

Writing History in the Global Era

By Lynn Hunt

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Leading historian Lynn Hunt rethinks why history matters in today's global world and how it should be written.

George Orwell wrote that "history is written by the winners." Even if that seems a bit too cut-and-dried, we can say that history is always written from a viewpoint but that viewpoints change, sometimes radically.

The history of workers, women, and minorities challenged the once-unquestioned dominance of the tales of great leaders and military victories. Then, cultural studies?including feminism and queer studies?brought fresh perspectives, but those too have run their course.

With globalization emerging as a major economic, cultural, and political force, Lynn Hunt examines whether it can reinvigorate the telling of history. She hopes that scholars from East and West can collaborate in new ways and write wider-ranging works.

At the same time, Hunt argues that we could better understand the effects of globalization in the past if we knew more about how individuals felt about the changes they were experiencing. She proposes a sweeping reevaluation of individuals' active role and their place in society as the keys to understanding the way people and ideas interact. She also reveals how surprising new perspectives on society and the self?from environmental history, the history of human-animal interactions, and even neuroscience?offer promising new ways of thinking about the meaning and purpose of history in our time.

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Writing History in the Global Era By Lynn Hunt Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1043437 in Books
- Published on: 2014-09-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.60" h x .80" w x 5.90" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 208 pages

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Editorial Review

Review
“No one has a better nose for historical trends than Lynn Hunt. Her short, sharp book offers an inspiring declaration of interdependence for historians?to understand the global present collaboratively, using all our tools to unscramble the entangled past.” (David Armitage, author of Foundations of Modern International Thought)

“With characteristic concision and lucidity, Lynn Hunt takes on the methodological dilemmas facing all historians today. How should we think of history in a postnational era? What is gained and lost by ‘going global’? What happens to individual actors and agency when history is written on a transnational scale? *Writing History in the Global Era* draws on a wide range of writings from the humanities and the social and biological sciences to propose a thought-provoking snapshot of where historians stand now and where they might be headed. Lively and engaging, this book will help both budding and seasoned historians understand the current state of their discipline.” (Sarah Maza, author of The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie)

“Hunt’s compact book should serve as the first port of call for students and general readers interested in how historians have interpreted and reinterpreted the emergence of the world around them.” (Brendan Simms - Wall Street Journal)

“Hunt has… the most reliable eye for new trends in the American historical profession, and what she considers important always amounts to more than the sum of her current enthusiasms… she has a preternatural sense of the new new thing being touted by historians to study old things.” (Samuel Moyn - The Nation)

About the Author
Lynn Hunt is Distinguished Research Professor at UCLA, former president of the American Historical Association, and author of numerous works, including Inventing Human Rights and Telling the Truth about History. She lives in Los Angeles.

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