



BOARD OF STUDIES
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HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION

WRITING BOOKLET

Examination

History Extension - History

Section	Part	Question Number
1	1	1

Date

3rd November

Number of booklets
used for this question

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Instructions

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History presents itself to one in many different forms; documents, accounts, facts, eyewitnesses, etc. Therefore when constructing and analysing the complexity of history, the question arises: who owns history and to what extent do historians own history?

Eric Foner conveys the idea that due to its complexity, nothing owns history, "which is why the study of the past is a constantly evolving, never-ending journey of discovery".

Leopold von Ranke, was a ~~German~~ modern German historian who believed in the strict presentation of facts and acknowledgement of sources as king. Von Ranke stated "I see the time approaching when modern history will be based upon narrative eye witnesses and the genuine and the original documents. Von Ranke believed very strongly that facts and sources were the ultimate importance. Foner argues that the way in which a historian documents history will always change and develop, however this contrasts with Von Ranke's ideas of using the same methodology and always referring to sources

as 'king'. In the search for "How things really happened", Von Ranke believes that the role of the historian is crucial to place value upon first-hand accounts and sources. However, Foner argues that "there are commonly accepted professional standards that enable us to distinguish good history from falsehoods" and that historians are adaptable to change the ways in which they conduct their researches.

This starkly contrasts with Von Ranke's view that if the same methodology is used amongst all historians, then the same conclusion should be deduced. Foner is ultimately arguing that no-one owns history and that history will evolve, change and adapt, ~~vs~~ while Von Ranke upholds the view that would associate easily with the idea that a historian owns history, as he chooses all the sources to be included or not to be. Von Ranke placed a large emphasis on the full inclusion of all aspects of history and never to change one's methodology.

~~BA~~ Edward Gibbon, who Additional writing space on back page.

was a historian in the enlightenment period, had some similar views to history, but ultimately overall were different. Gibbon believed that the way for a historian to document history should be more narrative based, as Gibbon included a greater amount of narrative perspectives within his work and often chose ~~where~~ ^{where} to place a sources and facts, rather than letting them construct history. Gibbon took the role as constructor of history, and by including, excluding and emphasising different aspects of history, he made himself part owner of history. Therefore it is seen that depending on the methodology, a historian can to an extent own history, as they decide what is and isn't said. This is why Foner states that history is owned by "everyone and no-one", as the methodology the historian employs will affect the outcome.

Pieter Geyl, wrote an extract in 1957 entitled, "The Use and Abuse of History"; which closely relates to the ideas ~~that~~ that have been presented by Foner. Geyl expresses the belief

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that history is ever changing and complex and that it is very difficult for a historian to achieve the entire truth. Geyl stated that "To ascertain the bare facts or factors", remains a never ending struggle and that a historians work does not simply stop there while the historian has the initial difficult decision of attempting to wholly ascertain the entire truth, he must then proceed to "choose from it, order it and to interpret it". In this process, elements of subjectivity are sure to be introduced, therefore giving the historian power over history.

While this can often happen, ~~Geyl~~ ~~Geyl~~ further argues that the best historian will despite the factors of subjectivity, try to represent the most accurate and detailed description of what really happened and to hope that they can fulfil the role of being a historian. Therefore, the importance of the historian is revealed and how ultimately they should not own it, but sometimes can

~~Greg~~ Foner uses the words of Charles Francis Adams to highlight the importance of the historian. "Adams called on historians to step outside the ivory tower and engage forthrightly in public discourse". Foner here is encouraging the historian to never present his work as a meaningful and important member, but more as a member willing to serve and present history however it is shown to us. Therefore, ~~a~~ historian should not own history to any extent, yet despite the numerous forms of methodologies, some historians do. ~~to Pieter~~ ~~Greg~~ Foner ultimately believes that a historian needs to simply stick to the facts and hope for the best representation that they can give.

Eric Hobsbawm wrote an extract in 1998 entitled ~~the~~ 'On History'. Hobsbawm argues that ultimately the way in which historians have implemented methodologies have improved, and that the history that is presented needs to become more defined. Hobsbawm also argues that one's sense of history will always be influenced by their own thoughts and memories.

and that history will remain no more the factual events, but projections of our memories. The view of Hobsbawm connects with Foner's ideas, ~~as the~~ as he questions who owns history and who would have the right to own it? Ultimately Foner is arguing that all people in all societies ~~en~~ (including historians) are in possession of their own history, but no-one owns history itself. "Who owns history? Everyone and no-one".

Through the multiple perspectives of numerous historians, it is evidently seen that the 'ownership' of history to a historian is largely dependable ~~en~~ on how they construct history. Ultimately, it is ~~see~~ argued that while historians may own history to a degree, no-one has the rightful ownership of history. Because of the "constantly evolving, never-ending journey of discovery" - this will never be so. Therefore, Foner's argument is clearly resonated in "that there are often more than one legitimate way of recounting past events" and that ultimately no one owns history, not even historians.

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