

Every place tells a story - do movies need geography?

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Mass media in general and Hollywood feature films in special shape our understanding of the world, therefore it is of great interest to look how place is constructed and represented. The use of different places and locations usually contribute to an understanding of a movie's geography. It seems that the Hollywood film industry uses generic and standardized places. This is demonstrated by means of an analysis based on formalist and structuralist concepts, which can be traced back to the Russian linguists Propp and Bachtin. The paper concentrates on the different places depicted as scenes of action and works with several popular Hollywood movies. This concept appears to be rather simplistic but is helpful when looking at feature films, no matter from which period they are or to which genre they belong. Cinematic narration - as narration in general - is organized around specific topoi and can be understood as the texture of the whole movie. These places are part of a visual heritage and help the viewer to understand the structure of the film and therefore the film's geography.