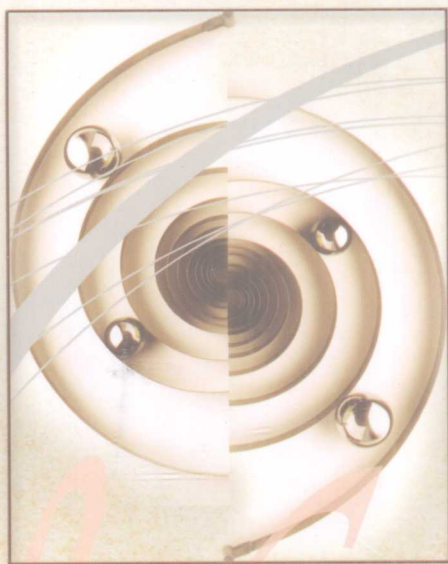


大学英语选修课规划教材



华中科技大学外语学院 编著

英美影视欣赏 教程

APPRECIATION OF

ENGLISH MOVIES

华中科技大学出版社

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内容提要

本教程共选用了 8 部影片，其中多为 20 世纪至 21 世纪最经典、最为人们所喜爱的影片。这些影片题材不尽相同，其中有揭示现代社会家庭伦理问题的故事片；有表现纯真爱情和友谊的爱情故事片；有表现英雄主义的故事片；还有颠覆传统童话的动画片。每部影片编写了背景资料（含人物简介），故事梗概，有代表性的人物对白，听力练习，口语练习，写作练习及佳句赏析 7 个部分。教程的目录根据影片拍摄的时间排列。

前言

影视是文化交流的先锋,也是语言交流和全球国际化的先锋。熟悉和了解影视文化,会让人们有更充足的储备面对全球化浪潮的挑战。国外学中文的外国学生看中文电影,甚至学相声、唱大鼓的不乏其人。国内学英语的中国学生追看英语选秀或者热门美剧更是成为一种势不可挡的潮流。

与这种热潮相对应的是,国内高校的英语课程设置中普遍开设了英语影视课。历年记录表明,这门课是大学生选课的经典热门之选,虽然个中原因林林总总,不尽相同,但其热门程度是有目共睹的。

遗憾的是,这门课由于其依托大量影视材料的独特属性,加上普遍缺乏规范大纲和教材,在不同的课堂上,教学效果往往良莠不齐,差异巨大。

有些学校的英语影视课变成了一哄而上的电影专场,学生在课堂上看得热热闹闹、喜笑颜开,下课之后却什么也不记得,什么也没学会。而有些影视课结束之后,学生普遍感觉对英语的领悟有了质的飞跃,学习的积极主动性也大幅度提高。为什么同样的一门课程,教学效果会差别如此之大呢?

要想明白这其中的差别,我们必须先想一想以下两个问题:教师期待通过这门课教给学生什么?学生们又到底期待从中得到些什么呢?

单从课程本身来看,英语影视课大致经历了三个阶段。

20世纪八十年代的英语影视课主要是作为日常教学任务之余的辅助手段,重点在展示英语背后的不同文化,当时的中国社会与国际接轨尚在起步阶段,学生很少能接触到国外资讯,这个阶段开设英语影视课更类似交代英语世界的人文社会背景,让学生在学语法、背课文之余多少增加些感性认识。这个阶段多选择经典爱情片,如《Waterloo Bridge》、《Casablanca》等,希区柯克的悬念片也是常见的选择。教学材料多半是录像带加印单页。

20世纪九十年代中国和世界一起日新月异,无数新鲜资讯扑面而来。各国风土人情电视、电影都成为中国大学生们随手拈来的谈资。这个阶段的英语影视课开始弱化了文化展示者的身份,更加注重语言点的讲授,让学生在电影中学习新词组和口语用法。这正好弥补了当时英语课本滞后于时代变化的不足。口语化、较易听懂的生活片和轻喜剧成为上好选择,比如《Forrest Gump》、《You've Got Mail》等。材料通常使用VCD和录音磁带。九十年代末DVD的出现给英语影视课的开展提供了极大方便,多种字幕的切换使得学生可能实现更大的学习自主权。如果使用DVD光驱在电脑上播放,播放软件还能支持双字幕展示。

进入21世纪以来,随着国际交流的日益繁荣,文化交流越来越频繁,文化的交叉成为主流,影视成为文化交流主要的中介之一,成为中国人日常生活的一个部分。英语电影的很多经典短语也成为中文流行语,“You jump, I jump.”变成大家经常套用的打趣桥段,“断

背”成为一个形容词。最新的国外获奖影片会在中国各大影院迅速上映,在这个新时期里,学生看过的英语片可能比讲台上老师看过的还多,新词汇、新词组对手持电子词典的学生都不再是什么大问题,他们更期待老师对其中的文化现象答疑解惑,也期待表达和交流自己的观点。课堂上老师可以减少对语言点的讲解,而把重点放到分析文化差异,培养学生的交流能力上来。为什么看到这里你哭了?为什么看到这里大家全都会哈哈大笑?为什么他们非要分手?为什么他会自杀?为什么公主最后没变回美人反变妖怪?结局能不能改写?为什么?

电影材料的突出优势是:它提炼全面展示的一个或者多个戏剧冲突的前前后后,当学生沉浸其中,正在同悲同喜之时,被老师的一个个尖锐问题突然击中,自然会有开口争辩的冲动。而问题层出不穷,学生的回答也各个不同,甚至针锋相对。在一节热烈的电影讨论课后,学生往往会感慨一个看似有定论的问题说出来居然有这么多种截然不同的答案。

如此看来英语影视课更接近口语讨论课和文本分析的结合,是对学生综合能力的一种提升。影视课不是录像厅,不是对影视材料的简单播放和剪辑。这门课程的目的是,通过一学期的锻炼,即使在英语环境中,大学生们也能表现的真正象 **educated adults** 一样,对矛盾能解释,对问题能分析,而且能把自己在中文环境中养成的内在个性和气质同样外化到英语的应对中去,自己的感触,别人的悲喜,都能同样在另外一种语言中交流和感受。包罗社会万象的英语影视成为我们的绝佳平台。

本书的编写兼顾了“听、说、读、写”四项基本技能的训练,包括每部电影的背景介绍、对白听写,以及各种形式的综合练习。最具特色的便是其中的问答,精心设计的开放式问题能成为深入理解电影的绝佳帮手。按照书中要求认真完成几部电影之后,你会发现自己甚至能用英语分析人生哲学和婚姻价值观之类听起来颇深奥的东西了。

而更妙的是,当你对这些对白了如指掌,分析起来头头是道的时候,恭喜,你的英语水平又实现了一次大的飞跃了!

本书首先是介绍部分,简略地回顾了电影的发展历史、著名的世界电影节、1980—2009年奥斯卡最佳影片获奖名单及电影类型,旨在增加学生对电影背景知识的了解。本书共有8个单元。每个单元需用约5个课内学时,总授课时数约40学时。每个单元分为七个部分:第一部分为影片背景知识,主要是主创演职人员介绍;第二部分为影片剧情介绍。这两部分将学生引入积极的学习状态,帮助学生宏观地了解全片,要求学生做课前预习;第三部分为有代表性的人物对白,以填空题形式给出,主要是训练学生的听力能力及语法、词汇的运用能力,要求学生在课堂内完成;第四、第五部分分别为听力练习和口语表达练习,采用多项选择题和是非判断题形式用以加强学生对影片细节的理解,可在课堂内以小组或结队活动的形式训练学生的口头表达能力;第六部分为笔头表达练习,旨在训练学生对词汇、惯用法、语法等语言要素的掌握及对语言的组织能力、表达能力等的运用;第七部分为影片佳句赏析,可要求学生课后模仿朗读背诵。

这本教程的最初轮廓是由雷小川教授根据华中科技大学大学英语教学需要确定的,并对本书的初稿进行了详尽审阅,在此我们向他表示最诚挚的谢意。

本书编写过程中得到我院领导、教师的热情帮助，华中科技大学出版社领导和英语编辑给予了我们热情的鼓励和帮助，我们在此表示感谢。

由于编者水平有限，编写方式又有异于传统教材，书中难免有错误和不当之处，恳请使用者提出宝贵的意见和批评。

编 者
于喻家山麓
2009 年 5 月

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O

Introduction

I. A brief Introduction of Movie History

Movies have a brief history, compared to such art forms as music and painting. Movies date back only to the late 1800's. By the early 1900's, filmmakers had developed distinctive* artistic theories and techniques. Motion pictures received little scholarly attention, however, until the 1960's. Since then, thousands of books have been published about every aspect of filmmaking and film history. Many universities and colleges offer degrees in motion pictures, and many more offer film courses.

Since earliest times, people have been interested in portraying things in motion. During the late 1800's, developments in science helped stimulate a series of inventions that led to projected motion pictures on celluloid* film. These inventions laid the foundation for a new industry and a new art form.

The first successful photographs of motion were made in 1877 and 1878 by Eadweard Muybridge, a British photographer working in California. Muybridge took a series of photographs of a running horse. For his project, Muybridge set up a row of cameras (first 12, then 24) with strings attached to their shutters*. When the horse ran by, it broke each string in succession^①, tripping* the shutters.

The invention of motion pictures. Muybridge's feat* influenced inventors in several countries to work toward developing devices to record and re-present movie images. These inventors included Thomas Armat, Thomas Alva Edison, C. Francis Jenkins, and Woodville Latham in the United States; William Friese-Greene and Robert W. Paul in the United Kingdom; and the brothers Louis Jean and Auguste Lumiere and Etienne-Jules Marey in France.

Through their efforts, several different types of motion-picture cameras and projectors* appeared in the mid-1890's. March 14, 1893 —Thomas Edison is granted Patent #493,426 for "An Apparatus for Exhibiting Photographs of Moving Objects" (The Kinetoscope*). It was a cabinet showing unenlarged 35-millimeter* black-and-white films running about 90

*/'distɪŋktɪv/

a. 有特色的

*/'seljʊləɪd/

n. 赛璐珞

*/'ʃʌtə/ n. 快门

*/'trɪp/ v. 绊动

*/'fi:t/ n. 技艺

*/'prə'dʒektə/

n. 放映机

*/'kaɪ'ni:təskeʊp/

n. 活动电影放

映机

*/'mɪlɪmi:tə/ n.

毫米

① in succession 接连地

seconds. An individual watched through a peephole* as the film moved on spools*. Kinetoscope parlors opened in a number of cities. However, they were soon replaced by projection machines that threw greatly enlarged pictures on a screen. These new machines allowed many people to view a single film at the same time.

1895 — In France, brothers named Auguste and Louis Lumière, designed and built a lightweight, hand-held motion picture camera called the Cinématographe. The Lumière brothers discovered that their machine could also be used to project images onto a large screen. The Lumière brothers created several short films at this time that are considered to be pivotal* in the history of motion pictures.

Edison, adapting a projector developed by Armat, presented the first public exhibition of projected motion pictures in the United States on April 23 1896, in a New York City music hall.

Film screenings soon became a popular entertainment. In large cities, motion pictures played on vaudeville* programs, in music halls, and in amusement arcades*. Traveling projectionists* brought the films to smaller cities and country towns. The most popular subjects included re-creations of current news events, such as battles in the Spanish-American War of 1898, and dramatized folk tales.

Films were made without recorded synchronized* sound. However, exhibitors sometimes accompanied the images with music or lectures, or even used offscreen* live actors to provide dialogue. Later, printed titles* were inserted within the films. The titles gave dialogue, descriptions of action, or commentary. Titles permitted the international circulation* of films, because translated titles could easily replace the originals. Edison's company dominated the early years of American moviemaking through its control of patents on filmmaking equipment.

By the time World War I broke out in Europe in 1914, a number of companies had established studios in and around the Hollywood district of Los Angeles. After the war ended in 1918, American movies became dominant worldwide and the name "Hollywood" came to stand for the values and style of American movies. Movies become big business then.

Before World War I, foreign-made films were strong competition for Hollywood, especially mystery serials* from France and historical epics* from Italy. But during the war, European governments diverted* raw material from their film industries for military needs. American movie companies seized the opportunity to become the world's strongest film industry.

Within the United States, competition among movie companies led the

*/pi:pəul/ *n.*

窥孔

*/spu:l/ *n.* 卷轴

*/pivətl/ *a.*

关键性的

*/vɔ:dəvɪl/ *n.*

歌舞杂耍

*/ɑ:'keɪd/ *n.*

游乐中心

*/prə'dʒekʃnɪst/

n. 电影放映员

*/sɪŋkrənaɪz/

v. 同步

*/ɔ:'fʃkri:n/ *a.*

画面以外的

*/taɪtl/ *n.* 字幕

*/sə:kju'leɪʃn/

n. 流通

*/sɪəriəl/ *n.*

连续剧

*/epɪk/ *n.* 史诗

*/daɪ've:t/ *v.*

转向, 转移

most powerful studios toward vertical* integration*. This term describes the system in which a studio owned production facilities, distribution channels, and movie theaters. Vertical integration gave the studios control of all three major elements of filmmaking: production, distribution, and exhibition.

A few movie companies came to dominate the industry — Columbia, Fox, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, RKO, Paramount, United Artists, Universal, and Warner Brothers. They adopted a system in which producers supervised* a movie's development from script to post-production. Producers, who were usually businessmen rather than film artists, kept a close watch on budgets and schedules. As far as possible, all the people working on the film — the director, writers, designers, crew, and cast — were drawn from the studio payroll. During the 1920's, engineers in the United States and Germany were working to develop a technology that could add synchronous* recorded sound to movies. By the mid-1920's, a few systems were ready for demonstration.

The first sound film to create a sensation* was *The Jazz Singer* (1927). Although silent for much of its length, in a few scenes the popular American entertainer Al Jolson sang and spoke in synchronous sound. The film used a system in which the sound from a mechanically recorded disc* was mechanically synchronized with the filmstrip*. This system was soon replaced by one that used electronic signals to record the sound directly on the filmstrip. The sound-on-film system was widely used by 1929.

The coming of sound marked a turning point in motion-picture history. Some historians claim sound was actually a setback* for the artistic development of movies. The emphasis on sound, and the expense of developing it, limited other technological advances that filmmakers had been experimenting with in the 1920's. For instance, a wide-screen process demonstrated by French director Abel Gance in *Napoleon* (1927) was not generally introduced until the 1950's. What was affected the most, perhaps, was a kind of poetic cinema represented by such silent films as *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), directed by Carl Dreyer of Denmark. Such films survived more as an experimental art form than as part of main stream commercial motion pictures.

In the 1930's, two important new genres* in American movies came from Broadway, the musical and the gangster* picture. Both came to symbolize* Hollywood's contribution to national culture during the Great Depression that followed the stock market crash of 1929.

The leading film-producing nations of Europe during the silent era, Germany and the Soviet Union, were displaced during the first decade of

*/və:tɪkl/ a.

纵向的

*/ɪntɪ'greɪʃn/ n.

联合

*/sju:pəvaɪz/

v. 监督, 管理

*/sɪŋkrənəs/ a.

同步的

*/sen'seɪʃn/

n. 轰动

*/disk/ n. 唱片

*/fɪlmstri:p/ n.

电影胶片

*/setbæk/ n.

退步

*/'zɑ:nra/ n.

类型, 流派

*/gæŋstə/ n.

土匪, 强盗

*/sɪmbəlaɪz/

v. 用符号表现

sound movies by the United Kingdom and France. Alfred Hitchcock led the emergence* of British cinema. Hitchcock directed a number of internationally successful thrillers*, including *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1935) and *The Lady Vanishes* (1938). In France, Jean Renoir made a series of films during the 1930's that shrewdly* observed social attitudes of the time, notably *Grand Illusion* (1937) and *Rules of the Game* (1939).

*/'imə:dʒəns/ n.

出现

*/θrilə/ n. 惊悚片

*/'ru:dlɪ/ ad.

机敏地

After Adolf Hitler seized power in Germany in 1933, a number of German filmmakers went into exile*. Many settled in the United States. Fritz Lang began an important career as an American film director with *Fury* (1936). Renoir went to Hollywood after the German conquest of France early in World War II (1939 — 1945). Hitchcock had already left the United Kingdom for Hollywood in 1939, though not for political reasons. The role of movies in education and propaganda* was far more appreciated during World War II than in World War I. Hollywood contributed to the war effort through traditional entertainment movies and through government service. Fiction films like *Casablanca* (1942) dramatized the war struggle using the traditional screen narrative devices of a love story and individual heroism.

*/'eksail/ n. 流放

*/prəpə'gændə/

n. 宣传

Postwar realism. The impact* of the war led many European directors to make movies that focused on society and its problems. This impulse* resulted in the emergence of the first important postwar European film movement, neorealism*. Neorealist directors were concerned primarily with portraying the daily life of ordinary people. They mainly filmed* on location rather than on a studio set, and they used mostly nonprofessional actors and actresses. These qualities gave neorealist films a gritty*, almost documentary look.

*/'impækt/ n.

影响

*/'impəls/ n.

推动

*/ni:əu'riəlizəm/

n. 新现实主义

*/film/ v. 拍电影

*/'griti/ a. 坚毅的

Italian director Roberto Rossellini made the first internationally significant neorealist films. Rossellini's *Open City* (1945) and *Paisan* (1946) told of the struggle to liberate wartime Italy from its own Fascist government and the later German occupation of the country. Probably the most famous of the neorealist films was *The Bicycle Thieves* (1948), directed by Vittorio de Sica. The Italian government regarded the treatment of social problems in these films as harmful to the country's image internationally and passed a law in 1949 hampering* their export. The law effectively ended the neorealism movement in Italy.

*/'hæmpə/ v.

妨碍

*/rekəg'nɪʃn/

n. 承认

*/'skri:nɪŋ/ n.

放映

* 黑泽明

* 《罗生门》

Thanks to the international impact of neorealism, films and filmmakers previously little known outside their home countries began to gain international recognition*. Some of this acclaim resulted from screenings* at film festivals. Japanese director Akira Kurosawa* brought attention to his country's distinguished film tradition with *Rashomon** (1950). The

Latin-American film industry gained recognition with *Los Olvidados* (1950), made in Mexico by Spanish director Luis Bunuel.

The New Wave in France. The chief goal of the young French critics, however, was to revive what they saw as a stuffy* French film industry. Leaving writing for directing, they were to become leaders of the French New Wave. Their impact on filmmaking of the 1960's was as profound as that of Italian neorealism several years earlier. Such films as *The 400 Blows* (1959), directed by Francois Truffaut, and *Breathless* (1960), directed by Jean-Luc Godard, marked the emergence of a new generation of influential movie directors.

*/stʌfi/ a. 乏味的

During the 1960's, Eastern European films made their mark on the world scene for the first time. Polish director *Roman Polanski's Knife in the Water* (1962) was the first major international success from Eastern Europe. Czechoslovak cinema soon captured* worldwide attention with a series of comic films that criticized social and political conditions.

*/kæptʃə/ v.
引起注意

For several reasons, the American film industry did not fully participate in the world cinema renaissance* of the 1960's.

*/ri'neɪsɪs/ n.

A new generation of filmmakers surfaced* in the 1970's. Steven Spielberg and George Lucas became the most successful of them. They established a remarkable record for producing and directing popular films, beginning with *Jaws* (1975), directed by Spielberg. Lucas's science-fiction movie *Star Wars* (1977) was the first of many popular adventure, military, and science-fiction movies to come from Hollywood in the late 1970's.

文艺复兴

*/sə:'fɪs/ v. 露面

During the 1990's, Hollywood introduced special effects images created by computer graphics*, which made possible greater realism and even more elaborate* fantasy stories.

*/græfɪk/ n.
图形

Cinema was increasingly dominated by special-effects films such as *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991) and *Titanic* (1997), meanwhile such films were sometimes criticized for allowing special effects to replace story elements, such as characterization and plot.

*/i'læbəreɪt/ a.
精美的

During the late 1990s, another cinematic transition began, from physical film stock to digital cinema technology. Meanwhile DVDs became the new standard for consumer video, replacing VHS tapes and VCD.

In 2000s, the documentary film also rose as a commercial genre for perhaps the first time, with the success of films such as *March of the Penguins* and *Fahrenheit 9/11*. The success of *Gladiator* led to a revival of interest in epic cinema.

More films were also being released simultaneously to IMAX cinema, the first was in 2002's Disney animation *Treasure Planet*; and the first live

action was in 2003's *The Matrix Revolutions* and a re-release of *The Matrix Reloaded*. Later in the decade, *The Dark Knight* was the first major feature film to have been at least partially shot in IMAX technology.

There has been an increasing globalization of cinema during this decade, with foreign-language films gaining popularity in English-speaking markets. Examples of such films include *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Mandarin), *Amelie* (French), *Lagaan* (Hindi), *Spirited Away* (Japanese), *City of God* (Portuguese), *The Passion of the Christ* (Hebrew), *Apocalypto* (Mayan) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (a third in Hindi).

One major new development in the early 21st century is the development of systems that make it much easier for regular people to write, shoot, edit and distribute their own movies without the large apparatus of the film industry.

II. A List of Film Festivals in the World

国际电影节一览

1.	Cairo International Film Festival —Cairo, Egypt	开罗国际电影节 ——埃及开罗
2.	Carthage International Film Festival —Carthage, Tunis	迦太基国际电影节 ——突尼斯迦太基
3.	Tokyo International Film Festival —Tokyo, Japan	东京国际电影节 ——日本东京
4.	London International Film Festival —London, Britain	伦敦国际电影节 ——英国伦敦
5.	Cannes International Film Festival —Cannes, France	戛纳国际电影节 ——法国戛纳
6.	Nantes Film Festival of Three Continents —Nantes, France	南特三大洲电影节 ——法国南特
7.	Berlin International Film Festival —Berlin, Germany	柏林国际电影节 ——德国柏林
8.	Thessaloniki International Film Festival —Thessaloniki, Greece	莎洛尼卡国际电影节 ——希腊莎洛尼卡
9.	Venice International Film Festival —Venice, Italy	威尼斯国际电影节 ——意大利威尼斯
10.	San Sebastian International Film Festival —San Sebastian, Spain	圣塞巴斯蒂安国际电影节 ——西班牙圣塞巴斯蒂安
11.	Locarno International Film Festival —Locarno, Switherlands	洛迦诺国际电影节 ——瑞士洛迦诺

12.	Moscow International Film Festival —Moscow, Russia	莫斯科国际电影节 ——俄罗斯莫斯科
13.	The World Film Festival in Montreal —Montreal, Canada	蒙特利尔世界电影节 ——加拿大蒙特利尔
14.	Toronto Film Festival —Toronto, Canada	多伦多电影节 ——加拿大多伦多
15.	Hawaii International Film Festival —Hawaii, USA	夏威夷国际电影节 ——美国夏威夷
16.	New York International Film Festival —New York, USA	纽约国际电影节 ——美国纽约
17.	Karlovy Vary International Film Festival —Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic	卡罗维发利国际电影节 ——捷克卡罗维发利
18.	Shanghai International Film Festival —Shanghai, China	上海国际电影节 ——中国上海

III. American Academy Award Best Film Winners

奥斯卡最佳影片奖名单 (1980 — 2009)

1980	<i>Kramer vs. Kramer</i>	《克莱默夫妇》
1981	<i>Ordinary People</i>	《凡夫俗子》
1982	<i>Chariots of Fire</i>	《火之战车》
1983	<i>Gandhi</i>	《甘地传》
1984	<i>Terms of Endearment</i>	《亲密关系》
1985	<i>Amadeus</i>	《阿玛迪斯》
1986	<i>Out of Africa</i>	《走出非洲》
1987	<i>Platoon</i>	《野战排》
1988	<i>The Last Emperor</i>	《末代皇帝》
1989	<i>Rain Man</i>	《雨人》
1990	<i>Driving Miss Daisy</i>	《为黛西小姐开车》
1991	<i>Dances with Wolves</i>	《与狼共舞》
1992	<i>The Silence of the Lambs</i>	《沉默的羔羊》
1993	<i>Unforgiven</i>	《杀无赦》
1994	<i>Schindler's List</i>	《辛德勒的名单》
1995	<i>Forrest Gump</i>	《阿甘正传》
1996	<i>Braveheart</i>	《勇敢的心》

1997	<i>The English Patient</i>	《英国病人》
1998	<i>Titanic</i>	《泰坦尼克号》
1999	<i>Shakespeare in Love</i>	《莎翁情史》
2000	<i>American Beauty</i>	《美国丽人》
2001	<i>Gladiator</i>	《角斗士》
2002	<i>A Beautiful Mind</i>	《美丽心灵》
2003	<i>Chicago</i>	《芝加哥》
2004	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i>	《魔戒》
2005	<i>Million Dollar Baby</i>	《百万宝贝》
2006	<i>Crash</i>	《撞车》
2007	<i>The Departed</i>	《无间道风云》
2008	<i>No Country For Old Man</i>	《老无所依》
2009	<i>Slumdog Millionaire</i>	《贫民窟的百万富翁》

IV. Movie Type

Movie Type	电影类型	Movie Type	电影类型
romance	爱情片	comedy	喜剧片
action	动作片	war	战争片
detective	侦探片	western	西部片
spy	间谍片	disaster	灾难片
science-fiction	科幻片	moral	伦理片
thriller	惊悚片	musical	音乐片
horror	恐怖片	biography	传记片
suspense/mystery	悬疑片	documentary	记录片
adventure	冒险片	sports	体育片
animation	动画片	drama	故事片

1 Kramer vs. Kramer

Billy has a home with me.

I've made it the best I could.

It's not perfect; I'm not a perfect parent.

*Sometimes I don't have enough patience and
I forget that he's — he's a little kid. But I'm there.*

I. Background Information



Cast



Billy Kramer
Justin Henry



Joanna Kramer
Meryl Streep



Ted Kramer
Dustin Hoffman

Text

In a 1996 edition of the *L.A. Times*, experts predicted that nearly half of all marriages would end in divorce. This is a pretty sobering* fact for couples hoping for true and lasting love. Most of us strive for a relationship built on a solid foundation, often finding that work, relationships or other vices* take control of our lives. In the wake of ^① this fact marriages are shattered* and families torn apart. Such is the case in the 1979 drama *Kramer vs. Kramer*. Winner of five Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Actor, and Best Supporting Actress, *Kramer vs. Kramer* went on to become a hit at the box office and a critical darling.

Kramer vs. Kramer is one of those quiet, real-life dramas which seem to be a rarity* today. It remains as powerfully moving today as relevant today as it was when released in 1979, simply because its drama will remain relevant for couples of any generation. The film adapted by director **Robert Benton** from the novel by **Avery Corman**, this is perhaps the finest, most evenly balanced film ever made about the failure of marriage and the tumultuous* shift of parental roles. *Kramer vs. Kramer* succeeds where most familial* dramas of this sort fall short — it plays like an honest, warts-and-all^② documentation of a family in tumultuous transition.

Most divorce/custody films deal with the mother gaining custody* of her child after the father's abandonment*. *Kramer vs. Kramer* asks the question: "What if it were the father who had to raise the child?" This may not be the newest concept, but back in 1979 audiences had never seen a film dealing with this subject matter (in fact, the subject of divorce was scarcely present in most movies back then).

Director/writer **Robert Benton** handles everything with a touch of humor and realism that makes the story stand out among other "families in crisis" films. **Benton** seems to understand the characters and lets there be a free flow of dialogue that feels very smooth and natural. **Dustin Hoffman** was in the middle of a divorce during the course of *Kramer vs. Kramer*, and this in turn brings a bit more feeling to his role.

The performances in *Kramer vs. Kramer* are what drive the story to great drama. Both **Dustin Hoffman** and **Meryl Streep** won Academy Awards for their portrayals of the dueling* Kramer's. Hoffman was very deserving of the Oscar he won for his role as Ted. **Dustin Hoffman** shows

*/'səubəriŋ/ a.

不言过其实的

*/'vais/ n. 恶习

*/'ʃæte/ v. 破坏

*/'reərɪti/ n.

稀有之物

*/'tju'mʌltjuəs/

a. 混乱的

*/'fə'milijəl/ a.

家庭的

*/'kʌstədi/ n.

监护权

*/'æ'bændənment/

n. 放弃

*/'dju:əl/ v. 决斗

① in the wake of 尾随, 紧跟, 仿效

② warts-and-all 据实的