seminaria gościnne Wydział Historii, Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu

Edoardo Tortarolo

Edoardo Tortarolo, Professor of early modern history at the University of Eastern Piedmont (Italy), w dniach 10-13 stycznia 2022 roku, poprowadzi serię seminariów gościnnych "The 20th Century Discussion on World History". Wykłady odbędą się na Wydziale Historii UAM, ul. Uniwersytetu Poznańskiego 7 (Morasko), sala 3.67.

The 20th Century Discussion on World History

Abstrakt:

World history has become a crucial component of the current conversation on the past. These four seminars aim to explore the different ways in which a global approach to history has been developed prior to 21st century world history. Greek and Roman universal history, the historical vision exposed in the Bible, secularized philosophies of history from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, the 19th and early 20th-century histories of the human civilizations will be among the subjects that will be treated. The final seminar will analyze the most recent and significant trends in world history, and discuss the tension between the analytical function and the predictive function shared by the different global/universal approaches to the past.

Program:

1. Monday, January 10, 12:30-14:45 (room 3.67)
Histories from a global perspective
The variety of approaches to a comprehensive approach to the past will be the focus of this seminar. Examples of the different insights will be discussed, ranging from Herodotos to the Book of Daniel, Sima Qian, Ibn Khaldun, Spengler, Toynbee, Jaspers, Galtung will be discussed.

Required readings:

> Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Origins of Universal History". *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofi* , 1982, Serie III, vol. 12, no. 2, 1982, pp. 533-560.

For further reading:

> Hervé Inglebert, *Le monde l'histoire. Essai sur les histoires universelles*. Paris: PUF, 2014.
> Siep Stuurman, "Herodotus and Sima Qian: History and the Anthropological Turn in Ancient Greece and Han China." *Journal of World History*, vol. 19, no. 1, March 2008, pp. 1-41.
> Andrew Marsham, *Universal Histories in Christendom and the Islamic World, c. 700-1400*, Oxford History of Historical Writing, 2: 400-1400, edited by Sarah Foot, Chase F. Robinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 431-456.

2. Wednesday, January 12, 10:30-12:45 (room 3.67)
Towards a secularized vision of the global past?
In this session, the focus will be on the emergence of the secular, empirical approach to the global past of mankind that European historians worked out in the early modern and modern period. Texts by Voltaire, Ferguson, Herder, Condorcet, Ranke, Teggart, Freyer, Osterhammel, Harari will be mentioned and discussed.

Required readings:

> Dan Smail, "In the Grip of Sacred History." *American Historical Review*, vol. 110, no. 5, 2005, pp. 1337-1361.
> Franz Leander Fillafer, "A World Connecting? From the Unity of History to Global History." *History and Theory*, vol. 56, no. 1, March 2017, pp. 3-37.

For further reading:

> Paolo Rossi, *The Dark Abyss of Time. The History of the Earth and the History of Nations from Hooke to Vico*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

3. Thursday, January 13, 10:30-12:45 (room 3.67)
The 20th-century world history and beyond
This session will focus on the forms of world history developed in the 20th century and on the methodological and political discussion on their implications as entangled or connected history, history of miscegenation and hybridization, history of encounters, big history, deep history, genetic historical maps. Examples of the historical production related to these new approaches will be presented and discussed, as well as critical approaches to world history from a post-colonial perspective (Guha, Lal, Dirlik).

Required readings:

> Jerry H. Bentley, "The Task of World History", in *The Oxford History of World History*, edited by Jerry H. Bentley. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
> David Christian, "The Return of Universal History." *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 49, 2010, pp. 6-27.

For further reading:

> *Global History, Globally: Research and Practice Around the World*, edited by Sven Beckert and Dominic Sachsenmaier. London: Bloomsbury, 2018.
> Ranajit Guha, *History at the Limit of World History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

Edoardo Toratarolo

is a Professor of early modern history at the University of Eastern Piedmont, Italy, since 1993. He is a permanent fellow of the Academy of the Sciences in Turin and a member of the Italian Committee on Historical Studies. A Humboldt fellow in 1989 and 1990, in 2006 he was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, and in 2010 the Fulbright Distinguished Lecturer in Italian History at Northwestern University. His research interests cover the 18th- and 19th-century intellectual history and the history of historical writing. He has co-edited the third volume of the *Oxford History of Historical Writing* (2012). His latest book is *The Invention of the Free Press* (Springer 2016).

Arnaldo Momigliano

THE ORIGINS OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY *

I

I would be making the understatement of the century if I were to say that universal history has never been a clear notion. Taken literally, the idea of universal history verges on absurdity. Who can tell everything that has happened? And who would like to listen if he were told? But both in the Greek and in the Hebrew tradition of history-writing the urge to tell the whole story from beginning to end has been apparent, and universal history has become one of the most problematic components of our twofold Jewish and Greek heritage. Among the texts which have reached us directly it is a Greek text — Hesiod's *Works and Days* — that gives us the oldest scheme of the succession of ages; but the Jews of the Hellenistic age outbid the Greek by taking the story beyond the present into the future and gliding from history into apocalypse. The mixture of the historic and the Messianic has seldom been absent in the accounts of universal history which have been produced by ecclesiastical and secular historians from the Revelation of St. John to Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History;* and there is no sign that the universal history industry is flagging.

Contrary to the prevailing opinion that most of the time universal history played only a small part in Greek culture there was a continuous and considerable production of patterns intended to give, if not a meaning, at least some order to the story of mankind. But the majority of these patterns had their origins in what we can loosely call the mythical or philosophical imagination of the Greeks rather than in the empirical collection and critical interpretation

* Creighton Lecture in the University of London, 1980-81.

of past events called *historia*. Only the succession of world empires can be said to have represented a guiding thought for real historians. I shall therefore devote the second part of this lecture to the development of the notion of the succession of world empires within Greek historiography and I shall try to show that the Jews — and more precisely the authors of the *Book of Daniel* — derived this notion from the Greeks and turned it into an apocalyptic one. But before I do this I have to examine three other Greek schemes of universal history which are important in themselves, though they affected the historians only in a marginal way. These are the scheme of the succession of different races characterized by different metals; the biological scheme according to which not only individuals but nations and even mankind as a whole go through the stages of childhood, youth, maturity and old age; and finally the scheme of the progress of mankind from barbarism to civilization through a series of technological discoveries. Each of these three schemes had high potential for proper historical research. In later ages each was adopted and developed by historians on a large scale. But the Greek historians, being mainly interested in politics and wars, took far less notice of these schemes than we should have liked. The first thing to learn from Greek historiography is that schemes of the evolution of mankind can be invented in a given culture before historical research makes its appearance and can be multiplied after historical research has established itself without necessarily taking into account what historians have to say. We historians are a rather marginal by-product of history.

The traditional father of Greek historiography, Hecataeus, lived at the end of the sixth century B.C.; the two men who shaped Greek historiography in the way we know it, Herodotus and Thucydides, operated in the second half of the fifth century B.C. But Hesiod presented a scheme of universal history which can hardly be later than the end of the eighth century B.C. It is also virtually certain that Hesiod had at his disposal a pre-existing model for his cogitations on the development of mankind through a succession of various races, the golden race, the silver race, etc. He-

siod's scheme is distinguished by two furher complications. For motives which at least in the case of the golden race are entirely mysterious and in the case of the successive races (silver, bronze, heroic, iron) by no means self-evident, the gods, to say the least, allow the elimination of the existing race and its replacement by another which (with one exception) they like less than the one just suppressed. The one exception — the race of heroes inserted between the bronze and the iron age — is anomalous in so far as it does not receive its name from a metal and interrupts for a while the decline characterizing the process as a whole. Long ago it was seen that the insertion of the race of heroes in the scheme of the four races named according to metals was secondary and necessitated by the importance attributed to heroes in the Greek tradition. Whether it was in fact Hesiod who performed this adaptation of the scheme of the four ages to specific Greek requirements we cannot say. The races of gold and of bronze, and the heroic race, each seem to be limited to one generation — which would mean that the gods from the start did not endow them with the faculty of reproduction. Only the race of silver is explicitly given children, but it is also the only race about which it is explicitly stated that it was destroyed by the gods themselves. Hesiod has no remarks on this, and nor have I.

All the later writers in Greek or Latin about the four races, outside Judaism or Christianity, depended directly or indirectly on Hesiod. Plato used the myth freely, especially in the *Republic* (3, 415 a-c), to support the hierarchical structure of his State. Hellenistic poets like Aratus (third century B.C.) and Ovid refurbished the Hesiodic myth to express a nostalgia for the golden race which Hesiod, far more sensitive to the pains of the iron race than to the attraction of previous times, had never really felt. The races could be reduced in number — or increased. It will be remembered that Juvenal in *Satura* XIII speaks of the ninth age without having a metal for it; he defines the ninth as worse than the iron age (l. 28, « nona aetas agitur peioraque saecula ferri temporibus »). He probably mixes up the scheme of the four ages with that of the ten generations which is found

in other contexts. It must here be observed that the transition from Greek to Latin in itself produced a momentous difference. The *saeculum aureum* or *saeculum felicissimum* of the Latins is not identical with the *genos chryseion*, « the golden race » which it purports to translate. The Greeks underlined the type of man, the Romans put the character of the age to the fore. The differences made it easier for the Romans to exploit the myth for political propaganda. A good emperor could be expected to change the character of his age more easily than the race of his subjects. The return of the Golden Age was a more plausible theme for propaganda in poetry and inscriptions or coins than the return of the Golden Race. Altogether the Romans felt free to develop the implications of cyclical return to the Golden Age which the Greek version had never stressed. In considering the evils of the Iron Race Hesiod had been unable to repress the *cri de coeur*: « Would that I were not among the men of the fifth generation, but either had died before or been born afterwards ». Yet it is very doubtful whether he implied circularity in the scheme of the ages and a possible return from iron to gold. Roman political propaganda on the contrary had to presuppose, or at least to imply, circularity in the scheme of the ages in order to make plausible the image of an emperor taking his empire back from the Iron Age to the Golden Age. In A.D. 400 the poet Claudian ominously depicted, not a Roman emperor, but the German general Stilicho as the man who brought the Golden Age back to Rome. This scene in the second book of the *Laudes Stilichonis* (vv. 422 ff.), with the Sun going to the Cave of Eternity to retrieve the Golden Age for the consulate of Stilicho, is a memorable antithesis to the lines of Hesiod's *Works and Days* which more than a thousand years before had firmly placed Greek culture in the Iron Age.

Whether in the Greek or in the Roman form, there was very little historical observation behind this scheme of the ages. Whether we take Hesiod or Aratus or Ovid or Claudian — or the philosophers and moralists who played with this story — they did not really talk about any remembered or recorded past. The designation of the bronze age may

have preserved some recollection of the time in which iron was not yet in use: it did not, however, define a technology. The collective image of the heroic age very probably preserved some obscure memory of the Mycenaean age — but no more than what one could find in the epic poems or some tragedy. The schematization did not add to knowledge, and in any case there was no folk memory behind the notions of gold and silver ages. For all practical purposes the iron age was the only age which belonged to the historical field: the four previous ages were ideal alternative forms of human life recaptured by myth and impervious to history. The scheme of the metal ages, as reported by non-Jewish and non-Christian writers, was part of classical mythology rather than of classical historiography. We shall see later that Persian and Jewish writers connected it with historical events.

II

Different considerations are suggested by the biological scheme, but again we shall find that in pre-Christian writers it was only marginal to history and hardly affected the writing of universal history. The biological scheme, in distinguishing between childhood, youth, maturity and old age (with further optional refinements), proved to have relatively greater historiographical possibilities when applied to single nations than when applied to the whole of mankind. Confused ideas that certain nations are younger than others floated about in Greek ethnography. Since Herodotus it had been generally admitted that the Egyptians were a much older nation than the Greeks, and Herodotus also knew that as a nation the Scythians were about a thousand years old (4, 7). Here again the Romans seem to have derived more precise consequences from Greek premises. Lactantius in his *Institutiones* (7, 15, 14) states that Seneca — whether the rhetorician or the philosopher is debatable — constructed a scheme of Roman history from Romulus to Augustus based on this metaphor of stages of life. We do not know how Seneca elaborated this scheme, but under the Emperor Hadrian Annaeus Florus

composed his elegant summary of Roman history according to the same guiding principle. Since it is preserved (it proved to be immensely successful) it gives us the best idea we can form of this type of biological history. Florus attributes to Rome a childhood of 250 years under the kings, an adolescence of comparable length, and then a maturity of 200 years which ends with Augustus. The next hundred years under the emperors are old age, but Florus sees signs of rejuvenation under the Emperors Trajan and Hadrian in whose reigns he happens to live. Interestingly enough, he does not go beyond Augustus in his actual narration.

As the Roman Empire was often identified with the whole of the world, one might expect an easy transition from the notion of an ageing Rome to the notion of an ageing human race. But I have no evidence to show that any pagan historian took the step of presenting world history in terms of the ageing of an individual. The notion of an ageing Rome derived much of its historiographical strength from the realistic impression that beyond the borders of the Empire — or even inside them — there were nations ready to take advantage of the weakness of Rome. Tacitus would not have written the *Germania* without the uneasy feeling that the barbarians were ready to prey on ageing Rome. Even more explicity, in the late fourth century, Ammianus Marcellinus connects the old age of Rome with the increasing frivolity and vulgarity of its ruling class which in turn provokes the enemies of the Empire to increasing audacity. It would not have made much sense for a historian rooted in the political tradition of Rome to identify the old age of Rome with the old age of the world: the danger, as he saw it, was in the contrast between the lethargy of Rome and the energy of her youthful enemies.

This may explain why, as far as I know, a clear formulation of the *senectus mundi* — of the old age of the world — is to be found only in Christian writers and does not become an operative historiographical notion until St. Augustine. A clear adaptation of the biological scheme to Christian notions of history is already to be found in Tertullian's *De verginibus velandis* (1, 7): the world reaches

its infancy with the Mosaic Law; its youth with the Gospel and its maturity with the Paraclete. But this is said in a perfunctory way. It takes a St. Augustine to face the *senectus mundi* in the precise clinical manifestation of the sack of Rome and to conclude that what appears to be old age in the City of Man may be youth in the Heavenly City: « Do not try to stick to this old World; do not refuse to find your youth in Christ who tells you the World is transient, the World is ageing, the World declines, the World is breathless in its old age. Do not fear: your youth will be renewed as that of the eagle » (*Sermo* 81, *PL* 28, 508). It is by now evident that outside such audacious metahistorical applications there was little scope for the biological scheme in universal history. We must conclude that in classical pagan historiography the application of the biological scheme to the history of mankind was scarcely more successful than the application of the scheme of the metallic ages.

III

A further scheme remains to be considered which, though born outside historical research, like the previous two schemes, was soon felt to be open to empirical verifications and as such interested ancient philologists and antiquarians, if not historians. Gods or culture-heroes who reveal technological secrets to helpless mankind are of course to be found everywhere. The Yahvist account of *Gen.* 4 may be as old as the tenth century B.C. What seems to characterize the Greeks is that they did not remain content with their heroes, impressive as they may have been. Already in Aeschylus' *Prometheus* (the question whether Aeschylus is the real author of the *Prometheus* is here irrelevant) the culture-hero symbolizes mankind in its efforts to attain knowledge. Sophocles in the *Antigone* can dispense with the culture-hero and make man himself the source of all the ambiguous achievements which intelligence brings about. Even when mythical forms are retained (as in the new version of the Prometheus story told by Protagoras in Plato) the problem of how man acquired the arts becomes the focus for reflection. Individual men

or individual cities were sometimes singled out for praise. The praise of Athens as a civilizing city goes back at least to Isocrates. The Epicureans would naturally emphasize the enlightened traditions of the city to which Epicurus, after all, belonged. We therefore find the praise of Athens in Lucretius, Book VI. But as a rule the effort to encompass the discovery of the arts went beyond individual names of gods, men and cities and tried to envisage the conditions which favoured discoveries in general. Climatic conditions, fear of animals, development of language, discovery of metals and forms of cultivation, organization of social life, the cumulative influence of observation in various fields, etc., are factors considered in the two most important discussions we have of the technical progress of mankind: Diodorus' *Bibliotheca* Book I and Lucretius' *De rerum natura* Book V, to which we may add Vitruvius, *De architectura* Book II and Manilius, *Astronomicon* Book I in the following century. Not much has come down to us — partly as a result of the classicistic selection operated by late Greeks and Romans — of the work of their predecessors, the Sophists of the fifth century B.C. and the specialized students of discoveries of the late fourth century B.C. and of the early Hellenistic period. We are informed about a refined study of sacrificial customs composed by Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus only because the philosopher Porphyry happened to be very interested in it in the third century A.D. Dicaearchus, who lent authority to the notion of a life of Greece and inspired Varro, apparently combined the cultural scheme with that of the decline from a golden to an iron age. He had some idea of technological stages, such as nomadism and agriculture. A couple of indications by Varro, one by Censorinus and one by Porphyry give us a pale reflection of what must have been Dicaearchus' thinking on the evolution of Greece. We would expect Posidonius to have said something very influential on the subject of the discoveries of the arts in the generation before Lucretius and Diodorus. But sources being what thery are, our main information about Posidonius' opinions on cultural history depends on Seneca's *Letter* 90. There Seneca agrees with Posidonius

that the philosophers were the natural leaders of mankind during the golden age, but he does not accept Posidonius' further conjecture that the philosophers discovered the arts and techniques which myth had considered to be Prometheus' province. This is very little, and therefore scholars have been able to state or to deny with equal assurance that Posidonius is the source behind Diodorus' chapters in Book I about the evolution of mankind.

We must add that in Hellenistic and Roman times it was natural for Oriental writers in the Greek language to dispute the claim that the Greeks with their gods and heroes had been the civilizers. Moses was turned into a culture-hero by Jewish writers, like Artapanus in the second century B.C.; and in the late first century A.D. the Phoenician Philon of Byblos boasted of having found in Phoenician writers older than the Trojan war a clear description of how Phoenician gods and heroes had introduced the technology of civilization. In the wake of the discoveries at Ugarit credulous orientalists have been inclined to believe him. All these discussions hardly went beyond the zone of myth and even within these limits they accepted the terms formulated by the Greeks.

The ravages of time, that is, the loss of so many original sources (like Posidonius himself) give perhaps an unjust impression of poverty of results in this field. We should be wiser if we had more of Posidonius or more of Theophrastus, or even more of Critias and Protagoras on this subject. The problems were recognized, and it is remarkable that such a variety of approaches — from fear of animals to climate and language — presented themselves to the Greeks (if not to their Oriental competitors) and remained present to the Romans. But even if we were much better informed we would hardly find cultural developments as one of the central themes of Greek historical research. More specifically, we would not find universal histories built on schemes of cultural development. We are brought back to the hard fact that before Christianity Greek and Latin historians saw political and military events as the natural subject of their researches. If universal history was to have

a central place in historical research it had to have a place in political history. Whereas it was generally admitted that by studying political history one could avoid past mistakes and improve future performances, cultural history at best provided confirmation of some philosophic theory. It was not meant to help the future development of culture and remained at the level of curiosity and exemplification. To find universal history in full dress we must therefore go to Polybius, the political historian who claimed to be a universal historian or, to use his own expression, *ta katholou graphein*, « to write general history » (5, 33). He is the first extant author to make this claim, though, as he himself knew, not the first to have made it.

IV

Polybius became a universal historian because he saw himself as seriously involved in a chain of political and military events which truly appeared to affect the whole world. According to Polybius the Romans created universal history by conquering the world or at least by affecting directly or indirectly the future of the whole world. This meant that Polybius could not envisage universal history as the discovery of patterns of behaviour common to all men qua men. To him universal history came into being at a certain date, say the second Punic War, about 220 B.C., because of a new historical development. The idea of a universal history from the origins of mankind was alien to Polybius. He was, however, prepared to admit that in the more remote past certain historical situations had already brought mankind near to political unity, and that some historians had understood this predicament and therefore examined the facts with something like the self-consciousness of the universal historian. In fact he indicated Ephorus, the historian of the middle of the fourth century B.C. who had examined Oriental events connected with Greek events, as his first and most serious predecessor as a universal historian.

The situations which Polybius believed to be comparable with Rome's conquests are the processes of formation of previous empires. Persia, Sparta and Macedon are his explicit terms of reference. Characteristically he leaves out Athens for he did not like Athenian democracy. He speaks of Rome and Carthage as the two powers which disputed the rule of the world before Rome won. Since the succession of empires is the central point of Polybius' historical vision it is useful to remind ourselves of his precise words: « The paradoxicality and greatness of the spectacle with which I propose to deal will become most clear if we single out and compare with the Roman hegemony the most famous of the previous empires —the ones which have provided historians with their chief theme. Those worthy of being thus set aside and compared are the following: the Persians ... the Spartans ... the Macedonians ... But the Romans have subjected to their rule not portions, but nearly the whole of the world » (1, 2) (transl. W.R. Paton, Loeb).

This was not only an intellectual perception, but an emotional finding. The fall of an empire is to Polybius an occasion on which a dignified man is entitled to let himself go, to be disturbed and even to cry. He knows he has a literary tradition behind him to justify his emotions and to give appropriate words to them. After having concluded his account of the fall of the Kingdom of Macedon under Perseus in 168 B.C. Polybius picked up a treatise on Fortune in which Demetrius of Phalerum had commented upon the fall of the Persian Empire and generally animadverted on the inconstancy of human fortunes. Polybius was impressed by the fact that in the generation after Alexander Demetrius had foreseen that Macedon would one day fall in turn. He quoted from Demetrius and concluded: « I, as I wrote and reflected on the time when the Macedonian monarchy perished, did not think it right to pass over the event without comment, as it was one I witnessed with my own eyes, but I considered it was for me also to say something befitting such an occasion, and recall the words of Demetrius » (29, 21) (transl. W.R. Paton).

It may seem superfluous to quote the other more famous

passage (38, 21) in which Polybius tells of how he was near Scipio Aemilianus, the Roman commander, when Carthage was burning in 146 and had Scipio grasping his hand and repeating Homer's line « A day will come when sacred Troy shall perish » (*Iliad* 6, 448). But this passage raises a problem. We have not all of Polybius' original text, and we must reconstruct it as best we can from three quotations: one in the so-called excerpts *De sententiis*, another in Diodorus 32, 24 and a third in Appian, *Libyca* 132. Appian is the only one to tell us that Scipio Aemilianus was meditating on the fall of the empires of Assyria, Media, Persia and Macedonia while weeping and reciting Homer to himself. This addition of the four world empires may be an improvement by Appian who as an Egyptian writer of the second century A.D. was aware of them, but one would need very strong arguments to admit such interference by Appian with the account of the scene which he explicitly takes from Polybius. Prima facie, the reference to the four empires must be attributed to Polybius. If this is correct it shows that although Polybius was interested as a historian in the succession Persia-Macedonia-Rome he was acquainted with a longer list of world empires in which Assyria and Media preceded Persia.

Indeed, we may immediately add that this list — the famous list of the four monarchies — must have been current in Polybius' time and therefore easily available both to him and to Scipio Aemilianus. We happen to know from a strange gloss inserted in Velleius Paterculus 1, 6 that Aemilius Sura, an otherwise unknown author of a book *De annis populi romani*, placed the Romans at the end of a succession of empires starting with the Assyrians and continuing with the Medes, the Persians and the Macedonians. More precisely Sura dated the beginnings of the Roman World Empire during the reigns of Philip V of Macedon and of Antiochus III of Syria, that is, either before 179 B.C., the date of Philip's death, or before 187 B.C., the date of Antiochus III's death. There are too many difficulties in this text for us to be certain when it was written, but one is inclined to believe that Aemilius Sura gave such a precise and uncon-

ventional date because he wrote in the earlier part of the second century B.C. and was himself a witness of the Roman victories over Macedonia and Syria.

In fact the notion of the succession of the world empires had been codified by Herodotus and Ctesias, the leading historians writing about Asia in the fifth and early fourth century B.C. Herodotus had stated in so many words that the Persians had succeeded the Medes in the empire (1, 95; 130); he had furthermore promised to write a special account of Assyria, though for reasons unknown he did not do so (1, 184). Ctesias fulfilled this desideratum and introduced Median and Persian history by way of a long account of the previous Assyrian empire. Neither of them could of course foresee that the Persian world-monarchy would be replaced by the Macedonian monarchy. But the contemporaries of Alexander the Great must have been quick to add the Macedonian world-monarchy to the three empires codified by Herodotus and described by Ctesias. A man like Demetrius of Phalerum quoted by Polybius must be supposed to have been acquainted with Herodotus and Ctesias.

It is not surprising that Polybius should concentrate his real interests on Grece, Macedonia, Carthage and Rome. Even Persia is to him a distant shadow. The succession of the four world empires must have appeared far more significant in the late fourth century and in the early third century B.C. when the Hellenistic monarchies as a whole seemed to represent an obvious and lasting replacement of the Persian monarchy: Rome was still confined to Italy. Though the disapperance of most of the historical writing of early Hellenism makes it difficult to prove this statement, three considerations can be offered before I pass on to examine the only extant text of the third century B.C. about the four monarchies.

If one feature was evident in this scheme of the four monarchies — Assyria, Media, Persia and Macedonia — it was that it kept Egypt out. This was of course noticed by Egyptians who came into contact with Hellenistic culture and by those Alexandrian intellectuals who persisted in the old Hellenic tradition of admiration for the Egyptians. He-

rodotus, without thinking of empires, had already presented the semi-mythical Egyptian King Sesostris as superior to Darius the Persian, who rather good-naturedly conceded the point (2, 110). But it was left to Hecataeus of Abdera — a Greek writing in Egypt about 300 B.C. — to elevate Sesostris to the dignity of a universal ruler. In Hecataeus' account, which we have in Diodorus' summary (1, 53), Sesostris's father gave his son the education befitting a future cosmocrator, and Sesostris proved to be the model emperor of the world. It does not matter very much whether the Egyptians put ideas into the head of Hecataeus of Abdera or vice versa. Three centuries later, when the geographer Strabo and the Emperor Tiberius's adoptive son Germanicus were travelling in Egypt, local priests told them stories similar to those of Hecataeus of Abdera (Strabo, 17, 816; Tac., *Ann.* 2, 60). Native historians of Mesopotamia were of course in an easier position. In telling the history of Babylonia to the Greeks Berossus was able to fit it into the scheme of four successive monarchies. On the other hand, it is impossible to understand all the anti-Roman propaganda of the last two centuries of the Republic without referring to these notions of successive world empires. The Greeks and even more the Orientals who saw the Romans taking over everywhere found refuge in hopes, in prophecies and even in actual revolutionary movements promising to put history in reverse and to give back to Greece or to the East the world-rule they had lost. Polybius says nothing of these outbursts. But some of them were registered by his contemporary Antisthenes of Rhodes, a historian and a philosopher. In Antisthenes' account both a dead Syrian officer and a dead Roman general announced Rome's fall and the return of Asia to power (*FGrHist*, 257 F 36). A forged letter from Hannibal to the Athenians circulated in which the Carthaginian promises to give the Romans a more severe lesson than that given by the Greeks to the ancestors of the Romans, namely the Trojans (*Hamburg Griech. Pap.* 1954, n. 129, ll. 106 ff.).

The rebellions of the slaves in Italy, the struggle of Aristonicus in Asia Minor about 132 B.C., the wars of King

Mithridates of Pontus against Rome for twenty-five years between 88 and 63 B.C., and finally Cleopatra's war against Octavian were accompanied and supported by prophecies of the return of the empire to the Asiatic nations. As there were colonies of Persians with their magi in Asia Minor somebody turned to them for help in this ideological warfare. The result was a document — the prophecy of Hystaspes, a King of Media supposed to have lived before the Trojan war. The prophecy was still circulating in the fourth century A.D., when it was amply summarized by Lactantius: it predicted the destruction of the Roman Empire and the return to power of the East.

Thirdly and finally we have to turn to the universal histories which multiplied in the congenial atmosphere of Roman wars and conquests of the first century B.C., when Pompey and Caesar seemed to be challenging the reputation of Alexander the Great. Some of these universal historians accepted in full Polybius' premise that proper universal history could not be written until the rise of Rome as a world empire. Therefore they continued Polybius down to their own day: Posidonius of Apamaea to about 60 B.C. at the latest and Strabo of Amaseia to the end of the civil wars, perhaps about 30 B.C. The novelty which Posidonius transmitted to Strabo, in so far as it was transmissible, was the use of Herodotean ethnography to describe cultures discovered — chiefly but not exclusively — by Roman conquest. Most of the world Posidonius had managed to conjure up in his vivid, rich prose has, alas, disappeared with the loss of his work. Though Posidonius was probably superior to any of the other post-Polybian universal historians, those who did not accept the chronological limits imposed by Polybius and bravely imitated Ephorus in going back to remote antiquity are, as a group, more interesting for our inquiry.

I shall not take into account two Italians of the second half of the first century B.C. who, just because they were the first Italians to write universal history, naturally stimulate our curiosity: we know almost nothing of the contents of the three books of universal history by Cornelius Nepos

which his friend Catullus commended; nor have we any precise idea of how Titus Pomponius Atticus selected his topics for the *liber annalis* which (Cicero claimed) « me inflammavit studio illustrium hominum aetates et tempora persequendi » (*Brut.*, 18, 74). But we can read part of the universal history by the Sicilian Diodorus, and we have at least the summary made in the second or third century A.D. by Justin of the vast work strangely called *Historiae Philippicae* by Trogus Pompeius, a Gaul from Gallia Narbonensis. We can also form some idea of what must have been the biggest universal history ever written in antiquity, a work in 144 books by Nicolaus of Damascus, a Hellenized Syrian who managed to be tutor to the children of Cleopatra and Antony, secretary and envoy of King Herod of Judaea for many years and finally a friend of Augustus, of whom he wrote a biography. We also have a faint notion of what must have been a universal history in Greek called « Kings » by Timagenes, who was forcibly removed from Alexandria to Rome about 56 B.C. and created for himself the reputation of being a bitter critic of anything Roman.

These four provincials — two from the West (Diodorus and Trogus) and two from the East (Nicolaus and Timagenes), one (Trogus) writing in Latin and the others writing in Greek — tried to offer some resistance to a view of world history which was an implicit, and even explicit, glorification of Rome. They gave pride of place to the old civilizations of the East and of Greece, and they emphasized either the relative barbarism of the Romans or their recent conversion to Greek customs (which amounted to the same thing). None of them could build up his history on a rigorous scheme of succession of world monarchies. They all had to take account of the Celtic West which that scheme ignored. Trogus Pompeius, perhaps the most remarkable of the four, came from this Celtic West. Nor could Egypt be ignored after so many protests. Diodorus as a Greek could emphasize the superior merits of Greek education; and Nicolaus as a secretary of Herod King of Judaea had to accommodate the Jews and was altogether sympathetic to the minor nations of the Near East. But each of these four

historians seems to have been very conscious of the scheme of the succession of Oriental monarchies. This is demonstrably the case with the two historians whom we can still read in a continuous way, not only relying on quotations, Diodorus and Trogus. Trogus' master-stroke — a piece of really good historical imagination — was to conclude his work by bringing together the free Parthians of the East and the no-longer-free Celts and Spaniards of the West. He simply declared that the Parthians were sharing the rule of the world with the Romans after having won three wars against them (41, 1). We know these victories had hurt the Romans. Trogus had hit where it hurt most. He had furthermore made it plain that the conflict between East and West, of which so much had been said in the previous century, was by no means closed. The Parthian Empire was after all either the continuation or the revival of the Persian Empire, as everybody knew.

There is also a conspicuous reference to the four monarchies of Assyria, Media and Macedon just at the beginning of the *Roman Antiquities* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. This was written in 7 B.C. And we could follow up the allusion to this scheme until the early fifth century A.D. when Rutilius Namatianus was still comparing Rome, to her advantage, with the great empires of old. He called the Persian Empire of the Achaemenids « magni Parthorum reges » (*De reditu suo,* 85). But we are ready to face the last text I propose to consider on this occasion — the Book of Daniel.

V

It was customary in the Hellenistic period both among Jews and among Gentiles to attribute sayings, visions and books in general to wise men of the past. Daniel was not such a big name but his reputation had been on the increase for some centuries. The prophet Ezechiel chose Noah, Daniel and Job as the prototypes of righteousness (14, 14; 20). Ezechiel 28, 3 taunts the King of Tyre: « are you wiser than Daniel? ». So Daniel was not only just, but wise. And he

was probably not Jewish, as Noah and Job were not strictly speaking Jewish. In the *Book of Jubilees* (4, 20), which is more or less contemporary with the final version of the *Book of Daniel* as we have it, we find a Daniel or rather a Danel whose daughter married Enoch, the other more important biblical figure to whom apocalyptic books were attributed in the second century B.C. If Daniel and Danel are two variant spellings of the same name, which seems beyond doubt, the figure of the just man Danel may go back to an Ugaritic text of the fourteenth century B.C., « The Tale of Aqhat ».

What is surprising is to find Daniel placed in the courts of Babylon and Persia by the book which bears his name. According to the book he would have been taken prisoner at the fall of Jerusalem at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. We have no idea of when and how Daniel became a hero of the sixth century B.C. According to the *Book of Daniel* he and three Jewish friends were successively at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, of Belshazzar, who is presented as the son of Nebuchadnezzar and the last King of Babylon (he was neither), and finally of that Darius the Mede, never heard of elsewhere, who is supposed to have conquered Belshazzar. In the first part of the book — which in our late medieval division into chapters corresponds to chapters 1-6 — Daniel interprets the vision and dreams of pagan kings. He and his companions exemplify steadfast Jews who prefer death to the cult of foreign gods or of living kings. But while (as we shall see) these chapters presuppose Alexander the Great and the formation of the Hellenistic monarchies, they do not allude specifically to Antiochus IV or his time. They envisage Jews living at the courts of kings and managing in spite of all to reconcile worldly success as courtiers with the duties of pious Jews. The situation resembles that of the *Book of Esther* rather more than that of the *Books of Maccabees.*

The second part of *Daniel* is differently oriented. It is clearly concerned with the situation of Jerusalem and the rest of Judaea under Antiochus IV, and his own visions are directly communicated by Daniel in the first person. The

stories about Daniel and his companions are replaced by the words of Daniel himself. It seems obvious, however, that the author or authors who composed what now constitutes chapters 7-12 of the *Book of Daniel* knew the first part well. There are in fact signs that the *Book of Daniel*, though composed of heterogeneous elements, was put together with conspicuous care by an editor who was interested in producing an impression of coherence and even of stylistic harmony. The task was by no means easy because, as we all know, *Daniel* is one of the two books of the Bible which are written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic. With the present division of chapters the first chapter is in Hebrew, the next six chapters are in Aramaic: in the second section of the book the order and the proportions are inverted, one chapter in Aramaic being followed by six chapters in Hebrew. Even if we forget the existence of chapters the proportions remain harmonic. This must be by design and indicates that the editor of the book did his best to give it an appearance of unity.

The link between the two sections is not only formal. The second section of the book develops the philosophy of history which we find in the second chapter of the first section. It is of course inspired by the idea of the succession of empires.

In chapter 2 Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, as we all remember, which none of the non-Jews could interpret, and he was determined to kill his professional advisers. Daniel was brought in, gave the right interpretation and thereby saved his gentile colleagues or rivals. The dream is that of the great image with the head of fine gold, breasts and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, feet part iron, part clay. A stone from heaven (according to the dream) shattered the statue. In Daniel's interpretation the different metals in the different parts of the statue each symbolize a kingdom, and the kingdoms are not concurrent but successive. The stone is the true God, and what follows the destruction of the statue is the establishment of the Kingdom of God which will endure forever. However, there is an ambiguity in the story. The stone smashes all the

elements of the statue at the same time, including the golden head. It puts an eternal Jewish Kingdom of God in the place of all the empires of the past taken together. Thus the statue is not meant to represent a succession of empires: it rather symbolizes the co-existence of all the past, as it had developed through a succession of kingdoms, at the moment in which all the past is destroyed by the divine stone and replaced by a new order.

Daniel does not say which are the four kingdoms smashed by the stone. The writer of chapter 7, which took up the same notion of four kingdoms but did not retain the symbolism of the metals, undoubtedly identified the kingdoms with Babylonia, Media, Persia and Macedonia. In chapter 7 the fourth kingdom is represented by a nameless monster with ten horns, and an eleventh little horn develops later. The ten horns of the fourth monster certainly symbolize three Macedonian and seven Seleucid kings, and the eleventh little horn is Antiochus IV. One can date chapter 7, from the details it provides, between 169 and 167 B.C. Like the writer of chapter 2 the writer of chapter 7 expects a Kingdom of God soon to replace the kingdom on earth.

Though there is a presumption that the author of chapter 7 was capable of understanding what the author of chapter 2 meant by four kingdoms we need confirmation. The confirmation comes from the fourth kingdom which is partly iron, partly clay because, so *Daniel* explains, « it will be a divided kingdom with some elements of iron in it ». This makes sense only for the Macedonian Kingdom or Empire which was divided by Alexander's successors. A further confirmation is in the apparently mysterious line 43: « Just as you saw the iron mixed with terra cotta of clay, they will be mingled by intermarriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not unite with terra cotta » (transl. L. F. Hartman, Anchor Bible, 1978). Here there is an allusion to an unlucky royal marriage. Now there was one disastrous marriage among the successors of Alexander: it was that between the Seleucid Antioch II and Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II. This is indeed recorded more explicitly in the second section of *Daniel* at 11, 6. We must recognize the

same allusion in chapter 2, 43. As this marriage happened about 250 B.C. and is the most recent event alluded to in chapter 2 there is a fair chance that chapter 2 was written not much later. If so, we could tentatively date the first section of *Daniel* about 250-230 B.C., whereas the second section is made up of chapters written between 167 and 164 B.C.

If our reading of the text of *Daniel* is approximately correct, we have a Jew who in the second part of the third century B.C. expounded in symbolic form the doctrine of the four monarchies and reinterpreted it in an apocalyptic sense: the fifth kingdom, soon to come, would be the Kingdom of God. The idea was found acceptable, and was revived and given a new urgency in Jerusalem at the time of the resistance to Antiochus IV when the priest Mattathias and his son Judas Maccabaeus took up arms to defend the Torah of the Fathers. The notion remained operative in Jewish thought, as a survey of Jewish Sibylline Books and other apocalyptic writing could easily show. But we must end with the obvious question. Where did the author of *Daniel* chapter 2 find this notion?

If we had only the second section of the *Book of Daniel,* which is directly inspired by the crisis in the reign of Antiochus IV and written while he was still alive, it would have been recognized long ago that the author or authors of these visions about kingdoms worked on the basis of the Greek concept of a succession of world empires. The religious interpretation, the apocalyptic finale, is of course the specific Jewish contribution to the reading of the situation. Furthermore, we must admit that Assyria is replaced by Babylonia in Daniel's vision: Babylonia was a natural beginning for a Hellenistic Jew, who associated its empire with the destruction of the First Temple. But the foundation of all this Messianic structure is provided by the scheme of the succession of empires which we found in Herodotus, Ctesias and their successors. What is decisive is that no one has so far been able to produce genuine evidence for the existence of the notion of four world empires outside Greek historical thought. There have been many suggestions in the direction of India, Persia and Babylonia, but none has stood up to

serious criticism. Four world ages of the Hesiodic type are known in India; four kings in a descending order of goodness within the Iranian state are described in Persian medieval commentaries on a lost book of the Avesta — the *Vohuman Yasn.* Some serious scholars have suggested that such texts were themselves written under Greek influence. If they were not, they prove that the Hesiodic myth of decline had wide Indo-European roots and ramifications. But the application of the quadripartite scheme to the political notion of world empires remains a Greek peculiarity, if one excepts the *Book of Daniel* and its imitators. In 1975 Professor A. K. Grayson introduced a new pretender to the title of Daniel's source by his meritorius discovery in the British Museum of a late Babylonian text which he called « a dynastic prophecy » (*Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts,* 24-37). This is a chronicle in the form of a prophecy which lists a series of kings who governed Babylon and indicates changes of dynasties and of territorial boundaries. The text has some remarkable similarities with *Daniel,* and I hope to show elsewhere that it was not compiled under the first Seleucid kings, as Grayson suggested, but under Alexander the Great. It may in fact be the earliest document we have of anti-Macedonian propaganda in Babylonia. But the similarities between this dynastic prophecy and *Daniel* do not involve the scheme of the succession of empires which is absent from the Babylonian text.

There is, however, a very good reason why scholars should have been slow to recognize that the *Book of Daniel* turns a Greek summary of world-empires into a blueprint for the preparation of the Messianic age. The reason is that no Greek source associates, as *Daniel* chapter 2 does, the four empires with the four metals. A similar association of metals and kings is to be found in the medieval Persian texts *Denkard* and *Bahman Yasht* when they describe the four Iranian kings representing stages of declining respect towards Zoroaster and his doctrine. I believe, however, that this does not disprove our main point that no theory of the succession of world empires circulated in the East before the Greeks imported it. It may well be that some such text

which associated metals with kings, even if not universal kings, suggested to the author of *Daniel* chapter 2 the idea of characterizing each world empire by one metal. But paradoxically this very association in *Daniel* between metals and world empires is presented in such a way as to show that it is secondary. The metallic ingredients can hardly be said to make sense in *Daniel's* context. The four metals in order of decreasing value ought to represent successive stages in the decline of earthly kingdoms. Yet *Daniel* does not express any preference: all the empires will be destroyed together. Nor would we expect a Jewish writer to give the highest mark to Babylonia which had destroyed the First Temple. It cannot be an accident that the scheme of the metals, where we find it outside *Daniel* chapter 2, has nothing to do with the scheme of the world empires. Even *Daniel* chapter 7 drops the combination of world empires and metals, thereby confirming that it was a peculiarity of *Daniel* chapter 2. The scheme of the world empires in *Daniel* is in itself value-free, as the Greek scheme of world empires was.

To judge from the fascination which the statue of the four metals has exercised throughout the centuries, we must admit that the author of *Daniel* chapter 2 had found a symbol which worked even if it was incongruous. While using the Greek notion of the succession of empires to illuminate the ways of God he had also produced a quaint target for the destructive capacities of God. To repeat the words used in a similar context by Mandell Creighton: « No disappointment was rude enough to show men that this theory was but a dream » (*A History of the Papacy*, 1882, I, 11).

We are no longer likely to be surprised that Jews talked to Greeks in the third century B.C. Even King Solomon, in his modern reincarnation as Ecclesiastes or Qohelet, was taking notice of the latest Epicurean treatises. In another context I hope to have shown that Herodotus was known to the somewhat later author of the *Book of Judith*. What is remarkable is the energy and independence with which the Jews turned Greek ideas upside down.

ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO

In the Grip of Sacred History

DAN SMAIL

On the other side of Eden lies a vast stretch of human history punctuated by compelling stories and events.[1] The ancestral Eve, the Out-of-Africa hypothesis, the Great Leap Forward, the settling of the Americas, the debates that rage around megafaunal extinction and the demise of the Neanderthals: all these and more have gripped the imaginations of academics and amateurs alike. If humanity is the proper subject of history, then surely the Paleolithic is part of our history. Yet despite enormous strides in the field of paleoanthropology over the last several decades, the deep past of humanity still plays a marginal role in the grand historical narrative that is taught in secondary schools and colleges in the United States. Most textbooks used in Western Civilization courses include very little on the Neolithic era, and even less on the Paleolithic. Some books in world history extend human history back to the outset of the agricultural revolutions, breaching the date of six thousand years ago that dominates some Western Civilization textbooks. Yet even world history surveys currently do not deal significantly with the Paleolithic.[2]

If history is biography—if the study of history, to be satisfying, requires us to make contact with the thoughts and psyches of people with names—then there is little point in advocating a deep history of humankind. But if history is also the study of the structures and patterns that shape the human experience, if acts such as handling a flint arrowhead or tracing one's mitochondrial family tree back to a small African valley can fulfill our desire for wonder, then the exclusion of humanity's deep history cannot be so easily explained. Puzzling over this exclusion, the archaeologist Glyn

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[1] I borrow the expression from Hugh Brody, *The Other Side of Eden: Hunters, Farmers, and the Shaping of the World* (New York, 2000).

[2] The first edition of William H. McNeill's *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community* (Chicago, 1963), especially important because of its subsequent influence, devoted eight pages to the Paleolithic in a book of some eight hundred pages. William J. Duiker and Jackson J. Spielvogel cover prehistory in two pages of their *Essential World History: Comprehensive Volume*, 3rd ed. (Belmont, Calif., 2001). A more trade-oriented title, J. R. McNeill and William McNeill's *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History* (New York, 2003), covers the Paleolithic in sixteen pages, although their "web" model offers an intriguing device for joining the Paleolithic to the later periods. Michael Cook's general history, *A Brief History of the Human Race* (New York, 2003), suggests that the Paleolithic does not count as history in part because there are no documents from the period that allow us to "study past humans on the basis of what they had to *say* for themselves" (5). An important exception to this neglect of early human history can be found in David Christian, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (Berkeley, Calif., 2004).

Daniel once wrote: "Why do historians in a general way pay so little attention to this fourth division of the study of the human past; while recognizing ancient history do they not give more recognition to prehistory? . . . Historians are taking a long time to integrate prehistory into their general view of man."[3] That was in 1962. Since then, the call for interdisciplinarity has encouraged historians to approach the past through tools provided by other disciplines. However, this interdisciplinarity has not yet been extended to the fields that constitute the realm of paleoanthropology. Deep history, for all intents and purposes, is still prehistory—a term, as Mott Greene has noted, that modern historians have been reluctant to let drop. "To abandon prehistory," he says, "would be to postulate continuity between the biological descent of hominids and the 'ascent of civilization' of the abstract 'mankind' of humanistic historical writing. Prehistory is a buffer zone."[4]

The purpose of this article is to explore some of the historiographical reasons for the continuing exclusion of deep history. I do not intend to offer suggestions for how we can go about actually emplotting the Paleolithic in textbooks, general histories, and lectures. That is the subject for future work.[5] Instead, what I will argue here is that the narrative of Western Civilization as it is currently understood by historians in the United States has not fully escaped the chronological and geographical grip of sacred history. Sacred history, as promulgated by early modern European historians and their predecessors in the Judeo-Christian tradition, was a view of history that located the origins of man in the Garden of Eden in 4004 B.C. In the eighteenth century, the chronology proper to history shrank significantly, as the new fad for catastrophism brought historical attention to bear on the Universal Deluge. Since human societies were rebuilt from scratch after the Deluge—so the thinking went—it was the Deluge that marked mankind's true beginning. And in the philosophy of the Neapolitan historian Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), the Deluge made all prior history unknowable anyway, because it destroyed all traces from which we could write such a history. As an event that set the civilizational clock back to zero, the Deluge marked an epistemological break between humanity's origin and the present stream of history. Although the flood itself has long since receded in historical consciousness, the sense of rupture remains.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, with the discovery of geological time, Western Europe's chronological certainties came crashing down. Stephen Jay Gould has called the discovery of deep time a cosmological revolution of Galilean proportions, and the new chronology came to shape all the historical sciences.[6] But how did historians respond to the long chronology? Like all educated people, the general historians of the later nineteenth century were aware of deep time. A few continued to affirm the truths of Judeo-Christian chronology in the face of the mounting evidence. Motivated by the professionalizing wave of the last decades of the nineteenth century, however, most historians in the United States were comfortable letting go

[3] Glyn E. Daniel, *The Idea of Prehistory* (London, 1962), 134.

[4] Mott T. Greene, *Natural Knowledge in Preclassical Antiquity* (Baltimore, Md., 1992), 3.

[5] But see David Christian, "The Case for Big History," *Journal of World History* 2 (1991): 223–238; Fred Spier, *The Structure of Big History: From the Big Bang until Today* (Amsterdam, 1996).

[6] Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 1; see also Stephen Toulmin and June Goodfield, *The Discovery of Time* (New York, 1965).

of the short chronology. Yet the historical narrative that emerged in the United States between the late nineteenth century and the 1940s did not fully abandon the narrow chronological space into which the diluvial paradigm had consigned secular history. Instead, the sacred was deftly translated into a secular key, as Sumeria and the invention of writing replaced the Garden of Eden as the point of origin for Western Civilization. Prehistory came to be an essential part of the story, but the era was cantilevered outside the narratival buttresses that sustain the edifice of Western Civilization. It was there only to illustrate what we are no longer.

Although the general histories published before World War II discarded the sacred, in other words, they nonetheless preserved the short chronology and the Mesopotamian geography of sacred history. The trend persisted in the postwar era. As the authors of *The Columbia History of the World* (1972) put it, "History begins in the Near East."[7] Acknowledging the abyss of time, however, the authors of textbooks and general histories published between the 1860s and 1930s felt an obligation to justify their adherence to the short chronology. They noted the absence of written documents. They proposed the idea that history concerns nations, not rootless bands. They developed the myth of Paleolithic stasis, the idea of a timeless dystopia whose unchangingness was broken only, *deus ex machina*, by some ill-defined catalytic event. In these and other ways, they justified the absence of any narratival continuity between prehistory and history.

The continuing significance of these arguments derives from the fact that however toothless they have become, they continue to influence the ways in which we imagine history and frame curricula. What do we gain by exposing them? One might just as well ask why historians of women thought it necessary to explore the historiographical grip of patriarchy even as they undertook the task of writing a women's history. Historiographical revisions have to proceed both materially and historiographically. The big history proposed by David Christian and others cannot make headway unless we expose the chronogeographic grip of sacred history and reexamine the trends that have prevented deep history from taking its place in the curriculum of history.

In the pages that follow, I make no claim to completeness. Apart from Daniel Segal's important study of the use of social evolutionary theory in Western Civilization courses and Doris Goldstein's work on the Oxford School, very little work has been done on historians' reception of deep time.[8] The project, moreover, is large, and I can claim only to have brushed the surface of the relevant sources. This is a prolegomenon. It hopes to inspire debate and suggest lines of research.

ALL HISTORIANS MUST GRAPPLE WITH THE QUESTION of where to begin the story. For historians of the particular, the problem of origins is not especially acute: choose some reasonably datable event, and have that mark the beginning of your particular history. General historians face a slightly different problem. General history, as de-

[7] John A. Garraty and Peter Gay, eds., *The Columbia History of the World* (New York, 1972), 49.

[8] Daniel A. Segal, " 'Western Civ' and the Staging of History in American Higher Education," *AHR* 105, no. 3 (June 2000): 770–805; Doris Goldstein, "Confronting Time: The Oxford School of History and the Non-Darwinian Revolution," *Storia della Storiografia* 45 (2004): 3–27.

fined by Herbert Butterfield, is a rational account of man on earth that explains "how mankind had come from primitive conditions to its existing state."[9] I use the term to embrace the universal histories of the ancient world and medieval Europe, the general world histories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the histories found in modern history textbooks, syllabuses, and lectures. Whatever their differences, all purport to begin at the beginning. But if one's object is the whole history of humanity, where, exactly, is the beginning?

Musing on the point of origins, the Greek poet Hesiod invented a Golden Age and proposed decay as the dominant historical trajectory. For ancient and medieval historians writing in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the trajectory was similar, although sacred history and the story of Eden supplanted the Golden Age. Universal histories became less fashionable in early modern Europe, but the impulse to begin at the beginning did not wholly wane. Sir Walter Ralegh's *History of the World in Five Books*, first published in the early seventeenth century, began in Eden and worked its way down to the Roman period. Jacques Bénigne Bossuet's famed *An Universal History* (1681) also began the story with Genesis.[10]

The practice of writing mainstream professional histories rooted in Eden would persist well into the nineteenth century. But even in Ralegh's day, historians and commentators such as Jean Bodin (1529–1596) were trying to bring a progressive element into the writing of history. Influenced by the natural or conjectural histories of the ancient world that had identified the aboriginal state of humankind as primitive, Bodin denied the existence of a Golden Age and made much of the lawlessness and violence of the early phases of society.[11] These ideas were shared by other sixteenth-century anthropologists, who proposed the idea of a progression from pastoral to agricultural society.[12] The schemes subsequently developed by philosophers, economists, and ethnographers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were also influenced by the growing number of reports concerning the savage peoples of the Caribbean, North America, Tierra del Fuego, and elsewhere. By the eighteenth century, there was a common understanding that humans had progressed through several economic stages—savagery, pastoralism, agriculture, and commerce were the usual suspects—and that each stage was associated with a particular set of political, social, legal, and intellectual institutions.

But how could the progressive fashion be squared with the chronological facts and the descending trajectory of sacred history? Peter Bowler has remarked that the idea that man acquired civilization in gradual stages required more time than was allowed by biblical chronology.[13] Yet the authors of conjectural histories did not necessarily offend a biblical time frame. Writing in the eighteenth century, Condorcet and Adam Smith dodged the issue by refusing to assign any dates to their

[9] Herbert Butterfield, *Man on His Past: The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship* (Cambridge, 1955), 103.

[10] Sir Walter Ralegh, *The History of the World in Five Books* (London, 1687); Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, *An Universal History: From the Beginning of the World to the Empire of Charlemagne*, trans. James Elphinston, 13th ed. (Dublin, 1785).

[11] Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, trans. Beatrice Reynolds (New York, 1966), 298; see also Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York, 1980).

[12] In general, see Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1964).

[13] Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past* (Oxford, 1989), 76.

armchair speculations. Others, notably the French physiocrat Turgot, were quite willing to squeeze the stages of progress into the short span of time made available by Holy Writ.[14] Adam Ferguson similarly framed the history of mankind in the limited time period allowed for by sacred chronology.[15] Few saw an essential contradiction with sacred history, because no one knew how long it took societies to evolve.

The chronological conundrums were easy to square. Sacred and conjectural histories, however, were profoundly incompatible in another way, for they disagreed on history's direction. Is it from Eden downward? Or from the primitive upward? Yet there was a solution to this problem. Embedded in the famous historical scheme promulgated by Turgot in *A Philosophical Review of the Successive Advances of the Human Mind* (1750) was a kind of biblical catastrophism, the idea that an event or events described in sacred history had wiped the slate clean and reset the clock of civilization to zero:

> Holy Writ, after having enlightened us about the creation of the universe, the origin of man, and the birth of the first arts, before long puts before us a picture of the human race concentrated again in a single family as the result of a universal flood. Scarcely had it begun to make good its losses when the miraculous confusion of tongues forced men to separate from one another. The urgent need to procure subsistence for themselves in barren deserts, which provided nothing but wild beasts, obliged them to move apart from one another in all directions and hastened their diffusion through the whole world. Soon the original traditions were forgotten; and the nations, separated as they were by vast distances and still more by the diversity of languages, strangers to one another, were almost all plunged into the same barbarism in which we still see the Americans.[16]

This, the crucial compromise, allowed conjectural history and economic stage theory to be reconciled with sacred history. Sacred history provided historians with at least three catastrophes—the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the Universal Deluge, and the destruction of the Tower of Babel—that could be said to have returned humankind to a primitive condition. The ascent of man, as predicted by theories of progress, could begin from any of the three points.

Of these, the Deluge easily loomed the largest. An event of monstrous significance, it has seldom failed to grip the European imagination.[17] The Deluge was a prominent feature in the geological treatises of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and figures significantly in other writings. Its implications were not lost on historians and economists. In his *On the Origin of Laws, Arts, and Sciences* (1758), Antoine-Yves Goguet argued that the Deluge caused humans to forget the use of iron and other metals and return to the use of tools based on stone.[18] Ferguson also made an allusion to the Deluge.[19] And it was not just conjectural historians who played with the idea. Bossuet's great *Universal History* suggested how mankind was

[14] Ronald L. Meek, ed. and trans., *Turgot on Progress, Sociology and Economics* (Cambridge, 1973), 42, 65.

[15] Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. Fania Oz-Salzberger (Cambridge, 1995), 74.

[16] Meek, *Turgot on Progress*, 42.

[17] See most recently Norman Cohn, *Noah's Flood: The Genesis Story in Western Thought* (New Haven, Conn., 1996).

[18] See Donald K. Grayson, *The Establishment of Human Antiquity* (New York, 1983), 12–13, for similar arguments made by Goguet's contemporaries.

[19] Ferguson, *An Essay*, 74.

reduced to nearly nothing after the Deluge and then, by degrees, slowly emerged from ignorance, transforming woods and forests into fields, pastures, hamlets, and towns, and learning how to domesticate animals.[20] This use of the Deluge as a resetting event in both sacred history and geology would persist into the nineteenth century.[21]

Conjectural historians, it is true, were not much interested in origins. Sacred historians such as Ralegh and Bossuet, in turn, wrote much about the Deluge but were correspondingly less interested in outlining the stages of postdiluvial progress. It was the Neapolitan historian Giambattista Vico who, in his *New Science* (1725), most persuasively reconciled the Deluge with the theory of human progress.[22] Vico was not widely known in his own day, but his *New Science* was rediscovered in the early decades of the nineteenth century, and his reputation was resurrected to the point where he, with Leopold von Ranke, has often been called the father of modern history. His emphasis on the Deluge was the key element of a philosophy designed to orient history around the proper interpretation of myths and legends, thereby avoiding idle speculation and armchair philosophizing. A consequence of this approach was to exclude sacred history from the terrain of the secular historian, on the theory that no documents apart from the sacred writings carried by Noah had survived the flood.[23]

Vico was clearly attracted to the idea of progress. But whereas Bodin was disinterested in the Deluge, preferring instead to describe ante- and postdiluvial societies as identical in their primitiveness, Vico molded it into a powerful punctuating event.[24] The singular importance of the Deluge in Vico's history is reflected in the chronological table printed in *New Science*, which begins in the year 1656 A.M. (*anno mundi*), the year of the Deluge. In a telling phrase, Vico actually describes his work as "a new natural history of the universal flood."[25] By the light of this natural history, the Deluge was seen as a catastrophic event that forced humans into the most primitive of conditions, far more abject than anything experienced in the preceding 1,656 years of sacred history. His enthusiasm reflected in his redundancy, Vico writes in many places of a period of brutish wandering during which the three tribes of men were scattered throughout the world's forests and copulated promiscuously with mothers and daughters, unmindful of kinship. Much that Vico wrote was compatible, and designed to be compatible, with the anthropology of his day.

Far more than Turgot, Vico's concept of historical chronology was thoroughly permeated by a philosophy of catastrophism. Catastrophism, the dominant paradigm in eighteenth-century geology, was not antithetical to conjectural history. Concerned

[20] Bossuet, *Universal History*, 8–10.

[21] For example, Sharon Turner, *The History of the Anglo-Saxons from the Earliest Period to the Norman Conquest* (1799–1805; repr., Philadelphia, Pa., 1841), 1: 27–28; David Ramsay, *Universal History Americanised; or, An Historical View of the World, from the Earliest Records to the Year 1808* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1819), 9–22. See also Charles Coulston Gillespie, *Genesis and Geology: A Study in the Relations of Scientific Thought, Natural Theology and Social Opinion in Great Britain, 1790–1850* (New York, 1951); George W. Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, 1987), 33–34, 43.

[22] Giambattista Vico, *New Science*, 3rd ed., trans. David Marsh (London, 1999).

[23] A trend under way since the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries; see Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1994), 171–185.

[24] For the single bland reference to the flood in the pages where Bodin dismantles the myth of a Golden Age, see *Method*, 298.

[25] Vico, *New Science*, 33, 143.

with process, conjectural historians did not trouble themselves with origins. To make their schemes work, all they needed was a set of primitive or presocial conditions. They could make their peace with the idea that a catastrophe such as the Deluge had reset the clock to zero. In this view, history did not have to begin with human origins, where Eusebius, Otto of Freising, Ralegh, and other general historians had chosen to begin. Instead, the catastrophic paradigm authorized a history that began in the middle, on the heels of a catastrophe. The philosophy promoted so vividly by Vico, in other words, authorized the compression of historical time. This compression would persist long after the Deluge vanished from the historical imagination.

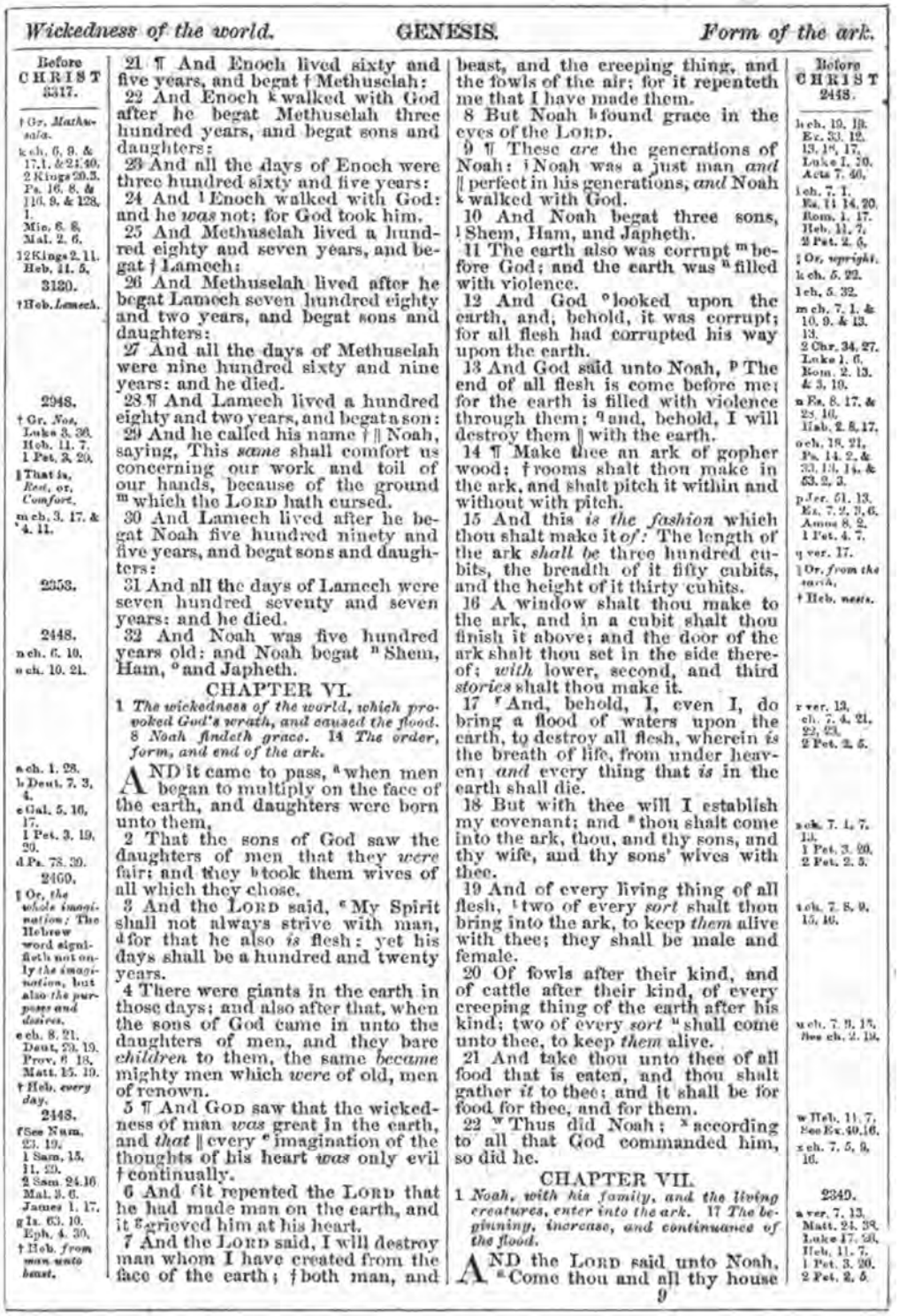
THE COMPRESSION OF HISTORICAL TIME made little practical difference as long as historical time itself was of short duration. Until the discovery and acceptance of deep time in the middle of the nineteenth century, human history as imagined in the Judeo-Christian tradition was coterminous with the history of the earth itself.[26] It is true that Aristotle and others had proposed the idea of an eternal earth, and speculations on the age of the world greatly engaged ancient and medieval philosophers. Historians writing in the Judeo-Christian tradition could hardly resist the temptation to assign a date, and assiduously combed the book of Genesis for clues. Genesis, alas, speaks of generations, not dates, and historians were forced to count generations in the manner of previous Greek, Syrian, and Jewish historians. In the fourth century, Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, had Adam created in the year 5198 B.C., and this was the date used by Jerome, Paulus Orosius, and many other Christian historians. In the seventeenth century, the busy recalculations of a number of scholars resulted in a diversity of dates, ranging from 3700 to 7000 B.C., although the date favored by James Ussher, 4004 B.C., soon emerged as the consensus.[27] A chronology beginning at this date was then added to the margins of English editions of the Old Testament so that readers could, at a glance, locate themselves in time. Bossuet's *Universal History* likewise provided chronologies in the margins that served to date events both by counting up, from Creation and by counting down to the birth of Jesus. (See Figures 1 and 2.)

The chronological scaffolding generated by this computational industry was an important intellectual step, because it provided a ready means for making instant comparisons between the chronologies of different civilizations. The idea was central to the work of some ancient historians and had a significant influence on early modern historians.[28] In the sixteenth century, Joseph Scaliger and Jean Bodin massaged the existing schemes into a grand system of universal time. The concordances promoted by this work suggested problems with conventional Judeo-Christian dating, for growing contact with Chinese, Indian, and Aztec civilizations was exposing Europeans to time scales that were not counted in the mere thousands of years. Scaliger, for example, pointed out that Chinese cosmology went back more than 880,000 years, and in 1658 the Jesuit Father Martini found that Chinese annals, suitably transposed

[26] What follows relies on Paolo Rossi, *The Dark Abyss of Time: The History of the Earth and the History of Nations from Hooke to Vico*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago, 1984).

[27] Ibid., 144.

[28] Breisach, *Historiography*, 10, 69–70, 81–82.



Wickedness of the world. GENESIS. *Form of the ark.*

Before CHRIST 3317.

21 ¶ And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat † Methuselah:
22 And Enoch [k] walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:
23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:
24 And ‖ Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him.
25 And Methuselah lived a hundred eighty and seven years, and begat † Lamech:
26 And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters:
27 And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.
28 ¶ And Lamech lived a hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son:
29 And he called his name † ‖ Noah, saying, This *same* shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground [m] which the LORD hath cursed.
30 And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters:
31 And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died.
32 And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat [n] Shem, Ham, [o] and Japheth.

CHAPTER VI.

1 *The wickedness of the world, which provoked God's wrath, and caused the flood.* 8 *Noah findeth grace.* 14 *The order, form, and end of the ark.*

AND it came to pass, [a] when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,
2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they [b] took them wives of all which they chose.
3 And the LORD said, [c] My Spirit shall not always strive with man, [d] for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.
4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.
5 ¶ And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* ‖ every [e] imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil † continually.
6 And [f] it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it [g] grieved him at his heart.
7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; † both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.
8 But Noah [h] found grace in the eyes of the LORD.
9 ¶ These *are* the generations of Noah: [i] Noah was a just man *and* ‖ perfect in his generations, *and* Noah [k] walked with God.
10 And Noah begat three sons, ‖ Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
11 The earth also was corrupt [m] before God; and the earth was [n] filled with violence.
12 And God [o] looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.
13 And God said unto Noah, [p] The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; [q] and, behold, I will destroy them ‖ with the earth.
14 ¶ Make thee an ark of gopher wood; † rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.
15 And this *is the fashion* which thou shalt make it *of*: The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.
16 A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; *with* lower, second, and third *stories* shalt thou make it.
17 [r] And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life, from under heaven; *and* every thing that *is* in the earth shall die.
18 But with thee will I establish my covenant; and [s] thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.
19 And of every living thing of all flesh, ‖ two of every *sort* shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep *them* alive with thee; they shall be male and female.
20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind; two of every *sort* [u] shall come unto thee, to keep *them* alive.
21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather *it* to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.
22 [w] Thus did Noah; [x] according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

CHAPTER VII.

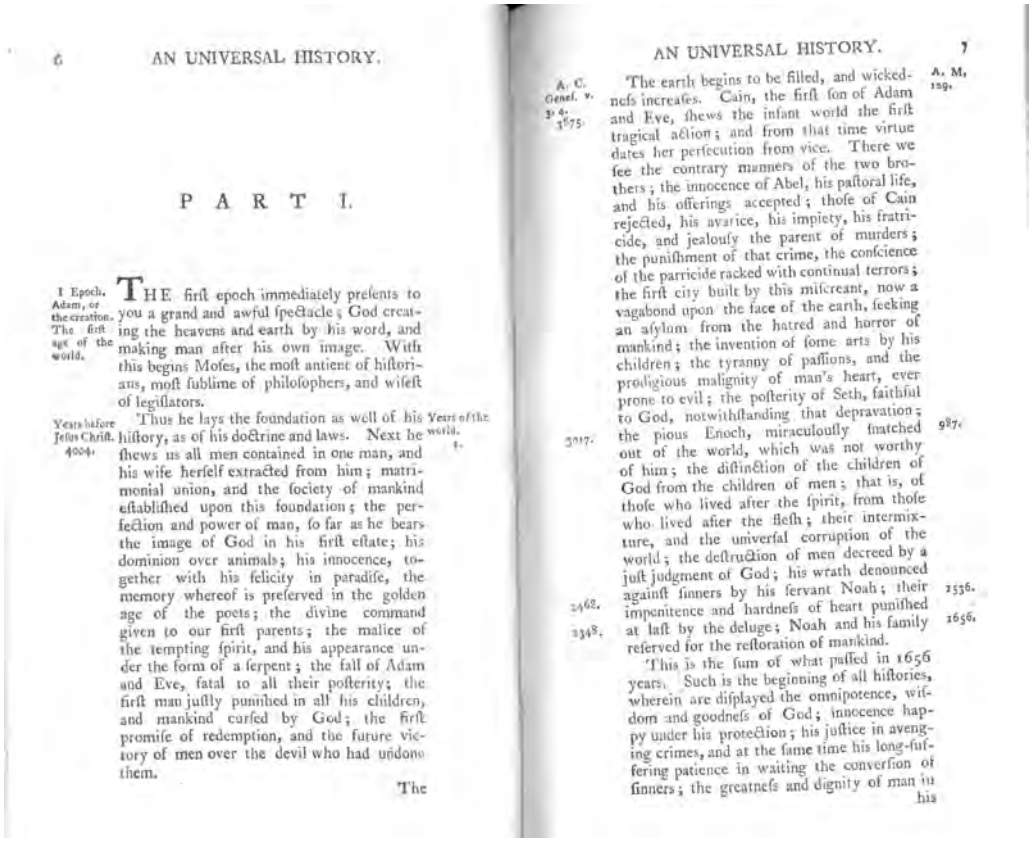
1 *Noah, with his family, and the living creatures, enter into the ark.* 17 *The beginning, increase, and continuance of the flood.*

AND the LORD said unto Noah, [a] Come thou and all thy house

Before CHRIST 2448.

Before CHRIST 2348.

FIGURE 1: Page from an 1868 edition of the Bible, illustrating marginal dates. Author's collection.



6 AN UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

PART I.

1 Epoch. Adam, or the creation. The firſt age of the world.

THE firſt epoch immediately preſents to you a grand and awful ſpectacle; God creating the heavens and earth by his word, and making man after his own image. With this begins Moſes, the moſt antient of hiſtorians, moſt ſublime of philoſophers, and wiſeſt of legiſlators.

Years before Jeſus Chriſt. 4004.

Thus he lays the foundation as well of his hiſtory, as of his doctrine and laws. Next he ſhews us all men contained in one man, and his wife herſelf extracted from him; matrimonial union, and the ſociety of mankind eſtabliſhed upon this foundation; the perfection and power of man, ſo far as he bears the image of God in his firſt eſtate; his dominion over animals; his innocence, together with his felicity in paradiſe, the memory whereof is preſerved in the golden age of the poets; the divine command given to our firſt parents; the malice of the tempting ſpirit, and his appearance under the form of a ſerpent; the fall of Adam and Eve, fatal to all their poſterity; the firſt man juſtly puniſhed in all his children, and mankind curſed by God; the firſt promiſe of redemption, and the future victory of men over the devil who had undone them.

Years of the world. 1.

The

AN UNIVERSAL HISTORY. 7

A. C. 4075. Genel. v. 3, 4.

The earth begins to be filled, and wickedneſs increaſes. Cain, the firſt ſon of Adam and Eve, ſhews the infant world the firſt tragical action; and from that time virtue dates her perſecution from vice. There we ſee the contrary manners of the two brothers; the innocence of Abel, his paſtoral life, and his offerings accepted; thoſe of Cain rejected, his avarice, his impiety, his fratricide, and jealouſy the parent of murders; the puniſhment of that crime, the conſcience of the parricide racked with continual terrors; the firſt city built by this miſcreant, now a vagabond upon the face of the earth, ſeeking an aſylum from the hatred and horror of mankind; the invention of ſome arts by his children; the tyranny of paſſions, and the prodigious malignity of man's heart, ever prone to evil; the poſterity of Seth, faithful to God, notwithſtanding that depravation; the pious Enoch, miraculouſly ſnatched out of the world, which was not worthy of him; the diſtinction of the children of God from the children of men; that is, of thoſe who lived after the ſpirit, from thoſe who lived after the fleſh; their intermixture, and the univerſal corruption of the world; the deſtruction of men decreed by a juſt judgment of God; his wrath denounced againſt ſinners by his ſervant Noah; their impenitence and hardneſs of heart puniſhed at laſt by the deluge; Noah and his family reſerved for the reſtoration of mankind.

A. M. 129.

3017.

987.

2462. 2536.

2348. 2656.

This is the ſum of what paſſed in 1656 years. Such is the beginning of all hiſtories, wherein are diſplayed the omnipotence, wiſdom and goodneſs of God; innocence happy under his protection; his juſtice in avenging crimes, and at the ſame time his long-ſuffering patience in waiting the converſion of ſinners; the greatneſs and dignity of man in his

FIGURE 2: Page from Jacques Bénigne Bossuet's *An Universal History* (1785), illustrating marginal dates. Reproduced courtesy of Fordham University Library.

onto a Christian dating scheme, were reliably recording events that took place more than six hundred years before the Deluge.[29] Growing awareness of the great antiquity of Sumerian, Chaldean, and Egyptian civilization was equally problematic. Work on Egyptian chronology suggested that Egyptian civilization dated back nearly to the Deluge itself, perhaps even before. How could so sophisticated a civilization have arisen in so short a time? Bodin was much troubled by these problems. The answer that he and others proposed was that all non-Mosaic chronologies either were fabulous or were written in the spirit of envy.[30] A second solution was to prefer the Greek Septuagint over the Hebrew Bible, since the Septuagint allowed an additional 1,440 years. In such ways, the intellectual challenge posed by lengthy Egyptian, Indian, and Chinese chronologies was, at least temporarily, absorbed and overcome.

But challenges to the grip of sacred chronology were not coming from historians alone, for geology, paleontology, ethnology, and natural history also found Ussher's date too constricting. That marine fossils such as shells and sharks' teeth were found on mountaintops had always been something of a problem. One could suppose that they were just odd-looking rocks or freaks of nature laid down by a playful God.

[29] Rossi, *Dark Abyss*, 136, 140.
[30] Bodin, *Method*, 303–333.

Alternatively, they were carried aloft by the waters of the universal Deluge. Fossils embedded in rock were also a conundrum. By what process could a solid object enter another solid object? For those who admitted the natural origin of such fossils, the solution lay in the proposal that rocks formed in layers through a gradual process of sedimentation.[31] The resulting realization that layered strata represented geological time did not immediately subvert biblical chronology, since no one knew how long it had taken the layers to form. Imaginative solutions were also devised for other emerging problems, including the tilting of the bedding planes, the discovery of strange creatures such as ammonites, and the presence of humans in the New World. Even so, by the 1750s, the loosening of the grip of sacred chronology had proceeded to a point where some were postulating an earth that was millions of years old, although such opinions were decidedly in the minority.[32]

The idea of a very old earth was easily dismissed by orthodox Christian theologians and by distinguished scientists alike, for it created as many problems as it solved. Critics seldom failed to notice that mountains had not eroded away in all the time supposedly available. This particular obstacle was solved by the Scottish geologist James Hutton, who argued in the late eighteenth century that mountains were being continually uplifted and continents remade in a process that "has no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end." Hutton did not insist on an eternal, uncreated earth. All he claimed was that no trace of the primeval earth could have survived the endless recycling of materials. Eschewing the search for origins, he focused instead on geological mechanisms, in much the same way that conjectural historians typically avoided questions of human origins and instead focused attention on lawlike processes.[33]

Evidence for the antiquity of the earth continued to mount in the early decades of the nineteenth century, and the field of geology developed apace. By the 1840s, geology's basic chronology, based on the succession of strata, had been worked out by the British geologist Charles Lyell, who published his *Principles of Geology* in the 1830s and remained a powerful advocate of uniformitarian geology for the next forty years. Lyell's ideas were contested in his own day, and in 1868 the estimate made by the future Lord Kelvin that a molten earth first consolidated a hundred million years ago—a figure later reduced to twenty to forty million years—put an end to any ideas of an eternal earth.[34] Yet the Aristotelian idea of an eternal earth has been vindicated in a sense by the current estimate that the earth is around four and a half billion years old, easily old enough to accommodate the gradual geological and biological processes on which people such as Lyell and Charles Darwin were most insistent.

Even as the field of geology was emerging as a science in the first half of the nineteenth century, antiquarians in Denmark, England, and France were excavating

[31] The leading figure here was Nicholas Steno, discussed in Alan Cutler, *The Seashell on the Mountaintop: A Story of Science, Sainthood, and the Humble Genius Who Discovered a New History of the Earth* (New York, 2003).

[32] See Rossi, *Dark Abyss*, 109; Claude Albritton, *The Abyss of Time: Changing Conceptions of the Earth's Antiquity after the Sixteenth Century* (San Francisco, Calif., 1980), 73, 85; Grayson, *Establishment*, 31–35.

[33] Mott T. Greene, *Geology in the Nineteenth Century: Changing Views of a Changing World* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982), 19–45; Rossi, *Dark Abyss*, 113–118.

[34] Joe D. Burchfield, *Lord Kelvin and the Age of the Earth* (London, 1975).

strata in which eoliths (early human stone tools) lay alongside extinct animals such as cave bears and mammoths.[35] The implications were obvious and had been noted since the very last decade of the eighteenth century. Yet Lyell originally resisted the attempt to associate geological time with human antiquity. A British chauvinist, he dismissed the evidence for man's antiquity compiled by French archaeologists. A sensational archaeological discovery in 1859, this time on English soil, finally convinced the geologists to support the idea of Pleistocene humans. Paleontology and prehistoric anthropology sprang up as legitimate scientific disciplines in the 1860s, and the proposition that humans had moved through Stone, Bronze, and Iron ages emerged as the fundamental chronological scheme of archaeology. John Lubbock later subdivided the Stone Age into old and new, Paleolithic and Neolithic, the latter associated with the agricultural revolution. Ethnologists such as Lewis Henry Morgan found the long chronology wonderfully liberating and took to it with great enthusiasm.[36] A crucial element of the time revolution was Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859, which offered a way to link the history of life and the descent of humanity to the emerging geological time scale, thereby unifying biological time.[37] *The Origin of Species* was soon followed by Lyell's *Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man* (1863) and Lubbock's *Pre-Historic Times* (1865), constituting the three works that lie at the heart of the time revolution of the 1860s.

THE STAGES OF THE DISCOVERY OF DEEP TIME are well known to historians of science, and figure in the standard disciplinary narratives of the great historical sciences. But what were historians doing as the understanding of time was transformed in the second half of the nineteenth century? Looking back from the early twentieth century, James Harvey Robinson could still reflect on the event with wonder: "Half a century ago, man's past was supposed to include less than six thousand years; now the story is seen to stretch back hundreds of thousands of years."[38] Other historians were at best indifferent. Yet despite the magnitude and implications of the revolution, the question of how historians accommodated deep time had not been seriously addressed until recently.

The later nineteenth and early twentieth century was the great age for patriotic histories of particular nations. In this climate, the urge to write universal histories was partially eclipsed. Even so, a good many works of general history circulated in the United States in the decades following the time revolution of the 1860s, including works imported from Europe as well as home-grown products.[39] Some of these were written for the general market. Others—a growing number—were explicitly designed for use in the classroom. Out of this pool of ideas and threads eventually

[35] In addition to works already cited, see A. Bowdoin van Riper, *Men among the Mammoths: Victorian Science and the Discovery of Human Prehistory* (Chicago, 1993).

[36] Thomas R. Trautmann, *Lewis Henry Morgan and the Invention of Kinship* (Berkeley, Calif., 1987), esp. 32–35 and 205–230.

[37] Ibid., 213.

[38] James Harvey Robinson, *The New History: Essays Illustrating the Modern Historical Outlook* (New York, 1912), 26. On Robinson, see Segal, "'Western Civ,'" esp. 771–779.

[39] For a useful survey of the important general histories of this period, see Charles Kendall Adams, *A Manual of Historical Literature* (New York, 1882), 31–41.

emerged the narrative forms that would take shape as Western Civ textbooks, first published in the early decades of the twentieth century. In all these sources we can find clues revealing how some historians reacted to the challenge of deep time.

In an age when so eminent a figure as the geologist Louis Agassiz could persist in his adherence to the idea of divine creation, it would be surprising if all historians accepted the long chronology without demur. The last edition of Royal Robbins's *Outlines of Ancient and Modern History on a New Plan* (1875), first published in 1830, was uncompromisingly sacred and treated Darwin as an infidel.[40] Reuben Parsons's *Universal History* (1902), written for an American Catholic audience, included an unapologetic defense of sacred history.[41] An especially significant source of resistance came from the great German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), who continued to affirm the truth of sacred history in his unfinished *Universal History*. On the other hand, the Oxford historians Edward Freeman and J. R. Green were remarkable for their cautious but sincere and early acceptance of the long chronology.[42] Amos Dean, in his seven-volume *History of Civilization* (1868), acknowledged the probability "that human life has existed on the planet during a much longer period than has been generally supposed," even though he perceived no investigative need to breach the barrier created by the Deluge.[43]

Rather than assessing nineteenth-century historians according to the litmus test of belief, however, it behooves us to ask whether the long chronology made any difference to the framing of history. Daniel Segal has argued that few late-nineteenth-century historians made a serious effort to build a meaningful historical continuum bottomed in the deep past.[44] In the general histories published before 1900, prehistory was simply tacked on at the beginning, or even reduced to a footnote.[45] What they offered, moreover, was little enough. In his important *Outlines of Universal History* (1885), the American historian George Fisher gave just a few paragraphs summarizing recent archaeological discoveries. In a general history first published in 1883, the French historian Victor Duruy, one of Fisher's sources, offered a little more. Even so, his contribution, in the 1925 English edition, amounted to no more than 7 pages in a text 892 pages in length.[46] One of the most sustained efforts by a historian to summarize the discoveries of archaeology can be found in the tenth edition of the *Storia Universale*, published in 1884 by the Italian novelist and general historian Cesare Cantù. Cantù was deeply engaged with biological, archaeological, and geological discoveries; the prefatory material is studded with references to scholarship on geological and prehistorical time, and Cantù devoted four chapters to the primitive world and theories about early human society.[47] But this incorporation of the paleoanthropological evidence was a curiously ironic gesture, because Cantù

[40] Royal Robbins, *Outlines of Ancient and Modern History on a New Plan* (Hartford, Conn., 1875).

[41] Reuben Parsons, *Universal History: An Explanatory Narrative*, vol. 1: *Ancient History from the Creation of Man until the Fall of the Roman Empire* (Yonkers, N.Y., 1902).

[42] See Goldstein, "Confronting Time."

[43] Amos Dean, *The History of Civilization*, 7 vols. (Albany, 1868), 1: 47, 51.

[44] Segal, " 'Western Civ,' " 774–775.

[45] E.g., Richard Green Parker, *Outlines of General History* (New York, 1848), 9.

[46] Victor Duruy, *General History of the World* (New York, 1925). First published in France in 1883, Duruy's *Histoire Générale* was translated for the U.S. market in 1898 and went through several editions until 1929.

[47] Cesare Cantù, *Storia Universale*, 10th ed. (Turin, 1884).

professed an adherence to the truths of sacred history and discussed the paleoanthropological evidence only so as to disprove it.

Cantù's skepticism aside, the problem of incorporating prehistory into the narrative was not just one of belief. It was also one of imagination. One could be open to the idea of deep history without knowing quite what to do with it. A remarkable solution to this narratival difficulty was to reimagine the European Middle Ages as a period of darkness so profound as to duplicate the social state of primitive savagery. In this new schema, ancient history stood in for the golden era of antediluvial sacred history, and medieval Europe was transformed into the primitive world of the immediate postdiluvial age. In an echo of a Huttonian geology that eschewed the search for origins and focused instead on process, general historians of the nineteenth century found that they had no need for genesis and could focus instead on the progress that mankind had made since the most recent catastrophe.

The very idea of a pseudo-primitive Dark Age influenced the ways in which nineteenth-century historians framed the history of civilization. The Enlightenment denigration of the European Middle Ages had made it easy to view the original inhabitants of Europe and the invaders of Rome as crude barbarians, little different from the primitive peoples that figured in conjectural histories and anthropological prehistories. Adam Ferguson made the parallel explicit, describing the Gauls, Germans, and Britons as resembling the natives of North America in their ignorance of agriculture and their tendency to paint themselves and wear the skins of animals.[48] Edward Gibbon himself wrote of a "deluge of Barbarians."[49] These barbarians gradually came to stand in for Paleolithic man in the developmental schemes of Western history. Medieval historians in the United States, deeply influenced by the idea of biological evolution and geological time, routinely referred to the early Germanic tribes using words such as "primitive."[50] Doris Goldstein, writing about Freeman and Green, has suggested that "their forays into what they described as the 'primeval' or the 'primitive' were closely related to their interest in the early history of the Teutonic tribes."[51] Historians used the word in a positive developmental sense, as this 1899 paean to the era makes clear: "in the middle ages we are to see the beginnings of ourselves. We are the perfectly legitimate descendants of mediaeval men, and we have no ideas, no institutions, no manners that are not shot through and through with thread of mediaeval spinning."[52] Nineteenth-century historians were deeply attracted to the idea that progress followed on the heels of a resetting event. All that changed was the event itself, as the aqueous Deluge was transformed into a deluge of barbarians.

This is not the place to explore in detail the refashioning of the European Middle Ages in nineteenth-century historiography. Here it is enough to suggest that medieval Europe's capacity to serve as a doppelganger for the primitive past helps

[48] Ferguson, *An Essay*, 75.

[49] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, abridged by D. M. Low (New York, 1962), 524–525.

[50] In general, see Gabrielle Spiegel, "L'histoire scientifique et les utilisations antimodernistes du passé dans le médiévisme américain," *Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques, Réflexions Historiographiques* 22 (1999): 87–108.

[51] Goldstein, "Confronting Time," 25.

[52] Arthur Richmond Marsh, "Special Introduction," in Henry Hallam, *History of Europe during the Middle Ages*, rev. ed. (New York, 1899), 1: iv–v.

explain why some historians failed to engage more seriously with the Paleolithic. Another problem with the Paleolithic lay in the inability of prehistorians to date their findings with confidence, since the lack of a chronological scaffolding made it impossible to attach prehistory to the grid of historical time, as J. L. Myres noted in 1911.[53] Yet the most prominent obstacle to the incorporation of prehistory centered on how nineteenth-century historians imagined the evidence appropriate for the study of history.[54] Since the seventeenth century, when schemes for lengthening the age of the earth first began to circulate, the "time beyond history" has been dismissed as unknowable. "All of that time was unknown and concealed," remarked Philippe Le Prieur in 1656.[55] Turgot said much the same. Vico denied the possibility of approaching the time before the Deluge via the products of vernacular language, since all such languages postdated the Deluge. Nineteenth-century archaeologists spoke of the fog that obscured their vision of the pre-Christian era. Lubbock summed up the philosophy of those opposed to prehistoric archaeology in the opening paragraph of *Pre-Historic Times*:

> The first appearance of man in Europe dates from a period so remote, that neither history, nor even tradition, can throw any light on his origin, or mode of life. Under these circumstances, some have supposed that the past is hidden from the present by a veil, which time will probably thicken, but never can remove . . . Some writers have assured us that, in the words of Palgrave, "We must give it up, that speechless past."[56]

That speechless past: no other phrase could capture so well the skeptical attitude toward the possibility of studying time beyond the veil.

Lubbock's comment on the prejudices that hampered the acceptance of prehistoric archaeology aptly describe the epistemological stance taken by Leopold von Ranke. In the remarkable opening paragraph of his *Universal History*, published in the 1880s, Ranke deliberately refused to breach the veil of prehistory:

> History cannot discuss the origin of society, for the art of writing, which is the basis of historical knowledge, is a comparatively late invention. The earth had become habitable and was inhabited, nations had arisen and international connections had been formed, and the elements of civilization had appeared, while that art was still unknown. The province of History is limited by the means at her command, and the historian would be over-bold who should venture to unveil the mystery of the primeval world, the relation of mankind to God and nature. The solution of such problems must be intrusted to the joint efforts of Theology and Science.[57]

Or in the words of the French historians Charles Langlois and Charles Seignobos: "The historian works with documents. Documents are the traces which have been left by the thoughts and actions of men of former times . . . For want of documents

[53] J. L. Myres, *The Dawn of History* (New York, 1911), 8–10.
[54] Segal, " 'Western Civ,' " 774–775.
[55] Quoted in Rossi, *Dark Abyss*, 159.
[56] John Lubbock, *Pre-Historic Times, as Illustrated by Ancient Remains, and the Manners and Customs of Modern Savages*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1872), 1.
[57] Leopold von Ranke, *Universal History: The Oldest Historical Group of Nations and the Greeks*, ed. G. W. Prothero, trans. D. C. Tovey and G. W. Prothero (New York, 1885), ix.

the history of immense periods in the past of humanity is destined to remain for ever unknown. For there is no substitute for documents: no documents, no history."[58]

No documents, no history. A feature of Vico's *New Science*, this epistemological stance was repackaged by Ranke and others in the nineteenth century and promulgated as a basis for scientific history. Admittedly, not all of Ranke's contemporaries shared this point of view.[59] So how did Ranke and others arrive at this stance? One can, with Herbert Butterfield, point out that Ranke was trying to preserve the realm of history from the speculations of philosophers.[60] But it is important not to lose sight of the fact that Ranke, like Vico, accepted the truths of sacred history. Early chapters of *Universal History* echo the sacred histories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ranke's firm belief that "the course of history revealed God's work," in Peter Novick's phrase, is well known.[61] In other words, Ranke arguably promoted writing as the sole reliable basis of historical knowledge, not just because he sought to place history on a scientific footing, but also because this was the only way he knew how to exclude prehistorical artifacts from historical reckoning and thereby dodge the vexed theological questions created by biology and archaeology.

In its attitude toward evidence, an important strand of late-nineteenth-century scientific history embedded a resistance to deep time under the guise of a neutral professionalizing agenda. By the turn of the century, however, some of the intellectual obstacles to prehistory were fading. The discovery of cave paintings in the 1870s and 1880s was a jolt to those who doubted the humanity of Paleolithic humans, because the capacity to create art was seen as a symbol of a higher world view—evidence for the thinking, feeling human so difficult to detect in the eoliths and bones that had hitherto dominated the archaeological world.[62] Lord Kelvin's thermodynamic principles had done away with the idea of an ageless earth, and although his dates proved wrong, it was nonetheless clear that the earth had a datable point of origin that was immensely old. Prehistorical dates were circulating widely in the works of acknowledged authorities such as Sir Arthur Keith, and although these, too, were inaccurate, they nonetheless provided a chronological scaffolding on which historians could begin to build.[63] (See Figure 3.)The tendency to focus exclusively on the political or constitutional history of nations was being challenged by the rise of social and economic history, fields that focused on how people lived in the past, not just on how they were governed.

In the wake of these changes, the New History of the 1910s and 1920s saw some remarkable attempts to bridge the gap between prehistory and history. In 1913, the

[58] Charles V. Langlois and Charles Seignobos, *Introduction to the Study of History*, trans. G. G. Berry (New York, 1898), 17. See also 145: "A document only contains the ideas of the man who wrote it . . . We thus arrive at this general rule of method: the study of every document should begin with an analysis of its contents, made with the sole aim of determining the real meaning of the author."

[59] Goldstein, "Confronting Time," 13, 18.

[60] Butterfield, *Man on His Past*, 103–104.

[61] Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, 1988), 27; see also Breisach, *Historiography*, 233.

[62] John Pfeiffer, *The Creative Explosion: An Inquiry into the Origins of Art and Religion* (New York, 1982), 19–39; Grahame Clark, *World Prehistory in New Perspective* (Cambridge, 1977), 3–4.

[63] Sir Arthur Keith, *New Discoveries Relating to the Antiquity of Man* (1915; repr., New York, 1931).

English historian James Bryce spoke enthusiastically about the possibility of a chronological expansion of the historians' terrain.[64] In 1916, the Berkeley historian Frederick Teggart suggested that "the historian has come to see that there is no hard and fast boundary between 'historic' and 'prehistoric' times, between 'historical' and 'unhistorical' peoples; the history of Man includes man everywhere and at all times . . . Anthropology and History differ only in so far as each represents the use of a special investigative technique."[65] At the same time, in his *New History*, Robinson was arguing forcefully for a historical understanding that would embrace the Paleolithic, and castigated his peers for their failure to make the mental switch:

> There may still be historians who would argue that all this has nothing to do with history,—that it is "prehistoric." But "prehistoric" is a word that must go the way of "preadamite," which we used to hear. They both indicate a suspicion that we are in some way gaining illicit information about what happened before the footlights were turned on and the curtain rose on the great human drama. Of the so-called "prehistoric" period we, of course, know as yet very little indeed, but the bare fact that there was such a period constitutes in itself the most momentous of historical discoveries.[66]

If the time revolution of the 1860s had caused the bottom to drop out of history, "prehistory and its living representatives were a means of 're-bottoming' history." This is how Daniel Segal has characterized the result of Robinson's engagement with the long chronology.[67] In this schema, the primitive conditions of the Paleolithic are an essential element of the story of Western Civilization, because they serve as a convenient measure for our subsequent progress.

There is much truth to the argument that the New History was thoroughly permeated by a rejection of the short chronology. Certainly, the paragraph or two devoted to prehistory in nineteenth-century works such as Fisher's *Outlines of Universal History* generally grew to a short chapter or more in the textbooks and professional histories published in the United States after the 1920s.[68] Yet when Robinson actually applied this idea in his own textbook, *An Introduction to the History of Western Europe*, first published in 1903, the results proved to be quite otherwise. Consider the question posed at the very outset:

> One of the most difficult questions that a historical writer has to settle is the point at which he is to begin his tale . . . How far back shall we go to get a start? Modern research seems to show that man was a wandering, hunting animal for hundreds of thousands of years before he learned to settle down and domesticate animals, cultivate the soil, and plant and reap crops.[69]

So where did Robinson begin? The answer is perhaps inevitable: the European Middle Ages. Eschewing the need to return to the Paleolithic bottom, Robinson argued that because our civilization has descended directly from the fusion of Roman civ-

[64] Goldstein, "Confronting Time," 21–24.

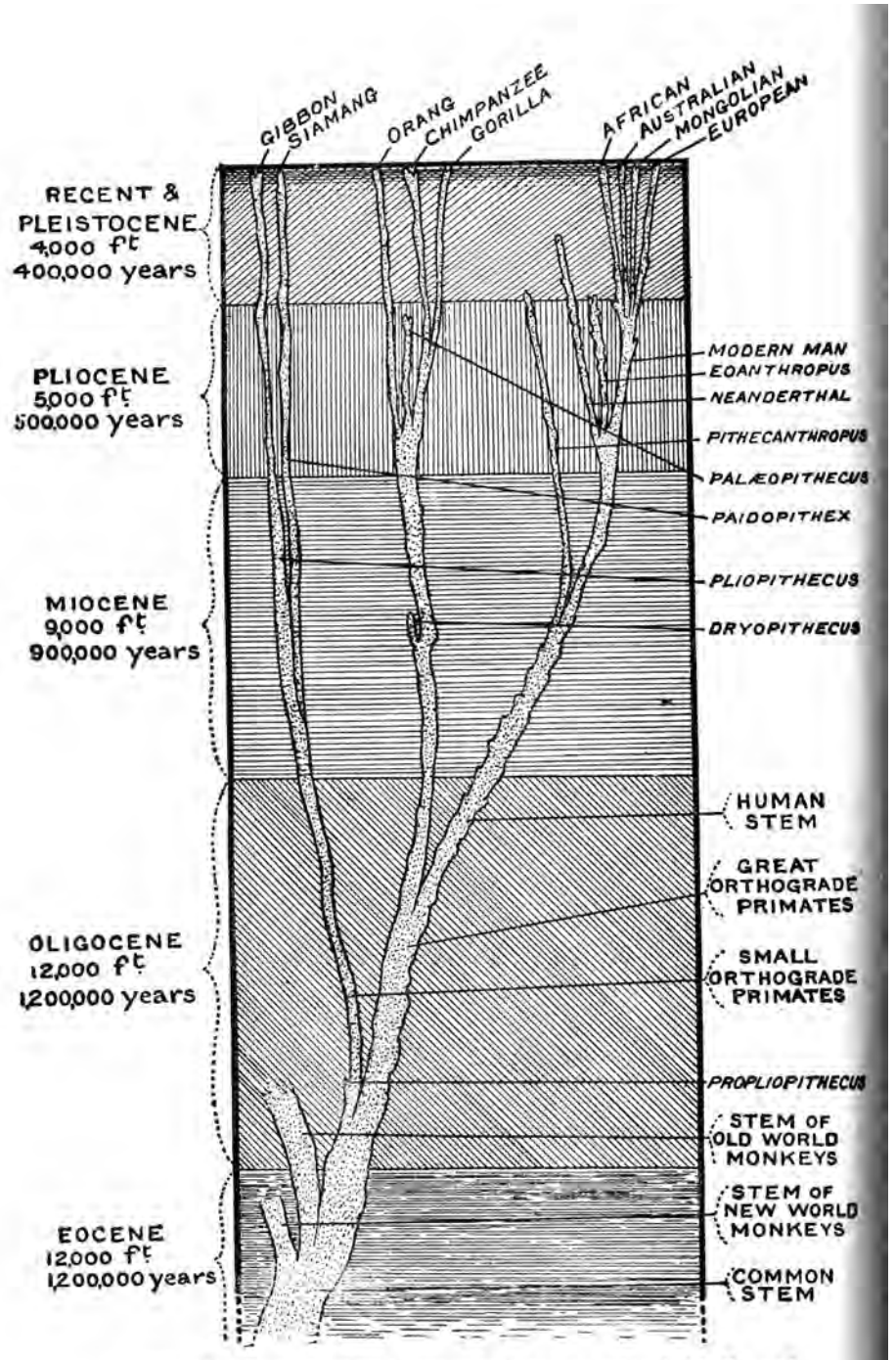
[65] Frederick J. Teggart, *Prolegomena to History: The Relation of History to Literature, Philosophy, and Science* (Berkeley, Calif., 1916), 276.

[66] Robinson, *New History*, 56.

[67] See Trautmann, *Lewis Henry Morgan*, 221; Segal, " 'Western Civ,' " 772, 775, 779.

[68] In general, see Segal, " 'Western Civ.' " Robinson himself cited favorably the 250 pages devoted to anthropology in Eduard Meyer's *History of Antiquity*; see Segal, " 'Western Civ,' " 89.

[69] I consulted the 1924 revised and enlarged edition of *An Introduction to the History of Western Europe* (Boston, 1924).



Genealogical tree, showing the ancestral stems and probable lines of descent of the higher primates.

FIGURE 3: The family tree of hominins, from the 1920 edition of Sir Arthur Keith's *The Antiquity of Man*. Reproduced courtesy of Fordham University Library.

ilization and medieval Europe, there is no particular need to go any earlier.[70] Recapitulating this argument in *The Ordeal of Civilization* (1926), he noted that "the development of our present civilization began with the first inventions and findings-out of mankind, of which no records remain." This is the great Rankean conundrum. "Fortunately," Robinson went on to say, "we can take up the story with the decline and break-up of the Roman Empire."[71] Subsequent passages reveal Robinson's assessment of where medieval Europe belongs on the scale of civilization:

> It seemed for a few years as if the new German kings . . . would succeed in keeping order and in preventing the loss of such civilization as remained. But no such good fortune was in store for western Europe, which was now only at the beginning of the turmoil which was to leave it almost completely barbarized, for there was little to encourage the reading or writing of books, the study of science, or attention to art, in a time of constant warfare and danger.[72]

Much like earlier historians who had chosen to begin history with the Deluge, Robinson sought to find the primitive in medieval Europe so as to have a more recent bottom on which to build history's narrative of progress.

Robinson, in other words, never really overcame the idea of rupture, the idea that some gulf separates us from the Paleolithic. With rare exceptions, textbooks and general histories published over the twentieth century followed more or less in his footsteps.[73] The gulf between prehistory and history was justified in a variety of ways. Robinson himself, thinking in a Rankean mode, made an epistemological distinction between remains and written documents.[74] Other historians claimed that documentary archives are more authoritative because their contents were *explicitly* designed to record information about the past. In the words of the authors of *The Illustrated World History* (1935), these constitute "conscious records."[75] Some have even claimed that the archive itself must be official, the product of intention. In a letter to a fellow historian written in 1927, J. Franklin Jameson rejected social history on the grounds that "you do not have definitely limited bodies of materials, handed down by authority, like statutes or other manageable series, but a vast blot of miscellaneous material from which the historian picks out what he wants."[76]

Another reason justifying the gulf between history and prehistory was lucidly expressed in Robert H. Labberton's *Universal History*, first published in 1871 and reprinted over the next few decades. Aware of the true depth of the human race, Labberton nonetheless held that a society can be subject to the gaze of history only when the society itself has a historical consciousness.[77] In *The Columbia History of*

[70] Ibid., 8–9. On Robinson's fusion of medieval with primitive, see also the brief remarks of Gilbert Allardyce, "The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course," *AHR* 87, no. 3 (June 1982): 704–705.

[71] James Harvey Robinson, *The Ordeal of Civilization* (New York, 1926), 7.

[72] Ibid., 35. See also 47 and 90.

[73] The most noteworthy exception among Western Civ textbooks is Harry Elmer Barnes, *The History of Western Civilization*, 2 vols. (New York, 1935), which was quite serious in its incorporation of the Paleolithic.

[74] Segal, " 'Western Civ,' " 779. One can still find variants on the Rankean argument; most recently, see Duiker and Spielvogel, *Essential World History*, 3.

[75] John Hammerton and Harry Elmer Barnes, eds., *The Illustrated World History: A Record of World Events from Earliest Historical Times to the Present Day* (New York, 1935), 7.

[76] Quoted in Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 89–90.

[77] Robert H. Labberton, *Labberton's Universal History, from the Earliest Times to the Present* (New York, 1902), xxi. See also François Pierre Guillaume Guizot, *A Popular History of France, from the Earliest Times*, trans. Robert Black (Boston, 1869), 1: 15.

the World, published a century later, the argument appears in this form: "History exists only in a persisting society which needs history to persist."[78] The consciousness of history, according to this argument, was itself a catalytic device that propelled humans across the gulf.

Still other historians echoed an argument that Fisher made in 1885 in his *Outlines of Universal History*, designed explicitly for use as a textbook in American secondary schools:

> History is concerned with the successive actions and fortunes of a community; in its broadest extent, with the experiences of the human family. It is only when men are connected by the social bond, and remain so united for a greater or lesser period, that there is room for history. It is, therefore, with *nations*, in their internal progress and in their mutual relations, that history especially deals. Of mere clans, or loosely organized tribes, it can have little to say.[79]

In 1909, John Bagnall Bury elevated this to a more systematic philosophy, arguing that anthropology dealt with presocial humans, whereas history "deals only with the development of man in societies."[80] Bury argued that the characteristic feature of society was the "differentiation of function" or division of labor, evidently assuming that primitive societies made no such distinctions. Still another argument held that early humans were not fully human, and that some event transformed them suddenly into civilized man. Consider Hermann Schneider's general history of world civilization, first published in German in 1927 and translated into English in 1931:

> There have been man-like creatures of the human breed (pre-humans, ape-men) for tens of thousands of years, nay, hundreds of thousands of years, before the Ice Age. Human beings proper have existed only since the end of the Ice Age; only then did ape-man develop into man on the road to civilization . . . Herein man surpasses the brutes; no animal before him ever took that step: here is the dividing-line between brutes and men.[81]

Schneider's views are an extreme version of a bias built into many world histories of the early twentieth century, namely, that humans were not quite human before civilization. It was civilization that made humanity, not humanity that made civilization.

This account embeds another perspective that was and remains common in a variety of twentieth-century general histories. In the nineteenth century, "prehistoric" meant "undocumented." A new shade of meaning was added in the twentieth, for "prehistoric" also came to mean a time before history, as if history had not moved in the eons before civilization. Current in some anthropological circles around the turn of the century was the belief that progress itself was highly unusual—authors such as Henry Sumner Maine and Walter Bagehot spoke instead of stationary societies and "fixity." Several decades later, Oswald Spengler wrote of a culture in stasis as being caught within a "historyless" period.[82] Ideas such as these, when applied to the deep past, constitute the myth of Paleolithic stasis.

[78] Garraty and Gay, *The Columbia History of the World*, 49.

[79] George Park Fisher, *Outlines of Universal History, Designed as a Text-Book and for Private Reading* (New York, 1885), 1.

[80] John Bagnall Bury, "Darwinism and History," in Bury, *Selected Essays of J.B. Bury*, ed. Harold W. V. Temperley (Cambridge, 1930), 32 n. 1. Similar ideas can be found in Max Savelle, ed., *A History of World Civilization* (New York, 1957), 1: 28.

[81] Hermann Schneider, *The History of World Civilization from Prehistoric Times to the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, trans. Margaret M. Green (New York, 1931), 3.

[82] Breisach, *Historiography*, 398.

The myth of Paleolithic stasis configured humanity's deep past as a grim and changeless era. The authors of a world history textbook for use in Catholic secondary schools, published in 1958, conveyed the idea nicely:

> Our imagination fails us when we try to see in the mind's eye the uncounted generations of Paleolithic people. We know what men have proved capable of accomplishing—their sciences and arts and great civilizations. Why, then, did they live for so long in the wilderness? It appears as if some great calamity had fallen upon human nature itself, as if some sentence of banishment and damnation had been laid on man by his Creator.[83]

Paleolithic stasis, in this view, was a result of the Fall. But what broke the stasis and set man on the move? Rather than catastrophe, some general histories of the twentieth century proposed the idea of a catalyzing event that introduced progress or direction into a society hitherto without history. Mott Greene characterizes the argument in this way: "at some point a leap took place, a mutation, an explosion of creative power—the 'discovery of mind,' or the 'birth of self-consciousness'—interposing a barrier between us and our previous brute, merely biological existence."[84] For the author of *A Brief History of Civilization* (1925), the events that brought mankind out of the "darkness" included the arrival of the Aryan race on the scene.[85] Schneider waffled between environmental changes and the fortuitous blending of human stocks.[86] In the more recent *Penguin History of the World*, J. M. Roberts postulates a new capacity for making conscious choices, a transformation that broke through what hitherto had been the dominating influence of genes and environment.[87]

An especially important catalyzing event was the invention of writing.[88] Eighteenth-century general historians were not particularly sensitive to the invention of writing as a historical event. By the nineteenth century, however, the invention of writing was beginning to figure prominently in historical accounts.[89] In 1928, Geoffrey Parsons introduced his chapter on the dawn of civilization in this way: "After 100,000 years of savagery and 10,000 years of barbarism the beginnings of writing and of civilization appeared at the eastern end of the Mediterranean."[90] Schneider identified the art of working in metal and writing as crucial events in Near Eastern history.[91] In later accounts, writing was thought to have allowed humankind to preserve valuable learning for posterity, and thus, for the first time, to have permitted human civilization to build upon itself in rapid Lamarckian fashion.[92] Historians such as Ranke had long argued that writing alone made the past knowable.

[83] Ross J. S. Hoffman, ed., *Man and His History: World History and Western Civilization* (Garden City, N.Y., 1958), 28.

[84] Greene, *Natural Knowledge*, 3.

[85] John S. Hoyland, *A Brief History of Civilization* (London, 1925), 24, 48, 49.

[86] Schneider, *The History of World Civilization*, 7.

[87] J. M. Roberts, *The Penguin History of the World*, 3rd ed. (London, 1995), 4. This argument, common to many general histories, may have been influenced by Julian Jaynes's *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (Boston, 1976).

[88] Sumeria was the earliest region to develop writing, a little more than five thousand years ago. Writing was independently invented elsewhere.

[89] E.g., Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilization in England* (New York, 1860), 1: 214–218.

[90] Geoffrey Parsons, *The Stream of History* (New York, 1928), 142.

[91] Schneider, *The History of World Civilization*, 37–38.

[92] See, among others, Crane Brinton et al., eds., *A History of Civilization*, vol. 1: *Prehistory to 1715* (New York, 1955), 18; Shepard Bancroft Clough et al., eds., *A History of the Western World* (Boston, 1964), 14.

The belief in writing as a catalyzing event, however, was a much more profound concept. Writing, in this view, actually put civilization on the move and created history out of the historyless Paleolithic. Few historians, it seems, were troubled by the incongruities of this argument: that agriculture, villages, towns, even cities and empires arose before the invention of writing; that the earliest forms of writing consisted of such things as market transactions and tax records, with no moral, political, or legal lessons for future generations; that the great religious texts and myths circulated in oral form long before they were written down.

The emphasis given to the invention of writing in historical accounts was linked to another trend, a key element of the persisting chronogeography of sacred history. This was the growing inclination to locate the Garden of Eden in Mesopotamia. (See Figure 4.) In medieval Europe, virtually all observers had associated the Garden of Eden with the Far East. Over time, it shifted westward in popular geography, toward the Near East, where both Bodin and Vico were inclined to place it. Armenia was the location preferred by the church historian George Smith in his *The Patriarchal Age* (1847).[93] In Smith's case, the reasons for this shift are especially interesting. Armenia, he noted, is where Noah and his sons settled after the Deluge. In this vision, the Ark, scarcely drifting at all in the floodwaters, settled on Mount Ararat after the waters subsided. Smith was insistent on Armenia because it was close to the geographic roots of the Indo-European peoples—and hence better suited to his purpose, which was to argue that the historical splitting of the Indo-European linguistic family was identical to the Confusion of Tongues.[94] Twentieth-century history and archaeology would soon arrive at a consensus that Mesopotamia was the birthplace of writing. The Sumerian origins of writing joined with the relatively new myth of a Mesopotamian Eden in confirming the Near East as the cradle of humanity. The rise of Mesopotamia in twentieth-century historiography is palpable. General histories and textbooks published in the later nineteenth century typically had history begin in Egypt, then considered the oldest civilization.[95] In most postwar textbooks, however, Mesopotamia supplanted Egypt as the point of origins.[96]

The deep gulf separating the Stone Age from civilization, a backward nowhere from a progressive Mesopotamia, was humanity's Rubicon. Crossing it at some point late in the Neolithic era, humanity entered on the road to civilization, creating history in the process. The Neolithic Rubicon performs a narrative function eerily similar to the Deluge. There are some obvious differences. The Deluge was a resetting

[93] George Smith, *The Patriarchal Age; or, The History and Religion of Mankind, from the Creation to the Death of Isaac* (London, 1847), 165–167.

[94] See ibid., 384–415, esp. the discussion of Sir William Jones from 401 onward.

[95] Among the many exemplars of textbooks or pedagogies that begin the course of study with Egypt, see W. C. Taylor, *A Manual of Ancient and Modern History* (New York, 1852); John MacCarthy, *History of the World from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (New York, 1882); Philip Van Ness Myers, *Ancient History* (Boston, 1904); Labberton, *Labberton's Universal History*; and Herbert Darling Foster et al., eds., *A History Syllabus for Secondary Schools* (Boston, 1904). Lynn Thorndike includes two chapters on the prehistoric era in his *A Short History of Civilization* (New York, 1930) but then proceeds to Egypt. Some early texts, including Fisher, *Outlines of Universal History*, begin with China and India, then move to Egypt.

[96] Among the many examples, see Clough et al., *A History of the Western World* (1964), and Garraty and Gay, *The Columbia History of the World* (1972). The fourth and most recent edition of William H. McNeill, *A World History* (Oxford, 1999), begins with Mesopotamia, in the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, as does Duiker and Spielvogel, *Essential World History*.

event, plunging humanity into the primitive conditions demanded by conjectural history. The Neolithic Rubicon was a passage from stasis to progress. But both sit astride the buffer zone between nonhistory and history. Both act as a rupture, generating a discontinuous narrative.

By this analysis, the Paleolithic "bottom" to the narrative of Western Civ has always been a false bottom. Robinson was earnest in his desire to integrate the Paleolithic into the stream of history, but in his own textbooks he was perfectly content to use the European Middle Ages as the Western world's point of origin. Even as Robinson was perfecting his textbooks, however, others were having a go at rebuilding the narrative of history, and coming up with very different results. In the 1920s, the reading public was fascinated by the vertiginous prospects of deep history. Some measure of this fascination can be found in the phenomenal success of H. G. Wells's *The Outline of History*, whose first edition was published in 1919. From his opening chapter, Wells rooted history in deep geological, even astronomical, time; he devoted far more attention to the Paleolithic and Neolithic than did other histories of his day. Moving continuously from geological and biological time to historical time, the narrative does not postulate a rupture. Several books and series published in the wake of *Outline* were equally ambitious and equally seamless. A remarkable exemplar is "The Corridors of Time," a series of ten books published between 1927 and 1956 by Yale University Press. Beginning with a volume entitled *Apes and Men*, the series develops a natural history of humanity that runs down to the agricultural revolution and beyond. In *The Stream of History*, a general history published by Scribner's in 1928, Geoffrey Parsons devoted 142 pages, a quarter of the total, to prehistory. These and other works entered the space first opened by Wells.[97] The modern-day descendants of this narrative include best-selling trade histories written by Jared Diamond and other authors without a disciplinary affiliation with history.[98]

As William T. Ross has pointed out, *Outline*, with its frank Darwinian message, was aimed at a middlebrow audience "obstinately unwilling to subordinate itself to any older 'blue-blood' elite."[99] The response was immense: the work sold 150,000 copies in its initial English edition and 500,000 copies in the subsequent U.S. edition. The work's appeal lay in the message that biology, not genius, was responsible for getting us where we are today.[100] This was an explicit attack on the university-educated political elite, who were inclined to explain history's progressive direction as a function of six thousand years of careful political stewardship. Political elites were not necessarily anti-Darwinian. They favored the older narrative, suitably shorn of its sacred underpinnings, for the political myth it conveyed. Leaderless, man is doomed to live in an unchanging Paleolithic world. Properly submissive to the benevolent rule of far-seeing college-educated elites, mankind ascends the ladder of civilization.

The captivating possibility of Ross's argument is that the historians responsible for writing and teaching the first generation of Western Civ textbooks had political

[97] See also G. Elliot Smith, *Human History* (New York, 1929).

[98] Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York, 1997). See also John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent* (New York, 1998); Tim Flannery, *The Eternal Frontier: An Ecological History of North America and Its Peoples* (New York, 2001).

[99] William T. Ross, *H.G. Wells's World Reborn:* The Outline of History *and Its Companions* (Selinsgrove, Pa., 2002), 16.

[100] Ibid., 20.

FIGURE 4: The Garden of Eden in Mesopotamia. From Athanasius Kircher, *Arca Noë*. Reproduced courtesy of Fordham University Library Special Collections.

motivations for placing the Paleolithic on the other side of a gulf. Adopting the long chronology, after all, might invite the dangerous idea that political hierarchies emerged as the result of natural or Darwinian processes. To believe this would be to doubt the civilizing function of education, the blessing that is writing—even the beneficent role of academia itself.

By the early twentieth century, most professional historians had abandoned sacred history. Yet the chronogeography of sacred history and its attendant narrative of rupture has proven to be remarkably resilient. History still cleaves to its short chronology. The otherwise meaningless date of 4000 B.C. continues to echo in our histories.[101] Authors still use the narrative device of rupture to create an artificial point of origin, reducing the Paleolithic to the status of a prologue to history, humanity's "apprenticeship." And history's point of origin is still a Mesopotamian origin. Although we may have abandoned the sacred, we have not yet escaped the grip of sacred history.

The obstacles that once prevented the absorption of deep time have, for the most part, disappeared. New research in the genetic and archaeological archives has transformed a once undifferentiated past of several million years into a past punctuated by extraordinary events and adventures, making it difficult for anyone to maintain a belief in a changeless Paleolithic. The mid- to late Paleolithic has now been dated with considerable precision, making available the scaffolding that nineteenth-century historians never had. Recent archaeological research has demonstrated the existence of late Paleolithic villages and towns numbering in the hundreds, even thousands, of people, proving that complex political organization owes nothing to agriculture, still less to the invention of writing. More recent civilizations and societies, equally undocumented but nonetheless knowable through archaeological research and oral history, figure prominently in the many branches of world history, illustrating how historians no longer consider documents essential to the framing of history. Ancient history is unimaginable without the archaeological evidence; medieval history is very nearly so; and the effort to reconstitute the histories of the peoples without writing is one of the signal achievements of twentieth-century history. An appreciation for oral composition and social memory suggests just how little the technology of writing has actually added to our ability to recall and duplicate the lessons of the past. One could go on. Even with the minimal evidence at his disposal in 1919, Wells showed how it was possible to build a history that seamlessly links the deep past to the recent past. Rather than Ranke's epistemological rupture, demarcating the unknowable from the knowable, one should imagine a cone of increasing evidence, swollen but not fundamentally transformed in recent millennia by the addition of writing. To learn to think with this cone, all one need do is acknowledge that writing is not superior to the other historical traces that our colleagues in the other historical disciplines use to approach the past.

What do we gain from incorporating the deep history of humanity more firmly into history texts and syllabuses? To do so is to foster a new interdisciplinarity, one that will not only reframe our narratives of the deep past but also contribute to the histories of Postlithic societies. Important features of modern political and social behavior—gossip and communication, altruism and cooperation, dominance hierarchies, women and sex, disease, even religion—are illuminated when set into relief

[101] For a few examples, see Harry Elmer Barnes, *An Intellectual and Cultural History of the Western World*, 3rd rev. ed., vol. 1: *From Earliest Times through the Middle Ages* (New York, 1965), 39; C. Harold King, *A History of Civilization: Earliest Times to the Mid-Seventeenth Century—The Story of Our Heritage* (New York, 1956), 4–5. The first unit of New York State's Global History and Geography curriculum for ninth and tenth grade begins in 4000 B.C. (see http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/socst/pub/sscore2.pdf, p. 94, accessed June 10, 2005).

on the canvas of the Paleolithic.[102] Authors working from the perspectives of paleoanthropology, geography, climatology, population genetics, and evolutionary psychology have begun to plot the early history of humankind in astonishingly vivid detail, and in the process have developed powerful new arguments tying the deep past to the present. Postlithic history will be enriched by these perspectives.

Aside from the benefits of building a genuine interdisciplinary history of humanity, we are left with the political or moral implications of failing to break the grip of a history that roots humanity's origins in Mesopotamia some six thousand years ago. We now know that our deep past is an African past, because that is where our species evolved. Around fifty thousand years ago, small groups of fully modern humans left that continent and subsequently colonized the world in a breathtaking expansion that began in South Asia and Australia, extended to East Asia and Europe, and finally reached the Americas at the end of the last ice age. Out-of-Africa populations soared as humans escaped African pathogens and learned how to exploit new ecological niches. Those who went north gradually lost their darker skin, and other groups experienced equally minor morphological changes as they adapted to new environments. In the last several hundred years, some of us were dragged violently off the ancestral continent. But we are all African.[103] That is where any genealogical tree will eventually take you. Every history curriculum in secondary schools and colleges that tacitly accepts a Near Eastern origin around six thousand years ago contains the unintended echo of the Judeo-Christian mythology of the special creation of man in the Garden of Eden. The full incorporation of humanity's African past in the grand historical narrative, in other words, is not just part of an idiosyncratic attempt to colonize the discipline of paleoanthropology. It is an intellectual and moral imperative.

[102] In order, see Robin Dunbar, *Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996); Elliot Sober and David Sloan Wilson, *Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998); Christopher Boehm, *Hierarchy in the Forest: The Evolution of Egalitarian Behavior* (Cambridge, 1999); Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, *Mother Nature: A History of Mothers, Infants, and Natural Selection* (New York, 1999); and David Sloan Wilson, *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society* (Chicago, 2002).

[103] For this formula, see Reader, *Africa*.

Dan Smail researches and writes about medieval European history when he is not otherwise engaged in pursuing the possibilities of deep history. He has published several books and articles related to the social and cultural history of Marseille in the later Middle Ages. After completing his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan in 1994, he taught for ten years at Fordham University before moving, in January of 2006, to the Department of History at Harvard University. In addition to several projects in medieval history, he is completing the manuscript for a book tentatively entitled "Outlines for a Deep History of Humankind" and hopes to get a chance to write the deep history itself.

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A WORLD CONNECTING?
FROM THE UNITY OF HISTORY TO GLOBAL HISTORY

FRANZ L. FILLAFER

ABSTRACT

Global history looms large in current historiography, yet its heuristic design and political functions remain ill-reflected. My article seeks to uncover the historical origins of the assumption that the "world" has one common history and that it is feasible and desirable to write it. I analyze the epistemic infrastructure underlying this assumption and argue that global history as practiced today is predicated on a specific mode of world-making that provides its basic template: Global history both grew out of and intellectually sustains the conception of an increasingly connected world. The type of connectedness thereby implied and reinscribed was established by what I call the "world-historical process," a cognitive framework that co-emerged with the early modern and modern European conquest of the world through expansion, discovery, commerce, and culture. The article investigates how this process-template emerged out of the crisis of universal history that could no longer integrate and reconcile the multiple pasts of the world. The format of the world-historical process was central to Enlightenment historians' assertion of the secular and scientific prestige of their craft, as much as to its ability to discern global epochs, in particular the modern and the premodern. My article traces the fortunes of this template through historicism up to present-day global history. Current global history remains structured around the growing connectedness of previously distinct parts of the planet whose pasts are transformed into relevant world history by the very process that makes them increasingly interrelated. Global history may be too much a product of the process of globalization it studies to develop epistemologically and politically tenable alternatives to "connectivity."

Keywords: global history, world history, connectivity, universal history, comparison, enlightenment, historicism

Global history is currently enjoying something of a boom in Anglo-American academia, yet its heuristic presuppositions, conceptual resources, and political proclivities remain ill-reflected. My article cuts against the grain of this methodological insouciance. The key concepts global historians deploy are inchoate, and the genealogies they provide for their own tools and techniques remain tentative and patchy. In what follows I contend that global history as written today is predicated on a specific practice of world-making that provides its framework and basic template: Global history both grew out of and intellectually sustains the conception of an increasingly connected world. The type of connectedness thereby implied and reinscribed was established by what I call the "world-historical process," a cognitive framework that co-emerged with the early modern and modern European conquest of the world through expansion, discovery,

commerce, and culture. This process spawned a novel type of interconnected global past created by European agency. In this article I argue that this world-historical process evinces several functional features: it arose out of a challenge to the unity of history caused by the availability of multiple histories of societies and religions of the wider world. Older universal history was no longer able to accommodate this plethora of histories. The premise of the integration of the world through European ingenuity, force, and mercantile spirit replaced the older unifying framework that relied on the primordial creation and future salvation of all humankind. In the eighteenth century, the world-historical process came to constitute a basic threshold for the very intelligibility of the history of the planet in terms of its interrelatedness. The historiographical accessories of this process produced a set of framing cues that surreptitiously continues to inform the present-day practice of global history.

The first section of my article throws into relief the disaggregation of universal history and traces how it was slowly supplanted by Enlightenment world histories. The second section is devoted to Enlightened and historicist world histories. Since the eighteenth century, historians and philosophers have come to design and gauge a world-historical process that has consisted of the increasing interrelatedness of the planet in order to salvage the unity of history under the conditions of a pluralized past. Section III demonstrates that global history inherited and continues to inhabit this very conceptual space: it remains structured around the growing connectedness of previously distinct parts of the world whose pasts are transformed into relevant world history by the very process that makes them increasingly interrelated. The article retrieves the conditions under which this conception of a global past emerged. This perspective permits a critical interrogation of the toolkit, structuring devices, and political implications of global history by historicizing its implicit premises. Thereby the exploration of the "world-historical process" allows for a firmer grasp of what the "global" actually is in global history.

I. UNIVERSAL HISTORY AND WORLD HISTORY IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

A specter stalked the scriptories of seventeenth-century Europe: the crisis of universal history. Even the more curmudgeonly practitioners of universal history realized that the prestige of their craft was crumbling. What were the reasons for this crisis? The retreat of biblical prophecy from modern history[1] made it grow out of the apocalyptical and millenarian expectations that had previously provided its conceptual framework. The unity of salvational history seemed in shambles. The standard accounts of this process usually invoke "secularization";[2] it allegedly

1. Arno Seifert, *Der Rückzug der biblischen Prophetie von der neueren Geschichte: Studien zur Reichstheologie des frühneuzeitlichen deutschen Protestantismus* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1990), 65-68; Seifert,"Von der heiligen zur philosophischen Geschichte: Die Rationalisierung der universalhistorischen Erkenntnis im Zeitalter der Aufklärung," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 68 (1986), 81-117.

2. Adalbert Klempt, *Die Säkularisierung der universalhistorischen Auffassung: Zum Wandel des Geschichtsdenkens im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1960), 124-132; Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 5-6. Cf. Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling, *Ausführlicher Discovrs über den ietzigen Zustand Der europäischen Staaten*

extended history back into deep time and inaugurated an open, manmade future.[3] The demise of the biblical prophecies occurred in tandem with a massive irruption of historical time and with the unprecedented expansion of historical space afoot in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Both were reinforced by the European age of discoveries that made a plethora of rival human pasts available.

These records could no longer be easily squeezed into the old design of universal history, and they decisively contributed to a new set of epistemic virtues for the antiquarian and philological study of a past increasingly regarded as different and distant from the present. Yet procrustean and ramshackle as the older universal history may have seemed at this time, it nevertheless continued to supply a basic outline for the history of the world. This section of my article traces the shift from universal history to Enlightenment world history. It splits up the early modern challenge to the unity of history into three lines of inquiry: the unity of creation and religion, the unity of nature, and the unity of culture.

Early modern universal historians situated the unity of human history in two states of time: in the remote past of common origins and in the distant future of a shared destination of humankind, in creation and redemption. Universal history imparted time with a projectable and predictable direction. It denoted a providential destination for history, but it did not imply a stringent and consistent, purposeful development toward this final state. The unity universal history provided concerned the earliest and the last stages of humankind, and it supplied some general templates for the intermediary sequence that permitted it to align and contain the diversity of pasts, such as the *translatio imperii* between the four empires and the figure of the ten lost tribes.[4] This absence of an overarching scheme of development became a crucial problem with the mentioned retreat of biblical prophecy from modern history and with the wealth of ethnographic and historical material that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made available.[5]

The Unity of Creation and Religion

Christian "universal history"[6] has long been regarded as god's playground, as a storyboard of redemption couched between the origins of all history and its

(Frankfurt-Leipzig: Spring, 1747), I, 8 ("Alle conjecturen dependiren vom praesentio & praeterito. Praeteritum est major sillogismi; Praesens est minor; Futurum est conclusio.")

3. Helmut Zedelmaier, *Der Anfang der Geschichte: Studien zur Ursprungsdebatte im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2003); Daniel Fulda, "Wann begann die 'offene Zukunft'? Ein Versuch, die Koselleck'sche Fixierung auf die 'Sattelzeit' zu lösen," in *Geschichtsbewusstsein und Zukunftserwartung in Pietismus und Erweckungsbewegung*, ed. W. Breul and J. C. Schnurr (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 141-172.

4. Ernst Kramer, "Die vier Monarchien," *Keramos* 28 (1965), 3-27; Werner Goez, *Translatio Imperii: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkens und der politischen Theorien im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958); Peter Calmeyer, "Fortuna—Tyche—Khvarnah," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 94 (1979), 347-365; Zvi Ben Dor-Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 135-168.

5. Leopold von Ranke, *Weltgeschichte, 1/I, Die älteste historische Völkergruppe und die Griechen* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1881), v. On the resilience of parallel typological-salvational traditions that continued to thrive beside "secularized" world histories, see the superb account by Konrad Petrasovsky, *Geschichte schreiben im osmanischen Südosteuropa: Eine Kulturgeschichte orthodoxer Historiographie des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), for example 226, fn. 4.

6. François Baudouin, "De institutione historiae universae et eius cum iurisprudentia coniuntione," in *Artis historiae penus octodecem scriptore*, ed. J. Wolf (Basel: Petrus Perna, 1579), 621, 636-

providential destination prearranged by an omniscient and omnibeneficent god. The demise of universal history is usually taken to have been caused by the collapse of theodicies, while eschatology continued to tacitly inform modern philosophies of history.[7] These accounts give short shrift to religious historiography, and they gloss over its significance for the very emergence of world-historical perceptions that tried to reconcile the unity of the common creation of humankind with the unity of its history.

Neither the templates of nor the challenges to universal history were in any sense quintessentially "European": The sequence of four world monarchies was culled from Persian sources; the ten tribes obviously were Israelite, and scholarly debate teemed with Chaldean, Egyptian, and Chinese chronologies.[8] These chronologies diminished the prestige of a creationist-biblical timeframe whose very coherence melted into air when one confronted the Samaritan Talmud, the Septuagint, and the Vulgate.[9] The same applied for the three *causes célèbres* that challenged the unity of creation and religion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the protracted debate over the existence of human life and culture before Adam,[10] the Chinese rites controversy (whether monotheistic Confucian converts to Christianity should be allowed to retain their ceremonies and rituals),[11] and the debate over the origins of the American Indians.[12] This pluralization was inextricably connected with a novel type of historicity that grew out of dogmatic premises and was vitally important for world-historical sensibilities.

Original sin deserves pride of place here as a possibility condition of historicity: Reworking an Aristotelian distinction, patristic exegetes contended that postlapsarian mankind had been ejected from physical nature (physis, φύσις)

637. Baudoin says that Polybius failed to grasp the underlying "principium" of the *historia integra* as he lacked acquaintance with the holy writ. Universal histories ab orbe condita existed alongside "local" ktisis (κτίσις) histories of foundation; compare Diodorus Siculus, *Diodori Bibliotheca Historica*, vols. 1-2, ed. I. Bekker, L. Dindorf, and F. Vogel (Leipzig: Teubner, 1888–1890), I.3.2. Cf. Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Origins of Universal History," in *Settimo Contributo allo studio della storia antica* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1984), 77-103.

7. See Löwith, *Meaning in History*; cf. Jacob Taubes, *Abendländische Eschatologie* (Bern: Francke, 1947), 79-81, 163-191.

8. Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983–1993), II, 681-728.

9. Edoardo Tortarolo, "Die Angst des Aufklärers vor der Tiefenzeit, oder: Die Euthanasie der biblischen Chronologie," in *Universalgeschichte und Nationalgeschichten: Ernst Schulin zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. G. Hübinger *et al*. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1994), 31-50.

10. See, for example, Ira Robinson, "Isaac de la Peyrère and the Recall of the Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 40, no. 2 (1978), 117-130; David N. Livingstone, "The Preadamite Theory and the Marriage of Science and Religion," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (n.s.) 82, no. 3 (1992), 1-78; Martin Mulsow, "Vor Adam: Ideengeschichte jenseits der Eurozentrik," *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* 9, no. 1 (2015), 47-66.

11. *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, ed. D. Mungello (Nettetal: Steyler, 1994); *Administrer les sacrements en Europe et au Nouveau Monde: la Curie romaine et les* Dubia circa sacramenta, ed. P. Broggio, C. de Castelnau-L'Estoile, G. Pizzorusso (Rome: École française de Rome, 2009).

12. Giuliano Gliozzi, *Adamo e il nuovo mondo: La nascita dell'antropologia come ideologia coloniale: Dalle genealogie bibliche alle teorie razziali* (1500–1700) (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1977); Johannes de Laet, *Notae ad dissertationem Hugonis Grotii De origine gentium americanarum, et observationes aliquot ad meliorem indaginem difficillimae illius quaestionis* (Amsterdam: Lowijs Elzevier, 1643).

and forced to develop artful contrivances as well as the pursuit of artificial wants (téchne, τέχνη) after the fall.[13] This figure of contained improvement was transformed into an iteration of progess once its purpose—the approximation to a lost state of grace—began to wane.[14] The grappling with original sin yielded a second important result: Concupiscence was taken to drastically curb the cognitive capacities of all humans. They were deemed unable to comprehend revealed religion, and hence needed the communication of revelation sliced into palatable units, "accommodation," the adjustment of revealed truth to humans' respective horizons of understanding whose precise contours could be established by means of historical reconstruction.[15]

So we have two advances here: The idea that the past consisted of manmade contrivances, and the premise that the historical study of divine accommodation could unearth common traces of one revelation in multiple faiths and religious practices across the globe. Though apologetical by design, both routines yielded secularizing results,[16] and both lines of argument were crucial for world history. Antiquarians and missionaries combined these two resources in trying to resolve the interpretive predicaments that arose when they sought to reconcile the biblical account with extra-biblical histories of earliest times. This reconciliation was achieved by using several filters and points of convergence in which multiple historical sequences were reunited before they bifurcated again: The critical episode here was the study of the deluge whose universality across all cultures scholars sought to demonstrate.[17]

Crucial as the ascertaining of a common creation or of later substitute scenes of convergence like the flood was, two alternative strategies arose out of sacred hermeneutics and natural theologies respectively. On the one hand was the philology of holy scriptures read as "sacred poetry," that is, the study of holy texts as products of universal culture. It was this study of "myth" as a specific but general style of poetic and affective human expression that permitted scholars

13. Henri Gouhier, "La crise de la théologie au temps de Descartes," *Revue de Théologie et Philosophie* (s.r. 3) 4 (1954), 19–54; Thomas Aquinas, *Prolog zu den Aristoteleskommentaren*, ed. F. Cheneval and R. Imbach (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1993), xx-xxi; *Antike Philosophie im Urteil der Kirchenväter: Christlicher Glaube im Widerstreit der Philosophen: Texte in Übersetzungen*, ed. Albrecht Warkotsch (Paderborn: Schönigh, 1973), 76, 94, 182.

14. See Panajotis Kondylis, *Die neuzeitliche Metaphysikkritik* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990), 76, 164.

15. Johann Jahn, "Was hielten die Kirchenväter von der Accommodation?," in Jahn, *Johann Jahn's Nachträge zu seinen theologischen Werken* (Tübingen: Heinrich Laupp, 1821), 15-60; Stephen D. Benin, *The Footprints of God*: *Divine Accommodation in Jewish and Christian Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 177-198.

16. Marijke H. de Lang, "Literary and Historical Criticism as Apologetics: Biblical Scholarship at the End of the Eighteenth Century," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 72, no. 2 (1992), 149-165.

17. See, for example, Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750–1900*, transl. J. Moyle (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 60-62, 501; Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon and Cornelis de Pauw claimed that a second deluge had lead to the "degeneration" of the indigenous peoples due to humidity: against this, see Clavijero's study on Coxcóx and Teocipatli (Xochiquétzal) as Aztec survivors of the deluge: Francisco J. Clavijero, *Historia antigua de México* [1780] (Ciudad de Mexico: Delfín, 1944), I, 273, 440; Klaus Müller, *Tora für die Völker: Die noachidischen Gebote und Ansätze zu ihrer Rezeption im Christentum* (Berlin: Institut für Kirche und Judentum, 1998).

to design scales with which to apprehend and compare the cultural functions of world religions.[18] On the other hand was the hoary chestnut of creation, laid aside because "natural religion"[19] promised to provide the unifying framework creation could no longer offer: Missionaries across the globe maintained that the pristine belief in a deity extended to all of humanity independent of revelation.[20] This leads straight to my second scene of inquiry, the unity of nature.

The Unity of Nature

In the world-historical imagination of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the unity of nature came to replace the unity of religion in a twin sense. First, the naturalness of mankind, of human sociability and its inherent laws that were neither enacted by god nor controllable by the reasons of state that held sway in the world's polities,[21] supplanted the commonality of creation. Second, the universality of "natural religion" became a potent basic device. It enabled students of the globe's faiths to compare the scriptural and ritual bodies of evidence about religious practice across the world by assuming a set of shared natural dispositions. This argument from nature crucially released these savants from having to demonstrate the actual historical relationships that connected these religions, as they did, for instance, when they drew on the ten-tribes model or on Saint Thomas's missions to India, inserting newly discovered areas of the world into the saint's itinerary.[22]

Despite these advances, the unity of nature failed to provide a durable bedrock for the unity of world history. This was so because nature's universality also turned out to be brittle. Since antiquity, nature had acted as the very source of laws in a twin sense: as the origin of norms enacted for mankind to be emulated and codified by lawgivers to this end, and as a system of "natural" regularities that shaped both the cosmic and the social order, and extended to the lawful patterns

18. Christian Harlich and Walter Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffs in der modernen Bibelwissenschaft* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1952); Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 105-128; Lucas Marco Gisi, *Einbildungskraft und Mythologie: Die Verschränkung von Anthropologie und Geschichte im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007).

19. On Lafiteau's *Moeurs des sauvages américains*, see David A. Harvey, *The French Enlightenment and its Others: The Mandarin, the Savage, the Invention of Human Sciences* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2012), 76; Anthony Padgen, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

20. Richard S. Westfall, "Isaac Newton's Theologiae gentilis origines philosophicae," in *The Secular Mind*, ed. W. W. Wagar (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), 15-34; Bernard Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1994), 319-326; an excellent overview is in Scott Mandelbrote, "Early Modern Natural Theologies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Natural Theology*, ed. Russell Re Manning *et al*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 75-99.

21. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, transl. A. I. Davidson (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 349.

22. On Spanish chroniclers' "clever ways of locating the Americas within the itinerary of Thomas's missions to India," see John-Paul A. Ghobrial, "The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory," *Past and Present* 222 (2014), 73; Sabine MacCormack, *Religion and the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 312.

of human conduct.[23] The fundamental question that arose here was to what extent human nature remained part of the "totality" of nature, whether it was equiprimordial with, subjected to, or covariant with cosmic nature writ large. A basic tenet of late scholasticism inherited by natural jurisprudence and empirical naturalists held that god's prerogatives were limited: he was bound by his own constant, eternal, and invariant laws. Yet the immutability of these laws turned out to be quite controvertible: While Newtonian philosophers of nature fleshed out the eternity of causative regularities, their rivals collapsed these laws of nature on the time axis. The historicization of nature transformed it from an inventory of primeval and eternal forms (*plenum formarum*) into a realm of organic life, probable perfectibility, and time-bound truths.[24] Providence was divested of its equilibrist and stabilizing structure; it came to encompass the course of the world in its entirety and was imparted with the principle of progress.[25]

Both natural-law scholars and antiquarian erudites recalibrated the relationship between human nature and cosmic nature. They postulated primeval "natural states" that were common to all humanity. Natural law supplied a diagnostic technique to isolate these primordial states and to trace their later mutations.[26] The theory of natural states provided a scheme of all-encompassing unity, and the assumptions about the naturalness of human sociability enabled scholars to situate societies around the world on stages of regular, law-like development.

Like natural religion, this type of naturalness permitted comparisons between the societies that inhabited different stages without requiring evidence of their connectedness. This approach, known as "stadial theory," allowed scholars to trace diachronic mutations within a given society and to synchronically compare the progress of various societies on a regular scale of progress from hunters to nomadic shepherds and sedentary agriculturalists to burghers of flourishing cities.[27] Eighteenth-century savages represented previous developmental stages of their refined European coevals; they were polished city dwellers' "contemporary ancestors."[28] Environmental facts and universal human capacities loomed large

23. See Constantin Fasolt, *The Limits of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); John G. A. Pocock, "The Origins of the Study of the Past: A Comparative Approach," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4, no. 2 (1962), 209-246.

24. Ernst Cassirer, *Leibniz's System in seinen wissenschaftlichen Grundlagen* (Marburg: Elwert 1902), 443-444; Fritz Saxl, "Veritas filia temporis," in *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, ed. R. Klibansky and H. J. Paton (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936), 197-224; Arthur C. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1936), 244-245. On indeterministic ways of conceiving of nature and on the gradual replacement of laws of nature with concepts of statistical and behavioral regularities, see Eric Brian, *La mésure de l'état: Administrateurs et géomètres au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994); Jean Ehrard, *L'Idée de nature en France dans la première moitié du XVIIIe siècle*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994), 251–608, 662.

25. Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, "Kants Theorie des Geschichtszeichens: Vorläufer und Nachfahren," in *Geschichtszeichen*, ed. H. D. Kittsteiner (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999), 90.

26. Wolfgang Proß, "Natur, Naturrecht und Geschichte: Zur Entwicklung der Naturwissenschaften und der sozialen Selbstinterpretation im Zeitalter des Naturrechts (1600–1800)," *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der Literatur* 3, no. 1 (1978), 38-67.

27. István Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 159-184.

28. Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* [1767], ed. F. Oz-Salzberger (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 80; Friedrich Schiller, *Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte? Eine akademische Antrittsrede bey Eröffnung seiner Vorlesungen* (Jena: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1789), 11-12.

here, the climatic zones and conditions of the soil, livestock breeding, access to overland and fluvial trade routes, drinking and dietary habits shaped each society's thriving conditions.[29]

This scheme of naturalness was predicated on humans' innate capacities like natural religion, on patterns of sociability, and on the universality of environmental factors. Although it gave structure to many scholarly works, its results failed to provide a unitary world history that evinced a meaningful sequence in time. The "state of nature" proved rife with problems because its exit options, the fall from grace and the social contract, were difficult to reconcile. Not only was it vexatious to harmonize theories and globalized accounts of social contracts with the Mosaic tales about paradise and the covenant,[30] natural history also ruffled feathers: The pre-Adamite hypothesis slotted into a new conceptual matrix, once paleontological and geological evidence began to jeopardize the credibility of the Pentateuch as a historical account. Luminaries like Voltaire and the Scottish gentleman scholar Lord Monboddo embraced polygeneticism and thereby threatened the common, monogeneticist explanation of the origins and integrity of humanity upheld by Jean Buffon in his *Histoire Naturelle*.[31]

Nature failed to deliver on the promise of the unity of history. The study of nature could barely substantiate the premise that the entire world and everything in it came from the same source, but it was even less reliable as a pattern wherefrom to extract the sequence of world-historical development. Neither human naturalness nor natural religion provided a sufficiently robust mold that could contain the history of humankind. Accounts that located this unity in primeval natural states of humankind or in its transhistorical natural capacities and dispositions failed to hold water when it came to evincing the trajectory of the entirety of world history.

This problem continues into the third part of this section, which is devoted to the unity of culture. Entering into the dovecotes of early modern antiquarian scholars, we realize that here the challenge for the unity of history lay in their sponsorship of a novel master concept: "custom." The customs and habits of each culture acted as the inventory, enunciator, and disseminator of its specific genius. Antiquarians scrapped universal-historical schemes and proposed culture as a conceptual surrogate, but the study of custom was to make the historical unity of humanity extremely fissiparous.

The Unity of Culture

The antiquarian and philological study of the past in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries revolved around a key insight: History was about distance and

29. Gisi, *Einbildungskraft und Mythologie*.

30. Samuel Pufendorf, *Einleitung zu der Historie der vornehmsten Reiche und Staaten/ so itziger Zeit in Europa sich befinden* (Leipzig and Frankfurt: Knoch, 1750); Joseph de Guignes, *Histoire générale des Huns, des Tartars, des Turcs, des Mogols, et des autres peuples Tartars occidentaux* (Paris: Desaint & Saillant, 1756–1758), II, 1-9; compare Plato, *Protagoras*, 320d; cf. Benjamin Straumann, "Appetitus societatis and oikeosis: Hugo Grotius' Ciceronian Argument for Natural Law and Just War," *Grotiana* 24-26 (2003/2004), 41-66.

31. Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2013), 46, 60-61, 104, 117, 167.

difference. Historians could no longer restrict themselves to *magistra vitae*-mongering, to spoonfeeding bite-sized lessons from the past to groping policymakers, and neither should history merely supply motley assortments of atomic facts. Historical accounts required situative, densely layered synchronicity, the recovery of cultural totalities each of which possessed a particular genius and had to be made intelligible in its own terms.[32] Theological and philosophical blanket clauses would no longer do. The shock and scope of world history made this task all the more demanding, and the smorgasbord-like collections of "antiquities" highly unsatisfactory. Alluding to Cesare Baronio, the great sixteenth-century historian of the Catholic church, Tomasso Campanella in 1638 called for a "Baronio of the whole world, and not just of Christianity";[33] Campanella's yearning for this synoptic vision was shared by many contemporaries.

Sacred antiquaries and ethnographers had used a cascade of analogies to equate different cultures' rituals[34] and deities from antiquity (for instance, showing Adam's grandson Enoch and the Egyptian god Hermes Trismegistos to have been the same person[35]) up to their present. Many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars did not content themselves with these superficial analogies. Instead they worked with elaborate typologies that made the world's polities, with their crafts, scientific pursuits, and modes of religious observance,[36] depend on a filigree of habits:[37] These histories hinged on "custom." As intimated above, they treated "primitive" peoples as Europeans' "contemporary ancestors." This operation also ran in the opposite direction: it particularized and "primitivized" the culture of Greco-Roman antiquity, making ancient Mediterranen culture comparable with that of the savages of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But the emphasis on custom contained the germ of its own demise.

32. Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 14-15, 24-25.

33. Tommaso Campanella, "Rationalis philosophiae pars quinta, videlicet: Historiographiae liber unus, iuxta propria principia," in *Tutte le opere di Tommaso Campanella*, ed. L. Firpo (Milan: Mondadori, 1954), I, 1254, quoted in Anthony Grafton, *What Was History: The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 111.

34. See, for example, M. de la Créquinière, *Conformité des Coutumes des Indiens Orientaux, avec celles des Juifs & des autres Peuples de l'Antiquité* (Brussels: George de Baecker, 1704), 17, 84.

35. Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Filippo Picinelli, *Lumi riflessi, o dir vogliamo concetti della sacra Bibbia osservati ne i volumi non sacri studii erviditi* (Milan: Francesco Vigone, 1667), 16, 72, 121; Johann Albert Fabricius, *Bibliotheca graeca sive notitia scriptorum veterum Graecorum*, 9 vols. (Hamburg: Theodor C. Felginer's Widow, 1705–1714), I, 37, 98.

36. See Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Entzauberung Asiens: Europa und die asiatischen Reiche im 18. Jahrhundert*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Beck, 2013), 211-374. Compare, for example, Johann C. Engel, *Commentatio de republica militari seu comparatio Lacedaemoniorum, Cretensium, Cosaccorum* (Göttingen: J. C. Dietrich, 1790), 6-11.

37. See Antoine-Yves Goguet, *De l'origine des loix, des arts, et des sciences; et de leurs progrès chez les anciens peuples*, 3 vols. (Paris: Desaint & Saillant, 1758); Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhart, *The Book That Changed Europe: Picart and Bernard's "Religious Ceremonies of the World"* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). On Carlos de Siguënza y Góngora's and Bernardo de Balbuena's sumptuous decorative and literary works, which furnished the Mexican Creole elite with a "classical" Aztec past that acted as a surrogate for European antiquity, see Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 100.

Eighteenth-century philosophical and world historians found these comparisons ludicrous; they gleefully wiped away their flimsy gossamer threads. Practitioners of philosophical world history provided accounts of civilizational improvement that extolled European achievements, thereby shifting the emphasis from the universal history of customs to the history of exceptional refinement.[38] Thus novel threshold requirements for a given society's belonging to "relevant history" were established: Christianity paled as an admission criterion; civilization was enshrined instead. History was no longer the common feature of one world under god; it now became a distinctive trait of superior civilization: historical peoples merited study whereas unhistorical peoples did not.[39] Voltaire deemed the study of the latter and of their habits superfluous, as he made clear in his 1754 *Essai sur les moeurs* when sneering at Joseph-François Lafiteau's *Moeurs des sauvages américains comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps*. For Voltaire, Lafiteau's comparative history of customs epitomized all the flaws and pitfalls of the genre. Iroquois matrilinearity reminded Lafiteau of the Lycians, Inuit snowshoes resembled those Strabo had seen worn in the ancient Caucasus, scalping equaled Scythian headhunting, and the calumet of peace found its counterpart in Hermes's Caduceus staff. Voltaire supplied this terse summary of Lafiteau's work:

> Lafiteau has the Americans come from the ancient Greeks, and here are his reasons. The Greeks had fables, some of the Americans have them as well. The first Greeks went hunting, some Americans do so as well. The first Greeks had oracles, the Americans have sorcerers. The ancient Greeks danced at their festivals, the Americans dance too. One must admit that these reasons are convincing.[40]

These three early modern challenges to the unity of creation and religion, the unity of nature, and the unity of culture left universal history shattered. It could no longer keep together the plurality of pasts it was confronted with. When bishop Jacques Benigne de Bossuet, royal tutor at Versailles, published his *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle* in 1681, critics charged that he failed to deliver the synoptic and comprehensive vision he advertised in the prelude to his work: His universal history, Bossuet had written, was "to the history of each country and of each people what a world map is to particular maps . . . in universal maps you learn to situate [the] parts of the world in their context. . . . In the same way . . . in order to understand everything, we must know what connection [each particular] history may have with others."[41] Enlightenment historians were to make good on Bossuet's promise by devising a world-historical process that combined the

38. Tamara Griggs, "Universal History from Counter-Reformation to Enlightenment," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 2 (2007), 246.

39. See Rolando Minuti, *Oriente barbarico e storiografia settecentesca: Rappresentazioni della storia dei tartari nella cultura francese del XVIII secolo* (Venice: Marsilio, 1994), 95-140.

40. Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations* [1754] (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1963), I, 30, quoted in Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "America and Global Historical Thought in the Early Modern Period," in *A Companion to Global Historical Thought*, ed. P. Duara, V. Murthy, and A. Sartori (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 163.

41. Jacques-Benigne de Bossuet, *Discours on Universal History* [1681], transl. E. Forster, ed. O. Ranum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 3-4. For Bossuet's unintended impact on philosophical history in the Enlightenment, see Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 23-25.

providential certainty of universal history with the sequence of development it had lacked.

II. WORLD HISTORY AND THE WORLD-HISTORICAL PROCESS BETWEEN ENLIGHTENMENT AND HISTORICISM

Classic accounts of eighteenth-century historiography remain by and large silent about the "past of 'world history'"[42]: Karl Löwith argued that eighteenth-century philosophers of history wrapped progress in historical time, that they conceptualized the fulfillment of history by history itself,[43] whereas Reinhart Koselleck famously credited the Enlightenment with the invention of the collective singular "history" that replaced the previous histories in the plural.[44] Both Löwith's and Koselleck's accounts fail to do justice to the magnitude and character of the shift from universal history to Enlightenment historiography precisely because they tend to bypass its world-historical dimension.

In the previous section I investigated three sites where frameworks of world-historical unity emerged out of the tatters of universal history. As we have seen, these frameworks were shaky and failed to evince the unity of history. Now it is crucial to clarify in what respect eighteenth-century world historiography elaborated a specific cluster of assumptions and concerns that differed from earlier models. As Serge Gruzinski and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have shown, world histories were written before the eighteenth century, and this mode of inquiry was by no means restricted to Christian scholars who struggled with the scope and strictures of universal history.[45] Historians at the Ottoman, Mughal, and Ming courts produced them in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and simultaneously the joint rule of the Habsburgs over the Spanish and Portuguese empires created a new sphere of imagination that updated older imperial models and integrated the peoples of the New World into sacred-historical accounts.[46] These

42. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "On World Historians in the Sixteenth Century," *Representations* 91, no. 1 (2005), 26-57, 30, cf. Subrahmanyam's recent *Aux origines de l'histoire globale* (Paris: Fayard-Collège de France, 2014).

43. Löwith, *Meaning in History*; see Henning Trüper, "Löwith, Löwith's Heidegger, and the Unity of History," *History and Theory* 53, no. 1 (2014), 45-68.

44. Reinhart Koselleck, "Geschichte. Historie," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. O. Brunner, W. Conze, and R. Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett Cotta, 1975), II, 647-658. Koselleck's location and dating of this innovation seem increasingly untenable after the incisive critique by Jan Marco Sawilla, "'Geschichte': Ein Produkt der deutschen Aufklärung? Eine Kritik an Reinhart Kosellecks Begriff des 'Kollektivsingulars Geschichte'," in *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 31 (2004), 386, 398-400.

45. Subrahmanyam, "On World Historians in the Sixteenth Century"; Subrahmanyam, "As quarto partes vistas das Molucas: Breve re-leitura de António Galvão," in *Passeurs, mediadores culturales y agentes de la primera globalización en el Mundo Ibérico, siglos XVI-XIX*, ed. Scarlett O'Phelan Godoy and Carmen Salazar-Soler (Lima: Instituto Riva-Agüero, 2005), 713-730; Velcheru Narayana Rao, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time: Writing History in South India, 1600–1800* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001).

46. Baki Tezcan, "The Many Lives of the First Non-Western History of the Americas: From the New Report to the History of the West Indies," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 40 (2012), 1-38; Serge Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde: Histoire d'une mondialisation* (Paris: Martinière, 2004); Gruzinski, *Virando séculos 1480–1520: A passagem do século. As origens da globalizaçaõ* (São Paolo: Companhia das Letras, 1999).

histories remain under-studied, but it is safe to say that they cannot simply be read as expressions of imperial zeal and imperialist pretensions. The transcontinental, multi-pronged location of world-history-writing did not change in the eighteenth century,[47] and neither did historians' subtlety of judgment and moral dedication. The reorientation that occurred in eighteenth-century European historical writing concerned a new basic template of world history that replaced the previous, benignly ecumencial vision.

In a nutshell, one might say that what occurred here was a double shift, from curiosity to connectivity and from transepochal comparison (think of the "contemporary ancestors") to epochal unity. Reinhart Koselleck trenchantly noted that one of the innovations of professionalizing eighteenth-century historiography consisted in its establishment of a sequence of epochs that were no longer deduced from the universal-historical trajectory of salvation, from nature with its phylogenetic and ontogenetic analogies, or from myth, but from history itself. In this sense the eighteenth-century invention of the Middle Ages constituted a decisive move toward an immanentist conception of historical periodization.[48] With this immanentist conception, the separation of recent history from previous epochs became possible: thereby eighteenth-century historians found a toolkit for formatting the change that they believed to permeate recent history. This device for periodization became the epistemic prerequisite for ascribing specific features to each epoch. By the same token, it also was the prerequisite for ascribing a novel quality to the relationships between the continents that re-established a unitary global past, for fleshing out the world-historical process by which Europe realized an unprecedented type of global connectedness.

The practitioners of universal history had sought in vain to demonstrate the unity of history. What Enlightenment scholars had in store was the realization of this longed-for unity: Their system of periodization made European experiences generalizable as a world-historical grid that could still accommodate encounters and cross-fertilizations between distinct cultures. Each epoch formed a unified entity with specific traits that served as valid descriptors for the history of the globe during that time. Here the challenge consisted in the reconciliation of the unity of history with the exhaustiveness of historiographical coverage, with the totality of history. I will turn to the synoptic and synchronistic techniques Enlightenment historians developed to solve this problem in a moment.

This inclusive epochal design was one architectonic element of the Enlightenment elaboration of planetary historical unity, but there was a second,

47. Eighteenth-century world histories were written by Mexican ex-Jesuits in Bologna and Naples, by Edinburgh clerics who had never left their native city, by Bengal scribes of the East India Company, as well as by Russian Orthodox missionaries in China; see, for example, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 63, 266; Sebastian Conrad, "Enlightenment in Global History," *American Historical Review* 117, no. 4 (2012), 1011; Huri Islamoğlu, "Islamicate World Histories?," in *A Companion to World History*, ed. D. Northrop (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2012), 447-463.

48. Reinhart Koselleck, "Moderne Sozialgeschichte und historische Zeiten," in *Theorien der modernen Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. Pietro Rossi (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), 178. For the *medium aevum* as an intermediary age expecting salvation, see Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1974), 145.

no less vital dimension: Enlightenment historians' mode of conceptual engineering ingenuously predicated the unity of world history on the connectedness of the globe. Enlightened scholars argued that this convergence of relevant history in space was spawned by a large-scale "world-historical process." It imbued world history with a unitary logic and direction: This world-historical process was a response to the challenges that subverted universal history, a response formulated under specific conditions. It departed from the perception that the different regions of the globe became increasingly interconnected through conquest, commerce, and culture, and that Europe acted as the fulcrum of this process. It was in eighteenth-century histories that Europe came to serve as an agent of reintegration for previously dispersed and distinct pasts, permitting again the establishment of a world-historical entity.

Enlightenment historians buttressed their claim that "world history" was feasible and desirable to write, and they did so by dissociating themselves from now lackluster "universal history." What about the conceptual properties and interpretive potential of the "world-historical process" that came to replace the universal-historical schemes? Enlightenment historians salvaged the unity of history by giving historical development a new, spatial mold, by mapping it onto the globe.[49] World history was now taken to evince an iteration in space; it acted as a relational vector that connected remote regions of the earth. This is a crucial point: Previous histories were censored for lacking a sequential interrelatedness over time, and this lacuna was now filled by Enlightenment historians who transmuted this type of connection into a geographical interrelatedness in space. Whereas universal history had envisaged a world connected by the commonalities of creation and redemption, Enlightenment historiography presented a connecting world, a world of increasing entanglement and integration with Europe as its main agent.

In 1789 Friedrich Schiller neatly summarized this perspective when he delivered his Jena inaugural address on the character and purpose of universal history. He invited his Thuringian listeners to resituate themselves as the product of nothing less than world history in its entirety:

> Even that we found ourselves together here at this moment, found ourselves together with this degree of national culture, with this language, these manners, these civil benefits, this degree of freedom of conscience, is the result perhaps of all previous events in the world: The entirety of world history, at least, was necessary to explain this single moment. . . . How many inventions, discoveries, state and church revolutions had to conspire to lend growth and dissemination to these new, still tender sprouts of science and art! . . . The clothes we wear, the spices in our food, and the price for which we buy them, many of our strongest medicines, and also many new tools of our destruction—do they not presuppose a Columbus who discovered America, a Vasco da Gama who circumnavigated the tip of Africa?[50]

49. For a similar argument, see Joan-Pau Rubiès, "From Antiquarianism to Philosophical History: India, China, and the World History of Religion in European Thought (1600–1770)," in *Antiquarianism and Intellectual Life in Europe and China, 1500–1800*, ed. P. N. Miller *et al*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 348. Koselleck makes a related point in "The Temporalization of Utopia," in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, transl. T. Presener (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 84-99.

50. Schiller, *Was ist und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?*, 19.

The unlocking of ever remoter areas of the globe "conspired," as Schiller said, in the fomenting of refinement and improvement in Europe. Yet with Europe's rise to supremacy, the prehistory and contingent origins of its preponderance became less and less relevant to historians. Enlightenment historians accounted for the process of world history that increasingly suffused the globe and collapsed its histories into one current of development,[51] but they recognized its obstacles and moral cost. Sensitive to setbacks and cessations in this world-historical sequence, Enlightenment historians also targeted the exploitation and violence it entailed.[52] William Robertson, minister of the kirk of Scotland, described Europe's insatiable appetite for Asian goods and pointed out that India was so generously equipped by tropical nature and native ingenuity that it took no interest in European merchandise. It was only the conquest of the Americas and the depletion of its gold and silver mines through cheap slave and indentured labor, Robertson maintained, that made European powers able to gain control over parts of Asia.[53]

The unity of history regained by devising the world-historical process closely allied historiography to historical experience: It made history intelligible on the epistemological level, and it increasingly made the world a coherent whole. This concept of a world-historical process that rendered history intelligible by making it unified persisted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but its epistemology and ontology changed along with the transition from Enlightenment to historicism.[54] Historicists were characteristically ungrateful heirs, basking in the glory of their scholarly innovations, dismissing eighteenth-century historians as prescientific, fumbling dilettantes, and glossing over the debts they owed to these predecessors.[55] Regarding the world-historical process, Enlightenment historians indeed sowed for historicists to reap.

Historicists retained the template of increasing interconnectedness, but they switched gears in several ways: This change was moral, stylistic, and epistemological. Moral qualms about the exploitive features of the world-historical

51. August Ludwig Schlözer, *Vorstellung seiner Universal-Historie*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1775), 271). See also 60, 68-69, on the end of "Roman history" with the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, and 77 on the Reformation.

52. See Girolamo Imbruglia, "L'ombra dei lumi: Il problema della storia universale in Francia tra Settecento e Ottocento," in *Lo storicismo e la sua storia: Temi, problemi, prospettive*, ed. G. Cacciatore, G. Cantillo, and G. Lissa (Milan: Guerini, 1997), 128-138; Imbruglia, "Tra Anquetil-Duperron e l'Histoire des deux Indes. Libertà, dispotismo e feudalesimo," *Rivista storica italiana* 106 (1994), 140-193.

53. William Robertson, *A Historical Disquisition concerning the Knowledge the Ancients Had of India; and the Progress of Trade with that Country prior to the Discovery of the Passage to it by the Cape of Good Hope. With an Appendix containing Observations on the Civil Policy—the Laws and Judicial Proceedings—the Arts—the Sciences —and Religious Institutions, of the Indians* (Dublin: John Ershaw, 1791), 164-165. See Jennifer Pitts, "The Global in Enlightenment Historical Thought," in Duara *et al*., eds., A *Companion to Global Historical Thought*, 188, and Karen O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 93-166.

54. Compare the excellent reflections by Trüper, "Löwith, Löwith's Heidegger, and the Unity of History," 50, on the epistemological and ontological aspects of the unity of history to which I am indebted here.

55. See the pioneering study by Peter Hanns Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

process abated. In the realm of aesthetics, historicists modeled their style of narration after the novels of Goethe and Scott.[56] The politics of style and of epistemology were intertwined, and historicists constructed an argument from life: They strove to reconstruct the "inner life" and the "internal evidence" of each historical subject and thereby brushed aside all forms they deemed artificially "engrafted" on the material. This drove the last nails into the coffin of Enlightenment comparative history.[57]

For our purposes it is of paramount significance to analyze how Enlightenment and historicist historians sought to realize the totality of history. The space-time compression that nineteenth-century historians achieved by following the ostensibly self-evident emergence of a "global past"[58] released them from having to spell out the world-historical process in detail. The totality of narrative supplanted the totality of historiographical coverage. By contrast, the Göttingen school of the eighteenth century, Johann C. Gatterer and August L. Schlözer most prominently, had still desperately sought to achieve this totality of coverage in thematic, temporal, and spatial respects: They provided far-flung archipelagos of "particular histories" that should add up to a systematic history of the world.[59] Gatterer produced pragmatic primers and a novel genre of tables, which he added to the tomes of his universal histories, so-called "synchronistic tables." These multicolored spreadsheets with parallel columns permitted readers to compare when diverse crafts, social institutions, and techniques like sugar beet cultivation, calculus, alphabetic scripts, monetarized exchange, or incest laws, developed among different peoples.[60] Crosslinks and multi-cell interstices that traversed columns made it possible to surmise arrow-like "diagonals" of cultural and

56. Daniel Fulda, *Wissenschaft aus Kunst: Die Entstehung der modernen deutschen Geschichtsschreibung, 1760–1860* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1996)

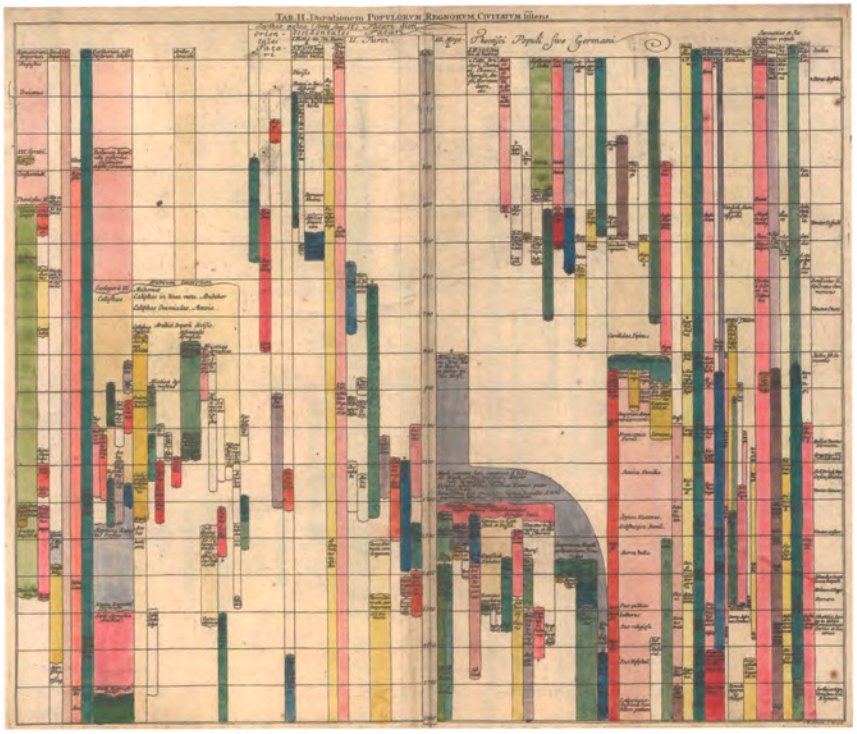
57. See Jürgen Osterhammel, "Transkulturell vergleichende Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Geschichts-wissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaats: Studien zu Beziehungsgeschichte und Zivilisationsvergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2001), 18.

58. Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

59. Subrahmanyam, "On World Historians in the Sixteenth Century," 36. Cf. Giuseppe Ricuperati, "Universal history: storia di un progetto europeo. Impostori, storici ed editori nella Ancient Part," *Studi settecenteschi* 1, 2 (1981), 7-90; *Uebersetzung der Allgemeinen Welthistorie die in Engeland durch eine Gesellschaft von Gelehrten ausgefertiget worden. Nebst den Anmerkungen der holländischen Uebersetzung auch vielen neuen Kupfern und Karten*, 30 vols., ed. Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten and Johann Salomo Semler (Halle: Gebauer, 1744–1766).

60. See Johann C. Gatterer, *Synopsis Historiae Vniversalis: Sex Tabvlis, quarvm dvae in aes incisae coloribvsque illvstratae svnt, comprehensa* (Göttingen: impensis avctoris, 1769); Gatterer, *Handbuch der Universalhistorie nach ihrem gesamten Umfang von Erschaffung der Welt bis zum Ursprunge der meisten heutigen Reiche und Staaten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1761), 140, 207-208, 258; Gatterer, *Handbuch der Universalhistorie nach ihrem gesamten Umfange bis auf unsere Zeiten fortgesetzt*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1764), 2, 521. Cf. Hermann Schadt, *Die Darstellung der Arbores Consanguinitatis und der Arbores Affinitatis: Bildschemata in juristischen Handschriften* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1982), 62; Arnd Brendecke, "Synopse, Segment und Vergleich: Zum Leistungsvermögen tabellarischer Geschichtsdarstellungen der Frühen Neuzeit," *Storia della Storiografia* 39 (2001), 75-85. Schlözer observed that "Confutius and Anakreon, Daniel and Tarquin the Elder, the Mongol Timur and the Scandian Margereth belong together, because they lived at the same time without knowing about each other" cited in *Theoretiker der deutschen Aufklärungshistorie*, 2 vols., ed. H. W. Blanke and D. Fleischer (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1990), II, 679-680.

governmental development that sliced through the sectorial grid.[61] Tables of this kind, for example, permitted readers to grasp how the fulcrum of world power shifted from the East to the West (Figure 1).



„Tab. II. Durationem Populorum, Regnorum, Civitatum sistens". Gatterer, J. Chr. 1769a, Tab. 2.

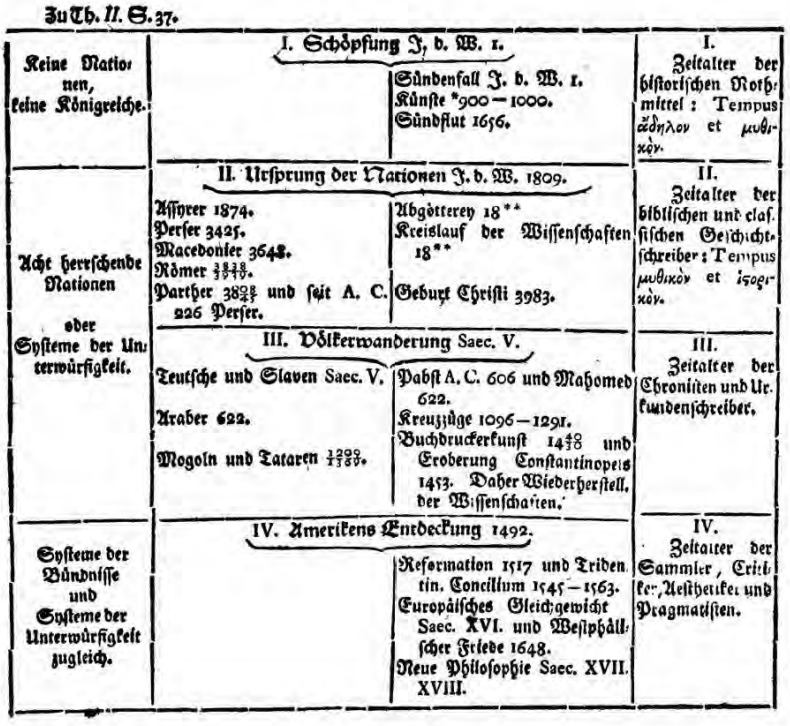
Figure 1. Johann Christoph Gatterer, *Synopsis Historiae Vniversalis: Sex Tabvlis, quarvm dvae in aes incisae coloribvsque illvstratae svnt, comprehensa*, (Göttingen: impensis avctoris 1769), "Tab. II: Durationem Populorum, Regnorun, Civitatum sistens.," repr. after Gierl, *Geschichte als präzisierte Wissenschaft*, table i. The table is organized in a top-down sequence: The y axis of the chart displays the time elapsed, the x axis features the different systems of peoples, colors are used to distinguish their stages of development and interdependence: dominating empires are marked in red, rival systems in shades of green, those who are about to become subdued tinged yellow, conglomerates of tribal peoples are recorded in blue, those who remain disconnected from world history in nuances of black.[62]

Gatterer's colleague Schlözer, the eighteenth-century pioneer of Russian and Scandinavian history in Göttingen, also reflected on the synoptic vision necessary for transforming an aggregate of special histories into a system of world history: Schlözer had used Moses Mendelssohn's theory of pleasurable affections when he described the cognitive and sentimental operation that was required for

61. Gatterer, Synopsis, table 1 and 2; Martin Gierl, *Geschichte als präzisierte Wissenschaft: Johann Christoph Gatterer und die Historiographie des 18. Jahrhunderts im ganzen Umfang* (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2012), 301-314.

62. The color version of the table is available in the online article: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/hith.10834.

creating a world-historical whole out of partially unrelated elements.[63] A second table, also by Gatterer (Figure 2), illustrates the peculiar Enlightenment combination of a universal-historical trunk with world-historical branches.


Zu Th. II. S. 37.

Keine Nationen, keine Königreiche.	I. Schöpfung J. d. W. 1.	Sündenfall J. d. W. 1. Künste 900—1000. Sündflut 1656.	I. Zeitalter der hiſtoriſchen Nothmittel: Tempus ἄδηλον et μυθικόν.
Acht herrſchende Nationen oder Syſteme der Unterwürfigkeit.	II. Urſprung der Nationen J. d. W. 1809.	Abgötterey 18** Kreislauf der Wiſſenſchaften 18**	II. Zeitalter der bibliſchen und claſſiſchen Geſchichtſchreiber: Tempus μυθικὸν et ἱστορικόν.
	Aſſyrer 1874. Perſer 3425. Macedonier 3648. Römer $\frac{3848}{1918}$. Parther $\frac{3828}{226}$ und ſeit A. C. 226 Perſer.	Geburt Chriſti 3983.	
	III. Völkerwanderung Saec. V.		III. Zeitalter der Chroniſten und Urkundenſchreiber.
	Teutſche und Slaven Saec. V. Araber 622. Mogoln und Tataren $\frac{1209}{1387}$.	Pabſt A. C. 606 und Mahomed 622. Kreuzzüge 1096—1291. Buchdruckerkunſt $\frac{1438}{70}$ und Eroberung Conſtantinopels 1453. Daher Wiederherſtell. der Wiſſenſchaften.	
Syſteme der Bündniſſe und Syſteme der Unterwürfigkeit zugleich.	IV. Amerikens Entdeckung 1492.	Reformation 1517 und Tridentin. Concilium 1545—1563. Europäiſches Gleichgewicht Saec. XVI. und Weſtphäliſcher Friede 1648. Neue Philoſophie Saec. XVII. XVIII.	IV. Zeitalter der Sammler, Critiker, Aeſthetiker und Pragmatiſten.

Figure 2. Johann Christoph Gatterer, *Einleitung in die synchronistische Universalhistorie, zur Erläuterung seiner synchronistischen Tabellen*, "Synchronistische Uebersicht der ganzen Historie," Tl. 2,3, repr. after Gierl, *Geschichte als präzisierte Wissenschaft*, 313.

Creation and deluge organize the earliest history, and the chronology follows this timeline: J.d.W. stands for year of the world; with the birth of Christ Gatterer switches to A.D., the common-era periodization. Gatterer distinguishes between the age of the origin of nations, the epoch of the migration of peoples, and the modern age beginning in 1492; each of these ages is marked by distinctive features, for example by the Crusades, by Muhammad's Hijrah, and by the invention of printing. The tabular cells for earlier epochs still accommodate statements that are generalizable for all of world history or encapsulate synchronistic linkages (for example, on Islam and papacy, or on the conquest of Constantinople and the invention of printing that conspired to spark the renascence of the sciences previously trapped in "circularity"). Since 1492, however, Europe makes world history: the discovery of the Americas, the Reformation,

63. Schlözer admitted that what was still lacking in order to transform the aggregate into a system of world history was the "general" or "universal" view (*allgemeiner Blick*) in *Vorstellung seiner Universal-Historie*, 19-23.

and the advent of a "new" Baconian-Newtonian philosophy are the hallmarks of this age. This is also reflected in the fourth column, which lists specific types of historiographical reflection for each epoch.[64] Whereas the Middle Ages are still marked by culture-neutral "chroniclers and annalists," modern historiography is the age of "collectors, critics, aestheticians, and pragmatists," pragmatists like Gatterer himself, who pursued world history as the knowledge of causes: of the causes of the rise of the West, albeit with full awareness of its non-Western conduits and catalysts. Once one coherent history for the planet re-emerged due to European worldmaking—"now," Schlözer says when discussing the age of discoveries, "the four continents enter into a relationship unknown since the days of the Creation"[65]—the effort of synchronization was no longer required: Now history itself is unified as a relevant, connected past, and historiography can comfortably structure its concerns and inquiries around this core.

The historicists inherited the world-historical vision of the Enlightenment but substantially modified it. The synoptic world-historical devices of the Enlightenment met with their scathing criticism. In 1825 Leopold von Ranke, then freshly appointed professor in Berlin, scoffed at his predecessors' tools. For Ranke, all Enlightenment world histories produced was a chronologically organized "chest of drawers" wherein random fragments could be assorted, a practice that promised no added value.[66] Ranke's metaphor juxtaposed the workman's piece of furniture, an artifice crafted by a carpenter, to the "living body of time"[67] that the true historian was supposed to recover. In the lectures delivered in October 1825, Ranke reminded his listeners that "it is only beneficial to compare different peoples in their concomitant development if their life is connected (*zusammenhängt*), as is the case in the most recent times; where this is not the case, as in ancient history, one breaks the thread that holds together the parts of the history of one single nation, and heaps fragment upon fragment."[68]

Europe's rise to supremacy created a global past by connecting previously detached and self-contained areas of the planet. When dealing with the epochs that preceded the modern age, Enlightenment historians sought to align the depth ranges of rival histories, and they studied the overlaps and intersections between them. Historicists increasingly regarded these travails as superfluous. Their politics of isolating a relevant past was inextricably linked to the novel narrative

64. ἄδηλον (ádilon) in the first section marked by makeshift means of historiography (*Nothmittel*) refers to the unexplored, turbid, imprecisely known; μυθικόν refers to "myths" (placed in the section that is dated from the creation of the world 3,983 years before the birth of Christ thanks to the efforts of reasonable ecclesiastical scholarship), whereas the second section brings a combination of μυθικόν, mythical, and ιστορικών, historical time.

65. Schlözer, *Vorstellung seiner Universal-Historie*, 77. See Helmut Zedelmaier, "Schlözer und die Vorgeschichte," in *August Ludwig (von) Schlözer in Europa*, ed. H. Duchardt and M. Espenhorst (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 192.

66. Ernst Schulin, *Die weltgeschichtliche Erfassung des Orients bei Hegel und Ranke* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), appendix; Leopold von Ranke, "Allgemeine Weltgeschichte I. Einleitung Und die alten Völker von Asien und Afrika. Zu den Vorlesungen vom 27. Okt. bis 18 Nov. 1825—Mit den früheren einzelnen Heften zugleich gebraucht," 311.

67. Herwig Floto, *Über historische Kritik* (Basel: Bahnmaier Detloff, 1856), 9, cf. Johan D. Braw, "Original Knowledge and True Enlightenment: Ranke's *Kritik* in Historical Context," *Historein* 10 (2010), 34.

68. Schulin, *Die weltgeschichtliche Erfassung*, 311.

genre and to a new set of epistemic virtues: Both irrefutably stipulated selection: the universal should be expressed through the particular.[69] The professional standard of source mastery, its reliance on philological skills and archival sources, made it impossible to appreciate, let alone ascertain the quality of the ethnographical and historiographical material from extra-European sources.[70] This applied for the "peripheries" without as well as within Europe and made the latter shrink to its Western and West Central parts.[71] Historicists jettisoned the epistemological problems that had bedeviled Enlightenment historians when they wrote their world histories. They did so by suspending the link that had previously existed between the totality of history and the unity of history. This breakup was made possible by the principle of life that governed the construction of the historical sequence and by the new set of epistemic virtues historicists subscribed to. The regions of the globe that had previously remained aloof entered into the narrative at the moment when they entered world history,[72] and Europe was the key arbiter and site of contact: for these regions the only way of partaking in world history was to be unlocked by European conquest or commerce;[73] other junctions and cross passages seemed nonexistent. This synchronization of the course of events with the representational time sequence turned the past that these zones had had before they became part of world history into negligible preludes, prehistories.

The totality of history faded once the world-historical process came to provide the unity and intelligibility of history. The result of this realignment was a double shrinkage: History dwindled, becoming a relevant past that was filtered through western European records, but this limitation also extended to earlier ages. European history was seen as a continuation of Greco-Roman antiquity, and it was the latter that, in Kant's words, had to "certify" and "authenticate" the traditions of all the adjacent ancient cultures.[74] In a similar move of relocation,

69. See Frederick Beiser, *After Hegel: German Philosophy 1840–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 139.

70. Kaspar Eskildsen, "Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn: Location and Evidence in Modern Historiography," *Modern Intellectual History* 5, no. 3 (2008), 425-453.

71. Hans Lemberg, "Zur Entstehung des Osteuropabegriffs im 19. Jahrhundert: Vom 'Norden' zum 'Osten' Europas," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 33, no. 1 (1985), 48-91.

72. Leopold von Ranke, *Vorlesungseinleitungen*, ed. V. Dotterweich *et al*. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1975), 99; Ranke, Weltgeschichte, 1/1, vi: "Nations can be considered in no other connection but through the very relation by means of which they appear consecutively, mutually affect each other and together form a living whole (*Gesammtheit*)." Cf. Ulrich Muhlack, "Das Problem der Weltgeschichte bei Ranke," in *Die Vergangenheit der Weltgeschichte: Universalhistorisches Denken in Berlin*, ed. W. Hardtwig *et al*. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 164; the active agent deserves priority over its passive, receptive counterpart.

73. Ranke reveled in describing historians as *conquistadores*, navigators, and explorers ("Columbus," "Captain Cook"); Bonnie G. Smith, "Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 4 (1995), 1150-1176; Leopold von Ranke, *Das Briefwerk*, ed. W. P. Fuchs (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1949), 123, 126. Ranke also presented the work in the archives in terms of courtship, virginity, and defloration, likening documents to princesses to be liberated from wizards or snorting dragons; see, for example, Leopold von Ranke and Ferdinand Ranke, 11.11.1836, in Ranke, *Neue Briefe*, ed. H. Herzfeld (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1949), 230.

74. See Kant's intriguing remark on "Greek history, through which every older or contemporaneous history has been handed down or must at least have been certified" and his explanation in the footnote on the continuous "learned public" that authenticates history; Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View" [1784], in *Kant on History*, ed. L. W. Beck, transl. L.W. Beck *et al*. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957) 24.

Ranke remarked that an inordinate amount of attention had so far been paid to ethnographies of the world whereas its European heartland remained neglected. Ranke resituated the field of ethnographic activity from the wider world to the "half-sunken and yet so near world" of the European past that deserved solicitude and in-depth coverage: "We chase unknown grasses far into the deserts of Lybia; should the life of our ancestors not merit a similar effort in our own country?"[75]

The intelligibility of world history afforded by the process of its integration released historiography from the obligation to grasp the Enlightenment *nexus rerum universalis* and enabled it to delve into the immediately surrounding past.[76] This relinquishing of the "universal nexus" also led to a neat separation between European and extra-European history, to a re-enchantment and re-exocitization of the latter[77] in historiographical presentation. Schlözer had advocated a technique that brought out similarities, a mode of *vraisemblance*: Asian customs and institutions should be made to resemble their European counterparts.[78] Ranke instead emphasized that historiography was all about individual "colors" and irreducible specificities. To make the past intelligible, historians were to study the entanglement among peoples that grew interrelated, but they should not introduce imaginary links by creating artificial resemblances.[79] This process was part of the first reduction mentioned, the re-particularization that made the European past, whose continuity was attested since Greco-Roman antiquity, act as the filter of verification for all history. The second reduction concerned the system of disciplines and its dispensations. Here the assertion of history as guiding discipline for culture and society entailed a philologization of knowledge. Anthropology[80] and Humboldtian human geography[81] were slowly exluded from history, their methods channeled into subordinate fields like biblical philology or oriental archaeology that increasingly catered to a small number of specialized scholars only.[82] With specialization came claims to European omniscience.

75. Leopold von Ranke, *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtsschreiber: Eine Beylage zu desselben Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker* (Leipzig: Reimer, 1824), 181.

76. See Hans Erich Bödeker, "Landesgeschichtliche Erkenntnisinteressen der nordwestdeutschen Aufklärungshistorie," *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 69 (1997), 247-279.

77. Osterhammel, *Die Entzauberung Asiens*.

78. August Ludwig Schlözer, *Kritisch-historische NebenStunden* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1797), viii-ix, quoted in Ernst Schulin, *Die weltgeschichtliche Erfassung*, 130-131.

79. Schulin, *Die weltgeschichtliche Erfassung*, 129. Ranke chided August Wilhelm Schlegel for translating the Kṣatriya, the warrior caste from the Bhagavad-gītā, as *milites* because Schlegel thereby divested the phenomenon of its "color" and transposed it to the European realm of imagination.

80. George W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 146, on the shift within anthropology in the 1850s that de-emphasized unity and gave pride of place to "origins" of civilizations as the main object of study.

81. Malcolm Nicolson, "Humboldt, Humboldtian Science, and the Origins of the Study of Vegetation," *History of Science* 25 (1987), 167-194, 170; Jürgen Osterhammel, "Alexander von Humboldt: Historiker der Gesellschaft, Historiker der Natur," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 81 (1999), 105-131.

82. [Anonymous,] "Ueber: ṣδε ṣ μνṣς τοṣ θεοṣ ṣ αṣρων τṣν ṣμαρτίṣαν τοṣ κόṣμου, Joh. I. 29.," *Neue Wiener Theologische Zeitschrift* 9, no. 1 (1836), 289-314; Joseph Scheiner, "Zur biblischen Wahrheit. Bauten die Egyptier auch mit Ziegeln? Eine archäologische Skizze zur Beleuchtung der historischen Wahrheit Exodus I.V. mit Berucksichtigung eines Ausfalls von Prof. von Bohlen gegen die Authentie des Pentateuchs," *Neue Wiener Theologische Zeitschrift* 9, no. 1 (1836), 314-331.

The world-historical process also remodeled the relationship between history and nature: It spatialized the unity of history while further unmaking the unity of nature. The legitimacy of the former made that of the latter dispensable. The domain of "natural" features and regularities was compartmentalized, split up into a preordained plan of nature that permeated history and into a separate register of "natural states." These natural states had supplied the universal scales for the "natural history of mankind" far into the eighteenth century; now they came to constitute a special register for "barbarous," "savage" peoples who lacked civilization. History and nature had been inextricably intertwined far into the eighteenth century, but the new distinction implied that some peoples had history whereas others remained imprisoned by nature.[83] Natural jurisprudence plummeted in European legal culture, but the "state of nature" and "natural religion" survived its demise;[84] now they were relegated to the sideline interest of the anthropology and history of savage societies. The same applies for natural or "cyclical" time, previously a device for identifying ensembles of recurrent patterns over time in all cultures of the world. Now, with Europe, the dynamic agent of increasing "connectivity," opting out of this model, it was drastically abridged to describe the repetitive temporal structure of barbarian "peoples without history."[85] The study of nature as a part of history was gradually replaced by history as the study of the mastery of nature.[86]

Therewith we have isolated one of the two functions of nature in the world-historical process. The other product that was broken out of the eighteenth century mold of the "natural histories of mankind," the preordained plan of nature, is equally crucial. This plan extended to the entirety of the human race; it supplied a tangible hierarchy of progress within it and located the realization of progress in history itself, but situated the culmination of this process in a remote future. This plan of nature was imparted with different types of lawlike sequences; among those most relevant for world historiography are Smith's invisible hand, Kant's unsociable sociability, Hegel's cunning of reason, and Marx's history of class conflict.

All of these concepts had important world-historical corollaries: Smith projected the redistribution of the cake of wealth through a natural system of allocative justice, but at the same time excoriated the exploitive relationships that obtained between commercial and pre-commercial societies.[87] Kant's "moral

83. J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. IV, *Barbarians, Savages, and Empires* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 189-190.

84. See Anton Anwander, *Die allgemeine Religionsgeschichte in Deutschland zwischen Aufklärung und Romantik* (Salzburg: Pustet, 1932).

85. See Leopold von Ranke, "On the Character of Historical Science (a manuscript from the 1830s)," in Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. G. Iggers (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1973), 46. Cf. Jürgen Osterhammel, "'Peoples without History' in British and German Historical Thought," in *British and German Historiography, 1750–1950: Traditions, Perceptions, and Transfers*, ed. B. Stuchtey and P. Wende (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 265-287; Garry W. Trompf, *The Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought from Antiquity to the Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Luciano Canfora, "Il 'ciclo' storico," *Belfagor* 26 (1971), 653-670.

86. This is the theme of Nathaniel Wolloch, *History and Nature in the Enlightenment: Praise of the Mastery of Nature in Eighteenth-Century Historical Literature* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

87. See Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 2 vols., ed. R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner, textual ed. W. B. Todd (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), IV.vii.c.80;

faith" in the plan of nature was required from all humans; it bridged the conceptual gap between the intelligible and the empirical self and existed in uneasy combination with Kant's envisaged world-republican league of nations (*foedus amphyctionum*). Although Kant argued that only humankind in its entirety can realize the "purpose of nature" (*Naturabsicht*), he simultaneously assumed that the European continent, standing at the cusp of "regular" refinement, will give the other zones of the earth their laws.[88] Hegel's "cunning of reason" coordinated the process of world history, but this was not simply a teleology riding roughshod over individual specificities: Hegel emphasized "recognition," which he took to be grounded in social institutions that mediated between freedom and necessity. Hegel and his adherents claimed to have thereby superseded the Kantian problem of how to situate selfhood and autotelic morality in deterministic nature, introducing instead the language of "alienation."[89] The formulation found by the Hegelians brought the cultural and economic form of the institutions that permitted recognition and produced alienation to the limelight, and thereby raised the question of the specific local preconditions of the general self-realization of the "world spirit" (*Weltgeist*).

Karl Marx charged that Hegel was unable to explain why a specific empirical form became the receptacle of the "spirit," therefore what Hegel provided was a mere "allegory of history."[90] Marx believed he had found in primitive accumulation and the private ownership of the means of production, in distribution, exchange value, consumption, and commodification segments that pertained to the "totality" of a globalizing *Gesamt-Prozeß*.[91] The advent of bourgeois society unified planetary history in a manner that was structurally analogous to the world-historical process devised by the historicists, but it differed from the latter in one salient respect: Marx was able to explain why he used bourgeois society as the main matrix of historical analysis. Bourgeois society contained sediments of all previous forms of social organization; contrary to historicists' world-historical templates with their inbuilt narrative conceit and moral geographies of civilizational superiority, it did not suppress awareness of the circumstances governing its existence. Bourgeois society supplied Marx with a framework of explanation that at the same time enabled them to historicize its origins and conditions of predominance.[92] "World history," Marx noted, "has not always existed;

627; IV.iii.c.9; 49; Sankar Muthu, "Adam Smith's Critique of International Trading Companies: Theorizing 'Globalization' in the Age of Enlightenment," *Political Theory* 36, no. 2 (2008), 185-212.

88. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," 24; Fabrizio Lomonaco, "Herder, Kant, e la storia," in *Lo storicismo e la sua storia: Temi, problemi, prospettive*, 107; Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, "Ethik und Theologie," in Kittsteiner *Listen der Vernunft: Motive geschichtsphilosophischen Denkens* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1998), 43-72.

89. Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 229-230.

90. Karl Marx, "Zur Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts" [1843], in *Marx-Engels-Werke*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Dietz, 1976), 241; Andrew Sartori, "Hegel, Marx, and World History," in Duara *et al.*, eds., *A Companion to Global Historical Thought*, 197-212.

91. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* [1894], vol. 3, *Der Gesamtprozeß der kapitalistischen Produktion*, in *Marx-Engels-Werke*, vol. 25 (Berlin: Dietz, 1983), 47.

92. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology: Part One, with selections from Part Two and Three, together with Marx's "Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy"* [1845/1846, 1st ed. 1932], ed. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 57.

history as world history [is] a result";[93] from this follows that "this transformation of history into world history is not a mere abstract act on the part of the 'self-consciousness,' the world spirit, or of any such metaphysical spectre, but a profoundly material, empirically verifiable act, an act which is proven by every individual human being as it moves and stands, eats, drinks, and clothes itself."[94]

The unity of history postulated in the different guises I have just surveyed released historians from the duty to cover and explain world history in its totality, while ensuring the intelligibility of its basic trajectory of development. The nineteenth-century elaboration of the world-historical process bequeathed three key elements to twentieth-century world and global histories.

1) The unity of history came to consist in the causational structure of a sequence of events integrated through spatial connectedness, a sequence that created a relevant "global past." At the same time, this interrelatedness supplied the causative sequence in planetary space with its meaning. The emergence of a "global past" made its study and conceptual affirmation possible.

2) The progressive irreversibility of this process was praised and rejected on moral grounds, but its factual properties were incontrovertible. The conceptual quality of the process was homeostatic in the sense that the sequential recombination of its elements invariably guaranteed its stable continuation.[95]

3) The formulation of the world-historical process involved a large-scale move from comparison to correlation and convergence: with the newly designed world-historical process, the expansion of world history consisted in an account of how active agents of "change" came to impinge on passive, receptive regions,[96] releasing them from their "waiting rooms of history."[97]

The process rendered world history intelligible, but thereby elicited the paradoxical effect that it released historians from actually having to write it.[98] Although world history was rejuvenated in the twentieth century, this by no

93. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* [1857–1861], transl. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin, New Left Review, 1973), 21.

94. Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, 58 (translation modified).

95. The world-historical process reproduces the conditions of its continuation and gives rise to basic distributional patterns that allow for its continuation despite the replacement of previous agents. See Niklas Luhmann, "Geschichte als Prozeß und die Theorie soziokultureller Evolution," in Luhmann, *Geschichte als Aufklärung*, vol. 3, *Soziales System, Gesellschaft, Organisation* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1981), 178-194.

96. The analogy between the historicist conception of the historian's quest and the conceptualization of the subjects of historical agency is not fortuitous; see fn. 73 above. Exposition-wise, this yielded the format I have described above: Historicists developed a narrative design of "real time," introducing each previously self-contained zone or nation at the moment when it was unlocked and thereby became part of world history; see fn. 72 above.

97. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 8; Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal, 1890–1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1989), 225-226; Chakrabarty, "Marx after Marxism: A Subaltern Historian's Perspective," *Economic and Political Weekly* (May 29, 1993), 1096.

98. 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. T. Blanning and W. Schulze (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 135-170; Franz Leander Fillafer and Jürgen Osterhammel, "Cosmopolitanism and the German Enlightenment," in *Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, ed. H. W. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 119-143.

means implies that the guiding assumptions and structuring devices of the world-historical process were dismantled. The last part of my article is devoted to the persistence of the architectonic features of the world-historical process in current global history.

III. REDUCTIO AD UNUM? THE INTERPRETIVE PROMISE AND PURCHASE OF GLOBAL HISTORY

In this final section I try to highlight in what sense global history remains conceptually predicated on the world-historical process whose fabrication I have outlined so far. My investigation of the early modern and modern quest for the "unity of history" has laid bare a set of tacit guiding epistemes that continue to inform the practice of global history. This critical interrogation is worthwhile as global history currently acts as something of a panacea whose appeal also consists in the very intangibility of its interpretive promise and purchase. We are being told ad nauseam that the "nation" is an artificial construct that was turned into a self-validating, natural unit of social organization only by the strenuous efforts of its nineteenth-century protagonists, but the conditions under which the "global" was ensconced as a promising heuristic alternative to existing ways of history-writing remain ill-understood.

My article has so far established what actually is the "global" in global history: The "global" constitutes an implicit selection bias in favor of an increasingly interconnected world whose pasts were compounded to form one historical process.[99] Global history is one of the products of the process of global interrelatedness it traces, reinscribes, and conceptually sustains. It crops up at a juncture between the old imperial and maritime history, on the one hand, and recent demands, both heuristic and political, historians have come to face, on the other. Global history promises a "workable past" that may permit its practitioners to soothe the woes of the discipline in four respects: It enables historians to respond to the shifting power relations in a multipolar world order[100] and allows them to cater to an increasingly diverse student body.[101] By the same token, it permits historians to defend the relevance of academic historiography amid the democratization and privatization of citizens' relationship with the past in pluricultural societies,[102] and, finally, to mitigate or overcome the "fragmentation" of their discipline into distinct turfs and zones of inquiry that rarely make contact.[103]

99. See Fernand Braudel's programmatic remark cited in Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, transl. P. Camiller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), xix-xx.

100. David Held, Anthony G. McGew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics, and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

101. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 469-521; Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret C. Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York: Norton, 1994), 4-6, 283.

102. Frank Ankersmit, *Historical Representation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 154. Ankersmit connects this argument about "privatization" to the demise of concepts of nation and class employed in nationalist, liberal, and socialist historiography that leaves us standing "face to face with our own past, as if we are confronting a former, alienated alter ego." (155).

103. Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 522-629.

My article has historicized the template of a connected, increasingly "globalized" world. If we adopt this perspective, global history can be regarded as a distinct form of "worldmaking"[104] in Nelson Goodman's and Duncan Bell's terms: as a cognitive practice shaped by a set of evaluative presumptions that encompass the universality of a given "world." Processes of this sort always take worlds when making them, worldmakers epistemologically and politically engraft their selected model at the expense of other, collateral visions of the globe. But the "global," as Shruti Kapila averred in a similar vein, is no neutral "plantary receptacle"[105] for the movement of ideas, goods, and people; it may not act as an innocent "placeholder" that signifies "not (or not only) Western."[106] In the previous sections of my article I have sought to provide an account of the conditions that spawned the idea that the world possesses one history and that made it feasible and desirable to write it. Eighteenth-century world history responded to the challenges posed to the previous design of a unitary mold of history since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Enlightenment world historians salvaged the unity of history by projecting the causational sequence in time onto the globe, by making growing geographical and material interrelatedness the surreptitious guiding theme and trajectory behind world history.

European conquest, commerce, and culture were taken to reunite the previously disjoint zones of the planet by co-opting them to the core of world history. Thereby a garbled and warped account emerged that obliterated spatiotemporal units that did not conform to this world-historical emplotment; older metaregional relationships and commonalities that linked European societies to Asia and Africa fell into oblivion.[107] Enlightenment historians still pursued their quest for the full coverage of history in its entirety. For the most part they continued to cling to the unity of humankind as the basic prerequisite for writing world history; Enlightenment scholars used their synchronistic tables as a comparative grid to apprehend the entirety of history. With the historicist elaboration of the world-historical process in the nineteenth century, the totality of history was supplanted with the totality of narrative sequence. The latter, historicists contended, provided a real-time format, introducing each nation that had previously been unmoored from the hinges of world history at the very moment when it re-entered the current of global development. "Culture" was now allied with historicality, nature was left to the "peoples without history." At the same time the world-historical process entailed the substantial projection of a preordained "plan of nature." This plan, conceived as a continuous realization of nature's aim for humankind, naturalized the world-historical process of accretive "global" entanglement.

104. Duncan Bell, "Making and Taking Worlds," in *Global Intellectual History*, ed. S. Moyn and A. Sartori (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 254-257; Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1979).

105. Shruti Kapila, "Global Intellectual History and the Indian Political," in *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, ed. D. McMahon and S. Moyn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 253-274, 260.

106. Bell, "Making and Taking Worlds," 256.

107. Joseph Fletcher, "Integrative History: Parallels and Interconnections in the Early Modern Period, 1500–1800," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 9 (1985), 37–57.

Global historians' conceptual resources seem piecemeal and provisional, but there is a set of robust assumptions and framing techniques that informs their practice. The "global" and the ways by which its historians seek to account for it bear the imprint of the world-historical process and of its naturalization of planetary interrelatedness. A closer look at the lexicon employed by global historians substantiates this observation. Here imprecise, evasive metaphors hold sway, "worldwide webs"[108] envelop the planet, other favorite terms include "flows"[109] and mellifluous "circulation," lubricant concepts that are byproducts of the monetarized, capitalist modernity whose worldwide spread they trace.[110] Augustine Sedgewick has recently highlighted that the talk of "flows" is "accessory to capitalist projects to naturalize and legitimate" commodity production and consumerism as frameworks for the motion of people and things,[111] and the current usage of "circulation" is similarly deceptive: it continues to denote markedly diffusionist conceptual properties.[112] Metaphors like these may be dismissed as featherweight and makeshift, but it is misleading to belittle their significance.[113] They are user-friendly in being self-propelling; they absolve the historian of the delicate task of recovering structural constraints, frictions, and blockages. Innocuous as the concepts discussed may seem, they betray a set of very real and robust assumptions about the world having one "global past," accordingly making all its histories "sub-," "semi-" or "pan-global."[114]

Many global historians show an abiding preference for treating Europe and the North Atlantic as key fulcrum, locus, and transfer site. In the face of omnivorous, sought after connectedness,[115] slumps, cutbacks, and crumbling zones of influence remain sorely understudied and undertheorized.[116] This is because much of global history reiterates the unification of a "global past" connected through

108. See, for example, Sven Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire: Reconstructing the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War," *American Historical Review* 109, no. 5 (2004), 1405-1438.

109. Stuart Alexander Rockefeller, "Flow," *Current Anthropology* 52, no. 4 (2011), 557-578.

110. Flow "vanquished a rival concept of motion and change, 'work'—meaning both labor, and, in a technical sense, the energy required to move or transform matter in space, force times distance—because it permitted the nascent discipline of economics, particularly the universalizing mode of analysis that became neoclassical economics, to evade the contingency implicit in the social and contextual concept of work." Augustine Sedgewick, "Against Flows," *History of the Present* 4, no. 2 (2014), 143. Cf. Ian Hesketh, "The Story of Big History," *History of the Present* 4, no. 2 (2014), 171-202.

111. Sedgewick, "Against Flows," 165.

112. Kapil Raj, "Beyond Postcolonialism . . . and Postpositivism: Circulation and the Global History of Science," *Isis* 104, no. 2 (2013), 337-347.

113. Hans Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology* [1960], transl. R. Savage (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 5.

114. James Belich, John Darwin, and Chris Wickham, "Introduction: The Prospect of Global History," in *The Prospect of Global History*, ed. J. Belich, J. Darwin, M. Frenz, C. Wickham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.

115. See the critical remarks by Ghobrial, "The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon," 58.

116. See, for example, Jürgen Osterhammel, "Geschichtskolumne: Themenwechsel," *Merkur: Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken* 66, no. 2 (2012), 143-148; Jan C. Jansen, "Unmixing the Mediterranean? Migration, demographische 'Entmischung' und Globalgeschichte," in *Globalgeschichten: Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven*, ed. B. Barth *et al*. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2014), 289-314; Jan C. Jansen and Jürgen Osterhammel, *Dekolonisation: Das Ende der Imperien* (Munich: Beck, 2013).

Western commercial, military, and cultural imperatives.[117] Therefrom follows the question whether global history is not too much a product of what it studies to develop valid epistemic and political alternatives that substantially challenge "globality."[118]

What does this question imply for the identity and epistemology of global history? Global historians defend the novelty and heuristic value of what they do by repudiating national history, yet it seems doubtful that national history ever was as much about the formation and fate of the "nation" as global history is about "globality," that is: about the origins and consolidation of a connected world. The apparently value-neutral and perspectival spatial dimension of the global remains, despite disclaimers to the contrary, linked with a substantial definition of emerging "globality" as a robust "first-order entity,"[119] arguably more robust than cognate regimes that organize the subject-matter in other subfields whose referents like the "social" in social history[120] or "science" in the history of science are more malleable, flexible units.

Planetary connectedness undergirds the basic templates of global history, as becomes clear from a crisp recent essay by Jürgen Osterhammel that enumerates six figures of thought employed by global historians: expansion, circulation, the integration through networks (*Vernetzung*), compression (*Verdichtung*, with illuminating reflections on the twin, not necessarily correlated significances of "globalization" as expansion and intensification), standardizing/universalizing, and power asymmetry.[121] It is helpful to reappraise these figures of thought from the perspective of the unity of history as realized and reformatted in the form of increasing planetary interconnectedness and to link them with the observation I made above about the essentially homeostatic setup of this system of connectivity. Thereby an alternative scheme to Osterhammel's six-point checklist emerges, a scheme that encompasses two possibilites for the entry into globalized history, "co-production" and "co-emergence."

At first sight, both models seem to challenge the prevalent percolation-, trickling down-, and contagion-models of diffusion,[122] yet upon closer inspection they reveal the same totalizing template that underlies the diffusionist schemes.

117. See David A. Bell, "This Is What Happens When Historians Overuse the Idea of the Network," *The New Republic*, October 25 2013. http://www.newrepublic.com/article/114709/world-connecting-reviewed-historians-overuse-networkmetaphor (accessed January 27, 2017.

118. This holds true for most theories of the "global," whether they focus on reappraisals of modernization that redescribe "exchanges" as processes of homogenization and convergence (C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004]), on "virtual capital" and deterritorialization (Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996]), or on Western economic supremacy that at the same time results in increasing cultural diversification (Arif Dirlik, "Globalization as the End and Beginning of History: The Contradictory Implications of a New Paradigm." http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08935690009359020 [accessed January 27, 2017]).

119. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1., transl. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 181.

120. Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014), 6-7.

121. Jürgen Osterhammel, "Globalifizierung: Denkfiguren der neuen Welt," *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* 9, no. 1 (2015), 5-16.

122. See, for example, David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

"Co-production" is predicated on the global "co-authorship" of universals (for example, of human rights). Samuel Moyn has called the underlying logic that informs this argument one of "truncated universals."[123] Think of normative claims to human rights that purport to be all-encompassing but are in fact exclusionary as they address and entitle only a tiny part of humanity. Moyn observes that the "truncated universals"-model permits historians to project a "global" re-elaboration of these claims: the significance allotted to the origins of these universals slowly decreases and their seizure by previously excluded subalterns makes them approximate true universality. "Detruncation" figures here as a means of realizing or "redeeming" previously imperfect universality.[124] The idiom of the global co-production of institutions, innovations, and cultural forms that were previously regarded as exclusively Western constitutes an illusory expansion of stakeholdership in that it promises to give previously marginalized groups their share in Europeanized world history. The figure of parallel evolution or co-emergence (for example, of "Renaissances,"[125] "rationalities,"[126] "modernities,"[127] preconditions of capitalism[128]) is less relational, but also presupposes an eventual convergence of the co-emerging morphological units, or at least the possibility and likelihood of this eventual result. The discovery of discrete potentials of convergence between the selected terms acts as a substitute for their actual historical relatedness.

The alternative trajectory to beneficial global co-production and co-emergence, "resistance" to growing interconnectedness, is conceptualized in terms of clusters of stimuli and responsive reactions to factors that impinge upon "local" or "regional" resistant units, superimposing local conditions and ecologies. Although presumed to evince conditions of entropy under time reversal (that is: a qualitative asymmetry of cause and effect), the argument is frequently couched in terms of commensurate "actions" and "reactions."[129] It is helpful to remember that proponents of post-imperial equality and self-assertion across the globe had already critically engaged with this presumption in the early twentieth century, delivering a blistering critique of the languages of "co-production" and "co-emergence."[130]

123. Samuel Moyn, "On the Non-Globalization of Ideas," in Moyn and Sartori, eds., *Global Intellectual History*, 187-204.

124. See Tim Rowse, "The Indigenous Redemption of Liberal Universalism," *Modern Intellectual History* 12, no. 3 (2015), 579-603.

125. See, for example, Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

126. See the excellent study by Benjamin E. Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550–1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

127. *Reflections of Multiple Modernities: European, Chinese, and other Interpretations*, ed. D. Sachsenmaier, J. Riedel, and S. N. Eisenstadt (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2002).

128. Xu Dixin and Wu Chengming, *Chinese Capitalism, 1522–1840*, transl. L. Zhengde, L. Miaoru, and L. Siping; ed. C. A. Curwen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

129. See Stephan Berry, "The Laws of History," in *A Companion to the Philosophy and History of Historiography*, ed. A. Tucker (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2011), 167.

130. See, for example, Brajendranath Seal, *Comparative Studies in Vaishnavism and Christianity with an Examination of the Mahabharata Legend about Narada's Pilgrimage to Svetadvipa* (Calcutta: n.p., 1899), i, iii, iv, v; cf. Manu Goswami, "Imaginary Futures and Colonial Internationalisms," *American Historical Review* 117, no. 5 (2012), 1467.

The distinct subgenre of empowering reversals of emulation and "resistant comparisons" developed by Indian, Central European, Latin American, and Ottoman authors at that time comprised three models: The replication of *translatio imperii*-models, for example, in late Ottoman histories that likened the Turkish peoples' rejuvenation of the Islamicate world to the role the Frankonians had played in the Roman empire;[131] modes of "protochronism" that antedated "Western" accomplishments and achievements to lodge them in rival points of origin;[132] as well as Indian and Central European intellectuals' construction of open futures of sovereignty after each other's examples.[133] This novel type of inter-marginal emulation would replace the mimicry of the West and shift the center of gravity of world politics toward the ethical imperatives of egalitarianism.

What both models of co-production and co-emergence have in common is that they presuppose "globality" as a governing referent; they assume "continuous identity in the object of change,"[134] the unitary "global past." This brings me to the homeostatic structure of this "global past" referred to above. In his *History of Civilization in England*, Henry Buckle observed the equilibrating interplay of coefficients, of factors that seem to "disturb" the natural, regular development if viewed from the perspective of national history, but "equalize" one another in world history,[135] and indeed both co-production and co-emergence are homeostatic in two senses: first, in that their essentially equilibristic setup makes their interacting factors balance and stabilize the whole;[136] second, in that they only permit conceptualizing dissent, conflict, and discontinuity through theoretical anticipation from within the pre-existing scheme.[137]

This problem becomes even more acute if one links the practice of global history to broader issues of historiographical method. Global history can be said to impinge on three types of relation: on the link between the unity and totality

131. See Michael Ursinus, "Klassisches Altertum und europäisches Mittelalter im Urteil spätosmanischer Geschichtsschreiber," *Zeitschrift für Türkeistudien* 2 (1989), 74-75.

132. For protochronism, see Maciej Janowski, "Three Historians," *CEU History Department Yearbook* (2001–2002), 199-232; *Selbstbehauptungsdiskurse in Asien: Japan—China—Korea*, ed. I. Amelung *et al*. (Munich: Iudicium, 2003); Wang Hui, "The Idea of China in New Text Confucianism," in *Critical Zone* 2*: A Forum of Chinese and Western Knowledge*, ed. Q. S. Tong *et al*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 167-180; Christopher S. Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, the Kyoto School, and Co-Prosperity* (London: Routledge, 2005), 27.

133. See S. [= Pavel Josef Šafařík?], "Braman Dwarkanat Tagor" [Dwarkanath Tagore], *Česká včela* (1845) 75: 303-304; 76: 307; 78: 315; 79: 319; 81: 327; 82: 331-332; Géza Staud, *Az orientalizmus a magyar romantikában* [Orientalism in Hungarian Romanticism] [1931] (Budapest: Terebess Kiadó, 1999), 51–52, 128; Benoy Kumar Sarkar, *The Social Philosophy of Masaryk* (Calcutta: Oriental Book Agency, 1937).

134. Arthur C. Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 248.

135. Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilization in England*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (London: Greene, 1873), I, 231.

136. See Simona Cerutti, "Pragmatique et histoire: Ce dont les sociologues sont capables," *Annales: Économie, sociétés, civilisations* 46, no. 6 (1991), 1442. Cerutti also observes that the previous homeostatic models of structural functionalism fell into disrepute and were replaced by the master trope of "circulation."

137. Caroline Arni, "AHR Conversation: Explaining Historical Change; or The Lost History of Causes," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 4 (2015), 1391, 1406.

of history, between the parts and the whole, as well as between the particular ("local") and the universal ("general").

Many global historians reiterate the nineteenth-century solution for the problem of exhaustiveness and completeness in the coverage of the planetary past: The unity of history that consists in its connectedness makes the apprehension of its totality superfluous. In gauging the provenance and purchase of this model, it is helpful to think again of the significance of space already discussed. As explained above, the world-historical process entailed a double shift from curiosity to connectivity as well as from trans-epochal comparison to epochal unity. In this regard, "secularization" denoted the functional replacement of the divine predestination for mankind with a mundane, inner-worldly unification of the planet as the key feature of a self-consciously modern epoch whose legitimacy hinged on a sharp dissociation from the premodern. One of the chief articulations of this secularized self-assertion was the spatializing of the unity of history.[138] It is precisely this model of planetary connectivity many global historians tap into, deracinating this mode of worldmaking that had evolved since the eighteenth century by turning it into a universal conceptual screen.[139]

The mediation between the parts and the whole of history, then, is substituted for global historians' robustly spatializing vocabulary whose emphasis on "mappable patterns of segregation" tends to bypass richly textured temporalities and risks occluding "social hierarchies of subordination."[140] This spatializing configuration rests on two types of interrelatedness: the "encounter" and seepage-like permeation that connect a series of hitherto separate contexts. Historians who use this template emphasize the salvific work of "brokers"[141] and the force of customizing "circulation," since both purportedly create novel, "interactive" histories between previously unrelated, discrete pasts. What emerges hereby is an increasingly pervasive language of dispersion in space, a language of "nodes" and "interfaces" whose skyrocketing success and matrix of segregation calls for sustained reflection. A salient and specific problem connected to the world-

138. The link between secularization and spatialization remains ill-conceived, but see Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, transl. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 40, 44, 65, 138, 173, and Walter Benjamin's gloss on the "secularization of time into space," Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, 2 vols. [*Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rudolf Tiedemann V/1] (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), I, 590. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, transl. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 301-304.

139. See Heinz Gollwitzer, *Geschichte des weltpolitischen Denkens*, vol. 1, *Vom Zeitalter der Entdeckungen bis zum Beginn des Imperialismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 56-65, 313-425; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, transl. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 31-33, 38, 111.

140. Jürgen Osterhammel, "Global History and Historical Sociology," in Belich *et al*., eds., *The Prospect of Global History*, 23-43, 40. On Braudel's "differential geography" see François Dosse, *New History in France: The Triumph of the Annales*, transl. Peter V. Conroy, Jr. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 125.

141. The broker is "not just a passer-by, or a simple agent of cross-cultural diffusion, but someone who articulates relationships between disparate worlds or cultures by being able to translate between them," as explained in the splendid *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820*, ed. Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, Kapil Raj, and James Delbourgo (Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications, 2009), xiv. On the implicit assumption about an equilibrium of power between interacting cultures that creates the "middle grounds," which then become the terrain of "brokerage," see Philipp J. Deloria, "What is the Middle Ground, Anyway?," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series 63 (2006), 16.

historical process of increasing spatial interrelatedness is the core assumption of pre-existing disparate histories that are linked by "go-betweens." The "deeper" intertwined histories[142] of conceptual commonalities, of cosmologies, schemes, and practices that societies shared across regions cannot be grasped by a research design that contrasts separate and self-contained cultures that are brought into "contact" through intermediaries.[143]

It is here that the globalist regime of spatial compression is linked most clearly to a temporal demarcation between the modern and the "premodern,"[144] making intermediate transregional structures falter, fail, and fizzle out—the watershed here is the eighteenth century—once modern ways of linking ostensibly self-sufficient cultural units emerge. This segregation in space was *created* by modern global history before being *partially suspended* by the interactions it studies. Here the "global" acts as a solution for a local, post-eighteenth-century European problem. Departing from this insight, a fresh reading may be offered for the concept of history as a "collective singular" whose soaring rise Koselleck sought to trace;[145] it could be viewed as a progressive singularization of history in space, ensuring the cognitive manageability of the subject of scientific historiography. Furnishing a novel approach to how history was vested in its secular and scientific garb, this perspective also enables us to tackle another, related problem. It permits us to reassess the less than stimulating skirmishes over history as a quintessentially Western and irreducibly modern epistemic design that allegedly is misplaced and artificially engrafted once applied elsewhere.[146] The genealogical and morphological observations offered in this article permit us to move beyond these slightly tedious tussles. They suggest that the self-assertion of modern and scientific historiography was closely tied to its carve-up and promised reintegration of the planet, thereby supplying an intelligible and useful past for an expansive present that finds its true space in globality.[147]

142. For example, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Intertwined Histories: *Crónica* and *Tārīkh* in the Sixteenth-Century Indian Ocean World," *History and Theory, Theme Issue 49* (December 2010), 118-145; Carl W. Ernst, "Muslim Studies of Hinduism? A Reconsideration of Arabic and Persian Translations from Indian Languages," *Iranian Studies* 36 (2003), 173-195.

143. See Jonardon Ganeri, *The Lost Age of Reason: Philosophy in Early Modern India, 1450–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); William M. Reddy, "The Eurasian Origins of Empty Time and Space: Modernity as Temporality Reconsidered," *History and Theory* 55, no. 3 (2016), 325-356.

144. See Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: Universty of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 78; Carina L. Johnson, *Cultural Hierarchy in Sixteenth-Century Europe: The Ottomans and the Mexicans* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

145. See fn. 44 above.

146. Ashis Nandy, "History's Forgotten Doubles," *History and Theory, Theme Issue* 34 (May 1995), 44-66. For helpful retorts, see Daniel Woolf, *A Global History of History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 177-280, 399-456; Subrahmanyam, "Intertwined Histories." For a recent lament about the epistemic violence allegedly perpetrated by a historiography that inevitably "deracinates" all other "lifeworlds" by the sheer act of making them "intelligible," as it thereby measures them against secular, liberal, capitalist modernity, see Greg Anderson, "Retrieving the Lost Worlds of the Past: The Case for an Ontological Turn," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (2015), 787-810, quotes on 787, 788-789, 801. The "ontological" solution presented here remains fuzzy. The postcolonial move of self-dispossession proposed by Nandy somewhat disingenuously makes the acquisition of historical knowledge the preserve of repentant Western scholars who, like Anderson, try to shake off the very yoke of history in their articles for flagship journals of the profession.

147. Reinhart Koselleck, "'Neuzeit': Remarks on the Semantics of the Modern Concepts of Movement," in Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, transl. Keith Tribe

Apart from the salience of this spatializing bent, the calibration of the parts and the whole of history is also skirted by global historians because they choose to emphasize the relationship between the particular and the general.[148] "Global history" and "big history" are said to permit generalizations in a novel manner, offering a useful corrective to microhistories and regional histories allegedly ensnared by "local detail."[149] Yet in fact generalizations that should be nonlocal, projectible—that is, reliant upon supporting evidence that does not exhaust all its instances—nonaccidental, and checkable by using counterfactuals remain by and large absent from global history.[150] "Generalization" may not be confounded with global historians' formulations of "general" statements, with the type of statements they make by dint of their holistic approach to the unity of history realized through progressive spatiotemporal compression: it presupposes a whole whose subordinate parts are identifiable and refer back to the preexisting and overarching entirety.

Global history, Christopher Bayly said, should ideally permit its practitioners and readers to "uncover a variety of hidden meta-narratives."[151] Jürgen Osterhammel explicitly singled out the absence of a "material philosophy of history" and the "multi-perspectival" design as the cardinal virtues of global history. He also pinpointed the danger of "pseudosynthetic" global histories that aspire to synoptic, planetary coverage while they lack firsthand source proficiency and rely on skimming English-language secondary literature.[152] By the same token, Osterhammel reflected on how to avoid the archipelago effect of aggregated specialized histories or the multipronged, "orbital" coverage that consists in a sequence of examples from the globe to substantiate an ostensibly overarching, all-permeating process.[153]

What follows from my remarks on the interpretive purchase of global history? Historians of the world need to interrogate and scrutinize the "global." In much global-historical writing it still acts as an implicit unit of reference against which all the spaces and scales are measured, and hence remains predicated on the truncating totality of the world-historical process that produces a relevant, interconnected planetary past. To be sure, there are excellent studies that de-prioritize and de-essentialize "connectivity" in a way many modern global historians seem reluctant to do because suspending the primacy of connectedness threatens to cut

(Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 250; Koselleck, "On the Need for Theory in the Discipline of History," in Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 4. Compare the perceptive comments by Harry Harootunian, "Remembering the Historical Present," *Critical Inquiry* 33, no. 3 (2007), 471-494.

148. Hesketh, "The Story of Big History."

149. Against this claim, see Lynn Hunt, "Faut-il réinitialiser l'histoire?," *Annales: Histoire, sciences sociales* 70, no. 2 (2015) 319-325; Carlo Ginzburg, "La longue durée, à la loupe," http://www.college-de-france.fr/site/roger-chartier/guestlecturer-2015-05-04-17h00.htm, 10:35-11:49, 54:43-56:19 (accessed January 27, 2017).

150. Bert Leuridan and Anton Froeyman, "On Lawfulness in History and Historiography," *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (2012), 174.

151. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 9.

152. Jürgen Osterhammel, "Aufstieg und Fall neuzeitlicher Sklaverei, oder: was ist ein weltgeschichtliches Problem?," in Osterhammel, *Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaats*, 343-344. "(Good) world historians rarely speak of the 'world' as such" (343).

153. *Ibid*., 344.

the conceptual ground out from under their feet. Postcolonial scholars with whose work on ecological, bodily, and economic vulnerabilities[154] global historians are notably reluctant to engage,[155] as well as historians of science and of the arts who emphasize bricolages, misrenderings, and appropriations, do exceptional and exemplary work here: I restrict myself to citing Kapil Raj's superb studies on the Indo-Lusitan pharmaceutical botany of medical potions and on the interactions between different taxonomic systems,[156] C. I. Beckwith's history of the recursive method that traces its fortunes from Buddhist cloisters over Avicenna to medieval Spain,[157] Hans Belting's exploration of the Baghdad origins of perspective,[158] Manolis Patiniotis's recovery of the appropriation of Newtonian *vis inertiae* in the Aristotelian milieus of the Greek Enlightenment,[159] and Avner Ben-Zaken's seminal work on Ottoman heliocentrism.[160] They devote themselves to the study of phenomena that fail to refract what emanates from the "West" or is fed back into European and North Atlantic history, and they refrain from retroprojecting "connectivity" or stages of approximation to "globality" across the epochs.

World-historical enquiries provide a basket of highly stimulating subsidiary perspectives, but they do not add up to a methodological paradigm.[161] They raise questions about the level, size, and scale of historical enquiry: Is a "decentered" history possible? Does world-history-writing always require an organizing spatiotemporal focus or tacit structuring assumptions about the all-permeating relationships that organize the planetary whole and are also at work in the representative sample examined that is believed to validate or invalidate these regularities?[162] How can one avoid the fetishization of the mobility of things and

154. Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Nivedita Menon, *Recovering Subversion: Feminist Politics beyond the Law* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Anupama Rao, *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

155. Frederick Cooper, "Postcolonial Studies and the Study of History," in *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*, ed. A. Loomba *et al*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 401-422; Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 53-57.

156. Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650–1900* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); cf. Marwa Elshakry, "When Science Became Western: Historiographical Reflections," *Isis* 101, no. 1 (2010), 98-109.

157. Christopher I. Beckwith, *Warriors of the Cloisters: The Central Asian Origins of Science in the Medieval World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

158. Hans Belting, *Florence and Baghdad: Renaissance Art and Arab Science*, transl. D. L. Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

159. Manolis Patiniotis, "Periphery Reassessed: Eugenios Voulgaris Converses with Isaac Newton," *British Journal for the History of Science* 40, no. 4 (2007), 471-490.

160. Avner Ben-Zaken, "The Heavens of the Sky and the Heavens of the Heart: The Ottoman Cultural Context for the Introduction of Post-Copernican Astronomy," *British Journal for the History of Science* 37, no. 1 (2004), 1-28.

161. See, for example, Ali Anooshahr, "Shirazi Scholars and the Political Culture of the Sixteenth Century Indo-Persian World," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 51 (2014), 331-352; Xing Hang, [Review of:] Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* (London: Profile, 2008), http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=25704 (accessed January 27, 2017).

162. Antoinette Burton, "Not Even Remotely Global? Method and Scale in Global History," *History Workshop Journal* 64 (2007), 323-328; Barbara Weinstein, "History without a Cause? Grand Narratives, World History, and the Postcolonial Dilemma," *International Review of Social History* 50 (2005), 76-77.

people whose itineraries global historians prefer to trace and thereby scrutinize the apologetics of entanglement, the surreptitious selection bias in favor of a globally integrated past? Scholars in the humanities have rightfully grown weary of "turns," and the global turn does little to dispel such misgivings. By structuring their array of concepts and concerns around an interconnected planetary past, many global historians subscribe to the logic of the world-historical process outlined above, producing what Gary Wilder recently called the "foreclosure effect" of historiographical turns. The "global" is an eloquent example for this move "from optic to topic"[163] that transforms perspectives originally meant to produce categories for historical inquiry into the "very thing examined for how it fared in the past, over time."[164]

IV. CONCLUSION

This article has sought to rediscover the link between the unity of history and global history. Connectivity has emerged as the templating strategy that linked these two terms. I have argued that the debacle of universal history in early modern times was caused by universal historians' incapacity to apprehend the unfolding multiplicity of human pasts. The world-historical process I have traced through the Enlightenment and historicism offered a remedy to this shortcoming. Instead of buffeting human history between distant creation and remote redemption, with its iteration being derived from a salvational scheme, the world-historical process devised by Enlightenment historians spatialized the unity of history, lodging it in the globe's growing interconnectedness. Now the world's unity in time became a byproduct of its integrity in space established by a specific, novel epoch of history, the modern age. It was in this modern age that European conquests, commerce, and culture reassembled the previously scattered and fragmented human pasts.

Three corollaries follow from this: First, the self-assertion of the scientific status of modern historiography in the Enlightenment hinged on its capacity to grasp the novelty and distinctive features of the epoch it operated in. The unity of history in space evinced by this historiography acted at the same time as a conceptual screen imposed by the new methods praised as superior to previous modes of inquiry, and as a relevance filter that ensured the production of a significant past for modern societies. The insight that secularization and spatialization were intimately linked offers a fresh, salutary way of getting beyond the stale and skewed debate about history as a quintessentially "Western" pursuit and regime of knowledge. Beyond claims about the complicity of history and power and laments over insipid and baleful globalization talk, this perspective permits us to analyze the connection that existed between historians' self-assertion of the scientific credentials of their craft and a distinct mode of worldmaking.

Second, Enlightenment historians still sought to cover the totality of history in the elaborate, multi-sectorial tables and charts they produced, and in the sequence

163. Gary Wilder, "From Optic to Topic: The Foreclosure Effect of Historiographical Turns," *American Historical Review* 117, no. 3 (2012), 723-745.

164. Arni, "AHR Conversation: Explaining Historical Change; or The Lost History of Causes," 1376-1377.

of stable, world-encompassing epochs they designed. Nineteenth-century historicists dispensed with the former effort; they untacked the unity of history from its totality while retaining the global epochs. The work of synchronization previously required from the historian was now carried out by history itself. The historicists harmonized their narrative with the sequence of interactions between their units of enquiry, between separate, self-contained cultures. Non-Europeans entered into this narrative at the moment their interaction with the relevant past occurred. The intelligibility of the unity of history that consisted in the progressive unlocking of previously isolated parts of the globe by European ingenuity and force released historicists from having to write world history. The waiting room of salvation that once contained the entire world had fallen into pieces, and this coming asunder created many "waiting rooms" for non-European peoples whose reintegration into the course of history depended on their entanglement with Europe. Although all epochs may be "equally immediate to god," as Ranke's famous apophthegm suggests, this immediacy does not extend to the spaces compressed into the global modern epoch.

Third, the spatialization of the unity of history emerged as a distinctive feature of modern historiography. Its practitioners laid claim to scientific progress because they believed they possessed supreme means of grasping the vertebrate structure of previous epochs as well as of the one they inhabited. Global historians derive their main framing cues from the world-historical process delineated above, from the presumption in favor of a planetary past that is made intelligible through its unity in space. In this respect they remain true to their nineteenth-century forbears' injunction that every age must be understood in its own terms whose salience has to be historiographically amplified, and indeed global connectedness appears as the dynamic context, the internal, integrating principle of the modern period. What is crucial in this regard is that global historians inherited the organizing principle of a spatialized, self-propelling unity of history, a unity that acts as a placeholder for the totality of history as it seems to guarantee generalness and wholeness. This increasing unity in space structures the relationships that permit the integration of previously distinct pasts into one overarching entity. So, instead of bemoaning the epistemic violence exerted by modernity and its alleged adjunct, historiography, it seems more rewarding to assess the spatiotemporal logic behind the "global," to locate it in the history of historiography, and to tease out its link to the worldmaking process it sustains, thereby recovering the pasts it silences and obliterates. The belief in a common planetary past reinscribes the very spatial segregation that the favorite intermediary subjects of modern global historians—merchants, missionaries, mariners, and migrants—ostensibly overcome. This does not imply that the balmy breeze of cosmopolitanism that global history promises is unwelcome or disagreeable as it ruffles feathers and offends prevailing sensibilities. However, the imagination of a global past may be an obstacle rather than a conduit for mutual recognition and equality across the planet. If we want to dislodge the structuring assumptions connected with globality, interrogating the premise that the world has one history is a good way to start.

University of Konstanz

The Task of World History

Jerry H. Bentley

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Abstract and Keywords

This article argues that professional historical scholarship has suffered from a number of serious problems from its beginnings to the present day. Yet, in the absence of any alternative approach capable of achieving absolute objectivity or yielding perfect knowledge, professional historical scholarship, in spite of its problems, is the most reliable, most responsible, and most constructive mode of dealing with the past. The world's peoples have more commonly relied on myth, legend, memory, genealogy, song, dance, film, fiction, and other approaches as their principal and preferred guides to the past. Granting that these alternative ways of accessing and dealing with the past wield enormous cultural power, it is clear also that they do not readily open themselves to critique, revision, or improvement. Professional historical scholarship by contrast approaches the past through systematic exploration, rigorous examination of evidence, and highly disciplined reasoning.

Keywords: historical scholarship, myth, historical critique, cultural power, intellectual credibility

THE term *world history* has never been a clear signifier with a stable referent. It shares a semantic and analytical terrain with several alternative approaches, some of which boast long scholarly pedigrees, while others have only recently acquired distinct identities. The alternatives include universal history, comparative history, global history, big history, transnational history, connected history, entangled history, shared history, and others. World history overlaps to some greater or lesser extent with all of these alternative approaches.

World history and its companions have taken different forms and meant different things at different times to different peoples. From ancient times, many peoples—Hindus and Hebrews, Mesopotamians and Maya, Persians and Polynesians, and countless others—constructed myths of origin that located their own experiences in the larger context of world history. Taking their cues from the Bible, Christian scholars of medieval Europe traced a particular kind of universal history from Creation to their own day. Historians of the Mongol era viewed historical development in continental perspective and included most of Eurasia in their accounts. The philosopher Ibn Khaldun conceived a grand histori-

cal sociology of relations between settled and nomadic peoples. The Göttingen Enlightenment historians Johann Christoph Gatterer and August Ludwig von Schlözer worked to construct a new, professionally grounded *Universalgeschichte* that would illuminate the hidden connections of distant events. In the twentieth century, Oswald Spengler, Arnold J. Toynbee, Karl Jaspers, and others turned world history into a philosophical project to discover historical laws by distilling high-proof wisdom from the historical record. To many others throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, world history has meant foreign history—the history of peoples and societies other than one's own. Meanwhile, in schools and universities, world history has commonly referred to a synoptic and comparative survey of all the world's peoples and societies considered at a high level of abstraction.

(p. 2) Since the mid-twentieth century, a new kind of world history has emerged as a distinctive approach to professional historical scholarship. It is a straightforward matter to describe the general characteristics of this new world history. As 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 discrete societies. World historians have systematically compared the experiences of different societies in the interests of identifying the dynamics that have been especially important for large-scale developments like the process of industrialization and the rise of the West. World historians have also analyzed processes of cross-cultural interaction and exchange that have influenced the experiences of individual societies while also shaping the development of the world as a whole. And world historians have focused attention on the many systems of networks that transgress the national, political, cultural, linguistic, geographical, and other boundaries that historians and other scholars have conventionally observed. World historians have not denied the significance of local, national, and regional histories, but they have insisted on the need to locate those histories in larger relevant contexts.[1]

This new world history emerged at a time of dramatic expansion in the thematic scope of historical analysis. To some extent it paralleled projects such as social history, women's history, gender analysis, environmental history, and area studies, not to mention the linguistic turn and the anthropological turn, which cumulatively over the past half-century have extended historians' gaze well beyond the political, diplomatic, military, and economic horizons that largely defined the limits of historical scholarship from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century.

Yet the new world history has conspicuously engaged two sets of deeper issues that do not loom so large in other fields. These deeper issues arise from two unintended ideological characteristics that historical scholarship acquired—almost as birthmarks—at the time of its emergence as a professional discipline of knowledge in the mid-nineteenth century: a legacy of Eurocentric assumptions and a fixation on the nation-state as the default and even natural category of historical analysis. The early professional historians reflected the influence of these values, which were common intellectual currency in nineteenth-century Europe, and to a remarkable degree, their successors have continued to view the

past through the filters of distinctively nineteenth-century perspectives. Because world historians work by definition on large-scale transregional, cross-cultural, and global issues, they regularly confront these two characteristics of professional historical scholarship more directly than their colleagues in other fields. By working through the problems arising from Eurocentric assumptions and enchantment with the nation-state, world historians have created opportunities to open new windows onto the global past and to construct visions of the past from twenty-first rather than nineteenth-century perspectives.

How did professional historical scholarship acquire its ideological birthmarks? How did it happen that serious scholars—who were conscientiously seeking an accurate and precise reconstruction of the past—came to view the past through powerful ideological (p. 3) filters that profoundly influenced professional historians' understanding of the past, their approach to their work, and the results of their studies?

Rigorous study of the past has deep historical roots. From classical antiquity to modern times, historians of many cultural traditions worked diligently to compile accurate and honest accounts of historical developments. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, historians in several lands were independently developing protocols for rigorous, critical, evidence-based analysis of the past.[2] Yet professional historical scholarship as we know it today—the highly disciplined study of the past centered principally in universities—acquired its identity and achieved institutional form only during the nineteenth century. Professional historical scholarship as we know it today derives from the efforts of Leopold von Ranke and others who worked to establish reliable foundations for historical knowledge and to enhance its credibility by insisting that historians refrain from telling colorful but fanciful stories and base their accounts instead on critically examined documentary evidence.

This essay will argue that professional historical scholarship has suffered from several serious problems from its beginnings to the present day. Let me emphasize that this argument is a critique of historical scholarship, not a rejection or condemnation. The critique does not imply that it is impossible for historians to deal responsibly with the past and still less that professional historical scholarship is a vain endeavor. In the absence of any alternative approach capable of achieving absolute objectivity or yielding perfect knowledge, professional historical scholarship, in spite of its problems, is in my opinion clearly the most reliable, most responsible, and most constructive mode of dealing with the past. It is by no means the only way or the most popular way by which the world's peoples have sought to come to terms with the past. The world's peoples have more commonly relied on myth, legend, memory, genealogy, song, dance, film, fiction, and other approaches as their principal and preferred guides to the past.[3] Granting that these alternative ways of accessing and dealing with the past wield enormous cultural power, it is clear also that they do not readily open themselves to critique, revision, or improvement. They stand on the foundations of unquestionable authority, long-standing tradition, emotional force, and rhetorical power. Professional historical scholarship by contrast approaches the past through systematic exploration, rigorous examination of evidence, and highly disciplined reasoning. Some practitioners have deployed their skills in such a way as to stoke the

emotions or inspire a sense of absolute certainty, but as often as not, professional historical scholarship has corroded certainty, raised doubts about long-cherished convictions, and emphasized the complexities of issues that some might have preferred to view as simple. More importantly, it exposes itself to review and critique in the interests of identifying problems, correcting mistakes, and producing improved knowledge. It enjoys general intellectual credibility—properly so—and it has earned its reputation as the most reliable mode of dealing with the past. Even if they left a problematic legacy, Leopold von Ranke and his collaborators bequeathed to the world a powerful intellectual tool in the form of professional historical scholarship.

(p. 4) Yet the habit of critique that is a hallmark of professional historical scholarship requires historians to undertake a critical examination of professional historical scholarship itself. This critical examination might well begin by considering the conditions under which professional historical scholarship emerged. It was significant that professional historical scholarship as we know it emerged in nineteenth-century Europe. The early professional historians fashioned study of the past into a rigorous and respectable scholarly discipline just as two other momentous developments were underway. First, during an age of industrialization and imperialism, Europe realized more global power and influence than ever before in world history. Second, in both Europe and North America, political leaders transformed ramshackle kingdoms and federations into powerful national states. Both developments had profound implications for historical scholarship and for the conception of history itself as an intellectual project.

Professional Historical Scholarship and the Problem of Europe

The twin processes of industrialization and imperialism created a context in which European peoples came to construe Europe as the site of genuine historical development. Michael Adas has pointed out that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, European travelers found much to admire in the societies, economies, and cultural traditions of China, India, and other lands. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, after the Enlightenment and the development of modern science, followed by the tapping of new energy sources that fueled a massive technological transformation, Europeans increasingly viewed other peoples as intellectually and morally inferior while dismissing their societies as sinks of stagnation.[4] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel articulated these views in stark and uncompromising terms. The Mediterranean basin was ‘the centre of World-History,’ he intoned, without which ‘the History of the World could not be conceived.’ By contrast, East Asia was ‘severed from the process of general historical development, and has no share in it.’ Sub-Saharan Africa was ‘the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of Night.’ As a result, Africa was ‘no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to exhibit.’ Turning his attention to the western hemisphere, Hegel declared that ‘America has always shown itself physically and psychically powerless, and still shows itself so.’ Like Africa, America

had no history, properly speaking, although European peoples were working to introduce history there even as he wrote, so Hegel predicted that it would be ‘the land of the future, where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the World's History shall reveal itself.’[5]

(p. 5) Hegel was a philosopher, not a historian, and I am well aware that his conception of history was more sophisticated than his uninformed speculations on the world beyond Europe might suggest. It is clear today that Hegel spoke from profound ignorance of the larger world, but his views were plausible enough in nineteenth-century Europe. Furthermore, as the dominant philosopher of his age, who placed historical development on the philosopher's agenda, Hegel deeply influenced both the conception of history and the understanding of its purpose precisely at the moment when it was winning recognition as a professional scholarly discipline capable of yielding accurate and reliable knowledge about the past.

Although the early professional historians bridled impatiently at Hegel's speculative pronunciamentos, their everyday practice resonated perfectly with his notion that history in the proper sense of the term was relevant almost exclusively for Europe, not for the larger world. The early professional historians faithfully reflected Hegel's views when they radically limited the geographical scope of proper historical scholarship to the Mediterranean basin and Europe, and to a lesser extent Europe's offshoots in the western hemisphere. These were the lands with formal states and literary traditions that were supposedly unique in exhibiting conscious, purposeful historical development. Hegel and the early professional historians alike regarded them as the drivers of world history—the proper focus of historians' attention. Hegel and the historians granted that complex societies with formal states and sophisticated cultural traditions like China, India, Persia, and Egypt had once possessed history. Because they had supposedly fallen into a state of stagnation, however, they did not merit the continuing attention of historians, whose professional responsibility was to study processes of conscious, purposeful historical development.

Accordingly, for a century and more, historians largely restricted their attention to the classical Mediterranean, Europe, and Euro-American lands in the western hemisphere. Study of other world regions was the province of scholars in different fields. Until the emergence of modern area studies after World War II, for example, orientalists and missionaries were the principal scholars of both past and contemporary experiences of Asian lands, which they sought to understand largely on the basis of canonical literary texts rather than historical research.[6] If the early professional historians excluded Asian lands from their purview, they certainly had no interest in sub-Saharan Africa, tropical Southeast Asia, the Americas, and Oceania. These lands without recognizable formal states or literary traditions were lands literally without history. As a result, these lands and their peoples, with their exotic and colorful but historically unimportant traditions—‘the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe,’

in the words of one latter-day Hegelian historian—fell to the tender mercies of the anthropologists.[7]

It is true that Leopold von Ranke echoed the language of broad-gauged Enlightenment scholars when he advocated a universal history that 'embraces the events of all times and nations.' He expansively envisioned this universal history not as a mere compilation of national histories but as an account from a larger perspective in which 'the general connection of things' would be the historian's principal interest. 'To (p. 6) recognize this connection, to trace the sequence of those great events which link all nations together and control their destinies,' he declared, 'is the task which the science of Universal History undertakes.' Ranke freely acknowledged that 'the institutions of one or another of the Oriental nations, inherited from primeval times, have been regarded as the germ from which all civilization has sprung.' Yet in the very same breath, he also held that there was no place for these 'Oriental nations' in his work: 'the nations whose characteristic is eternal repose form a hopeless starting point for one who would understand the internal movement of Universal History.' As a result, the horizons of Ranke's own universal history (published between 1880 and 1888) did not extend beyond the Mediterranean basin and Europe.[8] Thus, universal history meant European history, and European history was the only history that really mattered.

Over time, with accumulation of knowledge about the world beyond Europe, it is conceivable that historians might have corrected this kind of Eurocentric thinking by gradually broadening the geographical and cultural horizons of historical scholarship so as to include societies beyond Europe. But Hegel and the early professional historians were active at precisely the moment when European commentators were realizing the enormous power that mechanized industrial production lent European peoples in their dealings with the larger world. The intellectual environment that nurtured theories of pejorative orientalism, scientific racism, social Darwinism, and civilizing mission made no place for relativistic notions that Europe was one society among others. Contemporary experience seemed to demonstrate European superiority and suggested that weaker societies would benefit from European tutelage to raise them to higher levels of development.[9] Thus, Hegel and the early professional historians reinforced their Eurocentric perspectives with the assumption that Europe was the *de facto* standard of historical development and indeed of civilization itself.

In this intellectual atmosphere, the early professional historians universalized European categories of analysis, thereby ensuring, perhaps unintentionally, that societies in the larger world would look deficient when viewed in the light of analytical standards derived from European experience. Many critics have pointed out the distinctly European valence of terms like state and nation, culture and civilization, tradition and modernity, trade, labor, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and others that have become workhorses of professional historical scholarship.[10] When professional historians began to broaden their geographical horizons after the mid-twentieth century and extend historical recognition to lands beyond Europe, they continued to employ these inherited concepts and thus viewed societies in the larger world through the lenses of European categories of analysis. The

effect of this practice was to deepen and consolidate Eurocentric assumptions by producing a body of historical knowledge that evaluated the world's societies against standards manufactured in Europe.

In an influential article of 1992, Dipesh Chakrabarty offered a darkly pessimistic view of the resulting historiography and its potential to deal responsibly with the world beyond Europe. He argued that Europe had become the reference point of professional historical scholarship. ‘There is a peculiar way,’ he observed, ‘in which all…other histories tend to become variations on a master narrative that could be called “the (p. 7) history of Europe”.’ Further, ‘so long as one operates within the discourse of “history” produced at the institutional site of the university, it is not possible simply to walk out of the deep collusion between “history” and the modernizing narrative(s) of citizenship, bourgeois public and private, and the nation state.’ Thus, professional historical scholarship as an intellectual project fell inevitably and completely within the orbit of European modernity. As of 1992, Chakrabarty regarded its value as a form of knowledge as dubious and possibly nil.[11]

It is not necessary to accept all the dire implications drawn by Chakrabarty and some other postcolonial critics to recognize that it is indeed problematic procedure to universalize categories of analysis that originated as culturally specific concepts in one society and then apply them broadly in studies of societies throughout the world, and to acknowledge further that capitalism, imperialism, and other elements of European modernity have profoundly influenced both the conception and the practice of professional historical scholarship.[12] Rather than throwing up hands and jumping to the conclusion that historical scholarship is a vain pursuit, however, a more constructive approach might be to entertain the possibility that professional historians are capable of transcending the original limitations of their discipline. Before exploring that possibility, though, a second problem of professional historical scholarship calls for attention.

Professional Historical Scholarship and the Problem of the Nation

Alongside a cluster of Eurocentric assumptions, professional historical scholarship acquired a second ideological birthmark in the form of a fixation on the nation-state as the default and even natural focus of historical analysis. This was not inevitable. From ancient times to the present, many historians sought ways to understand the experiences of their own societies in larger context. This was true of Herodotus in the fifth century BCE and Sima Qian in the second century BCE.[13] It was true in the thirteenth century CE of the Persian historians of the Mongols, Juvaini and Rashid al-Din. In the Enlightenment era, it was true of amateur historians like Voltaire, Montesquieu, and the authors of the English *Universal History* who managed to compile some sixty-five volumes on the histories of all world regions (1736–65), as well as the professional historians Johann Christoph Gatterer and August Ludwig von Schlözer at the University of Göttingen. Even throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a tradition of popular interest in

world history persisted stubbornly in the face of university-based professional historical scholarship. Obscure individuals like Robert Benjamin Lewis and William Wells Brown published world histories from African perspectives, while prominent figures like H. G. Wells and Jawaharlal Nehru essayed comprehensive surveys of the global past.[14]

(p. 8) During the nineteenth century, however, as professional historians were narrowing their geographical horizons, they also chose a thematic focus for their studies that reflected the political environment in which their newly fortified discipline emerged. The nineteenth century was an age of heady nationalism and intense state building in Europe. Along with their contemporaries, historians witnessed the potential of the nation-state to mobilize human resources and marshal human energies. They became fascinated or even enchanted by national communities and the nation-state as a form of political organization. Notwithstanding the Rankean requirement that historians base their accounts on critically examined documentary evidence, they made the assumption that the national communities of the nineteenth century had deep historical roots reaching back into deep antiquity. So it was that they took the nation, the national community, and its political expressions, culminating in the nation-state, as the default and indeed almost the only proper focus of professional historical scholarship.

Like Hegel once again, the early professional historians regarded states—especially the nation-states of their own day—as the pre-eminent agents of history. Leopold von Ranke himself once referred to states as 'spiritual substances…thoughts of God.'[15] (Peter Novick aptly characterized his approach to the past as one of 'pantheistic state-worship.'[16]) Ranke and his professional colleagues focused their gaze on the experiences of national communities and nation-states as viewed through their institutions, constitutions, political experiences, cultural expressions, and relations with neighbors. They took the nation as the default subject of historical scholarship, and they treated history as though it were a property attaching primarily or exclusively to national communities and nation-states. They often composed intensely patriotic accounts that served as legitimizing genealogies of national communities. This involved the retrojection of national narratives into the distant past so as to appropriate some earlier events and experiences (while excluding others) and to forge linear national narratives.[17]

For their own part, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, nation-states responded enthusiastically to historians' attention: they supported and even subsidized the discipline of history by maintaining national archives, founding societies to publish historical documents, funding universities, establishing professorial chairs in national histories, and including the study of patriotic history in school curricula. In the absence of the symbiotic relationship between historians and nation-states since the nineteenth century, professional historical scholarship as we know it is almost inconceivable. Historical scholarship became in large measure an ideological servant of that particular form of political organization known as the nation-state. Indeed, professional historical scholarship is in many ways an intellectual artifact of the nation-state era of world history.[18]

The past century has brought enormous change to the theory and practice of professional historical scholarship. Contemporary historians have broadened the thematic scope of historical analysis, and they have mostly moderated the intense nationalism of their nineteenth-century predecessors. Yet their *de facto* attachment to (p. 9) national communities and nation-states persists to the present day. While addressing themes quite different from those of traditional political and diplomatic history, for example, social historians and feminist scholars have cast their studies mostly within the frameworks of national communities. It is a simple matter to think of studies on topics like the formation of the English working class, the subjugation of subalterns in colonial India, or the experiences of women in American history. The metanarratives underpinning these works explicitly regard class and gender as portable categories of universal significance, but historians have rarely undertaken basic research addressing issues of class and gender in contexts larger than national communities. Historians who have attacked patriotic and hyper-nationalist narratives have focused their own critiques mostly on specifically national policies and thus have viewed the past through the lenses of the very nation-states they criticize. And even when historians have dealt with eras long before the emergence of modern nation-states, they have routinely focused their analyses on individual societies such as early imperial ‘China’ or late medieval ‘Germany,’ thus construing the past through the optic of a world divided into national communities. Fixation on the nation-state remains a prominent characteristic of professional historical scholarship to the present day.

The point here is not to attack national history *per se* and certainly not to question the historical significance of national communities or nation-states themselves. National communities and nation-states have powerfully influenced the conditions under which the world's peoples have led their lives during the past two centuries, when the organization of ostensibly coherent and distinct national communities into nation-states has emerged as a conspicuous global historical process. Furthermore, individual nation-states have played out-sized roles in world history: in light of their proven abilities to command popular loyalty and mobilize human resources, they demand attention from historians and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

It is not so clear, however, that historians should permit nation-based political organization to obscure the significance and roles of the many alternative ways human beings have expressed their solidarity with others by forming communities based on sex, gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, ideology, caste, occupation, economic interest, status, taste, or many other conceivable foundations. Nor is it clear that historians should turn a blind eye toward the ways human groups, however diversely organized, have engaged other groups and the world beyond their own communities.

The Task of World History

How might professional historians deal constructively with the ideologically tinged discipline they have inherited? There can be no question of ignoring European history or abolishing national history, nor can there be any serious expectation that professional histori-

ans might find some privileged route to the holy grail of absolute (p. 10) objectivity. Having identified the issues, however, historians might work toward the construction of historiographies that mitigate even if they cannot entirely eliminate problems arising from Eurocentric ideologies and fixation on the nation-state.

To the extent that professional historical scholarship as a form of knowledge emerged as an integral element of European modernity—characterized by nation-states, mechanized industry, and global empire as well as a distinctive form of historical knowledge—it is a delicate operation to extricate the methods and analytical techniques of historical scholarship from ideological associations that have pervaded historical thinking for the past century and more. This task involves unthinking some perspectives on the world that have conditioned the foundations of professional historical scholarship itself. Yet there is no *a priori* reason to doubt that historians are able to root unhelpful assumptions out of their discipline: the historical record is full of cultural projects that started along one set of lines only to undergo radical changes of direction as later practitioners recognized problems and found ways to deal with them.

The new world history has emerged as one of the more promising disciplinary venues for efforts to deal with both Europe and the larger world without taking Europe as an unproblematic starting point or universal standard for historical analysis. World historians have not adopted any single formula or method as a general remedy for Eurocentric assumptions. Rather, they have constructed a less ideological and more transparent historiography through self-reflection, self-correction, and application of various *ad hoc* methods and approaches.

Not to attempt an exhaustive listing, several of these methods and approaches merit special mention. R. Bin Wong has advocated a method of reciprocal comparison that has the advantage of highlighting the distinctive characteristics and values of societies without comparing one invidiously against another.[19] Similarly, Jack Goody has suggested the adoption of analytical grids that would facilitate cross-cultural comparisons on specific characteristics (such as the cultural preferences and traits that some have thought were unique to European peoples), thus creating a context for the comparison of multiple societies with respect to particular traits or forms of organization.[20] Sanjay Subrahmanyam has turned less to explicit comparison than to the analysis of ‘connected histories’ and particularly the cultural influences that touched societies throughout the early modern world.[21] Meanwhile, moving beyond the bleak views expressed in his article of 1992, Dipesh Chakrabarty has more recently sought to redeem historical scholarship through the project of ‘provincializing Europe’—locating European modernity as one local expression in a larger constellation of many alternative modernities.[22] Kenneth Pomeranz has laid a solid foundation for the effort to understand industrialization from global perspectives through careful, controlled comparison of early modern Europe and China.[23] And C. A. Bayly has advanced a complex analysis that makes generous room for local experiences while exploring the early phase of modern globalization.[24] It would be possible to mention many additional contributions, but these half-dozen will serve as salient exam-

ples of the (p. 11) different ways world historians have sought alternatives to Eurocentric conceptions of the global past.

The approaches mentioned here do not seek to replace Eurocentric with Sinocentric, Indocentric, or other ideological preferences—and they emphatically do not dismiss Europe altogether—so much as they strive to decenter all ethnocentric conceptions. They are not entirely free of imperfection, but in combination they nevertheless clear a good deal of conceptual ground and open the door to more constructive analysis of the global past. Further possibilities for improved analysis will undoubtedly arise as reflexive historians find additional ways to avoid Eurocentric and other unhelpful ideologies when dealing with the global past.

Remedies for fixation on the nation-state as a focus of historical analysis are more straightforward than those for Eurocentric assumptions. Two main alternative strategies have emerged to deal with the problem. One approach, which has taken several distinctive forms, involves a turn to the local in an effort to discover historical meaning in intimate contexts much smaller than the nation-state. In philosophical dress, this turn to the local found expression in the famous pronouncement of Jean-François Lyotard that the defining characteristic of the postmodern age is ‘incredulity toward metanarratives’ because the only meaningful narratives were intensely local.[25] In methodological dress, the turn to the local made a prominent appearance in the spirited critique of European analytical categories by Steven Feierman, who insisted that scholars must adopt African categories in order to understand African historical experience.[26] In empirical dress, the local turn informed Clifford Geertz's anthropology based on local knowledge and the project of microhistory, which has discovered historical meaning in the lives, experiences, and relationships of individual men and women rather than in their societies' political organs or larger structural elements.[27]

The turn to the local has in many ways enriched understanding of the past without making the nation-state the natural focus of historical analysis, but it is also capable of obscuring influences and connections that condition the lives and experiences of local subjects themselves. Focusing on the lives and experiences of the marginal, the rebellious, and the subaltern, history reflecting the local turn has provided a convenient foundation for political and social criticism as well as identity politics in search of a usable past. Yet the local turn comes at high cost if it ignores the larger frameworks (including the nation-state) and large-scale processes that profoundly influence the experiences of local subjects. To the extent that it declines to engage the larger world and the links that tie societies together, the turn to the local has the potential to encourage the production of unrelated micronarratives and a vision of history driven *de facto* by local cultural determinisms. As Fernando Coronil has pointed out, ‘this popular trend leaves us facing a world of disjointed elements at a time when the globalization of space—marked by integrative and exclusionary processes—makes it intellectually compelling and politically indispensable to understand how parts and whole hang together.’[28]

(p. 12) A second alternative to nation-state history involves a turn toward the global by situating local, national, and regional histories in larger transregional, transcultural, and global contexts. The turn toward the global is not an unproblematic project. To the contrary, it is fraught with logical, epistemological, moral, and other kinds of difficulties. Some efforts at world history have assimilated readily to the familiar Eurocentric assumptions considered earlier. Others have drawn inspiration exclusively from the social theories, especially Marxist and Weberian, that were characteristic cultural productions of European modernity. Too many formulations have flattened differences between societies and homogenized peoples in the interests of grand abstractions.

In spite of all the potential problems and pitfalls, the turn toward the global is a necessary and indispensable project for purposes of constructing realistic visions and meaningful understandings of the world and its development through time. Without denying the significance of the nation-state, world historians have decentered it by focusing their analyses on networks of communication and exchange and by exploring processes of interaction between peoples of different states, societies, and cultural traditions. They have in many ways portrayed messy worlds and resisted temptations to reduce all the multiplicity and variety of historical experience to simple principles. They have sought to recognize both the claim that the world is a site of radical heterogeneity and the reality of transregional systems linking the fortunes of different heterogeneous peoples. In doing so, they have worked to construct visions of the past that are capable of accounting for both fragmentation and integration on multiple levels—local, regional, national, continental, hemispheric, oceanic, and global as well.[29]

The turn toward the global in the form of the new world history does not represent a cure-all, either for historical scholarship or for the more general effort to understand the larger world. It does not dwell on the experiences of individual communities, except insofar as they have participated in larger historical processes linking them to others. In taking long-term perspectives, it runs some risk of obscuring the contingency of history, even if it brings some large-scale processes into clearer focus. Moreover, it admittedly reflects modern cultural perspectives and might well seem impertinent to observers situated beyond the horizon of high modernity.

Yet the turn toward the historical global enables historians to address some significant issues that alternative approaches do not bring into focus. It offers a framework permitting historians to move beyond the issues that have been the principal concerns of professional historical scholarship since the mid-nineteenth century—cultural distinctions, exclusive identities, local knowledge, and the experiences of individual societies, most of them construed in fact as national communities—by making a place on historians' agenda for large-scale processes that connect the world's many ostensibly distinct and discrete societies. The global turn facilitates historians' efforts to deal analytically with a range of large-scale processes such as mass migrations, campaigns of imperial expansion, cross-cultural trade, environmental changes, biological exchanges, transfers of technology, and cultural exchanges, including the spread (p. 13) of ideas, ideals, ideologies, religious faiths, and cultural traditions. These processes do not respect national frontiers or even

geographical, linguistic, or cultural boundaries. Rather, they work their effects on large transregional, transcultural, and global scales. In combination, they have profoundly influenced both the experiences of individual societies and the development of the larger world as a whole. If one of the goals of professional historical scholarship is to understand the world and its development through time, these processes demand historians' attention alongside the experiences of national communities and nation-states.

The turn toward the global in the form of the new world history has become an essential perspective for contemporary thinking about the past. While recognizing that local communities and national states have figured as crucial contexts of all peoples' historical experiences, this project makes it possible to bring historical focus also to large-scale, transregional, globalizing processes that have touched many peoples and profoundly influenced the development of individual societies as well as the world as a whole. Networks of cross-cultural interaction, communication, and exchange, after all, are defining contexts of human experience just as surely as are the myriad local communities and nation-states that scholars have conventionally accepted as the default categories of historical analysis. The challenge for the new world historians is to clear paths leading beyond assumptions that European modernity is the appropriate standard for the measurement of all the world's societies, beyond notions that the world is a site divided naturally into national spaces, and beyond temptations to take refuge in the individual histories of local communities as the only knowable subjects of history.

In the volume that follows, world historians take up this challenge in four groups of essays on salient topics in the new world history. The first group deals with the most basic conceptual issues of the new world history—theories of historical development, frameworks of time and space, the constructs of modernity and globalization, and the analytical tools that new world historians have inherited or devised. A second group turns attention to the most prominent themes that world historians have explored on a transregional and global basis—the natural environment, settled agriculture, nomadic pastoralism, states and state formation, gender, religion, technology, and science. Essays in the third group focus on more or less discrete processes that have worked their effects on large scales—large-scale migrations, cross-cultural trade, industrialization, biological diffusions, cultural exchanges, and campaigns of imperial expansion in pre-modern as well as modern times. The book closes with a final group of essays that locate the major world regions in global historical perspective—by tracing the distinctive lines of development within particular geographical and cultural regions while also taking note of the links connecting individual regions to others in the larger world. In combination, the essays in this volume represent contributions to the understanding of the global past from fresh perspectives, and they reflect both the creativity and the vitality of the new world history.

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Notes:

(1.) Jerry H. Bentley, 'The New World History,' in Lloyd Kramer and Sarah Maza, eds., *A Companion to Western Historical Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 393–416.

(2.) Georg G. Iggers and Q. Edward Wang, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (London: Pearson, 2008), 19–68.

(3.) For a statement along these lines, see Ashis Nandy, 'History's Forgotten Doubles,' in Philip Pomper, Richard H. Elphick, and Richard T. Vann, eds., *World History: Ideologies, Structures, and Identities* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), 159–78; and the critique in Jerry H. Bentley, 'Myths, Wagers, and Some Moral Implications of World History,' *Journal of World History* 16 (2005), 72–6.

(4.) Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989).

(5.) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. by J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), quoting from 79–102. Cf. slightly different formulations of these points in the more recent translation of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. by H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 152–96.

(6.) Robert A. McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise: A Chapter in the Enclosure of American Learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

(7.) The quotation is from Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe* (London: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1965), 9.

(8.) Leopold von Ranke, 'Preface to Universal History (1880),' in Georg G. Iggers and Konrad von Moltke, eds., *Leopold von Ranke: The Theory and Practice of History* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), 160–4. See also Michael Harbsmeier, 'World Histories before Domestication: The Writing of Universal Histories, Histories of Mankind and World Histories in Late Eighteenth Century Germany,' *Culture and History* 5 (1989), 93–131; and Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 106–15.

(9.) Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, 133–270; Jürgen Osterhammel, '"Peoples without History" in British and German Historical Thought,' in Benedikt Stuchtey and Peter Wende, eds., *British and German Historiography, 1750–1950: Traditions, Perceptions, and Transfers* (Oxford, 2000), 265–87; Bruce Mazlish, *Civilization and Its Contents* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2004).

(10.) For a single pointed critique out of many that might be cited, see Steven Feierman, 'African Histories and the Dissolution of World History,' in Robert H. Bates, V.Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O'Barr, eds., *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 167–212.

(11.) Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian" Pasts?,' *Representations* 37 (1992), 1–26, quoting from 1, 19. Chakrabarty later modified these views and sought to salvage historical scholarship through the project of 'provincializing Europe.' See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), quoting from 27, 41.

(12.) Alongside Chakrabarty, see also the critiques of Eurocentric historiography by Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*, trans. by R. Moore (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989); and Arif Dirlik, 'Is There History after Eurocentrism? Globalism, Postcolonialism, and the Disavowal of History,' *Cultural Critique* 42 (1999), 1–34.

(13.) Siep Stuurman, 'Herodotus and Sima Qian: History and the Anthropological Turn in Ancient Greece and Han China,' *Journal of World History* 19:1 (2008), 1–40.

(14.) Marnie Hughes-Warrington, ‘Coloring Universal History: Robert Benjamin Lewis's *Light and Truth* (1843) and William Wells Brown's *The Black Man* (1863),’ *Journal of World History* 20:1 (2009), 99–130; David Kopf, ‘A Look at Nehru's *World History* from the Dark Side of Modernity,’ *Journal of World History* 2:1 (1991), 47–63; Paul Costello, *World Historians and Their Goals: Twentieth-Century Answers to Modernism* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993).

(15.) Leopold von Ranke, ‘A Dialogue on Politics (1836),’ in Iggers and von Moltke, eds., *Leopold von Ranke: The Theory and Practice of History*, 119.

(16.) Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The ‘Objectivity Question’ and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 27.

(17.) See Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

(18.) For examples of states' contributions to the emerging discipline of history, see G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Beacon, 1959); Felix Gilbert, ‘European and American Historiography,’ in John Higham, Leonard Krieger, and Felix Gilbert, eds., *History* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 315–87; and William R. Keylor, *Academy and Community: The Foundation of the French Historical Profession* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975).

(19.) R. Bin Wong, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

(20.) Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge, 2006).

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(22.) Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*.

(23.) Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

(24.) C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

(25.) Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by G. Bennington and B. Massumi (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv.

(26.) Feierman, African Histories and the Dissolution of World History.,' in Robert H. Bates, V.Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O'Barr, eds., *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contributions*

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(27.) Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); and *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); and Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, eds., *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

(28.) Fernando Coronil, 'Can Postcoloniality Be Decolonized? Imperial Banality and Post-colonial Power,' *Public Culture* 5 (1992), 89–108, quoting from 99–100. For a similar assessment see Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1997).

(29.) Bentley, 'The New World History'.

Jerry H. Bentley

Jerry H. Bentley was professor of history at the University of Hawai`i and editor of the Journal of World History. He wrote extensively on the cultural history of early modern Europe and on cross-cultural interactions in world history, including Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance (1983), Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples (1987). His more recent research has concentrated on global history and particularly on processes of cross-cultural interaction, resulting in Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times (1993) and Shapes of World History in Twentieth-Century Scholarship (1996).

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THE RETURN OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY

DAVID CHRISTIAN

ABSTRACT

The prediction defended in this paper is that over the next fifty years we will see a return of the ancient tradition of "universal history"; but this will be a new form of universal history that is global in its practice and scientific in its spirit and methods. Until the end of the nineteenth century, universal history of some kind seems to have been present in most historiographical traditions. Then it vanished as historians became disillusioned with the search for grand historical narratives and began to focus instead on getting the details right through document-based research. Today, however, there are many signs of a return to universal history. This has been made possible, at least in part, by the detailed empirical research undertaken in the last century in many different fields, and also by the creation of new methods of absolute dating that do not rely on the presence of written documents. The last part of the paper explores some of the possible consequences for historical scholarship of a return to a new, scientific form of universal history. These may include a closer integration of historical scholarship with the more historically oriented of the sciences, including cosmology, geology, and biology. Finally, the paper raises the possibility that universal history may eventually be taught in high schools, where it will provide a powerful new way of integrating knowledge from the humanities and the sciences.

Keywords: universal history, world history, big history, historiography, creation myth

> The historian's business is to know the past, not to know the future, and whenever historians claim to be able to determine the future in advance of its happening, we may know with certainty that something has gone wrong with their fundamental conception of history.
>
> —R. G. Collingwood, from *The Idea of History*[1]

I. INTRODUCTION AND A PREDICTION

How will historical scholarship and teaching evolve over the next fifty years? As I write this I can hear the specter of R. G. Collingwood tut-tutting somewhere behind the wainscot. By the time I have finished this essay I suspect others will have joined him (G. R. Elton, perhaps? or Jean-François Lyotard?), all tut-tutting away in an increasingly frenzied chorus. I want to thank the editors of *History and*

1. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, rev. ed., ed. Jan Van der Dussen (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 54. Collingwood argues that historians who try to predict the future have fallen for the deterministic logic of the natural sciences and have lost sight of human agency.

Theory for encouraging us to break with this particular historiographical convention.

My essay falls somewhere between a letter to Santa and a genuine attempt at prediction. My wish/prediction is this: a major development in historical scholarship and teaching over the next fifty years will be the return of what was once called "universal history." But this will be a new form of universal history that is global in its practice and scientific in its spirit and methods.

The Prediction: The Return of Universal History

I define universal history as the attempt to understand the past at all possible scales, up to those of cosmology, and to do so in ways that do justice both to the contingency and specificity of the past and also to the large patterns that help make sense of the details.[2]

I predict that in fifty years' time, all historians will understand that it is possible and fruitful to explore the past on multiple scales, many extending far beyond Braudel's *longue durée*, by reaching back to the origins of our species, the origins of the earth, and even the origins of the cosmos. The new universal history will transcend existing disciplinary boundaries, exploiting the powerful intellectual synergies available to those willing to deploy the methods and insights of multiple disciplines. It will treat human history as one member of a large family of historical disciplines that includes biology, the earth sciences, astronomy, and cosmology. By doing so, it will blur the borderline between history and the natural sciences (a borderline Collingwood took very seriously) as history rediscovers an interest in deep, even law-like patterns of change.[3]

In this expanded form, history will have a powerful impact on public thinking about the past because it will begin to play a role similar to that of traditional creation stories: it will aspire to create a map of the past as a whole. That map will allow individuals and communities throughout the world to see themselves as part of the evolving story of an entire universe, just as they once mapped themselves on to the cosmologies of different religious traditions, from the dreamtime stories of indigenous Australians to the Ptolemaic maps of medieval Christianity. The new universal history will contain a clear vision of humanity as a whole, for within its universal maps of the past it will be easy to see that all human beings share a common, and quite distinctive, history. Understanding of this shared his-

2. Marnie Hughes-Warrington distinguishes four possible definitions of "universal history": "a comprehensive and perhaps also unified history of the known world or universe; . . . a history that illuminates truths, ideals, or principles that are thought to belong to the whole world; . . . a history of the world unified by the workings of a single mind; and . . . a history of the world that has passed down through an unbroken line of transmission." *Berkshire Encyclopedia of World History*, ed. W. H. McNeill (Great Barrington, MA: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2005), V, 2096. I use the phrase primarily in the first of these four senses.

3. Collingwood argued that history dealt with an unpredictable world of conscious acts rather than law-governed events. The historian's goal, therefore, was not to seek general laws, but to "penetrate" the thoughts that motivated past actions. That was why historians seemed to occupy a different epistemological universe from natural scientists (Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 214). Why this distinction is no longer tenable is discussed elegantly in Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (Winter 2009), 197-222, 201ff.; thanks to Dr. Kim Yong-Woo of Ewha University's Institute of World and Global History for alerting me to this article.

tory will help educators generate a sense of global citizenship, just as nationalist historiography once created a sense of solidarity within different nation-states.

I make these predictions with some confidence because, in various guises and under various names, such scholarship is already emerging, though it remains marginal within the community of professional historians. After a century and more of detailed empirical scholarship in many different historical fields, it is now possible to construct accounts of the past at very large scales with a precision and rigor unattainable in the late nineteenth century. It is also apparent that the new universal history may yield results that are exciting and profound enough to transform our understanding of the past.

II. A SHORT HISTORY OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY

The Absence of Universal History Today

> *"I wish you wouldn't keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly: you make one quite giddy." "All right," said the Cat; and this time it vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone.*
>
> —*Alice in Wonderland*, chapter 6[4]

Today, universal history has about as much visibility within the history profession as the Cheshire cat's grin. In 1979, the French post-modernist theorist, Jean-François Lyotard, famously announced that "the grand narrative has lost its credibility."[5] As recently as 2005, Barbara Weinstein referred to "the virtual abandonment

4. From the Gutenberg Project text of *Alice in Wonderland*: http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~rgs/alice-table.html. (accessed July 12, 2010). The illustrations are Sir John Tenniel's from 1866.

5. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, transl. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiii, xxiv, cited from Kerwin Lee Klein, "In Search of Narrative Mastery: Postmodernism and the People without History," *History and Theory* 34, no. 4 (1995), 275-298, 283; my thanks to Andrew Dunstall for alerting me to this important article.

of the grand narrative tradition among historians of a strong theoretical bent. . . ."[6] To most historians, universal history seems a naïve, archaic, and outdated form of historical thought, abandoned, along with chronicle-writing, as the discipline of history matured into a modern, professional branch of scholarship in the late nineteenth century. Universal history makes occasional spooky appearances, perhaps in undergraduate courses on historiography, but it soon vanishes, leaving behind, like ripples in the air, a few derisive remarks about the failings of a Toynbee or a Spengler. Hugh Trevor-Roper captured these attitudes perfectly when he remarked of Toynbee's *Study of History*, that "as a dollar earner . . . it ranks second only to whiskey."[7]

One sign of the completeness with which universal history has vanished from the practice of professional historians is the interest shown in Fernand Braudel's *longue durée*. I remember vividly the sense of spaciousness I felt when first reading his wonderful volumes on the Mediterranean. That Braudel is so often taken as a model for historical scholarship at large scales is telling because, measured against the time scales of human history, Braudel's *longue durée* is not very *longue*: just a few centuries in a human history that extends back at least 60,000 years and perhaps 200,000 years.[8] William McNeill's pioneering world history, *The Rise of the West*, was so exciting in part because its scales were even more spacious than those of Braudel.

Even the booming field of world history focuses mainly on the modern era, and few world historians are comfortable with the idea that world history might try to embrace the whole of history.[9] In a recent survey, Patrick Manning insists that "World history is far less than the sum total of all history."[10] I suspect most world historians share Manning's caution, preferring to define world history in ways more compatible with the methods of detailed archival research that dominate modern historical scholarship.

6. Barbara Weinstein, "History without a Cause? Grand Narratives, World History, and the Postcolonial Dilemma," *International Review of Social History* 50 (2005), 71.

7. Cited from Gilbert Allardyce, "Toward World History: American Historians and the Coming of the World History Course" [1990], in *The New World History*, ed. Ross Dunn (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 30.

8. For arguments defending alternative dates for the origins of our species (and therefore the beginnings of human history), see Richard Klein with Blake Edgar, *The Dawn of Human Culture* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2002), and Sally McBrearty and Alison Brooks, "The Revolution That Wasn't: A New Interpretation of the Origin of Modern Human Behavior," *Journal of Human Evolution* 39 (2000), 453-563; there is a summary of this debate in Paul Pettit, "The Rise of Modern Humans," in *The Human Past: World Prehistory and the Development of Human Societies*, ed. Chris Scarre (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005), chap. 4.

9. Jerry Bentley, the editor of the *Journal of World History*, notes that only seventeen of the 195 articles published in that journal between 1990 and 2006 dealt with periods before 1500. Bentley adds that this "is not surprising . . . since most professional historians work in these eras for which relatively abundant documentation and source materials survive." At a conference on world history research organized by Patrick Manning in November 2006, only four of thirty-six presenters discussed research work on eras before 1500. See *Global Practice in World History: Advances Worldwide*, ed. Patrick Manning (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2008), 20 and 133-134.

10. Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York and Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 3.

Why the Absence of Universal History is so Curious

> *The executioner's argument was, that you couldn't cut off a head unless there was a body to cut it off from: that he had never had to do such a thing before, and he wasn't going to begin at his time of life. The King's argument was, that anything that had a head could be beheaded, and that you weren't to talk nonsense.*
>
> —*Alice in Wonderland*, chapter 8

Universal history has vanished so completely that few historians even notice its absence. Yet if we survey the evolution of historical thought on larger scales, the disappearance of universal history looks distinctly curious. I say this because before the late nineteenth century, universal history (as I have defined it) pervaded historical thought in most human societies, and the reasons for expelling it were less compelling than is often assumed.

In non-literate societies universal history took the form of what we somewhat patronizingly call "creation myths"—attempts to use the best available knowledge to place society within a large, often cosmological, context.[11] Universal histories were also constructed within all literate traditions, usually in tension with more sharply focused histories of particular groups, regions, or eras (a tension William

11. A century ago, Durkheim had already argued that "belief-systems, including primitive religions, should be treated as cosmologies." Steven Lukes, *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work, a Historical and Critical Study* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 449. More recently, in a critique of Lyotard's claim that creation myths, such as those of the South American Cashinahua, should be regarded as "little stories," Klein insists that this seems true only from the globalized perspective of today's world. "So far as the Cashinahua are concerned, 'The History of the Cashinahua' and 'The History of Humanity' are interchangeable phrases; there is no difference between them. Both are 'universal history,' and Lyotard's designation of such stories as 'local' or centered on 'rigid designators' reflects a retrospective, ironic intervention (the Cashinahua may have believed that they alone were truly human, but we moderns know better; humanity is a much vaster category)." Klein, "In Search of Narrative Mastery," 285.

McNeill finds in the contrasting perspectives of Herodotus and Thucydides).[12] Universal histories can be found in the Muslim world (in the work of Tabari, Rashid al-Din, and Ibn Khaldun), or in the encyclopedic tradition of Chinese official historiography, or in the chronicles of Mesoamerica.[13] In the Muslim world, dynastic histories customarily merged into a sacred version of universal history. We can take as a more or less random example a nineteenth-century history of the Qonghirat dynasty of Khiva, the *Firdaus ul-Iqbal*, or "Paradise of Felicity."[14] This surveys the military and dynastic history of the Qonghirats, but it begins with the traditional Muslim account of the creation of the earth and the first humans, Adam and Eve. It traces that history through the lineage of Noah's son, Japheth, and his eldest son, Turk, through to the time of Oghuz Khan whose first word was "Allah" and who restored the true faith in Central Asia. One of Oghuz Khan's descendants would be Qonghirat, the founder of the ruling dynasty of Khiva in the nineteenth century; another would be the progenitor of the lineage of Genghis Khan. The result was to map Khiva and Central Asia in general within a world that had always been Muslim, but which had periodically been returned to the true path through the heroic activity of great and pious rulers. More specifically, by tracing the Qonghirats to a lineage senior to that of the Chingissids, it legitimized the 1804 seizure of power in Khiva by Eltüzer Khan from a lineage claiming Chingissid antecedents.[15] By linking the present to the past as a whole, such histories made sense of the contemporary world at the time.

Raoul Mortley has traced the emergence of a self-conscious tradition of universal history in the Mediterranean world, soon after the conquests of Alexander the Great.[16] Christian historical thought was organized around a paradigmatic universal history constructed in the time of Augustine. This would frame European historical thinking until the Enlightenment, as it frames Christian fundamentalism today. As Collingwood puts it: "The conception of history as in principle the history of the world . . . became a commonplace. The symbol of this universalism is the adoption of a single universal chronological framework for all historical events. The single universal chronology, invented by Isidore of Seville in the seventh century and popularized by the Venerable Bede in the eighth, dating every-

12. William McNeill, "The Changing Shape of World History," *History and Theory, Theme Issue* 34, *World Historians and Their Critics* (May 1995), 8-26.

13. Marnie Hughes-Warrington, "Writing World History," in *Berkshire Encyclopedia of World History*, ed. William McNeill (Great Barrington, MA: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2004), V, 2095-2103. On the historiography of big history, see Marnie Hughes-Warrington, "Big History," in *Social Evolution and History* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2005), ed. Graeme Donald Snooks, 7-21 (also available in *Historically Speaking* [November, 2002], 16-17, 20]; see also McNeill, "The Changing Shape of World History," particularly pp. 8-9 for the argument that the sacred or philosophical histories of all the world's major historiographical traditions all produced accounts that can legitimately be described as "world histories."

14. Described in "Islam in Central Asia," in Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 19-20.

15. Adeeb Khalid, "Nation into History: The Origins of National Historiography in Central Asia," in *Devout Societies vs. Impious States? Transmitting Islamic Learning in Russia, Central Asia and China, through the Twentieth century*, ed. Stéphane A. Dudoignon (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2004), 131.

16. Raoul Mortley, *The Idea of Universal History from Hellenistic Philosophy to Early Christian Historiography* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996).

thing forward and backward from the birth of Christ, still shows where the idea came from."[17]

Bruce Mazlish argues that Bishop Bossuet's *Discourse on Universal History*, published in 1681, represents the "last gasp" of this historiographical tradition.[18] But secular forms of universal history would flourish for another two centuries during the Enlightenment and in the hands of the great nineteenth-century system builders from Hegel to Marx and Spencer. Fred Spier has noted that Alexander von Humboldt began, but did not finish, "a cosmical history of the universe." In the introduction to the first volume, published in 1845, Humboldt summarized his aims: "Beginning with the depths of space and the regions of remotest nebulae, we will gradually descend through the starry zone to which our solar system belongs, to our own terrestrial spheroid, circled by air and ocean, there to direct our attention to its form, temperature, and magnetic tension, and to consider the fullness of organic life unfolding itself upon its surface beneath the vivifying influence of light."[19] Even Leopold von Ranke, the iconic pioneer of archive-based empirical research, understood the importance of universal history, and at the end of his life he even attempted such a history. Earlier in his career, he wrote that "Universal history comprehends the past life of mankind, not in its particular relations and trends, but in its fullness and totality. The discipline of universal history differs from specialized research in that universal history, while investigating the particular never loses sight of the complete whole, on which it is working."[20]

Then, toward the end of the nineteenth century, professional historians expelled universal history from the discipline. Since then it has languished in exile, despised by professional historians and practiced only by mavericks such as H. G. Wells or Hendrik Willem van Loon, whose engaging writing style and financial success were often taken as proof of how bad their historical scholarship was.[21] The expulsion of universal history was an important part of the process by which the discipline of history demonstrated its "scientific" credentials. As Gilbert Allardyce writes: "The new history defined itself against the old, and apprentices in the vocation, reared on specialized research, learned to hold world history in suspicion as something outmoded, overblown, and metahistorical."[22] In the second half of the twentieth century, other macro-narratives suffered a similar fate, and

17. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 51.

18. Bruce Mazlish, "Terms," in *Palgrave Advances in World Histories*, ed. Marnie Hughes-Warrington (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 20-23. On universal histories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Tamara Griggs, "Universal History from Counter-Revolution to Enlightenment," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 2 (2007), 219-247.

19. Fred Spier, *Big History and the Future of Humanity* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 10.

20. Leopold von Ranke, cited from *The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present*, ed. Fritz Stern (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1956), 61-62.

21. Van Loon was particularly vulnerable to the charge of carelessness with facts.

22. Cited from Allardyce, *Toward World History*, in Dunn, ed., *The New World History*, 30. On the complex process of establishing and policing a clear border between "scientific" and "literary" approaches to history in England, see Ian Hesketh, "Diagnosing Froude's Disease: Boundary Work and the Discipline of History in Late-Victorian Britain," *History and Theory* 47 (October 2008), 373-395.

even science came under suspicion.[23] "A chorus of criticism consigned the grand or meta-narrative to the dustbin of historiography, if not history . . . ; postmodernists of various stripes questioned whether historical narratives could escape the teleological tendencies of the master narrative of the Western/liberal tradition; and recently a leading postcolonial theorist has denounced all historicism, broadly defined, as incurably Eurocentric."[24] As R. I. Moore puts it, "much of the resistance to world history among professional historians has arisen . . . from the fear that the attempt to grapple with questions too large to be tackled by means of the critical appraisal *de novo* of the relevant primary sources, . . . might lead to a resurgence of the grandiose and sinister speculative structures that they associate pre-eminently with the names of Spengler and Toynbee."[25]

Why did Universal History Disappear?

Seen in this broad historiographical context, the disappearance of universal history is curious and needs to be explained. Why did it vanish?

I am no specialist in nineteenth-century historiography, so I offer the ideas that follow tentatively. However, my overall argument does not depend on their accuracy. My hunch is that the most powerful currents in the perfect storm that blew universal history away were: 1) a growing concern for "scientific" rigor, 2) nationalism, and 3) the rapid institutionalization of "Rankean" methods of teaching and research.[26]

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, those who attempted universal histories did so partly in the hope of turning history itself into a science as powerful, as scientific, and as law-governed as physics or biology. By the end of the century, however, most historians began to suspect that the speculative and subjective elements in these narratives outweighed their scientific rigor. As Popper would argue, they were too rubbery even to refute. They failed as science, and this failure reverberated throughout the embryonic discipline of history. Historians lowered their sights, insisting that factual rigor must precede high theory. At the 1900 International Congress of Historians, Henri Houssaye thundered: "We want nothing more to do with the approximations of hypotheses, useless systems, theories as brilliant as they are deceptive, superfluous moralities. Facts, facts, facts—which carry within themselves their lesson and their philosophy. The truth, all the truth, nothing but the truth."[27] Houssaye's naive inductionism became the dominant

23. See the survey of this transition in Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1994).

24. Weinstein, "History without a Cause?, 71; the reference in the last sentence of this passage is to Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

25. R. I. Moore, "World History," in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 942-943.

26. Tamara Griggs argues that the culprit was Eurocentrism and that the process began in the eighteenth century: "World history as we find it today is no longer anchored in the universal. More recently, it has lost its center and this decentering was done in response to the European-progress histories launched in the 1750s." "Universal History from Counter-Revolution to Enlightenment," 246-247.

27. Cited in Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 37-38.

methodological slogan of historical scholarship in the early twentieth century. To demonstrate their scientific rigor, it seemed, historians would have to narrow their field of vision and set more modest goals. In their influential *Introduction to the Study of History*, written in 1898, Langlois and Seignobos wrote: "The historian works with documents. Documents are the traces which have been left by the thoughts and actions of men of former times . . . No documents, no history."[28] This methodological asceticism ruled out universal history for, as Langlois and Seignobos pointed out, "For want of documents the history of immense periods in the past of humanity is destined to remain forever unknown."[29]

It is easy to caricature the "empirical turn" of the late nineteenth century. But it is important to remember that similar strategies seemed to have worked well in the natural sciences. Darwin was a superb empirical researcher.[30] Yet he never lost sight of the ultimate goal of a unifying paradigm. In his autobiography, he did write that "My industry has been nearly as great as it could have been in the observation and collection of facts," but he also added that "From my early youth I have had the strongest desire to understand or explain whatever I observed, that is, to group all facts under some general laws. These causes combined have given me the patience to reflect or ponder for any number of years over any unexplained problem."[31] In the light of Darwin's experience, it was perhaps not so naïve to hope that the patient accumulation of accurate information might produce equally powerful paradigm ideas in history.

But that's not what happened. Historical scholarship narrowed its focus without generating new unifying ideas, and the discipline broke into many isolated islands of knowledge. Historians lost any remaining consensus about the fundamental questions, problems, and themes of their discipline. In a recent review article, Georg Iggers describes the result: "History, like other fields in the social sciences and the humanities, is caught in an iron cage of increasing professionalization and specialization with all the limits they set on the imaginative exploration of knowledge."[32]

Nationalism encouraged the narrowing of scholarly focus. It offered a historical object—the nation-state—that set clear, manageable, even alluring boundaries to historical research, attracted significant amounts of government funding because of its importance in public education, and attracted the attention of a wide readership interested in the history of its own imagined community. Nationalism also offered the discipline of history an artificial sense of wholeness.

The shift toward small-scale empirical research was rapidly institutionalized. "Historians were now trained as professionals, not as people of broad learning.

28. Cited in Daniel Smail, "In the Grip of Sacred History," *American Historical Review* 110, no. 5 (December 2005), 1350-1351.

29. *Ibid.*

30. See Janet Browne's superb biography, *Charles Darwin*, 2 vols. (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002).

31. *The Works of Charles Darwin*, ed. Paul H. Barrett and R. B. Freeman, 29 vols. (New York: New York University Press, 1986–1989), XXIX, 159.

32. Georg Iggers, "Historiography in the Twentieth Century," review essay of Lutz Raphael, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeiltalter der Extreme: Theorien; Methoden; Tendenzen von 1900 bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2003), *History and Theory* 44, no. 3 (2005), 471.

Career patterns were established. Scholarly journals were founded which, unlike those of the eighteenth century, addressed a professional readership."[33] The appearance of specialist journals, the rite of passage of the doctoral dissertation based on archival sources, the increasing respect for precision over relevance—these traditions left no room for the grand narratives of universal history. In an introduction to *History and Theory*'s 1995 "stock-take" on the state of world history, Philip Pomper describes how this methodological revolution squeezed out universal history. "The task of grand synthesis requires hedgehogs, Isaiah Berlin's great system-builders or holists, whereas the history profession attracts foxes, Berlin's thinkers who relish detail and particularity."[34]

III. THE RETURN OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY

> *[S]he noticed a curious appearance in the air: it puzzled her very much at first, but, after watching it a minute or two, she made it out to be a grin, and she said to herself "It's the Cheshire Cat: now I shall have somebody to talk to." "How are you getting on?" said the Cat, as soon as there was mouth enough for it to speak with. Alice waited till the eyes appeared, and then nodded. "It's no use speaking to it,"she thought, "till its ears have come, or at least one of them." In another minute the whole head appeared, and then Alice put down her flamingo, and began an account of the game, feeling very glad she had someone to listen to her.*
>
> —*Alice in Wonderland*, chapter 8

In an interview with Ved Mehta in the early 1960s, Arnold Toynbee insisted that the disappearance of universal history was a temporary aberration:

> he comforted himself with the thought that the days of the microscope historians were probably numbered. They, whether they admitted it or not, had sacrificed all generalizations for patchwork, relative knowledge, and they thought of human experience as incomprehensible chaos. But in the perspective of historiography, they were in the minority, and Toynbee, in company with St. Augustine—he felt most akin to him—Polybius, Roger Bacon, and Ibn Khaldun, was in the majority.[35]

Toynbee was right. Like the Cheshire Cat, universal history is reappearing, beginning with the easy bits. In recent years there has been a resurgence of large-scale narratives in world history, global history, trans-national history, macro-history, or whatever we choose to call it. In 1995, Philip Pomper described world history as "a lively and creative, but still small subdiscipline of history."[36] In 2009, fourteen years later, world history is flourishing, and not just in the USA.[37]

33. *Ibid.*, 470.

34. Philip Pomper, "World History and Its Critics," introduction to *History and Theory, Theme Issue* 34, *World Historians and Their Critics* (May 1995), 1-2.

35. Ved Mehta, *Fly and the Fly-Bottle: Encounters with British Intellectuals* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1962), 143.

36. Pomper, "World History and Its Critics," 1. In the same year, Michael Geyer and Charles Bright wrote: "It [world history] is still a hesitant and fledgling historiography, which remains mired in the old, unsure of its scholarly status, and with a tendency to serve existing knowledge rather than create new knowledge. But a start has been made . . . ," in "World History in a Global Age," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 4 (October 1995), 1038.

37. For two recent surveys that show that macro-history is reviving in many parts of the world,

Universal history, the most ambitious of these large narratives, remains out of focus. Nevertheless, we are beginning to see the outlines of a modern, scientific reincarnation of universal history. There are now several courses in what is often described as "big history," in the U.S., Australia, the Netherlands, and Russia.[38] And a small literature on big history is emerging that explores themes across many different historically oriented disciplines from history to biology to geology and cosmology.[39]

Why is Universal History Making a Comeback?

In a sense universal history, like the Cheshire Cat, never really disappeared anyway. It was lurking. In a remarkable article, published in *History and Theory* in 1995, when universal history seemed more securely entombed than ever, Kerwin Lee Klein argued that the coffin had always leaked.[40] "From Lévi-Strauss to Lyotard, from Clifford to Fukuyama, we remain haunted by history, returning ever and again to the big story even as we anxiously affirm our clean break with the evils of narrative mastery."[41] Even when it seems most absent, universal history has often survived as the shadow of all those pasts we try to exclude. And, like the shadow in Jungian psychology, it may be that what we exclude—what we define as the "other" in historical thinking—defines our thinking as powerfully as what we include. If history is to recover its wholeness as a discipline, it may have to look once again at the many shadow histories it has overlooked or repressed, the many "others" of universal history.

A second reason for the re-emergence of universal history is that a century of detailed research in history and neighboring disciplines has transformed the database on which historians can draw. In the late nineteenth century, European world historians such as Marx simply did not have enough reliable information to generalize convincingly about the history of Asia or Africa. With the limited information available within Western scholarship, it seemed obvious that the "East" of Marx's "Asiatic Mode of Production" was a realm of stasis. Today, it is apparent

see the special issue of *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 20, no. 2, on "Global History," edited by Peer Vries (2009), and Manning, ed., *Global Practice in World History*.

38. See Barry Rodrique and Daniel Stasko, "A Big History Directory, 2009: An Introduction," in *World History Connected* 6, no. 9 (October 2009): http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/6.3/rodrigue.html (accessed July 12, 2010).

39. Though I have reservations about the label, I coined the term "big history" in an article published in 1991 (David Christian, "The Case for 'Big History,'" *Journal of World History* 2, no. 2 [Fall 1991], 223-238). On big history, see Fred Spier, *The Structure of Big History: From the Big Bang until Today* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996); David Christian, *"Maps of Time": An Introduction to "Big History"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Cynthia Stokes Brown, *Big History: From the Big Bang to the Present* (New York and London: The New Press, 2007); and Eric Chaisson, *Epic of Evolution: Seven Ages of the Cosmos* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); and see a recent collection of essays from a conference on big history, *The Evolutionary Epic: Science's Story and Humanity's Response*, ed. Cheryl Genet, Brian Swimme, Russell Genet, and Linda Palmer (Santa Margarita, CA: Collins Foundation Press, 2009). For a recent survey of the rise of big history and some of its central concepts, see Fred Spier, "Big History: The Emergence of a Novel Interdisciplinary Approach," *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 33, no. 2 (2008), 1-12; Spier's *Big History and the Future of Humanity* offers a powerful theorization of big history around the notions of increasing complexity and energy flows.

40. Klein, "In Search of Narrative Mastery."

41. *Ibid.*, 276-277.

that nineteenth-century historiography was projecting onto a nearly empty historiographical canvas a sort of shadow identity of Europe. Asia seemed the shadow of everything European or Western. Today, historians throughout the world have better access to traditional regional historiographical traditions and can draw on a vast amount of modern scholarship, and this makes it easier to detect and counter such crude, culture-bound projections.[42] Indeed, one of the great achievements of modern world historical scholarship has been the refutation of Eurocentric images of a static East.[43] Analogous changes within archaeology and prehistory have transformed our understanding of the 100,000-200,000 years of human history before the appearance of the first written documents.[44]

Similar changes have also occurred in the more historical of the natural sciences. Particularly important has been the development of new dating techniques during what I have described elsewhere as the "Chronometric Revolution."[45] By "chronometry" I mean the techniques by which we assign absolute dates to past events. Chronometry is fundamental to historical scholarship. As M. I. Finley put it: "Dates and a coherent dating scheme are as essential to history as exact measurement is to physics."[46] Indeed, so fundamental is chronometry that historians all too often take it for granted. Yet in the last half century (and largely unnoticed by professional historians) a profound chronometric revolution has transformed many historically oriented disciplines. It is easy to forget that before the middle of the twentieth century written records provided almost the only reliable way of assigning absolute dates to past events. As Colin Renfrew writes: "Before World War II for much of archaeology virtually the only reliable absolute dates were historical ones—Tutankhamun reigned in the 14th century BC, Caesar invaded Britain in 55 BC."[47] H. G. Wells confessed in a chronological appendix to the universal history he attempted in *An Outline of History* that "Chronology only begins

42. Vinay Lal has written a forceful critique of the Eurocentrism of much recent scholarship in world history (including my own work) in "Much Ado about Something: The New Malaise of World History," *Radical History Review*, no. 91 (Winter 2005), 124-130, but Lal's own article, together with the rapid growth of world historical scholarship outside of the English-speaking world, raises the hope that in a more international scholarly community such projections will be exposed and corrected more easily than in Marx's time. For a discussion of similar critiques of world history, see Dominic Sachsenmaier, "World History as Ecumenical History?," *Journal of World History* 18, no. 4 (2007), 465-489.

43. Scholars such as Ken Pomeranz, Bin Wong, Andre Gunder Frank, and Jack Goldstone have demonstrated that as late as 1800 the Chinese economy was as dynamic, commercial, and technologically creative as those of western Europe. The changes that help explain the remarkable power of "the West" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries emerged suddenly and rather late. Two fine surveys of this historiographical revolution are Robert Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-first Century*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), and Jack Goldstone, *Why Europe? The Rise of the West in World History, 1500–1850* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008).

44. For a fine overview of recent scholarship on human prehistory, see Scarre, ed., *The Human Past*.

45. See David Christian, "Historia, complejidad y revolución cronométrica" ["History, Complexity and the Chronometric Revolution"], *Revista de Occidente*, no. 323 (April 2008), 27-57, and "The Evolutionary Epic and the Chronometric Revolution," in Genet *et al.*, eds., *The Evolutionary Epic*, 43-50.

46. Cited from Mazlish, "Terms," in Hughes-Warrington, ed., *World Histories*, 19.

47. Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology: Methods and Practice* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 101.

to be precise enough to specify the exact year of any event after the establishment of the eras of the First Olympiad [776] and the building of Rome [753]."[48] This fundamental chronometric barrier confined empirical historical scholarship to a scale of several thousand years and in practice to the study of literate societies and their elites. Though nineteenth-century geologists had determined *relative* dates for many geological eras, *absolute* dates were unattainable. This is why the emergence of radiometric dating techniques in the 1950s was so revolutionary.

The basic principle of radiometric dating was understood in the first decade of the twentieth century. Though the decay of an individual radioactive atom is unpredictable, the rate of decay of large numbers of atoms can be predicted with great accuracy. Each radioactive isotope has a precisely measurable half-life, a period during which half of its atoms will have decayed. Carbon-14, for example, has a half-life of 5,730 years, whereas uranium-238 decays to an isotope of lead with a half-life of about 4.5 billion years. This means that it is possible to determine when a lump of material containing radioactive material was formed, by measuring the relative proportions of the original material and the materials into which it had decayed. The practical difficulties are considerable, however, which is why such methods could not be used routinely before the 1950s, when Willard Libby established reliable methods for using the decay of carbon-14 to date archaeological materials. In 1953, Claire Paterson used the much longer half-life of uranium to determine for the first time the age of the earth at about 4.56 billion years.

Renfrew, one of the first to demonstrate the revolutionary implications of these techniques for European prehistory, writes:

> The second half of the twentieth century saw major changes in the nature of prehistory. . . . the development of radiometric dating methods, including radiocarbon, allowed the construction of a chronology for prehistory in every part of the world. It was, moreover, a chronology free of any assumptions about cultural developments or relationships, and it could be applied as well to nonliterate societies as to those with written records. To be prehistoric no longer meant to be ahistoric in a chronological sense. As a direct consequence, a new kind of world prehistory became possible. It was feasible to date, quite independently of one another, all the ancient civilizations of the world. . . . [I]t became possible at last to date the fossils documenting the various stages of human evolution, and their accompanying artifacts.[49]

The implications of the chronometric revolution go far beyond archaeology. Since the 1950s, it has been possible to create a timeline that is based on reliable absolute dates and extends beyond the appearance of writing, beyond even the appearance of our species, to the origins of the earth and the universe. Suddenly, we can do prehistory, paleontology, geology, and even cosmology with the sort of chronometric precision previously confined to the study of human civilizations.

48. H. G. Wells, *Outline of History*, 3rd ed. [1920] (London: Macmillan,1921), 1102.

49. Colin Renfrew, *Prehistory: The Making of the Human Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007), 41; in 1973 Renfrew published *Before Civilisation: The Radiocarbon Revolution and Prehistoric Europe* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973).

The chronometric revolution was one element in another important change, the historicization of the natural sciences. Paleontologists, geologists, and cosmologists began to realize that they, like historians, were in the tricky business of constructing a vanished, and often highly contingent, past using the few clues it happened to have left to the present day.[50] Suddenly, it seemed, history was merely one of a whole family of scholarly disciplines that studied the past with chronological rigor. What distinguished it was not its concern with change in time, nor its concern for chronological precision, but merely the fact that, along with archaeology and prehistory, it focused on the history of a single species, our own.

IV. THE IMPACT OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY ON HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP

> *The Cat only grinned when it saw Alice. It looked good-natured, she thought: still it had very long claws and a great many teeth, so she felt that it ought to be treated with respect.*
>
> —Alice in Wonderland, chapter 6

If we do see a return to universal history in a new, scientific, guise, how will it affect historical scholarship?

Seeing the Large Patterns

A revival of universal history will affect the context of historical scholarship much more than its practice. After all, rigorous empirical research is the meat and drink of scholarship in all fields including the natural sciences. So I suspect that for most historians "normal history" will carry on regardless. But the *context* of historical research will be transformed. Seeing human history as part of a much larger story will affect how historians think about research, the questions they ask, the ways they collaborate, and the way they judge the significance of scholarship. This is because a discipline of history that sees itself as part of a larger, interdisciplinary universal history will surely acquire some features of a Kuhnian paradigm.[51] There will surely emerge a loose consensus about the very large patterns apparent in history, and this will change how we think about the problems we study at more conventional scales.

The first reason for saying this is that universal history will encourage collaboration between historians and scientists. More and more, historians will find themselves working with historically minded scholars in the natural sciences who take it for granted that good empirical research is always linked in some way to large, paradigm-like ideas. Collaboration will be particularly important at the border between human history and biology. What makes human history different from the

50. W. H. McNeill, "History and the Scientific Worldview," *History and Theory* 37, no. 1 (1998), 1-13.

51. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). Kuhn famously argued that modern science is characterized by the existence of paradigms, fundamental models of how things work and how they should be studied. He argued that a paradigm "provides a map whose details are elucidated by mature scientific research. And since nature is too complex and varied to be explored at random, that map is as essential as observation and experiment to science's continuing development" (109).

history of, say, our biological cousins, the great apes? After all, as individuals they are just about as clever as we. Why do we have a rich history of long-term change when they, apparently, don't? To tackle such questions seriously, historians will have to negotiate the tricky border they share with sciences such as biology that are organized around Kuhnian paradigms.

Second, the sheer scale of universal history will encourage historians to start looking once again for large, paradigm-like patterns in human history. I would like to discuss this point in more detail.

The narrow focus of modern historical scholarship hides the large patterns. At the scale of a few years or decades, or even a few centuries, the contingent aspects of human history stand out, as do the unpredictable consequences of human agency. Even at the scales of demographic or economic history, contingencies loom large: think of the Chinese government's one-child policy, for example. The birth of Genghis Khan was a contingent event that reverberated throughout Eurasia for many centuries.[52] So contingency and agency dominate historical thought even at the scales of the Braudelian *longue durée*. This, I think, is why, in Toynbee's words, so many historians "sacrificed all generalizations for patchwork, relative knowledge, and . . . thought of human experience as incomprehensible chaos."[53] Something similar also happened in archaeology. Renfrew writes that for many archaeologists "The world . . . is constructed through individual actions by individual people. It is a rich palimpsest, testifying to human creativity, and perhaps little more is to be expected than the collection and collation of regional narratives."[54] Yet, like many other historians and archaeologists, Renfrew finds the idea that there is no deep pattern to human history profoundly unsatisfying. After the passage I have just cited, he adds: "To those, however, who see science as the search for pattern and for explanation, this ramifying richness of complexity leaves something to be desired. . . . Are there no simplifying perspectives which, while not denying individual agency and creativity, will reveal some underlying order?"[55]

A return to universal history will show that there are indeed "simplifying perspectives" that reveal a profound orderliness in human history. However, the large patterns can be seen clearly only at scales of many millennia, or at the even larger scales of human history as a whole. The shift in perspective as one moves to larger scales is similar to the shift physicists experience as they move from the quantum level, where processes such as radioactive breakdown are unpredictable, to the scale of everyday life, where the same processes yield powerful, law-like patterns such as those that make radiometric dating feasible. Two centuries ago, Kant had already understood that in history, as in the sciences, contingent processes could give rise to law-like patterns: "what seems complex and chaotic in the single individual may be seen from the standpoint of the human race as a whole to be a

52. For a fine recent discussion, see Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan* (Oxford: One World Publishers, 2007).

53. Mehta, *Fly and the Fly-Bottle*, 143.

54. Renfrew, *Prehistory*, 74-75.

55. *Ibid.*

steady and progressive though slow evolution of its original endowment."[56] Kant illustrated his argument by noting how the free demographic choices of millions of families resulted in highly predictable demographic patterns. At large scales, the pixels of human action generate clear patterns, and awareness of these patterns will inevitably change how we think about history at smaller scales. Though contingency can loom large even at very large scales (think of the asteroid impact that drove the dinosaurs to extinction and opened a path to our own evolution), Collingwood was missing half the story when he insisted that history was essentially about the free actions of individual actors.[57]

At the scale of human history as a whole, three large, interrelated patterns stand out. The first is increasing (and eventually *accelerating*) control of biospheric resources by humanity as a whole. The results are palpable today, in an era some geologists are beginning to describe as the "Anthropocene."[58] But the trend was already present in the Paleolithic era as our ancestors learned how to exploit many different environments, from tropical forests to arctic tundra, until eventually they had colonized all of the earth's continents. In the almost four-billion-year history of life on earth, no other single species has shown such sustained adaptability. The second pattern, made possible by the first, is a slow and accelerating increase in the total number of human beings. The third, intimately tied to the first two, is an eventual increase in the complexity, diversity, and interrelatedness of human societies once population growth ceased to take the form of migrations, and began, instead, to generate larger and denser communities. It was the appearance of agriculture, from 10,000 years ago, that allowed this fundamental change. None of these large trends were apparent to those who lived through them, nor can they be seen at the scales of conventional historical research. At small scales it is the fluctuations that stand out. The long trends can be seen only at large scales and in retrospect. "The owl of Minerva takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering."[59]

That these trends are linked in some ways with the very nature of our species is apparent from the fact that they can be seen in the histories of communities that had no contact with one another.[60] The best example of these strange parallels is perhaps the evolution of agrarian societies. In most agrarian regions (Papua New Guinea, with root crops that discouraged prolonged storage, is an interesting exception), the spread of agriculture led quite independently to the emergence of the large communities often described as agrarian civilizations.[61] In all of them

56. Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," in *Kant on History*, ed. Lewis White Beck (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 11-12.

57. That story is told superbly in Walter Alvarez, *T. Rex and the Crater of Doom* (London: Vintage, 1998).

58. See Will Steffen, Paul J. Crutzen, and John R. McNeill, "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?," *Ambio* 36, no. 8 (December 2007), 614-621.

59. Hegel, Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, cited from Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, transl. S. W. Dyde (Kitchener, ON: Batoche Books, 2001), 20.

60. Does the idea of a "species" history commit one to a form of essentialism? Not necessarily, as Dipesh Chakrabarty points out in "The Climate of History," 214-215.

61. Why tropical gardening discourages the storage of surpluses is discussed in J. R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of World History* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2003), 34-35.

we find cities, states, armies, networks of exchange and tribute-taking, literacy, astronomy, and . . . pyramids. It may well be that the particular design of the pyramids or the cities or the astronomical observatories varied in different "cultures" or "civilizations" as the result of contingent decisions taken within each region at particular times. These features may have been, in the economists' jargon, "path-dependent." But the fact that all agrarian civilizations built pyramids, cities, and observatories was not. That reflects something deeper. Robert Adams, who explored this problem in a classic study published in 1966, *The Evolution of Urban Society: Early Mesopotamia and Prehispanic Mexico,* concluded that "both the societies in question can usefully be regarded as variants of a single processual pattern."[62]

Remarkably, it seems that the trends apparent in human history may be intimately related to even larger trends. Eric Chaisson, who has taught a form of universal history for well over twenty years, has argued that one of the central themes of big history is that of increasing complexity.[63] We can think of complex things as entities composed of diverse elements assembled according to a specific plan. Stars are complex, so are planets, so are living organisms, so is human society. Complex entities also display "emergent properties," qualities that are extremely difficult (and perhaps impossible) to predict by studying their component parts, because they arise not from the components but from the precise way those components are arranged.[64] The qualities of water, for example, are not obviously implicit in the qualities of hydrogen and oxygen atoms. Arrange those atoms in different ways and you get different emergent properties. Emergent properties seem magical because it is impossible to detect them in the components that make up any complex entity; instead they seem to appear out of nothing once those components are arranged in a specific way. There is a famous Buddhist sutra, known in English as the "Questions of Milinda," that captures the idea of emergence well. When the Greco-Bactrian ruler, Milinda (Menander) asks the Buddhist sage Nagasena about the Buddhist doctrine of non-self, Nagasena asks how Milinda came to their meeting. In a chariot. Nagasena then asks what a chariot is. If you took its wheels away would it still be a chariot? If you took away the driver's seat? If you arranged its parts randomly would it still be a chariot? Like a star, a chariot is not a chariot (or a self a self) unless its many components are arranged in specific ways. Only then does the quality of "chariotness" or "self" or "star" or even "humanity" appear. Each type of complex entity appears to have its own distinctive emergent properties.

There are powerful reasons for thinking that in the 13.7-billion-year history of our universe, the upper levels of complexity have slowly increased. The early universe was simple. It contained huge clouds of hydrogen and helium atoms through which flowed various forms of energy. (I ignore dark energy and dark matter, even

62. This is Renfrew's paraphrase in Renfrew, *Prehistory*, 71.

63. Chaisson, *Epic of Evolution*.

64. In *The Astonishing Hypothesis*, an attempt to understand the emergent nature of consciousness, Francis Crick insists that we must never rule out the possibility that, at least in principle, emergent properties of an object can be understood from "the nature and behavior its parts *plus* the knowledge of how all these parts interact." *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).

though they make up perhaps ninety-five percent of the mass of the universe, because neither seems to have had the same propensity as atomic matter for forming complex entities.) Over time, from these elements more complex entities have emerged, including stars, new chemical elements (formed in the death-agonies of large stars), planets, and living organisms such as ourselves. Each reveals new emergent properties that provide the research agendas of the sciences that study them, from astronomy to earth sciences to biology to human history. As Chaisson has pointed out, all complex entities depend on energy flows. This raises the possibility that we might be able to estimate degrees of complexity with some objectivity by calculating the "density" of the energy flows through different complex entities.[65] Chaisson's rough calculations suggest that living entities are much more complex than dead things (a cockroach is vastly more complex than a star); and today's global human society appears to be one of the most complex entities we are aware of. That, surely, is a conclusion to make even the most empirically minded of historians sit up and listen!

Awareness of large patterns such as the ones I have described will affect the practice of historical research by raising new questions and setting new research agendas. How can I make sense of the processes I am studying in the light of these large patterns? Are they part of these patterns? Do they represent counter-patterns? Do they have no bearing at all on the large patterns?

Explaining the Large Patterns of Human History

Then there are deeper questions about the nature of the patterns themselves. How can we explain them? How, for example, can the history of a species as quirky, willful, and unpredictable as our own yield the powerful long-term trends we see in human history? And how does human history fit into an even larger story of increasing complexity?

We already have some interesting candidate answers to these questions. The trends we have seen show a species that keeps adapting in new ways so as to increase its control of biospheric resources. Of course, all species "adapt." They evolve in ways that ensure that most individuals can extract enough resources from their environment to survive and reproduce. Darwin's great achievement was to explain *how* species do this through the mechanism of natural selection. But the patterns we see in human history are different. Humans do not just adapt, they *keep* adapting, and at a pace that cannot be explained by natural selection alone. Continuous adaptation provides the species as a whole with more resources than are needed simply to maintain a demographic steady state. Something unusual is going on. And there is already emerging a consensus about how we should describe this difference, which distinguishes the history of human beings from the histories of all other species on earth. In a recent lecture advocating an "evolutionary history of humanity," Eric Hobsbawm puts it like this:

> The changes in human life, collective and individual, in the course of the past 10,000 years, let alone in the past 10 generations, are too great to be explained by a wholly Darwinian mechanism of evolution via genes. They amount to the accelerating inheri-

65. See Eric Chaisson, *Cosmic Evolution: The Rise of Complexity in Nature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), particularly chap. 3 and the table on p. 139.

tance of acquired characteristics by cultural and not genetic mechanisms. I suppose it is Lamarck's revenge on Darwin via human history.[66]

In fact, even Hobsbawm's scales are too small; the history of Paleolithic migrations shows that the same mechanisms have functioned ever since the appearance of our species, some 100,000 years ago.

How can we explain this remarkable capacity for sustained and accelerating adaptation that seems to be a new emergent property of our species and the primary driver of change in human history? I have argued elsewhere that the key is the remarkable precision and fluency of human language, which allowed humans alone to share learned knowledge so precisely and in such volume that it could accumulate with minimal degradation within the memory banks of entire communities.[67] Human language linked humans into highly efficient information networks through which the learning of each individual could be shared, added to, and passed on to future generations. The slow mechanism of genetic inheritance was overlaid by the much faster mechanism of knowledge transfer. The long-term trends that make human history so different are driven, in other words, by a new and more rapid adaptive mechanism that we can call "collective learning."[68] As a species we cannot help accumulating new knowledge by exchanging it. That explains our remarkable plasticity, the astonishing variety of behaviors that we find in individuals and in different human societies, and the extreme difficulty we have in trying to pin down any single "human nature." Yet behind this variety there is one constant: our propensity for sharing the insights of each individual, thereby generating a collective capacity for sustained adaptation. It is this propensity that seems to have driven human societies with radically different cultures and in very different environments along broadly similar paths, and ultimately toward greater control of resources, larger populations, and greater social complexity.

Is it too optimistic to suppose that ideas like these may contain in embryo a Kuhnian paradigm for human history? If so, then one consequence of a return to universal history will be the final collapse of the barriers that have divided the humanities from the natural sciences for so long. If Chaisson's ideas about the

66. Eric Hobsbawm, "Asking the Big Why Questions: History, A New Age of Reason," *Le Monde diplomatique* (December 2004) http://mondediplo.com/2004/12/ (accessed July 14, 2010); thanks to Dr. Kim Yong-Woo of Ewha University's Institute of World and Global History for alerting me to this article.

67. Daniel Dennett has argued that the remarkable stability of verbal communication arises from the digital nature of words, the fact that, even when mispronounced or misspelled or misunderstood, they can often preserve their meaning whole. "Words have one feature that has a key role in the accumulation of human culture: They are digitized. That is, norms for their pronunciation permit automatic—indeed involuntary—proofreading, preventing transmission errors from accumulating in much the way the molecular machines that accomplish gene replication do." "The Cultural Evolution of Words and Other Thinking Tools," *Cold Spring Harbor Symposia on Quantitative Biology*, published online August 17, 2009 at http://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/papers/coldspring.pdf, from p. 4 (accessed July 12, 2010).

68. I have explored these arguments in Christian, *Maps of Time*. The idea of collective learning attempts to generalize ideas central to the work of William McNeill. In a 1995 essay, McNeill writes: "it seemed obvious to me in 1954 when I began to write *The Rise of the West*, that historical change was largely provoked by encounters with strangers, followed by efforts to borrow (or sometimes to reject or hold at bay) especially attractive novelties." McNeill, "The Changing Shape of World History," 15.

extraordinary complexity of modern human society are correct, we may also be able to explain why generating paradigm ideas for human history has proved so difficult: historians deal with levels of complexity much greater than those described in, say, physics.

What will be the institutional implications of the collapse of this particular "Berlin Wall"? Will we see the emergence of new "Faculties of Historical Sciences," with historians sharing offices and seminars with cosmologists? Will the very nature of historical change emerge as a fundamental question to be tackled across multiple disciplines? None of this is clear. What is clear is that the return of universal history will have profound institutional as well as intellectual consequences because it will break down the scholarly fragmentation on which current institutional structures are founded.

V. THE IMPACT OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY ON EDUCATION IN GENERAL

The return of universal history will have a significant impact on education in general, in three main ways.

First, if universal history as I have described it begins to penetrate school curricula, it will help students grasp the underlying unity of modern knowledge. Today, modern education has neither the intellectual nor the institutional resources needed to integrate the many forms of knowledge that are taught in schools and universities. Rather than providing students with more information, we need to help them navigate through the information available in books and on the internet. We need to help them see the coherence of modern knowledge. I have found in my own teaching that there is a profound yearning among students for a less fragmented vision of reality. Courses in universal ("big") history can help overcome this sense of fragmentation by providing maps through the vast ocean of modern knowledge. Such courses are already being taught in universities, and I hope over the next few years to collaborate in constructing online curricula that can be taught in high schools. The barriers to such a proposal are both institutional and intellectual. If they can be surmounted, it should be possible to teach about the past in ways that help students understand that history and literature and biology and cosmology are not separate intellectual islands, but parts of a single, global, and interdisciplinary attempt to explain our world.

Second, the coherent vision of the past described in this paper should help people in many different walks of life to understand better the complex relationship between our own species and the biosphere. Such understanding will be increasingly important as we learn more about some of the dangerous consequences of our astonishing ecological and technological creativity as a species. Understanding how and why all human communities are driven to store and accumulate knowledge should help us be more choosy about how we use this creativity.

Finally, only at the scales of universal history will it be possible to grasp the underlying unity of humanity as a whole. We have seen that the overall trajectory of human history cannot be seen within the constricted time scales of Rankean scholarship. Consequently, the revival of universal history will allow historians to take up a challenge that some historians already understood at the beginning of

the twentieth century: that of constructing histories of humanity as powerful and inspiring as the great national histories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the aftermath of World War I, many argued that historical teaching organized around the idea of the nation-state could only guarantee more and even bloodier wars in the future. As John Tosh writes: "The League of Nations campaigned vigorously for the downplaying of war and nationalism in the history curriculum in schools. The historian Eileen Power believed that world citizenship would come nearer if history teaching enlarged the sense of group solidarity and demonstrated that 'everyone is a member of two countries, his own and the world.'"[69] H. G. Wells wrote his *Outline of History* in a similar spirit. Peace, he argued, required the creation of "*common historical ideas*. Without such ideas to hold them together in harmonious co-operation, with nothing but narrow, selfish, and conflicting nationalist traditions, races and peoples are bound to drift towards conflict and destruction. This truth, which was apparent to that great philosopher Kant a century or more ago . . . is now plain to the man in the street."[70]

More recently, the great American world historian William McNeill has written:

> Humanity entire possess a commonality which historians may hope to understand just as firmly as they can comprehend what unites any lesser group. Instead of enhancing conflicts, as parochial historiography inevitably does, an intelligible world history might be expected to diminish the lethality of group encounters by cultivating a sense of individual identification with the triumphs and tribulations of humanity as a whole. This, indeed, strikes me as the moral duty of the historical profession in our time. We need to develop an ecumenical history, with plenty of room for human diversity in all its complexity.[71]

Among many other reasons for welcoming the prospect of a return to universal history, then, is the possibility that it may provide the framework within which we can create histories that can generate a sense of human solidarity or global citizenship as powerfully as the great national histories once created multiple national solidarities. As Jerry Bentley has argued,

> [an] ecumenical world history might take on a more explicit ideological dimension by allying with movements seeking to advance the causes of global citizenship, cosmopolitan democracy, cross-cultural dialogue, and related projects. In recent years, political scientists, moral philosophers, and others have devoted considerable energy to the articulation and development of these ideals.[72]

By taking on this important challenge, historical scholarship and historical teaching may be able to play a vital role in helping to tackle the global problems we face today, and in avoiding some of the dangers inseparable from nationalism in a world equipped with nuclear weapons.

69. John Tosh, *Why History Matters* (Basingstoke, UK: PalgraveMacmillan, 2008), 125; he cites Maxine Berg, *A Woman in History: Eileen Power, 1889–1940* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 223.

70. Wells, *Outline of History*, vi.

71. "Mythistory, or Truth, Myth, History, and Historians,," *American Historical Review* 91, no. (February 1986), 7.

72. Jerry Bentley, "Myths, Wagers and Some Moral Implications of World History," *Journal of World History* 16, no. 1 (2005), 78. The same page includes a short bibliography on the idea of global citizenship.

"Cheshire Puss," she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name: however, it only grinned a little wider. "Come, it's pleased so far," thought Alice, and she went on. "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat. "I don't much care where—" said Alice. "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat. "—so long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation. "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

[Alice in Wonderland, chapter 6]

Macquarie University and WCU (World Class University) Fellow of the Institute of Global and World History at Ewha Womans University, Seoul