

But is it? For a long time, diversiphiles got away with mere assertion on that, but the University of Michigan cases that the Supreme Court will decide this summer have brought the issue into the open. Wood examines the evidence that the diversiphiles have presented and finds it weak and deceptive. The much-touted book by William Bowen and Derek Bok, *The Shape of the River*, he concludes, is just a “soggy apology for diversity.” Professor Patricia Gurin’s study of the educational benefits of diversity, cooked up to bolster the U of M’s case, receives richly deserved scorn as well.

Wood also devotes chapters to diversity in the arts, churches, and business. His insights are just as penetrating in those fields as they are in education.

Henry Hazlitt’s great book didn’t immediately cause the Keynesian edifice to collapse, but it was a rallying point for free-market economists who gradually drove Keynesian thinking off the commanding heights. My hunch is that Peter Wood’s *Diversity* will play a similar role. □

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## **Worlds Together, Worlds Apart: A History of the Modern World from the Mongol Empire to the Present**

by Robert L. Tignor, et al.

W.W. Norton & Co. • 2002 • 462 pages  
• \$62.50 hardcover; \$20.00 paperback

*Reviewed by Andrew Cline*

**H**istory books for college students are reputedly terrible. Do they merit that reputation? If *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart* is indicative, the answer is yes.

The authors of Norton’s new world-history textbook set out to accomplish something they say no history text has done: teach the subject from 1300, instead of 1492, to the present and shift the focus away from the West so that all the world’s peoples are given “fair coverage.”

Cramming 700 years of human history into 462 pages requires a great deal of labor to separate the wheat from the chaff. With a year and a half to fit into each page, many individuals, movements, battles, events, and so on won’t make the cut or will be reduced to a passing mention. The seven Princeton University professors who wrote *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart* undertake this historical culling with gusto. They chop, snip, clip, and weave like hairdressers on speed, creating a strange narrative in which Thomas Jefferson seems less important than numerous popular entertainers.

Take the twentieth century, for example. The authors carve out space for such people as Nelson Mandela (mentioned on five pages), Lenin (six pages), Hitler (eight pages), Gandhi (eight pages), Stalin (ten pages), and Chairman Mao (11 pages). But these people get only a mention: Woodrow Wilson, Margaret Thatcher, Pope John Paul II, Lech Walesa, Japan’s Emperor Hirohito, Malcolm X—as well as Boy George, Carmen Miranda, the Village People, Melissa Etheridge, Hideo Nomo, Toni Morrison, Josephine Baker, the Black Panthers, and Sting. It is difficult to see how students can get a coherent view of the century’s crucial events from this kaleidoscopic presentation.

There was so much going on in the twentieth century that the authors obviously wouldn’t have space to include everyone. I mean, they *had* to put Boy George and Carmen Miranda *somewhere*. So, naturally, they left out certain irrelevant figures. Among those not making the cut are J. Robert Oppenheimer, Albert Einstein, Enrico Fermi, Sam Walton, Duke Ellington, Golda Meir, and The Beatles. Of course, reggae musician Bob Marley is mentioned on two different pages and has his own photo.

There is no confusing *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart* for an old-fashioned, Western-centric textbook that uses out-of-date concepts like balance and historical perspective. In this book, we are spared long passages on such figures as George Washington, whose entire presence in the book consists of a single reference in the caption describing a painting of Simon Bolivar. It reads, “Bolivar

wanted to transform the former colonies into modern republics, and used many of the icons of revolution from the rest of the Atlantic world—among his favorite models were George Washington and Napoleon Bonaparte.”

Junking Washington leaves room for an entire page devoted to Ernesto “Che” Guevara. The text devotes more space to Guevara’s death scene than to Washington, Isaac Newton, and Michelangelo combined.

Also given entire pages are *The Communist Manifesto*, Islamic rebels Abi Al-Qasim and Zaynab, the official 1993 declaration of war against the Mexican government by a group of peasants, and rantings on socialism and black power by the first president of Senegal.

The authors also spare us most specific dates, such as July 4, 1776. They even dispense with such outdated concepts as the distinction between voluntary and involuntary transactions, saying “trade could also take the form of tribute to powerful rulers.” And they point out how social forces shaped history, claiming that the Mongol conquests were caused by “population pressures.”

Glossing over mass murder is a hallmark of this book. The Mongols were merely “terribly destructive,” but positively so because they “deepened the connections” between cultures. Likewise, Mao, history’s deadliest ruler, is summarized thus, “many of Mao’s ventures proved disastrous failures, but the Chinese model of an ongoing people’s revolution provided much hope in the Third World.”

One could go on and on with examples of how the authors of *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart* have turned history on its head, lionizing socialism and taking pot shots at free trade and capitalism. But by now you get the picture.

Studies show that history is no longer a required course at many colleges and universities. Maybe that’s not a bad thing, if it means that students won’t be subjected to material such as this. □

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## What’s So Great About America

by Dinesh D’Souza

Regnery Publishing • 2002 • 256 pages  
\$27.95 hardcover; \$15 paperback

Reviewed by Jim Peron

**T**he title of Dinesh D’Souza’s book promises one thing, but the book itself delivers another. What it does deliver is still worth reading. Rather than a discussion of what is great about America, the book is mainly a response to various anti-American special-interest groups. In that, he mostly succeeds.

One drawback is that he doesn’t sufficiently distinguish American values from Western values, for example, in his chapter “Why They Hate Us” (in which he argues convincingly that the attacks of 9/11 grew out of a culture clash with Islam, not out of U.S. foreign policy). While the values of Enlightenment liberalism came to dominate Europe, they took a very different form in America. When D’Souza does discuss American values he makes a big leap, because he does not explain how or why American values are different from European values. It would have been constructive had he done so.

In Europe, liberalism was grafted onto a culture that had had centuries to develop. European culture was already steeped in economic feudalism, aristocratic rule, a church/state alliance, and nationalism that barely escaped tribalism. There was always an uneasy arrangement where liberal concepts were based on values that evolved under illiberal systems.

The United States was special in that its liberal political structure, and hence its basic social values, were established before any uniquely American culture had evolved. Liberalism dominated American thinking from its birth, and thus American culture evolved within a liberal framework. D’Souza does put his finger on one distinctly American concept that helps make America great: egalitarian meritocracy.