

经典英文电影赏析

Appreciating of Classic Movies

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国防工业出版社

·北京·

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

经典英文电影赏析 / 李兵绒, 樊旭梅编著. —北京: 国防工业出版社, 2009. 5

ISBN 978 - 7 - 118 - 06261 - 8

I. 经... II. ①李... ②樊... III. ①英语—语言读物
②电影—鉴赏—世界 IV. H319.4: J

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2009)第 038628 号

※

国防工业出版社出版发行

(北京市海淀区紫竹院南路 23 号 邮政编码 100048)

腾飞印务有限公司印刷

新华书店经售

*

开本 710 × 960 1/16 印张 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ 字数 229 千字
2009 年 5 月第 1 版第 1 次印刷 印数 1—4000 册 定价 28.00 元

(本书如有印装错误, 我社负责调换)

国防书店: (010) 68428422
发行传真: (010) 68411535

发行邮购: (010) 68414474
发行业务: (010) 68472764

前 言

在“信息爆炸”的今天,随着国际文化交流的不断深入和推进,英语作为世界通行语的优势越来越显示出她的“英语帝国”风貌。一方面中国正逐步地同世界接轨,日益频繁的国际交往,使国家和社会对大学生的英语综合能力尤其是听说技能提出了更高的要求。另一方面,目前全国大学英语教学改革正在各高校尝试并推广,基于计算机/网络+课堂教学的教学模式日渐普遍。

教育部2007年颁布了《大学英语课程教学要求》。为贯彻其原则和方针,遵循其提出的“加强听说能力,提倡自主型的个性化学习”要求,大学英语教学课时数在一定程度上进行了缩减,包括听力课课时。而全国大学英语四、六级考试在这一改革的背景下进行了很大程度的调整,加强了应用能力的考查,听力所占的比例也由原来的20%提高到了35%。大学英语教学也面临着新的挑战。

因此,如何在学时减少、对听说能力要求提高的情况下,加强对学生学习能力的训练,培养学生自主学习的新模式,也是大学教师应该探讨的新问题。

电影一直以来就是人类漫漫旅途中的精神伴侣。在电影中,人们可以获得心灵的安慰,得到情感的滋润,寻求生活的力量,体验人生的快乐。而英语电影不仅能把学习者带入到一个非常好的语境中培养语感,而且有利于学生熟悉国外的社会、文化、生活方式以及异国风情,为他们了解西方提供了一种影像解读的窗口。中国著名英语语言学教育专家刘润清曾说过,“电影是社会文化的浓缩,看一部电影胜似在国外生活一天”。

借此我们编写了《经典英文电影赏析》这部书。在对近几年英美国家上演的大片精挑细选的基础上,我们选择了既适合英语学习,又集知识性、趣味性、观赏性、时尚性、体验性为一体的10部电影。目的是通过提供真实的英语语言环境,让英语学习者和爱好者能直接了解英美人的思维方式、文化和生活习俗,锻炼和提高英语视、听、说、读、写、译的综合应用能力。这10部电影涉及不同的类型:爱情片、励志片、喜剧片、动作片、友情片、动画片等,学习者可从各个侧面熟

悉西方的社会文化背景,体味不同的人生态度,缩短我们外语学习者与英语社会的心理距离,从而真正融入目标语的文化氛围之中。

本书由 10 个章节组成。每一章节包括电影背景、故事简介、主要演员阵容及导演介绍、精彩部分节选、对影片的评价及注释五大部分。相信许多读者会在观赏优美电影或阅读本书的过程中重温自己过去的电影体验,获得新的感悟和理解。

英汉对照是本书的一大特点。本书既有英文原文,也提供了中文翻译,有助于英语爱好者能更好地理解书中的内容。同时,本书还提供了注释,为读者的自学提供了参考。如需要与本书相关的经典电影的光盘资料,请发邮件到 lisalbr@163.com 联系。

由于时间较为仓促,编写人员水平有限,书中错漏之处在所难免,恳请专家及使用者批评指正。

编者

2008 年 3 月

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Chapter 1

Babel

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Background

Director: Alejandro González Iñárritu

Writers (WGA): Guillermo Arriaga

Main actors: Brad Pitt

Cate Blanchett

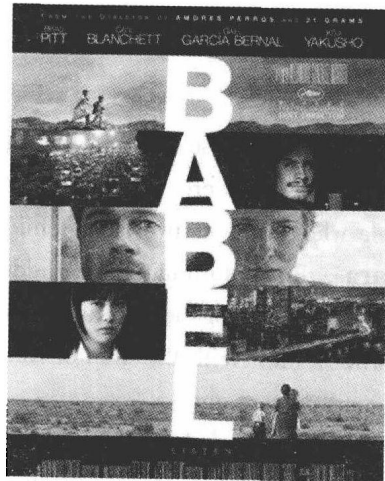
Runtime: 142 minutes

Release Date: 13 March 2007 (China)

Genre: Drama

Plot: Tragedy strikes a married couple on vacation in the Moroccan desert, touching off an interlocking story involving four different families.

Awards: Won Oscar Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures, Another 25 wins & 75 nominations.



There is a story in the first volume of Bible, **Genesis**¹: People of the God tried to build a tower which could reach the heaven to challenge the authority of the God. At that time, people spoke the same language, so they could communicate well. The speed of building was very high and then the God knew. As punishment for trying to build a tower that would reach the heaven, the God made the human race scatter over the face of the earth in a state of confusion—divided, **dislocated**² and unable to communicate. Therefore, people had many difficulties to understand each other. As a result of **miscommunication**³, the tower couldn't build any more and racial conflicts spread everywhere. The tower was built in Babel city, so it was named *Babel*. Babel

in *Bible* symbolizes ambitions that can't be achieved by people. In this movie, it doesn't tell us the *Bible* story, but a complex story occurred in four countries—America, Japan, Morocco, and Mexico.

Babel, *Amores Perros* and *21 Grams* are called “Death Trilogy”, in which the *Babel* is the last one. Like the first two movies, *Babel* gets big success. Alejandro González Iñárritu the director of this movie, announced to shoot this movie in 2005. After a long whole year, this movie finished. As soon as it released, it won lots of audience's praise. Although at last it only won the **Oscar Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures**⁴, with such heavyweight prizes as Cannes International Film Festival award for best director, Golden Globe award for best film drama and best director, in my eyes, this movie was one of the best movies in the year of 2006.

1.1.2 Story

To lessen the stress from life and marriage, Susan (Cate Blanchett) and Richard (Brad Pitt) were traveling in Morocco. They're a good-looking, middle-class couple who left their two small children in San Diego to make this journey into the **Sahara**⁵. But unfortunately, a sudden bullet hit Susan through the bus window. Due to the bad traffic of the poor area and different languages, Richard tried hard to save his wife's life. With the help of American embassy and the local government, finally he found doctors and. . .

Amelia, a loyal, middle-aged Mexican maid, took care of the couple's two small children in San Diego. Because she was unable to find someone else to care for them, she took them with her to a family wedding south of the border. On their way back to San Diego, Amelia and her nephew had been questioned by the border policemen. Without proof or smooth communication, they were suspected to cross the border illegally to traffic children. Out of panic, the nephew attempted to escape. Amelia and two children were trapped in the endless desert. . .

The media of the United States had deemed that the issue of “Susan being shot” was an act of terrorism. Under the diplomatic pressure of the government of the United States, the Moroccan local police looked into the matter immediately. In fact, it was only an accident. While out tending the family herd, an Arab's two young sons took **pot shots**⁶ to test how far a bullet might go, one of them at a distant tourist bus, not expecting to hit anything. But an American woman was seriously wounded. When

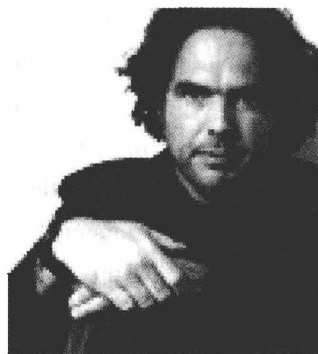
the policemen came to arrest the murder, the father had to deal with the policemen to protect his sons. . .

“The murder” has been found, and the origin of the rifle can be traced back to Tokyo, Japan. The first owner of the rifle was a widowed Japanese. He gave the rifle to a Moroccan farmer and the farmer sold it to an Arab, who bought the gun to kill jackals threatening his goats. Compared with unfortunate Richard, the widowed Japanese was more painful. His wife had just killed herself and now he was having trouble with his **rebellious**⁷ daughter Chieko, an attractive deaf-mute schoolgirl troubled by her **burgeoning womanhood**⁸. . .

1.2 The Main Actors and Director

Director: Alejandro González Iñárritu

Born in Mexico City, Mexico, in 1963, he is good at shooting complex films. His movies usually focus on the problems of communication. That movie, *Amores Perros*, became a major hit at its release at the Festival de Cannes 2000, and went on to huge worldwide success. It also earned an Oscar nomination for best foreign movie. The success of those films opened the doors of Hollywood to Alejandro. His second feature, *21 Grams* (2003), was written by Arriaga.



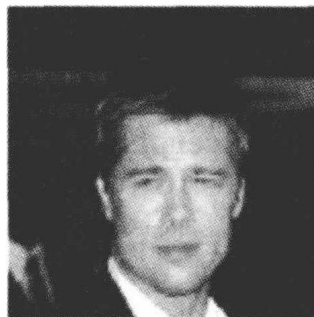
Awards: Nominated for 2 Oscars. Another 43 wins & 29 nominations

Main works: *Amours Perros* (2000) *21 Grams* (2003) *Babel* (2006)

Main actors;

- 1) Brad Pitt, won and was nominated for Oscar Best Actor many times, and another 21 wins and 35 nominations

Brad Pitt was born on 18 December 1963, in Oklahoma. His mother was a housewife and his father worked in management at a trucking firm. He has a younger brother, and a younger sister. Pitt



attended the University of Missouri, where he majored in journalism with a focus on advertising.

He gained recognition as the cowboy hitchhiker in the 1991 film *Thelma & Louise*. Pitt's first leading role in a major film was in *Interview with the Vampire* (1994). He starred in the critically acclaimed crime and science fiction films *Seven* (1995) and *Twelve Monkeys*, and won a Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actor in *Twelve Monkeys*.

Main works: *The Assassination* (2007), *Babel* (2006), *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (2005), *Ocean's Twelve* (2004), *Troy* (2004), *Spy Game* (2001), *The Mexican* (2001), *Snatch* (2000), *Fight Club* (1999), *Meet Joe Black* (1998), *Seven* (1995), *Legends of the Fall* (1994), and so on.

2) Cate Blanchett, won and was nominated for Oscar Best Actress many times, and another 47 wins and 49 nominations.

Cate Blanchett was born on 14 May, 1969 in Australia. She graduated from Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art in 1992. She made her feature film debut in *Paradise Road* (1997), and, in 1998, she played the title character in *Elizabeth* (1998), winning numerous awards for her performance, including the Golden Globe for Best Actress in a Drama. 2001 was a particularly busy year, with starring roles in *Bandits* (2001), *The Shipping News* (2001), *Charlotte Gray* (2001) and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. In 2003 she was again nominated Golden Globe for Best Actress in a Drama for *Veronica Guerin* (2003).



Main works: *The Golden Age* (2007), *Hot Fuzz* (2007), *Babel* (2006), *Notes on a Scandal* (2006), *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002), *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), *An Ideal Husband* (1999), *Elizabeth* (1998), and so on.

1.3 Excerpts

1) Richard's home. Amelia is answering the phone

Amelia: Yes?

Richard: Amelia?

Amelia: Yes, sir.

Richard: Hi, how is everything?

Amelia: Everything is Ok, sir. Mrs. Rachel told me. I'm very sorry, sir. How is Mrs. Susan?

Richard: She is better now. They're going to operate. But, look, Mrs. Rachel will flight this night. She is going to find someone to take care of the kids.



Amelia: Thank you, sir, thank you. I really appreciate it.

Richard: So, look after them, ok? Don't tell them anything.

Amelia: No, no, no, don't worry, sir, don't worry.

Richard: **Put Mike on**⁹, please.

Amelia: Yes, sir. Mike, Mike.

Mike: Hi, daddy.

Richard: Hey, sweetie, how are you?

Mike: Good, dad, guess what? Today, they brought some baby **crabs**¹⁰ at class.

Richard: Oh, really?

Mike: I held one in my hands. It bit me. It really didn't bleed. But, that...

(Richard starts to cry for the first time.)

Mike: Dad, are you ok?

Richard: Yeah, I'm ok. Everything's fine.

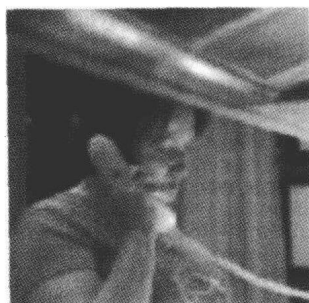
Mike: Marian wanted to take one home, but teacher didn't let her...

2) Richard's home. Amelia is answering the phone

Amelia: But today is my son's wedding.

Richard: Cancel your son's wedding. I'll pay for another one, I'll pay for a better one. I need you to do this, Amelia.

Amelia: Everything is ready, sir. Can't anyone come to take care of the kids? It's just one day, sir.



Richard: How do you expect me to find someone from here? Susan's still recovering, and Rachel can't make it to take care of the kids. Can't do it. Hold on...

We're really counting on you, I'm sorry, but you have to do this.

Amelia: But...

Richard: Bye.

3) Small eatery¹¹, Moroccan desert

Waiter: You want to order?

Richard: Yeah, I'll have a chicken **couscous**¹² and a Coke.

Susan: What do you have that doesn't have fat in it?

Waiter: Everything is delicious.

Susan: I'll have the fried egg and a diet Coke.

Waiter: Sorry, we don't have fried egg.

Susan: Then, a regular Coke.

Richard: **Two Cokes**¹³.

Susan: Richard, why did we come here?

Richard: What do you mean, why?

Susan: Really, why are we here?

Richard: **To be alone**¹⁴.

Susan: "Alone?"... (Throw out the ice.)

Richard: The Coke is hot.

Susan: Yeah, but you don't know what kind of water is in there.

Richard: Jesus Christ. Why can't you just relax? Why are you so stressed?

Susan: You're the reason I'm stressed. You're the reason why I can't relax.

Richard: You could if you tried.

Susan: You don't think I tried?

Richard: You're never gonna forgive me, are you?

Susan: You know what I'm talking about.

Richard: Hey, I'm not gonna argue.

Susan: Okay. You just let me know when you're ready to argue, **if you're not gonna run away again**¹⁵.

4) A small town in Morocco

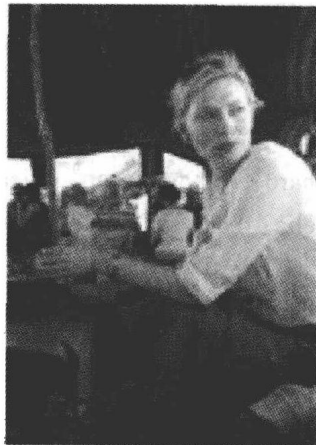
Tourist: How is your wife?

Richard: It is bad. I can't stop the bleeding.

Tourist: Get her out of there and let's go.

Richard: Where? Where do we take her?

Tourist: In Egypt in a town like this, they slit 30 German tourists' throats. They might do the same to us.



Moroccan guide: No, sir, not here.

Tourist: What do you know? We've got to get out of here as soon as possible.

Female Tourist: It's unbearably hot. We have to get back for our children.

Another Tourist: Look, you can't leave us here. What is the point in our staying?

Richard: In case we need the bus!

Tourist: He can drop us off and come back for you.

Richard: No.

Tourist: We can't stay here with you.

Richard: Please just wait. Let me figure this out.

Tourist: We're not gonna risk our lives, so hurry!

5) Moroccan guide's home

Richard: Is that your daughter?

Moroccan guide: Yes, the third of five. Do you have kids?

Richard: Yeah.

Moroccan guide: Just two?

Richard: Yeah.

Moroccan guide: You should have more.

Richard: What about you? How many wives do you have?

Moroccan guide: I can only afford one.

6) A small town in Morocco, Richard is on the phone

Richard: No, we need help now. We need help now. Do you understand?

Embassy clerk: I'm doing everything I can do. I've got the State Department on the other line right now. They are doing everything they can do. Due to some political problems that are being resolved. . .

Richard: I don't give a shit about political problems. I need help now.

Embassy clerk: Everybody is doing everything they can. Okay? I don't know what else I can do. It's all over the news. Everybody is paying attention and doing everything they can.

7) A room in Moroccan guide's house

Susan: Richard?

Richard: What?

Susan: If I die, you take care of the kids, especially Mike. He really needs you.

Richard: You're not gonna die. You can't die. You just can't.

Susan: Don't you ever leave them again?

Richard: No, I'll never leave them.

Susan: I **peed**¹⁶ my pants.

Richard: What?

Susan: I couldn't hold it in, and I peed.

I've got to pee again.

Richard: There is no need to apologize. Do you have a pan we could use? A pan?

Can you leave us for a few moments alone?

Guide: Of course.

Richard: Come.

Susan: I can't. **Yeap**¹⁷, yeah, I can.

Richard: Forgive me, love. When Sam died, I didn't... I ran. I was scared.

Susan: I was scared too... It was my fault, it wasn't...

Richard: No, it wasn't your fault.

Susan: He wasn't breathing. I can't...

Richard: I love you so much. I forget his face.

8) General store, Morocco

(Richard walks into the **cubicle**¹⁸. The phone is off the **hook**¹⁹ and Richard answers.)

Richard: Hello?

Secretary: Just a moment, I'm going to put you through to **Ambassador**²⁰ Ken Clifford.

Ken: Hello, Richard Jones? I'm very sorry about what happened to your wife, but you can be sure that the **culprits**²¹ will be punished.

Richard: Why does it take so long?

Ken: Well, the Moroccan government wouldn't let us use their airspace. They refused to **acknowledge**²² that this was an act of terrorism.

Richard: Why don't you take an ambulance?

Ken: Taking your safety into consideration, Mr. Jones, we didn't believe it would be appropriate to send a Moroccan ambulance. Stay put. We settled the matter. A helicopter should arrive soon.

Richard: How long?

Ken: Soon... it'll be there soon.

Richard: No, tell me how long.

9) US border police station

US officer: It's a miracle we found those kids, madam. I don't know how you could



have left them alone like that out in the desert.

Amelia: How are they, sir?

US officer: That's none of your business. You know how many kids die every year trying to cross this border?

Amelia: I raised these kids since they were born. I take care of them day and night. I feed them breakfast and lunch and dinner. I play with them. Mike and Debby are like my own children.



US officer: But they are not your children, madam. Plus, you've been working in this country illegally.

Amelia: What about my nephew, Santiago?

US officer: I don't have any information on him. We located the father in Morocco. He was very angry, but decided not to press charges.

Amelia: Thank you.

US officer: Nevertheless the government of the United States has deemed that you are seriously breaking the law, and is determined to immediately and definitively deport you.

Amelia: Sir, I've been here for 16 years. I have my things here. I rent a house. I made a life here, sir.

US officer: You should have thought about that beforehand.

Amelia: I want to talk to a lawyer.

US officer: If you attempt to take this to trial, I can assure you, you'll only be prolonging the inevitable. I recommend you accept voluntary deportation.

1.4 Comments

The Mexican director Alejandro González Iñárritu tells us a multiply story in *Babel*. Twelve persons, four countries, four different destinies and one accident come from that sound of shot. Different people from different races, regions and cultural background are met by destiny. On one hand, the audience will know that everything in the world is mysteriously, or scientifically, linked. However, the link is too weak for people to feel. On the other hand, the audience will touch discrimination, misunderstanding, apathy and alienation existed everywhere, between all levels couples, brothers, the abled and the disabled, countries and so on.

Contrast and conflict are an important technique. With the lens switching from the wild Moroccan desert to the developed modern city Tokyo, from American middle-class tourists to the Muslim with black veil, contrasts in location, language and culture put the conflict to a climax. In contrast to *Crash*, which just describes racial problem in the city of Los Angeles, *Babel* has stronger contrast, wider perspective and more international. Maybe due to the same theme with *Crash*, it is a pity that *Babel* has not won Best Picture Oscar.

The global village described in *Babel* is a harsh, unfair place. The prosperity of tourism and mass media have done little to better people's understanding. It is impossible to make people just as united as they are before God destroyed the tower of Babel. Although conflicts exist everywhere and misunderstanding is inevitable, in this movie we can also see bright side of human nature. Whether it is from Muslim woman who is taking care of Susan or from Debby who plays with Mexican children, whether it is from the Moroccan guide who refuses Richard's money or from the Japanese detective touched by the deaf-mute daughter, we can be hopeful for the world with apathy and alienation. The subtitle "To my children, Maria Eladia and Elisio... the brightest lights in the darkest night" illustrates that this is not a film of despair, but a story struggled in despair. They regard the children as the hope of the future and they believe that the bright world and the tower of Babel will be definitely built by the children. Wish there is no misunderstanding, alienation or sorrow any more.

In addition, in *Babel* the audience will have the same taste with the film *Lost in Translation*: in exotic culture, people often feel lost their sense of security and confidence to become panic and be at a loss what to do. The more they are eager to communicate, the less they can. The director's conclusion is that: "We always talk about-'border'-as a geographical term rather than a concept. I think the real border is in our hearts".

1.5 Notes

- (1) Genesis 《圣经》中的第一卷——创世纪
- (2) dislocated 混乱的, dis- 表示“不;打消;反对;分离”之意
- (3) miscommunication 误解, mis- 表示“坏;错误;否定”之意
- (4) Oscar Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures 奥斯卡电影最佳配乐奖

- (5) Sahara 撒哈拉沙漠
- (6) pot shots 随手射击;乱射
- (7) rebellious 造反的;反抗的;难以控制的
- (8) burgeoning womanhood 青春期
- (9) put Mike on 让迈克听电话
- (10) crab 螃蟹
- (11) eatery 小餐馆;食堂
- (12) couscous 蒸肉丸
- (13) two Cokes 两杯可乐
- (14) to be alone 让我们冷静一下
- (15) if you don't run away again 如果你不会再逃避问题的话
- (16) pee 口语中的“小便”
- (17) Yeap 口语中的“yes”之意
- (18) cubicle 小寝室;小隔间
- (19) hook 钩子;电话上固定话筒的东西
- (20) ambassador 大使;特使;使节
- (21) culprit 犯人;刑事被告;被控犯罪的人
- (22) acknowledge 承认;答谢;承认收到;自白