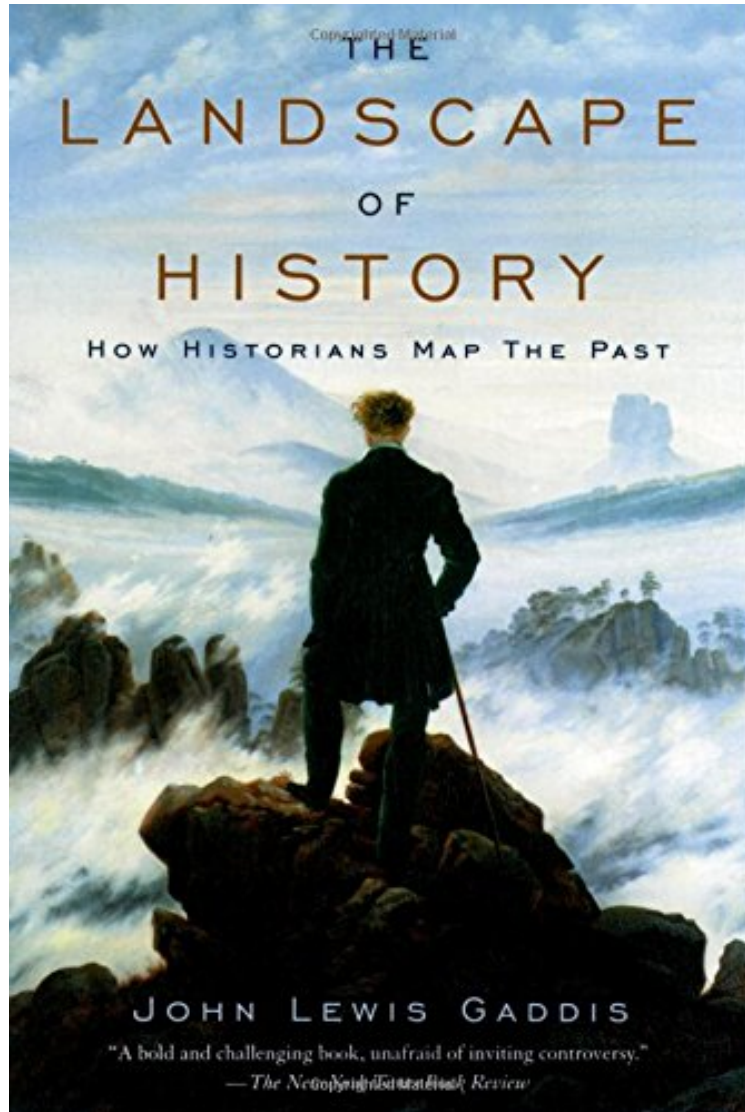


The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past

John Lewis Gaddis

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John Lewis Gaddis : The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Actually a book on the nature of science By Tom Uytterhoeven This book is certainly a good introduction in history as a science. Questions regarding it's methodology, it's subject, it's aim are discussed, using metaphors and philosophical analysis. Moreover, it offers an introduction to philosophy of science

in general (i.e.: more than just history), suggesting, among other proposals, that the natural sciences have become more historical in nature, rather than history having become naturalised. Lighthearted in tone, well-written (as a non-native speaker, I really enjoyed reading this book), but engaging and seriously arguing for its thesis, I would recommend this book for everyone, in particular for those interested in the relation between the human sciences and the natural sciences. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Heidi Wills This is a necessary part of any historian's library. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hilarious historiography! By Kristine Johnson Gaddis has a deep appreciation for Marc Bloch and it shines through in this very interesting book on historiography. It's not your typical boring historiography, either. Gaddis writes with enthusiasm and humor! I laughed my way through it! I would recommend this book to anyone, including non-historians, like me.

What is history and why should we study it? Is there such a thing as historical truth? Is history a science? One of the most accomplished historians at work today, John Lewis Gaddis, answers these and other questions in this short, witty, and humane book. *The Landscape of History* provides a searching look at the historian's craft, as well as a strong argument for why a historical consciousness should matter to us today. Gaddis points out that while the historical method is more sophisticated than most historians realize, it doesn't require unintelligible prose to explain. Like cartographers mapping landscapes, historians represent what they can never replicate. In doing so, they combine the techniques of artists, geologists, paleontologists, and evolutionary biologists. Their approaches parallel, in intriguing ways, the new sciences of chaos, complexity, and criticality. They don't much resemble what happens in the social sciences, where the pursuit of independent variables functioning with static systems seems increasingly divorced from the world as we know it. So who's really being scientific and who isn't? This question too is one Gaddis explores, in ways that are certain to spark interdisciplinary controversy. Written in the tradition of Marc Bloch and E.H. Carr, *The Landscape of History* is at once an engaging introduction to the historical method for beginners, a powerful reaffirmation of it for practitioners, a startling challenge to social scientists, and an effective skewering of post-modernist claims that we can't know anything at all about the past. It will be essential reading for anyone who reads, writes, teaches, or cares about history.

From Booklist Two classics of historiography, *The Historian's Craft* by Marc Bloch (1953) and *What Is History?* by E. H. Carr (1961), have prompted notable cold war historian Gaddis to offer his own abstract of what historians do. Does the methodology of historians captivate readers of popular history? Those sensitive to a historian's attitudes might be intrigued by this disquisition into the "ductwork" installed in every piece of historical writing. In discussing ductwork, the concepts by which a historian selects facts, comprehends time and space, and ultimately presents the past, Gaddis hews to two central tenets: that there is, somewhere, an objective truth in history, and that history is a science. Those ideas have been severely challenged, especially by social scientists enamored of quantitative methods. Gaddis dismisses quantification alone as unworkable and inappropriate and says historians must combine the techniques of many disciplines. A technical but provocative inquiry for sophisticated history readers. Gilbert Taylor Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Will... never allow either the reader of history or the writer of it to think about the past in quite the same way as before."--*The New York Times* "A masterful statement on the historical method.... Gaddis' characterization of the social sciences will surely spark debate even as it illuminates important intellectual connections between the disciplines. Delightfully readable, the book is a grand celebration of the pursuit of knowledge."--*Foreign Affairs* "A bold and challenging book, unafraid of inviting controversy. It provides a strong statement for our time of both the limits and the value of the historical enterprise."--*The New York Times Book* "A real tour de force: a delight to read, and a light-hearted celebration of the odd, 'fractal' patterns that intellectual and other forms of human and natural history exhibit."--William H. McNeill "Turns the old argument over science and history upside down."--*The Washington Post Book World* "Never before have I come across a book that so illuminated the craft of the historian."--Michael Pakenham, *The Baltimore Sun* "This is another of those books that rewards the effort it requires. Besides providing invaluable insights into how the historian goes about his business, it teaches--like all really good books--of life beyond its boundaries."--Colin Walters, *Washington Times* About the Author John Lewis Gaddis is the Robert A. Lovett Professor of Military and Naval History at Yale University. A leading authority on Cold War history, his books include *We Now Know*, *The Long Peace*, and *Strategies of Containment*. He lives in New Haven, Connecticut.