

The Renaissance

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**January 19, 2009, 7:00 PM
at the Renaissance Theatre**

Lawrence of Arabia

1963

Director: David Lean

Writers: T.E. Lawrence (writings), Robert Bolt (screenplay), Michael Wilson (uncredited due to blacklist)

Starring: Peter O'Toole, Omar Sharif, Alec Guinness, Anthony Quinn, Jose Ferrer, Anthony Quayle, Claude Rains

Music: Maurice Jarre

Lawrence of Arabia is the filmic retelling of Britishman T. E. Lawrence's heroic, autobiographical account of his own Arabian adventure, published in "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom" (originally published with the title *Revolt in the Desert*). The cinematic "men's film" (with first-time screenwriter Robert Bolt's screenplay) is a superb character study of a compelling cult hero, who exhibits homo-erotic tendencies in his relationship with Arab blood brother Sherif Ali, a dark personal nature, and an obsession with Arabia itself.

The historical accuracy of the film, and particularly its portrayal of Lawrence himself, has been called into question by numerous scholars. Most of the film's characters are either real or based on real characters to varying degrees. The events depicted in the film are largely based on accepted historical fact and Lawrence's own writing about events, though they have various degrees of romanticisation.

Many complaints about the film's accuracy, however, center on the characterization of Lawrence himself. The perceived problems with the portrayal of Lawrence begin with the differences in his physical appearance: 6-foot 2-inch Peter O'Toole was almost nine inches taller than the real Lawrence. His behavior, however, has caused much more debate.