

The historian greatly impacts on the construction of history.

By interpreting and evaluating sources, the historian has the task of turning the sources into evidence for their <sup>narrative</sup> ~~thesis~~. This means that ~~the~~ ~~the~~ history ~~is~~ is merely the facts as represented by the historian not necessarily the 'truth' of a given situation.

Munslow suggests that there is a distinction between 'the past' and that which is 'turned' into history by the historian. She therefore indicates that while a historian may be "truth-seeking" the historian cannot escape their own inherent understanding of reality. She outlines the move away from the



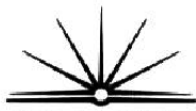
"empirical-analytical" approach to history, towards the ~~more~~ post modern movement in various forms of art and literature which suggested that there are multiple perspectives of a situation, none of which has ultimate claim to the 'truth'.

~~The lesson~~ ~~describes~~ ~~describes~~

Two sources which display this conflict between history as something which is 'static' versus history being "represented", is the debate between the historians Elton and Carr.

Elton was an empiricist historian who believed that historical 'truth' was attainable.

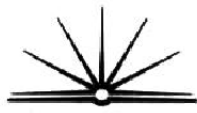
~~He argued~~ Elton disagreed with the claim that <sup>as</sup> history



is not a scientific experiment that can be repeated and tested it is therefore unreliable.

Elton claims instead that because "the historian does not design his experiment" but rather examines the evidence as they find it, history is more, not less, reliable than science.

However, while Elton does not agree with Munslow that history is several stories that can be "legitimately generated" he has in his own work, either intentionally or unintentionally upheld her claim that "historians ... make history." This was evident when he disproved the writings of his ~~few~~ fellow historian Neale, ~~not to mention~~ who had

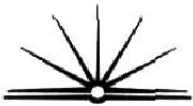


allowed his desire to prove his historical posturings blind him to various pieces of evidence that did not suit his thesis.

Elton was highly contemptuous of this perceived oversight, as his own empirical attitudes towards history insists that objectivity and ~~the~~ detail are crucial factors when writing history.

Elton therefore represents Munslow's ~~understanding~~ 'empirical-analytical', 'truth-seeking' historian, who believed that 'one truth' was possible and attainable.

Elton's view was highly contended by his contemporary, the historian Carr.



Carr believed in multiple truths and felt that the bias of the historian added to, rather than detracted from, their narrative.

~~Carr argued that~~

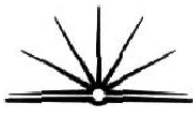
Carr's arguments disagreed with Elton's claim that historians ~~can interpret~~ ~~it~~ have the ability to uncover the 'static' facts, arguing that in history (as in science) the evidence one finds is often a direct result of the questions one asks. ~~This need Carr~~

Carr therefore claims that

"by and large, the historian will get the kind of results he want". This also supports

Munslow's suggestion that

"the historian provides the truth



of the past as she represents it rather than as she finds it".

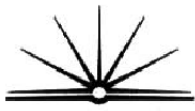
The suggestion by Carr that historians select the evidence best suited to their thesis also

supports the postmodernist attitude that there ~~are~~ are multiple perspectives of history, ~~with~~ all potentially equally valid and 'truthful'.

Carr claims that "history means interpretation" suggesting that the role of the historian in the construction of history is about finding sources and presenting a possible interpretation, which may add to the overall understanding of history, but is by no means definitive.

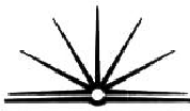
Carr's perspective of history places





more ~~evidence~~ ~~a~~ emphasis on the context of the historian than Elton does and therefore ~~they~~ the sources of Elton and Carr effectively represent the conflict outlined by Munslow between modern and postmodern attitudes towards history, and the changing attitude towards the role of the historian in the construction of history.

Munslow ~~and~~ effectively raises the issue of the role of the historian, outlining the difference between the aim to "represent meaning accurately" that was the goal of historians such as Elton and Ranke ("wie es eigentlich gewesen war"), ~~to~~ believing that all that was required



was correct interpretation of fixed facts; and the post-modern goal of ~~postmodern~~ recent historians such as Carr to "create a meaning for the past" or to write a narrative that is essentially a 'story' based on evidence that may be open to several ~~interpretations~~ interpretations.

It appears that the role of the historian is currently perceived as being an interpreter of sources and a contributor to their own ~~but~~ narrative.

~~They~~ When the historian writes their narrative, they are telling a story not only of the past, but also of their own values and attitudes.