



Sections

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

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The 6 O'Clock Scholar

By **Carol Krucoff**
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...
gives meaning to life," Daniel J. Boorstin wants you to know that he has written his latest epic--an acclaimed 745 page history of the world--in his spare time.

"It might sound corny or pretentious," the librarian of Congress announces from behind a fortresslike desk in his Cleveland Park

...
"I distrust single explanations of anything, including the meaning of truth. The thing that interests me most is the varied, unpredictable contrasts of human nature and of civilization.

"What an amateur is, is a lover of a subject. I'm a lover of facts. The fact is the savior, as long as you don't jam it into some preconceived pattern. The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance--it is the illusion of knowledge."

The facts Boorstin loves most, he says, "are the unnecessary ones. In a way, the most important things are the unnecessary things--great poems, for example. What is most characteristic about humanity is