

Everything your american history book got wrong

[History](#), [American History](#)



James Loewen's book entitled ' Lies MyTeacherTold Me: Everything Your American History Book Got Wrong' speaks of criticism against twelve American history textbooks that mislead readers by representing facts and viewpoints that are actually far from truth.

There is often a hitch of bias in the way history is being presented nowadays, what Loewen (2008) defined as heroification or " a degenerative process that makes people over into heroes... turn flesh-and-blood individuals into pious, perfect creatures without conflicts, pain, credibility, or human interest" (p. 19). From the Pilgrims up the occurrence of the Vietnam War, this Eurocentric method of formulating the teaching of history bears thoughts and issues, which appear to be very irrelevant to the views of everyday lives.

Main Body

Loewen (2008) has inserted in his book the words of W. E. B. Du Bois when he said:

" One is astonished in the study of history at the recurrence of the idea that evil must be forgotten, distorted, skimmed over... The difficulty, of course, with this philosophy is that history... paints perfect men and noble nations, but it does not tell the truth" (p. 18). In Loewen's book, it is emphasized how history textbooks, which are used today in education, proclaim misleading evidences and details that abuse ' heroification' and put the angle away from truth.

It emphasizes too much on positive qualities that give an overly-emphasized meaning that reflect significant lessons, while distorting the negative characteristics of history and its heroes. By this, students usually find significant lessons in them, such as, for example, Woodrow Wilson and Helen Keller. As Loewen (2008) stated, Wilson was usually pictured as an important president, while Keller was an inspiration to the blind and deaf students of this century (pp. 19-20).

However, as Loewen (2008) stated, “ Heroification so distorts the lives of Keller and Wilson (and many others) that we cannot think straight about them” (p. 20). It takes away the truth behind real people and events by presenting them in a way that leads to a specific objective and design. It fabricates people’s minds after a certain framework that would theoretically lead to a basic viewpoint, picture, or assumption.

Questions that are raised in Loewen’s book consist of the following: (1) How true and accurate are the details that are being presented in educational textbooks in the field of history? (2) How much morality do the authors, publishers, adoption committees, and teachers nowadays possess in presenting facts and issues that should reflect fair, non-bias, and factual details of history? (3) What are the exact causes why most elementary and secondary students find the lectures of history bland, boring, and almost senseless? (4)

How can the process of heroification lead to more positive, truthful, fair, yet fruitful results? Lastly, (5) what can authors, publishers, and teachers do to highlight the truth behind Loewen’s statement that history is an ongoing

process that is influenced by specific events, environments, and characteristics of the past. My general perception after reading the author's viewpoints or perspectives is that, Loewen (2008) has failed to analyze the other end of the pole, which reflects that, prior to a youth's desire to be one of the great men of his time, there first has to be the episode of mental and psychological stimulation and inspiration, before one can project positive results and actions that make history a lot more worthwhile.

Conclusion

I feel that this book of Loewen (2008) is the very thing needed to emphasize the truth behind the statement that history is an ongoing process that is being lived by on the account of one's everyday life. The reading has helped me to formulate my own ideas regarding education, as it reflected the issues of accuracy, morality, and the different tactics used in trying to come up with a structure that makes heroes appear like what the readers would expect them to appear: all faultless, perfect, and absolute. It is, however, far from the truth.

Reference

Loewen, J. W. (2008). Lies my teacher told me: everything your American history textbook got wrong. New York, NY: New Press.