

Is history fiction and a global history of modern historiography

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Is History Fiction? & a Global History of Modern Historiography Is History Fiction? Curthoys and Docker question the validity and truth of History by identifying the ' doubleness of history'. These authors argue that there exists a space between two forms of History. The first form is History as the scrutiny of information sources and History as the collection of various literary forms. They argue that this space room makes History uncertain and full of disagreements. In addition, this doubleness makes History a shifting and self- transforming subject. Curthoys and Docker (138) trace this double character back to the beginning of Western History. Early historians view Herodotus as the father of Western History. Unfortunately, Herodotus also orchestrated many lies especially on Greece states.

This book also identifies a double character in Thucydides' History.

Thucydides' History double's character is that it represents a focused accounts of events but at the same time, it is also an excellent literary works. Curthoys and Docker argue that although Herodotus and Thucydides are important history writings, they represent different modes of writings (169).

The contrast in Herodotus and Thucydides also involve the quality of the writings. These two History writings use cosmopolitan and internationalists modes to write History. In the progress, they ignored classical Greece sources and therefore, failed to write History as a progressive story.

This book also highlights the questioning of the truth of history that took place in the 1960s and 70s known as the postmodernism. Poststructuralists like Foucault and Derrida argued that History contains no truth since all the interpretations are equally good. The authors state that Foucault advocated

for a true historical form of evaluating historical writings. Derrida supported the strict evaluation of various texts to verify the existence of a historical event. The authors conclude by stating that historians cannot objectively obtain the truth about History (Curthoys and Docker 330).

A Global History of Modern Historiography

This book provides a global analysis of the history of modern historiography. Majority of books concentrated on analyzing the history of historiography from western perspective. This book examines the development of historical writings not only from western ancient societies, but also from non-western societies. It traces the development of historiography over two centuries ago. In addition, to tracing the transformation of historiography, this book examines the reactions to scientific historiography in the post-colonial and modern world. The main theme of this book is the reaction and adoption of western ideas by historians in the non-western world in addition to the exploration of these ideas using their cultural approach.

This book analyzes the trans-cultural exchanges that took place in the world over two centuries ago. Globalization and westernization were the main drivers of the trans-cultural exchanges that took place in different parts of the world. Iggers, Wang, and Mukherjee analyze the interactions of historical writing between the West and other regions such as the Middle East and South-East Asia (25). It especially focuses on how historians and the public in the Middle East and South and East Asia adopted and adapted historiography methods developed in western countries.

The authors argue for a global approach in the analysis of historical writings from the 18th century to the modern date. Prior to the 18th century, there

were traditions of historiography in different regions of the world such as the West, India, Asia and Middle East. The authors state that nationalistic historiographies developed in various countries of the world. These academic historiographies mainly began in the western countries and later on spread to non-western countries (Iggers, Wang, and Mukherjee 21). The historiographies developed in non-western countries followed the western models to a certain extent.

This book also highlights how new currents of historiography challenged the nationalist and political historiography in the twentieth century. Iggers, Wang, and Mukherjee state that Marxist, cultural, feminist and gender historiographies challenged the political historiography that had developed in the 18th and 19th centuries (21).

Discussion questions

1. Do Historians write about the past using the present terms or do they represent an objective account of the past?
2. Why do historians focus more on the development of historiography in the western world while ignoring the non-western regions?

References

- Curthoys and Docker. *Is History Fiction?* Sydney, AUS: UNSW Press, 2010. Print.
- Iggers, Wang, and Mukherjee. *A Global History of Modern Historiography.* New York, NY: Routledge Publishers, 2008. Print.