

APPRECIATING MOVIES

- ◆ 阅读电影，走进电影人物的悲喜情愁。阅读电影，认知情感，体悟生命。是人生的感悟，是心灵的共鸣，是感情的升华，是人性的积淀。
- ◆ 阅读电影，了解技术，通透文化，对电影进行深度解读，解读文化，解读意义。
- ◆ 阅读电影，解读电影，是对电影的一次忠诚的背叛，它来自于超越电影的一种内在诉求，这种解读，比电影本身更发人深省，更亘古隽永。

阅读 电影

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前言

电影也可以阅读，阅读电影让我们有机会捕捉另一种风景。

电影，不仅是视听的享受，也是感悟心灵的旅程。庞大的场景、唯美的画面、奢华的音效，电影所带来的视觉冲击力无可替代。然而对于影像的深度阅读也同样不可或缺。

阅读电影，走进电影人物的悲喜情愁。阅读电影，认知情感，体悟生命。是人生的感悟，是心灵的共鸣，是感情的升华，是人性的积淀。

阅读电影，了解技术，通透文化，对电影进行深度解读，解读文化，解读意义。

阅读电影，解读电影，是对电影的一次忠诚的背叛，它来自于超越电影的一种内在诉求，这种解读，比电影本身更发人深省，更亘古隽永。

阅读电影，一种对电影的全新的体验，阅读正成为影迷们欣赏电影的又一种方式。

《阅读电影》旨在引领读者走进美妙的光影故事，重温经典，思考社会，解读生命，追寻梦想，探究永恒。

《阅读电影》旨在提高对经典英语电影作品的鉴赏水平的同时，锻炼思辨能力，开拓国际视野，引发深层的文化思考，塑造独立的人生价值观。

2008年，美国电影学会评选出十大电影类型十大佳片(AFI's 10 Top 10)，作为美国电影学会“百年百大”系列的重要部分。十大电影类型包括动画片、奇幻片、科幻片、运动类型片、西部片、黑帮犯罪片、悬疑片、浪漫喜剧、法庭剧情片和史诗片。本书选取每一类型中评选出的最佳片，通过对每部经典电影的解读，透析时代的动荡变迁是如何影像美国电影的内容与风格，而美国电影又怎样从各个侧面折射出美国社会的面貌、思潮和心理的，是怎样反映并传播着不断变化的美国价值观念和美国理想。

《阅读电影》共有十章，每章内容包括：电影类型介绍，影片介绍，故事梗概，欣赏与推荐，影片评论和怀旧影评等。

电影类型介绍部分描述了每一电影类型的主要特征、风格及其流行特征等内容，以期读者通过电影类型所确立的视觉符码，更好地理解不同类型影片所展现的价值体系、文化社区、叙述方式和主题情境等。

影片介绍部分简述了所选影片的基本信息，包括编剧、导演、主演、上映时间、片长以及获奖情况等。

故事梗概勾勒作品的主要内容，通过文字，呈现电影立体而流动的精彩画面。

欣赏与推荐从剧作、摄影、声音、剪接、表演、主题、意义等方面对影片进行全方位剖析和解码。通过对电影的深度解构,再现经典影片的绝伦与精彩。

影片评论部分选取美国主流媒体或专业影评人对所选影片的深刻评论,引领读者解读电影,思考电影,呈现大师的思考与独白,引发电影与读者的共鸣和感念。

怀旧影评选取当代知名影评人对所选影片在当前语境中的评论。用一种批判的眼光对之重新审视,用独特的眼光对其意义进行重构,引领读者在当前的视角下,重新审视经典电影,释读经典电影。

《阅读电影》可作为高等院校英语专业教材,亦可供非英语专业学生影视课程和英文电影爱好者选用。

编者

2012年1月

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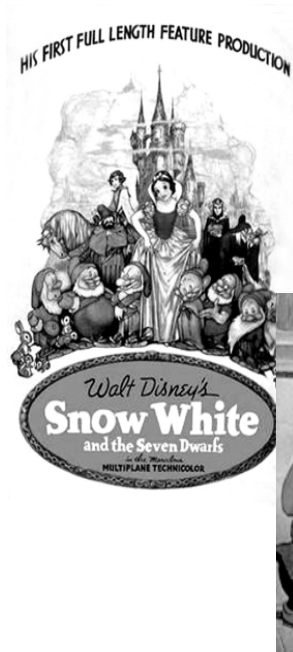
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Chapter One Animation

— *Snow White and the Seven Dwarf*





I. Genre —Animation

American Film Institute described animated films as “a genre in which the film’s images are primarily created by computer or hand and the characters are voiced by actors. A skillful combination of caricature and artistry, animation amplifies reality, offering stories that are visually stylized, but emotionally truthful. Whether it’s a minimalist black squiggle or a full-blown tour-de-force of color and movement, animation allows imaginary characters and inanimate objects to spring vividly to life.”

Animated films are ones in which individual drawings, paintings, or illustrations are photographed frame by frame (stop-frame cinematography). Usually, each frame differs slightly from the one preceding it, giving the illusion of movement when frames are projected in rapid succession at 24 frames per second. The earliest cinema animation was composed of frame-by-frame, hand-drawn images. When combined with movement, the illustrator’s two-dimensional static art came alive and created pure and imaginative cinematic images — animals and other inanimate objects could become evil villains or heroes.

AFI’s Top 10 Animation

1. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 1937
2. *Pinocchio* 1940
3. *Bambi* 1942
4. *The Lion King* 1994
5. *Fantasia* 1940
6. *Toy Story* 1995
7. *Beauty and the Beast* 1991
8. *Shrek* 2001

9. *Cinderella* 1950

10. *Finding Nemo* 2003

II. Film Details

Directed by	David Hand (supervising) William Cottrell Wilfred Jackson Larry Morey Perce Pearce Ben Sharpsteen
Produced by	Walt Disney
Written by	Ted Sears Richard Creedon Otto Englander Dick Rickard Earl Hurd Merrill De Maris Dorothy Ann Blank Webb Smith
Based on	<i>Snow White</i> by the Brothers Grimm
Starring	Adriana Caselotti Lucille La Verne Harry Stockwell Pinto Colvig Roy Atwell
Music by	Frank Churchill Paul Smith Leigh Harline



Studio	Walt Disney Productions
Distributed by	RKO Radio Pictures
Release date(s)	December 21, 1937 (premiere) February 4, 1938 (United States)
Running time	83 minutes

Awards:

Win

100 Greatest American Movies — 1998 American Film Institute

Honorary and Other Awards — Walt Disney — 1938 Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

10 Best Films — 1937 Film Daily

U.S. National Film Registry — 1988 Library of Congress

10 Best Films — 1937 New York Times

Nomination

Best Picture — 1938 National Board of Review

Best Score — Frank Churchill — 1937 Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Best Score — Leigh Harline — 1937 Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Best Score — Paul J. Smith — 1937 Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Film Presented — 2007 San Francisco International Film Festival

III. Plot Summary

As part of her daily beauty routine, the Wicked Queen asks her Magic Mirror, “Who is the fairest one of all?” and is told that Snow White, her blossoming stepdaughter, is now the “fairest one of all.” In an envious rage, the queen orders a woodsman to kill Snow White, who has just met the handsome and endearing Prince, in the forest. Once there, however, the woodsman finds he cannot do the deed and admonishes the princess to hide, while he returns to the queen with a pig’s heart, which he claims belonged to Snow White. Frightened

by the dark, stormy forest, Snow White runs wildly through the trees until she collapses with exhaustion on the forest floor. After her nap, she wakes to find the woods full of friendly, furry animals, who guide her to an empty cottage. Shocked by the decrepit condition of the cottage, Snow White enlists the help of the animals to clean it up, and then falls asleep in an upstairs bedroom, which has been furnished with seven tiny beds.

While Snow White sleeps, the owners of the beds, the Seven Dwarfs — Sleepy, Dopey, Doc, Sneezy, Grumpy, Bashful and Happy — return from working at the local diamond mine and discover the snoozing princess. After much confusion, Snow White strikes a deal with the Dwarfs, offering her domestic services in exchange for room and board. To Grumpy's dissatisfaction, Snow White turns the household upside down and instigates positive changes in the Dwarfs' life. The Dwarfs' newly found happiness ends abruptly when the evil queen, who has learned from the Magic Mirror that Snow White is alive, transforms herself into an old hag and, equipped with a poison apple, heads for the Dwarfs' cottage. Lured by the queen, the innocent Snow White bites into the apple and falls into a death-like sleep, which can be broken only when she is kissed by her first true love. Satisfied that Snow White is doomed, the queen rushes back toward her castle but is chased by the Dwarfs and falls to her death off a cliff. While lying in the woods in a glass-domed coffin built by the Dwarfs, Snow White is found by the Prince. Entranced by her tranquil beauty, the prince kisses her back to life and carries her off to eternal happiness.

IV. Recommendation & Appreciation

If Walt Disney's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" had been primarily about Snow White, it might have been forgotten soon after its 1937 premiere, and treasured today only for historical reasons, as the first full-length animated feature in color. Snow White is truth to tell, a bit of a bore, not a character who acts but one whose mere existence inspires others to act. The mistake of most of



Disney's countless imitators over the years has been to confuse the titles of his movies with their subjects. "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" is not so much about Snow White or Prince Charming as about the Seven Dwarfs and the evil Queen — and the countless creatures of the forest and the skies, from a bluebird that blushes to a turtle who takes forever to climb up a flight of stairs.

Walt Disney's shorter cartoons all centered on one or a few central characters with strongly defined personalities, starting with Mickey Mouse himself. They lived in simplified landscapes, and occupied stories in which clear objectives were boldly outlined. But when Disney decided in 1934 to make a full-length feature, he instinctively knew that the film would have to grow not only in length but in depth. The story of Snow White as told in his source, the Brothers Grimm, would scarcely occupy his running time, even at a brisk 83 minutes.

Disney's inspiration was not in creating Snow White but in creating her world. At a time when animation was a painstaking frame-by-frame activity and every additional moving detail took an artist days or weeks to draw, Disney imagined a film in which every corner and dimension would contain something that was alive and moving. From the top to the bottom, from the front to the back, he filled the frame (which is why Disney's decision in the 1980s to release a cropped "widescreen" version was so wrong-headed, and quickly retracted).

So complex were his frames, indeed, that Disney and his team of animators found that the cels they used for their short cartoons were not large enough to contain all the details he wanted, and larger cels were needed. The film's earliest audiences may not have known the technical reasons for the film's impact, but in the early scene where Snow White runs through the forest, they were thrilled by the way the branches reached out to snatch at her, and how the sinister eyes in the darkness were revealed to belong to friendly woodland animals. The trees didn't just sit there within the frame.

Disney's other innovation was the "multiplane camera," which gave the illusion of three dimensions by placing several levels of drawing one behind another and moving them separately—the ones in front faster than the ones behind, so that the background seemed to actually move instead of simply unscrolling. Multiplane cameras were standard in animation until the very recent

use of computers, which achieve a similar but more detailed effect—too detailed, purists argue, because too lifelike.

Nothing like the techniques in “Snow White” had been seen before. Animation itself was considered a child’s entertainment, six minutes of gags involving mice and ducks, before the newsreel and the main feature. “Snow White” demonstrated how animation could release a movie from its trap of space and time; how gravity, dimension, physical limitations and the rules of movement itself could be transcended by the imaginations of the animators.

Consider another early example, when Snow White is singing “I’m Wishing” while looking down into the well. Disney gives her an audience—a dove that flutters away in momentary fright, and then returns to hear the rest of the song. Then the point of view shifts dramatically, and we are looking straight up at Snow White from beneath the shimmering surface of the water in the well. The drawing is as easy to achieve as any other, but where did the imagination come from, to supply that point of view?

Walt Disney often receives credit for everything done in his name (even sometimes after his death). He was a leader of a large group of dedicated and hard-working collaborators, who are thanked in the first frames of “Snow White,” before the full credits. But he was the visionary who guided them, and it is a little stunning to realize that modern Disney animated features like “Beauty and the Beast,” “The Lion King” and “Aladdin,” as well as the rare hits made outside the Disney shop, like Dreamworks’ “Shrek” and Pixar’s “Toy Story,” still use to this day the basic approach that you can see full-blown in “Snow White.”

The most important continuing element is the use of satellite and sidekick characters, minor and major, serious and comic. A frame is not allowed for long to contain only a single character, long speeches are rare, musical and dance numbers are frequent, and the central action is underlined by the bit characters, who mirror it or react to it.

Disney’s other insight was to make the characters physically express their personalities. He did that not by giving them funny faces or distinctive clothes (although that was part of it) but studying styles of body language and then



exaggerating them. When Snow White first comes across the cottage of the dwarfs, she goes upstairs and sees their beds, each one with a nameplate: Sleepy, Grumpy, Dopey, and so on. When the dwarfs return home from work (“Heigh–ho! Heigh–ho! ”), they are frightened and resentful to find a stranger stretched across their little beds, but she quickly wins them over by calling each one by name. She knows them, of course, because they personify their names. But that similarity alone would soon become boring if they didn’t also act out every speech and movement with exaggerated body language, and if their very clothing didn’t seem to move in sympathy with their personalities.

Richard Schickel’s 1968 book “The Disney Version” points out Disney’s inspiration in providing his heroes and supporting characters with different centers of gravity. A heroine like Snow White will stand upright and tall. But all of the comic characters will make movements centered on and emanating from their posteriors. Rump–butting is commonplace in Disney films and characters often fall on their behinds and spin around. Schickel attributed this to some kind of Disney anal fixation, but Disney did it because it works: It makes the comic characters rounder, lower, softer, bouncier and funnier, and the personalities of all seven Dwarfs are built from the seat up.

The animals are also divided into body styles throughout Disney. “Real” animals (like Pluto) look more like dogs, comic animals (like Goofy) stand upright and are more bottom–loaded. In the same movie a mouse will be a rodent but Mickey will somehow be other than a mouse; the stars transcend their species. In both versions, non–star animals and other supporting characters provide counterpoint and little parallel stories. Snow White doesn’t simply climb up the stairs at the dwarves’ house — she’s accompanied by a tumult of animals. And they don’t simply follow her in one dimensional movement. The chipmunks hurry so fast they seem to climb over each other’s backs, but the turtle takes it one laborious step at a time, and provides a punch line when he tumbles back down again.

What you see in “Snow White” is a canvas always shimmering, palpitating, with movement and invention. To this is linked the central story, which like all

good fairy tales is terrifying, involving the evil Queen, the sinister Mirror on the Wall, the poisoned apple, entombment in the glass casket, the lightning storm, the rocky ledge, the Queen's fall to her death. What helps children deal with this material is that the birds and animals are as timid as they are, scurrying away and then returning for another curious look. The little creatures of "Snow White" are like a chorus that feels like the kids in the audience do.

"Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" was immediately hailed as a masterpiece. (The Russian director Sergei Eisenstein called it the greatest movie ever made.) It remains the jewel in Disney's crown, and although inflated modern grosses have allowed other titles to pass it in dollar totals, it is likely that more people have seen it than any other animated feature. The word genius is easily used and has been cheapened, but when it is used to describe Walt Disney, reflect that he conceived of this film, in all of its length, revolutionary style and invention, when there was no other like it — and that to one degree or another, every animated feature made since owes it something.

By Roger Ebert, October 14, 2001

V. Reviews

Review 1

By Frank S. Nugent

Published: January 14, 1938

From *The New York Times*

Sheer fantasy, delightful, gay, and altogether captivating, touched the screen yesterday when Walt Disney's long-awaited feature-length cartoon of the Grimm fairy tale, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs", had its local premiere



at the Radio City Music Hall. Let your fears be quieted at once: Mr. Disney and his amazing technical crew have outdone themselves. The picture more than matches expectations. It is a classic, as important cinematically as “The Birth of a Nation” or “The birth of Mickey Mouse”. Nothing quite like it has been done before; and already we have grown impolite enough to clamor for an encore. Another helping, please!

You can visualize it best if you imagine a child, with a wondrous, puckish imagination, nodding over his favorite fairy tale and dreaming a dream in which his story would come true. He would see Snow White, victim of the wicked Queen’s jealousy, dressed in rags, singing at her work quite unmindful of the Magic Mirror’s warning to the Queen that the Princess, not she, was now the “fairest in the land.” Then he would see Snow White’s banishment from the castle, her fearful flight from the hobgoblins of the forest, her adoption by all the friendly little creatures of the wood, and her refuge at the home of the seven dwarfs.

And then, if this child had a truly marvelous imagination — the kind of impish imagination that Mr. Disney and his men possess — he might have seen the seven dwarfs as the picture sees them. There are Doc, who sputters and twists his words, and Happy, who is a rollicking little elf, and Grumpy, who is terribly grumpy — at first — and Sleepy, who drowzes, and Sneezy, who acts like a volcano with hay fever, and Bashful, who blushes to the roots of his long white beard, and Dopey. Dopey really deserves a sentence all by himself. No, we’ll make it a paragraph, because Dopey is here to stay.

Dopey is the youngest of the seven dwarfs. He is beardless, with a buttony nose, a wide mouth, beagle ears, cross-purpose eyes, and the most disarming, winning, helpless, puppy-dog expression that creature ever had. If we had to dissect him, we’d say he was one part little Benny of the comic strips, one part Worry-Wart of the same, and one part Pluto, of the Mickey Mouse Plutos. There may, too, be just a dash of Harpo Marx. But he’s all Dopey, forever out of step in the dwarfs’ processions, doomed to carry the red taillight when they go to their jewel mines, and speechless. As Doc explains, “He never tried to talk.”

So there they are, all seven of them, to protect the little Princess from her evil stepmother, the Queen, to dance and frolic and cavort — with the woodland