An Interesting Annotation

Imagine what this kind of source transparency could do if it became standard practice for historical journals.

> *If this becomes the norm in historical journals, it changes the way historians complete their work, and how readers engage with it. By giving readers direct access to the primary sources of the case they are trying to build, they are forced to deliver an completely honest history; one that cannot omit certain events or points, or stretch the truth of another to make a case. Readers are then drawn into the process, because they are drawing from the same evidence the historian is, and they can acquire an idea based off a source and not the sole voice of the historian. It changes the dynamic of the*

> *relationship. It is not merely a historian reporting facts that readers take at face-value, because they too, get to explore.*
>
> *Here is the link to the original annotation.*

I find the idea in this annotation to be very important for any academic field. Having access to the primary source for a given topic could be helpful for research purposes and could greatly simplify the process of fact-checking and truthful writing.
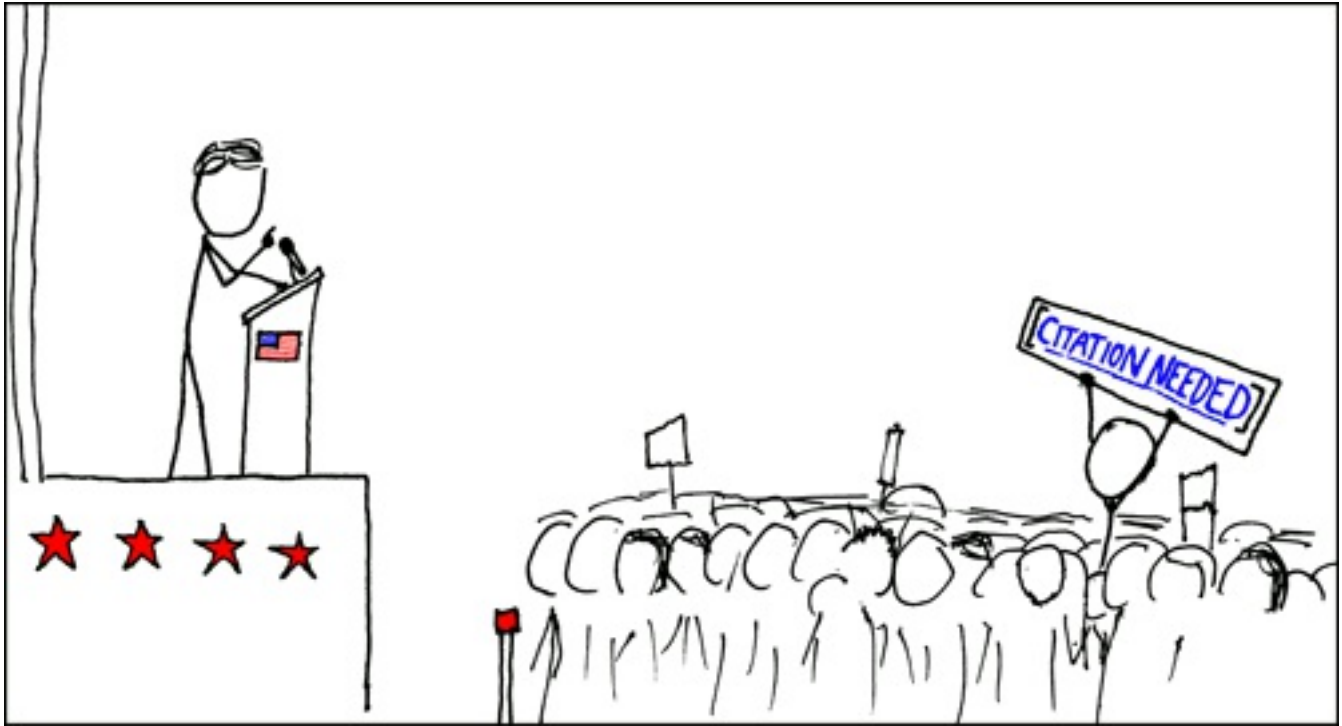
The most important advantage here is being able to confidently use sources without doubting their validity as much. If I am discussing a historic event in an essay, I would not have to look through multiple articles to ensure historical accuracy. As Sherlyn has said, readers would be drawing from the same evidence the historian originally published. There would be no external themes or interpretations present in the primary source, as opposed to a secondary source. In my opinion, using secondary sources is like playing a game of broken telephone or "chinese whispers". Every author will inevitably change the context, theme and information itself to provide a unique perspective for a given paper. There is no problem with this, however future researchers and historians will

likely use this paper as an important source for a potentially different topic. With more iterations of research papers, the original information conveyed may be twisted or completely incorrect at a certain point.

Aside from truthful and accurate writing, fact-checking becomes a lot easier. There would be no need to sift through several articles to guarantee a paper's correctness. There is a benefit for both the author and the reader. The author has access to a primary source, so it becomes easier for them to use the correct information. The reader can see that the author has used a verified primary source, and can therefore conclude the paper's facts to be accurate. Therefore, transparent primary sources can foster a relationship of trust among historians and other academics.

I'm glad that Zotero has started to create smarter bibliographies for students to find citations easier. Hopefully this trend of transparent research will become widespread in the years to come.