



# **The Way of the World: From the Dawn of Civilizations to the Eve of the Twenty-first Century**

*David Fromkin*

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"Ambitious.... The truth is that Fromkin's outline is persuasively thought out and presented."--*The Washington Post Book World*

As the human race approaches the 21st century, questions of our past trouble us as much as those that concern our future. How did we get here? Where--and how--did Homo sapiens originate? How did we, precariously bipedal, come to dominate the animal kingdom, direct the flow of the Euphrates, fly a rocket to the moon?

David Fromkin, author of **A Peace to End All Peace** and finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critic Circle Award, provides an arrestingly cogent answer in **The Way of the World**. With insight and sound scholarship, he reveals how human culture has evolved according to the principles of self-determination--from the footsteps of the first hominids 3.5 million years ago to the efforts of contemporary democracies' to establish a global, lasting peace. Here is a world history wherein early forms of Christianity give way to rationalism, the tyranny of kings crumbles to the merits of representative government, and modern science presents us with the master key to the future. Refreshingly positive, David Fromkin reminds us of the astounding record of human achievement, and the potential in each of us to improve the way of our world.

"Mr. Fromkin recounts 'the greatest story ever told' exceedingly well, aided by a deep knowledge and an elegant prose style."--*The Wall Street Journal*

"**The Way of the World** is worldly, civilized, genial."--*The Boston Globe*

## **The Way of the World: From the Dawn of Civilizations to the Eve of the Twenty-first Century Details**

Date : Published January 25th 2000 by Vintage (first published 1998)

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Author : David Fromkin

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## **From Reader Review The Way of the World: From the Dawn of Civilizations to the Eve of the Twenty-first Century for online ebook**

### **Marc says**

*"the history of the modern world can be seen as the story about the many civilizations that have flourished in the year 1000 and that in the ensuing thousand years all but one went defunct. (...) only the descendants of the Roman Empire managed to maintain themselves, by first creating a new civilization and then another one. What follows is therefore only their story ".* 50 years ago you could make such a statement without much resistance, today it is scandalous that such a thing is still printed in black and white. This book is not only short-sighted eurocentric (actually especially chauvinistic American), it is also superficial, based on outdated literature, and in the last chapter the author even commits the biggest mistake a historian can do: he looks into the future and makes specific predictions. Avoid this book!

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### **Rex says**

This is one of those books that everyone should read. Provided a great historical overview of the development of civilizations...and modern man. Highly recommend.

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### **Charlotte says**

Well organized, succinct journey through, well, all of history up to now. A quick read, a lot of information, and a great, unbiased supplement.

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### **Brian Steed says**

Wonderful narrative approach to the history of the western world. Takes the history of humanity, from the first stirrings of life in the primordial soup to speculations about our future, and presents it as a narrative in the tradition of the ancients telling big stories around the tribal fire. I'll be checking out more Fromkin.

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### **Larry says**

Too many years of "history" packed into just over 221 pages here but Mr. Fromkin does a tremendous job in his effort. Broad strokes do establish one thing: the political history of mankind is, indeed, a despicable nightmare from which we all ought to hope we might soon awaken. The final 3 chapters put all history into a meaningful perspective. Nobody knows nuthin' about where it all will lead is what I glean from them. Educated guesses have often been wrong. The future remains a mystery as does the past to most people which means, to me, that we are probably condemned to repeating it.

I have to scratch my head in wonder at mankind's inept rehashing of truths that science has so completely

established. To realize that at least 50% of AmeriKKKans accept the stories in The Bible as fact boggles the brain if it's still working. No wonder Willard Mitten Romney seems poised to "lead."

This book was selected by Bill Clinton as one of his 10 most important or favorite or good reads and I was curious. It IS a god read!

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### **John Gurney says**

Survey of human civilization from the start to 1999. In vivid writing, Fromkin's rapid-fire pace captures the key points in this work of tremendous scope.

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### **Sense of History says**

The author is a respected historian of 20th Century international relations. In this book he tries to give a complete outlook on human history in about 300 pages. I'm afraid he did a bad job: this is a classical history about the victory of Western, and especially American civilization over all others, pervaded by the optimistic "progress"-myth, and based on rather outdated literature.

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### **David R. says**

A thought provoking and unique approach to historical narrative. Fromkin makes a strong case for his eight critical developments and their impact on events of today. I haven't come across one this imaginative since Van Loon's Story of Mankind (1920s) The one weakness is a fairly lame closing chapter.

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### **Mark Galassi says**

I found this book quite lovely. It takes a particular angle on telling in brief a full human history, from the formation of the solar system until the late 1990s. The narrative is gentle and lovely, and you find yourself immersed and wanting to continue reading.

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### **david says**

Nothing spectacular in this survey of western civ.

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### **Sandy Sopko says**

Very much enjoyed Fromkin's synoptic view of human civilization and felt cheered his optimistic predictions for America's future. Written in 1998, this prescient author hit the nail on the head with events that unfolded

and trends that revealed themselves in the 13 years since the copy I borrowed was printed. His "A Peace to End All Peace" about the conflict in the Middle East is also in my bookbag. I hope he is still writing!

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### **Scott Pierce says**

Where did we come from and how and where are we going - pretty broad scope for a book, but Fromkin succeeds in making this readable and interesting. I came away with some insights and trivia.

- The Greek alpha and beta made up Alphabet
- Alexander called The Iliad everywhere and saw himself as Achilles - died at 32 in Babylon
- Cortes and Pizarro won in South America by turning repressed tribes against the other Indian rulers

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### **Emily says**

Strong at the outset, but it sort of fell apart at the end. Interesting to read speculations about the future 15 years after they were written.

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### **T.M. says**

If you aren't American, I wouldn't recommend reading this text as the author is so clearly invested in painting America as the hero sent to save the world that it will disappoint you, as will Fromkin's ill treatment of the ancient Eastern world.

Despite its obsession with the Western world (and its mentioning of China, India, and other eastern entities as merely an afterthought) I liked the first third of the text, which carried us from the primordial ooze through the fall of the Roman Empire. It was informative and illuminating. It is when the author entered the second third of the book, "The Present", that I began to lose interest. Much less a historical account than an explanation of perceived trends in, again, the Western World, the second half left much more to be desired. The rose-colored glasses through which the author views American history is the least of all crimes committed in the text.

Knowing that the novel was written before September 11, 2001 is important, as it shows how clearly naive the author was about the future and the scenarios he projected. The Middle East is so poorly addressed in the text that it appears, in retrospect, that the events of 9/11 would come as a great surprise to most people. I'm not so sure that was the case.

The latter part of the novel, "The Future", speaks to the importance of taking future projections with a grain of salt. The sentence "The arrival of the year 2001 is unlikely to signal change." is so comically ironic, given the events that did occur and, consequentially change the world irrevocably. Still, it was the overly idealist assertion that the 21st century would be another great American century that left the worst taste in

my mouth.

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### **D.R. Oestreicher says**

Imagine a professor teaching World History 101. Someone says, “Great course, you should write a book.” Maybe they just hoped to get their grade raised from a C+ to a B-, but the professor took the suggestion to heart. Here’s the book: twelve lectures (now chapters) from chimpanzees to the 21st century. If you slept through the lectures, you now have a chance to do it again: **The Way of the World** by David Fromkin.

If you’re looking for a World History survey, here it is. Enjoy.

For my expanded report: <https://1book42day.blogspot.com/2019/...>

Check out <https://amazon.com/shop/influencer-20...> for book recommendations.

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