# "chicago" and "there will be blood" movie review examples

## Assignment: Historical Accuracy in Hollywood Movies based on true stories.

A. What reasons do your authors give to explain the historical inaccuracies in the films? Give an example from one of the articles.

The director James Cameron seemed to be working against himself in putting together the movie " The Titanic." As the reviewer notes he carefully tried to portray the sets and rituals of Victorian society but then he used a script that showed a contemporary view of the appropriateness of . . . making love? having sex?. . . with a stranger. On top of that all the fine historical clothing was flooded so no one could ever use it again. I think the director had in mind making money and manipulating the audience for that reason. For instance not only the plot but also the ballad used as the theme song seems to me to be very manipulative of listeners. I don't think he did this carelessly; his motivation was to make a profit above the cost of making the film.

The director Paul Thomas Anderson of " There Will Be Blood" used one character to represent the devastation of greed in the oil business to the country. He didn't do this by explaining directly what he was doing but instead used metaphor. I think he did this for ideological reasons to show that greed is not good. Greed hurts peop and ruins the environment. He may have done it for political reasons but I couldn't see any when I watched the movie. I got the feeling he was trying to help the audience understand the good and the bad that are inside people. People make choices based on those characteristics that have far reaching impacts.

Spielberg was the director of " Saving Private Ryan." He chose an interesting true story to base the movie on and then tried to show the reality of the awfulness of war. The first part was very interesting and informative (and moving) showing the young men's reaction to knowing they were going into a terrible battle and would probably die. When the movie started showing the characters as more stereotypical that was probably done so the audience wouldn't be turned off by the violence and chaos of war. Probably Spielberg had ideological and political anti-war themes in mind when he made the movie but then used a script that gradually made the characters more familiar to the audience so that he could make money to pay for the film.

The movie " Chicago" directed by Rob Marshall whatever his original intentions seems to be a confusion of making compromises so the movie would make money. For instance using three Hollywood actors in the starring roles of a dance musical that couldn't dance was shocking and manipulative to the audience. In the end the way the movie was made seemed to be about making money. But there were some great numbers by real dancers that made the effort of making the movie worthwhile. The script had heavy sexual overtones that seemed to be used to manipulate the audience; maybe to draw in a young male audience.

" Cinderella Man" is such a good true story that I wonder why Ron Howard didn't show more of the whole boxing world and the background of the Great Depression in the movie. Mr. Howard seems to want to make movies that are based on wonderful true stories but leave his audiences feeling good when they leave the theater. That's manipulative. It seems like the movie would

have been more interesting if the different ethnic boxers and fan groups had been portrayed as well as more in the background about the terribly hard times.

None of the directors in the movies reviewed in this assignment seemed to work carelessly. They all seemed to have a certain finished product in mind, except for " Chicago" which I'm not sure about but I would like to give the director the benefit of the doubt.

I would say that depends on the director and the scriptwriter. In order to portray a true story in a two hour movie there have to be inaccuracies just based on the time and the structure of how Hollywood movies are made. I would have like to have seen Ron Howard use the same degree of accuracy in the costumes, props and time setting for " Cinderella Man" as James Cameron used for " Titanic."
Because of the superficiality of the plot for " Titanic" that movie didn't deserve all the authenticity. The scriptwriter writes the narrative but James Cameron could have asked for changes.

Being historically accurate in movies can't mean telling the story exactly as it happened in real life. But if historical accuracy is respected by the director and scriptwriter then you have a winner. The movie becomes more ' literary'like " There Will Be Blood." There were dramatic inaccuracies in the movie but the experience of watching the movie was satisfying. Also the audience had an insight into human nature because of the ingredients

mentioned before and also because of the actors' dedication to their craft (probably all the actors but especially Daniel Day Lewis).

C. In your view, do the historical inaccuracies, harm or help our understanding of the present (people or groups) That is to say, do directors use historical events and people to make a point about America and Americans today?
Sometimes people do forget that movies are presented as fiction, not as documentaries. That can be troublesome for people that think a movie from a true story is factual.

" Cinderella Man" should have presented different ethnic groups in the boxing realm at the time. It seems this would have added to the interest and entertainment of the film because it would not only be more a reflection of true events but also allow more people could identify with characters in the movie for a fuller experience. Perhaps the director was pandering to a certain ethnic group because he did not want to go out of his comfort level.

" Chicago" because it was a musical is easily viewed as a fiction. Sometimes when watching the movie though it went " over the top" in terms of the wildness of the women in that day and age. That ruined the pace of the film. It was unnecessary. Perhaps the director thought that would make it more interesting for young movie goers.

The movie " There Will Be Blood" is a good example of a true story being fictionalized with just the right amount of truth and fiction. By fictionalizing true events movies can tell a story that is highly entertaining yet present it

from a perspective that uses metaphor to help make the audience more interested because the metaphor of their present-day life will make the events more accessible to them.

The movie portrays the main character, Daniel Plainville as a murderer although the real person the character was based on, Edward L. Doheny, did not ever murder anyone by his own hand. The movie also came out just before or at the beginning the financial crisis in 2008.

Taking these two facts together emphasizes that the crime of murder by Plainville is a metaphor for the deaths of people no one will ever hear of because they died from losing their home and other financial losses. Nameless people were " murdered" because they could not get adequate health care anymore, or from the stress of going back to work in their sixties and seventies, and by heart attacks or suicide from the stress and anxiety of the situation.