

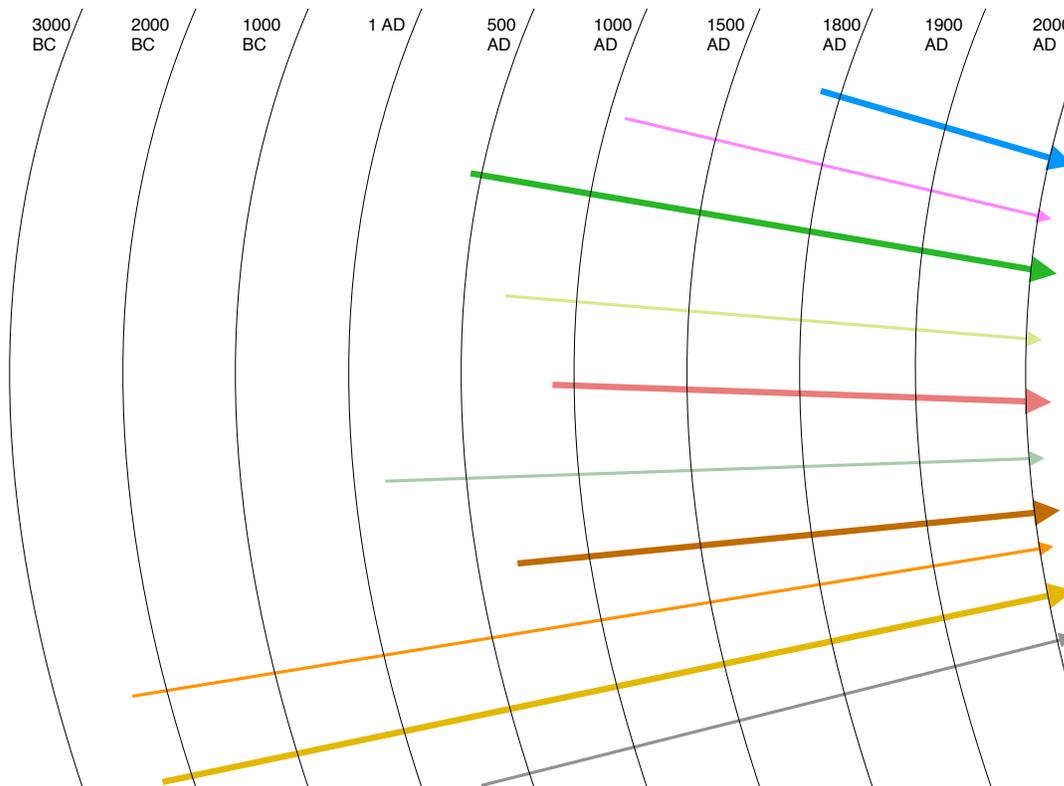
III. The Interconnected World We Live In

A. Interconnectivity

1. We have learned to see the world in terms of ten major cultural blocks, predominated by five cardinal cultural blocks. Now we need to grasp the unique historical reality that binds these blocks together in the present. Never before have the cultures of the world been so closely, multiply, and complexly connected. The world we live in is an *inter-connected* world.
2. The term “interconnected” is important to grasp clearly. “Inter-“ as a prefix, means “between.” And the idea of connecting things is to create a link *between* them. So both the root word “connect” and the prefix attached to it (“inter”) contain the idea of *betweenness*. The structure of the word itself thus elegantly captures the idea of more than one form of connection...which is indeed the meaning the word.
3. What forms of connection exist between the cultural blocks to a greater extent than ever before? Among the many answers are:
 - a) communication - via phone, print media, and especially the Internet
 - b) transportation - business travel and tourism by air, sea, and land — given modern technology we can be on the other side of the world, literally, in a day!
 - c) trade - Every modern household has products from every other major cultural block (from cars made in Japan, fueled by oil extracted from the Islamic world, to electronics assembled in China, to coffee harvested in Sub-Saharan Africa, to clothing made in the Iberosphere, etc.).
 - d) migration - People continue to move from one part of the world to another in large numbers.
 - e) cultural interaction - from the enjoyment of international cuisine to sporting festivals to movies and music
 - f) war - Although the world has been exceptionally peaceful since the world wars, small conflicts proliferate, drawing in the United States especially, as world police power.

B. Visualizing the Convergence

1. Using the common device of a timeline to represent the historical progressions of different cultures, we can color-code the various cultures of the world, and represent them as arrows—pointing from their origins to the present *and future*.
2. Before reading on, see if you can interpret the colors yourself on the next page and assign each line to a block. [From top to bottom, they are: 1) America (blue), 2) Anglosphere (pink), 3) Europe (green), 4) Iberosphere (lime green), 5) Russia (faded red), 6) Sub-Saharan Africa (faded green), 7) Islamic world (brown), 8) India (orange), 9) China (yellow), and 10) Japan (gray).]
3. America is by far the youngest block. China and India, by contrast, are the most ancient. The thickness of the *cardinal* blocks indicates their greater historical importance.

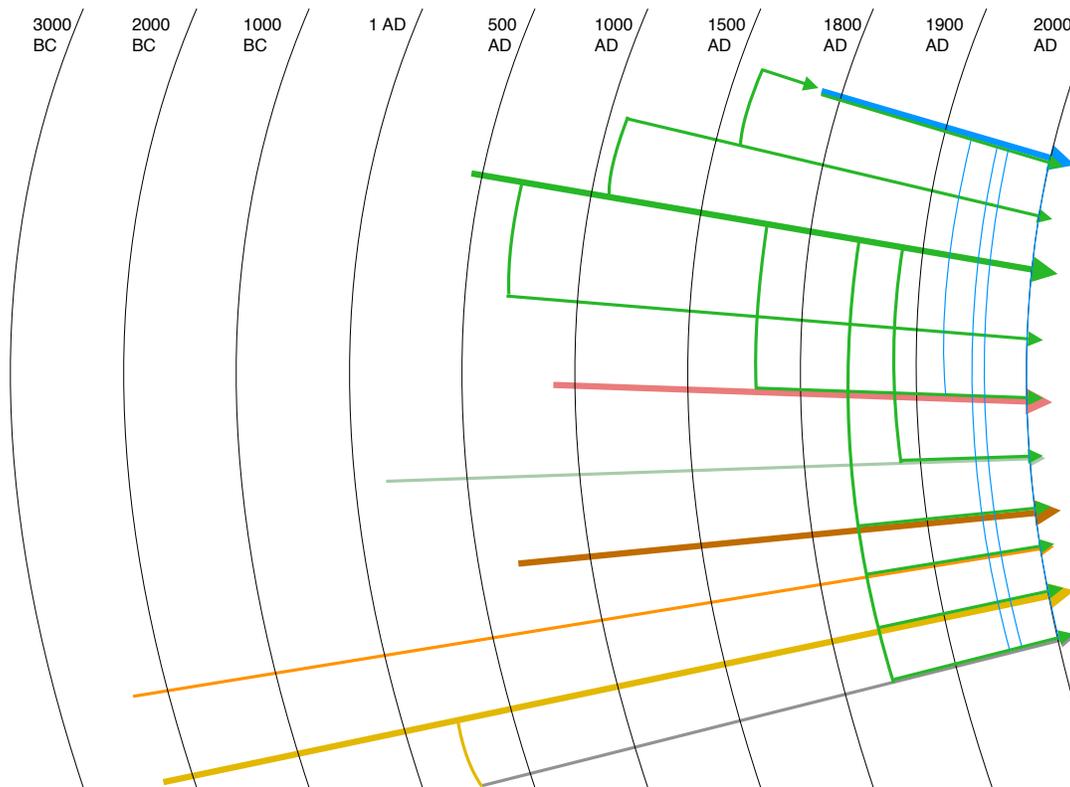


A timeline of world history can be used to illustrate the separate *but converging* evolutions of the world's ten major cultural blocks.

C. The Unique Interconnectedness of Western Civilization

1. In order to better understand the world we live in, we must learn to appreciate the many different kinds of connections between the cultural blocks. These all stem from the historical action of the group of cultural blocks called "Western Civilization."
2. Many people are familiar with the term "Western Civilization," but few can define it. Among the reasons for this difficulty are that 1) it's big, 2) it's diverse, and 3) it changes over time.
3. The primary cultural blocks that make up Western Civilization are: America, the Anglosphere, Europe, and the Iberosphere.
4. In addition, two cultural blocks are partial/peripheral members. Russia is a distinct national block, to be sure, but has greatly "westernized" in modern times. Sub-Saharan Africa has been primitive during most of its history and remains "underdeveloped," but because of the impact of the European empires that ruled it, it is peripherally part of the Western world as well.

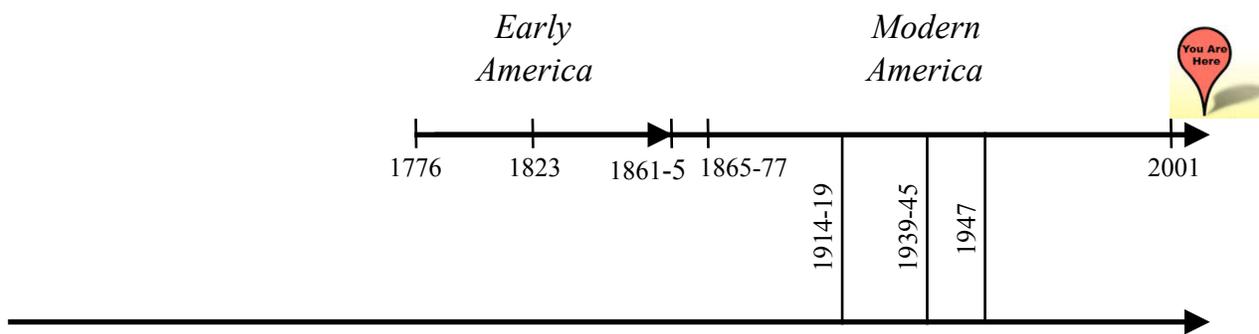
5. Furthermore, every other cultural block (including the Islamic World, India, China, and Japan) has been “westernized” to varying degrees through the adoption of science and technology and concepts of government (from democracy to communism).
6. The diversity of Western culture and its penetration of all the others, can be symbolized in a more complex and useful representation of history:



Western Civilization (now shown collectively in green) includes Europe, the Ibersphere, and the Anglosphere, and America (which is unique—ever since it declared its independence!—and thus blue *and green*). Green cross-connections representing exploration, colonization, and imperialism, show how the West interconnected the world in what is called “globalization.” Blue interconnections are recent features of world history. They represent the action of the United States as “world police power.”

D. Learning to See America and Europe As Interconnected

1. The complexity of the interconnected world can be overwhelming. It is important to learn about it in carefully measured increments. The first of these is to see the interconnection of America and Europe only.
2. The representation of this interconnection will derive from the basic timeline we have so far (see page 15) where an additional line will be used to stand for Europe. Instead of “tick marks” for the modern events of World War I, World War II, and the Truman Doctrine (1947) which linked the destinies of America and Europe, these events will now be shown as lines connecting the two timelines.



3. In a more artistic representation, America can be shown in blue, and Europe in green, but in this case, the lines are simply shown in black.
4. This dual timeline will now serve as the basis for an examination of how Europe and America have progressed in tandem as cultural blocks.