

Imagining History – Hollywood Cinema and America's Past

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The plot of many extremely successful Hollywood movies takes place in an historic setting, especially in a setting of genuine American history: Think of *Pearl Harbor*, *Patriot*, *Amistad*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *JFK*, *The Alamo*, etc. Certain genres, like the Western or the War-movie, rely more or less on this historic material to tell their stories. But is this cinematic imagination of historical situations a depiction of factual history? How much history do we get, when we watch that movies? Can we trust the pictures we see? Did all Indians wear feathers? This lecture tries to show the tension between the filmic construction of historical situations and the supposedly historical facts. For this purpose selected scenes of selected movies will be discussed and checked upon their historical plausibility.