

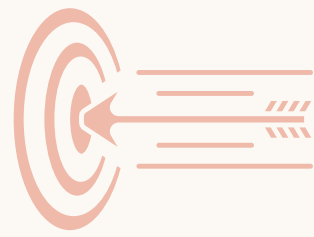
Historical Accuracy

Should film producers use fictional or nonfictional characters for historical events?



Historical Films

- Create a better understanding on how the past can shape the present
- Interrogates the relationship of a nation's past
- Allows the viewer to gain insight on the historical event and ask significant questions leading to a "what happened next?"

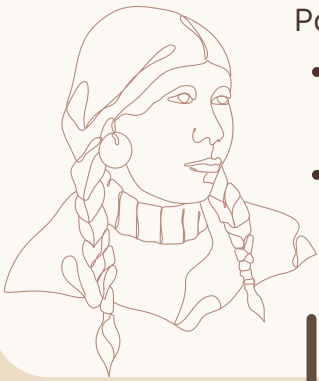


What about Accuracy?

- Historical films play within a particular culture or nation that influences society on a daily basis
- Therefore, stating that an event is based on a true story with real-life characters, allows the viewer to be easily misguided on factual occurrences

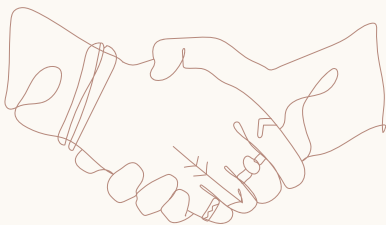
Pocahontas: Disney's vs Real-Life's Version

An example of a misguide use of a non-fiction character is Pocahontas, Disney's Version.

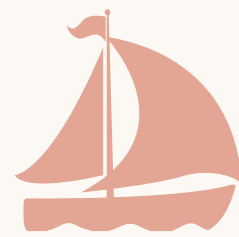


- The movie had changed Pocahontas name when she was originally referred to as Matoaka
- The movie had also relayed this narrative of Pocahontas saving John Smith, which was written by a John Smith himself but the action couldn't have taken place based on how the Natives acted towards newcomers.

Pocahontas



- The movie had also depicted Pocahontas as a young adult who had a romantic relationship with John Smith when in reality she was a child who briefly saw John Smith while passing by
- The issue with this is the not only the inaccuracy but what young children are learning as they watch films *supposedly* made for them

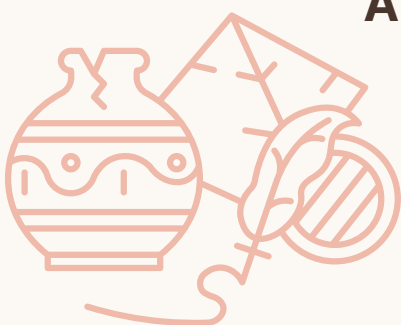


Amistad

Another example of inaccuracies is a film called Amistad.

- The film had added and take out several characters for the films dramatic effect such as Theodore Joadson
- Theodore Joadson was actually based on James Forten, an african-american abolitionist

Amistad

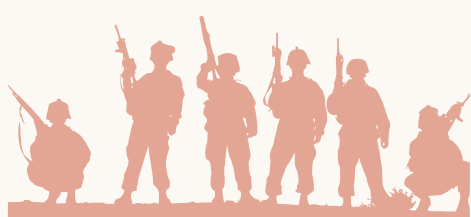


- The film had this language barrier trope which was relayed fairly well until the captured individuals were scene as "savagely"
- The film had falsely stated that the trial of the Amistad had started the Civil War
- The film represented this notion of a pending war when in reality the tension didn't hieghten until years later

Historical Accuracy

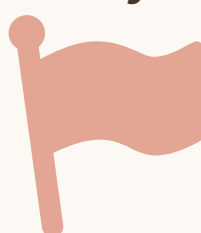
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Glory



- The 54th regiment was shown in a variety of ways that were accurate when it came to treatment of black people
- Although, there was a scene in the film that showed lashing of one of the enlisted when in reality, whipping was outlawed by that time

Glory



- The film depicted General Robert Could Shaw as someone would willingly chose to be the head of the 54th Regiment when he was in reality more hesitant

What did they do right?



- In Pocahontas, the film showed the struggle of survival from both the colonist and the native americas while also showing the tensions between both groups
- In the Amistad, the film showed the horrors enslaved people faced on The Middle Passage
- In Glory, the film portrayed the struggles african americans face in the war, no matter which part of American they came from

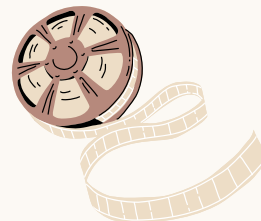
The use of nonfiction characters is important...

- It helps viewers connect to the character more on an emotional level
- The films are what can be used to teach younger audiences history in a matter of minutes



Why should we care?

- Cinematic History has a prominent place in the public mind
- That being said, producers should be careful with what information they put out whether or not it gets them the most money



Citations:

Trafton, John. "Historical Film." Obo, 6 May 2019, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199791286/obo-9780199791286-0239.xml>.

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