

# “Those Who Cannot Remember the Past are Condemned to Repeat it.”

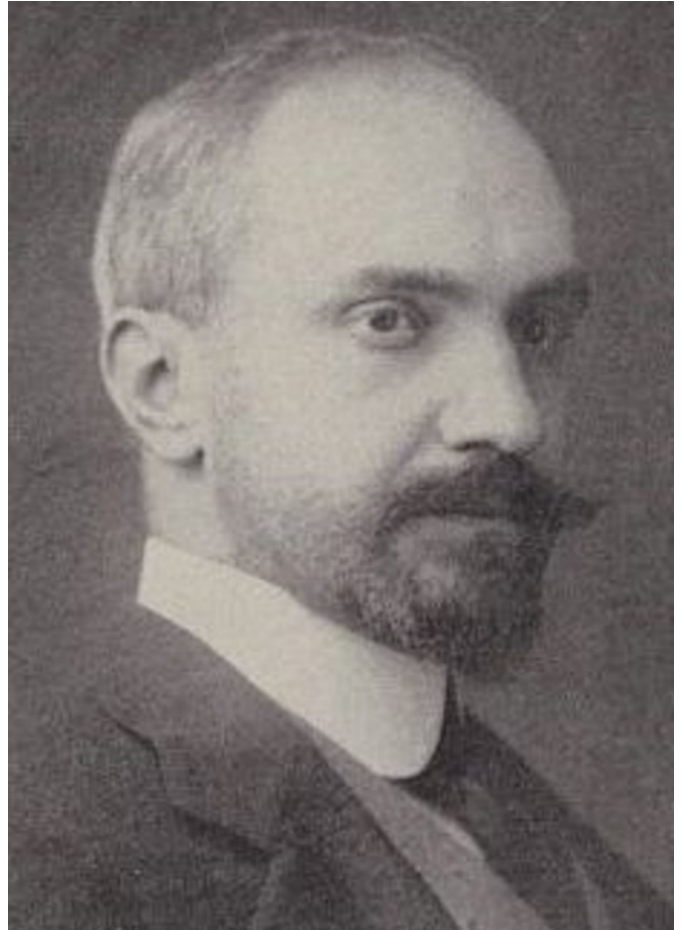
Historian John Prados believed that history was the highest calling of which mankind was capable. He devoted his life's work to laying out the terrible mistakes made by the U.S. government in Vietnam. When I suggested to him that it was time to move on, with so many other disastrous wars to follow-up, John commented. “The Vietnam War is not over yet.”

## Reason in Society

According to George Santayana, the author of the title quoted above, “the human race, in its intellectual life, is organized like the bees: the masculine soul is a worker, sexually atrophied, and essentially dedicated to impersonal and universal arts; the feminine is a queen, infinitely fertile, omnipresent in its brooding industry, but passive and abounding in intuitions without method and passions without justice.”

If you watch a line of ants, they follow the scent of the ants before them, and when they encounter ants coming in the opposite direction, they communicate with their feelers. "Hi Bob, yes, there are many great snacks up ahead." I have never seen the case of, "Bob, go back, there is danger up ahead." I have also watched bees, to see if they can detect and respond to air currents that would lead them to an open window, but once again, I haven't seen that behavior.

The study of history prevents mankind from behaving like little ants, who just keep coming and don't seem able to react to danger. The duty of the historian is to provide a service that the ants don't seem to have working for them; or, like the bee that wants to fly through the window to get outside, eventually dying because of the instinct to fly directly toward the light which is his goal.



## Oblique Strategy

When the direct approach isn't working, then it's time to step back and go against instinct. The possibility of overriding our instincts and rethinking our approach to a problem is a gift that we have available which insects do not. If we do not exercise this ability and continually do what our instinct commands, then we end up eating whatever tastes good, doing whatever we feel like, acting like one of the hive, which in the end leads to failure and dissolution. Just like the bee buzzing against the glass, we wonder why life is not working.

So, let's be like humans, and not like insects. Acting like ants is not good for our survival as a species.

—Kevin Zucker