

~~It~~ Ever since man learned to communicate, there has been history. Over time, this history has moved from being told in the form of stories and legends into Universities, where academics write detailed histories of the events from the past. These academics are today's historians, who devote their time to the past.

The historian's main role in their work is to accurately reconstruct the past, to present historical facts to the public ~~the present~~. While this seems an easy task, there are factors influencing the role of the historian, such as bias and the concept of multiple truths, mentioned by Professor Alun Munslow in his work 'History in Focus 2001'. These influential factors then lead the historian to obtaining more roles in reconstructing the past.

~~Another~~ Bias has been present in all histories since they began. Munslow touches on this, asking if the past is 'constructed by the historian in the present.' By this he means that the

social context of the historian influences  
~~the~~ him/her and ~~from~~ therefore the history  
that is written.

Bias comes from many areas of a historians  
life, such as their social and political context, ~~the way~~,  
~~the way~~ ~~the way~~ ~~the way~~ this context  
then gives the historian the foundations upon  
which to write his/her history. As Muslimau  
states, the 'two steady points in the historian's  
cosmos' are 'empiricism and rational analysis',  
backing up the point that the historian gain  
his foundations from his experiences/biases.

~~the way~~ ~~the way~~ Bias can come from the  
~~empiricism~~ purpose of the historians work. As historian  
John Vincent claims, the main source of  
bias in a historians work comes from their  
employment. In the past, history has been  
written by academics, whom work for the  
state, and are therefore sympathetic toward  
their employer, making them bias.

Historian Evans claims that bias is inevitable and ~~included~~ included into every historians work, ~~answering~~ ~~the~~ ~~question~~ therefore altering what is written on it. answering Munslow's question 'is history what happened, or what historians tell us happened?'

Due to the biases that all historians have, fulfilling the role of accurately constructing the past can be difficult. As ~~2~~ areas of history get left out due to bias/context, for example women or poorer citizens, history becomes less accurate. <sup>However,</sup> Elton, a historian, claims that even though bias is included in historians work, there still is some accuracy to it.

While this is correct, the role of the historian, which is to reconstruct the past as a whole, must be considered. ~~Elton~~ This ~~role~~ gives the historian a new role on top of their first one. Elton describes this new role as 'seeking to remove bias, being careful

not to include personal bias in historians work.

Another factor influencing the role of the historian in the construction of the past is the concept of multiple truths.

Munslow asks "does the past contain one true meaning or several?". ~~Many~~ Due to the biases of historians, whom present differing, yet accurate views, it is easy to see that the concept of multiple truths is a relevant one.

As ~~for~~ Vincent points out, ~~that~~ in the past, history has been written about 'great men and their great deeds', and it is written about 'rich white men' leaving out the poor, those of different ethnicities and women. ~~For~~ While this history is accurate, it ~~is~~ cannot be considered a universal truth as it leaves out areas of history. ~~Therefore~~

This is why historians have acquired another

role ~~and~~ which must be fulfilled when writing history - to consider all aspects of history in order to represent the truth.

Historians Sharpe and Scott explain this in further detail, claiming that history must be written ~~from below~~ 'from below'. This means that historians must consider normal men and women in their ~~own~~ history in order for it to be accurate. The Annales school takes this further by going into extreme detail in every aspect of history, including climate and geography as well as society.

Sharpe, Scott and the Annales school all reinforce Mumfords claim that "most historians ~~agree~~ today agree ~~on~~ on the latter analysis" ("that there are "several truths that can be legitimately generated")

Bias and the concept of multiple truths tie in together, as bias influences ~~the~~ an

historians' truth, which means that the role of the historian also includes making sure that "empiricism and inference really does get us close to the true meaning of the past". This means that an historian must try to use their bias in a way which will present the truth to the public who reads it, if they cannot eliminate it (bias) completely.

The questions raised by Mumfrow in his work 'History in Focus' show that the historian has more to his/her role in constructing ~~the~~ history than recounting it accurately. Questions he raised, such as "to ~~the~~ ~~mean~~ ~~ing~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~past~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ ~~meaning~~ ~~simply~~ ~~imposed~~ ~~in~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~historian~~" and ~~is~~ ~~the~~ ~~past~~ ~~is~~ ~~history~~ ~~affected~~ ~~by~~ ~~historians~~ ~~who~~ ~~turn~~ ~~the~~ ~~past~~ ~~into~~ ~~'~~ ~~thin~~ ~~narrative~~ ~~we~~ ~~call~~ ~~history~~' show us that bias is evident

in all historians work, ~~that~~<sup>which</sup> forces a new role ~~on~~ onto the historian - eliminating/minimising bias.

Other questions raised by Munslow, such as 'Does the past contain one true meaning or several?' show that the historians role also includes ensuring that all truths are considered in history.