

To Editor Jon Durbin, W. W. Norton

It was good to talk with you at the recent annual meetings of the American Historical Association, in San Diego. I told you of my frustration in finding even one world history textbook that adequately covers the majority of human history, in that time which historians so dismissively call “prehistory.” You gave me a copy of your new 2nd Edition of *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart* [WTWA]. I have given it an examination and would like to give you my assessment of it as a textbook. You may feel free to pass this along to the authors or others who are editing it for a future edition.

First, it is well written and with a smooth clear narrative. It has great visuals and uses maps well. The Preface, detailing principles and themes, is valuable and informative. I like the idea of a website to accompany the text.

HUMAN EVOLUTION: This book’s biggest advance is to be more inclusive of a wider sampling of human societies, and to cover in a substantive way hominid evolution and the history of early *Homo sapiens*. It does this more completely than any other world history textbook I have ever seen. I cannot compliment this advance more highly.

USE WORLD MAPS DIVIDED AT THE ATLANTIC: The map on p.18 is properly divided at the Atlantic, so that the route of early human migration from Asia to the Americas can be shown intact. Most textbooks rigidly use the common Eurocentric world (divided at the Pacific) even when it does not make sense. Showing the map like this has several advantages: 1. Almost all the Eurasian landmass can be shown on one page, rather than the usual world map which has the page separations right in the middle of Eurasia. Notice the world map on pages 28-29 that has the page separation right through the middle of Europe and Africa. 2. It does not divide Polynesia, a major world culture area, in half, as the usual division in the Pacific does.

MAP ON PAGE 18: There are a couple of mistakes on this map. It shows a single migration out of Africa up the Nile, to the Levant, and from there along the interior Silk Road route to Southeast Asia. Instead, it should show another earlier migration going from the East Africa coast, right along the coastline of Arabia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia to Australia. That initial migration out of Africa occurred before humans had perfected the hunting techniques that they later used, and the only way they survived was by gathering shellfish, turtles, seaweed, and other easily-found food sources at the confluence of two ecological zones at the seashore. It was only much later that humans moved up the Nile and into Southwest Asia, and from there into the grasslands of Central Asia. In addition, the top red line shows humans migrating from Europe to Siberia, “by 25,000 B.C.E.” when it really should be a line going from Central Asia to Siberia by 35,000 years ago.

USE OF NUMBERS FOR DATES OF ANCIENT TIMES: This map is the first of many in this book to use B.C.E. after numbers to indicate dates. This is silly to require every date to be numbered from the arbitrary time of 2,000 years ago as a base time. It is simpler to number from

today, rather than the reader having to add two thousand to every number to figure out how old something is. It is also extremely Eurocentric to choose the date of the Christian Jesus as the date by which all of world history is calculated. Besides that, it is also very confusing to students to talk about “near the end of the fifth millennium B.C.E.” In my teaching about the ancient past I have found that it is so much simpler to label all dates consistently as “years ago” or “ya” for short. If you can change this in the next edition of WTWA, it will save space and be more clear for readers. For example, instead of labeling this map showing human migration across Alaska “From Asia 16,000 B.C.E.” it should be “From Asia 18,000ya” and at southern South America “9,000 B.C.E.” should be “11,000ya” [Incidentally, I prefer the distinctive and easily written “ya” instead of the more common “B.P.” because B.P. is easily confused with “B.C.” especially if the lettering is small.]

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS BOOK: The first World History textbooks were little more than the old Eurocentric Western Civ book, with a few additions. Advances were made by later books which added substantial data on China, India, and Southwest Asia. WTWA makes a major improvement by adding much more attention to pastoral societies as central elements in global history. Pastoral history is the major unique accomplishment of WTWA, and it should be praised highly for adding this advance toward a more global conceptualization of what World History really is. WTWA is also very good on African history, at least for agriculturalist societies, and is good on Polynesia on pages 126-128

LACK OF COVERAGE OF PRE-AGRICULTURAL ERAS: However, after WTWA’s strong start on human evolution, I was disappointed to see that the rest of humanity is dismissed in a few pages on “Hunters and Gatherers” (pp.20-24). There is little explanation on the actual ways of life of this 98% of human existence. It is weak on the ideology of animism, the world’s oldest religion, and garbled on shamans. It is good on cave art, but ignores body adornment as evidenced in burials. It dismisses music, dance, and ceremony in one sentence.

DOMESTICATION OF THE DOG: Because this text really sees the domestication of plants and animals as the crucial revolution in human history, it ignores much that precedes that revolution. So, while WTWA gives a good discussion of the domestication of sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, and horses on page 30, it completely ignores dogs. The domestication of the dog is symptomatic of the weakness of WTWA in covering human history before the agricultural revolution. The dog is the species which has the longest and most intimate association with humans. It also, unique among any other animals, basically domesticated itself. I enclose here as an attachment an essay I wrote on the domestication of the dog. This essay is part of a world history textbook that I was planning to write, a decade ago.

CRITIQUE OF MAPS: A perusal of the maps in the book show large areas of land that are completely blank; that visual impression typifies the approach of this book. Anything other than agricultural or pastoral societies is a complete blank. For example, the map on pp. 186-187 shows nothing in Southeast Asia, nothing in the Pacific Islands, nothing in Sub-Saharan Africa,

nothing in northern Eurasia, and nothing in all of the Americas except the tiny Olmec and Chavin farming areas. It would be much more valuable for readers to see the map divided into major culture areas. Also, this map should be divided at the Atlantic rather than the Pacific, so most of Eurasia can be seen on page 186 without the spine of the book cutting apart Europe and Africa.

LACK OF COVERAGE OF THE INUIT EXPANSION: This blank view can best be seen in my own research area, Native American history. In contrast to the Polynesian expansion across the Pacific, which is well covered on pp. 126-128, there is no mention of the equally astounding accomplishment of the Inuit, who (due to the invention of the covered kayak and waterproof clothing about 4,000 years ago) quickly expanded from Siberia to Alaska and across the north coast of Canada all the way to Greenland.

LACK OF COVERAGE OF NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY: The coverage begins with a good discussion of the lack of domestic animals in the Americas, but then on the bottom of p.204 there is a statement that humans wiped out mammoths, camels and horses, which directly contradicts the (correct) statement earlier that it was climate change that wiped out these large mammals at the end of the Pleistocene. The only areas in America that WTWA considers worthy of commentary in ancient times are tiny areas of Mesoamerica and the Andes. There is a good summary on pages 207-212 of the Olmec culture, but then acts like nothing else happened in the Western Hemisphere until the rise of Teotihuacan.

LACK OF COVERAGE OF THE HISTORY OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA: There is a rather strange focus on pp.457-459 about the city of Cahokia that is taken completely out of its Mississippian cultural context. Reading the part on Cahokia struck me as if there had been a page written on London as a vibrant urban area, but with no other coverage in WTWA of the history of England. There ought to have been chronological history of the Eastern Woodlands, from the Paleoindians, the Archaic, the Woodland Period, and the Mississippian Period (of which Cahokia is a part). In other words, there should have been a history of this area. However, because Eastern North America does not fit into the agricultural/pastoral model of WTWA, it remains invisible.

MESOAMERICA CLASSIC: By the time WTWA gets to the Classic Period of Mesoamerica, on p.357, about all that is said is how isolated it is. Well, after dismissing the importance of connections of the spread of Mexican migrants to Peru on p.206, and completely ignoring the spread northward of Mesoamerican influences into the U.S. Southwest, and the spread northeastward of Mesoamerican influences into the U.S. Southeast (in the Mississippian culture), WTWA misses the opportunity on p.358 to show the same kind of radiating influence from Mexico to North America and to South America and Central America, that happened in Eurasia. The bottom of p.358 says Teotihuacan “did not conquer vassal states” but then says exactly the opposite a few lines down: “Its rivals were soon either overwhelmed or annexed... [and it] controlled the entire basin of the Valley of Mexico. It dominated its neighbors.” On p.359 the

statement is made that the Mayans did not have “a single great metropolis” ignoring Tikal and other large Mays cities.

CALIFORNIA INDIANS: My main critique of WTWA is that it does not treat non-agricultural/non-pastoral societies as part of world history. For example, the indigenous peoples of California before 1500 had a larger population than in any other non-agricultural area of the world. There were more people living in California than anywhere else in North America north of central Mexico. The California Indians had a complex religious system and a sophisticated trade network, using seashells as money, but they did not really need to do farming because they were blessed with an abundant source of food in oak trees. In other areas of the world humans did not eat the acorns of oak trees because acorns have a bitter tannic acid that is poisonous. California Indians, alone in the world, discovered a way to leech out the tannic acid. What was left was a highly nutritious plantfood that provided a good basis for a healthy diet. They also ate insects, and many kinds of wild plants, including seaweed. In fact, insects, acorns, seaweed, and other wild plants utilized by California Indians could be the basis for ending world hunger in the 21st century. None of these foods requires the expensive irrigation systems that are crippling commercial agriculture in California today, but these food sources are totally ignored. California natives did not have to work many hours to gather acorns, and as a consequence they had societies with much leisure time, and high emphasis on meditation and spirituality. WTWA does not even give readers a suggestion that human economies like this are even possible. Nor does it inform readers that the massive killings of Native Californians in the 19th century (about 95% depopulation) is the most devastating holocaust in modern world history.

NORTHWEST COAST INDIANS: Likewise, another example of a vibrant culture that is outside the agricultural/pastoral focus of WTWA is the Northwest Coast Indians. These people developed one of the great artistic traditions of the world, growing out of a prosperous society based on fishing. Later, Northwest Coast peoples became even more wealthy by serving as trade middlemen for the interior Indians of the Subarctic and the Plateau culture areas, who trapped furbearing animals and traded them for manufactured goods brought to the coast by British and Russian ships. Also involved in this trade was the American Fur Company, which generated such huge profits for its owner John Jacob Astor that he became the wealthiest man in the United States in the 1830s. Northwest Coast Indians shrewdly prevented the outsider ships from landing on the mainland, but insisted the Europeans dock only in offshore islands, so that the Indians could retain their monopoly as middleman in this trade. Though the Northwest Coast Indians were materialistic in their striving for wealth, they had an interesting tradition of periodically giving away most of their material goods in elaborate potlatch ceremonies. High social status was achieved not by how much material wealth an elite family owned, but by how much they could give away. This is a fascinating history which deserves to be included in the next edition of WTWA.

NATIVE AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO EUROAMERICAN CULTURE: When I teach my class on American Indian history, I have a full lecture on Indian contributions to

Euroamerican culture. “Hybrid Cultures in the Americas” on p.626 would be a perfect place to insert this, but it only talks about religion. If a genuine history of Native Americans were included here, one of the points would be the contributions of Deganawidah, the Iroquois visionary who in about 1400 came up with the idea for the Iroquois Confederacy. A number of the founders of the USA visited and observed the Iroquois Council in action, including Ben Franklin, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson. The reality of seeing a group of equal states voluntarily associating helped to inspire the formation of the United States as a union of equals. Indian models were incorporated into Enlightenment thought.

NEED FOR A REVISED APPROACH FOR “WORLDS APART”: While WTWA is an excellent textbook, the best I have seen in world history, it is a mess in regard to Native Americans. In accord with the book’s title, I would suggest that until 1492 the Western Hemisphere was “A World Apart.” It was only in 1492 that two worlds became one. Therefore, rather than trying to squeeze the history of Native Americans into the various chapters that are in the main devoted to Eurasia, it really is better to present the hemispheres as two separate histories. For a 3rd edition, you should keep the early pages the same, tracing the spread of humans out of Africa and to Europe and Asia, and then the gradual spread of humans from Siberia to Alaska. Once they crossed over to the Americas, coverage should cease, because they disappeared from the Eurasian record. Then, the following chapters of volume 1 should cover only Afro-Eurasia history up to 1492. Maps should show only Afro-Eurasia. Then, when Columbus sails from Spain in 1492, thinking he is headed for island Southeast Asia, he lands instead in “a world apart” that the Eurasians did not previously know about. Then follow the end of that chapter immediately with a new chapter (which will come from the pages within the various previous chapters which attempted to cover America. Those pages should be deleted or reused in this new separate chapter on the Americas).

NEED FOR A NEW CHAPTER ON PRE-COLUMBIAN AMERICA: This new chapter, with a title like “The World Apart in the Western Hemisphere.” should begin with a statement that the lack of animals that could be domesticated, especially the lack of horses and camels, made the history of the Americas very different ‘a world apart’. The lack of domestic animals (except for dogs, turkeys, and llamas in Peru) determined a whole different history from Afro-Eurasia, and its difference reinforces WTWA’s theme about the importance of horseback riding nomads in Eurasian history. Because there were no horseback riding nomads in pre-Columbian America, its separate history followed much different patterns. . This new chapter would go back chronologically to humans in Siberia during the Pleistocene, and trace the peopling of the Americas by the Paleoindians, then the impact of global warming when the ice ages ended 10,000 years ago. The next development was the rise of new ways of living, and the emergence of new culture areas. Rather than the territorial state/nomad invasion model which WTWA followed for Eurasia, I suggest that the best model for this chapter is what anthropologists call “the culture area.” There are ten culture areas in North America [click on “Culture Areas” on the left column of my website <http://college.usc.edu/americanindian>], and a few more in South

America. The history of each one should be analyzed independently, in the way that I do when I teach my class in American Indian history. I start at the north, with the Subarctic which is basically a continuation of the big-game hunting culture of the Paleoindians. Then I go to the Arctic, and cover the Inuit expansion from Alaska to Greenland beginning 4,000 years ago. That story is one of the great adventures of human history, comparable to the Polynesian expansion in the South Pacific. Next, I cover the Northwest Coast, the Plateau and Basin cultures, and then California. All these culture areas were non-agricultural. From there I go to Mesoamerica and talk about the initial hunter-gatherers who lived there, and how the origins of horticulture came about. From there I cover the history from Olmec and spreading southward to the Maya and west to Teotihuacan, and from there north into the Basin area to the Anasazi Pueblos, in a great wave of Mesoamerican cultural expansion and influence. Next I show how Eastern North America developed its own domesticated crops in the Archaic Period, which evolved into the Woodland Period and then Mesoamerican influence helped lead to the Mississippian culture (and here is where the page on Cahokia should be inserted). I would end this section with the founding of the Iroquois Confederacy by Deganawidah and his disciple Hiawatha about 1400. Then there ought to be a similar section on South America and the Caribbean, showing how culture areas evolved, building on its predecessors and sometimes with outside influence from other culture areas. The principle mode of analysis for “the world apart” in the Western Hemisphere is the culture area, unlike Eurasia. Following this chapter, the next section would be titled “The Two Worlds Become One” and it would focus on the Columbian Exchange as WTWA has it now. That is where the “hybrid societies” like the new Plains horse nomadic tribes emerge. I have many more ideas for Native American coverage if you are interested in further exchange.

DOMESTICATION OF ANIMALS, AND THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN SLAVERY: A weakness of WTWA is its lack of attention to Southeast Asia [if all of the countries of mainland and island Southeast Asia unified, it would be the world’s third largest nation, behind only China and India.] For example, the domestication of sheep, goats, cows, pigs, camels and horses in Southwest Asia is covered well on page 30. But there is no coverage of the domestication in Southeast Asia of chickens and water buffaloes, which are extremely important animals. In a future edition WTWA should also make a distinction between two types of domestication of animals: for consumption of meat, skins, wool, blood, feathers [sheep, goats, pigs, cows, chickens, turkeys, ducks] or for labor [oxen, water buffaloes, camels, donkeys, horses, sometimes cows and dogs]. It is the use of animals for labor, in which the greater strength of an animal is used to pull or carry loads, that marks the subjugation of animals as enslaved beings. On p.244 the illustration title speaks of “hard work required of Roman peasants” but the mosaic picture itself shows a man making oxen pull a plow. It is the oxen that are working hardest! For a human being to place himself on the back of an animal, and to use reins and harnesses to compel the animal to carry him around, is the ultimate subjugation. In hunter-gatherer societies, the hunter pays extreme honor to the spirit of the animal even as he kills it. Animals are given high

status in animist religions. This is in sharp contrast to the Bible, which repeats often that God created man in his own image, different from the animals, and God created animals specifically for the benefit of humans. In sharp contrast to animist religions, in the Book of Genesis God repeats the statement often that humans should have dominion over animals. This dominion over animals, in which humans forced animals to carry them, to pull their loads, to draw their water on treadmills, and to do any other task that the human master commanded, was the conceptual basis for slavery. To treat animals as “beasts of burden” “to treat someone no better than an animal,” to train a horse to take a bridle in its mouth and accept a human sitting on its back is still today called “to break a horse,” and even the very term “domestication” itself, is tantamount to slavery. Animals can be bought and sold, raped and bred against their will, and even killed without recourse to murder laws. All these forms of power of a master over his charge are the conceptual bases for human slavery. Therefore, for the text of WTWA to say on page 221 that human slavery was a new invention that suddenly appeared is not accurate. The enslavement of animals and the buying and selling of animals provided the exact model for the enslavement of humans.

SEXUAL VARIANCE IN HISTORY: It is not only important what a textbook says, but what it does NOT say. There is an astounding silence on sexual variance in history in WTWA. There is no mention of transgender shamans in many cultures around the world, no mention of transgender priests in many ancient goddess religions, no mention of the many homosexuals who were killed by Christian authorities from Byzantine Emperor Justinian, who blamed earthquakes on homosexuals, to the Spanish Inquisition burning “sodomites” at the stake. An example, of what is not said is on page 112 when Gilgamesh repeats several times “Enkidu, whom I love so much,” The author asks unclearly and mysteriously, “What does this passage tell us about human relationships and human nature during this period?” It should be reworded more directly to ask: “What does this passage tell us about same-sex love relationships during this period?” On page 111 the illustration of Gilgamesh mentions “his sidekick Enkidu.” The evidence of deep love between them suggests Enkidu is much, much more than a sidekick. This label should be changed to: “his companion Enkidu” or “his partner Enkidu.”

ANCIENT GREECE SEXUALITY: On p.223 there is good discussion of male nudity in ancient Greece, but not a word about the man-boy love relationships that formed the heart of Greek education and mentoring of youth. [cite K.J. Dover *Greek Homosexuality* and William Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Ancient Greece*]. On p.224 Sappho is discussed, but not a word about her love for women. On pp.226-227 Socrates and Plato are discussed, but nothing on their view of same-sex love. On p.236 Alexander the Great is highlighted, but nothing on his boyfriends. On p.243 there is a page on Jewish resistance to Hellenism, but not a word about Jewish outrage against Greek openly expressed homosexual love. On p.246 there is much discussion of Roman slavery but nothing about the sexual exploitation of slaves of both sexes by Roman masters. And nothing about the Christian persecution of homosexuals later [cite Louis Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization*].

SEXUALITY IN OTHER CULTURES: There is not one mention that I could see, anywhere in the entire WTWA, where readers are informed of the social acceptability of homosexual behavior and same-sex marriage in world history. There is no mention of the Spanish condemnation and persecution of American Indian transgender shamans, and their accusation that Indians were “sodomites” as a major justification for their conquest of the Americas [cite Walter Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture*]. No mention on Tokagawa Japan about socially accepted same-sex relationships among Buddhist monks, or samurai warriors. [cite a book by Gary Leupp, _____] On p.602 there is mention that the Ottoman Empire ran on the capture of young boys who were then educated and trained to become government bureaucrats or soldiers, with no mention that the older bureaucrat or soldier who was the mentor to train the boy was often his lover as well. This also applied to the Mamluks in Egypt [cite Paul Hardman, *Homoaffectionalism* , Vern Bullough, *Sexual Variance in Society and History*, and Stephen O. Murray, *Homosexualities*].

GODDESS WORSHIP: Another matter is the lack of analysis of the difference between religions that characterize their deity as female or intersexed, versus religions with masculine creator gods. Since the act of creation of new life is done by a female, it is not surprising that most early religions conceived of the deity as feminine. Many of these goddess religions also had male priests whose feminine nature was seen as a reflection of the goddess in their personality. These crossdressing male priests in drag were highly condemned by the Hebrew prophets, who worshipped a male deity and forbid men from crossdressing or even from plucking their beard. Implications of a male deity need to be addressed.

JESUS AND THE BUDDHA: WTWA analysis of the Buddha is wonderful, a real strength of this book. But then when it gets to Jesus it basically says what Jesus taught is not important. There is not much analysis of the revolutionary teachings of Jesus, his attacks on the Jewish law and on Jewish authorities (especially the Pharisees), Buddhist influences on Jesus’ ideas, etc. There is no analysis of the differences between what Jesus taught versus what Paul (son of a Pharisee) taught, or how Paul coopted Christianity to his own concerns (especially sex) which were quite different from Jesus’ teachings of love and sympathy for the oppressed and the poor.

A few other brief corrections that ought to be made in a future edition of WTWA:

APES: On page 9 I believe it is a mistake to say “Fifteen million years ago there were apes all over the world” You ought to ask a primatologist about this, but I am not aware that there were ever any apes in the Americas, in Australia, in the Pacific Islands, or in the northern parts of Eurasia, although there are certainly monkeys in some of these areas.

MAYA: On page 39, in the primary source of a Mesoamerican “creation myth” [which should be called a “origin narrative”], the translation of *Popol Vuh* that you use is an old one, and it

confusingly uses the word “man” in its older generic sense. A more accurate word choice today would be “human”. Check the more recent translation of the *Popol Vuh* by Dennis Tedlock.

On page 604 lower left typo “The Safavid Empire in Persia...of Southeast Asia.” Should be Southwest Asia.

NEED GRAPHS OF POPULATION INCREASE: On numerous times the population of the world is mentioned. When showing a Chronology timeline at the end of each chapter, another line should be added to show world population rate increases. The population maps are good but there should also be a cumulative graph of world population at the beginning of the book, showing the vast increase of numbers in the 20th century. It took all of human history until the year 1820 for world population to reach one billion people. Then it only took one century, from 1820 to 1920, for world population to double. That size increase was unprecedented in world history. But then, in the 90 years since 1920, world population has mushroomed many times more, from two billion to nearly seven billion. That is, within the lifetime of a single person, human population has exploded in a way that was never seen in the past.

NEED FOR COVERAGE OF THE WORLDWIDE GAY AND LESBIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT: The absolutely most crucial need for revision is to include at least something on the movement for gay and lesbian rights. I was astounded to find nothing on this subject, which is one of the most influential worldwide movements for changing social attitudes of the late 20th century. There is good coverage of the feminist movement on pp. 893 and 926, and the lesbian and gay movement was closely related, but no mention there. Even the Christian fundamentalist movement p. 934 and the Muslim fundamentalist movements p.933 receive good coverage, but homosexuality--one of their major complaints--is not mentioned in either place. The only place I could find the word gay or homosexual in the entire textbook was relating to popular music and to AIDS. It is quite ironic if the entire gay and lesbian civil rights movement is made invisible in WTWA, except for the Village People pop music group. I wrote an entire book on this subject *Gay and Lesbian Rights in the United States: A Documentary History* (Greenwood Press, 2003), and will be happy to advise how to best include the most important parts on this subject.

These subjects that I have detailed here are the problems that I have seen so far, in my perusal of selected parts of this book. There are no doubt others in the parts I did not read. But, I want to stress, I point out these problems in the context that the overall book is the best that exists. If you can work to make these changes in the next edition, this will make the book even better. Please let me know if you wish me to work with you further, in some capacity for the next edition. I hope these comments will be of help to you and the authors, for improving the next edition of what will no doubt become the leading world history textbook of our time.