

# **The Relationship Between Historical Research and Future Thinking**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Research  
18 October 2018

Sebastian Howe

Macquarie University  
Department of Modern History, Politics, and International  
Relations  
Supervisor: Prof. David Christian

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	5
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	9
<b>The History-Futures Framework</b> .....	9
<b>History Literature Contributing to Future Thinking</b> .....	14
<b>Futures Literature</b> .....	24
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	32
<b>A Historiographical Account of the Future in Historical Thought and Practice</b> .....	33
<b>Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886)</b> .....	36
<b>Karl Marx (1818-1883)</b> .....	40
<b>Oswald Spengler (1880-1936)</b> .....	45
<b>R. G. Collingwood (1889-1943)</b> .....	47
<b>E. H. Carr (1892-1982)</b> .....	50
<b>Geoffrey Elton (1921-1994)</b> .....	53
<b>Richard Evans (1947-present)</b> .....	56
<b>Concluding Thoughts</b> .....	59
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	61
<b>Environmental History</b> .....	61
<b>Something New Under the Sun (John McNeill)</b> .....	67
<b>An Environmental History of the World: Humankind’s Changing Role in the     Community of Life (J. Donald Hughes)</b> .....	74
<b>Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed (Jared Diamond)</b> .....	78
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	88
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	91

## Summary

This thesis explores the relationship between historical thinking and thinking about the future. We argue that despite methodological differences between History and Futures Studies, there is great potential for collaboration. The thesis begins by proposing the 'History-Futures Framework', which is a schematic that connects the two disciplines. This schematic reveals that there are three main ways scholars think about the future: by responding to concerns about the future, by envisaging the future, and by attempting to influence the future. We then examine historical thinkers who have either opposed or endorsed thinking about the future. Our findings suggest that despite a dominant attitude within History that historians should not engage in future-thought, some significant historical thinkers have held the opposite attitude. Finally, we use three World Environmental History books as case studies of a historical genre, which we argue is particularly well suited to future-thought. We conclude that by enlarging the spatial, temporal, and disciplinary scopes of historical thinking, historians are better positioned to respond to, envisage, and influence the future.

## Statement of Originality

*This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.*

(Signed)   
Sebastian Howe

Date: 18/10/2018

## INTRODUCTION

Whether the Historical discipline should relate to the future is a question seldom explored but one the question is exciting and also raises important philosophical and practical questions. This thesis has the triple purpose of proposing that historical thinking can connect to the future in three main ways, outlining what key historical thinkers have thought about the relationship between History and the future, and finally, demonstrating how the field of World Environmental History relates to the future. Each chapter focuses on one of these questions.

The overarching goal of the thesis to challenge the common perception that History should be limited to the past. The secondary and closely related goal is to investigate the hypothesis that expanding the spatial and disciplinary scope of historical thinking go hand-in-hand, and this greatly assists scholars connecting the past to the future. Expanding the disciplinary scope means increasing cross-disciplinary scholarship, such as the field of Big History. Due to the relatively limited discussions so far on the relationship between historical thinking and the future, this thesis positions itself as an 'exploratory' piece of literature that sweeps across a number of important ideas and scholars.

Defining past, present, and future is critical for a thesis concerned with how we study and connect these concepts. The thesis uses definitions based on philosopher John McTaggart's A-series which orders events into the past, present, or future. The A-series asserts that the present is a singular position whereas the past and the future contain an unrestricted series of positions an

event could occupy.<sup>1</sup> The past and future are thus referred to as temporal domains. A continual transformation takes place where an event moves through the future positions, becomes part of the present for a brief moment, and then enters the past positions. Philosophically, this leads to an infinitesimally short ‘present’, yet scholars tend to understand the present as having a much longer timespan than a few seconds.<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, we define the present as a direct experience of the world. Inside the present we study the past and the future, neither of which is directly observable, as noted by philosopher Michael Stanford.<sup>3</sup> The past and future are the two temporal domains of what we refer to as ‘reality’. The future domain is reality that has yet to pass, the present is where we directly observe reality, and the past domain is how reality used to be. In this thesis, our unit of analysis shifts from the exploration of events, to the Earth-system, to underline the importance of studying the past and future in terms of environments rather than events. The phrase Earth-system was derived from the Earth Sciences and encompasses physical, chemical, and biological phenomena,<sup>4</sup> but our usage includes the societal phenomena of culture and technology as well.

The study of the past and future is a ‘representation’ of reality. This representation involves a replication or imagining of what reality ‘was’ or may ‘be’ as accurately as possible, and an explanation of why the Earth-system ‘was’ or may ‘be’ that way. This thesis refers to History,

---

<sup>1</sup> Jari Kaivo-oja, Tapio Katko, and Osmo Seppälä, “Seeking for Convergence Between History and Futures Research,” *Futures, Journal of Policy, Planning & Futures Studies* 36 no. 5 (2004), 528.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 529.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Stanford, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1998), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Will Steffen *et al.*, *Global Change And The Earth System: A Planet Under Pressure* (Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media, 2006), 1-4.

capital H, as the representation of the past, and to historians as those who create History. We refer to 'Futures Studies' or 'Futures' as the representation of alternative futures, and its practitioners are futurists. Simply put, reality 'is' and representation explains what and why reality 'is'. There is always a gap between the representation and reality. This gap tends to widen when focusing on cultural and technological phenomena compared to physical and biological. This is due to how phenomena have emerged and evolved within the Earth-system and generally increased in complexity over time. Peter Kosso discusses a "gap between information that is available and the object of our interest" which refers to this gap between our representations and reality.<sup>5</sup> Unlike traditional Historiography, which examines the difference between historical evidence and the past, this thesis is also concerned with the difference between available information and the future.

In order to better understand how historical thinking can relate to the future, the following have been included to contextualise the Futures discipline. Ossip K. Flechtheim helped pioneer the field during the 1960s, and originally named it "Futurology".<sup>6</sup> It has taken on numerous names such as Futurism, Futuring, and Futuristics.<sup>7</sup> Futures is the most appropriate name today because the current "master concept of the futures field is that of the existence of many potential *alternative futures*, rather than a single future".<sup>8</sup> It has been argued that it should not be

---

<sup>5</sup> Peter Kosso, "Philosophy of Historiography," in *The Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, ed. Aviezer Tucker (Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009), <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/doi/book/10.1002/9781444304916>, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Ossip Kurt Flechtheim, *History and Futurology* (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1966), 1-60.

<sup>7</sup> Hyeonju Son, "The History Of Western Futures Studies: An Exploration Of The Intellectual Traditions And Three-Phase Periodization," *Futures* 66 (2015), 125, 130.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Voros, "A Primer on Futures Studies, Foresight, and the Use of Scenarios," *Prospect, The Foresight Bulletin* 6 no. 1 (2001), 1.

considered its own distinct discipline because it is “rooted in a deep understanding of social interaction and culture...All organisations tend to study past events to create predictive and prescriptive models for future decisions...”.<sup>9</sup> Despite these arguments, we consider Futures to be the formal academic field that explores alternative futures.

In chapter one, we propose there are three main functions scholars can perform to connect the past to the future. Each of these functions contain a number of processes that are either the speciality of historians or futurists. To show this complexity, the chapter introduces the History-Futures Framework, or *Framework*, which suggests how the processes of History and Futures overlap and connect. Chapter two is a historiographical analysis of a select group of historical thinkers from the English-speaking world since the 19th century. It examines their thoughts on the relationship between historical thinking and the future. Finally, chapter three examines how the field of World Environmental History, or WEH, relates to the future. It takes three books as case studies, using the *Framework* to examine the three main ways they connect to the future. World Environmental History seeks a global historical perspective on humanity’s relationship to the Earth-system. The genre pushes the spatial and disciplinary boundaries of History, so this chapter in particular tests our hypothesis that these expansions can help History relate to the future.

---

<sup>9</sup> Kaivo-oja, Katko, and Seppälä, “Seeking for Convergence Between History and Futures Research,” 538.

## CHAPTER ONE

The main purpose of chapter one is to propose that historical thinking can connect to the future in three main ways. We achieve this by examining the contributions of both historians and futurists whose work has touched on the relationship between historical thinking and Futures thinking. We begin this chapter by introducing the *Framework*, a proposal of how to think about the relationship between History and Futures in three interconnected ways. It is a suggestion of how to understand the complexities surrounding the role of the future in historical thought that has been largely underdeveloped in the literature.

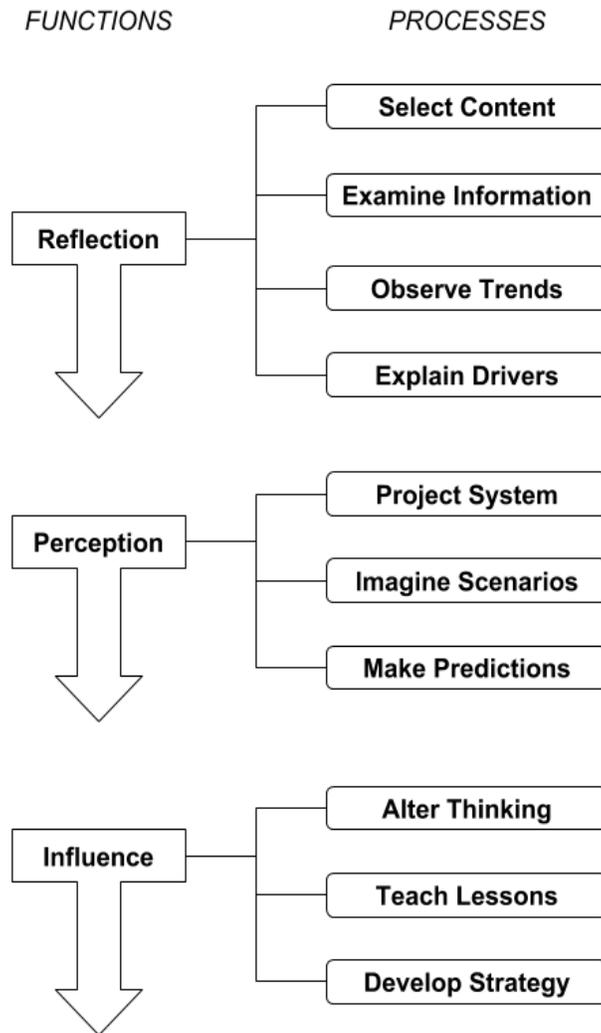
### The History-Futures Framework

The *Framework* helps us to consider the overlap of the methodology of History and Futures. The *Framework* has two main purposes:

1. To demonstrate the key differences and similarities between History and Futures.
2. To help us examine how History literature relates to the future in three main ways.

Futurist Joseph Voros uses a similar structure to explain Futures thinking which he calls the Generic Foresight Process or GFP. Initially, the *Framework* was designed independently of the GFP, but was then adjusted in light of Voros' scholarship. Although the GFP is not representative of the entire discipline of Futures, it does reveal ways of thinking about the future that can

connect to historical thinking. Hence, we primarily derive our understanding of Futures from Voros. His work, including the GFP, is discussed later in this chapter.



**Fig. 1.1: The History-Futures Framework**

Fig 1.1 shows that the *Framework* contains three ‘functions’. Each function is a different way that historians, or other scholars, like futurists, can relate the future to historical thinking:

1. Future-Reflection (F-Reflection) is how our interest in the future motivates us to study the past. How we examine the past becomes a reflection of some part of the future we are curious to understand. This shapes the historical method because we desire an explanation of the past that is also useful for understanding the future. For example, we reflect on what ancient societies thought about the natural environment because we want to improve our understanding of modern attitudes towards the environment. Thinking about the environment as a resource to exploit is a dangerous attitude that is foundational to our modern world. Understanding the emergence of this attitude, the trends in how it has been applied, and the factors that drive its practice, can hopefully shed light on whether this attitude will continue in the near-future.
2. Future-Perception (F-Perception) is the next logical step: attempting to envisage what will be the future based on F-Reflection. This ranges from predicting something will happen, to mapping out a series of alternative scenarios or paths that society may take, which is the favoured method of Voros. For example, we may envisage a scenario where vegetarian and vegan lifestyles rapidly gain in popularity across the developed world during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We may assign a relatively high probability to this scenario based on recent trends such as the uptake of these lifestyles, and the support for attitudes underpinning these lifestyles like ethical and environmental concerns. But we can also perceive the future in ways other than extrapolating current trends. For example, if we identify that a key driver for people changing eating habits is cost, then the emergence of

cheap artificially created meats, even if this event itself is of low probability, factors strongly into calculating overall probability of our original scenario. In fact, we should envisage a new scenario where these meats are developed and sold at a low price.

3. Future-Influence (F-Influence) is changing how people think about the future, and changing their future behaviour. This concerns the impact scholars have upon the readers, whether that be the public or academia. F-Influence is usually about how to increase or decrease the likelihood of a prediction or scenario coming true. Simply presenting what was found via F-Reflection, and the predictions or scenarios of F-Perception, will alter the mind of the reader in some way. Other times, the scholar can be more influential by preaching a message, or giving advice and strategy on how individuals, organisations, or communities should act.

As shown in fig 1.1 and described in the above definitions, F-Reflection is the basis of F-Perception, and F-Perception is the basis of F-Influence. This linear order simplifies what actually happens in History or Futures, because each function can influence the other two.

Each function of the *Framework* consists of a number of 'processes'. We can think of processes as the mechanics of historical thinking and future thought, or the actions that historians and futurists perform. Like the three functions, the ten processes, which we *italicise* in this thesis, usually connect to one another in a linear fashion (top-to-bottom in fig 1.1).

Starting with *select content*, we choose what to examine based on our interests in the future. We then *examine information*, including an examination of the credibility of our sources. This enables us to *observe trends*. The next, and final process under F-Reflection is *explain drivers*, where we attempt to explain the role of as many factors as possible that shape the phenomenon we are interested in. This ideally involves a systems-thinking approach that takes into consideration as many layers of the Earth-system as possible. Our thesis will argue that by holistically contextualising our phenomenon of interest into the wider Earth-system, we can better perceive the future of that phenomenon. Our representation of its past is closer to reality if we use a systems-thinking approach because all phenomena are part of the Earth-system. We may now extrapolate recent trends to envisage the future of the phenomenon in the 'business-as-usual' case which is *project system*. The process of *imagine scenarios* creates several scenarios representing alternative futures based upon a combination of our knowledge of factors influencing the phenomenon, and our imagination. The third process of F-Perception is where we *make predictions*, which may or may not involve the previous scenarios created. Finally, are the processes of F-Influence. *Alter thinking* is our attempts to change how people understand the phenomenon, including its past, present, and future. Applying knowledge of the past to future situations is *teach lessons*, where we give people advice on their future behaviour. The last process, *develop strategy*, is planning and deciding how individuals, communities, and/or organisations should change their behaviour so society can navigate towards, or away from, what is foreseen in F-Perception.

The *Framework* clearly simplifies the more complex, and ‘organic’, historical method and Futures thinking, but it highlights the important parts of both, and suggests that there is more overlap between the two ways of thinking than previously understood.

### History Literature Contributing to Future Thinking

The Annales School is a historical approach with its roots in 1920s France, and began having substantial international impact from the 1940s.<sup>10</sup> Since its inception it has pushed the traditional boundaries within History of space, time, and disciplinary scope. The *Annales* connects to many disciplines, including: “sociology and anthropology with auxiliary support from demography, geography, economics, psychology, linguistics, and art history”.<sup>11</sup> Although scholars of the *Annales* were far more sceptical about connecting History to the natural sciences, they have helped break down barriers between the human sciences and History. Cross-disciplinary scholarship helps History connect to the future. Firstly, the natural sciences, and even most of the human sciences, are more comfortable with predicting the future to some degree, so this attitude is likely to naturally influence historians. Secondly, the other disciplines help historians explain many of the factors that they identify through the *explain drivers* process. For example, it likely that the role of heuristics and biases in the decisions made by political and military leaders

---

<sup>10</sup> Eamon O’Flaherty, “Annales School,” In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences (Second Edition) Volume 1*, ed. James D. Wright (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015), 708-710.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Forster, “Achievements of the Annales School,” in *The Journal of Economic History* 38 no. 1 (1978), 71; Fernand Braudel, and Immanuel Wallerstein, “History And The Social Sciences: The Longue Durée,” *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 32, no. 2 (2009), 173-175.

is often neglected or understated in historical accounts because most historians have a poor grasp of these psychological phenomena.

One of the greatest contributions of the *Annales* is Fernand Braudel's concept of the *longue durée*.<sup>12</sup> It is "a different temporal horizon, a history measured in hundreds, even thousands of years: History of a long, sometimes very long, duration".<sup>13</sup> David Armitage argues that Braudel promoted the concept as "the key to integrating the human sciences".<sup>14</sup> Braudel does suggest a positive correlation between size of our temporal scope and the extent of our disciplinary reach.<sup>15</sup> As we include more disciplines into our understanding, we can think on longer timescales because many disciplines specialise in phenomena that operate on large timeframes such as geography. Thus the *longue durée* is important to our *Framework* because historians need to use disciplines that operate on long timescales.

Additionally, Armitage argues that the *longue durée* shifts away from a focus on events, and towards an emphasis on environments, which is another approach that is critical to the *Framework*.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, this is a shift that has also occurred in Futures.<sup>17</sup> It is difficult however to ascertain a direct contribution by the idea of the *longue durée* to this paradigm shift in Futures.

---

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>13</sup> David Armitage, "Horizons of History," in *History Australia* 12 no. 1 (2015), 217.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>15</sup> Francisco Naishtat, "Historiographic Refocalization And Change In The Historicity Regime," in *Controversy Spaces: A Model Of Scientific And Philosophical Change*, ed. Oscar Nudler (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2011), 29-33.

<sup>16</sup> Armitage, "Horizons of History," 217-218.

<sup>17</sup> David J. Staley, *History And Future: Using Historical Thinking To Imagine The Future* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 13.

The shift from events to environments is a form of spatial increase, and we hypothesised that such an increase would go hand-in-hand with extending disciplinary reach, and ultimately historians' ability to connect to the future. The *longue durée* does exactly this by breaking down historical time into *structure*, *conjoncture*, and *event*.<sup>18</sup> *Structure* is a "glacier-like macrocosm of an entire society conditioned by impersonal forces (geographic, climatic, biological, productive)" operating over vast timescales.<sup>19</sup> *Conjoncture* contains the technological, cultural, and population shifts occurring within society over decades that cause the *structure* to move to a new equilibrium.<sup>20</sup> Finally, *event* contains the "mere surface noises... indicators at best of the deeper currents of history".<sup>21</sup> Historians traditionally operate along the *conjoncture* and *event* levels, often neglecting the *structure* level. This level contains factors that are the domain of other disciplines but they should still be examined during the *explain drivers* process because these factors will influence the future of society. For example, human height is predominately determined by genetics, but our increasing average height over the past two centuries has been driven mainly by improved diets. Human height impacts many aspects of human society from the size of doors, to perhaps even our interpersonal dominance in social situations.<sup>22</sup> Thus, understanding evolutionary biology and nutrition may help a historian not only better explain aspects of society, but help perceive how they will change. The general lesson to be learnt when applying the *longue durée* to the future is that looking forward necessitates looking deeper.

---

<sup>18</sup> Forster, "Achievements of the Annales School," 63-64.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4342156/>

Historian David Staley has argued with mixed success in *History And Future: Using Historical Thinking To Imagine The Future*, that historians are well suited to Futures thinking.<sup>23</sup> Staley briefly argues that historians who have commenting on the future have traditionally extrapolated patterns and laws of the past into the future.<sup>24</sup> This approach falls under what is called the speculative, or substantive philosophy of History.<sup>25</sup> However, Staley argues that there has emerged a superior approach called “scenario modelling”, which we call *imagine scenarios*.<sup>26</sup> A scenario can “describe the structures and relations in a given time and place”.<sup>27</sup> Although a scenario is generally fixated around a particular time in the future, it is still embedded in the deep time of the *longue durée* by considering many factors that operate on this timescale. Staley also admires the *Annales’* “thick descriptions”, which can be integrated within *imagine scenarios*, which takes an environment, rather than event focus.<sup>28</sup>

Staley believes that historians are well suited to the *imagine scenarios* process, despite it being the domain of futurists, because it has many similarities to historical thinking. He emphasises that historians constantly utilise their ‘historical imagination’ to go between the “raw data of our sources and the finished product”.<sup>29</sup> The historical imagination is used to weave together multiple forms of evidence and fill in the gaps where evidence is lacking, to form a cohesive

---

<sup>23</sup> For some solid criticisms of Staley’s book see Noel Bonneuil, “Do Historians Make the Best Futurists?” *History and Theory* 48 no. 1, 99.

<sup>24</sup> Staley, *History And Future: Using Historical Thinking To Imagine The Future*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Aviezer Tucker, “Introduction,” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, ed. Aviezer Tucker (Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> Staley, *History And Future: Using Historical Thinking To Imagine The Future*, 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>29</sup> Staley, *History And Future: Using Historical Thinking To Imagine The Future*, 104.

narrative of the past.<sup>30</sup> Staley correctly identifies that this skill is used in the *imagine scenarios* process. But he does not demonstrate why historians are ‘best’ suited to this process, and thus Futures thinking in general, when ‘historical imagination’ is actually deployed in various guises across other disciplines.<sup>31</sup> History and Futures also clash more than what Staley’s argument suggests. However, the clash between historical thinking and Futures thinking is why attempting to connect them, such as through the *Framework*, is such an exciting prospect. History’s scepticism of evidence, attention to detail, and promotion of individual human agency can help combat Future’s broader outlook, civilizational focus, and less supported representations of reality. This comparison stereotypes both disciplines but it highlights the main differences which are both barriers to working together and ways they may ‘correct’ the tendencies of one another. Connecting them, like in the way proposed by the *Framework*, requires the disciplines to challenge one another along these main lines of difference.

Warren Wagar was a rare historian who worked as a futurist. Wagar wrote numerous books and articles on the future, and taught a Futures course.<sup>32</sup> He argued that historians should increase to what degree their work relates to the future.<sup>33</sup> Like Staley, Wagar is too optimistic and simplistic in claiming that there is no difference between our ability to uncover the past and reveal the future.<sup>34</sup> He attempts to support this claim with the idea that the both the past and future can be written about, and hence represented, in over a thousand different ways.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>32</sup> Marien Michael, “Celebrating the Life of Futurist W. Warren Wagar,” *The Futurist* 39 no. 2, 68.

<sup>33</sup> Warren Wagar, “Past and Future,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 42 no. 3, 365.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 366-367.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

However, this idea masks the fact that we can actually write an almost infinite number of different representations of the future. There is an epistemological difference here between recalling the singular reality of the past and mapping out the alternative futures of reality that may or may not come to pass. This difference can be seen in comparing the historical evidence we have of the past leftover in the present, and how futurists scan the present for clues of what makes up the many alternative futures. Wagar is aware of this difference, noting that “our documentation is skimpier” for the future, but sometimes this does not carry over to his scholarship.<sup>36</sup> Although there is a difference, this does not preclude an overlap between History and Futures, and a potential for them to assist one another.

Wagar argues that historians and futurists similarly struggle to identify and explain, what we have called the ‘drivers’ of the Earth-system.<sup>37</sup> Wagar observes that History has been developing a multitude of different perspectives since the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup> He notes in particular the role of the perspectives that have pushed for a wider scope such as Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-system theory.<sup>39</sup> Wagar concludes that these are important developments because F-Perception demands we simultaneously consider as many ‘drivers’ of the Earth-system as possible.<sup>40</sup> This supports the hypothesis of this thesis that enlarging the spatial and disciplinary scope of History assists its ability to relate to the future.

---

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

Wagar's work reveals strengths of History that can improve Futures thinking. Wagar has discussed how his university course categorises futurists into different categories based on "their ideological underpinnings".<sup>41</sup> For example, a futurist may fall under a "technoliberal" or a "countercultural" paradigm.<sup>42</sup> Opposing the idealised views of some futurists, Wagar asserts that all futurists "approach the future with ideological baggage in hand".<sup>43</sup> As a historian, Wagar finds it relatively easy to reflect on the context and undercurrents of why Futures explores certain parts of the future more than others, and why it uses a certain methodology. Ideologies influence many of the processes we use to connect historical thinking to the future. For example, during the *imagine scenarios* process, we ideally determine the 'desirability' for each scenario or our desire for a particular scenario to come true. Desirability is imbued with value judgements that are linked to ideologies. For example, a technoliberal ideology may value technological progress towards artificial general intelligence or AGI very highly at the expense of other pursuits. Thus, a scenario that is able to pursue AGI with greater resources than other scenarios may be deemed desirable over other scenarios. These other scenarios may instead put more resources towards other values such as implementing democratic systems. It appears that desirability is a central point of disagreement within the *Framework* because individuals, communities, and organisations value things differently and adhere to different ideologies. This is a limitation of connecting historical thinking to Futures thinking that requires considerable, and ongoing discussion.

---

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

Historians Jo Guldi and David Armitage published *The History Manifesto* in 2014 which discusses many relevant points to our discussion. The authors issue a ‘call-to-arms’ for historians to better employ long-term thinking. This call is also directed at futurists because the authors observe that those “assigned themselves the task of inspecting the future typically peer only shortsightedly into the past”.<sup>44</sup> The *Framework* is our suggested starting point for how historians and futurists can respond to this call. Additionally, the authors urge History to return to its more pragmatic roots, noting that “the ancient goal for history to be the guide to public life has collapsed”.<sup>45</sup> The book concludes that “the sword of history has two edges, one that cuts open new possibilities in the future, and one that cuts through the noise, contradictions, and lies of the past”.<sup>46</sup> The *Framework* suggests that perhaps historians and futurists can wield this sword together.

Guldi and Armitage note that historians increasingly “rewrite the histories of climate and inequality, the very stories that give our civilization nightmares...”.<sup>47</sup> The historical content is centred on issues, particularly topical ones because of an increased awareness of the issue or the issue recently having an increased impact on society. As has been argued, the *Framework* is best utilised under an approach that pushes the spatial and disciplinary boundaries of History. This approach should naturally lead scholars to consider large-scale issues such as international relations, global health, drinking water, energy production, education levels, and environmental conditions. Historian Paul Costello supports this idea by arguing that world historians are

---

<sup>44</sup> Jo Guldi & David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37.

“motivated by a sense of crisis... Each is concerned with the increase of humanity’s power...”<sup>48</sup>

However, we have to be careful with literature that uses a utopian-dystopian dichotomy to analyse how History relates to the future because it leads to a simplified account missing many of the nuances that the *Framework* reveals.<sup>49</sup> There is also a link between a sense of crisis and the public’s interest in History. Historian Paul Cohen argues that a sense of crisis is a what motivates people to connect to stories as they provide comfort by symbolically connecting individuals to each other and to a bigger narrative.<sup>50</sup> Despite History traditionally excelling at mapping out the narrative of the past, it can be far more useful to individuals and society if it provides guidance on how that narrative might continue in the future.

*The History Manifesto* encourages historians to extend their temporal framework both backwards and forwards. The authors pay homage to the *Annales* who sought to “find the relationship between agency and environment over the *longue durée*”.<sup>51</sup> Guldi and Armitage have observed promising developments in History away from fixed, small regions of space, and towards larger spatial perspectives, but on a temporal scale they note that “*Transtemporal* history has yet to come into vogue”.<sup>52</sup> They argue that one of the major reasons we should extend our temporal framework is to better understand “the genesis of contemporary global discontents”.<sup>53</sup> Once again, a positive relationship appears to exist between the size of our

---

<sup>48</sup> Paul Costello, *World Historians and their Goals* (DeKalb [Ill.]: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), 7.

<sup>49</sup> For example see Chris L. Lewis, “Telling Stories about the Future: Environmental History and Apocalyptic Science,” *Environmental History Review* 17 no. 3 (1993), 43-60.

<sup>50</sup> Paul Cohen, *History and Popular Memory: The Power of Story in Moments of Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 205.

<sup>51</sup> Jo Guldi & David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 16.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

temporal, spatial, and disciplinary scope. Rather than extend the temporal scope, Guldi and Armitage argue that historians have written more and more “Short Past” histories since the 1960s.<sup>54</sup> The result was that “As the Short Past became the rule, historians increasingly ignored the art of relating deep time to the future”.<sup>55</sup> The authors even describe Futures as the “forward-looking counterpart to the *longue durée*”.<sup>56</sup> This thesis does not advocate we erode “Short Past” histories from academic discourse, because they do allow historians to ‘dive-deep’ into a small part of reality. But we do encourage historians to use the *Framework* as a starting point to question their engagement with large scales of space, time, and disciplinary reach. This is a necessary step if historians are to seriously consider the future.

*The History Manifesto* also endorses History performing the F-Influence function where scholars seek to influence how people think and behave in the future. Guldi and Armitage reflect that across much of the twentieth-century “disciplinary historians understood themselves as working part for an audience of civil servants and social scientists who used historians’ *longue-durée* perspective as material for public reform”.<sup>57</sup> They conclude that today this influence on the future has been largely eroded.<sup>58</sup> But the idea of History influencing the future goes back much further. The authors argue that “The idea that history is ‘philosophy teaching by examples’ is ancient; the aim for history to provide pragmatic counsel to its readers is equally enduring”.<sup>59</sup> There thus appears a strong historical precedent to *teach lessons*, one of the processes under F-Influence,

---

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-60.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

that is about applying knowledge of past examples to future situations. History has been used in the past as a guide for the future, and it should consider taking up this role again.

## Futures Literature

Futures is motivated by addressing issues faced by the Earth-system, which falls under F-Reflection. However, complications arise when determining who exactly are the stakeholders facing these issues. Historian Jenny Andersson frames the inspiration and rise of Futures “not of a new step in the idea of progress, but rather of the growing unease and fear in a period in which the future became laden with connotations of looming disasters such as ecocide, atomic war, and the population bomb”.<sup>60</sup> Futurists are “motivated by ideas of the unforeseeable threat” in the future, so they strive to perceive it so that in collaboration with others they can chart out a course to appropriately respond to the threat.<sup>61</sup> This reinforces the idea that following the *Framework* will lead scholars to primarily consider large-scale societal issues. Mapping out the future also plays a psychologically comforting role because “People need the future; in other words, they need hope”.<sup>62</sup> Issues emerge however when considering that the ‘desirability’ of alternative futures envisaged through the *imagine scenarios* process is typically tied to the business, government, or other organisation that is doing the Futures thinking. How to determine what is desirable and for whom, become very difficult questions when we consider the notion of History integrating Futures thinking, as suggested by the *Framework*. This is exactly the problem

---

<sup>60</sup> Andersson, “The Great Future Debate and the Struggle for the World,” 1415.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 1415.

<sup>62</sup> Philippe Durand and Michel Godet, “Scenario Building: Uses and Abuses,” *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 77 no. 9 (2010), 1491.

Son identifies as troubling Futures in general.<sup>63</sup> Complications arise such as how what is highly desirable for one community, may be undesirable for another. Thus the 'desirability' of scenarios is a central point of debate for the *Framework*.

Scenario modelling is the most important aspect of Futures thinking, so it is worthwhile explaining how it helps us achieve F-Perception and prepare us for F-Influence. The *Imagine scenarios* process is a direct step towards F-Influence because scenarios have "the aim of clarifying present action in light of possible and desirable futures".<sup>64</sup> This process is built around 'systems-thinking' where the "global system can be decomposed into dimensions... these dimensions are; demographic, economic, technological, and social/organisational".<sup>65</sup> In Futures, scenarios come in two types: "Exploratory scenarios are concerned with past and present trends and lead to likely futures. Normative scenarios are constructed from alternative images of the future which may be both desirable and feared, and are conceived in a retroprojective way. Thus, exploratory scenarios are devoid of human values, whereas normative scenarios are the expression of human values."<sup>66</sup> In terms of the terminology of the Framework, exploratory scenarios are created by the *project system* process, and normative scenarios are envisioned through the *imagine scenarios* process.

---

<sup>63</sup> Son, "The History Of Western Futures Studies: An Exploration Of The Intellectual Traditions And Three-Phase Periodization," 130.

<sup>64</sup> Durance and Godet, "Scenario Building: Uses and Abuses," 1491.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 1490.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 1489.

The Finland Futures Research Centre 2004 paper *Seeking Convergence Between History and Futures Research* is one of the few pieces of literature directly examining the combination of History and Futures. It speculates that these disciplines “could jointly form a decision-making framework, which seeks to integrate both the historical and future perspectives into today’s decision-making processes”.<sup>67</sup> The *Framework* presented in this chapter is an exploratory attempt at what this framework might look like. We have already shown some support for the paper’s claim that History and Futures can integrate in a way that can draw upon the strengths of one another.<sup>68</sup> The paper articulates that the aim of Futures is to maximise the probability of the desirable scenarios coming true.<sup>69</sup> This is the ultimate goal of F-Influence. The paper also argues that the constructivist approach in History is the best approach that aligns with Futures thinking. A constructivist approach strives to provide explanations of the past by seeking to uncover the causal relation between phenomena.<sup>70</sup> This is the approach required during the *explain drivers* process to explain as many factors as possible.

The Finland Futures Research Centre paper also argues that Path Dependency Theory or PDT should play a significant role in the convergence of History and Futures. The theory is that “decisions made in the past are likely to have long-term impacts by binding, limiting or postponing alternative options”.<sup>71</sup> The theory is useful within various processes of the *Framework*. For example, the *explain drivers* process needs to explain not only factors driving

---

<sup>67</sup> Kaivo-oja, Katko, and Seppälä, “Seeking for Convergence Between History and Futures Research,” 540.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 538.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 529.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 529-530.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 532.

society, but also factors that are restricting society. PDT is linked to the mathematics of non-linear dynamic models, also known as 'chaos', that is used to study the sensitivity of a system to linear conditions.<sup>72</sup> This is important for *explain drivers* because it centres around a systems-thinking approach to explaining a phenomenon within the greater Earth-system. PDT is just one of the cross-disciplinary tools historians need to be aware of when engaging with the future.

The final pieces of Futures literature to examine are those by futurist Joseph Voros. As earlier mentioned, the *Framework* is mainly based on Voros' ideas of Futures thinking. In his 2001 *A Primer on Futures Studies, Foresight and the Use of Scenarios* he presents three 'laws' or guiding principles, that dispel common myths of Futures. The first is that "the future is not predetermined" or that there exists no one fully determined path the future will take based on what has occurred in the past.<sup>73</sup> This is an important absolute limitation to the *explain drivers* process: even if we could perfectly represent the past, this will not reveal a singular path the future must take. The second is that "the future is not predictable".<sup>74</sup> *Imagine scenarios* becomes the best way to map out alternative futures because *make predictions* does not properly acknowledge this law. The third is that "future outcomes can be influenced by choices in the present".<sup>75</sup> This underpins the rationale of pursuing the F-Influence function of the *Framework*.

---

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 532.

<sup>73</sup> Joseph Voros, "A Primer on Futures Studies, Foresight, and the Use of Scenarios," 1.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

The Futures equivalent to the *Framework* is the Generic Foresight Process or GFP. Voros refers to the GFP in numerous articles including the recent, and very relevant, *Big History and Anticipation*. The GFP consists of five to six phases which can be understood as overlapping activities.<sup>76</sup> There is an overall linear flow through the phases of inputs, analysis, interpretation, prospection, outputs, and strategy/policy, as well as many feedback loops.<sup>77</sup> These phases map out a similar information system that we have created via the processes of the *Framework*.

However, a number of key differences separate the *Framework* from the GFP. Firstly, the language of the *Framework* attempts to be more familiar to historians. The rationale is that it appears harder to convince historians than futurists to utilise the *Framework* because most of the processes traditionally reside within Futures. Secondly, the structure of the *Framework* places greater emphasis on the role the historical method plays, such as adding the *examine information* process. Thirdly, there are more processes than phases to better represent the fluidity of the scholarship process. This helps when it comes to using the *Framework* as a tool or a lens to analyse existing literature because it can be used to identify subtleties in how that scholarship may connect to the future. For example, a historian's book may *make predictions* but not *imagine scenarios*.

Scenario modelling is key to the GFP and likewise important to the *Framework*. Voros categorises scenarios into classes that “are best considered not as rigidly separate categories, but rather as

---

<sup>76</sup> Joseph Voros, “Big History and Anticipation,” in *Handbook of Anticipation*, ed. Roberto Polio (New York: Springer, 2017), 5.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

nested sets or *nested classes* of futures.<sup>78</sup> The “futures cone” is a powerful device for visually communicating the relative size and relationship between the classes.<sup>79</sup> Most of these classes are distinguished by their probability of occurring. The least likely are ‘Preposterous’ futures which are deemed impossible, but may occur due to some remarkable series of events.<sup>80</sup> Slightly more likely are ‘Possible’ futures that require knowledge we have not discovered, and may not exist.<sup>81</sup> ‘Plausible’ futures are far more likely because they are based on our current knowledge of the world.<sup>82</sup> ‘Probable’ futures are also based on our current knowledge, but are more likely based on current trends.<sup>83</sup> Lastly are ‘Projected’ futures based upon an unadjusted extrapolation of current trends.<sup>84</sup> This last class is envisioned by the *project system* process. There is one more class of ‘Preferable’ futures, but this class is based on ‘desirability’ rather than probability. Thus, it overlaps with all of the other classes which are based on ‘probability’. Voros stresses that because the classes “are all considered *subjective judgements* about ideas about the future that are *based in the present moment*”, an alternative future can shift between classes over time.<sup>85</sup> Hence the probability and desirability of the scenarios we imagine are constantly changing. The *develop strategy* process is added to the *Framework* to suggest a purposeful and structured way to influence the future. This process includes ‘strategic planning’ or “the breaking down of a goal or objective into steps... the steps needed for the *implementation of actions...*”, and ‘strategic development’ where “a particular goal or objective is actually set or a decision made.

---

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

The focus here is on assessing options, examining choices, making a *decision*, and/or setting a *destination*".<sup>86</sup> This process involves collaboration with individuals, organisations, communities, and governments.

Voros has recently looked at the combination of Futures and History by arguing in *Big History as a Scaffold for Futures Education* that the macro-historical approach of the field of Big History can help Futures. Big History is a cross-disciplinary field that surveys the entire past of the Earth-system from the Big Bang to the present moment.<sup>87</sup> It draws upon cosmology, geology, biology, anthropology, and many other disciplines to connect the content of inanimate matter, life forms, and human societies in a holistic manner.<sup>88</sup> Based on anecdotal evidence from overseeing his recently discontinued *Master of Strategic Foresight* course that introduced Big History, Voros argues that it provides a useful framework for people to better understand and practice Futures.<sup>89</sup> It teaches an openness to timeframes even exceeding those of the *longue durée*: "After a 14-billion-year run-up, their thinking does not, and cannot, stop in the present... one of the best ways to teach an openness to *futures* thinking is to introduce students to *the whole of the past!*".<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>87</sup> Eric Chaisson, "Cosmic Evolution: More Than Big History by Another Name," In *Evolution: A Big History Perspective* (Volgograd, Russia: 'Uchitel' Publishing House, 2011), 38.

<sup>88</sup> For a summary of Big History see David Christian, "What Is Big History?" *Journal Of Big History* 1 no. 1 (2017), 4-19.

<sup>89</sup> Joseph Voros, "Big History as a Scaffold for Futures Education," *World Futures Review*, 2.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

To contextualise how Big History can connect to Futures, Voros outlines that there are “five main layers of “depth” at which prospection may be conducted - Event (the shallowest), Trend, System, Worldview, and Historical (the deepest)”.<sup>91</sup> Voros notes that as we look at deeper levels, we look at change over a longer duration.<sup>92</sup> He thus strongly advocates an examination of the deeper layers to explore the future.<sup>93</sup> The two deepest layers, worldview and historical, respectively concern “mental modes, worldviews, modes and types of thinking and cognition and consciousness in general” and “social, historical, and macrohistorical change”.<sup>94</sup> Voros notes “that historical, macro-historical, and indeed *Big*-Historical change find their natural home, in sublayers of the Historical level”.<sup>95</sup> Big History provides the “much vaster social, biological, geological, and even cosmological context” which studying the future desires.<sup>96</sup> It provides an important and powerful perspective which is useful as “It is difficult to clearly see the present long-term dynamics of the world system when we are still so completely immersed within them”.<sup>97</sup> Ultimately, Big History should play an important role in the H-F Framework because its grand temporal, spatial, and disciplinary scope suits exploring the future.

## Concluding Thoughts

History, including Big History, has strengths that when combined with the strengths of Futures, create scholarship that can usefully study the past and future together. History offers an

---

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>92</sup> Voros, “Big History and Anticipation,” 15.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>95</sup> Voros, “Big History as a Scaffold for Futures Education,” 10.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>97</sup> Voros, “Big History and Anticipation,” 32.

attention to detail, a sceptical approach to evidence, a mind wary of generalisations, a pursuit of understanding the role of human agency, and an eye for bringing to the surface neglected communities and events. Big History may be an offshoot of History, but it has some different strengths. It offers an enlarged spatial, temporal, and disciplinary scope for understanding human society in relation to the rest of the universe. Ideally the strengths of both History and fields like Big History can improve the scholarly rigour of Futures to improve our representations of the past and future.

Chapter one has presented the *Framework* as a starting point for considering how these strengths could work together. Voros states that he wishes to contribute to “a wide-ranging continuing conversation - among big historians, sociologists, futurists...”.<sup>98</sup> This chapter also strives to contribute to this conversation. It has explored literature and scholars from both History and Futures to cover the important aspects of connecting these two disciplines. We have argued that historians and futurists should strive to represent the past and future on large scales as that leads to knowledge that can change how we think and behave in the future.

## CHAPTER TWO

The main purpose of chapter two is to chronicle what historical thinkers have thought about the relationship between historical thinking and the future. The chapter begins by outlining the historiographical approach taken to realise this purpose. The historiographical account of seven

---

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

historical thinkers follows. The scholars are used to represent both the dominant 'traditional' contempt for relating History to the future, and also the less-popular 'unconventional' attitude which embraces connecting History to the future.

### A Historiographical Account of the Future in Historical Thought and Practice

Chapter two surveys the last two hundred years of historical literature in the English-speaking world to see how historians understood their relationship to thinking about the future. It focuses on three ways historical thought can connect to the future. These three ways are the three functions of the *Framework*: F-Reflection, F-Perception, and F-Influence. In other words: reflecting on the past based on an aspect of the future we are interested in, perceiving the future based on the past, and the possibility of influencing the future by changing the thoughts and actions of readers. We use these three functions to reveal that greater nuances exist between History and the future than merely attempting to predict the future. This helps the historiography integrate the topic of the future with other matters historiography typically investigates such as evidence, biases, and purpose. We present the scholars chronologically because each scholar's attitude was often strongly influenced by previous scholars. This survey only includes a handful of scholars and only covers them briefly to establish their main understandings of the historical method that underpins their attitude to the future in History. A roughly equal selection of scholars who embraced or opposed the idea of thinking seriously about the future is not representative of the latter's dominance. Scholars were chosen this way to highlight the threads of historical thought that may lead to a more fruitful connection between historical thought and Futures thinking.

This survey has some similarities to Paul Costello's 1993 *World Historians and their Goals*. Like Costello, chapter two focuses on the general approach of each scholar, rather than the accuracy of their claims about the past and future.<sup>99</sup> The chapter also follows in Costello's footsteps by using the main books of each scholar as the primary evidence.<sup>100</sup> Supplementing this is secondary literature that has attempted to understand and critique the scholar's being discussed. Costello's book is also very relevant because it looks at a group of historians who are more likely than most to hold the 'unconventional' attitude of embracing the future. Costello examines those that study the core drivers of society and take a large-scale scope to produce what he calls "metahistory".<sup>101</sup> In other literature, this is referred to as "macrohistory" that operate on large scales and is "the study of the histories of social systems, along separate trajectories, in search of patterns. Macrohistory is ambitious, focused on the stages of history and the causes of change through time".<sup>102</sup> The macrohistorian "is looking for recurring patterns in the trajectories of the same and/or different units, and for mechanisms underlying them".<sup>103</sup> In the terminology of our suggested *Framework*, the macrohistorian is more familiar than most historians with what is involved in the *observe trends* and *explain drivers* processes. They also want to *teach lessons* to apply knowledge of the past to the future.<sup>104</sup> It will be shown that the approaches of the macrohistorian are relatively suitable to embracing the future.

---

<sup>99</sup> Paul Costello, *World Historians and Their Goals* (Dekalb [Ill.], Northern Illinois University Press: 1994), 8.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>102</sup> Johan Galtung, "Macrohistory And Macrohistorians: A Theoretical Framework," In *Macrohistory And Macrohistorians*, ed. Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 1.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Costello also argues that the macrohistorian produces stories that people connect with so it provides them with value on how to orientate their lives. The histories they create can provide a “...psychological grounding for life in an age without a common faith in any cosmic setting or supernatural drama” and a “...sense of place in an age of rapid change and apocalyptic potential”.<sup>105</sup> This is a form of F-Influence because the scholar is altering how people think about themselves and the world. It appears that scholars operating along larger scales are those more likely to produce powerful narratives like this. These are the scholars also more likely to embrace the future in their scholarship, so there appears some correlation between this embrace and narratives that provide guidance. This continues our exploration of the hypothesis that expanding the spatial, temporal, and disciplinary scope helps historians connect to the future.

Most of our chosen scholars fit within one of two categories: the dominant ‘traditional’ contempt for relating History to the future, and the less-popular ‘unconventional’ attitude embracing the future. Marnie Hughes-Warrington’s *Fifty-Key Thinkers on History* covers all seven of the selected scholars so is used as a starting point for understanding each individual.<sup>106</sup> Our survey begins with Ranke as the literature overwhelmingly places him as a central figure during the early 19th century when History is said to have ‘modernised’.<sup>107</sup> Although the discipline has highly

---

<sup>105</sup> Costello, *World Historians and Their Goals*, 5.

<sup>106</sup> Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers On History* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>107</sup> Roger Spalding and Christopher Parker, *Historiography: An Introduction* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 8; Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Is History Fiction?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010), 52, 69; Edward Gaylord Bourne, “Leopold Von Ranke,” *The Sewanee Review* 4, no. 4 (1896): 385; Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers On History*, 293; Helen Liebel-Weckowicz, “Ranke’s Theory Of History And The German Modernist School,” *Canadian Journal Of History* 23 no. 1 (1988), 74.

developed since Ranke's time, his views uncover some of the roots of History that perhaps today continue to underpin historians' reluctance to discuss the future. In this way, we explore the evolution of the main ideas historical scholars have had that underpins how they saw the role of the future in historical thought.

### Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886)

Most scholars support the claim of historian Helen Liebel-Weckowicz that "Ranke stood as the beginning of a long pathway which opened into the mainstream of modern historiographic theory".<sup>108</sup> For example, Hughes-Warrington asserts that "Ranke's critical method became the model of historical research in the nineteenth century in Germany and the wider world".<sup>109</sup> Others like J. D. Braw hold a more moderate appraisal, observing that "On the one hand, Ranke had a great and lasting impact; on the other hand, his approach was never re-utilized as a whole, only in its constituent parts...".<sup>110</sup> Braw notes there is little agreement on Ranke's involvement in the evolution of the historical method, and thus it is inaccurate to describe him as catalysing a paradigm shift.<sup>111</sup> On balance, Ranke at the bare minimum shaped the historical method so is worthy of our attention. Two centuries later, Ranke continues to be of interest to historians. For example, Andreas Boldt recently penned an article where his "intention is to reintroduce Ranke to contemporary historical thinking".<sup>112</sup> Ranke is examined in this chapter because some aspects

---

<sup>108</sup> Liebel-Weckowicz, "Ranke's Theory Of History And The German Modernist School," 73.

<sup>109</sup> Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers On History*, 298.

<sup>110</sup> J. D. Braw, "Vision as Revision: Ranke and the Beginning of Modern History," *History and Theory* 46 no. 4 (2007), 45.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 46, 57-58.

<sup>112</sup> Andreas Boldt, "Ranke: Objectivity and History," *Rethinking History* 18 no. 4 (2014), 463.

of his historical method remain central to how historians approach the past, and his approach helps explain why the discipline is typically very cautious about relating to the future.

Ranke popularized primary evidence as central to the critical method of History. Around the beginning of the 19th century, scholars were sometimes producing History “without conducting archival research or doing a critical source analysis”.<sup>113</sup> Ranke took issue with this, and went to extreme lengths to ensure the History he produced was based chiefly on primary evidence.<sup>114</sup> He practiced and endorsed the heavy using primary sources, paying attention to the details, and circumspectly examining sources such as scrutinising the narratives of eyewitnesses.<sup>115</sup>

Primary evidence remains central to History today. This is why, in connecting History to Futures via the *Framework*, the *examine information* process incorporates the collection and scrutinisation of primary evidence. Ranke influenced History because the “methodical principles of archival research and source criticism became commonplace as his students occupied the first academic positions in history departments”.<sup>116</sup> This meant that “research in the sources of the past, using the critical method, became the precondition and the centre of historical scholarship”.<sup>117</sup> Ranke was only focused on primary evidence in History, nothing more, and his idea of primary evidence was based narrowly around written material. As we outlined in chapter one, there is an epistemological difference between historical evidence of the past, and the

---

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 469.

<sup>114</sup> Gaylord Bourne, “Leopold Von Ranke,” 387-389.

<sup>115</sup> Curthoys and Docker, *Is History Fiction?*, 70.

<sup>116</sup> Boldt, “Ranke: Objectivity and History,” 464.

<sup>117</sup> Felix Gilbert, “Historiography: What Ranke Meant,” *The American Scholar* 56, no. 3 (1987), 393.

evidence futurists use to represent the future. Historical evidence is recreating and explaining what has occurred in reality, whereas Futures evidence is about mapping out what may occur in reality. Ranke's narrow understanding of evidence hindered any chance of him pursuing the future.

Braw stresses that Ranke held an experience-based approach to evidence where "the more vivid the experience of the person behind the source had been, the more visual would the historian's image of the event become".<sup>118</sup> This sort of experience is another difference between how evidence is used to represent the past or represent the future. As discussed in chapter one, both historians and futurists deploy a considerable amount of 'imagination' to describe what is missing from available evidence. In contrast, Ranke reflected that he "...turned completely away from such fiction and resolved to avoid any invention and imagination in my work and to keep strictly to the facts".<sup>119</sup> Commenting on the future was simply too far of a leap of faith for Ranke and his followers unwilling to expand upon their use of evidence and other tools such as the historical imagination.

Ranke also supported the idea of 'objectivity', by which he meant that historians should study the past within its own context, rather than be influenced by their present environment.<sup>120</sup> Ranke's most famous expression is that "History has had assigned to it the office of judging the past and of instructing the account for the benefit of future ages. To such high offices the present

---

<sup>118</sup> Braw, "Vision as Revision: Ranke and the Beginning of Modern History," 49.

<sup>119</sup> Leopold Von Ranke, *The Secret of World History: Selected Writings on the Art and Science of History* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1981), 62.

<sup>120</sup> Boldt, "Ranke: Objectivity and History," 463-464.

work does not presume; it seeks only to show what actually happened".<sup>121</sup> Scholars have debated what exactly Ranke meant but some agreed upon points seem to emerge.<sup>122</sup> One of those points is that "each era is unique and must be studied on its own terms, rather than through present ways of thinking" because that can bias how we understand that era.<sup>123</sup> Ranke used History as a tool to reveal what happened, and nothing more.<sup>124</sup> His critical method does not involve any of the three main ways History can connect to the future: F-Reflection, F-Perception, and F-Influence. But Boldt notes that "Many historians criticised Ranke's partial objectivity... but as we have seen... full objectivity is impossible to reach. It is already in the choice of our sources that subjectivity begins".<sup>125</sup> In reference to the *Framework*, the subjectivity Boldt mentions begins with the very first process of *select content* that falls under F-Reflection. Some scholars like Braw have even argued that Ranke himself could not practice the 'objectivity' he preached. Braw observes that there appears "an aesthetic and religious experience of the past" which shaped Ranke's writing.<sup>126</sup> In retrospect, Ranke was too naïve about historians' ability to isolate their study of the past from the present.

Just as Ranke did not engage in F-Reflection or F-Perception, he showed no desire for F-Influence. This is best seen by Boldt's contrast between Rankean history and "history that is written with a moral purpose - to improve character, to provide lessons (such as Voltaire)...".<sup>127</sup> Jonathan

---

<sup>121</sup> Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers On History*, 294.

<sup>122</sup> Gilbert, "Historiography: What Ranke Meant," 394.

<sup>123</sup> Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers On History*, 297.

<sup>124</sup> Boldt, "Ranke: Objectivity and History," 463.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 466.

<sup>126</sup> Braw, "Vision as Revision: Ranke and the Beginning of Modern History," 46.

<sup>127</sup> Boldt, "Ranke: Objectivity and History," 463.

Gorman extends this commentary by stating that “Those historians who, like Ranke, adopt a dispassionate distance from the morally demanding in the name of “objectivity” themselves face a moral risk: we can recognize in terms of our own moral outlook that an attempt to withdraw from the grip of the moral may be itself morally wrong. It is a current fashion to require of historians that they offer moral judgment”.<sup>128</sup> Offering moral judgement falls under F-Influence because the scholar is making claims about human behaviour that may influence how people behave in the future. Ranke desires History to play no role in this, or the future, in any meaningful way.

### Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Karl Marx was a 19<sup>th</sup> century historical thinker, economist, activist, and philosopher who has had a lasting impact on academia and society.<sup>129</sup> His most influential works are the 1848 *Manifesto of the Communist Party* he published with Friedrich Engels and the 1867 *Capital*.<sup>130</sup> There is a large amount of literature on Marx, often leading to conflicting understandings.<sup>131</sup> It is no exaggeration that Marx produced “one of the most ambitious attempts to look backwards and see forwards ever created”.<sup>132</sup> It led to the school of thought called Marxism that “aims to be a scientific theory of social systems” by being “a science of history, an explanation of how societies

---

<sup>128</sup> Jonathan Gorman, “Ethics and the Writing of Historiography,” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, ed. Aviezer Tucker (Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 256.

<sup>129</sup> Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers On History*, 248.

<sup>130</sup> Frederick Engels and Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971), 15-17.

<sup>131</sup> William Shaw, *Marx's Theory of History* (London: Hutchinson, 1978), 1.

<sup>132</sup> Engels and Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 21.

rise, persist, and decline”.<sup>133</sup> Marxism fits firmly in the macrohistory genre as it asserts that its theories apply “all over space and time, for all economic formations, for all transitions, and, by and large, in the same order”.<sup>134</sup> Some of Marx’s language, ideas, and economic thoughts are outdated.<sup>135</sup> However, Marx’s passion and vision of political change remain highly relevant to today’s world.<sup>136</sup> Marx is one of the few significant historical thinkers whose intent and scholarship covered all three ways History connects to the future: F-Reflection, F-Perception, and F-Influence.

Marx incorporated F-Reflection into his historical approach. This is firstly evident in how his concern for the impacts of Capitalism motivated him to understand its past. Secondly, he sought to explain the main factors driving society which provides a platform of knowledge to explain how society might be in the future. This is the *explain drivers* process that falls within F-Reflection, and sets up the scholar for the F-Perception function. Marx’s theory of History outlined that the “economic dynamic, the interplay of productive forces and relations of production” was the single dominant driver of “historical change and evolution”.<sup>137</sup> Marx argued that the “economic dynamic” was the ultimate driver that underpinned society. For the other drivers or factors, the “presence of those other factors stems from the existence of the new productive forces” when the economic system shifted.<sup>138</sup> Marx has been often critiqued for oversimplifying or

---

<sup>133</sup> Jeffrey Reiman, “Moral Philosophy: The Critique of Capitalism and the Problem of Ideology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Marx*, ed. Terrell Carver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 143.

<sup>134</sup> Johan Galtung, “Karl Marx: Techno-Economic Stages,” In *Macrohistory And Macrohistorians*, ed. Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 63.

<sup>135</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2011), 107-109.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 110-111.

<sup>137</sup> Shaw, *Marx’s Theory of History*, 4.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

misrepresenting society this way, but Johan Galtung makes the more charitable observation that Marx was “pointing to the basic mechanism and the major thrust of history, and less concerned with the details”.<sup>139</sup>

Unlike the detail-attentive Ranke, Marx was a visionary who used a macrohistorical approach to focus on the main drivers of society. The centrality of the “economic dynamic” to Marx’s explanation of society is observable in the *Communist Manifesto*:

...in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of the epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind...has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited...<sup>140</sup>

William Shaw’s 1978 *Marx’s Theory of History* elaborates on the many aspects of this “economic dynamic” such as the means of production, labour-power, various forms of relations, property, and classes.<sup>141</sup> The details are of little concern here, but it is important to note that Shaw reinforces that “the productive forces are the motive and determining factor in history”.<sup>142</sup> Placing so much emphasis on one aspect of the Earth-system has been seen as increasingly

---

<sup>139</sup> Galtung, "Karl Marx: Techno-Economic Stages," 63.

<sup>140</sup> Engels and Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 18.

<sup>141</sup> Shaw, *Marx’s Theory of History*, 10-52.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

problematic as we have expanded our knowledge of the many factors shaping the world.<sup>143</sup> Hence Shaw categorises Marx's representation of reality as fairly deterministic in how the nature of the "economic dynamic" dictated the rest of society.<sup>144</sup> But Marx's History cannot be solely classed as deterministic on these grounds because he and his followers saw a great potential for human agency in influencing the nature of the economic system. It was the actions of individuals that catalysed the collapse of an economic system and the emergence of its replacement. Shaw concludes on balance that Marx was not a complete economic determinist but did see economics as the primary underlying driver of society.<sup>145</sup>

By explaining the drivers of society, Marx is in the position to perceive how society will function in the future. This is F-Perception. Studying the past gave Marx the perspective that "if capitalism is a system which has not always existed, then there is no reason to think it will last forever".<sup>146</sup> We continue quoting from the *Communist Manifesto* to show how Marx applied the patterns of the past to the future:

...a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed classes - the proletariat - cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class - the bourgeoisie - without...emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles... What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces,

---

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-61.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

above all, is its own gravediggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.<sup>147</sup>

Marx is able to *make predictions* based on his analysis of capitalism.<sup>148</sup> He perceives the “necessary *long-term* historical tendencies of capitalist development” to write about how capitalism, and hence society, will operate in the future.<sup>149</sup> Marx makes a specific prediction that capitalism will be overthrown by the working class during a revolution. Marx’s work meant that “twentieth-century historians around the world continued writing about the changing nature of states... making daring predictions about the long-term sweep of events”.<sup>150</sup>

History for Marx was always a tool used to carve a path through the dense undergrowth of the future, and encourage others to follow him. As an activist, his evocative writing proclaimed that “The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win”.<sup>151</sup> Hobsbawm notes that Marx’s work has been incorrectly “read primarily as a document of historical inevitability”, because it is “not just about ‘what history shows us will happen’, but also about ‘what must be done’”.<sup>152</sup> In other words, Marx does not stop at the F-Perception function, but pushes on to the domain of the F-Influence function where he inspires and outlines how to make the future he perceives a reality.

---

<sup>147</sup> Engels and Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 18-22.

<sup>148</sup> Reiman, “Moral Philosophy: The Critique of Capitalism and the Problem of Ideology,” 143-144.

<sup>149</sup> Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World*, 112.

<sup>150</sup> Engels and Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 21.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>152</sup> Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World*, 118-122.

## Oswald Spengler (1880-1936)

Oswald Spengler released the first volume of his *The Decline of the West* in 1918 and for many decades it was heavily influential on both academia and the public as it was unusually widely read for a History book.<sup>153</sup> Spengler introduces his book as attempting “for the first time the venture of predetermining history...”, and this is based on the cyclical “logic of history” he has discovered.<sup>154</sup> He claims to provide “*the philosophy of the future*”.<sup>155</sup> His book was ambitious in both its civilisational scope and attempt to predict the future.<sup>156</sup> Scholars of the time “almost universally condemned it as too speculative, full of errors...”, and this criticism continues to the present day.<sup>157</sup> Despite his lack of scholarly rigour, “Spengler’s influence on modern social thinking is considerable, so much so that the discourse of decline, especially of the West, has become a common phrase in our language”.<sup>158</sup> Spengler influenced many others such as Arnold Toynbee who would refine his cyclic understanding of society. Spengler is worthy of our attention because he pushed the temporal and spatial boundaries of History to engage in F-Reflection and F-Perception.

Spengler observed trends in societies across large time periods, and used this information to formulate historical laws about how any society evolves. He observed a cyclic “ordered and obligatory sequence” to the “stages in the destiny of culture” where the “eras, epochs, situations,

---

<sup>153</sup> Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers On History*, 324.

<sup>154</sup> Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1926), 3.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>156</sup> Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers On History*, 324.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 324.

<sup>158</sup> Sohail Inayatullah, "Oswald Spengler: The Maturation and Decay of Cultures," In *Macrohistory And Macrohistorians*, ed. Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 104.

persons, are ever repeating themselves”.<sup>159</sup> A society starts as a culture, and the “strict and necessary *organic succession*” of societies means that “Civilisation is the inevitable *destiny* of culture”.<sup>160</sup> Spengler’s language such as “strict and necessary” help reveal that he was proposing laws rather than general tendencies of how a society evolves.<sup>161</sup>

Spengler crafts his cyclical theory of society from a symbolic understanding rather than the materialism of Marx. But like other macrohistorians, Spengler still wished to find the causes of historical change”.<sup>162</sup> Spengler uses the philosophical perspective of the “*world-as-history*” rather than “*world-as-nature*”.<sup>163</sup> This involves identifying the symbolic significance of historical phenomena to his cycles.<sup>164</sup> He uses symbols which are “sensible signs, final, indivisible and, above all, unsought impressions of definite meaning”.<sup>165</sup> Spengler believed that it is “through art, the unconscious, and the myths that create our dramas that we can understand history, not through a scientific objectification of history”.<sup>166</sup> Sohail Inayatullah thus concludes that “truth for Spengler is closer to *understanding* in the hermeneutic sense rather than *explanation* in the positive-empirical sense”.<sup>167</sup> The power of Spengler’s approach is that historical phenomena were “made *uniformly* understandable and appreciable”, and this makes it easier to make sweeping laws that encapsulate the phenomena.<sup>168</sup> Spengler operates on a relatively generalised plane which would be critiqued by most historians today. Historians align themselves more

---

<sup>159</sup> Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 3-4.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>161</sup> Inayatullah, "Oswald Spengler: The Maturation and Decay of Cultures," 99.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>163</sup> Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 5.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>165</sup> H. Stuart Hughes, *Oswald Spengler*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 163.

<sup>166</sup> Inayatullah, "Oswald Spengler: The Maturation and Decay of Cultures," 101.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>168</sup> Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 49.

closely to the details which for them reveal the uniqueness of phenomena, rather than the patterns.

Having understood how societies evolve, Spengler predicts the future, which falls under the function of F-Perception. He identifies western society as being within the civilisation part of the cycle, which is where the slow downward turn into collapse occurs. This is “calculated from available precedents”.<sup>169</sup> Unlike Marx, it is fair to characterise Spengler’s theory of history as deterministic. It provides little scope for human agency to take charge of our future like Marx encouraged people to do. H. Stuart Hughes classes Spengler as an extreme positivist because Spengler is so confident in his predictions.<sup>170</sup> He was certain that the immovable destiny of western society was collapse.<sup>171</sup> Despite his flaws, Spengler helped open up new discourse about the future, especially civilisational collapse. He attempted one of the first large-scale attempts to connect History to the future. This is an idea important today as we try and grasp the global issues the Earth-system faces.

#### R. G. Collingwood (1889-1943)

Collingwood was a historian and philosopher who deeply reflected on the nature of History, and encouraged others to do the same.<sup>172</sup> His views have been both widely heard and critiqued.<sup>173</sup>

Collingwood’s 1946 *The Idea of History* is part-historiography, part-philosophy, and provided

---

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>170</sup> Hughes, *Oswald Spengler*, 160.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>172</sup> Markku Hyrkkänen, “All History is, More or Less, Intellectual History: R. G. Collingwood’s Contribution to the Theory and Methodology of Intellectual History,” *Intellectual History Review* 19 no. 2 (2009), 251.

<sup>173</sup> Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers On History*, 37.

insights that became the cornerstone of historians views for decades later.<sup>174</sup> Soon after its publication, scholars such as Errol E. Harris acknowledged that Collingwood's theory of history, unlike most other historians, dealt explicitly with the nature of historical fact and the historical method.<sup>175</sup> Updating some Rankean ideas, Collingwood's views are a baseline representation of the 'traditional' and dominant attitude that historical thought should be kept separate from thinking about the future.

Collingwood spends considerable time in his book philosophically exploring the past, present, and future. The present is the 'actual' that is "the only possible object of our knowledge".<sup>176</sup> The past is an 'abstraction' that is our knowledge of the past found within the present. In contrast to this thesis, which describes History as the 'representation' or 'abstraction' of the past, Collingwood understands the past to be an abstraction itself. Collingwood also classes the future as an abstraction existing within the present, but it is a different type of abstraction to the past.<sup>177</sup> He asserts that unlike the past, there is no evidence in the present to allow us to recreate the future, so the idea of "anticipatory historical thought" is a wholly unsupported concept.<sup>178</sup> In a Rankean manner, Collingwood believes historians should study historical fact "as a whole and for its own sake... not merely as a particular exemplification of an abstract law".<sup>179</sup> Crucial to historical fact is assessing original evidence rather than simply agreeing with what historians have

---

<sup>174</sup> Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta Books, 2000), 10.

<sup>175</sup> Errol E. Harris, "Collingwood's Theory of History," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 7 no. 26 (1957), 35.

<sup>176</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History: Revised Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 404.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 405.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 410-411.

<sup>179</sup> Harris, "Collingwood's Theory of History," 36.

concluded.<sup>180</sup> Collingwood's views on the temporal domains and historical fact leave him with no room to manoeuvre towards the future like futurists do. This is evident in how he praises scholars such as Friedrich von Schiller who "...improves upon Kant, owing no doubt to his actual experience in historical work, which has shown him that history throws no light on the future and that the historical series cannot be extrapolated beyond the present".<sup>181</sup> The nearest Collingwood gets to the future is when he concludes that the "purpose of history is to grasp the present".<sup>182</sup>

Collingwood grounds historical evidence in human experience to further reinforce that his theory of History has little, or nothing, to do with the future. Collingwood argues along the lines that historical content needs to contain "perceived fact and the expression in some overt action of the experience".<sup>183</sup> "Collingwood concludes accordingly that history is the re-enactment in the mind of the historian of past experience".<sup>184</sup> Harris remarks that Collingwood's views on events beyond human experience is that they are of no "...interest to an historian. Other events, like earthquakes or plagues, are of historical interest only so far as they affect human action".<sup>185</sup> The problem with Collingwood's idea almost isolating historical events from human experience is that our increasing knowledge of the Earth-system has revealed an enormous number of events and phenomena that affect human affairs. Phenomena like plagues have influenced society far more than previous thought. It is becoming difficult to distinguish any notable phenomenon as being

---

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>181</sup> Collingwood, *The Idea of History: Revised Edition*, 105.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>183</sup> Harris, "Collingwood's Theory of History," 39.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

inconsequential to human behaviour and society. This has primarily been driven by understanding society as a part of a vaster Earth-system that interweaves the geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere. Although Collingwood claims historians should contemplate these other events when they affect human action, that approach will likely miss many of these events because the historian will not be able to identify every applicable event by themselves. The possible solutions include making greater cross-disciplinary collaboration an integral part of the historical method such as having more papers and books co-authored by people from different fields and presenting them in ways that are not directed at one discipline. Collingwood's theory of History does not lend itself to cross-disciplinary discourse, which is another reason underpinning the 'traditional' dominant contempt for future in most modern historical scholarship.

#### E. H. Carr (1892-1982)

Carr optimistically created and endorsed History that related to the future through both F-Reflection and F-Perception. His 1961 *What is History?* challenged some of Collingwood's ideas, and became a highly recommended text for examining the fundamentals of History.<sup>186</sup> Carr is the antithesis to Collingwood when it comes to thinking about the future. The immediate impact of Carr and his book was described by one reviewer as "...a blast of protest that has been heard round the historians' world".<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>186</sup> Keith Jenkins, *On 'What is History?' From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 3.

<sup>187</sup> Bernard Barber, 'What is History? By Edward Hallett Carr,' *American Journal of Sociology* 68 no. 2 (1962), 261.

In contrast to Collingwood and other historians of the 'traditional' dominant attitude, Carr supported the idea that History should comment on the future. Carr outlines a two-way relationship where "the past throws light on the future, and the future throws light on the past".<sup>188</sup> Respectively, these two parts roughly correspond to F-Perception and F-Reflection. Similar to Spengler and Marx, Carr understood that "history was just like any other science in its generation of laws and its predictive capabilities".<sup>189</sup> Carr supports this comparison to science by arguing that contrary to popular belief, the historian frequently uses generalisations to "simplify the multiplicity of his answers... to introduce some order and unity into the chaos of the happenings".<sup>190</sup> It is a valid point that historians often generalise far more than they acknowledge. Yet, and as will be expanded upon in Evans' section, Carr was not able to adequately demonstrate his claim that historical matters of human affairs could be generalised and thus predicted to a similar level as the sciences. One of Carr's predictions was that a "Soviet-style planned economy" would rise globally.<sup>191</sup> This is a symptom of Marx's influence on Carr in terms of both his embrace of F-Perception as a function History should pursue, and the actual predictions made. In retrospect, it would perhaps have been wise for Carr to soften his categorization of History as a science to History having some similarities to the sciences. Yet maybe this is really what Carr meant all along and his book, or our interpretation, exaggerates his position. It is far easier to explain and predict the behaviour of particle physics, fluid dynamics, and even marine ecosystems, than it is human behaviour and society. This is due to humans, and

---

<sup>188</sup> Carr, *What is History?* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1986), 117.

<sup>189</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, 57.

<sup>190</sup> Carr, *What is History?*, 85.

<sup>191</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, 226-229.

the things they create, being far more complex than other physical and biological phenomena. This notion will be further developed in Evans' section.

Carr's phrase "the future throws light on the past" concerns the nature of historical evidence.<sup>192</sup> Unlike many of his predecessors like Ranke and Collingwood, Carr shifts some of the focus away from obtaining primary evidence and towards its interpretation. This interpretation takes place in the present and is shaped by features of the present, so History should be understood as dialogue between the past and the present.<sup>193</sup> This is why Carr has "a view of history having the centre of gravity in the past and a view having the centre of gravity in the present".<sup>194</sup> Yet it is actually our thoughts about the future that is driving this dialogue between the past and the present. Carr claims that the historian's "aspirations and anxieties about the path that lies ahead quicken his insight into what lies behind".<sup>195</sup> This is the core of F-Reflection: the concerns or potentialities of the future drive what we reflect on in the past. As discussed in chapter one, a sense of crisis is a key motivator of futurists and Carr is touching on a similar factor. Carr's openness to connect the past, present, and future is a solid platform for understanding History as an examination of the past that develops as it sharpens its tools and adjusts its focus over time.

---

<sup>192</sup> Carr, *What is History?*, 117.

<sup>193</sup> Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers on History*, 32.

<sup>194</sup> Carr, *What is History?*, 29.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

Carr clearly embraces both F-Reflection and F-Perception, but his views on F-Influence are less clear. Carr claims that the historian “peers eagerly back into the twilight out of which he has come in the hope that its faint beams will illuminate the obscurity into which he is going”.<sup>196</sup> Unlike his influencer Marx, Carr was foremost a historian rather than an activist, and thus did not practice the F-Influence function that Marx passionately pursued. But Carr surely wished for History to ultimately shape people’s thoughts and actions in a meaningful way. This wish is evident in his endorsement of Voltaire’s question: “If you have nothing to tell us, but that on the banks of the Oxus and the Jaxartes, one barbarian has been succeeded by another barbarian, in what respect do you benefit the public?”.<sup>197</sup> Carr desired his scholarship to be relevant to how we think about the future, but generally avoided telling people how to behave in the future.

#### Geoffrey Elton (1921-1994)

Elton was the epitome of the dominant ‘traditional’ contempt for relating History to the future. He represents the core tendencies of most historians today, even if they do not practice or preach his views as extremely as he did. He criticised social scientists and History theorists.<sup>198</sup> He held a Rankean attachment to primary evidence, a strong dismissal of the idea of History as a science, and scorned those who sought to perceive or influence the future. He also disliked philosophising History.<sup>199</sup> For Elton, History is an isolated study of human events of the past. Through his writings

---

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>197</sup> Carr, *What is History?*, 82; full quote from Voltaire, *Volume 4 of A Philosophical Dictionary, From The Fr. [by J. G. Gurton]* (BiblioLife, 2016), 70.

<sup>198</sup> Robert H. Landrum, “A Eulogy for Geoffrey Elton (1920-1994),” *The Historian* 59 no. 1 (1996), 119-121.

<sup>199</sup> Quentin Skinner, “Sir Geoffrey Elton and the Practice of History,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 7 (1997), 302.

he became the “self-appointed oracle of the discipline”.<sup>200</sup> His most important writing was his 1967 *The Practice of History*. Examining Elton helps reveal some of difficulties that are involved with possibly connecting History to Futures

Elton grounds the historical method heavily on primary evidence, especially written material. This makes it difficult to even contemplate F-Perception because this requires evidence being collected and applied in a different way. Elton argues that if no evidence of a phenomena, then it is not an authentic subject of history.<sup>201</sup> The historian has to “reconstruct that which is lost from that which is still around”, and nothing more.<sup>202</sup> Elton appears to reject most notions of the ‘historical imagination’ that were discussed in chapter one as crucial to History and even more so to Futures - particularly the *imagine scenarios* process. Instead, Elton urged historians to focus solely on the archives to reveal the ‘facts’ of the past.<sup>203</sup> The issue with this are the biased nature of archives themselves. Elton argues that primary evidence itself will tell us why we study it, rather than presume questions and answers prior to the investigation.<sup>204</sup> Historian Quentin Skinner finds many of Elton’s claims as inherently impractical.<sup>205</sup> Scholars would tend to agree that presupposing answers to historical questions, even if open to changing them, may undermine the research by leading to cognitive biases like confirmation bias. But being unable to ask leading questions seems like a barrier to starting the research because we then lack any direction or framework. Additionally, it seems naïve because Historians are likely to have some

---

<sup>200</sup> Landrum, “A Eulogy for Geoffrey Elton (1920-1994),” 119.

<sup>201</sup> Geoffrey R. Elton, *The Practice of History* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1967), 9.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>203</sup> Landrum, “A Eulogy for Geoffrey Elton (1920-1994),” 121.

<sup>204</sup> Skinner, “Sir Geoffrey Elton and the Practice of History,” 305-307.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

reason 'why' they are examining a particular period, event, or phenomenon, that goes beyond simply the desire to establish the 'facts'. The 'why' of History should be at least grounded in the present, the temporal framework in which the historian does their research. Futurists would, as seen in chapter one, take this further and assert that the 'why' needs to be grounded in our interests in the future, especially to the big issues of the Earth-system. This notion of 'why' underpins the *Framework*. Elton on the other hand seeks to dispel 'why' questions completely, and this is unsuitable to relating the future to History in any way.

Elton argued that History should highlight the uniqueness of each event, rather than try to establish patterns and laws.<sup>206</sup> He criticizes those like Spengler and Toynbee who sought out such generalisations.<sup>207</sup> Unlike Collingwood's shift towards processes or linked phenomena, Elton returns to the notion that History's only valid subject are events.<sup>208</sup> A gaping chasm separates this view from the 'systems thinking' of many Futurists and some historians. Focusing on events does not lend itself to connecting the future to History.

Elton is extremely Rankean in claiming that any event must be examined entirely from within its historical era, and thus not be influenced by our understanding of the present or other eras. He argues that the historian must "understand an age on its own terms, to judge it by the criteria appropriate to itself, to avoid the error – the 'Whig' error – of looking only for what has

---

<sup>206</sup> Elton, *The Practice of History*, 10, 31.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>208</sup> Skinner, "Sir Geoffrey Elton and the Practice of History," 301-302.

significance in a later age”.<sup>209</sup> The underlying idea is a good one as a principle of methodology: we have to “understand a given problem from the inside”.<sup>210</sup> But it fails to capture that History has evolved new ways of examining the past.

### Richard Evans (1947-present)

Evans’ 1997 *In Defence of History* updates the philosophical debates about the nature of History undertaken by historians such as Collingwood and Carr. Hughes-Warrington describes the book’s structure as an “ironic revisioning” of Carr’s *What is History?* because it mimics its chapter structure.<sup>211</sup> She looks favourably upon Evans because his “writings represent an invitation for historians to make historiography as well as history”.<sup>212</sup> Evans’ attitude to the future does not fall nicely into either of the two categories that the previous six scholars do. He acknowledges that historians employ the historical imagination, but he opposes F-Perception which uses similar ways of thinking. He supports cross-disciplinary discourse, but understands that History is quite different to the sciences.<sup>213</sup> He sees great value in History for society, but is not an activist like Marx. Evans is thus representative of the cautious historian who wants History to be pragmatic but does not believe this includes F-Perception.

---

<sup>209</sup> Elton, *The Practice of History*, 19.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>211</sup> Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers on History*, 96.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>213</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, 8.

Evans emphasises that historical imagination plays a larger role in History than has been traditionally acknowledged by scholars such as Collingwood. He argues that historical imagination includes the use of counterfactuals where alternative pasts are mapped out based on theorising different initial conditions. Echoing Carr, Evans notes that historians frequently run through various iterations of their representations of the past to gauge the significance of a particular event, human, or phenomenon.<sup>214</sup> This challenges the dominant way of thinking in History because “historians approach counterfactual reasoning with enormous unease”.<sup>215</sup> Yet Evans is arguing that historians actually deploy this reasoning regularly. Generally historians want to avoid counterfactual reasoning as it draws heavily on “laws, rationality, and causal analysis” which they see as often invalid ways of thinking to explain the human past.<sup>216</sup> These three ways of thinking underpin the scientific method, and its predictive capabilities. This is suggestive that perhaps historians shy away from counterfactuals because it acknowledges that their discipline is more ‘scientific’ than they wish to admit. On historical imagination in general, Evans argues that for a past situation, historians “*imagine* the contours in this situation, and have to speculate on quite a bit of the detail; at the same time, however, the discovery of the existing pieces does set quite severe limits on the operation of our imagination”.<sup>217</sup> Going from sources to a representation of the past necessitates deploying historical imagination.

---

<sup>214</sup> Carr, *What is History?*, 90; Evans, *In Defence of History*, 132-133.

<sup>215</sup> Martin Bunzl, ‘Counterfactual History: A User’s Guide,’ *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (2004), 845.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 845.

<sup>217</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, 96.

However, Evans does not acknowledge that historical imagination should be used think about the future. He accepts the dominant view that F-Perception is not a function of History. This is done primarily by criticising Carr’s ideas, such as his seemingly oversimplified notion of causation between events. For example, Evans notes that accidental causes—ones that appear beyond logical causal explanation—are a critical element of an event, so should not be ignored.<sup>218</sup> More impressive is Evans dismantling of Carr’s idea that History is a science that can produce generalisations, laws, and predictions like the natural sciences. Evans observes that the differences between two atoms are much smaller than the differences between two historical phenomena, and thus we cannot construct patterns and laws like the natural sciences.<sup>219</sup> He argues that when dealing with patterns of human behaviour, our generalisations become broader, and the “further removed they will become from hard evidence...”.<sup>220</sup> In a more scientific sense, the complexity of human society is much higher than the complexity of inanimate structures such as mountain ranges, and biological systems such as coral reefs. Higher complexity means more parts, more connections, and thus more phenomena.<sup>221</sup> Generalisations, patterns, and laws are harder to perceive because in these more complex systems, each entity, say a human in a community, is being influenced by many more parts. This is the idea that underpins Evans’ criticism of Carr. Maybe our predictions of human behaviour and society will

---

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 134-135.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-58.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>221</sup> For an overview of the concept of complexity in terms of matter and energy, and from a Big History perspective see Fred Spier, “Complexity in Big History,” *Cliodynamics: The Journal of Theoretical and Mathematical History* 2 no. 1 (2011), 146-166.

get closer to the natural sciences in the future. Evans concludes that “It was always a mistake for a historian to predict the future”.<sup>222</sup>

## Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has examined the practice and thoughts of seven scholars on whether History should relate to the future. As outlined in the *Framework*, the past can relate to the future through three main functions: F-Reflection, F-Perception, and F-Influence. Even considering some additional historians covered in chapter one such as Braudel and Staley, we have drawn upon a very limited pool of scholars to represent History’s attitude to the future. However, we can map out some key observations about what approaches to the historical method are either conducive or unfavourable to the historian engaging in one or more of the three functions.

The ‘traditional’ historians of chapter two are Ranke, Collingwood, and Elton because their views are generally incongruent with History pursuing any of the three functions. These historians prioritise the ‘objective’ processing of primary evidence that must concern human experience. Only by separating this process from a historian’s own environment, can History remove itself from biases, and construct the ‘facts’ of History. They assert that the discipline should not be motivated by future interests, comment about the future, or aim to shape the future. Together, these three historians represent the traditional core of History’s method and purpose. The

---

<sup>222</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, 60-62.

dominant attitude within History today is not as absolute in its isolation from the future, but is rooted heavily in the historical method these three historians practiced and preached.

The 'unconventional' historical thinkers of chapter two are Marx, Spengler, and Carr because their views are fairly open towards the three functions relating History to the future. Marx and Spengler both constructed macrohistories that sought to explain how society operates on a large spatial and temporal scale. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Arnold Toynbee are two other examples of scholars who produced "generalized histories and comprehensive interpretations of recorded history facts".<sup>223</sup> All these scholars, including Carr, hold to varying degrees the view that History is a tool with social value. History is driven by our interests in the future, it can be used to perceive the future, and it can influence the future. Marx in particular exemplifies the F-Influence function. The commonalities between these scholars include their focus on explaining the main drivers of society, rather than the details which are of much higher priority for the 'traditional' historians. Both Marx and Spengler operated on a societal scale, thinking that explaining the main drivers of society was far more important than the details. As the *Framework* has suggested, the *explain drivers* process should operate on a large-scale to best inform the F-Perception function that feeds on the information from this process. Staley is an example of a more recent scholar who seeks to 'update' the views of the 'unconventional' historical thinkers to incorporate the ideas of Futures.

---

<sup>223</sup> Harris, "Collingwood's Theory of History," 35.

Finally, Evans is the 'balanced' historian whose view of History contains parts from both previous groups of historical thinkers. Overall, Evans acknowledges F-Reflection, opposes F-Perception, and is uncommitted on F-Influence. Obviously, if historians are to pursue the future, then they will have to practice F-Perception to some degree. Even if this is founded on a different form of evidence, historians need to venture into this largely unknown space if History is increase its social utility.

## CHAPTER THREE

The main purpose of chapter three is to demonstrate how and why World Environmental History or WEH falls within the less-popular 'unconventional' attitude embracing the future. The chapter begins by introducing Environmental History, the genre that includes WEH. This is followed by three case studies of WEH books. These case studies show that to varying degrees the authors engage in all three functions of the *Framework* that relate the future to History: F-Reflection, F-Perception, and F-Influence.

### Environmental History

Environmental historian J. Donald Hughes defines the discipline as seeking an "understanding of

human beings as they have lived, worked and thought in relationship to the rest of the nature”.<sup>224</sup> Hughes argues that the field overlaps with ecology in its focus on connections between humans, organisms, and the inanimate parts of the Earth-system.<sup>225</sup> He also shows that the field converges with many other disciplines, and often scholars working within those disciplines and using the conventions and approaches of other disciplines, produce Environmental History.<sup>226</sup> For instance, *The Social Metabolism* explains the Earth-system as a socioeconomic metabolism, and brings to the fore systems thinking that is often used in Environmental History.<sup>227</sup> The discipline strives to elevate the relationship between society and the rest of the Earth-system as one of the key drivers of how society has functioned and will continue to function. The systems approach, cross-disciplinary discourse, and focus on the main drivers of social and historical change are all aspects that overlap with the ‘unconventional’ attitude of historical thought that embraces the future. They are aspects that feature prominently in how we proposed History and Futures could connect via the processes of the *Framework*.

The emergence of Environmental History was primarily caused by people wanting to historicise the growing environmental crisis that was becoming an increasingly evident threat to society’s future from the 1960s. Catalysed by the 1960s environmental movement, particularly in the USA, scholars sought to rewrite History in terms of the relationship between society and the rest of the Earth-system.<sup>228</sup> The “concerns for sustainability” continue to motivate a rise in

---

<sup>224</sup> J. Donald Hughes, *What is Environmental History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-10.

<sup>227</sup> Manuel Gonzalez de Molina and Victor M. Toledo, *The Social Metabolism* (London: Springer, 2014), 2-3, 26-30.

<sup>228</sup> Hughes, *What is Environmental History?*, 28-40; J. R. McNeill, “The Historiography of Environmental History,” in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 5: Historical Writing Since 1945*, ed. Axel Schneider and Daniel

Environmental History and its related sciences.<sup>229</sup> Environmental History is a shining example that “History today, no less than in the previous century, does ultimately reflect the preoccupations, interests, and anxieties of our times”.<sup>230</sup> Environmental History is thus a prime example of how History peers into the past to explain our future concerns, or what we call F-Reflection.

Environmental History uses F-Reflection to provide a platform for F-Perception, but remains very cautious about function. Big Historian David Christian suggests that the discipline “leads naturally to discussion of the near future and the ecological challenges that face world society today”.<sup>231</sup> It could be argued that this progression to the near future can occur for any historical genre, but it happens more naturally for environmental matters because they are of great concern to society. As will be demonstrated in our case studies, environmental historians usually withhold from making predictions.

The F-Influence function is embedded within Environmental History’s desire to provide an improved understanding of society’s intimate connection to the Earth-system. Environmental historians want to change how people understand the environment and teach them lessons about what is a sustainable relationship between society and the Earth-system. Hughes argues that these desires of environmental historians stem from an ethical responsibility to inform

---

Woolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 159-160; Martin V. Melosi, “Equity, Eco-Racism, and the Environmental Justice Movement,” in *The Face of the Earth: Environment and World History*, ed. J. Donald Hughes (New York: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 2000), 47-52; David Christian, “World Environmental History,” in *The Oxford Handbook of World History*, ed. Jerry H. Bentley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 127.

<sup>229</sup> Gonzalez de Molina and Toledo, *The Social Metabolism*, 26.

<sup>230</sup> Sverker Sorlin and Paul Warde, *Nature’s End: History and the Environment* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2.

<sup>231</sup> Christian, “World Environmental History”, 136.

people about how society impacts the Earth-system, and thus change how people think and behave.<sup>232</sup> Chris J. Lewis questions us: “can we refuse to enter into the current scientific and political debate about the impact of the accelerating global transformation of the environment because it is just a debate between competing stories about progress and apocalypse?”<sup>233</sup> Environmental historians such as Sverker Sorlin and Paul Warde answer with a resounding ‘no’.<sup>234</sup> These scholars assert that “history is not just about understanding, it is also about action and about moral predicaments and determinants to guide action”.<sup>235</sup> Sorlin and Warde are stating that F-Influence is not only an important function of Environmental History, but is integral to all of History. They claim that Environmental History can “tell us how we arrived here and what we need to know to handle our global environmental predicament”.<sup>236</sup> Although the field can put us in a better position to handle future issues, there will always be much speculation. This is because the nature of the global environmental predicament is changing all the time. In 2050, the Earth-system may involve aspects that we cannot address by simply applying what has worked in the past. The world population will be close to 10 billion people by 2050.<sup>237</sup> World temperatures are almost certain to be around 1-2 degrees warmer than at the start of the century.<sup>238</sup> A

---

<sup>232</sup> Hughes, *What is Environmental History?*, 117.

<sup>233</sup> Chris L. Lewis, “Telling Stories about the Future: Environmental History and Apocalyptic Science,” in *Environmental History Review* 17 no. 3 (1993), 44.

<sup>234</sup> For a more detailed explanation of the practical role Environmental History should perform see Sverker Sorlin and Paul Warde, “Making the Environment Historical: An Introduction,” in *Nature’s End: History and the Environment* ed. Sverker Sorlin and Paul Warde (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1-19.

<sup>235</sup> Sorlin and Warde, “Making the Environment Historical: An Introduction,” in *Nature’s End: History and the Environment*, 2.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>237</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables*, Working Paper no. ESA/P/WP/248 (2017), 1.

<sup>238</sup> IPCC, *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri and L.A. Meyer (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, 8-12, available from <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/syr/>

technological phenomenon like artificial intelligence may have rapidly advanced. These are just some of the factors that would make the global environmental predicament of 2050 potentially so different to the past, or even today. This should not deter us from the knowledge we can gain from the past and apply to our thoughts about the future, but it is good to be aware of the limitations of the *teach lessons* process. Environmental historians see value in the F-Influence function because “sustainability is a decision, not a destiny”.<sup>239</sup>

Chapter three specifically focuses on World Environmental History because that allows the chapter to best test the thesis’ hypothesis that expanding the spatial and disciplinary scope of History assists its temporal expansion into the future. In contrast to most of forms of environmental history, WEH expands the spatial scope to examine the relationship between society and the Earth-system at a global level that transcends state and cultural boundaries.<sup>240</sup> It continues to push Environmental History’s cross-disciplinary approach by using the “complementary lenses of the science and the humanities” to perform a “triangulation on the nature of human history”.<sup>241</sup> WEH draws upon both the genres of World History and Environmental History as well as on the methods and approaches of ecology, climate science, and other sciences.<sup>242</sup>

---

<sup>239</sup> Sorlin and Warde, “Making the Environment Historical: An Introduction,” in *Nature’s End: History and the Environment*, 18.

<sup>240</sup> Hughes, *What is Environmental History?*, 76.

<sup>241</sup> Christian, “World Environmental History”, 125-126.

<sup>242</sup> J. Donald Hughes, “Introduction: Ecological Process in World History,” in *The Face of the Earth: Environment and World History*, ed. J. Donald Hughes (New York: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 2000), 3-21

Other existing historiography has touched on the future in terms of F-Perception, but not paid enough attention to F-Reflection and F-Influence.<sup>243</sup> We have used these existing historiographies to identify what three scholars to focus on that have significantly impacted Environmental History.<sup>244</sup> The section that follows examines how each WEH book engaged in the three functions of the *Framework* that connect the future to History. J. R. McNeill's historiography of Environmental History looks at "the evolution of environmental history in general, exploring its origins and growth, its flaws and eccentricities, and conclude[s] with an assessment of its most active areas".<sup>245</sup> We have overviewed this content in this introductory section, but the rest of the chapter will focus on just three WEH books.

---

<sup>243</sup> See for example Hughes, *What is Environmental History?*, 100.

<sup>244</sup> J. Donald Hughes, "The Greening of World History," in *Palgrave Advances in World Histories*, ed. Marnie Hughes-Warrington (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 238-251.

<sup>245</sup> McNeill, "The Historiography of Environmental History," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, 159.

## Something New Under the Sun (John McNeill)

*“There is something new under the sun...the place of humankind within the natural world is not what it was...modern times are different, and we would do well to remember that”<sup>246</sup>*

McNeill’s 2000 *Something New Under the Sun* received critical acclaim for its sweeping, rich, and at times evocative account of humanity’s impact on the world during the twentieth century. In *Part One: The Music of the Spheres*, McNeill demonstrates that humans have impacted all major aspects of the Earth-system to an unprecedented degree during the twentieth century. In *Part Two: Engines of Change*, he reveals that the main drivers of society are intimately connected to our impact on the planet such as our technology, politics, economics, and dominant ideologies.

McNeill’s thesis is best explained by his own summary from the preface:

In the pages that follow I aim to persuade you of several related propositions. Firstly, that the twentieth century was unusual for the intensity of change and the centrality of human effort in provoking it. Second, that this ecological peculiarity is the unintended consequence of social, political, economic, and intellectual preferences and patterns. Third, that our patterns of thought, behaviour, production, and consumption are adapted to our current circumstances—that is, to the current climate (and global biogeochemistry), to the twentieth century’s abundance of cheap energy and cheap fresh water, to rapid population growth, and to yet more rapid economic growth. Fourth, that these preferences and patterns are not easily adaptable should our circumstances change. This last proposition pertains to the future and so I will not, in a work of history, pursue it far. In addressing these themes I also aim to convince you that the modern ecological history of our planet and the socioeconomic history of humanity make full sense only if seen together.<sup>247</sup>

---

<sup>246</sup> John R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World* (London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 2001), xix.

<sup>247</sup> McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun*, xx.

He concludes outlining his thesis by proposing "...that we, as a species, are unwittingly choosing a particular evolutionary gambit".<sup>248</sup> McNeill is dealing with the survival of our species. His preface frames his book on the biological evolutionary level that necessitates such a deeply complex and fundamental topic. The extended passage from the preface hints at how heavily, or lightly, McNeill's book incorporates F-Reflection, F-Perception, and F-Influence. We break down this case study, and the subsequent ones, into how the author practices these three functions. One reason for selecting McNeill's book as a case study is that his attitude towards the three functions appears representative of world environmental historians in general. Another reason is that his book was critically appraised for its high calibre of argument, readability, breadth of statistics, use of evidence, and overall message.<sup>249</sup>

### **Future-Reflection**

McNeill writes about the environment's past because the present environment, and thus the future environment, is a major topic of concern for our society. McNeill frames the book around this concern, asserting in the preface that "This book is a history of—and for—environmentally tumultuous times".<sup>250</sup> The book reflects on how we got to the present relationship between

---

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, xx.

<sup>249</sup> Chris Lavers, "Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the 20th Century," in *The Ecologist* 30 no. 7 (2000), 60; David Christian, "Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World (review)," in *Journal of World History* 12 no. 2 (2001), 516-517; David Massell, "Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World," in *The Journal of American History* 88 no. 4 (2002), 1570-1571; Joel E. Cohen, "Linking Human and Natural History: A Review Essay\*," in *Population and Development Review* 27 no. 3 (2001), 573-583; Martin V. Melosi, "Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World," in *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 4 (2001), 1331.

<sup>250</sup> McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun*, xix.

society and the rest of the Earth-system. All the tables of statistics, illustrated case studies, and accounts of increasing human activity, paint and explain a picture of how this relationship has developed right up to the present. The picture is vividly painted for times of great change to illustrate the turning points in how humans have interacted with the environment.<sup>251</sup> Although History aims to be a representation of the past, it is never completely representative because historians tend to focus on the moments of change; in this case, the emergence of new ways humans impacted the Earth-system, or an increase in the intensity of pre-existing impacts. Additionally, what the historian is reflecting on becomes a lens to elevate the importance of this content across a wide range of historical material. In McNeill's book for example, he highlights the wider impacts that colonisation and the Cold War had upon the environment.<sup>252</sup>

### **Future-Perception**

Although very cautious about commenting on the future, McNeill does utilise some aspects of F-Perception in his book. In his preface he tells us that for content regarding the future, he "will not, in a work of history, pursue it far".<sup>253</sup> For the most part, McNeill stays within the confines of the dominant 'traditional' contempt within History for envisaging the future. This is despite the fact that his statistical approach to conveying the trends in environmental impacts across the twentieth century lends itself to an extrapolation into the near-future, particularly since his book is driven in part by a F-Reflection of the current and future environmental situation. His caution

---

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiii.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-41, 197-198.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, xx.

to comment on the future, despite his content and methodology lending itself to such commentary, helps show how strongly tied History is to isolating itself from the future.

At the end of some chapters, McNeill briefly comments about the future. Sometimes, like when he notes that carbon dioxide emissions will remain in the atmosphere for centuries because they take that long to decompose, are predictions that work well because they are grounded in scientific fact.<sup>254</sup> At other times, his comments are loose predictions of the “if...then...” form such as his remark that “given favourable conditions - a tall order in light of the history of whaling - whale numbers, except the slow breeding blues, might recover in 60 to 100 years and escape their brush with extinction”.<sup>255</sup> In other cases, McNeill simply claims that more impacts are yet to come: “...All this belongs to the future: like climate change or ozone depletion, the erosion of biodiversity certainly happened in the twentieth century, but its societal impact as yet remained small”.<sup>256</sup> It is noteworthy that despite being a fairly adventurous historian dealing with content that underpins our species’ future, McNeill remains very cautious of F-Perception.

F-Perception is more than simply predicting the future, it is also about framing the past in terms of the future, even if it is difficult to accurately gaze into its foggy depths. McNeil contextualises his discussion of the twentieth century within not only the thousands of years preceding that period, but also in context to the future in general.<sup>257</sup> He concludes that “our impacts on the

---

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>257</sup> For his contextualisation prior to twentieth century see McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun*, 3-17.

planet are not a bad gamble at all unless one is concerned with the long run, or unless one imagines our present circumstances are soon to change”.<sup>258</sup> Some of these circumstances will change such as a movement away from fossil fuels such as coal and oil not only due to the detrimental effect of greenhouse emissions, but the fact that these resources have a limited supply. McNeill shows that our impact on the planet during the twentieth century “will be peculiar not only in light of the past, but in light of the future as well”.<sup>259</sup> This adds significance to his illustration of how we have interacted with the planet in just one century. He stresses that the impacts of our actions in this century will have some consequences that have not yet happened. The consequences will “often be shunted onto the poor, the powerless, foreigners - or the future”.<sup>260</sup> Although McNeill seldom predicts the future or imagines a possible scenario, the future is used to assist the past in framing his period of enquiry.

### **Future-Influence**

The main way McNeill attempts to influence the future is by altering the thinking of how readers understand reality. McNeill’s main message is that “in the twentieth century, humankind has begun to play dice with the planet, without knowing all the rules of the game”.<sup>261</sup> In fact, he thinks that in regards to our impact on the planet, we “are scarcely more conscious of the process than were cyanobacteria” when they transformed the planet’s atmosphere.<sup>262</sup> McNeill wants his

---

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, xxi.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 179, 202.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

book to change how people understand society's relationship to the environment. To make them aware of the game we are playing with the planet. He also directs this message to academia, trying to convince scholars that "the modern ecological history of the planet and the socioeconomic history of humanity make full sense only if seen together".<sup>263</sup> He urges for an integrated knowledge system that connects our understanding of society and our understanding of the planet.<sup>264</sup> Furthermore, this approach allows for "a better idea of our possible futures".<sup>265</sup> In this way, McNeill is supporting this thesis' hypothesis that that a spatial and disciplinary expansion of History go hand-in-hand with thinking about the future.

McNeill wants people to grasp the complexities of the Earth-system because "few people paused to contemplate these complexities...few citizens and fewer rulers spared a thought for the ecological impacts of their behaviour or ideas. Even after 1970, when environmental awareness had hurriedly dawned, easy fables of good and evil dominated public and political discourse".<sup>266</sup> It is important to note that McNeill avoids promoting a particular ideology or judgement on the Earth-system. He warns us in the preface that "...for those who like to be told what to think, this [book] will particularly disappoint".<sup>267</sup> He stays true to his word, refusing to endorse the idea that we are in a "genuine ecological crisis".<sup>268</sup> This is still a little surprising given the strength of his arguments about humanity's increasing impact on the planet. With most of the 'spheres' of the Earth-system impacted more heavily today than twenty years ago, and our increase in knowledge

---

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, xx.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 192-193, 239.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

of the effects of human impacts such as climate change, it seems surprising does not endorse the idea of a genuine ecological crisis.

McNeill lightly touches on the process of *teaching lessons* where one provides general guidance on how to behave in the future based on past examples. Stories such as the devastation of the Aral Sea recount important turning points in our relationship to the planet, and they act as cautionary tales.<sup>269</sup> But highlighting ‘success’ stories of the human-environment relationship is arguably more important. ‘Success’ stories reveal strategies in the past that have helped build a healthy human-environment relationship. It may be useful to apply these strategies in the future. For example, McNeill notes that “whales avoided total extinction in large part because of their unusual appeal to conservationists. No fish enjoyed such status”.<sup>270</sup> Another example is the success of Japan’s attitude and strategy to managing waste.<sup>271</sup> McNeill’s book certainly offers some general points to consider for the future.

Finally, McNeill refrains from suggesting any particular actions to take in the future until the very end of his book. Even here, what is offered is simply a list identifying general strategies society should pursue:

My interpretation of modern history suggests the most sensible things to do are to hasten the arrival of a new, cleaner energy regime and to hasten the demographic transition toward lower mortality and fertility. The former implies concentrated scientific and engineering work, and probably interventions in the marketplace that encourage the

---

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 163-165.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

early retirement of existing energy infrastructures and faster diffusion of new ones. The latter implies furthering the formal education of girls and women in poor countries...<sup>272</sup>

An Environmental History of the World: Humankind's Changing Role in the Community of Life (J. Donald Hughes)

*"Floating above the Maasai Mara in a hot air balloon, as I did early one morning, affords a wide prospect of the mosaic of the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem. The number and variety of large animals visible from the air amazed me... But with agricultural developments moving ever closer, and poachers at their destructive work, the future of the wildlife is in question"*<sup>273</sup>

Hughes is one of the "Tribal Elders" of Environmental History.<sup>274</sup> He has written excellent books that introduce and examine the discipline such as *What is Environmental History?* and *The Face of the Earth: Environment and World History*. However, his 2001 *An Environmental History of the World* is his own attempt at WEH that covers society's interactions with the environment beginning with the emergence of our species. Similar to *Something New Under the Sun*, Hughes' book draws heavily on local and regional case studies to illustrate a grand narrative of increasing interactions between society and the Earth-system.<sup>275</sup> Also similar to McNeill is Hughes' embrace of F-Reflection, reluctance to utilise F-Perception, and focus on the *alter thinking* rather than *develop strategy* part of F-Influence.

---

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 359.

<sup>273</sup> J. Donald Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World: Humankind's Changing Role in the Community of Life* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 14.

<sup>274</sup> Stephen J. Pyne, "An Environmental History of the World: Humankind's Changing Role in the Community of Life," in *Environmental History* 8, no. 2 (2003), 316.

<sup>275</sup> Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World*, 3.

## Future-Reflection

One way that F-Reflection manifests itself in Hughes' book is through his personal style. This style grounds the book in the present which helps convey to the reader that despite Hughes examining the past of the human-environment relationship, this knowledge is also important to understand the future. In other words, Hughes' personal prose helps convey that the content at hand is integral to the past, present, and future.<sup>276</sup> The implementation of his personal style begins structurally with the choice that with one exception, he will use "only places I have seen and studied" for the main case studies.<sup>277</sup> Thus for most case studies, Hughes provides an individual and intimate perspective, as if we were the cameraperson following him on a documentary adventure. Vivid examples include Hughes floating above the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem in a hot air balloon,<sup>278</sup> strolling through the bustling markets of Shanghai,<sup>279</sup> and approaching by boat a Pacific Island where "to right and left, great waves hit the coral barrier and shot high into the air, making it vibrate".<sup>280</sup> Hughes' firsthand experiences of the interactions between humans and the planet bring an immediacy to those interactions. They are fundamental to how society has functioned and will continue to function. Hughes' style draws the reader in to consider the Earth-system, whether that be of the past, present, or future. This of course helps him influence the reader, which will discuss under the F-Influence section.

---

<sup>276</sup> Eric Jones, "An Environmental History of the World: Humankind's Changing Role in the Community of Life," in *The Journal of Economic History* 62, no. 4 (2002), 1172; Pyne, "An Environmental History of the World," 316.

<sup>277</sup> Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World*, 10.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

## Future-Perception

Like McNeill, Hughes usually avoids commenting on the future, doing so only to frame the human-environment relationship as something that is becoming increasingly important as we move into the future. Hughes acknowledges this framing by asserting that “while histories do not often concern themselves with the future, it is appropriate for a world environmental history to look at the trends active in the twentieth century which are likely to persist into the twenty-first and will continue to affect the worldwide picture.”<sup>281</sup> Throughout his book, Hughes discusses how a group of attitudes, values, and philosophies have underpinned how, and why, society has degraded the environment. Based on this explanation, Hughes predicts that if “the cultural attitudes of the industrial age remain the determiners of human actions in regards to the ecosystems”, then “an unprecedented crisis of survival is likely in the new century”.<sup>282</sup> Hughes’ prediction extrapolates current trends forward, which in this case are the dominance of ideas like nature being a resource to exploit for our community’s benefit. He is arguing that society has to substantially alter some of its core ideas, or else it probably faces a large-scale disaster.<sup>283</sup> There is little detail to this claim which is why it is classified as a rough prediction, rather than a scenario that futurists like Voros specialise in. But is an example of how Hughes performs F-Perception to frame the human-environment relationship as an emerging source of crisis for society in the future.

---

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 206; why historians in other genres have rarely framed their work in such a way is a question we touch on in the conclusion of this thesis.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

## Future-Influence

Again in a similar manner to McNeill, Hughes seeks to influence the future mainly by altering how readers think about the significance of the human-environment relationship. This is self-evident in how Hughes argues that humans are intrinsically linked to the rest of the environment. Hughes also aims to alter the thinking of historians by encouraging them to expand their disciplinary scope as “political and economic histories ignore geography, geology, and biology to their peril, since the latter reveal aspects of the order of things within which the former operate, and upon which they depend”.<sup>284</sup> This point is especially relevant to our thesis because Hughes is supporting our claim that cross-disciplinary collaboration is a prerequisite for historians to explain the ‘layers’ of the Earth-system within which all historical phenomena occur. This approach is sketched out in the processes and the characteristics of the *Framework* we suggested in chapter one to connect History and Futures thinking. Hughes continues by encouraging a *systems thinking* approach: “one of the greatest mistakes made by humans today is to think about themselves as existing and acting without reference to other forms of life. No species exists in complete isolation; everyone relates to others in a living system. This is common knowledge in biology, but must also be recognized as a basic fact of history”.<sup>285</sup> Hughes argues that a cross-disciplinary awareness must extend to the natural sciences: “Historians must never forget that the human body is composed of physical elements, made of the same stuff that the stars, and therefore the Earth, are made of”.<sup>286</sup> There are no obvious limits to the collaboration between

---

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

disciplines, but there of course remain great barriers we must overcome to reach this collaboration.

### Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed (Jared Diamond)

*“The world's environmental problems will get resolved, in one way or another, within the lifetimes of the children and young adults alive today. The only question is whether they will become resolved in pleasant ways of our own choice, or in unpleasant ways not of our choice, such as warfare, genocide, starvation, disease epidemics, and collapses of societies.”<sup>287</sup>*

Diamond's 2005 *Collapse* seeks answers to a two-fold question: why do some societies collapse, and how can this knowledge help us avoid a collapse of modern global society? Like our previous two case studies, *Collapse* was praised for its scholarly detail and engaging style.<sup>288</sup>

Diamond defines collapse as “a drastic decrease in human population size and/or political/economic/social complexity, over a considerable area, for an extended time”.<sup>289</sup> The book identifies and examines the main environmental and societal factors that have caused collapses, applies this knowledge to explain modern society, and considers how we should act to avoid collapse on a global scale. To a substantial degree Diamond relates History to the future via all three functions: F-Reflection, F-Perception, and F-Influence. Despite *Collapse* ultimately leaving us with more open hypotheses than well substantiated answers, Diamond does not shy away from examining the big questions of our past and speculating on our future.

---

<sup>287</sup> Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 498.

<sup>288</sup> Ralph Doty, “Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed,” in *Human Ecology Review* 12, no. 1 (2005), 76; Scott E. Page, “Are We Collapsing? A Review of Jared Diamond's *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*,” in *Journal of Economic Literature* 43, no. 4 (2005), 1050.

<sup>289</sup> Diamond, *Collapse*, 3.

Unlike McNeill and Hughes, Diamond was not trained as a historian but has a science background in physiology, biology, and geography. Diamond uses approaches such as the ‘comparative method’ that is also used in the sciences like evolutionary biology where controlled experiments in laboratories cannot be used to further our knowledge on a topic.<sup>290</sup>

Diamond explains how he will use the method and how it works in general: “I compare many past and present societies that differed with respect to environmental fragility, relations with neighbours, political institutions, and other “input” variables postulated to influence a society’s stability. The “output” variables that I examine are collapse or survival... By relating output variables to input variables, I aim to tease out the influence of possible input variables on collapses”.<sup>291</sup> This systematic approach lends itself to F-Perception because Diamond can apply the relationship he establishes between input variables and collapses, to modern society. Despite this method being atypical for History, this thesis classifies *Collapse* as a work of Environmental History because it by-and-large deals with the past of the human-environment relationship.

Diamond uses the ‘comparative method’ to postulate that the five main ‘input’ variables that may contribute to collapse are environmental damage, climate change, hostile neighbours, friendly trade partners, and how a society responds to its problems.<sup>292</sup> This becomes his five-point framework to argue that although “any people can fall into the trap of overexploiting environmental resources”, a mixture of one or more of the other four factors also plays a role in

---

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

collapse.<sup>293</sup> However, some scholars like social scientist Scott E. Page argue that Diamond provides insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the other four factors play a significant role in collapses, and thus overexploiting resources should be the only explanation of collapses.<sup>294</sup> Diamond himself sometimes questions causality within his analysis, such as thinking about whether fighting within Mayan society catalysed their collapse or was an effect of overexploitation of resources that drove the collapse.<sup>295</sup> Page's criticism appears valid because we are left with so many underdeveloped ideas relating to collapses such as the point Diamond raises about causality in the Mayan collapses. To be fair to Diamond, it is extremely difficult to explain societal collapses because there are so many factors to consider. He often has to use the historical imagination to formulate a more cohesive narrative of how the past may have unfolded than simply what the available evidence can reveal. But if his five-point framework is grounded on unsatisfactory evidence, then we have to be cautious applying it to modern and future societies.

### **Future-Reflection**

Like Hughes, Diamond's personal style reveals his book to be driven by a concern for the future of the human-environment relationship. "I have been a bird-watcher since I was seven years old" recounts Diamond as he openly discusses his personal interest in the environment, educational

---

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>294</sup> Page, "A Review of Jared Diamond's Collapse," 1054-1059.

<sup>295</sup> Diamond, *Collapse*, 176-177.

background, and relevant relationships to people, places, and businesses.<sup>296</sup> His personal style influences the structure of the book too. The first case study is modern Montana where Diamond uses his firsthand experience to impart valuable knowledge about how individuals relate to the human-environment relationship.<sup>297</sup> He brings us down to the intimate personal level so that we ask ourselves questions like: “what did the Easter Islander who cut down the last palm tree say while he was doing it?”<sup>298</sup> Diamond answers this question by directly comparing the Easter Islander to what individuals today say with concern to the environment.<sup>299</sup> This is just one example of how Diamond’s style connects the past to the present, and how he is reflecting on collapses of the past in response to our concern for the future.

### **Future-Perception**

*Collapse* does not predict the collapse of modern society, state the likelihood of such a collapse, or argue that “societies in general are prone to collapse”.<sup>300</sup> Rather, it argues that we must not underestimate the negative consequences of how society interacts with the environment in the future because the past suggests that these interactions can be devastating to society.<sup>301</sup> Diamond is savvy to the complexity of factors that underpin collapse, and hence wary of making an outright prediction. He extrapolates current trends to reveal some of these factors: “the development of environmental problems is accelerating, the development of attempted

---

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

solutions is accelerating... Which horse will win the race?”.<sup>302</sup> Another complication with predicting the future of the human-environment relationship and thus the likelihood of a collapse of modern society, is that society’s behaviour is constantly evolving. Diamond notes that it is very difficult to account for how society will change its behaviour when making environmental predictions, and this is why some predictions fail to materialise.<sup>303</sup>

However, Diamond does extrapolate current trends to make some rough predictions that help frame the human-environment interactions around their future significance. One example is Diamond predicting that China will continue to have a massive global environmental impact due to its rapidly increasing economy driving the standard of living upwards, and how much of this growth has been based on “outdated, inefficient, or polluting technology”.<sup>304</sup> He also extrapolates trends to identify 12 serious environmental factors that modern society must address.<sup>305</sup> Based on our current rates of impact, he predicts that some of these factors like fossil fuel supplies, will be practically used up or all destroyed within 50 years.<sup>306</sup> These are ‘business-as-usual’ predictions, that unlike scenario models futurists produce, do not consider how society’s behaviour will change such as the heavy usage of new energy production technology or a paradigm shift in our attitude concerning the environment. But as noted earlier, Diamond is right that envisaging how society will behave differently in the future is a very difficult task. Regardless of whether we imagine societal changes, Diamond is correct that we have something

---

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 510-511.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 258-260.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 498.

to learn from past societies to avoid the 'business-as-usual' prediction of global environmental destruction.<sup>307</sup>

## **Future-Influence**

Diamond wrote *Collapse* to influence how people think about the human-environment relationship, and thus influence how people behave in the future. Diamond explains that for the 12 environmental issues facing modern society:

If we don't make a determined effort to solve them, and if we don't succeed at that effort, the world as a whole within the next few decades will face a declining standard of living, or perhaps something worse. That's the reason why I decided to devote most of my career efforts at this stage of my life to convincing people that our problems have to be taken seriously and won't go away otherwise. On the other hand, we shall be able to solve our problems – if we choose to do so.<sup>308</sup>

What is important from this passage because it underpins the F-Influence function, is the idea that we have a choice over the future of the Earth-system. There is human agency to respond to the environmental crisis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If this is not true, and instead the notion of environmental determinism exists where society's evolution is entirely dictated by environmental conditions, then Diamond should not bother with F-Influence because it will be ineffective. However, and as suggested by the book's subtitle *How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, Diamond refutes the idea of complete environmental determinism. He supports his position through a case study where the Dominican Republic and Haiti societies take divergent

---

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 521.

routes despite starting with very similar environmental conditions. From this case study, Diamond concludes: “For anyone inclined to caricature environmental history as 'environmental determinism,' the contrasting histories of the Dominican Republic and Haiti provide a useful antidote. Yes, environmental problems do constrain human societies, but the societies' responses also make a difference”.<sup>309</sup>

For another case study involving the two societies of the Inuits and a Viking colony, he comes to a similar conclusion: “The tragedy of the Greenland Norse (Greenland Scandinavians) thus carries a hopeful message: even in difficult environments, collapses of human societies are not inevitable: it depends on how people respond”.<sup>310</sup> His argument is not completely sound because all of his other case studies are about a single society collapsing, and this appears strongly driven by environmental factors. Even if other factors of Diamond’s five-point framework do play a role in collapses like how a society responds to environmental issues, it may still be the case that initial environmental conditions are the number one factor causing collapse.

*Collapse* teaches us lessons about the human-environment relationship, especially in the “Practical Lessons” section. The idea is that “the past offers us a rich database from which we can learn, in order that we may keep on succeeding”.<sup>311</sup> The fundamental issue with applying lessons is that the condition of current and future societies will be at least slightly different to past examples, and at worst, very different. Diamond is well aware that his “Practical Lessons” section

---

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

is the most tenuous of the entire book.<sup>312</sup> In comparing Easter Island to modern society, he cautiously notes that “the metaphor is imperfect. Our situation today differs in important respects from that of Easter Islanders in the 17<sup>th</sup> century”.<sup>313</sup> It is a pity that Diamond fails to properly explore the differences between the past societies of his case studies, and modern society with its complex global interactions between governments, businesses, cultures, institutions, and individuals.<sup>314</sup>

Despite these limitations, Diamond offers many important lessons for us to consider. One lesson is that a society needs to be flexible enough internally to adapt to the environment. In comparing the Inuit to the Greenland Vikings, Diamond argues that the Viking’s conservative culture and fixed Christian and European identity hindered their colony’s ability to adapt to harsh conditions.<sup>315</sup> For example, Diamond notes that vast resources put towards the Church such as building structures could have been better utilised elsewhere.<sup>316</sup> Diamond acknowledges that sometimes rigid beliefs and value systems underpinning a society catalyse internal peaceful behaviour, but they can still lead to “irrational behaviour” that is detrimental to the society.<sup>317</sup> He also acknowledges that choosing to live by appropriate attitudes, and discarding certain beliefs and values, is a difficult process to implement.<sup>318</sup> But he suggests it is a crucial lesson to learn: “Perhaps a crux of success or failure as a society is to know which core values to hold on

---

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 514.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>314</sup> Besides talking about big business, Diamond barely progresses the discussion beyond what is mentioned in the prologue *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 239-245.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, 244-245.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 432.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 432.

to, and which ones to discard and replace with new values, when times change”.<sup>319</sup> Diamond thus urges us to question the values we live by and make adjustments.<sup>320</sup>

A closely related lesson is that a society should remain open to learning and applying what other societies are doing to survive. For example, Diamond argues that the Greenland Vikings could have learnt about and applied some of the Inuit technology and hunting techniques, or even traded with the Inuit, to aid the survival of the Viking colony.<sup>321</sup> Diamond concludes that “the Inuit represent a missed opportunity”.<sup>322</sup> The lesson here is best expressed as a question: what opportunities is modern society missing out on?

*Collapse* is predominately about diagnosing environmental problems, rather than offering solutions, but Diamond does touch on some concrete actions we should be taking to manage our environmental impact. For example, he urges individuals to pressure politicians on environmental matters such as logging laws.<sup>323</sup> In the “further reading” section, he offers a list of individual actions such as tell politicians you are environmentally concerned and vote appropriately, adjust your consumer behaviour, praise or criticise companies, donate to environmental groups, directly help your local environment, and communicate with people and communities.<sup>324</sup> Despite big businesses and governments overseeing the rapid rise in global environmental degradation, Diamond argues that the ultimate responsibility to change how

---

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 433.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, 523.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 570-573.

society interacts with the planet falls to the general public.<sup>325</sup> He supports this claim by noting that the public have only started to become environmental conscious very recently, so previous environmental exploits of businesses and governments went unchecked.<sup>326</sup> Attitudes are changing swiftly around the world but there is still a great cognitive dissonance between a desire to be environmentally sustainable, and the behaviour of individuals, businesses, and governments. There are countless complexities to consider, and Diamond only scratches the surface despite *Collapse* being a fairly long book.

One of the complexities Diamond does not touch upon is the spread across society in attitudes towards the human-environment relationship. We call this the 'spreading effect'. One axis of this spread is generational. Brought up in a far less environmental conscious society, older generations tend to value the planet more as a resource that a system in which to live. Another axis is socio-economic. For hundreds of millions of people, they think little of the environment at large scales, because their attention is focused everyday on their own survival. Having adequate food, drinking water, good health, shelter, and some basic education are the goals they must constantly work towards. The wellbeing of the planet is of little concern to these people. The harsh reality is that these people, who have individually have a limited impact on the planet, are the ones often impacted the most by environmental degradation and its effects like climate change that have been caused by the modernising world. The challenge is to continue to improve

---

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 484.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

the lives of people globally without the global distress we have caused the planet, which in the long-term undermines our goal of improving human wellbeing.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored several questions and ideas around the topic of thinking about the future in historical thought. During the course of this research, we found that these ideas prompted us to ask a broader, but equally as important, question: what is the purpose of History? We have suggested that the answer to this complex question should have some consideration of how it relates, and can influence, the future. History is a discipline about our knowledge of the past, but the power of knowledge is demonstrated in our ability to use it.

This thesis has examined various scholars and approaches that have demonstrated how we can apply historical knowledge to the future and in doing so, enabling society with the knowledge required to help respond to the challenges of the future, such as the modern environmental crisis.

In chapter one we took a look at the core features of historical thinking and Futures thinking and identified the differences between the two disciplines. There is a key difference between representing a singular past that has happened, and representing multiple alternative futures that may happen. This epistemological difference influences the different strengths and

weaknesses of each discipline however, we argue that these differences are where the potential lies for a collaboration between the approaches of History and Futures.

We presented the Framework as an example of what that collaboration might look like. In chapters two and three, the Framework helped us to assess how historical thinkers connected their scholarship to the future via three main 'functions': F-Reflection, F-Perception, and F-Influence. Despite the continual dominance of the traditional attitude within historical thinking that those three 'functions' should not be pursued, a few significant scholars have embraced them. When it came to World Environmental History, scholars were more inclined to relate to the future. They were motivated by a pressing future issue with significant ramifications and there appeared some clear lessons to influence the behaviour of the reader.

The hypothesis running alongside the main ideas has been that expanding our spatial and disciplinary scope helps us to connect historical thinking to thinking about the future. Our argument has been for a systems-thinking approach focusing on the environment rather than events. In chapters two and three, those scholars who were open to future-thought used methodologies that shared similarities to this approach.

This thesis opens up more questions than it answers. The Framework is only a starting point for understanding how History and Futures can connect. How to overcome the barriers to relating two different ways of thinking is a difficult task, but one that should be pursued to improve the

impact History can have on society. The past of how scholarship is done is behind us, but now we can use it to influence its future.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andersson, Jenny. "The Great Future Debate And The Struggle For The World". *The American Historical Review* 117 no. 5 (2012): 1411-1430. doi:10.1093/ahr/117.5.1411.
- Armitage, David. "Horizons Of History". *History Australia* 12 no. 1 (2015): 207-225. doi:10.1080/14490854.2015.11668560.
- Barber, Bernard. "What is History? By Edward Hallett Carr". *American Journal of Sociology* 68 no. 2 (1962): 260-262.
- Bentley, Michael. "General Introduction: The Project Of Historiography". In *The Companion To Historiography*, edited by Michael Bentley. London: Taylor & Francis, 2002.
- Berry, Stephan. "The Laws of History". In *A Companion To The Philosophy Of History And Historiography*, edited by Aviezer Tucker. Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009.
- Boldt, Andreas. "Ranke: Objectivity And History". *Rethinking History* 18 no. 4 (2014): 457-474. doi:10.1080/13642529.2014.893658.
- Bonneuil, Noël. "Do Historians Make the Best Futurists?". *History And Theory* 48 no. 1 (2009): 98-104. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2303.2009.00488.x.
- Bourne, Edward Gaylord. "Leopold Von Ranke". *The Sewanee Review* 4, no. 4 (1896): 385-401. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27527902>.
- Braudel, Fernand and Wallerstein, Immanuel. "History And The Social Sciences: The Longue Durée". *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 32 no. 2 (2009): 174-175.
- Braw, J. D. "Vision As Revision: Ranke And The Beginning Of Modern History". *History And Theory* 46 no. 4 (2007): 45-60. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2303.2007.00427.x.
- Brooke, John L. *Climate Change And The Course Of Global History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Bunzl, Martin. "Counterfactual History: A User's Guide". *The American Historical Review* 109 no. 3 (2004): 845-858. doi:10.1086/530560.
- Chaisson, Eric. "Cosmic Evolution: More Than Big History by Another Name". In *Evolution: A Big History Perspective*, edited by Leonid E. Grinin, Andrey V. Korotayev, and Barry H. Rodrigue. Volgograd, Russia: 'Uchitel' Publishing House, 2011, 37-48.
- Christian, David. "Something New Under The Sun: An Environmental History Of The Twentieth-Century World (Review)". *Journal Of World History* 12 no. 2 (2001): 516-518. doi:10.1353/jwh.2001.0056.

- Christian, David. "The Evolution Of Big History: A Short Introduction". In *Evolution: A Big History Perspective*, edited by Leonid E. Grinin, Andrey V. Korotayev, and Barry H. Rodrigue. Volgograd, Russia: 'Uchitel' Publishing House, 2011, 20-25.
- Christian, David. "What Is Big History?". *Journal Of Big History* 1 no. 1 (2017): 4-19.
- Christian, David. "World Environmental History". In *The Oxford Handbook Of World History*, edited by Jerry H. Bentley. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Cohen, Joel E. "Linking Human And Natural History: A Review Essay\*". *Population And Development Review* 27 no. 3 (2001): 573-584. doi:10.1111/j.1728-4457.2001.00573.x.
- Cohen, Paul. *History and Popular Memory: The Power of Story in Moments of Crisis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
- Collingwood, R. G. "Oswald Spengler And The Theory Of Historical Cycles". *Antiquity* 1, no. 03 (1927): 311-325. doi:10.1017/s0003598x00000685.
- Costello, Paul. *World Historians And Their Goals*. DeKalb [Ill.]: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994.
- Curthoys, Ann, and John Docker. *Is History Fiction?*. 2nd ed. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010.
- Doty, Ralph. "Collapse: How Societies Choose To Fail Or Succeed". *Human Ecology Review* 12 no. 1 (2005): 76.
- Durance, Philippe, and Michel Godet. "Scenario Building: Uses And Abuses". *Technological Forecasting And Social Change* 77 no. 9 (2010): 1488-1492. doi:10.1016/j.techfore.2010.06.007
- Flechtheim, Ossip Kurt. *History And Futurology*. Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1966.
- Forster, Robert. "Achievements Of The Annales School". *The Journal Of Economic History* 38 no. 1 (1978): 58-76. doi:10.1017/s0022050700088161.
- Galtung, Johan. "Karl Marx: Techno-Economic Stages." In *Macrohistory And Macrohistorians*, edited by Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1997.
- Galtung, Johan. "Macrohistory And Macrohistorians: A Theoretical Framework." In *Macrohistory And Macrohistorians*, edited by Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1997.
- Gilbert, Felix. "Historiography: What Ranke Meant". *The American Scholar* 56 no. 3 (1987), 393-397.
- González de Molina Navarro, Manuel, and Victor M. Toledo. *The Social Metabolism*. London: Springer, 2014.

- Gorman, Jonathan. "Ethics and the Writing of Historiography". In *A Companion To The Philosophy Of History And Historiography*, edited by Aviezer Tucker. Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009.
- Guldi, Jo, and David Armitage. *The History Manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Harris, Errol E. "Collingwood's Theory Of History". *The Philosophical Quarterly* 7 no. 26 (1957): 35-49. doi:10.2307/2216345.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. *How To Change The World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.
- Hughes, H. Stuart. *Oswald Spengler*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1992.
- Hughes, J Donald. "Introduction: Ecological Process In World History". In *The Face Of The Earth: Environment And World History*, edited by J. Donald Hughes. New York: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 2000.
- Hughes, J. Donald. "The Greening Of World History". In *Palgrave Advances In World Histories*, edited by Marnie Hughes-Warrington. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Hughes, J. Donald. *What Is Environmental History?*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006.
- Hughes-Warrington, Marnie. *Fifty Key Thinkers On History*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Hyrkkänen, Markku. "All History Is, More Or Less, Intellectual History: R. G. Collingwood's Contribution To The Theory And Methodology Of Intellectual History". *Intellectual History Review* 19 no. 2 (2009): 251-263. doi:10.1080/17496970902722932.
- Inayatullah, Sohail. "Oswald Spengler: The Maturation and Decay of Cultures." In *Macrohistory And Macrohistorians*, edited by Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1997.
- IPCC, *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri and L.A. Meyer (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, 2014, 8-12, available from <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/syr/>
- Jenkins, Keith. *On 'What Is History?' From Carr And Elton To Rorty And White*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Jones, Eric. "An Environmental History Of The World: Humankind's Changing Role In The Community Of Life". *The Journal Of Economic History* 62 no. 4 (2002): 1172-1173. doi:10.1017/s0022050702001961.
- Kaivo-oja, Jari Y., Tapio S. Katko, and Osmo T. Seppälä. "Seeking Convergence Between History And Futures Research". *Futures* 36 no. 5 (2004): 527-547. doi:10.1016/j.futures.2003.10.017.

- Kosso, Peter. "Philosophy Of Historiography". In *A Companion To The Philosophy Of History And Historiography*, edited by Aviezer Tucker. Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009.
- Kuper, Adam, and Jessica Kuper. *The Social Science Encyclopedia*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Landrum, Robert H. "A Eulogy For Geoffrey Elton (1920-1994)". *The Historian* 59 no. 1 (1996): 113-123. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6563.1996.tb00987.x.
- Lavers, Chris. "Something New Under The Sun: An Environmental History Of The 20Th Century". *The Ecologist* 30 no. 7 (2000): 60.
- Lewis, Chris H. "Telling Stories About The Future: Environmental History And Apocalyptic Science". *Environmental History Review* 17, no. 3 (1993): 43-60. doi:10.2307/3984604.
- Liebel-Weckowicz, Helen. "Ranke's Theory Of History And The German Modernist School". *Canadian Journal Of History* 23 no. 1 (1988): 73-93. doi:10.3138/cjh.23.1.73.
- Massell, David. "Something New Under The Sun: An Environmental History Of The Twentieth-Century World". *The Journal Of American History* 88 no. 4 (2002): 1570. doi:10.2307/2700702.
- Melosi, Martin V. "Something New Under The Sun: An Environmental History Of The Twentieth-Century World". *The American Historical Review* 106 no. 4 (2001): 1331. doi:10.2307/2692967.
- McNeill, J. R. "The Historiography Of Environmental History,". In *The Oxford History Of Historical Writing Volume 5: Historical Writing Since 1945*, edited by Axel Schneider and Daniel Woolf. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- McNeill, William H. *Past And Future*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.
- Melosi, Martin. "Equity, Eco-Racism, And The Environmental Justice Movement". In *The Face Of The Earth: Environment And World History*, edited by J. Donald Hughes. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2000.
- Michael, Marien. "Celebrating The Life Of Futurist W. Warren Wagar". *The Futurist* 39 no. 2 (2005): 68.
- Naishtat, Francisco. "Historiographic Refocalization And Change In The Historicity Regime". In *Controversy Spaces: A Model Of Scientific And Philosophical Change*, edited by Oscar Nudler. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2011, 29-40.
- Page, Scott E. "Are We Collapsing? A Review Of Jared Diamond'S Collapse: How Societies Choose To Fail Or Succeed". *Journal Of Economic Literature* 43 no. 4 (2005): 1049-1062. doi:10.1257/002205105775362032.
- Parker, Christopher, and Roger Spalding. *Historiography: An Introduction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.

- Pyne, Stephen J. "An Environmental History Of The World: Humankind's Changing Role In The Community Of Life". *Environmental History* 8 no. 2 (2003): 316. doi:10.2307/3985715.
- Reiman, Jeffrey. "Moral Philosophy: The Critique of Capitalism and the Problem of Ideology". In *The Cambridge Companion to Marx*, edited by Terrell Carver. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Shaw, William H. *Marx's Theory Of History*. London: Hutchinson, 1978.
- Skinner, Quentin. "Sir Geoffrey Elton And The Practice Of History". *Transactions Of The Royal Historical Society* 7 (1997): 301-316. doi:10.2307/3679282.
- Son, Hyeonju. "The History Of Western Futures Studies: An Exploration Of The Intellectual Traditions And Three-Phase Periodization". *Futures* 66 (2015): 120-137. doi:10.1016/j.futures.2014.12.013.
- Spier, Fred. "Complexity In Big History". *Cliodynamics: The Journal Of Quantitative History And Cultural Evolution* 2 no. 1 (2011): 146-166. doi:10.21237/c7clio21213.
- Stanford, Michael. *An Introduction To The Philosophy Of History*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1998.
- Staley, David J. *History And Future: Using Historical Thinking To Imagine The Future*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010.
- Steffen, W. L, Peter Tyson, Regina A. Sanderson, Pamela A. Matson, Frank Oldfield, Katherine Richardson, Robert J. Wasson, Billie L. Turner, and Hans-Joachim Schellnhuber. *Global Change And The Earth System: A Planet Under Pressure*. Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media, 2006.
- Thomson, David. *The Aims Of History*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1974.
- United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables*, Working Paper no. ESA/P/WP/248, 2017, 1.
- Vašíček, Zdeněk. "Philosophy Of History". In *A Companion To The Philosophy Of History And Historiography*, edited by Aviezer Tucker. Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009.
- Voltaire. *Volume 4 of A Philosophical Dictionary, From The Fr. [by J. G. Gurton]*. BiblioLife, 2016, 70.
- Voros, Joseph. "A Primer On Futures Studies, Foresight, And The Use Of Scenarios". *Prospect, The Foresight Bulletin* 6 no. 1 (2001), accessed <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580c492820099e7e75b9c3b4/t/58abbe7c29687fba4a03324/1487650430788/A+Primer+on+Futures+Studies.pdf>

Voros, Joseph. "Big History And Anticipation". In *Handbook Of Anticipation*, edited by Roberto Poli. New York: Springer, 2017, 1-40.

Voros, Joseph. "Big History As A Scaffold For Futures Education". *World Futures Review*, 194675671878351. doi:10.1177/1946756718783510, 2018.

Wagar, W. Warren. "Past And Future". *American Behavioral Scientist* 42 no. 3 (1998): 365-371. doi:10.1177/0002764298042003007.

Warde., Paul, and Sverker Sorlin. *Nature's End: History And The Environment*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

## **Chapter Two Primary Sources**

Carr, Edward Hallett. *What Is History?*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1986.

Collingwood, R. G. *The Idea Of History: Revised Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Elton, G. R. *The Practice Of History*. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1967.

Evans, Richard J. *In Defence Of History*. London: Granta Books, 2000.

"Manifesto Of The Communist Party". *En.Wikisource.Org*, 2017.

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Manifesto\\_of\\_the\\_Communist\\_Party](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Manifesto_of_the_Communist_Party).

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The German Ideology*. New York: International Publishers, 1970.

Ranke, Leopold Von. *The Secret of World History: Selected Writings on the Art and Science of History*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1981.

Ranke, Leopold von. *The Theory And Practice Of History*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973.

Spengler, Oswald. *The Decline Of The West*. New York: A. Knopf, 1927.

## **Chapter Three Primary Sources**

Diamond, Jared. *Collapse: How Societies Choose To Fail Or Succeed*. Rev. ed. New York: Penguin Books, 2011.

Hughes, J. Donald. *An Environmental History Of The World*. London: Routledge, 2001.

McNeill, J. R. *Something New Under The Sun*. London: Penguin Books, 2000.