

# BOOK REVIEWS

**Ramos, Dexter John V. *Pagtanaw at Pag-unawa: Kasaysayan ng Daigdig*. Makati: Diwa Learning Systems, Inc., 2013.**

**Reviewed by: Eric PORTERA**

**F**rom the earliest civilizations to today's history-making developments, the book *Pagtanaw at Pag-unawa: Kasaysayan ng daigdig* imparts a fascinating tale of human challenge and triumph. Author Dexter John V. Ramos took a genuinely balanced and global approach as he examined the unique character and development of human societies in different parts of the world. The book also showed different ideas and gave a new understanding and appreciation of human history through hundreds of vivid illustrations and engaging first-hand accounts of history. Many textbooks tend to simplify the content of history courses by emphasizing an intellectual or political perspective or, most recently, a social perspective, often at the expense of sufficient details in a chronological framework. This approach is confusing to students whose high school social studies programs have neglected a systematic study of world history. The book also attempted to write a well-balanced work in which political, economic, social, religious, intellectual and military history were integrated into a chronologically ordered synthesis.<sup>1</sup>

To enliven the past, the author also used different materials that historians also used like primary and secondary sources that are keyed to the discussion in the text and in so doing, readers are made able to understand important issues and events. Said primary and secondary sources include examples of religious, artistic, intellectual, social, economic and political aspects of life in different societies; all of which reveal, in vivid fashion, what civilization meant to men and women then.<sup>2</sup>

Each chapter has a lengthy introduction and conclusion to help maintain the continuity of the narrative and provided a synthesis of important themes.

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<sup>1</sup> William Duiker and Jackson J. Spielvogel, *The Essential World History* 6th Ed. (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010): 1.

<sup>2</sup> Duiker and Spielvogel, *The Essential World History*, Preface XXV.

Anecdotes in the chapter introductions dramatically conveyed the major themes of each chapter. Timelines at the end of each chapter will enable students and readers to see the significant developments of an era at a glance and within cross-cultural categories; while the more detailed chronologies reinforce the events discussed in the text. An annotated bibliography at the end of each chapter reviews the most recent literature on each period and gave references to some of the older works in each field. Extensive maps and illustrations serve to deepen the reader's understanding of the text. The book provides different map captions, designed to enrich students' awareness of the importance of geography to history and a large number of spot maps, which shall enable students to see, at a glance, the region or subject being discussed in the text.<sup>3</sup> To facilitate understanding of cultural movements, illustrations of artistic works discussed in the text were placed next to the discussions.<sup>4</sup> Chapter outlines and focus questions, including analytical questions, at the beginning of each chapter will help the readers with an overview and guide them to the main subjects of each chapter. An index of relevant terms and translation guides were included to enrich an understanding of the text.

After reading the book and analyzing it, I found the book to be a useful instrument for introducing students to world history. Some activities in the book such as *Maalala mo kaya* and *Kasama ka sa Kasaysayan* can help readers review and connect the past to the present hence, emphasizing the salience of the past, and all its teachings, to our progress today and tomorrow.<sup>5</sup>

History is such an essential part of our everyday lives. Not only because certain events and occurrences shaped our present world, but also due to the fact that humanity tends to go through the same challenges over and over again. The book promotes patriotism and enhances responsible citizenship. By reading the book, one acquires a plethora of information from how a nation emerged to the problems encountered along the way. The reader will discover the values upheld by a nation, allowing him to develop a sense of appreciation and reinforce the commitment to responsible citizenship. Further, the book provides cultural consciousness and cross-cultural appreciation through the study of historical events.

Sometimes people behave in certain ways, and we quickly rush to judge them without understanding why they are that way. When we study history, we learn to appreciate diversity when we are introduced to different cultures and norms.

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<sup>3</sup> Duiker and Spielvogel, *The Essential World History*, 18-19.

<sup>4</sup> Duiker and Spielvogel, *The Essential World History*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> [forum.objectivismonline.com/index.php?/topic](http://forum.objectivismonline.com/index.php?/topic).

We develop a deeper understanding of our society and live in harmony with those that seem different from us. We make sense of it all and forge ahead; fully aware of how far we have come and how long we can still go. Lastly, by reading this book, students will learn the value of history. The study of history is not irrelevant as some people may posit it to be. We do not have to live in the past, but we can definitely do better by learning from it and using the lessons learned to lead more meaningful lives. History plays a critical role in promoting one's intellectual growth and development. Let's learn to embrace our history, learn from the mistakes our ancestors made, appreciate their achievements and have fun while discovering more.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.importantindia.com/23240/importance-of-history-in-our-life>.