never before, in 4 billion years, has a single species so dominated change within the biosphere.

In the poetic metaphor of Didier Sornette, humans are dragon kings—familiar things that behave in unfamiliar ways. Dragon kings are off the charts. The dragon kings of Chinese mythology left their natural habitat in the oceans and took to the skies; we humans have soared above the ecological limitations of all other earthly species. And, on paleontological time scales, the transformation is lightning fast. That is the justification for arguing that human history marks a new threshold in the big history story of increasing complexity. And note that it is hard to

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even *see* this aspect of human history unless you embed human history within the larger narrative of big history.

Collective Learning: New Ways of accumulating and storing information:

> "Man the food-gatherer reappears incongruously as information-gatherer" [Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965, p. 302, cited from James Gleick, *The Information: A History, A Theory, A Flood,* Pantheon books, 2011, Kindle edn, p. 7.]

What makes us so different? The answer takes us back to the core ideas of complexity, energy and information: access to increasing flows of local information gave us increasing control over local flows of energy and resources, and those flows enabled us to build societies of unprecedented complexity.

How did we gain such control over information? All living organisms acquire information in two ways. First, as we have seen, their genes equip them with ways of reading local information. Second, most species can also acquire new information by learning during their lifetimes. An adult lion has more cunning than a cub, and an adult mouse will know better than its pups the meaning of an eagle's shadow. However, both the genetic and neurological information storage mechanisms have limits. Our species has stumbled on a third, and even more powerful information storage mechanism: "collective learning".

Here's how collective learning works. Many brainy species have limited forms of language that allow them to share some of the information they have acquired through learning. But in animal communities, the flow of information is limited and intermittent, so shared information leaks away as fast as it accumulates, and the total amount of information available to a species does not increase across generations. The species remains, with minor changes, within its original niche. We can be confident this is true because if it were not we would surely see archaeological evidence of other species that could generate new technologies and eventually transform environments across the world. In fact, we would see what we see in the human archaeological record. As Richerson and Boyd write, "only humans show much evidence of *cumulative* cultural evolution."[9]

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Humans can accumulate information across generations because human language is more precise and has greater 'bandwidth' than all other animal languages. As a result, humans can exchange information so efficiently that information accumulates in the collective memory faster than it leaks away. Just as RNA preserved genetic information by copying it, so human language stores cultural information by copying it to many different brains. What one individual learnt—say about the healing powers of a plant or how to collect honey or how to greet strangers or perform a ritual dance—could now be locked within the collective memory of entire communities. It could be passed on and added to, generation by generation. Fontenelle understood the power of such processes as early as the eighteenth century. He wrote: "An educated mind is, as it were, composed of all the minds of preceding ages."[10] As a result of collective learning, each human today has access to information accumulated by millions of other humans over thousands of years. Merlin Donald writes: "The key to understanding the human intellect is not so much the design of the individual brain as the synergy of many brains."[11]

Collective learning is the ability to accumulate information by sharing it within human cultures. It is the source of our sustained cultural and technological creativity and, as the great world historian, W.H. McNeill, has argued, the sharing of ideas is a fundamental driver of change in human history. Brian Arthur describes beautifully how new ideas accumulated and synergized each other, to give humans increasing control over the energy and the possibilities of their environments:

> In the beginning, the first phenomena to be harnessed were available directly in nature. Certain materials flake when chipped: whence bladed tools from flint or obsidian. Heavy objects crush materials when pounded against hard surfaces: whence the grinding of herbs and seeds. Flexible materials when bent store energy: whence bows from deer's antler or saplings. These phenomena, lying on the floor of nature as it were, made possible primitive tools and techniques. These in turn made possible yet others. Fire made possible cooking, the hollowing out of logs for primitive canoes, the firing of pottery. And it opened up other phenomena – that certain ores yield formable metals under high heat: whence weapons, chisels, hoes, and nails. Combinations of elements began to occur: thongs or cords of braided fibers were used to haft metal to wood for axes. Clusters of technology and crafts of practice – dyeing, potting, weaving, mining, metal smithing, boat-building – began to emerge. Wind and water energy were harnessed for power. Combinations of levers, pulleys, cranks, ropes,

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> and toothed gears appeared – early machines – and were used for milling grains, irrigation, construction, and timekeeping. Crafts of practice grew around these technologies; some benefited from experimentation and yielded crude understandings of phenomena and their uses.[12]

Collective Learning in the Paleolithic Era

At present, we do not know exactly how humans crossed the threshold to collective learning. There have been many attempts by linguists, psychologists and archaeologists to explain the evolution of human language, but none are fully persuasive. Like changes in all complex systems, this one probably involved a breakthrough change (probably in the wiring of the human brain), that transformed the significance of many other changes that had accumulated over many millions of years. This is an example of what complexity theorists call the 'butterfly effect'.

We cannot even be sure *when* our ancestors crossed the threshold to collective learning. There are hints of an acceleration in technological creativity as early as 250,000 years ago. But small networks of information exchange, and local disasters meant that in the early history of our species, technological gains were uncertain and easily lost. Early human populations surely fluctuated like those of all other animal species, so the longer trend of population increase and technological innovations would have been hard to see. Indeed, genetic evidence suggests that just 70,000 years ago human numbers fell to a few thousand individuals, perhaps as a result of the massive eruptions of Mount Toba in Indonesia, which created dust clouds that blocked photosynthesis for several years, threatening the survival of many large species, including our ancestors.

But from 70,000 years ago, there is growing evidence for collective learning. New technologies appear, and humans enter tougher environments such as ice-age Siberia, using accumulated information about how to survive colder conditions, how to hunt mammoth or woolly rhinoceros, how to tailor their skins to make warm clothing, and how to build and heat dwellings during the cold northern winters. As technologies accumulated, the geographical range of human beings expanded until, by 10,000 years ago, they could be found in every continent except Antarctica. These global migrations are evidence of innovation because different local environments required different tool kits, different biological and botanical expertise, and different techniques for hunting and gathering, for making clothes and building shelters. They

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are also evidence for increasing human power over the environment. In Australia, thousands of years of 'fire-stick farming', or systematic burning of the land, created new, human-created landscapes dominated by fire-adapted species such as eucalypts. The first human migrants to Australia, Siberia and the Americas may also have transformed the mix of species, as they hunted to extinction many large mammals, from giant wombats and kangaroos, to mammoth, to giant sloths and saber-toothed tigers. Paleolithic migrations indicate significant increases in our species' control of energy and resource flows through the biosphere.

Most of these increasing flows of energy and resources supported population growth rather than raising living standards, so increasing control of energy was manifested in migrations, as gentle population pressure drove communities to enter new regions. While the human range expanded, individual communities remained small, and while technological and cultural traditions diversified, social complexity was limited. Innovation took the form of *extensification*—exploiting more territory—rather than exploiting the same territory more *intensively* so it could support larger populations. So we should imagine a Paleolithic world of small, family-sized communities, linked into local networks by marriage, language and traditions, and linked more tenuously into larger networks of several hundred individuals, held together by occasional exchanges of information, people and gifts.

The small scale of Paleolithic communities helps explain why information accumulated slowly by later human standards, even if it accumulated quickly by the standards of other species. In small communities, there were fewer individuals to dream up and share new ideas, and small communities could vanish suddenly, as a result of local disasters or conflicts, taking their cultural heritage with them. So, though in retrospect we can track growth at large scales, for contemporaries change was hard to see, and most people surely believed they lived in a world of permanence. They probably lacked our modern sense of long-term change, or what we call 'history'.

At the coldest period of the last ice age, around 22,000 years ago, communities retreated from the harshest environments. Then, as climates warmed again from about 18,000 years ago, they returned to former frontier regions. These migrations into tough environments suggest that, by the end of the last ice age, the world was overpopulated given Paleolithic technologies. With no new continents to exploit, humans seemed to have reached the limits of their control over biospheric flows

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of energy. But just when most species would have stopped growing, humans began using accumulated stores of knowledge to tap new flows of energy and resources, and populations began to grow faster than ever before.

Agrarian Societies of the Holocene Epoch

From about 11,500 years ago, communities in several parts of the world began to farm. Farming gave humans control over more of the energy flowing through the biosphere, and with increased energy, human history took new directions and generated new types of complexity. We will track some of the most important of these trends using the rough estimates in Table 4.1.

Agriculture, Complexity and New Emergent Properties

Instead of increasing available resources by *extensification*, farmers did so by *intensification*, by extracting more resources from a limited territory. Using information accumulated over many generations, they began to extract more energy and resources by manipulating their surroundings so as to increase the production of species they could use, such as wheat or cattle, and reduce the production of species they could *not* use, species that we humans describe as pests or weeds. Farming probably did not increase the general productivity of the land; indeed, the figures in our table suggest that practices such as deforestation may have reduced the total mass of plant life in the biosphere, certainly in recent centuries [see Table 4.1, column G]. However, farming did increase the resources available to humans [see Table 4.1, column D]. It was, in other words, an energy grab by a single species: our own. Vaclav Smil estimates that even shifting or 'swidden' cultivation—a relatively simple form of farming in which communities cleared land, farmed it for a few years and then moved on—could support c. 20–30 people/km^2, or something like 100 times the population densities typical of foragers in similar environments.[13]

The appearance of permanent villages with hundreds or thousands of people transformed human communities and generated new types of social complexity. Larger, settled communities needed new notions of kinship, new rituals, new ways of allocating resources, and new ways of resolving conflicts. Where villages grew into towns and eventually into

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Table 4.1 Statistics on human history in the Holocene. B-G from [based on Smil, *Harvesting the Biosphere*, kindle, loc. 4528, H based on Morris, *Why the West RuIes—for Now*, p. 148–9 + 10,000 BP data interpolated

Era	*A: Year (BP)*	*B: POP (Mill.)*	*C: Per cap energy use GJ/cap/Yr (1st 3 = max. est.)*	*D: Total energy use M.GJ/Yr (=B*C)*	*E: Economic product (2005$/cap)*	*F: Life expectancy (years) E 1st 3 = max.est.*	*G: Global phytomass stock (Gt. Carbon equivalent) 1st 3 = max est.*	*H: Largest settlement pop. (1000s) 1st = max. est.*
Holocene	10,000	5	3	15		20		1
Agrarian era	8000							3
	6000							5
	5000	20	3	60	100	20	1000	45
	2000	200	5	1000	500	25	1000	1000
	1000	300	10	3000	500	30	900	1000
	200	900	23	20,700	600	35	750	1100
	100	1600	27	43,200	1200	40	660	1750
	0	6100	75	457,500	6500	67	600	27,000
	2010 CE	6900	75	517,500	7500	69	600	

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cities, new layers of complexity were added through links of migration, trade, information and power between millions of people. New types of work appeared, and specialized forms of knowledge, as increased resources began to support small groups of non-farmers: potters and tailors, priests, soldiers, scribes and politicians. Cities, which depended for many of their supplies on control of farming communities both within and beyond their borders, represented a peak of social complexity in the Agrarian Era. These are some of the new emergent properties we associate with the complex human communities traditionally known as 'civilizations'.

Civilizations had many components, which channelled new flows of free energy by managing the labor and resources of millions of individuals. Some of their methods were coercive, such as armies and prisons, which controlled people's labor by force. Some, like legal systems, combined exhortation and threat. Some, such as state religions, managed people's behavior more through persuasion, while some, such as state granaries, depended on the mutual interests of rulers and ruled in maintaining stability. There emerged new hierarchies and ranks, differences in power and privilege, and these pervaded all levels of society, transforming gender relations, relations between ethnic groups and between different castes and occupational groups. Hierarchy was an inescapable property of these new and more complex human societies.

There is no simple way of measuring increasing social complexity. But Ian Morris has suggested that a good rough index is the size of the largest cities, because supporting and maintaining cities is an organizational feat of great complexity[14] [see Table 4.1, column H]. On this measure, social complexity increased slowly for several millennia after the appearance of farming, then rose more sharply from about 6000 years ago, when Uruk, the largest settlement we know of at that date, had a population of about 5000 people. A thousand years later, its population had increased suddenly to 50,000 people. This was probably the largest community of humans that had ever existed. Three thousand years later, Imperial Rome was twenty times as large, with a population of a million people.

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Agriculture and New Flows of Energy

We can roughly measure the increase in flows of free energy managed by agrarian societies. The figures in Table 4.1 (column D, based on estimates of population growth and per-capita energy consumption) imply that total human energy consumption rose by almost 70 times in 8000 years.

How were these increasing flows of energy and resources used? As in the Paleolithic Era, much of the increase in human control of energy and resources supported population growth [see Table 4.1, column B]. The figures in our table suggest that populations increased by about 40 times between 10,000 and 2000 years ago. But total energy consumption rose even faster, by almost 70 times, so it seems that more than half of the increase in available energy was used to feed, clothe and house growing populations. And the rest? Most was used to pay for two expensive changes: the growing infrastructure of complex societies, and the wealth of elite groups.

We have seen that increasing complexity depends on increased flows of free energy. This is as true of human societies as it was of stars or the first living organisms. Complex societies needed pyramids, temples and palaces to appease their gods and impress their subjects and rivals; they had to hire soldiers, scribes and merchants, and direct the labor of slaves and peasants; and they had to manage waterways, markets and mines. They also had to build and maintain the tax systems that drove the energy and resource flows on which governments and elites depended. Civilizations had to exact tributes and taxes, to manage slaves or corvée laborers, to regulate trade, and maintain the respect and obedience of their populations. All of this cost energy and resources.

The priests, rulers, merchants, and estate overseers who managed these mechanisms also took a cut from the resource flows they managed. In this way, increasing energy flows began to pay for affluent elite lifestyles. Within complex societies there emerged a new level of resource extraction, what ecologists might call a new 'trophic level', a new link in the 'food chain'. While most humans continued to mobilize energy and resources from the land, rivers and woodlands around them, elite groups began to extract energy and resources from other humans through tributes, taxation and trade. In the human world as in the biosphere, energy was lost at each step in the food chain, so higher trophic levels supported smaller populations than lower levels. Just as carnivore populations are

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generally an order of magnitude smaller than herbivore populations, in most agrarian societies, it normally took 8 or 9 farmers to support 1 non-farmer. This is why elites normally accounted for 10% and rarely for more than 20% of the populations of agrarian civilizations.

After deducting for (1) population growth, (2) the infrastructure of civilization, and (3) elite affluence, little was left from the increasing energy and resource flows generated by agriculture to support improved living standards for the mass of the population. That explains a paradox of agrarian societies: huge increases in available resources did not translate into higher living standards for most of the population, who continued to live as peasants, close to subsistence. Estimates of average life expectancies support these conclusions. At about 25 years, life expectancies in the Roman Empire were only slightly higher than those likely during much of the Paleolithic Era [Table 4.1, column F]. Many lines of evidence show that the health and nutritional standards of early farmers were usually poorer than those of neighboring foragers, that stress levels rose in denser communities dependent on the vagaries of the annual harvest, and that large sedentary communities encouraged the spread of new diseases.

This suggests that the first farmers probably took to farming not to improve their living standards, but because they were forced to as a result of growing population pressure in a Paleolithic world with no more empty regions into which to migrate. Paleolithic foragers already knew a lot about plants and animals, so they had much of the knowledge needed to farm. Population pressure provided the incentive to use that knowledge. This is suggested by the nearly simultaneous appearance of farming in different parts of the world, and by modern studies of foraging communities. By the end of the last ice age, Marc Cohen argues, populations were so evenly distributed that "groups throughout the world would be forced to adopt agriculture within a few thousand years of one another."[15] A second, crucial factor, though, was the warmer post-ice-age climate, which made farming more viable than in the past. As Richerson, Boyd and Bettinger have argued, the cold and unstable climates of the ice ages made farming virtually impossible, while the warmer, wetter and more stable climates of the Holocene Era made farming possible, perhaps for the first time in human history.

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Agriculture, Complex Societies and New Information Flows

What was the role of information in agrarian civilizations? Increasing flows of information lay behind the new technologies of agriculture. But as agrarian societies multiplied and populations grew, the power of collective learning itself increased as more people exchanged more ideas in more powerful ways.

To understand how this powerful synergy worked we need to look more closely at *how* information flows through human societies. Here, historians have much to learn from network theory, a field of study pioneered within mathematics. Network theory has been applied to the internet, to financial markets, and to many other systems, so it can teach us a lot about how ideas are exchanged in networks of collective learning. In particular, it can help explain why collective learning seems to have worked more and more powerfully in the course of human history.

A network consists of nodes (people or communities if we are thinking of human history) and links between them (conversations, writing, trade, kinship). A basic principle of network theory is that the number of links or possible exchanges increases much faster than the number of nodes. So, while there are 780 possible links between 40 people; there are almost 20,000 possible links between 200 people. The possibilities for exchanging information multiply quickly as communities grow, so small increases in the size of communities can have a huge impact on the synergy of collective learning. No wonder the pace of innovation seems to have increased rapidly as populations took off from the end of the last ice age.

A second principle of network theory is that, as networks grow in size, the average distance (or degrees of separation) between nodes increases more slowly. This is the 'small-world' property of networks, the idea that even in very large communities the number of 'degrees of separation' between individuals may be surprisingly small. This suggests that ideas can move fast even through very large networks. In effect, large networks move information more efficiently than small networks. The reason is that occasional long-distance links between local networks can dramatically reduce the average distance between any two nodes.[16] If I talk to my neighbor and my neighbor then travels to China, my ideas may cross the globe surprisingly fast. For the historian, this idea highlights the crucial role of long-distance connectors—pedlars,

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traders, colonists, migratory workers—in spreading innovations. In the Paleolithic world, there were few such mediators; in the agrarian world, their number and impact grew fast. The 'small-world' principle also suggests the vital importance of new technologies, such as sailing ships or horse-drawn carts, that created links between previously isolated communities, and gave them access to information banked in other parts of the network.

A third principle of network theory is that variety matters. *New* information has more of an impact than *old* information. As they grew and diversified, agrarian societies brought an increasing diversity of communities and individuals into contact with each other, multiplying the chances of generating new ideas, as potters taught metal-workers how to improve furnaces, or fishermen from different regions exchanged their expertise.

As populations increased, as new links were forged between remote communities, and as information diversified, the total amount of information increased so fast that no individual could possibly manage it all. Now different forms of information had to be banked in different parts of each network. Potters and priests and government spies knew different things. This made *access* to information increasingly important. In network theory, nodes that are better connected than others are known as 'hubs'. Hubs have privileged access to vast hoards of information. But network theory has shown that hubs themselves are often distributed very unevenly, so that the largest hubs are *much* better connected and *much* more information-rich than the smallest hubs. In human societies, governments, businesses, local power-brokers and commercial cities provided the most important information hubs. As earlier parts of this chapter have already suggested, information is power because it gives access to local information and to flows of energy and resources. So it is no surprise that information accumulated in hubs dominated by the wealthy and the powerful. After all, only the very powerful could afford to organize imperial censuses or pay police spies, or maintain post-horse systems that could carry information hundreds of miles, like those of the Mongol Empire. Villages were not information hubs, nor were they centers of power and wealth. Palaces and cities were both. In agrarian civilizations, flows of information were as critical as flows of energy, wealth and power. So, in studying powerful states, it is always worth looking for the ways in which they managed flows of information as well as flows of energy and wealth.

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In all these ways, collective learning began to operate more powerfully in the large, diverse and complex societies of the Agrarian Era, and that is why rates of innovation increased. Pottery and metallurgy took off; new forms of transportation appeared with the domestication of horses and camels, and the introduction of wheeled transport; writing provided new and more stable ways of storing information; and new political technologies emerged with the appearance of state bureaucracies, systems of law, and organized warfare. Particularly important were technologies such as writing or road-building that speeded up the movement of information, people and goods, because these accelerated collective learning in a powerful feedback cycle.

And entropy? When studying human civilizations, we must not forget that complex structures are fragile because they require constant maintenance of carefully managed flows of energy. The importance of these mechanisms is easiest to see when entire civilizations collapse or fall into decline as they fail to manage the flows of labor, energy and resources on which they depend. Though 'the emergence and entropic decay of the Roman Empire' lacks the zing of Gibbon's title (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*), it captures the general idea. Civilizations represent an extremely high level of complexity, and they can break down quickly if starved of the managerial skills or the flows of energy and information needed to sustain them.

An Energy Ceiling to Agrarian Societies?

As complex societies spread around the world, they began to approach new energy limits. Agrarian societies used energy from plants, animals, and other humans (hence the importance of slavery), and smaller flows of energy from the wind (for sailboats or windmills) and from river currents (for watermills). But most of the energy that sustained agrarian civilizations, including most of the wood used for heating and construction, and the food that nourished humans and draft animals, came from photosynthesis, in other words from energy captured by plants from sunlight within recent decades. In practice, that meant that energy flows were limited by the size of the annual harvest.

Because they understood this, classical economists such as Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus argued that eventually even the most efficient economies would hit a limit, at which point energy and resource flows would start declining, wages would fall, and societies would face

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the sort of demographic crisis that all other organisms face when they have filled their niche. "In a country fully peopled," wrote Adam Smith, "in proportion to either what its territory could maintain or its stock employ, the competition for employment would necessarily be so great as to reduce the wages of labour to what was barely sufficient to keep up the number of labourers, and, the country already being fully peopled, the number could never be augmented."[17] By Adam Smith's time, as A.W. Crosby puts it: "Humanity had hit a ceiling in its utilization of sun energy."[18]

The Anthropocene Epoch

In the last two hundred years, as at the end of the Paleolithic Era, our unique capacity for acquiring new information through collective learning gave us access to entirely new energy flows, allowing a new phase of growth, and increasing social, technological and cultural complexity once more. Humans learned to tap stores of energy accumulated over several hundred million years of photosynthesis before being buried and fossilized as 'fossil fuels'. Using the statistics in Table 4.1, the final section of this essay will offer a brief sketch of the Anthropocene Epoch, the first epoch in the history of planet Earth, in which a single species dominated change.

From the sixteenth century, human information networks spanned the entire globe for the first time. This increased their scale, diversity and power. The first global exchange networks linked technological, ecological and cultural information from thousands of local cultures within exchange networks that carried huge amounts of information as they linked most of the 500 million or so humans alive at the time. Within these networks new global information hubs appeared. Most were based in European cities, because it was the ships of European governments and merchants that controlled the first global information networks. Modern science was born within these European hub regions, as older knowledge traditions were shaken to their core by a tsunami of new information from around the world—new information about stars, peoples, continents, plants, animals and religions never mentioned in traditional texts such as the Bible. Francis Bacon understood the transformative power of these new information flows. Early in the seventeenth century, he wrote: "by the distant voyages and travels which have

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become frequent in our times many things in nature have been laid open and discovered which may let in new light upon philosophy."[19]

Global political and commercial competition intensified the search for innovations. States had always sought new weaponry, larger populations and better information and communications in order to compete with their rivals. Merchants had always sought new and better methods of production, transportation and marketing in order to outcompete their rivals on competitive markets. But with the appearance of vast potential profits in global markets, political and commercial competition intensified. States sought new territories, improved and more powerful ships, and increased revenues; while merchants competed for the huge arbitrage profits available in global markets from sales of South American silver or Arctic furs or new products such as sugar or cotton. John Richards has described how population growth and political and military competition led states and entrepreneurs to exploit more and more of the earth's farmable lands, forests, fisheries and woodlands.

The information and wealth accumulating within these dynamic global networks would provide the ideas and funding for the Industrial Revolution. E.A. Wrigley has shown how a combination of resource limits, new flows of information, new flows of wealth, and relatively easy access to coal, pushed British society into the era of fossil fuels. Most agrarian societies had preferred wood to coal as a source of energy. Though it contains 50% more energy than wood, coal is dirty when burnt, it has to be dug from mines that easily flood, and it is heavy and expensive to transport by land. In England, though, there were limited amounts of wood, and large amounts of relatively accessible coal that could be carried by sea to the huge market of London. From as early as the sixteenth century, increasing demand for energy encouraged entrepreneurs to invest in innovations that would make it cheaper and easier to mine, transport and use coal. The crucial breakthrough was the creation, in the 1770s, of steam engines efficient enough to be commercially viable, even well away from sources of coal.

By the time the first modern steam engines appeared, European societies had already accumulated sufficient stores of information and finance to find many new ways of exploiting the cheap energy bonanza yielded by fossil fuels. Early in the nineteenth century, steam engines on wheels and in ships revolutionized transportation, while cheap energy from coal lowered costs of production and transportation in many different industries from cotton spinning to iron- and steel-making to brewing and

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brick-making. At the end of the nineteenth century, internal combustion engines allowed the exploitation of a second fossil fuel, oil, which was cheaper and easier to transport, while yielding twice as much energy by weight as coal. Electric grids made it possible to transport these new energy flows cheaply into millions of businesses and homes.

Like agriculture, the fossil fuels revolution spread around the world, but it spread much faster, circling the earth in just two centuries. The figures in Table 4.1 provide some crude measures of the changes associated with the fossil fuels revolution.

On these figures, total human energy use rose by over 20 times in just two centuries; John McNeill estimates that it may have risen much faster, by 90–100 times, between 1750 and 2015.[20] Both estimates are spectacular, and, whichever is correct, they show that here, too, as throughout the big history story, increasing complexity was driven by new flows of free energy. The size of the largest cities provides a rough measure of the increase in social complexity. In 1800, the largest cities were not much larger than Rome at its height, with populations of about 1 million; today, just 200 years later, the largest cities have populations close to 30 million. In the same two hundred years, global populations multiplied by more than 6 times, from c. 900 million to more than 7.3 billion in 2015. So great was the increase in energy and resource flows that it not only funded population increases, new levels of complexity, and new levels of elite affluence; eventually it even began to raise living standards for humans in general. This was the first time in human history that increasing flows of energy generated improved living standards for the bulk of the population. The two relevant indices from Table 4.1 are per-capita energy consumption, which increased by three times, from 23 GJ/cap/annum in 1800, to 75 GJ/cap/annum in 2000 CE; and life expectancy, which rose from 35 years, 200 years ago, to 67 in the year 2000 CE.

The huge flows of energy and resources that drove these changes were made possible by new flows of information. The political and commercial drivers of collective learning are now operating more powerfully than ever before, through commercial and government-run research institutes and think-tanks, universities, and the constant trickle of innovations produced by enterprises, small and large, in a capitalist world. But the information networks themselves are also working much more efficiently. Modern communications technologies link several billion people into networks that work faster and more efficiently, and generate more powerful intellectual synergies than ever before. The 'small world'

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of information theory has got even smaller as human populations have increased. Until the mid-19th century, courier-pigeons or post-horses provided the fastest ways of moving information (with the local exception of drumming). The telegraph provided the first technology that could link humans at close to the speed of light, and today, phones and the internet allow people to communicate around the globe as if chatting with their neighbors. Colossal amounts of information are banked and exchanged within these networks so that collective learning now works more powerfully than ever before. A modern mobile phone gives nearly instantaneous access to stores of information far greater than those in the world's libraries.

These flows of information provide the know-how that allows us to control energy and resource flows so vast that they now match those of natural processes such as the global climate system. It is the scale of these changes that justifies describing the most recent era of human history as the 'Anthropocene Epoch', the geological epoch dominated by a single species, our own. We humans now have such power that our actions will determine the fate of the biosphere for centuries and even millennia. Yet it is not at all clear that we are really in control of the power we yield, or have the political technologies needed to take coordinated and coherent decisions about how to use that power for the benefit of future generations. Understanding the large trajectories of human history will be essential, as we try to make sure that these huge flows of energy do not damage the biosphere and ruin the lives of future generations.

And Back to Big History

The ecological power of our species is remarkable on scales of many billions of years. Our planet has seen nothing like the global world system of modern humans. Equally remarkable is another feature of today's world. I have argued that there is a fundamental difference between universal and local information. And it was control of local information that allowed the emergence of complex adaptive systems, including life, and the diversification of life on earth. Our own species has harvested local information with such virtuosity that we have now begun to understand the universal information that lies behind local information, and is embedded in every atom of our bodies. Universal information is hard to see precisely because it is everywhere. Yet today, on an obscure planet in an obscure galaxy, we humans have begun to understand the universal

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rules that govern the behavior of atoms and galaxies, and that determine how our Universe works. That is the great achievement of modern science. And that, of course, brings us full circle back to the science that underpins the big history story and the story of increasing complexity, in which we humans play such a remarkable role.

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CHAPTER 5

History Beyond Humanity: Between 'Big' and 'Deep' History

Felipe Fernández-Armesto

Introduction

> This hypothetical creature can traverse all worlds at once with infinite velocity, so that he is able to behold all human history at a glance. From Alpha Centauri he can see the Earth as it was four years ago; from the Milky Way he can see it as it was 4000 years ago; and he can also choose a point in space where he can witness the ice-age and the present day simultaneously!
>
> –"S.S. Van Dine" [Willard H. Wright], *The Bishop Murder Case* (1929)

When painting a still life, Cézanne used to switch between vantage points, seeking momentary sensations, fleeting perceptions to combine in a single composition. The curves of the rim of his bowl of apples look as if they can never meet. He painted strangely distended melons, because he wanted to capture the way the fruit seems to change shape from different angles. In his assemblages of odds and ends each object assumes its own perspective. He painted the same subjects over and over

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again, because with every fresh look you see something new, and every retrospect leaves you dissatisfied with the obvious imperfections of partial vision.

The past is like a painting by Cézanne—or like a sculpture in the round, the reality of which no single viewpoint can disclose. I do not say so to occlude reality or subvert truth. On the contrary, I think objective reality (by which I mean, at least, what looks the same to all honest observers) lies, somewhere out there, remote and hard of access—at the summation, perhaps of all possible subjective perspectives. When we shift, we get a new glimpse, and try to fit it in when we return to our canvas. Clio is a muse we spy bathing between leaves. Each time we dodge and slip in and out of different points of view, a little more is revealed.

We have to incorporate perspectives of protagonists and victims to reconstruct a crime. We need testimony from lots of witnesses to reproduce the flicker and glimmer of events. To understand societies, we need to know what it feels like to live in them at every level of power and wealth. To understand cultures, we need to set them in context and know what neighbors thought of them.

Similarly, to understand humankind—I want to suggest—we have to broaden our vision to comprehend other species. To grasp a core we peel away at outer layers. But the past is ungraspable: we see it best when we add context, just as the bull's eye makes a clearer target when the outer rings define it and draw in the eye.

The most spectacular and objective point of view I can imagine is that of the creature I call 'the galactic observer,' looking down on our history across an immense distance of time and space, seeing the planet whole and taking an overall view of its past. The question for a global historian—for me, that is, as I want to inquire, not instruct—is, "What would history look like from the cosmic crow's nest?"

I suspect the galactic observer might need prompting even to mention such a puny and, so far, short-lived species as humankind. Grasses, or foxes, or protozoa, or viruses might seem more interesting: they all have, from a biological point of view, features at least as conspicuous—vast environmental reach, stunning adaptability, remarkable duration. But we are intriguing because we differ from other species in our hectic, kaleidoscopic experience of culture: the fact that we have more of it, of more various kinds, than any other creature.

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You can only discern that fact by studying human history in the context of the histories of other cultural organisms—which is my métier. By 'culture' I mean behavior—including mental behavior, such as thoughts and attitudes—acquired by learners, transmitted by teachers or exemplars, and adopted widely. People use the word loosely to mean a lot: civilization; 'high' culture; elaborate social organization; the peculiar features of a particular society; the commonalities that make individuals identify with a group; and hundreds of variants, with many nuances, on all these definitions. Underlying every usage, however, and uniting them all, is the bedrock of the word: differentiation from 'nature.'

Culture is part of nature, in an unchallengeable sense: it happens inside nature and cannot happen without it. That is why culture and environment have to be studied together. But in equally obvious ways it is useful to distinguish the cultural part of nature from what is merely natural. Some of what we do comes to us without any conscious input of our own. We share it with other creatures in the same measure as we share their ancestry or their physical environment: that is mere nature. Other behavior can vary from group to group; we learn it from other members of our own group—our parents, for instance, or our professors and peers: that is culture.

Communities in all cultural species become differentiated, as they change in contrasting and inconsistent ways, but humans are different: the processes involved happen incalculably more often, with a perplexingly greater range of variation than among any other animals. Human cultures register the constant series of changes that we call 'history.' They vary, radically and rapidly, from time to time and place to place.

Some people think the big narrative, which encompasses the whole of history, is of progress or providence or increasing complexity, or cyclical change or dialectical conflict, or evolution, or thermodynamics, or some other irreversible trend. The galactic observer, however, would surely notice a subtler but more compelling tale: how the limited, stable culture of *Homo sapiens*, at our species' first appearance in the archaeological record, scattered and multiplied to cover the tremendous range of divergent ways of life with which we now surprise each other and infest every inhabitable environment on the planet.

So I think the galactic observer would summarize our story in a single word: divergence. Spells or episodes of convergence—in which cultures retrieve or establish mutual contact and exchange influence—punctuate it. We are experiencing such a convergent time, which we sometimes call

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'globalization' today. But, as I hope to suggest in my contribution to the present book, divergence continues and can even accelerate during such periods. Call it a master-narrative if you like. It is the story I have to tell.

History Beyond Humanity: Between 'Big' and 'Deep' History

We live on a weird planet.

As far as we know, all the others are pretty much inert. Gases and dust swirl. Occasional cosmic events—experienced on Earth, too, such as a blip in an orbit, the tilt of an axis, an errant meteor—may alter the environment. But most changes on most planets happen predictably, within a narrow compass, or are measurable on a slow scale of millions of years.

Earth is not like that. Sci-fi writers who strain to imagine strange worlds might as well look inward, at the oddness of our own.

Earth is, to us, the most interesting large lump in the cosmos, not just because we live on it and it matters most to us, but also because—objectively speaking—a lot happens on it. For two reasons, Earth is the scene of vast, rapid changes, unreplicated anywhere else that we know of: first, because our planet has life, and organic systems are more dynamic than inorganic ones; second, because Earth has us—cultural animals. And culture is even more volatile than biota.

Cultural divergence, which is an index of the scale and rate of cultural change, is always very small in non-human species, compared with the immense diversity of human cultures. It is remarkable that there are any cultural differences at all among particular species of apes and monkeys, but they oscillate within a narrow band.

We do know, however, of some instances of cultural change in primate societies—of non-human societies with 'histories' of change. If we want to understand human history, we must begin with the disclosure of the only comparable data we have: non-human histories.

Imo's tribe cleaned sweet potatoes by scraping the dirt off with their hands. But Imo discovered how to wash them and passed the knowledge on, first to her mother and then, gradually, to other relatives who in turn taught others, until most of the tribe had mastered the idea. Imo later found a new way to separate wheat grains from the sand that clung to them: she dropped them in water. The sand was heavier than the cereal, so that it sank while Imo scooped up the wheat. Again, she taught the practice to the tribe.

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The most surprising thing about Imo's achievement, when scientists in Japan observed it in 1953, was that she was a macaque. She excited the scientific world because she helped to prove that humans are not the only species with culture—that is, with behaviors not just sprung from instinct or responsive to environmental change, but transmitted by learning, which become routines or rites, practiced not necessarily because they are useful but because they are traditional or conventional. To this day, the monkeys of Imo's tribe wash their sweet potatoes before eating them and teach their youngsters to do the same, even if you give them ready-washed food from a supermarket shelf.

The revelation that culture is not uniquely human expands the scope of history. Take politics, for example. Human societies have a dazzling range of political forms. To cite only the ways in which we choose our topmost elites, we sometimes share the method that is almost universal among other primates: we submit to the rule of the boss, the toughest strong-arm, assisted by the cronies he selects to share his power. Among early *Homo sapiens* and our hominid predecessors, all our ancestors' communities were ruled in this way. Gradually, however, human political cultures have multiplied. We sometimes choose our leaders by heredity, privileging a particular dynasty, and in some cases we refine our choice of ruler by defining the heir to power more strictly, perhaps as the first-born son of the incumbent. Sometimes we opt for charismatic leadership, favoring the shaman or prophet or magus or priest. Sometimes we invest individuals with the right to nominate their successor, or we shift the prerogative to a third party; sometimes we erect intermediary elites to choose the ruler. Sometimes we have monarchs, sometimes dictators, sometimes assemblies, sometimes matriarchies, sometimes theocracies. Sometimes our rulers have fixed terms of many different lengths from culture to culture. Sometimes they are enthroned for life. Sometimes we choose them by lot. Sometimes we even elect them democratically.

No other animal is as various. Non-human apes do, however, have a modest range of political diversity. In *Chimpanzee Politics*, Frans de Waal, one of the world's most productive primatologists, extolled the Machiavellian skills of some of the alpha apes he studied, as they forged alliances, undermined rivals, seized power, and kept competitors in check. Typically, an alpha wins supremacy by defeating his predecessor in combat. He rules by force, with subordinate helpers. Sometimes, individual alphas develop their own techniques for supplementing the fights and displays of aggression with which they enforce authority. Yeroen, for

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instance, who ruled the chimpanzees of Arnhem Zoo in the early to mid-1970s, made himself look bigger than he really was by walking heavily and inflating his posture—rather in the way George W. Bush used to do as U.S. president, extending his elbows as he walked, as if to occupy more space.

Other chimps treat the alpha with signs of deference, which might include submissive grunts, deep bows, and the kissing of feet. De Waal succeeded in writing chimpanzee history: a record of shifts of power; but it was almost entirely a story of coups, in which one chimp or group of chimps displaced another without changing the political system. In early editions the author even chose to suppress some varieties of behavior so as not to seem to press the parallel between chimp and human politics too far. Recently he has confessed that he omitted the case of a chimp 'elder statesman,' whom he likened to Dick Cheney or Ted Kennedy, "over the hill" but "gaining tremendous power" by exploiting younger contenders' rivalries. He added a picturesque detail: chimps competing for female support by tickling babies, like human politicos at a photo-op.

A spectacular innovation in chimpanzee politics, reported by Jane Goodall, occurred in Gombe in 1964, when a small and physically rather feeble chimpanzee, whom the primatologists call Mike, lost patience with the rule of existing alpha male, Goliath. Mike turned out to be a sort of David. He made up for his relative weakness by technical skill. He raided a primatologists' camp for large tins, which he used as cymbals, crashing through the forest and clashing them as he challenged Goliath and the gang, with a fearsome racket. He strewed tins across the leaders' pathways in what seems to have been a conscious attempt to intimidate them: he persisted until he bamboozled his enemies into surrendering power.

This incident constituted, as far as I know, the first known case of a political revolution in the chimpanzee world—where not just the leadership, but the method of selecting the leader changed. Mike gained power and held it for six years without ever attacking another chimpanzee. When the primatologists denied him access to cans he used anything else he could lay his hands on—boxes, chairs, tables, tripods. When they managed to keep all their gear from him, Mike improvised with suitably selected branches. His adaptation of a novel technology to wrest and keep authority was—in chimp terms—a stroke of genius. It gave him a status which, if reproduced in human terms, we might very well call charismatic, because on one occasion he faced down an attack from five allied rivals, even though he was alone and manifestly outgunned.

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He retained his position as alpha into old age, when his teeth were worn and he could not have fought back against a pretender. He almost initiated a new political tradition: Jane Goodall saw Figan, a young admirer of Mike's, practicing imitations of his technique.

Even baboons can revolutionize their political systems. In Kenya in 1986 the gang of toughs that ruled a group of about 90 baboons raided a contaminated rubbish dump for food. They all died. The less aggressive survivors had to extemporize a new way of running their community. The group adopted a much looser power structure, and taught male 'immigrants' from other tribes to adopt collaborative approaches: shared activities and much mutual grooming replaced force as the main way of gaining authority and attracting mates. The hierarchy was, in the words of R.M. Sapolsky and L.J. Share, the primatologists who wrote up the reports, more 'relaxed' than previously, with low-ranking males evincing little of the stress typical in the past. Females shared high status. The process genuinely represented the forging of a new political culture, as baboon males always migrate on achieving maturity. A decade later, these behavioral patterns persisted.

The reach and limits of cultural exchange affect non-human cultures just as they affect ours. On either side of the N'Zo-Sassandra River in Cote D'Ivoire, chimpanzees feed differently. On the west bank they crack open palm-nut kernels with stones to extract the oil. Their east-bank brethren leave the nuts unexploited. There is no environmental difference to explain the cultural divergence. The habitats are, for all practical purposes, identical. One group has discovered the relevant properties of stones and nuts and has enshrined the knowledge in culture. The other has not. The process of passing on the data stopped at the river, just as for millennia the Atlantic prevented European ideas from reaching the Americas, and the geography of Eurasia helped interrupt the sporadic but powerful flow of culture between China and the West. 'Chimpanzee archaeology'—literally, the excavation of sites chimps formerly inhabited—is in its infancy, and its practitioners still tend to focus as much on what they hope it can tell about humans as about other apes. So far, it has confirmed that chimpanzees have shaped stones by using them as tools for more than 4000 years and one day it may yield enough data for us to measure changes in the technologies of non-human primates over long periods.

By starting in the non-human world we can begin to see divergence as the distinctive theme of our own history. The difference is a difference

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of degree. But in some respects it is a very big difference: the extent and variety of communication, the rapidity and acceleration of change, the range of peculiar behaviour from time to time and place to place, the fertility of innovation, the multiplication of technologies, the proliferation and conflict of ideas, the richness of symbols, the abundance of creativity, the array of art and music and fun, the vagaries of fashion. If we engage in more possibilities of all these kinds than other cultural animals, it is in part, I want to suggest, because we can envisage more such possibilities. We have teeming minds—if I am allowed that word—full of notions of unrealized worlds, which we labour to create. We have a peculiar propensity to see or infer or intuit potentialities that are not present to our senses.

The history of human cultures—within the history of culture in general—should therefore begin with the story of how our ancestor-species evolved the faculties that make us so prolific in generating culture. I tried to cover that long prologue in *A Foot in the River* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). For present purposes, I ask readers to assent provisionally to five propositions: (1) that culture is a by-product of faculties of memory and anticipation evolved in some species; (2) that those faculties predispose cultures to change; (3) that humans' faculty of anticipation is exceptionally developed and contributes to making them highly imaginative; (4) that humans are the most mutable of cultural creatures because in their case peculiar features of memory and imagination make them fertile in ideas (which I understand as ways of reimagining the world); and (5) that ideas impel change in human cultures.

Imagination is the motor of culture. We look around us. We see our world. In our mind´s eye we see it differently—improved or made more conformable to some imagined model or pattern, ideal or order; or, if our taste so inclines us, we envision its destruction or reduction to chaos. Either way, we first recraft our world imaginatively. We then act to realize the world we have reimagined. That is how and why cultures change.

The first migrants from the cradle-land of *Homo sapiens*, for instance, were pursuing a vision of a life they had never experienced. The first builders saw in advance how they could transform leaves and bones into shelter. The adapters of utterance for communication imagined others´ response. The first cannibals anticipated the effects of appropriating their victims´ prowess and virtues. The first artists in ochre could envision their bodies adorned. The first cave-painters saw a world inside the rocks.

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The first shamans imagined themselves as animals, with animals´ power over prey. The first magicians imagined themselves manipulating nature.

Imagination, however, needs an environment to work on—to reimagine and re-craft. Cultural volatility and mutual cultural differentiation have occupied a relatively brief period of the human past: they really got going only about 100,000 years after the first appearance of *Homo sapiens* in the archaeological record, under the impact, I think, of a strong environmental stimulus. Until then, human communities inhabited the same environment in East Africa and had much the same way of life, the same technologies and, as far as we know, other common features of culture, such as the same or similar religions and aesthetics. Climatic instability and environmental diversity interrupted the normal continuities of human life.

Divergence became possible, roughly coincidentally with the onset of the last Ice Age, when human communities split from each other, moved, adjusted to different environments, lost touch, and developed in mutual isolation. The Ice Age was a dynamic time for those who experienced it but to us, who live amid convulsive change, it seems like an age of remarkable stability, continuity, and equilibrium. As far as we can tell, art, which is the mirror of society, changed little, compared with the madcap revolutions of artistic -isms in our own day, and demonstrated continuities in themes and techniques wherever people lived. Similar consistency characterizes evidence of religion—focused everywhere we know of on shamanism and fertility cults. Differences occurred in methods of shelter and in hunting and foraging technologies, but only within a relatively small range. The retreat of the ice 20,000 years ago ended all that. In the ten millennia or so after the ice began to recede, big changes—unprecedented divergences of culture from place to place—are discernible in the archaeological record. Previously, humans had led lives of a similar kind, wherever they lived—fed by the same methods of scavenging, foraging, and hunting; awed by the same kinds of gods and spirits; guided spiritually by shamans who experienced similar ecstasies; organized along similar lines into societies constructed of clans and totemic fraternities. Amid tremendous convulsions of climate, however, arose opportunities or exigencies to imagine and implement different ways of life.

Colonization quickened. Cultures diverged as communities tried different strategies for survival. The increasing pace of change since then is not an inherent property of change, but an historical phenomenon,

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which can be said to have coincided roughly with the Holocene. From this point onward, societies could be classified in three types: hunters, who foraged for food, and herders and tillers, who produced it for themselves.

Hunters were the most successful survivors because they maintained their way of life relatively unchanged. Tillers (and to a lesser extent herders) had to embrace dynamic change: political change because they needed strong leaders to organize production and distribution of food; social and economic change because they needed large workforces and growing populations; changes in economic specialization and styles of living because ever larger populations had to be concentrated in relatively small spaces; changes in health and nutrition because of the need to survive on limited diets in a new disease environment; changes in warfare because they had to defend their flocks and fields or enlarge them at others' expense.

As more and more societies followed the tillers' example or adopted it independently, peoples who remained loyal to foraging began to retreat into ever more marginal environments, to tundras, forests, and arid regions. The reasons for this withdrawal are hard to understand. To some extent, it was a simple matter of diminishing resources. As farming expanded, less game and land were available for foragers. At another level, it was an effect of relative power. Though farming disrupted almost every society that adopted it, and often led to failure and collapse, it fed more people and generated more resources for war.

Because farming societies at first developed in isolation from each other—as agriculture emerged independently in many places around the world and grew different crops in contrasting environments—they were incomparably more diverse than hunter societies. New economic practices demanded new ways of organizing life: uniting specialists in cities, instituting states to regulate labor, warehouse produce, distribute food and water, and organize ever larger-scale wars. The ambition to modify nature grew in the minds of the world's farmers. Across the globe—in East, Southwest, and Southeast Asia, in the Indian subcontinent, in parts of the Americas, Africa, and Europe, and around the Pacific—farmers recarved the landscape into fields and scored it with irrigation ditches. In extreme cases, elites in farming societies smothered the landscape with towns and cities, environments of their own building. Urban environments are ecologically fragile, and the societies that lived in them began to experience the turbulent history—full of declines and falls, crises and

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collapses, confrontations and conflicts—that makes the broad outline of history so hard to discern and crowds the relatively stable hunting peoples out of the story.

Just as cities were relatively unstable environments, so states and, especially, the relatively large states we call empires were comparatively unstable (and, among themselves, hostile) forms of political organization. Although some states lasted for centuries or even millennia, their internal histories were full of changes in styles and techniques of rulership, which as time went on tended to make them more unlike each other. Conflicting ideologies arose. States and empires adapted religions to justify the differences between them and competing states, and, in their turn, religions stoked hostility and helped to cause wars.

Human cultural change speeded up at an unprecedented rate. The accelerations of change, however, were not uniform. Experiences of convergence or re-convergence intervene from time to time, when sundered cultures establish contact and exchange influences. Because of the accelerations of change, historians are attracted to convergent episodes—such as the 'axial age' of prolific transeurasian contacts in the first millennium BCE, or the recovery of those contacts in the high Middle Ages, or their extension to other parts of the world in the 'age of exploration' and as a result of the founding of global empires, or the period of mutual learning among previously sundered cultures that we call the Enlightenment, or the intensified globalization of the 150 years or so. But convergence happens under overarching divergence and, by multiplying changes, usually makes the world more diverse.

Partly, I suggest, this is because ideas generate culture and ideas have a peculiar property: they stimulate each other and become more prolific when they interact. Sometimes they reproduce like amoebas, generating their own progeny. More commonly, they issue from the interactions of minds. An interlocutor's distinctive take on a subject inspires a new response. A book or broadcast or image or object ignites a new train of thought. A model from an alien culture alerts recipients to new possibilities for changing direction. Misunderstanding intervenes creatively. We misunderstand someone else's idea: the result is a new idea of our own. Many new ideas are just old ideas misunderstood. The kinds of change thinking ignites—technical innovations, new ways of organizing life—can create conditions propitious for the further multiplication of ideas: this is not to say that technology and social or cultural change cause ideas, but

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that they help make new ideas possible by facilitating communication or stimulating imaginations.

In consequence, the most culturally productive societies—the most intensely creative, the most innovative, the most dynamic, and the most mutable—tend to be in touch with each other and to experience change most when their contacts are closest. In the early twentieth century, anthropologists, mainly working with Franz Boas or in other schools dedicated to fieldwork, accumulated evidence of how cultures develop through borrowing from each other. The proposition is easy to test historically by looking at the circumstances of one of the most spectacular and intensive episodes in the history of ideas in the West: the 'age of sages' of the first millennium BCE in the eastern Mediterranean.

In about 33 BCE, a penniless poet received a gift from the chief minister of the Roman empire—a small farm on the River Tiber—in appreciation of the brilliantly understated verse-satires he wrote for Roman salons. It was just what Horace wanted. For the rest of his days he devoted some of the cleverest, loveliest work any wordsmith has ever forged to extolling the simple life of the farm, and praising his patrons. In one poem, he imagined his patron worrying over what the Chinese might be plotting. In others, Horace pictured Augustus intimidating them with his power, or engendering a future conqueror of China. This was outrageous flattery: there was no likelihood of the Roman and Chinese empires engaging in conflict, or even having much contact of any kind. But the fact that Horace was aware of China, and realized that events at the far end of Eurasia could affect Roman interests, shows how communications transformed the world of the first millennium BCE, making it 'smaller,' as we say now.

Indian world-maps of the period look like the product of stay-at-home minds. Four then—from the second century BCE onwards—seven continents radiated from a mountainous core. Around concentric rings of rock flowed seven seas, respectively of salt, sugar-cane juice, wine, ghee, curds, milk and water. One should not suppose, on the basis of this formal, sacred cosmography, that Indians of the time were ignorant of the world: that would be like inferring from a subway map that New Yorkers could not build railways. Real observations are detectable under the metaphors: a world grouped around the great Himalaya; the triangular, petal-like form of India, with Sri Lanka falling from it like a dewdrop; an ocean divisible into discrete seas, some of which represented routes to frequented destinations and commercial opportunities: the Sea of Milk,

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for instance, corresponded roughly to what we now call the Arabian Sea, and led to Arabia and Persia. The Sea of Butter led to Ethiopia.

To Greek traders, the Seas of Milk and Butter were 'the Erythraean Sea'—source of aromatics and resins, especially frankincense, myrrh and an Arabian cinammon-substitute called cassia. Many important ports for long-range trade lined Arabia's shores. At Gerrha, for instance, probably near modern Al Jubayl, merchants unloaded Indian manufactures. Nearby, Thaj also served as a good place to warehouse imports, with its walls of dressed stone, more than a mile and a half in circumference and 15 feet thick. From Ma'in a merchant supplied Egyptian temples with incense in the third century BCE: we know this because he died in Egypt and his sarcophagus is engraved with the outline of his life. This background explains the death-bed wish of Alexander the Great, the would-be world-conqueror who died in 323 BCE, to launch a conquest of Arabia. Before he died, he sent naval expeditions to explore the Red Sea route to the Indian Ocean, and reconnoiter the way to the Persian Gulf from the mouth of the Indus. Thereafter, Greek writers began to compile sailing directions, and geographical and ethnographical data for the shores of the Erythraean Sea.

The reason for the long seafaring, sea-daring tradition of the Indian Ocean lies in the regularity of the wind-system. Above the equator, north-easterlies prevail in winter. When winter ends, the direction of the winds is reversed. For most of the rest of the year, they blow steadily from the south and west, sucked towards the Asian landmass as air warms and rises over the continent. By timing voyages to take advantage, navigators could set sail, confident of a fair wind out and a fair wind home.

Overwhelmingly, the history of maritime exploration has been made into the wind: presumably because it was at least as important to get home as to get to somewhere new. This was how the Phoenicians and Greeks opened the Mediterranean to long-range commerce and colonization. Meanwhile, the same strategy enabled South Sea Island navigators to begin the long project of exploring and colonizing most of the islands of the Pacific. But fixed-wind systems as vast as those of the Atlantic and Pacific were almost uncrossable with ancient technology: we know of no round trips across them. Even compared with other navigable seas, the reliability of the monsoon conferred insuperable advantages. No reliable sources record the length of voyages in this period, but, to judge from later statistics, a trans-Mediterranean journey from

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east to west, against the wind, would take fifty to seventy days: with the monsoon, you could cross the entire Erythraean Sea, between India and a port on the Persian Gulf or near the Red Sea, in three or four weeks in either direction. In consequence, the world's most productive economies, most inventive societies, and most powerful states were ranged around the Indian Ocean. For the rest of the world, where fixed wind systems pinioned long-range commerce, most of the remainder of history was, in these respects, a story of catch-up.

In the long run, sea-routes were more important for global history than land-routes: they carried more goods, faster, more economically, in greater amounts. Nevertheless, in the early stages of the development of trans-Eurasian communications, most long-range trade was small-scale, in goods of high value and limited bulk. It relied on 'emporium-trading'—onward transmission through a series of markets and middlemen—rather than expeditions across entire oceans and continents. In the first millennium BCE, the routes that linked Eurasia by land were at least as important, in the history of cultural contacts, as those by sea.

From around the middle of the period, scattered examples of Chinese silks appeared across Europe, in Athens, Budapest and a series of south German and Rhineland burials. By the end of the millennium, a route of diffusion of Chinese manufactures became traceable, from the southern Caspian to the northern Black Sea, and into what were then gold-rich kingdoms in the south-west stretches of the Eurasian steppe. Meanwhile, starting from Greece, Alexander's armies had used the Persian royal roads to cross what are now Turkey and Iran, conquer Egypt and Mesopotamia, reach the Persian Gulf and, at the extremities of their eastward march, touch the Pamir mountains and cross the Indus. Merchants could also have used these routes.

In 111 BCE a Chinese garrison founded the outpost of Tun-huang—the name means 'blazing beacon'—beyond the western limits of the empire, on the edge of a region of desert and mountains. Here, according to a poem inscribed in one of the caves where travelers sheltered, was "the throat of Asia," where "the roads to the western ocean" converged like veins in the neck. We now call them Silk Roads. They skirted the Taklamakan Desert, under the mountains which line it to north and south. It was a terrible journey, haunted, in Chinese accounts, by screaming demon-drummers—personifications of ferocious winds. But the desert was so demanding that it deterred even bandits, and the mountains offered some protection from the predatory nomads who

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lived beyond them. The Taklamakan took thirty days to cross—clinging to the edges, where water drains from the surrounding mountains. Further west, to get to the markets of central Asia, or to reach India, some of the world's most formidable mountains had to be crossed. Caravans from China reached Persia and Chinese trade goods became common in the Mediterranean Levant.

The routes that bound Eurasia carried vectors of culture back and forth, creating new hybrids. We only know about a few cases. Pyrrho went to India with Alexander and conversed with Brahmins. Alexander's armies left colonists strewn across Asia in centers where hybrid art took shape, blending Indian and Greek aesthetics and eventually producing, for instance, a surviving relief of the Trojan horse from Gandhara, with Cassandra flinging out her arms in despair in an image that owes more to the sinuous gestures of Indian houris than to the ecstasies of a Sybil.

There is no record of direct contacts of this kind in the first half of the first millennium BCE, but across Eurasia, from China and India to southwest Asia and Greece, the sages' subjects of debate and their techniques of rational and empirical enquiry had so much in common that it is inconceivable that unaided accident produced the coincidences. Scholarship on the origins of classical Athenian thought has captured the light the "east face of Helicon" cast on Greece; the worlds of the Levant and what are now Turkey and Iran, with which Greeks were in constant touch, could mediate thinking and transmit objects from central Asia, India, and China. So could the commerce of the Erythraean Sea.

Partly as a result of the contacts, divergences in thinking in the first millennium BCE shared some starting-points. Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Taoism, monotheistic Judaism, Christianity and the beginnings of what became Hinduism owed something, perhaps, to traditional magic (while Confucianism was, possibly, more of a reaction against it), but they were genuinely new. They upheld the effectiveness of moral practice, alongside formal rituals, as ways to adjust humans' relationship with nature or with whatever was divine: not just sacrificing prescribed offerings fittingly to God or gods, but modifying the way people behaved toward each other. They attracted followers with programs of individual moral progress, rather than with rites to appease nature. They were programs of salvation, not just of survival. They promised the perfection of human goodness, or 'deliverance from evil'—attainable in this world or, if not, by transfer to another world after death, or by a total transformation of this world at the end of time. The religious teachings

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of the sages were highlights in a world teeming with other new religions, most of which have not survived. In a period when no one recognized a hard-and-fast distinction between religion and secular life, spiritual ferment stimulated all kinds of intellectual innovation.

Other innovators of the age formulated techniques for telling good from evil and truth from falsehood that we still use. Similar conflicts ensued over the nature of the state between moral optimists, who wanted to liberate human goodness, and pessimists, who felt the need for the state's restraining force. Thinkers, observers, and experimenters who belonged to the Hundred Schools in China paralleled the achievements of Plato and Aristotle. In India, logicians known as the Nyaya School shared confidence in reason and the urge to analyze it, resolving arguments step by step.

Beyond the Eurasian axes of communication, uncrossable obstacles divided most peoples from each other. Some—especially in Australia and New Guinea and in dense forest environments elsewhere—were isolated from contact with outsiders except for their immediate or near neighbors. Poor communications tended to keep peoples apart in most of sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas and to inhibit long-range exchanges of culture and ideas. Even within Eurasia, across the great axis of communications that eased exchanges of influence, ideas, and technologies between regions as widely separated as Europe and China, the effects were markedly different from place to place. Although the sages of China, India, Iran, Palestine, and Greece shared many of the same thoughts, the results of their ideas were so different that they stimulated conflict: mutually hostile religions, mutually antagonistic world visions. An intelligible paradox was at work: mutual influence between cultures can stimulate divergence by sparking innovations.

In the first few centuries after the age of sages, the huge states we call empires, while they lasted, acted as arenas for transmitting culture. The Roman Empire spread Greek learning and the Christian religion from the eastern Mediterranean to as far away as the Atlantic edge of Europe. Over many centuries, China forged a common identity in a vast domain, and the influence of its arts, learning, and political thinking had spilled over into Korea, Japan, and other parts of Asia. China was also the conduit by which Buddhism spread from India to Korea and Japan. Empires, however, rarely displace indigenous cultures, which incubate under the shell of unity. And they tend to stimulate cultural innovations: creole and pidgin languages, for instance (all romance languages originated as

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variants of the language of the Romans), syncretic religions, hybrid cultures, and extemporized political systems like those of the 'barbarian' kingdoms that succeeded the Roman Empire in the west, or of the Asian states that appropriated parts of Chinese political tradition.

In other parts of the world, similar processes can be dimly discerned, despite the dearth of evidence, during the first millennium of the Christian era. In Mesoamerica, in the late fourth century, Teotihuacán influenced fashion and politics in the Maya world; in the Andean region from the sixth century Huari was a pattern for ways of building, ruling, and exploiting the land over a similar extent of territory. From the seventh century, Muslim empire builders spread Islam—with adaptations that made it different in every destination—across a great swathe of the Old World from Spain to the borders of India and deep into Africa. With Islam came scholars and texts that put the learning of India and of the former Roman world back in touch with one another. Muslim rulers and the gardeners and agriculturalists they patronized exchanged unfamiliar crops back and forth across Eurasia and North Africa.

Hostility, meanwhile, became routine between societies that relied mainly on tilling the soil and those that had to move frequently from one place to another with the herds they lived off. Grazing needs a lot of space, relatively speaking, to turn the plant life eaten by livestock into humanly edible food. So practitioners of the two types of culture became competitors for land. Their differences of culture were so marked that farmers and herders found it easy to hate each other and hard to establish mutual understanding.

Christendom, Islam, and China had contrasting experiences of relationships with nomads. In the eighth and ninth centuries, Magyars and Bulgars settled inside Christendom, setting up states similar to those of their neighbors, but most of the herder-peoples who raided or invaded Europe remained excluded and hostile. Nomad invaders of China typically adopted Chinese ways and became vulnerable in their turn to further waves of invasion from the steppes. In Islam, however, Turks' vocation for war outlasted conversion to Muslim identities and to settled ways of life. From the tenth century onwards they became the sword-bearers of Islam, renewing manpower for defense and expansion to an extent unparalleled in Europe or China.

Contacts between China and Europe, though never altogether interrupted, were feeble and indirect. Despite separation by stormy seas, Japan was never quite out of touch with the other civilizations of east

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Asia. So the extremities of Eurasia were able to cope with—and, increasingly, emerge from—their relative isolation. Societies that fringed the Indian Ocean continued to enrich and influence each other. The relative stagnation of parts of Africa and the Americas showed, meanwhile, how isolation can inhibit change, whereas interactions between cultures exert mutual magnetism and make changes happen faster.

In the twelfth century, after the long period of disruption in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the routes of communication that linked Eurasia became active again, when the Song reached westwards from China and crusaders colonized parts of the Levant. In the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the 'Mongol Peace' enhanced the process, encouraging trans-Eurasian trade and opening new steppeland routes to long-range travelers.

In part, the Mongols' outreach was a response to climate change, as cooling shriveled their grasslands. In the fourteenth century, observers began to notice unsteadily increasing cold. Glacial evidence shows that global cold lasted—with varying intensity—until the eighteenth century. In most of Eurasia and North Africa, climate change nourished the diseases contemporaries called plague. As long as the cold period lasted, so did frequent plagues, which stimulated further change: every plague leads to a redistribution of wealth and power among the survivors. The lurches of climate, especially during periods of exceptionally intense cold in the fourteenth century (which would be replicated or exceeded in the seventeenth) sped transformations of states—leading, fitfully or gradually, to retreating aristocracies, encroaching bureaucracies, the multiplication of laws, and the recrafting of notions of sovereignty, with emphasis on the state as a device for making and unmaking laws, rather than dispensing justice on the basis of tradition.

The Mongols exceeded previous empires as a stimulus to the migration of ideas and technologies, while merchants, missionaries, and pilgrims pioneered ever more intensive communications that bound together Eurasia and parts of North, East, and West Africa. A series of Chinese techniques and ideas reached and reinvigorated Christendom, planting most of the technologies that, in later periods, Westerners misidentified as world-changing inventions of their own. Paper money (the basis of Western capitalism), the blast furnace (the precondition for Western industrialization), the rudder and separable bulkhead (the technologies that made possible the world-ranging shipping of the modern West), and gunpowder (the starting-point for Western supremacy

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in firepower) were among the arrivals from China in the period. I suspect that the revival of empiricism—the fact-finding technique on which Western scientists congratulate themselves—was also the result of transmission from China, where it had never faded from sages' minds.

We know a lot about individuals who travelled back and forth, carrying ideas and artefacts West from China, and about the travails they underwent: the Polo family, for instance, who crossed Asia in three years' hard pounding, contending with the demons of the Taklamakan; John of Monte Corvino who declared proudly how he faced the daunting mountains of central Asia—"but," he said, "the Mongols crossed them, and so, with God's help, did I;" or the merchants who travelled with the help of Francesco Balducci Pegolotti's early fourteenth-century guidebook, which told them where along the road to change money, hire transport, get a shave, or employ a prostitute.

The period of interchange between West and East did not last. In 1368, the Ming overthrew the Mongols and China reverted to autarchy. I suspect that the loss of stimulus from Eurasian contacts drove western Europeans back on classical sources of inspiration for innovation in the movement we usually call the Renaissance: at least, it is curious that a reputedly inventive period in Western art and learning should have happened, against the odds, in a period of relative isolation and adverse climate and disease. No Western accomplishments, however, diminished the desire to break out—back into contact with the richer economies and more technically proficient societies around the Indian Ocean. Merchants and monarchs on the Atlantic fringe of western Christendom dreamed of opening a sea route to the East. The obstacles were formidable. Ignorance led Columbus, among others, in the wrong direction. But the first Portuguese mission reached China via the Indian Ocean in 1516 and, little by little, European shippers got a foothold in the lucrative business of supplying China with luxuries from much of the rest of the world. A role as carriers in intra-Asian trades made it possible for European merchants for the first time to begin to catch up in terms of wealth and enterprise with Asian rivals who had formerly outclassed them.

The unprecedentedly long outreach of communities on Europe's Atlantic edge was not the result of technical or commercial prowess; it rather resembled the efforts of 'developing' countries today to find offshore resources, with borrowed capital and imported expertise. It had, however, revolutionary consequences. Explorers found routes across

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the Atlantic, which for the first time linked Europe and Africa to the Americas and put vast new lands and resources within Europeans' reach. Cultural exchange stimulated Western arts and learning, though—from the perspective of Islam, India, or China—Westerners remained relatively backward and poor. Over a longer period, empires and trade overleaped oceans, taking people, animals, plants, deadly microbes, and forms of culture with them. Parts of the globe that had grown unalike now began, slowly and selectively at first, to resemble each other once again as they had before the continents had drifted apart millions of years ago. The way life-forms began to cross the world in the sixteenth century halted one of the longest-standing trends on the planet. Scores of millions of years of divergent evolution, continent by continent, were reversed. But the big effects on the diversification of food and the increase of global population were not felt until global warming resumed and plagues receded in the eighteenth century.

Meanwhile, world-ranging European travelers, merchants, missionaries, and conquerors carried ideas with them, making the Renaissance the first global intellectual and aesthetic movement. In the sixteenth century, cities modeled on ancient Roman patterns appeared in the Americas. Congolese kings inhabited a palace built in European style. A Mughal emperor ordered his painters to imitate European engravers. The greatest mediators of ideas, Jesuit missionaries, did not succeed in establishing themselves as part of the acceptance of the court in China until 1610—and their ascent was laborious, as the Chinese dismissed them at first as barbarians who had nothing to offer "except a picture of a woman and baby" and dubious, purported relics of "the Immortals." Jesuits inaugurated, however, a new era of exchange among the great civilizations of Eurasia by interesting the imperial court in their skills, first as cartographers, then as astronomers and experts in arts and engineering. Prowess in these fields won Europeans new respect in parts of Asia where they had formerly longed in vain for access.

At the same time, maps, reports, curiosities, and exotica garnered from all over the globe were beginning to give European science a privileged view of the world and to stimulate imperial imaginations, accumulating in the West the raw materials of the world-ranging awareness of opportunities and vision of knowledge that we call the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, and incubating in the eighteenth—thanks in part to the reports of Jesuits and other European savants in

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China, India, and Japan—the new, radical political and philosophical thinking of the Enlightenment.

The glimmerings of Western global hegemony became discernible to eighteenth-century observers. But it took a long time to happen in reality. Most empires founded by Europeans were feeble at first, outclassed by those of indigenous Asian powers. Only in the eighteenth century did Europeans other than Spaniards conquer substantial hinterlands and turn their maritime empires—designed to control particular seaborne trades—into vast engines of production comparable with the traditional empires of the Qing, the Ottomans, the Mughals, and the Safavids. The global balance of wealth remained largely undisturbed until well into the eighteenth century and was not reversed before the nineteenth: indeed, China benefited most from the growing range and scale of global trade. Christianity was reaching previously unevangelized populations in Europe and around the world—but the spread of Islam and Buddhism echoed and, in some regions matched or exceeded, that of Christianity.

Cultural convergence—the spread of world religions, the worldwide projection of Renaissance images, the confluence of Western and Eastern cultures in the Enlightenment—accompanied the global range of contacts in what we conventionally call the early modern period. But, as in previous convergent episodes, the diversity of culture continued to increase. Creole languages, for instance, are scattered around the world, like jetsam left by the receding tides of early modern empires. Slaves created many of the new languages, while other languages took shape in the communities of traders or settlers: reminders that colonialism, which was destructive of so much of the culture it touched, could also be amazingly creative, calling into being not only new languages but also new religions, new cuisines, new manners, and new ways of thought and life.

The effects of the global exchange of culture were visible and audible not just in the far-flung outposts of empires, where new creole cultures emerged, but also in the homelands of the imperial powers. News and views from the Americas deeply influenced European imaginations and helped to form romantic aesthetics. The political thought of the European Enlightenment would have been radically different without input from the worlds of Islam, India, China, and Japan. Without reports about the Huron and the Polynesian islanders, Europeans would not have formulated the notion of the noble savage—and so ideas about common wisdom and popular sovereignty might have been arrested. Cultures traditionally hostile to foreign influences began to respond

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positively to global exchanges, as Dutch studies introduced Japanese thinkers to revised models of how the world worked and as the Jesuits influenced Chinese arts and engineering.

Meanwhile, in the eighteenth century, influences beyond human control re-fashioned the global environment. Resumed sunspot activity warmed the world. Little-understood mutations in the microbial world brought the age of plagues to an end in a global disease environment still full of hazards but less lethal, on the whole, for humans. The worldwide shifts of edible biota—combined with effects of human agency, such as the extension of ranched and farmed lands—boosted food stocks and, by freeing many regions from dependence on unique staples, indemnified them against blights.

Industrialization, the biggest story in the nineteenth-century world, was a response to a surprising effect of the new environment: a global energy crisis, evident in intensified conflicts over the availability of lipids and the proliferation of expedients to meet the crisis. Mechanization was a vital part of the solution. It happened when and where global population was exploding—which might have made mechanization seem unnecessary. But up to a critical threshold, if my theory is correct, population increase generated demand for new scales and new kinds of production. Beyond that threshold, as in China, the amount of surplus manpower available inhibited mechanization. A startling result was the shift in the global balance of wealth and power away from China and South Asia to Europe and—by the end of the century—the United States.

Industry opened a vast energy gap between industrializing and unindustrializing zones. The industrializing areas imposed their power on the unindustrializing, enforcing political unification, for instance, in Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States. The world split between industrializing regions and those that, by choice or coercion, produced primary goods for the industrializers. Peoples untouched by industrialization became the victims of the disparities it empowered. In Africa and much of Southeast Asia, indigenous states could not resist European imperialism unless they 'modernized' along European lines. In the Americas, industrially equipped armies and colonists displaced native peoples. Industrialization transformed the world's labor force. States got stronger. Intellectual trends became mass movements and attracted worldwide followings. Industrial forms of production and distribution supplemented existing frameworks of life with new kinds of workplace,

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warfare, and institutions—especially schools and universities—adjusted to new economic values. Finally, by demanding huge amounts of coal and, increasingly, oil, industrialization transformed the scale on which people valued resources and edged the world toward conflicts over increasingly precious fossil fuels.

Like the 'Neolithic revolution' that inaugurated agriculture, the "Industrial Revolution" empowered states, increased inequalities, and opened new niches for disease. But, as with agriculture, the gains in productivity were irresistible. Almost every people that had the means to imitate industrialization did so. But that did not make the world more uniform. On the contrary, mechanized efficiency made accelerated change—and therefore more diversity of culture—possible. Industries divided the world according to regional specializations. A global economy ensued—a single system in which interdependence linked all regions, but more because they were different and therefore complementary than because they were mutually mimetic.

In the long run, industrialization—and the vast cities and growing populations it helped to sustain—provoked new environmental crises: stress in the humanly occupied stretches of the biosphere, pollution (especially of the atmosphere, dangerously escalating the global warming that had begun in the eighteenth century), species extinctions, depletion of resources, 'lifestyle' diseases. We are still looking for ways to respond.

The accelerations we face today began with a sudden spurt. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, every measurable kind of change leapt off the graph paper. Observers at the time were instantly aware of acceleration, and theorists rushed to seek explanations—albeit without success. Franz Boas thought "the rapidity of change has grown at an ever-increasing rate." In 1917 his student, Robert Lowie, postulated a "threshold," beyond which, after "exceedingly slow growth," culture "darts forward, gathering momentum." Fellow-Boasian Alexander Goldenweiser, suggested that cultural change "comes with a spurt" in surges between inert phases, rather like the way Stephen Jay Gould thought evolution happens, "punctuating" long periods of equilibrium.

Accelerating change shocks people and drives them to easy or purportedly 'final' solutions. In partial consequence, rival fanaticisms convulsed the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, promising to arrest chaos in a 'thousand-year Reich' or a renewed caliphate or a classless 'synthesis' of history—usually seeking to craft utopia by purging the world of enemies or scapegoats in war and massacre. A shaky

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consensus in favour of practical imperfection—capitalism restrained by democracy—managed to hold them off in bloody conflicts. The scale of massacre, persecution, and abuse of science that accompanied the conflicts dispelled or called in question faith—inherited from nineteenth-century impressions of a world sustainable by improvement—in secular, scientifically induced progress. 'Culture wars' ensued between those who clung to outmoded confidence and those who embraced pessimism or reverted to religion.

By the late twentieth century it was almost impossible for any community to opt out of accelerated change: even resolutely self-isolated groups in the depths of the Amazon rain forest found it hard to elude contact or withdraw from the influence of the rest of the world once contact was made. The biggest single indicator of acceleration was global consumption, which increased nearly twentyfold in the course of the twentieth century. Because people used far more goods in industrialized, urbanized communities (and especially in the United States) than anywhere else, the spread of industrialization and urbanization guaranteed that consumption would continue to hurtle uncontrollably, perhaps unsustainably. World population—an area of growth that excited Malthusian apprehensions and ignited intrusive programs of population control—hardly kept pace with consumption; but it quadrupled during the century. Production, inescapably, rose in line with consumption in terms of volume, while the range of products multiplied bewilderingly, especially in pursuit of technological innovations, medical services and remedies, and financial and commercial instruments.

The world became rapidly unrecognizable to the ageing, whose lives (in regions suitably equipped with physically unstrenuous means of livelihood and death-defying medical technology) were unprecedentedly prolonged. In my boyhood, one of sci-fi's favourite time-travel themes concerned visitors to the present or future from previous centuries and their struggles to adjust to a transformed world. At the end of the twentieth century, the BBC was screening a television series about a contemporary projected back in time to the 1970s, depicted as an almost unimaginably primitive era, where there were—*horribile dictu*—no home computers, games consoles, or mobile phones.

Nowadays, a new kind of convergence has set in: we exchange culture globally. The same food is available, the same music heard, the same religions practiced, the same technologies applied, and the same games played all over the world. We even have a 'world language'—a strange

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dialect of English, which everyone, except the English, who persist with their own, idiosyncratic version of the lingo, is expected to understand at international gatherings. Meanwhile, some traditions, languages, religions, foodstuffs are becoming extinct. But divergence remains dominant. Even if we were to attain the common global culture of visionary dreams and nightmares, it would probably not make the world uniform. It would not displace all the local variations but coat them with an extra layer. It would not unravel the strands in the fabric of the world, but add one more thread.

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CHAPTER 6

The Human System: An Introduction

Patrick Manning

The Human System and Its Troubles

Humanity today functions as a gigantic, world-encompassing system, built of seven billion individuals who participate in activities and organizations that combine to perform myriad interacting functions. In its systemic behavior, human society reproduces itself, ingests great amounts of natural resources, transforms them and produces a full range of social, economic, cultural, communication, and governmental activities. It also yields, as exhaust, waste materials of many types.

Humanity is an open system, as defined by the fact that it ingests materials from its environment and expels exhaust materials back into the environment. It is a historical and adaptive system, in that it functions not only according to an initial plan but also undergoes change in response to external and internal influences. These adaptive mechanisms may serve both to strengthen and weaken the operation of the system. Having begun as a small community, humanity has now grown to

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become one of the principal influences on the larger system of the earth itself—interacting with what geologists like to call earth's geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere. Humanity emerged within the biosphere and has grown rapidly to become an influential portion of that sphere. More rapidly than any other terrestrial influence, the human system is bringing change (and perhaps destabilizing change) to the earth as a whole.

This chapter provides an argument for inclusion of systems thinking in the understanding of human history. It is *not* an argument that 'systems' provide the answer to history—that systems will clarify all the big patterns of change in the past. But it *is* an argument that the logic of systems and systemic change adds some important specific insights to the understanding of history, especially at the level of world history. The peculiar nature of the human system is that it sustains itself both through biological evolution and social evolution.

The story of the human system, as told here, begins some 70,000 years ago as certain East African populations of *Homo sapiens* developed patterns of fully articulated speech—more or less like ours today. These populations relied upon their improved system of communication and the ideas they developed with it. They spread, step by step, throughout the African continent and across the world as a whole, incorporating other hominid populations as they spread. Early in this process, humans created multiple forms of representation—that is, representing their interpretation of their world notably in speech but also in visual art, dress, music, and in interpretation of their society and environment. In this view, the replication and transformation of the human system provides a framework for summarizing human history. As will be seen, speech, categorization, innovation, and migration play central roles in social evolution.

The human system, however, is now in trouble. Its troubles lie both in its external relations with the environment and in its internal functioning. In large part, today's troubles result from the very success of the human system: its growth in population, productivity, and in its ability to mobilize resources for issues of high priority.[1] In its external difficulties, humanity faces a likely destabilization of climate, especially because of the burning of fossil fuels and the expansion in greenhouse gases. In addition, we are losing many types of plants and animals because human activities are encouraging habitat shifts and extinction of animal and plant biota from the tiniest to the huge, on land and in the waters. By

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analogous processes, the waters of the oceans, streams, and lakes are being polluted by human activity; the very flows of the ocean are threatened with being redirected. Thus, the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the hydrosphere are under severe pressure because of the expanding human system. Even the geosphere is groaning with expanding seismic activity in response to drilling and fracking for the extraction of natural gas.

Within the human system, the trouble may be just as severe. Great flaws have shown up in the management of human resources. The crisis in human inequality, measured most easily by differences in income and wealth, is deepening as the benefits of production go disproportionately to the wealthy. One result of this inequity is that great numbers of people are held in subjection and deprivation. The poor, as understood by modern science, have the same intellectual potential as all others, but today's deprivation wastes their potential; social oppression and antagonism may be expected to grow. In addition, the great investments in mutual hostility and warfare are in many ways wasteful.

Study of the human system involves identifying its elements, tracing their interplay, and analyzing its transformations over time—especially with attention to the roles of individual and collective consciousness. Is the system ready with adaptive responses that will respond automatically to current crises? Is the system capable of changing its direction in time to limit the damage and threat from within and without? To anticipate the question posed at the end of this essay: can human nature change?

Formation and Expansion of the Human System, 70,000–30,000 BP

I begin with a narrative of the formation and early stages of the human system, in which speech communities of foragers spread throughout the eastern hemisphere. This early history, I argue, is more central to later developments than usually thought. Then I interrupt the narrative to present the theory and define the terminology used in the rest of the chapter. The remaining narrative traces a period of dilemmas and subsystems (30,000 to 6000 years ago), explores the diverging scales of social order (from 4000 BCE to 1700 CE), and questions human nature (from 1700 CE to the present). The narrative sketches out how recurring episodes of social evolution guided by human agency led to a succession of dramatic changes, each characterized by a combination of success and malfunction, leading to the dilemmas of today.

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Research in genetics and paleontology indicates that a new hominid species, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, emerged in northeast Africa some 200,000 years ago. The communities of this species, similar to other hominids in that they were good at running and had the use of tools and fire, developed slowly for a long time before their dramatic expansion. The climate in which the new species developed included major swings in temperature and humidity over the long term and significant fluctuation in the short term. As *Homo sapiens* entered the scene, the climate was warm and humid and the sea level was nearly as high as it is now. But by 70,000 years ago, temperature and humidity had declined to a relatively low point. It was at about this moment (though presumably not because of climate), that innovative communities, again from East Africa, developed articulated speech.[2]

That expanded capability for communication precipitated the formation of the human system. Inherent patterns of speech change took hold, and language divergence led to the emergence of separate language groups. Did language arise because of the biological evolution of a larynx placed to modulate air from the lungs more precisely? Did it arise because of a social need for more detailed communication? In any case, speech unleashed discourse, social reorganization, and innovation.

Language groups might commonly have included 200–300 persons, residing across a territory but assembling occasionally. When groups lost contact with each other, their languages diverged with time. Through definition of their world and through innovation to modify it, these communities became local systems that changed by social evolution. Over the course of 10,000 to 20,000 years, these communities and their diversifying subsystems expanded across the Old World tropics. By retaining their inherent capacities and remaining in contact through migration, they had become a single great human system, stretched in a thin but growing community across land and littoral from the African Atlantic to the south Pacific.

This growing community spread initially throughout Africa, as seen through the archaeological record.[3] The expanding community of talking humans became a system at this time because of the degree of human intercommunication; other species have *herd* behavior but not really *system* behavior. Were the migrants able to teach speech to other human groups? The various language communities differentiated in language and, with time, in customs—yet they remained connected by migration and did not become entirely self-sufficient. As populations expanded across Africa, they had to learn about each new ecology in order to

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survive and thrive, getting access to firewood and water and perhaps finding materials for jewelry. Customs developed, perhaps including periodic reunions, to maintain social relations within communities. Some major technical developments took place, including the development of clothing and the construction of watercraft.[4] With the watercraft, presumably made of reeds bound by cord, migrants navigated lakes and rivers and, most outstandingly, crossed the Bab el-Mendeb from Africa to Arabia at the opening of the Red Sea. Some moved east along the Indian Ocean littoral as others moved west across the African mainland. Moving to the east in tropical latitudes, human settlers moved across coastal and inland areas of Arabia, Persia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia until they reached Australia and New Guinea by about 50,000 years ago.

The ups and downs of climate affected human expansion. As temperatures declined from 60,000 years ago, the lands of northern Africa and southwest Asia became dry and desert, obstructing all but the hardiest migrants toward the Mediterranean; humans remained restricted to tropical and subtropical regions. From about 45,000 years ago, humans found their way to the temperate lands of Eurasia (perhaps through the passage just west of the Himalayas) and then moved rapidly across the grasslands, west to Europe and east to the Pacific. In the northern temperate zones, someplace between what are now Russia and China, humans and dogs encountered each other. The two species formed a bond: dogs apparently joined human communities readily. This association gave humans their first experience with breeding. With time, dogs spread through human communities on all the continents, thus revealing the networks of continuous contact among human populations. (Bows and arrows, once they were invented, spread almost as far.)

The consolidation of human populations throughout the Old World was well advanced by 30,000 years ago. Steady adjustment to local ecologies brought differentiation in communities. In addition, from the earliest expansion, talking humans encountered other humanoids—other communities of *Homo sapiens* in Africa, Neanderthals in Europe and west Asia, and *Homo erectus* or Denisovans in eastern Asia. Geneticists have shown that there was interbreeding of these communities in Eurasia, but we do not know under what social conditions.

This narrative of human expansion is becoming familiar to students of world history. But what were the subsystems and sectors of the early, constructed social systems that stretched in a thin layer over such a huge terrain? What functions did these subsystems serve? Did they benefit the

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whole system or just specific social groups? The human system had no central brain, though many conscious individuals and communities were able to share information and develop consensus behavior. The biological subsystems of human groups continued, but were supplemented by social subsystems, expanding and subdividing functions. For the period before 30,000 years ago, while expanding human communities implemented many practical decisions, it seems that conceptual and social changes were the most numerous and most important. For instance, the social practice of migration enabled both the gene pool and the social archive to be widely exchanged among all human communities. Human reconfiguration of the material world would come later.

Biological and Social Systems: Theories of Their Evolution

A systems-based approach to world history provides a framework encompassing all of humanity yet focusing as well on its subsystems at every level and on its local elements. This approach has the advantage of encouraging analytical linkage of the earliest times with the most recent times; it also requires attention to human interaction with the many aspects of our environment.

The term 'system' has long been in the lexicon of many languages.[5] Not until the aftermath of World War II, however, did it become a formal topic of analysis. Norbert Wiener and John von Neumann led in developing formal theories of systemic relationships. Since then, systems thinking has developed many important applications. I have chosen to draw on four major elements of systemic and evolutionary analysis, with some further extensions: the "general systems analysis" of the biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, who published general statements from 1945 to 1976; James G. Miller's 1978 analysis of "living systems"; the investigation of "complex adaptive systems" from the 1980s; and study of human social evolution, especially by Peter J. Richerson and Robert Boyd.[6] I have combined these and other systemic approaches with my own thoughts to propose a framework for the human system that balances six principal elements[7]:

1. Humanity is a ***biological system***, evolving through *natural selection* within its genome.
2. Humanity is an ***open social system***, consisting of ***communities*** at all levels, evolving through *social selection*.

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3. ***Social evolution*** works through ***social selection*** via conscious choices.
4. ***Subsystems** of* humanity and its *communities* perform key ***functions***: reproduction, maintaining borders, processing matter and energy, and processing information.
5. ***Sectors***, each with characteristic *dynamics*, are constructed to expand the performance of functions within *subsystems*. These sectors are institutional structures that generate social behavior serving within a subsystem.
6. The ***constructed human system,*** in its growth and transformation, is the central object of study. The system exhibits a teleological drive to survive and to thrive.

Humanity as a biological system with its subsystems Humanity is a biological system at least in that it is made up of many individual human organisms. In addition, humanity is a biological species with a shared gene pool. Following earlier hominid evolution, today's humanity has undergone biological evolution in the rise of phenotypical variations that we sometimes identify as 'race,' and in the emergence of genetic adaptations such as the sickle-cell adaptation to malaria and the growth of lactase persistence among milk-drinking populations.

Biological systems function at multiple levels, from the cellular to the organism and on to the level of herds. Miller, in showing the analogies among all these levels of living systems, has proposed a list of 19 subsystems for any living system. Each subsystem performs a function necessary for the survival and reproduction of the system. For the case of an individual human organism, these are listed in Fig. 6.1, showing the *name* assigned to each subsystem, its *purpose* (or function), and *agents* (or *organs*) fulfilling the purpose.

Figure 6.1 shows that biological subsystems are neither neatly packaged nor discrete. The *output transducer*, to express the individual's choices and decisions to the environment, uses numerous agents—including voice, hands, feet, emotions, and more. That is, as Miller points out, the functions of certain subsystems are dispersed downward to the next level in the biological hierarchy, yet still serve as an overall subsystem. In addition, a single agent can contribute to several subsystems—as the mouth contributes to *ingest, extruder,* and *output transducer.* Subsystems, therefore, consist of all the elements combining to form each specific function: it is important not to oversimplify them.

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For the organism as a whole. *(1) Reproducer,* to produce the next generation [reproductive organs].
(2) Boundary – to separate the system from its environment [the skin].
For treatment of matter and energy. *(3) Ingest* – to bring materials from the environment [mouth, lung]. *(4) Distributor* – to circulate ingested materials [heart, blood and lymph vascular systems]. *(5) Convertor* – to convert ingested to usable materials [stomach, small intestine]. *(6) Producer* – to synthesize materials for growth, damage repair, replacement, or moving output [bone marrow]. *(7) Storage* – to store energy [fatty tissues, muscles, bones, lower bowel]. *(8) Extruder* – to remove products and waste from system [lungs, kidneys, ureters, rectum, anus, lungs, sweat glands, birth canal, breasts, mouth]. *(9) Motor* – to enable the system to move [muscles, bones, joints]. *(10) Supporter* – to support the system and to separate subsystems [skeleton, tendons, ligaments, muscles].
For treatment of knowledge. *(11) Input transducer* – to bring information from the environment [eyes, ears, nose, tongue, nerve endings]. *(12) Internal transducer* – to accept information within the system [polysynaptic regions of neurons, receptor cells]. *(13) Channel and net* – to carry information within the system [blood and lymph vascular systems conveying hormones, central and peripheral neurons]. *(14) Decoder* – to prepare information for decisions [cells in sense organs]. *(15) Associator* – to form associations (categorize) to start learning [brain]. *(16) Memory* – to store information for learning [brain]. *(17) Decider* – to receive information inputs and transform them to information outputs (to make decisions based on available information) [pituitary, spinal cord, brain]. *(18) Encoder* – to implement decisions within the system [brain, endocrine glands, elements for alpha, beta and& gamma coding]. *(19) Output transducer* – to implement decisions in the environment [endocrine glands, lips, tongue, palate, larynx, lungs, hands, feet].

Fig. 6.1 Biological subsystems of a human organism: names, purposes, agent organs

The human social system: levels (communities at various scales) and subsystems Systems created by social evolution function at multiple levels, as do biological systems. The most basic unit in social evolution is the human family or local community. Intermediate levels of social systems have arisen (language groups, voluntary associations, ethnicities, regional or civilizational cultures, plus states and international organizations). Figure 6.2 displays the case of the most basic social system, a *small community* (for instance, a language community or a residential community), showing the *name* of each Miller-type subsystem (the same 19 at every level of living systems), its *purpose* (or function), and the *agents* (individuals

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For the community as a whole. *(1) Reproducer* – to reproduce the community [adult members].
(2) Boundary – to separate community from its environment [selected community members and '"walls,"' both physical and metaphorical].
For treatment of matter and energy. *(3) Ingest* – to bring materials from environment [those who acquire food and resources]. *(4) Distributor* –- to circulate ingested materials [those who distribute food and resources].
(5) Converter – convert ingested to usable materials [those who transform food, fuel]. *(6) Producer* – to synthesize materials for growth or damage repair [artisans].
(7) Storage – to store matter-energy [those who store food or energy]. *(8) Extruder* – to remove products and waste from system [those who clean up]. *(9) Motor* – to enable the system to move [legs, boats]. *(10) Supporter* – to maintain spatial relationships among system sectors [persons, walls].
Information. *(11) Input transducer* – to bring information from the environment [scouts].
(12) Internal transducer – to accept information within the system [speech]. (13) *Channel and net* – to carry information within the system [messengers]. (*14) Decoder* – to prepare information for decisions [guides and interpreters]. *(15) Associator* – to form associations (categorize) to start learning [analysts]. *(16) Memory* – to store information for learning [senior group members.] *(17) Decider* – to receive information inputs and make decisions [decision-making persons or groups]. *(18) Encoder* – to represent decisions within the system [linguists, artists]. *(19) Output transducer* – to implement decisions in the environment [convey message of the group].

Fig. 6.2 Social subsystems of an early human community: names, purposes, agent groups

or social groups) fulfilling the purpose. In this case the environment of the system is the natural environment but also other human communities.

Human communities, starting with local communities, are *open* systems: they interact with their environment and they also depend closely on neighboring communities. This open-community structure has been essential for the multiple levels of communities: local, language-based communities; towns as they developed; ethnicities and monarchies; regional and civilizational groupings; and states (including monarchies, empires and nations). Because of the openness of community systems, the subsystems that perform functions for sustaining them are often *distributed* among communities or sectors. For instance, collection of food can be distributed across communities of foragers, herders, fishers, and farmers.

Comparing Fig. 6.2 with Fig. 6.1, we see that in some cases the agents performing various functions are very similar at both individual and community levels, while in other cases the agents are very different.

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The motor system for a community is much the same as for a human organism—legs of the individual. But the agents of social reproduction (adults) are very different from the agents of biological reproduction (individual reproductive organs). Further, the boundary of a human community at any level is much less precise than the skin surrounding an individual human organism. For the processing of information, we see that the internal transducer for human communities is speech, which is very different from the neural system of a human individual.

Social Evolution and Social Reproduction

Up to now, this discussion has focused on cross-sectional descriptions of living systems. We turn next to systemic evolution and transformation over time. For biological evolution in humans as in other species, nuclear DNA serves as the *archive* of genetic constituents and the *template* for replicating the organism and its elements. The *mechanism for change* in biological evolution is natural selection: mutations in DNA, caused by a range of mostly random factors, survive and spread if they are adaptive or at least neutral in genetic reproduction of the species.

Social evolution, while analogous to biological evolution in general, is quite different in its particulars: the social system changes through human agency rather than through biological mutation.[8] The four main steps of social evolution center on conscious choices, though each choice brings additional implications.

Innovation accelerated among humans especially because of the rise of fully articulated speech.[9] The interaction of people through speech brought interpersonal *discourse,* the exchange of information and sentiments. Discourse gave specific names to the elements of the world (nouns), to actions that can be taken (verbs), and qualifications of these (adverbs and adjectives). In this discourse, speakers engaged in specific *categorization* and general *representation* of their world. Through *categorization*, people selected terms and assigned meaning to them, thereby constructing knowledge about the social order, the natural world, and any subject imaginable. In *representation*, once people represented their world by coining thousands of words in language, they pictured aspects of their world in other media—dress, music, dance, visual art, and philosophy. In these discourses of categorization and representation, people communicated meanings with a mix of clarity and error, agreement and disagreement, information and misinformation. The result, however, was

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that individuals and groups repeatedly proposed innovations in conceptualization, social structures, and material life.

Archiving began as the process of selecting and preserving elements of the social order. The selection of innovations to preserve required a consensus articulated for the community. Discourse in communities could lead to consensus but also to extended debate between viewpoints: for instance, categorization could lead to the creation of spurious categories, yielding innovations of value to special interests but not to the human system as a whole. Out of these discourses developed *ideologies*, sets of ideas that served either to sustain or undermine a social consensus, often representing specific interests within a community. Overall, however, a process of *social selection* commonly led to a consensus in favor of adopting and preserving innovations.

The actual preservation of the archive began as the conscious, collective memory of community members, reinforced by the structure of social institutions. The inherited structures of society and the innovations of the current generation had to be preserved in some sort of archive and made accessible for the next generation. This human social archive—the social equivalent to the biological human genome—ultimately became more complex and more reliable, especially with the invention of writing.

Reproduction of the social order included all the ways in which the practices of one generation were passed on to the next, through the intermediary of the archive. The human system must reproduce itself roughly every thirty years, the average difference in age between an individual parent and child. Intergenerational learning is central to implementing the *template* that replicates existing society and its recent changes. In addition to the inherent patterns of child-rearing, such constructed social practices as initiation, apprenticeship, and education became essential to replicating the social order. The social archive and the template for reproducing the social order are less precise and reliable than are the workings of DNA. On the other hand, the mutations that launch biological evolution are largely random, while the innovations that launch social evolution are commonly conscious choices.

Deselection of undesirable practices is one more element of social evolution. For those innovations that have been archived and reproduced in later generations, some will turn out to be harmful. Once a consensus forms that they are unfortunate, an effort will be made to purge them from the archive. This is, in effect, an additional innovation intended to counter the earlier one.

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Communities, subsystems, and their sectors The human system is composed of overlapping and interacting communities, initially at levels of family, language group, and ethnicity. With time, communities expanded to towns, states, and empires. These communities, to survive and reproduce themselves, required *subsystems* functioning to perform the tasks of reproduction, maintaining boundaries, processing of matter and energy, processing of information. The human system, since it began, has maintained the same 19 subsystems—functions to be performed in each living system. Each subsystem, while necessary to the community and to humanity overall, became more complex as human society expanded. Rather than adding new subsystems, the process of social evolution worked by constructing *sectors* (with innovative functions) and adding them to the appropriate subsystems. This relationship among communities, subsystems, and sectors enabled technical and conceptual changes to fit into the underlying biological system of humanity.

Sectors of human subsystems and their dynamics Each subsystem performs its function through institutions that are here called *sectors*. But as social evolution brought change, learning, and complexity, inherent subsystems developed additional *sectors*. Language emerged as a *sector* constructed for use in the *internal transducer* and *decoder* subsystems of human communities. With early language communities as the principal social organizations, a given language was sustained by those who communicated and maintained a discourse within it.

Such sectors, while constructed by human agency, commonly function through dynamics that are inherent to the logic of the sector. Thus language inherently includes vocabulary, parts of speech, grammar, phonology, plus patterns of gradual change over time. In another example, the function of the *producer* subsystem is to synthesize materials for growth and repair. When agriculture arose it became a distinct sector, governed by the seasons and the characteristics of the various crops. A parallel sector within the *producer* system developed for animal husbandry, with its patterns governed by the breeding, pasturing, and exploitation of the animals. Much later, libraries arose as a sector within the *memory* subsystem: library dynamics rely on the logic of classification and access to resources. The novelty of each sector generated an appropriate sort of human behavior that fits the institution, as with weeding in agriculture and re-shelving in libraries. In the case of each sector, whether it addressed information or matter and energy, the relevant *subsystemic logics* could

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be encountered only by entering each of these new practices. The growing system of human knowledge developed many discrete disciplines of knowledge about the inherent character of many types of activity.

The constructed human system How have these numerous elements and sub-elements of the human system sustained the system as a whole? One big question inherent in Miller's scheme is about the functioning of the *decider*, the subsystem that is to make decisions based on available information. The answer, consistent with Miller's observations, is that the mission of higher levels is often performed by distributing tasks to lower levels. So it is with decisions in political, economic, cultural, and social arenas—the decisions are taken in a distributed fashion among overlapping communities, where contending views are expressed through ideologies, in a continuing debate on the degree to which they should be de-centralized or centralized.[10] Humans everywhere preserve the initial endowment of a common genetic archive and common social archive. Its persistence is reinforced by migration, enabling both the gene pool and the social archive to be widely exchanged among all human communities.[11] Together, these archives provide a platform for further social evolution. Even today, with superpowers and international organizations, we are far from having a unique 'decider' to answer all the big questions.

Dilemmas and Subsystems, 30,000–6000 BP

I return now to the narrative, describing the unfolding of human history in terms of the emergence of new sectors performing key functions in certain subsystems. Beginning 30,000 years ago, the nascent human system had to deal with wild fluctuations in temperature, humidity, and sea level: these climatic jolts continued for a full 20,000 years. Environments shifted everywhere. Massive fluctuations, both year to year and over the centuries, brought insecurity to every living thing. Glaciers advanced from the Arctic, covering most of Europe, much of North America, and expanding in mountains everywhere. Humid areas became dry and dry areas became desert; huge storms criss-crossed land and sea. Every species moved towards the equatorial zone and lower altitudes, with chaotic struggles for new habitat and needed resources.

Then, from the low point of the glacial maximum, the fluctuations turned in an upward direction. From 20,000 years ago the temperature and humidity rose slowly and then careened their way upward (but with

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a major reversal from 13,000 to 12,000 years ago). Plant and animal species moved from their concentration in equatorial zones, colonizing lands at higher altitudes and higher latitudes, though with reverses. Humans too expanded. Most likely, because of their improving technology and knowledge of the land, they expanded at the expense of other species, as by diverting watercourses or as with Australian burning of terrains to concentrate the animals to be hunted. Meanwhile, megafauna became extinct in several parts of the world at the time of the temperature reversal.

Rather remarkably, the period of climatic crisis from 30,000 to 10,000 years ago was also a period of extraordinary innovation in human society. More than a shift from foraging to agriculture or from Paleolithic to Neolithic tools, this era may be called 'the era of production' because it was in this time that societies supplemented their ancestral reliance on foraging, hunting and fishing with production of many sorts. Accompanying the technical innovations were surely crises in leadership, attention to the heavens in an effort to predict the weather, and efforts to understand the activities of spirits governing the unknown.

In systemic terms, the expansion of all these new productive activities added new *sectors* to the *production* subsystem. For instance, early pottery industries arose in the Jomon pottery of Japan and pottery of the Nile Valley. Construction of housing arose as a sector: the era of the glacial maximum is when many human communities moved from living in light shelters to constructing homes, constructed out of wood, stone, bamboo, mud, and skins. The development of agriculture based on wheat and rice has been recounted many times—each of these became another sector of production, with its own dynamics. Domestication of animals brought new sectors for chickens and for ruminants.

The *ingest* subsystem had to expand to incorporate all of the raw materials brought into agricultural and artisanal production: the capture of water for their crops through cisterns and aqueducts, obtaining fibers for weaving. The *distribution* subsystem had to expand to accommodate the growing exchange of commodities among communities. In the same processes, permanent communities consolidated: villages and towns brought new problems in leadership and in disposal of waste. Semitic-speaking migrants, from the upper Nile Valley, settled in the Levant and the Arabian peninsula; Indo-European-speakers, with eastern Eurasian ancestry, expanded west from Anatolia: these were *boundary* and *supporter* subsystems expanding with early Holocene migrations.

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Then—suddenly and seemingly for good—temperature and humidity stabilized about 8000 years ago. Temperature, humidity, and sea level stabilized to a degree that had not taken place for millions of years, remaining roughly stable from this point of the Holocene era until the present. Humans had to adjust to this change like all the others, but their adjustments provided the basis for millennia of expansion in human population and society. This stabilization occurred at the most fortuitous time for humans—in early stages of the agricultural age. Communities could now plan, within tolerable limits, for the changes in seasons, the rains, the availability of grazing lands, the availability of fish, and all the elements of their increasingly complex style of life. Under these circumstances, agricultural society was able to spread and innovate to a degree that might not otherwise have been possible, so that agriculture, herding, and fishing had become the dominant bases of human food production by the middle of the Holocene era. This shift to stability in climate could have been considered as a gift from the gods.

During the early millennia of climate stability (from 8000 to 6000 years ago), changes in the human system included the implementation of new productive sectors, such as the system of ox-drawn plows for wheat and barley farming, the development of paddy rice, the expansion of maize production, and expansion in farming yams. Towns arose, most famously Catalhöyök, which thrived in Anatolia from 9400 to 8200 years ago. One recurring question about this era is whether the rise of agriculture resulted in the creation of a gendered division of labor that put women in a permanently subordinate position. I suspect that, rather than a one-size-fits-all demotion of women to subordinate status in agricultural societies, there were numerous experiments and negotiated results in designing division of labor for the numerous tasks of agriculture and their interplay with other economic activities.

In the long period from 30,000 to 6000 years ago, human society developed numerous new sectors of production, so that foraging became subordinated to production of human resources. The rise of production brought the creation of numerous artisanal specializations. While social hierarchies had expanded in certain areas of life and in certain communities, to a large degree humans managed to keep differentiation within an overall framework of social equality. Human communities developed in roughly parallel fashion in widely separated parts of the planet—with differences among agricultural, pastoral, fishing, and foraging economies—all of them in contact with neighbors. Can one argue that there was a single

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human system in times when there was no direct contact between distant regions—for instance, between Mesopotamia and New Guinea? Were the indirect ties, mediated over centuries of migration and exchange, sufficient to sustain the human system of earlier times?

Diverging Scales of Social Order, 4000 BCE–1700 CE

The late Holocene era maintained the climatic stability of the preceding millennia. Sea levels varied by roughly one meter, as compared to the hundred meters of change from the Glacial Maximum to 8000 years ago. Still, climate change remained influential in this era. The Sahara was again desert by 4000 BCE. Later climate shifts included a cooling period from 1200 to 1000 BCE; the Medieval Warm Period 900–1300 CE; and Little Ice Age in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries CE. Overall, however, the continuing climatic stability of the Holocene would enable human society to continue on its trajectory of expansion and innovation.

The technical and social innovations in human societies, after accelerating in the late Pleistocene, continued to unfold into the Holocene. With time, however, these increasingly complex societies faced choices between two basic paths: whether to embrace the expansion of hierarchy or to continue in limiting hierarchy. In each case the analyst may ask, when did a top-down social dynamic begin, one in which efforts to create inequality became organized? And when did a bottom-up social dynamic begin, one in which those who were deprived in one way or another began to press for revision of the rules of society? To restate the questions. How would societies govern their greater complexity? Would it be possible to maintain the cohesion and egalitarian relations that had characterized earlier societies? On one side, the priority was to reorganize society in hierarchical terms, with clear identification of leadership and command. On the other side, time and again, societies chose to limit the expansion of hierarchy, governing the rise in social complexity with enhanced structures for shared decision-making.[12] (A third answer was given by a smaller group of societies that maintained old-style egalitarianism: they fit into broader humanity as specialized hunters and foragers.)

Many of the basic decisions seem to have been set during the 2nd millennium BCE. In what I will call the 'Old World core'—the region from the Mediterranean to North India, also including the Yellow River Valley—societies opted principally for hierarchical social systems. The details, of course, are more complex. The Harappan society of the Indus

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valley and the Minoan society of Crete developed major urban societies with minimal hierarchy, though both of these had disappeared by roughly 1300 BCE. The hinterlands of the civilizational centers—and perhaps the subaltern strata within the urban centers—may have preferred an egalitarian model but were caught up in the dominance of the great centers.

The later Holocene era was highlighted by the rise of hierarchical civilizations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Yellow River valley, and in Mesoamerica. In deference to the written calendars created in these communities—with beginning dates ranging from 6000 to 4000 years ago—my narrative switches calendars at this point.[13] The sectors of hierarchical civilization included monarchy, bureaucracy, religion celebrating the monarch, taxation of production, and administrative distribution of food, and monumental construction that commonly celebrated the state more than the community. Bronze metallurgy arose by 2900 BCE: relying on alloys of copper and tin, it sustained many technical advances. Writing systems, if created often, would seem to have survived only if nurtured by an elite literate class. Full writing systems arose in the form of Uruk's cuneiform by 3300 BCE, in Egypt's hieroglyphics by 2500 BCE, and in Chinese characters by 1200 BCE. These were the innovations of hierarchical civilization.

In other parts of the world, technical and social accomplishments expanded, though without such growth of social hierarchy. Construction in wood, stone, brick, and adobe expanded as towns grew. Watercraft developed with the addition of sails in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific. Public works of various sorts arose, as communities worked together for water management, mining, building protective walls, and constructing ceremonial sites. The steady mastering of fire brought production of ceramics to almost every region. Iron metallurgy emerged among artisans in Anatolia in roughly 1200 BCE, and shortly thereafter among artisans in India, in Vietnam, in three regions of Africa, and elsewhere. Iron, being more widely available than other metals, enabled metal use to expand not only in urban civilizations but in rural centers all across the Old World.

This same era brought great migrations of agricultural peoples, moving into both densely and lightly populated regions. From 4000 to 3000 BCE, rice-growing Austronesian-speaking migrants, having sailed in their outrigger canoes from the Chinese mainland to Taiwan, moved south to the Philippines and then settled both to the east and the west in the Indonesian archipelago. At much the same time, Bantu-speaking

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migrants, beginning at the frontier of today's Nigeria and Cameroon, began pushing their settlements to the south and east. Maize, fully developed by Mesoamerican cultivators by 4000 BCE, had spread to North and South America by 3000 BCE. Meanwhile, in northern Eurasia, speakers of Yukhagir languages moved from the Arctic shores of eastern Siberia, settling all the way west to the zone now known as Finland.

Two interesting cases show that the innovations in hierarchical and non-hierarchical societies could interact in surprising fashion. In both these cases, crucial developments in intermediate-level technology arose outside the centers of hierarchy, yet enabled hierarchical societies to expand all the more. First was the rise of writing systems among Semitic-speaking peoples. These systems, fully developed by 1400 BCE, may have been inspired by Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, but proto-Canaanite was quite different, relying on an *abjad* of just over 20 letters, each corresponding to the sound of a consonant. This workable system, usable by commoners, spread west with Phoenician language, providing the model for Greek and Latin scripts, and spread east with Aramaic, providing the model for the scripts of South, Central, and Southeast Asia. Second was the development of horse-drawn chariots with spoke wheels. These chariots, developed by the Central Asian peoples who had domesticated horses, sustained a culture of heroic warfare in their homeland for some time; eventually the war chariots ventured south to challenge the large states. In the era from 2000 to 1600 BCE, chariot warfare led to the conquest of Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. Indo-European neighbors of the Altaic-speaking inventors used chariots in their contemporaneous conquest of Iran and North India; China adopted chariots in about 1200 BCE. Chariot warfare brought changes on the battlefield and facilitated seizure and enslavement of exposed populations. Slavery, which already existed in West Asia, the Mediterranean, and South Asia, expanded and gained a more permanent place in the society of this great region. Horses, meanwhile, joined lions as symbols of state power.

In the Old World core, states erected numerous physical walls. The Great Wall of China and its preceding smaller walls were famous, however, in not really forming a dependable boundary between those on one side and those on the other. Still, wall-building continued in an effort to impose new categories on society. In addition, numerous metaphorical walls were created as well. They separated slaves, inferior castes, and certain ethnic groups as inherently different from those with privilege. In terms of human-system logic, the creation of physical and metaphorical

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walls took the form of extending the *supporter* subsystem, which structured the relations and divisions among sectors, in part to control the resources going to each. More broadly, the proliferation of walls revealed the increasing attention of communities to subdividing humanity into discrete and mutually exclusive categories. Thus, the physical labor that went into building the Great Wall gives a hint as to the social effort devoted to creating the metaphorical wall separating slaves from free people. In effect, this reasoning exaggerated the differences among groups and minimized the variations within groups. These metaphorical walls—defining codes of dress and codes of obeisance—came to play an important role in the elaboration of sectors that were intended to perform specific tasks within the human social system.

With such walls, sectors of *production* or *networking* could be created through rationalization, with a claim that this categorization created a social benefit when in reality it suited only the private need of some interest group. Sectors could be created, based on the needs of general social welfare, or on practical self-interest. Self-interest can be rationalized through ideological statements—principled and coherent but not necessarily valid views of society and its categories. Not uncommonly, religious justification was given to social categorization—in effect, making the argument that these divisions, constructed through human agency and sustained by social institutions, had their origin in nature and in the wishes of supernatural powers. At worst, the human creation of such sectors allowed cruel and pointless subjugation. If children, women, or people of a particular ancestry could be categorized in this way, they were open to ruthless treatment. On the other hand, gender relations, while often portrayed as fixed by law and tradition, must surely have varied according to the power of those on both sides of the gender divide, and because of the common interests shared by both male and female.

By the mid-1st millennium BCE, the Old World core had reached new heights of achievement, bringing three important new *sectors* to large-scale society: commerce, empire, and large-scale religion. As populations and levels of production rose in the Old World core, the long-standing systems of exchange came to be supplemented by commerce—that is, by trade relying on money, banking, marketplaces, ports, caravans, and resting spots. Coins were first created in roughly 600 BCE, and their use spread rapidly. The expansion in commerce spread commodities more widely, but it also created fortunes among merchants, reinforcing inequality and jealousy. As commerce spread, so did empires. The Achaemenid empire arose

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in 550 BCE, incorporating the pre-existing states of Persia, Mesopotamia, and the Levant, and setting up larger-scale administrative coordination. In three centuries came Alexander's conquest of the Achaemenids, and soon thereafter arose the Mauryan empire in India, the Qin empire in China, and the empire of Rome in the Mediterranean. Iron weapons were available to all of these conquerors, and horses led charges as a cavalry rather than with chariots.

The two new sectors of commerce and empire seem to have required a third sector: large-scale religion. The strains of commerce and empire, wealth and hierarchy, brought anxiety and unhappiness to many. In response, the era from the sixth century BCE to the seventh century CE brought the flowering of several important new religious traditions. Indeed, the empires and most of their capital cities were rather ephemeral, while several of the new religious traditions became permanent features of human society. Jainism, Buddhism, Mithraism, Christianity, Manichaeism, Islam, and other religions asked believers to consider all as the human community. These religions began not just as belief systems but also as social movements. An outstanding example of the influence of religion is the case of Asoka, ruler of the Mauryan empire, who experienced a deep change of heart after leading the bloody conquest of the kingdom of Kalinga in 261 BCE. He became a devout Buddhist and supported the expansion of Buddhism throughout his realm.

Each major religion had its initial key insight in spiritual and ethical understanding. But as religions encountered each other and competed for converts, they tended to adopt each other's institutional forms and interpretive styles—for instance, mysticism. In addition, as religions became associated with states, they came to adopt hierarchical values, while still not giving up their initial message of salvation. It is remarkable that religion outside of the literate zones of empires did not take the form of crusading visions of universal salvation. It may be that, in the areas beyond the empires, the questions of hierarchy and oppression were not posed in such forceful terms.

In the 1st millennium CE—after the decline of Rome, Han, and Mauryan states—the contrasts in hierarchy between the Old World core and other parts of the world declined. In part, practices of hierarchical societies spread to new areas; in part, the practices of egalitarian societies developed to more elaborated levels. Hinduism and Buddhism each spread into Southeast Asia as universal religions; Islam spread further into Africa and into northern Eurasia. Maritime activity expanded

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in the western Indian Ocean; then Sri Vijaya rose in the eighth century to become a Buddhist-oriented nexus of commerce from its base in Sumatra, linking south China and the Bay of Bengal. Austronesian mariners sailed the Pacific and across the Indian Ocean. Viking mariners sailed the North Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and across riverine Europe all the way to the Caspian. Major states developed in Japan, Korea, and Europe, great alliances of Turkish clans arose periodically in the steppes, kingdoms arose in the African savanna, the eastern coast of Africa, and the American highlands; a system of writing arose among the Maya. While the Islamic world and the Song state were the great powers of the world as of 1000 CE, Vikings led a major attack on Byzantine Constantinople and the Song state lost lands to the northern Liao and Jin states.

This expansion of states and commerce is usually interpreted as the diffusion of hierarchical, civilizational ideas from the core to adjoining regions. In contrast, it could be argued that regions outside the core had evolved hierarchies on their own. One way to distinguish the hypotheses is in the relative specificity of institutional forms: if the practices of Vikings, Sri Vijaya and Turks closely matched those of Mesopotamia, we have a clear case for diffusion; if the practices were substantially different, we have a case for local agency and development.

The years from 1200 to 1700 CE brought a calamitous global unification to human society, resulting from the compounded transformations of late Holocene societies worldwide. Regions were brought into tight connection, magnifying both the similarities and differences among them. This era of global crisis followed the warming trend of 900 to 1300 CE, which had brought good crop yields and growing population to regions all over the world. But the same trend enabled the rise of the Mongol Empire, which dominated over half of Eurasia from soon after 1200 to roughly the 1380s. The Mongols crushed Song China, eliminated the Abbasid Caliphate, reordered Eurasian politics and incited war for centuries to come—and expanded Eurasian trade ties on land and sea. Yet the Mongol regime was weakened by a disaster in health that spread beyond Mongol frontiers, as the Black Plague raged across Eurasia and into Africa in the mid-fourteenth century, causing devastating loss in population, best documented in Europe. Plague recurred thereafter, and temperatures fell steadily until the Little Ice Age of the seventeenth century.

On land, successor states sought to replicate the Mongol regime: the Romanovs and Ottomans came closest to success. By sea, maritime

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connections expanded throughout the Old World in the fifteenth century—and in the sixteenth century, European mariners came to dominate the Atlantic and span the Pacific. The 'Columbian Exchange' brought the transfer of many sorts of biota between the Americas and the Old World, and a disastrous decline in American populations from 1550 to 1650. Systems of colonial slavery expanded in the Americas and in Asia; African populations met limits and eventually declined because of the destructiveness of slave trade. Great fortunes were won and lost in developing an expanded commercial system that linked all areas of the world. Silver, from the highlands of the Andes and Mexico, facilitated the expansion of commerce and war on all continents. The total human population may well have declined in the period from 1350 to 1650: European regions declined and may have rebounded in that time period; other regions of the world are less likely to have rebounded by 1650.

The great religious controversies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be seen as responses to this restructuring of the world. The wars and evangelization campaigns of Protestants and Catholics focused on empire and commerce, but also on accommodating to the larger size and more complex past of the world as now understood. The contemporaneous great battles of Shi'a and Sunni, especially in Iran, and the struggles within Buddhism responded to the same tensions and global shifts. By roughly 1700, the reverberations of global interaction had become less severe for most regions, though Africa and the Americas still suffered. Systems of commerce, politics, and belief had accommodated to the new linkages. Even the Little Ice Age came to an end. The stage was set for the human system to begin an unprecedented era of expansion.

Human Nature: Can It Change? 1700 to the Present

During the past three centuries—'the modern era,' as one says—the human system has grown in many ways, contrasting sharply with the crisis and stagnation of the preceding centuries. Modern growth accelerated along many axes: in trade, population, communication, knowledge of the world, and more. Such growth, however, brought with it three great challenges. First was the concomitant growth in human inequality, for instance in the expansion of enslavement to a peak in the late nineteenth century or the divergence in wealth continuing to the present. Second was the developing ideological contest between the defenders of hierarchy, on one side, and the proponents of an egalitarian social order, on

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the other. Third was the confrontation, reaching crisis levels in the late twentieth century, with the ecological limits on the expansion of human society.

Growth and crisis in human society have elicited a concern about 'human nature,' the apparently inherent patterns of human behavior. There is fear that a biologically frozen human nature might render futile any effort to reform society, thus frustrating any efforts to limit war, inequality, and environmental destruction. In contrast, I see human nature as a summation of the behaviors generated in all of the social sectors constructed over the millennia. While behavior within each sector is generated by the specifics of its processes—on the assembly line, on the farm, or in a hospital—all of them, having been constructed, might therefore be regulated or reorganized. By this logic, human nature is in recurring and accelerating change. The question, then, is: what governs the overall balance of human behavior? Might a conscious social consensus seek to reform that balance?

I conclude by exploring the potential for successful human policy through some examples of recent social change. Modern-era growth has gone well beyond what economic indicators can show: the number enslaved grew to the seemingly impossible figure of some 50 million in the late nineteenth century, despite the course of slave emancipation during the whole century. The number of industrial wage workers grew to an even larger peak in the mid-twentieth century and then ceased growing. Human population more than doubled between 1700 and 1900, and then grew by a factor of four before 2000, in response to improved health care and nutrition. Even more rapidly, populations shifted from rural to urban areas, passing 50% urban shortly after 2000.

Ideological debate—the public discussion of social priorities—grew along with the era's expansion in commerce, empires, wars, and migration. While ideological discourse had long been influential at local levels and among the powerful, the expansion of literacy and communication media drew more people on every continent into public debate. The revolutions of the United States, France, Haiti, and Spanish America sharpened the class, national, and racial dimensions of ideology. Concurrently an economic 'Great Divergence' propelled Western Europe and North America ahead of other regions in wealth and levels of production. New types of physical power—steam, electric, and petrochemical—generated industrial output; wastes of all sorts flowed into the earth's environment. European notions of race and civilization, as expressed in popular writings, suggested

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that differences within these factors could be distinguished in a clear hierarchy with Europeans at the top and Africans at the bottom.

World War I was a clash over global leadership among recently constituted national polities. The victors were the United States, Britain, and France; the Soviet Union and Japan also gained in power. After the war, a constellation of ideologies and social groups struggled for global leadership: contending liberals and conservatives; the proletarian ideology of communist parties, the negotiating stance of socialists; and a dictatorial ideology. The notion of dictatorship, in which small elites governed through an industrial economy, gained dominance in a few industrial countries but was also imposed through colonialism on nearly half of the world's population.

The ancient choice between social hierarchy and equality thus reappeared—now on a fully global stage but with some new dimensions. Popular culture arose to articulate innovative support for egalitarian outlooks. What had been local folklore, subordinated to elite culture, grew to become an immense cultural industry, lionizing 'celebrities' and connecting cultural expression by millions around the world, in which many consumers can decide what media and what artist to enjoy. Further, the natural sciences accelerated the scale of their knowledge, broadening professional training and skill in science, engineering, and medicine; even the social sciences, though confused by ideological debate, developed important new knowledge.

To rephrase these changes in systemic terms, the human system added sectors in which these developments took place: new sectors of the productive subsystem for each new source of power; new sectors of the distribution sector with the rise of the gold standard; new sectors in the *decoder* and *associator* with the rise of scientific research and universities; new sectors in the *encoder* for global popular culture; new sectors of the social division of labor with the hardening of racial and civilizational boundaries. Some of these new sectors brought genuine advances in productivity; others rationalized the seizure of lands and the biasing of prices. In strategic systems terms, the competing ideologies can be seen as attempts to revise the *decider* function for humanity—rather than leave decisions to be distributed among communities, the ideologies proposed various ideas for centralizing humanity's decisions: in nations, political parties, or empires. World War II can be seen as a fight to the death among major ideologies, followed by a post-war recognition of the fragility of human society.

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The key benefit of human-system analysis is that it distinguishes *subsystems* (the inherent elements of a living system) from the constructed *sectors* within those subsystems—which generate specific and appropriate behavior for each sector. Thus the overall problem of human nature and behavior must be broken down into sector-specific behavior. Just as the sectors are constructed historically and can be deconstructed, the behaviors are constructed and can be deconstructed. Human-system analysis argues that we have the power to change ourselves and to meet the challenges we face.

To return to the narrative: the generation after World War II enjoyed three decades of life with a greater degree of economic equality, worldwide, than in the previous two centuries. This was also a time of substantial social welfare programs, the dismantling of empires, and rapid economic growth to rebuild after wartime destruction. The United Nations and its organisms took form, along with other international organizations: such international organizations had the potential to broaden decision-making by including more national units, but could also narrow decision-making by establishing elite-based bureaucracies. Yet in the post-war era as in other times, growth remained the one objective on which virtually all ideologies agreed. The experience of growth, accelerated in recent experience, brought an appetite for more—growth in the social order came to be seen as 'human nature.' Nevertheless, the expanding human order ran headlong into its disruption of the global environment, especially in rapid warming and in destruction of many species. This great systemic dilemma could not be easily resolved, because the ideology of growth had become deeply engrained.

From the 1970s, inequalities grew rapidly. An energetic ideological movement arose—a restated campaign for unregulated economic growth that came to be known as neo-liberalism. It eclectically linked the interests of the wealthy, corporate opposition to regulation, innovations in financial systems, banking interests, and electronic networks. Its influence was felt in structural adjustment programs restricting public expenditures in ex-colonies, privatization in Chile, deregulation in wealthy countries, then in new and risky financial instruments. Neo-liberals claimed their financial sector to be the center of economic growth and social advance, arguing that the incentives to amass profit in financial instruments reflected fundamental human behavior. Their approach precipitated the worldwide 2008–2009 financial panic and demanded that financial institutions avoid paying the costs of the panic. Neo-liberalism appeared able

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to veto the emerging consensus for human equality and remained unconcerned about the environmental crisis.

What future should humanity seek in responding to the crises of environmental destruction and human inequality? For the environment, is it feasible to renounce the addiction to growth? In this essay I have sought to demonstrate that humans have the agency to develop a policy—whether such a policy could succeed is a separate and difficult question. To offer a brief response, I call for an effort to achieve a *near-steady state*. In such a policy, humanity would draw a relatively constant amount of resources from the earth, thus permitting other spheres to renew themselves. If human innovation were engaged effectively enough, it might be possible to use those limited earthly resources more efficiently, so that individual humans and the human system could experience more broadly the quality of life. The objective of this sort of steady state, combined with the active application of innovations to improve social efficiencies, might show humanity a way to maintain and advance its level of living without destroying the planet on which we live. The objective would be to identify and deselect, from the human archive, the preference for growth and the preference for inequality.

If we admit that humanity is in trouble, do we agree on why it is in trouble? No—at least not yet. Understanding recent global growth entails a classic debate in agency vs. structure. It could be the task of large-scale social science to investigate this issue. If it could be shown that advancing health and expanded production were the achievements of elite imperial leaders, we would have our answer: human agency has caused our problems. On the other hand, if the growth of trade, population, and nationhood could be shown to result from the long-term and structural results of gradual linkage among global regions, we would have a different answer: structure of the human system has caused our problems. If it is the case that long-term structure rather than short-term agency has done the most to bring humanity to this dilemma, we are in even more trouble. Is it perhaps some of each? Since agency and policy are weak tools with which to correct the momentum of accelerating system growth, policy would need to be used in the most expert of fashions to slow or re-channel the momentum.

If it is the case that devotion to growth, greed, and inequality are localized and recently learned patterns rather than basic and inescapable human instincts, there is the possibility of rethinking and redirecting those energies. That is why it is important to distinguish biological

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evolution and social evolution as sources of human behavior. Thus, the voracious behavior that now dominates financial markets may not be the inherent behavior of all humans but, rather, the result of local incentives within the specific systemic sector of high finance. As for whether human nature can change, it can be shown that it is already changing. The creation of systemic sectors of human life, each with its specific dynamics, has generated behavior patterns specific to each sector. Social patterns have been reinforced over centuries and millennia, but much of the structure of society is new. This reasoning does not tell us what to do to change human society and human nature. But it does tell us that they are changeable, and tells us to look for changes that appear to fit human needs.

Notes

1. For an insightful overview of this issue, see James Burke and Robert Ornstein, *The Axemaker's Gift: A Double-Edged History of Human Culture* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995).
2. Temperature and sea level rose from the trough at 70,000 years ago until 60,000 years ago, then underwent a long, slow temperature decline until 30,000 years ago, when temperatures began declining rapidly.
3. See Christopher Ehret, "Evolution, Rupture and Periodization," in *Cambridge World History*, Vol. 1, ed. David Christian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 339–361.
4. Study of the genome of body lice, associated with clothing, showed that the lice species originated at least 83,000 years ago, in Africa. The African origin suggests that clothing was initially worn for display rather than for warmth. Melissa A. Toups, Andrew Kitchen, Jessica E. Light, and David L. Reed, "Origin of Clothing Lice Indicates Early Clothing Use by Anatomically Modern Humans in Africa," *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, Vol. 28 (2011): 29–32.
5. For instance, "The System of the World" (Isaac Newton, vol. 2 of *Principia Mathematica*) and *Systema Naturae* (Linnaeus, 1732).
6. Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, *General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications* (New York: G. Braziller, 1969); James G. Miller, *Living Systems* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978); Stanley Wasserman, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Linton Freeman, *The Development of Social Network Analysis: A Study in the Sociology of Science* (Vancouver, BC: Empirical Press, 2004); John H. Miller and Scott E. Page, *Complex Adaptive Systems: An Introduction to Computational Models of Social Life*

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(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Peter J. Richerson and Robert Boyd, *Not by Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Richerson and Boyd, eds., *Cultural Evolution: Society, Technology, Language, and Religion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013).

7. Further works in history and historical sociology have advanced the systemic conceptualization of history: Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, vol. 1 (New York: Academic Press, 1974); J. R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's-eye View of Human History* (New York: Norton, 2003); and David Christian, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003).
8. Miller correctly emphasizes the parallels among all living systems, especially in their short-term functioning. But in a choice that I find surprising, he did not distinguish between the long-term mechanism of change—that is, DNA-based biological evolution for cells, organs, organisms and animal groups, in contrast to the social evolution of human communities, societies, and humanity overall. In another surprising omission, his functional approach gives virtually no attention to conflict or disease in biological species or to war in humanity. If these deficiencies could be corrected, Miller's work would have wider relevance.
9. Innovation can also be seen as creativity in big or small new ideas, whether they are ultimately positive or negative in their effects.
10. Subsystems are too often misunderstood as coherent and neatly bounded—a common error in categorization: common errors in discourse exaggerate uniformity within groups and difference between groups.
11. Patrick Manning, "Cross-Community Migration: A distinctive human pattern," *Social Evolution in History*, Vol. 5 (2006): 24–54.
12. Kent V. Flannery and Joyce Marcus, *The Creation of Inequality: How Our Prehistoric Ancestors Set the Stage for Monarchy, Slavery, and Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 183.
13. My use of the calendar switches from years BP (or before the present) to the Gregorian calendar in its current usage, in which the years from 1 to the present are labeled CE (the Common Era) while earlier years are labeled BCE (Before Common Era). The Gregorian calendar—not the most accurate but the most widely used—is the current representation of precise calendars developed by careful observations of heavenly bodies, and it denotes the last 6000 years as a time in which human communities had gained a new level of ability to observe the natural world and to preserve and pass on those observations. (The period from 4000 BCE to 1700 CE in the revised Gregorian calendar corresponds roughly to the period from 6000 years ago to 300 years ago in the 'before present' calendar used informally in scientific discourse.)

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CHAPTER 7

Social and Cultural World History

Merry Wiesner-Hanks

Introduction

World history has been told in many ways: as a series of human/divine interactions; a saga of wars and conquests; an encyclopedic presentation of the rise and fall of empires; a sequence of biographies of virtuous or evil rulers; a succession of rising and falling dynasties; a heroic tale of intrepid men in ships; an inevitable march toward some type of paradise (or hell); a moral lesson for children and young people; an impersonal process of commodity chains, trade networks, labor systems, and other somewhat faceless material forces; a complex interweaving of flows and diasporas. These stories have been recited orally, represented visually, or recorded in writing for millennia, by amateurs and by professionals. Since the 1970s, however, the world history researched and written by professional historians and taught in schools and universities has primarily focused on political and economic processes carried out by governments and commercial elites, beginning with the river-valley civilizations

For references and detailed context, see Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *A Concise History of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

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of the ancient world and ending with contemporary international trade agreements and multinational agencies. It has had a powerful materialist tradition, in part because material objects seem relatively unproblematic to compare and connect across regions. This political/economic focus has been even more pronounced among the scholars who view world or global history primarily as the backstory to the globalization of the last several decades.

The emphasis on political economy has largely left out social and cultural history—and related fields that have developed within them—which along with world and global history have been the most important new approaches in history as a field over the last half-century. Through social and cultural history, the focus has broadened from politics and great men to a huge range of topics—labor, families, women and gender, sexuality, childhood, material culture, the body, identity, race and ethnicity, consumption, and many others. The actions and ideas of a wide variety of men and women, and not simply members of the elite, have become part of the history we know. To some degree, this broadening was a result of the changing demographics of professional history: social and labor history developed when working-class students entered universities and graduate programs in larger numbers, women's and gender history when women did, the history of sexuality when LGBT movements allowed scholars to reveal their sexual identities without losing their jobs. It would have been strange had it been otherwise. (Similarly, the expansion of world and global history, and of related approaches such as transnational, post-colonial, diasporic, and borderlands history, has been shaped by the scholarly diaspora, especially from universities with fewer resources to those with more, and by global migration patterns in general.) But the growth of social and cultural history has also resulted from changes in the interests and methods of historians, whatever their own background or identity.

Social history became a popular approach in the 1960s, and many historians used theory and methods from the social sciences, especially anthropology and sociology, to investigate the past, with a particular emphasis on the lives of ordinary people. This has continued, and now the tools to answer their questions—ranging from DNA analysis of tiny fragments of bone to quantitative studies of 'big data'—have become more sophisticated and varied. During the 1980s, history took a 'cultural turn', with many historians drawing on the ideas of literary and linguistic theory about the power of language to increasingly focus on the

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way things are 'represented' or 'constructed' in historical sources rather than searching for a reality behind them, a search that cultural historians regarded as naïve because sources always present only a partial picture. The cultural turn—which happened in other fields along with history—elicited harsh responses from other historians, however (including many social historians), who asserted that a focus on meaning and symbols denied the very real effects of oppression and violence, and also denied the ability of people to shape the world around them. Cultural historians, and cultural studies scholars more generally, argued that this was not so, but that their field was politically engaged because it critically examined the dynamics and cultural practices of power. The split between social and cultural historians has become less pronounced in the twenty-first century, as cultural historians increasingly treat their sources as referring to something beyond the sources themselves and examine social phenomena, and social historians incorporate insights about the importance of meaning. Thus today many historians would describe their approach as a mix of social and cultural history.

Social history and world history intersected very little as the two fields developed because the scale of their inquiries was generally so different, and cultural history and world history even less so because cultural studies was suspicious of comprehensive narratives and world history of an overemphasis on language. Since the 2000s, however, more connections have developed. In a 2007 forum published in the *Journal of World History* (which began as a session at the American Historical Association in 2005), for example, Peter Stearns commented that slavery and migration were social history topics on which there was solid comparative and transregional work, and proposed childhood as one theme among many in which the local studies favored by social historians would profit from an awareness of their relationship with much larger patterns. In the same forum, I pointed to studies of nationalism, marriage, and consumption, and Kenneth Pomeranz to histories of daily life, clothing, compulsory schooling, and port cities as topics on which there was beginning to be (and could profitably be more) work that was comparative or on larger geographic scales. All three of us noted that the social and cultural effects of imperialism, which included colonizers defining differences among people and then regulating their private as well as public interactions, and local people resisting or co-opting these measures, were becoming particularly fruitful subjects of analysis.[1] In a 2009 forum on transnational sexualities in the *American Historical Review*, Dagmar Herzog

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agreed, commenting that recent books on just one aspect of this process, "made it impossible to tell the stories of colonial projects of Britain, the Netherlands, or France without recognizing not only the sexualization of colonial encounters in the European imaginary and the intricate imbrication of local sexual and economic arrangements, but also the literal pervasiveness of 'cross-racial' sexual and familial intimacies of all kinds."[2]

Focusing on social and cultural topics within world history can thus be rewarding, but there are also some cautions. In contrast to material objects, social and cultural forms and categories appear more particular to individual societies, and have a very different meaning in different places. Thus trying to compare them or make generalizations seems to require glossing over differences and reducing complexities, the opposite of what social and cultural historians generally seek to do. Even basic terminology can be tricky, as, for example, 'middle class' in one place means something very different from 'middle class' somewhere else, to say nothing about the fact that 'class' itself is a social category invented by particular people at a specific time and place. In addition, in the world histories of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, making comparisons among social and cultural forms was often part of ranking them—groups were 'primitive' or 'advanced', cultures were 'civilizations' or they were not—and most contemporary historians try to avoid such rankings.

Comparing does not have to mean ranking, however, and historical analysis always involves comparison, if only the comparison between something at one point in time and at a later point, or between the past and the present. No question about change, continuity, causation, or connections can be answered without making comparisons. History also always involves generalization and a selection of evidence. Even the micro-histories that look very closely at one event or one individual leave things that the historian judges to be less important out, and suggest parallels with developments in different places or times. The search for patterns is what allows historians to create categories that can organize and make sense of the past. Thus, like the political/economic world histories of trade, commodity flows, and empires, social/cultural world histories can make comparisons and generalizations but also note diversities and counter-examples. You might think of this in musical terms, as a theme and variations.

Like any world history, one with a social and cultural focus must first wrestle with questions about time: where should the story start, and

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how should time be divided? Most world historians have de-emphasized the invention of writing as a sharp line in human history, dividing the 'pre-historic' from the 'historic'. With this the border between archaeology and history disappears, and the Paleolithic and Neolithic become part of history. Some expand their timeframes even further, and begin history with the Big Bang, thus incorporating developments that have usually been studied through astrophysics, chemistry, geology, and biology within what they term 'Big History'. (For an example of this, see the essay by David Christian in this volume.) A social and cultural world history might not start this far back, but it clearly needs to incorporate groups that did not leave written records, and—like all good world history—use a range of chronological and spatial scales, including, but not limited to, very large ones.

World historians also agree that we should always be conscious and careful about how we divide history into periods and determine which events and developments are key turning points, although they often disagree about those periods and turning points. Some argue, for example, that the modern world began with the establishment of the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century, while others would say that this happened in 1492, with Columbus's voyages, and still others in 1789, with the French Revolution. Other world historians would say that the search for one single point is misguided, because it implies there is only one path to modernity, or that the whole notion of 'the modern' is so value-laden that we should stop using the term. Those who emphasize social history are often uncomfortable using periodization drawn from political and military history, as the events of 44 BCE, 1066, 1453, 1644, 1789, 1917 and many other dates of assassinations, conquests, and revolutions may not have been much of a turning point in terms of basic social structures or the way that people spent their time. The events within the realm of social and cultural history that are often labeled 'revolutions', such as the Agricultural Revolution, the Scientific Revolution, or the Industrial Revolution, can be the basis of periodization, but they unfolded at a pace very different from that of political revolutions, and often at different times in different places, so they make this complicated.

Such complexities do not mean that world history should continue to be limited to political economy, however. Social and cultural matters are at the heart of big questions in world history today, from the Paleolithic—Did early *Homo sapiens* begin creating social institutions, art, and complex language as the result of a sudden cognitive revolution,

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or was this a gradual process?—to the present—Are technology and globalization destroying local cultures through greater homogenization or providing more opportunities for democratization and diversity? Social and cultural matters are also part of issues in world history that might seem to be about political economy, such as whether European dominance of most of the world in the nineteenth century was the result of accidents such as easy access to coal or learned behaviors such as a Protestant work ethic or competition. They are also central to looming contemporary global issues, such as poverty, ageing, and inequality, on which history can give us a perspective. Thus the narrative that follows is an attempt to see world history through a social and cultural lens.

Social and Cultural World History

Foraging and Farming Families to 3000 BCE

With the expansive chronology of world history, we can begin before there were humans, that is, before the evolution of the species *Homo sapiens*. Some of the scholars who study early hominins—the sub-family division within the hominid family that includes us (but excludes the great apes)—think any discussion of culture among hominins of the past that were not users of symbolic language is inappropriate, but others see symbolic thought expressed through objects and the human body itself millions of years before it was expressed orally, connecting very early hominins in social webs of shared understanding. They would say, then, that social and cultural history could start with the genus *Australopithecus,* small hominins that first evolved in Africa about 4 million years ago with bodies light enough to move easily in trees, but with hind limbs that allowed efficient bipedal motion. Australopiths first used tools and then began to make them; the earliest now identified are 2.6 million years old.

Around 2 million years ago, one branch of austrolopiths developed into a different type of hominin that later paleontologists judged to be the first in the genus *Homo*, often termed *Homo ergaster* or *Homo erectus*. They had a larger brain, narrow hips, longer legs, and feet that indicate they were fully bipedal, but here there is an irony: the slender pelvis made giving birth to a larger-brained infant difficult, and put a limit on how much the brain can expand before birth. Among modern humans, much brain expansion occurs after birth, and humans have a long period

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when they are completely dependent on their parents or others around them. Judging by brain size, that was also true for *Homo ergaster/erectus*, and groups may have developed multi-generational social structures for the care of infants and children. Small groups of *Homo ergaster/erectus* migrated out of East Africa to much of the rest of Africa, and then to Asia and southern Europe, adapting gathering and hunting techniques to the local environment. There is no clear evidence in the fossil record of symbolic thought among *Homo ergaster/erectus*—no decorations, no artwork, no sign of body adornment—but the fact that hand axes found over a huge area and a long period of time were symmetrical and uniform may not have been simply a matter of practicality, but also a conceptualization of what was 'good', a cultural value.

The genus *Homo* continued to evolve, and by about half a million years ago a species called *Homo heidelbergensis*, found throughout much of Afroeurasia, used pigments and regularly controlled fire in cooking hearths. Cooking had enormous social and cultural consequences. Cooking causes chemical and physical reactions that make food taste (and smell, which is essential in taste) better, leading to eating together in a group at a specific time and place, which increased sociability. Because it expands the range of possible foodstuffs, cooking encouraged experimentation, and may also have encouraged symbolic thought, as cooked foods often make us think about something that is not there. Both cooking and eating can also be highly ritualized activities.

The most famous early species in the genus *Homo*, the Neanderthals, lived throughout Europe and western Asia beginning about 170,000 years ago, using complex tools that enabled them to survive in diverse environments and climates. They built freestanding houses, controlled fire in hearths, lived in kin groups, sometimes buried their dead carefully, and occasionally decorated objects and themselves with red ochre clay, providing evidence to many scholars of symbolic thought and cultural creativity. DNA evidence indicates that along with mating with one another, Neanderthals also occasionally had sex with a new species that had evolved in East Africa and then spread: *Homo sapiens*.

Archaeologists distinguish *Homo sapiens* (what they term 'modern humans') from other hominins by a number of anatomical features, which show up first in fossilized remains from Ethiopia from about 195,000 and 160,000 years ago. Paleontologists and archeologists suggest that *behavioral* modernity, which involves long-range planning, rapid development of new technologies, a wide use of symbols, and

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broad networks of social exchange, evolved somewhat later, either as a gradual process or as the result of a 'cognitive revolution' that happened about 50,000 years ago. Behavioral modernity was linked to more complex oral language, which allowed for stronger networks of cooperation among kin groups, the formation of larger social groupings, and the development of a wider range of products and ways of using them. New technologies and ways of using them were (and are) not simply invented to address material needs, but also to foster social activities, convey world views, gain prestige, and express the makers' ideas.

Homo sapiens moved into areas where there were already other types of hominins, including Neanderthals, who lived side by side with the immigrants for millennia, but then lost the competition for food (or were killed). Humans then moved further, using new technologies such as boats, and eventually reaching the Western hemisphere and many islands of the Pacific. They lived in small groups of related individuals—what anthropologists refer to as 'bands'—who moved through the landscape foraging for food, using tools of wood, sinew, bone, and stone, from which later scholars gave this era its name: Paleolithic, or Old Stone Age. Most of what foragers ate were plants, and much of the animal protein in their diet came from foods gathered or scavenged, although they did hunt large game; both hunted and gathered foods were cooked. They most likely had some type of division of labor by sex, and also by age, though this was flexible, particularly during periods of scarcity. Clothing was often decorated with beads made from shells, teeth, and other hard materials, and the placement of these in undisturbed burials indicates that the clothing of men and women was often different, as was clothing at different stages of life. Thus gender and age had a social meaning, and mortuary rituals conveyed this; burials, rock art, and carved objects also conveyed other social messages, and suggest that people thought of their world as extending beyond the visible to an unseen world of spirits.

Small bands of humans were scattered across broad areas, but this did not mean that each group lived in isolation. Their travels in search of food brought them into contact with one another, not simply for talking, celebrating, and feasting, but also for providing opportunities for the exchange of sexual partners. People sought mates outside their own band, a practice termed exogamy, and bands became linked by bonds of kinship, which in a few places has been traced through the study of bone chemistry.

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Bands of foragers may have been exogamous, but as humans spread out over much of the globe, kin groups and larger networks of interrelated people often became relatively isolated from one another, and people mated only within this larger group. Thus local exogamy was accompanied by endogamy at a larger scale, and over many generations human groups came to develop differences in physical features, including skin and hair color, eye and body shape, and amount of body hair. Language also changed over generations, so that thousands of different languages were eventually spoken. Groups developed differences in all aspects of culture, including foodways, rituals, and clothing, and passed them on to their children, further increasing diversity among humans. Over time, groups of various sizes came to understand themselves as linked by shared kinship and culture, as a people, ethnic group, tribe, race, or nation different from other groups with a conscious common identity. Differences between groups were (and are) often conceptualized as blood, a substance with deep meaning.

Foraging remained the basic way of life for most of human history, and for groups living in extreme environments, such as tundras or deserts, it was the only possible way to survive. In some places, however, the natural environment provided enough food that people could become more settled, especially beginning about 15,000 years ago, when the earth's climate entered a warming phase. Archaeological sites in many places begin to include storage pits and other sorts of containers and more permanent housing, indicating that people were intensifying their work to get more food from the surrounding area instead of moving. This sedentism used to be seen as a result of the plant and animal domestication that historians use to separate the Paleolithic from the Neolithic (New Stone Age), but in many places it preceded intentional crop-raising by thousands of years, so the primary line of causation runs the other way: people began to raise crops because they were living in permanent communities. Thus people were 'domesticated' before plants and animals were. They developed socioeconomic and sociopolitical structures for village life, such as ways to handle disputes or make decisions about community resources, which they then adapted when they changed their subsistence strategies to agriculture.

Sedentary villagers first began intentional crop-planting in the area archaeologists call the Fertile Crescent, which runs from present-day Lebanon north to Turkey and then south to Iraq. They used the digging sticks, hoes, and other tools with which they gathered wild wheat

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and barley to plant seeds, selecting seeds to get crops that had favorable characteristics, such as larger edible parts or kernels clustered together. Through this human intervention, certain crops became domesticated, that is, modified by selective breeding so as to serve human needs. By about 9000 BCE, many villages in the Fertile Crescent were growing domesticated crops, and a similar process—first sedentism, then domestication—happened elsewhere as well: the Nile River Valley, western Africa, China, Papua New Guinea, Mesoamerica, and perhaps other places. Crop-raising spread out these areas, and slowly larger and larger parts of Asia, Africa, and the Americas became home to farming villages. Farming increased the food supply and the population grew, but farming also requires more labor, which was provided both by the greater number of people and by those people working longer hours.

Farming increased the division of labor within communities, as families became increasingly interdependent, trading food products for other commodities or services. Technologies of storing and cooking, including baskets and fired clay pots, developed alongside those of food production, and food preparations, especially for celebrations and feasts, became more elaborate. Clay pots were also used for preparing, storing, and transporting fermented food and beverages, including cheese, beer, and wine, whose production began about the same time as farming itself. Alcohol became part of social events and its consumption was often ritualized, with beer and wine among the offerings given to spirits and deities.

At roughly the same time that they domesticated certain plants, people also domesticated animals, first the dog (which fits within a foraging lifestyle) and then goats, sheep, pigs, guinea pigs, and various sorts of poultry, breeding all these selectively for qualities that they wanted. They learned that animal manure increases crop yields, so they gathered the manure from enclosures and used it as fertilizer. Animal-raising was not sedentary everywhere, however, for in drier areas, flocks of sheep and goats were herded (often using dogs) long distances, and a new form of living was created based on herding—pastoralism. In some places people domesticated certain large animals, including cattle, horses, donkeys, and water buffalo, who would carry people on their backs and pull against loads and could thus be used for plowing, transport, and conquest.

Agricultural communities showed signs of increasing social and gender differentiation, with multiple pathways leading to wealth and power: links with the world of gods and spirits, positions as heads of kin groups

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or tribes, or personal characteristics. Wealth could command labor directly, as individuals or families could buy the services of others to work for them, and eventually some individuals bought others outright. Slavery predates written records, but it developed in almost all agricultural societies, as did patriarchy, the social system in which men have more power and access to resources than women.

Social and gender hierarchies were enhanced over generations as wealth and power were passed down unequally. The inheritance systems through which goods, especially land, passed from generation to generation tended to favor men, although the drive to keep property within a family or kin group sometimes resulted in women inheriting, owning, or managing significant amounts of wealth, a pattern that continues today. As inherited wealth became more important, men wanted to make sure that their sons were theirs, so they restricted their wives' movements and activities. Elites began to think of themselves as a group apart from the rest with something that made them distinctive—such as connections with a deity, military prowess, and natural superiority. They increasingly understood this distinctive quality to be hereditary, and, like membership in an ethnic group, to be carried in the blood. Thus along with distinctions *between* groups that resulted from migration and endogamy, distinctions developed *within* groups that were reinforced by social endogamy, what we might think of as the selective breeding of people.

By 3000 BCE, humans were the only surviving hominins, and had migrated to all of the large land masses of the world (except Antarctica), and many of its islands. They brought with them symbolic language, kinship structures, technological inventions, food preferences, aesthetic and moral values, rituals, and divisions of labor, creating distinct cultures reinforced by endogamy. All the aspects of human society that people carried with them played a role in the domestication of people, plants, and animals that marked the Neolithic, and were themselves affected by that domestication. Agriculture and animal domestication allowed the population of farming communities to grow much faster than those of foragers, and resulted in a wide-spread common social pattern in which a small elite of land owners, religious specialists, and military leaders lived from the labor of the vast majority, who spent their lives raising crops. Like boundaries between cultures, social and gender hierarchies within cultures were reinforced by endogamy and other marital and inheritance patterns, and also by force, religion, norms, and oral traditions.

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Cities and Classical Societies (3000 BCE–500 CE)

Toward the end of the 4th millennium BCE, some agricultural villages began to grow into cities: first in Mesopotamia and Egypt, then in China, Africa, Southeast Asia, Mesoamerica, and South America. In each of these regions, cities developed independently, and in many places urbanism spread, with cities multiplying and growing, but also shrinking and disappearing. In some places, writing and other information technologies transformed the oral communication of ideas into written law codes, religious texts, and philosophical systems, creating distinctive and long-lasting cultural traditions that were later labeled 'classical'. Although politically classical societies ranged from tiny city-states to giant empires, cities, writing, and formalized social hierarchies were important features of all of them. From the growth of the first cities about 3000 BCE to what is traditionally viewed as the end of the classical period about 500 CE, most people continued to live in small agricultural villages, or moved around the landscape as foragers or pastoralists. But for those who wanted change, cities were the place to be.

Cities became ceremonial as well as economic centers, with special buildings or sacred precincts for regular public performances and rituals. They began to assert control over the surrounding hinterland, forcing residents to supply some of their agricultural surplus to the city. Cities were crowded with people and animals, and they became breeding grounds for diseases. They all faced the same central challenge: reliably feeding a large population in a sustainable fashion. To do this they developed structures of power and authority that ranged from highly centralized to less hierarchical. Ancient cities were often divided into quarters, districts, or neighborhoods; these may reflect pre-existing social divisions such as kin groups, but they also grew out of new divisions fostered by the city itself, such as craft specialization or allegiance to a particular temple. Cities provided opportunities for social and economic mobility, both up and down.

Writing began in cities, not as a way to record speech, but to record data, such as ownership, taxes, and events in the lives of elites: it was an information technology devised to store and retrieve information across space and time that later became a communications technology. Writing was invented independently in at least three places—Sumer, China, and Mesoamerica—and perhaps in many more, and it spread from the places it was invented just like any other technology, through

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conquest, trade, and imitation. Writing began as pictures or symbols that represented things and concepts, and some writing systems remained that way, but in some places symbols that stood for sounds were gradually added, and around 1800 BCE the first fully phonetic writing system was invented in the Sinai peninsula. It spread and was modified, so that alphabets based on this simpler phonetic system were developed around the Mediterranean and east to Central and South Asia. Learning to read and write still took a number of years, however, which meant that this remained a skill limited to members of the elite, religious personnel, and professional scribes, most of whom were male.

States grew in scale in the ancient world, almost all of them hereditary monarchies, in which those who held power were regarded as members of one kin group, and bolstered by ideologies connecting the rulers to heroic figures or gods. The legitimate handing on of authority was understood to proceed through a dynastic succession, normally through the male line. Thus the rise and fall of states is also a story of the rise and fall of lineages, that is, social groups maintained through sexual relationships that produced children who could legitimately inherit. For rulers, marriage was an important tool in forming political networks and consolidating territory, and they depended on their family members for many aspects of government.

Further down the social scale as well, procreation and property were the family's intertwined core threads. Because marriage linked two families as well as two persons, the choice of a spouse was much too important a matter to be left to young people to decide. Marriages were most often arranged by parents, other family members, or marriage brokers, although arranged marriage did not always preclude the possibility of spousal affection and romantic love. In most urbanized societies, living arrangements for spouses were patrilocal: the bride came to live in or near the ancestral home of the groom, or in a place determined by his family rather than hers. Early states attempted to regulate family life through law codes, which often had provisions about inheritance, property transfer, adultery, premarital sex, and a host of other family and sexual matters. The husband/father was envisioned as the dominant person economically and socially in the household, but women, especially widows, may have made more family decisions and controlled more of what went on in the household than laws alone would indicate. Among agriculturalists, pastoralists, and foragers who did not live in states, kin

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groups remained powerful, although marital patterns and the resultant living and ownership arrangements varied widely.

States generated new patterns of social inequality, expanding on those that emerged in agricultural villages, and often codifying these in written law. Philosophical and religious texts discussed these hierarchies, justifying them with reference to the gods or to nature. Among the most complex and enduring of these social hierarchies was that which developed in South Asia during the millennium from 1500 to 500 BCE, which in English came to be called the caste system. The most pervasive social distinction in the ancient world was that between slave and free, as slavery could be found in every state and in many tribal societies. Slaves came from every ethnic group, and included captives of war, raids, piracy, and abductions, as well as people enslaved for debt, sold by their families, or who sold themselves into slavery because of extreme poverty. The labor that slaves did was diverse and flexible, but everywhere slavery depended on the communal recognition that some individuals owned others as property.

Writing was invented for bureacratic and political purposes, but in the middle of the 1st millennium BCE, religious and philosophical traditions were increasingly systematized and often written down. These included those of Confucius in China, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in Greece, the Hebrew prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the second Isaiah, and the Buddha and Mahavira (the founder of the Jain faith) in South Asia. The ideas and moral teachings of these thinkers were recorded, copied, recopied, studied, commented on, and expanded until they became foundational cultural traditions. Some of these, such as Buddhism, were spread by their adherents through intentional missionary work, and others traveled through migrations, invasions, and trade, becoming transformed in the process. Beginning in the first century CE, Christianity, based on the teachings of the Jewish thinker Jesus of Nazareth and spread by missionaries and converts, also took root and expanded in the cosmopolitan world of the Roman Empire, gradually becoming more formalized and hierarchical by adopting much of the organization of the Roman state. When the Western Roman Empire collapsed in the fifth century, Christianity survived, just one of many cultural traditions created in the ancient world that turned out to be extremely resilient. That group also includes Confucianism, which has survived every political change in China, minor or major, and profoundly shaped other parts of East Asia as well. In fact, the social forms and cultural traditions

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created in the urbanized agricultural states of the ancient world remain very powerful today, as now more than half of the world's people live in cities—a milestone reached only in 2008—and every one of them lives in states, or as we now term them, nations.

Expanding Networks of Interaction, 500 CE–1500 CE

Goods, people, and ideas travelled in the ancient world, but in the millennium that followed various regions of the world became even more integrated through conquest, trade, migration, conversion, and pilgrimage. Networks of exchange were larger and denser in the eastern hemisphere than in the western, but products, ideas, and technologies traveled in the Americas as well.

Islam, a new religion founded by the religious reformer and visionary Muhammad (ca. 570–632), created one of the largest and most important of these networks. Carried by its followers from its homeland in the Arabian peninsula over vast distances, sacred texts, spiritual practices, and legal principles bound the Dar al-Islam together, though the incorporation of existing cultural forms and social structures led to great diversity and often bitter hostilities between varieties of Islam, interwoven with political conflicts between rival Muslim states as well as with their non-Muslim neighbors. By 1500 the Muslim world stretched from the Songhay Empire in West Africa to island Southeast Asia, with a broad range of practices, rituals, and norms of behavior, which were sometimes shocking to Muslims from other places. Muslim scholars in Baghdad and Córdoba built on Greek, Persian, Jewish, and Indian knowledge, a cosmopolitanism that conservative moralists opposed. The mystical movement known as Sufism emphasized personal spiritual experience and emotional rituals, which some learned theologians thought led people away from the essentials of Islam. Social practices also varied widely. For example, women's seclusion was common in the Arabian peninsula and South Asia, especially among wealthy urban women, while in Western Africa, Southeast Asia, and the central Asia steppes, Muslim women often worked, socialized, and traveled independently and in public view. (Restrictions on women's mobility and visibility were not limited to Muslim areas, but increased elsewhere as well in this era).

Most states in this era, as in the ancient world, were monarchies ruled by hereditary dynasties, and with monarchies came courts—communities of individuals around a ruler that both exercised and represented

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power, thus with both practical and symbolic functions. Courts became places where authority was delegated through a hierarchy of offices, military and political decisions were made, and decrees and laws were issued. They varied greatly in size, complexity, and structure, but all were centers of cultural production, conspicuous consumption, and family and factional intrigue, with intense competition for power and prestige. Courtly splendor was created by local artisans and by merchants who imported prestige goods from far away, and paid for by the increasingly systematic collection of taxes and rents on villagers, and in some cases by a flow of war booty. Rivalries and status insecurity gave rise to particular codes of behavior and cultural ideals that sought to teach courtiers—and particularly male courtiers—successful skills to survive and flourish. Romantic love became part of the noble ideal in some of these codes of behavior, depicted in poetry, prose, and paintings, but it was not tied to marriage, which was far too important as a social, economic, and sometimes political arrangement to leave up to personal passions.

Rulers and their officials developed ceremonies, rituals, and other activities that made the special nature of the monarch and his (or occasionally her) connection to the cosmic and social order visible, creating a bond between a ruler and his subjects, from the highest to the lowest, and reminding everyone of their place. Monarchies survived in this (or any) era more because people accepted that the hierarchy through which power was administered was legitimate than because of authoritarian power at the center. Through the creation and repetition of myths of origin and other shared traditions, rituals also reinforced the sense of a conscious common identity among the ruler's subjects, the sense that they were somehow one people. Many of the individuals at court were members of land-holding hereditary aristocracies, who also had judicial, political, military, and economic responsibilities away from the court. In a number of places, including Japan, many Muslim states, and much of Europe, aristocrats were, in fact, quite independent during this period.

The expansion and intensification of sedentary agriculture picked up pace in this era, and by 1500 agricultural villages and domesticated plants and animals could be found over far more of the globe than they had been in 500. Rulers were one force behind this expansion, though people also decided on their own to migrate, sometimes sailing across vast distances of open ocean, or sometimes simply walking a short distance and carving new fields out of forests or marshes. Maize agriculture spread across much of North America, manioc across Amazonia,

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yams and sorghum in Africa, irrigated rice paddies in Southeast Asia, and taro, bananas, coconuts, and breadfruit across the Pacific. Social and gender distinctions permeated many aspects of village life, including work, property ownership, inheritance, and rituals. Fathers and mothers taught their children how to carry out the tasks they would be expected to do, and the traditions that otherwise structured their lives. Many of these traditions were undergirded by beliefs about deities, spirits, and sacred beings, whether those of universal religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, or Islam, or of local religions.

States based on settled agriculture did not triumph everywhere, however, as mounted nomadic pastoralists extended their authority over vast swaths of Eurasia. Central Asian steppe peoples, organized into clan and tribal groups, followed set migratory paths based on the climate and seasons, using horses to herd sheep, goats, and cattle. One of these peoples, the Mongols, created the largest land-based empire the world has ever seen through military conquest, then held it by mobilizing resources—both human and material—from the agricultural regions that came under their control. The extensive forced and voluntary migrations of men and women within the Mongol Empire led to sexual relationships and marriage across all kinds of lines—linguistic, cultural, tribal, religious—which served as important means of cultural exchange and hybridization.

The Mongols were nomadic, but in the thirteenth century they built a new capital city, Dadu (also known as Khanbaliq), the heart of modern Beijing. Other major cities also arose or expanded in this era, including Baghdad, Cairo, Córdoba, Hangzhou, Kaifeng, Anghor Thom, Delhi, Vijiyanagar, Constantinople, and Paris in the eastern hemisphere and Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlán in the western. Along with the urban government itself, corporate bodies were established in many cities, and they regulated the production of goods and services, provided support for religious personnel and buildings, patrolled city walls and streets, opened and ran educational institutions, and carried out a variety of other activities.

Cities pulled in people, especially young people, from the countryside with the promise of economic opportunity and social mobility, a promise on which they sometimes actually delivered. Scholars, artists and artisans congregated in cities, where wealthy patrons commissioned paintings, sculpture, books, devotional aids, and other objects, and people of all classes purchased whatever they could afford. Cities were not egalitarian; the larger they were, the more elaborate the social hierarchy. These

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ranged from wealthy merchants, officials, and professionals at the top to artisans, students, and shopkeepers in the middle to servants, day laborers, porters, peddlers, and (in some cases) slaves at the bottom. People of all sorts, from beggars to wealthy merchants, regularly rubbed shoulders, but social standing and sometimes occupation were clearly indicated by people's clothing. The economic situation of many people in cities was precarious, and a rise in food prices—on which the poor spent a majority of their income—could be devastating. Religious and charitable institutions provided support for the poor in some cities, but beggars were everywhere.

Religion and trade motivated more people to travel after about 1100 than had before. The largest trading network in this era was that across Eurasia, which encompassed the Muslim, Buddhist and Christian ecumenes, and both facilitated and was in turn enhanced by the spread of these religions. Christian monks and missionaries built churches, gained converts, and acquired land from Iceland to Beijing, and in many places Christianity became a powerful institution with links to ruling elites. It assimilated certain aspects of existing religious practice, and developed variants in different geographic areas in terms of doctrine, rituals, language, and organization. Itinerant monks and merchants carried Buddhist teachings, texts, relics, devotional objects, and images widely, creating a polycentric world that extended from the western steppes of Central Asia to the towns and mountains of Heian Japan. In both Christianity and Buddhism, monasteries ran schools, engaged in charity, provided lodging for travelers, and became major centers of art and learning. Pilgrimage was one of the duties of a believer in Islam, and Buddhism and Christianity also encouraged pilgrimages to holy places.

Throughout much of Eurasia professional merchants moved cargoes of more varied commodities longer distances and served a wider consumer base than could have been imagined several centuries earlier. This included luxuries and prestige goods, such as spices, gold, jade, and porcelain, but also basic foodstuffs and bulky goods, such as rice or wheat. Traders also regularly crossed the Sahara, sailed the South China Sea, and paddled the rivers and coastlines of Mesoamerica, creating regional and transregional networks. Wherever they came from and wherever they went, merchants bought and sold slaves along with other merchandise. Most professional merchants were male, as trade requires access to trade goods and the ability to move about, both of which were more available to men, although women often traded locally or regionally, and

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some women married in-migrating merchants. These marriages facilitated trade, and also served as ways in which religious ideas and rituals or other cultural practices traveled and blended. By the end of the fifteenth century Europeans were becoming more active players in the competition for trade with the East, and searching for new routes. In 1492, three small ships, captained by the Genoese adventurer Christopher Columbus and bankrolled by the Spanish crown, landed in the Caribbean.

A New World of Connections, 1500 CE–1800 CE

By crossing the Atlantic and then the Pacific, European ships linked the eastern and western hemispheres, whose biospheres had evolved independently from each other for tens of thousands of years. This allowed the transfer of plants, animals, germs, and people in new directions over vast distances, with consequences that were both disastrous and beneficial, a process that in 1972 the environmental historian Alfred Crosby termed the 'Columbian Exchange'. Prime among the disastrous effects of the Columbian Exchange was the spread of disease from the Old World to the New, including smallpox, malaria, typhus, influenza, measles, mumps, diptheria, bubonic and pneumonic plague, and scarlet fever. Estimates of the total population decline within the first century after European contact is about 90%. Disease allowed the Spanish to defeat the weakened Aztecs and created turmoil in the Inca Empire, which made it easier to conquer. A period of climate extremes, especially the cold period known as the Little Ice Age that lasted from about 1500 to about 1850, contributed to crop failures, which led to increased mortality, reduced fertility, and lowered resistance to disease in the eastern hemisphere as well.

Soldiers, traders, workers, and settlers traveled the same routes that diseases did. In the sixteenth century, Spain built the largest colonial empire in the western hemisphere, and Portugal established a colony in Brazil. The Spanish and Portuguese set up agricultural plantations, built Christian churches, and mined precious metals in empires with mixed populations of Europeans, Africans, and indigenous people. Overseas conquests gave Western Europe new territories and sources of wealth, and also new confidence in its technical and spiritual supremacy. In Eastern Europe and across Asia, conquests in the sixteenth century created large land-based empires, many of which also fostered trade.

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The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought the further expansion of empires and new patterns of conquest, colonization, and trade. Other European powers, including the English, French, Dutch, and Swedes, contested Spanish dominance in the Americas and moved into its northern regions, farming, trapping, and fishing. Han Chinese farmers settled in Central Asia with the expansion of the Qing Empire; Russian fur-traders moved into Siberia; the Ottomans expanded into Europe and around the Mediterranean and the Mughals into South Asia, spreading Islam and creating new institutions of governance. Global trade also expanded, fueling a 'consumer revolution' in many places as wealthier households bought imported luxuries and the less well-off cheaper imports or locally-produced knock-offs, all with an eye to changing fashions in dress and household goods. These might be paid for with Mexican silver pesos, which circulated globally.

This global trade network was an essential part of the expanding capitalist economic system, first organized by family companies or among groups that shared close cultural connections, then by large joint-stock companies of unrelated individuals. In many places money made in trade was invested in land, which was expected to make a profit. Landowners encouraged or forced the peasants who farmed their land to raise cash crops alongside or instead of staple food crops, or they switched to raising sheep or other animals if this would generate a higher income. Land that had been held collectively or by customary use became private property, which happened in North America as European settlers moved westward and occupied Native American land and in Central Asia as Chinese settlers also moved west and began farming land that had been the grazing grounds of nomadic pastoralists.

Colonial empires were created by military force, and war was a constant elsewhere as well, many fought with gunpowder weapons, which made them more deadly and much more expensive than earlier wars. The demands of war shaped all aspects of society. Soldiers in the new standing armies were often housed with civilian families, with the family expected to provide a place for a certain number of soldiers to sleep, eat, and keep warm. Hunger and disease accompanied the troops and the refugees who fled from place to place.

Disease, famine, and war killed huge numbers of people in this era, but the world's total population did not decline. The primary reason for this growth was another consequence of the Columbian Exchange: the spread of food crops, which were taken in all directions. Europeans

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brought wheat, their staple crop, to the Americas, and also onions, barley, oats, peas, and fruit trees, while Africans brought bananas, yams, rice, okra, sorghum, and coconuts. Tomatoes, chili peppers, sweet potatoes, squash, beans, potatoes, peanuts, maize, manioc, and other crops went from the Americas to other parts of the world, with about 30 percent of the foods eaten in the world today originating in the western hemisphere. Potatoes and sweet potatoes in particular were planted across the cooler parts of Europe and Central Asia, where they became the staple food of poor people.

While crops and soldiers traveled in all directions, animals, like disease, traveled primarily from the Old World to the New. Europeans brought horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, and poultry, which often escaped into the wild and thrived. A herd of a hundred cattle that the Spanish abandoned in what is now Argentina grew to over 100,000, and African, indigenous, and mixed race people fleeing Spanish mines and plantations began to herd them from the backs of horses, creating a pastoral form of life. They would later be celebrated as gauchos, the symbol of Argentina. In the plains and deserts of the North American West and Southwest, horses transformed the economy, as Native Americans gave up sedentary farming and localized foraging for a more nomadic existence hunting vast herds of buffalo and other animals from horseback. Desire for more horses encouraged warfare among plains tribes and between Native Americans and European colonists, but was also a motivation for trade, fueling a North American consumer revolution parallel to that in Europe.

European goods were exchanged primarily for furs, as tens of millions of skins were taken from North America. Conflict over the fur trade was one factor in warfare between Native American nations and between France and Britain. Ever-larger fishing fleets, backed by capitalist investors, took huge quantities of fish, and European whalers also hunted, killed, and processed tens of thousands of whales. Fur trapping and hunting, ocean fishing, and whaling were all occupations in which the vast majority of the workforce was male. Like warfare, these took men away from their home towns and villages for extended periods of time into all-male communities, leaving women and children to carry out agricultural production and other tasks in places they had left.

The products of the Columbian Exchange included pleasurable and addictive products, which were often consumed in new social settings of commercialized leisure. Cafés and coffeehouses in Europe and

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the Muslim world became places where (mostly) men gathered to drink coffee, smoke tobacco, and talk about business, politics, or whatever, and in Japan teahouses along with theatres and taverns popped up in major cities. In the larger cities of China and western Europe as well, people watched plays, operas, and concerts in permanent theatres. In Europe and its colonies, ideas as well as commodities were exchanged in new urban social settings and cultural institutions, including scientific societies, printed journals and newspapers, clubs, and salons. Tea-drinking took off world-wide in the eighteenth century, when sugar produced on Atlantic plantations became affordable to the masses and the caffeine and sugar combination of sweetened tea allowed for longer work hours as well as new forms of female sociability around a teapot. Both work and leisure were accompanied by alcoholic beverages, as every staple crop of the Columbian Exchange was transformed into alcohol somewhere, often distilled into strong liquors.

The sugar that sweetened beverages was largely produced on plantations in the Caribbean and Brazil, run by Europeans and worked by slaves imported from Africa. For 350 years after Columbus' voyage, more Africans crossed the Atlantic than Europeans; current estimates of the total are 10–12 million, with many more millions dying on the way. The slave trade had dramatic effects in West and West Central Africa, encouraging warfare and destroying families and kinship groups. Slavery was a part of many societies around the world in this era—as it had been earlier—but the plantation slavery of the New World was different because it had a racial element that other slave systems generally did not. By linking whiteness with freedom and blackness with slavery, the plantation system strengthened ideas about Africans held by many European Christians and Arabic Muslims, who saw them as inferior, barbaric, and primitive.

Religion served as a justification for slavery in this period, and also as a justification—and motivation—for conflict and colonization. Reforms and reinvigorations of existing religions, such as the Protestant and Catholic Reformations in Europe and Shi'a Islam in the Safavid Empire, along with the creation of new faiths, such as Sikhism in South Asia and a new form of Tibetan Buddhism, led to higher levels of religious zeal. Converts included rulers, who often demanded their subjects adhere to the same religion and used religion as a reason for persecution and conquest. Religious reformers viewed everyday activities and family life as opportunities for people to display spiritual and moral values. Catholic

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Christianity expanded around the world, mixing with existing practices in a process of cultural synthesis often referred to as'creolization', creating new social and marital patterns as well as new rituals and symbols.

The process of mixture and creolization that marked the early modern world involved people themselves as well as their ideas and practices. Every trade venture, willing or coerced migration, conquest, or any other sort of travel brought together individuals who thought of themselves as belonging to different groups. Despite norms prescribing group endogamy, there was intermarriage and other types of sexual relationships, many of which produced children. Colonizing powers created systems of categories to define and divide the groups under their authority, and limited certain activities to privileged groups. The extent of ethnic mixing varied considerably, from Latin America where the population became increasingly *mestizo*, to British North America, where marriages between white men and indigenous women were rare. As the slave population in southern colonies increased, sexual relations between white men and black women did as well. Although white men's fathering of children with their slaves was not recognized legally and rarely spoken about publically, this was so common that by the nineteenth century a large part of the North American slave population was mixed.

Laws and norms about sexual relations, and the family patterns that resulted from these, were shaped by changing ideas about the differences between human groups. Among European colonizers, these were initially roughly based on continent of origin, and then increasingly on skin color and 'race'. 'Race' became the primary term for discussing human variety in the nineteenth century and beyond, although today biologists who study the human species as a whole avoid using 'race' because it has no scientific meaning.

Capitalist enterprises, global trade networks, and colonization made some families and individuals fabulously wealthy, but they also spawned a variety of social protests and riots, as did food shortages. Most of these were small scale, but some grew into major revolts and rebellions. In the last decades of the eighteenth century, a series of revolts in the Atlantic world became full-fledged revolutions that ousted or toppled governments. Their leaders were inspired by new ideas about liberty and rights that circulated in all directions, and also by social conditions and the existing governments' inability to handle economic crises. In North America, British colonists angry about tax increases and changes in the tea and tobacco trade revolted and declared their independence in 1776,

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with speeches and documents proclaiming ideals of liberty and equality; after five years of war, Britain recognized the independence of the colonies that had revolted. In France, food riots and economic crises led to the overthrow of the monarchy in 1789 and a brief period of radicalism, followed by reaction. In Latin America and the Caribbean, repression of indigenous people and slaves along with social inequality and the spread of new ideals of liberty also led to revolts, first in Haiti in 1791, led by a freed slave—the only successful slave revolt in history—and then in South America, where locally-born men of European background ousted the Spanish, but did not incorporate indigenous peoples into the institutions they created.

Despite all of these changes, some aspects of life changed little in these centuries. While people and goods moved regularly around the world by water, land transport of bulky goods remained difficult, and local famines continued, contributing to infant and child mortality that remained high. War was also a constant, now fought with gunpowder weapons, and continuing to carry disease, hunger, and brutality with it. Cultural traditions and religious ideas were still taught primarily through the spoken word. Wealth created by commerce allowed some individuals and families to increase their social stature, but did not upset a hierarchy in which being born into the landholding elite was the best assurance of power and prosperity. Hierarchies of wealth and inherited status continued to intersect with hierarchies of gender, for whether one was born male or female shaped every life experience. Women were active in the riots and revolts of the era, and occasionally suggested they should have rights, but both conservatives and revolutionaries were shocked by this; calls for the 'rights of man' were just that.

Industrialization, Imperialism, and Inequality, 1800–2015

The political revolutions of the late eighteenth century were part of the creation of what we now call the 'modern world', but another revolution was even more important: the industrial. The use of fossil fuels—first coal and then also oil and gas—created a dramatic increase in productivity, as the energy stored over millions of years was put to human use. It transformed the world politically, economically, socially, and physically, allowing countries that industrialized to dominate those that did not.

Why Britain industrialized first is a key question in world history, and a range of factors were involved. Industrialization happened first in

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cotton production, as entrepreneurs and tinkerers fostered by a culture of innovation invented machines to replicate the lightweight, colorful Indian cottons that were popular around the world. These machines were often powered by Britain's many rivers, and run by young women who had already been spinning or doing other work to save money for their later marriage. The cotton was imported from the Americas, grown there by slave labor on plantations, which expanded geographically and in intensity to meet the demand. Cotton was very hard on the soil, but the environmental and social effects of this intense monoculture were not experienced locally in Britain. Britain had a growing population that provided a broad-based market for consumer goods, colonial possessions that provided additional markets and raw materials, and naval power that could enforce laws requiring colonies to trade only with Britain. The limits of water power led to the search for other sources of power, which was provided by coal, of which Britain had plenty, generally located along navigable rivers, which was also true of iron. Coal-powered steam engines allowed the faster and cheaper movement of goods. The impact of this perfect storm of factors was dramatic: in 1750, Britain accounted for less than 2% of production around the world, while in 1860 its share was more than 20%.

Not surprisingly, other countries attempted to follow the British path, including France, Prussia, the United States, and Japan. They were motivated by nationalism, a new ideology that built on the very old idea that each people has its own culture and identity. Nationalists regarded economic growth as essential to a strong nation, so advocated for the development of industry. Beginning in the 1870s, the United States and Germany joined Britain in a 'second industrial revolution'. Chemicals, electrical goods, pharmaceuticals, food, military technology, and the automobile joined textiles and iron as key industrial products and factory production was speeded up through the use of the assembly line. Japan also industrialized, initially following Western models and then developing a more labor-intensive type of industrialization that often combined machine and hand production. By 1933, Japan was the world's largest cotton textile exporter. Other countries were less successful because their industries could not compete with cheaper European or US imports.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, and in some parts of Africa, businessmen and bankers from Europe and the United States established or expanded plantations that grew cash crops for export, including coffee, hemp, sugar, cotton, bananas, beef, and rubber, along with

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mines for the minerals utilized in industrial processes. European and US governments used investments, loans, technology, and military actions to support this neo-colonial system of Western economic domination, sometimes called 'soft imperialism', and maintain friendly government relations. Commercial agriculture for export and mining employed many more men than women; men migrated to large plantations, cities, or even other countries in search of paid labor, and women remained in villages to care for children and the elderly and to engage in unpaid agricultural work.

Industrialization was thus an uneven process. By harnessing power and using machinery, industrial production allowed workers to produce far more than they would have been able to otherwise, created opportunities for great wealth for those who owned this output, and eventually raised the standard of living for most people in industrialized countries. Industrialization also spurred new technologies, such as the steamship and railroad, which allowed products to be shipped long distances fairly cheaply and dominate the global marketplace. New tools included new weapons, such as the repeating rifle and the machine gun, through which a few industrial states were able to conquer many others.

Industrialization was facilitated by existing social and gender structures, but it then changed these significantly. Hereditary aristocracies did not disappear, but social elites increasingly included families that had made their wealth in production, banking, and commerce. They understood themselves to be 'middle class', set apart by education, culture, and habits from those beneath them, which now included not only rural villagers, but also the 'working class' of wage-laborers created by industrialization. Ideas about class distinctions drove socialist movements, which advocated greater economic and social equality and the public ownership of institutions, and also movements that sought to foster 'middle-class values' of respectability and behavior, especially among women. Married women were encouraged to avoid work outside the home, making this a 'haven in the heartless world' and concentrating on the mother–child bond. Concern for children's welfare began to reduce child labor in the factories of some industrialized countries in the early twentieth century, but children continued to work in home-based production and on the plantations that produced raw materials. Women also continued to make up a significant share of the workforce in many industries, although supervisory positions were reserved for older men. The

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labor force was segmented by race as well as gender, which limited the range of jobs available, and helped keep wages low.

Technologies of communication, transportation, and computation led to an expansion in service, sales, and information transfer in the early twentieth century, with the store or office rather than the factory the primary place of work. Such jobs were 'white-collar' and employees were expected to maintain certain standards of dress and decorum. A white-collar job became a mark of middle-class status, although many paid far less than did 'blue-collar' jobs in factories or as skilled tradesmen.

Problems created by the growth of industry combined with liberal and socialist ideologies advocating greater equality to inspire movements for social change. The horrendous conditions of work under early industrialism led workers to form labor unions that sought shorter hours, better wages, safer working conditions, and the right to vote. Initially governments outlawed unions and strikes, but workers organized anyway and engaged in actions and collective bargaining that were successful in gaining some of their aims. Social movements included those advocating an expansion of women's rights, the abolition of slavery, prison reform, temperance, the extension of free public schooling, and the protection of animals. Slavery did end in the nineteenth century, although this did not bring dramatic change for most people of African descent in the Americas, who remained sharecroppers or tenant farmers, or workers in mines and factories.

Groups advocating change in this era included many that wanted less equality, not more. Hostility toward Chinese workers in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand led to riots and other types of violence, and to restrictions on immigration by place of origin. In many parts of the world, color lines were drawn around territories, districts, and neighborhoods to separate white from non-white spaces. Evolutionary thinking was applied to human society, as people argued that history was a 'survival of the fittest' in which the strong were destined to triumph and prosper and the weak be conquered or remain poor. For some, this was not to be left to natural selection or immigration restrictions alone, but should be shaped by the intentional selective breeding of certain types of people and the prevention of breeding among the unfit, a movement called eugenics.

Eugenics and racist ideologies developed in a world in which not just the fittest were surviving, for after 1750 the global population began to go up at a steadily increasing rate. Public health measures, especially

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water and sewer systems that lessened contagious and intestinal diseases and lowered child mortality, were one important factor, as were improved transportation networks that brought food to famine-stricken areas. For working-class families, lower child mortality was both joyful and burdensome, and the demand for contraception grew, but religious and political leaders often tried to prevent this. Migration was a far more common solution than contraception to population pressures and poverty; steamships made long-distance migration much easier and cheaper, and millions of people moved. In the century before the outbreak of World War I in 1914, 50–60 million Europeans emigrated (more than half to the United States), and most stayed. Asians also migrated in unprecedented numbers, many as indentured laborers to work on plantations and mines.

Global European empires made possible through industrial technologies shaped these migration patterns and the resultant social systems. White women travelled with their husbands and fathers more than they had earlier, and attempted to recreate life 'at home' as much as possible, so there was less cultural mixing or intermarriage. European and American officials and missionaries sought to convert and 'civilize' their imperial subjects, establishing schools to teach Western values and using taxes, permits, and registration documents to impose Western family structures. In the late nineteenth century these empires came to include Africa, as nationalism and the desire for direct access to raw materials led nations to grab territory. Government authorities and private companies used violence to appropriate land, retain control, and force Africans to work long hours growing cocoa, mining diamonds or gold, or other demanding and dangerous jobs.

Nationalism also led to a war of unprecedented scope and destructiveness that eventually pitted most of the countries of Europe, including Russia, against one another. The weapons and supplies of World War I included all the newest products of industry: heavy artillery, giant battleships, poisonous gas, canned food, mass-produced uniforms, synthetic rubber. Nations mobilized their populations to be part of the war effort, rationing food and other goods, organizing production, allocating labor, and encouraging more women to join the paid labor force with facilities such as child-care centers. The devastation of the war led to revolution in Russia, and the Communists came to power, renaming their nation the Soviet Union. Soldiers in the war included more than a million conscripted or recruited colonial troops, but afterwards Britain and France

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would not even listen to their colonies' proposals for national self-determination and continued their colonial or neo-colonial dominance, sparking increased demands for political rights.

World War I led to dramatic cultural change in the West. Young people turned against what they saw as the values of an older generation that had led to the unprecedented carnage of industrial warfare. They listened to new types of music, including jazz, wore less restrictive clothing, and even rejected their parents' notion of the ideal body type; wealth and social prominence were now to be shown through a slender figure rather than the bulky body of pre-war 'men of substance'. Sexual desire was increasingly viewed not as a sin, but as a standard part of the human psyche, though if it deviated too far from the expected norm it might be seen as a 'perversion' to be corrected by scientifically trained professionals. Bicycles allowed young people, including women, to travel without parental supervision and for wealthier people automobiles further increased mobility for work and leisure. Writers and creative artists rejected old forms in favor of ones designed to shock, challenge, and perhaps foment radical social change, a movement that came to be called 'modernism'.

The experimentation of the 1920s included financial speculation. Bankers, investors, and even people of modest means bought stocks with borrowed money in a speculative bubble, and the crash of the New York stock market in 1929 triggered a global financial crisis that led to declining productivity, plummeting trade, mass unemployment, and a long and severe economic depression. The Great Depression shattered fragile political stability in Europe, and made people in many places willing to put their trust in authoritarian leaders. They created totalitarian regimes that asserted a complete claim on the lives of their citizens, and demanded popular support for their ambitious aims, which they expected would be achieved by war.

That war came in the late 1930s, pitting Germany, Italy and Japan against the Allied powers of Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States, who were ultimately the victors. World War II was a total war just as World War I had been. Governments directed the economy and intervened in education, culture, and family life in both totalitarian regimes and democracies, using new means of mass communication, especially radio and movies, as tools to bolster support for the war. Women's factory work allowed astounding increases in the production of military equipment, but after the war a similar marketing campaign

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urged the return to 'normal' gender roles, women's paid employment declined, and the birth rate soared in a post-war 'baby boom'.

For forty years after the end of World War II, political, economic, and even cultural life in much of the world was shaped by the geopolitical and military conflict known as the Cold War that pitted the Soviet Union and the United States against one another. Conflicts between the superpowers played out on a global stage of decolonization, in which people around the world sought political self-determination; between 1945 and 1965, almost every colonial territory gained formal independence in processes that ranged from largely peaceful to extremely violent, with religious and ethnic conflicts complicating the struggle. Economic nationalists in Latin America also sought to free their countries from U.S. and European domination and expand their economies through industrialization. In East Asia, China experienced the establishment of an authoritarian Communist one-party state, in which party leaders sought to revolutionize social structures and cultural forms, while in Japan capitalism triumphed and the Japanese economy grew at a breathtaking pace through the 1980s. Western Europe also rebuilt after the war's devastation. Seeking to prevent the dislocation that had led to fascism and war, Western European governments created a social safety net for workers and families, building what was termed the 'welfare state'.

The US experienced a post-war boom, becoming the world's largest economy. Per-worker productivity and real wages increased steadily from 1945 to 1975, as people built houses (often in suburbs around cities) and bought cars and consumer goods. Consumer spending became the driver of the US economy, and to a great degree of its culture, and has remained so, with global implications. In the Soviet Union and other communist countries, the government prescribed social egalitarianism, and education and health care became more widely available to all social groups. Communist party control over cultural and intellectual life waxed and waned, with periods of liberalization followed by crackdowns.

Anti-colonial struggles, especially the Vietnam War, found support among young people around the world, part of a global youth movement among the unusually large and prosperous cohort born in the post-war baby boom. Young people in the late 1960s, much like those of the 1920s, renounced what they saw as the militaristic and conformist values of their parents' generation, wore clothing and hair styles that signified their countercultural values, and listened to new types of music—now rock 'n' roll and folk music rather than jazz. Anti-war protests combined

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with movements for social egalitarianism, including those for civil rights and women's and gay liberation, and against right-wing governments in Latin America and white minority rule in southern Africa.

These shifts toward greater political and social egalitarianism occurred within a climate of economic liberalization (often termed 'neo-liberalism), however, which favored the free circulation of goods and capital, the privatization of state-run enterprises, and reductions in government spending, generally through cutting social programs. A global economic downtown in the 1980s left many nations unable to pay their debt obligations, and as a condition of receiving further loans they were required to institute neo-liberal policies, which generally increased disparities of wealth and power rather than lessening them. Throughout the West, employers responded to the economic downturn by slowing the pace of wage increases, and from that point real wages of both white- and blue-collar workers have been largely flat. Productivity has continued to rise, but the profits from this have gone to stockholders and corporative executives, as income inequality has again risen to late nineteenth-century levels.

Families responded to flat wages by borrowing, working more hours, and sending more family members into the labor force. Married mothers with children became the fastest-growing group within the paid labor force in many countries, as the paid work of two people was increasingly essential to achieving a middle-class lifestyle or simply keeping the home bought on credit. Economic liberalization, particularly the development of free markets, spread into many communist countries as well. In Eastern Europe the economic crisis led in the late 1980s to a series of largely peaceful revolutions that overturned the communist regimes, which brought greater personal freedom, but also more economic disparity and social dislocation.

Along with economic liberalism, religious fundamentalism became a powerful force in the later twentieth century, combining with nationalism, ethnic identity, anticolonialism, and economic grievances as a motivation for action, which sometimes included violence directed against those of other faiths or those within one's own religious tradition with different views. Fundamentalism, which emerged in all world religions, advocates a return to what are viewed as core teachings, patriarchal gender norms, and a conservative social agenda, and a rejection of secular values. Religious fundamentalism and hostility to those of other faiths has been accompanied (and in part caused) by increasing religious

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diversity as migration brings those of different religious traditions together, missionaries gain converts, and individuals blend elements of different traditions in new ways.

In the later twentieth century, many older industrial centers declined, transformed into 'Rust Belts' of aging machines and ageing workforces, as new giant factories were built wherever wages were low. As in the early Industrial Revolution, women and girls made (and make) up a large share of the workers in these factories. The post-industrial service economy expanded, often decentralized, because computer and communications technology allowed many employees to work from their own homes or in small sweatshops. A few of these were highly educated and highly paid 'tele-commuters' in the burgeoning information industry, but most home or sweatshop labor involved routine data office work or more traditional jobs such as making clothing or shoes, with little limitation of the workday and few benefits. Globally, measures reducing social benefits to shrink government budgets had a disproportionate impact on children, women, and the elderly, often resulting in what economists term a 'feminization of poverty'.

Increasing poverty has also been the result of a population explosion in Asia, Africa, and Latin America after 1950, largely because of medical advances such as vaccinations that lowered the death rate among children dramatically. This growth threatened to outpace economic gains, putting pressure on every institution, from the family to the nation, and also led to a population skewed toward the young. The dramatic growth in population has occurred despite the emergence and spread of new diseases, including AIDS, many of which have had significant social and cultural as well as health consequences. New birth control methods introduced in the 1960s and their growing cultural acceptability, along with government intervention, have led to plummeting birth rates in many parts of the world within the last several decades, but fertility rates remain high in the poorest countries.

The world's villages had few prospects for the growing numbers of young people, and they went where they always have—to cities, which expanded at an astonishing rate, their populations sometimes doubling or tripling in a single decade. In these mega-cities, most people survived through the type of economy of makeshifts that has long been the situation for poor urban dwellers, selling commodities and labor services—including sex—on a very small scale. Moving took young people away from their extended family, which allowed them to be more

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independent, but also left them vulnerable because they did not have a lineage to support them economically or emotionally.

In the early twenty-first century, it is easy to see the enormous changes brought by a globalized economy and modern media technologies, but many aspects of life have been extremely durable. Inequality has been a central feature of human society since the Neolithic (or perhaps earlier), though people in many times and places have also worked to lessen its impact. Migration has always brought people of different backgrounds and traditions together, leading to blended families and new cultural mixtures, but also fostering hostility and opposition. The social structures and cultural products that people have created show amazing diversity, but they continue to address both material needs and a search for identity and meaning.

Notes

1. Peter Stearns, "Social History and World History: Prospects for collaboration," Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "World History and the History of Women, Gender, and Sexuality," and Kenneth Pomeranz, "Social History and World History: From Daily Life to Patterns of Change," *Journal of World History* 18 (March 2007): 43–98. I have also updated my analysis of the intersection between world/global history and the history of gender and sexuality in: "Crossing Borders in Transnational Gender History," *Journal of Global History* 6 (2011): 357–379.
2. Dagmar Herzog, "Syncopated Sex: Transforming European sexual cultures," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 114, No. 5 (2009): 1291. The forum (pp. 1250–1353) also includes regional articles by Margot Canaday, Marc Epprecht, Joanne Meyerowitz, Tamara Loos, Leslie Peirce, and Pete Sigal.

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CHAPTER 8

World History as a Single Story

Tamim Ansary

Introduction: On Crafting a Meta-History of the World

Some years ago, in *Destiny Disrupted: A History of the World through Islamic Eyes*, I offered an alternative to the traditional (Eurocentric) narrative of world history by sketching what the story might look like if one were to assume the center of the world to be the Islamic heartland.[1] I was not arguing that the traditional narrative was false and this one true. Rather I was out to dramatize the proposition that every history of the world is really the story of how 'we' got to where 'we' are today and since there is no single 'we', there can be no single world history. The shape of the narrative depends on the teller of the tale. Events that register as crucial from one perspective may be filed as irrelevant from another.

For expanded treatment of many of the themes and details of this chapter, see Tamim Ansary, *Ripple Effects, How We Came to Be So Interconnected and Why We're Still Fighting* (in progress, targeted for publication in 2019).

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Lately, however, I have been thinking that it might be possible to absorb all the parochial 'someone–centric' world histories into a single meta-narrative, or at least to launch the project. It might be possible today because every part of the Earth is now so entangled with every other that one might viably speak of a human 'we' that includes 'all-of-us'. What would a narrative of world history look like from the perspective of this global 'we'?

The common thread would surely be the ever-increasing interconnectedness of our species. Thirty thousand years ago, 'we' were tens of thousands of largely autonomous, nomadic bands distributed sparsely across the natural environment, entirely subordinate to the forces of nature, only intermittently in contact with other human bands. Today, 'we' inhabit every inch of the globe and verge on merging into a single civilization. Our meta-history would be the narrative leading from 'then' to 'now'. What stages, factors, forces, and pivotal events can we discern in *that* story? How do the major themes driving human history—language, technology, and environment, for example—twine into the narrative?

What strikes me about this trajectory, however, is not just the ever-increasing interconnectedness, but the discontinuities in that process. We are a single species, yet we inhabit different socially constructed and collectively maintained conceptual micro-cosmos that stand in for the unknowable totality of the world itself. These worlds differ from one another, each is a model of the world experienced by its inhabitants as the world itself, and each model includes all the others as part of its picture—giving each a false appearance of objectivity.

The events of history are generated largely by the expansion of these conceptual bubbles and by the consequences of one such world interacting or overlapping with another—interactions that produce everything from psychological confusion and social chaos to cultural efflorescence and war. But most significantly, even amidst conquests, enslavement, rape, and murder, ideas mingle and interleaf until new and more comprehensive conceptual frameworks emerge. We see this in social and economic developments, in warfare, technology and invention, in religion, art, philosophy, and science. We see it in the course of empires and in the spread of ideas and in the occasional overthrow of one global paradigm by another. The process is ragged but the direction is clear: a movement of the social many toward a social singleness.

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On the other hand, change comes not just from interaction among differing conceptual frameworks but from the internal contradictions in every culture, society, and civilization, which its members struggle to resolve, struggles that generate conflicts, chaos, confusion, illumination, crimes and creative achievements of their own. These processes pertain directly to the central questions that a global meta-history must address. First, how did 'we all' come to be so interconnected? And second, given that we *are* moving in that direction, how come we're still fighting? Or, to reverse the statement, how is it that, despite our proclivity to clump together as sub-groups separate from humanity as a whole and go at one another with knives and guns, we have managed to keep merging into ever-larger wholes? Surely, there is a story here.

World History as a Single Story

Beginnings: Tens of Thousands of Autonomous Bands of Hunters and Gatherers

Broadly speaking, world history is the story of how we got to where we are today. Usually, however, embedded in the narrative is an assumption about who consitutes the 'we'. The shape of the story depends on the tellers of the tale. Today, however, with pretty much everyone on the planet entangled in one another's destinies, it may be possible to construct a history of the world from the perspective of a global 'we'. The common thread of this meta-narrative would surely be the drama of ever-increasing human interconnectedness—from a distant past when our species roamed the planet as many thousands of largely autonomous nomadic bands to the present day when 'we' are a world-wide web of cultures and people potentially on the verge of merging into a single civilization.

Where did it all begin? Scientists tell us the Universe started with a Big Bang some 13.8 billion years ago, and that over countless eons, clouds of primal matter condensed into stars, around some of which planets formed. One such was our own Planet Earth, born roughly 4.5 billion years before today. That is the cosmic backdrop to the human story.

The physical stage was shaped in part by tectonic plate movements, which configured the continents, moved the Americas to the opposite side of the planet, raised spines of mountains along the lengths of

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continents, opened the rift that became the Mediterranean Sea, and brought India pushing against Asia, thereby crumpling the Earth's crust to form the Himalaya mountain ranges. Then, about seven million years ago, tectonic plate movements reshaped the landscape of northeastern Africa, giving rise to a warmer, drier climate in that region. The new climate transformed heavily forested terrain into grasslands dotted with trees.

In the now-receding forests, certain species of primates had adapted to living partly on the ground by using low branches like bars of a jungle gym to walk on two feet. Some of those creatures receded with the forests, but others went on living at the edge and indeed ventured out onto the savannah. Scuttling among stands of trees, they evolved into bipedal proto-humans, with front paws shaped into hands that were capable of fashioning objects from the environment into tools. In this long moment, 'we' crossed the threshold toward becoming humans.

Data gleaned from bones suggest that anatomically modern *Homo sapiens* existed on the planet as early as 100,000 years ago, and probably earlier. By then, we had mastered the mystery of fire; we could make stone clubs, knives, and scrapers; we were social beings capable of operating as coordinated groups to hunt other animals, and we were probably fearsome predators. Thanks to these advantages, we were spreading from our point of origin out of Africa and across the world.

Bones by themselves cannot, however, pinpoint when we developed that most distinctive of human traits: language. Our ancestors of a thousand centuries ago no doubt had a rich stock of verbal signals in common, but mere vocabulary is not language. True language includes that grammar and syntax genetically embedded in our species (and apparently in no other) allowing us to organize words into symbolic structures within which we can interact. Once language had evolved, groups of humans could inhabit not just the physical space they were in, but conceptual worlds they constructed socially, worlds that existed only in the imagination of each member yet had a quasi-objective existence independent of any person. To this day, each of us is born into a pre-existing conceptual world, we learn to imagine it fully, and we then operate within it in concert with others. Human history is not simply the story of individuals or groups of people fighting, trading, inventing, building; it is also the story of these conceptual cosmos forming, growing, overlapping, merging, and evolving.

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The emergence of true language may account for the Creative Explosion that began some 40,000 years ago, a period when human capacities suddenly spiked. Within as little as five millennia, most features of 'culture' came into existence. From Europe to Indonesia, cave art suddenly featured skillful depictions of animals and hunters. Artifacts from this time indicate the beginnings of dance, music, jewelry. Trace evidence of ceremonial burial rituals suggest religion. Language enabled elders to tell their children what they had learned, and human know-how could thus accumulate from generation to generation. So it probably wasn't just art, dance, and religion that began with the Creative Explosion but storytelling, poetry, and communal memories of a legendary past—in short, history.

With our ever-more sophisticated tools we made clothing and shelters that allowed us to expand into colder climes. By some 30,000 years ago, humans had spread from Asia into North America. There, great sheets of ice blocked their further progress until about 12,000 years ago, when a glacial period ended, the ice sheets melted, and people were able to migrate south. At the same time, however, sea levels rose, erasing the land link between the continents, thereby dividing the planet into a global east and a global west, two worlds that evolved separately for millennia.

Herders, Farmers, and Urban Cultures

In Eurasia around this time, environmental factors were generating a consequential branching of human culture. Some people were becoming sedentary farmers; others were developing a pastoral nomadic way of life. Farming emerged mainly in the temperate zone from Iberia to China. Pastoral nomadism flourished mainly in the north from central Asia to the European plains and eventually in western and southern Africa. The nomads inevitably overlapped with and pressed into areas inhabited by sedentary people. In Eurasia, this provoked patterns of friction that endured for millennia.

The first villages emerged in West Asia and Asia Minor and some grew into sizable towns. There, human societies moved toward ever-greater complexity simply because more people were brushing up against more people, leading to the serendipitous juxtaposition of random ideas that triggers innovation. But the tipping point toward 'civilization' came when farmers settled along a number of seminal rivers, the earliest

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of which were the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates, the Indus, and the Huang-He rivers.

These (and eventually other) rivers drew settlers because regular flooding deposited fresh topsoil along their banks each year and provided irrigation water. Year-round irrigation, however, demanded that water be hoarded at the peak of flooding and released over time, which could be done only with large-scale construction projects. Building such works required formal social structures beyond mere kinship ties. Abstract conceptual frameworks came into being at this point functioning as mechanisms for weaving numerous lives into a social singleness that transcended kinship, and in these river-valley societies, social layering no doubt emerged as well.

The seminal rivers had key geographical differences as well as important similarities, so each river-valley culture developed distinctive features. The Nile Valley was an enclave of security, virtually sealed to aggressors from the south, east, and west by cataracts and deserts. The river itself was wonderfully navigable, with a current that flowed north and a breeze that blew south, allowing people to ride either way in boats by putting up or taking down sails. People consequently settled along the whole valley instead of bunching up into towns. Cultural homogeneity and the immensity of Egyptian irrigation works favored the emergence of a single god-like monarch whose whims and moods were easily conflated with the slight irregularities of the life-giving floods. The Pharaoh's supposed divinity (and the need to keep an enormous labor force occupied year-round) resulted in ambitious religious construction projects such as the pyramids, which had cultural ramifications of their own.

The Tigris and Euphrates, by contrast, flowed through flat, bountiful terrain with few protective features. Because settlers in this valley were constantly vulnerable to raids by pastoral nomads, they clustered into walled towns, each an autonomous unit. Surplus social energy was funneled into standing armies. Armies once formed needed to be kept occupied. Cities began attacking cities, conquests that generated empires—clusters of cities ruled by a single authority. In Mesopotamia, priests and kings evolved as parallel, though intertwined, institutions. While people here recognized a common gallery of numerous gods, each city tended to embrace one deity as special to *themselves,* their own supernatural champion.

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China's Huang He, on the other hand, was a turbulent river, all but impossible to navigate, which tended to cut off one community of farmers from another. Yellow dust blown off distant cliffs provided thick topsoil that favored farming, but this dust also caked in the riverbed, raising the waters. Settlers along this river had to terrace their hillsides to farm it and build ever-higher dikes to contain the rising waters—dikes that sometimes broke, resulting in catastrophic floods. Life along the Huang He was overshadowed by emergency: survival depended on a discipline, hierarchy and obedience that began perforce in the family.

Then there was the Indus. This was not, actually, one river but many streams that joined together only a few miles from the sea. While pyramids were going up in Egypt, some five million people inhabited this landscape, living in at least 1000 towns. They equipped their cities prolifically with baths, plumbing, and sewage systems since water was neither precious nor problematic, and they luxuriated in arts, crafts, engineering, and trade; but their lives were haunted by impermanence because the Indus streams had a disturbing propensity to change course. A bustling city might be stranded far from water over a few generations. Also, the Hindu Kush mountains loomed over this valley and from the high grasslands beyond the mountains, marauders came storming down repeatedly. Over the ages, Indian civilization emerged from a complex interaction between the pastoral nomads and the settled farmers.

From each seed, culture spread along capillaries of trade and corridors of conquest. Entrepôts along especially busy routes bloomed into cities, and these too became centers of distinctive, expanding cultures. In the west, the Mediterranean Sea supported the busiest network. Although Egypt bordered this sea, the Nile made Egyptians so self-sufficient, they had little incentive to sally forth—the world came to them. It was the Greeks, therefore, who ended up defining Mediterranean civilization. They lived on rocky islands and peninsulas unsuitable for farming but rimmed with coves that made ideal launch points for seafaring. East of the Mediterranean, the web of criss-crossing routes between Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, India, and the northern steppes supported the emergence of Persian civilization.

The northern steppes remained inhabited by pastoral nomads, among whom political groupings were fluid and shifting, but the nomads were not the left-behinds. They too kept developing ever-more sophisticated skills for *their* way of life. Around 5000 years ago, tribes of cattle herders between the Black and Caspian Seas domesticated the horse

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and invented or acquired a formidable military device, the two-wheeled chariot. They spread east and west, from the Tien Shan mountains to the Atlantic Ocean, and from this belt trickled south. As the people branched apart, their mother tongue branched into the various (mutually unintelligible) languages of the Indo-European family. Linguistic evidence suggests, therefore, that the ancient Greeks, Romans, Persians, and Indians were some blend of Indo-European nomads and the indigenous people already inhabiting the areas they entered.

Civilizations as Master Narratives

Ideas radiating from vital urban cores wove together into civilization-sized worldviews. By the first millennium BCE a number of distinct regional civilizations had coalesced, each a plexus of mythologies, narratives and values forming a coherent framework.

The worldview that took shape in China saw the Universe as concentric. Its core was an empire, the so-called Middle Kingdom. Around this were tributaries. Around them were various barbarians. Beyond them didn't matter. History oscillated between happy periods of imperial unity and unhappy periods of fragmentation. The state of the world at any given time depended on whether an imperial dynasty had a mandate to rule from 'heaven'. This ultimate supernatural aspect of the Universe was not personified.

In India, by contrast, people saw a world teeming with intricately personified deities. The Universe was not concentric but striated. Kingdoms came and went, but the stratification of humans into castes and subcastes and outcastes cut across all boundaries. The gods themselves existed at many levels, some being avatars of other higher gods, some incarnating down into the human realm at times. History was an illusion of chaotic change masking a permanent reality without change. The only movement was the quest of individuals to migrate upward from the most palpable but least real level to the least palpable but most real (nirvana).

Further west, from the Iranian highlands to the Mediterranean Sea, Indo-European tribes had long been migrating into areas inhabited by earlier peoples such as the Sumerians. This region had seen a great deal of warfare, empire-building, and intermingling of peoples. Here emerged a view of the Universe as essentially dramatic. History was neither cyclical nor changeless but linear: it had a beginning and it would have an end.

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In between, a dramatic struggle was underway among the gods, in which human beings and their fate were intimately involved.

In the far west, the Mediterranean world of the Greeks, the Indo-European pantheon of gods affiliated with aspects of nature morphed into a somewhat different version of a dramatic universe. Here, the gods came to be seen as something like a race of supernatural beings sharing the same material universe as people. They were immortal and vastly powerful but otherwise looked and acted much like people and had the same range of faults, virtues, and quirks. They were tangled up in dramas with one another, just as we humans were with one another. The gods however might whimsically interfere in human affairs, so they had to be propitiated. Still, there was a natural universe irrespective of the gods, and people had to somehow make their own lives within it.

Birth of Major Belief Systems

Between roughly 900 BCE and 200 BCE, a number of charismatic personalities distilled the themes of the regional civilizations into fairly specific belief systems. Each one purported to give meaning to human life and govern how people *should* behave. In the sixth century BCE, the Chinese sage Confucius integrated the rituals and observances of his culture into an ethical system rooted in the idea of empire and family as reflections of each other. Throughout the social order, he suggested, every person had familial-style duties, responsibilities, and rights. The father was like an emperor within his family; the emperor was like a father to his subjects.

In the Indian subcontinent, where the center of cultural gravity had moved to the Ganges River valley, an array of mystical renunciants produced sacred texts called Upanishads. While Hinduism has no distinct beginning and is still evolving, the Upanishads did mark a seminal moment in this vast religious tradition. These mystics identified reincarnation as the fundamental fact. People endlessly died and were reborn, moving through millions of lives governed by a law called karma, which dictated that everyone reaped what they sowed—but not necessarily in the same lifetime. Karma determined whether a soul moved up or down with each re-birth. In higher realms the ratio of spiritual to material increased and the highest achievement was ascent out of the cycle of reincarnation altogether, into union with the unchanging, eternal world soul.

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Meanwhile the Buddha was blending the same themes into a somewhat different brew. The Buddha did not offer a cosmology so much as a practical program for escaping the cycle of birth, ageing, and death. He identified desire as the source of suffering, recommended a life of moderation—'the noble eight-fold path'—and taught techniques of meditation by which a person could break free from attachment and achieve freedom from reincarnation in any single lifetime.

In the Persian world the prophet Zoroaster produced a hugely influential set of ideas, which are known today mainly from traces they left on later systems. Zoroaster cast the Universe as a struggle between light and darkness, each personified as a singular deity. Humans were situated between the two and could tilt the outcome by their moral choices. When the Persians conquered Babylonia and absorbed Mesopotamia into their empire, Zoroaster's ideas encountered the proto-monotheistic religion of the Hebrews. A series of Hebrew prophets emerging from Babylonian captivity transformed their religion into full-fledged Judaism. They too cast the world as a struggle between good and evil but reduced the number of deities to one and demoted Satan to a mere creation of His. Judaic monotheism retained, however, a link to the Mesopotamian theme of gods as champions of particular peoples, for in Judaism, the one God of everyone had a special covenant with the Hebrews, to reward them for moral conduct by restoring to them their tribal homeland of Israel.

Finally, on the stage set by secular paganism, Greek philosophy emerged as a belief system analogous to the religions of the east. Greek philosophers launched inquiries into the material realm that persist to this day as preoccupations of science. For example, Thales and other pre-Socratics asked: what is the one substance of which every other is made? The Sophists explored intellectual methods for winning arguments, which helped give birth to logic. Finally, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle situated the source of moral good in secular life rather than in dictates from deities and identified reason as the means for discovering it.

Vast Empires Form

As civilizations and religions congealed, political super-states emerged. Four empires were especially vast and consequential. In the Middle World, immediately east of the Mediterranean, a series of empires arose, each conquering the one before and then expanding the realm with

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further conquests until at last the Persians brought the process to a climax. Their empire stretched from Afghanistan to Egypt and brought many people under one political umbrella. The Persians' success was built on technology, ideology, infrastructure, and administration. They embraced Zoroastranism as the official imperial religion; created an elite corps of military experts to spearhead their armies; built an impressive road network; created a postal system, fielded a formidable intelligence corps; and set up an intricate administrative system of provincial governments beholden to a center. In the centuries that followed, these same themes emerged repeatedly as ingredients of state-building.

The Persian expansion ended when they came up against a cultural energy expanding from a different center: Persia met Greece and failed to conquer. In fact, it was the Greeks who did the conquering. In the fourth century BCE, led by Alexander of Macedon, the Greeks swept east through Persia, spreading a patina of Hellenism across much of the Middle World. But Hellenism reached its limits, too, when it lapped against a culture expanding from yet another center. The Mauryans of India stemmed the tide of Hellenism by forging the subcontinent's first imperial state. Like the Persians, they built a powerful military, good roads, a postal system, and a spy network. They also relied on doctrine to cement cohesion. The greatest Mauryan emperor, Ashoka, anointed Buddhism as the favored religion, giving it temporary ascendency over Hinduism in the subcontinent.

By then, the real heirs of secular pagan Greek culture were emerging in the far west. The Romans worshipped the same gods as the Greeks but under different names. They plowed the same fields of art, literature, philosophy, and culture, but less deeply. Their real genius revealed itself in politics, technology, and administration. They systematized a body of laws based on reason. They evolved a republican political structure that substituted a complex, quasi-elected body for a monarch and gave it life by ratcheting civic chauvinism to a near-religious fervor. The Romans invented concrete, built roads and bridges, aqueducts and sewage systems, stadiums and baths. Their conquests were based not so much on military brilliance as on technology, tenacity, and organization. By the start of the Common Era, they had conquered all the lands bordering the Mediterranean, absorbing into their Greco-Roman social fabric a staggering array of peoples and cultures.

Finally, there was China. There, the king of a state called Qin conquered all the kingdoms surrounding his, to forge the first Chinese

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empire. In 221 BCE the Middle Kingdom of the Chinese cultural imagination came into concrete existence. The First Emperor of China used brutal force to impose a structure of authoritarian regulations on his realm—so brutal that the backlash toppled his son and ended his dynasty. But the peasant who emerged from the chaos as ruler founded the long-lasting Han dynasty. Qin brutality having built a state, the Han could commence to govern gracefully. By wedding the first emperor's rigorous bureaucracy to a society already infused with the Confucian belief system, the Han cemented cohesion. They staffed that bureaucracy with scholars chosen by examinations that tested, not just literacy, but mastery of Confucian classics, thereby reinforcing the doctrinal unity of the administration. Many languages were spoken in the empire, but the Han employed China's ideographic script as an instrument for governing this heterogeneous world as a unit. Thus the Han presided over four centuries of more or less uninterrupted prosperity and power.

Trade Between Civilizations

Civilizations usually get the spotlight, but people living between the great civilizations helped shaped history too, particularly as connectors. An enduring problem for the Han were the Turkic nomads of the north, whom the Chinese called the Xiongnu. The first emperor had built a wall to keep these raiders at bay, but in Han times the wall became as much a trade zone as a barricade because both groups had products the other coveted. The nomads wanted Chinese silk, jade, and bronze; the Chinese wanted nomad horses (ironically to fight the nomads). Chinese products filtering through nomad territories reached distant lands, and products from those lands came trickling back to China, sparking an appetite for trade goods that germinated what is retrospectively called the Silk Road. This was not one road but a thick network of overland routes that took Chinese products (especially silk) to markets as distant as Rome but snaked into India and throughout Persia as well.

In the last century BCE, certain tribes allied to the Chinese were driven from the steppes by the Xiongnu. They regrouped in the rubble of the Mauryan civilization as the Kushan empire, stretching north from the Indus River Valley and replacing the Hellenic Bactrian kingdoms, residues of Alexander's campaigns. The Kushan empire functioned as a melting pot, overlapping as it did the Indian, Turkic, Chinese, and Persian cultural zones. Buddhism had been losing its hold in India; but

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the Kushans embraced it, and their endorsement enabled Buddhist missionaries to flow through Central Asia to China. On its way through the steppes Buddhism brushed against themes from the Persian world, and from the contact emerged a new commerce-friendly form of the religion, featuring quasi-deities called Bodhisattvas, and religious functionaries who shouldered the heavy work of meditation. The masses could ride to nirvana on vessels navigated by these monks so long as they contributed to the monasteries and performed designated rituals. From this time on, Buddhism was centered in China and points south.

Kushan power soon crumbled but over the centuries states kept forming that were distinct from the better-known civilizations surrounding them—Persia, India, China. This unstable but recurrent state tended to straddle the Silk Route and usually extended south to ports on the Arabian Sea, thereby connecting overland trade through Central Asia to the sea-trade network on the Indian Ocean. The sea-trade network was shaped by the seasonal monsoon winds that blew from the center of Eurasia out to sea in the winter and from the sea back toward the interior in summer. The Himalayas split these winds into two distinct whorls, one in the Pacific Ocean and one in the Indian Ocean. These monsoons overlapped in southeast Asia. Sailors from China could ride the monsoon winds to Malaysia and Indonesia in winter and back in summer. Sailors from India, Arabia, and Africa could ride to the same area on *their* monsoons. For three to six months, traders from both worlds mingled here as they waited for the winds to change. Southeast Asia thus functioned as another nexus of world cultural interaction.

Christendom

Both the Silk Road and the monsoon routes linked to that other busy trade web, the Mediterranean Sea. By the last century BCE, the entire Mediterranean littoral was a single political entity. Rome had started out as a secular pagan society that drew its cultural inspirations from Greece; but once Roman conquests encompassed Mesopotamia and the Levant, ideas from that region wove into the Greco-Roman fabric. One such strand was Judaism from which branched Christianity, a new religion. To be a Jew, one pretty much had to be born Jewish but as Christianity coursed into Roman society, it shed all tribal affiliation: anyone could become a Christian. Mesopotamian gods had been the champions of

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particular peoples. The Christians believed in one God only, and so He, in his incarnation as Jesus Christ, was the savior of all humanity.

Christianity brought into the Roman world the Judaic emphasis on scriptures and revelation over reason and observation. This put Christianity inherently at odds with the secular paganism of Greco-Roman culture. Yet Christianity also absorbed certain elements from its Roman environment: the Church organized on the Roman model, dividing the world into dioceses, with a hierarchy of administration that ran from local priests at the bottom to metropolitans and bishops at the top. As the social fabric of Rome weakened, the structural integrity of the Church strengthened. At last, the Roman emperor Constantine realized that the most efficient administrative system in his realm was the shadow-state created by Christianity. When he converted to Christianity in 312, he set the stage for co-opting that administration. He moved his capital to the ultra-defensible city of Constantinople, closer to the birthplace of Christianity, and by the fifth century, Christianity had become the state religion of the empire and all others were proscribed.

The original Roman Empire had grown too huge and complex to administer as one unit now, given the transportation and communication technologies of the times. The eastern half established by Constantine congealed into a tough imperial core, but its connection to the west dwindled. In the eighth century, the Byzantine version of Christianity began flowing north into Slavic lands thinly colonized by Vikings. Over the centuries, these influences—Viking, Slavic, and Byzantine Christian—blended to form Russian civilization.

The western empire meanwhile fragmented until Christianity was the only remaining instrument of social cohesion. The pastoral nomads north of the Empire—German tribes such as the Goths, Visigoths, and Vandals—were now better able to do what nomads on the edges of urban civilizations had always done, nibble at territory, raid towns when possible, and occupy whatever areas the empire could not defend. Yet German migrations into Roman territory changed the Germans too; so the 'fall of Rome' might just as aptly be described as the rise of something new: the Christianized world of Greco-Roman secular paganism absorbed elements contributed by Germanic nomads to form Christendom. What resulted can be seen in retrospect as the seed of 'Western Civilization'.

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Islam and the Middle World

Just as the Roman-Christian and Germanic worlds were blending, Islam was born in the Arabian Peninsula. Mohammed took the Abrahamic tradition of monotheism to its uncompromising extreme. He stripped it of tribalism and turned it into a teleological social project: God, characterized by a radical singleness, had specific instructions for human society. Mohammed taught a set of rituals to his followers, who were guaranteed to spend eternity in paradise by virtue of their membership of Mohammed's community, which was not just a religious congregation but a political entity.

With the Prophet's death his followers confirmed his religious community as a political state, which rapidly conquered territory from Iberia to the Amu River. As it expanded, Islam the religio-political phenomenon evolved into Islam the civilization, a new fabric woven of previously distinct cultural strands. Just as western Christendom was born of Greco-Roman, Christian, and Germanic ingredients, so the Islamic eruption now incorporated Arab, Levantine, North African, Hellenic, Persian, and eventually Turkic elements into a new master narrative. Islam as empire maximized its territorial reach within a century and began fragmenting, just as Rome had done, but Islamic civilization continued spreading toward sub-Saharan Africa, across northern India, and into southeast Asia.

The persuasive power of Islamic civilization stemmed from its vision of a just and harmonious community right here on Earth, derived from a structure of immutable laws called the sharia. This was more than a legal code because it governed not only criminal conduct and civil matters but also family life, social etiquette, sexual mores, diet, dress, religious rituals, and indeed every sphere of human action and interaction entailing choice. The sharia was thought to have an objective existence, like the laws of nature, so the instructions ordained by God had the same precision and certainty as did the course of stars across the sky. Elaborating the sharia down to the last detail became a central project of Islamic civilization, much as science later became a central project of Western civilization.

Beyond the frontiers of Islamic expansion, Indian civilization continued to blaze. The Mauryan state had collapsed in the second century BCE, but the subsequent period of fragmentation was also a time of creative ferment. Then in the fourth century CE the Gupta empire

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united the subcontinent once again. This dynasty embraced Hinduism as enthusiastically as the Mauryans had Buddhism. Under Gupta rule, in a world shaped by Hinduism, Indians made important strides in mathematics, medicine, philosophy, art and literature. The great oral epics of Indian civilization, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, were written down in these centuries. By the time the Muslims arrived at the gates in the eighth century, first as traders and later as invaders, Gupta power had eroded, but Indian learning still glowed brightly enough to infuse Muslim civilization with some of its intellectual vigor.

Bright Ages/Dark Ages

Indeed, the five centuries following the birth of Islam might well be called the Bright Ages, given the creative vitality of the Eurasian world east of the Mediterranean. China had already seen the invention of paper, block printing, and the magnetic compass. In the early seventh century, the short-lived Sui Dynasty built the Grand Canal linking China's two great river systems, with immense economic consequences. Under the prosperous Tang and Song dynasties that followed, the Chinese invented the mechanical clock, gunpowder, chain drives, porcelain, canal locks, paper money, and much more.

The Islamic world, known to itself as Dar al-Islam (the realm of peace) could also lay claim to world historical centrality for geographical location made Dar al-Islam *the* cultural crossroads of its time. Intellectuals of the Islamic world were the first ones in a position to make direct comparisons between Greek, Indian, Persian, and Chinese learning. Muslim thinkers sought ways to integrate these diverse ideas and reconcile them with the pronouncements of the *Qur'an*, in pursuit of which goals Muslim thinkers made breakthroughs presaging many modern sciences including physics, chemistry, and geology. They also invented sociology, developed algebra, and advanced medical learning, as well as map-making, and navigation. Most significantly, they elevated translation into a science, which had crucial consequences for the history of ever-increasing human interconnectedness. All these achievements, however, revolved around the core project of elaborating the sharia, so that one day all the world might become a single, harmonious community.

Mohammed having been a merchant, traders were seen as culture heroes in Islam, so the Muslim world became the commercial nexus of

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the global east. Muslim ships docked in Chinese ports, brought Islamic ideas into southeast Asia, threaded through India, plied the monsoon trade network to Africa, and carried goods from Baghdad to Spain and back.

Since precious metal tends to flow to wherever exchange is taking place, the hum of commerce in the east drained hard currency out of Europe. There, urban centers were already crumbling and pastoral nomads were settling into subsistence farming. Without currency to facilitate transactions, trade shrank and people stopped traveling much. Germans carved Roman territories into petty fiefdoms, law and order broke down, and Europe entered its 'Dark Ages'.

The Concept of Europe

Then, in the eleventh century, the tide began to turn. In the Islamic world, pastoral nomads started gnawing at urban civilization, much as the Germanic tribes had done earlier to Rome, and with similar consequences. Masses of Turkish nomads converting to the faith spawned a less nuanced, more doctrinaire Islam, bound to scriptural literalism, which dampened intellectual vigor and transferred power into the hands of a clerical orthodoxy. Endorsed by these clerics, Turkish warriors led armies into northern India and spread a layer of Islamic rule over a population that remained overwhelmingly Hindu. At the same time, other Turkish tribes pressing into northern China began fragmenting that empire and carving out small kingdoms of their own. The Song imperial dynasty relinquished the north and regrouped in southern China as a smaller state. In retrospect, this looks like a period when the cultural vigor of India, China, and the Middle World began to wane.

In Europe, the opposite process was underway. Here, over several centuries, subtle technological improvements such as the horse collar and the moldboard plow had made peasants just productive enough to create small surpluses, which they took to impromptu crossroads trade fairs. As exchange increased, temporary trade fairs turned into permanent markets, which coalesced into towns. By then, the Church of Rome had brought its doctrine to maturity and was extending its reach across the continent and down into the lives of all Europeans. By the end of the first millennium, every village had a church, every church had priests, and all priests answered to higher officials in a hierarchical chain topped by a single pope with a decisive say over all doctrine. Western Europe

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now had the technology and administration needed for coalescence. The Church provided the last key ingredient, an ideological framework that enabled everyone in Western Europe to think of themselves as members of a single something.

Numerous monasteries had sprouted in Europe, too. Translation now revealed its historical power. Latin translations of Arabic translations of Greek texts gravitated from Muslim Spain to European monasteries. Wherever books bunched up, scholars came, and where scholars gathered, students came: the first European universities were born, in Naples, Paris, and elsewhere. In and around these intellectual communities, the scholastics emerged, a school of European thinkers who took up the same task that had preoccupied Muslim philosophers earlier: reconciling the rationalism of the Greeks with the doctrines of the faith—except that the faith, in this case, was not Islam but Catholic Christianity.

In its Dark Ages, Europe had been under assault from every side by Germans, Huns, Magyars, Muslims, Vikings, and others. Now Europe was ready to switch from defense to offense. Finally, the energy of this rising culture erupted into the Crusades: nine European military campaigns carried out in Palestine between 1095 and 1291. Launched by a pope, an abbot, and a ragtag of street preachers, the Crusades gripped the European imagination. Knights flowed east and on the way struck a shivering blow at that other major Christian realm, the Byzantine Empire. They also planted several small kingdoms in the Levant—Catholic beachheads within Dar al-Islam.

These campaigns were only one chapter in a bigger story, a tale of long Crusades, as it were, which unfolded over five centuries and extended from Palestine across the Mediterranean to Spain: a front of interaction between two global entities, European Christendom and Dar al-Islam. The interaction included much war but also considerable cultural and commercial exchange. In Byzantium and the Levant, Europeans encountered the dynamism of the Eurasian east. Fighting what they saw as a monolithic enemy, western Europeans developed a monolithic sense of their own identity, based on the otherness of the other. The long Crusades helped create the concept of Europe.

The Crusades also transformed Europe. Modern finance began to emerge in northern Italy as people flowing through from many parts of Europe with many kinds of coins sought the services of currency exchange experts. The money-changing business morphed into the money-lending business and then into banking. At the same time,

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people returning from the east brought knowledge of commercial practices common to the Islamic world, such as double-entry bookkeeping and letters of credit as a form of payment. These revolutionized the ability of Europeans to conduct business. The real game changer, however, was Arabic numerals—Indian mathematics as developed by Muslims, which facilitated business calculations that were virtually impossible with Roman numerals.

The Mongol Eruption

In a continent poised for takeoff, the Crusades aroused a European hunger for the trade goods of the Far East, especially spices. But those same Crusades created a zone of hostile middlemen who blocked European access to those goods or made them prohibitively expensive. Then came one of the key 'black swans' of history: in 1219, Mongol armies erupted out of Central Asia, a penultimate flare of pastoral nomadic power. Within two generations, Genghis Khan and his successors brought China, Russia, and much of the Islamic world under one political umbrella. From the South China Sea to Constantinople, political borders dissolved. For one crucial half-century, goods, messages, and ideas coursed swiftly through the largest contiguous empire history had ever known.

Together, the Crusades and the Mongol conquests triggered a massive transmission of ideas, inventions, discoveries, and technologies from Asia to Europe. Diseases flowed through the network too, including the bubonic plague, which may have killed more than half of all Europeans in the fourteenth century. Horrifying though it was, this catastrophe also broke up stubborn social encrustations in Europe, left over from the feudal past. Innovations derived from the Crusades could now produce maximum social impact. Serfdom died out, peasants gained some mobility, workers' wages rose, the feudal system foundered, and women achieved some measure of liberation.

Inventions that entered Europe at this time included nautical instruments such as the lateen sail and the magnetic compass. Europeans could now undertake hitherto unthinkable voyages. Portuguese sailors circumnavigated Africa, blazing a sea route to the Indies. More consequentially, Christopher Columbus, sailed west across the Atlantic, hoping to reach the Indies—and stumbled on the Americas instead.

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Global East and Global West Merge

Columbus' voyage of 1492 might well be considered *the* pivotal event of world history. Other Europeans had reached the Americas, but Columbus opened the floodgate to traffic between the hemispheres. The first result was history's greatest holocaust—European diseases raging across the global west killed as much as 90% of the indigenous population and left the survivors too weak to resist conquest. Western Europeans thus came into possession of a virtually unpeopled land, rich with untapped resources.

What their arrival wiped out was not a civilization but a universe of civilizations parallel to that of the global east. Urban civilization had emerged independently at least twice in the Americas, in Peru and Mesoamerica. Here, as in Asia, early agricultural cultures emerged in river valleys, and developed into urban societies built around city-temple complexes, often featuring enormous pyramids. Styles of art that originated with the Olmec of Mexico reappeared in cultures from the Zapotecs of western Mexico, to the later Mayans, then the Toltecs, and finally the Aztecs. Enormous pyramid-shaped earthen mounds in the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys bespeak a sophisticated vanished civilization. Teotihuacan in central Mexico was one of the world's six largest cities in the fifth century CE, with trade links radiating throughout Mesoamerica. Today, we don't even know what these people called themselves. Along the east coast of North America, tribal nations flourishing when the Europeans first arrived had sophisticated political institutions that may have influenced the founders of the United States, but the origins of these remain obscure. The Mayans certainly had sophisticated mathematical skills, a precise calendar, extensive astronomical knowledge, and a written script. They certainly wrote histories, but of their many books, only three of undisputed authenticity survive, and part of a fourth. These reveal something of Mayan religious rituals and calendar, but the rest is mostly lost to darkness.

Europeans on the westernmost edge of the Eurasian landmass—Spain, Portugal, England, France, and the Low Countries—had first and best access to the Americas. They profited the most from Columbus' voyages. In America, these newcomers elaborated a plantation system in which a vast tract of land is given over to a single cash crop. The most prominent crops were sugar, tobacco, and cotton. Tobacco, being an addictive drug, did especially well. The sugar industry boomed because it supplied

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the raw material for rum, but also because, in Europe, sugar was nearly as precious as gold. Sugar production, however, required backbreaking manual labor, which the indigenous people of the Americas were too ill to perform, so the planters began importing slaves from Africa.

Africa in the Global Narrative

Africa below the equator had been largely isolated from the mainstreams of urban history by the Sahara desert, and an equatorial rain forest infested with tsetse flies. Around 3000 years ago, however, advanced indigenous cultures developed near the western coast of what is now Nigeria. The Nok were making sophisticated terra cotta sculptures here, and they mastered iron-smelting technology. From this area, people began spreading south and east in waves rivaling the Indo-European migrations. These can be traced by the spread of languages belonging to the Bantu family, which include most of the languages spoken in sub-equatorial Africa today.

To the north, between the Sahara and the equatorial forest, a succession of major empires flourished between the fourth and sixteenth centuries. Ghana gave way to Mali, which was followed by the Songhay empire, each bigger than the one before. The Songhay empire lasted into the seventeeth century, by which time, some state formation had begun below the equator. Most of southern Africa, however, remained a world of pastoral nomads and tribal villagers, who did what others had done throughout the world for thousands of years: fought petty wars with neighbors and used the prisoners they captured as slave labor. Africans also sold their captives to Arab traders who came inland seeking ivory, ebony, musk, and gold. Slaves taken by Muslims mostly ended up as soldiers, servants, and sexual chattel because the Islamic world had not developed plantations or industrial factories.

Contact with Muslims spread Islam into Africa, perhaps because Islamic doctrine forbade the enslavement of Muslims, a prime incentive for conversion. By the end of the thirteenth century, the Mali elite had converted to Islam, from which time forward the history of west Africa intertwined with the Islamic narrative. Indeed, the Mali capital of Timbuktu became a major intellectual center of the Muslim world.

When European slave traders arrived in the sixteenth century, they drastically disrupted the course of history here. Tribes and nations along the coast abandoned farming and industry for the easy money to

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be made from catching and selling slaves from an ever-more devastated interior. Over the next three centuries, some ten million Africans were hauled to the Americas in chains. Africa became a crucial if tragic part of an increasingly integrated global narrative dominated by Western Europeans.

Silver

The first Europeans to colonize the Americas lucked into an immense trove of precious metals. Gold gets the press but silver was the real disruptor, precious enough to function as money anywhere, abundant enough to circulate as coins. The Spanish extracted massive quantities of silver from the Americas, which made them the richest power in Europe—until the sudden glut of silver caused the value of silver itself to plummet, helping to reduce Spain from the richest country in Europe to one of the poorest.

Even as its power declined in Europe, however, Spain held onto its vast empire in the Americas. A small class of Spanish colonials ruled a vast population of indigenous people. But American natives who had survived European diseases developed immunity, and their numbers began to grow. The border between the two cultural communities blurred until a new culture emerged south of the Rio Grande river, flavored by genetic and cultural contributions from both peoples—mostly Portuguese or Spanish-speaking but not Castilian Spanish; mostly Catholic, but with a panoply of its own saints, such as Mexico's Virgin of Guadalupe. In the Caribbean, and in South America, particularly Brazil, considerable cultural contributions came from Africa as well.

In France, England, and the Netherlands, the influx of silver corresponded to an increased productivity that led to formidable prosperity. Armed with hard cash, these Europeans financed ambitious trading expeditions to the East Indies, giving rise to multinational corporations, and since these East Indies Companies were chartered by their respective governments, the birth of such corporations also helped promote the nation-state as a political form.

Post-Mongol Restoration

East of the Mediterranean, quite a different world historical narrative was unfolding. Here the Mongol holocaust had left a hunger for the

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restoration of an older order. The Islamic world had taken the hardest hit, so the rebound here involved a resurgent Islam. Around 1500, one last flaring of pastoral nomadic power planted three powerful new Islamic states. The Ottoman empire spread from Anatolia into the Balkans, the Levant, and North Africa. The Safavids, a militant Sufi sect, rebuilt Iran as a Muslim Shi'a power. The Moghuls, who traced their line back to Genghis Khan, restored Islamic suzerainty over Northern India.

These empires took little notice of cultural events in Europe and the Americas, busy as they were with jump-starting the interrupted social project of Islam: to universalize a community governed by the architectonic sharia, which Muslim scholars had derived over the centuries from the revelations of Prophet Mohammed. Ottomans tried to replicate on a grand scale the social system pioneered in Medina, which put Muslims in charge but accommodated non-Muslims as harmonious threads. The Safavids committed to developing a monolithic Shi'a version of a Muslim society. The Moghuls had their hands full as a powerful minority ruling a huge Hindu majority.

Throughout the Middle World, the effort to restore normalcy undermined the appeal of experimentation. A self-selecting clerical establishment tightened its grip on social policy. Admittance to its ranks required mastery of orthodox Islamic doctrine. The clerics were protected by authoritarian dynastic governments, whom they legitimized by their endorsement, an alliance from which both partners profited. In the sixteenth century, in seeking to derive harmony from unchanging doctrine, the Islamic world strained to achieve stasis. The Ottomans constructed a particularly intricate mechanism of counterbalancing parts built to operate enduringly so long as everybody kept doing what they were doing. And the results seemed to confirm the wisdom of state policies because the Islamic World achieved a coherence and complexity rivaling its own previous peak. The elite lolled in luxury, the masses were well fed, and Muslim states wielded such military might, they had little to fear except one another.

Into this world came European traders armed with silver and gold. They bought their way into the Ottoman world, disrupting the intricate social arrangements that made the system work. In their wake, corruption infested the bureaucracy and undermined Ottoman efficiency. A similar process weakened the Safavid Empire next door. In both cases, the European presence exacerbated mounting internal contradictions.

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European traders also landed in India, almost unnoticed by the Moghuls. Their commercial power soon overwhelmed local manufacturing and spawned an economy built around supplying raw materials to European industries. The cash derived from this exchange pooled in the coffers of the Indian elites, enabling them to buy whatever they desired, especially products manufactured in Europe. Under European domination, India acquired a British-style civil service system and the most extensive rail network in Asia. English became India's most common second language. At the same time, Hindus gained ground vis-à-vis Muslims, although both were dominated by the British.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, as Europeans co-opted the ruling elites of these Muslim societies and gained control of their economies, Islamic reform movements sprang up in response. These sought to restore a spiritual dimension to Islam by rescuing it from the legalism of clerics and the corruption of political elites, but the reform movements were fueled by the promise of liberating Muslims from subservience to Europeans. The reformers cast Europeans as a monolithic 'other', and the Otherness of that Other became their basis for a new definition of Muslim identity.

Restoration in China

The Mongols had devastated China less than the Islamic world, but China was nonetheless living through its own version of post-Mongol recovery. When the Ming Dynasty ousted the Mongols in 1368, they framed their victory as a reclamation of China from aliens. They then toiled to restore China as the Middle Kingdom mandated to rule 'all under heaven'. Here, as in the Islamic world, hunger for a status quo of earlier times undermined regard for creativity and innovation. The Ming promoted a reinvented system of Confucian values and built a totalitarian bureaucracy even more intricately regulated than the one installed by the First Emperor. Decades before Columbus sailed to America, the Ming dispatched an enormous armada to sail around southeast Asia to India and even to Africa—but only to assert the centrality of China. After this flirtation with global exploration, the Ming destroyed their own ships and redirected all their society's energies toward boxing out the dreaded nomads of the north. They rebuilt the Great Wall as a massive stone structure stretching thousands of miles, perhaps the most ambitious construction project ever undertaken, considering the technology available.

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The Ming restored the Grand Canal linking northern and southern China. Here too imperial policies generated such stability and prosperity it was easy to assume that China had everything and needed nothing, a success that encouraged inward-looking complacency.

European penetration of the Americas had brought new crops flooding into the global east. Plants such as tomatoes, potatoes, sweet potatoes, maize, peanuts and squash changed diets from Ireland to Africa. When these crops reached China, they proved so nutritious they sparked a population boom. But European traders were arriving with silver too. The Ming Empire operated with paper money but the state now began demanding that taxes be paid in silver (while state payments continued to be made in paper). To acquire silver, Chinese taxpayers had to increase their exports to Europe. Porcelain workshops and silk production boomed to industrial scale, and the Chinese adopted a plantation system to grow tea in massive quantities, mainly for export to England.

Then, as the seventeenth century dawned, wars in Europe (among Europeans) temporarily crimped the flow of silver to China. As it happened, a period of bad weather had triggered food shortages—just as the population had risen. These and other dislocating circumstances brought the Ming Dynasty down. Their successors, the Manchurian Qing, carried out military campaigns that expanded China to its biggest size ever, but China was also expanding its exports to Europe at this time, and the European presence in China was growing. As a matter of state policy, the Chinese refused to import anything from Europe. They would accept only silver in exchange for Chinese goods.

The Europeans considered precious metals to be equivalent to national wealth, so the drain of silver alarmed them, but they were hooked to this trade. The British government, for example, had come to depend on tea taxes for its revenue. Possessing India as they did, the British now promoted the sale of Indian opium to the Chinese—for silver. When the Qing government tried to outlaw this trade, Britain employed military force. Two Opium Wars fought between 1839 and 1860 ended with Chinese concessions to an array of Western powers, and after this, although still technically a sovereign empire, China was partitioned into a multitude of colonized parts. In all of East Asia, in fact, only Japan escaped Western domination: they had read the signs early, retrenched against Western influence, and begun to industrialize on their own.

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Secular Rationalism and Its Fruits

Just as the Ming and the neo-Islamic empires were trying to tamp down innovation for the sake of stability, Europe was going the other way. Here, thanks to a long period of improvement, change had appeal and experimentation had prestige. The monolithic doctrinal power of the Catholic Church was under siege. In the sixteenth century, the growing dissent erupted as the Protestant Reformation, which spawned numerous alternative versions of Christianity within European society. Meanwhile, the trickle of intellectual exploration that began with scholasticism turned into a torrent. Revived respect for classical Greek and Roman learning had generated new humanistic styles of art and literature and new inquiries into the natural world. The scholastics' achievements had buttressed the proposition that a perfect God must have created a rational universe, inspiring legions of thinkers to search the observable world for the hidden clockwork of reality. Early on this registered as a way to know the mind of God, but it acquired a purpose and dynamic of its own. In the several centuries after the voyages of Columbus, Europeans invented calculus, developed the experimental method, formulated the laws of motion and of thermodynamics, and launched all the branches of modern science.

The same climate that spawned science triggered a tsunami of practical inventions. Gutenberg's seminal movable type came along just as paper was replacing parchment. Books could now be mass produced, making them cheap enough for the masses to read. Just as religious movements were challenging the monolithic dominance of the Catholic Church, secular philosophers were questioning the Christian emphasis on the afterlife. At the same time, hard currency from the Americas was greasing the gears of commerce as never before; new methods of financing were making economic ventures of unprecedented ambition possible; and mastery of the seas was revealing the provocative diversity of the planet to European society.

Technology had always shaped culture, but in this period—when spectacles, telescopes, microscopes, mechanical clocks, geared machinery, and later the steam engine, the power loom, the locomotive and countless other mechanizations of work were transforming European life—the machine entered history as a truly defining force.

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Ideology and Revolution

Europeans also applied reason to the realm of social interaction, giving rise to novel political concepts including the idea that government was, like any machine, a human artifice designed for a rational purpose and modifiable by those governed. In North America, thirteen British colonies won independence from the mother country and set to work designing a new form of government from scratch, proceeding on the assumption that the function of a government was to secure benefits for its citizens. Consent of the governed replaced kinship and divine favor as the source of a ruling power's legitimacy. On this premise the United States of America was born.

A decade or so later, the French Revolution saw kings, clerics, and aristocrats ousted from power in the name of ideals—liberty, fraternity, equality—confirming the modern concept of revolution as sudden ideological violence aimed at replacing, not just one set of rulers with another, but one social paradigm with another. The American and French Revolutions asserted democracy as their goal, and in 1848, a version of this ideal sparked a wave of upheavals across Europe and Latin America. But the idea of government as a rational social project did not necessarily imply democracy. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, Karl Marx and his intellectual successors had proposed Communism as an ideal form for society and defined government as a mere mechanism for achieving that ideal state, through a revolution led by a dictatorial party committed to the ultimate goal. In 1919, Communists did indeed seize state power in Russia, physically the world's biggest country. Communism was just one of many ideologically-driven party-based 'isms' that emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Others included socialism, nationalism, racism, fascism, liberalism, and eventually Islamism.

In the same year that political upheavals surged through Europe, a conference in Seneca Falls, U.S., marked a seminal moment in another revolutionary movement: feminism. Industrialization had first wiped out cottage industries and thus destroyed the role of women's work in the economy of Western Europe. Then, however, it opened up women's participation in public life—beginning with the liberty to shop unaccompanied, then to work outside the home, then to seek work-oriented education, then to seek political rights in the public sphere, then commercial, social, and legal power, then reproductive rights, and finally full

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access to the military sphere. The emergence of women into the public sphere may be the most far-reaching shift in human affairs since the Neolithic revolution: the change that changes everything. In fact, virtually all liberal, progressive, and revolutionary movements of the past two centuries, from European Communism to China's devastating Taiping Rebellion to America's countercultural movement have paid at least lip service to the liberation and empowerment of women.

The Machine Age

The machine had many other reverberations. It brought the middle class into being. It made war more deadly. It made messaging ever faster, enabling central political powers to control ever larger surrounding domains. It facilitated cargo transport to such a degree that by the end of the nineteenth century, the whole world was linked into a single network of production and consumption. Thereupon only the politics of distribution limited our species' capacity to feed every person on the planet.

The inventions of the machine age came in waves triggered by core ideas. The steam engine broke open the notion of using combustion to power work, whereupon inventors explored all the implications. What other substances could provide combustion? What other forms of work could be harnessed to this effect? Petroleum replaced steam (with deep political consequences, since the Islamic world proved to be the main reserve of this resource). Weaving, garment manufacturing, hauling, drilling, even the making of machines—all were mechanized and harnessed to combustion.

The telegraph revealed the practical possibilities of electricity, a force scientists had been exploring for a century. By revolutionizing messaging over long distances, the telegraph spawned a rich corporate entity with money to spend on patents. Tinkerers eager to get rich were inspired to explore what else electricity could do. Along came the telephone, electric lights, refrigeration, air conditioning, electric motors, radios, movies, television…

The Politics of Industrialization

Outside the West, many people saw mechanization as the key to Western power. Beginning in the nineteenth century, a wide array of rulers and movements put industrialization at the center of their political goals.

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In the Muslim world, the elites in closest contact with Western culture tended to embrace secular developmentalism as an ethos.

But secular developmentalism found itself inherently at odds with Islamism, a burgeoning movement. Islamists argued that only one thing could restore Muslim dominance: strict adherence to Islam in its purest form, a code derived from the most literal possible reading of the sacred texts. Islamists rallied support with two banners: one, the unifying chauvinism that came from a sense of shared membership in a worldwide community (the *umma*); and the other, an unwavering application of Islamic legislation to family matters. After all, Islamism had staked its identity on its opposition to Western culture, and the most obvious difference between the two cultures involved family life and gender roles. In the Western world industrialism had extinguished tribe as a source of identity; the nuclear family was emerging as a unit separable even from extended family; the individual was seen increasingly as a sovereign actor in society; and women were expanding out of family life into public roles previously reserved for men. Islamists not coincidentally put the sequestration of women and the walling-off of family life from public life at the center of their campaigns.

Meanwhile, by the start of the twentieth century, European colonization had brought the Chinese empire to its lowest ebb. A new generation of Chinese activists favored saving their civilization by abandoning traditional Chinese ways and adopting selected Western ones. Nationalism took hold in China, giving rise to a nominally democratic movement, which in 1912 ended the Qing dynasty, and replaced the Chinese imperial system with a Western-style republic. Over the next half-century, Chinese versions of Western currents contended for control of the region and indeed of this civilization.

The End of Empires

Even as science and technology leapt ahead, political forms lagged behind. The turn of the twentieth century saw much of the world still organized into multi-ethnic empires, each a disorderly collection of parts—ethnic nationalities, tribes, fiefdoms, petty principalities and the like, living mostly by local rules but submitting allegiance, taxes, and military service to some central power. This venerable form dated back to the earliest Mesopotamian empires. In 1900, the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns had their patchworks in Europe, the Romanoffs ruled an

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omnibus Russia, the Ottomans technically still held much of the Islamic world, the British and French had their worldwide collection of colonies, and China, parsed though it was by European powers, retained the outer form of a traditional empire ruled by the Qing dynasty. Within all these empires, however, nationalism, racism, and other swelling 'isms' were straining the framework, until at last a spectacular outburst of violence originating in Europe engulfed the world, rising to one climax in 1914 and another in 1939. The greatest war of the twentieth century finally ended in 1945 with the annihilation of two Japanese cities by nuclear bombs and the reduction of Germany to ruins.

By that point, all the traditional multi-ethnic empires had been pulverized out of existence. Out of the rubble, the nation-state had emerged as the (seemingly) final political unit. In theory every person now belonged to one such state, and the nation-states were contiguous, with no unclaimed land between sovereignties.

Yet even as the world congealed into a collection of sovereign countries, a simpler superstructure was emerging too: countries clumped into two rival 'blocs', the communist and capitalist worlds, with a smattering of unaffiliated countries designated 'the Third World' between them. These were the global players in the 45-year drama known as the Cold War. And although the World War had ended, the competition between the rival blocs manifested as conflicts in the Third World, where the superpowers supported competing forces, each hoping to draw the disputed territory into its bloc.

The competition between ideological blocs lay like a grid over other sources of violence. As the twentieth century wound down, the contradictions built into the idea of the nation-state generated numerous wars and friction. Virtually every state turned out to contain within its borders ethnic minorities with a propensity to self-identify as nations and therefore seek autonomy. Also, many national borders were straddled by ethnic or tribal groups whose members felt affiliated with one another but found themselves subject to separate state authorities.

And even as the world was congealing into nation-states and blocs of nation states in the mid-twentieth century, the first traces of global units began to appear. The United Nations was born. The Bretton Woods conference established rules for currency exchange among nations. In the following years, the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund emerged as planetary economic overseers. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserted principles of

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value deeper than any culture. States, movements, and private groups took actions that challenged the principle of sovereignty. Global anti-apartheid activists, for example, claimed the right to modify the domestic laws of South Africa. Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini 'passed a death sentence' on writer Salman Rushdie as if he had jurisdiction over a British citizen. U.S. president George Bush had Panamanian president Noriega 'arrested' for drug crimes in Panama. Al Qaeda launched military operations on the scale of a nation-state without possessing one inch of territory.

Persistence of the Past

The Cold War temporarily obscured still-flowing ancient currents. The Islamic Revolution of Iran and the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan, for example, had less to do with the Cold War than was seen at the time. China appeared to have joined the Communist bloc in 1949, when a movement led by Mao Tse-tung seized power and launched a state patterned after the Soviet Union, a pattern derived from the theories of Karl Marx which were themselves firmly rooted in mainstream Western philosophy. On the face of it, then, China had joined the Western world historical narrative.

But Chairman Mao's career fits just as neatly into a Chinese world historical narrative. He played out what Chinese historians had long identified as an archetypal pattern of history as seen from this center: a warring-states period had ended; the empire was unified once again: the Middle Kingdom had been restored. Much the same story had been seen when the Qin dynasty founded the first empire, when the Sui dynasty reconstituted it, and when the Ming emerged. Like earlier empire-founders, Mao was a ruthless colossus who sacrificed countless lives to carry out monumental, transformative infrastructure projects. He imposed on China a body of regulations administered by a corps of bureaucrats educated in the official canon. Under earlier emperors, that canon was Confucianism. Under Mao it was "Maoist" Communism. Mao's administrators were party members, not scholar-bureaucrats, but they too secured their offices by passing exams in the doctrine. And again, the backlash to Mao's tough rule brought a quick end to his 'dynasty', but his work laid the groundwork for what may be a more enduring surge of Chinese cohesion and dominance. The Qin were followed by the Han,

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the Sui by the Tang, and, since Mao's passing in 1976, China is on a course laid down by Deng Xiaoping and his successors.

What's Next

Throughout the twentieth century, even as war tore up the world, inventions kept sewing disparate lives together. Cars, airplanes, telephones, radio, movies, and television all moved cargo and messages ever further, ever faster. Antibiotics and new vaccines extended life. Air conditioning and electricity expanded the zone of human habitation and the hours of human productivity. In the late twentieth century the computer launched the digital age. Tinkerers at once set out to explore what else could be digitized. So far they have come up with cell phones, the internet, social media, and 3-D printing. The surgical replacement of body parts, bionic sensory organs, primitive mind-reading and mental manipulation of material technologies, organic computers using enzymes instead of electricity, and machines that pass the Turing test for intelligence suggest that the border between humans and human technology is dissolving and we are merging with our machines. These developments have taken us across another line as well: throughout history environment has shaped human culture; now culture shapes the environment and is shaped by its own technology. We have become the environment with which we must contend. Our ancestors built shelters to protect themselves from the climate. We struggle to protect the climate from ourselves.

The machine age has intertwined with the political narrative of the world. Information circulating within a network of people who interconnect more directly with one another than with others outside their network is the mechanism by which world-historical microcosms have always formed. But today, technology, social media, and political institutions ensure that information cannot be contained within fixed geographical networks. Workers in India provide support services to companies in the United States. The United States floats treasury bonds that are bought in great quantities by the Chinese state. Economic decisions by Chinese state planners affect mortgage rates in Des Moines. People in Des Moines vote for their favorites in *American Idol*, a TV show spun off the British hit *Pop Idol*, which also spawned *Afghan Star*, a show from Kabul watched in remote Afghan villages on TV sets hooked to satellite dishes and powered by solar panels bought not with

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money but with opium, which the villagers trade to Taliban gangs and tribal warlords—who process and sell the drugs to finance military operations against Western armies, sales that contribute to skyrocketing addiction rates in Western Europe…

We humans started out as tens of thousands of autonomous bands of hunters and gatherers. Here we are now, on the verge of merging into a single intertwined spaghetti of human civilization. What is world history? It is, I propose, the trajectory that goes from that beginning to this present.

Note

1. Tamim Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted: A History of the World through Islamic Eyes* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009). Cf. also *Games Without Rules: The Often-Interrupted History of Afghanistan* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2012).

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CHAPTER 9

Western, Russian, and Islamic Culture in World Civilizational Perspective

Tursin Hafizuhli Gabitov

Pre-civilizational Culture

The cultures and civilizations of the present age did not simply appear in the world in their present form. Neither are they the casual gift of nature, society, or some special powerful force. Human culture is the product of humankind's tireless quest, its ongoing spiritual development, and its advances and breakdowns in the world.

Who are we and from where did we come? In the beginning of that earliest period of history what did we hope for, and what did we strive for? What kinds of events and causes raised us to a human level? These and other kinds of questions for which there is still no final answer—and to which an answer may even be impossible—continue to make humankind ponder deeply. Therefore, our deductions about human culture in the earliest period are hypotheses and tentative interpretations at best.

Translated from Kazakh by Zhuldyz Zhumashova; edited by R. Charles Weller.

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Nonetheless, modern science has gathered a great many facts about the formation of humans and culture. According to anthropological genetics (that is, knowledge about the origins of humans and society), humankind's formation is comprised of roughly three periods:

1. Human biological evolution. This began some 20–25 million years ago and ended 3–4 million years ago.
2. About 3–4 million years ago the earth experienced major geophysical changes (radiation, Ice Age and so on). Initial genetic mechanisms went through mutation processes and humankind's anthropoid species started to develop by biological adaptation. Since the time of *Paranthropus boisei*, which was discovered by the Leakeys in Eastern Africa, humanity's social evolution began to displace biological factors. As evidence for this, tribal organization of *Australopithecus*, their hand-made tools, artificial objects crafted by creative thinking, language, primitive consciousness, and early forms of religion and art have been noted.
   Basic humanistic principles are of high importance among the factors that form a human culture. As such, we may suggest that prohibition of incest regulated marital relations and as a result, led to the creation of matriarchal clans. Prohibitions on killing relatives, and assisting the weak can also be considered as pre-conditions for the formation of a human culture. Certainly, the biological evolution of humanity did not stop then, but it was the time of early cultural and social development.
3. About 40,000 years ago *Homo sapiens* (that is, genetic human beings) evolved into modern humans. Adaptation to environmental conditions was replaced by culture. More precisely, pre-civilizational culture covers a period from those times up to the times of the formation of the first civilizations (4th–3rd millennia BCE).

Every nation and ethnic group has gone through a stage of pre-civilizational culture. Even in the twentieth century it was possible to find some groups functioning at the level of the Stone-Age period. It would not be fair, however, to judge the pre-civilizational age as 'primitive'. World concepts of pre-civilizational culture rely on myth. Ancient myths and legends act as significant guides to early human lifestyles. Human beings mastered and understood the environment through the semiotic meaning of myths.[1] The first religions (animism, totemism, fetishism) and

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myths strongly promoted unity between humans and nature. Agriculture and pastoralism, and even handiwork, required pre-civilizational culture to be in close contact with nature. Scythian 'animal' style art and mythology, Chinese Yin–Yang dualities, Egyptian and Sumerian myths about resurrected gods—all are the symbols which sound out a unity with nature.

One of the features typical of pre-civilizational culture is that people's relations were regulated by customs and traditions, systems of taboos (prohibitions), and superstitions rather than by law.

The First Civilizations

The first civilizations have been investigated more elaborately and thoroughly than pre-civilizational cultures. However, these researches were mainly conducted from a 'Western' point of view. Toynbee, Spengler, Danilevsky, and Herder drew wrong conclusions about ancient Eastern civilizations. We will discuss some great cultures which made prominent contributions to human history and examine them axiologically.

One of the earliest world civilizations is that of ancient Egypt. It was founded in the lower Nile valley in 4th–3rd millennia BCE and continued until the invasion of Alexander in 322 BCE. There are differing opinions on the origins of Egyptian civilization. According to Toynbee, some of the barbarian tribes who were settled in the Afro-Asian deserts became nomads due to harsh climatic conditions; some were able to cultivate the areas between the Nile and the Tigris and Euphrates and mastered agriculture. However, recently many scholars highlight its African origins. As evidence for this can be given the fact that Africa was not only the place of Egyptian civilization, but other similar cultural groups such as those of Kush, Nubia, Ghana, Sangha, and more.

Another source of world civilization was ancient Sumer. The harsh climate of the Afro-Asian zone caused the ancestors of the Sumerians to migrate to the region of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Scholars of cultural evolution cannot agree on the origin and language of the Sumerians. The latest research traces their origins to a proto-Altaic ethnic group. Indeed, Sumerian myths can be compared with the Turkic Blue-Tengri, Zher-Su, and Umay myths of Central Asia. They reflect the fact that the Sumerians cultivated deserts and created in them their flourishing lands.

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Contemporary culture retains traces of Sumerian-Babylonian mathematics and astronomy. Up to the present we still use Sumerian algorithms which divide a circle into 360°, an hour into 60 minutes, and a minute into 60 seconds. Likewise, after the invasion of the Semitic-speaking Akkadians at the end of the 3rd millennium BCE, and even after the establishment of the Babylonian and Assyrian Empires in the Sumerian territory, the Sumerian language did not lose its significance as a source of religious and cultural influence.

One of the ancient cultures that has influenced both West and East is the Persian civilization. It acted as a bridge between Afro-Asia and Eurasia. The emergence of Persian civilization occurred within a complex historical-cultural process in the 3rd millennium BCE. It is worth highlighting that the migration of ethnic groups and tribes played the decisive role in the formation of Persian civilization. In approximately 2000 BCE, Aryan tribes invaded the current territories of Iran and India from Eurasia. Persian and Median tribes settled mainly in western Iranian territory. However, it would be biased to claim that Persian civilization has only Indo-European origins. Persian culture was founded under influence of Sumerian civilization. According to Toynbee: “Iran is the second home of Sumerian civilization.”

The main basis of Persian civilization was the Zoroastrian religion. It is much closer to a deep philosophical worldview taking shape as a cultural phenomenon than a system of mere religious beliefs. Zoroastrianism had great influence on the formation of ancient philosophical systems, as well as on sacred traditions in Christianity and Islam. Different opinions exist about the life and teachings of Zarathustra, who was the founder of Zoroastrianism. ‘Zarathustra’ (derived from Greek *zoroast*) means ‘with camels’ or ‘one who drives camels’. Hence, the Kazakh scholar Agyn Qasymzhanov’s suggestion that Zarathustra originated among nomadic tribes, but was then persecuted by his people and had to seek the patronage of King Vishtaspa is reasonable. Zoroastrianism propagates complex teachings about the eschatological future. It claims that the world’s history will last for 12,000 years, during which 3000 years were considered a ‘Golden Age’. This age was the most peaceful of times; there was no illness, no death, and no famine. But at the end of the Golden Age Angra Mainyu appeared and brought to humanity famine, illness and death. Then a member of Zarathustra’s community (Saoshyant) will win out against evil and found the eternal, just kingdom of Ahura Mazda.

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From Persian inscriptions we know that king Darius ordered the digging of a channel from the Nile to the Red Sea. Also, Persian culture used a lunar calendar. It had 11 fewer days than the solar calendar and the name of each month was related to seasonal agricultural work. The names of the months in Kazakh were derived from the Persian calendar.

Another treasured resource of humanity is the ancient Indian civilization. This is an Asian civilization with unique features, and it would be impossible to understand the whole planet's contemporary culture without understanding its Indian heritage. Indian culture had a direct impact on the ancient Persian and Arabian cultures. It is particularly close to Persian civilization in terms of its origin, mentality and approach to the world. After Harappan civilization (2500–1800 BCE), beginning from c. ninth–tenth centuries BCE, Indo-Aryan tribes from Central Asia started to cultivate valleys near the Ganges River. Later this area became the object of expansionist ambitions for Greek, Macedonian, Scythian and Arabian tribes. Despite this fact, Indians, with their deep rootedness in their own cultural ways, overcame the invaders spiritually and preserved their uniqueness.

One of the great heritages of world culture, Buddhism, emerging as it did out of Hinduism, is one of the fruits of India. Later it moved across the borders of India and became the first of the three world religions. After some 2500 years, the Buddha's teachings remain intact and continue to be a spiritual source for more than half a billion people.

Ancient Indian civilization is interrelated with the eastern Dong Son, Cambodian, Sri Lankan, Javanese, and ancient Japanese and Korean civilizations. However it is well-known that one of the most advanced and influential civilizations of Asia was that of the Chinese. Unlike the Sumerian, Egyptian and Indian civilizations, Chinese civilization was mainly influenced by distinct cultural-social regulations. The above-mentioned civilizations appeared on the basis of irrigational systems, whereas in China this system appeared later. Chinese civilization originally developed in isolation from the other states for a thousand years, though it later developed in interrelation with the powerful northern Eurasian nomadic tribes. Scythians and Huns, Wusuns and Mongolian Manchurian tribes, as well as Turkic peoples had a direct impact on Chinese history. China was heavily dependent on them. In order to survive, the Chinese had to negotiate a delicate policy, namely to "instigate barbarians against barbarians."[2] Like the Sumerian and ancient Turkic peoples, the Chinese worshipped 'Heaven' and considered their empire

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to be divinely established. The Chinese mastered growing rice and millet, as well as producing the silkworm and porcelain. They created the compass and invented gunpowder. They became skilled in diverse architectural and monumental art and introduced them to the entire world.

While discussing ancient Chinese civilization special attention must be given to Confucius (also Kongzhi or Zhongni, 551–479 BCE), the Chinese philosopher who laid the foundations of not only China's, but much of east Asia's spiritual culture. His political and ethical teachings later became Chinese official teaching. Confucius is one of the contributors to human spiritual innovation during the Axial Age. Following Confucian teachings, human social structure is stable, with each person having their own place in the life of Heaven. Confucius says: "Let the ruler be a ruler; the subject, a subject; the father, a father; the son, a son." The Heavenly god created only kind aristocracy and common people who can work physically. This statement was opposed by the followers of Daoism, or 'the natural way', who treated heaven and the earth equally and suggested that common people are not lower than aristocracy.

Classical Culture

After typological analysis of the legacy and influence of several Eastern civilizations within world history, let us review the West. It is undeniable that the word 'West' is associated with ancient Greece. Hegel notes: "Among the Greeks we feel ourselves immediately at home." Jacob Burkhardt remarks: "We see with the eyes of the Greeks and use their phrases when we speak." However, it would show bias to agree with the European point of view which claims that the cradle of the whole of human civilization is Hellas. Neither Greek nor Roman civilizations can be regarded as having been without influence by the great Eastern civilizations. Their territory was not isolated with great 'Chinese walls'. Even the initial form of Greek civilization, Cretan-Minoan civilization, was formed before the Indo-European migration to Hellas (with some scholars suggesting that Minoan civilization is itself the heir of an alleged Atlantean culture).

The greatest treasure remaining from ancient Greek spiritual culture in human civilization is Classical art in various forms, such as the Greek tragedians Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, the playwright Aristophanes, the sculptor Phidias, and others. Another significant

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contribution of Classical civilization to world human civilization is Greek philosophy. Thales and Pythagoras, Heraclitus and Democritus, Socrates and Plato, Aristotle and Epicurus raised the entire human way of thinking and worldview by their profound philosophical systems. The harmony of microscosm and macrocosm, the main basis of diversity of the Universe (substrate and substance), the idea of the 'Logos' (word) which identifies the world, the absoluteness of reason and necessity, human beings as a measure of truth, and principles about an ideal world in ancient Greek philosophy all had a significant influence on not only Western world perceptions, but on all human society. In the world empire of Alexander of Macedonia, Greek culture in the form of Hellenism was adopted by multiple civilizations as the highest form of culture. The later Roman Empire was also founded on Hellenistic ideas and principles. The end of Hellenism, following the collapse of the Roman Empire, is the beginning of the Middle Ages.

Medieval (Post-classical) Culture

Typically in scholarly sources, the Middles Ages are recorded as: "Dark ages, as well as an age of fanaticism, following the light of the period of Antiquity." This position was particularly popular among representatives of the Renaissance. In fact, the Middle Ages is not the period when human cultural evolution came to a stop, but it is a period of preconditioning for future cultural and technical progress. Western European culture in the Middle Ages can be described as the period when Classical Greco-Roman achievements converged to form a new era. From this angle it would be correct to consider the significance and beauty of the Middle Ages as the basis of contemporary Western civilization, including Russian and later Soviet societies. The Russian writer Gorky noted that "an abundance of things in Western and Soviet museums likewise all share a similar style."

The barbarians who destroyed the Roman Empire did not appreciate cultural artfacts in the beginning. In human history, German tribes, called Vandals, are viewed from a negative perspective for their destruction of artworks and historical monuments. They ruined the cities, temples, and irrigational networks that flourished in the places they invaded. The cultural level of the barbarians was thought to be much lower than that of those who were invaded. European states, which were joined

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together artificially from different nations and tribes, gradually lost their barbarian features and turned back to an antique (i.e., Greco-Roman) mentality. In this process, the unifying function of Christianity was significant. In the eleventh century, the French monk and chronicler Rodulfus Glaber wrote: "It was as if the whole world were shaking itself free, shrugging off the burden of the past, and cladding itself everywhere in a white mantle of churches."[3]

Beginning from the middle of the twelfth century, the Romanesque style was transformed into Gothic. Although Gothic art was mainly used in church buildings, it had great influence on the whole culture. In Gothic buildings, which were erected at the expense of citizen's funds, people participated in Church services and discussed important social problems. They were places for university lectures, theater performances and parliament meetings.

In terms of its unique features, Medieval Western European culture can be viewed as two interrelated cultures: religious-formal, upperclass; and carnival-folk, lower class. Formal, upper-class culture considered the ascetic equivalent of Christianity as a goal of the human being, promoting a religious-moral consciousness.

The time of transformation from Classical civilization into the Middle Ages was an age of stress, crisis and collapse. As a result, emerging Western culture regarded efficiency and practicality as the main principles by which to orient life; they selected only the most useful parts of the previous Classical culture. They, likewise, divided the society into landed estates. According to aristocratic thought, common people were closer to animals than human beings; they displayed no signs of being civilized.

Culture of the Renaissance

The Renaissance has a significant place in the history of human culture. Spiritual revitalization and humanist characteristics of culture flourished at the heart of this age; humankind began tapping into the ripe fruits of cultural progress. Hegel described the idea of Renaissance as a "golden dawning" and new age of worldwide culture.

All civilized nations have experienced renaissance at some stage. Historical data rejects the Eurocentric position which claims that the Renaissance occurred only in Western Europe. For instance, the Indian

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Renaissance occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in Central Asia this phenomenon covered the tenth to fifteenth centuries.

If in the Medieval era, God was regarded as the center of the universe, during the Renaissance human beings were raised to the level of God. Italian nobleman Pico della Mirandola wrote in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*: "The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, and by no such restriction, may, by your own free will, determine to whose custody We have assigned you, and trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. We have placed you at the very center of the world, so that from that vantage you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains."[4] As stated by the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, the individual of the Renaissance is set free and is "alone" responsible for themselves and their fellow man. Medieval religious dominance had decreased the value of a person significantly.

Renaissance culture was, for the Western world, concerned with mastering time and space. Great geographic discoveries increased people's understanding of the world. Technical achievements sped up life's flow.

This age also thoroughly transformed the systematic interrelation between the world and people. Humankind's unique place in the world offers opportunities to develop diversely. On the basis of Renaissance culture in the Modern Era Europeans made a decisive step toward modern civilization.

Culture of the Modern Era

If spiritual values took first place in the Antique and Medieval cultures, in the Modern Era humankind turned their aims and understanding of life in a thoroughly new direction. In the Modern Era Europeans marshalled all their potential to master nature. The civilizations of Europe and North America formed the most developed industrial-capitalistic system. In this age science and technology rose to the highest levels yet achieved. They proclaimed that the main goal of this civilization was to construct a wealthy society which could satisfy all human needs using all natural and technical resources available. The offspring of Western Civilization is an active, creative individual. A. Hamidov states: "Western people use their power of development and advancement for outer things…They create from this material their true world, a world of culture and civilization. In the last stages of development Westerners will be able to create

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a specific monster, a system of technique and technology which can turn into Golem, which may prove dangerous for the existence of humanity and the planet."[5]

Industrial civilization based on large-scale production competed with nature. The world was technologized. '*Homo faber*' ('man the maker') aspired only to material things: benefits, profits and wealth became the main motto. However, the modern European age could not overcome its narrow circle. Social and international relations became complicated. Revolutions and movements brought disaster to people. Berdyaev said: "The industrial capital system was not just the most powerful development economically, it affected spiritual development, namely the destruction of spirituality. Modern capitalistic civilization rejected God, and became a godless civilization."[6]

Modern-era civilization went through historical-cultural stages such as the Reformation, Enlightenment and Romanticism in its development. In general, the following defining features of the Modern Era can be noted:

1. Nature is an object to which the actions of a subject are directed. If in the past humans believed in God as the absolute measure of truth, now nature provided the highest and final judgment. Scholars very often use phrases such as 'natural man', 'society's natural conditions' and so on.
2. The influential part of a society became the economy and material production; it formed 'economic man'.
3. Natural sciences (mechanics, mathematics, physics, and biology) took first place. Philosophers paid close attention to the development of rational and empirical methods.
4. Traditional and religious consciousness was exchanged for social and legal principles. Civil society (which rests on legislation) was strengthened.
5. Utilitarian directions became dominant in art, culture, religion and literature.

The twentieth century took its unique place in human history with its greatness and social crises, great achievements in science and technology and destructive wars, concrete steps toward a bright future and thermonuclear danger. If two world wars in the first half of the century aroused fear concerning the end of the world, the end of the century brought

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about the strengthening of reasonableness and kindness. The main lesson of the twentieth century was that "we have to understand we all are passengers on the spaceship called planet Earth," as stated by the great humanist Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900–1944).

In the twentieth century the beginnings of a global humanist culture took shape in all civilized states. The art which emerged in the Ancient world, originally without writing systems, passed from generation to generation and advanced to the most exquisite forms. In the Modern Era was born 'screen culture' (that is, observing and living life through digital technology screens). Its basis was historicity, industrial society transformed into post-industrial regulations with its creativity turned into social unity. Post-industrial (that is, contemporary) society can solve forever the problems of food, clothing and all consumption matters. The next goal is the solution of quality of life issues. Production problems were replaced with problems of welfare, professional, technological services and relations. It is understandable that ethics became the dominant science among world sciences in the twentieth century. Even the United States, where an individualistic culture is highly developed, had to accept 'collectivism', a value which was peculiar to Eastern countries, because experience proved that the management of industry is not effective with authoritarian methods.

It is inappropriate to simply copy transformations in different spheres of culture to other states. As evidence of this we can highlight the fate of Kazakh culture in the Soviet period, which was overwhelmed by the imposed way of life. Under the Soviets, Kazakh society and economy, which were rooted in three millennia of Central Asian nomadic pastoralism, were forcibly collectivized and converted to agricultural and industrial ways of life in villages and cities respectively. By contrast, in their adoption of 'Western' culture, Japanese industrialists organized special 'circles of quality', aiming to involve multiple employers in the quality of production. This movement was based on Japanese cultural-psychological values and features. The Japanese are brought up from childhood placing high value on the moral duties of gratitude and loyalty. Japanese employers, motivated by such national-cultural values, relied on their strength and did not concern themselves with free time for employees. In the 1970s, similar circles were created in the U.S. After several years they were introduced into 230 American companies. Unfortunately however, only eight of them were successful while the rest could not achieve significant profit. Even this simple example alone illustrates our opinion. The root of American

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individualism and entrepreneurial spirit rests on its history as well as complex ethnic and geographical construction. It is impossible to understand German diligence and their economic achievements without taking into consideration German history and their national features. As for the Chinese, they have a unique optimistic worldview, regarding life and death as related natural processes. People live on earth, but both those alive and those deceased remain interconnected with one other. Chinese popular custom, according to which a grave is given as a gift to a seriously ill person, deeply confuses European people. The gift is a sign of esteem and true feelings toward them, since a dying person is seen as a passenger heading off on a long journey. On the other hand, social reformers calling for decisive steps to bring about serious changes have been frustrated in Europe. The prominent twentieth-century thinker Albert Schweitzer highlighted the need to reject technocratic culture and to rise to the highest level of advancement possible. He concluded that the destructive events, bloody wars, ecological catastrophes and other events of the twentieth century had led science to be transformed into "technocracy and technological science", resulting in the sacrifice of culture for the sake of ideas, placing pressure on spirituality and emotions, leading to cultural crisis. The great thinker suggested as a principle that we should "esteem life" for the sake of a new culture common to all humankind. This principle supposes a turn from the idea of development as it applies to culture to a new direction of development based on common human values. This is the way that will lead humanity to a bright future.

Russian Culture

Russian culture is an inseparable part of world culture. It is a culture with unique features that cannot be replicated. Hence, its input to the treasure of world culture is invaluable.

The main features in the formation of Russian culture were interrelated with the following factors: takeover of the vast territory settled by many ethnic groups and nations; a unique Russian Orthodox branch of Christianity established according to spiritual and traditional customs; countering of the 'isolationism' which arose from out of the relatively temporary but long-enduring process of Western European civilizational development; the subordination of individual interests to state interests.

In order to support these ideas, let us consider the periods of formation of Russian culture. Even though Russian culture, which is part of the world cultural tradition, was founded on a national basis, it closely

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interacted with Byzantine and other cultures, particularly Bulgarian, Serbian, Armenian, Georgian and other countries which bordered Byzantium.

Ancient Slavic culture is regarded as the beginning of Russian culture. Its main cultural components are sacred poems, mythology and legends. Many scholars believe most of these were lost after conversion to Christianity starting in the late tenth century. Before the coming of Christianity, a pagan culture was highly developed in Russian lands.

The worldview of the ancient Slavic people was closely related with nature-worship. They perceived each forest, stream, well and even each tree as inhabited by a living spirit (cf. animism). They were especially impressed with the appearance of old oak trees which were covered with many leaves. They regarded rapid, fast rivers as sacred, so much so that in legends rivers could talk to people. The gods of simple-hearted Slavic people, who were very close to the earth and nature, were also related to the mysteries of nature. For example, Perun, the God of holy thunder, was the most powerful God.

Slavic people worshipped the Sun and had several names for it (for example, Dazbog—the most merciful God). Like other nations, Slavic people also described things with qualities peculiar to humans, thus bringing them to human consciousness. Clear evidence of this can be seen in production of the image of 'Almighty Mother God'. Many works have been written about the Slavic people. In one of them, a Byzantine historian of the seventeenth century, Procopius of Caesarea, wrote: "Slavs and Antaes are not ruled by one person, but live according to the rule of the people [cf. democracy], they thus resolve issues of happiness and misfortune through general counsel."

Religion is the main element of any type of culture. Religion is not only worship or a system of religious rituals, it is an understanding (or worldview) regarding the environment, and ideas about humankind's place within this environment. It is a system of religious beliefs as well as an image of life. Consequently, conversion to Byzantine Christianity by the people of Rus' was a critical turning point in its cultural history. The acceptance of Orthodox Christianity by the Russians was determined according to their internal and external conditions. The main condition which determined their choice was economic and cultural relations between Kievan Rus' and Constantinople. Orthodox Christianity highly influenced all spheres of the Russian state's social, political and cultural life. As a result of conversion to the new religion, trade, political and

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cultural relations with Christian countries stabilized and began taking shape from a new vantage. Southern Slavs, Armenians and Georgians, who had converted to Christianity before the Rus', experienced the impact of Byzantine culture much earlier.

Leading world cultures significantly influenced the development of Kievan Rus' culture, which took form as a result of the unification of the eastern Slavs and the related rise of one of the most influential countries in Europe by virtue of its expanding territory and power. We have no other comparable cultural phenomenon in the Medieval world. In fact, geographically Rus' has borders with Byzantium, various eastern and Caucasian nations, Western Europe and Scandinavia, and they all exerted great cultural influence on the area.

After conversion to Christianity, Rus' culture achieved its peak in a very short period of time, particularly in the times of Prince Yaroslav (eleventh century). Kiev was transformed into one of the largest cities in Europe. While foreign travelers called Kiev 'the second royal city', the eleventh-century writer Adam of Bremen offered it a high valuation, calling it "the rival of the scepter of Constantinople." The Kievan Sophia cathedral, built in the reign of Prince Yaroslav, was an outstanding monument. According to historians of architecture, there is no other comparable building with thirteen domes displaying such outstanding architectural design, not only in Byzantium, but across the Christian world.

Kievan Rus' was called 'the country of books'. Schools, libraries, and archives were opened in monasteries and much foreign literature was translated; chronicles were recorded. The price of some works was so high that in case of fire books had to be rescued first. If we thus consider Kievan Rus' culture within its broader world historical context, we can conclude that it was at a high level.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the center of Russian culture became Novgorod. The city, with its painting and architecture, called itself 'The Great and Honorable Novgorod'. It is not just coincidence that a foreign author evaluated this historical city, saying: "Its wealth is equaled only by Rome." No other country was so skilled and passionate in creating and painting the iconic works of beauty which have become an inseparable part of Russian Christianity. Among icons preserved in Novgorod there are some which have global significance, including the *Angel with Golden Hair* painted at the end of the twelfth century and housed in the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

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By the end of the fifteenth century Moscow had achieved high cultural and political authority in Eastern Europe. The great state of Byzantium was experiencing its famous downfall; the culture of the southern Slavs was in decline; the Mongol and Tatar raids were still strong; the historical victory of Dmitry Donskoy over the Golden Horde at the Battle of Kulikovo (1380) elevated the authority of Moscow. After this event various art representatives from different states, including Rus', started to gather in Great Moscow, and Moscow became one of the largest cultural centers in the region. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Russian Orthodox Church gained its independence and became separated from Western Christianity. Now Rus' considered itself as the main guardian of Christianity and took responsibility for developing and spreading it worldwide. As a result, Moscow Rus' proclaimed itself 'Holy Rus' and Moscow became the 'Third Rome'. In 1480 Moscow finally gained its independence from the Golden Horde, but the influence of Eastern culture on the Russian state did not end. From 1547, in the time of Ivan IV (d. 1584), Rus' was officially entitled Russia.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Boris Godunov paid close attention to culture, enlightenment and Western civilization. As a result, Russia's trade relations with Western countries intensified and its cities flourished, becoming large cultural centers. The development of the Moscow Kremlin was commenced. However, only 2% of the Russian population were settled in cities at the time, which meant that the majority of the population were still peasants.

In the middle of the seventeenth century state and private schools were founded at which different disciplines, including foreign languages, were taught. In 1637, the first Slavic, Greek, and Latin Academy was founded in Moscow. The Likhud brothers, who had graduated from Padua University in Italy, guided the Academy. Under Western influence, the first theater performances took place and in 1675 the first ballet was performed in the Russian state theatre.

Cultural changes in the beginning of the eighteenth century in Russia were closely related to the reforms of Peter the Great. The main feature of this new age of Russian culture was that it developed in close interrelation with other cultures. As a result of clear-sighted state policy, aiming to destroy national isolationism, international relations with Western countries were expanded; humanistic and rational sciences began to penetrate Russia. The ideology of absolutism accompanied European ideas

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of enlightenment and rationalism. These changes also influenced the sphere of culture. The process of differentiation had begun, and new directions in cultural formation began to take shape. Most important was the visible tendency to aspire for democracy.

Peter the Great's reforms covered all aspects of social and cultural life. As a result, the pace of cultural development increased in comparison with previous periods, and new styles (Baroque, Rococo, Classical) were followed in the sphere of art. This was the main feature of Russian new-age culture.

The issue of education for young people and the construction of schools was raised to the official state level only during the reign of Peter the Great. Due to a shortage of specialists, along with the local system of aristocratic schools, the practice of sending young people to foreign schools started from the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

The nineteenth century in Russian cultural history is of great importance within the period from Kievan Rus' to the Tsarist Russian Empire. In the first place, since this period was a time of cultural revival, we can label it as the Russian Renaissance period. Among many others, some forty Russian writers served as a cultural-spiritual source for literature for two centuries. The nineteenth century was full of philosophical-humanistic endeavors related to peace and equity, happiness and the free will of humankind. The nineteenth century laid the basis for the cultural transformations of the twentieth century; it was a 'golden age' of Russian culture which started with the birth of the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837) and ended with the death of the metaphysician and philosopher Vladimir Solovyov (1853–1900).

The nineteenth century was full of many social movements (anarchists, atheists, populists, Marxists, nihilists ad others), more than in any previous centuries. Russia understood its historical role in the West–East dilemma. Developments in nineteenth-century Russian culture were some of the greatest achievements in world cultural history because the Russian national culture was based precisely on this broader world historical period.

The culture of the Soviet period is a complex one, full of deep contradictions. Hence, it is the main purpose of a scholar of cultural studies to conduct elaborate research about its achievements and mistakes, victories and failures from as objective an historical perspective as possible. Today there exist two points of view about the culture of the Soviet period. The marginal position regards Soviet culture as absolutely uninteresting

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and as the dark burden of a totalitarian system; the more rational position tries to explain cultural processes elaborately from a concrete and complex historical perspective. Representatives of the rational approach make suggestions based on thorough analyses of historical developments. Indeed, it would be biased to consider the history and culture of the Soviet period separately from its entire social system and its main elements. Contradictions were commonplace within the whole Soviet totalitarian system. In the twentieth century the false premise that "ideology is the main content of culture"[7] turned into a State program, as a result of which, Russian intellectuals were oppressed, and the main cultural values destroyed. In spite of these contradictions, the rich heritage of the 'Silver Age', produced at the beginning of the twentieth century and then suppressed due to ideological and political conditions, became accessible once again for inquirers at the end of the century. No matter what difficulties they have faced, Russian society and its cultural heritage will never lose its significance for world history and culture.

Islamic Culture

In the seventh century CE there emerged an event that was critical for the entire history of humanity, namely the rise of Islam. This religion, which appeared in the Arabian Peninsula, brought tremendous changes to the spiritual, political, social and economic life of not only the peninsula itself, but also Northern African, Asian and European peoples. It facilitated cultural advancement in those regions, so it would be logical to ask why the changes occurred and why peoples with differing cultural paradigms converted to the new religion and changed their spiritual beliefs and values. We could answer that the culture based on the new religion and its principles was superior to the existing ones. However, that would undoubtedly be a biased and arrogant answer. Of course the state which spreads the new religion can have political influence, but that in itself is not sufficient to provide effective proselytism.

For Muslims, the very emergence and development of their religion is a divine act, and the astonishing success of the prophet's mission is proof of his trustworthiness. "This large and beautiful structure – Islam – transcended a religious community of purely national character, or a religio-ethnic group; in similar fashion, it displayed its longevity by safeguarding its right to exist and retain state status, being transformed into a broad cultural community."[8]

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Islamic civilization was founded in the seventh to ninth centuries CE during the Arab-Muslim military campaigns[9] and trading relations with surrounding peoples. Islamic civilization covered the areas of the ancient developed civilizations such as the Mediterranean region, as well as western and central Asia. The civilizations in these regions provided the cultural substratum for the formation of Islamic civilization, which spread through Arabia and Iran to remote and peripheral regions such as northern Eurasia, southern and southeastern Asia, China, Africa and the Balkan Peninsula.

Conceptual frames on the emergence of Islam have been suggested by the Kazakh scholar Sanzhar Asfendiarov in his article titled "Islam and Nomadic Economy" published in the 1930s. Even though it is apparent that the mark of his time—the early Soviet period—prevails in his opinions on religious origins, his logical thinking and consistency, methodological principles, elaborate analysis of social phenomena from wide social perspectives arouse great interest. Of course, it is difficult to accept his position about Islam and its emergence in its entirety. Nonetheless, we think that this Kazakh scholar has laid bare the social preconditions of Islam. Let us, therefore, now critically analyze his article.

Asfendiarov pointed out that: "as with other religions, Islam also has a long history; it passed through several historical periods, with several recent layers. The difference between current Islam and the Islam which prevailed in the times of Muhammad is like heaven and earth, while its similarities are minimal. Hence, we need to consider not only the social-economic structure on which Islam was founded, the production method which identifies this structure, and the tribal relations formed in that region, but the entire historical processes of the Middle East region."[10]

If we look at world history in the period before the emergence of Islam, it was doubtless a very complicated period for humanity in all respects. In those times Western Europe was experiencing feudal disorder. Classical civilization had been destroyed and the basis for a new civilization had not yet formed. Europe, exhausted from internal conflicts, could not yet see how to escape the circumstances of their Dark Ages. Regarding this, the Islamic thinker Abu al-Hassan al-Nadvi stated: "The Northern European nations were left behind from the main life streams and their knowledge about the environment was too weak. From a religious perspective, they were still between Christianity and ancient idolatry."[11]

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Before the emergence of Islam, the religions of the Middle East could not provide a theological-philosophical grounding for the shared heritage of humanity, nor supply it a universal character. Judaism could not overcome its ethnic confinement because the foundations of its teachings did not allow it to attain universal status. Theological disputes within Christendom led to persecution and bloodshed for those who did not accept the various church councils' decisions. Zoroastrianism departed from its foundational ideals and was influenced by teachings such as Manichaeism and Zurvanism. However, it could only satisfy the interests of the Persian rulers and could not transcend the ideology of the Persian Empire. Buddhism, which promoted the rejection of life in this world, did not embrace the need to change this present life's circumstances; even though it led to individual development, it estranged its followers from society.

The fundamental concept of Islam is an absolute faith in the Creator of all, Allah. Islam calls this 'Tawhid'. Muslims feel very proud of this belief which was passed to them through the Prophet Muhammad. Montgomery Watt wrote that:

> Muslims accepted Islam as the purest and highest form of worshipping god. However, they did not declare these advantages, because it would be the sign of an unbeliever. They realized this belief patiently, relying on their own power. The wisdom of other nations was embraced easily and later was regarded as truly Arabic… They took foreign wisdom and science seriously and studied it elaborately. When people brought up in other traditions converted to Islam they compared their previous cognitions with the Qur'anic teachings.[12]

From this excerpt we can see that Muslim pride was based on spirituality and led to arrogance and pride. It is said in the Qur'an that "Allah guides whom He wills." Hence, acceptance of religious faith should not be because of outer impact or coercion. Therefore, Islam and its founder, the Prophet Muhammad, did not pressure people on issues of faith. It is said in the Qur'an that "there is no compulsion in religion" (Sura 2, 256).

Islam's support of science and scholarship impacted its rising significance and authority in society. Engaging in science and scholarship was considered a noble undertaking, and eventually respect for learning became an important part of Islamic civilization. By harmonizing

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intellect and faith, the authority of science and scholarship in the Islamic world provided Islam with a leading role in the Middle Ages. G.M. Kerimov described the development of learning in the Arabic-Muslim world, noting that by "[m]astering the scientific achievements of other nations, Muslim scholars made tremendous advances in more sciences than ever before."[13] Islamic scholars praised the great qualities and abilities of the human intellect, and tried to prevent it from doing things which had no value or benefit to the person themselves or to society. Accordingly, they created various scientific disciplines and contributed greatly to the identification of research objects and subjects as well as the cognitive and everyday significance of each branch of science. One Islamic scholar, Al-Ghazzālī (eleventh century), divided the sciences into two categories:

a. False sciences which have no value for people. He listed in this category magic, astrology and horoscope.
b. Sciences which are beneficial both in this and the next world. This category includes Qur'anic and religious sciences, *fiqh* (deep understanding), *tafsir* (explanation), linguistics, natural sciences, and studies of culture and society.

Al-Fārābī classification of sciences is similar to this. Muslim thinkers who identified the distinctions between false and true sciences rescued human intellect and cognition from useless deviations and led them to researches which are concrete and useful for both the individual and society. This principle of Arabic Muslim scholarship is based on the Qur'an. "Generally for Muslims different directions of sciences were divided into 'necessary' and 'unnecessary' according to their social usefulness."[14] Thus, humanism, tolerance, social justice, and special respect to science and education were the main foundations and principles of Islamic civilization. These foundations, values and principles influenced its spread far beyond the borders of the Arabian Peninsula to turn it into a world phenomenon.

The first official conversion to Islam by the Turks was during the reign of the Kara-Khanid Khanate which was founded in the ninth century in Eastern Turkestan. The Kara-Khanids highly influenced the establishment of Islam in the regions between Kashgar and Issyk-Kul. The Seljuq Turks, who converted in the mid-tenth century in Central Asia, then brought Islam with them to Asia Minor, which was under

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the control of the Byzantium Empire. In 1071, the Seljuq leader Alp Arslan captured the Byzantine emperor Romanos IV Diogene near Manzikert in Armenia. Consequently, he established the long-lasting reign of the Turks in Anatolia. The historical period when Islam spread in the Eurasian cultural area is closely interconnected with the Mongol Empire. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Islam was the leading civilization among medieval societies. Ultimately, the campaigns of the Crusaders, enemies of Islam, to the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea were unsuccessful. They totally lost Jerusalem in 1187 and instead conquered Constantinople, the center of the Byzantine Empire, their previous ally and coreligionist, in 1204. They founded the Latin Empire in the strategic Bosphorus region. However, the Byzantines freed their capital in 1260 and expelled the Latin Crusaders. But they could not revive their previously great empire. In 1453, the Ottoman Turkish army conquered Constantinople and finished off the history of Byzantium. From this time on, the Ottoman Empire became the main heir of Islamic civilization and made an invaluable contribution to the preservation of its unity and cooperation for an extended period, until the end of World War I. Islam provided the opportunity to the Turkic peoples to preserve their ethnic unity. At the same time, the Turks protected the Islamic world from outer enemies and provided stability for its civilization.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, a historical development took place which completely altered the Medieval map of Eurasia: Turkic and Mongol nations appeared on the world historical stage. A powerful empire was founded by Genghis Khan whose clan colonized the territories from Eastern Europe to the Korean Peninsula. The Islamic world was also influenced by their invasions. In 1258, the Mongol military destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate and threatened the borders of Egypt. The Mongolian invasions destroyed many civilizations. However, these civilizations flourished again, and revived their cultural material and humanist potentials, while the heritage and enormous empire of Genghis Khan's descendants disintegrated, and was influenced by diverse civilizations such as the Chinese-Buddhist and Turkic-Islamic.

In the fourteenth century, the Ulus of Jochi in Central Asia, which included the Kipchak Khanate, began to disintegrate intensively. As a result, the Golden Horde, which was one of the greatest Mongol-offshoot states of its time, broke into several khanates of varying sizes. These historical circumstances led to the establishment of the independent Kazakh khanate

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in the second half of the fifteenth century. As stated by D. Stuart, conversion to Islam by the Kazakhs was a very complex process. It included: (1) the introduction and penetration of Islam; (2) conversion to Islam by higher authorities; (3) the announcement of Islam as an official religion; (4) familiarity with the neighboring Muslim nations which were Islamic states; and (5) the formation of a Muslim majority among the population. Regarding the final two stages, Stuart described the decision in 1509 that the Uzbek Shaybanids issued about the Kazakh faith and provided Fadl-Ullah bin Ruzbihan Isfahani's report on that decision. Stuart wrote:

> According to Ruzbihan, the Kazakhs converted to Islam in the times of the great ancestor Oz Beg (or Uz Bek) khan. After 200 years they came to know perfectly all the rules of Islamic life, but they intentionally broke them. The Kazakhs who break the rules observe the 'namaz' prayer and other duties correctly, therefore ignorance is not the cause of their sin. Ruzbihan noted that Kazakhs bow to idols. He likewise described the Tengrian rite of offering the first kumis (that is, cultured mare's milk) as a sacrifice. He explained it as a ritual of sun worship. The main reason for the consensus (on Kazakh religious practice) was the capturing of Muslims in the invasion of 1507-8. As a result of the consensus, the Shaybanids, whenever conducive for them, began going to war against the Kazakhs, thus it was possible to capture Kazakhs. The consensus issued in 1509 was a shock for Muslim Kazakh consciousness. But the process of Islamization did not stop.[15]

As seen from the above description of the penetration of Islam into the area of Eurasia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia, the process lasted for many centuries and went through several periods. Arbitrarily the process of Islamic penetration into Central Asia can be divided into: (a) the first introduction in the eighth–eleventh centuries; (b) the period of temporary downturn due to the formation of the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century; (c) the revival and quick development of Islam in the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries; (d) the establishment and strengthening between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries.

More than official Islam, it was Sufi teachings which spread widely among the nomadic Turkic peoples. The main reason for the establishment of the Sufi practice was the tradition of venerating 'saints', before conversion to Islam. Sufis, who were famous and authoritative for their spiritual purity, healing skills and piety, tended to turn into living legends.

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After their death, their graves became holy places (centers of pilgrimage). Without overemphasizing such unique features, Sufism had great impact on the spread of Islam to the Central Asian nomads. Islamic moral principles were instilled into people's consciousness through Sufism. The Hanafi School was practiced officially at the broader social level, though observance of this teaching was much wider among sedentary Turkic peoples than among nomads. Even though nomads followed traditional legislative norms in the regulation of social life, they followed the principles of this teaching in observing Islamic rules and matters of worship. The call to prayer and naming upon the birth of a child, marriage, funerary rituals, fasting, rules of observing worship were all conducted according to the rules of Hanafi teaching. Like other Muslim countries, nomads also celebrated holidays such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. *We thus see in the history of Kazakh conversion to Islam an example of how the Islamic faith spread among many peoples and cultures of the world.*

In the Middle Ages Islam was victorious in the struggle between religions in the Turkic Central Asian states and many other parts of the Afro-Eurasian world. There were several reasons for this. Islamic teachings were much simpler and more understandable than other religious teachings. Secondly, "Islam stood out with its syncretic features. It mastered many ideas of previous religions. It is often compared to branches of a river." Thirdly, Islam could give new impulse to the development of statehood and culture in countries which adopted Islam. Unfortunately, in more recent centuries, Islamic civilization began to lose its leading position. Rivalry between the branches of Islam and individual clans led to feudal contention, the demise of statehood, and the degradation of science. Furthermore, Islamic civilization trailed behind other civilizations from a scientific technological perspective. Religious and ethnic disputes, political turmoil, colonization, and cultural weakness were all factors impacting the Islamic world between the thirteenth and twentieth centuries.

However, the twenty-first century offers great opportunities for Islamic civilization. Many Islamic countries can achieve their independence and build general political and economic institutions. More significantly, Islam has gained recognition among humanity as a core contributor to spiritual purity and values, and as a nurturing force able to provide humankind with essential unity. Some 1.7 billion people across the globe today connect life changes, welfare and wisdom, and the future of human civilization with this one deep inner faith.

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For the past five centuries the world has been developing according to a Western civilizational model. Western civilization preserves in memory both great achievements of humanity and bloody, destructive wars. Regardless of this, it is impossible to reject the achievements of Western civilization in its development of ideas, basic human values and freedom, civil society, and legal statehood. These are the results of the strong courage and persistent struggle of Western civilization's leading representatives as well as ordinary people. Not to be passive, but instead to take action, to be in a tireless search for knowledge and foster a hard work ethic, to realize their true potential—all of these became life principles of the Western world. There have been those who have made mistakes and gone astray, but the ideals of searching for truth, striving for justice, and living free have become the hallmarks of Western civilization.

The contemporary age is different. The process of historical evolution is setting new challenges for civilizations and societies across the globe. The future is going to be shaped by the results of the measures taken in response to these challenges by individual countries and other major religious, cultural, linguistic, social and economic groups, as well as human society as a whole. Islamic civilization has set forth noble goals and weighty responsibilities. What alternative models can Islamic civilization offer the world in the spheres of economy, politics, and social life? How and in which directions should the reform and modernization processes be implemented within Islamic civilization? Can Islam solve its own inner problems in a civilized way? These kinds of questions go on without end. The main point is that representatives of this civilization must pose these questions to society while also themselves seeking answers to them. As stated by Heidegger, one can find truth only when tirelessly probing the questions of our existence.

Notes

1. Edward Burnett Tylor (1812–1917) identified the following five types of myths: (1) philosophical or explanatory myths; (2) myths based on real descriptions misunderstood, exaggerated, or perverted; (3) myths attributing inferred events to legendary or historical personages; (4) myths based on realization of fanciful metaphor; and (5) myths made or adapted to convey moral, social or political constructions.
2. A.J. Toynbee, *Postizhenie Istorii* (*A Study of History*), p. 549.
3. Lev Lubimov, *Batis Evropa oneri* [*Western European Art*] (Almaty: Publisher, 1982), p. 22; Rodulfi Glabri, *Historian Libri Quinque/*

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Rodulfus Glaber, *The Five Books of the Histories*, ed. and tr. John France (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 114–117.

4. *Istoria Estetiki. Pamiatniki Mirovoi Esteticheskoi Misli* [*History of Aesthetics. Monuments of World Aesthetic Thought*] (Moscow: Publishing House of the Academy of Arts of the USSR, 1962), p. 507 (Web edition – Adelaide: ebooks, 2005. URL: https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/pico_della_mirandola/giovanni/dignity/).
5. A. Hamidov, *Shigis zhane Batys: Dunielik Katinas zhane Dunietanim* [*East and West: Relation of Worlds and World Outlook*] (Almaty, KZ: "Shahar", 1993), No. 1, p. 11.
6. Nikolai Berdyaev, *Naperelome* [*On the Edge*] (Moscow: International, 1990), p. 80.
7. Transl. note: Cf. Stalin's approach to the 'national question' as officially "national in form, socialist in content" (Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 201–202).
8. G.E. Grunebaum, *Klassicheskii Islam. Ocherki Istorii (600–1258)* [*Classical Islam. A History. 600 A.D. to 1258 A.D.*]. tr. from English by I.M. Dizhura and V.V. Naumkina (Moscow: Nauka, 1986), p. 13.
9. Transl. note: The Kazakh verb behind the English translation of 'conquest' is 'zhorik'. It is translatable as a military 'march, campaign, attack, assault, invasion'. Of comparative interest, Gabitov uses the same Kazakh verb here of the 'Muslim campaigns' which is typically used in Kazakh accounts to describe the Christian Crusades of the eleventh–thirteenth centuries ('aikish zhoriktari', lit. 'conquests of the cross'). Indeed, Gabitov himself uses the same verb in reference to the Crusades later in his narrative.
10. S. Asfendiarov, "Islam i Kochevoe Khoziastvo [Islam and Nomadic Economy]," *Atheist*, Vol. 10, No. 58 (Nov 1930).
11. Abu al-Hassan al-Nadvi, *Chto Poterial Mir po Prichine otkhoda of Islams* [What the World Lost When the Muslims Fell], tr. from English (Moscow: Ansar, 2006), p. 14.
12. W.M. Watt, *Vlianie Islama na Srednivekovuiu Evropu* [Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe], tr. from English (Saint Peterburg, Dilia, 2008), pp. 24–25.
13. G.M. Kerimov, *Shariat: Zakon Zhaizni Musulman. Otveti Shariata na problemi sovremennosti* [*Shariah. Law of life of Muslims. Shariah responses to problems of contemporaneity*] (St. Petersburg: Dilia, 2007), p. 164.
14. A. Kh. Zarrinkub, *Islamskaia tsiviizatsia* [*Islamic Civiization*] (Moscow: Andalus, 2004), p. 25.
15. R.N. Bezertinov, *Tengrianstvo—Religia Tiurkov i Mongolov* [Tengriism is the Religion of Turks and Mongols] (Kazan: Slovo, 2004), pp. 144–145.

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CHAPTER 10

Going Global: Thematic Explorations in World History

Candice Goucher

Introduction

A thematic approach to world history was my earliest strategy for confronting the vast and unfamiliar territory of a world history classroom.[1] After more than three decades, this hasn't changed. What *has* changed is the richness of available world historical research scholarship, the increasing relevance of world history to real world problems, and the dynamic character of periodization schemes I and others are better able to apply to the explication of those themes. All historians—especially world historians—must be selective in their methodological orientation, framing, and choice of what to include and what to exclude. The organization of a narrative into thematic chunks says loudly and clearly: here are the emphases I think are the keys to unlocking the global past.

More than ever before, world historians are willing to be thematic in their scholarly approaches to research and in their teaching and learning in the classroom. This hasn't always been the case. Many of the early world history textbooks used Western Civilization courses and textbooks

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as their models. Some of the best-selling textbooks (for example, Bentley et al.) maintained the 'civilizational' approach derived from Western Civilization in their narratives. The results were chronologically weighted towards periodization derived from European history and often used Eurocentric terms (such as Classical Era or Axial Age) or perspectives that effectively marginalized entire continents. In many early synthesizing works, the continental regions of Africa and the Americas were perceived to have been lacking the authenticity of written documentation and so their histories were placed into separate chapters. Unfortunately, many of the European-biased approaches have persisted in the majority of textbooks, despite significant changes in the national-level scope of standardized testing in the U.S. that embraced key themes applicable to all parts of the world. One resultant contradiction has been that the issue of Eurocentrism was never fully addressed by the field of world history.

These and other gradual reforms have systematically de-emphasized mandated content coverage in exchange for an emphasis on historical skills (such as the analysis of documents or material culture and the ability to use a variety of evidence to support arguments). Despite these obstacles, the focus on themes, patterns, and processes has resulted in a more inclusive past befitting a global society. Thematic approaches overall have invited higher order thinking, comparison and synthesis. The shift towards a more thematic spectrum has suited the generalizing trend by reshaping the field and by incorporating at least some components of world history into general education programs at the tertiary level.

There has been and remains a fairly substantial lack of agreement about what constitutes a 'theme'. Is any subject a potential theme? Some texts have claimed to be thematic, while holding forth little in the way of synthesis or comparison, instead using topics as themes. Selectivity is at the heart of a thematic approach, but often at the cost of narrowing the content. Other scholars have taken singular subjects and made entire 'thematic' monographs of them by excluding everything else. Such approaches have used the theme to dictate the periodization and the content.

Somewhere in between these two strategies, Linda Walton and I have argued elsewhere for the utility of several mega-themes:

> Two broad themes can be applied to view the people and events of world history: integration (how the processes of world history have drawn peoples of the world together) and difference (how the patterns of world history also reveal the diversity of the human experience).[2]

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In our most recent iteration of a world history textbook, *World History: Journeys from Past to Present* (Routledge, 2013), we introduced the significance of each chapter's theme, elucidating how that theme answered specific questions about our shared human past. These chapter themes were then organized into six parts, each part provoking a broader thematic discussion and helping to build and integrate the larger chronological era. For example, the book's 'Part III: Connections' included three chapters: one on long-distance trade between c. 500 and 1600 CE, another on cultural memory (and transmitting traditions) from the Egyptian pyramids to the printing press and beyond, and another chapter on the commerce and change that created world systems in Afro-Eurasia in the thirteenth century and subsequently in the Atlantic. Chapter timelines introduced the chapter and helped ground the reader in the chronological sequencing of events and places mentioned. Regardless of how we define 'thematic' issues, the thematic approach has tended to invite opportunities for highly effective iterative learning, often through their periodization's overlapping chronologies. These chronologies spring from the needs of the thematic discussion and their relevance to broader concepts beyond the discipline of history. They also clearly rely on the reconstruction of the past using multiple sources of evidence, from paleontology to archaeology, genetics and linguistics to material culture and written documents.

In the sections below, I have identified some of the key themes, which I feel generally address questions of increasing complexity and scale in the unfolding of the human past. The themes include: cooking food (and sharing a common human past), the impact of agriculture (and other markers of 'civilization') on building world systems of inequality; how urbanization, beliefs, family, and economic exchanges have gone about shaping modernity through gradual and revolutionary change; and, finally, resistance and globalization. The periodization of each section's theme overlaps somewhat (perhaps inevitably) with one or more other sections, but generally moves chronologically from past to present through multiple world regions and the structure of a sweeping narrative of more than 40,000 years. It seems impossible to adequately account for human commonalities without extending the span of world history to include what once was called 'prehistory'. For the purposes of this essay, I also have consciously described selected themes using active verbs (cooking, constructing, trading, encountering, etc.) in order to promote the most significant advantages of the thematic approach: answering

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what and how the past does come to mean something relevant to the present and identifying the processes (the 'how') of world history in service of the discovery of insights that connect the past and the present.

The most pressing of contemporary problems demand our attention as historians, including the growing gap between the haves and have-nots in the world and the planetary fragility wrought by global warming. These are problems about which world history has much to offer as a way to frame our understanding of the present in terms of the past. Perspectives on the past are driven by the selection of themes that are inclusive of both the broader, seemingly more distant societal and institutional issues of conflict and disorder, paired against the intimacy of the family's daily life, complexity and inequality, injustice and resistance. This temporal and topical breadth thus moves us between the levels of individual and collective experience, between social history and political or economic history. Throughout the narrative essay, I remind the reader that the individual person experiences world history on a daily basis at the scale of family and household. Yet even the intimacy and familiarity of daily life cannot fully mask the impact of global forces and the mobility of individual and collective lives. Awareness of the pathways by which we have arrived at our twenty-first-century world seems not only profoundly interesting, but also necessarily critical to finding sustainable solutions to the problems we face as the current band of humans circling the sun.

Humans were on a pathway towards 'going global' from their earliest appearance on the planet perhaps six million years ago. Their global migrations eventually peopled every continent, from Africa to Eurasia and even across the Pacific to the Americas. The story of their movements constitutes an amazingly prominent place in world history. While we tend to think of an age of globalization beginning in 1492 CE, or perhaps later with the rise of technologies that enabled regular movements circumnavigating the globe and creating the worldwide web, the entire fabric of the human story was woven globally, one step at a time.

Going Global: Thematic Explorations in World History

Cooking a Shared Human Past

Based on molecular and fossil evidence, the divergence of the bipedal (walking upright on two feet) ancestors of humans from most other

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mammals took place between five and seven million years ago. Called 'hominins', these ancestors adapted to tool use and other anatomical specializations that gave them great evolutionary advantages, whether walking across African savannas or living in that continent's forests. The seasonality of their movements and the selectivity of their individual and collective food choices (as plant and meat-eaters) helped create the contours of the human experience.

Among the most important achievements of early human history are those that center around the essential activity that made us human: cooking food. Cooking food likely led to changes in the human diet with huge evolutionary payback. Eventually the cooperative human groups who shared food, developed communication (that is, language), and improved their diets and thus perpetuated planetary dominance by this seemingly simple act. We now know that one of the single most defining characteristics of the human experience is the ability to control and use fire to shape the environment, including foods. Sometime around a million years ago, likely somewhere in southern Africa (perhaps at Wonderwerk Cave) our hominin ancestors first sat down to a home-cooked meal; between 125,000 years ago and about 40,000 years ago this became a key and widespread feature of human behavior. Cooking became a means by which humans were able to increase the adaptability and versatility of their diets and other primary aspects of their behavior. From their beginnings in Africa, the human project spread around the globe increasing in scale and degree of successful adaptability to every known environment.

Together with pounding and grinding foods, the specialized techniques of food preparation allowed humans to pre-process their foods and gain extra value (and more efficient energy use) from what they ate. In Chinese, the radical (or root) for 'fire' is the character for cooking, roasting, frying, steaming and so on. Cooking not only amounted to the chemical alteration of foods at their molecular level, making some foods and their nutrients more accessible, it allowed for the removal of unwanted toxins, thus expanding the repertoire of what could be consumed. Eventually this diversity could gain elaborate cultural expression. Amongst many sub-Saharan Africans, foodways presented unique markers of the distinctiveness of specific ethnic identities as well as the commonality of group social and environmental behavior and interactions. Yet, the cooking hearth was the universal symbol of cultural and social reproduction.

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Richard Wrangham has argued that the controlled use of fire made us humans into "the creatures of the flame."[3] Cooked food gave humans the advantages of more nutrients, increased proteins, and resultant larger brains and bodies. The tool of fire created a home base in which food consumption could be delayed, food stored and shared. Food sharing likely led to language, social communication, and community-building, and, of course, the transmission of cultural memory across generations. The history of food explains the diversity and commonality of a signature feature of being human.[4] Without home-cooked meals, there would be no world history.

Constructing a World with Agriculture

Foraging, fishing, and hunting lifestyles satisfied human needs for thousands of years from the Pleistocene to our own climatic era (termed the Holocene) beginning around 11,500 years ago. While these millennia of human history relied on the expansive mobility of hunter-gatherers, often in the patterned form of seasonal movements, along with a keen awareness of microenvironments, they shared a remarkably successful subsistence strategy of collecting, hunting, and foraging wild foods. The climatic changes of the Holocene have been marked by a period of dramatic and sometimes abrupt transformations in temperatures and rainfall. A few thousand years after the onset of the Holocene era, food production appeared among societies in Eurasia, Africa, and the Americas, leading some scholars to suggest a causal relationship. Food production included the genetic manipulation of plants and/or animals to make them more productive (and/or pleasing) and dependent on human intervention. This cultivation of crops and herding of animals forever altered the relationship (or ecology) between humans and their environments. Because the reliance on farming changed the populations and landscapes of the planet, its origin is sometimes called the most importance 'event' in world history.

Agriculture supported the expansion of human population from perhaps 6 million at the end of the Pleistocene era to more than 7 billion today. The rise and diffusion of agriculture also afforded opportunities to create settled (sedentary) societies, producing food surpluses with strategies of food sharing and food storage that enabled complex social systems to arise. These agricultural systems were often marked by great inequalities and differential access to food and power. The larger

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and materially complex societies sometimes developed into small villages, larger urban centers, and states. The transition from hunting and gathering to farming was described as revolutionary and termed by the archaeologist Gordon Childe (in 1923) to be a "Neolithic Revolution," assuming that the early origins identified in southwest Asia spread to other places, with a distinctive material culture package of traits, including domesticated plants and animals, polished stone tools, permanent village settlements of small houses, and eventually pottery. But agriculture also involved individual decision-making.

The early scholarly ideas about the origins of agriculture assumed that the first farmers held in common an appreciation for the advantages of an agricultural way of life at a time of severe climatic change (the onset of the Holocene). However, this motivation appears unlikely to have been the predominant model and the Holocene is now understood to be a period of overall wetter, not drier conditions, thus dampening the enthusiasm for the theory of environmental determinism. Ethnographic studies of the world's remaining hunter-gatherers and extensive archaeological research in many world regions have complicated the understanding of agricultural origins. A large number of possible mechanisms for inducing humans to engage in agriculture now have been identified. Rather than an inevitable sequence of intensified experiments of management that ended in the glory of agriculture, the journeys of hunter-gatherers sometimes rejected or failed to adopt agriculture altogether and sometimes even reverted back to foraging and hunting. The picture of uneven and uncertain change also conveys the importance of a world historical perspective on human decision-making, experimentation, and adaptability.

Marking World Regions of Change

Archaeological, genetic, and linguistic research provides the primary evidence for understanding the origins of agriculture in a variety of world regions. These regions are delineated from the distribution of the wild cultigens, the crops and animals that humans first sought to domesticate. Not only river valleys (of the Nile, Huang-He, Niger, Mississippi, or Tigris-Euphrates, for example) were homes to early efforts at food production, although rivers and floodplains often afforded the best opportunities for successful strategies by novice farmers. These environments were just as friendly for the activities of fishing, foraging, and hunting. We now know that the beginnings of agriculture were appearing in

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various environments, both tropical and temperate, highlands and lowlands, and involved a diversity of crops native to those regions, from bananas, sugarcane, taro and yams in New Guinea to enset in Ethiopia, rice in Asia, potatoes in the Andes, and maize in the Valley of Mexico. Childe had noted the typical pattern of mixed agriculture (farming and herding), with animal husbandry and herding of animals following the domestication of plants. Much more unusual in world history, the first adoption of livestock-raising strategies in the Nilo-Saharan region of northeast Africa preceded crop cultivation around 9500 BCE. By about 8000 BCE, agricultural villages had emerged in SW Asia. Semi-sedentary sites appeared in the Americas between 7500 and 6000 BCE. By about 500 CE, nearly every world region had found the path to agriculture.

The genetic manipulation of plant and animal populations began to shape the world's many hunters, fishers, and foragers into prolific food producers. Climate change, population pressure, social competition, and shifts in ideology may have played roles in pulling or pushing populations to adopt or reject food production strategies at various times. Recent research has focused on the processes of intensification and transformation on the food strategies of early peoples on every continent, where agriculture eventually enabled increasingly larger and more complex societies to emerge. Agriculture also permanently changed the world's physical environments as farmers deforested fields, moved soils by terracing, damming, and plowing activities, and genetically altered species. World historical perspectives have utilized both global and local research strategies to reveal the patterns supported by archaeological, genetic, and linguistic evidence.[5]

Digging up Agricultural Origins[6]

Three specific case studies of agricultural origins explore the dynamic state of current research and suggest something of the range of responses to the theme's question: What was the origin and impact of agriculture? These relate to Brześć Kujawski (Europe), Tichitt (Mauretania), and Kuk (New Guinea). Excavated by Peter Bogucki and Ryszard Grygiel, the site of Brześć Kujawski (in Poland) reveals how pioneer farmers struggled in everyday life. Alasdair Whittle's extraordinarily rich and imaginative work integrating this and other sites in Europe provides a surprising trajectory that suggests that the narrative of the Neolithic is not a steady development of a world with agriculture.[7] Agriculture is introduced to Europe from the

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7th millennium BCE on, and DNA evidence favors a model that emphasizes the role that outsiders played in introducing the cultivation of cereals and husbandry of cattle, sheep, and goats. The consequences are varied in this transitional period and include intensive, small gardens, increasing signs of community life, and worldviews marked by a preoccupation with investment in the future. Yet there seems to be no signs of control ever the means of production by a few and no marked increase in social inequality, unlike the patterns from almost every other part of the world.

The site of Dhar Tichitt in the West African Sahel is one of the continent's earliest complex societies.[8] Evidence from the pearl millet grain impressions on the bottoms of local potsherds allowed archaeologists to follow the trail of mobile herders and hunter-gatherers to sedentary farmers across the centuries between 1900 and 100 BCE. Again, major socioeconomic changes were not instantaneous. Yet eventually, the Tichitt farming diaspora appears to have persisted, creating in the Middle Niger the foundations for urbanism and empire building at Ghana and Mali. The paucity of archaeological work here compared to the Nile suggests that critical historical gaps (including the chronological gap of more than seven millennia between Nilo-Saharan and Cushitic farmers and the Tichitt settlements) will be slow in being back-filled.

Finally, the swamps of New Guinea provide equally surprising evidence of the independent development of agriculture in a place that qualifies for least likely to produce the stereotypical 'rise of civilization'. At the site of Kuk, early farmers manipulated and cleared the local wetlands for their farms, probably before 7000 BCE and possibly as early as 10,000 BCE, although the earliest interpretations of the transition between the Pleistocene and Holocene are still tenuous and ambiguous.[9] This was vegetative propagation not seed dispersal and it was small-scale farming which is usually impossible to identify in the archaeological record. Using mounds and ditches, Kuk farmers cultivated bananas, taro, and yams and created new environments through their management of the landscape. Eventually they added the sweet potato and the pig to their food production strategies, emphasizing the interregional connections that have been at play for millennia.

Finding Food, Power and Inequality

Occasionally agriculture did not seem to result in accentuated differences in access to food or power, as in the reconstructed village life of

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relative equality at the site of Brześć Kujawski described above. Among the more disturbing world patterns related to the adoption of agriculture is the nearly universal propensity for the new food-producing societies to generate social inequality amidst the dramatic environmental changes they wrought. The common changes involved larger populations achieving greater cultural and social complexity. Food producers relied heavily on new forms of technology for lifting water, moving soil, and clearing forests. This began a long history of interrelated forces for innovation, destruction, and expansion.

The mechanics of food production also paralleled the rise of urbanism, social complexity, and increasing inequality. The capacity to feed larger groups of people provided the means to lubricate and nurture political and social control. These increasingly hierarchical structures began to build intertwined state and food systems through networks of appropriation. Expansive trade allowed individuals and groups to control resources via mechanisms that included enhanced food preservation and storage and the enactment of laws and regulations. The complex social structures were everywhere constructed on the foundational control over food supplies. Cultural interactions relied on shared rituals of drinking and feasting, as well as ideologies of power and control over the redistribution of food. Around the world, farmers and herders built many versions of the complex systems that ultimately created competing, but enduring categories: the political and religious elites and the ordinary laborers, the haves and the have-nots.

Living in a Material World: Urbanization

While the world historical narrative recounted above suggests the trajectory of increasing population and community size—from Jericho to Tenochtitlan, this story of the past and its emphasis on urban life can be misleading. Until the twenty-first century, most of the world's peoples did not live in cities. Cities have captured the attention of historians, in part because cities served as centers for the accumulation of material culture. It may be more useful to think about cities as nodes in urban systems. Cities could not and did not exist without the surrounding countryside with which they traded. Following the patterned networks of interconnections, it is possible to identify some characteristics of ancient world cities. These traits were what early historians considered to have been the characteristics of 'civilization', a word that comes

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from the Latin *civitas* (city). Cities had complex systems of social and political hierarchies (often highly gendered), rituals of public order, governance, taxation or tribute, symbolic communication (often writing or record-keeping), and the market connections to a wider orbit of crafts and industries, including food production and public services. Common beliefs (religion and cultural expression) and common needs (such as defense) brought about the appearance of interdependence and exchange systems, which in turn expanded the scope and importance of the city dwellers. The requirements of urbanization drove the economy and politics of management and control over the larger region belonging to an urban system.

The crowded daily lives of cities resulted from increasing population density. In turn, the management of food and water, not to mention parasites and infectious diseases often meant that most people's lives were unpleasant and short. Cultural elaboration was one response to the environmental and technological changes that accompanied complex urban development. Among the most important of cultural events was the appearance of metallurgy—particularly the smelting of copper and iron and the casting of their alloys to produce the Age of Metals around the world. At the same time, the metal-using cultures were adaptations to their own dynamic environments. Deforested hillsides were the result of expanding extractive industries, including the mining of ores, pottery production, and charcoal making, as well as smelting and blacksmithing activities. Thus the "advance of civilization" should rather be seen through the eyes of the Chinese writer Wang Taiyue, who wrote his "Lament for the Copper-bearing Hills" in response to the human and ecological dimensions of exploitation.[10] Urban life may not have been ubiquitous, but it was influential.

While some urban communities such as Jericho (which grew into a city between 9000 and 6500 BCE) began as smaller, temporary and commercially focused settlements attracting diverse peoples and goods, other cities, such as Thebes in Upper Egypt (2200 BCE) or Teotihuacán in the Valley of Mexico (100 BCE–750 CE), were ceremonial centers, whose temples and tombs supported artisans and elite cultures. The earliest cities in East Asia were also ceremonial centers directly related to the formation of a dynastic state, the Shang (c. 1600–1945 BCE). The ruler's residence became a sacred city and its palace and storage pits reflected the highly stratified society over which he ruled.

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Cities sometimes developed into larger state structures that historians have called city-states. City-states were groups of urban communities that banded together for the purposes of trade and defense. They were often united by a common ideology or set of beliefs. Prominent early city-states included the Greek states of Athens, Sparta, Corinth, and others, beginning around the eigth century BCE. The city-states along the East African coast similarly engaged in trade shaped by their coastal geography. They shared a common urban culture and language, Kiswahili, which emerged from cultural interactions between 100 CE and the tenth century CE.

Not all early cities had monumental architecture, such as the Egyptian or Mayan pyramids or temples of ancient Athens and Rome. Called "a city without a citadel" by its excavators, the urban center at Jenne-Jeno (450–1100 CE in Mali, West Africa) was situated at the intersection of major trade routes and varied environmental niches that could be exploited year round.[11] Eventually the mud-walled city attracted the attention of Muslim traders, who sought gold and brought a variety of goods in exchange, as well as a new religion. Living in a material world enabled the past to be communicated across time and space. Despite the continuities afforded by successful cultural adaptations to environment, cities not only flourished, but also declined and disappeared. Among the many reasons for their ebb and flow were the shifting winds of trade, climate, religion and ideas, and conflict.

Trading and Encountering Beliefs: Between State and Family

Not only modern world historians have attempted to explain the past. Ancient beliefs in goddesses and gods, spirits, and ancestors were important ways that people tried to make sense of their worldly experience and the larger cosmos. Shared beliefs created the basis for a common identity of community and could sanction political authority. The veneration of urban deities in North Africa (Egypt), East Asia (China), and in Mesoamerica (Teotihuacan and Maya), spread across cultural and geographic boundaries. In Uruk, one of the early urban centers of West Asia, the priest-king was the consort of the city's goddess Inanna in the late 4th millennium BCE.

Other city-states held their own gods or goddesses that could merge and transform over time. The Babylonian ruler Hammurabi (c. 1792–1750 BCE) claimed that the power of the god Marduk commanded him

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to bring justice through his laws known as the Code of Hammurabi. In the Indus Valley (c. 2500–1500 BCE), shared beliefs blended with Indo-European religious culture in the Vedas ('knowledge'), a collection of ritual hymns transmitted orally. Eventually written down, these texts formed the basis for the cosmic sanction of social castes in South Asia. Later texts called the Upanishads were compiled between the seventh and third centuries BCE and questioned the inherited traditions and meaning of human existence. Reformulated, these ideas contributed to the religious traditions later known as Hinduism. In West Asia, the roots of Judaism emerged among semi-pastoral peoples of Mesopotamia moving westward in the 2nd millennium BCE. Known as the Hebrews, their beliefs became a religion based on the idea of one god, a creator and lawgiver.

Three later religions stand out as influential world religions, meaning that they were carried around the globe by proselytizing or teaching the messages of their beliefs in a variety of cultural settings. Followers of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam transmitted the teachings of their founders across cultural and geographic boundaries. The man later known as Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, was born around the sixth century BCE into the Himalayan kingdom's ruling family. Rejecting this wealth, the Buddha ('awakened one') embarked on a personal journey to enlightenment. Emerging in a period of Roman rule in the eastern Mediterranean, Christians believed that Jesus of Nazareth (c. 4 BCE–30 CE) was the Messiah promised in the Hebrew Old Testament. His teachings were carried by personally chosen disciples and later by missionaries. In the seventh century CE, the Prophet Muhammad received revelations from God. These teachings were remembered and recorded in the Qur'an and formed the basis of Islam. In all three religions, missionaries were instrumental in spreading the faith along the trade routes traveled by merchants and pilgrims alike. Islam had no ordained priesthood, leaving it to scholars and judges to invoke religious authority.

The three world religions became intertwined with the rise of political states. After his conversion to Buddhism, the Mauryan ruler Ashoka (304–232 BCE) renounced war and helped spread the doctrines and further political unity in Southeast Asia. The Roman emperor Constantine (272–337 CE) claimed conversion to Christianity and ushered in an era of tolerance for the faith. Within a century after the Prophet Muhammad, an Islamic empire extended from the Iberian Peninsula to northern India. Arab traders moved along the Gold Roads of Africa,

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down the east African coast, sailed across the Indian Ocean, traveling the Silk Roads through Asia via commerce and conquest. In cities as diverse as Córdoba, in Al-Andalus, Cairo, in Egypt, and Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Empire, followers of multiple faiths interacted daily and transcended the worlds into which they were born. The three world religions were well suited for adapting to and assimilating indigenous belief systems, even as they altered the ideals and values of the local communities. Yet the largest contiguous land-based empire in world history, the Mongols (1206–1368 CE) drew on the sanction of the sky god, a principal deity of the Central Asian steppe.

Empires were the largest polities and resulted from the expansion of one state at the expense of another. These largest states became influential catalysts for furthering the inequality within and the integration of vast territories on land and on water. The unequal distribution of resources and power intensified with the scale of complexity and size. The maritime and mainland empires of Srivijaya (c. 170–1025 CE) and Khmer (802–1432 CE) gathered wealth and created expressions of collective identity, such as temples and other religious monuments, knitting together local villages and their kin groups. The Incan Empire covered an equally diverse area of more than 2000 miles of South American mountains, basins, and plains to the Pacific Ocean. Using conquest and cultural memory systems, the Incans made the Sapa Inca a descendant of the sun god. The mummified bodies of dead kings became tangible links between the living and their pantheon. Again, material wealth gained through conquest, trade, and tribute fed the Incan system of differences.

Regardless of the social or political scale of a given society, the social organization of family and household played a key role in constructing systems of difference, yielding experiences of both cooperation and inequality. Indeed it seems impossible to understand the building blocks of difference and inequality without considering gender. While definitions of family differed across cultural landscapes and through time, everywhere they comprised the most basic levels of social interactions usually connected by kinship or marriage. In contrast, households were shared residences and sometimes served as economic units.

Family and state sometimes have been closely linked. In China, Confucianism provided the ideology for patriarchy that reached inside the extended family, shaping its ideals. The twelfth-century writer Yuan Cai (c. 1140–95 CE) wrote a book about how to manage a family and household, admonishing that "women should not take part in affairs

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outside the home." It seems as if most world historians may have read that book. Typically the interests of world histories have veered towards the political and the powerful, writing women (especially non-elites) out of the picture. Focusing on kinship at least provides an option for the inclusion of women, if only as placeholders in both matrilineal and patrilineal systems in the past and present. The Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406 CE) described the lineage as the primary source of identity and group cohesion, concluding that even the rise and fall of states were dependent on the interplay of lineage and other social factors that constituted increasingly hierarchical societies. In South Asia, where caste distinctions became a hereditary distinction based on occupation and sanctioned by ritual beliefs, the very order of society reinforced political authority and power relations more generally. Kinship bonds, gender identities, caste affiliations, and patronage existed within the context of economic systems and they helped create and maintain the structures of inequalities.

Ushering in the Modern World

The expanding trade and exchange networks of the 2nd millennium CE carried much more than goods. Ideas, beliefs, diseases, and other silent travelers were transported globally. The era of enhanced mobility benefited from technological innovations—from maritime tools to land-based manufacturing. In turn, these transformations ushered in revolution after revolution and created what historians have termed 'modernity'. There were world travelers before 1492. Merchants along the Silk Roads connected China and the Roman Empire from the time of the Han (fourth to first centuries BCE). Countless Mayans carried turquoise and parrot feathers between the Anasazi in the southwest corner of North America and the Valley of Mexico beginning in the eigth century CE. Ibn Battuta (1304–1377), who was born in North Africa, traveled even farther than the legendary Marco Polo, clocking about 75,000 miles along the gold roads of West Africa and far beyond. The expeditions of the Chinese admiral Zheng He (1371–c. 1433) reached Southeast Asia, Arabia, and East Africa. It should not be surprising that the cultural, commercial, scientific, industrial, and political revolutions of the following centuries were global in nature, as were their significant outcomes.

Cultural encounters were often at the heart of the dramatic changes in social and economic spheres. The scientific revolution (after c. 1500)

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was based on the revitalization of intellectual traditions from the Mediterranean, the interaction and synthesis of Arab, Asian, and European knowledge, and the challenging of authority and questioning of inherited concepts for understanding the natural world and the larger cosmos. European and Muslim scholars synthesized mathematics and scientific ideas. Ming China, Tokugawa Japan, Islamic Southeast Asia and Enlightenment Europe were four places where reformations and revitalization occurred, altering the values and functioning of all levels of society, from religion to commerce. Traditions and their transformations characterized the encounters that swept every continent. In the Americas, the Quechua nobleman and world historian Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (c. 1535–1615) chronicled the conquest of Peru, simultaneously denouncing the ill treatment of his people by the Spanish colonizers and reworking their history into an Incan-centered Biblical historical calendar. Similarly, the seventeenth-century Akan weavers of the Gold Coast (today's Ghana) systematically unraveled the threads of imported silk and rewove them into the traditional patterns known as *kente*, selectively giving them local meaning.

No world history of modernity would be complete without a discussion of the rise of capitalism. The integration of a global economy was also the intersection or critical juncture of very different economic systems. One component developed historically from the China-centered thirteenth century world system and the other was European-dominated (what scholars once called the 'rise of the West') commercial growth and maritime expansion of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Europe's shared political culture had emerged between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries in commercial cities. In China, an earlier commercial revolution resulted in expanded trade and the knitting together of extensive networks of cultural and economic significance using a monetized system, banking and credit institutions, and metal and paper currency. European maritime expansion converged with an ability to meet China's demand for silver bullion from ores mined in Mexico and South America. Thus the global connections after 1492 (especially those forged from the gold trade and silver trade) became the foundation of a world economy that saw the rise of mercantilism and a commercial revolution that left Europe in the driver's seat. The dramatic shifts in power resulted in an era dominated by Europe, with repercussions for colonizing nearly every part of the globe.

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The industrial revolutions (after about 1760) also occurred on every continent. Again, China had succeeded first in creating mining and manufacturing systems that relied on entrepreneurial investments across a broad range of enterprises as early as the twelfth century CE. Later European industrialization relied on the investment of profits gleaned from a worldwide trade in enslaved labor and the extraction of key resources from tropical regions, eventually from the rubber plantations of Brazil, Vietnam, and the Congo to the palm oil farms of West Africa and Indonesia. Not only were the inputs to the industrial revolutions global, but also the technological innovations further globalized the networks of transportation, communication, and exchange. Steam power and railroads, telegraph, refrigeration, and steamships quickened the pace of change. In particular, the use of fossil fuels harnessed energy from coal and began to irrevocably alter the planet's environment and peoples. Manufacturing industries changed the nature of gender, class, and other social experiences, literally transforming the patterns of interaction and increasing the frenzy of urban migration. Production relied on delivery to global markets of consumption, further intertwining the destinies of disparate parts of the world and fostering even greater inequities.

Many of the technological innovations were used as tools of empire and nation building. They served to integrate the economies of the state into a global network of enterprise and profit. The seventeenth-century trading companies such as the East India Company were early versions of multinational corporations. Their successful exploitation of capital and labor depended on access to resources on a global scale. European military power was reinforced by technological advantages, especially gunpowder weaponry. The acceleration of the processes of transformation extended the tentacles of progress and power to every corner of the globe. In this way, both the distribution of costs and the exclusive control over profits further exacerbated global economic inequalities.

Political revolutions ushered in the emergence of the modern nation state, first in the Atlantic world, in North America, France, and Haiti, and eventually across other parts of Afro-Eurasia and the Americas. Not only technologies were enlisted to enhance the imperial gains; ideas also became driving forces for the dramatic political changes beginning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Eventually the new imperialism was accompanied by new nationalisms based on ideas of popular political sovereignty and inalienable rights, with democratic movements appearing on every continent. These were not the only influential ideas to travel

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around the world. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, social Darwinism and pseudoscientific concepts justified the rampant global racism and exploitation inherent in the creation of colonial victories and regimes of European hegemony.

Colonialism meant the subjugation of one people to another by occupying territory and imposing laws, culture, political order, and economic controls. The etymology of the word comes from the Latin *colonus*, meaning 'farmer'. This reminds us of the importance of settlements in implementing colonial rule. The transfer of settlers to new territories furthered the integration of world peoples, uniting their modes of production and even their diets. Colonial empires also operated by maintaining differences and fundamental inequalities. The impact of colonialism was mutual, changing both the colonizer and the colonized. Between the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) and the Berlin Conference (1884–1885), Europeans envisioned the possibility of hegemonic control and they divided the world's territories among themselves, using the tools of empire to initiate and maintain colonies.

The European domination of world economy, people, and land (by 1914, roughly 88% of the planet) had created a confidence and unwarranted faith in 'progress and reason', but its structure of imperial controls was relatively short lived. At its heart were concepts of ecological imperialism, limited only by the fragility of the planet's flora and fauna, air and light. Mapping the world may have created the myth of control, as did the tendency to rewrite the past of peoples considered 'without history'. Despite some collaboration and alliance with the colonizers, the colonized mounted armed resistance in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Resistance on multiple scales, including family, village, and pan- and cross-continental movements, eventually led to the decolonization of continents and the creation of newly independent nation-states. The entanglements of social, cultural, and economic webs seemed next to impossible to erase. The new states often inherited local systems of violence, corruption, ties of dependency, exploitative systems that continued to rape and pillage peoples and lands. Europeans were not the only world peoples to colonize parts of the globe. Japan, the United States, and the Ottomans furthered their imperial missions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The global competition for empire created both economic and military ambitions that eventually erupted in world wars. In the post-war era, the empires were dismantled and the processes of decolonization exacerbated new nationalisms within old spheres of

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influence. The former colonies were left to manage massive debts, with little hope of education or health care receiving adequate state support. Yet the growing gaps in the world economy in other ways seemed not to recognize the new national boundaries.

Finding Crucibles of Modernity: The Caribbean Example

It is possible to find the crucibles of modernity in all corners of the globe, from Amsterdam to Zanzibar, from Singapore to Potosi. The Caribbean region serves this essay as merely one example of the processes of global transformation outlined here. Indigenous peoples in the Americas became the Caribbean region's first migrants, peopling most of the islands at least 5000 years before the Europeans. They brought foodways and foods from the Americas and exploited local resources with sophisticated and sustainable cultural systems. However, the arrival of Columbus in 1492 and subsequent European voyages set in motion a process of genocide and destruction that decimated these First Peoples and much of the local environment. Relatively few people survived and those who did interacted with enslaved Africans, sharing indigenous knowledge of local agriculture, aquaculture, hunting, and foraging. Enslaved and coerced labor (including European indentured labor and prisoners of war, but mostly from sub-Saharan Africa and South and East Asia) supported plantation systems developed under colonial regimes. Sugar, mining, and ranching were the most profitable.

The historian Walter Rodney called this process of intertwined labor and exploitation "how Europe underdeveloped Africa" and other parts of the world. On a typical eighteenth-century Caribbean island, enslaved Africans and African-Caribbean descendants outnumbered white Europeans by a ratio of 13 to 1. Thus, the crucible of modernity began as the set of cultural encounters created by Europe's maritime expansion, mercantilism, and imperial ambition. The crucible's ingredients came from an intersection of peoples from Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. European settlers included voluntary and involuntary laborers, prisoners of war, and indentured servants. Indentured Asians from South Asia and China replaced enslaved African labor after the abolition of slavery. Violence and oppression, racism and resistance, extensive global trade, and profound inequality all tempered the contents of this crucible.

The demographic changes wrought by migration to and from the Caribbean characterized the post-Columbian era. Plantations were nodes

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in a global exchange of labor, raw products, manufactured goods, and cultural strategies for exploitation and survival. Perhaps not surprisingly, the viability of African values, languages, foodways, knowledge, beliefs, and skills endured as adaptations and syncretic survivals. The flavors of African cooks and the rhythms of African drums won out over European counterparts. Even early attempts at local industrialization relied on the technology of African metallurgists, until the imperial masters imposed restrictions on local production in order to create markets for imported goods from their metropole. Resistance rang out as maroons (the escaped Africans) won wars and made treaties, and Rastafarians and Hindus, vodunists and others reinvented and asserted their religions far from their homelands. The commonalities of experiencing migration, slavery, and colonialism helped created a Caribbean cultural and even economic region. Webs of relationships among the colonies were just as influential as the relationships between the colonies and their metropoles. The Caribbean was seemingly fractured by the multiplicity of national identities, yet its cultures remained influential on a global scale. In this way, the interdependencies and identities of this and other world regions were solidified during the colonial era and long afterwards. Today, China makes inroads into reaches of the former colonized world, from Guyana to Ghana. The neo-colonial experiences have suggested to some scholars that the decolonization of the mind and the unraveling of the era's economic patterns of interaction would long outlive the structural reality of any single imperial project.

Contributing to Uncertain Futures

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the forces of industrialization, migration, and population growth finally resulted in the majority of humans in the world living as residents inside cities. Urban centers increasingly shared common cultural elements, including the expectation of commercial abundance (plus basic shelter, food, and water), improved sanitation, available transportation hubs, sophisticated global cultural performances, and functioning communication networks. Yet between 1900 and 2000, global warfare, genocide, disease, pollution, nuclear weapons, and global warming also contributed to the disillusionment and destabilization of these highly urbanized world societies. The common elements were not always in alignment and poverty and suffering increased during the twentieth century.

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Both world wars began in Europe but quickly engulfed the global community, including European colonies and other countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. They were industrial wars revealing how extensively military production could command the resources of the state. Conflict and disorder didn't end with the post-war treaties or the redistribution of territorial claims among victors and losers. Whether facing a Cold War era of competition between the United States and Soviet Union or terrorism in the post-9/11 era, societies were forced to accept conflict and violence as inevitable consequences of globalization, as evidenced in the ways that they permeated the global economy, increased the flow of refugees, created crises of national security and global human values, and exacerbated poverty and instability on a global scale.

Colonization, wars, and injustice also fostered international networks of resistance and inspired revolutionary struggles, including a number of social movements in which participants fought for and exercised their democratic rights. Pacifists opposed the barbaric nature of warfare that also integrated the world in the twentieth century. The League of Nations and later United Nations were formed to guarantee peace and "make the world safe for democracy." The solidarity of labor activists played a role in creating improvements in working conditions and limiting the power of large multinational cartels, as well as occasionally providing support for political activities, such as in the Spanish Civil War that reached across the Atlantic to Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, women suffragettes around the world fought for the right to vote. Decolonization in the twentieth century similarly took place amidst struggles for "better conditions, peace, and liberty."[12] The Civil Rights Movement (1954–1971) sought racial equality in the United States, where another half a century have not erased the disparities of a once-flourishing slave society. The recognition of pan-African connections inspired Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, and Nelson Mandela in South Africa in their own struggles for independence and justice, although continents apart.

Globalization has led to economic gain for some and increased global poverty and inequality for others. The widening gap between the wealthy and the poor has resulted in 1% of the world's population owning more wealth than the remaining 99%. Not surprisingly, globalization's circle of discontent has also widened. Globalization is blamed for rampant environmental crises and their intractability. Demonstrations against powerful institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) express

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popular outrage over policy deliberations in which the global poor have no voice.

Modern globalization has also meant the continuing reduction in the distances that separate people and places, thanks to super jets and digital innovations. Despite the fears of homogenization of world cultures, the modern world also has accentuated differences. Transportation and communication technologies have allowed more and faster connections between parts of the globe, resulting in pathways of integration and difference undreamed of two centuries ago. Population movements between the 1840s and 1940s constituted multiple flows of migrants to world regions that together witnessed the largest era of migration in world history. Families and identity, religious, ethnic, and racial categories, as well as globally shared cultural norms have shifted in response to the enhanced global connections.

Among the more powerful signs of global cultural transformations are shared technologies in the digital age, the embrace of common sports, and world arts, including literature and music. Digital media and information now function in multiple cultural contexts. Global changes in social networking and knowledge and information transfers include the speed, scale, and cost of connections worldwide. In the case of soccer, the most widely viewed televised sport, the global game has undergone changes that reflect the growth of nationalism and increasing commercialization. From villagers kicking a pig's bladder around to the first soccer clubs of the nineteenth century, soccer flourished as a way to express the conflict and rivalry of the wider world. International games, which relied on international agreements over codes and rules, sometimes pitted colonizer against the colonized. More than one billion people watched the FIFA World Cup 2014 tournament's final match on television.

Books, art, and music have also traveled the world's trading and exchange networks. Manuscripts and books were the most valuable items of exchange in the trans-Saharan trade of the fifteenth century, reaching the libraries of Timbuktu's elite collectors and scholars after long and dusty journeys from Cairo and more distant reaches of Eurasia. Garden arts symbolize the movements of plants and designers in cultivated landscapes both urban and rural. The gardens of Al-Andalus (tenth–fifteenth centuries CE) brought multiple traditions together, as did the Chinese royal and scholarly styles of gardens. Global gardens, such as those at Kew, England, or the Imperial Summer Palace gardens in Beijing, were

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collecting points for the ostentatious display of knowledge and power acquired from afar and exerted over the natural world after 1500 CE.

Over the same centuries, music also traveled with people, merchants and missionaries, settlers and the enslaved. African immigrants brought their traditional instruments and rhythms to the Americas, ultimately creating the art form known as 'jazz'. In the nineteenth century, German immigrants brought musical traditions and the powerful influence of the symphony to other parts of the world, including the Americas. Since the electrification of music, live and recorded songs of protest and songs of celebration have joined the global age in expressing the characteristics of shared modernity that abound. In this way, the technology and cultures of globalization combine and re-combine to preserve heritage and encourage innovation in order to keep cultures dynamic and alive.

Conclusion

Themes in world history have demonstrated that both continuity and transformation are unique to the human experience and its consequences for a livable planet. From the moment that hominins stepped onto the evolutionary pathway of becoming anatomically modern humans, their cultural adaptations began to alter their surroundings through the dynamic relationships with planet Earth's environments. Through key 'events' such as cooking and producing food (controlling and using fire and embarking on agriculture), our technological innovations have exerted ever-more powerful changes over the environment and in other species.

Exploring the key themes in human history provides us with understandings that can shape our future. While supporting tremendous population growth, transformations in scale have also served to challenge the range of human responses. Thus far, the cultural, social, and political solutions have wrought ever-increasing levels of complexity and greater inequality. From our position in the twenty-first century, world historians may question how we might measure the ultimate success or failure of these responses. Human mobility and adaptability have characterized the planet's history for hundreds of thousands of years. From the hominin journeys within and out of Africa to the multiple diaspora of refugees of the twenty-first century, the ultimate meanings of movement and mobility have remained unaltered. Shaping both the dangers and opportunities and encompassing both the differences and commonalities of the human

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experience, the shared human journeys comprise a narrative of the past that world historians owe to future generations.

NOTES

1. See Candice Goucher, Charles LeGuin, and Linda Walton, *In the Balance: Themes in Global History* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1998); the multimedia project, including 26 videos and interactive website: Candice Goucher and Linda Walton (co-lead scholars), *Bridging World History* (Annenberg and Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2004) at https://www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/; and more recently, Candice Goucher and Linda Walton, *World History: Journeys from Past to Present* 2 vols (London and New York: Routledge, [2008] 2013).
2. Candice Goucher and Linda Walton, "What is World History," *Bridging World History* website (Annenberg/Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2004). Accessed 7/24/2015: https://www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/whatis.html.
3. Richard Wrangham, *Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), and quoted in Dwight Garner, "Why Are Humans Different From All Other Apes? It's the Cooking, Stupid," *The New York Times*, May 26, 2009. Accessed 7/17/2015: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/27/books/27garn.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
4. See Kristen J. Gremillion, *Ancestral Appetites: Food in Prehistory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
5. See more about the regions and their case studies in Graeme Barker and Candice Goucher, *The Cambridge World History (Volume II): A World With Agriculture, 12,000 BCE–500 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
6. The following section first appeared in an article by the author "The World on a Plate: A guide to consuming food in world history," in *World History Connected*, 2015.
7. Alasdair Whittle, "Early Agricultural Society in Europe," in Graeme Barker and Candice Goucher, *The Cambridge World History (Volume II): A World With Agriculture, 12,000 BCE–500 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 555–588.
8. Kevin C. MacDonald, "The Tichitt Tradition in the West African Sahel," in Graeme Barker and Candice Goucher, *The Cambridge World History (Volume II): A World With Agriculture, 12,000 BCE–500 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 499–513.
9. Tim Denham, "Swamp cultivators at Kuk, New Guinea: Early agriculture in the highlands of New Guinea," in Graeme Barker and Candice Goucher, *The Cambridge World History (Volume II): A World With*

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Agriculture, 12,000 BCE–500 CE (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 445–471.

10. Quoted in Candice Goucher and Linda Walton, *World History: Journeys from Past to Present* vol. 1, 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).
11. Susan Keech McIntosh and R.J. McIntosh, "Cities without Citadels: Understanding West African urbanism," in T. Shaw et al. (eds.), *The Archaeology of Africa: Foods Metals and Towns* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1993), pp. 622–641.
12. Black activist Elma Francois was tried for sedition in Trinidad (1937) for these words; quoted in Goucher and Walton *World History: Journeys* (2014), p. 607.

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PART III

Comparative Historiographical Critiques

Introduction

Part Three offers comparative critiques of the Part Two narratives. Contributors were provided with a set of questions as a guide. It is impossible of course to touch on all the points raised in the questions when considering such limited skeletal narratives within such limited space. The comparative critiques are only initial observations by historians with expertise in either historiography or teaching. They are intended to provide initial insights to stimulate further discussion and analysis. The question set would ideally be applied to full world (and other) history volumes within critiques of much wider and deeper range and scope.

1a How does each author chronologically and/or thematically frame their narrative? Into what major sections do they divide their narrative and why? In what ways are the differing approaches within the various narratives complementary/supplemental? Contradictory/incompatible?

1b What major patterns/trends and overarching themes are included/excluded, emphasized/minimized, both within each period covered and the broader narrative in its entirety? Are any such patterns/trends and/or overarching themes given any sense of 'directionality', whether implied or explicitly stated?

1c How does each author employ the following within their narrative and what is the relative emphasis/importance given to each? (1) 'great events', 'decisive moments', 'turning points', and/or 'key figures/personages/entities', and (2) longer, deeper flows of multiple 'smaller'

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events/developments. (This could prove a difficult issue to address since the narratives are, by design, quite limited in scope and thus potentially coerced/forced more toward (1) rather than (2), but it is nonetheless worth considering.)

2 (a) How does each author resolve the choice/dilemma of what to include versus exclude? (b) How fairly/adequately/objectively do they descriptively represent what is included? (c) How much space do they allot to each component/topic, within the defined scope of the narrative?

3 How does each author interpret the relation of the various eras, trends, and components/topics included within their narrative in terms of cause–effect (with a view to both human and natural causes), and culturally-civilizationally speaking, dependence–independence, and direction–measure of influence of one culture-civilization upon another or multiple cultures-civilizations in relation to one another, and internal versus external factors in relation to the 'rise' and/or 'fall' of those cultures-civilizations (cf. 'balance of interdependence' and questions/categories of 'developed/undeveloped', 'dominance/subordination'; see C. Dawson, "Sources of Culture Change")?

4a Has the contributor's own national/cultural/civilizational/gender perspectives and/or areas of expertise informed/influenced/shaped their narratives in ways that possibly eclipse other important aspects/topics within world history? In ways that complement/supplement other narratives? In ways that positively challenge common assumptions and paradigms and/or help expand and enlarge the human community's understanding of and perspective on our shared world and its history?

4b In what ways are the various world historical frameworks applicable, relevant, and/or illuminating for historians and other scholars working in particular areas of expertise and/or area studies? In what ways do they complement, enhance, and/or provide a beneficial context for such scholars and their fields?

5a Does the author explicitly state or implicitly reveal any motives/aims/purposes (e.g., Western democratic/capitalist versus Marxian socialist/communist, religious/missionary, philosophical, ecological and so on) in how they go about framing their narrative and/or the themes/issues/topics they address therein?

5b Are there any recognizable attempts to address present-day contemporary issues via the author's presentation/interpretation of the world's history (e.g., issues of environment and/or climate change; peace/conflict/war/terror; form and/or function of economy and/or

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government; economic and/or labor (in)equality; human slavery, sex and/or drug trafficking; ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation; religious freedom and pluralism; human health and/or diet (cf. organics, GMOs and so on); disease and/or poverty; animal rights and so on)? If so, how does this affect the narrative with respect to our need/ability to understand the past on its own terms?

6a With respect to international political and economic, intercultural, interethnic, and interreligious relations as well as other forms of relations between various types/categories of human social groups and communities, what implications does a comparison of the various narratives carry for the idea of working toward a mutually 'shared' and agreed upon (cf. 'ecumenical') history of the world? Is such a goal even feasible and/or desirable and, if so, in what ways? If not, why/for what reasons?

6b With respect to international political and economic, intercultural, interethnic, and interreligious relations as well as other forms of relations between various types/categories of human social groups and communities, in what ways do differences and/or disagreements over understanding/interpretation of our world's history reflect or have the potential to contribute toward: (a) tensions, conflict, and/or war—'cold', violent, or otherwise—between such groups? (b) greater mutual understanding, appreciation, affirmation, cooperation, peace, and/or harmony between such groups?

7 What practical application and/or value do these narrative frameworks and/or the comparative historiographical critiques have for teachers, students as well as the broader reading public in: (a) undergraduate contexts? (b) graduate and post-graduate contexts? (c) specific religious, cultural, linguistic, political and other social settings?

8 What implications does this project carry overall for continuing research within: (a) the world and/or global history fields? (b) other historical and/or related humanities and social science fields? (c) STEM, business and other non-history, non-humanities fields?

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CHAPTER 11

World History and Perspectivity: Between Necessity and Opportunity

Gotelind Müller

This is a short reflection on perspectivity in world history, so it is more than appropriate that I should first state my own point of departure (and should use mainly the first person in writing). Starting out as an area specialist focusing on China and East Asia, my first encounter with world history and perspectivity was through Chinese eyes, so to speak, when the frequent quarrels about history views in East Asia, above all in the context of teaching (history textbooks, curricula) which you will note in the following is my main concern, pulled me into researching the question of how historical consciousness (national and transnational) is generated and transmitted in these societies. Apart from the fact that also in pre-modern China there was a conception of the world beyond, reflected in a sino-centric historical view which tends to linger on and nicely contrasts with the Eurocentric view common in Western approaches,[1] the study of present-day conceptions of world history as transmitted in Chinese schools and in the media[2] made me think about some issues that

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might be of interest in reflecting on the Part One narratives in more general terms.

First of all, every kind of history writing needs to confront the question of evidence on which it bases the narrative. In Part One, many narratives tend to concentrate on material evidence, which goes well with the new re-appreciation of the material (the so-called 'material turn').[3] We might of course argue that when going back in time to the 'dawn' of the human species or even beyond (and thus far beyond the appearance of any writing system), as most narratives in Part One do, the concentration on the material is a fairly natural consequence. By its very materiality, this kind of evidence also appears to be particularly 'solid' (or "seems relatively unproblematic", as Wiesner-Hanks frames it) and to be less malleable by arbitrary interpretative 'distortions' than, say, textual sources of 'historical' times reflecting certain interests of those writing or their masters. However, we should be aware that this evidence, usually taken up by the world historian from secondary literature of other disciplines,[4] is by this very process already mediated. Interestingly, but on a second thought logically, considering the dependence on other disciplines for what used to be called 'pre-history', there seems to be much less divergence in the world history narratives about the phases before the times traditionally handled by historians than for later times where sources are more ample and variegated, differentiation is more palpable and the historian feels more at home, at least in terms of methodology and disciplinary training. Incidentally, the periodization schemes proposed in the narratives virtually all show the tendency to have ever-shorter chunks of time the closer we get to the present. We should not forget, however, that this might merely reflect the increasing availability and plurality of evidence. Furthermore it suggests it is our perspective from today and our perception of complexity and acceleration of our own times (and thus our interest in understanding where we are at present) that makes it seem that times long, long ago were comparatively more 'stable' and uniform, especially in times of which we have no contemporaries voices to prove the contrary. This means we need to always remember that our perception and narrative construction is strongly conditioned by the availability (or absence) of evidence (and by our motivation to look into history, as well).

As far as evidence and its impact are concerned, there is one further issue I would like to raise. For gaining currency in a wider societal sphere it is, in fact, mostly images (or visualizations) that represent material

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evidence and that stick in people's minds. It is not the single excavated mandible of some early hominin such as *Homo heidelbergensis* (to take an example geographically close to my home) that leaves a mark, but the reconstructions and interpretations based on that mandible, though being hypothetical at best when offering a reconstruction of a whole face or even a whole body in a museum or a textbook. The mandible itself might be seen by only relatively few people in the original (and could hardly be evaluated in terms of its significance by any non-specialist) but is received by many via some reproduction, often accompanied by a reconstruction of the assumed living style of that hominin to 'show' how he is presumed to have lived. What started out as an ensemble of scientific hypotheses thus gets crystallized into a set image in the public imagery. The visual, which has come to be more and more center stage since the 'visual turn', tends to not only overshadow text but also to frame perceptions of material evidence in our highly mediatized society of today. I therefore think there is a need to integrate some reflection on the role of the visual in and for world history writing/presentation which dominates in people's (and pupils') "Ökonomie der Aufmerksamkeit" (attention economy)[5] as the 'receivers' of world history presentations (including presentations of natural history which are usually mediated by images/visualizations, too). My work on Chinese TV documentaries on world history, in which image and sound are very obviously as important as the textual 'message', and given, for example, the highly iconic role photos and other visual images play for people's awareness and imagery of history in the world beyond their immediate surrounding and their own times, leads me to believe that this layered mediatized access to knowledge (or at least to what we presently think we know) is an important aspect to consider and address. The visual, always taking a certain perspective perforce, makes also tangible perspectivity a necessarily involved factor, though this holds true no less for the textual or even the material in its presentation and perception.

Basically, history as such and world history, too, is written (or presented in other ways) by someone for someone. As Ansary points out, there is always an assumed 'we' as addressee of a world history narrative (and supposedly also as the subject of it, though the historian in fact is the subject writing/presenting, inevitably writing/presenting with his/her personal view even if posing as the assumed 'we' s/he claims to represent). In fact, it seems doubtful to me that the historian will ever know what an assumed galactic observer (Fernandez-Armesto) might think,

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since it is still the historian formulating the latter's assumed views. We cannot get out of our own skin, and, as Wiesner-Hanks mentions, the development of historiography itself is very much a reflection also of a particular academia developing in a special societal context. For example, the move to broaden world history to include 'natural history' (e.g., with the narratives of Christian and Fernandez-Armesto in this volume) does reflect a shift in values which tries to 'decenter' the human experience to a certain degree. This approach came up in North American academia and it still seems to be largely connected with them in the theory and practice of world history writing,[6] though slowly expanding beyond these origins. World history as practiced elsewhere is usually more restricted in coverage and might even have reservations about the desirability of 'decentering' the human experience. The founding of an Asian Association of World Historians and its own (English-language) journal,[7] in turn, is in itself a reflection of perceived perspectivity in world history writing practice (and at the same time acknowledges the perceived dominance of English as a medium). Others have felt the need to stress the fact that world history writing exists also in other languages and academic contexts[8] with different approaches and perspectives which should not be overlooked.[9] In short, perspectivity is simply a reality to be reckoned with. But is this a problem?

Whereas the focus on the "human system" (Manning) connects all humans via the undisputed fact of their shared belonging to one species (even if aiming at a middle way between presently very fashionable biological approaches and 'culture/the social', which are more prominent in conventional approaches and in this volume stressed in Gabitov's contribution), the question of whether this might lead to a "single story" (as Ansary puts it) in turn makes me wonder whether the construction of the latter is really possible, and, to be honest, whether it is desirable. From the pedagogical point of view (cf. Stearns and Goucher), we certainly need to be aware of the increasingly pluralist student audience in (world) history classrooms, especially in those countries where immigration is high. In fact, this reflects why—and to a degree in which way—world history courses have been introduced in some (by far not all!) countries' educational systems: seen from the perspective of someone living in Germany where these developments have not yet gone as far as, above all, the U.S. (though moving in this direction), and where national or European focuses are still standard in history education, the connection between societal exigencies and academic and practical

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developments in this way of 'doing' world history seems quite obvious (and might point to future developments also in Germany and Europe). The need to take pupils with other cultural backgrounds on board in history classes makes for a shift of the "addressee we" (Ansary) and necessitates new ways of writing history to satisfy identity needs. In East Asia, in turn, though 'world history' is an official part of the curriculum in all countries there, it is clearly framed as the history of "the others,"[10] adding to the national history curriculum which is the main focus of history education. This, of course, is predicated on a (still) fairly homogenous (or if you will: homogenized) student body. As not only today's Chinese curriculum designers clearly spell out, world history teaching is assigned the task of learning from others' experience (positively or negatively). Accordingly, only those elements of others' historical experience are chosen that seem 'relevant' to the (national) self in this perspective (though in the Chinese case deliberately subordinating the de facto multi-ethnic character of that 'national self' to Han dominance). Thus, very clearly, it is a 'we' and 'them' story, not a 'one single world' story of any 'global we'. In fact, given the nationalisms around in the whole area, attempts at a 'one single world' story would likely be denounced as another form of de facto hegemony,[11] and very probably this is not only an exclusively East Asian preoccupation. Periodizations are one of those factors seen as problematic, since very often categories, as Goucher reminds us, are simply taken from the European experience (e.g., Classical).

One problem I see with 'one single story' attempts is not only that it might lead to leaving out everything that does not fit in, but that it tends to lead to a one-way evolutionary narrative from 'primitive' (whatever this might mean) to 'higher developed' (whether praising it or deploring it). Often, this is framed in economic terms, for example, that foraging is 'followed' by agriculture and a sedentary way of life. However, as Goucher briefly mentions and Christian hints at too, there are also documented cases of countermoves where sedentary people opt for foraging, so one should be careful not to unintentionally subscribe to a 'move-up' idea with terms fixed of what this move up on a supposed ladder of development means (e.g., foraging to agriculture). Obviously, those people going against the presumed way of development do not share the value system which sees agriculture as somehow superior or at least as the necessary 'next step', but have their reasons to opt for foraging though knowing about agriculture. As Christian underlines, in fact such 'development' always comes at a cost (though there might be demographic

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reasons preventing a potentially desired move back in practice). With Goucher's thematic approach, these problems are largely evaded since this approach does not claim per se to be all inclusive, is under no pressure to present a seamless narrative, and is free to pick up those instances where comparisons (and/or an inquiry into connections) seem possible across cultures and times.

With this we have arrived at the point where we may ask what the opportunities are that perspectivity might offer. Whether there will ever be an 'ecumenical history'[12] everybody will be happy with might turn out to be a quest for utopia, but—as especially Stearns and Goucher with their focus on history education make clear—there is a societal and political need to at least get into dialogue about historical perceptions (cf. the textbook 'wars' not only in East Asia). In this context, the question raised by Weller about the contribution of world history to peace education is very pertinent: for example, the attempts at multi-national history textbooks are promising beginnings. Even though they usually concentrate on a more specific time or regional section of world history, not attempting to cover all from the Big Bang to today, they nevertheless constitute steps toward a broader 'we' as subject and as addressee of historiography.[13] As Akira Iriye and Jürgen Osterhammel also underline in their big American-German project on world history still underway,[14] given the advanced specialization in expertise in all thematic fields and geographical areas (including solid language competence so crucial not only for dealing with sources but also for adequately evaluating secondary literature—as I know from my own field), world history invites projects with multiple authors, everybody bringing in his or her expertise and perspective on the basis of an agenda developed together.

Therefore, to my mind, perspectivity is not only an inevitable necessity on logical and practical grounds, but it is also a great opportunity, enriching our views on history and ourselves with perspectives we would not come up with on our own. This is far more than simple relativism. We will never know everything—and we need not, but we should learn more about each other's views of who we are, where we come from and move onward to, in order to live peacefully together in the one world we share.

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Notes

1. Cf. Arif Dirlik, "History without a Center? Reflections on Eurocentrism," in *Across Cultural Borders: Historiography in Global Perspective* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), pp. 274–275.
2. See Gotelind Müller, ed., *Designing History in East Asian Textbooks: Identity Politics and Transnational Aspirations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), Chap. 2; Müller, *Documentary, World History, and National Power in the PRC: Global Rise in Chinese Eyes* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013); and Müller, "World History Education in the PRC between Textbooks and Television: Some observations on recent developments," in *Tian ren gu jin: Huaren shehui lishi jiaoyu de shiming yu tiaozhan* [*Nature and man, past and present: the mission and challenges of socio-historical education among Chinese*], ed. Li Xiangyu (Macau: Aomen ligong xueyuan, 2014), pp. 8–22.
3. Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce, *Material Powers: Cultural Studies, History and the Material Turn* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).
4. Cf. Diego Olstein, *Thinking History Globally* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 54–55.
5. Georg Franck, *Ökonomie der Aufmerksamkeit: ein Entwurf* (München: Hanser, 1998).
6. Cf., somewhat polemically, Chloé Maurel, "La World/Global History: Questions et débats," *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire*, No. 104 (Oct–Dec 2009): 163–166.
7. See Ji-Hyung Cho, "Editorial," *Asian Review of World Histories*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jan 2013): 1–3.
8. For example, Dominic Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Chap. 1.
9. For example, Matthias Middell, "L'histoire mondiale/globale en Allemagne," *Cahiers d'histoire: Revue d'histoire critique*, No. 121 (2013): 75, or recently Masashi Haneda, "Japanese Perspectives on 'Global History'," *Asian Review of World Histories*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Jul 2015): 227–232.
10. Müller, ed., *Designing History in East Asian Textbooks*, chap. 2, and Müller, "World History Education in the PRC between Textbooks and Television," pp. 8–14.
11. Xincheng Liu, "The Global View of History in China," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Sep 2012): 494, 505–507, 510; Arif Dirlik, "Performing the World: Reality and representation in the making of world histor(ies)," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Dec 2005): 391–392.

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12. Jerry Bentley, "Myths, Wagers, and Some Moral Implications of World History," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Mar 2005): 76–82; Dominic Sachsenmaier, "World History as Ecumenical History?" *Journal of World History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Dec 2007): 484–489.
13. Falk Pingel, "Mediating Textbook Conflicts," in *Designing History in East Asia Textbooks*, ed. Müller, pp. 245–248.
14. Akira Iriye and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *A History of the World / Geschichte der Welt*. 6 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and München: C.H. Beck, 2012—).

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CHAPTER 12

World Histories in Conversation

Leonid Trofimov

As a historian of Russia with a growing awareness of its role in the world, I approach the field of world histories with questions that are important for a broader historical community. How can world histories help expand our understanding of history per se?[1] What can my field contribute to world histories' frameworks and perspectives? How can world histories contribute to my field? History scholarship in the West continues to a large extent be driven by national and region-specific histories. A casual glance at the lists of advertised university vacancies confirms this observation. There is also a certain degree of skepticism among historians with narrower research focuses about the value of efforts to construct all-encompassing interpretative world history frameworks. I recall wondering how anyone could claim understanding of the entirety of world history, if I had just spent two years in the archives trying to figure out what exactly Stalin was up to at the onset of the Cold War.

Of course, one can and should pursue such broad understanding. In addition to sheer intellectual curiosity that compels us to seek general patterns and explanations of human historical experience, many non-world historians at some point in their career face a need to relate their field to a broader story of humanity, both in research and in teaching.

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That's why this collection of essays is of utmost value not only to other world historians but to all historians. At the same time, the ultimate future of the field of world history may well depend on the strength of connections between world histories and regional, country-specific, local histories, and individuals' histories.

One could hardly think of a better way to begin a conversation about world history than with David Christian's essay on Big History. Approaching the entirety of human history from an even broader perspective is an appealing proposition. While human beings have always interacted with one another, they have also interacted with their physical environment. If these interactions reveal shared patterns and categories then our understanding of world human history could benefit from understanding the world itself and its categories: energy, complexity, information.[2]

Christian notes the unprecedented creativity of human species, which has allowed it to collectively accumulate, distribute, and exploit information, tap new flows of energy, form increasingly complex communities, and eventually concentrate enough power to dominate the biosphere. The good news is that his Big History framework for human history opens up a limitless number of interdisciplinary approaches, perspectives, fields, and focuses. The bad news is that human history as such could get diminished and even lost in such a framework, which in Christian's categorization might include anything from cosmology, geology, and biology to neuroscience, linguistics, epistemology, psychology, sociology, economics, culture studies, and so forth. Since the present is elusive and can be construed as a single moment, always about to pass, Big History could rise as an umbrella over all arts and sciences. I am not certain historians are ready for such an expansive conceptualization of world history.[3]

Like Christian, Felipe Fernandez-Armesto places human history in a broader context of the histories of other, non-human societies, which, in the case of the chimpanzees and baboons, demonstrated ability to accumulate and pass knowledge and generate cultural and political diversity. This helps not only to recognize broad patterns, but also to appreciate the ability of the human species to achieve unprecedented heights of cultural diversity due to the greater imaginative power of their creative minds.[4]

Patrick Manning argues that humanity as such can be conceived of as an expansive global living system, or to be more precise, a biological system overlaid by a social system. Following James G. Miller's analysis, Manning argues that like any other living system, humanity in biological and social terms has 19 subsystems that account for its complexity and

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high degree of evolutionary adaptability. Unlike other living systems, however, humanity is self-aware, both on an individual and on a collective level. It is driven by human agency, which creates a growing number of behavior-altering sectors within subsystems, but at the same time manifests fixed patterns of expansive systemic behavior. Humanity's ability to alter behavior (and by extension human nature) has critical importance for its sustainable future.[5]

The essays by the above-mentioned authors can be grouped together as examples of a universalist approach to world history, or as Fernandez-Armesto and Benjamin Sacks put it, a view from "a cosmic crow's nest."[6] Civilizational and national historical narratives have often rested on the notion of 'centeredness', on comparing and distinguishing various 'us' (cultures, nations, civilizations) from close and distant 'others'. The universalist frameworks offered by Christian, Fernandez-Armesto, and Manning carry the same function for *Sapiens* humanity by placing it side by side with non-human beings and entities, thus helping us become more aware of ourselves not as American, French, Kazakh, Jewish, or Russian, but as members of the same collectively organized and uniquely creative species. In a similar vein, Tamim Ansary defines 'us' as the entire humanity whose destinies are entangled and intertwined. He departs from his earlier thinking that there could be no single world history, a premise that had nevertheless led him to write a fascinating survey of world history from an Islamic perspective.[7] This raises an important question: while we definitely gain a lot by developing a universalist perspective on human history, what do we risk losing? Ansary's earlier premise could some day inspire the writing of a world history through Buddhist eyes or a world history through Jewish eyes. A search for a universalist perspective on world history should not replace pursuits of world history perspectives that are explicitly informed by a particular cultural or a religious background or vantage point. All of them could contribute to a fuller appreciation of the diversity of human experience.

The second group of essays in this collection represent a focus-driven, thematic approach to world history. Tursin Gabitov offers three such focuses: on Western, Russian, and Islamic cultures. In the introductory pages he notes a traditional bias of European historians of Ancient Greece who have tended to emphasize its connection to Western culture, even though Classical Greece had been influenced by great Eastern civilizations. His discussion of Western, Russian, and Islamic cultures is vivid, but largely non-overlapping, even though interaction and

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cross-fertilization between these cultures can offer important insights into the dynamics of world history. The Western–Russian nexus provides several examples of such cross-fertilization: Russia's Europeanization under Peter the Great, Russian elites' embrace of Enlightenment ideas, and the arrival in Russia, adaptation, and subsequent global expansion of Marxist socialism.

Another example of a thematic approach to world history is offered by Merry Wiesner-Hanks. In her essay she argues that world history surveys have often focused on political and economic processes carried out by governments and commercial elites, since material objects can be more easily compared across regions. Instead, she proposes a focus on social and cultural world history that involves a broad range of topics and categories—labor, families, women and gender, sexuality, childhood, material culture, the body, identity, race and ethnicity, consumption, migration, and so forth. Some may wonder why her perspective on social and cultural world history as presented in this volume, should make only brief references to the Roman Empire and none to the Renaissance, Enlightenment, and Romanticism, but this can serve as a reminder that world history is not one standard checklist of historical phenomena, but rather a multi-directional search for cohesiveness, patterns, and meaning in the endlessly diverse record of human experience.[8]

In this search, focusing on social and cultural, as well as on political and economic categories, can only get us so far. World history could serve as a past-centered extension of economics, sociology, demographics, gender studies, but that does not mean we should turn our backs on what is at the heart of history as a distinct discipline: historical events and experiences. Wiesner-Hanks points out that events within the realm of social and cultural world history—the Agricultural Revolution, the Scientific Revolution, or the Industrial Revolution—would be different from events in political and military history, which did not necessarily change basic social structures or the way people spent their time. This distinction may be too rigid. The Russian Revolution of 1917, for example, was certainly a political revolution, but it was also a social and cultural event with global repercussions leading to widespread and violent devastation in a former Empire, a transformation of its social structure, rapid industrialization, and the birth of a global vision which forever changed how hundreds of millions of people lived their lives.

On the other hand, 'historical events' are unlimited. If we want world history to make sense of the humanity's past and reach broad audiences

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doing so, selective choices have to be made. Two essays provide invaluable assistance to anyone interested in teaching world history. Peter Stearns proposes a chronology of world history, which is clear and not too complicated, but at the same time flexible enough to accommodate different focuses. His basic principle of periodization involves identifying the emergence and decline of various themes. One can agree with the principle without agreeing with the significance or temporal boundaries of a particular theme.

In another article that focuses primarily on teaching, Candice Goucher shows just how diverse these themes can be, from cooking food to urbanization. Goucher recognizes that a thematic approach to teaching world history should not mean the dominance of a bird's-eye view. Instead, themes should allow us to move between social and political history and involve both global historical events and personal experiences of world history. To quote another world historian, Yuval Noah Harari, in addition to questions of "what happened?" and "why?" historians should not shy away from such questions as "how did it feel?"[9]

Goucher implicitly points to a potential weakness in world history narratives that emphasize big patterns, categories, networks, and systems. First, such emphasis could make some histories seem less important. Second, it could also make conscious human action seem less important. Such action is, to be sure, recognized by most authors, but the focus is usually on collective, not individual human endeavors. World history narratives can do more to examine individual creative (and destructive) accomplishments and this could fit well with most of the narratives in the present volume.

This has a direct bearing on how world history can be taught. Historians can provide students with knowledge of chronology, facts and events of world history, help them identify its various themes, equip them with analytical skills and historical methods, but when it comes to understanding individual experiences, we all become co-learners, since each of us has empathic abilities to appreciate and internalize the richness and diversity of such experiences. This helps explain the ongoing popularity of primary sources in history teaching—we all create primary sources in the course of our lifetimes and students often can relate to other people who have created them better than to abstract categories or patterns.

The grouping of the volume's essays into two broad categories of universalist and thematic world histories does not negate their individual distinctiveness and intellectual boldness especially since they do not shy

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away from posing 'big questions' and advancing 'big arguments' about the meaning and outcomes of history.

Fernandez-Armesto's key argument is that as human cultures interact and influence one another, they produce not uniformity, but more diversity. In his view, the current 'globalization' is just a phase, an episode of convergence, which does not diminish the dominant overarching trend of divergence, although compared to his ample evidence for globalization, the outweighing evidence for increasing cultural diversity is somewhat thin.

By contrast, Tamim Ansary, in consonance with Patrick Manning, argues that the main theme running through human history is that of increasing interconnectedness of our species, which has brought humanity on the verge of merging into a single civilization. But he also follows with a question that is left unanswered: if we are moving towards greater interconnectedness and larger wholes "how come we are still fighting?"

It seems that we have encountered a key paradox of world history. As we examine cultural and social diversity more closely, patterns of uniformity, order, and organization begin to emerge, yet an even closer look at that uniformity reveals new layers of chaotic diversity and complexity. As Antoinette Burton put it, "the more world history you know, the more you realize the less you know."[10] At least, it is hard to disagree with Candice Goucher that integration and difference can be seen as world history's two mega-themes.

Perhaps another mega-theme of world history deserves more emphasis and it is about the way humanity has dealt with change. Historians, especially those coming out of the Western tradition seem to be particularly attuned to change. To be sure, the ability to creatively adapt to change and embrace it has been a crucial contributor to the unsurpassed dynamism and resilience of human beings. Yet one cannot overlook just how important fear of change and rejection of change has been to human history as well.

Russian history provides vivid examples of forceful and violent resistance to change. When in the seventeenth century the Russian Orthodox Church changed liturgical practices to make them conform with Greek texts and rituals, it relied on the power of the state for implementation and anathemized those who refused to accept them. Nevertheless, resistance to these changes has lasted for more than three centuries and continues to this day. Members of Old Believer religious communities chose flight, isolation, even death over accepting liturgical changes, which they

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believed came from anti-Christ, struggling enormously to make sense of and adjust to the changing world.[11]

A yearning for a time when change would no longer dominate people's lives has arguably been one of the fundamental appeals of Christianity (as well as of many other religions) and the Russian peasants have often interpreted an intensified pace of social, economic, political, and war-related change as evidence of the nearing end of times, to be followed by a very different life of blissful unalterable unity with God.

Furthermore, we could never understand why Marx's analysis of capitalism and its inevitable collapse has captured the hearts and minds of hundreds of millions in Russia and beyond without recognizing that Marx's vision of a communist future offered peasants and first-generation workers precisely what they were longing for: a golden age in which people would no longer be left at the mercy of change. Even as educated Russian Marxists saw themselves as modernizers eager to embrace change and transform society, popular support for their policies was largely conditional on their promise of building a blissful and harmonious "kingdom of labor" free from the shocks and calamities of capitalism. Even a casual look at recent headlines confirms that fear of change and mythic visions of static and immutable future (or of static and immutable past) still fuel conflicts and currents of world history.

These reflections merely serve as examples inviting historians of different fields to contribute insights to world history. Such cross-fertilization can work both ways. Perhaps one of the most exciting recent developments in the field of Russian history is its globalization. Global and comparative approaches to the Russian Empire are allowing us to move beyond simple dichotomies of a developed West versus an underdeveloped Russia and discover surprising similarities in the way, for example, colonial officials across the world treated their subjects or governed and exploited their empires.[12] Viewing the Russian revolution as a world history phenomenon is making it possible to evaluate its impact well beyond specific policies pursued by the Soviet state and attain a better understanding of the Soviet Union as a globally oriented project whose legitimacy was intrinsically linked to a particular version of the world's future.[13] Finally, Russian and Soviet imperial collapses and their lasting ethno-cultural, national, and geopolitical repercussions have recently been examined in comparison with the Ottoman and Habsburg imperial collapses yielding new insights into past and present Eurasian instability.[14]

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In sum, a historian focusing on any particular period, group of people, country or region should approach world histories with confidence knowing that his or her expertise and perspective could both be expanded and in turn contribute something new to our shared understanding of humanity's past. The present collection of essays is a compelling invitation to do so.

Notes

1. Helpful overviews of world history varieties can be found in Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: Norton, 2014), Diego Olstein, *Thinking History Globally* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), and in Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016). Conrad advocates a more restrictive 'global history' approach which focuses not just on global frameworks, networks, connections, and interactions, but on global integration, mostly in the modern era.
2. A major milestone in the development of the Big History field is the *Journal of Big History* whose first issue was published in January 2017 (URL: https://journalofbighistory.org/index.php/jbh; last accessed: Feb 6, 2017).
3. Despite these reservations, Big History's integrational approach has been effectively used in education at university, high-school, and lifetime-learning levels. See David Christian, Craig Benjamin, and Cynthia Stokes Brown, eds., *Big History: Between Nothing and Everything* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2014); Cynthia Stokes Brown, *Big History: from the Big Bang to the Present* (New York: Free Press, 2007), and https://school.bighistoryproject.com/bhplive; last accessed: Jul 16, 2017.
4. See additional insights on his view of human species' distinctiveness and of the value and pitfalls of studying non-human societies in Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, "History beyond History: New adventurers on the frontiers of traditional historiography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51 (2009): 212–219.
5. Manning provides a detailed analysis of the links that have connected the global human community in Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave, 2003) and *Migration in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
6. Quoted in Conrad, *What is Global History?*, p. 7.
7. Tamim Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted: A History of the World Through Islamic Eyes*. (New York: Public Affairs, 2009).
8. Wiesner-Hanks offers a more expansive treatment of these topics in a survey of world history: Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *A Concise History of the World*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

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9. Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (New York: Harper Publishers, 2015), pp. 114ff.
10. Antoinette Burton, *A Primer for Teaching World History: Ten Design Principles* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), p. xi.
11. See for example Georg Bernhard Michels et al., *Russia's Dissident Old Believers, 1650–1950* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2009); Robert O. Crumney, *Old Believers in a Changing World* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011).
12. See, for example, Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History. The Power and Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Choi Chatterjee, "Imperial Incarcerations: Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaya, Vinayak Savarkar, and the original sins of modernity," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 74 (Winter 2015): 850–872.
13. Martin E. Malia and Terence Emmons, *History's Locomotives Revolutions and the Making of the Modern World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Jonathan Daly and Leonid Trofimov, *The Russian Revolution and Its Global Impact* (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishers, forthcoming).
14. Karen Barkey and Mark Von Hagen, eds., *After Empire*: *Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997); Michael Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

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CHAPTER 13

Eight World Historians

Diego Olstein

In August 2000, James Blaut published his book *Eight Eurocentric Historians*,[1] in which he criticized eight authors for approaching world history from a Eurocentric perspective. Six of these authors (Max Weber, Lynn White, Jr., Robert Brenner, Eric J. Jones, Michael Mann, John A. Hall) wrote their works well before the 'global turn' of the 1990s.[2] Only two of them (Jared Diamond and David Landes) had their books published after the turn, with the case for Diamond's alleged Eurocentrism being very weak. Blaut distilled his criticism of the above authors into a list of thirty arguments that they collectively offered as explanations of the preponderant place of Europe in world history. Among the factors contemplated in these explanations there are: ecological ones (climate, soil fertility, landform structure, coastline shape, vegetation, the distribution of natural disasters, the incidence of disease); cultural ones (the degree of inventiveness, rationality, scientific thinking, progressiveness, religion); and socio-economic political ones (markets, class structure, family, cities, political fragmentation, and democracy).[3]

More than twenty five years later, eight world historians are brought together in this volume offering a great opportunity to enquire on what has been changing in the writing of world history since the 'global turn'. And very

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important changes have indeed been underway since that 'turn'. Three commonalities stand out in these essays that make them very indicative of the new world history that emerged in tandem with the global turn. These are: the adoption of the world as the ultimate space unit, attention to humankind at large as its agency, and the inclusion of the entire span of its existence as the chronological framework. These three innovations were made possible by a drastic change in the perspective from which the past is contemplated. That perspective is one in which the planet and humankind are approached as a whole as if it were by "an alien visitor," "a galactic observer," or the "perspective of [a] global 'we' that includes 'all-of-us'." These points of departure are substantially different from the pre-global turn narratives, exemplified by most of Blaut's selected authors, in which enclosed geographical units and specific human groups provided the building blocks for a history officially taking off around 5000 years before the present at the very earliest.

All the world historical narratives presented in this volume offer much earlier departing points than that: 2.5 million years ago, 250,000, or 70,000 years before the present at the very latest. This is indeed one of the original contributions of world history to historical writing at large, and is emphasized by all authors in this volume. History is not narrowly defined as a discipline based on written records. Rather history is about the human experience even if humans did not leave written records behind. That is why a recurrent motive in these essays was the determined rejection of the notion of Prehistory.[4] World historians are collectively taking the geographical denouncement made by Eric Wolf in his book *Europe and the People without History*[5] for the temporal dimension: history cannot be that of "written record keepers and the people without history." Hence, the eight narratives of this volume share a common criterion for the temporal point of their departure: the origins of our species.[6] They do that with variations: the genus homo, the appearance of Sapiens, or the "cognitive revolution."

A similar principle of commonalities and variations is discernible while looking at the periodizations that these eight narratives provide: the Cognitive Revolution, the Agricultural Revolution, and either the Scientific or Industrial Revolutions are the pivotal moments that determine the three major phases of world history—the age of the hunter and gatherer, agricultural, and modern or industrial societies.[7] Within such a tripartite overall framework some of the authors apply further subdivisions, which mostly overlap. The agricultural phase in particular

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is subdivided by the emergence of the First Civilizations (3500–3600 BCE), Classical Cultures (600 BCE–600 CE), a Post-Classical or an age of expanding networks of interaction (600–1450). The modern phase is traditionally divided in two by the industrial watershed around 1750, split into the early (also defined as the Post-Mongol Restoration for Eurasia and a New World of Connections for the entire globe) and Contemporary periods. However, for all of the chronological commonalities, variations and even contested views are what characterize the galvanizing themes that provide a unifying thread to each of the eight essays.

David Christian looks at the dynamics of increasing complexity and the flows of energy in the cosmos, planet Earth, life, and human societies. The tension between the order brought by more complex things in our Universe and societies and the disorder resulting from 'entropy' or the randomness of change is at the core of his story. What defines the specificity of human societies in this context is the development of new ways of accumulating and storing information. World history is, in two words, the history of *collective learning*.[8] The flows of information created and transmitted by this mechanism allowed for huge flows of energy and resources. These flows, in turn, drove the big changes along the human past.

Patrick Manning also defines his central theme in two words: *human system*. This system looks formally similar to Christian's scheme except that the flows do not follow the sequence 'collective learning—energy and resources—big changes', but rather 'energy and resources ingested—big changes accomplished—exhaust materials expelled back into the environment.' These big changes include "innovations, expansion and deepening, and addressing the various obstacles it faces." This human system entails a paradox too, namely that of its overwhelming success. On the one hand there is "growth in population, productivity, and in its ability to mobilize resources for issues of high priority." But at the same time growth and ability are the source of serious problems. Not the disproportional growth of happiness but the threatening deterioration of the environment and the detrimental malfunctioning of the system itself, with inequality and warfare as the outstanding expressions of it.[9]

Felipe Fernandez-Armesto's organizing principle for world history can be further economized into a one single word: *divergence*. And its dynamic simply leads to the sustained increase of it. His leading question is "how the limited, stable culture of homo sapiens … scattered and

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multiplied to cover the tremendous range of divergent ways of life …" The answer comes as yet another paradox in which the more human societies interacted and experienced convergence and cultural borrowing the more divergence was created by sparking innovation and new hybrids. The contemporary world epitomizes this paradox as industrialization brought regional specializations and complementarity rather than uniformity by imitation.[10] The global culture is understood, then, as a coat of uniformity underneath which "divergence remains dominant."

Although different, increasing complexity and increasing divergence can correspond well. Increasing *divergence* and "*merging into a single civilization*," the thread offered by Tamim Ansary, cannot. Fernandez-Armesto could easily agree with Ansary that our species has been ever-increasingly interconnected. Yet they would disagree on the effect of it. For Ansary 'we', *Homo sapiens*, were tens of thousands of largely autonomous, nomadic bands distributed sparsely across the natural environment. Since then a sustained process, even if ragged at times, with a clear direction is about to bring humankind toward "social singleness." That is, what world history, according to Ansary, is about: the intertwinement of human civilization into a single entity.

For Tursin Hafizuhli Gabitov the concept of civilization is central and civilizations are the building blocks of his narrative. The dynamics that he proposes, neither "merging into a single civilization" nor divergence, incorporate *evolution* and *diffusion*. That is, every discrete civilization underwent a trajectory of progression recurrent in civilizations at large while at the same time contacts were established between them through which influences traveled. Gabitov explores these dynamics throughout his typological dichotomy between 'Eastern civilizations' and the 'West', with particular attention to Russian and Islamic cultures. Then, industrialization as an decisive economic turning point resulted in the emergence of a civilization defined by time rather than space, the industrial civilization that gained global proportions during the twentieth century.

Christian, Manning, Fernandez-Armesto, Ansary, and Gabitov have woven world historical narratives through a major thread. Peter Stearns, Merry Wiesner-Hanks, and Candice Goucher, instead, have cross-sectioned world history by prioritizing a particular dimension. For Stearns that cross-sectional dimension is an entanglement of *economics*, *society*, and *politics*. This prism emphasizes the ways in which economies and societies are organized with attention to exchanges, conflicts, and power shifts within and between societies. The detection of global trends,

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generalized, along with comparable patterns allows him to advance a world history chronology.

The cross-sectional lenses used by Wiesner-Hanks are those of the *social and cultural fields*.[11] Through these lenses she focuses on the social structures and cultural products that people have created to address both material needs and a search for identity and meaning. Also here trends, comparisons, and generalizations are made accessible, resulting in the framing of a world history chronology. However, the emphasis is in the very different meanings that social and cultural forms and categories have in individual societies.

The originality of Goucher's essay resides with her thematic rather than chronological approach. Interestingly, her *mega-themes* are closely related to some of the core threads of other narratives in this volume. She is focusing in the integration of world peoples in a similar fashion to Ansary's perspective but conciliating it with the diversity of the human experience as proposed by Fernandez-Armesto, and enhanced by increasing complexity and scale as envisioned by Christian. The rejection of chronology is deliberately made to further exorcise the specter of Eurocentrism. And yet, Goucher organizes her themes chronologically (cooking food, agriculture, urbanization, beliefs, modernity, and globalization). Isn't this chronological succession of themes similar enough to a standard European chronology?

Indeed, after pointing to the noticeable differences between the *Eight Eurocentric Historians* and the eight world historians gathered by this volume, there is still room to ask: Other than by their departing point, how different are the world historical chronologies from the pre-global turn ones? The problem of the Eurocentric chronology could be solved by provincializing Europe[12] and recognizing that the key periodization for that region is nothing but a particular case of actually much broader trends which apply in some cases to the globe at large (e.g., early civilizations) or, in others, at the very least to Afro-Eurasia (e.g., Post-Classical Age). It is not that a European chronology has been imposed on the world. Rather the European chronology is just one instance of a global one. Thus, for example, far from being Eurocentric, the notion of an Axial Age or an Age of Sages provincializes Europe by portraying the emergence of philosophy in Greece as just one additional instance of a broader trend in which the teachings of the prophets of the Bible, Zarathustra, Buddha, Mahavira, Confucius, and Lao Tze also emerged.

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Hence, even with some significant overlap between old and new chronologies, global-turn world history is innovative; and not only by means of provincializing European chronology. Rather, its innovations are clearly reflected by these eight essays in sharing new definitions of space (i.e., the entire planet or beyond), time (i.e., the entire time span of our species or beyond), agency (i.e., our species in its entirety in interaction with other species and the environment), and multiplicity of threading themes and cross-sectional lenses (i.e., collective learning, human system, divergence, social singleness, evolution, socio-political economic commonalities, social structures and cultural products in their singularities, and a dissection of the human experience primarily by themes rather than time and space).

Global-turn world history is innovative in additional ways as implied or declared by the authors in this volume. World history, as the essays presented here exemplify, is innovative in confronting head on the postmodernist claim of the death of meta-narratives.[13] World history is here to offer meta-narratives! Yet, each of them is offered in full postmodern awareness of being just one additional possible narrative among many. In a similar fashion, world history reacts against the postmodernist emphasis on representations of reality by bringing reality back: energy, resources, economy, politics, political economy! Yet, world historians are also part of the 'linguistic turn' and as such they insist on the critical role of human language, fictional thinking, and imagination as the motor of culture.[14]

Global-turn world history is also innovative in its wider range of multidisciplinarity. It is not only the social sciences that are integrated to the analysis of the human past but also the sciences, particularly biology and environmental sciences. The harnessing of multidisciplinarity channeled into meta-narratives invites to make global-turn world history not only a branch of history on a bigger scale but also a branch of history that is different in kind in two regards. First, in the type of questions that it aims to tackle. World history brings to the fore the opportunity not only of de-centering and re-centering the ways in which we understand the human societies in the world but also to provincialize human history within the histories of other species. Second, world history is already targeting wider student bodies, readerships, and audiences and can further grow, persisting in reaching out.

In conclusion, these eight essays invite us to write a very different list from the one collected by Blaut. Far from multiple Eurocentric

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arguments, the eight essays in this volume inspire a list of the innovations that global-turn world historians are making for the writing of twenty-first-century narratives of world history. Such a list includes attention to, at least: global space, full time range, all humankind agency, multiplicity of threading themes, cross-sectional lenses, anti-postmodernist postmodernism, wide-range multidisciplinarity, relevancy, and daring questions to engage a growing wider readership.

Notes

1. James M. Blaut, *Eight Eurocentric Historians* (New York: Guilford Press, 2000).
2. See esp. Ross E. Dunn, Laura J. Mitchell and Kerry Ward, eds., *The New World History: A Field Guide for Teachers and Researchers*, 2nd edn (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016); "From the Perspective of the 1990s," in *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, by Georg G. Iggers (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), pp. 134–140; "World History, Global History, and History of Globalization," in *A Global History of Modern Historiography*, by Georg G. Iggers, Q. Edward Wang, and Supriya Mukherjee (Harlow and New York: Pearson Education, 2008), pp. 387–394; and Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015).
3. Cf. Jonathan Daly, *Historians Debate the Rise of the West* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014).
4. Cf. for example Chris Gosden, *Prehistory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).
5. Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).
6. Cf. Manuel Domínguez-Rodrigo, *Stone Tools and Fossil Bones: Debates in the Archaeology of Human Origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
7. Cf. David Christian, *This Fleeting World: A Short History of Humanity* (Great Barrington, MA: Berkshire Publishing, 2008).
8. Cf. David Baker, "Collective Learning: A potential unifying theme of human history," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2016): 77–104; see also Brett Bowden, "The River of Inter-Civilisational Relations: The ebb and flow of peoples, ideas and innovations," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 7 (2007):1359–74; Bernhard Forchtner and Christian Schneickert, "Collective Learning in Social Fields: Bourdieu, Habermas and critical discourse studies," *Discourse & Society*,

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Vol. 27, No. 3 (2016): 293–307 and Anne Krueger, "The Global Diffusion of Truth Commissions: An integrative approach to diffusion as a process of collective learning," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (2016): 143–168.

9. Cf. Walter Scheidel, *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).
10. Cf. Alex Inkeles, *One World Emerging? Convergence and Divergence in Industrial Societies* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).
11. Cf. Margaret L. King, *Western Civilization: A Social and Cultural History*, Combined Volume, 3rd edn (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005).
12. Cf. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 2nd edn (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007) and Vasant Kaiwar, *The Postcolonial Orient: The Politics of Difference and the Project of Provincialising Europe* (Leiden: Brill Academic, 2014).
13. Cf. Ernst Breisach, "The Metanarrative Controversy," in *On the Future of History: The Postmodernist Challenge and Its Aftermath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 122–152.
14. Cf. Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

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Concluding Reflections: A Way Forward: Grand Narrative World History as Specialization?

R. Charles Weller

In overviewing trends within historical scholarship between the 1970s and the early 21st century, Jo Guldi and David Armitage note how "historians across the world began to focus on shorter time-scales." At the same time, "'grand narratives' – big structures, large processes, and huge comparison – were becoming increasingly unfashionable, and not just among historians. Big-picture thinking was widely perceived to be in retreat. Meanwhile, short-termism was on the rise." They tie this trend to "the inward turn of academics towards an ever greater specialization of knowledge." They nonetheless "identify a recent shift back to longer-term narratives, following many decades of increasing specialisation, which [they] argue is vital for the future of historical scholarship and how it is communicated."[1]

This difference of perspective in fact goes back to at least the early 19th century (see Chap. 1). As Lynn Hunt highlights, "[s]pecialization followed from the drive of history and other social science and humanities fields to emulate science. …fields had to be defined ever more narrowly if they were to be mastered."[2] But no clear demarcations or rubric for establishing 'too broad' or 'sufficiently narrow' exist. Those who wish to claim that grand narratives, macro-history or meta-narratives are too broad and general and do not sufficiently constitute specialized

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research (cf. monographs) need first to define what they mean by 'grand narrative', 'macro-history' or 'meta-narrative' as well as 'monograph' and then *demonstrate their claims with empirical evidence*.[3] And *if* that evidence is ever presented, it will, like all scholarly studies, have to confine its results to the specific volumes it critiques, with no grounds for assuming that such findings apply to all grand narratives, until and unless a properly researched study can empirically demonstrate such a claim. In the meantime, all such judgments continue to be highly arbitrary and, thus, unscholarly. On the other hand, it can be persuasively argued that over-specialization, that is, too narrow of focus, leaves historians ill-equipped to properly understand the larger contexts of history in which their areas of specialization are necessarily situated.

The alleged dichotomy between generalized and specialized studies shrouds the much deeper complexity of the matter. The categories are relative, shifting continuously across a sliding scale of comparison.[4] As any rubric used to assess multiple, complex learning outcomes on an assignment should attest, a simple span of years or a vague, undefined idea of 'specialized' does not provide a sufficient rubric for judging specialization in historical studies. The matter is far more complex. All specialized (cf. monograph) studies must, necessarily, depend upon secondary scholarship to situate and interpret their archival and/or primary source research. Likewise, all history is interconnected. Decisions on cut-off points are necessarily arbitrary and artificial. Quality, not quantity of material (personages, years, etc.) covered, is the academic standard.

Grand narrative world history is much more than a 'summing up' of all history. *Good* world history requires thorough research based in primary and secondary sources, as well as archival sources when necessary, often employing several languages, complex analysis, and careful interrelating of all the various parts in the process of constructing an accurate, high-quality narrative founded firmly upon the available evidence. In a word, it requires *specialization*. The highly condensed world history narratives in this volume cannot, in and of themselves, be put forward as sufficiently 'specialized'. They do, however, represent 'the tips of icebergs', with mountains of expertise lying beneath the surface informing them. Only proper recognition and support for grand narrative world history as an integral sub-field of specialization within the discipline of history can produce better quality grand narrative world history at earlier stages in historians' academic careers. Grand narrative world history is not the only nor necessarily the best way forward for the discipline of history, but it is one among many ways forward, and an essential one at that.

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Notes

1. Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); quoted material from pp. i and 11.
2. Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), p. 48.
3. Cf. the ambiguity of Thomas Bender, Philip M. Katz, Colin Palmer and the Committee on Graduate Education of the American Historical Association, *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-First Century* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), p. 62: "Is a research degree in world history possible? Or is world history something which is to be undertaken well into one's career, with many years of both theoretical reflection on the field and a cumulative fund of historical knowledge that goes well beyond the usual boundaries?" The definition of 'monograph' in English-language dictionaries is, likewise, vague. Note also the lack of definition in Robert Darnton, "From the President: A program for reviving the monograph," *Perspectives on History*, March 1999 (URL: https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/march-1999/a-program-for-reviving-the-monograph; last accessed: May 22, 2017). Cf. also Brett Bowden, *The Strange Persistence of Universal History in Political Thought* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
4. If, for example, W.H. McNeill and J.R. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of Human History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003) is set alongside Geoffrey Best, *Churchill: A Study in Greatness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), then based strictly on the span of years they cover—some 200,000 versus the World War II era—the former can perhaps be called a 'general' and the latter a 'specialized' study. But both works are by competent scholars, roughly the same length (300–400 pages), rich in both synthetic description and critical analysis, and filled with an impressive depth of scholarly research based on substantial primary as well as secondary source material. The choice here to compare a world history with a biography of one individual—and that with a specific focus on roughly a five-year period in that individual's life, namely World War II—is quite intentional. It highlights how the history of each individual within a more general history could potentially become the object of a specialized study. Indeed, multiple individuals from World War II could easily, and in a number of cases have, become objects of detailed biographical studies. Placing any of these biographical studies next to the history of World War II makes the former appear as specialized and the latter generalized. If we take the span of years as the criterion, then placing a study of, say, Kennedy's or Lincoln's assassinations next to a study of Kennedy's or Lincoln's entire lives, then we have one day versus 16,000–20,000 days (i.e., 45–55 years). Likewise, if we compare a history of World

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War II to a history of, say, the Cold War (1945–1991), then the former in this case becomes the specialized and the latter the general study. The same shift takes place if we set the Cold War study alongside, for example, C.A. Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2004). Likewise, a history of humanity spanning some 200,000 or even several million years considered comparatively in relation to a Big History narrative taking in some 14 billion years makes the former appear specialized and the latter generalized.

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Appendix A: Other 21st-Century Narratives of World History from Around the Globe

R. Charles Weller

This appendix provides a sketch of 'grand narrative' world history as it is being practiced as well as at times theorized in major world cultural and linguistic domains beyond what is typically called 'the West'. Some work along these lines has already been done. For example, the spring 1998 issue of the *World History Bulletin* featured "World History from Around the World," with articles on China, Romania and Lithuania (as well as New Zealand and South Africa). A decade later, Patrick Manning edited a volume on *Global Practice in World History: Advances Worldwide* (2008) which featured chapters on world and global history from an Islamic Perspective, Asian perspectives, and China (as well as Germany, Britain and the USA). Likewise, Georg G. Iggers, Q. Edward Wang, and Supriya Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (2008), touch in various places upon the subject broadly. The focus of these works is not always grand narrative world history, but it nonetheless receives attention within them. More specifically on China are Ralph Crozier, "World History in the People's Republic of China" (1990), Dorothea A.L. Martin, *The Making of a Sino-Marxist World View: Perceptions and Interpretations of World History in the People's Republic of China* (1990), Roxann Prazniak, *Dialogues Across Civilizations: Sketches in World History from the Chinese And European Experiences* (1996) and Gotelind Müller, *Documentary, World History, and National Power in the PRC: Global Rise in Chinese Eyes* (2013).[1]

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Adding to this growing body of literature, I herein sketch a select number of grand narrative world histories which have been published since 1990, and especially 2000, in Russian, Polish, Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Kazakh, Hindi, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese and Japanese. I do *not* include translations from Western language sources, only works which, to the best of my judgment, have been written by national scholars in their own language. My reasons for limiting the selections to those language (and related cultural) domains are twofold. Some of them are of particular interest to my own areas of research and, to varying degrees, language abilities (Kazakh, Turkish, Russian, Japanese, Arabic) *and* they were the primary non-Western languages in which WorldCat facilitated specific searches. I used Google and other translation software where necessary, along with some limited research assistance in Arabic[2] and, when possible, reference to various library, book and internet sites in the respective languages for additional clarification.[3]

First, in **Russian**, Svetlana Mattson has produced a volume entitled *World History: An Encyclopedic Dictionary* (2010). With respect to standard narratives, A.O. Chubarian, V.A. Golovina and V.I. Ukolova teamed up to edit *World History: in six volumes* (2011). A lengthy discussion of the volumes raised questions regarding the unity of historiographical approach "in the era of the diversity of information resources, the disintegration of macro historiographic schools and the triumph of individual research strategies." The third volume in particular was criticized for not maintaining a unifying theory. On a smaller scale, G.B. Poliak and A.N. Markova, both long-time academics in the Russian context, have co-authored a single-volume (866-page) *World History* (2013). This is the third edition, following from the first edition in 1997. The volume, in both structure and content, closely resembles standard world civilization texts typically found in Western Europe or North America, albeit with much greater emphasis on the Slavic-Russian and Eastern Orthodox world, including the entire final section. According to the book's own description: "Historical events, processes and phenomena are generalized for the most important epochs (the Primitive Age, the Ancient World, the Middle Ages, the Modern Era, and the Late Modern Age), as well as the leading countries of each period." It is referred to as a 'textbook', presumably for university-level courses.[4]

Breaking with convention, Maria Baganova published a *World History Without Censorship, in Cynical Facts and Delicate Myths*, one which claims to "know the real story, and not what is written in the official annals." Breaking even further with convention, E.V. Kuz'menkov

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produced a heavily spiritualized interpretation titled *World History: A Cosmic World Understanding* (2010). His framework is determined largely by a Christian-Biblical view, though whether this is Russian Orthodox, Russian Baptist, Russian Pentecostal or some other form of Russian Christian faith is not immediately clear. However, it integrates this perspective into a progressivist interpretation which includes Soviet communism. Indeed, the volume outlines: "The approximate path of development of the human species and its community…, right up to the end of the material world, moving from savagery, at the beginning of existence, to the peak of spiritual and physical transformation. The author is sure that social justice will triumph first under socialism, afterwards under communism, and then after several stages of development and the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, in heaven." Beyond these, along more thematic and topical lines, Yu. Yu. Churilov penned *A World History of Injustice* (2012) which focuses on 'judicial errors', that is, court rulings throughout world history which have resulted in time in prison or, more severely, the death penalty for innocent people.[5] This by no means exhausts the material highlighted on WorldCat, but does represent the original Russian-language 'grand narrative' work sifted from among numerous listings.

With respect to my research in **Polish** language sources, it can be summarized in one brief statement. The only works which showed up on WorldCat were those translated from Western language sources. Similar brevity applies to **Persian (Farsi)**, where only one work on *Iran in World History* (2016) appeared. No original works of grand narrative world history appeared in either language. Mohammad Ghaedi has, however, under my direction, unearthed a number of Iranian (Farsi) world histories to be included as a chapter in another volume I am currently working on.

In **Arabic** in the early 2000s, Fred Antonius, a Lebanese Catholic writer, published a *World History* (2001) which was issued in Beirut. Elsewhere, Mujahid Mamoun Diranieh, a Syrian-born conservative Muslim writer who has voiced opposition to the Asad regime and now holds Jordanian citizenship penned a work titled simply *World History* (2004). The book was published in Dubai, reflecting, it would seem, broader networks across the Middle East reaching from Syria to Jordan to Dubai. Reflecting similar networks, Mohammed Hamza Hussein Dulaimi, an Iraqi professor who taught in Mosul, overviewed the *History of the Contemporary World*. The book was issued by a press in Jordan,

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though no date is provided for the publication. Judging by the title in conjunction with the description, it is a history of the 20th century, from World War I down to the present, though the description highlights only World War I. Across the miles in Morocco, in a work intended for a public and probably academic as well as possible political audience, Ibrahim Ait Izzy inquires into *World History and the History of the Madrasa in the Moroccan Educational Reality: Integration or Separation* (2012). In Egypt, Muhammad ʻAbd al-Wāhid Hijāzī reflects some of the interreligious tensions which have historically troubled the country when he asserts, by way of his book title, that *Jews Falsify the History of the World* (2005). The book is not intended as a text for schools, but aimed at a public audience. Although no further information was found in my initial search, the title suggests that, among other things, the Israeli–Palestinian controversy mostly likely factors into his argument.[6] As with Russian, this by no means exhausts the material highlighted on WorldCat, but does represent the original Arabic-language grand narrative work sifted from among numerous listings.

In **Turkish**, a rather large number of works on world history written by Western authors have been translated. They surface regularly on WorldCat as well as numerous Turkish internet book sellers. Among original Turkish language works written by Turkish authors, one of the more interesting and certainly Anatolian-centric is a 28-volume series written by Evin Esmen and Arda Kisak entitled *Ours: Anatolian Centered World History.* No date is given for publication, but the authors, apparently a husband-and-wife team, passed on respectively in 2015 and 2012, so the final volumes could not have been produced thereafter. It in fact appears that more volumes were planned since the series as it stands only covers up to 1880. The volumes have all been made available as free downloadable ebooks. Among more standard works, Tolga Uslubaş and Sezgin Dağ issued *An Encyclopedia of the History of the World from Early Times* (2007). In the same year, Hikmet Yıldırım came out with a *Comparative Chronological World History* (2007). Aysun Yavuz, a scholar at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University (between Bursa and Izmir on the Dardanelles), opted for the simpler, more straightforward title of *World History* (2010). I was unable to find any further information on any of these works within my limited time of research.[7]

There was, however, information available for *A Brief History of the World* by Ahmet Meral (2015). According to Meral, "[m]any historians, sociologists and economists have failed to go beyond the ideological

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patterns" of Darwinian evolutionary theories. "These evolutionist intellectuals, distancing themselves from religion, have been blinded by their ignorance of all religions." Her work thus offers "a small footnote to the discipline of history in the direction of the neglect and field blindness in this area." One can assume that her perspective is shaped as much by a certain interpretation of Islam as the 'evolutionist intellectuals' were shaped by Darwin. Indeed, she has published another work entitled *The Harmful Effects of Mixed Education* (2015) in which she appeals passionately for readers to embrace Qur'anic, not educational values. Brief though it may be, her world history volume is available as both a single or multi-volume collection. The same year, Ali Çimen published *A Brief History of the World* (2015) for youth. It is a single volume of 400 pages. Aiming at an adult audience, Güray Alpar concerns himself with *Strategic World History: An Anthropological Perspective* (2016). In doing so, he attempts to "bring a new perspective to human history by making use of the branches of anthropology, archeology and ethnology." Finally here, Ali Birinci, Türkei Talim and Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı conducted a study on *Contemporary Turkish and World History Curriculum in Secondary Education* (2012) published by, and apparently on behalf of, the Ministry of National Education (MEB). The publication is listed in WorldCat with a 2012 release date, though internet searches seem to indicate that the program which sponsored the project ran from January 2009 until September 2011.[8]

In **Kazakh**, itself a Central Asian Turkic language, 23 world history books appeared in my search of the National Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan database.[9] Most of them were school textbooks designed for pupils between grades 8 and 11. Some of them were overviews of world history while others focused on the 20th and 21st centuries. The only other world history volume to surface was a 2007 work translated from Russian. It covers only the 17th to 21st centuries and is itself designated as a school textbook, though the grade level is not specified. It is attributed to a Kazakhstani Russian scholar named Vladimir Sergeevich Oskolov (though the work is not listed in his publications within his resumé).[10] One can assume, in fact, that since all of these world history books are designed for use within the secondary school system in Kazakhstan, that they all have Russian counterparts. Whether they were written in Russian first and then translated into Kazakh, or vice versa, is not clear. Many (though not all) Kazakhs can function sufficiently in both Kazakh and Russian, so the volumes attributed to Kazakh authors

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could have been written in both languages by the same author(s). Certainly, the Kazakh historiography of world history has been heavily influenced by Russian historiography going as far back as the 19th if not 18th century. How innovative they have become in the post-colonial context of revisionist history is an important question for future research. But the still relatively fresh post-colonialist context of the former Soviet republics makes recovery and revision of national history more urgent a task than world history.

In **Hindi**, only two works on world history showed up: *Ancient and Medieval World History* (published in Delhi in 1995), and the original Hindi version of Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (1934). In **Indonesian**, only a *World History Atlas* (2001) by A. Prandito Suprihadi and Rashad Herman surfaced.[11] In **Thai**, Anantachai Jindawat produced two separate volumes, one entitled *World History: From the Stone Age to Globalization* and the other *World History, Modernism, Colonialism and Medieval Europe*. They were both put out by the same publisher, though no dates were given for either publication.[12] We find more works in **Vietnamese**, including an *Encyclopedia of World History* by Xuan Chuc Nguyen (2003), a work by Ngoc Lien Phan titled *The Rebirth of Historical Consciousness: A History of the World* (2002), *The Secrets of Contemporary World History* by Xuan Lai Vuong, Chi Hao Kim and Thanh Tinh Dang (2004), and *A History of the World* by Hien Le Nguyen and Thien Giang (2016), which may have been produced for secondary or post-secondary education, though it is not clear. Judging by their titles alone, the other works seem to be geared more toward a public audience. Finally here, Van Hien Hoang produced a study titled *Access to World History and Vietnamese History: A Perspective* (2009). Given that it was published by the National Political Publishing House, it appears to be a study regarding world and Vietnamese history within the Vietnamese educational system, though this is not certain.[13]

Moving on to **China**, Zhang Zhilian and Liu Xuelong produced a *World History Atlas* (2002) while Wan An Zhong approached the subject via *World History Stories*, or possibly *World History through Storytelling* (2001). Judging by the table of contents, the latter volume appears heavily influenced by Western historiography and is probably geared toward a primary or secondary educational level. Later in the decade, Liang Gong Ping released a volume entitled *Knowing World History* (2007). It takes a “grand” but “modest playful” approach, offering, so it claims, “a profound taste of world culture and history.” This was followed in 2011 by

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A Chronological Overview, World History in Brief by Xiao Sun. According to his biography, Sun is from a "military family background. …He graduated from the Department of Finance of Kunming University of Science and Technology" and was later "admitted to the ancient history of Yunnan University" where he "studied under the famous historian Han Jie." Several years later, Guo Xiaoling published a similar volume titled *A Brief History of the World* (2014). According to *China News*, the book was released to the public in September 2015 through a forum hosted by the publisher, China Social Science Press. The release was attended by multiple scholars from multiple universities and institutions, including "the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Peking University, Tsinghua University, Renmin University of China, Beijing Normal University, Capital Normal University, Tianjin Normal University" and others. According to assessments at the forum, the volume is "based on the historical materialism of Marx as a guide, extensively absorbing and synthesizing the latest research of domestic and foreign scholars." The book seems geared toward 'young people', though apparently at a university level.[14] For more in-depth coverage of world history in China, see the works referenced in the opening paragraph of this appendix.

In **Japanese**, one of the most cutting-edge works to appear in the early 21st century is a 456-page volume jointly authored by Shigeru Akita, Youko Nagahara, Masashi Haneda, Shingo Minamizuka, Akimasa Miyake and Shirou Momoki covering *A World History of "World History"* (2016). The authors "analyze the world image that humankind has drawn in each region and era [of the world], critically evaluate Western European world historical images since the 19th century, and aim for the construction of a new world history." In doing so, they "aim to go beyond the history of the world as a collection of traditional nation-state and regional histories and world history seen from specific centers." A translation of this volume into English would be a valuable contribution to global dialogue.[15]

Along somewhat similar lines was a much earlier work by Gorou Yoshida entitled *World Historiography of Independence and Symbiosis: Histories of Home Countries and the History of the World* (1990). Part One investigates "Problems of Historical Studies and History Education," including "The Problem Surrounding the Status and Recognition of World History" and "World History Education and Textbooks." Part Two considers "Western History within World History," "East Asia in World History," "World History as Solely

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'Foreign History'" (cf. the problem of 'world history as non-Western history' within Western historiographical traditions), and "The Discovery of Japanese History Ideology within Western Historiographical Traditions." Part Three attempts to move from "'Japanese History and World History' to 'Domestic History and World History'," with chapters on "Domestic History and World History," "International Exchange and World Recognition," "Learning from Bulgarian Domestic History Textbooks," and "Learning from Philippine National History Textbooks," among others.[16]

Some twenty years earlier than Yoshida, Seiki Sha had offered *A View of the New World History: From the Viewpoint of Eurasian Civilization* (1972), with a reprint appearing in 1990. Although I am concerned primarily with works produced after 1990 and especially 2000, I mention this here because it matches, at least by way of title, the concept of 'new world history' which is considered a post-1990s phenomenon in Western historiographical traditions. It appears to be an early work from an anti-Western post-colonialist perspective arguing that "the history of the world must be reformulated. The era of European civilization's materialist dominant culture, pathological division of human spirit, and mass murder is passing away."[17]

Along more typically chronological and narrative lines, Shin'ichi Arai and others issued a *Detailed World History* (1990) and Mitsuo Hirahara authored *Understanding World History in Detailed Chronological Flow* (1992). With whatever intended contrast, Choufuu Nonume (1919–2002), drawing from long years of life experience, provided a *Clear World History* (1990) at about the same time. Significantly expanding the scale, the New Central Public Opinion Company published a 30-volume *History of the World* (2009–2010). It is a revised update to a 24-volume series published in the late 1990s. The project was approached through a regional framework, with individual volumes focusing on areas such as South Asia, Latin America, Africa and so on. More creatively, Shueisha Publishers released both a 20-volume and a smaller 10-volume *Manga-version of World History* (2009). Less ambitiously, another Japanese publisher put out *A Book That Shows the History of the World in Only Two Hours* (2010) targeting an adult audience[18] and Masayoshi Kitamura edited a *World History Overview* (no date). Thematically, Omura Dajiro penned *The History of the World Understood by the Flow of Money* (2015) while Shigeo Sawano was, some 25 years earlier, more concerned with *Children Who Make World History: Recommendations for Peace and*

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Human Rights Learning (1990). Much of this work reciprocally inspired and was perhaps inspired by Yuu Tateishi who promoted *A Great Love for World History* (2005) among his people.[19]

This provides only a survey of select material from major foreign language sources. It is clear that much work remains to be done in accessing the historiography of world history around the globe.

Notes

1. "World History from Around the World," *World History Bulletin*, Vol. XIV, No. 1 (Spring 1998) (URL: http://www.thewha.org/bulletins/spring_1998.pdf; last accessed: May 14, 2017); Patrick Manning (ed.), *Global Practice in World History: Advances Worldwide* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner Publishers, 2008); Georg G. Iggers, Q. Edward Wang, and Supriya Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (Harlow and New York: Pearson Education, 2008); Ralph Crozier, "World History in the People's Republic of China," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1990): 151–169; Dorothea A.L. Martin, *The Making of a Sino-Marxist World View: Perceptions and Interpretations of World History in the People's Republic of China* (London: Routledge, 1990); Roxann Prazniak, *Dialogues Across Civilizations: Sketches in World History From the Chinese and European Experiences* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996); Gotelind Müller, *Documentary, World History, and National Power in the PRC: Global Rise in Chinese Eyes* (London: Routledge, 2013). Relatedly, a number of important studies have been produced over the past few decades which are specifically aimed at addressing the relations between various world cultures, worldviews and (world) historiographical traditions, including most notably: Arik Dirlik, Vinay Bahl and Peter Gran, eds., *History after the Three Worlds: Post-Eurocentric Historiographies* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000); Robert K. Frykenberg, *History and Belief: The Foundations of Historical Understanding* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001); Jörn Rüsen, ed., *Western Historical Thinking: An Intercultural Debate* (New York and Oxford: Berghan Books, 2002); and Jason Nicholls, ed., *School History Textbooks across Cultures: International Debates and Perspectives* (Didcot: Symposium Books, 2006).
2. My thanks to Khalid Abdulrahman Alshehry for his assistance with Arabic. After supplying him with the bibliographic information from WorldCat, he added additional descriptive clarifications based on directed internet research.

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3. Note that I limited my searches to the equivalent phrases for ‘world history’ and ‘history of the world’ in each language domain. In all cases (except Kazakh), I enclosed the phrases in quotation marks in order to further limit each search to those specific phrases. On WorldCat, I further limited the search to the specific language, the title field and the years 2000–2017.
4. Svetlana Mattson, *Всемирная история: энциклопедический словарь* [*World History: An Encyclopedic Dictionary*] (Saint Petersburg: Aleteiya, 2010) (cf. http://www.rubricon.com/whist_1.asp); A.O. Chubarian, V.A. Golovina and V.I. Ukolova, eds., *Всемирная история: в шести томах* [*World History: in six volumes*] (Moscow: Nauka, 2011); see the discussion on the volumes at: https://www.academia.edu/12065306; G.B. Poliak and A.N. Markova, *Всемирная история* [*World History*] (Moscow: Unity, 2013); the quoted material was translated from the copyright page, which is the standard location for book descriptions in most former Soviet countries, in contrast to the back cover.
5. Maria Baganova, *Всемирная история без цензуры, в циничных фактах и щекотливых мифах* [*World History Without Censorship, in Cynical Facts and Delicate Myths*] (Moscow: Poligrafizdat, 2012) (see quoted material at: URL: https://www.litres.ru/mariya-baganova/vsemirnaya-istoriya-bez-cenzury-v-cinichnyh-faktah-i-schekotlivyh-mifah/); E.V. Kuz′menkov, *Всемирная история: космическое миропонимание* [*World History: The Cosmic World Understanding*] (Saint Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriya, 2010) (see quoted material at: URL http://www.ozon.ru/context/detail/id/5585878/); Yu. Yu. Churilov, *Всемирная история неправосудия* [*A World History of Injustice*] (Rostov-na-Donu: Pheonix, 2012) (cf. http://www.ozon.ru/context/detail/id/7599761/); all websites last accessed: May 12, 2017.
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[*Jews Falsify the History of the World*] (دار الوفاء لدنيا الطباعة والنشر, Alexandria, Egypt: Dār al-Wafā' li-Dunyā al-Tibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 2005).

7. Evin Esmen and Arda Kisak, *Bizimkiler: Anadolu Merkezli Dünya Tarihi* [*Ours: Anatolian Centered World History*], 28 vols. (Bizimkiler, nd) (URL: http://www.dunya-tarihi.com/); Tolga Uslubaş and Sezgin Dağ, *İlk Çağlardan Günümüze Dünya Tarihi Ansiklopedisi* [*An Encyclopedia of the History of the World from Early Times*] (Istanbul: Karma Kitaplar, 2007); Hikmet Yıldırım, *Karşılaştırmalı kronolojik dünya tarihi* [*A Comparative Chronological World History*] (Ankara: Maya Akademi, 2007); Aysun Yavuz, *Dünya tarihi* [*History of the World*] (Istanbul: NTV yayınları, 2010).
8. Ahmet Meral, *Kısa Dünya Tarihi* [*A Brief History of the World*] (Istanbul: Yüzakı Yayıncılık [Publishing], 2015) (for quoted material, see URL: https://www.nobelkitap.com/kisa-dunya-tarihi-299337.html); Ali Çimen, *Kısa Dünya Tarihi* [*A Brief History of the World*] (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2015) (see URL: https://www.nobelkitap.com/kisa-dunya-tarihi-276063.html); Güray Alpar, *Antropolojik Bakış Açısıyla: Stratejik Dünya Tarihi* [*Strategic World History: An Anthropological Perspective*] (Konya: Palet Yayınları, 2016) (for quoted material, see URL: https://www.nobelkitap.com/stratejik-dunya-tarihi-291277.html); Ali Birinci, Türkei Talim and Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı, *Ortaöğretim çağdaş Türk ve dünya tarihi dersi öğretim program* [*Contemporary Turkish and World History Curriculum in Secondary Education*] (Ankara Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2012); cf. URL: http://www.tarihbilinci.com/konular/ortaogretim-cagdas-turk-ve-dunya-tarihi-dersi-ogretim-programi.3681/. All websites last accessed: May 16, 2017.
9. See http://cat.nlrk.kz/?modname=databasework&action=newsearch2&type=1&page=1 (last accessed: May 16, 2017).
10. See http://spp.almau.edu.kz/72 (last accessed: May 16, 2017). Note that my classifying him as a Russian scholar does not mean that he has no Kazakh heritage or Kazakh language ability. But his name is effectively Russian and all of his publications are in Russian.
11. Prandito Suprihadi and Rashad Herman, *Atlas Sejarah Dunia* [*World History Atlas*] (Surabaya: Karya Pembina Swajaya, 2001).
12. อนันตชัย จินดาวัฒน์ [Anantachai Jindawat], ประวัติศาสตร์โลก (ฉบับสมบูรณ์) จากยุคหินถึงโลกาภิวัตน์ [*World History: From the Stone Age to Globalization*], Complete Edition (Bangkok: ยิปซีกรุ๊ป [Gypsy Group], nd) and อนันตชัย จินดาวัฒน์ [Anantachai Jindawat], ประวัติศาสตร์โลกสมัยศาสนาเรื่องอำนาจและยุโรปยุคกลาง [*World History, Modernism, Colonialism and Medieval Europe*] (Bangkok: ยิปซีกรุ๊ป [Gypsy Group], nd).

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13. Xuan Chuc Nguyen, *Tu' die n bach khoa lich su' the gioi* [*Encyclopedia of World History*] (Hanoi: Encyclopedia Publications, 2003); Ngoc Lien Phan, *So tay kie'n thu'c lich su': pha'n lich su' the gioi* [*The Rebirth of Historical Consciousness: A History of the World*] (Hanoi: Education Publishing House, 2002); Xuan Lai Vuong, Chi Hao Kim and Thanh Tinh Dang, *Nhung bi a'n cua lich su' the gioi du'ong dai* [*The Secrets of Contemporary World History*] (Hanoi: Hanoi Publishing House, 2004); Hien Le Nguyen and Thien Giang, *Lich su' the gioi* [*A History of the World*] (Ho Chi Minh City: General Publishing House of Ho Chi Minh City, 2016); Van Hien Hoang, *Tiep can lich su the gio'i va lich Viet Nam: mot cach nhin* [*Access to World History and Vietnamese History: A Perspective*] (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2009).
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15. Shigeru Akita; Yōko Nagahara; Masashi Haneda; Shingo Minamizuka; Akimasa Miyake; Shirou Momoki,「世界史」の世界史 [*"Sekaishi" no sekaishi, A World History of "World History"*] (ミネルヴァ書房, Kyōto-shi: Mineruva Shobō, 2016) (for quoted material, see URL: http://www.minervashobo.co.jp/book/b217326.html; last accessed: May 14, 2017).
16. 吉田悟郎著, [Gorou Yoshida] 自立と共生の世界史学：自国史と世界史 [*World Historiography of Independence and Symbiosis: Histories of Home Countries and the History of the World*] (青木書店 [Aoki Bookstore], 1990) (for quoted material, see URL: https://www.kinokuniya.co.jp/f/dsg-01-9784250900167; last accessed: May 14, 2017).
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18. Given that the video entitled *History of the World in Two Hours* by A&E Productions did not appear until 2012, it does not seem that this book is based on that video.
19. 荒井信一ほか著 [Shin'ichi Arai et al.] 詳解世界史 [*World History in Detail*] (三省堂, Tōkyō: Sanseidō, 1990); 平原 光雄 [Mitsuo Hirahara], 流れがわかる詳解世界史年表 [*Understanding World History in Detailed Chronological Flow*] (山川出版社 [Yamakawa Publishing Company], 1992); 布目潮[フウ][ほか]著. 布目潮フウ, [Choufuu Nunome], 明解世界史 [*Clear World History*] (帝国書院, Tōkyō: Teikoku Shoin, 1990); 世界の歴史, 30 vols (中央公論新社 [New Central Public Opinion Company], 1997–1999, 2009–2010); 漫画版世界の歴史 [*Manga-Version of World History*], 10 volumes (集英社 [Shueisha], 2009); 北村正義編 北村 [Masayoshi Kitamura, ed.], 概說世界の歴史 [*World History Overview*] (学術図書出版社 [Academic book publisher], nd); 歴史の謎を探る会, 世界の歴史がたった2時間でわかる本 [*A Book That Shows the History of the World in Only 2 h*] 河出書房新社 [Kawade-Shobou-Shinsha-Henshuubu] 2010); 大村 大次郎 [Omura Dajiro], お金の流れでわかる世界の歴史 [*The History of the World Understood by the Flow of Money*] (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2015); 澤野 重男 [Shigeo Sawano], 世界史をつくる子どもたち : 平和•人権学習のすすめ [*Children Who Make World History: Recommendation for Peace and Human Rights Learning*] (平和文化 [Peace Culture], 1990); 立石優 [Yuu Tateishi], 世界史を彩る大恋愛 [*A Great Love for World History*] (毎日新聞社, Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 2005).

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Appendix B: The Politics of Difference in World Historical Study

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The Necessity of 'Otherness' **Inclusive or Exclusive of 'the Other'?** **'The Other' as 'Friend', 'Enemy', or both?** (*Cf. 'I-Thou'*)	**Self** Me Us	**'The Other'** You Them
Commonly Used Geographical & Cultural 'Constructs' – Real or imagined? Or a little of both?	'The West' 'Europe' 'The Occident' 'North' (cf. 'North Atlantic') Christendom	'The East' 'Asia' 'The Orient' 'South' Dar al-Islam
Questions of: **Singularity/Homogeneity vs. Plurality/Heterogeneity** **Cultural Sharing, Adaptation, Change & Preservation**	**Singularity, Homogeneity** One 'world culture' ('Global', 'Globalization'?) 'Kingdom-Empire', 'Christian', 'Islamic', 'Hindu', 'Buddhist culture' 'Local', 'National', 'Tribal' ('Parochial', 'Balkanized'?)	**Plurality, Heterogeneity** Diversity, Multiplicity of cultures 'Cosmopolitan', 'Pluralistic' 'International', 'Inter-ethnic' 'Multi-ethnic', 'Multi-cultural' ('Global', 'Globalization'?)
Comparison & Contrast **'Similarity', 'Sameness' = 'Oneness', 'Unity'?** **– OR –** **'Uniqueness', 'Difference', 'Diversity' = 'Division', 'Separation', 'Disunity'?**	*Sharing in Common and United by…* History, Culture, Religion, Language, Territory (*Cf. 'national' and 'sacred language or culture'*) (*Cf. 'Ecumenical history'*)	*Made Unique, Different, and Separated by…* History, Culture, Religion, Language, Territory (*Cf. Uzbeks vs. Tajiks, Irish vs. English, Catholics vs. Protestants*)
Cultural (cf. also Gender) 'Superiority' and 'Inferiority' Complexes **'Crosscultural' vs. 'Intercultural'?**	'High(er) culture' 'Advanced', 'Progressive' 'Living', 'Dynamic' 'Enlightened' 'Cultured', 'Civilized', City-based 'Literate' 'Developed' 'Modern' (cf. 'Modernization', 'Modernity') 'First world'	'Low(er) culture' 'Primitive', 'Backward' 'Dead', 'Static', 'Monolithic' 'Ignorant', 'Darkened' 'Barbaric', 'Savage', Nomadic 'Illiterate' (*cf. 'oral'*) 'Un(der)developed' Feudal, Medieval, 'Living in the dark ages', 'Behind the times' 'Second' & 'Third worlds' (cf. '3rd world' as '2/3 world')
Approaches to Crosscultural Contact & Exchange **Questions of: 'Credit' vs. 'Blame', Beneficial vs. Harmful, Forced vs. Willing Embrace vs. Intentional Rejection**	*(Historical) Cause-Effect Approaches* 1- Mono-directional 'Cultural Diffusion' – OR – 2- Multi-directional Mutual Reflexive 'Influence'	*(Anthropological & Psychological) Non-cause-effect Approaches* Independent, Isolated Development (*No 'influence'*)

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