SELECTED PROBLEMS IN TEACHING FOR HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING

by

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ABSTRACT

Teaching for historical understanding is challenging because high school students often believe that they will learn what actually occurred in the past. Historians, on the other hand, understand the uncertain nature of historical explanations; their work is validated or criticized by a community of peers and they accept that historical judgment may shift in subsequent generations. Students can develop a more complex understanding of history by studying historians' investigations of their specific subject.

This thesis examines several historical works as well as scholarly analyses of the discipline of history. From this body of literature, four issues relating to teaching for historical understanding are identified: selection of facts, construction of facts, use of "grand narratives" and identification of bias. This paper examines the impact of selection and construction of facts against four factors. The first factor is historians' determination of what facts are used on the basis of what they consider significant. The second factor is the specific purpose that historians have for their studies. The third is the sense of outcome and "presentism" that historians, living in the present but writing about the past, bring to their work. The fourth factor is the development of the awareness of bias.

In the exploration of grand narratives, commonly used in high school history, four of their features are investigated. Grand narratives make history more constructed than real; they typically produce stereotypes; they reflect power relations and little else. Despite these caveats, grand narratives remain valuable in helping students develop historical understanding.

The issue of bias, as it relates to historical understanding, is examined by asking three questions. To what extent is each historical account simply a particular historian's biased version? Are all histories equally valid? What criteria should be used to judge the adequacy of historical accounts?

This study concludes with suggestions for developing students' understanding of, and thinking with, history. This thesis carries the hope that it may help other teachers, as it has the author, in moving the teaching of history and its understanding by high school students, closer to the way it is taught and understood by historians.

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CHAPTER ONE

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." Marcel Proust

Introduction

I am a student of history; I am a teacher of history. It is the intersection of student and teacher which is the basis of this study. I explore the student / teacher relationship in regard to myself, given that my primary function each school day is to walk through the door as a teacher. This exploration might not seem to be a challenge because teachers continue to learn by the very nature of their profession. Teaching promotes learning, a claim recognized in the adage which states that in order to learn something well, one must be able to teach it. Yet I continue to learn about the past and about approaches to history through reading, thinking, interacting with students and now in a more structured way, through graduate studies.

This thesis is not a study of serendipitous learning as I teach. Rather, I use a body of literature on the discipline of history to rethink my teaching practices. I explore how academic learning has impacted and continues to impact my teaching in the secondary school history classroom. Now that I have spent almost fifteen years teaching high school history classes, the mechanics of teaching are no longer my primary concern. I feel confident in a classroom of high school students. I am interested in developing ways to have students engage in a richer exploration of the history curriculum. What might that

engagement look like? How do I maintain rigour in teaching content, yet deal with questions concerning the nature of history? As a teacher, I consider the discipline of history a good fit for certain students' curiosity. For students who elect a senior history course such as History 12, I want to make sure that they learn more than isolated facts about the twentieth century.

The Intersection of Autobiography and Profession

My interest in history is one of those childhood wonders which probably need not be analyzed. At the same time, my early experiences have had a profound impact on the adult I have become and the profession I have chosen. As a child of German immigrants, my home life, diet, parents' expectations, celebrations, language and customs were different from those of my school friends. I sensed early on that just because they were German, my parents carried a burden from World War Two. It was not until I was myself a high school history student that I could make any sense of this.

Like most European immigrants from war-torn Europe, my parents brought belief in hard work and thrift to Canada and instilled these in my sisters and me. Family was considered important, and as my parents were the only members of their family who had left Germany, our family flew overseas to visit grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends as often as we could afford a charter flight. Memories of these holidays, some captured in black and white film of the time, consist of carefree fun in an enchanting part of the world.

I do not remember specifically when I first learned about the horrors of the Second World War. I overheard adults talking about events which I gradually began to place. The Nazis had created horror and shame, but there were also

contradictions. I discovered that the Nazis had committed atrocities, but improved the economy; terrorized opponents including some family members, yet gave German citizens pride in their country; started a war in which my grandfather was lost on the eastern front shortly before the unconditional surrender, but allowed Germans to focus on achievements. I sensed these contrasts and felt a great deal of pain in my family because of recent German history. There were every day realities as well. My father did not use his first name, 'Adolf' at work, but was called 'Eddie' by his colleagues.

How was I involved with this horrific history? How were my parents? My grandparents? German people I knew and loved? In school, why did it seem that the words 'German' and 'Nazi' were interchangeable? What had my family seen and experienced? How much did they "know?" Why did my History 12 teacher show pictures of Himmler at open graves filled with Jews who had been shot, and then announce to the class that this is what Karen's relatives had done during World War Two?

I felt that people were getting something wrong. They were looking at pieces without looking at the whole, or perhaps at the whole without seeing the pieces. Things seemed out of context. Citizens and their leaders had become interchangeable. Children had become responsible for an adult world. It was implied that Hitler could have been stopped if the German people had had the will to do so. How could German citizens not have known about the Holocaust? Some people seemed to believe that Germans had committed horrendous crimes because of their character flaws. Were Germans inherently aberrant, and by their defeat, fascism was, and by implication always would be, defeated? The historical accounts I studied were presented as black and white, something complex was being made simple. But it seemed to me that it was not the same

for all history. Why were individuals held responsible for atrocities in one era in history, yet not in another? Why were the Turks not reviled because of the Armenian massacre? Why did American soldiers kill Vietnamese villagers at My Lai? Why were some stories known by everyone, or at least taught in school, and others were never mentioned? Who was making these decisions? Who was writing the books? Who was asking the questions? Who thought the past should haunt the present? Did it haunt the present for everyone or just me?

I went to university to study history to explore some of these questions. I became a history teacher partly to right the perceived wrong I experienced, partly and happily, to make a living doing something I find compelling. Once I was comfortable in the routines of the classroom, the issues around my German heritage, not as unique as I had thought in my childhood, resurfaced. I found there are many individuals and groups who feel their history is misrepresented. I also found that historical accounts continue to be challenged. Certainly Nazi Germany continues to be studied by historians. For example, the role of ordinary Germans during the Holocaust is under re-examination (Goldhagen, 1996; Shandley, 1998; Breitman, 1998). Whatever I may believe about this particular historical topic, the point is that historical inquiry is an ongoing enterprise, not as closed as I had earlier believed.

During teacher training I found no guidance for questions about historical representation in Ministry of Education curriculum documents. The problem for me was adequately teaching students without merely providing them with my answers. What attributes, for example, define a hero? Was John A. Macdonald a Canadian hero? If he was, then how could Louis Riel be represented as a hero? Did Riel have legitimate claims against the Canadian government? Was

Canadian history no more than an account of the political clashes of men in power? How would my own beliefs influence teaching the curriculum to students? What should students learn about Canadian historical figures? What about the history of First Nations' interaction with Europeans? I had native students in my Social Studies classroom. How could I deal with their history? If I was uncertain, was it because First Nations were barely mentioned in standard textbooks? Should I ignore First Nations altogether if I was uncertain? I really was not confident with these questions because I had not carefully explored them.

In my experience, teacher training was an amalgam of learning how to plan units and lessons and learning how to deal with students. My journal, written while I was a student teacher, suggests anxiety around not knowing enough content to be a good teacher. Once I was more familiar with content and had a number of years of classroom experience, I began looking differently at the material I taught. What do I really want students to learn? How can I present material more meaningfully? These thoughts compelled me to learn more about teaching history to secondary students.

Comments on Teaching History

I teach International Baccalaureate (IB) History to mostly motivated, academic oriented, grade eleven and twelve students in a BC school. Also, I teach History 12 to students of differing academic abilities who have completed eleven years of Social Studies instruction. Most students come to me with no training in history; in fact, they come with a profound misunderstanding of the discipline. They have little sense of formal historical study and have rarely

given a serious look at what history is. High school students have generally adolescent understanding of concepts such as point of view, objectivity, subjectivity and agency. For example, students tend to be critical of Soviet versions of Cold War incidents because they believe Soviet citizens were duped and government officials lied. Yet the same students will take western versions of the same incidents as free of propaganda. In my history teaching, I have become interested in making students more critical of what they read, see and experience. I want them to build an appropriate framework to develop their historical understanding.

Although by no means education's panacea, having students think critically is necessary for developing this understanding. I have found it useful to use the historiography of a particular issue as an example of how historians produce history. The controversy over the origins of the Second World War launched by A. J. P. Taylor (1961) is a fascinating study. Many historians believe that Hitler had a specific plan for war in Europe. Taylor argues that this cannot be proven. He claims that the archival documents used by historians to make this case exist in similar forms in a number of European national archives. These documents are no more than a record of general military planning and all countries make such plans. Taylor says that Germany's planning for war does not necessarily mean war is the nation's aim. Presenting contrasting interpretations of Hitler's European aims to students is a way of teaching them that history is more than a dry compilation of facts. History students need to develop an appreciation for a variety of historical explanations.

What tools do historians and their readers have for deciding which accounts are best? How do various accounts reflect different interests? How can the study of these accounts be a worthwhile academic exercise? On their

own, few students would consider structured questions about history. But the history classroom should require an exploration of such questions. Instructors need to include lessons aimed at helping students understand how history is produced. I found that I began changing my teaching when I began challenging my own notions of history. Curriculum documents may ask that students will be able "to recognize bias, weigh evidence, and evaluate arguments, thus preparing them to make informed, independent judgments" (BC Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. 1). Students would only be able to do this if they are taught how. The curriculum also states that students need to "analyse historical evidence to assess reliability, identify bias and point of view and corroborate evidence" and to "demonstrate historical empathy (the ability to understand the motives, intentions, hopes, and fears of people in other times and situations)" (BC Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. 10). There are similar expectations for IB History. Students should be able to "evaluate, interpret and use source material critically as historical evidence" (IB History, 1996, p. 6). Until it became my personal interest to look critically at the discipline, I made only superficial attempts to require students to meet these learning outcomes despite curriculum requirements. My focus was not so much on building students' historical understanding than on having them learn a lot of information about historical topics. At times, that is daunting enough (Seixas, 1996), and I suspect that other history teachers share the sentiment.

Teaching history to high school students is a pleasant endeavour. Although the reality of examinations exists for IB and History 12, students generally find the courses interesting. As a rule, students are curious and eager to learn about factors which have shaped the decade or century in which they find themselves. Although a demanding curriculum and academic writing

requirements are part of the course, students who have chosen the course typically find the content, class discussions, films and readings appealing. They understand the curriculum is quite specific and do not expect to stray significantly from it. Nevertheless, as their teacher, I know the course can be more stimulating if students are asked to do more than fulfil requirements. The History 12 curriculum asks students "to use historical evidence and fact to analyse and construct arguments, and to be aware of the subjective nature of historical narrative" (1997, p. 1). More subtle yet is the IB History aim that the student "recognise that the subject matter is contestable and that [its] study requires the toleration of uncertainty" (IB History,1996, p. 4). Meeting these outcomes is challenging for teachers and students alike.

The IB requirement that students recognize the contestable nature of history was what started me looking more closely at the state of the discipline of history. What debates were taking place outside my usual realm of reading? My research showed that some historians were very clear about their purpose, but other authors put the discipline itself under attack. History as a distinct way of knowing and explaining the past was being questioned by writers who claim that historical accounts are mostly imagined by historians who have deluded themselves into believing they are free agents and able to look objectively at the past (Bunzl, 1997; Jenkins, 1991, 1995; Munslow, 1997; Said, 1979; Trouillot, 1995; White, 1973, 1987). From this perspective, knowledge about the past is merely constructed by historians. Other writers acknowledge the positions historians bring to their work, but believe historical study can provide tentative conclusions which are scrutinized by the professional community of historians (Bailyn, 1994; Breitman, 1998; Bullock, 1990; Carr, 1961; Lukacs, 1997; Martel, 1986, 1992).

This range of beliefs about historical representation led me to questions about teaching history. Will critical viewpoints about the history discipline in high school classes overwhelm students? Will the concept that historical accounts are tentative lead students to conclude that historical accounts are completely relative? Will students, for example, attach equal credibility to an account which denies the Holocaust of World War Two and to an account which documents it? Relativism is a difficult concept for students because it suggests that there are no criteria by which to judge an historical argument. Conclusions are drawn relationally and therefore they cannot be judged against an absolute standard. I do not want students to adopt a relativist stance. I also do not want students to conclude that historical arguments lack rigour nor do I want students to accept accounts based on unexamined, naive or dogmatic personal beliefs which ignore work by acknowledged, serious historians.

In order to be thoughtful students of history, young people need to learn that historical enquiry is based on asking worthwhile questions about the past (Bailyn, 1994). But in this very exercise lies tension. What is worth asking? What is worth knowing? How does one recognize a good question or learn how to ask one? What if it is not possible to access the information required to find answers? Do the answers exist unchanged or do they change over time? Do answers reflect mostly specific authors' ideological positions? The IB History exam asks questions which require judgment, not questions whose answers can simply be found in a textbook. Students, for example, may be asked to determine to what degree Germany was responsible for causing World War One. They must use their historical judgment to draw conclusions about the role each European country played in escalating what might have been a local incident into a European war. To answer such a question well, students need to

consider far more than facts about the world in 1914. They need to develop historical understanding.

According to my research, the very definition of history is contested. Is history a distinct discipline? How is history different from literature? Why are traditional accounts of history being criticised? How has history been opened up by and to minorities? Why should we have any faith in historians' reconstruction of the past? The literature around these questions was important reading for me as a classroom history teacher.

The Intersection of Learning and Teaching

Typically I begin my history courses by asking students what they think history is and why history is important. By their answers I informally measure their historical understanding. Depending on the quality of students' answers, I have them read prefaces of history books to see what historians say about the discipline and their reasons for writing the books. Many historians give traditional responses: it is important that people know about their society, that mistakes of the past do not have to be repeated, or studying history helps people make sense of the present world. The notion of progress is often embedded in these reasons: the world will improve if we study history. Students seem to accept that we are more enlightened today because of lessons we have learned about the past. In this understanding, knowledge is seen as cumulative and therefore we must know more than people of the past knew.

Knowing more also implies knowing "better" because most students believe our knowledge is more accurate than that of past societies. Students

rarely see knowledge reflecting any particular world view. The Middle Ages practice of using leeches in an attempt to treat the mentally ill may be seen as barbaric. Yet the same students may find it unproblematic that mental patients today are drugged. I am not suggesting today's drugs are comparable to medieval medical procedures. The point is that students often innocently see our society as far superior to past societies. That our ways are perhaps no closer to curing patients is not an issue for many students because they consider our more sterile medical practise in any event superior to the use of leeches. In my teaching experience I have rarely had a student question basic assumptions of our superiority over our forebears.

In order to stimulate historical thinking, it is useful to introduce students to historians who consider specific historical questions. Bullock's (1962) Hitler: A Study in Tyranny, for example, had two inquiries. In light of the Nuremberg Trials, Bullock wanted to know how great a part Hitler played in the Third Reich. If the picture painted of him at Nuremberg was right, then what "gifts" did Hitler possess to secure and maintain power? This framework is stimulating for students who often have the same questions. Sources such as Bullock are valuable to make the point that historians come to their work with a specific purpose.

High school students are inclined to believe that everything from the past is "history", even events that are only days old. In earlier years I tried to challenge this uncomplicated view by beginning the course with a short introductory unit in which students engage rather superficially in defining history and then carry on with the core content of the curriculum. Although not educationally sound, I was in step with the curriculum. "This introductory topic [The Study of History], which requires only brief coverage, examines the

academic discipline of history and organizes the direction of the course" (BC Ministry of Education, 1989, p. 17). Teachers are constrained by limited time, and a reason I decided to approach the course this way was the reality that the volume of content to be covered required that the class consistently work through this content if we were to complete the course in time for the scheduled examination. Another reason I chose this method of course organization was that students are not tested on their philosophy of history. I thought that if something was not tested on the exam, I need not spend class time on it. I tended to drop historiographical issues after the first weeks of class, although they were typically revived for the study of the 1938 Munich Conference. Here students role-played the diplomatic positions of the various European powers involved in Germany's take over of the Sudetenland.

I needed, however, some ideas for the IB History students, who would be examined explicitly on historical understanding, as well as on explanation and analysis of evidence. Students achieve top marks only if they give evidence of wide reading which shows understanding of historiographical issues, and if they are able to write a structured analytical response to a relevant question. The need to have students work consistently at this in IB History drove my determination to learn more about teaching history.

I have wrestled with "better" ways to teach history. By this I mean that I am attempting to make students more thoughtful and critical about history. I want students to question historical accounts, and ask critical questions of these accounts. I want to give them tools to look more analytically at accounts, and not merely be swept into an "apparent past" (Seixas, 1996). Seixas believes that school history curriculum has two aims. The first is to have students confront historical accounts critically and the second is to teach students how to

think historically. I believe these are appropriate aims. I do not want students to watch a movie about an historical topic and then simply accept that the film offers the truth about the past. Instead, the movie could be a prompt for further questions or consideration of contrasting versions of the same events. Given the short time I spend with students, how can I teach them better, how can I get them to spend their time more efficiently, more focussed, more engaged in their study? Students have many school, personal and extracurricular commitments in their lives; merely assigning more homework does not in itself help students gain a deeper understanding of history and may have the undesired effect of having students lose interest in the subject.

I am now working on providing students with a richer history education. I want to make sure students do not leave my class with the same attitudes about the past they had before studying history and perhaps they will be less naive about the past. In order to achieve this, I need to investigate my own assumptions about history because I no doubt pass these on to students.

The Masters programme has helped focus my thoughts. Most markedly, studying approaches to history has been valuable. The comments and critiques of historians forced me to examine my history teaching and question how I represent and present the discipline to students. Examining theories has caused me to examine practise. My teaching is now changing because of what I am learning. Neither in my undergraduate work nor in my teacher training was I exposed to looking critically at the discipline I teach. I knew about revisionist works and historical debates, but a full-time teaching position and, like my students, many out-of-school interests meant I did not spend time studying the state of history itself.

In the following pages I discuss four issues for consideration by history

teachers and students. Chapter two deals with the first two issues: selectivity of facts and construction of facts. Since historians do not and cannot report everything, how do they decide what is important and therefore what to select for study? How do facts of the past get selected to be historical facts? Because language is value-laden and changes over time, it affects how historians create facts. Because history is written in the present it is written from a world view which perhaps reflects the present more than the past. Facts are constructed out of information from the past. How is this resolved?

The third issue, analyzed in chapter three, concerns the general framework or "grand narrative" of history. Accounts tend to be measured against a framework which is far larger than any individual historian's account. British imperialism, for example, the grand narrative through which the west knew India, impacted the history of India well after Indian independence and arguably still frames that history today. How is knowledge of Indian history filtered through this narrative? What kinds of accounts are produced? Which are absent?

The final issue, examined in chapter four, is bias. What do we mean when we claim an account is biased? Can historians stand "above" their time and overcome bias? If bias is unavoidable, to what extent does it affect historical knowledge? What must students understand about bias? These issues are crucial to history and, as such, crucial to teaching for historical understanding.

The fifth chapter discusses the implications of these four issues for teachers. It highlights some of the points teachers should consider in planning lessons and offers some suggestions for addressing the issues. These suggestions are not intended to be prescriptive, but are meant to move other

teachers to address these issues in their unique way in their classrooms.

The issues found in chapter two, three and four are of particular interest to me because I am aware that embedded in all that I do in the classroom are assumptions which, implicitly if not explicitly, I pass on to students. If I leave issues untouched and present history as unproblematic, students will leave with the naive views they had before they took the course. Historical study can help bring meaning to their own lives for as they learn about historical debates, their assumptions and beliefs may shift. Most students come to senior history courses because of interest in the subject, perhaps suffering from their own childhood wonders, and this inspires me as a teacher. I continually learn from their questions and naive outlook. This study is a way I can give something back and make part of what I have learned meaningful to students.

CHAPTER TWO

"One of the easiest ways of telling an untruth is to speak nothing but the truth-with something vital omitted." E.H. Dance

Selectivity and Construction of Facts

Overview

In this chapter I examine two issues which are important to me as a high school history teacher. The first issue is selectivity of historical facts. Historians simply cannot include everything in their work. E.H. Carr (1961) writes that many crossed the Rubicon, but it is only Caesar's crossing which is important to historians. Given that not all facts can be included, on what basis are some facts selected over others? How do historians determine which to include and which to leave out? Facts are the fundamental evidence historians use to make specific arguments, but their inclusion and meaning are determined through selection.

A second issue is how historical facts themselves are constructed. Facts do not exist in and of themselves and therefore the latitude in characterizing facts pose a problem for historical inquiry. Facts depend partly on language which is meaning- and value-laden. Meaning and value change over time. In 1808 Simon Fraser described several native totem poles as having been "carved in a curious but rude manner, yet pretty well proportioned" (reported in Case & Clark, 1997). Today we might say the same totems are rough or crude in reference to the carving style. We may conclude that "rude" means

something different to the reader of the late 20th century than to the writer of the early 19th century. As well, words chosen to describe situations may reflect ideological stances. What is called 'exploitation' by a Marxist may be mere 'work' to a conservative. 'Conservative' itself does not have the same implication for everyone. Describing a person as conservative could indicate that the person makes careful, considered, cautious decisions, or in its more extreme form, conservative could indicate someone who thinks the underprivileged of society are in that position through their own failing and should not be helped. Language and context affect how facts are constructed and construed.

Questions about the selection and construction of facts are important issues for high school history teachers. Students tend not to have considered how history is produced. Most students come to history class expecting to learn what "actually happened" in the past. This is not peculiar to my teaching situation. Howard Gardner writes that this is often the case in college classes as well:

> Even at the college level, most students view history as the ordering of already known facts in agreed-upon chronologies. For many of them, in fact, history *is* facts, with issues of interpretation scarcely arising at all. If history is seen as being about people, the people are viewed as generic and remote rather than as particular persons who, like themselves, exhibit an amalgam of sometimes conflicting goals and feelings. (1991, p. 174)

I am interested in exploring fundamental issues of history in a way which opens young minds to consider history as selected and constructed, but does not overwhelm them or cause them to reject historical research. I do not want students to think that historical conclusions are no more than individual historians' idiosyncratic accounts of the past. At the same time, I want them to

learn differing interpretations of the same events offered by various historians. The challenge is to find the balance between opening students' minds to issues of selectivity and construction of facts, but not fixing in those minds the notion that all historical accounts are equally valid. The challenge of evaluating accounts is addressed in chapter four.

In this chapter I begin by examining four factors around selectivity of facts which arise from the literature. Then I examine how these four factors impact the construction of facts. These discussions will be the basis for considering implications of selectivity and construction of facts for teaching for historical understanding in secondary school. These implications will be addressed in chapter five.

The Selection of Facts

Key Factors

In reviewing the literature on history and history education, four factors which determine the selectivity of facts emerge. The first is that historians select facts on the basis of significance or importance. But how do they determine what is significant to study? If military, diplomatic and political history are significant, facts which relate to these types of history are selected. What happens when there is a shift in what is considered significant? The facts which had been previously selected may no longer be considered worthwhile or relevant. Which facts are then selected? Does the "new history" simply replace the old? In one sense that has been the case. In some circles, social history is now more popular than political history. Histories about common peoples are

being written, and are replacing the history of the elites who governed the country (see, for example, Granatstein, 1998; Ingram, 1995). The significance of a particular historical focus (i.e. social or protest history) influences the selection of facts.

The second factor concerns the historian's purpose-- the underlying motivation for the historical enterprise. Historians make judgments about which facts serve their purpose. For example, in his biography of Adolf Hitler, Alan Bullock (1962) wanted to determine to what extent Hitler was responsible for the Nazi regime. During the Nuremberg trials defendants suggested they were following Hitler's orders. Bullock wanted to see if the evidence indeed supported this defense. In this way, his question determined the selection of facts. He selected some facts and ignored or discounted others depending on whether or not they helped him answer his question.

The third factor is the implicit sense of outcome or end result that is often woven through an historical account. Knowing the outcome impacts the selection of facts. This is because of the common practice that historians wait ten or more years before they publish major works about an event. The events of the subsequent years impact the study. Often new documents, previously classified documents, are made available after many years. Subsequent events often shape our understanding of past events. For example, since the collapse of the Soviet bloc, some historians believe Ronald Reagan's presidency was a cause in undermining the integrity of the Soviet bloc. Does that belief stem from the knowledge that the political structure of countries in the communist bloc collapsed? Knowing what happens after an event may impact how historians analyze it.

Closely connected to sense of outcome is "presentism"-- do historians

look at the past in light of their own reality? Does living in the present impact the view on the past? Today's beliefs and attitudes may not have existed previously and historians need to be careful about using today's standards as measures of the past. It is perhaps easier to condemn Abraham Lincoln as a racist because he had slaves than to ask what made a white man of privilege devote himself to abolishing slavery. If historians or their students are incapable of actively confronting presentism, historical understanding cannot be developed.

Conscious bias, the final factor I suggest influences the selection of facts, does not require extensive analysis because it simply results in bad history. What if historians, through wilful selection of facts, offer consciously biased conclusions? Jim Keegstra taught history to Alberta high school students this way. The sources he gave students consciously selected facts and ignored others because the authors were not interested in historical inquiry, but rather wished to assert specific conclusions about the Holocaust. The resultant propaganda may meet the intentions of particular writers, but fails to be an honest attempt to reconstruct the past. Historians' intentions highlight the importance of the discussion of selectivity of facts as the integrity of the work must meet the intellectual requirements of the discipline. The challenge raised by this factor is to teach students to recognize historical accounts which are products of this form of overt bias.

The Object of Study: What is Significant?

A classic work in exploring fundamental issues in historiography is E.H. Carr's What is History? (1961). Carr, a noted historian of Soviet studies, originally presented his work as the Trevelyan Lectures at Cambridge

University. He effectively challenged the notion that history shows how the past really was and enthusiastically agreed to give the lectures because "where the pundits contradict each other so flagrantly, the field is open to inquiry" (p. 8).

For Carr, the past is not easily accessible to all; it is the domain of the historian. Historians select facts by determining which facts are needed to make arguments. Carr criticizes positivists who believe historians find facts and then draw conclusions from these facts, as if the historical enterprise was a simple arithmetic formula. He says it is impossible to look at any number of facts and allow these facts to simply write their own story. Conclusions are not embedded in facts. Facts need to be shaped by historians, just as facts are shaped by journalists. The selection and arrangement of facts is the challenge for historians and journalists alike. The historical enterprise is not to locate random facts and draw conclusions based on them, rather historians must continually make informed choices about which evidence to use.

Carr distinguishes between general facts about the past and historical facts. The difference is determined by the overall impact of a person or an event. As mentioned earlier, Carr observes that many people crossed the Rubicon, but it is only Caesar's crossing which is an historical fact. This statement indicates that significance of an event is not inherent; it is part of a larger historical process. A fact is only selected if it intersects with a larger event. Acceptance of information as an historical fact indicates that the information makes historical sense or achieves significance when it is related to events around it which have been deemed noteworthy. In this process, the selection is made by the historian who carefully chooses facts to build arguments and, consequently, the historian's position is evident in the work. Carr claims this is necessary in good history. Historians present specific

positions which are discussed in a larger professional community and an acceptance here validates historical knowledge.

Facts are chosen because they reflect what is considered important. Recent historical study has opened up to include, among other interests, social history and particularly women's history. Previously the history of approximately half of the world's population was deemed unimportant because the reality of most women's existence was limited to the domestic sphere. Women's activities were not written about because the main narrative tended to reflect general political history. Now, that is changing and multiple narratives are able to co-exist. The notion that women did not matter has been challenged by women historians--and more recently by women educators (Anderson & Zinsser, 1988; Coulter, 1989; Hart, 1997; Lerner, 1997; Turner, 1998). As a result, women's experiences are beginning to appear in curriculum and textbooks.

Scholarship in women's history suggests it is more than separate spheres that are at work in deciding what is worth knowing and studying. Alison Prentice notes, in reference to Canadian female writers she was researching for a book: "It is extraordinary how women intellectuals just disappear from view" (quoted in Moore, 1998b). Although Prentice herself is a leader in the women's history movement, she had not previously heard of most of the women writers and intellectuals she studied. Moore's point is that women's history is not a recent phenomenon. But women, despite great intellectual capacity, have always been on the fringe and with the professionalization of history in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, women were almost completely left out. If this is the case, struggle for power, more than disputes about what is considered worthy of historical study, have contributed to the marginalization of women's history. The issue of power will be discussed in the chapter on the grand narratives of

history.

What was not considered serious study years ago may become interesting to historians and their students. Shifting interests reflect changing times. Carr examines what happens when historians' areas of interest change. Information is transformed from a fact about the past to a fact of history. Carr (1961) gives the example of Stalybridge Wakes where in 1840 a gingerbread vendor was kicked to death by a mob. Although it was recorded in an obscure memoir, it was not seen as worthy of analysis. Subsequently, a historian lecturing at Oxford mentioned it during a prestigious lecture series. Social history had become interesting to historians. This is how one reference became a quasi-historical fact. Carr goes further to say that the importance of the fact is still in doubt at that point. If the reference is picked up by other historians and used by them, the fact makes it into the select club of historical facts and other historians will refer to it. Historical work is very much a product of such a community. Although I did not trace further references to the death at Stalybridge Wakes, the present interest in social history makes it highly possible that this fact did make it into the select club. New facts are selected and added to the body of historical knowledge as areas of interest shift. New facts are not products of whimsical accounts, rather they reflect questions different from those previously considered.

The Historian's Conscious Sense of Purpose

Historians bring specific questions to their work. Depending on the purpose of their inquiry, they become highly selective in the facts they use. Historians work within particular areas of interest. As mentioned earlier,

Bullock's Hitler: A Study in Tyranny (1962) is explicit in its questions. In the search to answer his questions, Bullock carefully chooses which information to include in his work. He highlights Hitler's personality as the driving force to explain what happened in Europe in the 1930s. For Bullock, Hitler is a primary catalyst, and in the introduction to his book he admits he wants "to reconstruct the course of his life from his birth in 1889 to his death in 1945 in the hope that this would enable me to offer an account of one of the most puzzling and remarkable careers in modern history" (1962, p. 13). This introduction is helpful to the reader because the author's conscious purpose is clearly articulated. The reader wishing contrasting theses can consult other works.

The historical debate around Hitler's personality, goals and war aims often comes down to whether one includes the Hossbach Memorandum of 1937 as a significant fact. In the informal minutes of this brief meeting, Colonel Hossbach summarized Hitler's comments on German military preparedness. Apparently Hitler believed German military superiority would be lost between 1943 and 1945. The problem of 'Lebensraum', therefore, had to be solved before then. That meant war would have to be waged prior to 1943 while the rest of Europe was frantically rearming. What historians dispute is whether the Hossbach Memorandum means Hitler actually planned on war (Taylor, 1961). Was Hitler merely musing about the state of the military? Britain and France have similar documents outlining their plans in their archives and yet are not accused of warmongering. Hitler never verified Hossbach's summary because Hitler told him it was unnecessary. Historians do not know if this was because the meeting was insignificant in Hitler's mind, or if he did not want his thoughts recorded. This debate about the meaning of the Hossbach Memorandum highlights a serious issue for historians, history teachers and students because

it shows the importance of fact selection. Including or omitting the Hossbach Memorandum leaves markedly different impressions on students. In light of this debate around the selectivity of historical facts, teachers should be clear about the limits of specific historical interpretations.

Historians who consider appeasement as the reason for war may neglect the Hossbach Memorandum. In the two common History 12 textbooks, there is no reference to the Memorandum (Howarth, 1987; DeMarco, 1987). The IB textbooks are not consistent. One (Palmer & Colton, 1995) does not mention it, while the other (Morris, 1995) does. The beliefs students will form about Hitler's war aims may well depend on which work they consult.

Carr believes historians aim to make a clear argument about a particular issue. They come to their work with a particular question or purpose. The point of excellent historical work is to make a precise argument.

> When you read a work of history, always listen for the buzzing. If you can detect none, either you are tone deaf or your historian is a dull dog. The facts are really not at all like fish on the fishmonger's slab. They are like fish swimming about in a vast and sometimes inaccessible ocean; and what the historian catches will depend, partly on chance, but mainly on what part of the ocean he chooses to fish in and what tackle he chooses to use -- these two factors being, of course, determined by the kind of fish he wants to catch. By and large, the historian will get the kind of facts he wants. (1961, p. 23)

It is clear that Carr believes that historians carefully select facts to make their particular arguments based on their particular purpose.

Sense of Outcome and Presentism

Carr understands that historians are bound by the time in which they live

and that this impacts their selection of facts. Historians writing today cannot escape knowing that the Soviet bloc collapsed when they write about the Cold War. This knowledge will no doubt have an affect on how the topic is approached and therefore which facts are emphasized, ignored, or possibly even identified. When I began teaching in the mid-1980s I recall emphatically telling classes that the Berlin Wall would not come down in this century. I had been to Berlin in 1978 and crossed into East Berlin at Checkpoint Charlie. I remember getting off the bus and having documents carefully checked. The bus was closely examined; huge mirrors were held beneath the bus's undercarriage during both crossings to make sure that nobody was clinging to it. As a result of this experience, I could not imagine that the Soviet bloc or the Berlin Wall would collapse quickly in 1989. How could the authority of the state vanish almost overnight? Because of my belief in the authority and security of the Soviet system, the way I taught the Cold War was quite different from my approach today.

What I may have regarded as minor stresses on their system in the 1980s, I now present as serious problems that the Soviets were not equipped to handle. Such is the nature of living in the present knowing how issues evolved from the past. When the Berlin Wall collapsed in 1989, it caught world leaders, journalists and citizens off guard. President Bush reportedly called reporters into the Oval office and "declared himself 'very pleased' but seemed oddly subdued. Aides attributed that partly to his natural caution, partly to uncertainty about what the news meant, largely to a desire to do or say nothing that might provoke a crackdown in East Germany" (Church, 1989, p. 28). By the next day the president was far more enthusiastic when he realized how significant the event had been.

Knowing outcomes is an ongoing problem for historians; once the outcome is known, different facts may be selected or considered more important than others that might have been selected if the outcome was not known. The framework one uses to examine events is altered. No doubt there were cracks in the Soviet system long before the Berlin Wall collapsed, but until it actually happened, historians merely speculated on the possibility of the Wall's collapse and subsequent German reunification.

Historians studying more remote topics such as the Roman empire cannot help but be very conscious of sense of outcome. The years since the collapse of the Roman empire have provided opportunities to look at Ancient Rome from many vantage points and through various interpretations. Historical observations and conclusions are shaped by what happened in Europe since the collapse of Rome. More recent events do not have the same distance but are still be influenced by later events.

Carr (1961) gives an example about how the sense of outcome affects selectivity of facts when the life work of an historically significant person is compiled by others after the person's death. He shows that selectivity of facts is impacted by people and events after the historical period from which the facts come. Gustav Stresemann, interim Chancellor and long time Foreign Minister of Weimar Germany, left behind almost 300 boxes of papers which his secretary organized into three 600-page volumes. The documents to which the secretary gave prominence included all Stresemann's successes: his achievements at Locarno, the Dawes and Young Plans, the admission of Germany into the League of Nations, and allied withdrawal from the Rhineland. Notwithstanding, those who knew Stresemann claim his main preoccupation was Germany's relations with the Soviet Union. Stresemann spent more time and attention

negotiating with the Soviets than with western powers. These negotiations, however, led nowhere. Reflected in the secretary's work are the achievements for which Stresemann received recognition. One can imagine that when the original dense three volume series was whittled down and published in a single volume, the triumphs of his western foreign policy were stressed and the eastern policy was abbreviated even more.

When Stresemann's achievements are presented to high school students, the information about his eastern policy may disappear completely. If there is no mention of the primary significance Stresemann had given to the east, it may be because there is no specific treaty to hold up as an example of this policy. In a book commonly used in History 12 in British Columbia, it states: "But if Stresemann had soothed the powers in the West with promises of Germany's good behaviour, he had promised nothing of the kind to the countries in Eastern Europe, especially Poland and Czechoslovakia" (Howarth, 1987, p. 50). This could intrigue a careful reader to do further research, but more likely readers would assume no treaties were signed with eastern European countries.

A textbook I use for IB History has no specific mention of Stresemann. But in reference to Locarno, it states: "[Germany] signed arbitration treaties with Poland and Czechoslovakia--not guaranteeing these frontiers as they stood, but undertaking to attempt changes in them only by international discussion, agreement, or arbitration" (Palmer & Colton, 1995, p. 787). This is a broad, but seemingly unimportant reference to Stresemann's eastern policy. No later international discussion is mentioned in the book, so readers tend to conclude that Stresemann achieved nothing. This example of how Stresemann's work was interpreted and edited shows the importance of the selection of facts; who

selects them and for what purpose? Perhaps even deeper, what does this say about having trustworthy accounts to study? Students should learn how to determine trustworthy accounts. A discussion of trustworthy historical accounts is part of chapter four.

Of course, the Stresemann example raises further issues. Even if an account is trustworthy, it can still leave a skewed impression. It is not that Stresemann's secretary or subsequent historians were dishonest or inaccurate, it is that they made editorial choices based on how they wished to portray Stresemann's work. They have selected particular facts to include, and others to omit, in the overall interest of emphasizing the significance of Gustav Stresemann to the Weimar Republic. As a result of not being able to study all possible information on Stresemann, high school students may get a distorted glimpse into a complex situation. This should not impact their overall understanding of the reality and relevance of the Weimar Republic. Knowing that Stresemann's leadership brought Germany acceptance in the international community is the essence of what they should know for the purposes of their course. Selectivity of facts as in the Stresemann example is not arbitrary, but is based on the audience and the purpose of the historical account. BC high school students do not need to know the failure of Stresemann's eastern policy; it is not all that significant. Their course is a survey of the important developments in the twentieth century. Authors decide what to include based on pragmatic and editorial reasons with a specific audience in mind.

Selecting broad information seems appropriate for a high school audience. Bailyn (1994) believes that there are two important obligations in high school history teaching. The first is giving students "basic structural lines to large-scale historical narratives" (p. 17) and the second "is simply to fascinate

high-school students with history" (p. 19). Bailyn admits that these two things may oppose each other, but believes it is crucial that students don't come into college-level study or their own independent reading "without any kind of structural lines to the larger story. They must have something to hang the later information on" (p. 20). Which facts are selected for inclusion is often determined by the assumed historical knowledge base of the intended audience. Regardless of any author's particular purpose, every author seeks to communicate clearly with targeted readers.

What happened after an event tends to impact how the history of the event is written. In Canadian history, 1867 is considered the year that Canada became a country. The background to nationhood is sought in the years before 1867. But did the Quebec and Charlottetown conferences really cause Canada to become a country? Is it because of later results that meaning is given to prior events? Is it because we know that Manitoba, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island join Confederation by 1873 and Alberta and Saskatchewan were not far behind? Perhaps we choose 1867 because we know the outcome. Students need to be aware that the sense of outcome may impact the historical record.

Sense of outcome causes most Canadian historians to place significance on 1867. Nevertheless, this reference point is debatable. 1867 is not as important to Canada as 1848 argues John Ralston Saul (reported in Moore, 1998c). Saul says that the Baldwin-LaFontaine platform was the essence of a French and English partnership. Canadian roots lie deep in the nineteenth century according to Saul. He selects facts which reflect this different end point in order to argue his case. An historian with a different sense of outcome can select different historical facts to make his argument.

The selectivity of facts then reflects general historical concerns and trends of later times and operates through hindsight. It is easy to be caught in the fallacy of thinking that just because something preceded something else, it caused it. Knowing present circumstances may cause historians to select certain facts to help explain a chain of events. Using a Cold War example, if it can be determined that the 1947 Truman Doctrine and subsequent Marshall Plan were the starting points of the Cold War, then the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences are considered significant because in 1945 the Grand Alliance was still together, at least in terms of official policy. By the time the British could no longer afford to fight communists in Greece, the Americans had changed their isolationist course and were willing to be involved in the affairs of Europe. The U.S. had moved into the British sphere of influence while at the same time the Soviets had not allowed free elections in eastern European countries. The war-time agreements were no longer in effect and the Cold War had begun. Explanations for events in the post World War Two era are sought in the period preceding it.

That selectivity of facts can be impacted by sense of outcome is shown in a study of the Vietnam War. The link between the French defeat in Indochina at Dien Bien Phu and American involvement in Vietnam determines which pieces of information become historical facts. Numbers of American military personnel, Viet Minh response to the American presence and the relationship between the government of South Vietnam and the United States become historical facts in light of what happened after the American government passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. This affirms the point that later historical events shape historical facts.

The most immediate issue around presentism for high school history

teachers is students' beliefs that people of prior times were naive. In twentieth century history courses students quite normally look for ways to stop Hitler and fascism from taking hold and simply dismiss appeasement as a useless policy. Living in the present and knowing the historical results of previous events make students want to moralize about past leadership. Students need strategies to understand the role of presentism and sense of outcome in historical studies.

Conscious Bias

Historical records which consciously exclude information to give a false sense of the issue or topic do not meet the criteria of honest inquiry which is the foundation of historical study. Jim Keegstra's teaching that the Holocaust did not happen is an example of conscious bias. Instead of looking critically at relevant issues surrounding Holocaust studies, he denies it took place. The information he presented to students was written by people like himself who denied historical archives and records.

Conscious bias is more than sloppy research. In the case of bias, the answer to the historical question is not sought with an open mind. A consciously biased writer has a closed view of the issue. On the other hand, intellectual honesty in open-minded research implies that there is room for dialogue and adjustment of conclusions based on one's findings and the response to an historical account by a community of scholars. Historical conclusions may change over time, based on new evidence, but they cannot be deliberately fabricated and consciously ignore readily available information. The strongest historical arguments are those which acknowledge counter arguments.

As I have already argued, historians have a purpose when they begin historical research. This purpose impacts their questions and use of documents. A fair-minded historian however, does not have the conclusion predetermined before research. No doubt, historians have a sense of where their research might take them, but serious historians allow evidence to change their thinking and writing. A. J. P. Taylor is a good example of this process. Although he was an Englishman who detested Hitler, he could not ignore the fact that his research led him to the conclusion that Hitler did not necessarily want a European war in 1939. Taylor knew this was not a popular thesis, but he published his analysis because he believed in the integrity of historical inquiry. Had he been consciously biased, he may well have ignored his archival findings and simply presented less controversial information.

The Construction of Facts

Introduction

It is not simply that facts are selected which impact historical accounts; they are also constructed. I am not considering here facts manufactured as a hoax. Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995, p. 6) explains that if one wrote a story of American troops massacring five hundred Gypsies in a jail at the end of World War Two and claimed that the story was based on documents from Soviet archives and validated by German authorities, one is not writing fiction, rather a fake. The evidence does not exist; the entire account is fabrication. The so-called Hitler Diaries had the same problem. Despite being authenticated by

respected historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, the "diaries" were later discovered to be an elaborate hoax. It is not in this sense that I suggest facts are constructed. In examining the same four factors which framed the discussion around selectivity of facts, I show how construction of historical facts operates in historical accounts.

The Object of Study: What is Significant?

Deciding significance of historical events intersects the construction of facts because the very determination of what is significant influences what is recorded at the time. The Charlottetown and Quebec conferences are generally seen as significant to Confederation. In fact, the foundation of the federal agreement was laid at these conferences. The significance of the roles of George Brown and John A. Macdonald at the conferences is not questioned. However, almost no books make reference to the role of the women who created a congenial role which helped break down the conflicting political views of the politicians (Turner & Clark, 1997). As the role of women was not seen as significant, their contributions were not recorded. It was unlikely a conscious decision by the politicians and their staff to omit women's roles, but the omission shows the perception of women's roles at the pre-Confederation conferences. This reality perhaps reflects the time and the political focus of the conference, but it leaves little evidence for present-day historians to work with.

Interest in women's history indicates notions of significance are shifting. Current questions regarding the roles women played in events, that up to this point have been reported as if women had no role, require historians to look at references in a different way. Were there any references to women? Who

organized attendance, who assisted with seating and catering? Do diaries make reference to any point which can be used as an historical fact? When the object of historical study changes, different historical facts may be constructed.

What is considered significant is also mirrored in the language used to construct facts. Dance (1960) shows how facts are constructed through language and often reflect ideas of cultural superiority. A particular cultural account may privilege that account as being the best and therefore the most important. In Dance's study, Russian textbooks show extreme cultural superiority placed on inventions and discoveries of Russians. Certainly Russian textbooks are not the only books to do this, but this is an example of how national histories, because of their purpose of inculcating patriotism in their young, often include their own contributions without reference to equivalent inventions and discoveries of other nationalities. For Russian textbook authors the important historical facts are those which reflect Russian achievements.

The Historian's Conscious Sense of Purpose

Historians are drawn to their work for complicated and often deeply personal reasons. In the previous section on selectivity of historical facts, I used Allan Bullock as an example of an historian who comes to his work with particular questions. Another example are Holocaust historians who have a particularly difficult task of explaining how the Holocaust occurred. In the absence of concrete evidence that Hitler ordered the annihilation of the Jews, historians have to reconstruct possible scenarios to explain how this almost unimaginable horror happened. Some believe Hitler wished to force Jews to emigrate to Madagascar, an option until 1940. Archival studies suggest that

there was no master plan for the extermination of Jews among mid-level Nazi officials, although there was some discussion of mass murder among a few of them. As well, Hitler was not present at the 1942 Wannsee Conference chaired by Reinhard Heydrich, which decided the logistics of the "Final Solution." There is no photograph of Hitler at a concentration camp. The historical question for students of the Holocaust is whether there was an original long-term plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe, or whether escalating persecution of the Jews led to gradual, unplanned implementation of mass murder (Evans, 1997; Lukacs, 1997).

Analysis of this complicated question necessarily means historians' purposes dominate their work. It is not the case that the facts exist simply as building blocks to be put together in a particular way. Instead, different explanations are the results of different authors' purposes. The explanation that by tapping into ancient and existing anti-Semitism and using propaganda to keep hatred and misunderstanding at the forefront of public discourse the Holocaust was allowed to happen, is the general thesis of one school of Holocaust historians. Another, much smaller group, led by David Irving, suggest that the Holocaust was arranged behind Hitler's back by Himmler and Heydrich (Lukacs, 1997). Still others believe that anti-Semitism and its resultant Holocaust were the consequence of a German character trait (Goldhagen, 1996). Historians use their own sense of the question, and perhaps ideas about human psychology, to answer the question of how it happened. Information proving that the Holocaust was an original long-term plan does not exist in any discrete document. Because of a lack of indisputable evidence, it seems fair-minded to conclude that the Holocaust happened as a result of gradual persecution, which became increasingly more oppressive, to the point of

murder. As documents do not directly link Hitler to the Final Solution, this explanation for the systematic extermination of Jews needs to be offered. Historians' purpose in explaining the Holocaust helps drive this answer.

Lucy Dawidowicz (reference in Martel, 1992) accepts the thesis of a link between escalating persecution and the Final Solution. To make her argument she chooses her facts from general information. This does not mean that she falsifies information, but she uses facts which construct the argument that the anti-Semitic laws of Nazi Germany allowed Jews to be seen first as different and then as inherently evil. In Dawidowicz's view, Hitler shaped the climate and context of decision making and his radical anti-Semitism laid the foundation for the genocide which followed. Without specific archival evidence of Hitler's plan for the Final Solution, historians construct ways of explaining the barbarism by finding its source in the organization and social climate of Nazi Germany.

The historian's conscious sense of purpose is particularly noticed in national histories. Here language has a specific role in the construction of facts. Dance (1960) says omission and distortion are blatant in a Russian textbook he examines. He says language itself reflects the author's purpose: workers 'toil' and masses are 'exploited', imperialists are 'predatory' and some classes are 'slave-owning'. An even stronger example is the reference to Great Power relations with Poland: "Austria wished to *conquer* (Poland)... Prussia to *annex*... Russia to *recover*..." (p. 68). In this sentence, Austria's claim is considered imperialistic, Prussia is seen as inflicting her will upon Poland, while Russia is taking back what is rightfully hers. Common usage of the words conquer, annex and recover privilege the Russian point of view, exactly the intention of the author.

It is obvious that high school history students read, discuss and use

words without critically examining how meaning is constructed. I am not suggesting students in formal educational settings are the only people susceptible to word manipulation; it happens constantly in everyday life. Consider advertisements which are created from carefully constructed images and language and are designed to evoke a certain response. Most people fall for this exploitation at one time or another. The history classroom is an appropriate place for analyzing language when it clearly reflects particular versions of history. In Dance's example, the Russian textbook is doing more than explaining Great Power politics. It is attempting to shape the historical understanding of its readers by constructing facts through careful manipulation of language.

The use of visuals such as paintings is common in helping students understand history. For example, I use Jacques Louis David's heroic "Death of Marat" to show students the dedication of French revolutionary Jean Paul Marat, and I use Pablo Picasso's "Guernica" to capture the horror inflicted on civilian targets during the Spanish Civil War. Although artists are not historians, their work often makes a greater point, useful to history students. Artists clearly have a conscious sense of purpose in their work, although their art may just as clearly be used to make a historical point quite different from the works' original purpose.

John Trumbull's "The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill" is such an example from a commonly used junior high school textbook (Beers, 1985, p. 1). The textbook shows a detail from the painting with the accompanying text:

> *In June 1775, British troops attacked American forces defending Bunker Hill, the heights overlooking the city of Boston. The heroic stand of American patriots in this battle inspired colonists in their struggle for independence.*

The detail of the painting and the accompanying text suggest a pro-American stance. But the picture in the textbook is just a corner of the actual painting. The entire Trumbull painting presents a different point of view. In the complete painting, a British Major is preventing a soldier from bayonetting American Generals. It also shows the Americans in the process of retreating. This leads to the speculation that Trumbull, who painted the picture ten years after the battle, probably was more concerned with the heroic and noble behaviour of both the British and American officers (Case, Daniels & Schwartz, 1996, p. 121). To make this point, Trumbull took liberties in the painting. In his rendition he included scenes which had not happened at the same time. Trumbull's sense of purpose determined his painting's composition. As such, the painting does not explain actual events of the American Revolutionary War, but can be used as an example of the ideals of patriotism which the American Revolution inspired. In this case, the painter, much like an historian, has a conscious purpose when composing a painting. The textbook author wanted a particular impression and with a detail of Trumbull's painting and corresponding pro-American words, was able to evoke a powerful image of American revolutionary events.

Sense of Outcome and Presentism

If language plays a role in determining how facts are constructed, so does having a sense of how an event plays out. Knowing the consequences of previous events cannot help but influence the construction of facts. Perhaps there is a fine line between attributing sense of outcome to the selection, as opposed to construction of facts. Certainly sense of outcome influences what

facts are selected, but in some ways it also impacts construction of facts. In considering the example of the role of the women at the pre-Confederation conferences, the knowledge that the political work of the men led to a federal agreement determined which information was recorded (Turner & Clark, 1997). The role of the women was, until more recently, not of interest to many historians. Information about the women was not constructed into historical facts.

Present day realities influence contemporary historians. Facts are created, often through language. Language is both value laden and subject to shifting meaning. Certainly through time, meanings of words have changed. Original British understanding of the 'liberal' and 'conservative' compared to their meaning in Canada today is a good example. The terms now reflect a political reality not in existence in parliamentary democracy when the concepts first were used. Present day American discourse around these words is also interesting. Perhaps this stretches the point, but if a Republican publicly calls a Democrat "liberal", it is intended as a pejorative term which insinuates that the Democrat is permissive and soft.

E. H. Carr (1961) was concerned with the role of language in relation to historians. He reminds us that historians are situated in their time. This implicates language; it cannot be neutral. Historical terms as broad as democracy and revolution mean different things at different times. Liberal and conservative, communism and fascism, are highly charged words. Who is a terrorist; who is a freedom fighter? Which war is justified to prevent further aggression; which is a war of aggressive conquest? Who decides? How do students understand terms in relation to what is studied in class? Historians deal with words whose meaning change depending on locale and time.

Presentism also makes it difficult to understand moral standards different from our own. Today's moral indignation about gladiators misses the point that to Romans, gladiators were mere entertainment (Harrison, Smith & Wright, 1999). Today it is socially unacceptable to slaughter animals for ivory; in the past it may have been simply part of a hunter's day. Our condemnation of the League of Nations as being idealistic comes out of a realization that the dictators of Europe did not respect principles of peace. In 1919 these principles seemed necessary for the survival of western civilization. The role of sense of outcome and presentism in the construction of facts are important.

Conscious Bias

If facts are constructed from the position of conscious bias, the account is propaganda. As with selectivity of facts, bias means the intention of the historian is dubious. The biased author is not seeking to construct a probable account while dealing with, as all historians do, making and supporting judgments. Rather the focus is on a fixed end result, perhaps a defense of a certain position. Before the collapse of the apartheid regime, Gunn (1987) acted as an apologist for the pro-apartheid South Africa government and in its defense made extraordinary claims. It is not that he merely constructed facts; rather the explanation he offered to explain damning information clearly shows his bias. He says the white community felt a special responsibility for Coloureds and Indians because of their history in South Africa (p. 33). They were brought in by others or are the result of intermarriage. On the other hand, Gunn argues that Blacks had their geographical locations and political and social structures in place before the Europeans came. He uses this point to suggest that the

white community has less responsibility to Blacks. This was the official justification for apartheid.

Gunn also claims negative aspects of South African society were continually and unfairly reported. He stated that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) was typically sympathetic to the African National Congress (ANC) (p. 5) and did not point out that most A.N.C. members were communists. Gunn wanted to write "a more balanced view of both historical and current trends" (p. 5), but his book is filled with sweeping overstatements driven by his own justification for the apartheid system.

Construction of facts through conscious bias leads to fake accounts, all indefensible as history. The Keegstra denial of the Holocaust demonstrates the point that Holocaust deniers construct facts to the point of creating fakes. Their alternate facts do not hold up to scrutiny by a community of open-minded historians. The issue of bias is so important that I have devoted the entire fourth chapter to it.

Conclusions

Consideration of selectivity and construction of facts is important to history teachers and their students as facts are the fundamental pieces of evidence from which history is written. In order to promote historical understanding, teachers can help high school students develop a more sophisticated notion of what study of the past entails. Underlying any particular history course is a notion of what is significant and worthy of study. For example, British Columbia History 12 learning outcomes reflect broad European-based content and include Africa, the Middle East and Latin America only as they

intersect greater European interests. I suggest that teachers help students examine how notions of significance impact what they learn. Students can see that beliefs about significance may be temporary. The addition of social history at the expense of diplomatic history may be an example students can understand. Making explicit the framework of the course can be a starting point for confronting the idea that history is not everything in the past, but a study which reflects what is considered significant in the past.

This chapter also suggests that historians' conscious sense of purpose impacts historical works. Students will more fully appreciate the dynamics of studying history if they understand historians to be active, curious individuals. Students need to understand that the historical enterprise arises from a curiosity about our collective past. Teachers can also introduce students to the notion that sense of purpose leads to some facts being chosen over others. The construction of an historical answer is bound to the sense of purpose of the historian.

In addition, students need to experience the feeling that knowing how events turned out is quite different from not knowing which direction an issue might take. This implies that there is room in the history class for current events. Students in history class know where the events of the 1930s and 1940s lead, but people living at the time did not. Condemnation of historical participants, while sometimes warranted, does not mean that past policies and actions can be condemned merely because in present time we view the results.

Finally, this chapter raises the issue of conscious bias which results in gross distortion. The problem, however, is students' understanding of bias. In my experience, students tend to believe that an historical account is biased if its interpretation challenges their existing beliefs. On the other hand, if they agree

with the argument, they tend to consider those accounts unbiased. A sophisticated understanding of bias is so important for history teachers and students that it is addressed separately in chapter four.

CHAPTER THREE

"Look," says the poet, "the sun obeys my syntax."
"Look," says the historian, "the past obeys my interpretation."

George Steiner

Grand Narratives

Overview

In this chapter I examine literature concerned with the nature and role of a general framework or "grand narrative" in history. Also referred to as a master narrative, it is the overriding story which historians tell by linking events as part of a sequence or trend. It might, for example, be the story of God-fearing, hard-working pioneers opening the untamed Canadian west. In such a narrative, native people might be largely ignored or seen as one of the many obstacles in the unfolding story. This pioneer narrative often pits people against nature. The dangerous physical elements are overcome by decent people who may persevere against heartbreaking odds. Another grand narrative typical in high school textbooks is the "forging a nation" narrative. This is a sweeping account of visionary leaders working for the greater good to establish a territory as a country and set her on a decent course. Grand narratives are much larger than individual facts of history or even various historical accounts. They are the framework or plot line which determines how individual historical accounts are written.

Embedded in grand narratives are ideological assumptions and beliefs and ways of writing history which filter information and provide a specific framework for particular versions of events. I am interested in how this framework impacts history teaching and learning. The narrative framework may be as broad as the notion of progress, which implies that society is moving forward in a positive direction. The notion of progress is common in narratives, but focusing on progress may ignore the fact that technology tends to outpace society's moral development.

Despite negative features, grand narratives serve a positive function in the classroom. As a starting point for students who may not know anything about a particular historical period, grand narratives can effectively provide a framework for individual, seemingly separate events. The grand narrative becomes a way for students to make sense of information. My caution regarding grand narratives is they may outlive their usefulness. Once students have an understanding of an historical period, they may be ready to consider rival, divergent explanations of the same historical periods. Opposing narratives may be necessary for developing historical understanding.

Under the assumption that progress defines the twentieth century because every generation is generally better off and more informed than the one before it (Meltzer, 1994), Nazi Germany is considered an aberration and historians try to locate the specific reasons for the aberration. German culture, once the height of European Baroque tradition, regressed to the barbarity of the Nazi regime. Does the problem lie with the German people? A contrasting possible explanation for Nazi Germany was offered by my college political science professor who made the point that if one 'scratched' a liberal, one got a fascist. The professor did not see Nazi Germany as a puzzling aberration. His

explanation suggested that fascism was embraced in western Europe before World War Two because people faced losing all they cared about. People's liberal tendencies were at the forefront when the economy was healthy; but once wealth, property and status were threatened, people recoiled, clung to notions of their own importance and looked to blame others for society's problems.

This rival narrative does not suggest that German character and tendencies alone were responsible for the horrors of World War Two. It suggests that the combination of historical, economic, social and political factors situated in a particular era led to fascism. This narrative explains Nazi Germany as specific factors in a specific time. Although our century has experienced progress in terms of technological advancement, progress may not be a uniform descriptor of the century. This rival explanation suggests technology outpaces society's moral development. Making development appear uniform highlights a problem with grand narratives since grand narratives tend to be too broad to hold up under careful scrutiny. They are often insufficient to explain complex historical questions, yet are found predominantly in school textbooks. If the narrative of progress, for example, is built into a history curriculum with focus on how life for the middle classes in western, industrialized societies has become physically easier, teachers are in a sense leading students to believe that this physical ease is what is most important in life. If students are never asked to consider what the "trade-off" for technological "advancement" might be, the result can be ethnocentricism.

It is no longer academically honest to claim that history is an unframed, unencumbered vision of the past (Bunzl, 1997; Jenkins, 1991; Meltzer, 1994; Munslow, 1997; Trouillot, 1995). Writers and thinkers admit to positioning

themselves within general ideological stances in producing their work. It is common to read neo-Marxist, feminist or neo-conservative accounts of the past. For the most part, these ideological accounts pose alternative grand narratives to the privileged grand narrative. The problem for high school teachers is that students have rarely had history presented to them as reflecting a particular narrative. The suggestion that history is more than what actually happened in the past is most likely foreign to students. A more sophisticated history programme can teach students about the prevailing grand narratives and alternative narratives as well.

The last chapter dealt with selectivity and construction of particular facts. Historians assemble evidence in order to answer historical questions. Facts may be selected or constructed within or outside of grand narratives. Historians choose facts and produce accounts based on their support of, or challenge to, a grand narrative. Women's history, for example, challenges the traditional dominant political account which privileges male political activities. Women's history therefore challenges the historical account most frequently taught in schools.

Historians shape past events into stories which often reflect these grand narratives. For example, the narrative of progress paralleled British "prosperity, power and self-confidence" (Carr, 1961, p. 111). Carr writes that the great Enlightenment historian Gibbon believed that wealth, happiness, knowledge and virtue increase in every age. This grand narrative, enthusiastically supported by writers and historians, permeated middle and upper class British society. Classroom history teachers should consider learning to identify grand narratives and perhaps involving students in identifying and assessing these narratives.

This chapter investigates four features emerging from the literature about grand narratives. The first feature is the suggestion that because grand narratives operate in history, historical accounts are more constructed than real. The framework cannot help but define the structure of the story. A radical claim within this argument is that the narrative form itself determines the way historical understanding is constructed. An account which has a beginning, middle and end by definition has meaning embedded in it. Meaning is determined more by putting the events in a narrative form than what actually happened in the past. This is the thesis of Hayden White (1987), a critic of traditional history.

A second feature of grand narratives is that they typically produce stereotypes. Grand narratives tend to produce overgeneralizations which focus on essential features and often present an uncomplicated version of people and events. The stereotype of the noble explorer is widely found in textbooks. Against enormous odds, the explorer was able to succeed in the name of the monarch. Another stereotype is the hero or heroine who is written about in an uncomplicated, favourable manner. Controversial aspects of a life might be entirely overlooked. Helen Keller is known to most North Americans as a woman who overcame limitations caused by blindness. Almost unknown is the fact that she was a radical socialist and a vocal supporter of the Soviet Union (Loewen, 1995). As this information may cause people to wonder which conditions led to her radical stance, most school texts ignore her life after the point when Annie Sullivan taught her to speak. The stereotype of the humble woman who learned to speak through signing continues.

A third feature of grand narratives is their alleged use to control the powerless. Typically, those in a position of power are the ones who direct writing the history which is taught in schools. During the height of the British

Empire, the narrative used by the British to explain Arab culture was constructed by western imperial overlords. Not only was the explaining of Arab ways left to non-Arabs, there was no way to correct information if it was incomplete or incorrect. Arabs were rendered almost invisible through the narrative of Orientalism. Edward Said (1979) claims this is the way the oriental was kept as a perpetual outsider.

A fourth feature of grand narratives is perhaps the most interesting to educators. Despite the three negatives features which arise in the literature, grand narratives are very useful as a way of providing coherence and avoiding fragmentation of knowledge. I argue that one of the purposes of history education is to provide a national narrative to students in order to facilitate their gaining a proud and thoughtful national identity. Another may be to promote an internationally focussed narrative. Rejection of a particular narrative may occur later in students' lives, but a narrative may be an appropriate vehicle for developing historical understanding in high school students. If indeed students later reject a narrative, at least they have a narrative to reject. As a teacher, my concern is to stoke students' curiosity and engage students in educationally defensible activities. Grand narratives are effective in providing coherence to what otherwise may appear to be discrete events.

The Construction of Grand Narratives

In 1993 at the Orpheum Theatre in Vancouver, Stephen Jay Gould, a Harvard paleontologist, spoke on "Rethinking Patterns in History and Evolution". Gould claimed we have erred in presenting evolution as "a sanitized version of predictable progress." His studies indicate a fallacy in believing that evolution

was a determined march through time in a neat and progressive manner culminating in the inevitable appearance of man. Rather, Gould argued, evolution happened in non-rational random spurts. Gould sees evolutionary theory which emphasizes certainty and prediction as hampered by the myth of progress which tries to shape understanding in a clean, precise manner. The grand narrative of progress has interfered with a better understanding of evolution.

Does the same not apply to history? The past is not a "sanitized version of predictable progress"; yet that is often how history is presented to students. Facts tend to be selected which fit a larger story, perhaps the narrative of the gradual, but systematic opening of the west. The greater story is more than individual historical facts.

The grand narrative may evolve from the need to tell an heroic story from not so heroic individual details (Meltzer, 1994). If facts are the "building blocks" of historical arguments, are they sometimes shaped into a particular narrative in hindsight? As discussed in the last chapter, once historians have an endpoint, they may seek facts to fit the greater narrative. Facts are selected and may be used for a specific purpose. This purpose might be to fit into a grand narrative. For example, the Bolsheviks wrote a history of their triumphant revolutionary struggle in October 1917 in order to mythologize an event which did not happen in an especially heroic way (Pipes, 1995; Shukman, 1998). With the success of their seizure of power, they made facts fit their larger purpose by developing a version of the revolution which showed the Bolsheviks to be competent, patriotic leaders. The suggestion is not that historians make up evidence, but perhaps information is shaped to fit a particular purpose. In this case, the grand narrative of triumphant Bolshevik leadership determined how the facts were presented.

The Bolsheviks may be an extreme example, but information can be framed in particular ways to reflect historians' specific purposes.

Textbooks tend to have neat, closed accounts of experiences which were complicated, messy and open to a variety of interpretations (Loewen, 1995; Meltzer, 1994). If there is to be a purpose to history education, should it not be a higher goal than merely exposing students to historical reconstruction? The goal could be to approach historical narratives critically and teach students to think historically (Seixas, 1996). Instead of being swept in to an apparent past, Seixas argues that students need to ask who constructed any particular historical account. In this way, textbooks, teacher-accounts and historically-based movies would all be equally open to questions of interpretation. Teachers could make grand narratives known to students if this philosophy of teaching history were implemented.

Hayden White (1973, 1987) offers a critical explanation into how history is constructed. He claims that the narrative tradition used to write history has meaning embedded in the narrative form itself and so "true" accounts or unencumbered accounts are not possible. The narrative form of beginning, middle and end is itself a scaffold which provides meaning to events which might in themselves have no meaning. As a result, content is as much imagined as found in concrete evidence. White believes historians imagine what they do not know and imagine what they cannot possibly find in records of the past.

White does not think it possible to have objective evidence "out there" which historians can find. Instead, he believes, that historians give story shape to past events which may have no stories in them. Events are emplotted through the narrative form which provides a beginning, middle and end. Drawing on literary theory, White argues that historians combine a mode of

emplotment (Romance, Comedy, Tragedy or Satire), a mode of explanation (Formist, Organicist, Mechanistic or Contextualist) and a mode of ideology (Anarchist, Conservative, Radical or Liberal) to write their work. His examples are influential nineteenth century historians such as Michelet, von Ranke, de Tocqueville and Burckhardt.

Jules Michelet, a French nationalist historian, attempted to resurrect the past by including his personality in his narrative. His resultant histories had great dramatic power. His strong dislike of kings and priests and his gradual acceptance of democratic progress were evident in his work which White labels "Romance." Leopold von Ranke believed history could be scientifically examined and from this belief he developed the seminar method of teaching students. White defines von Ranke's work as "Comedy." Alexis de Tocqueville, the French historian and political philosopher, concluded after his visit to the United States that the spread of democratic government was inevitable. He was concerned that democracy would smother individuality and personal freedom. White labels de Tocqueville's work as "Tragedy," and offers Burckhardt's work as an example of "Satire." Jacob Burckhardt, apprentice to von Ranke, rejected his mentor's nationalism and looked to sources of evidence for historical explanation. Burckhardt's famous study was of the Renaissance, but he refused to underrate medieval achievements. In addition, he was able to discriminate between the great artistic achievements and the ruthless politics of the Renaissance era. For White, regardless of what these historians wrote, the events of the past did not describe themselves: they reflected the various modes of the historians.

The influence of postmodernism on White's work is evident. White believes that before the eighteenth century history was undisciplined, but was

replaced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by ideological disciplined histories (e.g. Marxist, liberal, conservative) which suited particular objectives. The ordering of knowledge in this way meant it was not possible to have a "true" account of the past in the sense that truth existed in and of itself. Historical accounts were ideological accounts. White believes that in the present we are at an exciting juncture in the discipline of history. The postmodern condition offers the possibility of "opening up" history and offering multiple accounts of past events. Postmodernist thinkers claim it is not necessary to ask if an account is true. That question is invalid, a remnant of the positivist tradition where the facts were said to speak for themselves. Postmodern thinkers believe that all historical accounts, regardless of methodology, are tentative, partial and particularly situated.

White's Metahistory (1973) explores nineteenth century European histories produced by "master historians" such as Michelet, von Ranke, de Tocqueville and Burckhardt, and philosophers of history such as Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche and Croce. By analyzing the verbal structures, White finds these writers have very different ways of expressing historical works. White categorizes these approaches by the modes listed earlier. He then questions what the historical method consists of and what it means to think historically. His point in doing this is to emphasize that if there was only one answer to the historical question, these works would all operate within the same system. There are, however, different answers and different systems. For White, this means it is naive to believe there is a "true" historical account. In developing his idea, White finds more similarities between fiction writers and historians than traditional historians would admit.

White refutes the idea of a clear distinction between fiction writers

"inventing" their stories and historians "finding" theirs. He suggests that historians are very much involved in invention. As the past offers only partial traces, historians invent other parts to fit the narrative form. In his study, White considers medieval annals and the annalists' apparent unwillingness to see the historical stories waiting to be told. He supplies an example of how annalists recorded the past:

> 709. Hard winter. Duke Gottfried dies.
> 710. Hard year and deficient in crops.
> 711.
> 712. Flood everywhere.
> (White, 1987, pp. 6-7)

Historians looking through the annals today approach the information differently. They make connections, assumptions, integrate information with other accounts and in so doing, create a narrative. Historians also supply an ending. However, the annals do not conclude, says White, they merely terminate. The convention of eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century historians put the information in story form. White claims this makes the point that historians 'finding' their stories is nothing but a myth. In saying this, he goes far beyond Carr's point (1961) that individual facts are selected and constructed. White claims it is a nineteenth century view to believe that the historical method consists of investigating documents in order to determine the truth or most plausible account, yet discount that the narrative form adds to the content of the representation (1987, p. 27).

For White, the definition of history is blurred because past and present, memory and reality intersect. Combining memory and history may lead to fine stories, but not history per se. Waterland (Swift, 1983) is an example of this kind of work. Classified as fiction / literature, it combines personal history and human

drama with the history of the Fens. One can learn about life in the Fens by reading the book, but it does not claim to be based on actual events. Yet, if one accepts White's definition, Waterland qualifies as metahistory.

There is no question that the narrative form is a standard form of expression. Umberto Eco, in an interview with Mark Kingwell (1998), says our attempt to give order to the world always takes a narrative form. But he claims the issue should not be about the narrative form itself, rather the differing expectations readers bring to works of fiction and non-fiction. For example, newspaper readers expect to be informed about actual events. Eco argues that non-fiction claims to be true while fiction claims to be a beautiful lie and these expectations must be respected. We understand the difference when we approach a work of non-fiction just as we understand it when we approach a work of fiction. Because history claims to be true, historians have a responsibility to be serious about honest representation in their narratives. Historians must show fidelity to facts; they cannot merely write in what they need to complete the story. They need evidence to make their greater points. In this, Eco challenges White's point about how historians invent much of their work. Eco seems to suggest that when narrative is not completely sustained by the facts, rather than invent facts, the author needs to drop the narrative or label the narrative fiction. Inasmuch as White's ideas are thought provoking, a clearer distinction between fiction and non-fiction seems appropriate in high school history classrooms. Students need to be involved in making sense of the past with a clear concept of the difference between what happened and what was merely imagined.

Stereotypes in Grand Narratives

Grand narratives by their definition are overarching stories which "frame" historical accounts. Often historians group people, not in reality grouped, to explain their part in a larger sequence of events. There were, for example, many distinct indigenous cultures in North America when Europeans made contact, but these cultures did not understand themselves as a collective body. A collective label was imposed by Europeans. The thesis of The Imaginary Indian (Francis,1992) is that 'Indian' is the invention of Europeans. Francis' work offers many examples of European portrayals of indigenous people and how these portrayals expanded the myth. The myth seems to hold. A visit to tourist shops with Canadiana provides the evidence. Indian artwork is a hot tourist commodity.

The popular image of Indians does not exist in reality. At the same time, it endures. It is appealing--exotic perhaps because it seems so ideal. How is this image constructed? Francis (1992) asserts it stems from a complex and interlocking set of beliefs and assumptions by which the "White Man" claims to know the "Indian" that these images are produced. Both "White Man" and "Indian" stereotypes have been constructed in an attempt to highlight differences, or at least make differences interesting. The story of Grey Owl, a man commonly thought to be an Indian, shows the power of the stereotype. Grey Owl was not an Indian at all, but an Englishman whose fascination with North American Indian culture came from reading all he could find on the subject. His life as Grey Owl was an almost perfect hoax. He learned the persona through books which had been written by people who used

stereotypes to describe Indians. He adopted those characteristics, became that person and then passed convincingly as an Indian. Francis claims that even aboriginal people, who met Grey Owl and knew he was not native, did not publicly question his background because he was sympathetic to their culture (p. 137).

Francis deconstructs another stereotype. The famous speech about the oneness of nature, supposedly by Chief Seattle, says "Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth," a statement which has made it onto widely available posters. Environmentalist David Suzuki has publicly used the statement. Francis claims that the real story of the speech is much less interesting. As Chief Seattle spoke very little English, the original speech he gave was translated. Notes on a translation were taken by a physician who, thirty-three years later, published a newspaper article in which he reconstructed parts of the speech. Since then, various versions of the speech have been used. In 1971 the Southern Baptist Convention produced a film which used the speech, admittedly quite different from the physician's version (Francis, 1992). According to Francis, this supposedly profound Indian observation about people's relationship to the natural environment is constructed by a variety of people over many years. The ideas have been mythologized. But the myth fits the stereotype of the Indian as "guardian of the landscape." Francis' point is not to dispute the merits of the statement's claim, but to show how a stereotype helped created it.

In addition to Indians, there are other groups who are stereotyped by grand narratives. National Dreams (Francis, 1997) deconstructs the CPR and the RCMP stereotypes. Francis investigates the importance of the railway and examines whose purpose it served. His research into the RCMP indicates a

heroic "sub-narrative" of the RCMP but finds that in reality the police force is more than the popular image of men in serge performing musical rides. The RCMP was used against Canadian citizens during the Winnipeg General Strike. Yet the myth of the men (and now women) in scarlet seems to hold, perpetuated by TV shows like "Due South," which portray an honest, honourable young man as a member of the RCMP. The stereotype has idealized the concept of policeman as helper, not necessarily a negative image. The problem with the stereotype is its power to limit further critical analysis if there is no examination beyond the stereotype. Francis does not compare the actions of the RCMP to other national police forces, nor does he look at the purpose of policing. His point is that the narrative of the RCMP was historically constructed through careful images and stories that do not necessarily align with reality. The stereotype of the helpful but resolute police man dominates despite historical evidence to the contrary.

Perhaps most insightful as an example of how grand narratives produce stereotypes is Francis' example of the infantilization of Quebec. Francis feels that the roots of the narrative of the naive and simple peasant from Quebec, unable to understand political reality, dates back to the Conquest. The English defeated the French army at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham but never really celebrated their victory. On the other hand, Americans have celebrated their victory over the British unabashedly. Instead, English Canadians have patronized the Quebecois (Francis, 1997) as a way to capture the victory which may never have felt like a victory. Typically, Quebecois have been portrayed two ways: either as the simple, singing 'voyageur' who loved to paddle canoes, or as the 'habitant' who loved the status-quo, singing and pea soup. Francis admits these images of the Quebecois were not completely imposed from the

outside. The superiority of rural life was an accepted belief in Quebec until the last half of the nineteenth century when farmland was no longer readily available. The Catholic Church and Quebec government attempted to open new parts of Quebec to agricultural settlers by building roads and railroads, as well as offering families subsidies to move to and work the land. Francis argues that Church and government images indicate acceptance of the belief that the key components of French Canadian life were the rural setting and small communities. This image suited English Canada, which contrasted rural to urban modern, progressive, superior life. Unfortunately, Francis argues, what remains today is the stereotype of Quebecois as simple folks who do not really know what they want. Francis' lesson for teachers seems to be that if we recognize stereotypes, we can teach students about the limits of making historical judgments based on constructed categories. Stereotypes are a way to identify difference, but when stereotypes obscure the richness of complex reality, they work contrary to educational goals.

Power Relations in Grand Narratives

Edward Said, while not writing about history as such, makes the case that knowledge does not exist in and of itself, but is produced through power relations. These "constructed accounts" are monolithic, produced through a filter which determines what we observe, know and learn about the world. The filter is not merely a simple screen because it is constructed by a variety of complex and interlocking factors. In Orientalism (1978), Said outlines ways in which the British, French and later the Americans constructed and upheld notions of superiority over the Orient. Consequently he argues, Orientalism

says more about the West than about the Orient. Said's notions are important to history teachers because of his claim that the 'Oriental' filter is based on power-- who has it and who does not.

Said's thesis suggests that power relations operate in grand narratives. The point of his argument for history teachers is that teachers, as products of their society and schooled in a particular way, may offer views about the past as unproblematic, when, in fact, these views reflect a particular power-based grand narrative. The argument that power productions operate in history is not Said's alone (Trouillot, 1995; Jenkins, 1995). This important feature of grand narratives raises issues for teachers. Teachers may need to analyze their own positions and assumptions in terms of the power structure in which they find themselves.

In Said's study (1978), notions of, on the one hand, Europe, the West and "us," versus, on the other hand, the Orient, the East and "them," were entrenched in the power structure. Said claims that this is the fundamental feature of orientalism. But power relations are not unique to a particular people or country because typically the powerful control the powerless. If negative power relations existed only among particular people, it would be relatively easy to identify and work against them. Instead, this particular way of constructing reality is not unique to Orientalism:

> One ought again to remember that all cultures impose corrections upon raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge. The problem is not that conversion takes place. It is perfectly natural for the human mind to resist the assault on it of untreated strangeness; therefore cultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformation on other cultures, receiving these other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be. To the Westerner, however, the Oriental was always like some aspect of the

> West; to some of the German Romantics, for example, Indian religion was essentially an Oriental version of Germano-Christian pantheism. (p. 67)

Said's words mean that understanding others happens by filtering information through oneself. Said claims people are entrenched in particular points in time and are only able to understand "other" in reference to self. This typically leads to stereotyping because there is really no way to allow one to know the other.

Said does not blame individuals for policies which were entrenched in British imperial affairs. The words and actions were reflections of Orientalism, the system by which westerners understood Orientals:

> It is therefore correct that every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric. Some of the immediate sting will be taken out of these labels if we recall additionally that human societies, at least the more advanced cultures, have rarely offered the individual anything but imperialism, racism, and ethnocentrism for dealing with "other" cultures. (p. 204)

"Orientalism," as Said portrays it, is reflected in historical patterns. He states that about 60,000 books about the Near Orient were written in the 150 years from 1800 to 1950, yet there was no remotely reciprocal situation about the West (p. 204). The westerner was in the habit of "writing up" the Oriental, but the Oriental did not "write up" the westerner. To Said, this statistic suggests that Orientalism was very much about power. Those who had the power "wrote up" those who lacked power. The relationship was not one of truly learning from the other, rather speaking for them. Certainly in the nineteenth century, Said claims, the reference to the Oriental reflected essential categories: "its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, it backwardness" (p. 205). These notions were widely accepted

and, of course, found in the scholarship of the day. "Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or--as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory--taken over" (p. 207). Said concludes from this that anything marked as oriental had an evaluative judgment attached. The grand narrative of the oriental reflected the power relations in the Middle East where Europeans were masters over the Arab peoples.

Said's thesis claims people are much more products of their society than Carr (1961) might admit. The filter of Orientalism held, or perhaps still holds, when the very sources of information to which one might go to find out more about Arab society come from the orientalist tradition.

Said's and Francis' works suggest power operates in the production of history and other writers confirm this assertion. If the debates around history are rooted in two approaches to history, the positivist and constructivist, Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) finds neither complete. Positivists claim that all true knowledge is scientific in the sense that rational questioning can lead to truth. Constructivists claim that meaning is made or constructed through active questioning whose answers will lead in different directions. A positivist thinks the answer will be found "out there" while a constructivist believes answers will be shaped depending on what is being looked at.

Positivist views were accepted in the nineteenth century when history became a profession. Gibbon and Acton, as historians of the period, epitomize this scientific tradition. The scientific method of detachment was seen as a way of finding truth in history. Positivism distinguished between historical process and historical knowledge. Historical knowledge was the result of the scientific historical process. If historians could successfully argue that process was

separate from knowledge, then "scientific" professionalism could be recognized. Today, few historians and philosophers describe themselves as positivists. Trouillot, however, believes that the positivist tradition still influences scholarship because common understanding of the role of historians is that they discover truth and reveal the "real" past. A positivist account of history does not hold power to be problematic. For a positivist, history is about power only in the sense that those who won were most powerful. Power relations as a focus of study tends to be ignored by positivists.

Constructivist views of history have gained an audience since the 1970s, but are not new according to Trouillot. "There is nothing new even in the claim that everything is an interpretation, except the euphoria that now surround the claim" (1995, p. 5). The key argument of constructivists is that issues of truth are by-passed in historical narratives by virtue of the narrative form. This is Hayden White's argument which states that the narrative form adds meaning not necessarily found in the evidence. Trouillot believes that the end result of constructivist thinking is that an historical narrative is one fiction among others. But he recognizes that some narratives are more compelling than others. "If history is merely the story told by those who won, how did they win in the first place? And why don't all winners tell the same story" (p. 6)? He recognizes that there is more to grand narratives than an accounting of the "winners" of history. The typical grand narrative, however, tends to reflect the dominant culture or the victorious groups.

Said's work shows that the dominant tend to believe they know and understand the minority, even if the explanation has been developed without the minority's input. This is a thorny issue for teachers. Can effective teaching about power take place without merely inflaming students' indignities? Is a

sensible alternative possible? A discussion of the implications of power relations is offered in chapter five.

The Usefulness of Grand Narratives

The previous sections of this chapter dealt with three features of grand narratives which may hinder developing students' historical understanding. This section argues that grand narratives are useful for high school teachers and their students because they can provide an effective framework for developing historical understanding. Grand narratives supply nations with stories of a collective past. In a country such as Canada, where various groups compete to have their history taught, the lack of a unified national identity may be a product of conflicting or narrow narratives. If the alternative to grand narratives is balkanization of history where students are given only limited exposure to particular, specific histories, yet never learn about Canada's national development, schooling has perhaps failed them (see, for example, Granatstein, 1998; Bailyn, 1994).

A softer, cohesive, national narrative can be part of a history programme, even in a European survey course like History 12. Canadian contributions to the World Wars, our participation in the Spanish Civil War, Korean War, international peacekeeping, particularly in Suez, may reflect a cursory treatment of Canadian involvement in international affairs, yet they provide examples of positive Canadian contribution to the 20th century. This information, while limited, may help students gain foundational historical understanding which additional information will enhance (Bailyn, 1994). The power of the narrative form is that it helps students make sense of otherwise discrete pieces of

information.

Negative consequences are the result of narrow, perhaps nationalistic, narratives which overemphasize specific points. The ongoing horror in Yugoslavia is commonly claimed to be caused by focusing on isolated past events. The Turkish defeat of the Serbs in 1389 is known to most Serbs and fuels some to avenge this defeat. In Canada there are laments for lack of historical knowledge by our young people (see Granatstein, 1998; reference in Moore, 1998a), but any proposal to increase students' historical knowledge should at the same time meet the broader goal of developing historical understanding. The Yugoslavian example is surely not one we wish to follow. Inclusive, reasonable narratives, on the other hand, may be worth pursuing. Narratives do, in fact, help students develop historical understanding by giving order to vast amounts of information.

An example of the power of grand narratives to promote identity comes from the Balkans and this illustration highlights the problem of narrow narratives. The war in Bosnia altered the school system and students of different ethnic backgrounds are now segregated. Bosnian Serb children get their textbooks from Belgrade. These books claim Bosnia never really existed. According to Serb officials, Bosnia was Serbian territory taken over by the Ottoman Empire. These books portray Princip, the Serbian assassin of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, as a hero. The recent war is presented as genocide by Muslims. Bosnian Croat students, on the other hand, whose textbooks come from Zagreb, are taught that Bosnia is really part of Croatia. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, created after World War One, is explained as a Serbian plot to dominate Croats. In these accounts, Ustashe atrocities during World War Two are barely mentioned while the Chetniks are portrayed as

murderers. The Croat books depict Croats heroically fighting Muslim and Serb aggression in the recent war. Finally, Bosnian Muslim textbooks claim that the Ottoman period, which shaped Bosnian Muslim heritage, was one of enlightenment. The inter-war period is portrayed as a time of oppression and the crimes that Bosnian Muslims committed in World War Two are not mentioned. The recent Bosnian war is blamed on the Serbs (Black, 1999, p. 83). These examples of narrow, nationalist narratives show that each group ensures their particular narrative is taught. These stories, however, highlight divisions and do not promote Yugoslavian unity.

The example from former Yugoslavia points out the potential ideological power of the narrow narrative, not a use of narratives I wish to promote. Perhaps a country as diverse as Canada needs a broader, inclusive narrative to help students gain historical understanding. I am not advocating propaganda over education, simply suggesting that broader narratives are educationally defensible. Students can learn about the past through the power of the narrative form. If students do not learn their country's history, being Canadian may become meaningless, the concept of Canada no more than an abstract notion (Davis, 1995; Osborne, 1997; Granatstein, 1998). Fair-minded narratives can help develop historical understanding.

The positive aspect of the grand narrative is the power of its storytelling form (Meltzer, 1994; Egan 1997; Eco, 1998). We tend to make sense of the world in narrative form; stories stay with us. Understanding information presented in narrative form tends to be much easier than making sense of lists or discrete pieces of information. This is the educational benefit of using narratives to enhance student learning. Narratives engage students in particular ways and help them make sense of the world. According to Egan

(1997), many high school students are in the process of moving from Romantic to Philosophic understanding. Romantic understanding is identified by engagement by "extremes of experience and the limits of reality, association with transcendent human qualities, the personalizing of knowledge, and a distinctive romantic rationality as among its constituent tools" (p. 217). At this stage, the narratives teachers use to develop optimum learning should produce wonder and awe. The challenge to effectively use narratives to reach the sophistication of Philosophic understanding means information has to be taught quite delicately. To attain this understanding, students may receive a short, dramatic lesson on a theory (Egan uses Bentham's theory of Utilitarianism as an example) in order to expose students to the notion that theories undergird social, economic, political and cultural realities. The narrative form is a powerful tool for educational development and can be useful for enhancing students' historical understanding.

Conclusions

Knowledge and understanding of grand narratives is perhaps more important for teachers than for students of history. Unlike the previous chapter which suggests students can learn about selection and construction of facts, grand narratives are the form in which school history tends to be written. If this framework is removed, students may loose an anchor in an already confusing world. At the same time, teachers need to inoculate against stereotyping, perhaps the most negative effect of the grand narratives.

Three sections in this chapter are critical of grand narratives because grand narratives are consciously constructed, produce stereotypes and reflect

power relations. These sections suggest teachers might use caution when dealing with grand narratives. Histories with clear grand narratives have been carefully crafted and often sanitized to reflect dominant powers in a positive light. With this type of history, minorities may be excluded, or treated in stereotypical ways. Although not developed, the chapter suggests implicitly that the goal of history teachers should not be to replace one grand narrative with another. History should be presented in a more sophisticated way to engage students with the complexities of the past and not merely train them to reject one grand narrative in favour of another.

Grand narratives are useful in survey history courses because they are constructed in order to give coherence and provide general understanding. High school students most likely find grand narratives in textbooks, a feature I suggest can be positive because of the strength of the narrative form. Narratives provide historical information in a coherent and linked framework which assists students in building historical understanding. Canadian history, including Confederation and western expansion, can fit easily into a grand narrative of Canadian development. To guard against the potential negative features of grand narratives, more inclusive narratives should be used. This way the story can engage students but in a more historically accurate way.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Now I no longer know which story is the truth, what was the real reason why she left. They are all the same, all true, all false."

Amy Tan The Kitchen God's Wife

Bias

Overview

Running through the previous chapters is the idea that an underlying set of values, assumptions, beliefs and ideological positions, often called "bias", operates in historical study and writing. But accepting that bias exists in history is meaningless for educators unless a further question is asked: how does the notion of bias affect learning and teaching history? Accepting bias in history books is only a first step. If the aim of history teaching is to develop students' historical judgment, they should learn to judge degrees of bias. Without some guidance, it is common for high school students to equate biased accounts with untrue or unworthy accounts. Once bias has been detected (and students often consider information biased if it clashes with their viewpoint), they tend to conclude the historical account has no merit. If students are to be thoughtful students of history, lessons about bias need to be part of the history programme.

As "bias" is routinely used, it means to warp or prejudice. My history teaching experience suggests students define bias more generally as merely reflecting a contrasting point of view. For example, students tend to consider

pro-Soviet information biased. It seems students believe that information which reflects anti-western point of view is distorted while western sources are not.

Common usage of "bias" may be the basis of the misunderstanding which students bring into the history classroom. To claim an account is biased is generally a way of attacking an opposite opinion or position, or making information suspect. The media's obsession with the O.J. Simpson trial brought the word and understanding of "bias" into many homes through the ongoing television coverage of the trial. Reports of Los Angeles police detective Mark Fuhrmann's alleged bias against black people led the jury to conclude Fuhrmann may have planted evidence against O.J. Simpson, and this ultimately led to Simpson's acquittal on murder charges.

According to Webster's Dictionary, bias is "unexamined opinions or opinions formed without due knowledge of the facts and circumstances attending the question". This definition suggests premature conclusions are drawn without sufficient information, or the information presented is simply wrong. For the purpose of learning about history, however, a more encompassing definition may be necessary. Historians' research may lead to varying results: some historical writing is blatantly biased, while other accounts, ultimately based on solid scholarship, produce reasonable conclusions which may reflect particular stances. As Carr (1961) and Bullock (1962) argue, historians cannot transcend themselves. But historians can and do get past immediate, limiting stances so that they may carefully examine evidence.

In order to examine bias in history, it is helpful to establish two senses of bias. The first, more modest sense, suggests simply that historians have particular perspectives and orientations which impact the examination of historical questions. It is a pre-existing attitude which may be brought to

historical study. I will refer to it as "weak bias". My earlier statement that historical accounts are biased stems from this definition of bias. Certainly bias impacts how historians approach their questions, but weak bias may be no more than a product of the historian's purpose. If the historian is fair minded, this form of bias is not a hindrance to historical study.

The second sense of bias impedes historical research. It is a function of closed-mindedness because a historical problem has been prejudged; conclusions are drawn despite contrary information. Accusations of bias at the first panel of the recent APEC Inquiry in Vancouver, for example, suggested that the inquiry's outcome had been predetermined. No matter what the evidence, it was argued, the conclusions had been drawn. It is in this sense that I use "strong bias". When strong bias is present, honest historical inquiry is precluded. Strong bias means fair examination of historical questions is not possible because conclusions are reached by ignoring relevant evidence.

In some ways, teachers may be responsible for students' prevalent naive notions of history. Questions in books and on exams which ask students to assess the reliability of a source seem to imply that unreliability is a result of bias (Lang, 1993). Instead, students need to learn to discern perspective, strong bias and weak bias. Understanding these concepts leads to richer historical understanding. Students may read historical works which are dated, simplistic or from a particular perspective, but do not necessarily contain strong bias. On the other hand, they may study works which are strongly biased. It is a valuable skill to be able to tell the difference.

In this chapter I examine strong and weak bias, and how understanding these nuanced versions of bias can help develop historical understanding. Because historians bring beliefs, experiences, areas of interest, and further

questions to their study, teachers should draw students' attention to their particular perspectives. We might teach that having a perspective on an issue is quite different from having a strong bias. Students may be able to abandon naive conceptions of bias in order to experience the intellectual richness of historical interpretation.

I use the common terms 'perspective' or 'point of view' to mean the way a person sees an event. Continuing with the APEC example, the perspective of the APEC protesters is undoubtedly different from RCMP officers who were ordered to block them. The RCMP officers must have seen the students as trouble-makers while the students saw themselves, according to their own reports, as legitimately protesting General Suharto's repressive regime.

Students also need to learn how "interpretation" operates in historical inquiry. Interpretation is the general analytical framework given to a event. A feminist perspective may be used to give a feminist interpretation to an event or a Marxist analysis may be used to frame a question. An interpretative framework need not necessarily be an existing academic category. It could be the adult perspective on a child's activity, or a worker's interpretation of an employer.

Given that bias, perspective and interpretation exist in historical study, are all historical accounts equally valid? Can a particular perspective or interpretation be judged more valid than another? How do we identify trustworthy accounts? Is any historical account acceptable? Students need to learn how to evaluate historical works in order to develop historical understanding.

In this chapter I look at three questions which emerge from the literature. The first examines to what extent history is a particular historian's biased

analysis of past events. Is history more than this? The second question asks whether all histories are equally valid. If we accept that either strong or weak bias will be present in all historical accounts, how do we decide on better interpretations? I argue that some histories are better than others and this leads to the third question. By which criteria can we judge historical accounts? If they are not all equal, there must be ways to determine which account is most acceptable.

History as Biased Analysis

When my history classes study the Russian Revolutions, I bring Alexander Kerensky's memoirs (1966) to class and, to make the point that Kerensky was not that far removed from their lives, tell students about Kerensky's lecture at Simon Fraser University in the 1960s. Kerensky had been the leader of the Russian Provisional Government after the overthrow of Czar Nicholas II, had worked with the Bolsheviks to put down the Kornilov coup and ultimately had fled the Winter Palace when Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized power. Kerensky's life after he left Russia was spent trying to explain how Lenin and the Bolsheviks came to control this vast country. Kerensky's account of heroically trying to stave off Bolshevism is no doubt part reconstructed memory and myth, yet Kerensky is a significant historical figure and his account of the revolution provides important historical information.

As Russian leader, Kerensky had access to official corridors of power and particular insights into how events happened. I ask classes to read and discuss excerpts from Kerensky's book and to analyze the information as a source of evidence. Even the best students tend to say unproblematically that Kerensky's

account is biased because he tries to protect his historical position in suggesting the Bolshevik organization was ruthless in achieving power. Students equate Kerensky's insider account with biased information and thereby discount it. They believe Kerensky's position in the Provisional Government means that his account is untrustworthy because his sole concern must have been how his leadership was portrayed.

This example makes it clear that students should learn to judge degrees of bias. The innocuous belief that all historical evidence is equally biased is a stumbling block to promoting historical understanding. Of course historians bring a particular perspective to their work, but they do not necessarily bring a strong bias. What students may be missing is an understanding of how history is produced. Historians, like scientists, do not work in isolation. Their works are judged by peers, their findings are presented or published. Publication elicits responses from other historians knowledgeable about the particular question or the particular methods of inquiry (Bullock, 1962; Wineburg, 1991; Seixas, 1993). For example, Goldhagen's thesis (1996) about ordinary Germans and the responsibility for the Holocaust has been widely reviewed and examined in the historical community (Shandley, 1998), as well as by the public. This book has led to arguably the most important debate about the nature of history and the realities of the Holocaust since A. J. P. Taylor (1961) challenged the thesis that Hitler alone was responsible for the outbreak of World War Two.

Goldhagen's comparative politics dissertation, which became Hitler's Willing Executioners (1996), set off a debate among historians for both its methodology and conclusions. This debate demonstrates that the study of history is more than individual historian's analysis of past events. It is indeed the debate, the ongoing reexamination of questions, the tentative conclusions

which may change over time, the fresh look at old questions, which produces history. Yet this is rarely how history is presented to high school students.

The role of the teacher in bridging the gap between the scholarly and school-based community is examined by Seixas (1993) who explains that while historians produce knowledge and debate it within a community of historians, teachers more commonly accept historians' knowledge and impart it to students. Teachers tend to be, and remain, outside the historians' community because teachers aim to bring accepted understanding to students, whereas historians aim to bring "new" understanding to the discipline. Seixas advocates a community of inquiry to address the gap between the groups.

I believe historians see their work as completely different from a strongly biased analysis of the past and certainly more than a mere compilation of facts. A. J. P. Taylor's thesis (1961) on the reasons for the outbreak of World War Two challenged traditional explanations because Taylor framed and weighed evidence differently than other historians who had studied the same question. His argument was based on the proposal that Hitler was an opportunist who responded to circumstances rather than followed a set plan. Taylor argued that the documents which have been used to show Hitler's war preparations are taken out of context. Similar documents are found in French and British archives, but do not prove, and are not used to prove that France and Britain wanted war. In meetings with his General Staff, Hitler talked of war. Taylor rhetorically asks what other purpose these meetings would have had. Hitler boasted of his military and overinflated its size. Taylor wonders why historians continue to use these figures and not the actual figures indicated in the documents. Despite reworking historical evidence, Taylor is in no way an apologist for Hitler, but finds him despicable, as Taylor does the people who

carried out orders. Taylor believes, however, that Hitler's foreign policy aim was no more than to make Germany a dominant power in Europe. This aim was not unique to national leaders. He writes: "In international affairs there was nothing wrong with Hitler except that he was a German" (p. 27).

Taylor's case study is interesting because his thesis on the cause of World War Two was so different from previous explanations of the beginning of perhaps the twentieth century's most cataclysmic event. His book caused great general interest in history and sparked much debate because he used evidence known and available to other historians. Perhaps previous historians' anti-Hitler bias was a factor in their work. Their accounts may have had more to do with knowing that Germany started World War Two when she invaded Poland in September, 1939, than information they read in the documents. The outcome of the actions perhaps influenced previous historians. As argued in chapter two, a sense of outcome makes it difficult for historians to weigh the evidence without considering the result of the action. Presentism too certainly played a role. It is difficult to imagine any "pro-German" history in the years immediately following the war. Emotions ran high and the horrific results of Hitler's policies were still fresh in people's minds. Indeed, Taylor's work, which in the 1990s tends to be seen as superb history, was viewed as pro-German and biased by some historians and members of the public when it was first published.

Historians have continually studied the 1919 Paris peace conference where the architects of the treaties had strong anti-German feelings. Although the Great Powers in Europe shared responsibility for the outbreak of World War One, Germany became the primary enemy as the war progressed and she was later forced to accept responsibility for the war in a specific clause in the Treaty of Versailles. The results of the war influenced political decision making.

Historians tend to be critical of Germany's harsh treatment because they understand that this treatment later helped fuel dangerous nationalism.

These examples show how complicated bias can be. It may be in the documentary evidence or it may reside in the historian, or both. It is an undeniable and fertile factor in how history is produced. The historical community accepts a fresh analysis such as Taylor's because the account is fair minded, based on depth and breadth of evidence and holds up under peer scrutiny. It does not mean that all historians agree with him, rather that his work adds to the historical understanding of the issue.

Historical Validity

Because history is constructed by historians who are situated in their own time and make judgments about what is significant in the past, how can differing accounts be evaluated? E.H. Carr openly rejects the notion "that history has no meaning, or a multiplicity of equally valid or invalid meanings, or the meaning which we arbitrarily choose to give to it" (1961, p. 109). He thinks some accounts are more durable, more able to hold true for a longer period of time. Longevity occurs when a historian has the capacity "to project his vision into the future in such a way as to give him a profound and more lasting insight into the past" (p. 123). Carr's analysis suggests objectivity comes closer as past, present and future are linked. He defines objectivity as a historical conclusion independent of an individual mind. According to Carr, the hallmark of the historian is, that while never fully objective, to strive for objectivity.

E.H. Dance (1960) argues that there can be no such thing as objective history because all matters reflect subjective positions and are open to

interpretation, most of which he believes, reflect national positions. This argument raises an issue for history teachers because if Dance's position is accepted, it is impossible to evaluate national positions. Dance seems to imply that histories merely reflect the broader civic realities. Dance claims "subjective" means reflecting particular points of view which cannot be sidestepped. He believes historians cannot look disinterestedly at an event. As an example, Dance compares a German and an English elementary school book in terms of the key events of the first part of the sixteenth century. He finds there are no items in common. Dance claims this is because the books reflect two different points of view. These viewpoints show that what is important for one nationality is not for another. Dance finds it impossible to avoid this in national histories.

> No doubt the American teacher will say that the Russian teacher is not honest in his belief; no doubt the Russian will say the same of the American. That sort of reasoning leads us nowhere. Our failure to appreciate the sincerity of people whose ideas are opposed to our own is at the bottom of most of the misconceptions in history books, and indeed in life itself. (p. 18)

This explanation highlights the problem of judging historical accounts. National histories may be written by well-intentioned authors, but Dance believes the history always reflects national interests. History books may also reflect specific interpretations. Dance, using his own British history texts, writes that his generation was warned to watch for Whig interpretation in history, but it was merely replaced by Tory interpretation in subsequent books. Stomping out one interpretative ideology does not mean it will not be replaced by another. Dance argues that it is impossible to have unfiltered historical accounts. History cannot and will not be free of interpretative bias. For Dance, bias is a factor in history textbooks, which means that judging a history's validity is a subtle art.

Dance's definition of "bias" goes beyond mere national points of view.

He claims that the main cause is not biased research, but historians' unwillingness to look critically at simple statements. Thus, they get things wrong. For Dance, bias means ignoring available information and, as a consequence, producing distortion. By this definition, national histories such as school textbooks contain strong bias. Dance has numerous examples of this:

> Non-British historians seem not to realize that the size of the British Navy in the past has been due, not to a desire to dominate, but to the strategic necessities of an island country with a lop-sided economy. Historians of western Europe fail to appreciate what is patent to every educated Russian, how very land-locked Russia's ports have been throughout her history. French historians appear unconscious that all German history has been conditioned far more by what happens across the Vistula than by what happens across the Rhine. European histories (all but the most advanced) treat the United States as a land of one culture instead of many--and some elementary books treat it as a land of no culture at all. (pp. 40-41)

Dance continues his analysis by questioning whether these prejudices are the results of accident, ignorance or, more consciously, a refusal to learn what would rather not be known. Whatever the reason for the wrong information, the results are dismal:

> And so the children of the whole world grow up with the impression that their own people has done more for civilization than any other. In all these cases a very little research, not among documents in archives, but in the popular books and elementary histories of other countries, would correct national complacencies and prevent them accumulating, as they do, like rolling snowballs. (p. 43)

In his exploration of ideological textbooks, Dance focuses on those from Nazi and Communist Russian. He points out that explicitly ideological regimes are very conscious of the purpose of schooling children. Confronting such people with their own propaganda and beliefs will not make them ashamed; they acknowledge meeting their objective. Certainly Goebbels and the Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment were clear about their objectives and knew

what results they wanted. Dance reminds us how ideological education is constructed. Emphasis on certain events, lack of counter arguments and simplicity are key factors. In the case of Nazi history textbooks, they were a refreshing change to many Germans from the former, tedious books. Dance suggests that explicitly ideological histories are not as valid as national histories because their baser purpose reduces the validity.

Dance's conclusion that national histories are better than ideological ones, provides an argument that histories are not equally valid. Even these crude examples make the point that criteria can be established by which histories can be judged. Those reflecting strong national bias which identify the historian's patriotic purpose, but do not necessarily give a fair-minded interpretation of what happened in the past, are clearly not as valid for developing students' historical understanding, as books which give fair-minded, critical analysis of the past. Taylor (1961) has proven that fresh insight is possible if historians are open- and fair-minded. All histories cannot be equally valid. Some history may be simply bad history: poorly researched and written. Historical accounts which are the most valid, even for Dance, are concerned with a fair-minded representation of the past. The next question then, is by which criteria can we judge historical accounts.

Judging Historical Accounts

In order to judge historical accounts, there should be clarity about what can be expected from the discipline. A definition of history commonly held by people unschooled in history is that it offers an objective, disinterested account of the past. This belief most likely comes from the understanding that historians

reconstruct the past through tangible evidence. This understanding of history, however, contains its own problem: the same evidence may lead to conflicting versions. If one account is objective and therefore true, does this mean that contrasting accounts must be false? The issue of interpretation is ignored in this common definition.

The belief that pursuit of knowledge must be primarily concerned with objectivity, argues Richard Rorty (1987), stems from the dominance of science in our culture. Because it is commonly believed that science offers 'hard', 'objective' correspondence to reality, humanists are in the uncomfortable position of measuring their conclusions by the same criteria. Rorty posits that the scientist has replaced the priest "as the person who keeps humanity in touch with something beyond itself" (p. 6). If humanistic disciplines are unable to offer the prediction and technology which natural sciences do, Rorty writes, these disciplines are seen as less significant. He believes that attempts to frame the humanities in scientific terms cannot be successful because science and the humanities are different enterprises. At the same time, questions about objectivity and truth are important to both sciences and humanities. Rorty believes that the humanities and the arts tend to be seen as ignoring the pursuit of truth, and thus have been relegated to mere entertainment. He thinks we should examine questions about truth with a new vocabulary, and we should start with a new way of looking at the natural sciences. The purpose is not to debunk the scientist, Rorty says, but to "simply ceas[e] to see him on the model of the priest." As it is now, science dominates "as the place where the human mind confronts the world" (p. 7).

Rorty looks at reasons for the domination of science. Why is scientific knowledge so appealing? What does science offer that history does not? He

believes that part of the answer lies in the method: the criteria for success are predetermined. Scientific experiments are successful when the outcome meets the hypothesis. Rorty contrasts the scientist with poets and painters, who may not know what they want to do until they have done it. A key factor in scientific methodology is the ability to predict. The answers to scientific questions may give the impression of certainty which history, by her very nature, cannot offer. According to Rorty, this is the problem. If the criteria for success are predetermined and the objective is the ability to predict, humanities can never meet the criteria and cannot be objective. Their very nature means they do not fit the definition. If, however, the factors found in sciences are merely considered 'rational,' and 'rational' is expanded to mean 'reasonable', the humanities can be accepted as a bona fide source of knowledge. This expanded definition is important because it includes attributes shared by science and the humanities: "moral virtues: tolerance, respect for the opinions of those around one, willingness to listen, reliance on persuasion rather than force" (pp. 8-9).

Rorty believes that if this larger definition of rationality is accepted, the objective / subjective debate no longer has merit. But as long as notions of objectivity in science dominate, and objectivity is the measure of truth, only science is considered able to generate truth. Rorty considers 'truth' a univocal term which applies equally to, for example, judgments of lawyers, physicists or literary critics. He may not include historians on this list, but the point is clear. Unforced agreement "gives us everything in the way of 'objective truth' which one could possibly want: namely, intersubjective agreement" (pp. 10-11).

From this I extrapolate that Rorty believes truth is achieved if a community of historians, through fair-minded research, honest debate, formulation and

reformulation of ideas based on fluid interaction, arrive at substantiated conclusions. Their conclusions would meet the criteria of intersubjective agreement. Rorty is not concerned with ultimate truth because he believes neither science nor the humanities offer this. But he challenges the notion that science produces a superior way of explaining events.

Rorty further explains intersubjective agreement by acknowledging that intersubjectivity can be challenged by accusations of relativism. He sees three distinct ways of defining relativism. The first, that every belief is as good as every other, he claims is silly. Some explanations are simply more rigorous, more complete, more disciplined and truthful than others.

The second possible definition, that 'truth' has as many meanings as there are contexts, Rorty calls wrong-headed. As social creatures, people determine criteria for judging what is best for particular situations. These criteria do not have to hold for all cases at all times. Yet without agreed upon criteria, each person would define truth in his own way. It becomes impossible to build community, a key requirement of a healthy society.

The third possible definition of relativism admits to ethnocentricism: nothing can be true apart from the familiar procedures of justification which society uses in one or another area of enquiry. As a self-proclaimed pragmatist, Rorty holds this view. He states that it is not that he believes something is relative to something else, but that the traditional distinction between knowledge and opinion should be dropped. Knowledge is considered true, while opinion is considered assumption. Rorty is not sure this is the case. He knows claims of being ethnocentric sound suspicious, but that is only so if one is guilty of "pigheaded refusal to talk to representatives of other communities" (p. 11). His point is that as members of society we have beliefs and notions, and, instead of

denying these influences, we should acknowledge them and work forward from that point.

The argument over which definition of truth to accept is an issue for historians. What kind of truth can the study of history provide? Rorty writes at length about how we should not be concerned about metaphorically coming closer to a perfect explanation of events as if the one explanation of the past is out there waiting for us. He finds it much richer to accept that more diverse rather than more unified explanations will be written. "We should think of human progress as making it possible for human beings to do more interesting things and be more interesting people, not as heading toward a place which has somehow been prepared for us in advance" (p. 14). According to Rorty, it is far healthier to equate 'true' with 'justified' than 'true' with 'only one acceptable account.' This is an important distinction for historians. By accepting that the purpose of writing history is to provide justified accounts of the past, historians avoid focusing on debates about truth, which ultimately confuse rather than clarify their work. At the same time, this may be a non-issue for historians. They understand their purpose and aim to write substantiated accounts about what happened in the past. It is perhaps teachers, textbook authors and students who need to spend more time making sense of historical truth.

Intersubjective agreement, which Rorty considers truth, means the agreement on what is "true" is determined without the scientific notion of objectivity. Stated another way, this means that historians do not need to use the same method as, for example, scientists. Both professions seek truth, but scientific knowledge does not deserve special status simply because it follows procedures laid down in advance.

A case study which helps make this point is the recent debate around

Columbus's 1492 voyage. As 1992 approached, celebrations marking the trip were planned, only to be publicly challenged by historians and lay people who felt the voyage and its impact had been blatantly distorted in textbooks and general understanding (Meltzer, 1994; Loewen, 1995; Trouillot, 1995). The official story commonly claimed that brave Columbus "discovered" America in the name of Spain. Gentle European influence tamed uncivilized natives and brought progress and enlightenment to the New World. The evidence had been in the documents since 1492. What then, made the "official" myth no longer generally accepted? How did the sanitized version of the events come under scrutiny?

The bias of past historians was identified in the way that information from the documents was selected. Information which did not fit the grand narrative of the superiority of European civilization was not used. Post-colonial historians, perhaps subject to their own bias, looked at the evidence in a more critical way and re-wrote the story of the 1492 journey. The result has been a more fair-minded analysis of Columbus's voyage and a more historically justified account. Columbus's motivation was probably not his religious fervour, but the hope of finding gold. Columbus, in reality, allowed natives to be treated like animals, even though textbooks generally depict Columbus's interaction with natives more heroically (Loewen, 1995). Loewen's study shows that these textbook accounts are not justified, but are repeated because of naive conceptions of the importance of historical heroes. Students are given the information as representing what actually happened when in fact these accounts are not true, nor are they justified by the evidence in the documents. As I am not analyzing textbooks in this paper, I will take this point only far enough to suggest that if students lack criteria for judging historical accounts, they are passive recipients

of information and it is not surprising that studies show students commonly consider history boring and irrelevant (Loewen, 1995).

There are factors which can help teachers and students judge the merits of historical arguments. First, historical accounts that are blatantly one-sided should be suspect. It may be that the other sides are dismissed as having no merit, or ignored altogether. Information may be presented as wrong or right without a suggestion that a moderate middle ground is possible. A justified historical account includes counter-argument and deals with conflicting information in a fair manner. A.J.P. Taylor (1961) makes his argument more convincing by confronting analyses which conflict with his own.

A second factor in judging historical accounts is analysis of the language. By way of example, Dance (1960) points out that there is a difference between occupying, annexing and liberating a country. Students should learn to look at the general tone of an historical account by analyzing the language. Did Columbus "discover" the New World or make "contact" with the Americas? Historians are re-examining how "new" the world was, since exploration did not begin with Europeans (Loewen, 1995, pp. 37 - 44).

Another point of language analysis can be to distinguish between warranted facts and unwarranted values which are often presented as if they are the same thing. Columbus, for example, changed his portrayal of Indians from when he was trying to impress Queen Isabella, to when he needed to justify enslavement. Language shifted to reflect different values, yet both sets of descriptors were presented as if they were facts. At first Columbus wrote that Indians were "well built", "of quick intelligence", and claimed "they have good memories." These phrases changed when he wanted to exploit them. He later called them "cruel," "stupid", "warlike and numerous" (Loewen, p. 58). Analysis

of language may indicate that a particular version of the events has been carefully crafted, and in this sense, the facts really do not speak for themselves.

A third factor in judging historical accounts is the credibility of the source. Is the author reputable and well-informed? Does the author have an obvious bias? For example, David Irving's work on the Holocaust is accepted only in limited circles because of his reputation for Holocaust denial (Breitman, 1992). The credibility of the author is usually a reflection of the esteem held by a peer group. Carr's (1961) and Dance's (1960) books are commonly called classics because of their comprehensive and critical treatment of history. Taylor (1961) tends to be respected because of his open-minded approach to evidence.

Another factor linked to the credibility of the author is credibility of the publisher. Is the work printed or broadcast in a reputable newspaper, magazine, web site, or by a reputable publisher? I am not suggesting small, independent companies are not credible. If fact, many publish important, critical information (for example, Arsenal Pulp Press which published Francis, 1992; 1997). On the other hand, reputable companies tend to avoid one-sided, dogmatic works (such as Gunn, 1987). Credibility of sources becomes a thorny issue if students learn history only from textbooks. Presumably the textbook is used because it matches the curriculum, and students may have difficulty criticizing the book which for many of them is key to their success in the course.

Conclusions

This chapter examines certain issues around bias. I suggest that bias is unavoidable in historical accounts, but in order to develop historical judgment, it is necessary to distinguish between strong and weak bias. This also provides a

way to judge historical accounts. I suggest students have a naive understanding of bias and tend to consider information biased if it is opposite to their own beliefs.

I argue that while historians cannot be bias free, they can write histories which are not simply their own biased analysis of past events. It is true they cannot escape their own beliefs and situation, but by being fair and open-minded, they are able to analyze events at a distance. Certainly Taylor (1961) was able to transcend being British in his examination of the origins of the second World War. The second point I make is that history is more than a particular historian's biased version of the past because while historical accounts may be produced by individuals, they gain acceptance within a community of historians. Learned communities decide what historical accounts are justified. Historians may adjust their views in light of colleagues' responses.

Finally, I argue that histories are not equally valid. Some, especially textbooks, reflect specific ideologies or national histories. Nevertheless, fair representation of the past is possible, even if it is not universally found in textbooks. I develop this idea further in the last section of the chapter which outlines Rorty's argument that historians produce justifiable accounts of what happened in the past. Ultimate truth cannot be the objective of the historian, but justifiable historical accounts can be produced.

CHAPTER FIVE

"The reason for teaching history is not that it changes society, but that it changes *pupils*; it changes what they see in the world, and how they see it."

Peter Lee

Teaching for Historical Understanding

Overview

The issues I identified in the previous chapters suggest that teaching history to high school students is a challenging undertaking. History teachers typically want students to develop historical understanding of the vast time span and topics covered in the prescribed curriculum. I believe that students become better history students when they engage with the discipline as practised by historians. History teachers' can bridge the gap between historian and student in order to make the teaching of history less rote and more fascinating by presenting the complexity of historical study to students. Student anecdotes tell me that the more I give them the opportunity to work with historians' accounts of the past, the greater interest they have in the discipline. In other words, the more history is taught as historians understand it, the more likely it is that students will want to continue to study history.

In the pages which follow, I discuss some implications of my study for history teachers and make suggestions for developing historical thinking. These are not meant to be prescriptive nor exhaustive but touch on some of the key points from the previous pages. I anticipate that student learning would become

more sophisticated if these suggestions are followed. I did not systematically study student attitudes or achievement and have no evidence to support this contention. I do not say much about the curriculum either. History 12 and IB History curriculum documents articulate profound aims and goals, but they are mere words on the page if teachers do not teach them richly and systematically. Finally, History 12 and IB History students write final examinations set by outside authorities. Although these exams put significant pressure on students and teachers, it is my hope that implementation of the following strategies may make the exams more accessible to students. The recommendations mirror the main issues of the thesis: selection of facts, construction of facts, use of "grand narratives" and identification of bias.

Teaching about Selectivity and Construction of Facts

As I suggested in chapter two, the issues around selection and construction of facts are fundamental to building understanding of the discipline of history. Facts are the domain of the historian; information about the past becomes historical facts only when used in a particular way. I also suggested that if teachers are serious about developing students' historical understanding, they need to have their students explicitly examine how historical facts are determined. As I argued in the section about how historical significance is determined; facts reflect historians' interests. Students must be helped to understand that everything that happened in the past is not a historical fact. Facts are carefully crafted.

My research leads me to conclude that notions of historical significance are particularly important. Students should learn that conceptions of

significance largely determine what is studied. My first suggestion is that teachers adopt strategies designed to address this issue. A specific lesson to help students understand how significance influences the choice of facts is offered by Seixas (1996). Students are asked to list four significant events in their life and write their autobiography based on these four events. When they have completed this task, they are asked to pick four different events that are important in their life and write their story based on these. Students quickly see that the initial understanding of significance determines what four events they choose. Each set of four is important, but may provide profoundly different insights into themselves. This exercise may stimulate discussion of "truth" as well. Students see that the issue is not that one account is true while another is false, but that both offer different insights into a particular life. This may allow students to understand that if one version is true, the other is not necessarily false.

Most students believe facts speak for themselves (Gardner, 1991), which indicates a naive understanding of how historical facts are produced. In order to teach about the construction of facts, students might need to learn a different way of describing evidence. It is likely they have learned the terms "primary" and "secondary sources," and understand primary sources to be the foundation of history, the supply of facts from which the historian writes a secondary account. This often leads to the belief that primary sources have more credibility because they are objective information. Somehow students misunderstand that sources are actually selected by historians in order to make a particular argument. When students identify primary and secondary sources in isolation, they do not necessarily have to confront the idea that historical facts are selected. In order to be meaningful, the production of historical sources of

evidence may need a new vocabulary to describe their tentative nature.

Seixas (1996) suggests using "accounts" and "traces" rather than "primary" and "secondary sources" to teach this concept. He differentiates between the two by suggesting that traces are official, public documents as well as unofficial, private documents and relics, whereas accounts are the explanations which come from traces. Filmmakers, grandmothers or historians may supply the context of accounts. Seixas recognizes that both traces and accounts may change over time. Neither can be read directly or absolutely. If the vision of what is considered important changes, the way traces are treated, and how accounts are presented, changes. A diary of a servant who worked at the Charlottetown conference can be considered a trace as it may not tell us exactly what was happening at the conference, but it can help form an account if an historian uses the diary combined with other traces to reconstruct the mood at this pre-Confederation conference. Although traces and accounts may be difficult concepts for students, it is worth teaching Seixas's way of classifying evidence because by understanding that the significance of historical evidence may shift, students can develop historical understanding.

A second issue in relation to selectivity and construction of facts worth teaching students is the historian's purpose. Teachers can use sources such as Bullock (1962) to suggest that historians have questions which they bring to their work. This means there is a purpose to their research. Library shelves are lined with history books whose introductions explicitly state the writers' purpose. I suggest history teachers set up lessons which encourage students to read introductions in history books. Most historians clearly explain their position and philosophy of history. If the purpose is not explicitly stated, teachers can challenge students to find the purpose in the body of the work. Textbook

introductions should be treated the same way. Students can be invited to learn what authors tell readers about why they wrote their books.

Two other factors I identified--sense of outcome and presentism--are also important to a richer understanding of history. Students' tendency to enjoy passing judgment on historical events creates a deterministic view of the past. Teenagers see themselves as smarter than historical figures. When I have students role play the 1938 Munich Conference, most are reluctant to play Neville Chamberlain, who they see as weak and irresponsible. One way to create a more realistic sense of historical figures is by studying current events. Current issues can help students understand that if the outcome of an event is not known, decisions may be very different than if the outcome is known. Students really do not know what current leaders might do next. Postulating the as yet unknown actions of a contemporary figure can be used to help students appreciate the uncertain state facing historical figures.

The study of regions which receive wide media attention is also useful for developing students' appreciation of the need to avoid interpreting history without regard for sense of outcome and presentism. The recent N.A.T.O. air strikes on Serbia and Kosovo, for example, provide a rich source of information to show that as a crisis is happening, we cannot be sure what the next event will be. But once something has happened, it becomes easy to criticise a decision and suggest an alternative to bring about different results. In the case of the Kosovo crisis, the class can research the conflict and look at N.A.T.O. deadlines and extensions before the air strikes began. Students can be asked to predict what will happen in the region in the following months, and can check their predictions against future information which they will learn by tracking events in the region.

To make the point that knowing the outcome of an event is often a factor in how we judge it, a current events study could parallel an historical study, such as the 1938 Munich Conference which gave Hitler the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. Students are usually incredulous that the Sudetenland was given to Germany without the Czechoslovakian government's involvement. They believe Hitler should never have had his demands met. I am convinced that their thinking is a result of knowing the eventual outcome. The appeasers, however, did not know that Hitler would attempt to take more territory. Students usually believe that there should have been an international movement to stop Hitler, and they consider the politicians of the time weak.

Teachers can help students feel like historical players by shifting the lesson back to current events, such as the conflict over Kosovo. Students are often frustrated when asked to write down how a conflict will unfold and how it will end because, as in the case of Kosovo, they do not know with certainty how events will develop. They cannot know Serbian President Milosovic's plans. Just as students cannot know how far the Serbian government will go to maintain power, European leaders could not know with certainty that a war would break out in Europe in September, 1939. Students should be taught that living after-the-fact cannot help but impact how we see the past. I believe this will help them become more complex thinkers and help them get past the frustration of not knowing how events will progress.

Teachers have an ongoing challenge to deal with bias in history. In chapter two I suggested that obvious bias comes from a failure to use evidence honestly. The ongoing antics of Ernst Zundel provide an example of misuse of evidence. The Holocaust is not the only topic to make the point, but it is effective. Given the Canadian spin of the Keegstra and Zundel stories, Holocaust deniers

are an appropriate subject because students tend to be surprised that this form of extreme thought operates in Canada. Teachers can use Keegstra and Zundel as examples that people will let their bias distort history, but should be clear that gross distortion of the past is not what history is about.

Teaching about Grand Narratives

In chapter three I explain Hayden White's thesis that the narrative form, by its very construction with a beginning, middle and end, has meaning embedded in it. This is of interest to history teachers because history tends to be written as narrative. I included Eco statement that the attempt to give order to the world always takes a narrative form. I wonder if the claim that meaning arises from the narrative form itself is important for high school history teaching. I think it might be taught to particularly sophisticated classes, but this notion might be too confusing for most high school students. Teachers need to judge if students can make sense of the concept and if it can be used to develop historical thinking.

If a teacher wished to explore the effect of the narrative form with a class, it might work best with an example of a historical period or events foreign to students. An ancient civilization might work well. Information could be presented on a timeline with no particular indication when the period began nor when it ended, such as White's example from ancient annals. Students could be asked a series of questions about the historical period such as why the period was important, how it was notable and what factors led to its downfall. No doubt students would find this frustrating because the answers would not be apparent in the information in front of them.

The same historical period could next be presented in narrative form. The beginning, by nature of the introduction, would suggest why the period was a worthwhile topic of study, the middle would describe the key factors in the era's development and the end would indicate why the era ceased. This exercise is a simplistic adaptation of White's point, but a sophisticated class might begin to look at the narrative form more closely. I do not think all students need to participate in this exercise. An adequate level of historical understanding is possible without it. Students can learn and appreciate the complexity of historical study without analyzing the narrative form.

The point that grand narratives typically produce stereotypes is more important for high school classes. Students tend to have no trouble understanding stereotypes because they themselves are often grouped in a negative way. Students love to tell stories about how older people may avoid them if their clothing is less than conservative. Of course, students and teachers hold their own stereotypes and individual teachers need to decide which to carefully deconstruct. Perhaps teachers can supplement a stereotypical narrative with specific exceptions to the "norm" of the narrative. I am particularly cautious about stereotypes because I remember my grade 12 history teacher equating "German" with "Nazi." Teachers know their own community and should use professional discretion in addressing this issue.

As the Nazi stereotype of Jews is unavoidable in history class, it must be dealt with carefully. Most students find it amazing that all German Jews did not leave the country when they could. I suggest to them that it may be that after living in Germany for generations, many Jews felt themselves more German than Jewish. It was Nazi ideology which lumped all Jews together and declared them the enemy which threatened the Reich. It did not matter what individuals

thought or did, if they had Jewish blood, they were targeted. That is the point of stereotypes. People are essentialized and lose individual characteristics. There is no way to assert individuality as the stereotype determines the judgment.

Political cartoons may be an excellent teaching tool for pointing out how stereotypes are constructed. Cartoons usually contain stereotypical portrayals of public figures. My caution about cartoons is they might teach the wrong lesson. Cartoonists often reinforce stereotypes through exaggeration so teachers need to choose them carefully in order to make the appropriate point.

In chapter three I also suggested that power relations are reflected in grand narratives. High school students can understand the concept of power. An appropriate way to teach about power relations may be through children's stories. Teachers can suggest that many histories may reflect a version of the past told by the powerful.

Classic bed-time stories are wonderful teaching tools for this. I start with The Three Little Pigs, a story which most students know. I then read them The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs by A. Wolf (Scieszka, 1989) which starts with the provocative statement: "Everyone knows the story of the Three Little Pigs. Or at least they think they do....Nobody knows the real story because nobody has ever heard *my* side of the story." Students realize it is possible to rewrite the story by adjusting the facts. The wolf is suggesting the pigs, who had the power to tell their story for so long, now have to be corrected. In the "true" story, the wolf has a cold, but wants to bake his grandmother a birthday cake. He admits he 'huffed and puffed', but claims it was merely a sneeze which came up just as he was knocking on the door. Nevertheless, the pigs fabricated and spread the story of how bad the wolf was, when in fact all the wolf wanted to do was borrow

a cup of sugar. The story is a powerful example of grand narratives reflecting power relations.

Next, teachers can introduce students to The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig. This story reverses the characters of the original story and the pig destroys three of the wolves' houses until they build one out of flowers. The pig adores the smells, becomes a good pig and lives the rest of his happy life with the wolves. This opens students to the possibility that some historical accounts are less valid than other accounts, a point I discuss in chapter four. Students tend to be skeptical about this version because it seems unlikely to them. These stories taken together can lead to discussions about how history may be revised. Teachers can give examples of historical questions that are commonly re-examined. They can study the traditional and revisionist versions of Columbus. Perhaps students could be asked to re-write Confederation from French nationalist point of view. The general aim of the exercise is to make students aware that the stories are reflections of power or shifts in power.

I was clear in chapter three that despite criticism of grand narratives, they are justified in high school history. I think teachers need to provide students with comprehensive stories and reject fragmentary history. Isolated fragments of history tend to work against developing historical understanding in students. Grand narratives should not neglect colourful figures and less than heroic material, but their strength is in providing a framework for understanding. Successes and failures should be included, as well as the characters' inner turmoil. Within a greater story, there can still be historical honesty. Any of Milton Meltzer's history books for young people are examples of honest narratives that show peoples' doubts, uncertainties and failures, as well as their triumphs.

Teaching about Bias

My research suggests that better understanding of bias is important to developing students' historical understanding. The issue of bias is no doubt worsened by reliance on authoritative textbooks which often do not acknowledge bias. Relying on textbooks can be limiting and often produces dull history. Reading historians' works may give high school students the experience of history's richness. If they are led to conclude that all history is biased, without a more careful look at what that means, students will not develop a sophisticated understanding of history.

I propose that a new vocabulary is needed to develop historical thinking in high school. If students are quick to classify an account as biased and thereby dismiss it, the opportunity to look more critically at historical accounts is lost. If historical characters are seen as no more than people holding biased positions, students might not have cause to examine their own beliefs and assumptions which determine their point of view. Understanding historical agency may only occur if students know that they themselves come to topics with specific positions. Questions around degrees of bias need to be explored in the history classroom. Teaching students about "weak" and "strong" bias will give them a vocabulary to make discerning judgments.

Students should investigate whether history is merely the story of an individual historian's particular analysis of past events. If they believe that historians are free to write what they wish regardless of the evidence, and that all accounts are equally biased, students will continue to hold a naive view of history. They need to learn to situate particular historical accounts and examine

how they fit into the historiographical debate.

An example of a central historiographical issue in the twentieth century is how and why war broke out in Europe in September, 1939. This is a good example of how history is produced in an historical community, and shows that although individual historians can be influential, their work will be challenged and not necessarily accepted. As I outlined in chapter four, the answer to how and why war broke out in 1939 was one-sided until A.J.P. Taylor published The Origins of the Second War War (1961). Up to to that point, historians had concluded that Hitler was the cause of war. Taylor's book was widely successful and stirred great controversy. Some people suggested that Taylor was an apologist for Hitler, a charge he vigorously denied. He said the duty of the historian is to explain, not excuse or condemn. Taylor explained that Hitler had no long term goal to achieve power, nor did he seize it. Chancellor Papen and his associates gave it to Hitler. Austrian Anschluss was a product of Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg's policies more than Hitler's. Czechoslovakia was dismantled on Britain's insistence, not Hitler's. Taylor was using a different framework for the subject than the framework used by earlier historians.

As the Taylor thesis refutes earlier work on the subject, it is a good example for problematizing common historical understanding. First, students could be taught the common narrative that Hitler's singlehanded manipulation of the late 1930s led to war. Then, the Taylor thesis might be taught with emphasis on how his work is a less biased piece of history. Not only is Taylor a respected and respectable historian, he rises above nationalism. His British citizenship does not preclude him from critically examining the evidence. The Taylor example offers students a glimpse of an historian who is able to break out of a national position and look critically at a question. Students may be

quick to label Taylor anti-Semitic, perhaps even a Holocaust denier. Of course, he is neither. He finds the treatment of Jews by Nazi Germany beyond repugnant. But his work was not written to explain the Nazis' racial policies, rather to explain how the war broke out. Students cannot easily dismiss Taylor's work as simply being biased. It is a carefully researched and written piece and shows them how history is complex and compelling.

Students will most likely adopt the position that all histories are equally valid if all they know is that historical accounts contain bias. If students are not taught to distinguish between strong and weak bias, they may be left with the misbelief that historians all reflect equally biased positions. As a result, students will be unable to differentiate between superior and inferior history. Providing students with a more sophisticated understanding implies they will be able to examine historical accounts more critically, and will be able to learn to distinguish between good and bad history.

Once they accept that some accounts are better than others, students need to work out criteria for judging differing historical accounts. Most students have a sense that the best accounts must be based on evidence, that the evidence must not be fabricated, that the interpretation must be accepted by others and that the historian's purpose must be honest. A specific example may help students understand how complex judging historical information can be. Not only do they have to consider the information, but they should consider its source. Sir Thomas More, as presented by authors of varying motivation and authority, is the object of a case study which makes this point (Case, Daniels & Schwartz, 1996). The exercise asks students to decide which source is most reliable and which one is least trustworthy. Students must critically examine the historical accounts and give substantiated answers. In chapter four I offered

three factors to consider to help judge historical accounts. These are not definitive, but may serve as a starting point for discussion. As students become more sophisticated in historical thinking, they will expand their criteria.

Conclusion and Further Issues

As I wrote in the introduction, my own engagement with philosophical issues about history and specific historical questions produced changes in how I think about and teach history. At the very core of my interest is a passionate belief that formal, even informal, historical study enriches lives. The connection of past, present and future is more than a slogan; it provides insight into the human condition and can provide individuals with a qualitatively better life. We are as fascinated by where we came from as by where we are going. Systematic study of history can continually fuel curiosity.

As a result of my study, I have further questions about how to most effectively teach history. I realize how important the role of the teacher is. I wonder if history as historians understand it and how high school history teachers portray it will intersect. Do other teachers think this is possible or worthwhile? History teachers must be at the center of any change because they are the ones who would provide their students with the necessary instruction. Like anything meaningful, good history teaching requires clear conceptualization of the task. Perhaps a more thorough education of teachers as well as students about historiography is necessary.

Students' cognitive understanding is another point for further exploration. How do high school students best learn history? High school students make sense of history in different ways than adults. They think differently from the way

history teachers think about the curricular topics. It may be worth researching how teachers can bridge this gap.

Because it is historians' work which is at the centre of the discipline, it would be helpful to explore ways to bring historians and high school history students and teachers closer together. There are, of course, problems. Students are not bona fide members of the same community and cannot be given the burden of creating justifiable meaning. On the other hand, students can be involved in generating possible historical meaning. What form might this take in light of the time and budget constraints of most high schools?

A personal anecdote will conclude this paper. When I began teaching, the tests I composed for students clearly discriminated between students who learned (or memorized) historical information and those who did not. Now my assessment is moving towards measuring historical understanding. A messy and complicated task, it has given me new enthusiasm for teaching. Students tell me they are more engaged, more challenged and feel more valued as thinkers when they are asked to explain an answer in a profoundly historical way. As a student and as a teacher, I continue to learn about history. The by-product is enthusiasm for history. By any measure, a victory.

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