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Start Here
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Sunday, 27 March 2011, 07:49 PM

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E. H. Carr
by [Jason Brady](#) - Monday, 28 March 2011, 05:32 PM

"The function off the historian is neither to love the past nor to emancipate himself from the past, but to master and understand it as the key to the understanding of the present." -- E. H. Carr

I've always thought that the key to understanding the present and the future lies in the past, and this quote seems to speak to that idea the most. In a way, I think of historians as a kind of gateway from the past and into the future. That is, if historians have a great understanding of the past, they should also be able to rationalize what is happening in the world today by using examples from the past, and these same historians should also be able to make a pretty good prediction of what will happen next in the world.

-- Jason

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Re: E. H. Carr
by [Emlee Martin](#) - Monday, 28 March 2011, 09:16 PM

Jason-

I agree with your statement, "...the key to understanding the present and the future lies in the past..." I think we can learn so much from history. Well said.

Emlee

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Re: E. H. Carr
by [Charlotte Thomas](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 09:46 AM

Jason,

I really like your statement "I think of historians as a kind of gateway from the past and into the future". That is how I see them too. It's just us and the past and the only thing connecting them is the historians. If we didn't have historians then we wouldn't know about past events and that gateway would be closed. We would be lost without the knowledge of the past and we'd probably be repeating ourselves and not moving forward.

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R. G. Collingwood

by [Roxanne MacDonald](#) - Monday, 28 March 2011, 06:17 PM

"History is *for* human self-knowledge. Knowing yourself means knowing, first, what it is to be a person; secondly, knowing what it is to be the kind of person you are; and thirdly, knowing what it is to be the person *you* are and nobody else is. Knowing yourself means knowing what you can do; and since nobody knows what they can do until they try, the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is." R.G. Collingwood

College, for me is not about getting a job (although I certainly plan on having one). It is for the education. I did not believe I would have the opportunity to attend college and after enough time passed, I did not feel I could be successful in college. So far that has not been the case. Collingwood's quote describes some of my innermost thoughts, regarding what it is to be a person and what kind you are. He was a philosopher of many subjects – history, nature, art and several others. Archaeologist was the primary hat Collingwood wore; it is a sub-discipline of anthropology. He said, "...since nobody knows what they can do until they try, the only clue to what man can do is what man has done." In my mind, this is a big portion of what history is. I complete my AAOT this term and am transferring to the U of O to seek degrees in anthropology and history.

http://www.philosophers.co.uk/cafe/phil_feb2004.htm

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Re: R. G. Collingwood

by [Jesse Kennedy](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 09:48 PM

Roxanne,

Congratulations on completing your AAOT!! I took a hiatus from college as well, and coming back was a little daunting. Everything has worked out well for me as well and I have learned quite a bit about myself in the process. I love constantly challenging myself and learning new and interesting bits of knowledge. Amazingly I found that my love for biology outweighs my desire to pursue social sciences for a career. As such, physical sciences have been my focus over the last few years, but I still love learning

history! Good luck this and I look forward to learning about people in our virtual classroom!

Jesse

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Re: R. G. Collingwood

by [Roxanne MacDonald](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 11:09 PM

Hi Jesse,

Thank you for replying. Several years ago my friend's daughter had severe croup. I drove them to the hospital and as we were pulling in front of the emergency room, her lips were turning blue and she was barely taking in air. A reparatory therapist was with my friend and her daughter the whole time. They kept the baby in the hospital for several days and now she is the midst of the teen years. I came away from that experience wanting to be in respiratory care.

After my first biology class my whole path changed. I did not understand anything and could not retain the information I did learn. After that I started taking history and anthropology classes and found my true passion. Have you always liked biology or did you discover it once you started college? Good luck to you also and I hope you have a wonderful term.

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-James Joyce

by [Sagamore Blakley](#) - Monday, 28 March 2011, 07:13 PM

"History," Stephan said, "is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake." -James Joyce

I love this statement for its simplicity. Alone it requires no explanation, yet explains nothing of its implicit meaning. It flaunts its intuitive simplicity.

A nightmare that one recalls only vaguely that seems to lack coherent chronology and who's complexities are so interwoven as to be considered occult. something almost primordial, natural in essence, that requires metaphor to be understood. This metaphor, a simplification, can convey its meaning more readily than the rush of emotion and experience stored with insecurity and roused again deep in the night. This metaphor can be seen as a real and measurable thing that has cause and consequence. This nightmare chases the dreamer as they flee, away from it, but never escaping it, never out running it. Never waking.

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Re: -James Joyce

by [Orion Bijleveld](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 03:44 PM

"'History,' Stephen said, 'is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.'" James Joyce

Your interpretation is very poetic, Saga, but isn't the nature of an eternal dream simply that of reality? A dream is defined by its lack of continuity. As the narrative of a dream is in juxtaposition to the precursing events of waking life, a dream's identifying nuance is the discontinuity that marks its beginning, and the one that is anticipated to mark its end. It is in this way that I believe that Joyce's quote can be read, implying not only the beginnings of history, but its end. Thus, there is a strong implication of a purgative nature to history. That the quote is given by Nestor, an old man, brave enough to have risked his life many times, the common end to mortal men is a poignant resolution to the "nightmare" of history.

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Ralph Waldo Emerson

by [Emlee Martin](#) - Monday, 28 March 2011, 09:14 PM

"There is properly no history; only biography." Ralph Waldo Emerson

I like this quote because it got me thinking, every story we read in the history books is someone's biography. Every feat, accomplishment or failure being told is someone's story. History essentially is, many biographies compiled together to make a collective history of a nation, culture, or world. I so much enjoy history, reading of what happened before us and paved the road to where we are. I know have seen many changes in my lifetime (flat TV's, collapse of Soviet Union, 9/11, cell phones, etc.) We can learn so much from the past and make a brighter future.

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Re: Ralph Waldo Emerson

by [Darin Richardson](#) - Monday, 28 March 2011, 10:04 PM

Emlee,

I agree with your statement: "History essentially is, many biographies compiled together to make a collective history of a nation, culture, or world."

That's exactly what it is. I encounter this in all the Civil War books I read; whether it's an eyewitness to a battle, a description of one of the generals, or facts and figures of the Civil War, it is someone else's words, someone else's report. History isn't just made up on the spot; someone had to have witnessed it and then wrote it down for posterity. Then it became history.

I enjoy history, probably more so than most other people I know. You can learn so much about what is happening *now* from reading about the past.

I have also seen the same changes in life you have seen as well, and I think we will probably be in for many more in our lifetime.

-Darin

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Re: Ralph Waldo Emerson

by [Stephanie Tighe](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 12:52 AM

Emlee,
This really is a good quote! I mean every thing in history is told by a person in their point of view or their experience, which would inevitably be part of their biography right? It just really makes so much sense. Life is one big biography in the end.
stephanie

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Re: Ralph Waldo Emerson

by [Tina Smith](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 10:53 AM

I agree with what you said about history being "many biographies compiled together..." I think it is also important to look at history to help insure that we do not write the same biographies that we have read.

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Re: Ralph Waldo Emerson

by [William Clark](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 11:19 AM

If history is like a building, the biographies are the bricks that make it up. Each brick is a separate story as much as it is part of the larger story of mankind. I like to think of history this way because a biography without the backstory or understanding of the environment of that person's life is a pale compared to the same story told in context.

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Re: Ralph Waldo Emerson

by [Emlee Martin](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 01:43 PM

Well put!!

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Sigmund Freud

by [Darin Richardson](#) - Monday, 28 March 2011, 09:48 PM

"Only a good-for-nothing is not interested in his past." Sigmund Freud

I agree with Freud. We have to learn from the past in order to define ourselves today, or to even define ourselves in the future. If you are not interested in your past, then your future, and your present, seems pretty unimportant. But it is not just *your* past that you should be interested in; you should be interested in the past of your country, your ancestors, even your planet. All I know about the Vietnam War is what my father has told me about it, since he is a Vietnam War veteran. I never learned anything about Vietnam when I was in school. That is why I am taking this class; in order to understand an important part of our history that occurred during my lifetime.

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Re: Sigmund Freud

by [Elizabeth Potter](#) - Tuesday, 29 March 2011, 06:05 PM

I also agreed with this quote at first I thought this was the one I liked the best but then I found the other one. And I also really like how you described that you shouldn't just learn about the history of the country you live in but every aspect of the past.

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Re: Sigmund Freud

by [Jennifer Lusby](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 09:26 AM

Elizabeth-

I agree with you about Freud quote. I also agree with you that we need to learn about the past to make anything of ourselves today and in the future. My father is also a Vietnam War Veteran. I took this class because history is a requirement for my degree and why not take a class and learn about what happen in Vietnam.

~Jennifer

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G.M. Trevelyn

by [Michael Tieman](#) - Tuesday, 29 March 2011, 12:27 PM

"Since history has no properly scientific value, its only purpose is educative. And if historians neglect to educate the public, if they fail to interest it intelligently in the past, then all their historical learning is valueless except in so far as it educates themselves." G. M. Trevelyan.

For me this quote shows the importance of education as a whole. History is included in all aspects of life. When you teach someone how to type effectively that means it was learned elsewhere by someone and perfected. Then you learned it. There is history to it. It lets you take what is old, master it, and come up with new theories on your own giving way to discovery. This should be shown to others so as to expand on life as a whole. Especially in terms of governments and histories of people. While nothing ever happens the same way twice, it is important to know warning signs so that trouble can be spotted and avoided. History, like story tellers of the middle ages, must be told and passed on so that knowledge doesn't die or whither away.

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Re: G.M. Trevelyn

by [Katherine Kendrick](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 10:48 AM

I enjoyed reading your thoughts on this quote! I liked this quote a lot too because I also feel that education is extremely important and that we can teach generations after us about how to avoid our mistakes, as well as to teach them about our successes. I agree

with you that although actions usually don't happen the exact same way twice, it is important to learn from past mistakes our government has made and try to think of new ideas for what to do differently next time a similar situation arises.

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Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi

by [Elizabeth Potter](#) - Tuesday, 29 March 2011, 05:59 PM

"The historian does simply not come in to replenish the gaps of memory. He constantly challenges even those memories that have survived intact."

I really like this quote because it really describes how I feel about history. Almost too perfectly. It kind of freaked me out because this is exactly what I was thinking about when I started reading the quotes. I really love history and I love learning about anything that has to do with the past and how it relates to the future and how to connect our society today to the ones in the past. If you couldn't tell I really like history it is one of my favorite subjects. One of the few I am really good at.

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Re: Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi

by [Sagamore Blakley](#) - Tuesday, 29 March 2011, 07:35 PM

I also like this quote, I agree that dissent and conflict can illicit better understanding. I love learning and challenging history as one learns from and challenges a mentor. I enjoy using knowledge and history to challenge commonly accepted fact.

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Re: Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi

by [Jason Brady](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 10:49 PM

I do like this quote, and my comment might contradict it bit, and most of the other quotes, including my own selection. I was recently reminded of another quote by Alex Haley, "History is written by the winners." So what if Haley is correct? Then what we know and teach are not the "memories that have survived intact," but are actually the skewed realities of historians from the winning side. Something to think about.

And to add even more: Since this is a course on the Vietnam war, a war widely thought to be a war with no victor, how does the Yerushalmi and Haley quotes compare? With the little knowledge of the Vietnam war I have, I suspect my views on all of these quotes will change by the end of the term.

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Sigmund Freud

by [Stephanie Tighe](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 12:41 AM

" Only a good-for-nothing is not interested in his past"

I chose this quote because I noticed that when I want to discuss history and the accomplishments of man with my friends, they just seem bored with the whole idea. It really

is concerning that I know so many people who don't care anything about his or her past or families past. I want to be a life long learner and that includes learning about my country and the people who fought for it. It has payed off to, just last month, I learned that my great grandmother may have had a legal or illegal marriage to a confederate general named Robert E Lee. I have looked everywhere for information but can't find any that is public. All information I have gathered states he only had one wife but who knows. My great grandmother was a full blooded Cherokee woman and was married several times after having my grandfather. I am still on the search to find out more about my families past, I just love history in general also.

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Re: Sigmund Freud

by [Heather Davis](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 07:58 AM

I believe you are right on with expressing what this quote means. I feel that a lot of our history is hidden due to arrogance and hatred of what was considered wrong at the time. Many individuals are too self absorbed to care about the past and those are the ones doomed to repeat many mistakes.

One day I was watching Quantum Leap on Netflix and Sam said something like this, "the Vietnam war was a mistake we learned not to repeat". This is one reason way I wanted to take this class because I want to know if we are making a similar mistake with the war that is going on now. Yet, my main reason is because my Uncle Jack served two tours in Vietnam and he didn't really talk about it. He was a journalist in the army and I am still searching for the papers he wrote for.

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Re: Sigmund Freud

by [Catherine Smith](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 08:19 PM

I empathize with the feeling of concern when those around you display a complete sense of apathy towards the past, which birthed us into our culture and allowed our humanity to develop. Those who came before us allow us to live and learn as we do now! Let's do a bit more learnin.

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Re: Sigmund Freud

by [Tyler Flinchbaugh](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 11:30 PM

I completely agree I wish life was still simplistic as back then when things weren't taken for granted and everyone in a community was close. Today this idea is inconceivable firstly because of the size of communities today but also because of the lack of oneness, a lot of people are selfish making it hard to come together. These are the same people that could care less about what was happening in the past so it just shows they've grown up differently.

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E.H. Carr

by [Autumn Patronelli-West](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 06:03 AM

"The function of the historian is neither to love the past nor to emancipate himself from the past, but to master and understand it as the key to the understanding of the present." E. H. Carr

I believe this is true. I also think that it's a very difficult task to master. In my opinion, too often history is one sided. Perhaps it should be added that history is the key to understanding the present lives of those who are affected by their history. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, maybe history is a biography. One thing I know for sure is that history doesn't have just one definition.

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Re: E.H. Carr

by [Michael Tieman](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 12:18 PM

A great quote. History is according to perspective of those telling it. It is very hard to write or talk about something without throwing "a spin" on it. It can leak out even when you are trying to hold back. Which makes great communication all the more necessary to master. Understanding the present though "the key" though so that we can move forward to the future. Nice.

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Cicero

by [Cameron Lasater](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 08:05 AM

"History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illuminates reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tidings of antiquity." Cicero

I chose this quote because it is written with words that inspire imagery. A lot of the other quotes seemed really bland to me. I like that this one have history a picture in my mind as I read it. I learn best by seeing and doing things, so this quote really drew me in to it's meaning.

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Re: Cicero

by [Jennifer Lusby](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 09:26 AM

Carmeron-

I totally agree with you. Thats why i chose the same quote.

~Jennifer

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Cicero

by [Jennifer Lusby](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 09:17 AM

"History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illuminates reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tidings of antiquity." -- **Cicero**

I feel that this quote by Cicero is very true. History is the witness of the passing of time. History when it is told correctly is the way that most of us in the future learn about the past. We learn from what those of the past have done to help us, also we learn from the mistakes they have made so that they are not repeated. History and the knowledge of the history is a great thing it lets us know that we are not the only ones that have had to deal with hardships or loss because others have also in the past.

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Cicero

by [Katherine Kendrick](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 10:45 AM

"History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illuminates reality,vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tidings of antiquity." -Cicero

I love this quote because it creates a different understanding of history's role in our everyday lives for me. Growing up we are taught many stories of history in school, and I feel that a lot of people, including myself, consider them "old" stories of something that happened in the past which we will never see or experience. When I think of history in the sense that this quote puts it it, history truly does illuminate reality, showing us why our country/world/lives are the way they are today and shows how things could be totally different if something else had happened. History can also provide guidance in daily life by teaching us what not to do at times, or what works well. Certain stories can be used as motivators and encourage us to make change.

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Re: Cicero

by [Wendy Hughes](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 06:35 PM

Hi Katherine

I really enjoyed your explanation of why this quote stood out to you. It is so true that history gives us memories of our lives and allows them to live in our minds. Also, I liked how you explained that history can also provide guidance in daily life by allowing us to learn from our mistakes and make good decisions based off of prior situations.

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Francis Parkman

by [Jesse Rowe](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 01:32 PM

"Faithfulness to the truth of history involves far more than research, however patient and scrupulous, into special facts. Such facts may be detailed with the most minute exactness, and yet the narrative, taken as a whole, may be unmeaning or untrue. The narrator must seek to imbue himself with the life and spirit of the time. He must study events in their bearings near and remote; in the character, habits, and manners of those who took part in them. He must himself be, as it were, a sharer or a spectator of the action he describes." **Francis Parkman**

This quote rang particularly true for me. As it states, the truth of historical fact however minutely exact can still be misinterpreted if the narrator has not taken the time to fully understand the life and spirit of the era being discussed. By studying the events in their bearings near and remote, as well as the character, habits, and manners of those who took part in said events, one can give themselves a far better perspective of the historical facts pertinent to the discussion. Not only does this help to keep the mind open when learning new information, but it will also help to explain ones own standpoint on certain historical events, while still being able to offer objective points of view for the same events. The "Whats" and "wheres" have always been a little less important to me than the "what led up to" and the "whys", which to me, are the most important aspects of history. To truly understand the events of the past, one must have an understanding of the popular concensus, and political motivations of that time.

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Sigmund Freud

by [Wendy Hughes](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 06:31 PM

"Only a good-for-nothing is not interested in his past." Sigmund Freud

The people who forget why they're able to preach their beliefs and opinions are the people who truly forget why they have the freedoms they do and who fought and gave their lives in the past for the freedoms they take for granted today. This is an issue that I believe is very prominent in our society today and should be brought to the surface more often rather than tucked away and forgotten. Americans need to be grateful to live in a land that is free and appreciate the people who are willing to volunteer to make sure that we sustain those freedoms. This quote really touched me because I feel that too many people are involved in changing and taking for granted the greatest country in the world.

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Cicero Quote

by [Keenan Sullivan](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 06:51 PM

I liked this quote because it makes perfect sense. History really is a way to witness the past. It is the only way to understand how we as people became what we are today. It brings current events into perspective since we have the ability to look at past events that were similar. When we look at today's recession it looks like the end of the world, however during the numerous panics of the 1800's we always recovered. If one hasn't studied the history its harder to stay positive about our future.

"History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illuminates reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tidings of antiquity."

Cicero

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Re: Cicero Quote

by [Jesse Rowe](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 09:22 AM

This is a really great quote, true in every aspect of the word. I agree that while the media feeds a "sky is falling" mentality, people simply need to look at the trials this country has already gone through, and one would know that things will be what we make them. It is in our history to persevere and overcome. The lessons taught to us by our history can be very beneficial, if we just pay attention to them. Hind sight is ALWAYS 20/20. Have a great day Keenan.

Jesse R.

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William L. Burton

by [Jesse Kennedy](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 09:19 PM

"If you do not like the past, change it." William L. Burton

This quote sums up the biggest challenge of history: what is fact and what is a favorable interpretation by the winner? History is written by the victor. All of our readings about Vietnam so far illustrate the idea that the American history of the Vietnam war is much different than the Vietnamese one. So in that sense, no description of history will ever be entirely accurate because there is no way to account for all of the factors of every participant. All we can do as fledgling historians is take in all of the information that we can with a grain of salt and remember that hard facts like dates and important figures are secondary to the people that made the history. I am very glad that the materials are attempting to show the many angles involved.

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Re: William L. Burton

by [Sagamore Blakley](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 09:40 PM

Yes, double plus good.

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Re: William L. Burton

by [Michelle Murawski](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 10:10 PM

I agree, and I like that you mentioned "history is written by the victor." It's important to be aware of possible bias when learning about historical events.

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Polybius

by [Miranda Esperanza](#) - Wednesday, 30 March 2011, 10:37 PM

"That historians should give their own country a break, I grant you; but not so as to state things contrary to fact. For there are plenty of mistakes made by writers out of ignorance, and which any man finds it difficult to avoid. But if we knowingly write what is false, whether

for the sake of our country or our friends or just to be pleasant, what difference is there between us and hack writers? Readers should be very attentive to and critical of historians, and they in turn should be constantly on their guard." Polybius

I believe this to be an important to understand before studying history. People should be skeptical, due to the danger caused by peoples' misconceptions or interpretations of history. Some history has been recreated on falsehoods, with the intent to disguise or manipulate the truth to better serve a specific group/governments purpose, agenda, and/or reputations. Yet, it baffles me how people can trust information taught in schools in the United States because there are instances where it has been proven to be falsified for the sake of patriotism, for example: Native American history. Ignorance to these techniques of manipulation gives power to the government/group imposing their agenda. It is our duty to ourselves to question and think beyond what we're taught, to improve the future and preserve the true past. I had a teacher who would remind me, "just because it is printed or written, doesn't mean it is the truth!"

Miranda Esperanza

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Polybius

by [Heather Davis](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 07:42 AM

"That historians should give their own country a break, I grant you; but not so as to state things contrary to fact. For there are plenty of mistakes made by writers out of ignorance, and which any man finds it difficult to avoid. But if we knowingly write what is false, whether for the sake of our country or our friends or just to be pleasant, what difference is there between us and hack writers? Readers should be very attentive to and critical of historians, and they in turn should be constantly on their guard."

This quote is true when it comes to our countries own history, because of the influence of media. America's history will truly be a work of fiction if people do not question what is told to them. Historians really need to look for hard facts and truths so the world of the future are not blinded by their history and not make similar mistakes.

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Re: Polybius

by [Jesse Rowe](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 09:25 AM

Heather, I just wanted to say that truer words have never been spoken. I share this point of view wholeheartedly.

Jesse R.

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**Re: Polybius**

by [Miranda Esperanza](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 04:07 PM

I picked this quote also because I agree with it completely...You summed it up much simpler than I had and still got the same point across, I need lessons in that :)!!! I like short and concise but am very bad at doing so.... Anyways, I look forward to "seeing" where this class goes and the different angles we will all view it from. I am excited to work with you along with our other classmates!! Good luck in the class!!!

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**Re: Polybius**

by [Rachel Regelbrugge](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 08:12 PM

I completely agree with you! You have a very good perspective of history.

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**Re: Polybius**

by [Heather Davis](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 08:30 PM

Thank you all for your feedbacks. FYI though I do have the DVDs that we need to watch for class on my computer, so if anyone wants to get together and watch them just email me back in moodle and let me know.

Thank you again,
Heather

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**Re: Start Here**

by [William Clark](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 11:13 AM

"Time in its irresistible and ceaseless flow carries along on its flood all created things and drowns them in the depths of obscurity. . . . But the tale of history forms a very strong bulwark against the stream of time, and checks in some measure its irresistible flow, so that, of all things done in it, as many as history has taken over it secures and binds together, and does not allow them to slip away into the abyss of oblivion." Anna Comnena

This quote spoke to me in because it focuses on history as a means of keeping our stories from slipping away. I think that the primary human attribute that separates us from the animal kingdom is the ability to pass the lessons of our own generation downwards beyond our own lifetime. The passage of centuries and generations have an erosive effect on the structure of our collective memories. The study of history is how we retain and reinforce them, and sometimes rediscover them. Humanity has reached it's current heights by building on the foundations those that came before us. History is how we prevent those foundations from crumbling away. It allows each subsequent generation to build upwards and outwards, rather than covering the same ground over and over.

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Anna Comnena

by [William Clark](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 03:12 AM

Ouch!, negative one point for not following instructions.

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Sigmund Freud

by [Rachel Regelbrugge](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 04:15 PM

"Only a good-for-nothing is not interested in his past." Sigmund Freud

I personally believe that to not re live history you have to learn about it, and that if you want to change it you must be educated towards it. That's why I liked this quote because you must be conscious of your past to move forward.

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Re: Sigmund Freud

by [Sara Boyd](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 12:53 AM

I agree. I think Freud really valued the importance of self-evaluation and introspection. I don't think anyone gets anywhere without knowing where they've come from, and making adjustments to get where they want to go.

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William L. Burton

by [Catherine Smith](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 08:16 PM

"If you don't like the past, change it."

Simplistic, matter-of-fact, and applicable to almost all things in life, this quote caught my attention because I believe that we revisit history in order to learn from our past mistakes so that we may avoid repeating them in the near or far future. Once something is identified as undesirable, whether it be a personal trait, a unhealthy friendship, or an act of horrific barbarism (ie. Holocaust), I believe one must look at the cause of the issue, the root of the problem, in order to identify the traits which inevitably lead to pain and suffering. Once these qualities have been identified, steps may be taken to avoid discomfort, death, distress, and other negative "d" words.

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William L. Burton

by [Tina Smith](#) - Thursday, 31 March 2011, 08:28 PM

William L. Burton

"If you do not like the past, change it."

I choose this quote for a couple of reasons. I find myself saying and living life with the thought that you can not change the past you can only change the future. So, this quote certainly made me think. It makes me wonder is he not saying the same thing just

in different words. That we as individuals and as a society have the ability to change things that we do not like. That by looking at our past (our history) we can learn from those things that we did like and change the rest of our history (our future) by not repeating the same mistakes. That as long as we look at our past we can change it.

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Re: William L. Burton

by [Sara Boyd](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 12:51 AM

I also liked that quote. Our future is eventually going to be part of the past, so it's interesting to think how we can effect "history" in that way.

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Re: William L. Burton

by [Nathaniel Adams](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 09:27 AM

or is it because the past is subjective and the past (history) is constantly being rewritten, through the lens of the present society and culture? Glazing over of the facts is another way to change the past too.

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R.G. Collingwood

by [Sara Boyd](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 12:49 AM

"History is *for* human self-knowledge. Knowing yourself means knowing, first, what it is to be a person; secondly, knowing what it is to be the kind of person you are; and thirdly, knowing what it is to be the person *you* are and nobody else is. Knowing yourself means knowing what you can do; and since nobody knows what they can do until they try, the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is." **R. G. Collingwood**

I like this quote because it sort of embodies what it means to "find oneself." For many, that usually involves delving into a person's own history, and/or family history, and the history of those who came before you in any particular endeavor. Collingwood took a rather profound view of what history is, and turned it into an even more profound epiphany of the value of human life, and what man can do. I like the last line, "The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is." I think it sums up the rest of the quote, and gives us something to think about while studying and interpreting history.

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Edward Gibbon

by [Nathaniel Adams](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 08:57 AM

"History . . . is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." Edward Gibbon

This quote is my favorite because of its blatant explanation of history. It is true, if a bit pessimistic, in most regards, though I would argue there are positives to history as well. But, I realize, those same positives rose out of crimes, follies and misfortunes. Penicillin, came from a need to cure disease, the United Nations, was a result of World War 2, humanitarian aid, human atrocities, all of these examples need history, of what it was like without them, to understand them fully. As an explanation of history this quote is a perfect and eloquent representation.

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Re: Edward Gibbon

by [Cameron Lasater](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 01:56 PM

I hadn't thought about this quote the way you have described it. I completely understand what you're saying, and I would have to agree with you 100%. It does seem a bit pessimistic at first, but it's probably more of a realist's statement. I think there might be a bit more to it than history being "little more than the register of crimes....," but nonetheless I like the quote.

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E. H. Carr

by [Charlotte Thomas](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 09:27 AM

"The function of the historian is neither to love the past nor to emancipate himself from the past, but to master and understand it as the key to the understanding of the present."

I picked this quote because I think it's extremely true. To understand the present we must understand the past. The past is what has gotten us to the present isn't it? Without the events of the past there would be no present or if some of the events of the past didn't occur then we would live in an entirely different world. By understanding what we have been through and the experiences we have experienced, we have a better understanding of the world we live in today, how it came to be and it also helps us learn from our past mistakes.

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Re: E. H. Carr

by [Autumn Patronelli-West](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 02:05 PM

I like what you have said here. I am, at heart, an optimist, and this is definitely an optimistic view on the world. I too chose this quote, though, and I think it is a good representation of what history and a historian should be. I don't think they are all this honest, unfortunately. I learned in Cultural Anthropology last term about Nazi doctors and historians molding the evolution of jews in order to support their views and actions. In that example, it's hard to say whether that was the work of historians or of fiction writers. I still think that there are more good historians than ill inspired ones.

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Re: Start Here

by [Mackenzie Clark](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 11:49 AM

"History does nothing, possesses no enormous wealth, fights no battles. It is rather man, the real, living man, who does everything, possesses, fights. It is not *History*, as if she were a person apart, who uses men as a means to work out her purposes, but history itself is nothing but the activity of men pursuing their purposes." **Karl**

Marx

This is an interesting quote because it states that history itself is not outcomes of events but rather the actions or purpose of people. I enjoy this quote because I feel that sometimes when we look at history we see it as history being a separate entity that has a different purpose. When, really, it is the purpose of people in power that creates history because of the way people attempt to fulfill their purpose. The outcomes of the historical events are simply due too what a person's purpose is; which makes them act on that "need". I picked this quote because I think that when looking at history we can not ignore what the purpose of a person in power was in order for the historical event too occur.

Mackenzie Clark

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Re: Start Here

by [Roxanne MacDonald](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 02:06 PM

Hi Mackenzie,

"The outcomes of the historical events are simply due too what a person's purpose is; which makes them act on that "need". I picked this quote because I think that when looking at history we can not ignore what the purpose of a person in power was in order for the historical event too occur. "

Excellent statement. I think often we forget that history is created by an agenda. From the start of humanity on this planet, (however you view this start) it has been a recording of our history. From something as simple as a village leader seeking out a new home closer to food to a president making the determination to get involved in a war, it is history, history. I think you summed it up very well. Take Care

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Sigmund Freud

by [Michelle Murawski](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 09:50 PM

"Only a good-for-nothing is not interested in his past." Sigmund Freud

I agreed a lot with this quote, someone who doesn't care for what happened in the past likely doesn't care for what happens in the future. Without reflecting on and learning from past mistakes, you're bound to repeat them. On a larger scale, those who don't bother to learn their own history become unappreciative of the work and sacrifices that gave them what they have today, and may cause them to be unwilling to make sacrifices of their own.

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Re: Sigmund Freud

by [Lindsay Knutson](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 11:18 PM

I like what you said about people who don't bother to learn their history becoming unappreciative and in the end not sacrificing for others. That was a good thought. Also I think that your right about reflecting and learning from past mistakes. Without doing that how can we make the future better?

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Wright Morris

by [Tyler Flinchbaugh](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 10:59 PM

"The past is useless. That explains why it is past" -Wright M.

This quote interested me because I thought It was good way to view the past seeing as dwelling on it will get you nowhere fast therefore having no positive uses. Out of all the reasons I've heard to not think about the past this is probably the best way to put it to anyone if you want to be straight up with them and there's no point in going past those few words either because when something is useless there is no reason to waste time on it.

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William L. Burton

by [Lindsay Knutson](#) - Friday, 1 April 2011, 11:20 PM

"If you do not like the past, change it." William L. Burton

I really liked this quote because it was straight to the point. For me it was a call to action to stand up for what I believe in and make changes if I disagree. Where would we be if people didn't want to change the past? Women's rights and racial equality are both examples of when people didn't like the past and took steps to change it. What we do now, in the present, is what will change the past. I think that here in America, as citizens we have equal rights and can make changes if we don't like how things are going. I think we should take advantage of that.

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