

Lesson 21

William S. Hart and
the early 'Western' film
威廉.S. 哈特和早期限的 '西部' 影片

First listen and then answer the following question.
听录音, 然后回答以下问题。

How did William Hart's childhood prepare him for his acting role in Western films?

William S. Hart was, perhaps, the greatest of all Western stars, for unlike Gary Cooper and John Wayne he appeared in nothing but Westerns. From 1914 to 1924 he was supreme and unchallenged. It was Hart who created the basic formula of the Western film, and devised the protagonist he played in every film he made, the good-bad man, the accidental-noble outlaw, or the honest-but-framed cowboy, or the sheriff made suspect by vicious gossip; in short, the individual in conflict with himself and his frontier environment.

Unlike most of his contemporaries in Hollywood, Hart actually knew something of the old West. He had lived in it as a child when it was already disappearing, and his hero was firmly rooted in his memories and experiences, and in both the history and the mythology of the vanished frontier. And although no period or place in American history has been more absurdly romanticized, myth and reality did join hands in at least one arena, the conflict between the individual and encroaching civilization.

Men accustomed to struggling for survival against the elements and Indians were bewildered by politicians, bankers and businessmen, and unhorsed by fences, laws and alien taboos. Hart's good-bad man was always an outsider, always one of the disinherited, and if he found it necessary to shoot a sheriff or rob a bank along the way, his early audiences found it easy to understand and forgive, especially when it was Hart who, in the end, overcame the attacking Indians.

Audiences in the second decade of the twentieth century found it pleasant to escape to a time when life, though hard, was relatively simple. We still do; living in a world in which undeclared aggression, war, hypocrisy, chicanery, anarchy and impending immolation are part of our daily lives, we all want a code to live by.

CARL FOREMAN Virtue and a Fast Gun from The Observer

New words and expressions 生词和短语

Supreme

adj. 首屈一指

protagonist

n. 主角

outlaw

n. 逃犯, 亡命之徒

framed

adj. 遭到陷害的

vicious

adj. 恶毒的

mythology

n. 神话

vanished

adj. 消失了的

absurdly

adv. 荒诞地
arena
n. 竞技场在
encroaching
adj. 渐渐渗入的
Indian
n. 印第安人
bewilder
v. 使手足无措
alien
adj. 外来的
taboo
n. 戒律
disinherit
v. 剥夺...继承权
undeclared
adj. 未经宣布的
hypocrisy
n. 伪善
chicanery
n. 诈骗
impending
adj. 迫近的, 近在眉睫的
immolation
n. 杀戮
code
n. 准则

参考译文

威廉·S·哈特大概是美国西部电影明星中的佼佼者。他和加里·古柏、约翰·韦恩不同, 他只在西部电影中扮演角色。在 1914 年至 1924 年期间, 他首屈一指, 独霸影坛。正是他创造了西部电影的基调, 即在他自己的拍摄的影片中他所塑造的主人公形象: 被认为是坏人的好人, 出人意料的高尚的逃犯, 诚实却遭陷害的牛仔或因流言蜚语蒙受嫌疑的司法官。总之, 主人公是一个自相矛盾, 又与他的拓荒环境相矛盾的人物。

哈特与大部分同时代在好莱坞的演员不同, 他确实了解西部早期拓荒生活的一些情况。作为一个孩子他曾在西部生活过, 当时西部拓荒生活正在消失。他塑造的英雄人物深深地扎根于他本人的记忆和经历之中, 也扎根于有关已经消失的拓荒生活的历史和神话之中。虽然在美国历史上没有任何时期或地区像西部拓荒时期那样被荒谬地浪漫主义化了, 但神话和事实至少在某一个舞台上共存, 也就是存在于个人与渐渐闯入的文明这两者的冲突之中。

习惯与大自然和印第安人作斗争以求生存的拓荒者被政客、银行家和商人搞得晕头转向, 最后被圈地、尖利的外来的清规戒律所击败。哈特扮演的被误为坏人的好人总是一个局外人, 总是一个被剥夺继承权的人。如果他认为在进行过程中有必要枪击一个司法官或抢劫一个银行, 他的早期观众很容易接受, 觉得应该原谅他, 特别是当哈特最后战胜了前来进攻的印第安人时, 观众更能原谅他。

生活在 20 世纪 20 年代的观众认为, 逃到一个即使艰苦但比较简朴的时代中去是件愉快的事, 我们今天仍有这种感觉。如今, 不宣而战的侵略、战争、虚伪、诈骗、无政府状态以及即将临头的毁灭成了我们日常生活的一部分, 我们都希望有一个赖以生存的行为准则。