

Paper Reference(s)

9846/01

Edexcel

History

Advanced Extension Award

Monday 26 June 2006 – Afternoon

Time: 3 hours

Materials required for examination

Answer book (AB16)

Items included with question papers

Nil

Instructions to Candidates

In the boxes on the answer book, write your centre number, candidate number, your surname and initials and your signature. The paper reference is shown above. The box entitled Examining Body should be left blank.

Answer ALL parts of the question in Section A and ONE question in Section B.

Write your answers in the answer book provided.

Additional answer sheets may be used.

Information for Candidates

The total mark for this paper is 60: 40 marks for Section A and 20 marks for Section B.

You will **not** be credited for using the same information in more than one answer.

Advice to Candidates

You are advised to spend two hours on Section A (Question 1) and one hour on Section B.

You are reminded of the importance of clear English and orderly presentation in your answers.

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SECTION A

Question 1

Study Sources 1 and 2 and then answer questions (a) to (c) which follow.

SOURCE 1

Taken from Dick Turpin: The Myth of the English Highwayman, a book written by James Sharpe and published in 2004.

Line

1 With Dick Turpin¹ we encounter the clear distinction between the type of attempts to
reconstruct historical reality with which historians struggle, and the historical myth that so
often achieves widespread public currency and which triumphs over historians and their
labours. Historical myth in this context is a set of beliefs about an aspect of the past that does
5 have a core of reality, but which is held by most people uncritically as part of their general
cultural heritage. Dick Turpin as most of us know him is a creature of historical myth.

It is a matter of interest, and, to the academic historian, of concern, that many of the alleged
Turpin associations are spurious. The past, with its overtones of heritage and tradition, is
obviously a desirable commodity. This 'false' past allows us to buy into something which may
10 never have existed, and to which we may not really be connected, but which, in its
inclusiveness, helps us feel safe. This does not, apparently, mean that we have to get the past
right.

This takes us beyond Dick Turpin. History is a subject that is enjoying something of a vogue.
There are numerous history programmes on television, there are a number of history books that
15 have sold exceptionally well recently, a few individual historians have achieved star status,
and, more generally, the past, usually described as heritage, is becoming ever more enshrined
in a growing number of museums and related institutions. It is striking that all of this is
progressively marginalising the type of history that is taught, researched, and written about, in
academe [the universities]. Popular history and the heritage industry have become key zones
20 for the 'dumbing down' of British culture. History, a demanding and sometimes difficult
intellectual pursuit, is being reconstituted as theme park. Much television history has the same
cultural resonances as reading *Hello!* magazine²: in a reflection of the current obsession with
'celebrity', we are invited briefly into the lives of the great and famous, given a peep show of
their experiences, and then, at the end of the allotted hour, shuffled out again into our more
25 humdrum existences. The idea that history is a discipline that involves critical discourse, and
in which conflicting views interplay, vanishes. Attempts at confronting the complexity of the
past are buried in the production team's agenda, and smothered by a desire to replace reflective
opinions by soundbites.

Equally serious is the way in which the reading public is, via book reviews in broadsheet
30 newspapers, served up with opinions about history, and directed towards those history books
considered worth reading. A large proportion of reviews of history books is written by people
with little specialist knowledge of history or sensitivity to historical techniques or the processes
of historical research and writing. Some reviewers do bring a fresh and intelligent perspective
to the historical works they are commenting on; for others, the fundamental requirements of a
35 good history book are that it should contain a minimum of complexity and that, above all, it
should be an easy read. Repeatedly in the broadsheet reviews we find the term 'academic' used

pejoratively, as if a desire to confront the complexity of the past, attempt difficult explanations, avoid soundbite culture and make qualifications, and display and respect professional competence were utterly damning.

40 Thus we arrive at a basic problem, the widespread unwillingness to accept or engage with any level of difficulty or acknowledge any concept of professional expertise in endeavours that are purely intellectual. Is getting history right really so unimportant? And if so, how does this unimportance fit with that ever increasing public hunger for history, or at least for tasty and easily digestible morsels of the past?

45 We need to ponder on what it means to 'get history right'. There are, of course, different types of history. Perhaps the most demanding is the technical, heavily researched, and very scholarly history that appears in the academic journal, the learned monograph and the edited text. Such publications are primarily read by other people working in the discipline, and it is on this level that the discipline really progresses. Yet at least some historians feel that they have a wider
50 remit, and that, as well as their involvement in this very technical level of research and publication, they should also be writing works that are both technically accomplished enough to be acceptable in academic circles and also accessible to the general public. Obviously, this involves pitching what one writes at different levels, but a number of basic rules have to be observed. These include respect for evidence, attempts at least to get to grips with all relevant
55 documentation, a respect for balance in the approach taken to the subject and a willingness to face complexity and ambiguity in both what is being written about and the materials upon which that writing is based. Moreover, most historians would accept that what they write is not, and cannot be, definitive. We try to do the best we can with the materials and time available to us, secure in the knowledge that somebody else will either juggle the materials we have used
60 in a different way, discover new materials that alter our view of the subject in question, or, since we and our works are all products of the time and culture in which we live, provide a new interpretation.

There is at least the lingering feeling that if the past is worth anything, the past that is on offer should be recreated at as professional and technically skilled a level as possible. Some possible
65 consequences of what might happen if it is not are indicated by those political regimes for which presenting a generally falsified view of the past is an essential element in maintaining ideological control. As George Orwell pointed out, controlling the past can be an important element in controlling the present and the future.

¹ Dick Turpin (1706-1739), the Essex-born cattle thief, smuggler, highway robber and murderer whose career was brought to an end by his trial and execution at York. Romanticised descriptions of Turpin's exploits have featured in numerous novels, plays and songs. The exploit with which Turpin's name is most closely associated is a twenty-four hour ride from London to York with the intention of providing himself with an alibi. A seventeenth-century highwayman, John Nevison, did something of the sort but the deed was attributed to Turpin entirely fictitiously in a novel based on his career, *Rookwood* (1834), written by Harrison Ainsworth.

² The subject matter of *Hello!* magazine is news and gossip about popular celebrities.

SOURCE 2

Taken from The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History, a book written by David Lowenthal and published in 1998.

Line

1 Because the word 'history' means both the past and accounts about the past, these two different things – the past that was, and the past as chronicled – are continually confused. The exemplary history that critics contrast with the defects of heritage is the authentic actual past, rather than historians' descriptions of that past. But the actual past is beyond retrieval: all we have left are
5 much eroded traces and partial records filtered through various eyes and minds. Historical accounts are riddled with most of the same defects that critics think peculiar to heritage.

Prejudice is the most parlous of these flaws. Many who condemn heritage as biased claim for history an objectivity free from special pleading. Believing that the actual past can be retrieved intact and untarnished, they presume that it is the historians' task to resurrect the past exactly
10 as it was. True history, in this view, is not made but found. No hint of the historian should intrude: to hear an author's voice would taint an account's veracity and erode its authority.

A past so impersonal may be too arid to bother recounting, let alone reading. No matter how rigorous it is, history must be able to compel our attention. While shunning heritage's 'cosy cuteness', it should be no less inspirational than heritage. But how does history thus brought
15 alive differ from heritage? The crucial difference lies in their goals. Objectivity remains a holy grail for most historians. The historian Roy Porter caricatures his colleagues as white-coated clinicians who fancy themselves 'animated by pure love of truth, probing the past with the same objectivity, neutrality and disinterest as a scientist peering down his microscope'.

To strive for impartiality is one thing: to achieve it is another. Historians who criticise the
20 biases of earlier generations fancy themselves less prone to bias: recognising forerunners' flaws, they suppose their own less serious. But this is an illusion common to every generation. We readily spot the now outgrown motives and circumstances that shaped past historians' views; we remain blind to present conditions that only our successors will be able to detect and correct.

25 Few historians think that no progress is being made towards the truth, but even history's keenest devotees know objectivity is unattainable.

Heritage is scolded for swerving from the true past – selecting, altering, inventing. But history as written by historians also does this. Like heritage, history cannot help but be different from, as well as both less and more than, the actual past. History departs from the past in being an
30 interpretation rather than replica: it is a view, not a copy, of what happened. The broad outlines of the well-known past are generally accepted, but most of what happened can only be partly retrieved or is perennially disputed. And everything that is known about the past gets reinterpreted through each new generation's updated lenses. History is *less* than the past because only a fraction of all events has been noted; only a few of past lives are remembered, and only
35 fragments of flawed record survive in decipherable form. History is *more* than the past because it not only deals with what took place back then, but with myriad events that go on unfolding beyond their participants' lifetimes. History is not just what happened at the time but the thoughts and feelings, hunches and hypotheses about that time generated by later hindsight. In this way, people of the past come to be in a considerable part our own creations.

1. (a) **Study Source 1.**

Why, according to the author of Source 1, have 'Popular history and the heritage industry' become 'key zones for the "dumbing down" of British culture' (Source 1, lines 19–20)?

(6)

(b) **Use your own knowledge.**

The author of Source 1 suggests that views about the past that do not correspond with historical reality sometimes achieve widespread popularity. Identify **one** example (other than Dick Turpin) of an historical personality, episode or issue where you believe this to be the case, and explain in relation to your chosen example the ways in which popularly held views differ from the historical reality. Develop your answer by reference to any historical period you have studied.

(14)

(c) **Study Sources 1 and 2, and use your own knowledge.**

'Historical accounts are riddled with most of the same defects that critics think peculiar to heritage' (Source 2, lines 5–6). To what extent do you agree with this opinion? You should develop your answer by reference to Sources 1 and 2 and to your own historical studies.

(20)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A: 40 MARKS

SECTION B

Answer ONE question from this section.

You will not be credited in this section for repeating information that you have used in Section A.

2. 'Political history is inevitably just the history of elites.' To what extent do you agree with this claim? Develop your answer by specific reference to any historical period or periods you have studied.

(Total 20 marks)

3. 'Consideration of "what could have been" might be an entertaining activity, but it has no place in serious historical study.' How far do you agree with this view of counter-factual history? Develop your answer by specific reference to your own knowledge and to historical works you have studied.

(Total 20 marks)

4. 'Imaginative literature, music and the visual arts are all highly problematic sources for the social historian: they provide much less useful evidence than might be anticipated.' How far do you agree with this assertion? Develop your answer by specific reference to any historical period or periods you have studied.

(Total 20 marks)

5. 'Wars between states create more problems than they solve.' To what extent do you agree with this observation? Develop your answer by specific reference to any historical period or periods before the end of the twentieth century that you have studied.

(Total 20 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B: 20 MARKS

TOTAL FOR PAPER: 60 MARKS

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Acknowledgements

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