

Big History And The Future Of Humanity

This New York Times bestseller "elegantly weaves evidence and insights . . . into a single, accessible historical narrative" (Bill Gates) and presents a captivating history of the universe -- from the Big Bang to dinosaurs to mass globalization and beyond. Most historians study the smallest slivers of time, emphasizing specific dates, individuals, and documents. But what would it look like to study the whole of history, from the big bang through the present day -- and even into the remote future? How would looking at the full span of time change the way we perceive the universe, the earth, and our very existence? These were the questions David Christian set out to answer when he created the field of "Big History," the most exciting new approach to understanding where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. In *Origin Story*, Christian takes readers on a wild ride through the entire 13.8 billion years we've come to know as "history." By focusing on defining events (thresholds), major trends, and profound questions about our origins, Christian exposes the hidden threads that tie everything together -- from the creation of the planet to the advent of agriculture, nuclear war, and beyond. With stunning insights into the origin of the universe, the beginning of life, the emergence of humans, and what the future might bring, *Origin Story* boldly reframes our place in the cosmos.

This *Fleeting World* is the smallest book of big history, telling the story of the universe and history of humanity in less than one hundred pages. Prize-winning historian David Christian covers it all in this compact, accessible, and inspiring guide to the history of everything, from stars and empires to cities, the World Wide Web, capitalism, and globalization. David Christian's approach to human history and big history is a call to action, based on a profound and fresh understanding of our place in the universe. This book is essential reading for our time. David Christian asks big questions. Will contemporary challenges will lead to the emergence of a new global system capable of ecological, economic, and political stability? Or is the accelerating pace of change a prelude to a sudden, sharp collapse that will drive many parts of the world back to the productivity levels of the early agrarian era? He presents our origin story and the history of women and men across the entire world, within the framework of the universe explaining, for example, that the chemicals we are made of come from supernovae. He tells the human story as a story of changes: changes in the ways we produce and distribute food, move from place to place, organize ourselves into communities, explore and populate our environment, and both create and respond to crises. He gives us maps of time, history on different temporal-spatial scales, and even offers paths to locate evidence that might challenge his big story. Big history leads to strategies for building a more sustainable world, and Berkshire Publishing is proud to offer this new edition of a big history for our common future. The 2018 edition has been expanded and updated for the general reader; there is also an earlier edition designed for use with AP World History and other courses, which included a teachers' guide.

The first comprehensive overview of the innovative new discipline of global history Until very recently, historians have looked at the past with the tools of the nineteenth century. But globalization has fundamentally altered our ways of knowing, and it is no longer possible to study nations in isolation or to understand world history as emanating from the West. This book reveals why the discipline of global history has emerged as the

most dynamic and innovative field in history—one that takes the connectedness of the world as its point of departure, and that poses a fundamental challenge to the premises and methods of history as we know it. *What Is Global History?* provides a comprehensive overview of this exciting new approach to history. The book addresses some of the biggest questions the discipline will face in the twenty-first century: How does global history differ from other interpretations of world history? How do we write a global history that is not Eurocentric yet does not fall into the trap of creating new centrism? How can historians compare different societies and establish compatibility across space? What are the politics of global history? This in-depth and accessible book also explores the limits of the new paradigm and even its dangers, the question of whom global history should be written for, and much more. Written by a leading expert in the field, *What Is Global History?* shows how, by understanding the world's past as an integrated whole, historians can remap the terrain of their discipline for our globalized present.

This volume, *BERKSHIRE ESSENTIALS Big History*, places the history of humanity and the Earth in the largest of contexts, that of the universe. *Big history's* interdisciplinary approach draws on archaeology, paleoanthropology, astronomy, and biology to raise questions about the future of our species and its relationship to the biosphere. The articles included, a number of them by big-history specialist David Christian, convey big history's span and scope from cosmology, creation myths, and the Gaia theory (in which Earth's living and nonliving components exist in harmony), to ice ages, extinctions, and migrations, and to why many geologists today believe the world entered a new geological epoch (the Anthropocene) at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, when human activity unwittingly became the single most important force for change in the biosphere.

Making Sense of World History is a comprehensive and accessible textbook that helps students understand the key themes of world history within a chronological framework stretching from ancient times to the present day. To lend coherence to its narrative, the book employs a set of organizing devices that connect times, places, and/or themes. This narrative is supported by: Flowcharts that show how phenomena within diverse broad themes interact in generating key processes and events in world history. A discussion of the common challenges faced by different types of agent, including rulers, merchants, farmers, and parents, and a comparison of how these challenges were addressed in different times and places. An exhaustive and balanced treatment of themes such as culture, politics, and economy, with an emphasis on interaction. Explicit attention to skill acquisition in organizing information, cultural sensitivity, comparison, visual literacy, integration, interrogating primary sources, and critical thinking. A focus on historical "episodes" that are carefully related to each other. Through the use of such devices, the book shows the cumulative effect of thematic interactions through time, communicates the many ways in which societies have influenced each other through history, and allows us to compare and contrast how they have reacted to similar challenges. They also allow the reader to transcend historical controversies and can be used to stimulate class discussions and guide student assignments. With a unified authorial voice and offering a narrative from the ancient to the present, this is the go-to textbook for World History courses and students. The Open Access version of this book, available at <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781003013518>, has been

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According to the working definition of the International Big History Association, 'Big History seeks to understand the integrated history of the Cosmos, Earth, Life and Humanity, using the best available empirical evidence and scholarly methods.' In recent years Big History has been developing very fast indeed. Big History courses are taught in the schools and universities of several dozen countries. Hundreds of researchers are involved in studying and teaching Big History. The unique approach of Big History, the interdisciplinary genre of history that deals with the grand narrative of 13.8 billion years, has opened up a vast amount of research agendas. Big History brings together constantly updated information from the scientific disciplines and merges it with the contemplative realms of philosophy and the humanities. It also provides a connection between the past, present, and future. Big History is a colossal and extremely heterogeneous field of research encompassing all the forms of existence and all timescales. Unsurprisingly, Big History may be presented in very different aspects and facets. In this volume the Big History is presented and discussed in three different ways. In its first part, Big History is explored in terms of methodology, theories of knowledge, as well as showcasing the personal approach of scholars to Big History. The second section comprises such articles that could clarify Big History's main trends and laws. The third part of this book explores the nature of teaching Big History as well as profiling a number of educational methods. This volume will be useful both for those who study interdisciplinary macroproblems and for specialists working in focused directions, as well as for those who are interested in evolutionary issues of Astrophysics, Geology, Biology, History, Anthropology, Linguistics and other areas of study. More than that, this edition will challenge and excite your vision of your own life and the exciting new discoveries going on around us!

From the Big Bang to the future of our planet, The Little Book of Big History divides history into manageable but comprehensive time frames, encompassing the cosmos, the stars, life and everything in between. Big History is the attempt to understand and condense the entire story of the cosmos, from the Big Bang to the current day.

Combining methods from history, astronomy, physics and biology to draw together the big story arcs of how the universe was created, why planets formed and how life developed, this creates a unique perspective from which to understand the place of mankind in the universe. Excited by the alternative 'framework for all knowledge' that is offered by this approach, Bill Gates is funding the Big History Project, which aims to bring the subject to a wider audience around the world. The Little Book of Big History breaks down the main themes of Big History into highly informative and accessible parts for all readers to enjoy. By giving a truly complete timeline of world events, this book shines a whole different light on history as we learned it and makes us think of our history - and our future - in a very different way.

The Routledge Companion to Big History guides readers through the variety of themes and concepts that structure contemporary scholarship in the field of big history. The volume is divided into five parts, each representing current and evolving areas of interest to the community, including big history's relationship to science, social science, the humanities, and the future, as well as teaching big history and 'little big histories'. Considering an ever-expanding range of theoretical, pedagogical and research topics,

the book addresses such questions as what is the relationship between big history and scientific research, how are big historians working with philosophers and religious thinkers to help construct 'meaning', how are leading theoreticians making sense of big history and its relationship to other creation narratives and paradigms, what is 'little big history', and how does big history impact on thinking about the future? The book highlights the place of big history in historiographical traditions and the ways in which it can be used in education and public discourse across disciplines and at all levels. A timely collection with contributions from leading proponents in the field, it is the ideal guide for those wanting to engage with the theories and concepts behind big history. This book collates papers presented at two international conferences (held at the Australian National University in 2018 and Birkbeck College London in 2019) exploring the relationships between big history and astrobiology and their wider implications for society. These two relatively new academic disciplines aim to integrate human history with the wider history of the universe and the search for life elsewhere. The book will show that, despite differences in emphasis, big history and astrobiology share much in common, especially their interdisciplinary approaches and the cosmic and evolutionary perspectives that they both engender. Specifically, the book addresses the unified, all-embracing, nature of knowledge, the impact of big history on humanity and the world at large, the possible impact of SETI on astrobiology and big history, the cultural signature of Earth's inhabitants beyond the atmosphere, and the political implications of a planetary worldview. The principal readership is envisaged to comprise scholars working in the fields of astrobiology, big history and space exploration interested in forging interdisciplinary links between these diverse topics, together with educators, and a wider public, interested in the societal implications of the cosmic and evolutionary perspectives engendered by research in these fields.

Presents a controversial history of violence which argues that today's world is the most peaceful time in human existence, drawing on psychological insights into intrinsic values that are causing people to condemn violence as an acceptable measure.

How should historians speak truth to power – and why does it matter? Why is five hundred years better than five months or five years as a planning horizon? And why is history – especially long-term history – so essential to understanding the multiple pasts which gave rise to our conflicted present? The History Manifesto is a call to arms to historians and everyone interested in the role of history in contemporary society.

Leading historians Jo Guldi and David Armitage identify a recent shift back to longer-term narratives, following many decades of increasing specialisation, which they argue is vital for the future of historical scholarship and how it is communicated. This provocative and thoughtful book makes an important intervention in the debate about the role of history and the humanities in a digital age. It will provoke discussion among policymakers, activists and entrepreneurs as well as ordinary listeners, viewers, readers, students and teachers. This title is also available as Open Access.

An exploration of four cities that reflect a blend of Eastern and Western cultures traces the historical threads connecting St. Petersburg, Shanghai, Mumbai, and Dubai while discussing their conflicted embrace of modernity.

The New York Times bestselling author of *Origin Story* turns his attention to the future of humanity — and how we think about it — in this ambitious, interdisciplinary book. Every second of our lives, we have to cope with an unknowable future. How do we do this?

And why do we, like most living organisms, manage this impossible challenge quite well ... at least most of the time? David Christian, the historian and New York Times bestselling author of *Origin Story*, is renowned for his pioneering "big history" framework. But with *Future Story*, he turns his sharp analytical eye to the future, offering a unique and accessible guide through what we think we know about future thinking and about the future itself. With fascinating explanations of the various ways living things understand and plan for the future, plus detailed explorations of the future of evolution, humanity, artificial intelligence, interstellar travel, and beyond, *Future Story* teaches us how to think creatively and intelligently about the future — and paints an unusually thoughtful and science-backed picture of what's to come.

"Startling in scope and bravado." —Janet Maslin, *The New York Times* "Artfully envisions a breathtakingly better world." —*Los Angeles Times* "Elaborate, smart and persuasive." —*The Boston Globe* "A pleasure to read." —*The Wall Street Journal* One of CBS News's Best Fall Books of 2005 • Among *St Louis Post-Dispatch's* Best Nonfiction Books of 2005 • One of Amazon.com's Best Science Books of 2005 A radical and optimistic view of the future course of human development from the bestselling author of *How to Create a Mind* and *The Singularity is Nearer* who Bill Gates calls "the best person I know at predicting the future of artificial intelligence" For over three decades, Ray Kurzweil has been one of the most respected and provocative advocates of the role of technology in our future. In his classic *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, he argued that computers would soon rival the full range of human intelligence at its best. Now he examines the next step in this inexorable evolutionary process: the union of human and machine, in which the knowledge and skills embedded in our brains will be combined with the vastly greater capacity, speed, and knowledge-sharing ability of our creations.

Big History: Between Nothing and Everything surveys the past not just of humanity, or even of planet Earth, but of the entire universe. In reading this book instructors and students will retrace a voyage that began 13.7 billion years ago with the Big Bang and the appearance of the universe. Big history incorporates findings from cosmology, earth and life sciences, and human history, and assembles them into a single, universal historical narrative of our universe and of our place within it. The first edition of *Big History: Between Nothing and Everything*, is written by the pioneers of the field, and presents a framework for learning about anything and everything. It encourages students to think critically about our cumulative history and the future of the world through a variety of lenses.

BIG BOOK OF HISTORY Learning Just Became BIG FUN! Families, schools, and churches can unfold 15 feet of the most interesting history of the world. This easy to follow, color-coded, multi-stream timeline teaches six thousand years of world history to children ages seven through thirteen. These exciting facts and so much more wait inside: who were the first emperors of China and Rome what discovery unlocked the secrets of a forgotten language how modern robotics had its roots in the tea dolls of Japan where Christians faced death for the entertainment of thousands why the languages of Greek and Hebrew were used to write the Bible and how the Age of Discovery meant wealth some, and the destruction of civilization for others. Understanding how the past has shaped our future will inspire young learners to make history for themselves!

big history and the future of humanity "This remains the best single attempt to theorize big history as a discipline that can link core concepts and paradigms across all historical disciplines, from cosmology to geology, from biology to human history. With additional and updated material, the Second Edition also offers a fine introduction to the history of big history and a superb introductory survey to the big history story. Essential reading for anyone interested in a rapidly evolving new field of scholarship that links the sciences and the humanities into a modern, science-based origin story." David Christian, Macquarie University "Notable for its theoretic approach, this new Second Edition is both an indispensable contribution to the emerging big history narrative and a powerful university textbook. Spier defines words carefully and recognizes the limits of current knowledge, aspects of his own clear thinking." Cynthia Brown, Emerita, Dominican University of California Reflecting the latest theories in the sciences and humanities, this new edition of Big History and the Future of Humanity presents an accessible and original overview of the entire sweep of history from the origins of the universe and life on Earth up to the present day. Placing the relatively brief period of human history within a much broader framework – one that considers everything from vast galaxy clusters to the tiniest sub-atomic particles – big history is an innovative theoretical approach that opens up entirely new multidisciplinary research agendas. Noted historian Fred Spier reveals how a thorough examination of patterns of complexity can offer richer insights into what the future may have in store for humanity. The second edition includes new learning features, such as highlighted scientific concepts, an illustrative timeline and comprehensive glossary. By exploring the cumulative history from the Big Bang to the modern day, Big History and the Future of Humanity, Second Edition, sheds important historical light on where we have been – and offers a tantalizing glimpse of what lies ahead.

The social and natural sciences have more in common than most people would perhaps suspect. This thought-provoking study, the first of its kind ever attempted, presents a single straightforward structure which unites the latest scientific views on the history of the Universe, the Solar System, Earth, life and humankind. It contributes to a better understanding of some long-standing academic controversies, such as the root causes for the origins of humankind, the rise of agriculture and the emergence of early states.

Following up on the best-selling Hot to Cold, Bjarke Ingels Group breaks down their work across time in this ambitious multidisciplinary undertaking. This book is the companion to BIG's far-reaching exhibition and features conversations with the likes of Elon Musk and Ray Kurzweil. We explore the evolution of intelligence, communication, migration, and how architecture and design can literally give form to the future.

Our Yearbook 'History and Mathematics' has already celebrated its 10th anniversary and has confidently entered its second decade. The common feature of all our Yearbooks, including the present volume, is the usage of formal methods and social studies methods in their synthesis to analyze different historical phenomena. The present Yearbook (which is the seventh in the series) is subtitled 'Big History Aspects'. This issue is devoted to the problems of evolutionary development of the world. In no way will it be a digression from the direction which we have initially defined for our Yearbook, but just an extension of the scope of the research. The matter is that there are two kinds of history: the history of nature (or more exactly the Universe and the Earth) and the history of humans and mankind. It is not surprising that the idea of historicism penetrated almost every scientific field. At the same time the search for common foundations of this endless in its diversity world has intensified. One of the directions of this interdisciplinary search for the unity of the world in its diversity is Universal Evolutionism (Big History). Mathematical and formal methods help to understand much deeply both natural and human history. This issue of the Yearbook consists of four main sections: (I) Patterns of Big History; (II) Hypotheses of Deep Big History; (III) Biological Aspects; (IV) History and Future of Social Systems. We hope that this issue will be interesting and useful both for historians and

mathematicians, as well as for all those dealing with various social and natural sciences. The epic saga of Big Basin began in the late 1800s, when the surrounding communities saw their once "inexhaustible" redwood forests vanishing. Expanding railways demanded timber as they crisscrossed the nation, but the more redwoods that fell to the woodman's axe, the greater the effects on the local climate. California's groundbreaking environmental movement attracted individuals from every walk of life. From the adopted son of a robber baron to a bohemian woman winemaker to a Jesuit priest, resilient campaigners produced an unparalleled model of citizen action. Join author Traci Bliss as she reveals the untold story of a herculean effort to preserve the ancient redwoods for future generations.

Big History and the Future of Humanity presents an original theoretical approach that makes "big history" -- the placing of the human past within the history of life, the Earth, and the Universe -- accessible to general readers while revealing insights into what the future may hold for humanity. Provides an accessible and original overview of the entire sweep of history that places human history within the history of life, the Earth, and the Universe Features an original theory of "big history" which explains all of history and opens up an entirely new interdisciplinary research agenda Offers new insights into the future of humanity by better understanding the past Presents a new approach to complexity studies, which takes into account the greatest galaxy clusters as well as the tiniest sub-atomic particles

A captivating history of the universe -- from before the dawn of time through the far reaches of the distant future. Most historians study the smallest slivers of time, emphasizing specific dates, individuals, and documents. But what would it look like to study the whole of history, from the big bang through the present day -- and even into the remote future? How would looking at the full span of time change the way we perceive the universe, the earth, and our very existence? These were the questions David Christian set out to answer when he created the field of "Big History," the most exciting new approach to understanding where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. In Origin Story, Christian takes readers on a wild ride through the entire 13.8 billion years we've come to know as "history." By focusing on defining events (thresholds), major trends, and profound questions about our origins, Christian exposes the hidden threads that tie everything together -- from the creation of the planet to the advent of agriculture, nuclear war, and beyond. With stunning insights into the origin of the universe, the beginning of life, the emergence of humans, and what the future might bring, Origin Story boldly reframes our place in the cosmos.

Presents a new perspective for looking at history from the origins of the universe to present day.

One of the world's most beloved and bestselling writers takes his ultimate journey -- into the most intriguing and intractable questions that science seeks to answer. In A Walk in the Woods, Bill Bryson trekked the Appalachian Trail -- well, most of it. In In A Sunburned Country, he confronted some of the most lethal wildlife Australia has to offer. Now, in his biggest book, he confronts his greatest challenge: to understand -- and, if possible, answer -- the oldest, biggest questions we have posed about the universe and ourselves. Taking as territory everything from the Big Bang to the rise of civilization, Bryson seeks to understand how we got from there being nothing at all to there being us. To that end, he has attached himself to a host of the world's most advanced (and often obsessed) archaeologists, anthropologists, and mathematicians, travelling to their offices, laboratories, and field camps. He has read (or tried to read) their books, pestered them with questions, apprenticed himself to their powerful minds. A Short History of Nearly Everything is the record of this quest, and it is a sometimes profound, sometimes funny, and always supremely clear and entertaining adventure in the realms of human knowledge, as only Bill Bryson can render it. Science has never

been more involving or entertaining.

A guide for doing good and doing well in a fast-changing world--Applied Big History show how economics and finance can be better understood through the lens of "Big History"--the scientific narrative of the 13.8-billion-year journey of our universe, the 4.5-billion-year evolution of our planet, the million-year rise of our species, and the 10,000-year accelerating drama of human civilization. Understanding this epic of evolution from multiple perspectives gives investors--and also other living things--an edge in a fast changing world.

It is the modern human scientific and historical creation story.

Big History and the Future of Humanity John Wiley & Sons

Why does the West rule? In this magnum opus, eminent Stanford polymath Ian Morris answers this provocative question, drawing on 50,000 years of history, archeology, and the methods of social science, to make sense of when, how, and why the paths of development differed in the East and West — and what this portends for the 21st century. There are two broad schools of thought on why the West rules. Proponents of "Long-Term Lock-In" theories such as Jared Diamond suggest that from time immemorial, some critical factor — geography, climate, or culture perhaps — made East and West unalterably different, and determined that the industrial revolution would happen in the West and push it further ahead of the East. But the East led the West between 500 and 1600, so this development can't have been inevitable; and so proponents of "Short-Term Accident" theories argue that Western rule was a temporary aberration that is now coming to an end, with Japan, China, and India resuming their rightful places on the world stage. However, as the West led for 9,000 of the previous 10,000 years, it wasn't just a temporary aberration. So, if we want to know why the West rules, we need a whole new theory. Ian Morris, boldly entering the turf of Jared Diamond and Niall Ferguson, provides the broader approach that is necessary, combining the textual historian's focus on context, the anthropological archaeologist's awareness of the deep past, and the social scientist's comparative methods to make sense of the past, present, and future — in a way no one has ever done before.

From the formation of the Universe to today, countless major events have changed the course of life on Earth. Aligned with the online Big History Project supported by Bill Gates, Big History puts a wide-angle lens on 13.8 billion years of remarkable history and shows you how and why we got where we are today. With stunning visual timelines and special CGI reconstructions, you can see history's greatest events. Look back to our origins in the stars, explore everything from the birth of the Sun to modern technology, and see what the future holds for humans. Weaving together multiple disciplines including physics and sociology, and with a foreword by TED speaker Professor David Christian, Big History is a truly unique look at the history of the world. Featuring a variety of updates and revisions, Big History and the Future of Humanity, Second Edition, presents an accessible and original overview of the entire sweep of history from the origins of the universe and origins of life on Earth up to the present day. Provides an accessible and original overview of the entire sweep of history that places human history within the context of the history of life, the Earth, and the universe Offers new insights into the future of humanity by providing a better understanding of the past Features a variety of updates and revisions that include increased coverage of key concepts such as the emergence of human behaviour, the development of value

systems, and patterns of complexity in Big History Incorporates a variety of 'little big histories' that aid readers in recognizing how big history concepts can relate to their daily lives Instructor resources from the author will be available online upon publication Find additional resources from the author online at www.bighistory.info

Big History is a new field on a grand scale: it tells the story of the universe over time through a diverse range of disciplines that spans cosmology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, evolutionary biology, anthropology, and archaeology, thereby reconciling traditional human history with environmental geography and natural history. Weaving the myriad threads of evidence-based human knowledge into a master narrative that stretches from the beginning of the universe to the present, the Big History framework helps students make sense of their studies in all disciplines by illuminating the structures that underlie the universe and the connections among them. Teaching Big History is a powerful analytic and pedagogical resource, and serves as a comprehensive guide for teaching Big History, as well for sharing ideas about the subject and planning a curriculum around it. Readers are also given helpful advice about the administrative and organizational challenges of instituting a general education program constructed around Big History. The book includes teaching materials, examples, and detailed sample exercises. This book is also an engaging first-hand account of how a group of professors built an entire Big History general education curriculum for first-year students, demonstrating how this thoughtful integration of disciplines exemplifies liberal education at its best and illustrating how teaching and learning this incredible story can be transformative for professors and students alike. "A higher education history textbook that covers the history of the universe, Earth, life, and humanity as a single unified whole, integrating knowledge from across the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities"--

This provocative book challenges the status quo in history education by proposing that isolated facts from the past be replaced by knowledge relevant to the future. Not a classroom teaching guide, this book examines the fundamental premises and practices that underlie the work of every history teacher from grade school through graduate school.

Extend the human story backward for the five thousand years of recorded history and it covers no more than a millionth of a lifetime of the Earth. Yet how do we humans take stock of the history of our planet, and our own place within it? A "vast historical mosaic" (Publishers Weekly) rendered engaging and accessible, Big History interweaves different disciplines of knowledge to offer an all-encompassing account of history on Earth. Since its publication, Cynthia Brown's "world history on a grand scale" (Kirkus) has been translated into nine languages and has helped propel the "big history" concept to viral status. This new edition of Brown's seminal work is more relevant today than ever before, as we increasingly must grapple with accelerating rates of change and, ultimately, the legacy we will bequeath to future generations. Here is a pathbreaking portrait of our world, from the birth of the universe from a single point the size of an atom to life on a twenty-first-century planet inhabited by 7 billion people.

This a companion reader for the website World History for Us All, a site with free

online lesson plans. <http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu> This reader is edited for language accessible to grades 6–9 and contains Big Eras One–Seven.

This urgent and eye-opening book makes the case that protecting humanity's future is the central challenge of our time. If all goes well, human history is just beginning. Our species could survive for billions of years - enough time to end disease, poverty, and injustice, and to flourish in ways unimaginable today. But this vast future is at risk. With the advent of nuclear weapons, humanity entered a new age, where we face existential catastrophes - those from which we could never come back. Since then, these dangers have only multiplied, from climate change to engineered pathogens and artificial intelligence. If we do not act fast to reach a place of safety, it will soon be too late. Drawing on over a decade of research, *The Precipice* explores the cutting-edge science behind the risks we face. It puts them in the context of the greater story of humanity: showing how ending these risks is among the most pressing moral issues of our time. And it points the way forward, to the actions and strategies that can safeguard humanity. An Oxford philosopher committed to putting ideas into action, Toby Ord has advised the US National Intelligence Council, the UK Prime Minister's Office, and the World Bank on the biggest questions facing humanity. In *The Precipice*, he offers a startling reassessment of human history, the future we are failing to protect, and the steps we must take to ensure that our generation is not the last. "A book that seems made for the present moment." —*New Yorker*

This book introduces a 'Big History' perspective to understand the acceleration of social, technological and economic trends towards a near-term singularity, marking a radical turning point in the evolution of our planet. It traces the emergence of accelerating innovation rates through global history and highlights major historical transformations throughout the evolution of life, humans, and civilization. The authors pursue an interdisciplinary approach, also drawing on concepts from physics and evolutionary biology, to offer potential models of the underlying mechanisms driving this acceleration, along with potential clues on how it might progress. The contributions gathered here are divided into five parts, the first of which studies historical mega-trends in relation to a variety of aspects including technology, population, energy, and information. The second part is dedicated to a variety of models that can help understand the potential mechanisms, and support extrapolation. In turn, the third part explores various potential future scenarios, along with the paths and decisions that are required. The fourth part presents philosophical perspectives on the potential deeper meaning and implications of the trend towards singularity, while the fifth and last part discusses the implications of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI). Given its scope, the book will appeal to scholars from various disciplines interested in historical trends, technological change and evolutionary processes.

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