The Conversation receives a lot of comments each day and you can't read everything. That's why we occasionally end the week with a selection of community highlights: comments we enjoyed or thought interesting. Read on for five comments or discussions I thought worth highlighting.

Guide to the classics: The Histories, by Herodotus

Adam Britton described the link between Herodotus and crocodiles:

Very interesting article. In my own work with crocodiles, Herodotus comes up quite a bit. Some of his observations and conclusions were reasonably accurate, but he also made quite a few mistakes and misinterpretations. What's interesting is that a lot of the myths associated with crocodiles even today go all the way back to his descriptions, presumably repeated over time verbatim by other authors.

Many of his misconceptions are understandable. He described the trochilus bird (the Egyptian plover) as having a symbiotic relationship with crocodiles, keeping their teeth and tongue clean by removing scraps of flesh stuck there, or pulling leeches from the tongue. Certainly we know that plovers and other birds appear comfortable feeding close to crocodiles; the latter rarely bother trying to attack as the birds are usually too fast. However, there is no evidence that a mutual relationship exists (don't tell toothbrush companies).

More curiously, he described crocodiles as lacking an anus, instead ingesting food and eliminating waste through the mouth. Despite the apparently strange notion for a reptile, crocodiles do regurgitate indigestible material - hairballs, or trichobezoars - in a similar way to birds that regurgitate a pellet. This suggests he observed this behaviour at least once, and he must have spent some time doing so because it's a fairly rare occurrence to witness. Another idea of his, that crocodiles intentionally stash their prey so that it can rot before they're able to break pieces off, is also inaccurate. Yet it's an understandable conclusion based on observations of crocodiles scavenging from dead carcasses caught in vegetation by the water's edge.

It’s clear that Herodotus didn’t employ what we’d consider these days to be a scientific approach, but when it came to the natural world he must have been a keen observer and thinker, even if he wasn’t afraid of jumping to conclusions.

To which Julia Kindt, the article’s author, responded:

Yes, astonishing how accurate Herodotus zoographical observations frequently are. Unfortunately it is Aristotle who is usually credited as the ‘father of zoology’.

Elsewhere in the comments, Charles Dodgson asked a few questions about Herodotus’s approach to writing and history:

Julia, thank you for a thoroughly entertaining and interesting article. I have recently read The Histories and would appreciate an expert in the field answer a couple of questions.

Did Herodotus distinguish the stem word for both story and history - ιστορία - Latinised to istoria? Do the histories of the Persian wars make a distinction between a fable and a chronicle? I’m thinking, was Herodotus drawing a line between Aesop and Homer?

On a similar theme, do you think Herodotus makes the distinction between an individual’s and a collective memory? If an event is remembered, sometimes in a dream then it slots into the sequence: it is part of the story. Medicos call this confabulation.

Is it true that Herodotus provides another legacy to European consciousness? Did he popularise the term᾽Ασία - Latinised to Asia - meaning those who are not from Ευρώπη - Europe: the term he used to define the lands in which Greeks lived. An us verse them narrative was integral to Herodotus' notion of istoria.

And Julia Kindt responded:

I think for Herodotus storytelling was an important part of writing the past. Aesop wrote moralising fables, while Herodotus aimed to tell a true story about the past. But both the Histories and the Aesopic fables use storytelling for the purpose of moralising.

Is your artwork genuine and who can you trust to advise you?

James Coburg shared his views on art fraud and the destruction of art:

The simplistic view of course is that a work of art is worth what the work of art is worth - not by who created it (or did not).

I dont deny the fraud intent in the Whitley case (assuming the result is correct) but that too is about playing on the value of a name.

It is the problem of visual art where there is the work and a copy does not count. compare writers or composers where we can all enjoy the words or music.

the authentication ought to be a question of interest in understanding the history of the work, often a challenge for older pieces, and where needed to distinguish a modern copy or work in a style of from originals.

The Andy Warhol Foundation is renowned for its attempt to control the Warhol works, destroying pieces it considers not authentic even some made at the time. It is caught up in the problem that Warhol liked to mass produce or reproduce works hence making the question of ‘the one piece’ meaningless. The articles about the foundation in The New York Review of Books a few years ago were very interesting about this.

They too like to destroy works they don't like despite not owning them.I cannot see that copies, even ones intentionally pretending to be by the artist, can really harm the other works - only the market price. Price not value as Wilde observed.

To which Felicity Strong , the article's author, responded:

Hi James,

Thanks for the comment.

Interesting points you raise about the worth of a work of art. Value on the modern art market is almost entirely predicated on authenticity and as much as i agree with you about other points of value, i am not sure that it will change anytime soon! Certainly recent thinking on this topic considers the obsession with authenticity as a modern phenomenon.

I always give the advice to people wanting to buy art that you should really love it, regardless of the name or signature attached. In saying that, i also think it is human nature to be disappointed to find out something you considered to be original (and perhaps touched by the hand of a great master!) is not real. It upsets me when i talk to people who have loved a work and then found out it might be a forgery - particularly when they remove it from the wall and hide it away.

Good point re. the irony of the Warhol Foundation authenticating works in that manner. I often wonder what he would say about this issue if were still alive today. I think this is one of the articles you refer to?

On your final point, the destruction of works of art considered to be forgeries makes me incredibly uncomfortable but I make a distinction between a direct copy of an existing work and one that is painted/drawn in the style of another artist.

In terms of direct copies, I understand why some artists and foundations wish to destroy them. There is a lot of time of time, effort and heartache taken to remove them from the market to ensure that people do not get deceived. However a copy labeled as such does no harm at all.

With works in the style of another artist, there are two issues at play - one is the fear that it is a completely irreversible decision to destroy them, with the risk of accidentally destroying an authentic work. It's ridiculous to suggest that an artist never has a bad day! That Van Gogh painting is the perfect example of this. Art history needs to understand an artist's total oeuvre, not just those works that are considered 'great'.

The other issue that sits uneasily is the idea that an art object may be destroyed because you have devalued it based on a certain criteria. Depending on your definition of art, it can be argued that a work created in the style of another artist has merit and value as an work of art, just in a different way to that of an original. I also can't shake the associations with book burning or cultural cleansing.

Child-free: why women who choose not to have kids are given such a hard time

Meg Thornton touched on the social factors that can influence critques of women having or not having children:

It's worth noting that all critiques of women's child-bearing choices (either positive or negative) tend to be influenced by things like ableism (disabled women are criticised for having children, rather than refraining from having children); classism (poor women are criticised for having children, rich women are criticised for not having them); racism (white women are criticised for not having children, non-white women are criticised for having them) and so on. Basically, the core argument appears to be "a woman's place is in the wrong".

(White; aspirational working class/lower middle class; on the dole; mentally ill - you'd be surprised how fast the last two factors cut off criticisms of my child-free status mid-sentence).

How our modular brain pieces the world together

Finally, Tracy Nelson touched on how things like stance helped her remember people from her past:

Hi Bronson,

I found aspects spoken of in your article very interesting.

One reason it caught my attention was that it touched (if perhaps only lightly) on my very good and continuing recall of details of people I may not have seen in decades (despite my memory slipping in other areas).

For this and other reasons, at one point I thought I may have made a good detective of some kind.

What bothered me a bit though, was that after (timidly) approaching these people (after decades of not seeing them) I introduced myself and often it took them some time to remember me – if they remembered me at all (despite seeing some of them every day at school). Yes, enough of the jokes about me not being worth remembering!

Some people don't change much at all but some do change a great deal (becoming almost unrecognisable from their earlier school days).

One way I recognised one person as an adult was by his stance more than anything else (decades after not seeing him from about the age of 9 or10). As with others, importantly, his eyes, among other traits, were (or could be) also a bit of a giveaway. However, in his case, this was hardly convincing since he had changed so much in adulthood. It was the way he stood that did it for me. He and those he was with were amazed that I recognised him after all that

time and particularly in this way.

Bronson Harry , the author of the article, provided some research on that element of recall:

Unfortunately the history of person perception has been almost entirely directed toward the study of the face. Gait and movement have been overlooked for a long time, with early models proposing that only facial structure contributed to identification and recognition. However, one has only need to watch someone imitate another person to see that the static structure information is only part of the whole process.

In fact we often unaware of the degree to which we use other cues from the body, for example when we attempt to understand another persons emotional expression.

https://theconversation.com/are-you-furious-body-cues-tell-us-more-than-faces-11029

Read a comment you thought interesting? Let me know during the week. You can leave a comment below or send me an email .

Read more http://theconversation.com/community-highlights-60111