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Historical Amnesia

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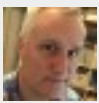
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Historical Amnesia

by [Joe Escobar](#) – Friday, May 6, 2016, 9:20 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Historical Amnesia topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT – SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: Historical Amnesia

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Concerns Regarding Historical Amnesia

by [Meghan Jacinto](#) – Sunday, May 8, 2016, 9:29 PM

After watching the video on the Rape of Nanking and reading the articles on China’s concern for Japan’s “historical amnesia”, or retelling history, it seems China’s gravest concerns regarding this event was that the textbooks are completely undermining the significance and horrific events taken place by the Japanese, especially since the Japanese textbooks described “the murders as an "incident" rather than a massacre” and underplayed “the use of sex slaves, women brought from all over Asia to service the Japanese military” (Source: Article #2 “China Says Japanese Textbooks Distort History”). This type of historical amnesia greatly affects the Chinese, since 96 percent of them said “such action had severely hurt the Chinese people's feelings and constituted an insult to the Chinese people" (Source: Article #2). Although the Chinese are also accused of their own retelling of history, the act of historical amnesia in general completely disregards the importance of integrity. A major event like the Rape of Nanking deserves to be told the right way out of respect to the millions of civilians who had to suffer through it.

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Don't forget Your Past

by [Clint Leigh](#) – Monday, May 9, 2016, 1:21 AM

There are so many grave incidents that were committed by all sides that took place during WWII and any war for that matter. With all of these incidents there are always two sides of the story and usually the worst the incident is the more the two stories differ from one another but that is normal. I believe that historical amnesia is a bad term. I think that it is okay to look at an incident and decide whether its historical value is still worth the time to be taught. We constantly gloss over old issues that were important during their time but have less meaning to current ways of life. Like the Roman Empire we are quickly told about how they spread across the world concurring everyone in their path but you don’t hear about how many people they massacred along the

way. Same thing with American history and the Native Americans we don't teach about all the savage and terrible thing that happened. Here is the deal just because we don't specifically teach the full history doesn't mean that an interested mind can't do research and learn about the exact details which are important, the fact and details should always be available. Were amnesia is a loss of memory and I'm not okay with losing history no matter how trivial or extreme. When a story starts to get lost usually the only part that survives is exaggerated and governments lie to fill in lost narratives because it makes them look better. In this specific case I really think that the gravest concerns about historical amnesia has to be the fact that both side will never understand why everything happened the way it did. Listening to how Japanese soldiers in training were taught their skills using live POW's, knowing that the Emperor would have them killed if they didn't learn to kill indiscriminately. When a story is lost it's always the individual people who end up suffering and paying the consequences and not the governments who write writes policies makes the final decisions.

I have a lot of concern over how much historical amnesia happens do to government censorship. Whether it is on the individuals who were there but are afraid to tell their stories because of the fear of government repercussion, or because governments use their power to censor the internet and now even shutting social media outlets during riots to keep the information from spreading. It is one thing for historical amnesia to happen naturally do to irrelevance but it is a scary and terrible thing when governments use it as a tool to control how people think and make decisions.

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Lost History
by [Luis Montoya](#) – Monday, May 9, 2016, 9:03 PM

One of my gravest concerns regarding “historical amnesia” is the fact that Japan doesn’t want to admit or even talk about what really happened in Nanking, China. That there own government is publishing books for students minimizing the events that really took place. Even though recently there have been interviews by several soldiers who were there and confessing on what really occurred, they’re still trying to put the “Lid on the Stinking Pot”. Another one of my concerns is the consequences that this may have. 70 years later and China still has an issue with what Japan is doing by not being truthful and hiding certain events. Japan wants to enter the United Nations Security Council, but for them to get in all other five countries have to agree but due to the conflict between China and Japan, China will veto and thus not allowing Japan into the Council. Stating that "Only a country that respects history, takes responsibility for history and wins over the trust of peoples in Asia and the world at large can take greater responsibilities in the international community". If you think back a few years, two of the greatest baseball players were Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens. If you look at their career stats you would see that they would for sure be inducted into the Hall of Fame. But due to steroid use the public has had very negative views on them. The sport itself doesn’t want to acknowledge their contribution to the sport. So when they look back at some of the greatest players to ever play, Bonds and Clemens often seem to get overlooked.

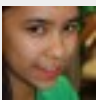
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Re: Lost History
by [Chloe Duryea](#) – Thursday, May 12, 2016, 10:11 PM

My gravest concern is also the fact that the Japanese are trying to downplay the events that occurred during the Nanking Massacre. Especially the fact that Tsuyoshi Ebato mentioned about school textbooks, and the Japanese not including these actions that were made towards the Chinese. Also, I agree that the Japanese should admit/talk about the events that occurred during the Nanking Massacre. They cannot simply look over the fact that the massacre resulted in the deaths of between 250,000 and 300,00 Chinese. Even though it is a sensitive topic, it should not be ignored or downplayed at all. Japan cannot act like these terrible events never happened when there is ample proof that they it did.

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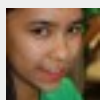


Not enough
by [Emily Phan](#) – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 4:40 PM

Like historical amnesia, minimizing what really happened in a horrible event in history is a great danger. Authors who write history books have great control over what is put into the minds of the people who read them.

Totally ignoring a horrible event in history may be difficult (for people like to find new and sensational stories) however minimizing and playing down on what has occurred is easier and more face saving. Minimizing is perhaps more dangerous than totally ignoring it for it dulls people’s thoughts about the event, never allowing them to see what really happened with unclouded eyes.

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To much
by [Emily Phan](#) – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 4:40 PM

Secondly, over emphasizing how badly some people or country messed up can be almost as harmful as totally ignoring it. If one never lets a country forget, and always point out how horribly they behaved, the country will become bitter. They will not appreciate the constant finger pointing and condemnation. This is even more important as time wears on. When the generation who committed the crime has died, their descendents will deserve the chastisement even less. When a crime has been committed, the committer ought to be punished but after that, all parties must learn to move on. This doesn’t we must forget, it means that we must no longer punish and no longer repay for what has been done. We can’t change the past but that doesn’t mean we need to wallow in it. No amount of money, benefits, or speeches can bring back lives or fully pay for what evil has been done. After one has made amends, staying in a state of constant remorse hurts all parties. Countries have to move on.

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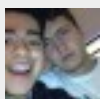


Japan's Blackout
by [Laura Steger](#) – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 8:37 PM

The events that took place in Japan during WW2 are still to this day one of history's best kept secrets. Up until this past week I had never heard about what happened during the early 1930s–1945 in China.

The greatest concerns about Japan’s historical amnesia is the fact that Japan has kept this huge event secret from their own people and the rest of the world. If they can keep what happened in Nanjing a secret for so many years, what else could they be hiding? By keeping these horrific events censored it is doing a disservice to many people, and in a way it is insulting to all the victims and their families.

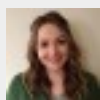
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Re: Japan's Blackout
by [Luis Montoya](#) – Saturday, May 14, 2016, 7:39 PM

I absolutely agree with you. A few things i may add are the ability for future japanese generations to never even hear about the Nanking massacre or even know what it is. And by Japan not coming out and saying its "fabricated", it's taking away the proper closure to those families who have been impacted by this terrible event.

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Nanking Massacre
by [Chloe Duryea](#) – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 11:06 PM

One of the more severe concerns regarding “historical amnesia” in the case of the Rape of the Nanking is that Japan basically wants to keep a lid on a stinking pot. During the Nanking massacre, women and children were raped and killed, people were beheaded, and others were burned. Nowadays, people are saying that those sorts of appalling acts never happened. However, there are photographs and living people who have proof that these events did occur. Also, the new textbooks play down the actions that the Japanese committed. This just shows that this part of history is complicated and that it is a sensitive topic. However, this does not mean that the truth should not be told about this particular WWII case. In the video, some soldiers admitted to the acts they committed, yet some people still try and say that these kinds of terrible acts never happened. We need to be able to admit mistakes that have been made in history. We cannot just talk about the good; the bad has to be included as well. Japanese soldiers did rape and kill women during these times and we need to acknowledge

these actions. I believe these things need to be included in school textbooks. The Nanking massacre resulted in the death of between 250,000 and 300,00 Chinese, and this cannot be simply looked over or played down in any way whatsoever.

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Re: Nanking Massacre

by [Clint Leigh](#) - Saturday, May 14, 2016, 6:45 PM

The Nanking massacre is a big part of Japanese and Chinese history and to see that one side is trying to deny and change its side of the story show just how important it is to document all accounts and to preserve the real history. We are lucky in our times we carry phones and there are surveillance cameras, drones and much more that can take picture or videos of any issue documenting them for the history books. This also show me that even though history is in the past and is done there are people still working hard to fight historical amnesia to restore lost history. I agree that this massacre was extreme and need to be taught correctly and not down played.

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Re: Nanking Massacre

by [Chloe Duryea](#) - Saturday, May 14, 2016, 8:50 PM

I agree that we are lucky to have the technology we do nowadays to capture history, and I believe that it will help in lowering historical amnesia in the future. I wonder if people would still try to deny past events if they had the technology we do now? I am curious to see how the media and current technology will affect people's perception of history in the future. We need to see the good and the bad sides of history in order to learn from past mistakes. How can we learn from past mistakes if we continue to downplay such horrific events?

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Gravest Concerns

by [Christopher Burton](#) - Thursday, May 12, 2016, 9:35 AM

I think the worst thing that could happen from "historical amnesia" is that we lose part of history. I believe that the world is at a point where keeping an accurate record of history is almost too simple, so by no means should it be purposefully removed. I don't think people or countries always make the right choices when they can look back at history and see what happened the last time they did something, however, if that piece of history is removed completely there's nothing to look back at and maybe change your mind. When Japan authorized their new school book it quite clearly angered the Chinese people which is another problem that comes from "historical amnesia". It blew my mind when the book refers to the rape and/or murder of up to 300,000 people as an incident. It sounds like Japan accidentally bump China's car in the parking lot. One last thing is that if the professor hadn't of started digging those actual account from soldiers that were actually there most likely would have been lost when the aging veterans passed on. Not only is she helping to preserve history but she is also finding more history from first hand accounts.

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Re: Gravest Concerns

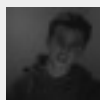
by [Clint Leigh](#) - Saturday, May 14, 2016, 6:22 PM

I really agree with you, when you say that the worst part of historical amnesia is that we lose part of history. When books are updated the information should be gone through to see if the subjects within it are still important enough to be included in the new edition I can understand that, if you go and do some research you would still be able to find out all the information. It is when they take the information and change it to fit their narrative. Effectively rewriting history and changing the way future generations think. The last part about the professor who gathered information from soldiers is very important. I think that the world would be a lot smarter if everyone made an effort to preserving history and passing it down. Even simple things like personal journals will have information that will help future generations understand what

happened and what life was like during specific time period.

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Repercussions of Denying History

by [Shane Cooney](#) - Thursday, May 12, 2016, 5:19 PM

Ultimately, I think the term "historical amnesia" takes away from what's really happening. It's blatant denial of the truth of the past. "Amnesia" implies that it's almost like an accident. But there is no accident when it comes to the process of erasing history; it's always deliberate and has insidious motives.

Concerning Japan's denial of the events that happened in Nanjing, I think the worst thing is that it undermines that suffering felt by the Chinese people; it's adding insult to injury. Additionally, it encourages the practice of avoidance and denial of responsibility. Countries and people must be held accountable for their actions, no matter how atrocious or horrible those actions were. Countries and people must accept the past, and learn from it. This is the only way for the world, on a whole, to progress in a positive way. Similar to Japan's case with the textbooks, Germany went through a period of holocaust denial, and distortion of the facts. Common distortions included, for example, assertions that the figure of six million Jewish deaths is an exaggeration; deaths in the concentration camps were the results of disease or starvation but not policy. And I think once this kind of process takes place in any form, the behavior can/will be encouraged by those who wish to permanently erase or change certain parts of history.

But the United States in the past--and possibly still--also denied the truth of certain aspects of our own nation's history. Mainly the genocide and severity of our treatment of the Native Americans. This deviation from the truth is detrimental to society, and has to be corrected (hopefully, it has by now). I understand that we have attempted to make reparations for what we did to them, but I have to wonder, can something like that ever be completely forgiven? Can any monetary offering make up for our blatant disregard for human life?

I think history is one of the most important subjects taught in any educational setting. It has serious applications in contemporary society from the shaping of policies to the values we instill in future generations. The denial of history by any country or any person sets the world back in terms of positive development. In order for us to make better decisions in the future, we must look back, address, and accept our pasts.

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Japanese Atrocities

by [Mariah Marelli](#) - Saturday, May 14, 2016, 8:07 PM

After watching the video on the Rape of Nanking and reading the articles on a Japanese War Museum and China's Concern for Japanese Textbooks, what do you consider are the gravest concerns regarding "historical amnesia" (by any country or group of people) in this specific WWII case?

I think that there is a lot to be concerned about with regards to the " Rape of Nanking". I don't understand how Japan can gloss over the atrocities that their soldiers committed in China, Korea and the Pacific as a whole. One of the things that I find most concerning is in the article about Japanese textbooks. In the article it says that their textbooks call Nanking an incident not a massacre. Which I find to be dishonest, but also very disrespectful to all the victims of the massacre. One of the most frightening things about this piece of history is the way it is being ignored by the Japanese. There are hundreds of interviews or statements from former Japanese soldiers saying what they did in China, but this is being ignored.

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Holocaust Amnesia

by [Mariah Marelli](#) - Saturday, May 14, 2016, 8:23 PM

After you address these materials, what other concern do you have concerning historical amnesia on ANY subject.

I am concerned that people can blatantly ignore history and facts and pretend a terrible event didn't occur. I can't wrap my head around how some people can ignore photographs from a time when they couldn't really edit photos. How can you ignore widely known facts that are right in front of you. I'm especially concerned with the people who believe that the Holocaust didn't actually happen. Are you kidding me! How can you ignore pictures, film, soldier accounts and most importantly first hand accounts of concentration camps from the survivors!! I don't understand how someone can just ignore this when forming their opinion on the matter.

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The manipulation of history

by [Delbert Borden](#) – Saturday, May 14, 2016, 10:09 PM

I believe one of the articles most poignant phrases in regards to the atrocities at Nanking is the attempt by the Japanese government to “keep a lid on a stinking pot.” These actions by historians and Japanese officials to white wash the context of war time crimes against humanity serve as a tell-tale sign of the lack of civility during times of war. Many experts can and will argue that the very nature of war is evil, and that any actions that take place during these times are to be expected, however, if this is the case why is it necessary to lie or better yet expunge these events from the history books?

As a nation we ourselves have committed atrocities in times of war against our adversaries; in recent times we can look no further then Guantanamo Bay and the treatment of political prisoners by our country with no regards to the Geneva Conventions standards. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Ghraib_torture_and_prisoner_abuse

https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/geneva_conventions

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Forgetting the Past

by [Theodore Pratten](#) – Saturday, May 14, 2016, 11:01 PM

Japan has basically been a pacifist nation post-WWII, and a few generations have now grown up in a country that is peaceful, prosperous, and demilitarized. I think there is a certain attractiveness in forgetting the past. For one thing, it is disturbing to think that your grandfather or great-grandfather and his peers could have been involved in such an atrocity like the Rape of Nanjing, or others committed by Imperial Japan. For right wing nationalists, imperial atrocities are inconvenient reminders of past nationalist and ethnic supremacist exploits. Erasing industrial-scale killing in China during the 1930s and 40s gives nationalists much stronger ground to stand on. I think it's important to always remember history as accurately as possible, no matter what the social or political ramifications are. It's better to deal with something like the Rape of Nanjing openly, even though it is difficult subject matter. Otherwise you open up paths for movements that aren't based in reality, but rather in mythology.

I think historical amnesia is a problem we encounter in this country when we talk about things like westward expansion. There is the mythological notion that western North America was a vast uninhabited wonderland just waiting to be filled with Anglo settlers. There seems to be a conflict between an honest reckoning with the ethnic cleansing that took place and revisionism that centers around the Manifest Destiny mythology.

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Re:National Superiority and Amnesia

by [Delbert Borden](#) – Saturday, May 14, 2016, 11:23 PM

I find it appalling when we as a nation point our fingers at others presently or historically in regards to crimes against humanity or amnesia about past actions. We along with other nations have adopted a method of interpreting our history in text books to maintain our countries created identity of being the altruistic, and morally superior nation along the lines of our self-given title of being Gods chosen nation. To think that for the sake of western expansion we justified and condoned for the sake of Manifest Destiny, the purging of whole populations of indigenes peoples and furthered these deplorable actions by robbing them and then exploiting them and stealing their land and cultural heritage.

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newnation/4532>

<http://www.worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/war.crimes/US/Indian.Removal.htm>

This narrative of American morale superiority, and the exclusion of events that deviate from this national ideology are seen throughout our national history with events like: slavery, Native American genocide amongst others. When we read about the medical experimentation done on the Chinese by Japan, or what Germans did to the Jews many gasp with disapproval. But if we understand our history and resist the notion to blindly accept what we perceive to be our moral superiority we can see that we are guilty of these very same things. From internment camps, to medical experimentation on citizens for the sake of national security and of course the treatment of other nations civilians during the occupation of other countries is covertly/overtly excluded from the Texas Schools Boards efforts to minimize our countries pension for the unsavory treatment of its peoples.

<http://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/timeline.htm>

<http://thinkprogress.org/education/2015/11/19/3723876/texas-board-fact-check-textbooks/>

http://www.alternet.org/story/140137/american_amnesia%3A_we_forget_our_atrocities_almost_as_soon_as_we_commit_th

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