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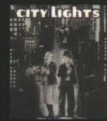
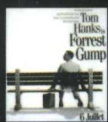
AMERICAN MOVIES



美国电影



吴守谦 编著



哈尔滨工程大学出版社

Harbin Engineering University Press

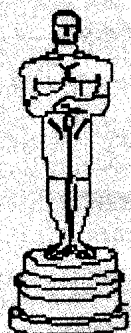
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内 容 简 介

本书通过故事梗概、剧本片断、影片评论、问题讨论、翻译与写作练写、问与答、电影 ABC 及相关音像资料,讲授英语视、听、说、读、写、译技巧,讲解电影文化、美国历史、艺术审美要领,可提高学生语言交际能力和整体文化素质。电影媒介使英语学习自然、生动、高效,使知识传播和文化吸收形象、深刻、快捷。

《美国电影》所选影片反映了自 17 世纪 60 年代至 20 世纪 90 年代美国的社会变迁和人的生存状态,折射出大千世界的风风雨雨和社会进步的艰难历程。

本书语言与文化并重,视听说读写译交融,可用作高等院校美国电影教程,英语视听说教材,也可供英语学习者自学。

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American Movies and Movie Teaching

Movies, also known as films, motion pictures, the pictures, and the cinema, are one of the most popular art forms in the world. They first appeared at the end of the 19th century, and grew into the most creative art of the 20th century.

In 1895 in France, the Lumiere brothers produced their first short movie, *The Arrival of a Train*, and showed it on December 28th at the Grand Cafe, Boulevard des Capucines, Paris. That is generally regarded as the birth of the movie industry and the start of the silent movie era.

On October the 6th, 1927, Warner Brothers' *The Jazz Singer*, a film with music and several talking sequences, was shown in New York. It marked the beginning of the sound movie era. The introduction of sound fundamentally changed the culture and aesthetics of film and in 1935 the technicolor three - strip process came into use. In 1953 widescreen technology was introduced. Nowadays digital - analog technology, multi - digital stereo, super - screen, etc., have been widely applied to film - making. In the evolution of movies, virtually every technical innovation pushed the medium closer to a realistic ideal. Within the 20th century film managed to attain for itself a sophistication and glory unparalleled in any other world art form.

Even before the Lumiere brothers produced their movies, in America, Thomas Edison developed the Kinetoscope, basically a bulky, coin - operated viewer, and the Kinetograph, the early version of a movie camera. In 1893, the world's first film studio, the "Black Maria," was built on the grounds of Edison's lab at West Orange, New Jersey. Most of the earliest moving images were non-fictional, unedited, crude documentary views of ordinary slices of life.

Far away from the battlefields of World War I, the American economy grew very rapidly during and after the war. Hollywood was able to develop and prosper in the first two decades of the 20th century. The film industry absorbed the world's cinematic talent, including Charlie Chaplin and Greta Garbo, who moved to the United States, where they made highly successful American careers. America became the leading producer of films in the world. The influential films of the decades were *Birth of A Nation* (1915), *The Gold Rush* (1925), *The Jazz Singer* (1927), and *Wings* (1927).

The 1930s were "The Golden Age of Hollywood." This was brought about by three factors. The first of these was the revolutionary effect of sound. Also significant was the formation of five major cooperative - style studios - Twentieth Century Fox, MGM, Paramount, Warner Bros, and RKO. Lastly, there appeared independent producers such as David O. Selznick. All of these contributed to the rapid development of the film industry.

Hollywood film production reached its climax during the years 1939 to 1942, over a decade after the rise of sound film production. A tremendous variety of films were produced with a wit, skill, and elegance unknown up till that time. The directors and movie stars from Europe such as Alfred Hitchcock, Michael Curtiz, David

Lean, Vivien Leigh and Ingrid Bergman, made great contributions in this golden age and left an indelible mark in the history of film production.

The movies selected in this book - *City Lights* (1931), *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *Waterloo Bridge* (1940), *Citizen Kane* (1941), and *Casablanca* (1942) - were all produced in the decades of the Golden Age. Other distinguished films of the decades were *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), *Stagecoach* (1939), *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Rebecca* (1940), and *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946).

The motion picture industry faced its period of the greatest crisis and challenge with the close of the 1940s and the start of the next decade: the collapse of the film - making monopoly, the competition of television, blacklisting and McCarthyism. The distinguished films of the 1950s were *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), *High Noon* (1952) and *Roman Holiday* (1953).

Cinema in the 1960s reflected a decade of fun, fashion and tremendous social change. With movie audiences declining, major American film companies began to diversify with other forms of entertainment: records, publishing, TV movies and the production of TV series. The distinguished films of the decade were: *Spartacus* (1960), *The Longest Day* (1962), *The Sound of Music* (1965), *Dr. Zhivago* (1965), and *The Graduate* (1967).

The 1970s were a creative high point in the US film industry. A new generation of film makers arose and Hollywood welcomed another surge in development. Most of the new directors, such as Francis Ford Coppola, George Lucas and Steven Spielberg were film - school graduates. They focused on both aesthetic and commercial values, and were inclined to create profound themes, using lifelike

depictions and new technology. Their films are a blend of artistry and commerce. Coppola's criminal film "*The Godfather*" (1972) and the Vietnam War film "*Apocalypse Now*" (1974) reflected American social problems and attracted people's attention, these films winning an Oscar and a Golden Bear Award, respectively. Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975) attracted huge audiences and was a big success at the box office. Lucas' first Sci - Fi film *Star Wars* (1977) won six Academy Awards and was a even more successful in terms of earnings. *Kramer Vs. Kramer* (1979) brought the decade to a close nicely. Distinguished films of the decade were also: *Patton* (1970), *Love Story* (1970), *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975).

The decades of the 1980s and 1990s tended to consolidate and develop the gains made in the 1970s. Ethical films such as *On Golden Pond* (1981), *Forrest Gump* (1994), *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995), described contemporary social life, touched on confusion in public morals and despair, and presented the concerns of contemporary American society. The trend toward production of sequels from the films of the previous decade continued, Hollywood attempted to deal with serious themes, including war, the Holocaust, AIDS, feminism, and racism. There were a number of films that confronted these issues in a profound way: *Glory* (1989), *Schindler's List* (1993), *Platoon* (1986), *Philadelphia* (1993), *Thelma and Louise* (1991), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). Other distinguished films of the decades were: *Out of Africa* (1985), *Rain Man* (1988), *Brave Heart* (1995), *Mr. Holland's Opus* (1995), and *Titanic* (1997).

Hollywood employs the Star system. This system exploits the charisma of popular performers to enhance the box office appeal of films. The star system was developed in America and has been the backbone of the American film industry since the mid - 1910s. Among the film celebrities introduced are Charlie Chaplin, Vivien Leigh, Clark Gable, Ingrid Bergman, Humphrey Bogart, Katherine Hepburn, Marlon Brando, Dustin Hoffman, Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks.

In May 1927, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was established. The Academy Awards, which are widely known as the "Oscars", have been awarded every year since 1929. Oscars have promoted the prosperity of the American movie industry, and have also elevated Hollywood's position in the world film - making industry.

Compared with countries of Europe, America is a very young country. Culturally, America has not always had its own identity. Almost every American is an immigrant. Immigrants from different countries of the world bring their own culture with them. So culturally, America is made up of many different identities. Hollywood has not only depicted every aspect of the U.S., but also has ransacked world literature for its stories. For example, Oscar - winning movies *Out of Africa*, *Brave Heart*, *Waterloo Bridge*, *The Sound of Music*, *Dr Zhivago*, *The English Patient*, and *Schindler's List* are all adapted from the novels or history of other countries. The wide range of locations and subject matter show that Hollywood movies are international. Hollywood becomes the eye of world events and the window of human nature. The diversified

culture, star system, Academy Awards, blend of commerce and artistry, high technology and big investment enable Hollywood to maintain its lead in world film industry. Indeed, film is not just a form of entertainment, but a shaper of mass consciousness. Some Hollywood commercial films are tawdry, false, violent and carnal. We should keep cool heads when dealing with such films.

The American movie industry has become the fourth largest industry in the U. S. economy, and Hollywood, the most powerful empire in the world of filmmaking. Although Hollywood has had ups and downs, American movies have ruled the world movie market. Between the world wars, American movies dominated 80 % of the world's screens. In 1996, 70 % of the European movie market consisted of American movies. In Japan, the figure was over 50 %. By 1999, 72 % of French movie market was occupied by Hollywood; in Germany, the figure was 90.5 %; in Japan 64 %. American movies have entered China's market since the 1980s. Hollywood's aggressiveness has already aroused concern in many countries. They deplore the hegemony of American culture. In June 1998, a discussion on America's predominant status in the cultural field was held in Ottawa. Nineteen countries including France, Britain, Canada, Brazil and Mexico attended the meeting. On May 15, 1999, the former French minister of culture issued an article in "Le Monde" on saving his country's national film industry. This expressed the common voice of the world movie circles.

From Hollywood's early days to the high - tech cinema of today, the silver screen has projected our dreams and fantasies, presented both glamour and works of social conscience, and served

as our collective memory. Among the 18 American movies selected in this book, 14 are Oscar - winning movies. Most Oscar - winning movies are classics, and certain movies, which didn't obtain this award, are also worthwhile. Because it is nearly impossible to choose only 18 of the influential movies to discuss, a great number of movies are introduced briefly in this book. All these selected movies are both entertaining and enriching, and have left an indelible marks on the 20th century's culture. They are landmark movies in the history of American/Hollywood cinema, and serve as signposts to map the progress of our cinematic past. These movies depict people from different classes, occupations, ages, and regions. They vividly unfold their loves, hates, struggles and fate in war and peace; they profoundly reflect the great events of different stages in American history from the 17th century New England to America at the end of the 20th century, the history of the rest of the world as well.

The films to be discussed in the book are listed here, along with aspects of each film, which I consider important:

1. In *The Scarlet Letter*, we observe social life in the 17th century New England. It is a story of love and love's violation. Film ABC in each unit includes interpretation of the film terms and introduction of basic knowledge about film. It helps you understanding movies and movie culture.
2. In *The Patriot* we see how a strong imperial power is defeated by 13 weak, disorganized colonies, and understand the significance of the War of Independence and the making of a nation.
3. In *Gone with the Wind*, we see the struggles of Scarlett O'Hara, a woman in a Southern upper - class family during

the Civil War, understand the fundamental cause of the Civil War, and have a better idea about the making of a nation.

4. A woman's heart is a deep ocean of secrets. In *Titanic*, we see her love, her lover, her lover's sacrifice for her at a moment of life and death on the maiden voyage of the "unsinkable" Titanic. Titanic sinking tells us that man is not always the most powerful force in the universe.
5. In *Out of Africa*, we learn about one Danish writer's experiences in Africa, and her nostalgia for that magic land. In a land where whites are foreigners, she is a foreigner among whites. It is a film in the prose style. The remarkable cinematography and score give their specific romantic flavors to the movie.
6. In *Waterloo Bridge*, we witness the sins and cruelties of war, and the unfairness of the British class system. Like Scarlett, Myra's lot is changed greatly in war, but unlike Scarlett, Myra maintains her character. Scarlett grows up and Myra commits suicide. Would character determine one's lot in life?
7. In *City Lights*, we see the charm of the silent movie and appreciate Charlie Chaplin's acting talent. The Great Depression of the 1930s hits hard. Chaplin's ability to blend comedy with pathos is unique.
8. In *It Happened One Night*, we experience The Great Depression. The balancing act for film - making in this instance was to both reflect realism and cynicism, while also providing escapist entertainment to boost the morale of the public by optimistically reaffirming values such as honesty,

kindheartedness and perseverance. This "screwball" comedy is only one instance out of many.

9. *The Sound of Music* is a perfectly realized combination of drama, emotion and song. We enjoy the beautiful music, the picturesque scenery, and cheer for the Von Trapp family's successful escape from the Nazis. Hollywood musicals, due to the joy that audiences everywhere take from singing and dancing, will live forever.
10. The setting of *Casablanca* is an intermediate point from which Europeans could flee to America during World War II. Romance, life and adventure remind us of Petofi's poem: "*Life is a treasure, love even dearer; but to win freedom, I would throw both away.*" The film's great success is a typical example of the combination of artistry and commerce.
11. *Schindler's List* concerns the lives of a thousand Jews during World War II. The film shows, unforgettably, how one man does make a difference. Schindler proves that man's morality and humanity are always alive. "Save one life, save the world entire." The heavy tone and fearful atmosphere of the film are heightened by black - and - white cinematography.
12. *Saving Private Ryan* relives the D - Day landing at Omaha, truly reveals the cruelty of war, and reflects humanitarianism in war. It criticizes, rather than glorifies, war. Everyone's life is valuable. A brief introduction to the formerly Soviet movies and the movies of Italy, France, Britain and China makes you see big pictures of world cinema industries.

13. *Citizen Kane* portrays a great newspaper tycoon's troubled and controversial life. In my eyes, the Rosebud on the sled is not only Kane's lost childhood but also a more generalized symbol of loss: power, money, and love. It is the most creative movie ever made, which greatly enriches the film expression.
14. In *The Godfather* the story of an Italian Mafia family in New York unfolds. The Mafia exists and develops in almost all countries, especially if a country is in a period of social transition. The cinematography by Gordon Willis in this film proves that the aesthetic of a film is in photography.
15. *Forrest Gump* is a fable - like story and Gump is a very new screen image. Following his remembrance of the past at a bus - stop we enter into social life in the turbulent years of America from the 1950s to 1970s. From his love, friendship and career we see the wounds of the Vietnam War are being healed and the reunion of the nation is being effected. From this movie we see Hollywood has really become a "Dream Works".
16. Where there is marriage without love, there will be love without marriage. The romance in *The Bridges of Madison County* is short but unforgettable. Francesca and Robert are a pair of soul mates. While the novel tells the story from Robert's point of view and glorifies masculinity, the film tells the story from Francesca's point of view and focuses on her torment at having to choose between family and happiness.
17. *Kramer vs. Kramer* depicts a middle - aged couple's

marriage crisis. A comparative study of Kramer Vs. Kramer and American Beauty helps you make up your own judgement about Hollywood movies and learn how to confront the different opinions in a proper way.

18. In "*On Golden Pond*" we see the loneliness and frustration of American senior citizens, and understand the essence of youth and the meaning of life. Indeed, the sunsets are still bright and magnificent. Youth is not a time of life, it is a state of mind.

The cinema was at the center of life in the 20th century - and it continues to be in the new century. Film is the greatest teacher because it teaches not only through the brain but through the whole body. Movies tell us stories about places never seen and people never met; they bring us together and tell us about each other; they help us to remember childhood and to dream about future. When I was a boy, movies fired my ambition and imagination. I wanted to see for myself that other world out there beyond those broad horizons where I lived. Movies have drastically changed the way we perceive the world and ourselves. From movies, people learn about history and human nature, and understand the world and life through the growth and fate of movie characters.

Movies are a sophisticated art - possibly the most important art of the twentieth century - with a rather complex history of theory and practice. The motion - picture medium has an extraordinary range of expression. It has in common with the plastic arts the fact that it is a visual composition projected on a two - dimensional

surface. It shares common ground with dance in that it deals with movement. Like the theatre, it can create a dramatic intensity of events. Like music, it can compose in the rhythms and phrases of time and can be accompanied by voice and instruments. Like poetry, it can juxtapose images. And as is the case with literature, generally, it can encompass in its sound track the abstractions available only to language. In short, movie art possesses nearly all the expressions of literature and arts. The special characteristics of film produce an endless array of charms and make it a very popular medium. The cinema will play an even more important role in entertaining and enriching the world.

Language is not only a tool of communication but also a part of culture. English helps you understand motion pictures, motion pictures in turn help you master English. English, without adequate cultural background, can never be fully appreciated. I make American history the theme of American Movies, and explore it through the eighteen movies selected in this book. People of different eras, countries, sexes, ages, races, colors, education backgrounds and occupations speak English with different pronunciations, intonations, speeds and vocabularies. In the movies you will hear British English, American English, the Black English of the slums, German English, Italian English, jargon, slang, and even obscenities. With 《American Movies》 one is learning the language and the culture together, as one global entity. Learning English through movies makes the learning process natural, effective and enjoyable.

The goals of learning through American Movies are to

- Strengthen your listening, speaking and interpretation skills;
- Acquire a basic knowledge of film, its history, genres, artistic means, the Oscars and star systems;
- Understand foreign people, their customs and behaviors, values and beliefs, hopes and dreams, loves and marriages, ways of thinking and daily activities;
- Have a better idea about America in the making of a nation, its geography and history, religions and philosophies, war and peace, literature and art, science and technology, law and order, and western civilization as a whole;
- Improve your understanding and aesthetic judgement of motion pictures thus enhancing your enjoyment;
- Round out your experience and perfect your character.

Each unit consists of

- Synopsis
- Characters
- Excerpts of Screenplay
- Comments
- Supplementary Reading
- Film ABC
- Notes
- Movie Understanding and Essay Writing
- Translations
- Questions and Answers.

Teaching 《American Movies》 is usually done as follows:

1. Reading the movie materials before class to understand the main ideas and relations among the characters of the film;
2. Listening to the movie tapes before and after class to