

Historiography:

- According to Marwick 2 words define the historical discipline associated with Ranke and his followers:
 1. *Hermeneutic* - its insistence on the overriding importance of primary texts as hermeneutics is the science of correctly understanding texts.
 2. *Historicist* - its insistence that the past is different from the present and that there is a process of change linking past with present.
- Marwick believes that Ranke did little to cast off the prejudices and assumptions of his nation and class. He believed that the national political state was vital to the progress of human society. Religious and political fervour came together in Ranke's conviction that nation states were 'thoughts of God' and partly because the newly opened archives in which he was interested were the archives of princes and prelates, he gave history a firm orientation towards 'past politics' and the relations between states.
- According to Tosh, what was new about Ranke's approach was the realization that the atmosphere and mentality of past ages had to be constructed too, if the formal record of events was to have meaning. The main task of the historian became to find out why people acted as they did by stepping into their shoes, by seeing the world through their eyes and as far as possible by judging it by their standards. Ranke did not look for practical lessons from the past. He believed that detachment from present day concerns was a condition of understanding the past.
- Marnie Hughes-Warrington in Fifty key Thinkers on History writes that Ranke argues that each era is unique and must be studied on its own terms rather than through present ways of thinking or as a stepping stone to a subsequent era. He does not believe there is a general directing will that guides the development of the human race from one point to another or a progression of the spirit which drives humanity toward a defined goal. All eras are equal to God and must be to the historian.