

HST 202: ONLINE U.S. History W19 (Escobar)

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Hollywood History & Mythology
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, January 26, 2019, 7:18 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Hollywood History & Mythology topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes the questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Hollywood History & Mythology

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If historians want to acknowledge slavery, why would they allow falsehoods of a Hollywood movie in their textbooks?
by [Alli Crank](#) - Monday, January 28, 2019, 10:35 AM

Both responding personally and academically to these falsehoods, I am concerned. I am not necessarily concerned about historical truth being kept from me, but rather it being manipulated and misinterpreted. I feel that I know “the truth” about events like Amistad because I have prior knowledge and have read what I thought were trustworthy textbooks throughout school growing up. However, had I not had background on the specific event of Amistad, I don’t think I would’ve picked up on how the event was manipulated by it’s Hollywood producers.

Unfortunately, I most likely would’ve believed that what they were showing me was portrayed accurately and relatively fair because like Eric Foner mentioned in his review of the movie “Amistad must be considered a step forward: it’s about slavery...”. But Foner goes on to say that though the movie may have had good intentions, it falsely portrayed this event in history. He exclaims “In the historical case, the defense was handled by veteran abolitionists or by persons who had been working with abolitionists for a long time. Spielberg shaped this group to tell his own story, beginning with reluctant and confused reformers and politicians who, along with the audience, gradually realize the moral imperatives of the case.” The movie allows its viewers to interpret this event as a change in specifically the white leaders of that time.

It is very concerning how well Hollywood is able to do this and how easy it is to believe. But it’s even more concerning to me that this movie was included in our textbook at one point. Foner writes “Amistad's black characters are essentially foils for white self-discovery and moral growth” followed later by Foner expressing that the one the historians do well is acknowledge America’s past of slavery. This being true, how can historians allow kids to read this in their textbook? Sure, this movie is an eye-catcher and an intriguing “awareness creator”, but when so falsely portrayed, and still included in our history textbook, it is confusing and concerning as a student.

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Hollywood in the wrong?

by [Taylor Reid](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 4:44 PM

I am not surprised that this is happening. Hollywood movies tend to glorify events to hit their sales quota. As someone who watches movies, I don't go to a movie theater thinking that I am going to watch something completely factual. Academically I know that in class teachers do use certain movies as learning tools so I would hope those are actually an accurate source of information. I am concerned when things are kept from me historically because it is usually something bad. I think that history is important so we don't repeat the bad things but if we are having information being withheld from us, we won't be able to learn from the mistakes already made. I don't think you can necessarily trust it because there have been lies surrounding the Underground Railroad already. I think that if they changed it because they were mislead, that is a good thing because we are getting the right information now.

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Re: Hollywood in the wrong?

by [Taylor Reid](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 8:11 PM

History seems to be something that you can't always trust. Gore Vidal wrote, "We learn nothing because we remember nothing." Vox.com interprets that as, "America's concept of itself is shaped by mythology, not by facts. And it's harder to address mistakes if you're unwilling to face them honestly." The fact that it has been found out that what we are taught by our history books about the past and it could be wrong isn't very surprising. To me, I think it would be hard to genuinely believe that everything recalled from before the author of a book was alive isn't smart. The fact that there are so many misconceptions surrounding the Underground Railroad, something we have learned about since we were young, means that we can't always trust what we have been taught about the past.

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Re: Hollywood in the wrong?

by [Letitia Hadix](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 10:42 PM

Hello Taylor,

I agree completely with where you are coming from on this topic. Occasionally some of my teachers will have my class watch movies related to the subject matter we would be covering at that time. I remember taking an online science class last year and the teacher had notes on our worksheets about some of the videos we had to watch. The videos were older but still had a lot of useful information compared to new ones. Unfortunately, some of the information was no longer correct due to new discoveries. I remember being confused at the time about why we were watching "wrong" videos. I think every subject and topic of knowledge is a mix of truth and myth and it's just a matter of sifting through the information to find what is "right". It is definitely important to scrutinize the mistakes of our past to ensure a better future.

Sincerely,

Letitia Hadix

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Re: Hollywood History & Mythology

by [Brianna Shelley](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 10:09 PM

We can not change the past, no matter how ugly, how hurtful, and painful it might be. The only reasonable thing we can do is learn from it, and vow to never make those same mistakes again. But how can we learn from our past if the majority of what we see and hear every day, whether it be in movies, television shows, radio or even worse what we learn and are taught in school are not an accurate representation of our world's history. Instead it can be a skewed, morphed version of what we think will be easier for people to deal with. How can we teach our children about the injustices many individuals have faced when we do not have a clear understanding of what that is? Hollywood movies and television are made to be fiction, one of the purposes of movies is so you can escape reality, which I myself enjoy from time to time. The problem is, when they create "history based"" or "based on a true story" movies they need to be factual, they need to represent that time in history as truthful. Not what they think will sell more tickets. In a perfect world, this wouldn't be a problem either, because we would all be so well educated, we

would immediately be able to tell the difference between fact and fiction. Unfortunately, this is not the case. According to Eric Foner’s article (The Amistad Case in Fact and Film) the movie Amistad had many factual history flaws. He says, “It goes far deeper then Martin Van Buren campaigning for reelection (in 1840 candidates did not campaign) or people constantly talking about the coming Civil War, which lay twenty years in the future.” The main issue of the movie was the misleading account of the case’s historical significance. The movie makes it appear that the Supreme Court agreed with Adams plea to end slavery in favor of the natural rights of man, pushing the Union to take momentous steps to abolition. When really the Amistad case revolved around the Atlantic slave trade and had nothing to do with slavery as a domestic institution. “Rather than being receptive to abolitionist sentiment, the courts were among the main defenders of slavery.” (Eric Foner, The Amistad Case in Fact and Film) Having such egregious errors in the portrayal of a based-on history movie does everyone an injustice. What is even worse, is what’s being taught in schools. With Hollywood movies I’m sure most people know to take them at face value, rather than expect complete historical accuracy. According to Professor Blight the Underground Railroad “is both a story of reality and history we can document. But it is also a mythology and a set of legends Americans have fostered over the years.” (Underground Railroad video 0:28) He goes on to say over the years, especially in the North more and more places are claimed as part of the Underground Railroad. If that were the case slavery would not have lasted until 1860. Professor Blight gives reasoning for the need of the folk lore regarding the Underground Railroad, “It is a passage into the understanding of slavery that is sometimes gentler and more savory then it is to look at slavery by itself.”(Underground Railroad video 3:43) Our Country has had many dark moments in the past and I believe stretching the truth or recounting history any other way than how it happened adds insult to injury to the ones who endured such tragedies. The truth needs to be told so people can understand the some of the horrific things people have been forced to endure. If everyone could try to understand their pain, then maybe just maybe history would stop repeating itself.

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Hold film makers responsible for their content.
by [Kelly Cline](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 10:13 PM

I think that the fact that Hollywood changes historical facts to make a movie more appealing, and then claims it as the real truth, is terrible. They are trying to confuse the public to make money. This shows the sheer greed of some people. This not only confuses the public, but seems to also confuse educators who use these movies to teach students about slavery. I feel that big screen movies should be excluded from schools or at least be explained as partially inaccurate and corrected in front of students. If we continue teaching children twisted truths about slavery, true history will be lost. The truth will fade and change over time in the eyes of the masses. I think if a Hollywood movie is claimed to be a true story, it should also include, in some way, the sources it has used to help in the creation of the film. Maybe movies makers will make historically correct films if they are held responsible for the information they include.

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Re: Hold film makers responsible for their content.
by [Letitia Hadix](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 11:00 PM

Hello Kelly!

This is definitely a serious issue in our education system. I noticed you said that "big screen movies should be excluded from schools or at least explained as partially inaccurate and corrected in front of students." This is an excellent idea and I can't speak for our education system, but I know that some teachers do try to set the record straight in these cases. I think it would be great if everyone took Hollywood films and other movies with a grain of salt and open-mind. I think something that shocked me the most from the article was the sentence referring to the producer's reaction towards historians. "The guide ends with a quote from Debbie Allen, *Amistad*'s producer, castigating historians for suppressing the “real history” of African-Americans and slavery." (paragraph 10) Although I don not know Producer Allen or what facts led her to saying this, I know it was incredibly rude and insulting. Honestly, I know that we are still studying our past and new discoveries are welcome every day so that we can progress further down the path of knowledge, but nobody should assume anything about our since none of us were there. Even though we possess documents from our previous generations, it doesn't mean that they are accurate since everyone perceives information differently. We are in a constant state of growth and it's sad that not everyone can see that in today's society.

Sincerely,

Letitia Hadix

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History and Movies

by [Haylee Stevens](#) - Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 11:14 PM

The movie Amistad was based on a story in history, but as all movies go, they have to be exciting. Stories have to get twisted in order for them to be a movie that people want to watch. It is very alarming that textbooks are now changing their information based off what was in a movie, instead of what actually happened in history. If the story doesn't stay the same and keeps changing, how will future generations come to learn the actual truth of the history of America? You can no longer rely on your textbooks to tell you the full truth and authors should not be changing the story at all unless more discoveries of the ACTUAL history is found.

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Re: History and Movies

by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 4:12 AM

I agree with you that movies distort history to make it more exciting. But I have to disagree with you on updating the textbook. New movies are constantly being made and could possibly be more accurate or relevant to the time period under discussion. As long as it is just the movie section and not the actual history being revised then I think they should keep it updated. Another good reason is to keep current with times. They want the example movies to be relevant to the reader and using newer movies is a way to guarantee that people reading it will have seen the movie.

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Hollywood Horror

by [Katie Lauck](#) - Thursday, January 31, 2019, 3:10 PM

As many of us should know, Hollywood can be a source of manipulative falsehoods when it comes to movies, shows, and in this case, even history. Amistad is a movie about a slave uprising that takes place as a boat is taking a group of slaves from Cuba to America, and the consequences that follow the revolt. After watching the trailer for this movie, I was slightly intrigued and thought that it didn't look like an awful movie, but after reading the review of Amistad by Eric Foner, it became clear that Hollywood had once again misled viewers about a true historical event. Foner lists some of the additional add-ins that historians know did not occur in the real life such as the fact that Van Buren was campaigning on a "whistle-stop train tour" when we know campaigning was not a thing candidates did in this time period. He also adds that the characters in the movie included a lot of talk about the Civil War when in reality it did not occur for another twenty years. Most notably though is the false portrayal of the relationship between the judiciary and slavery. The movie gives the impression that the court becomes closer to supporting abolition, when in reality the case was solely about the Atlantic slave trade and not about domestic slavery (Eric Foner, paragraph 5-6).

Personally, finding out that a very important part of our history has been dramatized and that gives false information makes me angry. Many movies including this one are probably made for the benefit that might bring money, fame and almost anything else but the gratification of providing viewers with accurate information. With Hollywood being so popular in our modern world, it becomes the only thing we focus on, and we forget how we got to where we are now. Foner writes, "Most galling, however, is the assumption that a subject does not exist until it is discovered by Hollywood" (paragraph 10). This sentence really impacted me because I didn't realize how true it was until now. A lot of people don't know the truth of historical occurrences because they often only see it through the lens of Hollywood's eyes. Foner also makes a good point that if we want to learn the real truth about our history rather than watching it in some movie that may or may not be real, we should be going to libraries and reading the truth of who we were and where we are now.

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Re: Hollywood Horror

by [Brianna Shelley](#) - Saturday, February 2, 2019, 8:44 PM

Katie,

I agree with your view on this subject matter. It is so saddening that this day and age revolves so much around Hollywood and pop culture. I believe it’s true, most people do not become interested with a person or an event that took place in history, or even in the present day unless its splashed all-over social media. Foner also talks about how the producer of Amistad Debbie Allen accuses historians for suppressing the “real history” of African-Americans and slavery. Which Foner contradicts by stating “historians may be guilty of many sins, but ignoring slavery is not one of them. (The Amistad Case in Fact and Film, By Eric Foner; Paragraph 10) There was also a study guide that went along with the movie, it was disbursed throughout school systems. It encouraged teachers to use the movie Amistad, when teaching about slavery. Also, to study black abolitionism through the films invented character Theodore Johnson, rather than study real historical figures. (The Amistad Case in Fact and Film, by Eric Foner; Paragraph 9) It makes me so angry to read that. Foner’s review of the movie does not say whether Amistad was used in schools, but I hope teachers disregarded that study guide. To use fictional Hollywood movies and characters to teach on a subject when there are so many readily available and factual materials that could be used to teach about slavery and the abolition movement.

Thanks for sharing!

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Underground Railroad mythology

by [Brianna Shelley](#) - Friday, February 1, 2019, 10:30 PM

Stories of the Underground Railroad throughout the years have been embellished and the facts of what took place have been distorted. Professor Blight describes the Underground Railroad as loosely connected, sometimes networks of weigh stations across the border states between North and South where fugitive slaves escaped. (Underground Railroad video 0:42) Unfortunately what is taught in our schools and written in our history books describes the Underground Railroad as closely knit networks of farms and stations, that had station masters whose business it was full time to help slaves escape. This was not the case. Most of the people who worked within the Underground Railroad were black not white and were part of the loosely connected networks. Professor Blight goes on to say that American Folklore has appropriated several places that were believed part of the Underground Railroad. The biggest problem with the mythology is that people, especially in the North need to believe that somewhere in their community was a part of it. With the secrecy surrounding the Underground Railroad, we will probably never know everything about it. Which is why it makes it so hard to believe all the claims of sites used during that time. Our textbook Liberty, Equality, Power describes the Underground Railroad as taking on “legendary status.” “Stories of secret chambers where fugitives were hidden, dramatic trips at night between stations on the underground and clever or heroic measures to foil pursuing bloodhounds exaggerated the legends.” (Chapter 13, page 450)

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Not a substitute

by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 3:10 AM

The way the media has portrayed history has always been a pet peeve of mine. One of the biggest reasons I have for this is because people believe these movies can be substitutions for actually learning about the event being portrayed. They take it for granted that the movie makers have fully researched and care about the accuracy of their portrayal. But in all actuality, all they are trying to do is make a good movie that everyone will like. Unfortunately, history is more complicated than that. Some events in history do not make for what Hollywood would consider a good movie. They are not as interesting as they would like, are too long and complicated, or just don’t have the happy ending that most like. In consequence we get these exaggerations and falsehoods that many people take for granted as what really happened.

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Re: Not a substitute

by [Katie Lauck](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 8:21 PM

I completely agree with your statement that many historical occurrences might contain parts that would not make for good movies, which prompts writers and directors to change the storyline and distort real history. When this happens though, the part of the story that is left out will slowly be forgotten and therefore won't be passed onto the next generation of students. I recently learned in another class that this same thing happened in the movie "300", telling the battle of the Persian war. When I think about it, there are probably many movies I have watched and had no clue that a real event had been turned into a fake storyline for Hollywood's benefit. Eric Foner says "The film's historical problems are compounded by the study guide now being distributed to schools, which encourages educators to use Amistad to teach about slavery". (The Amistad Case in Fact and Film, paragraph 9). This frightens me because it's insinuating that even our educators don't take time to make sure what they are teaching is valid and factual information. I believe Hollywood should not continue producing historical fiction films altogether to stop the inaccuracy and confusion, and maybe just stick to documentaries.

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Pulling the wool over our eyes.
by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 3:12 AM

I am very concerned when historical truth is hidden from me in media. I wonder why something was left out or manipulated. Was it to forward a director's opinion or bias, was it because it was an unpopular moment in history, or did they just do it so they could make a better movie? As the Amistad review from the 6th edition of the textbook says, "Spielberg shaped this group to tell his own story." Fully pointing out that Spielberg was trying to tell his own version of this story rather than worry about accuracy. For whatever reason they manipulate things, it is upsetting. The thought of anyone being able to use the media to manipulate my views of the past is enough to send me running for a textbook anytime I see a historical movie about to be released.

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Updates are important
by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 3:12 AM

I was surprised to find information on movies in my textbook in the first place. Especially considering the inaccuracies of Amistad. Very little is actually mentioned about the inaccuracies of the film. But if they insist on putting information about movies, I can see why it would be important to update that content. New movies are constantly coming out that could be more accurate and relevant to the time period under discussion. As was the case with them changing out Amistad for 12 Years a Slave.

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Re: Updates are important
by [Haylee Stevens](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 8:57 PM

I agree completely with your view on this, the movies shouldn't even be in the textbooks because the movies never really have the full truth in them. If the movies are constantly updated though, then everyone is going to have different information on what actually happened in history.

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The Surprises of our History
by [Letitia Hadix](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 4:12 AM

Despite the fact that there were several shocking statements in Professor Eric Foner's analysis of *Amistad*, I agreed with almost everything he had to say on the topic. I found his disappointment in the film to be very legitimate. Although I personally have not seen the movie, just viewing the trailer and reading the summary provided me with a lot of insight. Something I found to be a big issue in regards to the film was the information concerning the dialogue of the Mende actors. I agree with Professor Foner's opinion about how the portrayal of the African victims could have been more thought out and portrayed better. Professor Foner stated that, "In the end, most of the Mende dialogue ended up on the cutting-room floor" and how "It would have been far better to have the Africans speak English (the film, after all, is historical fiction), rather than rendering them virtually mute." (Pg.1 paragraph 4) Instead of removing most of the Mende dialogue in favor of the American populace's dislike of subtitles, it would have been a more balanced film if the producers had kept the them or came up with a different method of speech. Due to their decision in removing most of scenes accompanied by subtitles, audiences ended up with a mostly one-sided point of view. I also disliked how the movie was mostly from the white side's point of view, but I did understand how that came into being.

Going through the information provided for this week’s forum on Hollywood History & Mythology was a real eye-opener for me. Although I know that oftentimes Hollywood glosses over the truth or leaves out important information from their movies, I was still shocked. Many times a viewer can see how the producers cut-up and separate out information when it comes to a topic they are knowledgeable about. I personally have seen this many times in animal or science-based films. I can only imagine how much history I think is right is wrong. The fact that there are some textbook authors willing to change the facts over a movie produced for entertainment sickens me. Reading this makes me wonder if I know information about “real” events or if I’ve been taken in by the myths. Not to say that most people don’t take on any new or surprising information with a grain of salt, but one can never tell; such as in the topic of the Underground Railroad.

I was both surprised and not about the Underground Railroad video. I think the most shocking piece of information was concerning the portrayal and implication of the waysides. Truthfully, Professor Blight’s introductory statement about how “The Underground Railroad is really a story of reality and history documented...(10sec)” as both mythology and legend sums up the issue quite nicely. A keypoint of his video covered the misconceptions versus the reality of the Underground Railroad and how people need to be cautious of places that claim to have been waystations sites. Although I already learned of how “Most of the people who actually worked in the Underground Railroad were **black**, not **white**. (1:30)” A while back, I’ve discovered it’s easy for people to forget such an important fact due to the thought and hope that there were more white abolitionists involved. I also know to be wary of places and towns claiming to have been waystations of the Underground Railroad (especially in border states) since “Most Americans in the North wanted to believe that there were more than one site of the Railroad in their community (2:46)”

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Importance of Real History
by [Brianna Caridio](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 4:10 PM

It is not surprising in the least to learn about more exaggerations and falsehoods being shown and taught to people. The phrase “History is written by the victors” would be quite applicable here, I am not bringing this up to question the validity of the work that historians do, but to point out that it is not uncommon for historical facts to be altered or omitted when aimed toward a public audience.

I do not know what is taught in schools now, but in my experience the Underground Railroad was taught to me in the way that Professor David Blight described in his video. I remember learning that it was a closely knit network where slaves were ushered from safe place to safe place by abolitionists until they were far enough in the North to be safe. I learned that it was a very dangerous passage for the slaves, but much information was missing and it was made out to be a story of the hero abolitionists. This represents the mythology and folklore that I was exposed to in school. However, in our textbook there is an entire section on the Compromise of 1850, officials in free states who decided to not honor the Fugitive Slave Law, and how the “professional slave-catchers went too far – kidnapping free blacks, forging false affidavits to ‘prove’ they were slaves, and selling them south into bondage” (Murrin pg. 450). Many slaves who escaped to the north were tracked down, captured and returned to their “owners.”

I think that it can be damaging to society when historically based fiction shows such an altered view of history, but far worse is when what is taught in schools doesn’t show a different story. It is appalling how the *Amistad* movie gave “a highly misleading account of the case’s historical significance, in the process sugarcoating the relationship between the American judiciary and slavery” (Fonner, *The Amistad Case in Fact and Film*). The movie review that was in the old edition of *Liberty, Equality, and Power* may point out some of the fictitious facts but does not even include explanations of the true events that Professor Foner brings up.

It is far easier to look at our history, gloss over the bad things we’ve done, and pull out those gems where our ancestors did the right thing and put them on a pedestal. As Professor Blight discusses, there has been an appropriation of many places that were not actually apart of the Underground Railroad in Folklore and Mythology that “especially people in the north need to believe in” (Blight 2:54). These people want to believe that their ancestors and communities did well, rather than looking at the hard truth. It may be easier to accept altered versions of history, but eventually how do people differentiate what is actually true of what they have learned? “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” George Santayana.

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Re: Hollywood History & Mythology: Accuracy or lies.
by [Emilie Ormsby](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 10:14 PM

After reading and watching the Hollywood History & Mythology forum materials, I am somewhat baffled at the ignorance of the filmmakers behind the movie *Amistad*, the textbook authors who created history books with counterfactual information regarding both the time period featured in *Amistad* as well as the underground railroad,

and any teacher who would think such materials would be suitable to teach their students. Personally, I am very disappointed to learn that there was ever such a movie considered to be appropriate for a history textbook when it blatantly contained false information. How could a Hollywood producer criticize an actual historian and claim that what they are portraying in their movie is factually accurate? As stated in Eric Foner’s “The Amistad Case in Fact and Film” article, “Historians may be guilty of many sins, but ignoring slavery is not one of them. For the past forty years, no subject has received more scholarly attention. All American history textbooks today contain extensive treatments of slavery, almost always emphasizing the system’s brutality and the heroism of those who survived — the very things Amistad’s promoters claim have been suppressed.” I don’t understand how the producer of Amistad claims to be the groundbreaking scholar to present such information. Furthermore, I don’t understand how anyone thought that was permissible.

As a student, I am very unhappy to think that information I learn about my own country’s history is skewed and sugar coated. This doesn’t allow me the chance to learn about the actual historic events of the United States through a trustworthy source, thus denying me and many other students the authenticity of learning. To think that the author(s) of the study guide referring to Amistad as a credible film actually allowed a hollywood film to be used as a major learning point in American history is ridiculous and offensive. Foner writes “The guide erases the distinction between fact and fiction, urging students, for example, to study black abolitionism through the film’s invented character, Theodore Joadson, rather than real historical figures. And it fallaciously proclaims the case a “turning-point in the struggle to end slavery in the United States.” As a student and general individual, I am not okay with the history we are being taught (especially regarding the horrible long-standing oppression of African Americans) if it isn’t entirely accurate and does not give a sugar coated presentation for the sake of heroism.

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Re: Hollywood History & Mythology: The Underground Railroad

by [Emilie Ormsby](#) - Sunday, February 3, 2019, 10:53 PM

In regards to the underground railroad, I remember being taught as an elementary student the history of Harriet Tubman and how incredible the underground railroad was with its determination for safely guiding slaves to freedom. As I’ve grown and taken more advanced history courses, like many topics, I’ve come to find it’s a lot less glamorous and laid back than I was previously lead to believe. David Blight describes the underground railroad as “a set of legends that America had fostered over the years.” In his commentary of the underground railroad, he expands upon how the underground railroad though it may be over glorified in history books or curriculums, was truly just a loosely connected network of people near the border state region living and working in their regular lives, but also trying to help runaway slaves escape to freedom. It seems we are too eager to mark certain landmarks as historically involved with the underground railroad, thus adding to the legend fostered by Americans over the years.

Perhaps if we were taught at a younger age the brutality and genuine struggle of colored people during that time period, especially native americans african americans but not disclusing Irish and German immigrants, maybe there would be less institutional racism amongst us. Maybe being exposed to the raw facts of the history of enslaved african americans would have eaten up more time spent believing a sugar coated version of a horribly oppressive history and we could make progress faster. Blight states “It’s a passage into our understanding of slavery that is more gentle.” It’s unfortunate in my opinion that historians and maybe certain teachers would rather give into a more gentle version of the truth simply for the sake of heroism or simplicity, instead of bringing the truth of these very real issues to life.

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