

# History

**[N]ow that we have become very sensitive about Western interpretations of the non-Western past, this temporal feeling of superiority [of the present over the past] applies more to the Western past than it does to the non-Western one.**

**We more easily accept the existence of eunuchs and harems, for example, than of witches.**

**Because they found a place in a non-Western society, eunuchs and harems seem strange to us but they do not reflect badly on our own past. Witches, in contrast, seem to challenge the very basis of modern historical understanding and have therefore provoked immense controversy as well as many fine historical studies.**

**Lynn Hunt, May 1, 2002,  
president, American Historical Association,**