

Daniel J. Boorstin

Quotes

*Men, Book, Hero, World, Knowledge, Reading, America, Real, Ignorance,
Travel, Thinking, Library, Mean, People, Ocean, Atheism, Art, Science, Life,
Character*

The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance - it is the illusion of knowledge.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some hire public relations officers.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The traveler was active; he went strenuously in search of people, of adventure, of experience. The tourist is passive; he expects interesting things to happen to him. He goes 'sight-seeing.'

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Human models are more vivid and more persuasive than explicit moral commands.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The courage to imagine the otherwise is our greatest resource, adding color and suspense to all our life.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Freedom means the opportunity to be what we never thought we would be.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

I write to discover what I think.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Knowledge is not simply another commodity. On the contrary. Knowledge is never used up. It increases by diffusion and grows by dispersion.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

We suffer primarily not from our vices or our weaknesses, but from our illusions. We are haunted, not by reality, but by those images we have put in their place.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Technology is so much fun but we can drown in our technology. The fog of information can drive out knowledge.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

No agnostic ever burned anyone at the stake or tortured a pagan, a heretic, or an unbeliever.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The history of Western science confirms the aphorism that the great menace to progress is not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

An image is not simply a trademark, a design, a slogan or an easily remembered picture. It is a studiously crafted personality profile of an individual, institution, corporation, product or service.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

By reading we discover our world, our history, and ourselves.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The great obstacle to discovering the shape of the earth, the continents, and the oceans was not ignorance, but the illusion of knowledge.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Dispersed as the Jews are, they still form one nation, foreign to the land they live in.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The problem for us is less to discover the way it really is than to see the meaning of the way.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Planning for the future without a sense of history is like planting cut flowers.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Each living art object, taken out of its native habitat so we can conveniently gaze at it, is like an animal in a zoo. Something about it has died in the removal.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

In America, communities existed before governments. There were many groups of people with a common sense of purpose and a feeling of duty to one another before there were political institutions.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

A wonderful thing about a book, in contrast to a computer screen, is that you can take it to bed with you.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Reading is like the sex act - done privately, and often in bed.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The fog of information can drive out knowledge.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

What preoccupies us, then, is not God as a fact of nature, but as a fabrication useful for a God-fearing society. God himself becomes not a power but an image.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

I write to discover what I think. After all, the bars aren't open that early.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

We need not be theologians to see that we have shifted responsibility for making the world interesting from God to the newspaperman.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

There's something beautifully soothing about a fact "even" (or perhaps especially) if we're not sure what it means.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The world of crime is a last refuge of the authentic, uncorrupted, spontaneous event.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Disagreement produces debate but dissent produces dissension.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

As you make your bed, so you must lie in it.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

It is only a short step from exaggerating what we can find in the world to exaggerating our power to remake the world.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

[The Library of Congress] is a multimedia encyclopedia. These are the tentacles of a nation.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

A best-seller was a book which somehow sold well because it was selling well.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

A sign of celebrity is that his name is often worth more than his

services.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

There is no disinfectant like success.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The most promising words ever written on the maps of human knowledge are terra incognita, unknown territory.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

There was a time when the reader of an unexciting newspaper would remark, 'How dull is the world today!' Nowadays he says, 'What a dull newspaper!'

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Time makes heroes but dissolves celebrities.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Formerly, a public man needed a private secretary for a barrier between himself and the public. Nowadays he has a press secretary, to keep him properly in the public eye.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The most important American addition to the World Experience was the simple surprising fact of America. We have helped prepare mankind for all its later surprises.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

We read advertisements... to discover and enlarge our desires.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The force of the advertising word and image dwarfs the power of other literature in the 20th century.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

destruction is easy for humans but creation is too difficult.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Since the Creator had made the facts of the after-life inaccessible to man, He must not have required that man understand death in order to live fruitfully.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Any government which made the welfare of men depend on the character of their governors was an illusion.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

While the easiest way in metaphysics is to condemn all metaphysics as nonsense, the easiest way in morals is to elevate the common practice of the community into a moral absolute.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The Republic of Technology where we will be living is a feedback world.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Where ruts have not yet been worn, it requires less effort to stay out of them.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Americans expect to eat and stay thin, to be constantly on the move and ever more neighborly ... to revere God and be God.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The hero created himself; the celebrity is created by the media.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Through human history, illusions of knowledge, not ignorance, have proven to be the principal obstacles to discovery

~Daniel J. Boorstin

More appealing than knowledge itself is the feeling of knowledge.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

There is no known device for artistic contraception.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

When I was living in England I found that the more I lived abroad, the more American I discovered I was.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

While knowledge is orderly and cumulative, information is random and miscellaneous.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The celebrity is a person who is known for his well-knownness.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Never have people been more the masters of their environment. Yet never has a people felt more deceived and disappointed. For never has a people expected so much more than the world could offer.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

God is the celebrity author of the world's best seller. We have made god into the biggest celebrity of all, to contain our own emptiness.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The mind is a vagrant thing.... Thinking is not analogous to a person working in a laboratory who invents something on company time.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The traveler used to go about the world to encounter the natives. A function of travel agencies now is to prevent this encounter.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

A pseudo-event ... comes about because someone has planned it, planted, or incited it. Typically, it is not a train wreck or an earthquake, but an interview.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

We must abandon the prevalent belief in the superior wisdom of the ignorant.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Historians will not fail to note that a people who could spend \$300 billion on defense refused to spend a tiny fraction of that total to keep their libraries open in the evening.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The hero was a big man; the celebrity is a big name.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

. . . the messiness of experience, that may be what we mean by life.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The hero was distinguished by his achievement; the celebrity by his name or trademark.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Climaxing a movement for calendar reform which had been developing for at least a century, in 1582 Pope Gregory ordained that October 4 was to be followed by October 15.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Standing, standing, standing - why do I have to stand all the time? That is the main characteristic of social Washington.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The institutional scene in which American man has developed has lacked that accumulation from intervening stages which has been so dominant a feature of the European landscape.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

The computer can help us find what we know is there. But the book remains our symbol and our resource for the unimagined question and the unwelcome answer.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

It is very unlikely that the computer will displace the books, except in areas where we need information speedily.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

An enamored amateur need not be a genius to stay out of the ruts he has never been trained in.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

While the Jeffersonian did not flatly deny the Creator's power to perform miracles, he admired His refusal to do so.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

When the necessary eleven days were added, George Washington's birthday, which fell on February 11, 1731, Old Style, became February 22, 1732, New Style.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Nothing is really real unless it happens on television.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

American civilization, from its beginnings, had combined a dogmatic confidence in the future with a naive puzzlement over what the future might bring.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Water, that wonderful, flowing medium, the luck of the planet - which would serve humankind in so many ways, and which would give our planet a special character.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

What is more natural in a democratic age than that we should begin to measure the stature of a work of art-especially of a painting-by how widely and how well it is reproduced?

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Best-sellerism is the star system of the book world. A "best seller" is a celebrity among books. It is a book known primarily (sometimes exclusively) for its well-knownness.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

Books are messengers of freedom. They can be hidden under a mattress or smuggled into slave nations.

~Daniel J. Boorstin

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