

### **5.1.1. PJC BOOK OVERVIEW (Dec.2020):**

#### ***TIME & THE SHAPE OF HISTORY (2007)***

#### **BOOK STRUCTURE:**

Eight individual chapters are interspersed with eight thematic chapterlinks, which are designed to provide access points to the overall discussion. The whole design is rather like the spokes of a wheel. So readers may start at any point and work forwards or backwards through the chapters.

#### **CHAPTER HEADINGS:**

**1 History in Time** (giving definitions and explaining scope of the book)

Chapterlink **Shaping History – Time Travel**

**2 Deep Continuities** (considering the role of persistence through Time and History)

Chapterlink **Shaping History – Time Cycles**

**3 Micro-Change** (assessing the role of gradual change in Time and History)

Chapterlink **Shaping History – Time Lines**

**4 Radical Discontinuity** (reviewing the role of revolutionary change in Time and History)

Chapterlink **Shaping History – Time Ends** (*announcements of End of Time*)

**5 Mutable Modernity** (criticises model of change from Ancient to Medieval to Modern)

Chapterlink **Shaping History – Time Names** (*how ages of history are named*)

**6 Variable Stages** (explores problems within stage-models of History)

Chapterlink **Shaping History – Time Pieces** (*clocks and time measurement*)

**7 Multiple Dimensions** (offers a longitudinal model of intertwined continuity and changes)

Chapterlink **Shaping History – Time Power** (*acknowledgements of Time's power*)

**8 History Past and Future** (concluding reflections upon understanding Past and Future)

**Coda: Timeframes and History** (*three-dimensional Time visible in the night sky*)

## REVIEWS:

Reviews, which have been only few, can be broadly divided into three categories.

- (1) One group of reviews recounted the theme and noted its breadth, respectfully but without overmuch enthusiasm.
- (2) A second category of reviews was interested but somewhat baffled, since these topics are not commonly addressed. The simplest summary of this response, by a young American reader, was that the book is ‘wacky’. (PJC ultimately takes that as a compliment, as indicating originality).
- (3) The third group of reviews, broadly from a Postmodernist perspective, was definitely interested but hostile to any approach that attributes ‘reality’ to Time. Instead, stress was laid upon the element of subjectivity in attitudes to Temporality and its historic sub-divisions. That perspective was based upon an underlying philosophical scepticism about the foundations of knowledge. In response, PJC accepts that many interpretations of Time are human-made and culturally-specific, as shown by much evidence within *Time & the Shape of History*. But there are absolutes, even within the sub-atomic world of quantum physics. Moreover, without some firm footing for knowledge, everything would remain open to permanent doubt. It would be impossible to measure Time – or to name the present as an era of ‘Postmodernity’. NOTE: In fact, Corfield, *Time & Shape of History*, Ch 5, has already offered a detailed critique of both ‘Modernity’ and ‘Postmodernity’ as satisfactory terms for autonomous historical stages. And by 2020 it is notable that contemporary references to ‘Postmodernity’ in particular are fast fading).

## UPDATE:

Since 2007, PJC has written numerous essays and BLOGS to expand on these issues and is currently (2020) writing a short outreach book, entitled *All People are Living Histories*, on the theme of living in Time-Space in all its dimensions.

