

Stop rewriting history

At some point we must all say, "stop" and agree on one history of America that will not be subject to more rewrites, otherwise each generation that comes along will be tempted to interpret what has happened in America on the basis of what IS happening now. To understand history and make plans for our future we must not treat it as something fluid and always open to revision.

The exception of course is the introduction of new relevant information that comes to light that demands we alter our views of historical events. Absent that, our core history should never be like our own subjective opinions which do change over time. Historical events must always be judged (if it's judgments we want to make) on the basis of context and fact. However, I'm afraid that even the context that surrounds or supports historical events is now being subject to interpretation and is contributing to some pretty nasty cultural and social conflicts.

In order for us to achieve even a modicum of agreement or solidarity on what constitutes true American history we must realize that the process to reach that goal is flawed as there will always be people who will seize on one isolated aspect or event and make it the lynchpin for their argument - whatever that argument might be. It could be the *rape* of the North American continent by the pioneers, the *genocide* of native Americans, the *original sin* of slavery and racism, the *subjugation/ oppression* of women, the *discrimination* against homosexuals, the *disregard* for our environment and of course, the *scourge* of capitalism. To those we must add our *dysfunctional* politics and our *penchant* for going to war, sometimes for the wrong reasons and in the wrong places. In his play the "Tempest" Shakespeare said "what's past is prologue" and there are many who believe that our present and future are inextricably tied to our past and that "what goes around comes around" in a kind of perpetual cosmic circle that is influenced by our Karma or destiny.

In fact, Americans incorporated that belief into their 19th century push westward - that it was America's "manifest destiny" and its "divinely ordained right" to expand its borders to the Pacific Ocean and beyond. Many would say that this was nothing more than a justification for conquering a virgin land. That is but one example from history that can and should be held up for review and that the decisions that followed it using that justification should be more than just a historical footnote for sociologists and the general public to examine when we think about our role in an ever-changing world. History lives and teaches us, but it can be manipulated by unscrupulous people who lust for power, control or money.

It's always easier to view history through the narrow lens of special interests, discarding the events that influenced our decisions and the context in which those decisions were made, but if we do that we are really replacing insight with tunnel vision and allowing IT to be the sole determiner of our beliefs. If we need a case history to prove that point, we can look at any number of our college campuses these days that have erupted with anti-Semitic protests - protests which have not as yet been labeled as 'hate speech' by university authorities and not shut down.

Many in the media are quick to liken these protests against Jews and for the dissolution of Israel (and an intifada) as similar to those of the late sixties when young Americans mobilized to protest the Vietnam war. That is a specious argument inasmuch as the Vietnam war protest movement of a half-century ago was anti-war while this current one is pro-genocide of the Jewish people. Those of us old enough to remember the Holocaust and heard all the Holocaust-deniers attempt to expunge this most heinous moment in world history must stand with Israel and against those who would destroy it.

A century ago we relied on bona fide historians and an academic elite to explain our history to us. Today, we are bombarded with challenges to that history by the media, politicians and the dark money funders of hatred and there is still one more shoe to drop that will challenge and attempt to reshape and rewrite our view of history, and it is perhaps the most insidious one of all.

It is AI or artificial intelligence and it is coming for our history books. To ignore it will not only damage our history, but it will imperil our future. America, beware.

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