**Another Voice Podcast with Eric Nelson**

**to accompany Strayer/Nelson, *Ways of the World*, Third Edition**

**Revolutions in World History (Chapter 17)**

**SLIDE 17.1**

How do historians define the term revolution?

**SLIDE 17.2 [Image: Revolution and the reversal of class roles and P17.05 The Socialist Outlook]**

This chapter and the previous one include the word “revolution” in their titles, so it’s a term that is worth some consideration.

For most historians revolutions are judged by their outcomes. A revolution results in a fundamental change in society. Political revolutions, for instance, herald a change of governing structures, not just the accession of a new ruler. Revolution is also frequently used to describe developments that have profound effects on societies, including changes to social hierarchies, people’s daily lives, and beliefs. Some revolutions, like the overthrow of British rule in the American colonies, are specific events. Others, like the Industrial Revolution, are processes that occur over longer time frames.

**SLIDE 17.3 [Image: Women’s Suffrage Parade]**

Profound political and social changes defined Chapter 16 on the Atlantic Revolutions. Republics founded on new enlightenment principles and later the concept of nationalism replaced monarchies and colonial empires. New ideas of popular sovereignty and inalienable rights transformed understandings of social hierarchies. In the French and Haitian Revolutions existing elites were overthrown.

While, over the longer term, the abolitionist and feminist movements brought further revolutionary changes to the social order of the Atlantic World and beyond.

**SLIDE 17.4 [Image: Chapter Opener: Industrial Britain]**

Industrialization explored in this chapter also fits our definition of a revolution. Over a century or so, in the societies that embraced it, a shift from muscle to machine power led to productivity gains never before seen in human history. New settlement patterns in factory towns transformed concepts of community and the regimented production lines of factories reshaped the work day and family life of countless individuals. Industrialization altered the social order leading to the emergence of new groups including the working and middle classes, industrialists and capitalists. Through time, these dramatic social changes led to new ways of thinking about society and how to order it, including the ideologies of socialism, communism and capitalism. The industrial revolution changed all societies which embraced it and even those that did not, because the supplying of raw materials to industrial factories came to define economies across the globe.

**SLIDE 17.5 [Image: Agricultural scenes from the Tomb of Menna]**

Industrialization was perhaps the single most revolutionary development over the past 500 years. Indeed, the only other revolution on this scale in human history was the Agricultural Revolution which began about 12,000 years ago. While agriculture emerged independently in more regions and developed more slowly than the Industrial Revolution, its impact on human societies was similarly profound. As with the Industrial Revolution, a dramatic increase in overall productivity made humankind wealthier but also led to greater inequality.

Agricultural fundamentally changed the social, material and work cultures of all who adopted it. Politically, it provided the foundation for the emergence of more complex societies and ultimately civilizations. We remain today a society deeply shaped by the Agricultural Revolution.

**SLIDE 17.6 [Image: Globalization: One World or Many?]**

Traditionally world historians have identified the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions as the two developments that have most changed human society on a global scale. But some see the current globalized world of the information age as potentially a third revolutionary moment on a scale comparable to the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions. Supporters identify dramatic shifts in productivity and work patterns, new social networks forged by the internet, changing conceptions of community, the relationship between local and global developments, along with humankind’s mounting impact on the earth as indications that a third revolution may be underway. Are these developments simply a consequence of the Industrial Revolution or something entirely new? It is probably too early to tell at this point, but it is something worth pondering in the years to come.