

### **Brilliant Painting: How the Study of World History Changes Perspective**

The study of world history has altered my viewpoint of the world I live in through two main ways: pattern and context. History repeats social and philosophical ideas over and over again throughout many countries, so understanding the past creates an even deeper understanding of the future. This is the pattern that world history provides. Developing a deeper understanding of the cultures of the entire world throughout history also creates a meaningful knowledge of one's own culture. This is the context that the study of world history provides. These two characteristics of the study of world history change my viewpoint of the world I live through developing an understanding of and hope for the future through the patterns of world history and developing an understanding of and appreciation for not only the different cultures of the world but also my own culture through the context of world history.

Time ebbs and flows in the same manner since the foundation of the world. Countries rise and fall in a cycle, and actions inspire reactions. Each revolution affects the next revolution. For centuries, underdogs have been rising up and demanding equality. For example, Gandhi's fiery non-violence has created a cycle of non-violence freedom-fighting. Mahatma Gandhi fought for separation from British rule and the abolition of social discrimination in India. He advocated non-violence as a strategy to lawfully pressure the government into recognizing the legitimacy of his ideas. He won his war, and India and Pakistan were separated from the British Empire in 1947.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was a pastor in the Southern United States of America who employed Gandhi's idea of nonviolence to great effect, spurring the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. He began the major movement to abolish lingering racism in America. Gandhi's writings were his textbooks to learn how to win a civil rights war.

Aung San Suu Kyi, a freedom-fighter in Burma (Myanmar) also stated that she was fundamentally inspired by Gandhi's teachings. She was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1991 for her struggle for human rights and democracy. She employed a non-violent method that has greatly affected her country, and she is now the leader of the National League for Democracy.

Gandhi's idea was a new one, and its repetition creates new social revolutions of equality. The sequence of events in the world is repeated over and over again. Humans copy each other. From looking at the pattern of events that have occurred throughout the world, prediction of the future is possible. Seeing that progress has been made against racial discrimination, particularly in the past 150 years, we can hope that even more progress will be made in the next 150 years. But a person who had not studied world history would not know that epic battles are being fought worldwide against racism and bigotry in general.

A world history student can look at the patterns of progress being made in the field of bigotry and hatred and feel hope for his or her own future. The victories seen across the world throughout history provide a glorious pattern that inspires hope in many. Simply knowing that difficult and horrible problems have been overcome makes us hope, like Lyndon B. Johnson, president of the United States of America during the Civil Rights Movement, that "these enemies..., poverty, disease, ignorance - we shall overcome."

The second way the study of world history changes the way I view the world is the context that it offers. World history is like a beautiful impressionist painting. Many flecks of brilliant colors make up a picture with a story. Looking at one fleck of paint can be worthwhile in admiring the unique color, but it isn't meaningful. The whole painting must be observed to make sense of the single paint fleck. Three countries (or "paint flecks") that fought similar wars and must be viewed in context with each other are France, the United States of America, and the Sultanate of

Mysore. France's revolutionary stirrings did not culminate in a war until 1789. America fought their Revolutionary War earlier, around 1765. Both were rebelling against a perceived unjust authority figure. France's revolution was over equality for the masses and the abolishment of aristocracy. America's revolution was over representation in British government and all the full rights of colony status. Failing that, the Americans fought for independence from British rule entirely. America's war was influenced by French thought and ideals. Thomas Paine's pamphlet, "Common Sense", was inspired by his time in France. "Common Sense" went on to spur the Americans to war. The First Anglo-Mysore War (1766-1769) was a rebellion of the Sultanate of Mysore against a British trading company that was also a colonial and imperial agent. Although superficially similar to the American Revolutionary War in its rebellion against colonisation, it is also similar to the French Revolution in its rebellion against perceived "rich" figures who oppress the masses. A student seeing the one war without reference to the other two would infer certain misconceptions. It's important to keep in mind the influence of the three countries on each other through ideas.

The eighteenth century is a time era known for revolutionary outbreaking. Seeing the whole time period in context is key to developing a deep understanding of the world. One war takes on more meaning when it is viewed against other wars. Viewing the American Revolutionary War next to the French Revolution and the Anglo-Mysore War, the conclusion that rebellion against a wealthy or monopolising authority figure was common during that time period is evident.

A world history student can look at the context of the countries in the present and the future.

Doing this tempers extreme patriotism. When there is no context to history, it is easy to feel that one's own country is the best. It is easy to think that one's own country has achieved much and conquered many. But the brilliancy of countries' achievements, supposed or otherwise, is

tempered when viewed against other countries. Knowing that one's own country has indeed achieved much along with other countries fosters a sense of unity around the entire globe. World history can tear down the barriers of extreme patriotism.

Finally, the study of world history alters my viewpoint of the world in two main ways. World history provides a reference of patterns, and it provides context for the understanding of my own country along with other countries. The patterns of world history can provide hope for repeated change, and it can provide a reference for both the past and the future. The context that world history provides not only fosters a deeper understanding of all countries in the world as well as one's own but also develops an appreciation for and unity with all the cultures in the world. Each country in the world's history is enriched through the understanding of other countries as well.

\When the lovely impressionist painting of the history of the world is seen from a distance, all the small paint flecks make a picture with meaning. The brilliancy of the colors is like the diversity of ideas throughout the globe, and the repeating themes of influencing patterns are what combine the paint colors to create a picture of depth and value.