WHAT ARE OUR 17-YEAR OLDS TAUGHT? WORLD HISTORY EDUCATION IN SCHOLARSHIP, CURRICULUM AND TEXTBOOKS, 1890-2002

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ABSTRACT

This study examines world history education in the United States from the late 19th century through 2002 by investigating the historical interplay between three mechanisms of curricular control: scholarship, curriculum recommendations, and textbook publishing. Research for this study has relied on unconventional source classification, with historical monographs which defined key developments in world history scholarship and textbooks being examined as primary sources. More typical materials, such as secondary sources analyzing philosophical educational battles, the history of educational movements, historiography, and the development of new ideologies from have been incorporated as well.

Since educational policy began trending towards increasing levels of standardization with the implementation of compulsory education in the late 1800s, policymakers have been grappling with what to teach students about the wider world. Early scholarship focused on the history of Western Civilization, as did curriculum recommendations and world history textbooks crafted by professional historians of the period. Amidst the chaos of two World Wars, economic depression, the collapse of the global imperial system, and the advent of the Cold War traditional accounts of the unimpeachable progress of the Western tradition began to ring hollow with some historians. New scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century refocused world history, shifting away from the cyclical rise and fall of civilizations model which emphasized the separate traditions of various societies and towards a narrative of increasing interconnectedness. While this view has come to dominate present day historical world history research it has not yet replaced the older Western Civilization model in the education system. Curriculum
recommendations continue to be undermined by partisans committed to a model based on century old scholarship which has been abandoned by the field itself and textbooks illustrate an uneven and varied approach. A closer look at the three mechanisms in the two periods (1890-1960, 1960-2002) suggests that creating a greater synergy between the mechanisms is likely necessary if the narrative suggested by contemporary world history scholarship is to take hold in the classroom of today. The development of a defined introductory narrative, supported by the scholarship, reflected in the college survey, and promoted in curriculum recommendations and textbooks are the suggested path to creating this synergy.
For my parents…
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

In a 1989 summit in Charlottesville, Virginia President George H.W. Bush and state governors from the fifty states began an initiative to set nation-wide goals for the schools. In the twenty years since the 1989 Charlottesville education summit the field of education in the United States has been increasingly committed to the idea of standardization. This movement towards increasing levels of standardization is hardly a new development; public education has been subject to a degree of “recommended” standard content for over one hundred years. Beginning with the curriculum recommendations of the National Educational Association and the American Historical Association in the late 1890s and early 1900s, concerned educators and content professionals have been trying to provide model history curriculum which every student should be taught. Contemporary standardization efforts from 1989 to the present have attempted to implement a common set of knowledge and skills students should achieve at an unprecedented level, requiring massive organized efforts at the national, state, and local levels. A key question which has haunted these organized efforts at standardization is whose judgment should mold the curriculum?¹ For world history education, the focus of this study, the question of which groups should have this role in the decision making process included professional historians, teachers, educational professionals, legislators, political commentators, religious organizations, and cultural groups. This curriculum “standardization by democracy” represents a break from the earlier methods of the 1890s and the first decades of the 1900s which were more powerfully directed by historians themselves.

Historians played a prominent role in developing early K-12 world history education. They dominated committees which developed recommended curriculum. This curriculum was closely aligned with the historical scholarship and textbook publishing of the day, with both centered on the civilization as the unit of historical analysis. The civilization model focused the narrative on the development of Western Civilization in the ancient Mediterranean and its continuation up through the states of Western Europe and the United States. The uniformity of this early world history narrative granted the model considerable staying power, as illustrated in the national world history curriculum standards created in 1996. The cohesion of this narrative and the three mechanisms which work together to implement it—scholarship, curriculum, and teaching materials—adds to its pedagogical persuasiveness. The persuasiveness of the Western Civilization narrative also speaks to history’s unique pedagogical role as a unifier of the curriculum.

The notion of history as unifier of the curriculum is perhaps most true of world history, where the seemingly disparate strands of the social studies like culture, economics, politics, and geography are pulled together in an effort to explain the past. Judith Zinsser, currently a professor of gender and world history at Miami University and formerly a world and American history teacher at United Nations International School from 1969-1993, illustrates this point mindfully when explaining the composition of one of her seventh grade courses. In attempting to explore the lives of the people of the Kalahari Desert, Zinsser found that her students could not understand the subject without “learning about their lives thirty years ago and today after

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2 National Center for History in the Schools, National Standards for History, Part Two: National Standards for History Grades 5-12 (World History), 1996, nchs.ucla.edu, accessed August 12, 2009. Era’s two and three, “Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples, 4000-1000 BCE” and “Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 BCE-300 CE” both focus on early civilizations. Greek and Roman civilization, the roots of Western Civilization, are granted the greatest amount of coverage. This will be looked at further in chapter two.

commercial stock-raising and intermittent war” which had physically altered the environment and upset traditional social institutions. Merely teaching about the current condition of the peoples of the Kalahari left the students with too many questions. Providing context to their condition through the integration of history, anthropology, and geography allowed students to penetrate the fog of culture, distance, and time in order to better understand a “foreign” people and the processes which drive change in the world. World history, in one incarnation or another, has played this role well for over one hundred years. Its ability to do so in the most effective, or persuasive, fashion has wavered considerably though.

World history is one of the fastest growing pieces of the American K-12 school curriculum. As Robert Bain and Tamara Shreiner point out in their 2005 article “Issues and Options in Creating a National Assessment in World History,” almost every state has added world history content to their curriculum, with many of them requiring a year of world history study at the high school level as a graduation requirement. In trying to develop a method for assessing world history Bain and Shreiner draw attention to the fact that one of the greatest challenges facing world history education involves the “variations in the type of world history that United States students encounter in their schools,” pointing out the way states and local school districts “use the world history label to describe curricular practices with dramatically different structures, historical content, and approaches.” In an endnote Bain and Shreiner quote historian Ross Dunn as claiming that the varied models of world history are evidence that there is no “dogmatic consensus to official narratives” in the field, and that their own review of world

history standards and the AP world history exam supports the varied model of claim Dunn made. They had not reviewed world history textbooks, where they suspected “one might be more likely to find such a stance.” The issue of textbook narratives will be explored more in Chapter Three, where I find rather surprisingly that contemporary world history textbooks also lack such a unified or “dogmatic” narrative.

Bain and Shreiner lay out their own four models or patterns of world history curriculum available today under the titles “Western Civilization Plus,” “Social Studies World History,” “Geographic/Regional World History,” and “Global World History.” The Western Civilization Plus pattern builds off of the older Western Civilization course, which will be outlined in Chapter Two, adding to this study cultures and civilizations outside of Western Europe but “without dramatically shifting the key events or the underlying narrative structure.” Bain and Shreiner claim that “approximately seventy percent or more of the content of this world history curriculum is devoted to the study of Europe,” and continues with the periodization schemes and organizational features of the old Western Civilization course. Bain and Shreiner see this pattern as the “most dominant” among state standards, with twenty-eight states, including Ohio, as adding non-western content to a Western Civilization model.

Social Studies World History was the second most prominent curriculum pattern. This pattern builds off of the National Council for the Social Studies curriculum standards. In the Social Studies model world history is often found in various social science disciplines, from

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7 Bain and Shreiner, “Issues and Options,” 268. The online resource American Forum of Global Education at www.globaled.org, which once housed the Ross Dunn article “Introduction: Contending Definitions of World History: Which One Should We Choose for the Classroom” is not currently available.
8 Ibid, 246.
9 Ibid, 245. Chart 10 on 266 illustrates the breakdown state by state. Ohio, whose 2002 Ohio Department of Education curriculum standards which will be examined in chapter two are rather accurately labeled as Western Civilization Plus.
economics to geography. This pattern is found in twenty of the state’s curriculum standards, although it may hold even greater sway when examined at the K-8 level where the social studies often exerts greater primacy over history in the curriculum. The major problem highlighted by world history through social studies is that this model “leaves specificity of events and people to local districts or requires other documents to provide more detailed content and integration.”

Few states offer the third model, Geographic/Regional World History. This pattern treats various regions of the world independently in examining their history, economics, and geography, much like the Western Civilization course did for Western Europe as a whole. The forth model is that of Global World History. Bain and Shreiner define this model as constituting “a self-conscious attempt to locate history at different scales of time and space, specifically adding trans-regional historical processes to the study of regions and civilizations.” The Global World History model is largely based on the examination of patterns over time and space which connect local developments to global developments. This curriculum pattern, which fits the connections-based model which world history scholarship has been moving towards since the middle of the twentieth century, is only employed by six states (Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, and Washington).

While Dunn and other world history advocates may applaud the lack of a “dogmatic” world history narrative, which allows for a greater scope of scholarly inquiry, the price of this freedom is often ignored. That price is the amount of uniformity in the world history narrative taught in classrooms around the United States. In this work I will argue that the lack of a

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10 Ibid, 246-247. The tie in with geography is perhaps the most clear. This content strands very title “People, Places, and Environment” evokes the spirit of interdisciplinary education which social studies attempts to encapsulate.
11 Ibid, 246.
12 Ibid, 247.
13 Ibid, 266-267. Utah’s curriculum also includes aspects of the Geographic/Regional World History.
cohesive narrative, which the state standard classification done by Bain and Shreiner illustrates, has created a less effective form of world history education. This evaluation assumes that a standardized curriculum is a desired goal in American education. Within this standard curriculum world history is used to help students understand the significant events, patterns, and themes of the past through human experience and knowledge in order to understand their rights and responsibilities within both the American and international community as the goal of world history education. Early world history education, under the Western Civilization model, was highly successful in forcefully presenting a collective past which accomplished this goal. The scholarship, curriculum recommendations, and textbooks of the period all closely reflect one another. Scholars like Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee were writing large scale histories which outlined the development and decline of civilizations. Curriculum recommendations from the National Educational Association and the American Historical Association outlined a course of study which concentrated on the linear progression of civilization from ancient Greece and Rome up through the contemporary states of Western Europe and the United States. Textbooks like Geoffrey Parsons 1933 *The Stream of History* would present this civilization narrative to students and use it to provide context to contemporary United States political issues like immigration laws. The persistence of this persuasive model is reflected in its still dominant

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14 Office of Curriculum and Instruction in the Center for Curriculum and Assessment, *Academic Content Standards K-12 Social Studies*, Ohio Department of Education, 2002, 12. The ODE standards explain that the goal of history is for students to “use materials drawn from the diversity of human experience to analyze and interpret significant events, patterns, and themes in the history of Ohio, the United States, and the world” while citizenship education should provide students with “knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in order to examine and evaluate civic ideals and to participate in community life and the American democratic system.”
position within the curriculum despite scholarship moving increasingly away from such interpretations since at least the 1960s.\textsuperscript{17}

In addition to the Bain and Shreiner article, this work is also indebted to and inspired by Ross Dunn’s 2000 \textit{The New World History: A Teacher’s Companion}. Dunn’s edited volume has been an invaluable companion, with its compilation of various calls to develop and refine world history in the classroom. In Dunn’s anthology interested historians, primarily—but not exclusively—world historians, outline the reasons for teaching world history, what comprises world history, various methods of studying (and teaching) world history, and the future of the field.\textsuperscript{18} Many of the major world history scholars of the past fifty years contributed to the volume, including William McNeill, Phillip Curtin, Gilbert Allardyece, Andre Gunder-Frank, Patrick Manning, Jared Diamond, and David Christian. While the volume was aimed primarily at college teachers, Dunn acknowledges that many high school and middle school teachers are also grappling with the “same basic conceptual and organizational problems.”\textsuperscript{19} Dunn’s primary purpose for creating \textit{The New World History} was to “encourage history professionals to consider the directions the discipline has taken and to contemplate where it might go from here.” The aim and purpose of Dunn’s \textit{The New World History} have been instrumental in guiding my work. His introduction bristled with optimism at the growth of the field in the late 1990s, particularly his mentioning of the expansion of the WHA and its efforts at better integrating world history at the college and K-12 level.\textsuperscript{20} A decade later the shine seems to have worn off of these optimistic outlooks. World history has continued to become increasingly relevant in the curriculum of both

\textsuperscript{17} This shift in scholarship will be explored more fully in chapter one.
\textsuperscript{18} Ross Dunn, \textit{The New World History: A Teachers Companion}, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2000). Among the methods of world history discussed in the text are regional studies, world systems, civilizations, periodization, comparative, thematic, and gender in world history.
\textsuperscript{19} Dunn, \textit{The New World History}, 9.
\textsuperscript{20} Dunn, \textit{The New World History}, 7.
colleges and the K-12 system, but despite the subject’s sustained relevancy world history education has failed to create a cohesive and standardizable narrative.

The most important pieces of this collection for the purposes of this work are the defense of and advocacy for the teaching of world history. Along with McNeill’s early call for developing the field as a supplement (or replacement) for the Western Civilization course, other influential world historians began to push the cause as well. L.S. Stavrianos 1958 “The Teaching of World History” is one of the earliest such calls. Stavrianos advocated for the teaching of world history on the grounds that increasing globalization necessitates a better understanding of general human history. Stavrianos also called for the treatment of world history as a distinct field, “comparable to European of American history,” a call which seems to have been only half-heartedly accepted. Marilyn Robinson Waldman argued in the late 1980s that world history was still faced with an uphill battle to escape the safety of the “mainstream” historical consciousness in an effort to create narratives which “make responsible use of our new knowledge.” Despite being separated by roughly a decade apiece these three works all call for the continued remolding of the non-U.S. survey, concentrating on integrating the expanding knowledge of the field into more accurate narratives which help place the current human condition into a more “truthful,” or accurate, historical context.

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22 L.S. Stavrianos, “The Teaching of World History,” *Journal of Modern History*, 31 (June 1959): 110-112, 113-116, in *The New World History: A Teachers Companion*, ed. Ross Dunn (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 77. Stavrianos points out the way the stresses of World War II and rapid technological change have pushed the world increasingly closer. “World War II accelerated the awakening of colonial peoples, with the result that Cairo, Delhi, and Peking today are crowding out Washington, London, and Paris in the daily headlines. And the technological advances had, in effect, made all peoples neighbors even before Sputnik I began circling the globe every ninety-five minutes.”


Patrick Manning’s 2003 *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* also played a prominent role in shaping this study. Manning himself describes his work as a “voyage towards understanding world history.” In navigating this voyage Manning analyzes the development of World history as a field and the perils the field faces. Manning’s interpretation of world history echoes those of Stavrianos nearly half a century earlier in cautioning that the field is much more than “an assemblage of facts already known.” Instead Manning harkens back to William H. McNeill’s focus on connections and interactions between systems and people through time. *Navigating World History* lays out the field of World history as one interested in broadly generalized connections between people and cultures (like those of McNeill’s *Rise of the West*) and more narrowly focused regional comparisons (similar to Kenneth Pomeranz *The Great Divergence*) which may hold useful inferences for the story of the world at large.

Manning also points out two serious drawbacks the field had encountered in its early period of post-McNeill expansion in both research and teaching. While world history research was growing rapidly during this most recent era of world history scholarship, it was often too concentrated and lacked the sort of “planetary syntheses” which a truly global history narrative should encompass. In particular Manning points out the work in economic, political, and imperial history’s done by Curtin and Wallerstein, migration studies, like his own, and scientific-

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26 Stavrianos, “The Teaching of World History,” 79. Stavrianos acknowledges that a one-year world history course cannot “deal with the histories of all the world’s civilizations, just as in a one-year European history course one cannot deal with the histories of England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Russia, the Balkan countries, the Scandinavian countries, etc” saying that the world history survey should no more be the sum of the histories of various world civilizations than the European history survey should be the total sum of European states histories. 27 Betty S. Anderson, “Review: Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36 no. 3 (2003), 681. McNeill’s *Rise of the West* and its role in establishing the connections-based model is explored in chapter one.
cultural works like those of McNeill and Crosby.28 While works like these have expanded the knowledge of the field by explaining various events and trends which have affected the development of the modern world they often fail to provide a compelling global narrative. The problem with teaching world history prior to the 1990s, Manning concluded, lay in the fact that while narratives were introducing students to new and mysterious parts of the world the substance rarely ventured “beyond travelogue” and failed to “convey logic and facilitate debate.”29

*The New World History* and *Navigating World History* also proved invaluable in piecing together key pieces of theory and scholarship which constitute the field of world history. The growing historiography of the field is clearly not as homogeneous as it may be portrayed in chapter one of this study, but that is in part by design. Building off of Manning’s connections-based definition of world history and Bain and Shreiner’s Global World History curriculum model I chose to chronicle key pieces which contributed to the building of what I agree should be the defined narrative of the field. This defined narrative is one which emphasizes the study of world history beyond the civilizational level and focus on the connections and processes which have driven change world-wide. The works below are among the best representations of this line of thought.

In outlining the two models historians use to shape history education curriculum I drew heavily from the work of Peter Stearns and Gilbert Allardyce. Their interpretations of the Western Civilization course not only outlined the historical developments of this key course but prompted my thoughts on the way the college survey has traditionally been used indirectly to shape history education. References to the NEA (1894) and AHA (1898 and 1911) committees

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29 Manning, *Navigating World History*, 78.
impelled me to take a closer look at these earlier curriculum recommendations which the Western Civilization course had replaced. These curriculum recommendations outlined a course of study which would be reflected in the Western Civilization course, the linear progression of civilization from the “Oriental” origins of ancient Greek culture through the Roman Republic and Empire, the rise of Christianity, the Renaissance, Enlightenment, Reformation, exploration, colonization, and industrialization of Western Europe. The fact that concerned educators and historians had funded professional committees to examine and recommend a standard curriculum in both the 1890s and the 1990s but produced very different results seemed puzzling. Why had the Western Civilization model succeeded so spectacularly, and why have contemporary curriculum standards failed to emulate that success? Answering this question became the goal of this work. This was done by examining the three methods of curriculum influence professional historians have a degree of agency in creating, the scholarship of world history, curriculum models (in the form of committee based standardized recommendations and introductory college courses), and world history textbooks.

Chapter One examines world history scholarship across the twentieth century. Key pieces of scholarship are examined along with peer-reviewed critiques. Part I, “Early World History Scholarship,” looks at the contributions of four key authors in shaping the emerging field of world history. German historian Oswald Spengler’s *Decline of the West* sets the pace for this period in examining world history through the lens of the civilization. The work of American historian Arnold Toynbee’s *A Study of History* continues the world history analysis through the civilization trend associated with Spengler. Famous fictional author H.G. Wells rounds out the early period with his *Outline of*
History. While not technically a professional historian, Wells work was widely read and influenced later conceptions of world history.\textsuperscript{30} All of these works examine world history at the level of the civilization. They present a unified narrative of the past, which we will see is reflected in both the curriculum and textbook publishing of the period.

Part II delves into world history scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century. Beginning with William McNeill’s \textit{Rise of the West} world history scholarship would shift away from the civilization interpretation and towards a more inclusive model based on ecumenes and human connections.\textsuperscript{31} Many of the works following \textit{Rise of the West} would work to explore regions or topics traditionally neglected by past world history narratives. Alfred Crosby’s \textit{Columbian Exchange} and McNeill’s \textit{Plagues and Peoples} would explore the way humans and their actions affected the world through the intentional and unintentional consequences of expanding connections. Phillip Curtin’s \textit{Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex} explored the world through the varied impacts of plantation style economies through trade, migration, regional power, and forced labor. Jared Diamond, like Wells a non-historian, and his work \textit{Guns, Germs, and Steel} explored the ways geographic environments have influenced the development of human societies. \textit{The Great Divergence}, by Kenneth Pomeranz, re-evaluates the reasons for the rise of European economic and political dominance after the industrial revolution, attributing this more to circumstance and luck than inherent cultural or intellectual superiority. Andre Gunder-Frank’s \textit{ReOrient} continues along this path, arguing that Asian dominance of the world economic system lasted well into the industrial revolution, which itself played a lesser role in

\textsuperscript{30} H.G. Wells, \textit{The Outline of History: Being A Plain History of Life and Mankind}, (1920, Garden City, New York: Garden City Books, 1956). Before Wells death \textit{The Outline of History} was published in 1920, 1923, 1925, 1930, and 1939. It continues to be republished to this day.

\textsuperscript{31} McNeill’s ecumenes were an attempt to analyze world history at a higher unit of analysis than the civilization, where regional connections created intercommunicating zones of exchange which grew (or closed) over time.
explaining the rise of the West than the discovery and exploitation of the New World. World history scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century has boldly expanded to examine much more of the world. While few scholars have attempted to write metanarratives like those of Spengler and Toynbee (McNeill being an exception) they have radically expanded the knowledge base of the field. While this scholarship lends itself most clearly to the connections-based or Global World History model, much of it can be applied to the other models as well.

Chapter Two takes a glimpse at the two world history curriculum models; the committee recommendation and the introductory collegiate survey. Part I, on the committee model explores the curriculum recommendations created by interested professional organizations, namely the National Educational Association (NEA), the American Historical Association (AHA), and the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS). Early curriculum recommendations from the NEA’s 1894 Committee of Ten focused world history education on classical civilizations of Greece and Rome along with medieval and modern French and English history as a way of giving context to United States history. The AHA’s 1898 Committee of Seven recommended a similar pattern of Ancient History (which expanded Greek and Roman history to include their “Oriental beginnings”), Medieval and Modern European History, and English History as the supplements to United States History and Civil Government. The second AHA committee, the 1911 Committee of Five, reviewed the effects and revised the recommendations of the Committee of Seven. The Committee of Five’s recommended course of study was a sequence of Ancient History, English (and Medieval European History), Modern European History in addition to United States History and Civil Government.

The 1994 History Standards created by a committee formed by the NCHS (who were appointed and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities) would produce a much
lengthier curriculum. World history would be broken into nine eras to be taught between grades 5-12. These eras, The Beginnings of Human Society, Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples 4000-1000 BCE, Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires 1000 BCE-300 CE, Expanding Zones of Exchange and Encounter 300-1000 CE, Intensified Hemispheric Interactions 1000-1500 CE, The Emergence of the First Global Age 1450-1770 CE, An Age of Revolutions 1750-1914 CE, A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement 1900-1945 CE, The 20th Century Since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes along with a broad category of World History Across the Eras which would invite teachers and students “to give attention to long-term changes and recurring patterns of the past.” These long world history standards contain various approaches to teaching world history, much like those reflected in the varied state’s standards which followed in their contradictory wake.

The recommended curriculum established by these organized committees along with published reports authored by committee members summarizing the creation and intentions of these recommendations serve as the primary sources for this sections while secondary source overviews of history education like Peter Novick’s *That Noble Dream* and Diane Ravitch’s *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reform* lend historical context to these developments.

Part II looks at the way the college introductory survey in non-U.S. history has served as a curriculum model for K-12 world history education. The development of the Western Civilization course in the early twentieth century can be traced both to the efforts of the early curriculum recommendations which stressed the importance of world history in creating

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33 Recommending multiple curriculum patterns at once creates varied curriculum structures where districts and state’s pick and choose pieces to incorporate.
effective citizens but also to the scholarship of the period. It was also viewed as a necessary supplement to the recommended curriculum, as too many students were viewed as having passed over the medieval and modern European portions of the curriculum before going on to post-secondary education. The Western Civilization course would be focused on the intellectual achievements in rational and scientific thought which had produced a consistent line of progress from the ancient past up through the contemporary United States. Molding better citizens by providing students with a sense of America’s place in the privileged tradition of European civilization was the primary motive for the course. The Western Civilization course followed closely the linear narrative of progress and Western exceptionality shared by the scholarship and curriculum recommendations of the period.

The contemporary World History survey is another story. Like the national curriculum recommendations and state curriculum standards themselves the course has no singular model. Early attempts to create World History surveys reflect this confusion. The model which most closely follows the scholarly developments in the field suggests that a World History survey should be based off of the McNeill connections-based model. Lacking institutional support—even at the University of Chicago where it was founded—along with the reluctance of scholars within and outside of the field of world history to adopt a central thesis has hindered the development of a survey which provides a standardized vision of the wider world for the student body. Issues with teacher content training also arise from the conflicting forms of World History surveys which are offered.

After examining world history scholarship and curriculum in chapters one and two, world history textbooks will be the focus of Chapter Three. Ten world history textbooks were examined in order to discover which vision (or visions) of world history have made their way
into the classroom during two key periods over the last ninety years.\(^{34}\) Four questions played heavily in the analysis. First, have texts increased their emphasis on connections and exchanges? Are textbooks becoming less “Eurocentric” as the scholarship of world history would suggest? How similar or different are the narratives within and between the two eras? Finally, has there been a noticeable shift towards or away from the Western Civilization/American Exceptionalism narrative? Answers to these questions would outline the unity of the textbook narratives, how well the textbooks match up with the scholarship and curriculum of their given periods, and provide some keys on the kind of world history narratives which have been presented in the classroom over the last eighty-plus years.

Four of the textbooks (the Wilmot-Buxton, McKinley, Howland, and Dann, Hayes, Moon, and Wayland, and Parsons texts) were early forms of world history textbooks from the 1920s and 1930s. These works were produced during the formative years of universal history, Western Civilization, and the social studies.\(^{35}\) These texts provide a glimpse into how world history was conceptualized and presented as a teaching field before generations of what Peter Stearns might refer to as intellectual dogma had set in.\(^{36}\) The other six (Dunn and McNeill, Beers, Ellis and Esler, Stearns, Spielvogel, and McDougall Littell) come from the contemporary period, the 1990’s and 2000’s.\(^{37}\) These texts were written after thirty years of continuous

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\(^{34}\) The two key periods are the early period of world history through the Western Civilization model in the 1920s and 1930s and the contemporary period of world history publishing in the 1990s and 2000s.


\(^{36}\) Peter Stearns, *Western Civilization in World History*, (New York: Routledge, 2003). Stearns argues that the Western Civilization course abandoned its intellectual and cultural history roots and became bogged down in a static narrative based more on political and diplomatic history.

development in the field of world history. The textbooks of the early period illustrate a great deal of narrative cohesion. These texts focus almost entirely on the West, as the scholarship and curriculum of the period might suggest. While there are a great deal of connections surveyed in these texts they are largely confined within Western society or dictated from the West to the outside world.

Textbooks of the contemporary period have grown less Eurocentric, as would be expected given the scholarly developments in the field. However many of these gains are restricted to the pre-modern era and present a combination of Western Civilization Plus and Geographic/Regional World History elements. Connections have not generally increased, and while there have been gains in two-way connections which grant agency and value to non-Western peoples/societies this is hardly uniform. The narratives of contemporary world history textbooks are found to be extremely varied in both their orientation (Western or Global) and their commitment to the connections model suggested by the scholarship.

The Conclusion seeks to tie together the scholarship, curriculum, and teaching of world history presented throughout this work, arguing that the relationship between the three in the early period shows a great deal of uniformity while the contemporary period is marred by variation. The success of the early period in developing a centralized and persuasive world history narrative which crafted and informed generations of American’s notions of the United States and their own individual place in the world can still be seen today. If we are seeking to


38 The choices were made based upon three criteria. Each work had to purport to being a world history textbook, had to have been commonly (or plausibly could have been) used as a textbook at the high school level, and had to be available to me here in Bowling Green, Ohio (this last point being especially important in the case of the texts from the 1920 through 1940 period).
create a standardized understanding of the world and our place in it today (and continual efforts
to craft such standards indicates a wide desire to do just that) we are failing miserably. To do so
effectively there must develop a synergy between world history scholarship, curriculum, and
teaching that we saw in the past. To do so I suggest that three developments must be made by the
field. First, historians need to define and articulate a common narrative which outlines the basic
contours of the field as suggested by the best scholarship available. The second change is with
regards to the teacher content training in world history. This would be greatly aided by the first
change, but would also supplement it by providing future teachers (and parents) the tools to
make sophisticated and nuanced additions to basic recommended curriculum. The third
development I would advocate for is the creation of more consistent textbooks which approach
the subject from a similar orientation, at a similar level of analysis, and from a similar model of
world history.
CHAPTER ONE: THE SCHOLARSHIP OF WORLD HISTORY

World history as a subject of scholarly inquiry is not in and of itself a novel endeavor. The father of the Western history tradition, Herodotus, wrote what amounted to an all-encompassing survey of the world known to his society. Searching for explanations which account for (or even justify) the known world can be seen in various historical approaches, be they Christian accounts written in Rome or “rationally” based accounts emanating from the salons of Enlightenment era France. Sociologists Max Weber would explain the prominence of Europeans throughout the world by pointing to the superiority of the Protestant work ethic, while an economist like Karl Marx might explain the course of human history through stages of economic and political development. Professional historians have been less quick to adopt such approaches, eschewing the tendency towards generalization which historical analysis on such a scale lends itself to. Nevertheless there have been historians brave enough, and perhaps foolhardy enough as well, to attempt such analysis. Universal histories, already an established part of the recently expanding educational curriculum, began to be explored more seriously in the early twentieth century. With modern warfare bringing untold levels of death and destruction across Europe society during this period several historians, German historian Oswald Spengler, British historian Arnold J. Toynbee, and American historian James Harvey Robinson, along with the prominent author H.G. Wells put forth various historical accounts which explained how the world had come to this.

40 See chapter 2
41 One point of continuity within the literature of world history across the decades has been the contributions of non-historians. Contemporary contributions like those of the scientist Jared Diamond, reviewed below, or the journalist Thomas Friedman’s *The World is Flat* have continued the tradition Wells represents of the non-historian explaining historical processes which have shaped the world.
PART I
EARLY WORLD HISTORY SCHOLARSHIP

OSWALD SPENGLER AND THE DECLINE OF THE WEST

Spengler’s 1918 The Decline of the West was the first of the modern professional attempts at writing world history. Spengler differentiated his study from prior endeavors by focusing it on what he referred to as the “destiny of a Culture.”

Spengler sought to discover the logic of history, seeking in the past lessons and patterns which could help explain what was happening today and what tomorrow may well hold. Decline of the West dealt extensively in history through analogy—particularly the correlation between human life-cycles of birth and death, youth and age, and the lifetimes of cultures. In this way Spengler was proposing that all history was “founded upon general biographic archetypes.” Spengler was not attempting to create a narrative which would explain the world for every inhabitant, instead he explained, “World-history is our world picture and not all mankind’s.”

His distinction that world history was the establishment, progress, exhaustion, and deterioration of Western culture would have great consequences on future scholarship and popular thought, but his note on the world-view of the author and presumptive audience deserve greater attention than it is often granted.

Spengler sets up world history as the study of individual cultures during specific timeframes corresponding to the lifecycle analogy running throughout his work. He discredits

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42 Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West: Form and Actuality Volume One, (New York: Alfred Knopf), 1928, 3
43 Ibid, 3
44 Ibid, 15
45 Ibid, Spengler points out the “meaningless” nature of the “Ancient,” “Mediaeval,” and “Modern” organizational scheme used by Western historians for adhering to an overly simplistic linear progression of history (16), along with the way this scheme and the Western European orientation of Western historians created an optical illusion which “shrinks” the lengthy histories of cultures like China to the “dimensions of mere episodes” in post-Napoleonic European history (17). In his own words Spengler claimed to be admitting “no sort of privileged position to the Classical or Western Culture against the Cultures of India, Babylon, China, Egypt, the Arabs, Mexico—separate worlds of dynamic being which in point of mass count for just as much in the general picture of history as the Classical, while frequently surpassing it in point of spiritual greatness and soaring power.” (18)
the idea of a continuous “Western” culture dating back to the classical Greek and Roman period, instead viewing them as distinct cultures of which Westerners of the contemporary period were merely “adorers” of. Describing civilization as the final form of a culture, in the way that death is the final stage of life, Spengler cites historical patterns where “strong-minded, completely non-metaphysical man” takes control of a given society and lead to its decline. Concentration on the arts and philosophy are replaced by the relentless pursuit of tangible success and brutal conflict. According to Spengler the classical world crossed this threshold in the fourth century while contemporary Western culture passed over it in the nineteenth century. The concentration of energies inward towards cultural efforts is seen as the form of a culture on the rise, the turn of energies outward towards economic, political, or military expansion is deemed the highest form of civilization; imperialism. For the West this outward expression is embodied by Cecil Rhodes, who Spengler calls the “first man” of the age of Western civilization.

As magnificent as this work is, both in its philosophy and coverage, it suffers from many inconsistencies. Repeatedly Spengler ignores historical evidence which runs counter to his thesis; for example there is no mention of Roman authors like Virgil or Ovid, as the notion of Romans producing culture runs counter to his notion that Rome represents the civilization period of classical culture. Alexander and Napoleon are treated as romantic precursors to the military tyrants and imperial figures who follow them, since they fall before the Roman and Western European imperial period which Spengler dates as the crossover point between culture and

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46 Ibid, 27
47 Ibid, 32
48 Ibid, 36-37. Spengler calls imperialism “Civilization unadulterated” and explains that these imperial forms may last for hundreds or thousands of years as nothing more than the “dead bodies, amorphous and dispirited masses of men, scrap-material from a great history” which are to be taken as “the typical symbol of the passing away” of a once great culture.
49 Ibid, index xxi and xxx.
civilization.\textsuperscript{50} In abandoning the organic culture begets civilization framework he had established Spengler opened up his work to wider criticism and undermined his attempt at reforming the way historians write about world historical processes. Instead historians and laymen alike would, and continue, to look at \textit{Decline of the West} as a prescriptive and cyclical examination of cultural history, meant to be generalizable to the world at large, instead of a study of the naturally occurring process of cultural development and decay it may have been meant to be.

**JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON AND LONG CHRONOLOGY**

James Harvey Robinson was a pioneer in both education and history. The “New History” theory, which Robinson was one of the leaders, brought an innovative approach to the still emerging professional field of history. One of the most important concepts for world history scholarship which emerged from Robinson’s New History was that of “long chronology.” As part of the professionalization of the field, which saw history breaking from a religious explanation to a secular interpretation, the new long chronology Robinson supported incorporated the findings of fields like archeology, anthropology, and geology to provide a more accurate measure for dating.\textsuperscript{51} Long chronology placed the appearance of humans hundreds of thousands of years in the past. A famous passage of Robinson’s \textit{The New History} situates the vastness of such a period of human existence into the context of human history by examining the human experience on Earth through a twelve-hour clock. On Robinson’s clock, the current day (1912) was placed at noon, each hour represented 20,000 years, each minute 333.33 years, and

\textsuperscript{50} Oswald Spengler, \textit{The Decline of the West}, 38

\textsuperscript{51} Gilbert Allardyce, “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course,” \textit{American Historical Review} 87, no. 3 (June 1982). Allardyce explains the development of the Western Civilization course
the whole of “known” human existence took place within the last half-hour (11:30 to noon). In explaining this last half-hour Robinson lays out his vision of human history:

Not until twenty minutes before twelve do the earliest vestiges of Egyptian and Babylonian civilization begin to appear. The Greek literature, philosophy, and science of which we have become accustomed to speak as “ancient,” are not seven minutes old. At one minute before twelve Lord Bacon wrote his Advancement of Learning, to which we shall recur presently, and not a half minute has elapsed since man first began to make the steam engine do his work for him.52

In placing human history into a larger chronological framework Robinson also helped to draw a public dividing line in what was history. The distinction between history and what would be termed pre-history dates back to at least 1871.53 The common division between the two, highlighted by the passage from Robinson, was the written word. People lacking written records of the past were not considered part of history. Evidence of remains, be they pottery shards, stone tools, or human skeletons were little more than a baseline for the beginning of human history.54 The exclusion of peoples and cultures from “history” based on their lack of the written word (and their subsequent classification as a part of prehistory) would be joined with a barring of peoples whose histories were rooted in “superstition” and “backwardness” as opposed to reason and progress.55 Thus history took on more than a chronicling of the human past. History was the past of “civilizations”, peoples capable of recording their own past, and who played a role in the “progress” of humanity. While Robinson’s notion of civilization was not clearly

52 James Harvey Robinson, The New History (Norwood, MA: MacMillan, 1912), 239-240. This has become a familiar device in describing the enormity of both space and time, as seen in Carl Sagan’s Cosmos (New York: Random House), and David Christian’s Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).
53 Daniel A. Segal, “‘Western Civ’ and the Staging of American History in Higher Education,” The American Historical Review, 105(3), 774
54 Segal, “‘Western Civ’ and the Staging of American History in Higher Education,” 779. Segal comments that even living links with prehistory, like the Tasmanians and Eskimos of the period, were not considered a part of history proper.
defined it was generally in opposition to Spengler’s final and declining stage of culture. In practice this definition of civilization was associated with the theory of “Western Civilization” stretching from the present all the way back to ancient Greece and Mesopotamia which Spengler denounced so thoroughly in *Decline of the West.*

**ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE AND A STUDY OF HISTORY**

Arnold J. Toynbee’s work built off of these earlier models for analyzing world history, looking at what was considered the largest unit of historical analysis—the civilization. Toynbee’s definition of civilization was similar to Spengler’s identification of “cultures,” and contained “civilized” distinctions like those promoted by Robinson. Toynbee also furthered the cause of world history through his critical analysis of the “industrial” nature of modern professional scholarship. Toynbee saw modern history as being far too focused on the “assemblage of raw materials” in monographs and periodicals while treating with “unmistakable hostility” any efforts to synthesize the “entire life of mankind,” like the work of H.G. Wells below. The hostility towards general world history which Toynbee points out here would be felt throughout the twentieth century, as various experts picked apart wide-ranging historical surveys which happened to “traverse” their particular areas of expertise.56 As Toynbee astutely points out the universal histories which historians have held in disdain have been better appreciated by the general public, who found use for general histories which attempt to make sense of the larger world.57 The universal history that historians and other concerned academics in large rejected

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56 As seen below William McNeill’s *Rise of the West* would face similar attacks from the margins.
57 Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Abridged edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 31-32. This is a trend which I would argue remains active to this day, as evidenced by best-selling works like Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and *Collapse.*
was exactly the kind of history Toynbee would write in *A Study of History*, on which he worked intermittently from 1920 to his death in 1975.58

In making a case for history at the civilization scale Toynbee used the rough outline of the most prominent of European nation-states, Great Britain. Toynbee outlined the seven principal chapters of British national history as the conversion of the English to Christianity in the sixth century, the completion of the feudal system in the eleventh century, the Renaissance in the late fifteenth century, the Reformation in the sixteenth century, overseas expansion in the late sixteenth century, the establishment of parliamentary government in the seventeenth century, and industrialization in the eighteenth century. In looking at these defining characteristics Toynbee finds external influences and exchanges have been instrumental in developing the nation, even in the seemingly local institutions of representative government and the industrial economy. “If this is true of Great Britain,” Toynbee exclaims, “it must surely be true *a fortiori* of any other national state.” After eliminating the nation-state as an appropriate level of analysis Toynbee defined the three key terms which shape his work; society (the network of relations between humans), culture (the external and internal regularities of behaviors and values), and civilization (a particular kind or phase of culture in practice).59

Toynbee placed himself and his nation-state, Great Britain, into the larger construct of Western Civilization. Like Spengler, Toynbee saw a life-cycle which civilizations or cultures go through. Western Civilization was not disconnected from the now dead Greco-Roman civilization, which he refers to as the Hellenic Civilization, as it was under Spengler’s model. Instead it carried pieces of that defunct civilization forward through their shared connection with

58 The “other academics” refers to the wide range of fields whose work is “traversed” upon by world historians, including scientists, artists, engineers, social scientists, classicists, and the like.
the Christian church. Using the ancient Hellenic Civilization and the Chinese, or Sinic, Civilization as case studies Toynbee established a working list of over twenty civilizations through time, beginning with the Sumero-Akkadian and then Egyptiac Civilizations circa 3300 and 3100 BC respectively. Toynbee also identified overlap and borrowing between civilizations, like that between the Indus and Indic Civilization’s or the Middle American and Mississippian Civilizations.

According to Toynbee civilizations were created in several ways. Some, like the aforementioned Egyptiac or Sinic civilizations were created through the “spontaneous mutation” of a pre-civilizational society. Others, like the Russian or Japanese Civilization’s, were stimulated into form by the influence of another civilization(s). The third type of civilization Toynbee identified was created by the disintegration of an older civilization and the transformation of some of its elements into a new civilization—which is where he places Western Civilization.

Among the breaks with past universal histories, Spengler’s most notably, were not only Toynbee’s definition of civilization but also the issue of historical determinism. While Toynbee recognized that civilizations had beginnings and some had met with ends—occasionally before reaching maturity—a civilization did not have to die. Toynbee would argue that a civilization, like the Chinese, could absorb fundamental changes—like the adaptation of Buddhism—without crumbling. Instead of accepting imperialism as the death-knell of civilization, as Spengler did

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60 Ibid, 52.
with his scathing attack on the Roman Empire mentioned above. Toynbee saw in the universal state a “boon” which peace and prosperity offer to the people of such a civilization.

As mentioned above Toynbee’s work was not as complete a departure from that of Spengler’s as he himself might have hoped. While breaking out of the prescriptive and pessimistic schema provided by Spengler, Toynbee was perpetuating the cyclical study of civilization which many viewed the *Decline of the West* as presenting. While some aspects of Toynbee’s differences with Spengler appear to be moving toward a more sophisticated understanding of world history, his open-ended civilizational life-cycles for example, others appear in retrospect to have regressive qualities. The linear “rise and fall” progression of civilizations and the notion that civilizations are forged from challenge and response represent the two most prominent and lasting criticisms of Toynbee’s work. Despite its various deficiencies Toynbee’s magnum opus continued to exert influence over general universal history narratives which focused on the rise and development of Western Civilization.

**H.G. WELLS AND THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY**

Attempting a universal history of humanity has never been the purview of professional historians alone. One of the most well-read world histories ever written was penned by the

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62 See footnote 24.
63 Ibid, 277. Toynbee, translating himself from the German publication of *Decline of the West* quotes the passage from footnote 24 at length, taking Spengler to task for his overly negative interpretation of imperial rule. Toynbee’s more positive outlook on empire vis a vis Spengler’s may likely have been due to their home state’s particular condition and standing within Western civilization in the 1920s.
64 William McNeill, *Arnold J. Toynbee: A Life*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 98-99. According to McNeill Toynbee was happy to find this difference between the book idea he had in mind and what had been recently published by Oswald Spengler as he feared his thoughts may have already “been disposed.”
65 Ibid, 285. This is far from a universally held critique of Toynbee’s work, as McNeill points out Toynbee himself saw his work as expanding the civilizational purview to other parts of the world in an attempt to help Westerners to see the whole of the world.
66 This can be seen in the world history standards of the 1990-2000s in chapter two and the state standards which rely so heavily on Western Civilization Plus models which Toynbee’s work seems a likely archetype.
famous British author H.G. Wells.\textsuperscript{67} Wells work was an outlier in this early period of world history writing. *The Outline of History* did not attempt to squeeze history into the domain of only the literate and “civilized,” but took a much wider view of the whole human experience. According to Wells himself the *Outline* was written during the closing period of the First World War as a response to the overwhelming feeling of crisis in international affairs.\textsuperscript{68} In examining contemporary international issues Wells felt that men and women of the period were ill-equipped by the “narrow history teaching of their brief schooldays” whose only tools for comprehending the world were “an uninspiring and partially forgotten list of national kings or presidents.” Escaping these nationalist blinders which the education system of the early twentieth century provided created the need for a general outline of history which “all the intelligent people of the world… were seeking more or less consciously to ‘get the hang’ of world affairs as a whole.”\textsuperscript{69}

In attempting to aid this understanding of the modern world Wells laid out his working outline of history. Beginning with the creation of the Earth and its place in space Wells integrated science as best he knew it into his narrative of collective human history. The development of life on Earth, natural selection, climate change and why life must continually adapt, and the development and spread of man encompassed the first twelve of Wells eventual thirty-nine chapters. Only then did Wells engage in the more conventional study of the first civilizations in Sumer, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, India, and China. Pieces of Wells ideological beliefs permeate the text as well. Chapter seventeen, “Serfs, Slaves, Social Classes, and Free Individuals,” places the development of social classes’ right after those of writing and religion,\textsuperscript{67} Before Wells death alone his *Outline of History* was published 1920, 1923, 1925, 1930, and 1939, owing both to the works popularity and Wells drive to improve his account.\textsuperscript{68} H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History: Being A Plain History of Life and Mankind*, (1920, Garden City, New York: Garden City Books, 1956), 1.\textsuperscript{69} H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, 2. As seen below in chapter two even world history curriculum during this period was designed to not to explain a wider world but more to situate the standing of the United States in the world.
before moving back to the civilizational approach with Judea, the Aryans, Greece, and India. Rome, Christianity, Islam, the Mongols, the Renascence, imperialism, democracy, nationalism, the industrial revolution, and the “Catastrophe of Modern Imperialism” in the twentieth century close out the second half of Wells survey, in a way that remains fairly familiar today. Portions of the work really shows its age, particularly chapters eleven and twelve on the races and languages of mankind, where now outdated and discredited social science theories of the early twentieth century appear in all of their ugliness.\(^70\)

While *The Outline of History* was an ambitious endeavor designed to make the world understandable for its wide public audience, Wells held few pretensions about his work. He understood that the *Outline* would be little more “than a current rendering of the opening vision of reality that the multitudinous activities” of various expert groups like geologist, paleontologists, historians, and naturalists had uncovered through the last century of scholarship.\(^71\) The *Outline* model for writing world history would promote the idea that any world history narrative had to be a book of today. Each subsequent edition or attempt would build upon the last with fuller information and better analytical tools. In highlighting his desire to read a 2031 *Outline of History* Wells proved that his immense skill for envisaging the future also extended to historical scholarship:

> Probably the general shape of the early part would still be very much the same, but there would be hundreds of illuminating details now unknown and fascinating additional discoveries, of skulls, implements, buried cities and vestiges of lost and submerged peoples, as yet unsuspected. The stories of China and India would be much more exact and perhaps different in quality, and much more would be

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\(^70\) H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, 107. In explaining the loose nature of the racial generalizations he makes in chapter eleven Wells exclaims “We may find primitive black people in the Andaman Islands far away from Australia and far away from Africa. There is a streak of very negroid blood traceable in south Persia and some parts of India. These are the ‘Asiatic’ negroids.” This example of once “state of the art” terminology appearing incredibly outdated to the present day reader is bound to be common in any work of world history after enough time has elapsed.

\(^71\) Ibid, 4.
known of Central Asia, and perhaps America before Columbus. Charlemagne and Caesar would still be great figures in history, and some of our nearer giants, Napoleon for example, might be found shrunken to comparative unimportance.\textsuperscript{72}

Had Wells the time machine of his famed 1895 novella it is hard to imagine that he would not beam with pride at the accuracy of his prognostication in describing the developments of world history scholarship since his death in 1946.

PART II
WORLD HISTORY IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20\textsuperscript{TH} CENTURY

WILLIAM MCNEILL AND THE REINVENTION OF WORLD HISTORY

Scholarship, popular literature, and history textbooks would continue to pursue the topic of world history through the prism of Civilizations, primarily Western Civilization, over the next thirty plus years. In the decades after yet another World War world history was reshaped yet again, ironically by one of the great spokesmen and practitioners of Western Civilization, University of Chicago professor William H. McNeill. McNeill’s 1963 publishing of his seminal tome \textit{The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community} would reshape the way historians analyzed and synthesized the story of the human past. McNeill’s epic work was hailed at the time by fellow world history pioneer L. S. Stavrianos as “a return to the historiographic tradition of the Enlightenment, when the idea of universal history fitted in with the prevailing views regarding progress.”\textsuperscript{73} Later world historians would continue to praise \textit{Rise of the West} for the way it served as the culmination of an early period of grand synthesis and “the opening of a new era in the study of world history.”\textsuperscript{74} While still attempting to create a universal narrative of the past, as Spengler, and Toynbee had before him, McNeill broke new ground by exploring the

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid, 5.
\textsuperscript{74} Manning, \textit{Navigating World History}, 52.
past not through a general progression where one civilization gives way before another, but by examining the way in which human communities in various (and growing) ecumenes borrowed and built off of each other through various mediums of exchange. The dramatic shift from the now tired cyclical rise and fall examination of static civilizations to a more fluid narrative which emphasized connections and exchange between human communities cannot be understated.  

This shift from civilizations to ecumenes refocused world history scholarship on the connections between people throughout the world. 

*Rise of the West* not only broke new ground in examining World history through the lenses of human interaction, connectivity, and exchange, it set a new paradigm for explaining the wider-world both in scholarship and teaching. By discarding the narrow and rigorous mantle of Thucydides for the inclusive and all-encompassing approach of Herodotus (as McNeill himself would assert years later) *Rise of the West* represented a turning point in the scholarly interpretation of World history. 

While many historians would continue to cling to what McNeill considered the Thucydidian historical tradition of narrow and focused research, those interested in world history would more often than not follow McNeill in adapting a macro-level view of the history of the earth and her people. That is not to say that world historians would ignore focused regional or topical subjects, the reality was quite the contrary. Many world historians would examine what had been oft ignored areas and subjects which expanded the accrued knowledge of the field and allowed for more accurate conceptions on the development of the world around us. A great deal of these more traditional scholarly monographs would continue the trend popularized by James Harvey Robinson of taking advantage of inter-

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75 See above on Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* or Arnold J. Toynbee’s *A Study of History.*
76 The connection model of world history which takes shape after *Rise of the West* is associated closely with the Global World History curriculum model explained by Robert Bain and Tamara Shreiner in the introduction above.
disciplinary study of diverse fields such as anthropology, archeology, art, architecture, biology, economics, and physics in addition to customary historical sources in order to craft a global narrative.

As Toynbee had noted in an earlier period, not all academics were open to such changes. Classics scholar R.J. Hopper criticized McNeill for having endeavored to pen “a book that attempts to deal with so large a subject as the history of the world” which must invariably invite “misunderstanding on an unusually massive scale.” Others would nitpick the work focusing on minor (in the sense of a global narrative) items such as the first Easter being the vital rallying point of Christianity rather than the Whitsuntide or on methodological grounds in the vein of McNeill’s failure to keep up with the most recent scholarship in every field he incorporated into *Rise of the West*, such as the thesis the field of archaeology had generally developed on the origins of man. Charges of “Eurocentrisism” and an overt western orientation would be leveled—in some cases rightly so—against McNeill’s work (and are still often lobbed, frequently in a misleading manner, by contemporary readers who attribute Eurocentrisim to the title itself and have a tendency to ignore its historical context as a response to Oswald Spengler’s *Decline of the West*). The loudest Eurocentric criticism was directed at McNeill’s treatment of cultural diffusion in the non-Western world in the third portion of his work. Despite such criticisms *Rise of the West* would become the new standard bearer for the reemerging field of

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80 Cyril Black, “Review: The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community”, *Slavic Review*, 24 no.4 (Dec 1965): 722- 723. Black’s criticizes McNeill’s treatment of Western cultural diffusion as being both semantic and substantive, with the latter claim being rooted in McNeill’s supposed failure to account for the interaction of traditional Russian institutions with their Western counterparts citing this “lack of emphasis on indigenous institutions of the countries subject to Western influence” as an illustration of McNeill’s clear Western bias.
world history, setting the bar for future works which would seek to make an extensive synthesis of the collective knowledge of the history of humankind.\textsuperscript{81}

**ALFRED CROSBY AND THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE**

Alfred Crosby’s 1972 *Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* continued the trend of interdisciplinary work in world history. Crosby expanded the interdisciplinary approach through the field of biohistory (examining the effects of human actions on the biosphere, and the influence of biological factors on humanity). While *Columbian Exchange* was not an all encompassing world narrative it did continue the main tenet of McNeill’s *Rise of the West* in explaining the development of the modern world through the interactions of human communities. Substituting cultural diffusion for biological diffusion Crosby illustrated the profound impact Columbus’ “discovery” of the New World had on people world-wide and on the individual environments in contact. *Columbian Exchange* was roundly praised for its exploration of a “microbial interpretation” of American history, particularly the impacts of the small-pox disease on the hereto unexposed populations of the Americas.\textsuperscript{82}

Crosby’s biological examination of human history was rooted in his desire to understand what he would later term “the basics,” life and death. Eschewing ideology for the nuts and bolts of human reality Crosby looked at what kept humans alive long enough to reproduce and what killed them,

\textsuperscript{81} Ross Dunn, *New World History: A Teachers Companion*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 3 and Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 52. Dunn claims that William McNeill and *Rise of the West* had the greatest influence on developing a more nuanced interpretation of world history and cites an American Historical Association literature guide as saying *Rise of the West* had the effect of “propelling world history to public consciousness and professional legitimacy.” Manning refers to *Rise of the West* as “the culmination of this era of great synthesis” represented by the Spengler and Toynbee period, as well as “the opening of a new era in the study of world history.”

\textsuperscript{82} G.S. Dunbar, “Review: The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492”, *William and Mary Quarterly* 30 no. 3 (Jul 1973): 542.
primarily through food and disease. What he found, and the major contribution *Columbian Exchange* would make to the field of world history, was that upon Columbus’ arrival in the New World the biological divergence of the last Ice Age has been steadily overturned by a seemingly unstoppable push towards biological homogeneity. This push towards biological homogeneity helped propel the European dominance of the Americas, as virgin soil epidemics decimated the populations of the New World opening the way for their settlement by Europeans. The exchange of crops, plants, and animals between the Old and New Worlds also takes a prominent place—with New World crops playing a prominent role in Old World farming and Old World animals altering the life-ways cultures of New World societies. Human exchange is also examined, highlighted, as Crosby notes, by labor shortages which induced the forced migration of between 8 and 10.5 million Africans to the New World.

Crosby exclaims in his conclusion that “the Columbian exchange has left us with not a richer but a more impoverished genetic pool. We, all the life on this planet, are the less for Columbus, and the impoverishment will increase.” This conclusion has often been interpreted as too pessimistic, highlighting the losses of the exchange while ignoring the gains made by flora and fauna which resisted or adapted to the post-Columbian environment. Crosby’s work has influenced many historians with the idea that cultural interactions had great and often unintended

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84 Ibid, 3.
85 Crosby astutely notes in his 2003 preface that his original text gave too much credence to the power of virgin soil epidemics and that without the immediate following of large-scale European colonization it is plausible that indigenous American populations could have recovered the way European populations did in the aftermath of the plague. His analogy to the European colonization paired with wide-scale epidemics to what may have happened had the plague arrived in Europe along with an immune horde of Mongol invaders seems quite apt.
87 Ibid, 219.
88 Wayne D. Rasmussen, “Review: The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492” *Agricultural History* 47 no. 3 (Jul 1973): 269 and Dunbar, 543 are two examples of pessimistic interpretation of Crosby’s conclusion.
consequences not only on the ecological environment but on the development of world history itself.

**WILLIAM MCNEILL AND PLAGUES AND PEOPLES**

Following along the lines of Alfred Crosby’s examination of biological and ecological exchange, William McNeill examined more closely the subject of infectious disease on world history in his 1976 text *Plagues and Peoples*. Where Crosby contained his study of epidemic diseases primarily to small pox and syphilis, McNeill cast a much wider net. Spurred to action by considering the rapid success of the European conquests in the New World, McNeill arrived upon the tentative conclusion that human history has been fundamentally affected by disease circulation in both ancient and modern times. The unique capacity of humans to create “micro-environments” which were suitable for sustaining human life under a wide variety of ecological conditions, allowing for the first time a creature which could spread across the globe. This may have also diminished the need for biological adjustment or adaptation in humans, creating a “fundamentally disruptive, persistently changeable factor” in the Earth’s ecological balance. The less richly populated temperate zones of the Earth had more simple biological environments, meaning that human settlers initially faced far fewer pathogens, though biological adjustments would eventually arise. McNeill speculates that perhaps in a longer view of history, measured in eons instead of centuries, that biological adjustment may well curb human expansion over the globe, but that to this point human ingenuity has allowed human kind to adapt at an unusually fast rate and continued the reign of human dominion over animate and inanimate nature.

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90 Ibid, 47.  
91 Ibid, 48.
The ability of humanity to adapt varied environments to suit ever-changing human needs is directly related to the development of epidemic disease. Fundamental environmental change has traditionally led to hyperinfection. Land which is stripped of its existing flora or fauna is quickly overrun by existing fringe species which are particularly suited to take advantage of the new niche created by the environmental change. McNeill examined many disease changes over time, such as the development of the blood fluke in ancient Egypt as a result of the environmental effects of irrigation from at least as far back as 1200 BC, the barrier which parasites in southern China acted as in slowing the settlement of that region by the people of northern China, the spread of infectious disease by long distance trade, the fall of the Western Roman Empire to disease, the critical threshold of the Black Death in Britain and Japan, the spread of the plague through Mongol expansion, and echoing Crosby’s thesis on the effects transoceanic Old World diseases had on New World populations which may have reduced the American Indian population by roughly 90%.92 Like Crosby’s work McNeill’s monograph expanded the knowledge base of the field, explaining the likelihood that infectious disease would continue to act as a fundamental parameter and determiner of human history.93

PHILLIP CURTIN AND THE PLANTATION COMPLEX

Ecological and biological interactions were far from the only issues that this new breed of world historians would grapple with in the second half of the twentieth century. As both Crosby and McNeill point out in their own previously mentioned monographs, human migration also played a key role in altering the shape of human history. Phillip Curtin’s examination of the way labor shortages and labor intensive plantation based economies affected human migration and interaction in his The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex is yet another example of this new

92 McNeill, Plagues and Peoples, 63, 103, 127, 134, 155, 163, and 213.
93 Ibid, 295.
world history scholarship. Curtain laid out the Mediterranean origins of the plantation complex, in particular the cultivation of the labor intensive sugarcane crop. Curtin places the middle of the fourteenth century as the origin of the sub-Saharan African slave trade through two main factors; the near simultaneous developments of the cutting off of Western Europe from the traditional slave ports of the northern Black Sea by the Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453, and Portuguese contact with sub-Saharan Africa as a result of their nautical exploration along the west coast of Africa.94 Curtain’s work helps explains the manner in which African slave trade would come to play such a prominent role in the history of the modern world.

Pointing out shifts in the world’s climate around 2500 BC, the ending of the last Ice Age, which created (among many environmental changes) the Sahara desert, Curtin explores the way in which this climate change cut off the people of sub-Saharan Africa from the wider world zones. While discoveries and technology would diffuse relatively quickly across the intercommunicating zones (or ecumenes as McNeill called them) the more loosely connected peoples of Western, Central, and South Africa were largely cut off and on their own.95 While some developments would serve to break down the environmental isolation imposed by the climate change of the third millennium BC, such as the introduction of camels and the gold trade emanating out of West Africa which began around 500 AD, the people of these regions lagged behind those of the interconnected zones in technological and economic development. In coupling this lag with the development of large scale labor intensive sugar plantations first in Brazil and the Caribbean, along with the decimation of indigenous American peoples by disease and conflict, Curtin highlights some of the developments which encouraged European’s to seek

95 Ibid 31.
out an alternative labor source in sub-Saharan Africa. These developments helped synthesize secondary sources in African and world history in order to create a “broad and general interpretation” of the African slave trade. While chiefly a work of the area-studies approach to writing world history, Curtin’s work fits neatly into a connections-based approach which explains how decisions and actions have ripple effects throughout human society.

**JARED DIAMOND AND GUNS, GERMS, AND STEEL**

Like H.G. Wells in the earlier period of world history literature physiologist Jared Diamond would add an outsider’s take on world history with his popular 1997 work *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. Turning Toynbee on his head Diamond’s text would argue that environmental differences are largely responsible for the economic and technical disparities between cultures. Again like many other works of world history since McNeill’s *Rise of the West, Guns, Germs, and Steel* was an interdisciplinary study, incorporating ecological physiology and history to arrive at its conclusion.

Diamond was explicitly trying to break free from the racist, presentist, and Eurocentrist narrative he believed to be common among books which attempt to write a world history. He described his work as a “search for ultimate explanations” which could be accomplished by “pushing back the chain of historical causation as far as possible.” This could not be accomplished by concentrating on the political and economic history of the last several hundred years, or even of the civilizations of the last five thousand years—Diamond argued that writing

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96 As opposed to older notions that inherent European superiority in logical thought and industriousness was the explanation for the developmental gap and the ease with which European’s colonized the Americas and enslaved large numbers of Africans.
98 The area studies approach to world history research is most closely associated with the Regional/Geographic World History curriculum pattern articulated by Bain and Shreiner in the introduction.
99 Diamond’s venture into world history publishing continued with his 2005 release of *Collapse: How Human Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*.
had emerged in other parts of the world outside of the Western Eurasian zone around a similar time and could not be the basis for their contemporary prominence.\textsuperscript{101} By examining the greater past Diamond tries to outline more basic reasons for the relative success and failure of societies.

Diamond examines the rise of agriculture through the lens of competing “alternative strategies” for food production and finds that the factors that tipped the scale in favor of agriculture and animal domestication were the decline of available wild foods due to climate change and rising skill levels of hunter-gatherers, the natural selection of crops suited to domestication—like wheat and barley in the Fertile Crescent, the development of technologies which increased the ability to gather wild plants—like the sickle and pestle, and finally rising population density which accompanied increases in available food.\textsuperscript{102} This process coupled with the power advantage granted by higher population numbers via greater food supplies allowed the agricultural revolution to push out competing hunter-gather lifestyles everywhere that crop domestication was possible, rather than any inherent day-to-day superiority in the agricultural way of life for the average person.\textsuperscript{103} The geographic advantages that areas particularly well-suited to agricultural production would reap the greatest benefits from this circumstance, and were in Diamond’s opinion the “ultimate answer” to why different peoples end up with disparate degrees of power.\textsuperscript{104} The geographic “answers” of Diamond’s have influenced thinking on the earliest portions of the world history narrative, moving the story beyond mere cultural speculation and basing it more solidly in observed scientific hypothesis.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 9.
\textsuperscript{103} Diamond explains that early agriculturalist likely worked longer for less nutritional diets. While agriculture allowed for the accumulation of large food stores, they were often limited compared to the varied diets of hunter-gathers.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, 195.
Like Crosby and McNeill, Diamond looked at the effect of germs on humanity.\textsuperscript{105} Highlighting the important ways these diseases have impacted human history Diamond sets about to explore why Western Eurasians have fared so favorably in the disease exchange. High population density was a large piece of the puzzle, but close proximity to animals was the defining trait.\textsuperscript{106} Writing and the transmission of knowledge were only possible in highly stratified societies which necessitated long standing and highly productive agricultural systems.\textsuperscript{107} Technological development was a product of geographic location, vis-à-vis diffusion.\textsuperscript{108} The driving force of historical determinacy was clear to Diamond; human history was shaped not by cultural institutions, as Spengler and Toynbee had suggested, but by environmental features.\textsuperscript{109}

Diamond’s assertion that environmental factors determined the development of the modern world continued the trend in world history towards interdisciplinary work which included the importance of connections and diffusion between societies and the way humans interact with their environment. While some of his historical analysis is lacking, particularly the shallow and Spengleresque way in which he credits the competing state’s of early modern Europe for allowing innovation and commercial development while the central Chinese imperial government stifled such acts, the text has been instrumental in developing both public and

\textsuperscript{105} Although Diamond does not use footnotes or citations, but rather a “further reading” section of texts which influenced his writing, both Crosby and McNeill’s works are listed.
\textsuperscript{106} Diamond, \textit{Guns, Germs, and Steel}, 214.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, 236.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid, 257.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid, 406-408. Diamond gives four sets of environmental differences to back-up his claim; 1) continental differences in wild plant and animal species available for domestication, 2) factors influencing inter-continental diffusion—i.e. the superiority of the east-west axis over a north-south access, along with ecological and geographic barriers, 3) factors influencing diffusion between continents—those affecting connections with other continents, and 4) area and population size.
professional interpretations of world history which grant increased levels of importance to the Earth itself in their narratives of the world.  

KENNETH POMERANZ AND THE GREAT DIVERGENCE

The themes of interaction, environmental circumstances, and unintended consequences also played a prominent role in Kenneth Pomeranz’s 2000 *The Great Divergence: Europe, China, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*. Pomeranz’s approach to World history reconsidered the reasons that European culture rose to a position of dominance on the global stage through industrialization instead of the equally (if not actually more well) developed Asian cultures of India, Japan, Southeast Asia, and most prominently China. Moving away from accounts which attributed the rise of Western civilization to cultural uniqueness (and inherently to Western cultural superiority) *The Great Divergence* explains this development by highlighting some of the conveniences and serendipitous circumstances which litter the historical record. Examples like the easily accessible high quality coal deposits in regions near urban centers and transportation hubs in England and the European procurement of the vast resources of the New World (owing no small favor to the unfortunate small-pox epidemic brought on by the Columbian Exchange) support Pomeranz’s explanation of the rise of the West through terms of fortunate opportunities as opposed to European superiority.

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110 Manning, *Navigating World History*, 100. Manning points out the weakness of Diamond’s explanation of imperialism and racism.


112 Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 46-47. Pomeranz argues that among many circumstances which allowed the economies of Northwest European nations to thrive were the location of coal deposits and the “enormous amounts of textile fibers” provided by the New World.
Like McNeill before him, Pomeranz’s work was met with stiff criticism from both the ancillary fields his work engaged with (primarily economics in this case) and from historians opposed to broad generalist histories. Some economists attacked *The Great Divergence* for its Sinocentrism while others nit-picked its details attempting to discredit the “factual minutiae” of his scholarship in an effort to refute the works grand thesis. While Pomeranz continues to face outside opposition centered on his supposed “Anti-Western” bias many in the field of World history itself have adapted his interpretation and included at least parts of it into their global narratives. For the connections-based world history narrative which the scholarship suggest Pomeranz’s *The Great Divergence* moves the date of the widening of the economic gap between the West and the rest to the nineteenth century, removing supposed cultural and racial determinates and replacing them with “microeconomic data” that supports this “macroeconomic argument.”

**ANDRE GUUNDER-FRANK AND REORIENT**

Pomeranz was far from the only scholar promoting the notion that European economic dominance in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century was far from complete. Andre Gunder-Frank had actually gone further in his 1998 work *ReOrient*, advocating the position that Asia (and China in particular) had dominated the world economic system which he claims existed by, at the latest, 1400. For the next four-hundred years Asia would dominate the

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116 Andre Gunder-Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*, (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1998). Although *The Great Divergence* was published before *ReOrient* it builds off of similar economic works and is a global synthesis of such work.
market through superior goods, lower waged labor (due to population surpluses provided for by superior Asian agricultural techniques), advantages in natural resources. The critical turning of the worm came about when Europeans stumbled across the New World. According to Gunder-Frank, their ability to exploit the natural resources of the Americas (especially silver) finally provided Europeans with goods desirable in the Asian marketplaces which dominated the world economy. Their coffers buoyed by the incomes of their slave plantations, along with their exploitation of captive markets where they could pawn off their inferior and unwanted goods (in terms of the non-American portion of the world market) Europeans were finally able to purchase “a seat, and then even a whole railway car, on the Asian train” when it seemed given historical precedence that they could scarcely afford even a “third-class ticket to board the Asian economic train.”

In attempting to reorient economic world history Gunder-Frank attacked the interpretation of historians past and present, from Karl Marx through Immanuel Wallenstein (and even the previous writings of one Andre Gunder-Frank). While his differences with many historians, like Wallenstein, were relatively benign, like the dating of the emergence of the first world-system, others were quite contentious. The writings of Karl Marx and Max Weber faced perhaps the greatest scrutiny for the manner in which they have contributed to the Eurocentric bias in world history. Gunder-Frank points out how contradictory the theories and viewpoints purported by Marx and Weber appear to be. The inconsistency between the tightly controlled and repressive “Oriental despotisms” of Asia and the loosely organized and largely isolated village

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117 Andre Gunder-Frank, *ReOrient*, 277-278. In his typically confrontational style Gunder-Frank attributes the “Rise of the West” to luck (finding the ticket, in the form of the New World), theft (finding and then stealing the resources of the New World), extortion, and/or earning the money—although it is clear from Gunder-Frank’s perspective that the manner in which the money may have been earned is still through exploitation and theft. Peter Gran also makes claims to the argument that plunder drove the development of the modern Western dominated world in his *The Rise of the Rich: A New View of Modern World History*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2009).
life of Asia, both of which Marx claims are to blame for the relative backwardness of Asia in comparison to the capitalist West is one of the most prominent. Gunder-Frank would find his work hailed by some, applauded for its break with traditional Eurocentric world history and intrigued by its call for the further examination of world-systems over nationalistic histories. Other critics, like economic historian David Landes, would take umbrage with Gunder-Frank’s denial of Weberian social science. Landes derided Gunder-Frank’s refusal to account for “special European characteristics” or “essentialisms” and expressing his disbelief at the rejection of the notion that European science was “implicitly far superior to, Asian science.” Landes would go as far as to end his review by stating, “Suffice it to say here that I find Frank's demonstration and argument inconsistent, contradictory, and inaccurate. He does not like the West. So be it.”

While not alone Landes perspective on Gunder-Frank’s denial of Weberian social science has been on the outside looking in on the development of world history scholarship, as monographic works have continuously pushed the field towards more integrative and inclusive narratives which examine the contributions of people all over the world to the global narrative.

CONCLUSION: EMERGING WORLD HISTORY CONSENSUS?

The scholarship of world history has shifted dramatically over the last century. Early scholars like Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee centered the world history narrative on the historical analysis of civilizations. Analyzing the characteristics and achievements of these groups became the standard manner of examining the wider past. Using the civilization as the unit of analysis lent itself to notions of long standing cultural superiority innately attributed to

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118 Gunder-Frank, ReOrient, 15.
121 Ibid, 566.
Western Civilization based on the standing of European imperial powers at the beginning of the twentieth century. This Eurocentrist worldview confined world historians’ perspective until the second half of the century. Following the publishing of William McNeill’s *Rise of the West* in 1963 the field would be reconceptualized, emphasizing notions of interconnectivity and the closing of various ecumenes, with research branching out in various directions in an effort to examine these phenomena. Interdisciplinary works examining the way ecological, biological, and economic exchanges have influenced or determined the development of human history have become increasingly common. In addition, these various research fields have expanded the collective knowledge of history, allowing for the construction of more sophisticated (and hopefully more accurate) world history narratives.

However few such narratives have been constructed. Some bold authors have put forward texts which examine the entire history of the universe and man’s history within it under the title of “big history.” Others have attempted to re-appropriate the term civilization as a unit of historical analysis. Yet other historians continue to base their narratives on the connections and patterns of exchange model. In addition to these attempts to create a workable world history narrative a plethora of world history textbooks have been produced both for the college and K-12 courses. These textbooks often lack a cohesive narrative and revert to the encyclopedic approach to history more common in the 19th century.

While a cohesive and agreed upon world history consensus may not have yet to appear, the progress that has been made by the field has been stunning. The wide-ranging nature of

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125 Problems with contemporary world history textbooks will be dealt with in detail in chapter three.
research by world historians has created an academic climate in which connections among “issues, regions, and even time” are encouraging scholars to learn about connections between their area of specialization and those of others. The accrued knowledge of the field has greatly expanded the competence with which historians can craft global narratives which reflect the contributions and developments of humanity outside the constraining bounds of the civilization. Though this single narrative has not emerged from this vast discipline certain themes have come to be generally accepted by the growing scholarship. The constraints and human adaptations of the environment must be included. The effects (intended and unintended) of technological, biological, and economic exchange warrant coverage as well. Additional topics once common to the older tradition of Spengler and Wells have been generally discarded by the field, among them Weberian philosophies extolling the inherent superiority of Western culture, and the progress of time narrative.

Historians and world history teachers have before them an ever expanding toolset from which to build the world history narratives of the future. These tools have been forged by over a century of scholarly inquiry and reflective discussion. These tools, no matter how well developed, do not exist in a vacuum. Curriculum guidelines and textbooks also play a large role in the kind of world history education available. Crafting these accumulated tools into a cohesive and well articulated world history canon is the next necessary step in refining world history education today. Patrick Manning’s simple yet profound definition of the field as “the story of connections within the global human community” may be the key to creating the kind of

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narrative which moves beyond the shallow “vacation slideshow” approach he perceptively alludes to in describing the world history education of today as mere travelogue.\textsuperscript{127}

CHAPTER TWO: WORLD HISTORY CURRICULUM MODELS

In addition to crafting the scholarship of world history historians have played a large role in the formation of world history curriculum since the late nineteenth century. Historians influence curriculum through two methods, referred to here as the committee model and the survey model. The committee model is the older of the two, dating back into the 1890s. This model is also the more direct of the two, with the committee’s development of recommended curriculum often playing a large role in the formation of state and local curriculum standards. The second model, the survey, is typified by its first incarnation the Western Civilization course. Instead of directly influencing curriculum standards this model alters the world history narrative through the content training of future teachers. These curriculum models were wildly successful in their earliest incarnations, but have seen their influence wane in recent times. This chapter seeks to examine the development of these two models over the twentieth century and illustrate how the falling levels of uniformity in the scholarly narrative have contributed to the crumbling effectiveness of historian’s traditional methods of curriculum influence.

PART I: THE COMMITTEE MODEL

The first of the historian’s traditional curriculum direction methods is the committee model. Part I outlines the history of this model from early period of the National Education Association and the American Historical Association committees of the late 1890s and early 1900s along with the 1994 history standards created under the direction of the National Center for History in the Schools.
Rising population numbers, urbanization, immigration, and labor laws restricting the use of child labor combine to create a growing interest in secondary school education in the late 19th century. In 1890 there were roughly five thousand secondary schools in the United States; by 1924 their numbers would swell to over twenty thousand with over a tenfold increase in student enrollment over the same period. With the rapidly rising number of schools and students came a rising professional discourse over what secondary education should be. An early professional education organization, the National Educational Association (NEA), would take the lead in trying to bring uniformity to the secondary schools curriculum. Seeking to create order out of the chaotic secondary education curriculum the NEA would commission the Committee of Ten to examine existing curriculum and suggest ways in which it could better prepare students for higher education. This committee was comprised of nine educational professionals (high school principals, college professors, university presidents, and the US Commissioner of Education) and chaired by Charles Eliot, President of Harvard University.

The two greatest problems the Committee of Ten had with the existing secondary schools were their lack of continuity in the studies and the curriculums apparent failure to provide

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131 National Educational Association, *Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies*, 1894. The Committee of Ten was comprised of the following ten individuals: Charles Eliot (President of Harvard), William T Harris (Commissioner of Education), James B. Angell (President of the University of Michigan), John Tetlow (Headmaster of the Girls’ High School and Girls’ Latin School, Boston), James M. Taylor (President of Vassar College), Oscar D. Robinson (Principal of the High School, Albany, NY), James H. Baker (President of the University of Colorado), Richard H. Jesse (President of the University of Missouri), James C. Mackenzie (Headmaster of the Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, NJ), and Henry C. King (Professor at Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH).
students with “sufficient time” to understand the content.\textsuperscript{132} In order to alleviate these problems, which the committee chalked up to the curriculum being too varied in an effort to meet the future needs of individual students, they recommended that schools adopt a uniform curriculum. This uniformed curriculum would simplify the job of the schools by offering a single curriculum to all students regardless of their future aims. Committee member James Taylor, President of Vassar College, summed this notion up by stating that “As long as the study (secondary education) is to be pursued at all it should be done with the same thoroughness and the same amount of time, whether the boy is to go into business or into college.”\textsuperscript{133} Continuing with this theme Taylor remarked:

\begin{quote}
Both for, those who are to carry on their education no farther, and for those who are to choose a special line of development, it is desirable that a course be planned which shall include the essential of all sound education, language, history, mathematics, natural science. The gain to the youth in an acquaintance with the elements of these different lines of interest, before his decision is made, cannot be overestimated.\textsuperscript{134}
\end{quote}

For the Committee of Ten the focus of secondary school education was a wide-ranging intellectual endeavor which exposed the students to the various core fields of the curriculum. The goal of providing a wide educational gamut to all students was not as idyllic as it may appear to the contemporary reader. The goal of the committee members, who were overwhelmingly higher education administrators and professionals, was the preparation of students for higher education. Secondary education, where it existed, was offered only to a select few, and higher education to even fewer.\textsuperscript{135} Secondary education was primarily a privilege of the

\textsuperscript{132} Taylor, “Review of the Committee of Ten,” 194.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, 194.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid, 195.
upper class, and as such the focus of the committee’s reforms was on preparing those chosen few who would go on to higher studies.

Despite arguing that students needed increased time needed to comprehend the material, the Committee of Ten did not call for an overall increase in secondary school days, either in time per day or days per week. The committee stressed the importance of keeping the school week around the current load of fifteen hours. They were worried that ambitious increases to the length of the school day or week would be responsible for “crowding their childhood out of them” along with various other fears of “overworking” the students.\(^{136}\) This was in stark contrast to the secondary schools of France and Germany during the period which commonly called for twenty-eight to thirty-four hours of school per week. The key to increasing the amount of time for comprehension and maintaining the fifteen hour school week was in reducing topics to be covered to the aforementioned essentials of “sound education,” language, history, mathematics, and natural science. In addition to stressing these subjects over others, who were deemed of lower “practical rank in relation to college requirements,” the committee called for increased unity in the curriculum.\(^ {137}\) This called for a supervision of “all the interests of the student by every teacher,” seeking connections between the subjects, which could create deeper meaning and understanding for students.\(^ {138}\)

More importantly for the purposes of this study, in the subject of history the Committee of Ten suggested that American, English, Greek and Roman (along with their “Oriental” connections), and French history be taught in secondary schools.\(^ {139}\) In addition to these “basic” courses in history the committee suggested a one year intensive program of study


\(^{137}\) Ibid, 196.

\(^{138}\) Ibid, 196.

\(^{139}\) NEA, Report of the Committee of Ten, 162.
in which students would be exposed to a narrow topic in greater depth, such as “The struggle of France and England for North America.” In addition the Committee of Ten recommended working in various outlying subjects which would later be thought of as part of the social studies, such as economics, topography, and geography, could be worked into the history curriculum. Civil governance, in particular, was singled out for inclusion in the American history course.

The committee resolved that history teaching methods should produce an environment where topics could “stimulate pupils and encourage independence of judgement,” where the teaching of history would be “intimately connected with the teaching of English,” and where an effort would be made “to teach the pupils in later years to discriminate between authorities, and especially between original sources and primary works.” In addition the committee would offer a suggested history curriculum whose scope extended back into grammar school education. The Committee of Ten recommended two alternative curriculum outlines, one of eight years and a shorter six year course of study. The eight year program was intended for secondary schools which had four years of study, while the six year program was for three year institutes. The shorter course of study eliminated the study of French history and the recommended intensive course.

In stressing the unity of the curriculum and history’s role in connecting various subject matters, the Committee of Ten created a prominent role for history in the secondary education system of the future. This vision of history was an expansive one, integrating disciplines like economics, politics, and geography, while stressing ties to other “core”

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140 NEA, Report of the Committee of Ten, 162.
141 Ibid, 162-163.
142 Ibid, 164.
143 Ibid, 163-164.
disciplines like English. Their historical narrative reflected the kind of world history scholarship which would be produced a barely generation later. This was most clearly evident in the curriculum recommendations ties to the linear civilizational progression from ancient Mesopotamian, Greek, and Roman civilization to early modern Europe and finally the United States.

THE AHA AND THE COMMITTEES OF SEVEN AND FIVE

Professional historians really began to take a more active role in crafting the history curriculum which should be offered in the growing number of secondary schools in America in the aftermath of the Committee of Ten report. The American Historical Association (AHA) funded two commissions which were tasked with surveying the existing educational landscape. In addition these committees were also to offer a suggest course of study for secondary students in accordance to the best professional historical standards of the time. The Committee of Seven (1898) and Committee of Five (1911) were the result.

According to the Committee of Seven history in the late 19th century was often neglected at the empirical level. The committee noted that “the educational value of every other subject has received more attention than that of history” and that “only within the last few years has there been anything like a thoughtful discussion by practical teachers of the worth of history as a disciplinary study.”¹⁴⁴ In explaining the necessity for history education in schools the committee claimed:

… it does not seem necessary now to argue that the most essential result of secondary education is acquaintance with political and social environment, some appreciation of the nature of the state and society, some sense of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, some capacity in dealing with political and

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governmental questions, something of the broad and tolerant spirit which is bred by the study of past times and conditions.\textsuperscript{145}

Merely training students in the structure of civil government would not be enough; according to the Committee of Seven the schools needed to expose students to human morality as well. They argued that students should see how aspects of human life, from negative examples like tyranny, vulgarity, and greed to more positive traits like benevolence, patriotism, and self-sacrifice influenced the course of human events for good or ill. Creating a causal relationship between the past and present, showing interlinking events which build upon one another over time was viewed as the fundamental role history should play in education. The “practice of linking the present with the past of watching progress and studying change,” the committee suggested, “has become one of the marked characteristics of modern learning; and it indicates that history, in the broad field of human affairs, is a subject which is contributory to others, is indeed a part of them, and occupies a central position among them.”\textsuperscript{146}

The committee also stressed the important role history plays in teaching students to arrange and systematize information. Giving students the proper tools to analyze information with and make well rationed decisions required providing them with knowledge of like past events with which analogies could be drawn. In addition to opening students minds to the process of analogizing the committee stressed the importance of providing students with a framework they could use to collect, assemble, and make known the facts and their interpretation of an issue. Seeing in the existing educational structure a failure to address these issues

\textsuperscript{145} AHA Committee of Seven, \textit{The Study of History in Schools: A Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven}, 1898, “Value of Historical Study,” historians.org, July 17, 2009.
\textsuperscript{146} AHA Committee of Seven, \textit{The Study of History in Schools: A Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven}, 1898, “Continuity of Historical Study and the Relation of History to other Subjects,” historians.org, July 17, 2009.
fundamental to the mission of history education the AHA emphasized a need for increased specialization in historical content training for history teachers in the schools.

Professionalizing the field of history educator training and outlining a rationale for the study of history in the schools was only the beginning of this first great history education reform movement. Standardized history education would also be introduced. In trying to establish the need for educational standardization the Committee of Five would argue that “there is such a thing as a logically developed series of history courses, and there are general principles that are largely applicable to the great majority of schools; such principles may in special cases need modification; but they need not be entirely ignored.”\textsuperscript{147} While both committees would offer caveats regarding local circumstances which could necessitate the altering of suggested standards of instruction (such as the size or resources of a particular school or schools geared to the entrance examinations of a select university or groups of universities) they both prescribed a general set of secondary courses which they recommended as standard history curriculum. The Committee of Seven outlined four general fields of study for secondary students, fields which echoed very closely those put forth by the NEA’s Committee of Ten. The four fields recommended by the Committee of Seven were Ancient History, Medieval and Modern European History, English History, and American History and Civil Government.

The first field, Ancient History, was to overview the ancient world with special attention being paid to Greek and Roman history and a short introduction to “the more ancient nations,” and would end with either the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire (800), the death of Charlemagne (814), or the Treaty of Verdun (843). The rationale behind the particular importance accorded to Western antiquity was that “Greek and Roman civilization contributed

so much to the world—the work which these nations accomplished, the thoughts which they brought forth, the ideas which they embodied, form so large a part of the past—that in any systematic course their history must be studied."148 The “more ancient nations” of the Ancient History course were to be the origins of Mesopotamian culture in the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys, possibly up through the Persians. This history was to explain in some limited detail the length and reach of recorded history, the “remoteness of these Oriental beginnings… a definite knowledge of the names, location, and chronological succession of the early Oriental nations,” and “the distinguishing features of their civilizations.” Perhaps most importantly, from a curricular standpoint, this history was designed to help students recognize the “lines of their (being the “Oriental” civilizations) influence on later times.”149

Medieval and Modern European History would cover the history of Europe from the ending date of Ancient History to present. Without the Medieval period Greek and Roman history would “dwell in a world apart” from modern times. In addition the picture of the modern world would be distorted without the contributions of the Middle Ages, particularly subjects like “the development of the papacy and the Church, the establishment of feudalism, the foundation of modern states, the Renaissance, and the beginning of the Reformation.” Placing Americas role as a world power into historical context was another goal of the European History course, explaining the last 400 years of European politics and history which would not only place

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148 AHA Committee of Seven, The Study of History in Schools: A Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, 1898, “Four Years’ Course, Consisting of Four Blocks or Periods,” historians.org, July 17, 2009.

149 AHA Committee of Seven, The Study of History in Schools: A Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, 1898, “How the Different Blocks or Periods May be Treated,” historians.org, July 17, 2009.
America into context but relieve students of a tendency towards intolerance, which the committee cleverly remarked “resembles patriotism only as bigotry resembles faith.”  

The final two recommended courses were those of English History and American History and Civil Government. The importance of American History and Civil Government, along with the way they are tied together, are both directly in line with the Committee of Ten recommendations. This comes as little surprise given the primacy American history held in the schools, its ties to the aforementioned case for the continued and increased study of history—largely the effective citizen building capacity of the subject. To the committee these two courses of study were inexorably tied. “Any argument in favor of American history,” the committee argued, “holds almost equally true for the study of English history.” The struggles of the English people to obtain representation, free speech, and due process of law, along with English colonial ties with the original member states of this country in 1776 fixed the histories of these two nations such that the committee deemed them of equal importance in the suggested secondary course of study in history.

The AHA would fund a second round of curriculum investigation/recommendation in 1911. This Committee of Five would reevaluate the curriculum and examine the results of the Committee of Seven’s recommendations. The Committee of Five found the recommendations of the Committee of Seven to “have generally judged the situation correctly” and had made sound recommendations which were adopted from “one side of the continent to the other.”

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150 AHA Committee of Seven, *The Study of History in Schools: A Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven*, 1898, “Four Years’ Course, Consisting of Four Blocks or Periods,” historians.org, July 17, 2009.

151 AHA Committee of Seven, *The Study of History in Schools: A Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven*, 1898, “Four Years’ Course, Consisting of Four Blocks or Periods,” historians.org, July 17, 2009.

Committee of Seven, this time described as Ancient History, English (and Medieval European History), Modern European History, and American History and Civil Government. Under this revised format Ancient History would still cover the same basic information, although it stressed the section on Oriental history should be very brief (no more than one-eighth of the course) and that the last five hundred years of the course should be covered in a rather rapid fashion. The shift from medieval European history to English History was meant to provide greater coverage of contemporary history. Lamenting the fact that “Charlegemange and Peter the Hermit are more familiar figures than is Napoleon, or Cavour, or Bismarck” the committee exclaimed that “such a condition can scarcely be justified.” Feeling that an increased emphasis on Modern times was more desirable the committee recommended a rearrangement of the curriculum which condensed English History and Medieval History. This new English History course would trace the development of English history up to 1760 while highlighting the chief facts of European history along the way. The new Modern European History course would pay greater attention to the Europe of the previous several centuries in an effort to provide greater context to the political climate and issues of the current day. American History and Civil Government remained practically unchanged, although the development of Political Science as a field separate from history had led to increased questioning of the proper balance between history and government. The committee suggested splitting time with roughly two-fifths devoted to the civil government and three-fifths to American history, although stressing the need for the two to remain integrated and not separate entities.

The four year program of history suggested by the AHA was intended to supplant the older one year model of general history which they claimed were favored by school

154 Ibid, 53.
administrators. The Committee of Seven railed against such general history courses claiming “that four years should be devoted to the study of the world’s history, giving the pupil some knowledge of the progress of the race, enabling him to survey a broad field and to see the main acts in the historical drama.”155 Two main criticism of one year general world history courses were prevalent. The first charge was that they were too absorbed in factual minutia like the names of kings and queens and the rise and fall of various dynasties—the very indictment leveled against the education system by H.G. Wells in The Outline of History nearly a decade later.156 They were also charged with being too wide-ranging in scope and too grand in ideals, focusing on ideas beyond the students’ capacity for comprehension and dealing in “unquestioningly broad generalities,” a problem faced by world historians both in the early and contemporary period of scholarship.157 The committee pushed for a study of history which emphasized not broad generalities but a process of development, along the civilizational model Spengler and Toynbee would shortly provide. They wished for students “to see that for the historian nothing is, but everything is becoming,” but cautioned that “in all such work, however, the teacher must begin with ideas and facts.” The scale of history covering such an area as extensive as the world, dating back several millennia which should be examined through “ideas and facts” necessitated a four year course of study.

Eschewing the second of these two methods of instruction the committees based their four-year courses of history study on the principle that a general history of the world was

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155 AHA Committee of Seven, The Study of History in Schools: A Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, 1898, “Why No Short Course in General History is Recommended,” historians.org, July 17, 2009.
156 A charge still often applied, rather rightly or wrongly, to history education.
necessary, but that it should be taught through certain necessary facts. The Committee of Five would remark that,

there are many things to be gained from historical study besides a comprehensive view and equally proportioned knowledge; and even if such a view and such a knowledge could be secured by the study of general history in a single year, perspective and proportion would be acquired at the expense of what is much more valuable—training and insight and comprehension.158

Basing this training, insight, and comprehension on a lengthy study of the fundamental factual knowledge necessary to gain competency in historical knowledge ought to be the goal of history in the schools, the AHA committees would argue. By establishing a factual baseline of the people, events, and institutions deemed most crucial to the development of the United States and the modern world schools could best prepare students for responsible citizenship, which was, as stated above, one of the primary functions of history education.

World history and the history education of secondary students in the early 20th century were undergoing a drastic shift. Being phased out were “outdated” models of instruction which tried to treat the history of the world in a single year of secondary instruction. Replacing these general history courses would be a series of courses outlining what was considered world history at the time. This new narrative, and curriculum, would tell the history of the world from its inception in the river valleys of Mesopotamia, to the critical period of classical Greece and Rome, through the tumultuous Medieval period in England and Europe, into the development and conflicts of modern European peoples and nations, finally culminating with the development of American government and the story of America’s past. This was clearly in line with the world history scholarship which would be published in the coming decades, typified by Toynbee, which was primarily concerned with the progress or collapse of civilizations over time.

For the most part these recommendations were accepted and created the backbone of traditional history education in the K-12 system, with many of its models still plainly visible in the curriculum and outcomes of state and local standards today.\textsuperscript{159} The European pieces of the history curriculum being the notable exception, with student avoidance (or schools failure to provide) the Medieval/Modern European History and the English History blocks of the suggested curriculum contributing to the circumstance which prominent Harvard historian Charles Homer Haskins described in 1906 as “the real reason” that a new introductory course in American colleges which focused on European history was necessary because “students did not bring it to college with them.”\textsuperscript{160} While students may not have been taking en mass the contemporary European pieces which constituted the modern portion of the world history education of the period the curriculum of the period shows a remarkable level of consistency with the scholarship being produced by historians during the period as well, paying particular attention to the cultural and political factors which had shaped Western and American civilization.\textsuperscript{161}

**THE 1994 STANDARDS**

Historians’ attempts to shape world history curriculum through the committee model have persisted to this day, with the creation of the 1994 history standards as a prime example. The work of this committee was more complicated than that of the earlier period, as the standards became bogged down in political debate and conflicting visions of world history. The resulting standards reflected the compromise nature of such a climate and have influenced the

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\textsuperscript{159} AHA Committee of Five, *The Study of History in Secondary Schools*, 2, and the predominance of Western Civilization Plus world history curriculum patterns in Bain and Shreiner in the introduction.

\textsuperscript{160} Gilbert Allardyce, “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course,” *American Historical Review* 87, no. 3 (June 1982): 702. See section in Chapter Two, Part II on the Western Civilization course.

\textsuperscript{161} The European history curriculum was being offered, but according to College Review Board evidence in Allardyce “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course” incoming college were not taking it in numbers considered sufficient.
development of conflicted and relatively ineffective state and local standards. This section explains why this happened and what historians could have done to alter the outcome.

In a 1989 summit in Charlottesville, Virginia President George H.W. Bush and state governors from around the country began an initiative to set nation-wide educational goals for the schools. As part of this program, which would eventually come to be titled America 2000 (later dubbed Goals 2000 under the Clinton administration), a commission of historians and educators were designated by the National Endowment for the Humanities to create a voluntary model of secondary school standards in history. The standards movement would be a bipartisan effort supported by Republican and Democratic Presidential administrations, state governors, and Congressional legislators. The history standards were developed collaboratively and sought to address one of the many ‘crises’ in American education. In contrast to fields like science and mathematics, whose inclusion of advancements in the field were accepted practically without question (for example, who would dare to teach physics without including Einstein’s theory of relativity?) the new history standards quickly drew a storm of protest.

Conservative commentators, politicians, and educational reformers argued that the historians and educators who developed these standards were subverting traditional history and fostering anti-American sentiment in the youth. They concentrated criticism on the way they the standards tended to describe non-American and non-Western traditions and peoples positively, while constantly emphasizing flaws in the American/Western tradition. Following an aggressive campaign “anti-standards” by conservative political partisans the U.S. Senate voted 99-1 in favor of denouncing the standards. Their complaints with the standards were not restricted to U.S.

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162 Crises in education have been the prevalent framework for launching curricular reform in the United States since the Sputnik induced “STEM” (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) crisis of the late 1950s.
history. As Peter Stearns pointed out, while the Senate’s greatest “ire” was directed toward the U.S. history standards, they did offer a prescription for placing world history within the curriculum by stipulating that recipients of federal money "should have a decent respect for the contributions of Western civilization." Why did politicians, and seemingly the public at large, recoil from the standards so fervently?

The conservative backlash against the standards was in large part responsible for the spectacular failure of the 1994 history standards. Lynne Cheney’s October 20th Wall Street Journal op-ed piece entitled “The End of History” charged the soon-to-be released National Standards with being overtly politicized by the academic establishment. While Cheney does not explicitly mention the association of liberals and the academic establishment, her argument against the standards is firmly rooted in the conservative viewpoint and assumptions of the ‘Culture Wars.’ Cheney called on like-minded citizens concerned with the history their children would be taught to take on this “formidable task” of taking down the vast liberal educational machine and preserving their own “depoliticized” version of history. This supposedly depoliticized version of history would resist the “revisionist agenda” of political interest groups who had “unleashed the forces of political correctness” in the wake of President Clinton’s 1992 election, and toppled the traditional narrative with an “inclusive” account. The inclusive narrative was tied to falling standards of historical education, as Cheney herself recounts the amazement from crowds when told that more students know who Harriet Tubman was (83.8%) than know that George Washington was the commander of the American army during the Revolutionary War, and how those over thirty-five in the crowd “haven’t the least idea of who

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Tubman—so familiar to seventeen–year-olds—was.” Cheney claimed that when the time came for revisions no one involved in the standards making process could stand up to these groups and their “great hatred for traditional history.”

The conservative critique of the standards spoke to something in the public memory. Employing negatively loaded terms like “politically correct,” which could be resented by people on both sides of the political spectrum, they painted the liberal history employed by the ‘establishment’ as an oppressive and politicized historical narrative focused on teaching the values of others and the ‘evils’ of America. Under this viewpoint the “oppressive and politicized” narrative being pushed by the supposed liberal establishment was responsible for creating citizens who were overly critical of the United States and had failed to impart the appropriate amount of love of country into students. While most conservative critics waffled on clearly outlining what they felt was the underlying purpose of citizenship education, their complaints with the “liberal” narrative seem to indicate that unquestioning love and loyalty to the United States lay at the center of their interpretation. By loading the terms of the argument and painting their adversaries narrative as subversive and politicized conservatives like Cheney and Diane Ravitch were able to set up their vision of history as depoliticized narratives which were based in traditional ‘facts.’ These facts were free from the subversion and indoctrination of the progressive, protest era, liberal ideals which ran rampant through the educational establishment.

165 Lynne Cheney, Telling the Truth: Why Our Culture and Our Country Have Stopped Making Sense—and What We Can Do About It, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 33. Cheney, nearly a decade later, is still harping on the “multicultural” deficiencies highlighted by Ravitch and Finn’s highly flawed study. In addition Cheney under-cuts her own position by pointing out how prevalent confusion over who Harriet Tubman was among those over thirty-five, most of whom would have been educated during an even more heavily “liberal” education period bent on subverting traditional narratives.


167 Peter Hoffer, The Historians Paradox: The Study of History in Our Time, (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 132. Hoffer explains that in Cheney’s eyes the result “was a ‘grim and gloomy’ account of America that could give comfort only to the politically correct.”
In many ways the battle over the 1994 history standards had become a battle over the core values of the earlier AHA committee’s description of the role history education played in the creation of good citizens.168

The figures behind the direction of the committee who created the national history standards had a different impression of what they had accomplished. Gary Nash, who was co-chair of the National History Center that Cheney herself had approved to fund the writing of the standards, sought an end to the “false dichotomy between facts and conceptual analysis.”169 The attack that Nash and his colleagues faced from Lynne Cheney and others in 1994 was not a particularly new one; as evidenced in reactions to the progressive movement and protest movements of earlier periods. Critics of these earlier education movements often charged that changes to history, and especially the shift to social studies, were an affront to the very cultural fabric of the nation. Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn point out the striking parallels faced by Harold Rugg in the 1940s, whose history texts were derided for undermining patriotism, debunking heroes of yesteryear, and stressing the ‘errors and evils’ in “our” civilization.170

The shot Cheney preemptively fired across the bow of the standards for their supposed liberal excesses and the committees’ discouragement of open discourse on the issue of multiculturalism was dubious at best. A bipartisan National Council had been formed to set policy and oversee the development of the standards. The composition of this council was negotiated by Charlotte Crabtree and Gary Nash on one side, and Lynne Cheney and Diane Ravitch on the other. According to the Crabtree and Nash account many of the twenty-eight

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168 Tiffany Trimmer, draft comments to the author, August 6, 2009.
170 Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn, *History on Trial*, 45. Rugg’s texts, written during the interwar and World War II period attempted to examine both the positive and negative aspects of U.S. history. His texts were met with opposition by conservative critics on the grounds that they undermined national patriotism by exposing negative aspects of the nation’s past.
members were nominated by the Cheney camp.\footnote{Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn, History on Trial, 159.} National Forum was also formed, represented by twenty-four varied interest groups; from religious groups like the National Catholic Educational Association and the Lutheran Schools, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; to “multicultural” groups like the Native American Heritage Commission, and the National Alliance of Black School Educators. The consensus was not limited to religious or cultural organizations, politically minded groups like Chester Finn’s conservative education organization, the Educational Excellence Network, were included as well.\footnote{Ibid, 160.} All of these various interests groups, liberal and conservative alike, would have a forum to voice their particular concerns and visions for national and world history. Finn would take a strong stance against multiculturalism in the standards, arguing that history binds Americans together under “the great unifying Western ideas of individual freedom, political democracy, and human rights” and implying that narratives which highlight inconsistencies and hypocrisy in ‘traditional’ history were guilty of blaming or ignoring Western tradition.\footnote{Ibid, 162.} James Gardner, deputy executive director of the American Historical Association (AHA) answered in equally strong terms that the AHA would “not be a part of any standards project that does not address the multicultural aspects of our history… We don’t see this as an option or an alternative but the reality of our past.”\footnote{Ibid, 162.} As a result two resolutions were passed, one emphasizing the inclusion of the nations diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and religious affiliation, and the other centered on the commonalities in American society and a common civic identity.\footnote{Ibid, 163-164.}
The AHA’s threats to abandon the standards devising process also contributed to derailing the 1994 standards. While their commitment to including under-represented groups like African Americans and women in the U.S. history narrative and to world history over western civilization is admirable in its commitment to the best thoughts and practices of its constituent group, it was lacking in two significant ways. The first, and most clearly related problem to the AHA’s stance against Finn and the conservative interpretation of history was its utter lack of diplomacy. In railing against the supposedly simplistic ‘fact’ based, pro-America, Eurocentric vision of history the AHA employed equally loaded and self-sure language. That multicultural aspects are “not an option or an alternative but the reality of our past” would be hard for anyone to deny today. However, using such inflammatory rhetoric painted Finn and the conservative movement not only as Eurocentric defenders of American exceptionalism, but as deniers of the historical reality that the modern world was shaped by more than privileged white males. As useful as this polemic may be it is as inaccurate as conservative attempts to paint liberal historians and educators as radical agitator’s intent on subverting American culture and government. Conservative critics, like Diane Ravitch, called for the inclusion of race, gender, ethnicity, and class in the historical narrative taught in our classrooms, arguing for the weaving together of the liberal and conservative narratives which would “add new faces to the pantheon of American heroes.”

The AHA’s more aggressive policy approach in 1994 represented a sharp break with their behavior in the past, perhaps influenced by being “merely” a voice among many as opposed to the dominate director of curriculum recommendations.

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The political conflict boiled down to a definition of what the principal task of history in education would be, although the debate was very infrequently cast in this light. Would history and social studies education be focused on addressing the inequalities of educational and social opportunities between black and white, rich and poor, immigrants and natural-born citizens, or would it concentrate on setting high educational standards for all students? This quarrel between equity and excellence harkened back to the “Culture Wars,” and saw its contestants aligned by political leanings, with those invested in equity and multiculturalism being cast as the liberal left and those in favor of the same high standards for all students as the conservative right. Moreover, this argument, couched in the terms of the now familiar struggle between liberal progressives and their push for social equity and conservative critics hell-bent on maintaining (or restoring) high academic standards, was actually a battle over the kind of citizens that the groups sought to create. Under this rubric one can see more clearly the political motives of each side, with the liberal position stressing curriculum which creates thoughtful and reflective citizens who question their personal (along with their country’s) role in the world. Conservative critics desired a more “traditional” curriculum which highlighted commonalities, supported existing social and political structures, and emphasized a patriotic zeal for America and her supposed principles.

Another, perhaps more subtle conflict brewing beneath the surface would further complicate these alliances. While conservatives pushing for high standards promoted a narrative which was appalling to many historians, highlighted by the AHA’s threat to abandon the

standards, they also played to a long standing seductive aspiration of the field. Conservatives were advocating content over pedagogy in teacher training, and an increased role for history over the social studies in the K-12 education system. Some historians found the allure of this proposition more appealing and aligned themselves, at least partially with the conservatives in calling for the promotion of history over social studies. By throwing their weight behind “better curricula from kindergarten through high school, better textbooks, higher teacher certification requirements, and better training and retraining of teachers” and stressing history content over the social studies, some historians hoped they could improve the state of general education and improve the long-term standing of their own field.179 Educators more inclined towards the teaching of history over social studies also agreed, attacking trends in K-12 administration to hire teachers who can “teach students how to think and not what to think, and so it really does not matter if a teacher lacks the expertise to teach a subject because enthusiasm and pedagogy are more important than content.” A quote from a veteran teacher’s former school Headmaster sums this tendency up nicely. When hiring a teacher with no content training in the subject she would be teaching, the Headmaster said, “We’re more interested in the spirit of teaching around here.”180 This remnant of the Culture Wars resulted in another equity versus excellence debate in the humanities. The liberal history/social studies education reform consensus was fractured, pitting those who supported history as a part of the social studies curriculum— who generally belong to the equity camp— against those who favored history over social studies in the curriculum—who were often members of the excellence group.

The fervor over the national history standards subsided after the initial firestorm in 1994 and a subsequent “compromise” version of the standards were created, sans the controversial (and misunderstood/misrepresented) teaching examples. Uneasy balances were struck between traditional historical figures and the so-called multicultural figures, like the much harangued Harriet Tubman. While a consensus was struck to bring the standards to life, the underlying stresses exasperated by the crisis remained entrenched. Questions over the purpose of history and social studies education undermine efforts by both sides to increase the standing of the field within the educational disciplines. Debates over issues like the primacy of history in the social studies curriculum, the kind of citizenship indoctrination schools should provide students with, the role of contemporary social issues in the curriculum, and “whose history” is to be taught are but a handful of the central issues which muddle the very nature of the field itself.

The compromise 1996 standards which were actually published represent a combination of curricular models for teaching world history. The Western Civilization Plus, Regional/Geographic, Social Studies, and Global World History (or connections) models are interwoven throughout the curriculum recommendations. The Western Civilization Plus and the connections model dominate the curriculum recommendations. Familiar Western Civilization topics appear throughout the standards, supplemented by information about additional civilizations. Era 2 Standard 1 is a prime example of this practice as it examines the “major characteristics of civilization and how civilization emerged in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the

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181 The teaching examples, which were included only to serve a lesson models for classroom teachers struggling to implement content knowledge they may not have training in, were used by opponents of the standards as examples of the liberal largess of the standards themselves. Frequency counts of lessons oriented on traditional historical figures and allegedly multicultural lessons were some of the most familiar of these misrepresentations, as these numbers were used to represent the overwhelmingly multicultural and subversive nature of the standards themselves.

Indus valley.”

Taking the traditional Western Civilization narrative of the beginnings of civilization in Mesopotamia and Egypt is supplemented by similar developments in India. In all twenty of the forty-six world history standards are similarly rooted in the Western Civilization Plus model. The Global World History or connections model clearly influenced nineteen standards, particularly the “major global trends from…” standard which appears in every Era, save the first, and is the over-arching standard for the “World History Across the Eras” category. The connections model emphasizes these “major trends,” patterns, and systems of exchange between interlinked peoples and regions throughout the world. The other two models

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184 Additional examples of Western Civilization Plus curriculum models in the 1996 world history standards can be found in Era 3 Standards 2, 3, and 4 which outline the emergence of Aegean civilization and major religions and large scale empires in the Mediterranean, China, and India from 500 BCE-300 CE, and the development of early agrarian civilizations in Mesoamerica; Era 4 Standards 1, 4, and 6 which illustrate the fall of the large scale empires from 300-700 CE, the search for political/social/cultural redefinition in Europe from 500-1000, and the rise of centers of civilization in Mesoamerica and Andean South America in the first millennium CE; Era 5 Standards 2, 3, and 6 covering the redefinition of European society and culture from 1000-1300, the rise of the Mongols and their empires effects on the people of Eurasia from 1200-1350, and the expansion of civilizations in the Americas from 1000-1500; Era 6 Standards 2, and 5 outlining the political, economic, and cultural transformation of Europe from 1450-1750, and the transformation of Asian civilizations during the age of European expansion; Era 7 Standards 2, 3, 4, and 5 which detail the causes and consequences of the agricultural and industrial revolution, the transformation of Eurasian societies during the era of rising European global power from 1750-1850, the patterns of nationalism, state-building, and social reform in Europe and the Americas from 1830-1914, and the patterns of global change in the era of Western military and economic domination from 1800-1914; Era 8 Standard s 2, 3, and 4 which are the causes and consequences of World War I, the search for peace and stability in the 1920s and 1930s, and the causes and global consequences of World War II; and Era 9 Standard 1, how post-World War II reconstruction occurred, new international power relations took shape, and colonial empires broke up. National Center for History in the Schools, National Standards for History, Part Two: National Standards for History Grades 5-12 (World History), 1996, nchs.ucla.edu, August 12, 2009.

185 Additional examples of the connections model in the 1996 curriculum standards are found in Era 1 Standards 1 and 2 outlining the biological and cultural process which led to the rise of the earliest human communities, and the processes which led to the emergence of agricultural societies around the world; Era 2 Standards 2 and 3 detailing the spread of agrarian societies and new states in the third and second millennium BCE, the political and social consequences of population movements and militarization in Eurasia in the second millennium BEC; Era 3 Standard 1 on the innovation and change horses, iron, and monotheistic religion brought about from 1000-600 BCE; Era 5 Standards 1 and 5 which cover the maturing of an interregional system of communication, trade, and cultural exchange during the period of Chinese economic power and Islamic expansion, and the patterns of crisis and recovery in Afro-Eurasia from 1300-1450 CE; and Era 6 Standards 3 and 4 outlining the domination of large territorial empires in Eurasia through the 16th and 18th centuries, and the economic, political, and cultural interrelations among the peoples of Africa, Europe, and the Americas from 1500-1750. National Center for History in the Schools, National Standards for History, Part Two: National Standards for History Grades 5-12 (World History), 1996, nchs.ucla.edu, August 12, 2009.
are less well represented, with the Regional/Geographic model totaling only four standards and the Social Studies model merely three standards.\(^{186}\)

Why did the committee model which had worked so successfully in the late 1890s and early 1900s break down so spectacularly in 1994? As the above narrative illustrates the standards became largely a political debate centered on liberal and conservative interpretations of citizenship and the ways history, both U.S. and world, could be used to support either viewpoint. The standards reflect this fight in the varied world history curriculum models the standards employ. Lacking a clear and agreed upon mission statement, like those of the hard sciences that Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn mentioned above, world history curriculum is open to being haggled over by competing interests. While a rough consensus has emerged from an overview of the scholarship and reflected by the connections model, it has failed to provide the canonical narrative that modern physics or older world history models provided. These widely adopted norms, like those of the aforementioned AHA committees or the Western Civilization model below, help allow historians to recommend a curriculum in line with the scholarship of the field. Not clearly adhering to and articulating a single model of world history in the committee format doomed the process from the start—opening the way for varied approaches which undermine the notion of a standard curriculum.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Social Studies Academic Content Standards are a concrete representation of the muddled curriculum recommendations which emerged from

\(^{186}\) The Regional/Geographic standards are located in Era 4 Standards 2, 3, and five, causes and consequences of the rise of Islam, major developments in East Asia and Southeast Asia in the era of the Tang dynasty from 600-900 CE, and the development of agricultural societies and states in tropical Africa and Oceania; Era 5 Standard 4 covering the growth of states, towns, and trade in sub-Saharan Africa between the 11\(^{th}\) and 15\(^{th}\) century. The Social Studies model are contained in Era 7, 8, and 9 Standard 1 on the causes and consequences of political revolutions in the late 18\(^{th}\) and 19\(^{th}\) century; reform, revolution, and social change in the world economy of the early 20\(^{th}\) century; and the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world. National Center for History in the Schools, *National Standards for History, Part Two: National Standards for History Grades 5-12 (World History)*, 1996, nchs.ucla.edu, August 12, 2009.
the 1994 fiasco. The world history standards are found in the seventh and ninth grade of the state of Ohio’s Social Studies curriculum. The “scope and sequence” of these years of study are labeled “World Studies from 1000 B.C. to 1750: Ancient Civilizations Through the First Global Age” and “World Studies from 1750 to the Present: Age of Revolutions Through the 20th Century.”  

Seventh grade students would be expected to learn that “each historic event is shaped by its geographic setting, culture of the people, economic conditions, governmental decisions and citizen actions.” Fitting this incredibly ambitious scope with the indicators which accompany the seventh grade world history standards is a daunting task. The three content organizers of seventh grade standards are “Early Civilizations,” “Feudalism and Transitions,” and “The First Global Age.” Within each of these organizers are individual indicators. For the first unit, Early Civilizations, students should be able to describe the enduring impact of early civilizations in India, China, Egypt, Greece, and Rome after 1000 B.C. through the development of concepts of government and citizenship, scientific and cultural advancements, the spread of religions, and through slavery and systems of labor. This is the smallest unit by the number of indicators in the seventh grade curriculum—making up only one sixth of the whole—yet it is asking students to understand the interplay between geographic environment, culture, economics, citizenship, governance, the development and spread of religion, the “advancement” of science and culture, and how and why varying systems of labor

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188 Office of Curriculum and Instruction in the Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Academic Content Standards K-12 Social Studies, 3. Grade-level indicators are “a specific statement of the knowledge and/or skills that a student is expected to demonstrate at each grade level.”
189 Office of Curriculum and Instruction in the Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Academic Content Standards K-12 Social Studies, 10.
190 Office of Curriculum and Instruction in the Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Academic Content Standards K-12 Social Studies, 46.
developed throughout the world. This sort of over ambitious content runs rampant throughout the standards.¹⁹¹

Over-ambitious curriculum is teamed with a confusing narrative to undermine the existing world history standards.¹⁹² The seventh grade curriculum starts out with a Western Civilization Plus narrative, adding India and China to the traditional Western civilizations of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. A full half of the standard is devoted to the topic of “Feudalism and Transitions,” which concentrates on the conditions which gave rise to feudalism, the political, economic, and social characteristics of feudalism, the lasting effects of Muslim, Crusader, and Mongolian conquests, along with the impact of new ideas and institutions on European life through movable type, the Renaissance, and the Reformation.¹⁹³ This is followed by the final unit on the “First Global Age.” The indicators for this third of the standard expands the Western Civilization Plus model to include a Regional/Geographic model on the empires of West Africa (Ghana, Mali, and Songhay) and the causes and effects of European exploration after 1400 through imperialism, colonialism, mercantilism, and the impacts on the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Americas.¹⁹⁴ The narrative shifts from studying world civilizations to Europe in the medieval era, and then to the way European expansion affected the world, with a

¹⁹¹ The single indicator for Industrialization in the ninth grade world history curriculum is another fine example of this, asking students to explain the causes and effects of the Industrial Revolution by emphasizing the way scientific and technological changes in promoted industrialization in the English textile industry; the impact of population growth, immigration, and urbanization in Europe; the changing role of labor and the rise of labor unions; changes in living conditions, particularly for women and children; and the spread of industrialization around the world. Office of Curriculum and Instruction in the Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Academic Content Standards K-12 Social Studies, 49-50.
¹⁹² In this way the ODE standards appear largely influenced by the 1996 NCHS standards, following its varied curriculum models.
¹⁹³ Office of Curriculum and Instruction in the Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Academic Content Standards K-12 Social Studies, 46.
¹⁹⁴ Office of Curriculum and Instruction in the Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Academic Content Standards K-12 Social Studies, 46.
brief and somewhat confusing inclusion of West African empires so as to off-set the high levels of Eurocentrism in the narrative.

While the ninth grade world history narrative is more coherent it is no less problematic. Instead of following a mixture of Western Civilization Plus, Regional/Geographic, and connections-based curriculum patterns the ODE standards take an explicitly Western Civilization Plus turn. This narrative picks up where the seventh grade curriculum ends culturally, by outlining the ideals of the Enlightenment. Enlightenment gives way to Industrialization, which leads to Imperialism, and finally conflict in the twentieth century. Europe and the United States dominate the indicators. Where other regions are mentioned it is most often in terms of how they rebelled against Western imperialism (Enlightenment roots of Latin American wars for independence), or how Western institutions spread through other parts of the world (industrialization). The World War’s and the Cold War constitute over half of the ninth grade world history curriculum, and give the curriculum a political and military history of the twentieth century feel. Not exactly a glowing endorsement for world history standards.

The over-ambitious, confusing, and Eurocentric narrative of the seventh and ninth grade world history standards in Ohio clearly exhibit the issues recent policymakers have faced in creating curriculum recommendations through the committee model. These curriculum standards are very large; they mandate the incorporation of environmental, economic, cultural, social, and political history into the shaping of every historical event. The narratives are confusing, incorporating Western Civilization Plus, Regional/Geographic, and connections-based curriculum patterns. The unity of the early world history curriculum recommendations and the varied approach of the contemporary period is reflected in the record of the second curriculum

model historians have influenced world history education through; the introductory college survey model.

**PART II. THE INTRODUCTORY SURVEY MODEL**

In addition to formally recommending curriculum models to schools through professionally organized committees historians have also directed curriculum reform through narrative modeling at the higher education level. Crafting courses which introduce a historical subject to the larger public in a general way is the primary responsibility of the typical survey course, regardless of the area or unit of analysis. On top of introducing the topic to the larger public, these courses play a key role in the content training of future history teachers. For world history two courses have been the most influential in the process; the Western Civilization course of the first half of the twentieth century and the World History survey which has been developing since the 1960s. The first section of Chapter Two, Part II outlines the development and impact of the Western Civilization course which emerged after World War I. This course shares some striking similarities with both the scholarship and committee recommended curriculum of the early twentieth century. The second half of Part II takes a closer look at the World History survey of today, and finds that it too has remarkable similarities with the scholarship and recommended curriculum of its period.

**WESTERN CIVILIZATION**

As was illustrated in Chapter One, the world history scholarship of the early twentieth century was primarily concerned with analyzing the rise and fall of civilizations. And as Part II demonstrated, for history education this largely boiled down to examining the development of the culture which American society emerged from, Western Civilization. Existing curriculum recommendations roughly followed the pre-existing civilizational models, which Toynbee would
soon refine. There would be need for a more focused response from historians though as World War I threatened the preconceived notions and thoughts of the “progress” of civilization. The resulting Western Civilization survey course would reinforce the civilizational model and endow multiple generations of future historians, teachers, and laymen alike with a collective sense of the shared values American’s inherited from “our” civilization.

The Western Civilization course was one of many results which came from the general education movement. The professionalization of the academy and its shift away from the traditional or “classical” curriculum of the past and towards an elective system created an academic environment where both scholars and students were free to create courses which had greater personal and contemporary relevance. General education also sought to maintain order in the academy by providing students a broad intellectual training. This movement assumed that some level of knowledge was necessary for students to take anything away from the more specialized disciplines. Students without a general education, the argument goes, would lack the context necessary to comprehend not only their specialized fields, but also where their fields fit within a larger intellectual structure. Specialization and freedom of academic choice ironically spawned course prerequisites and a hierarchy of courses.\textsuperscript{196} In addition to providing prerequisites for advanced study within a field this new system of higher education encouraged departments, in an effort to procure students and resources, to develop courses which were applicable to the general public. History within the academy began to echo its call at the secondary level, emphasizing the effective citizen-building capacity of the subject matter along with its unique ability to integrate the curriculum.

\textsuperscript{196} Gilbert Allardyce, “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course,” \textit{The American Historical Review}, 87 no.3 (June, 1982): 700. Allardyce points out that the effect of specialized instruction at one end of the curriculum made general education and requirements necessary at the introductory level.
Building better citizens, a mission espoused a generation or two earlier by both the NEA and AHA and still explicitly visible in our primary and secondary school standards today, was a key component to building a common introductory world history course. Part of creating better citizens through this course would be accomplished by placing the nation’s history, thought of as rather brief, into a broader historical context. Another reason behind the need for an introductory world history course which was not rooted in an explicitly national framework was the partial failure of schools to fully adopt the AHA Committee of Seven recommended course guidelines.\textsuperscript{197} While the courses were being offered in many schools it was possible for students to skip what were viewed by historians as vital pieces of the curriculum, namely the fields of European history. As mentioned above, students jumping the Medieval/Modern European History and the English History blocks of the suggested curriculum created a circumstance which prominent Harvard historian Charles Homer Haskins described in 1906 as “the real reason” that the new introductory course in American colleges would be general course on European history by stating that “students did not bring it to college with them.”\textsuperscript{198} Filling in this void was an essential reason for the development of the Western Civilization course.

An additional reason that the new introductory course would have a distinctively European flair had to do with the professionalization of the field. As history had professionalized it moved away from a historical narrative which amounted to a chronicle of Christendom and towards a secular narrative which stressed the importance of classical Greek and Roman history.\textsuperscript{199} In the higher education history programs of other nations this led to the formation of nationally influenced secular narratives, with German programs, for example, stressing their

\textsuperscript{197} Highlighted in Part I on the AHA Committee of Five report.
\textsuperscript{198} Allardycce, “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course,” 702.
\textsuperscript{199} Peter Stearns, \textit{Western Civilization in World History}, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 9-10.
lineage from the Germanic tribes which over-ran the Roman Empire in the west or French narratives tracing their pedigree directly from the Romans. In America, as well as Great Britain as the writings of Toynbee display, the secular interpretation would define the “essence of history” by intellectual achievements in rational and scientific thought which had produced a consistent line of progress, as opposed to fractious political histories more common in European academies. 

This “line of progress,” it was thought, could be traced from the present day United States (at the turn of the 20th century) back through high-water marks of European intellectual history like the Enlightenment and Renaissance, to the classical period of Greece and Rome. Beneath this auspice of progress Europe as a whole could be defined as a civilization.

This distinction of civilization would prove to be an important one in the formation of the new introductory course. Giving shape to the rather broad term civilization was the scholarship of the period. Authors like Spengler, Toynbee, and Robinson all pointed to the written word, as well as other leisure based cultural activities, as the defining characteristics of civilization. As mentioned above, people lacking written records of the past were not considered part of history.

The idea that history was the past of “civilizations”, peoples capable of recording their own past, and who played a role in the “progress” of humanity became central to the Western Civilization narrative.

The Great War amplified the need for a stressing a common, united heritage. The Student Army Training Corps “War Issues Course” at Columbia stressed that the war was one of ideas and that the course should provide students with “the view of life and of society which they are

201 Allardyce, “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course,” 699. Harvard professor John Franklin Jameson claimed in 1890 that what made Europe a “civilization” were the enduring achievements of the mother culture. Spengler is clearly at odds with the field here, as he views the classical Greco-Roman civilization as a distinctly separate entity long dead and merely crudely imitated by Western civilization.
called upon to defend and of that view against which we are fighting.™ This course tied the United States to England and Western Europe and described them as a “civilization” defined by their advancement of liberty and culture.™ Using this framework a post-war course in “Contemporary Civilization” was designed to transmit the responsible citizenship message of the “War Issues Course” through Robinson’s “new history” model. The narrative of the development of Western European civilization was based on the progress of reason and liberty.™ While neither the “War Issues Course,” which was centered on the political issues and opposing ideologies of the late 19th and early 20th century, or the “Contemporary Civilization” course, focused on the Old Regime, economic, social, and political developments of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th century, explicitly followed the format of later Western Civilization courses they did provide a key jumping off point for the course. These two courses would set-up the intellectual climate at Columbia in the early 1920’s in which the origins of the Western Civilization course was fermented. They emphasized the primacy of the West, examined the developments and problems of the West, and generally treated the West as a distinct and exceptional civilization.

In addition to stressing the Western ideas that American’s were fighting for, the developing Western Civilization course, like the post-war scholarship of the period, sought to place the war into the narrative of progress. How could the “greatest civilization in the world” be “split asunder” by such a terrible war?† This strengthened the existing desire for a narrative which could eclipse the nationalist limitations plaguing the continent of Europe. Centering the

202 Allardyce, “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course,” 706.
203 Ibid, 706.
204 Ibid, 707.
205 Segal, “Western Civ’ and the Staging of American History in Higher Education”, 781. Segal directly refutes Allardyce’s notion that the “War Issues Course” and the “Contemporary Civilization” course at Columbia contributed to the formation of the Western Civilization course, citing these course objectives.  
206 Peter Stearns, Western Civilization in World History, 13.
history of the West more solidly in French and especially English history was one resolution, pushed in particular by the “War Issues Course” and reinforced by the existing secondary school historical narrative. Others would limit the course by excluding the “messy” 20th century altogether, while yet others would look to American exceptionalism and explore why Europe went wrong and how America kept right.207 Further interpretations would place the European historical legacy through its relevancy to America by linking America with the North Atlantic nations and exploring the way they had become the preponderant powers in the world.208 No matter the slight secondary variances in the narrative, the course would continue to focus on the development and progress Western Civilization brought to the world.

Creating more enlightened citizens by providing students with a sense of America’s place in the glorious tradition of European civilization was only part of the new introductory history course’s general education mission. Another was to reinforce history’s important role as a unifier of the curriculum. Preserved Smith, a student of James Harvey Robinson’s and later a professor of history at Cornell University, wrote about the “unity of knowledge” and the key role history played in illustrating this unity in the curriculum.209 Following the trajectory of Robinson’s long chronology, which made use of advances in various outside disciplines in order to craft an updated historical narrative, Smith advocated the primacy of history in its capacity for integrating seemingly disparate subject matter from the specialized fields.

This was not the only form of unity that Robinson and Smith would promote. Robinson’s “unity of history” was tied to his human history chronology through the twelve-hour clock analogy and the notion that “ancients” like “Thales, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle,

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208 Allardyce, “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course,” 708.
Hipparchus, Lucretius—are really our contemporaries.” Robinson writes, can be seen through the fact that “every human institution, every generally accepted idea, every important invention, is but the summation of long lines of progress.” For Robinson the unity and continuity of history were tied directly to the unity and continuity of the West’s civilizational lineage. If there was a unity and continuity to history, a history which was implicitly Western, it would only make sense to present students with a general introductory course in history which highlights these scholarly developments. Preserved Smith would propose just that, suggesting that students should be exposed to “the whole scheme of things entire as we know them” at the onset of their collegiate education.

Out of this bustling caldron of professionalization, specialization, general education, patriotism, propaganda, and historical scholarship would emerge the Western Civilization course. In its original state Western Civilization would focus on the long chronology of human history, highlight the distinctions between prehistory and history, the differences “between others and the West”, and the disparity between civilization and the primitive life. As the course spread through colleges across the country and the political climate in the United States changed it would diverge from its original form. Eventually the course would come to rely on the sort of rote memorization and preoccupation with political and diplomatic history which were the antithesis of the Western Civilization course’s intellectual and cultural origins. The notion of a shared cultural heritage and a direct lineage with the glorious and (semi) ancient

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211 Ibid, 64.
212 Segal, “‘Western Civ’ and the Staging of American History in Higher Education”, 778.
213 Allardycce, “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course,” 697-698.
214 Segal, “‘Western Civ’ and the Staging of American History in Higher Education”, 782-783. Segal examines the first generation of Western Civilization textbooks written primarily by Robinson’s protégés at Columbia.
215 Peter Stearns, *Western Civilization in World History*, (New York: Routledge, 2003). Chapter three examines various factors that precipitated the “fall” of Western Civ, citing rote learning of political and diplomatic history over intellectual and cultural information at a 2:1 ratio according to the College Board.
“classical” past ceased to be an innovative attempt to place American history within a greater historical narrative and became a fixed and idealized form of thought control and indoctrination. The course had succeeded in programming vast segments of multiple generations of American’s to believe in a historical narrative of Western exceptionality and of the triumph of progress, a notion which could no longer be accepted by a more diverse and empowered American population who saw no place for themselves in the Western tradition. Historical scholarship began to turn as well, examining—as Wells predicted—the wider world and encountering evidence which did not fit the old civilizational model. Despite this the course continues to have supporters, politically, culturally, and academically. This can largely be attributed to the effectiveness with which the Western Civilization model integrated the best scholarship of the field into curricular models and, as we will see in Chapter Three, textbooks as well.

**WORLD HISTORY**

The World History survey course of today shares many similarities with the Western Civilization course which preceded it. Both were reinterpretations of the history of the wider world. Both were spurred on by spectacular international events which seemed to upset the conventional world history theory of the period, which allowed (if not forced) world historians to re-conceptualize their field. While the similarities which created both of the movements contain some striking resemblance it bares noting that were also some very important distinguishing factors which separate the two. Foremost is the degree to which the World History survey broke

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216 Allardycce, “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course,” 719-720.
217 The women’s and civil rights movements of the twentieth century saw vast segments of the population in the United States gain increased rights and a larger voice in American society. These traditionally underrepresented groups did not play a large role in the Western Civilization narrative. Paired with the economic and physical destruction of successive World Wars the idea of a linear narrative of the progress and triumph of Western Civilization began to stand on shaky ground.
with the traditional scholarly narrative—this was not a focusing of the civilizational model, it would eventually result in an out-and-out break from this unit of analysis. Which leads to the second key point; for several reasons this re-conceptualization of world history has taken much longer to develop a central thesis and thus lacks the clear narrative which made the Western Civilization course so persuasive.

If New York, via Columbia University, can be said to have spawned the Western Civilization course, then the city of Chicago must be designated the birthplace of the World History course. Three of the key post-World War II re-formulators of world history called Chicago their home; Marshall Hodgson and the aforementioned William McNeill of the University of Chicago, and Leften Stavros Stavrianos of Northwestern University. The three men were not particularly close, though Stavrianos and McNeill had very similar life experiences and academic concentrations. But their conceptions of world history and their course offerings helped to define first an expanding vision of the Western Civilization course and later a wholly new survey in World History.

Marshall Hodgson’s contribution to world history came out of his commitment to the notion of Islamic civilization as a trans-Hemispheric cultural system. Building off of the Western Civilization model which explored the culture through its classical writings, Hodgson taught an introductory survey on Islamic civilization, as courses in Indian and Chinese civilization had

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218 William McNeill, *The Pursuit of Truth: A Historians Memoir*, (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2005) and Kevin Reilly, “Remembering Leften Stavrianos, 1913-2004,” *World History Connected*, (University of Illinois Press, 2005). McNeill and Stavrianos were both Canadian born who specialized first in Balkan history and later world history. After McNeill serendipitous recruitment into the OSS and subsequent transfer to Greece during World War II and the following Greek Civil War it was actually Stavrianos who received, read, and filed reports on McNeill’s field notes. Later, in applying for applications to the Carnegie Foundation for grants to work on their visions of world history they learned of each other’s applications and ideas after accidentally receiving the others acceptance letter via misaddressed envelopes, setting them up as natural rivals. Despite McNeill and Hodgson’s shared institution and interest in world history they did not collaborate in any meaningful way, though McNeill joins most world historians in lamenting the premature passing of Hodgson in 1968 at age of 47.
likewise developed at the University of Chicago.\textsuperscript{219} Hodgson examined the ways in which an Afro-Eurasian ecumene provided a framework for analyzing the interactions of civilizations and the way developments “altered human relationships across the entire trans-Hemispheric region.”\textsuperscript{220}

The Afro-Eurasian ecumene played a role in the work of McNeill and Stavrianos as well. The role of the ecumene in McNeill’s \textit{Rise of the West}, mentioned briefly above, deserves more description here. McNeill’s adaptation of the ecumene came about much the same way the civilization distinctions of the earlier generation of world historians arose. As Spengler and Toynbee sought a unit of analysis which could better explain long term historical trends than the nation-state, McNeill sought a unit which would transcend the civilization. This unit was the ecumene. For McNeill the ecumene represented the interaction and connection of civilizations within an area, and these areas continually grew through time. As distinct civilizations began to emerge and spread through diverse parts of the world they came into contact with one another and ceased to have a truly independent history. While various regional civilizations like China, India, the West, and the Middle East retained individual characteristics unique from the others their technology, philosophy, religion, art, and diseases were traded back and forth. This exchange impacted the development of each and meant that meaningful study and synthesis on a world scale would recommend the study of civilizations collectively instead of in isolation.

L.S. Stavrianos also supported the study of world history through the interconnected Afro-Eurasian zone, as evidenced by his glowing review of \textit{Rise of the West} above and his own famous texts \textit{A Global History} and \textit{The Global Rift} attest to. Ecumenes for Stavrianos, as his

Marxist background might suggest, provided a way to look at issues of political power and social classes outside of the all too constraining units of nations or civilizations. Stavrianos’ world history would concentrate more on these issues than McNeill’s, which was often more concerned with technological, biological, and cultural exchange. These distinctive approaches to world history may not have provided a clear outlook or sketch for the field, but in that regard they hardly differ from the scholars of the earlier period who produced the Western Civilization motif, as the line tying these works to the study of interaction between civilizations was at least as clear as the centralizing theme of civilizations as a unit of study were in the earlier era. So why has it failed to develop as coherent a central narrative and integrate itself as thoroughly into American society as its predecessor?

One explanation may be in institutional support. The University of Chicago, unlike Columbia (and Chicago itself) during the early days of the Western Civilization course, was unwilling to embrace and promote this new course. The university administration and the history departments own predilections towards the civilization model, which as mentioned above led to expanding it to encompass courses in other civilizations, made the effort to galvanize world history at a single high profile institution nearly impossible. After McNeill’s retirement from Chicago the world history course fell out of practice at its own birthplace—a poor endorsement by any standard.221 The institutional issue was not confined to the University of Chicago alone either. Even today, after the course has spread to universities, colleges, and K-12 schools nationwide it faces an overwhelming amount of institutional disinterest or opposition. Derisions familiar to world historians of any age are common, with many historians wondering how such a wide-ranging subject can be possible without colossal levels of generalization—the professional

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historians favorite bogeyman. Others nitpick the mistakes occurring in the coverage of their narrow research interest or take vocal exception to omissions of their area which must come naturally to history at such a scale. Institutions may mix the two models, using an “ancient civilizations” course for the first half of the survey and a “modern world history” course for the second.222 Others may simply offer both the Western Civilization and World History course.223 Regardless of which individual or combination of institutional constraint(s) that have held the World History course back, it still has not establish a solid footing in the halls of academia.

These internal oppositions to world history are hardly new criticisms for historians interested in making their field more applicable to the general public. In Carl Becker’s now famous AHA presidential address, “Everyman His Own Historian,” Becker outlined the importance of making history applicable to the masses.

Berate him as we will for not reading our books, Mr. Everyman is stronger than we are, and sooner or later we must adapt our knowledge to his necessities. Otherwise he will leave us to our own devices, leave us it may be to cultivate a species of dry professional arrogance growing out of the thin soil of antiquarian research. Such research, valuable not in itself but for some ulterior purpose, will be of little import except in so far as it is transmuted into common knowledge. The history that lies inert in unread books does no work in the world. The history that does work in the world, the history that influences the course of history, is living history, that pattern of remembered events, whether true or false, that enlarges and enriches the collective specious present, the specious present of Mr. Everyman.224

The idea that the unread history, which is the “history that does no work in the world,” serves no greater purposes still seems the most succinct rebuttal to this generalization criticism. As Becker says, it is the history that does work in the world, the “living history,” which historians should be committed to. The historian’s greatest contact with the “everyman” is still the student. This

222 History 1510 and 1520 at BGSU fit this model.
223 As was the case at my alma mater, Miami University.
remains one of the great utilities of history. This makes the creation of historical narratives which could prove most useful to the citizen building goals of the system one of the primary responsibilities of the field at large. Becker’s remark that the living history, “whether true or false,” is the basis for the somewhat spurious reality of the everyman bears mentioning as well. The creation of every general historical narrative carries with it an element of myth and misconception inherent both in the author(s) and the time in which it was created. This might mean creating narratives which show the manner in which civilizations have emerged, grown, collapses, the way in which Western culture and civilization have positively (or negatively) altered the development of humanity, and now a narrative which examines how connections between cultures or civilizations have shaped the modern world. Each of these narratives carried with them an element of truth which spoke to the people and international environment of their times. They are not complete and infallibly correct narratives—as no such narrative ever could be. So those choosing the narrative (or curriculum structure) are left with a serious question to answer: what are the underlying beliefs our world history will be centered on?

Despite developing in a very similar ways the Western Civilization course and the World History course have met with very different levels of acceptance. Western Civilization was created as a political response to the political climate of the early twentieth century. Following closely the scholarship of the period a new survey was created which stressed more explicitly the unifying factors of Western culture and provided a historical narrative which gave context to the development and spread of that civilization. The narrative promoted in the schools where it was first formed, often endorsed and encouraged through interdisciplinary ties to classical literature, permeated university curriculum and found itself adapted to the existing K-12 curriculum structure in the place of older European history courses. Whether these courses were named
Western Civilization or European history they remained concerned largely with the same objective; to establish and promote the line of progress from ancient Greece and Rome up through the modern day in Western Europe and the United States. The model was even adapted as the way to examine other civilizations independently at the university level. While world historians have largely abandoned this model in favor of one which examines the world at a higher unit of analysis and through the lens of interconnectivity and exchanges as opposed to static and independent development and decline, its support among the public and even segments of academia remains as a testament to the enduring power of a persuasive, well supported, and unified narrative.

The World History survey has not had nearly the success. While world history scholars have continued to expand the knowledge of the field and developed theoretical frameworks which provide a more logical explanation of large scale world historical processes the general survey course, which is the greatest practical outlet for these scholarly developments, has largely failed to develop a standard narrative. The failure of the contemporary World History survey course to swiftly gain acceptance and support in colleges and universities has largely contributed to its inability to shape a more centralized and accepted thematic structure for wider world history education, as the Western Civilization course was able to do before it.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of the historians’ two models of influencing history curriculum design have become increasingly less successful over the twentieth century. From early curriculum committee recommendations in the 1890s and early 1900s which were closely aligned with each other to the politicized mess of the 1994 history standards battle it is pretty clear something has changed. History has become more complicated, and that in and of itself is a positive
development. Narratives which exclude broad segments of our society or our world have become inexplicable given the contributions historical research has made to the collective knowledge of the field in the last hundred years. Complicated history does have its drawbacks when it comes to crafting a general narrative—consensus is hard to reach. The commitment to the civilization model saw few detractors in its first decades and was merely building on already culturally accepted notions. Presenting world history as a break with that model was bound to ruffle the feathers of those who have close ties to civilizational studies. Perhaps more importantly, the visions of world history which have developed in the last fifty years have a great deal of structural variation to them, much more so than the civilization based histories of the early twentieth century. Lacking a clear and agreed upon mission statement world history curriculum opened itself to debate from outside by competing interests. While a rough consensus has emerged from an overview of the scholarship and the individual efforts of concerned world historians who have attempted to explicitly define the field as being about Global World History or “connections,” it has failed to provide the canonical narrative that older world history models provided. Failure to adhere to and articulate clearly the connections model of world history in the committee format doomed this model from its inception.

The survey model suffered a similar fate. Despite the fact that the Western Civilization and World History courses developed in practically the same way their level of success could not be more different. Western Civilization followed closely the world history scholarship of the period favoring the civilization model promoted by Spengler and Toynbee. This new survey stressed the factors which brought together the nations which made up Western culture and provided a historical narrative which gave longstanding context to the rise of this civilization. The narrative established and promoted the lines of progress from ancient Greece and Rome up
through the modern day in Western Europe and the United States. The Western Civilization course had great success in supporting the unity and cultural identity of Western civilization among the large segments of the public, although it began to lose a great deal of steam as more and more diverse segments of American society became empowered through education and legislation.

The World History survey which arose as a supplement and eventual successor of Western Civilization has been less successful. World history has continued to expand as a scholarly field and has developed many theoretical frameworks which provide more reasonable explanation of large scale world historical processes. This general survey course has not been successful in fully supplanting the older model. The failure of the contemporary World History survey course to swiftly gain acceptance and support in colleges and universities played a central role in this collapse. Like the committee model, the survey model has suffered to make a more complicated amount of historical knowledge into a centralized and accepted thematic structure it can present in a persuasive way to non-world historians (academics and the general public alike) as the Western Civilization course was able to do before it.

The breakdown of the two models of curriculum direction used by historians is primarily attributable to the success of the field scholarly. The incredible gains by world historians in both traditional historical studies and theoretical works have enhanced the knowledge available to those interested in crafting larger general narratives. This increase has been so large as to make a comprehensive coverage of the scholarship rather untidy. Common themes exist amongst the mainstream of the scholarship but remain less accessible to those outside the field who hear various approaches like “regional studies,” “comparative studies,” “gender in world history,” and “world systems” and merely throw their hands up in confusion. World historians themselves
appear unwilling to divest themselves of their particular research approaches in order to articulate a clear definition of the field for use at the survey level. Using the themes apparent in canonical pieces of the scholarship and the definitions put forward by some of the most forward thinking and well-respected scholars of the field would go a long way towards resolving the primary issue responsible for the failure of these two methods.
CHAPTER THREE: TEACHING WORLD HISTORY

In addition to the scholarship and curriculum models outlined above, historians have a third approach through which they have traditionally exerted their influence on world history education, textbook publishing. Chapter three examines the content composition of world history textbooks from the early Western Civilization period of the 1920s and 1930s and world history textbooks of the contemporary period, the 1990s and 2000s. Ten world history textbooks were examined to outline the kind of world history that has made its way into the classroom during these two key periods over the last century. The quantitative portion of the analysis measured the level of overt European orientation was in the textbooks as well as the both the amount and types of connections the texts included.

WHY TEXTBOOKS ARE AN EFFECTIVE MEASUREMENT TOOL

The importance of textbooks in K-12 world history instruction can scarcely be undersold. Teachers are frequently forced into duty as world history instructors, often lacking the proper content background in the subject. As noted above the world history surveys of today are hardly uniform. Some may employ a connections-based narrative of world history throughout, although the civilization model is often used in the “ancient” survey. In addition few universities offer upper division courses in world history, meaning that few future teachers grapple with world history content after their freshman or sophomore year. At some accredited teaching programs it is possible to be licensed to teach world history without even receiving a “C” or above in the courses. Given the paucity of world history content training and the varied

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225 The same is likely to apply for the world history survey at the college level taught by an instructor not trained in the literature and theories of world history.

226 The 2009-2010 AYA Social Studies check-sheet at Bowling Green State University requires only 9 or 24 hours of history courses (depending on whether the student minors in history or political science) and has no restrictions
yet demanding curriculum standards teachers are saddled with it stands to reason that their classroom textbook would play a central role in the development and teaching of their course. This chapter illustrates how the organization and make-up of these texts have traditionally been a reflection of the level of effectiveness historians have had in creating a unified and central narrative for world history. Given the important role textbooks play in the practical act of teaching world history at the K-12 level it seems appropriate to examine the quality of texts they have before them.

Ten world history textbooks were examined as an attempt to discover which vision (or visions) of world history have made their way into the classroom during two key periods over the last ninety years. Four questions played heavily in the analysis. First, have texts increased their emphasis on connections and exchanges? Are textbooks becoming less “Eurocentric” as the scholarship of world history would suggest? How similar or different are the narratives within and between the two eras? Finally, has there been a noticeable shift towards or away from the Western Civilization/American Exceptionalism narrative?

Four of the textbooks (the Wilmot-Buxton, McKinley, Howland, and Dann, Hayes, Moon, and Wayland, and Parsons texts) were early forms of world history textbooks from the 1920s and 1930s. These works were produced during the formative years of universal history, Western Civilization, and the social studies.227 These texts provide a glimpse into how world history was conceptualized and presented as a teaching field before generations of what Peter

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Stearns might refer to as intellectual dogma had set in. The other six (Dunn and McNeill, Beers, Ellis and Esler, Stearns, Spielvogal, and McDougall Littell) come from the contemporary period, the 1990’s and 2000’s. These texts were written after the professional field of world history had over thirty years of continuous development. The textbooks of the early period illustrate a great deal of narrative cohesion. These texts focus almost entirely on the West, as the scholarship and curriculum of the period might suggest. While there are a great deal of connections surveyed in these texts they are largely confined within Western society or dictated from the West to the outside world.

After choosing the texts additional parameters were placed on the nature of the study. Each text would be analyzed from the fall of the Roman empire to the onset of the twentieth century (the fall of Rome being chosen for its near universal inclusion in the texts as a chapter and the dawn of the twentieth century chosen because the first period of the study only had twenty years plus years of recent history to cover—too little to be of use in this study). A single page would be chosen at random from each eligible chapter in each text (excluding the first and last pages of each chapter, pages in which one-third or more of the composition is comprised of illustrations or insets) by rolling an appropriate number of dice depending on chapter page count.

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228 Peter Stearns, *Western Civilization in World History*, (New York: Routledge, 2003). Stearns argues that the Western Civilization course abandoned its intellectual and cultural history roots and became bogged down in a static narrative based more on political and diplomatic history.


230 The choices were made based upon three criteria. Each work had to purport to being a world history textbook, had to have been commonly (or plausibly could have been) used as a textbook at the high school level, and had to be available to me here in Bowling Green, Ohio (this last point being especially important in the case of the texts from the 1920 through 1940 period).
After random selection detailed information was recorded from each page. The chapter itself was labeled as being either Western or Non-Western in topical orientation. Then the detailed region of the selected page was recorded. There were thirteen separate regional distinctions used for this categorization: Middle East, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Central Asia, East Asia, South East Asia, North Africa, East Africa, South Africa, West Africa, North America, Latin America, and the South Pacific, with Western Europe and North America normally serving as the signifiers of “Western” orientation (on occasions that North American connections are made with reference to the original indigenous population it was deemed a non-Western connection). After determining the regional orientation the page was examined for connections within and between regions. Upon recording existing connections it is noted where the connections are taking place and whether the connections are one-way (dominated or dictated by one region over another) or two-way (in which both regions contribute to the connection).

Page 510 of the McKinley, Howland, and Dann text will serve as an example of this process. This page, coming from a Western oriented chapter entitled “The Renaissance: Europe RedisCOVERs the Way to Progress”, is regionally oriented on Western Europe and includes two connections between Western Europe and East Asia. The two connections are in reference to the European adaptation of Chinese navigational technology and the effects of Marco Polo’s travels through China. The connection between Western Europe and East Asia with regards to the European adaptation of Chinese navigational technology is considered a two-way connection where non-Western technology contributes to the development of Western culture while the Marco Polo connection is a one-way connection where the non-Western culture is mentioned passively as a non-contributing part to a Western narrative. In all one hundred and seventy-two
separate chapters were observed and recorded in this fashion.

**TEXTBOOKS OF THE 1920S/1930S**

The early record of world history textbook publishing during the interwar period is represented here by four texts, two each from the 1920s and 1930s. This period of textbook publishing accompanied the shift in scholarship and curriculum models from the old universal history design into the Western Civilization narrative. As a group all of the texts are oriented in an extremely Eurocentric manner, as would be expected given their date of publication relative to the state of development the field of world history outlined in Chapter Two. As seen in Table 1, of the seventy-six chapters observed in the 1920-1940 texts sixty-three were of Western orientation and only thirteen were non-Western oriented chapters.

![Table 1: West/Non-West Orientations 1920-1940](image)

That is not to say that the general trend can absolutely be applied to the texts individually. For instance while the Wilmot-Buxton and McKinley, Howland, and Dann texts from the 1920s are both overwhelmingly Western in orientation the composition contrasts between the two are
clear just from a perusal of the chapter headings. Both close out their period on the ancient world with a chapter on the fall of Rome, but from there on their foci could not be more different. Wilmot-Buxton explores non-Western topics like the “Empire of Islam,” “The Eastern World,” and “The Late Medieval World of Asia,” while the most exotic chapter titles (indeed the only non-Western chapters) in the McKinley text are the nominally non-Western topics “Eastern Europe and the Crusades” and “The Growth of Russia.” Nearly a third of the Wilmot-Buxton chapters (four of the thirteen) deal with non-Western topic orientations while that can only be said for a tenth of the McKinley chapters (two out of twenty). While the sample size is admittedly small it the Wilmot-Buxton text is clearly the outlier here; as seen here in tables 1.2 and 1.3, all three of the other texts come closer to meeting the expected 4.8 Western oriented chapters to each non-Western oriented chapter, while the Wilmot-Buxton text has a ratio of 2.3 Western chapters to every non-Western chapter. The observed cases are the actual count of Western or non-Western chapters, while the expected ratio describes what would statistically be expected to occur.

### Table 1.1: Observed Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1920-1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.2: Expected Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1920-1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West to Non-West Ratio</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Not surprisingly, the variation of one-way/two-way connections follows a similar distribution pattern. Just over 88% (sixty-seven out of seventy-six total cases) of the cases were one way connections, and 86% of those cases (fifty-eight out of sixty-seven cases) were Western dominated. While some non-Western dominated one-way connections existed they were often in reference to ways in which non-Western culture influenced the West during the either the “Dark” or Medieval Ages, the ways non-Western cultures responded to European imperialism, or the way more influential non-Western cultures dominated or influenced their lesser non-Western neighbors.231 Common non-Western one-way connections like these were found in portrayals of the influence of Islam on the West through the Crusades, the Iberian Muslim occupation, and the preservation of ancient Greek materials which aided the development of the Renaissance in Europe. Other familiar non-Western representations included South American revolutions against European imperialism, the consequences of the Mongol expansion, and Indian and Chinese cultural, religious, and political influence in Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Asia.

Far more frequent were the one-way Western dominated connections. These connections did more than just express the history of the world through a Eurocentric prism; they were predominantly focused on inter-Western connections. There were many more instances of

Western areas being mentioned in connection with other Western regions than any other occurrence. In the Parsons text alone there are more than three times as many Western regions connected to each other on the pages examined than non-Western to Western connections and non-Western to non-Western connection combined (35 West to West connections, 11 West to Non-West connections, and 11 Non-West to Non-West connections). This illustrates the importance given to Western states and peoples in this early period of world history publishing, as one would have expected given the orientation of both scholarship and curriculum models during the period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.4: 1920-1940 Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One-Way Connections</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Western</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the historical interpretation of the period it is hardly surprising that such a Eurocentric narrative would be common among high school history texts; indeed these texts present world history in a way that is very compatible with the early history standards offered by the 1898 and 1911 AHA committees and the emerging Western Civilization of the first decades of the twentieth century. By emphasizing the special importance of Western culture in the development

232 These figures are a count of individual regional connections occurring within the greater One-Way/Two-Way connection set illustrated in Table 3. Table 3 is calculated on a page by page basis, each page having a singular distinction as One-Way or Two-Way, Western Oriented or Non-Western Oriented.
of the modern world these authors were creating workable and relatively unified narratives based upon the best existing evidence and theory of their field at the time.

The common Eurocentric narrative presented throughout these texts is deeper than the mere titles of chapters or the frequency with which groups are mentioned. The stories at the heart of these narratives were important as well. The common narrative running through these remarkably similar texts goes roughly as follows: The Medieval period is a fall from an earlier period of Roman prominence. After the fall of the Rome, which was the end of the “glorious” Western classical period, the West began to falter—losing its way and lagging behind cultures in the East, particularly the Islamic Middle East. After a brief digression into the way that Islam preserved some of the “glories” and “splendor” of the classical period the texts turned to focus on Europe recapturing her former glory under the revival of the Renaissance.\footnote{Wilmot-Buxton, vii. Chapters 4 and 5 of the text are respectively labeled The “Glory of Greece,” and The “Splendor of Rome.” And while Wilmot-Buxton may have given stereotypically superfluous names to chapters on classical Western history, his text did at least devote a chapter—albeit a relatively short one—on the Empire of Islam.} The Renaissance begot the rapid expansion of Western power through the intellectual developments of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment, along with other Western traits inherited from its classical and Christian background, created the production and commercial power of the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution provided the West with the means for rapid growth in political, economic, and military strength, augmented by the rise of nationalism in Europe. The narrative of this period is linear, with history following a logical line of progression (and progress).\footnote{The “logic” behind this linear history is itself tied to the Western tradition of the Enlightenment, which serves to separate the West by its adherence to logic over mystical superstition or myth.}

Even where the general narrative was interrupted or enlarged by topical accounts, a level of Eurocentrisim remained plainly visible. In explaining the development of the printing press in
a chapter titled “The Expansion of Europe” one text allows that while the printing press had been invented in China and spread throughout Japan and Korea there was no proof that “the art of printing was borrowed by Europe from Asia” saying that printing “seems to have been independently invented in Western Europe.” Other texts may have granted slightly more credit towards the contribution of non-Western actors, although it was generally clear that these contributions were not made truly productive until employed by Westerners. One such example comes in the description of the contribution the mariners compass made to navigation. While again crediting the Chinese with the invention of yet another fundamental technology of the early modern period, the text explains that only after its introduction into Europe at the close of the Crusades could it contribute to producing modern navigation which was “no longer a haphazard game of chance, but a real science producing dependable results.”

In addition to the blanket Eurocentrism of the texts readers will likely run across other now defunct ideologies and theories which were prevalent during this era of scholarship. A section in chapter 20 (The Age of Science and Democracy) of Geoffrey Parsons 1933 *The Stream of History*, a text which boldly explored many of the latest theories and practices of historical analysis during the period, investigated, among other things, the creation of the “American breed.” On top of vaguely attributing Democracy in its “widest application” to the “fruits of the pioneer spirit,” Parsons examined the racial “mingling” of European stock in

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235 Haye
236 Arthu
237 Geoffrey Parsons, *The Stream of History*, (Scribner: New York, 1933). Parsons text could be viewed as an early proponent of “Big History,” as one-third of the text looks at pre-history through the formation of the Sun, the development of the Earth, the beginnings of life and evolution, and the emergence of humans, before turning to more traditional topics like herders and farmers, the development of language, and the dawn of civilization in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Mediterranean.
America, such as English, French, German, Irish, Scandinavian, Italian, Slav, and Jew. These groups were further broken down into three main races, Nordic, Alpine, and Mediterranean, with the conclusion that a new national type was likely emerging in the United States. This “American fusion” was juxtaposed with the unique problems presented by the “two wholly alien stocks, the American Indian and the African Negro.” The American Indian is portrayed as an obstacle to colonization, a case study in how to protect a small and weakened minority, and how to guard its “interesting primitive institutions” from political ignorance and greed. The African Negro issue is described more delicately as an unresolved issue stemming from slavery and the ineffective manner in which it was abolished—lacking the appropriate social, industrial, or political reorganization necessary to resolve the “racial antagonism” and “social handicaps” with plagued the nation. In addition, these two issues—the American Indian and African Negro—were held up as a judicious validation for racially motivated immigration laws, stating that “America has quite sensibly halted Oriental immigration” in order to avoid creating yet another racial tension within its borders.238 Theories such as this one, based on the knowledge and rational thought of the time, were discarded in the same way that eugenics found itself abandoned in the hard sciences. As more sophisticated understandings of genetics and anthropology have been developed outdated and invalidated theories like these are replaced by new knowledge. Similar change has been less forthcoming in the overarching historical narrative.

**TEXTBOOKS OF THE 1990S/2000S**

As world history’s popularity as a field has grown in recent years, authors and publishing companies have scrambled to keep up with the mounting need for up to date textbooks. Often co-written, edited, or advised by scholars involved in developing the scholarship of world history.

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(including William McNeill who was senior consultant for Ross Dunn’s 1990 text *Links Across Time and Place: A World History*, which appears in this study) these texts claim, often in their very titles, to examine the subject of world history through the patterns and connections which tie the human community together.239 Claiming a departure from the old model history text format centered on the collection and presentation of “known facts” these texts profess to look at world history with a more critical eye. Dunn’s text, the first of the modern world history textbooks examined here, sets the pace by explaining that the goals of world history include promoting “a way of thinking about people and change that you can use throughout your life… Studying world history encourages critical thinking skills by considering and comparing alternative solutions.”240 Jackson Spielvogel’s *Glencoe World History* explains its inclusion of certain primary sources by saying “reading the documents will enable you to develop your critical reading skills and to evaluate the material in this book—in a sense to be a historian yourself.”241 Much like the varied curricular approaches taken by the NCHS and ODE standards Beck, et al’s *Modern World History: Patterns of Interaction* students are asked to look at world history through “eight significant and recurring themes” of power and authority, religious and ethical systems, revolution, interaction with the environment, economics, cultural interaction, empire building, and science and technology. These eight historical themes are interlaced with five geographic themes of location, human/environment interaction, region, place, and movement.242 Peter Stearns text is more closely aligned with the Global World History or

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239 Ross Dunn, *Links Across Time and Place: A World History* (Evanston, Ill: McDougal, Littell, 1990), v. In a letter to the readers Dunn explains that in teaching world history he is trying to impart a global perspective in which students “discover that peoples and civilizations have always been interdependent, exchanging products, skills, and ideas.”
240 Ibid, v.
connections model. In addition to urging his readers to commit to “a global rather than a West-centered approach” by studying East Asian, Indian, Middle Eastern, East European, African, and Latin American civilizations along with Western civilization in order to “explain how the world became what it now is,” Stearns claims his text will help students “sharpen their understanding of how to interpret change and historical causation and providing a rich field for comparative analysis.”243

In some regards they have been a rousing success; in particular the coverage of non-Western peoples, cultures, and topics have increased significantly, as one might expect given the explosion of monographic studies on these subjects in recent decades. These increases in coverage have not always sufficed to significantly alter the actual (as opposed to the stated) narrative of the world history textbook, and in some ways the expansion of coverage has led to less critical texts which come off more as encyclopedic endeavors which attempt to cram various curricular patterns into a single narrative rather than thought provoking introductions to a more general history of the world.

A quick perusal of the chapter orientations provides a respectable display of the manner of changes in coverage which world history texts have undergone in recent years. The ratio of Western chapter orientations to non-Western chapters has seen a significant decrease from the relatively high 4.8 to 1 mark during the 1920-1940’s to its current ratio of 2 to 1. While this indicates the continued preeminence of Western orientation in the texts of today it still represents a massive shift in the levels of exposure given to non-Western peoples and cultures. In terms of raw numbers the six 1990-current textbooks have sixty-four Western oriented chapters to thirty-two non-Western chapters. This is likely indicative of the aforementioned development of world

history scholarship which has turned away from an unduly Eurocentric interpretation of world history in favor of a more inclusive analysis which examines world history on a more global scale.

| Table 2: 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Orientations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Western 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The gains made by non-Western topics however have been almost exclusively confined to the pre-modern period of history. Chapters focused on the expansion of Islam across Africa and into India, the East African Civilizations, the West African Empires, the Mesoamerican Civilizations, and the Mongol conquests account for most of the gains. That is not to say that these pre-Columbian chapters are merely superficial in their coverage of non-Western peoples. Quite the contrary, some of these chapters make positive and thoughtful connections which explore the ways other cultures and people have contributed to the development of the world today. Peter Stearns description of the development of Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese civilizations explores the way non-Western cultures interacted and created similar, yet distinct civilizations. The borrowing and adaptation of Chinese culture by the Japanese stands out the most in this section, as Stearns investigates the notion of “selective borrowing” in Japanese culture; a trait which he believes the Japanese used both around 600 AD when it began adapting
aspects of Chinese culture, and again later in the nineteenth and twentieth century with the selective borrowing of aspects of Western culture.244

Dunn’s treatment of China in the middle ages is another example of the connections model in practice. Rather than highlight differences between Western and Chinese culture during the period from the traditional and less historically informed viewpoint stressing the uniquely industrious nature of Western peoples, the development of Chinese industries and society in the period is examined with a greater depth. Advances in agriculture and transportation show the high levels of productivity which allowed the boom of Chinese population. Various inventions, like those of paper money, the printing press, and gunpowder are praised for both their inventiveness and their positive effects on the growth of Chinese civilization. The technological revolution in China during the thirteenth century is also discussed, explaining the advanced manner in which coke and steel production helped to make China the most advanced and productive region of the period—perhaps even undergoing an industrial revolution centuries earlier than Europe.245 The story of Mansa Musa has become the standard “go-to” example of the region, with coverage like that of Jackson Spielvogel’s operating as the norm. Coming to power in 1307, Mansa Musa doubled the size of his empire and consolidated his gains through a strong centralized government ruled by appointed governors. But more notably Mansa Musa is known for his pilgrimage to Mecca, in which he lavished gold on hosts and made “hundreds of purchases with gold from merchants” to the point that he actually devalued gold in Egypt for over a decade. While his importance in spreading Islam through West Africa, along with its

fringe benefits like scholarship and literacy, is noted the story of his fantastic pilgrimage remains the focal point of the section.246

The expansion of Islam, which the story of Mansa Musa and the empires of West Africa is normally a part of in the contemporary world history textbook, tends to dominate, along with China, the non-Western coverage. The Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Israel/Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the North African coast, the Safavid Empire in Persia, and the Mughal Empire in India covered in the McDougall-Littell Modern World History: Patterns of Interaction text are the standard units of examination for this phenomenon. The Ottomans are credited with expanding militarily and developing a highly structured social organization during the reign of Suleyman, before beginning their slow decline. The Safavids are attributed with blending Persian, Ottoman, and Arab culture within their empire, while the Mughals in India are a study in liberal, decentralized rule. The flowering of culture, art, literature, and architecture, particularly under the rule of Akbar (d.1605) again shows a blend of culture, like that in Safavid Persia. Mixing Arabic, Persian, and Hindi languages created Urdu—still the official language of Pakistan. The epic 4th century Indian love story of Rama and Sita, the Ramayana, was rewritten as the Ramcaritmanas which remains more popular than the original. The most famous landmark in India, the Taj Mahal, was another product of the Mughal era. However the end of this era is given fleeting mention, it is merely attributed to the overextension and decentralized management style of the Mughals which saw India penetrated by Western traders in the seventeenth century.247

Another of the popular pre-Columbian non-Western topics was that of the Mongol conquests. Ellis and Esler’s treatment of the “Mighty Mongol War Machine” is rather typical of

the way this subject was treated. The Mongols are credited with their great skill in horsemanship, their martial discipline, and the creation of the largest empire “the world had yet seen,” along with their ability to adapt and facilitate cultural exchange. The authors credit the Mongols with the spread of cannons, windmills, gunpowder, papermaking, and various trees and crops, along with facilitating economic growth through the promotion of peace and stability along the Silk Road.248

While these various gains represent real change in the amount, and in some respects the kind, of coverage given non-Western regions there remain some problems with these treatments. Confining the majority of the increases in non-Western world history treatments to the pre-Columbian period serves to reinforce the “traditional” narrative of the earlier period, by focusing on the triumph of Western progress over the stagnant (or inferior) cultures of the “Rest.” In addition to at least partially upholding this antiquated narrative which has been largely abandoned by the wider field of world history scholarship, confining the coverage of non-Western topics to the pre-modern era serves to marginalize the notion that the connections and exchanges which have helped to shape the modern world will continue to play a pivotal role in development in this “global” age—a message which seems paramount to the citizenship-building mission of world history education at the K-12 level today.

The possible marginalizing effect of the pre-modern treatment of non-Western topics played a key role in my analysis of the connections in contemporary texts. Despite the textbooks overt claims stressing the connections and links promoted in world history scholarship, these textbooks from the 1990’s on show little actual increase in connections over the older, pre-

connections-based interpretation of world history prevalent in the earlier texts. On average the number of topics actually dropped over the period, which seemed to have some affect on the inter-page connections within the texts as well. This may be attributed to the emphasis of critical thinking and in-depth coverage of subjects as opposed to the more prescriptive manner in which earlier texts approached the topic. The evidence does not seem to support this thesis however.

Not only do the older texts include more chapters, covering more topics, they include a greater degree of regional connections per page than the newer textbooks as well. While the newer texts are including more regions and peoples they seem to be doing so in a way which actually fragments the narrative more than the Eurocentric texts of the past did. This seems likely to be due to the varied state and local standards which incorporate multiple curriculum patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.2</th>
<th>Total Connections (within chosen pages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920-1940</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-Current</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Connections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Connections per Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.75</td>
<td>58.67</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It seemed unlikely that world history textbooks claiming to be more focused on connections, and with access to a plethora of existing world history scholarship that advocates just that, would actually contain fewer connections, but the data indicates otherwise. Which lead me to question whether the connections may have grown more in substance rather than in quantity. To answer this I examined the frequency of one-way and two-way connections within the texts, with the general premise that a two-way connection which provides a level of agency to both sides of a
connection is more in-line with the substantive developments of the field of world history than a one-way connection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.3</th>
<th>Average Connections Per Textbook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920-1940</td>
<td>1990-Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Way</td>
<td>16.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Way</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average two-way connection did grow, if ever so slightly, from 2.25 in the first period to just over 2.8, meaning that two-way connections rose by just over one-half an occurrence over the period. Given developments in historical scholarship this improvement hardly seems to signify a significant development. Of equal importance is the decrease in one-way connections, which dropped from nearly seventeen a text to just over thirteen. This is a much more substantial change, reflecting increased attention to toning down the prescriptive nature of world history narratives in the contemporary period. The predicted number of connections against the actual number of observed connections in table 2.4 indicate that the 1990-current group of textbooks has outperformed its expected projections for one-way and two-way connections, having three less cases of one-way connections and two more cases of two-way connections in the observed occurrences.
### Table 2.4: One-Way: Two-Way Connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed 1920-1940</th>
<th>1990-Current Expected</th>
<th>1920-1940</th>
<th>1990-Current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-Way 67</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>One-Way</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Way 9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Two-Way</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHI = 0.344512

### Table 2.5: West: Non-West Two-Way Connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed 1920-1940</th>
<th>1990-Current Expected</th>
<th>1920-1940</th>
<th>1990-Current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West 6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>6.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Non</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHI = 0.836701

Development has not been as forthcoming when it comes to creating non-Western based two-way connections. As illustrated in table 2.5, the ratio of Western to non-Western two-way connections has not increased, and has actually shown a slight drop in occurrences. This is in line with the expected performance of the textbooks based on the total number of occurrences. The relatively high CHITEST rating may indicate a degree of randomness to the result and thus requires further testing, but the results remain significant for their applicability to the lack of significant change in the ratio of occurrences.\(^{249}\)

\(^{249}\) The Pearson’s chi-squared test is a statistical calculation which is used to estimate the theoretical frequency or independence of variables.
cohesion in the narrative. The apparent inability of contemporary textbooks to produce a greater number of West to non-West two-way connections during a period which shows a significant increase in non-Western topical orientations demonstrates a fundamental failure with the state of world history textbook publishing (and perhaps world history education)—that the narrative often lacks cohesion, too often examining regions separately while making unclear (or excessively complicated) over-arching associations which tie these disconnected stories together.

The brief outlining of some of the most typical treatments of non-Western regions above is indicative of this finding; these most common non-Western topics, even when committed to illustrating two-way connections, typically confine the connections between non-Western actors.\(^{250}\) Where the West is shown to both give and receive with a non-Western region it is normally in the form of technology—often technology which is used in accompaniment with a Western oriented technology or idea. Examples of this might be the adaptation of the compass along with deep-hulled Northern European shipbuilding—much like the 1920-1940 texts above.

The migration of the cannon to the West is another common example, which when paired with Western developments in siege warfare proved to be a devastating military advantage.

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\(^{250}\) This is not to imply that world history, either in textbooks or teaching, should be the study of interactions between the Western and non-Western world. Instead this example illustrates how agency in contemporary narratives on the historical development of the modern world is still primarily granted only to Western actors. In order to create a more accurate narrative which spreads agency throughout the world, instead of concentrating it in the hands of Westerners, textbooks must embrace a connections model which gives non-Western peoples a greater role in two-way connections not only with each other but with the West as well.
Further supporting my theory regarding the disjointed nature of world history narratives can be seen through taking a look at the chapter orientations of each textbook. As table 2.6 shows there is a great deal of variety in the composition of these texts. Outside of the Dunn and Spielvogel texts (labeled in the table by their publication dates of 1990 and 2003 respectively) there is little similarity among the texts at all. When examined next to table 1.3 it becomes clear that the textbooks of the 1990 to current period lack the narrative cohesion that the 1920 to 1940 texts have. The 1920-1940 texts (with the exception of the Wilmot-Buxton outlier) all hover around closely the 4.8 to 1 ratio of Western to non-Western orientation based upon their average. The 1990 to current texts on the other hand vary greatly from the 2 to 1 ratio of this group. Only the Dunn/McNeill text *Links Across Time and Place*, which not surprisingly is one of the texts which most closely seems to have incorporated the growths of world history as a scholarly field, truly comes close to this average. Not only does this support my previous claim that the text books of today lack a cohesive narrative based on the West to non-West two-way connections, it also shows the sort of wild variations in the narratives currently available. This text to text variation is yet another contributing factor to the less standardized and less effective world history narratives which have come to dominate the field in the last several decades.

<table>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-West</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.6:**
*Frequency Count of Regional Orientations*
CONCLUSION

As was the case with both scholarship and curriculum models, world history textbooks have seen a general shift towards a less unified and compelling narrative in the last century. The textbooks of the universal history and Western Civilization period of the 1920s and 1930s follow rather closely both the scholarship and curriculum models of the era. Civilizations and nation-states are the primary units of analysis, echoing the scholarship and the committee recommended curriculum respectively. The general narrative follows the Eurocentric theme common to the Western Civilization course. The grim political reality of the twentieth century, represented by the World War’s, the collapse of the European imperial system, the Cold War, and mounting civil and human rights movements which exposed the hypocrisy of Western liberalism, gave scholars reason to pause and question the traditional narrative of progress. The upsetting of the 19th Century political order along with gains in scholarly knowledge about the wider world, including China, India, and Africa, led to the development of much richer world history accounts. These new narratives explored the ways civilizations interacted with and affected one another and the physical environment. The textbooks that have been created in the last several decades under these expanding and roughly defined notions of world history reflect the disjointed nature of the field. They show little uniformity in commitment to the connections-based definition generally favored by world historians, and include works which are much closer in substance to the older Western Civilization narrative.
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Scholarship, curriculum models, and world history textbooks have undergone a drastic shift in the twentieth century. Early world history scholars concentrated on explaining the development and decline of a series of civilizations, with the greatest attention being paid to the heritage of Western civilization. According to most of the scholarship of the period Western civilization could trace its lineage back through the classical period of Greece and Rome. This civilizational model was predominate in the version of world history curriculum professional historians of the period would recommend. Committees, particularly those from the AHA (1898 and 1911 respectively), designed curriculum recommendations which outlined world history education by the traits passed down through successive civilizations. These recommendations were widely accepted where possible and retain a high degree of support and emulation in the curriculum today. The Western Civilization course also contributed to this increasingly integrated world history narrative by amplifying the attention paid explicitly to the unique traits common to Western culture as a means of explaining the dominate position of Western states/empires in the modern world. Textbooks published during this early period of world history education were extremely successful in creating unified and persuasive narratives out of the scholarship and curriculum models of the period. These texts focused on the rise and fall of various civilizations, while highlighting the qualities and characteristics which explained the dominance of the West and the United States. The continued commitment to this narrative in the high school world history curriculum today speaks to the persuasiveness of such a unified narrative.

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251 See Oswald Spengler’s *Decline of the West* for an exception to this.
The story of world history education in the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first century has been quite different. World history scholars have been continually advancing the knowledge base of the field, debunking long held myths—like the dating of the “Rise of the West” to prominence over Eastern powers like China—and uncovering the wide variety of contributions to human development that disparate and historically neglected peoples have made. The remarkable gains made by modern world history scholarship have come at a high price for the subject as a teaching field. Gone is the cohesive, coherent, and compelling narrative of the civilization model, which in and of itself is not a bad thing. The problem lays in the fact that the narrative which has arisen in its place has failed to replicate its unity and persuasion. Lacking a clearly defined narrative has opened the subject up to political haranguing, complicated and contradictory curriculum recommendations, and the creation of college surveys which lack any semblance of institutional coherence. All of these problems are reflected in the textbooks of today which show a varied and generally low level of commitment to the connections-based model which the scholarship of the period recommends.

PART I. THE PAST AS AN EXAMPLE OF TEACHING WORLD HISTORY

Large, general surveys of the human past have played a major role in the way people conceive of and understand the past. Universal histories of this nature were common in the classroom through the nineteenth century and began to be explored in greater detail during the twentieth century. As a response to the overwhelmingly destructive impact of World War I in Europe during this period historians, Oswald Spengler and Arnold J. Toynbee most prominent among them, were compelled to take a closer look at the development and destruction of human society at the highest unit of analysis they had available to them: the civilization.
The analysis of human civilizations which the scholarship of Spengler and Toynbee promoted took a relatively static look at the way civilizations developed and declined independent of each other. Internal sources played central roles in the narratives of these separate and distinct civilizations. Civilization as the unit of world history analysis lent itself to narratives which explained the progress and development of the modern world under the leadership of Western civilization. The Western Civilization course would embody these ideals, tracing its historical lineage from ancient Greece and Rome, the European kingdoms of the Mediaeval Era, the European empires of the early modern period, and the nation-states of Western Europe and North America. The narrative contained within the civilization model stressed the ways historical events like the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, and Industrial Revolution molded the distinguishing characteristics which paved the way for Western political and economic dominance of the prior three hundred years. While there was certainly dissent and variation among the individual classroom narratives of Western Civilization, be they over the periods most key or the national events and figures of greatest relevance, the central idea that certain traits and historical processes were responsible for the unprecedentedly successful Western society of today remained both clear and persuasive.

The power of this narrative is reflected in the all three of the key tools historians have for influencing world history education outlined above. It radiates throughout the scholarship and popular literature of the era. It is reflected in the sort of curriculum that historians recommended to schools nation-wide and in the introductory survey courses universities offered to their public. The world history textbooks of the period faithfully follow this narrative in both format and substance. The uniformity of world history education in the early twentieth century, despite the
visible shift from universal history to Western Civilization, is a testament to the strength that a collectively assumed and accepted narrative has on influencing educational practice.

Achieving this sort of uniformity has escaped world history education since the mid-twentieth century. Abandoning the linear civilizational model for the connections-based model of world history has been too steep a learning curve for non-specialists and the general public to latch onto in the same way they did with the move from universal to Western Civilization in the past. The shift was too drastic and institutionally embraced in an all too piecemeal like fashion. The world history that emerged after McNeill was not merely a refocusing of the existing means available for examining the wider world as Western Civ had been for the universal history of civilizations which preceded it. All this first shift truly required was to narrow ones focus more explicitly on those aspects particular to the “rise of the West.” Instead this new world history would ask students and the general public to examine the past in terms of the how the people connected in a region or regions of the world at a given time have contributed, both positively and negatively, to the development of the world after them. It was no longer just about artistic, philosophic, religious, and political development which dominated earlier world history, but expanded to examine the consequences—intended and unintended—of a plethora of historical phenomenon such as trade, exploration, economic development, and the use of resources to name but a few.

SYNERGY OF SCHOLARSHIP, CURRICULUM, AND TEXTBOOKS

The drastic departure from the old universal civilization model has opened up many avenues of historical inquiry. However it had the unintended consequence of weakening the historical strength of world history education in the United States. The synergy displayed by the scholarship, curriculum, and textbooks of the early twentieth century created a program of study
which presented a strong and united story of how the world came to be and the role that students should play in the world of tomorrow. Whatever one thinks of this narrative and its intended citizenship outcomes its success in the classroom has been on display nationwide. The appeal of “traditional” literature and history in humanities education debates referred to as the “Culture Wars” and the vitriolic response to the inclusion of non-traditional elements in the 1994 history standards speaks to how deeply the sense of shared “Western” culture runs through the American public. No course has been more instrumental in fostering this belief than Western Civilization.

I would posit that the synergy between scholarship, curriculum, and textbooks were not a symptom of the strength and persuasiveness of this world history narrative but were collectively the impetus behind that force. Independently each of the three contributes to the effectiveness historians and teachers have in transmitting a historical narrative. When they are aligned their power is magnified, creating an educational environment in which the best historical practices of a field are transmitted into understandable and reasonably constructed curriculum recommendations, supported by teachers who have been taught the narrative and by textbooks which follow said narrative.

PART II. PROBLEMS FACING WORLD HISTORY EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

LESSONS FOR WORLD HISTORY EDUCATION TODAY

The lessons the universal/Western Civilization model of world history education hold for world history education today and into the future lay in the aforementioned synergy of scholarship, curriculum, and textbook publishing. These linkages are unlikely to emerge as smoothly as it did in the prior period; the scholarly shift has been too drastic, the success of the previous model has been too persuasive, and the intellectual climate is far too contentious for
that to happen. If the highly successful model of influencing history education the past has provided for us is to be salvaged it will take a concentrated effort to align these three entities in order to recreate the kind of synergy the earlier narrative held.

In trying to reconstruct the combination of scholarship, curriculum, and textbook publishing displayed by world history education in the early twentieth century three pressing issues come to the forefront. The most essential is defining and articulating a common narrative. A common narrative would directly aid in the construction of useful curriculum standards and provide a clear understanding of the field to the public at large, while providing a clear template for world history textbook authors and publishers. Enhancing the content training for world history teachers also appears to be a likely area of improvement. If the goal of world history education is the creation of citizens capable of thinking “globally” the creation and promotion of World History surveys which are true to a common narrative of the field which stresses this notion would improve K-12 classroom implementation. The natural companion to the development of a common narrative in the curriculum is the creation of higher quality textbooks. World history textbooks intended for a standardized education system should not illustrate wild variation in format or content, but they should incorporate the most up-to-date knowledge of a given field into the common narrative of the subject as a helpful guide to our undertrained and

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252 See the contestation of the 1994 history standards. This continuation of the Culture Wars in 1994 has no equivalent during the earlier periods of curriculum recommendations surveyed here. While the AHA recommendations were not without opponents and critiques, they were of an entirely different nature. Common criticisms the AHA recommendations faced were their concentration on ancient history, insufficient coverage of modern periods, age inappropriate methods, appropriateness for vocational/industrial education, and its effects on Americanizing students. None of these debates were tied to well-developed political/intellectual camps like the liberal/conservative interpretations of the Culture Wars period. See Ronald Evans, The Social Studies Wars: What Should We Teach the Children, 15-16.

253 See James Loewen’s Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong for a discussion of the muddled nature of contemporary textbook writing/publishing. As Loewen outlines, it is hard to pin down what portions of textbooks were actually penned by the credited authors and which portions have been farmed out to uncredited (and often unqualified) freelance authors who write not to impart their historical interpretation of an event, person, or process but to fulfill the orders market driven textbook publishers.
overburdened world history teachers. Moving towards resolving these issues in world history education could go a long way towards recapturing the success of its previous incarnation.

**DEFINING THE INTRODUCTORY NARRATIVE**

By far the most important of the lessons learned from the earlier period of world history is developing a commonly accepted definition of the field and the narrative which accompanies it. In moving to the civilization and away from the nation-state world history scholarship of the early twentieth century was not breaking new ground, it was merely expanding on an underrepresented branch of the field; universal history. It was understood that a larger unit of analysis was needed to examine long term historical trends which pre-dated and outlasted conventional states. While scholars like Spengler and Toynbee may have disagreed with particular definitions of stages of civilization, dates of their relative rise or decline, and the like there was clear consensus that the civilization was the appropriate unit of analysis. Availability of historical resources, understandings of what comprised history, and questionable social scientific theories focused the study of civilizations on the one most professional historians of the period were a part of, the Western Civilization. Fitting this knowledge and understanding of the world alongside a theory of the unstoppable march of general human progress created a rubric for understanding the world which academics and laymen alike could support.

In deconstructing this worldview new world historians have found themselves trying to both explain away the old model and create a workable model in its place. They face opposition from every direction. Some historians and politicians defend the old model, others decry the very notion that history can be done on such a large scale. Some say proposed breaks do not go far enough, while others believe the old model would work fine if we only added a few more
groups. Defining a common narrative out of the scholarship of this field is clearly a daunting task. But in order to successfully transmit the fantastic discoveries and theoretical developments of the field such a definition is necessary. When historians get around to creating this definition of what world history at the survey teaching level encompasses there are two key issues they should keep in mind. First, the definition is not an end all proclamation of what the field is and what it can be. It is merely the baseline narrative which anyone first being introduced to the field should know about world history. Secondly, any definition must be relatively short and simple; a serious chore for any historian no doubt. This is paramount as it will serve as the talking point for any discussion of the field and attempts to encapsulate for the purpose of curriculum development. Bigger is not always better.

The current state of the field suggests that the common narrative in the scholarship of the field is one based on human connections. Whatever term one prefers, be it ecumene, web, or world system, the general theme is that there are larger human institutions at work than the mere civilization. Returning once again to Manning, the world history of today is the story of connections within the human community. From this simple definition must come forward a

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255 Intellectually it is inappropriate to expect teachers who are only briefly (if at all) exposed to world history research to grasp the subject in its most advanced form. Pedagogically it is even less appropriate to expect middle school and high school students to take a highly varied and nuanced approach to the subject. Harkening back to the notion of the “spiral curriculum” it would seem more appropriate for world historians concerned with education and curriculum to focus the discussion on what the basic necessities for understanding the more developed and nuanced versions of world history are, and how they can be arranged in order to create a narrative which both fulfills the citizen-training goals of the education system and the intellectual goals of the historical profession.

compelling yet straightforward narrative which pares down the idea of connections to a useful configuration. Is world history education to be the story of human cultural interactions? Perhaps world history should be about economic connections. Yet another alternative might be telling the story of world history through the lens of humans and their connections with the Earth. Our desires to most fully explain the world as it really has been notwithstanding, it behooves the field to settle on a central narrative for use at the K-12 level in which the competing versions play a supporting/supplemental role.

This is the great undertaking those interested in world history education must first concern themselves with. Creating a pared down and uniform narrative generally supported by the best scholarship in the field would have the greatest impact on positively influencing the world history education in practice. It creates an easily defendable position from which historians can support their scholarly driven educational propositions against polemic political criticism. It provides a clear format for creating curriculum recommendations, which are most effective as broad manuals and less so as exhaustive handbooks. Textbook publishers would have little room, or economic motivation, for the creation of works which vary wildly from the accepted meaning of the field, irrespective of various regional desires.257 Perhaps the most important impact of creating a uniform narrative is how a short and simple narrative statement can serve as a practical guide to teachers. Having a relatively short statement which sums up the course they are trying to teach gives them a useful and convenient measuring stick to gauge the successfulness of their instructional design.

257 See Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. Despite local desires and pressures for texts which include creationism or the exclusion of evolution you are not likely to see nationwide high school science textbook variation due to these causes. This has not been the case in history, where local/state/regional interest groups have pressured publishers into altering history textbooks based not only scholarly development but on the desires of special interest groups.
IMPROVING THE CONTENT TRAINING IN TEACHER EDUCATION

A more definitive world history narrative at the K-12 level should be supplemented by an increased amount of content training for future teachers who are likely to instruct on the subject. Current content training does not ensure that educators licensed to teach world history will have actually taken both the pre-1500 and post-1500 standard surveys in the subject. And very few education students are offered the opportunity to take upper-division world history courses which could deepen their knowledge on key themes, areas, or questions in the field. While creating a common unified narrative will grant the field a solid and standardized base to build off of, high quality education requires teachers with a more nuanced understanding of the subject. Providing this more thorough content background for future world history teachers will go a long way towards improving the quality of world history education in the schools.

This leads however to further complications at the higher education level. Even where students take both the early and modern World History course there is often a great deal of variation in the presentation. The same arguments for coming to a common narrative at the K-12 level apply to the introductory college survey course as well. It would aid instructors who are not trained in world history by providing them with a basic template for designing their courses around, would align the courses around the best scholarly knowledge currently available in the field, and create the common understanding of the human past which the courses set out to accomplish. The survey is the backbone of any history department’s contribution to the general education and teacher education programs at colleges and universities nationwide. These courses bring in the largest number of our students, they represent the largest impact historians can have on our society, and are perhaps the most compelling justification we can offer to cost-conscious
administrators for our continued existence as a field. A better definition of the course and greater institutional support for that narrative seem to be in order.

**HIGHER QUALITY TEXTBOOKS**

There is a third process, in addition to creating a more common narrative and improving the content training of teachers, which could have a positive impact on the future of world history education; the creation of higher quality world history textbooks. Like the two suggestions before it, these high quality textbook rely on the creation of a commonly accepted definition and narrative of world history. Creating high quality world history textbooks requires a faithful and consistent commitment to this narrative in the format and content of the text. As with the definition and curriculum recommendations before them, historians must keep in mind that when developing textbooks for the K-12 market it is unfeasible to create an all-inclusive synthesis of the entire field. World history textbooks at this level must be narrower in scope in order to have greater wide-scale adaptability. More detailed and nuanced accounts require well-trained and skillful teachers, not larger and more all-encompassing texts.

As the selection of contemporary textbooks from chapter three displays there are several trends that deserve particular attention. World history textbooks should not vary greatly in their orientation, be it Western, non-Western, or something approximating neutral. Nor should textbooks display wild disparities in their commitment to the connection model prevalent in the field. These problems were non-existent in world history textbooks of the more unified and successful universal/Western Civilization period, but they are persistent problems in the textbooks of today.258 Textbooks today must find a way to provide a coherent account which

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258 See Chapter Three’s account of the disparities in the employment of the two-way world history connections model in contemporary textbooks and the highly similar commitment to the one-way Western oriented accounts of the 1920-1930s textbooks.
integrates the most up-to-date scholarship in the field into the accepted narrative, supplying teachers with the ancillary curricular support essential to their work.

Pooling the collective power of world history scholarship, curriculum, and textbook publishing is paramount to the future success of world history education. The relative success or failure historians having in merging these entities might determine whether the world history education programs of today will ever approach the impact and success the field saw nearly a century ago. The need for a successful world history education program seems especially pressing for a nation still grappling with its role as a global hegemon and in a world that appears increasingly interconnected at an international level. Historians must play a central role in this process, not only through high level scholarship, but through the development of practical teaching applications which make world history “do work” in the world. Developing a greater synergy between scholarship, curriculum, and textbook publishing is a great place to start.

_259_ Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 377. This has been an emerging trend in US history as well, as scholars like Thomas Bender, Akira Iriye, and Daniel Rodgers have placed increasing importance on examining US history in a global context. See Thomas Bender ed, *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002).
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