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# A Study of History

by Miles Mathis

No, this isn't a study of *all* of history, so don't worry. This is a short non-standard study of the meaning of the word "history". As usual, I intend to twist this a little to make you think of it in a different way.

As it now stands, history normally means a record of past events, as you would find in a book. But that isn't history, is it? That is a *record* of history, which may or may not be true. So what is history, really? Obviously, history is the events themselves. History is what actually happened in the past.

I say the governors don't want you to remember that. They want you to think history is the record of the events. They have spent inordinate amounts of time and energy in the past century trying to make sure you think of history as the record of the events rather than the actual events. Why would they do that? Because if they can convince you history is the record, then they can control the record and therefore history.

Think of George Orwell's *1984*, which probably didn't teach you what I just said, but should have. That book brings up the subject very vividly, but then George does his best to sell you the idea that history is the record of events. After reading his book, you will come away believing even more strongly that history is the record of events, and that it is subject to manipulation by the government.

But while it is true the record of events is easily manipulable, history isn't. History is inviolable. Once something happens, it cannot ever be undone. Something that happened will always have happened, no matter who denies it, covers it up, lies about it, memory-holes it, or suppresses it. That is the amazing thing about the past: no matter how you try, you can't get to it. Something that happened will have happened forever, *by definition*.

You should take great solace in this. I do. Just as it is very comforting that matter cannot be destroyed, it is very comforting that the past cannot be changed. If your life is full of horrible mistakes and your head full of guilt, that may not be so comforting, but for me it is very comforting. I see my own past as a little sandcastle I have built on the beach of time, and it is amazingly comforting knowing it cannot be touched.

You will say, "You fool! Nothing lasts. Sooner or later a wave will come in and wash all you have done away!" True, but the wave will come in the future, not the past. The wave may wash away my last twenty years, for instance, but it cannot touch my first fifty years, since they already happened. They are etched in time regardless. *As events*, they cannot be washed away. Only the present and future results of the events can be touched. But the events themselves cannot be undone. They happened, and no wave can un-happen them.

Many people will still not follow me, I know. They will say something like, "Etched in time? Etched

where? If nobody knows what you did, it will be like you never did it.” These people have been mis-educated very thoroughly, and there is probably no way I can get through to them. They have been taught that the value of your life is what other people think of it, now and in the future. Therefore, recorded history is all that matters. But life isn't about creating a set of sentences to put in a future file. Life is about your experience from moment to moment. Nameless people compiling data on you, now or in the future, cannot touch that. You aren't living as fodder for historians. You are living as an opportunity for matter to merge and experience its own lovely complexity ever more fully.

And *that* is where your experience is etched in time. The universe knows all that has happened. We have seen experimental evidence recently of memory in water and memory in cells and memory in DNA. The charge field itself has a memory, and old paths persist, perhaps forever. What happened will always have happened.

We see evidence of that even in the shorter term, where efforts to overwrite the past inevitably fail. People remember, even the people overwriting the events. They cannot even erase their own memories, and those memories are more important than any words in a book.

Let me give you an example. Let us go back to 1997 and try to rewrite history. Let us say the governors had been even less happy about Tiger Woods winning the Masters that year by 12 strokes than we know they were. Let us say they decided to immediately rewrite history. Let us say they erased his signature from his final round scorecard, claimed he failed to sign it, disqualified him, and declared Tom Kite the winner. Would they have rewritten history? No, they would only have rewritten the record of it. Tiger still shot 69 the last round, no matter what. He signed his card and he knows that. The governors know it. So his experience of the tournament itself is exactly the same. They can only affect his experience *after* the tournament, which admittedly wouldn't be so good. But in affecting his experience, they would affect their own experience, since they would have to live with themselves as horrible cheaters the rest of their lives. In that case, I would rather be Tiger than the governors.

That didn't happen in 1997, but we all know things like that have happened many times.

I have always intuited this meaning of history, but it was Lao-Tze who first put it into words for me, helping me to clarify my intuition. He taught that we only have the right to our labors, not to the fruits of our labors. In the example above, that means that Tiger can only control what he shoots for four rounds; he cannot control whether or not the governors decide to cheat him.

Most people would read that quote from Lao-Tze and complain that we *do* have a right to the fruits. That is what a large part of the law is about: getting a fair wage for work done, etc. But if you were a student of Lao-Tze, he would scold you and recommend you study the first part of the quote, not the second. Rather than complain about the unfairness of the second part, notice how comforting the first part is. We *do* have the right to our labors. Which I encourage you to read this way: we do have the right to claim our own actions and events, because they are ours. Not only can no one take away our events from us *legally*, they cannot do it in any other way. Once the events have happened, they will have happened for all time. You cannot steal someone's history from them, because they have already lived it no matter what you do. Even wiping their memory or killing them will not change their history. You cannot undo what has been done.\*

Someone who really understands that is unstoppable, because they will continue their labors even without payment and without recognition. If that had happened to Tiger and he had replied, “Fine, I

will see you next week and you will have to steal that one from me as well. It is going to look kind of suspicious when I lose on a technicality every week.”

If we all learn this lesson, it will be very difficult to rewrite history out from under us. Yes, the governors can control the record of history to a limited extent, but the extent to which they can control it is determined by the extent to which you believe the record *is* history. If you remember that the record is just the record, your history will always remain your own.

Actually, your history will remain your own even if you *don't* remember that. That is another nice thing about the working of the universe: it doesn't require your belief. Your events will be yours forever, no matter how you feel about it. Come to think of it, that is probably why the governors don't believe in that definition of history: they don't *want* their events to be theirs.

\*Nietzsche almost hit on this interpretation with his eternal recurrence, but garbled the message a bit. He intuited that the paths once made remain, but we don't need to walk them over and over. We *may* walk similar paths, from nostalgia, but there is no need for a permanent loop. Which is just to say, we can do better next time.