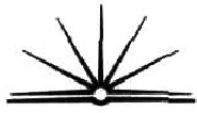


As Munslow suggests, the historian has always played a major role in shaping and constructing the history that exists. His combination as to how historians 'make history' echo the sentiments of the Post-Modernist school, and the views of E.H. Carr and Leavis. History as a 'poetical creation'. However, Munslow's obsession to the 'objective... for the 'seeking' nature of historical scholarship, with its 'methodological developments', is reminiscent of the Ranke school of 'imperial historiography', with the historian attempting to 'extinguish himself entirely'. Furthermore, the introduction of 'new themes' manifests the influence of Marxist history, and its focus on the forgotten elements of society - history from below. Each of the systems sees the role of the historian in a different light, ~~in addition~~ as the role of the

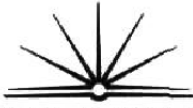


historian - 'the midwife to the truth of the past' or the poetical 'narrator' - is still debated.

Munslow questions the way in which historians 'make history' 'visibly in' many to do would otherwise perhaps remain a 'meaningless collection of facts' (white).

In raising this question, he reflects the views of the Post-Modern school of historical thought, a school which sees the historian in the role of arbiter, deciding what is, and what is not history, through the process of selection "elevating some facts and subordinating others" according to white.

Munslow expresses this idea, writing 'is it the historian who provides the truth of the past... is history what



happened or what the historian tells
is "happened".

White, in his Metahistory (1973),
suggested that history was ~~not~~ only
what the historian tells ^{an audience} because

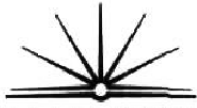
that is all they are willing to accept.

White outlines four "tropes" or genres -
satire, romance, epic and comedy. Selected by
the historian to manipulate the reader, to
and present history in the light he
so chooses.

Munstow also touches upon this
issue, asking "Is there ever story
to be discovered, or ~~nothing~~ ^{several?}"

There are, according to White, many
however. history, he asserts, 'prefers'
there is only one.

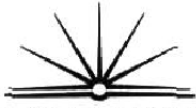
Hence, for White, the historian
plays, essentially, a magisterial role in
deciding what is, and what is



with history, constructing it in a form recognised by the audience and positioning them to accept it as 'truth'.

However, Ginslow also reflects upon the 'truth-seeking nature' of history in his its pursuit of 'objectivity'. This, as well as the 'methodological developments' alluded to, manifest the influence of Leopold von Ranke and the methodological reudtoen that accompanied his historical work.

For Ranke, the "strict presentation of facts, as noble law conditioned or unappreciated, is surely the supreme law". The historian must 'setting-aside' himself and allow the facts to "speak for themselves" to obtain "history as it essentially occurred". Effectively, this amounts to



A non-existent role for the historian, one who does not 'co-construct' but 're-assemble' the facts of the past. For Burke, the objective study of documentary evidence and the 'virtuous ~~task~~^{practice} of verification' allows the historian to produce an objective, empirical history free from bias and remedy the 'subtle' will of God.

The Burkean historian therefore, plays ~~as~~ a small and insignificant role in the 'construction' of history, a history elevated by Munslow to the status of 'two steady points in the historian's cosmos: empiricism and rational analysis'.

Munslow however, ~~rejects~~^{questions} the empirical claim to objective history, and the Burkean claim of objectivity due to the difficulty of being

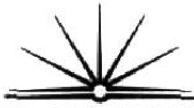


able to 'represent their (sources) meaning accurately':

In this instance, Munslow's views mirror those discussed by Carr and Elton during the 'History Wars' of the 1960's and '70's.

Carr's views accurately represent those of Munslow, as he writes "the historian delicately navigates between the Scylla of history as objective and Carybdis of an equally untenable view of history as the product of the historian's mind."

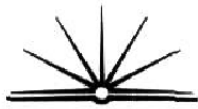
For Carr, as for Munslow, the role of the historian is to attempt to wield the objectivity of Parkes with acceptance that 'historical truth' can be achieved. For Carr "the facts are not really ~~at~~ all like fish on a fish-monger's slab ... By and large, the historian will get the kind of



facts he wants to... history means
interpretation. The historian is ~~not~~ not
'merely the witness to truth of the
past' but is in fact 'invariably implicated' in its
creation. History is plural but the
historian is invariably able to represent
at only a fraction of these views.
Hence, through the unavoidable process
of selection, the 'truth-seeking' nature
of the exercise is jeopardised
and the history 'constructed'.

However, for Elton, Law's views hold
a 'dangerous relativism', compromising
the ability of the historian to
provide 'historical reality' (Elton).

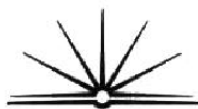
Elton defends the 'empirical-analytical'
path criticised by Munro, Carr
and White, arguing that the
'scientific' methodology of the historian



classics than above the social scientist
~~to the~~ and allows him to 'know'
the past. For Elton, as for Rawley,
the historian is able to 'extinguish'
himself and create an accurate,
objective and unbiased presentation of
the past.

Finally, Munslow's allusion to the
introduction of 'new themes (society,
women, gender, culture)' to history,
reflects the legacy of Marxist
historiography and its 'history from
below' which the historian has
always needed to investigate those
areas of history previously
untouched by historical scholarship.

For Marx, 'the history of all
civilised' what now has been the



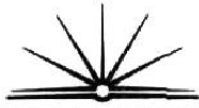
history of class struggle". In terms of historical construction and the primacy of objectivity, history for the Marxist was dominated by ideology and the need to propagate the Marxist doctrine.

Hence, history is 'what the historians tell us happened' as opposed to the historical reality of events.

Marxist history then, is inherently flawed as it subjugates the reality of events, in order to devote indoctrination.

Munstow references this subjectivity, asking 'what consequences flow from the fact that all events and processes in 'the past' are 'furnished' by the historian into the narrative'.

Munstow's critical evaluation may differ opinions and beliefs in relation to the role of the historian, his use



of sources and his methods of
presenting the past. For Munslow, as for
many White and the Post-Modernists,
history is essentially 'what the historians tell
us happened'.

Munslow appreciates the inherent bias that
inevitably accompanies acts of selection,
emphasis, subjugation, elevation or omission.

The historian is, for Munslow, essentially
the arbiter of historical knowledge,
the one who 'provides truth' and able
to shape social perceptions of the past
as she represents it, rather than 'the past
as she finds it'.