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2011

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION

WRITING BOOKLET

Examination

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| History Extension |
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Instructions

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The question of how much a historian owns the history that they write is widely debated. The historian however is most definitely in control of how history is presented, absorbed and discussed by individuals. Eric Foner suggests that history 'belongs' to everyone explaining why historical thought has evolved so rapidly and constantly throughout the years. ~~Leopold~~ ~~von~~ ~~Ranke~~ ^{Leopold} von Ranke, father of objective history during the 19th Century would very much suggest otherwise with history belonging to the historian, who must present the facts of history as they were in the time. Marc Bloch, of the Annales School of historical thought was a firm believer in Foner's ideas of more total histories, that are inclusive of all facets of people and schools of education. Keith Jenkins, a postmodernist historian would tend to believe in Foner's wide considerations and debates within history but would also be mindful of the inability of a historian to achieve true objectivity. The historian is very much in control of history, hence modern historians must take into account numerous other factors in order to create their works.

~~The~~ A broad and all inclusive history is what Eric Foner believes in, ^{together} "inconsiderate of the fact that historians have created a vast majority of the debates and historical arguments. Foner discusses how the are vast differences between "historians understanding of their task" and "what much of the broader public" thinks history should be. These considerations, when considered by historians can lead to far more accurate histories and add to the constantly "written and rewritten" nature of history. Foner further believes that history as fact doesn't exist in the "scientific sense" but as a reasonable approximation of the past. Historians, ~~are~~ further suggested by Foner need to take part in "public discourse" that has had history frequently mucked by those "with little general understanding", Foner's view of history as a world dominated by ~~the~~ historians who must deal with uneducated persons as singular factual history is slightly hyperbolic and the conclusions he reaches regarding the fact that "everyone" owns history is perhaps a little too exaggerated.

Leopold Von Ranke, known particularly for his work, a history of the latin and teutonic

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notions, is considered the father of Objective history. Von Rake believed in the "strict presentation of facts," "contingent and unattributed though they may be". Von Rake would be critical of Foner's views that history would never be an authoritative account that was always changing. Von Rake presented his sources in a very linear, ~~never~~ with only a mild degree of storytelling involved, likewise his sources were taken nearly from primary accounts from those in high positions, or situations of power. Von Rake's search for objective truth and an "unvarnished picture of the facts" has been a major influence on many historical trends, and is an ideology that suggests that it is very much the historian that is in control of history. Foner speaks of disengagement with the larger public, expressing dismay, Von Rake however would be more than pleased, separating himself from the masses of his time and establishing himself as a historian very much in control of his histories.

Marc Bloch ~~is~~ was a French historian who was part of the Annales school of thought. Bloch, similarly to von Rake

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believed that an objective, non-dogmatic free approach should be striven for, however like Foner, Bloch believed in inclusivity in history. Bloch's history took into account all facets of human existence including geography and sociology. His aim was to write complete histories without making any grand assumptions regarding facts. "One must not solve the answer is it or a half" Bloch has written in his book The Historian's Craft, the fear and a half being the number between two equation answers. Bloch's metaphor here makes the disregarding of the grand narrative assumptions made by historians like von Ranke and provides echoes of Foner's own views that history is a "reasonable approximation of the past". Bloch is however not a supporter of the view that histories convey in their recounts believing that all concerning accounts regarding sociological factors are equally as important as taking into account varied perspectives. Bloch's histories go beyond individuals too, looking in minute details at everything. Bloch's views regarding the course history could best be considered as belonging to professionals who

look into account all facets of human existence.

Keith Jenkins, a post modernist historian, decries the idea of "no such thing as objective truth". Indeed historical debates and history itself too have belong to everyone who is willing to admit ~~that~~ the forces and pressures acting upon their work. Jenkins's rethinking history is a work that would somewhat agree with Foner's beliefs of the free nature of history. Jenkins believes that "objectivity cannot be achieved" seem to suggest an acceptance of the fact that ~~history will always be~~ history "always will be regularly rewritten". Jenkins views however seem to be overly skeptical however and dismissive of history as something that can be owned by anyone, let alone historians.

Historians remain very much in control of history, and could be considered to 'own' it. Eric Foner is broadly accepting of history belonging to all without really considering how history is really created and maintained by historians. VonRake is very much a

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historians possessors of history and accept that it is his role to make decisions. Bloc and Jenkins are now broadly accepted, like Foner of the wider audience in history, ~~and~~ ~~with~~ with Bloc especially taking a considered approach to the ~~role~~ role of the historian in 'owning' history. While a solid argument can be made for history being owned by all, it is clear that many of the debates are influenced directed and owned by historians predominately.

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