

The Story of Mankind Study Guide

The Story of Mankind by Hendrik Willem van Loon

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Plot Summary

"The Story of Mankind" by Hendrik Willem Van Loon is a tale of mankind's development from the nothingness of the origins of the planet through modern day science and technology. Written early in the 20th century, the information in the novel is clearly dated, but still manages to provide a base for young readers as to the origins of man. Engaging and entertaining, this book is a must read for any audience.

"The Story of Mankind," a hopelessly out-of-date scientific account of the rise of mankind, is an ambitious attempt by Hendrik Willem Van Loon to explain to a young audience how mankind came to be. Beginning with the creation of the world and traveling through the late 1920's, the scope of the work is breathtaking, if not still accurate. This version also includes several updates that bring the story to more modern times, but without altering the historical writings. While the work is quite clearly out of date, it is an entertaining read, and shows how much mankind has grown in his knowledge of our origins even in the previous century alone. In addition, the book adds several handwritten illustrations and diagrams that not only help to explain the information presented, but also serve as a charming testament to the author's sense of humor. The book is easy to read, light, and offers, at the very least, a humorous look at the world as one viewed it in 1920.

The novel begins with a joyful account of the author's own journey to find enlightenment, which gives a sense as to why the book was written. The author then travels from the origin of the plant through prehistoric man. From Egypt to the Middle Ages, the author then tells briefly of various cultures that helped to increase scientific knowledge over time, including the origins of the alphabet, farming, writing, government, theater, and everything in between. He discusses major battles that changed the course of history, as well as focusing on Greek and Roman civilizations. Also covered are origins of various religious sects, revolutions, the evolution of Europe, and World War I. Finally, in the last section, John Merriman, a professor of history, has written an update to the book. This update covers the years since Van Loon's time through current times, and includes such topics as the exploration of space, the Cold War, medical and scientific advancement, and the role of developing countries. Cleverly written and witty enough to engage the reader throughout, "The Story of Mankind" is one for all levels of readers to enjoy.

Foreword, and Chapter 1 through Chapter 10

Foreword, and Chapter 1 through Chapter 10 Summary and Analysis

In the "Foreword", Van Loon tells readers of a trip he took with his uncle to the tower of Old St. Lawrence in Rotterdam. He sees history as a tower of experience. In "The Setting of the Stage", Van Loon discusses the earth as a large mass of rock and water from which the first cells of life begin to develop into plants and dinosaurs. Mammals soon evolve, become bipedal, and can hunt, survive various climates, and begin to learn language. In "Our Earliest Ancestors", Loon tells of ancient humans who do not have fire, and fight each day for food and survival, through which man begins to develop language. In "Prehistoric Man", man finds himself in the midst of a climate change where ice covers the world. As a result, he is forced to reason out problems. He learns to clothe his body, build shelters, and trap animals. He also seeks fire, and learns to cook food. In "Hieroglyphics", these primitive creatures are discovered by more learned men from Egypt. These men are farmers with irrigation, calendars, clocks, and most importantly, writing. In "The Nile Valley", many come to the Nile valley because of its rich soil and natural irrigation. Priests arise as keepers of knowledge, religion becomes a part of life, and pyramids are built. In "The Story of Egypt", men learn teamwork, but soon, kings are made. The Hyksos attack Egypt and rule for many years before Thebes revolts, freeing Egypt once more. After many more battles, Cleopatra's army loses to the Romans in 39 B.C. In "Mesopotamia", Mesopotamia is much like the Nile, as it is situated between the Euphrates river and the Tigris. "The Sumerians" discusses the nail writings of the Sumerians, the first population of Mesopotamia. Nail writings are small pictures derived from more elaborate images. The Sumerians are overrun by the Akkadians or "Semites", who are later overrun by the Amorites. Such battles continue through many populations, including the Greeks and Romans. In "Moses", the Jews, led by Moses, escape their Egyptian masters and arrive in the desert. Moses receives word from God as to his wishes, and spreads his word to the Jews. The Jews become the first people to worship a single God. Moses leads them to Palestine and dies. In "The Phoenicians", Loon explains that Phoenicians were greedy traders, but that they also developed the modern alphabet which soon spread all over Europe.

Chapter 11 through Chapter 21

Chapter 11 through Chapter 21 Summary and Analysis

"The Indo-Europeans" discusses the population of man who lives in Asia and Europe. These individuals fight many wars, beginning the first conflicts between Asia and Europe. "The Aegean Sea" discusses the finding of an ancient society of Crete. Crete was an island whose inhabitants were far more advanced than the Greeks, and was a major trading area while the main city, Cnossus, had proper plumbing, stoves, bathtubs, storage for foods, and other modern conveniences. In "The Greeks", the Hellenes move into Greece and become friends with the Aegeans, only to kill them once their knowledge had been passed on. In "The Greek Cities", the Greeks believe in moderation and in a simple life in all aspects. In "Greek Self-Government", tyrants begin to rule the cities. In the seventh century, the Athenian people put together a system under which the freemen of Greece are responsible for helping to run their own government by attending government meetings. In "Greek Life", the Greeks further develop a democratic government system, but many in Greece have no say in government. The slaves take over many of the tasks of the men who now serve their government. Loon explains in "The Greek Theatre" that modern theater developed from the parades of the Greeks in honor of Dionysus. In "The Persian Wars", tensions begin to build between the Greeks and the Persians as the Persians begin to demand submission. The Phoenicians offer help to the Persians, and the Greeks refuse to submit. When the Persians attack, the Athenians ask Sparta for aid, but Sparta refuses. A small army of Athenians defeat the masses of Persians at Miltiades. Eight years later, Sparta again refuses to help Thessaly as the Persians attack. A small army led by Leonidas fights, but is defeated, and much of Greece is lost to the Persians. Soon after, however, Sparta comes to aid, and the Greeks triumph. "Athens vs. Sparta" explains the differences between the two Greek cities. Athens was a modern intellectual city whereas Sparta was a city of military function. The two begin to war, and Athens is beaten down. The city falls in 404, but the desire for learning lives on. "Alexander the Great" explains that Philip, king of Macedonia, takes over Greece, and asks the people to join him in overtaking Persia. He perishes, however, and his son, Alexander, goes on a rampage, overtaking Egypt, Phoenicia, Persia, and the Himalayas. When Alexander dies, the land is again divided, but the idea of the blending of Greek, Asiatic, Persian, Egyptian, and Babylonian ideas remains. In "A Summary", Loon summarizes information thus far in the book.

Chapter 22 through Chapter 26

Chapter 22 through Chapter 26 Summary and Analysis

In "Rome and Carthage", Carthage hears Rome plans to come after the commerce of Sicily and France. Carthaginians learn that when the Greeks arrived in Rome, the Romans develop a system where the Senate and tribunes within specific cities are in charge of government affairs, and a general common wealth state of various cultures begins to form. Carthage attempts to negotiate commerce territories with Rome, but war begins over control of Sicily. In the First Punic War, Carthage loses to Rome, and Sicily becomes Roman. After Saguntum is overtaken by Carthage years later, Rome declares war again, and sends troops to cross to Spain. However, Hannibal of Carthage and his army join the Gauls and attack the Romans. When Hannibal attempts to have the citizens of the common wealth attack Rome, however, they refuse, and Hannibal flees after being defeated in 202. Carthage falls to Rome, and Hannibal commits suicide in 190 B.C. In "The Rise of Rome", Rome becomes a superpower. In "The Roman Empire", the farmers who return from fighting for Rome find themselves as poor as slaves. Sulla becomes dictator of Rome and peace remains, but on his death, Gaeus Pompeius begins to fight against neighboring countries. Julius Caesar attacks and takes control of France, the Teutons, and Egypt, where he establishes a government under Cleopatra. He attempts to reform the government by giving more rights back to the people and is murdered for it. Cleopatra kills herself and Egypt becomes a Roman province. Octavian, now ruler of Rome, maintains peace for the empire. In "Joshua of Nazareth", Ensa writes to his uncle of a man known as Jesus. He notes that Jesus is a religious man who believes in a single God, and in the soul of mankind. He tells of the arrest of Jesus for plotting against the government of Rome, and explains that according to Pontius Pilatus, Jesus is not against Rome, but only in favor of the goodness of man. Pilatus tries to spare Jesus, but is eventually forced to allow the Jews to crucify him. In "The Fall of Rome", Rome is beginning to fall apart. Rome as a city-state is successful, but Rome as a center of the world is bound to fail, due to endless war, poverty, and misrepresentation. The slaves have begun to follow Jesus' word, and foreign mercenaries are hired to fight and begin to lose Roman territory to barbarians. To avoid war with peasants, Constantine moves the capital to Byzantium and names it Constantinople. When the Huns attack the Gauls, the Gauls in turn attack Rome in the fourth century. Piece by piece, Rome is taken by various invaders. Roman language is given up for Greek, and all laws revert to the Greek laws.

Chapter 27 through Chapter 33

Chapter 27 through Chapter 33 Summary and Analysis

In "Rise of the Church", Rome is a mixture of all types of religion. When Jesus arrives, he preaches of eternal happiness. The Christians begin to anger other religious groups as they gain more members. After many years, the Church becomes recognized by the government. The Church of Rome comes under the lead of Gregory, and the whole of western Europe accepts the Pope as head of the church. In the east, Constantinople is taken over by Turks. In "Mohammed", Mohammed is a camel driver who hears the voice of an angel which leads him to write the Koran. He recruits many followers in Medina. Islam, his religion, succeeds because there are few rules, unlike Christianity, and the faith promises those who fight for Allah acceptance into the holy land. After his death, many leaders follow, including Omar, who takes over countries to make the Mohammedan empire. In "Charlemagne", the Popes of Rome persuade Pepin, a Frank, to become king. Pepin then helps defend the Pope. When Pepin dies, Charlemagne is appointed emperor of Rome by the Pope. Following his death, the Roman Empire is divided into two parts, France and Germania. After several fighting rulers, the Pope sends for aid from a northern Germanic tribe. Otto, the chieftain, sends aid, and the Pope names him emperor of the German Nation. In "The Norsemen", Germanic tribes are invaded by Norse soldiers. Following the death of Charlemagne, the Norsemen begin to spread to across Europe. In the tenth century, William, a Norse, becomes duke of Normandy, and attacks England, and becomes King of England. In "Feudalism", nobles swear loyalty to the king giving them land, or feudum, and promise to serve the king. In "Chivalry", professional fighting men learn to adhere to a code of conduct known as knighthood or chivalry. The knight swears he will be faithful to God and to the king, help the poor, and be humble. However, during the Crusades, the knight becomes useless, and knighthood is abandoned. In "Pope vs. Emperor", the Emperor is to protect the worldly being while the Pope is to protect the spirit, but these goals often clash. Subjects are forced to choose between the two forces. In the eleventh century, Gregory VII is elected Pope. He sends notice to all kings of Europe of his new laws, but King Henry IV refuses to submit and has Gregory dethroned. Gregory excommunicates Henry, who asks for forgiveness. He soon repeats his actions, however, and forces Gregory to retire, where he dies. This struggle continues between Popes and emperors for several generations.

Chapter 34 through Chapter 38

Chapter 34 through Chapter 38 Summary and Analysis

In "The Crusades", the Turks take over the Holy Land, and in 1095 the Pope raises the alarm in Rome, asking for everyone to help battle for Palestine. Religious mania results. This is the First Crusade, and it leads to the killing of thousands of Jews. The Church then spends a year training soldiers, and sends them on a Second Crusade, where they kill masses of Muslims. The Turks again rise to the occasion, retaking Jerusalem and slaughtering the Christians. Seven further Crusades occur, but none are successful, and moreover, the Crusaders often return home imitating the manners and customs of their enemies, the Turks. This changes Europe as the people seek a broader life. In "The Mediaeval City", the Crusades make the people of Europe realize the world is vast. They learn to make goods at home, become manufacturers, and cash becomes a useful commodity. Kings begin to borrow money from money-lenders in exchange for mortgages, or from Jews who ask for favors in return. As a result, power slowly shifts from the kings to the cities and the townspeople. In "Mediaeval Self-Government", after the Crusades the middle class comes back into power. The Magna Carta is signed by King John, which defines the powers of the King. Henry III calls for representatives of the cities to be present to act as financial experts. These representatives soon become part of a Parliament. In "The Mediaeval World", men are unlearned, barbarians, and only have the Bible and Aristotle as a learning tools. When scientists attempt to teach from outside of these books, they are shunned. This is done to protect the citizens from destroying their own future in Heaven. People freely give up their free thought for heavenly gains. In "Mediaeval Trade", the towns of Italy stand to do well following the Middle Ages. Venice is particularly famous, as it is one of the only salt producers. However, government is still run by a few wealthy merchants. On the other hand, another city, Florence, is at the opposite end, with a completely democratic government. This leads to fighting and an eventual tyrant as a ruler. Many cities, such as Genoa, use waterways to carry goods, whereas others, such as Venice, use land. International trade develops, as do associations of merchants designed to protect both goods and people from harm on land and sea.

Chapter 39 through Chapter 42

Chapter 39 through Chapter 42 Summary and Analysis

In "The Renaissance", Dante, a young man from Florence, writes a novel that captures the totality of the Middle Ages but at the same time, Francesco Petrarca becomes a famed poet whose work introduces a change from the old ways of the Middle Ages to the "live for today" mentality of the Renaissance. In Florence, there is a war between the old thinkers and the new, and a Dominican monk, Savonarola, convinces the masses to burn their arts. The masses eventually kill him. The Pope praises the masses, but Savonarola never repents, believing he was doing his best by the people. In "The Age of Expression", Thomas Kempis writes the "Imitation of Christ", a peaceful book which has a later impact on millions. This small book, however, written without experience, personifies the ideas of the Middle Ages. Men like Thomas are soon surpassed by those who want to express their own desires and thoughts. From this expressionism comes artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and inventors such as Johann Gutenberg whose printing press allows books to become mass produced. In "The Great Discoveries", the seas are filled with criminals, as the life expectancy of those traveling by water is short due to disease, weather, and malnutrition. In 1415, Prince Henry of Portugal discovers the Canary Islands, Medeira, charts the Azores, and by the end of the fifteenth century discovers Cape Verde. In 1486, Bartholomew Diaz finds the Cape of Good Hope. In 1487, Pedro de Covilham travels the Persian Gulf, and discovers Madagascar. In 1492, Columbus is granted a contract with the king and queen of Spain to attempt to find a western route to the Indies. Columbus believes he finds a route, but instead discovers North and South America. Other explorers such as Vasco Nunez also find land to the west. In 1521, Magellan discovers the Philippines, where he is killed, and his crew continues on to Spain. The journey takes three years, but proves the earth is round, and establishes the sea as the primary trading route. In "Buddha and Confucius", the travelers of Portugal and Spain discover new religious icons. In the sixth century, Buddha, in India, grows up as a wealthy prince, but at thirty discovers the world outside the palace is full of death and despair. The country revolves around the caste system, and the lowest caste is not allowed to read the Veda, or scriptures. Buddha moves into the wilderness to obtain the perfection of Brahma, the creator, and after teaching five disciples for six years, he fasts for 49 days and is visited by Brahma. Buddha spends the rest of his life teaching his faith to all casts, and Buddhism reaches China and Japan. Confucius, on the other hand, is born in 550 B.C in China. Confucius teaches not religion, but self-possession. He teaches an aversion to anger, and a life of peacefulness, and his common-sense philosophy was followed by millions.

Chapter 43 through Chapter 45

Chapter 43 through Chapter 45 Summary and Analysis

In "The Reformation", the Church begins to sell "indulgences" which, for a fee, promise a reduced time in Purgatory. Martin Luther, a priest, posts a sheet with ninety-five statements against the selling of indulgences to the door of a church. Luther is excommunicated, but many begin to follow his ideas of reforming the Church. The Reformation then becomes chaotic as people rebel, with some becoming protesters of Catholicism, or Protestants. In "Religious Warfare", both Protestants and Catholics begin to revolt against other faiths. Galileo and Servetus are punished, imprisoned, and killed as are many other scientists. When all of King Phillip's Dutch subjects denounce Catholicism, Philip sends the duke of Alba, who begins to lay siege to Dutch cities. The Protestants defeat the army. The seven northern Provinces meet at the Estates General in 1581 and declare their sovereignty. A naval war begins between the Spanish and the Dutch. By 1616, most colonies of the Indies and the Cape of Good Hope are Protestant. In 1618, the Thirty Year War begins. The war ends with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, but religious intolerance is still high between Catholics and Protestants. In "The English Revolution", England is taken over by Caesar in 55 B.C. After years of fighting, England is a united country by the end of the fifteenth century under Henry VII. In 1509, Henry VIII comes to power and makes the Church of England the religious power. Following his death, his son and daughter rule, but in 1558, Elizabeth takes power. She secures a place for England through her strict and shrewd rule. In 1587, Elizabeth has Mary, Queen of Scots beheaded, causing a war with Spain. The English and Dutch defeat the Spanish, Elizabeth dies, and James I takes over. Charles I, his son, succeeds him in 1625. A fight ensues between Parliament and the crown, and the two go to war. Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans fight Charles, and he flees to Scotland. After another small civil war, the Puritans remove any from Parliament that do not share their views, and condemn King Charles to death. Cromwell takes over, but on his death, Charles II returns to power. He reverts to the old ways, dies, and is replaced by Catholic James II, who continues to force Catholic rule. The people request the return of William III, husband of James' oldest Protestant daughter. William returns, thus making England Protestant. A Bill of Rights is drawn up, giving the church sovereignty over England, and making Parliament primary ruler. William also develops the Cabinet. Over the course of time, the Cabinet becomes accustomed to ruling the country. Thus, England becomes the first to have representative government.

Chapter 46 through Chapter 51

Chapter 46 through Chapter 51 Summary and Analysis

In "The Balance of Power", France is achieving great things, but Louis XIV, the king, is single-handedly running the country. He invades the English in 1678, and again in 1697. By the end of the War for Spanish Succession, international politics are such that a single nation ruler of Europe is impossible. This balance of power ensures that no single nation's interests are pushed before the interests of other nations. In "Rise of Russia", Russia accepts foreign trade in 1553, and nations begin to learn about the land of Russia. Byzantine monks traveled to the area and taught the inhabitants language and religion and arts. In 1224, Mongolians take control under Jenghiz Khan. In 1453, Moscow takes control of the Byzantine Empire. In 1598, Godunow takes control, and the freemen of the state become slaves. In 1689, Romanow becomes tsar, and attempts to change the state into a mimic of European civilization. In "Russia vs. Sweden", under Peter's rule, Russia is divided into eight provinces, infrastructure is developed, industry is empowered, and Peter is made head of the Russian church. Peter builds a city near the Baltic Sea, and when Charles XII of Sweden is made king, Russia, Poland, Denmark, and Saxony attempt to take it over. In 1709, Peter's army wins against Sweden, and the Baltic possessions of Sweden become the property of Russia. In "The Rise of Prussia", Frederick I, leader of Prussia, hates French ideas and values only military rule. His son, Frederick II, enjoys French ideals and values whatever is best for the state. In 1740, Fredrick II's army overtakes parts of Austria. He overhauls the government, treasury, and infrastructure of Germany. In "The Mercantile System", the new countries know they need money. The center of trade switches to the Atlantic ocean, and the mercantile system is born. Countries begin to foster foreign exports and lower imports in an effort to obtain more gold. In "The America Revolution", Puritans from England settle in North America to begin a new life, whereas settlers from France colonize North America for the King. France and England begin to fight over rights to America, and England wins the war. However, the Pilgrims of England soon resent the efforts of England to rule over them and revolt. Under George Washington's military genius, the colonists win their freedom. In Philadelphia, the representatives of the colonies draw up the Declaration on Independence under Thomas Jefferson, and the Constitution in 1787.

Chapters 52 through 55

Chapters 52 through 55 Summary and Analysis

In "The French Revolution", Louis XIV has become the entire government of France, and authors such as Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu begin to urge change due to poor conditions of life. The treasury is in debt, and Louis hires a series of ineffectual ministers of finance who succeed only in furthering the debt. Revolts begin to occur, and the king calls for a meeting of the Estates General. The queen calls for soldiers to come to Paris, and the peasants revolt and destroy the prison of Bastille. The National Assembly writes the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and in September of 1791, the constitution of France is written. In October, the Legislative Assembly meets, but armies of Prussia arrive to save the king. The peasants rise up in Paris, storm the palace, and arrest the king. When the National Convention meets in 1792, run by the Jacobin revolutionaries, the king is tried and convicted of treason. He is killed on January 21 of 1793. Eventually the Jacobins are killed, and the nation is ruled by a select five for forty years. In "Napoleon", the general begins life as a poor son of a notary public in Italy. Over time, he becomes a supporter of France. His reign is successful from 1789 through 1804 as he helps lead the French revolution. However, in 1804, he makes himself emperor of France, and begins slaughtering thousands which makes him the enemy of the people. When Alexander takes rule of Russia, Napoleon attacks. France takes Moscow and retreats, but his army is bashed by Russian troops. Napoleon reorganizes, and a battle ensues at Leipzig, but his army is defeated again by Russia. Napoleon is removed from power, but his soldiers rally to him in 1815, and he storms northward through France and Belgium. On June 18, the battle of Waterloo is fought, where the French are defeated. He is exiled to St. Helena, where he dies. In "The Holy Alliance", Talleyrand of Prussia talks the nobles into allowing Louis XVIII to lead France, Metternich of Austria believes France should have remained quiet and not fought the old ways, and Alexander of Russia feels he helped Europe avoid demise by ousting Napoleon. These three individuals set forth the Holy Alliance, which promises that all three countries will remain allies. Metternich, however, through the document ensures his own armies will uphold peace in Europe at the demise of any dissenters. In "The Great Reaction", the Congress changes the Dutch Republic into a kingdom, and makes Belgium part of the Netherlands. Poland is made part of Russia, Norway is given to Sweden, Italy is divided, and Spain is given back to Ferdinand VII. Portugal is made a British province, the Slavs and Greeks are left to suffer under their sultan, and Germany is left in the hands of the German Confederation.

Chapter 56 through Chapter 59

Chapter 56 through Chapter 59 Summary and Analysis

In "National Independence", in Haiti, a fight over independence occurs and Haiti gains freedom. Haiti then helps Simon Bolivar win independence for Venezuela. South America and Mexico win independence as well. Revolts against the Turks occur in Romania, as well as in Greece. France, and England, and Russia attacks the Turkish fleet in 1827 and wins. Belgium declares independence, while Poland loses its battle to Russia. Austria then wins their independence. Italy unites and, following the Crimean war, Sardinia is recognized as a power in Europe; Cavour uses this country to begin a war against Austria. The Austrians are defeated. The Prussian army invades Bohemia, and Prussia again holds leadership of Germany. France and Germany soon go to war, where Napoleon III and his army are defeated. The king of Prussia is publicly named emperor of Germany. In "The Age of the Engine", in 1777, James Watt invents the first usable steam engine. In 1730, the fly shuttle is invented for weaving to improve cotton clothing production, Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin, and Richard Arwright invents the weaving machine. Steamboats are in use by 1807, and in 1818, the Savannah steamer makes it from Savannah to Liverpool. The traveling engine is built in 1824. Benjamin Franklin and many others begin to study electricity and magnetism, and Samuel Morse develops the Morse Code machine and uses it in 1844. In 1867, Alexander Bell invents the telephone. In 1831, Michael Faraday invents the dynamo, or the first electrical generator. In "The Social Revolution", the introduction of machines forces small business owners to work in factories. The new factories cause riots, but insurance companies are created to protect the factories. Labor unions are abolished by Parliament. In 1832, England gives factory owners more of a voice in government than the workers. In "Emancipation", factory workers are living in squalor with little food, children are forced to work, and people are dying by the hundreds. Slavery has been implemented in the United States, and England and other countries begin to push for its abolition. By 1863 there are no slaves in England, France, or Portugal. In the U.S., the north is pushing for the end of slavery, and the South is threatening to secede from the Union. President Abraham Lincoln sends northern soldiers to the south, and four years of civil war ensue. In 1863, Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, which frees all slaves. Socialism is popular for a short time, and Karl Marx writes "Capital" and "Manifesto", in which he explains his socialist view of economics, and in which he urges workers to fight for political and economic measures.

Chapter 60 through Chapter 65

Chapter 60 through Chapter 65 Summary and Analysis

In "The Age of Science", Copernicus, Galileo and Issac Newton discover much about the stars and gravitation, the microscope is invented, and scientists begin to research bacteriology. Several scientists, such as marquis de Laplace and Darwin, discuss alternative stories of creation. Additionally, dissection begins to occur. In "Art", readers are taken through the history of art, where, up until the Romans, mankind enjoyed making artistic things. He soon combines art of the East with art of Germanic form to create Gothic art. During the Middle Ages, the Church becomes a center for artistic expression and architectural advancement. In the fifteenth century, oil painting is developed. Plays are developed in the sixteenth century, and music becomes popular as Bach, Mozart and others are heard. By the coming of the steam engine, however, the world turns away from art as a useless tool of an ancient age. In "Colonial Expansion and War", Loon explains why he chooses to include some countries and people and to exclude others. Back to history, countries begin to expand beyond their borders and broaden their interests. The economic development of the world is stable, but the political developments of Europe are unstable as the Turks attempt to maintain control over the south-east corner of Europe. Russian armies attack Constantinople, and after Turkey appeals to England, Russia withdraws. Montenegro, Serbia, and Romania are made independent, Bulgaria is given self rule under Prince Alexander, and Austria takes Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1914, archduke Ferdinand is murdered in Bosnia, beginning World War I. In "A New World", Loon laments that modern man is not "modern" but is simply another building block on the way to higher civilization. He notes that the world changes drastically with machines, and that this is, in effect, the cause of the war. In "As it Ever Shall Be", Loon notes Irony and Piety should be the gods of modern man. In "After Seven Years", Loon notes that the history of Europe is one of a battle by several countries for control. In terms of WWI, William II of Germany attempts to befriend England, but England realizes Germany is a competitor. The world has become one giant trading center. Loon believes the U.S. joins the war only after propaganda sells them on the idea that democracy is being lost overseas. Once Germany agrees to a "republic", the war should end, but U.S. President Wilson takes a personal interest in the peace negotiations. He and others develop the League of Nations, which is limited in power. Loon notes the world has become a servant of industry, but that Americans, because of their lack of identity with foreign countries, is better able to deal with such modern ideas. He laments that the treaty of Versailles is a failure in that it is based on the old world ideals.

Chapter 66 through 71

Chapter 66 through 71 Summary and Analysis

In "The United States Comes of Age", written by another author, Willem, the United States is ignoring the rest of the world following WWI. The 1920s are a period of lawlessness, and the U.S. shuns her responsibilities in the world. The U.S. is too busy panicking over the fall of the stock market and their own revolution, the Depression. In "The Axis Partners", stocks become worthless, banks all over the world are bankrupt, and war begins. In 1931, Japan sends troops into Manchuria. In 1933, Hitler is named chancellor of Germany, and he and the Soviet Union begin to fight for control of Russia. Mussolini and Hitler join forces, and invade Ethiopia in 1935. In 1936, Mussolini takes Ethiopia. Uprising in Spain has led to the victory of General Franco as dictator, who sides with Mussolini and Hitler, and Hitler welcomes the Japanese as allies, forming the axis powers. In "Isolationism and Appeasement", the U.S. practices isolationism, while England attempts to appease Germany. Hitler takes over Austria in 1938, however, and isolationism ends in the U.S. In "The Atlantic Charter", in 1939, Germany invades Poland, and a joint declaration of war is issued against Germany by France and Britain. By September 12, 1939, Australia, New Zealand, India, Canada, and South Africa also declare war. Winston Churchill takes over the English as prime minister, but France finally falls to Germany. When battle begins in 1940 for England, Hitler's air force is surprised by the British elite air force. On June 22, 1941, Hitler invades the Soviet Union but when winter hits, Germany is forced to wait for spring. By then, the U.S. has allied with the Soviet Union. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacks Pearl Harbor. In "Global War", Japan takes over many islands in the Pacific. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. declares war against Japan. In September, 1942, the Soviets defeat Germany at Stalingrad, and Germany begins to retreat from Russia. In 1943, Mussolini is overthrown and in 1944, the allied forces invade Normandy. The Battle of the Bulge occurs, Hitler is nearly killed by his own general staff, and Germany suffers defeat in Belgium. The Soviet Union takes control over the Balkans, and heads towards Berlin. Hitler commits suicide in 1944, and Germany surrenders. Meanwhile, the allied forces attempt to capture smaller Japanese islands, but lose many men. In Oak Ridge, Tennessee, an entire population of scientists develops the atomic bomb, which is then tested in White Sands, New Mexico. The bomb is then dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing thousands of people. The Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945. In "The United Nations", the world is destroyed in the aftermath of WWII. In October of 1944, the U.S., Soviet Union, and Britain push forward the idea of the United Nations. The U.S.S.R. begins to slow negotiations and begins to put up the "Iron Curtain." Marshall Aid plans, or promises of financial funding by the U.S. to any non-communist nation, begin to take effect and France, Yugoslavia, and Greece fight communism. Israel is made independent in 1947, as is Pakistan and the Philippines. Chinese communist forces begin battling nationalist forces, and the Korean war begins. U.N. forces are dispatched, but when Chinese forces assist North Korea, the U.N. forces fall back. In 1950, members of the Atlantic Pact meet in Brussels and appoint Eisenhower as commander of the western European army.

Chapter 72 through Chapter 77

Chapter 72 through Chapter 77 Summary and Analysis

In "A Turbulent Peace", armistice is finally concluded following the Korean War after years of debate. In 1954, the Western European Union comes into being as a gathering of nations against Communism, while in 1955, the Warsaw Treaty Organization is organized of several Communist nations. Stalin dies in 1953, and Malenkov replaces him with a more tolerant view of Western culture. Nikita Khrushchev comes to power in 1964, and relations improve more. However, in Germany, Russian controlled East Berlin riots over their conditions under Communist rule. Similar riots occur in Poland, and in Budapest in 1956. China begins to exert power as a communist state, while Japan shows record growth in development as a democratic nation. The United States, too, continues to be a vast power as they help the world fight communism and form democratic governments through N.A.T.O. and other organizations. In 1962, President Kennedy creates a naval blockade of Cuba, preventing the Soviets from giving rockets to revolutionary Fidel Castro, causing problems between the two powers. Problems also erupt in the Middle East as Arabs and Israelis fight over the Gaza Strip and Palestine, and as other nations fight for control over rich oil reserves. Further, underdeveloped countries struggle to compete with industrial nations, and struggle to survive overpopulation, poverty, and development. In "An Old Order Gives Way", the United States grapples with new issues such as desegregation, civil rights, and poverty, and a lack of education. President Kennedy is seen as an icon of the new order and the activism of the 1960s. Dr. King fights for the rights of all black men, and President Eisenhower desegregates the armed forces and the educational system. However, there is a down side to this new world, in that cities become more polluted, drugs enter society, wars in Asia and Africa threaten the world, race riots ensue, and the two icons of change, King and Kennedy, are assassinated. However, the arms race is slowed by a treaty between the U.S. and the Soviet Union to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, a treaty to halt nuclear testing, and talks to limit strategic arms. In "Spaceship Earth", the Russians are the first to put a man into orbit, and to put a satellite into space. The U.S. puts men on the moon. The author notes, however, that man's world is limited in resources, and that man has nearly destroyed the earth through each step of advancement. In "The Earth as a Global Village" the author warns that all generations believe they experience things worse than generations before them. All nations are moving more toward helping their fellow man, and the author, writing in 1972 believes minimum wages and welfare will be developed, and that people believe they cannot be stopped, due to putting a man on the moon.

In "Entering the High-Tech Age", written in 1984, science has advanced mankind through space exploration, but such exploration could lead to space wars. The electronics revolution has increased availability of the personal computer and improved factories, but as a result men have lost jobs, industry has become dehumanized, the wealthy have more access to wealth, and the government has more power over citizens. Nuclear weapons pose a serious threat and environmental pollution has



caused grave health risks. The world's weather patterns are changing, which cause crops to suffer and ecosystems to die. All of these issues cause a gap between wealthy and poor nations, and wars often develop as a result of land rights or rights to oil and other natural resources. As oil prices rise due to war and a lack of supply, demands diminish as a result of oil-saving techniques. The U.S. involvement in Vietnam is met with a mixture of support and severe protest. A peace agreement is signed but both North and South Vietnam violate it. Eventually, the country falls to communism. Following the war, the U.S. is further shaken by Watergate, when five burglars place listening devices at the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee. When President Nixon is indicated in the scandal, he resigns. Ford follows, as does Carter, but neither president is able to turn around economic and foreign policy problems in the U.S. Woman's rights improve during the 1970's as the Equal Right's Amendment is passed, abortion is legalized, women run for office, excel in sports, and even enter space. Homosexuals and blacks also gain more rights during the 1970s and 1980s. There becomes a focus on the idea of being young and staying young, and people start jogging, eating healthier, and cancer treatments are improved. However, the arms race is still a problem, Communism is still an issue, and there are still countries seeking democracy. In 1983, the U.S. invades Grenada as well as Nicaragua to help overthrow governments, despite international law against such moves. The Iranian Revolution brings Ayatollah Khomeini to power, and in 1979, the American Embassy in Iran is attacked. The Cultural Revolution in China ends in 1976, but damage has been done to the economy of the superpower. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Middle East is still a battlefield for Israelis and Arabs. The Palestine Liberation Organization, a terrorist organization, has developed, and hundreds of Muslims, Christians, and Jews are killed. The 1970s in Europe bring Portugal under new rule, and both Spain and France become socialist. The Catholic Church elects a non-Italian Pope for the first time in hundreds of years, and millions of Biafrans are killed in race wars in southern Africa. Assassinations and terrorism are abundant. Even the Olympic games of 1972 are plagued by terrorist attack, as is Ireland, Paris, Bologna, and even Buckingham Palace. The author notes that this era shows the resilience of mankind, and he ends the chapter by thanking the heroes of the age who stood up for the rights of their fellow man.

In "A New Millennium", Gorbachev becomes head of the Soviet Union, and relations with the U.S. improve. Nationalist movements increase, and in many countries, communism begins to crumble. The Berlin Wall falls, and East and West Germany are united. By 1991, thirteen of the fifteen Soviet Union states declare Independence. The new countries have difficulty in becoming stable, however, and civil wars begin to break out. China remains communist, as does Cuba, but South Africa ends apartheid. Civil wars in Somalia and other areas of Africa, continue to rage, but other countries such as Congo remain free. In South America, democratic governments also come to power, as they do in Central America. The Middle East continues to be a hotbed of rebellion and violence as Iran and Iraq go to war, and as the Gulf War is battled between the United Nations, including the U.S., and Iraq. The United Nations defeat Iraq but leader Saddam Hussein continues to threaten the world. In 1994, Palestinians are granted self-rule of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but terrorists and extremists continue to attack here and elsewhere in the world. Due to these issues, immigration increases, and refugees number in the millions. Increases in military spending occur, business in the US

becomes more competitive, the deficit increases, and the stock market crashes in 1987. By the 1990s, however, the economy is back on track, which affects the rest of the world. Drug use, however, becomes a huge problem in the 1980s. Natural disasters and industrial accidents also occur around the world. Oil spills and pollution continue to take their toll on the environment, and diseases such as Ebola and AIDS kill millions. Genetic studies continue to bring up ethical questions of genetic alterations and health care costs soar. Space exploration continues to evolve as nations send ships to Uranus and Neptune, but also experience set backs, such as the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger. Satellites and television bring the world together, and the personal computer makes communication instantaneous and introduces the age of information, but simultaneously brings questions of free speech and privacy. The author ends the chapter by noting that the advancements at the end of the twentieth century can only lend hope to better lives for everyone in the next millennium.

Characters

Egyptians

Egyptians were some of the first inhabitants of the world who formed a civilization. The Egyptians lived in the Nile Valley, where the river helped to ensure the people had clean water, food, and lush, fertile ground. The Egyptians were farmers, and developed complicated irrigation systems to keep the land fertile. They also developed buildings that were much more complex and architecturally sound than previous populations. The Egyptians also developed a calendar to mark the seasons, and clocks to mark the hours of the day. Further, the Egyptians developed the art of writing through the use of hieroglyphs. These individuals also began to question the world around them in a way other civilizations did not. As a result, certain individuals became more learned than others, and served as teachers to the population. These were known as priests, and they began to preach to the populations about the gods, such as Osiris. In order to arrive in the realm of Osiris with possession of the body, the priests began to bury the dead in pyramids, where they could store the mummified remains of the deceased. The Egyptians, however, soon found themselves at battle with several surrounding civilizations as others began to realize the value of the valley land. In the end, Egyptians lost to the Roman army in 39 B.C.

Mesopotamians

The people of Mesopotamia were another civilization who found themselves at war with neighboring countries, but also in possession of great advancements. Mesopotamia lies between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. The land, therefore, is similar to that of the Valley of the Nile, in that the soil is fertile. The Sumerians, the first inhabitants, came from the mountains in the north. They were a white race, and often built large towers in Mesopotamia on top of which altars were placed to worship the gods. The Sumerians were soon overtaken by the Akkadians, however, who lived in the desert area of Arabia. They were known as Semites, because they were believed to be the direct descendants of Shem, a son of Noah. These individuals were then taken over by the Amorites, whose king Hammurabi set forth a listing of rules that created the administrated city of Babylon. They were then overrun by the Assyrians, who terrorized the land. When they were overrun by the Chaldeans, Nebuchadnezzar, their king, encouraged study in many areas including science, astronomy, mathematics, and technology. Eventually the land became a forgotten wilderness, but the Mesopotamian people advanced human civilization through their lives.

Moses

Moses, a slave in Egypt, escapes and lives for many years in the desert, where he learns to live a simple life with few wants or desires. He comes back to Egypt to free his



people, and leads them across the desert to freedom, stopping at Mt. Sinai. While at Mt. Sinai, Moses travels to the top of the mountain and receives word from God. He writes these words onto tablets that he then shares with the Jews, who now worship a single God. These writings become the commandments of God and are followed by the Jews. Moses leads the people to Palestine, where they are free, but perishes himself before reaching the land.

Leonidas

Leonidas was the King of Sparta at the time of the invasion by Persia. Leonidas and his small army were in charge of guarding the narrow pass between the mountains and the sea near Thessaly to prevent the Persians from attacking the mainland of Greece. Leonidas and his army fought for several days, and nearly held off a huge military force. However, Ephialtes, a traitor in Leonidas' group, led the Persians through the hills to attack Leonidas from behind. Leonidas and his army were slaughtered, and the Persians went on to overrun much of Greece.

Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great was the son of King Philip, who ruled over Macedonia following the battle between Athens and Sparta. When Philip died, Alexander took over the kingdom of all of Greece and Macedonia, and began a journey that would unite a massive area under Greek rule. Alexander and his army overtook Egypt, Phoenicia, Persia, and most of Asia. He was worshiped as the son of pharaohs in Egypt, rebuilt Babylon, and taught the people the ways of the Greeks. He raised civilization to a whole new level, and joined the intellectual communities of many nations. While the empire of Greece was lost following his death, the concepts he brought about continued to thrive.

Jesus

Jesus Christ is described as the son of a carpenter, Joseph. Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem in Syria to Mary. Jesus quickly became a Jewish prophet who began to speak about the kingdom of heaven and the benefits of living a clean, good life. He was arrested for attempting to lead a revolt against Rome. When questioned by Pontius Pilatus, Jesus noted he believed all men to be equal, but that he cared not for politics. He only cared about saving the souls of men. He wanted everyone to become one with God and to stop squabbling. However, Pilatus had to turn Jesus over to the Jews, who crucified him for treason.

Caesar

Caesar was a governor of Spain before rising to power in Rome. He conquered France, the Teutons, England, and other areas before landing in Egypt and taking over the lands. He created a democratic government under Cleopatra, and returned to Rome as

dictator. Caesar attempted to implement many of the reforms needed in Rome. He allowed freemen to become Senate members, made all inhabitants citizens of Rome, permitted those of foreign nationality to participate in government, and attempted to pull the government away from wealthy aristocrats. Unfortunately, he was murdered for such changes.

Mohammed

Mohammed began life as a camel driver who was born in Mecca. He was an epileptic who suffered unconsciousness, during which he heard the voice of angel Gabriel whose words were then written into the Koran, or the holy book. Mohammed attempts to tell his people that Allah has sent him to save the world, but they do not believe him. He flees to Medina to avoid death, and here he finds an audience for his sermons. He is soon accepted as a prophet of Islam. Islam preaches that one must love Allah, honor parents, be honest, be charitable, and to abstain from strong drink. Mohammed began to alter laws of Islam to support the wealthy, however, discrediting his faith. He died in 632.

Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus was the son of a wool merchant in Genoese in the late 1400s. He studied mathematics at the University of Pavia, but soon traveled to the eastern Mediterranean on business. He sailed several journeys before marrying the daughter of a captain who served under Henry the Navigator. He received a contract with Spain to sail a route to the Indies to the west, but discovered the Americas instead. While he was unaware of his finding at the time, it was his discovery that eventually led to the European settlement of the United States.

Buddha

Buddha was born in the sixth century to a chief and his wife. Raised inside the palace walls, he knew nothing of the world. On learning of death, the caste system, and despair at age thirty, Buddha elected to travel to the desert to purify himself, as was the directive of Brahma, the creator. He begins teaching lower castes about the faith, and angers the nobles. After fasting for fifty days, he receives a vision of Brahma, and devotes the rest of his life to spreading the word of Brahma.

Elizabeth Tudor

Queen Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. She was made queen of England in 1558 after the death of Queen Mary. Queen Elizabeth spent time in prison in her younger years and was only released on word of the holy Roman empire. Elizabeth hated all things Catholic and all things Spanish. It was because of the superior rule of Elizabeth that the country became a dynasty, in that her work increased the possessions and revenue of England, making the country more able to send ships out



onto the seas to claim more land and increase trading. Elizabeth had Mary, Queen of Scots beheaded, which started a war with Spain, but her reasons were sound. Elizabeth died in 1603.

Napoleon Buonaparte

Napoleon Buonaparte was born in 1769 on Corsica, an Italian island, to Carlo and Letizia. Carlo was a single notary public of Ajaccio, while Letizia was a strong, high-mannered woman. Napoleon grew up rather poor, and hated France as a child. Following the freeing of Corsica by the French, however, Napoleon found himself drawn to the French lifestyle and believing in French virtue. He became a military leader, and at first helped bring France to the forefront of the Revolution, becoming a hero to the people. Later, however, as he grew addicted to power, he named himself emperor, and began spreading terror throughout Europe. He was defeated eventually at Waterloo, and sentenced to exile on St. Helena.

Adolf Hitler

Adolf Hitler was the chancellor and president of Germany beginning in 1934. On his appointment, he began to lead the German people by promising them a rise back to power. He pushed the idea of Germans as a superior race of Aryans. He claimed the downfall of the race was the Jewish population. He then hired soldiers to kill the Jewish population of Germany, and began a quest to take over Europe. After several years of death, Hitler's army was defeated in Germany and Hitler committed suicide in a bunker.



Objects/Places

Amphibian

According to the book, an amphibian is a creature able to live both on land and in the ocean.

Mammals

In the book, mammals are described as animals who feed their young through the milk of the mammary gland.

Anthropologists

The book describes anthropologists as scientists who study mankind as a member of the kingdom of animals.

Hieroglyphics

Hieroglyphics were invented by the Egyptians, according to Van Loon, and are carved or drawn images that represent certain concepts or ideas that can then be combined to form sentences.

Nail Writings

Nail writings, developed by the Sumerians, are similar to hieroglyphics, except that whereas hieroglyphics are images, nail writings are simply v-shaped characters meant to represent concepts.

Draconian Law

Athens, in an attempt to even out government for the common freeman, set about to create laws that would give the people a voice. Their first attempt at such laws was written by Draco, a professional lawyer. Draco's laws, however, were far too strict, and were completely out of touch with ordinary life. These laws were thrown out.

Plutocracy

A plutocracy is a government of wealthy business owners in ancient Rome.

Feudum

A feudum is a piece of land granted to a vassal by a king in exchange for devotion, taxes, and maintenance. It is also the basis for the concept of feudalism.

Magna Carta

The Magna Carta was a charter developed by the vassals of England in 1215 that specifically spelled out the role of the king, and the rules of the land. While it ignored the peasants, the document was one of the first to offer securities to the rising middle class of merchants.

Scurvy

A disease common to the sea travelers of the Middle Ages caused by a lack of vitamins. According to the author, the gums begin to bleed, and the blood is poisoned until the patient dies.

Caste System

A system of classifying individuals of India according to their importance to society, in which the warriors and nobles are the highest, the priests are the next highest, the peasants and business men are the third highest, and the natives are the lowest. These natives are not allowed to study the holy scriptures of the Veda of Brahma.

Heretic

A heretic is a man or woman who openly questioned the fundamental principles of the Protestant or Catholic religion. Such individuals were seen as a plague on society.

Mercantile System

This economic system states that the country with the biggest capital is the richest country, and that international trade is vital to increases in such capital.

Dynamo

A dynamo was the first electrical generator, developed by Michael Faraday in 1831.

Isolationism

Isolationism is the political policy pursued by the United States in the beginning of World War II. Following WWI, the U.S. received nothing in payment for its involvement in foreign fighting, other than a promise of further trade agreements. As a result, the U.S. paid little attention to the beginnings of WWII, since the people preferred not to go to war again for foreign interests.

Ecology

Ecology is the relationship of living things to their surroundings, and the relationship between all forms of life.

Apartheid

Apartheid is the separation and inequality of blacks made legal.

Themes

Religious Persecution

One of the primary themes throughout the novel is that of religious persecution. Throughout history, religious differences have caused mayhem throughout the world, as different belief systems clash and compete for power. From the earliest priests, those of the religious hierarchy have been seen as keepers of knowledge and as leaders of the people. By the fifth century B.C., Christianity is beginning to take hold as rulers learn that by teaching barbarians Christianity, they can begin to control them. By 1095, the Crusades begin. Whereas other areas of history have experienced smaller bouts of religious fighting, the Crusades are the first real attack for religious cause. As the Turks attack the Holy Land, the Pope demands that the Christians take up arms. Thousands of Jews are killed in the first Crusade, and masses of Muslims are killed during the second. Thousands of Christians are killed by the Turks during these as well. This process of religious slaughter occurs seven more times, during which religions are pitted against one another. Such persecution is not limited to Christian religions either. In the sixth century, Buddha learns that the lower casts of his society are not allowed to read the Veda, or the holy scriptures. He spends his life teaching lower castes the value of religion, in exchange for the persecution and anger of the higher casts. By the late 1500s, even the Church cannot hold together a single faith. When the Church sells indulgences, or shorter terms in Purgatory, priest Martin Luther objects, which brings about an uprising against what has become the Catholic Church. The result is a group of Protestant, or protesters against Catholicism. By the 1600s, King Phillip has the duke of Alba slaughtering those who denounce Catholicism, and the king makes these individuals enemies of the state. The Thirty Year war is a result of this religious fight, but solves nothing, and actually increases intolerance between sects of Protestants and Catholics. In the modern world, religious intolerance has not abated. The Jews and the Arab Muslims still fight over possession of the Holy Land, or the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. There are still several separations between religious communities, even amidst the Christian faith, and certainly between Christians, Jews, Muslims, and other religions.

Military Expansion

The theme of governmental expansion has dominated history for thousands of years, and is a primary theme within the novel as a result. As early as 39 B.C., the Hyksos attack Egypt to expand their empire, and the Romans continue until they capture Egypt in that year. The Persian wars are based on the desire of the Persians to control the Greeks, and to expand the Persian empire through lands owned by the Greeks. Alexander of Macedonia expands his empire to include Egypt, Phoenicia, Persia, and the Himalayas. The First Punic War, fought between Carthage and Rome, is fought for control over Sicily to expand trade routes. At the time of Jesus, Rome is expanding to include all areas of Europe in an effort to become the greatest Empire of all time. In the



ninth century, Omar, a follower of Islam, takes over several countries in an effort to expand the Mohammedan empire. Such fighting continues in Europe throughout the Middle Ages as countries attempt to expand their own borders for reasons such as protection against other nations, commerce, trade, religion, or simple greed. In 1224, for example, Jenghiz Khan takes over much of central Asia to create the vast expanse of the Mongolian Empire. By the late 1400s, many countries are setting sail to expand their territories to include otherwise unknown areas such as the Americas, and islands in between. By the mid 1600s the battle shifts to expansion as a result of religious differences, as countries fight to win specific areas so they can be of a particular religious order. In the 1800, Napoleon attempted to make France a new empire by invading Russia. By WWII, Hitler and Mussolini attempt to expand their own borders to take most of Europe for a racial cause, or the belief that the Aryan nation should prevail. In modern times, these reasons are still pursued as Saddam Hussein overtakes lands for their resources, and as arguments continue over the ownership of the West Bank. It is clear, through this history, that the expansion of borders by governments occur for a number of reasons, but that in all cases, the expansion causes many regular civilians to suffer as a result of persecution, economic instability, and in some cases, outright murder.

Technological Advancement

Technological advancement has dominated the course of history since man first invented tools. With each step, man has served to increase his presence on the earth and to improve his own quality of life, while often simultaneously causing drastic negative consequences to the planet or to other populations. In the beginning, it was technological advancement that made mankind able to survive while other species did not. The wheel, the hammer, the spear, and other primal tools helped man to evolve into a thinking, reasoning creature. His learning of writing and language allowed him to share knowledge with other individuals. By the time of the Romans and the Greeks, technology has advanced to allow soldiers better weapons and better armor, and allow doctors to improve health conditions and food growth potential. By medieval times, however, scientists begin to be shunned as heretics who go against religion. By the 1400s however, advancements lead to the sailing of countries around the world. However, these trips often lead to the death of native inhabitants of the islands landed on. In later years, technological advancement leads to an end to some diseases through studies using microscopes, studies of the stars and gravitation, and studies of physics. In later years, cell phones, computers, medicine, industry, and other areas all see advancements that allow individuals to work less, live longer, and produce more. When taken alone, these advancements are wonderful, and have allowed the citizens of the world to advance. However, these advancements have caused a host of other problems for the world. Environmental pollution, including acid rain, contaminated ground water supplies, polluted streams and rivers, oil spills, and air pollution all serve to hurt the environment as well as all life on the Earth. Technological advancements have allowed humans to be instantly connected with one another in all areas. However, this has also lead to a depersonalization of most industries, and a collection of "space junk" or debris in space the equates to a space landfill, which may eventually threaten populations on

the planet. With deforestation has come changes in weather patterns that threaten crops and harm water supplies. With medical advancements have come ethical dilemmas such as right to life questions and cloning issues. With advancements in physics and energy has come such technological wonders as atomic power, but also the atomic bomb. It is clear, in looking at just these limited examples, that with advancements of man has come a great responsibility to use the outcome of such advancements carefully. If used improperly, many of the modern technologies we see today could cause our demise tomorrow.

Style

Perspective

This book is written mostly in the third person, with occasional breaks in the first person as the authors speak their own opinions. This third person viewpoint allows the illusion that the author is giving simple facts of world history, and helps to keep the storyline flowing. However, as the author himself admits, any person telling of world history in a small space has to exhibit some form of bias and prejudice even to fit the information in. The author chooses specific instances in history to discuss that he feels are vital to the story of the world. Others, however, may not agree with those choices as definitive moments in history, since such a perspective is extremely relative. In addition, the author shows an extreme bias against most religious movements in history, which lead to a slightly skewed notion of historical events. Van Loon's background as a historian and a lover of knowledge helps him to keep the story alive through his writing without being dull or boring, as some historical accounts can be. His first person narratives, when given, are short, and while they betray his own opinions at the occasional stupidity of all government, they also serve to add a human voice to the historical account being given in the book, and help explain the biases that are clear within the novel.

Tone

The tone of the novel changes slightly throughout. There is a consistent tone of amusement, which helps to lighten some of the extremely heavy and dry topics being presented in the book. In general, the tone is also neutral, in that Van Loon gives a fairly accurate portrait of history, as he knows it, without severely leaning toward one political extreme or another. However, in some areas his tone becomes almost combative as he discusses his opinions about the validity of religious intolerance, and his fights with colleagues about which material to stress in the book and which to leave out. His tone, at times, can be one of awe as he describes certain military rulers, both good and bad, who command the attention of the world, but at other times, his tone is almost whimsical as he tells of his cat, and his modest home. Finally, Loon's tone can be one of pure optimism as he discusses possibilities of the future. Such changes in tone allow the writer to interject himself into the story of history, while also serving to liven up the story. In addition, such changes in tone allow the reader to place a human element in the telling of history, which is vital to understanding how history relates to modern times.

Structure

The novel is separated into a Foreword, List of Illustrations, 77 chapters, an animated chronology, and an index. The chapters are of very unequal lengths, in that some are only a page, while others are nearly one hundred pages. The Foreword is a note from Van Loon to his readers that describes his love for history. The List of Illustrations shows

the title and page number of each illustration, drawn by the author himself, throughout the novel. The chapters are next, and are both numbered and titled. Each chapter also has a small summary of topics under the chapter heading. The animated chronology is a series of drawings showing the timeline of man. Finally, the index is a listing of all important topics and characters of importance, and their corresponding page numbers. The language of the novel is extremely easy to read, as it was written originally for younger audiences. The history is told with a sense of humor, adding an entertaining element to the sometimes dry read of historical events. Loon's own way of interpreting events makes the stories of history come alive in a way that allows the reader to picture the events, rather than simply read of them. The other authors who add to the original story follow Loon's narration style to allow a cohesive story throughout.

Quotes

"History is the mighty tower of experience, which time has built amidst the endless fields of bygone ages. It is no easy task to reach the top of this ancient structure and get the benefit of the full view. There is no elevator, but young feet are strong and it can be done. Here I give you the key that will open the door," (Foreword, p. xvii).

"This knowledge forced him to strive after perfection, and perfection, as he had been taught from childhood, was not possible without moderation," ("The Greek Cities", Chapter 14, p. 60).

"...[T]he story of Greek life is a story not only of moderation, but also of simplicity...the Greeks before everything else wanted to be "free", both in mind and in body. That they might maintain their liberty, and be truly free in spirit, they reduced their daily needs to the lowest possible point," ("Greek Life", Chapter 16, p. 71).

"But when the enemy was before the gates of Rome, all the Latins rushed to her defense. It was their mother who was in danger. It was their true home, even if they lived a hundred miles away and had never seen the walls of the sacred hills," ("Rome and Carthage", Chapter 22, p. 98).

"Why should we ever read fairy stories when the truth of history is so much more interesting and entertaining?" ("The Norsemen", Chapter 30, p. 160).

"Deliberately, they turned their backs upon a world which was filled with suffering and wickedness and injustice...They tried to close their eyes to most of the joys of the world in which they lived that they might enjoy those which awaited them in the near future. They accepted life as a necessary evil and welcomed death as the beginning of a glorious day," ("The Mediaeval World", Chapter 37, p. 208).

"For tolerance (and please remember this when you grow older) is of very recent origin and even the people of our own so-called "modern world" are apt to be tolerant only upon such matters as do not interest them very much," ("Religious Warfare", Chapter 44, p. 278).

"It turned the Slavic peasants into miserable slaves. It deprived the mass of the people of all feeling of honor and independence. It made hunger and misery and maltreatment and personal abuse the normal state of human existence," ("The Rise of Russia", Chapter 47, p. 320).

"But should I happen to look out of the window, down upon Seventh Avenue, and should the endless procession of trucks and carts come to a sudden halt, and should I hear the sound of the heavy drums, and see the little man on his white horse in his old and much-worn green uniform, then I don't know, but I am afraid that I would leave my books and the kitten and my home and everything else to follow him wherever he cared to lead," ("Napoleon", Chapter 53, p. 371).

"Don't be satisfied with the mere statement that 'such and such a thing happened then and there.' Try to discover the hidden motives behind every action and then you will understand the world around you much better and you will have a greater chance to help others, which (when all is said and done) is the only truly satisfactory way of living." ("The Holy Alliance", Chapter 54, p. 391).

"But in the early revolutionary generals had proclaimed the new doctrine that 'nationality was not a matter of political frontiers or round skulls and broad noses, but a matter of the heart and soul,'" ("National Independence", Chapter 56, p. 403).

"Indeed one of the most interesting chapters of history is the effort of man to let some one else or something else do his work for him, while he enjoyed his leisure, sitting in the sun or painting pictures on rocks, or training young wolves and little tigers to behave like peaceful domestic animals," ("The Age of the Engine", Chapter 57, p. 425).

"The foundation for a new era was laid but yesterday. The human race was given its first change to become truly civilized when it took courage to question all things and made "knowledge and understanding" the foundation upon which to create a more reasonable and sensible society of human beings," ("A New World", Chapter 64, p. 486).

"This does not mean that we are absolutely certain about the road that now lies before us...and in the meantime we are fast learning one very important lesson—that the future belongs to the living and that the dead ought to mind their own business," ("After Seven Years", Chapter 65, p. 508).

"From space, the surface of the Earth is alive with color of incredible beauty—vivid blues, bright greens, and swirly whites. From Earth, on closer scrutiny, our landscape is scarred and marred, mutilated over the years by the thoughtless excesses of its human inhabitants," ("Spaceship Earth", Chapter 74, p. 583).

"But as the horrors of fascism and the failed experiment of Communism fade into the past in most of the world, we have every reason to hope and to be optimistic that the first century of the new millennium will bring, not only further progress in science and technology, but a better life for an even greater percentage of the world's population," ("A New Millennium", Chapter 77, p. 656).

Topics for Discussion

What were the primary components of the rise of Rome as an empire? How did it become a vast empire? What components led to her demise? Why? Be sure to include ideas such as politics, religion, economics, and other social aspects in your answer.

Compare and contrast the world of the Greeks and the Romans with the Middle Ages. What were similarities? What were differences? Be sure to compare all aspects of life, such as politics, religion, ideals, free thinking, merchant life, and modern conveniences.

Throughout the novel, religion divides populations, is the name under which individuals kill others, and generally causes disagreements and arguments. List at least two examples where religion is the driving force behind conflict. Why does the conflict occur? What result does the conflict have? Why do you think religion causes conflict throughout history? Does this still happen today? Why?

On page 278, the author notes that people are only tolerant if the issue in question is one that does not interest them. Using modern experiences, do you think the author is right? Why or why not? Can you think of issues in today's society that show people as intolerant? What are they? Why do you think some individuals remain intolerant of differences in opinion?

In "Napoleon", Loon notes his inability to believe everything about Napoleon was negative, since so many people following him as their leader. He admits he would likely do the same. What reasons does he give for such a statement? Do you think Napoleon was completely negative, or did he have positive aspects? Why? What are some of these characteristics? Do you agree with Loon to the reasons soldiers continued to follow Napoleon? Why or why not? If not, why do you think soldiers followed Napoleon?

In Chapter 56, much is said about nationality being a simple matter of identification with a culture, and not with physical features or country of birth. Do you agree with this statement? What creates nationality, to you? Why? How does that differ with the idea that nationality is simply a tie to a nation through physical features and birth?

In "Colonial Expansion and War", Loon apologizes for his own prejudices in writing the history of the world, and reminds readers that historians can be biased, and that one should carefully choose the historian whom he or she trusts. Do you think the telling of history is dependent on the storyteller? Why or why not? Do you think Loon is as unbiased as he can be in his telling of history? Why? Be sure to use examples from the book to support your answers.

In the last several chapters, the authors focus not only on the positive aspects advancements in technologies have brought the world, but also the problems those same technologies have brought forth. Name a few of the positive aspects and a few of the negatives. Do you believe the positives outweigh the negatives? Why or why not?

Do you believe these negative aspects are simply a part of advancement of society, or can they be avoided? Explain your answer.