



American Movies

This info package is compiled by Information Resource Center, U.S. Embassy Jakarta for Picturing America Exhibition Al-Azhar University, Jakarta. April 27-May 7, 2010.

What's American About American Movies?

By Thomas Doherty

"The Americans have colonized our subconscious," says a character in Wim Wenders's *Kings of the Road* (1976), speaking as much in admiration as complaint, which only makes sense in a road movie by a German director who, first chance he got, rushed to shoot a picture on location in Monument Valley, Utah, an area frequently used by famed Hollywood director John Ford.

Wenders's double-edged attitude to the mother country of the movies expresses a common enough sentiment among the "colonials," one often shared by the host country nationals. Hollywood's genius for projecting the stuff that American dreams are made of may be undeniable, but non-American moviegoers can't help but resent this invasion of their brainstem. No wonder every year at the Cannes Film Festival the cinephiles joke that the odds-on favorite for the Palme d'Or is always an anti-American film ... from America. Michael Moore's

Fahrenheit 9/11 (2004) fit the bill perfectly.

Despite onslaughts from DVD pirates and YouTube videographers, the company town for the mass production and widescreen exhibition of American values in the 20th century seems poised to dominate the market well into the 21st century. Detroit, Michigan, home to the American automobile industry, may have buckled under the competition of car-makers in Toyota City (Japan) and Sindelfingen (Germany), but Hollywood still retains its brand supremacy in popular entertainment. In part, the preeminence of the American logo is due to the intrinsic appeal of a quality package filled with gleaming treasures: individualism, freedom of movement, upward mobility, pursuits of happiness (erotic and financial), and heroes who achieve moral reform through violent means. Yet the corporate descendents of film companies 20th Century Fox, Warner Brothers, and MGM have also thrived

by doing what automobile manufacturers have not: adapting to new market forces and co-opting the competition. Today the Hollywood product line is not only being manufactured to overseas specifications but assembled by imported engineers.

Point of interest: More than 50 percent of Hollywood's box-office revenues typically derive from ticket windows beyond American shores.



Monument Valley is often featured in American movies, especially the classic westerns of director John Ford.

Read more:
<http://www.america.gov/st/arts-eng-lish/2008/June/20080615213600xjyrrep0.578747.html#ixzz0mNxZW6xa>

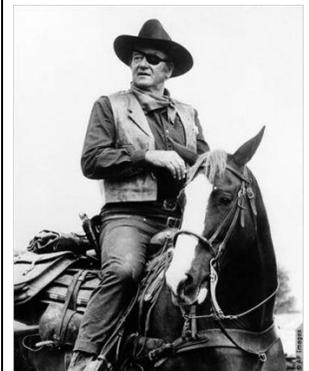


Do Hollywood movies truly reflect life in America?

Find the answers at:

<http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplace-eng-lish/2010/April/20100406123246fsyelkaew0.8771479.html>

<http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplace-eng-lish/2010/April/20100420162752fsyelkaew0.2170178.html>



The name of actor John Wayne, shown in the 1969 movie *True Grit*, became synonymous with the American Western feature film.

American Images in the U.S Television and Cinema

Our opening scene takes place in Rome, early morning, late summer, in the breakfast room of a moderately priced albergo catering to the tourist trade, a stone's throw from the Pantheon. The waiters, Filipino natives, hover in their white waistcoats as the hotel guests, families from the United Kingdom, France, Greece and Spain mostly, graze over the croissants and sweets and pitchers of juice, maintaining a polite indifference to one another in their respective zones of privacy. Everything is a hum of efficiency and competence, executed in the hushed tones appropriate to the hour.

Then the doors of the elevator slide open, and there he is. He's a very large man, not fat, necessarily, but brawny and big-boned. He has evidently tried to pull himself together, though without much success. His hair sprays off in all directions, defeating his every attempt to smooth it into shape with his beefy hand. His shirttails are busily untucking themselves from his

pants, which are hitched two inches too high. His socks are white and they droop.

He approaches one of the waiters and vigorously shakes his hand.

"I heard there was a free complimentary buffet breakfast down here," he says, redundantly. And of course he says it in English,

with no thought to the possibility that he might, when in Rome, be speaking a foreign language. "I'm from Minneapolis," he goes on. "My wife and I just got in. A long flight. I told her I'd grab her a blueberry muffin. Haven't slept in a day. We're from Minneapolis."

The waiter points him to the buffet. "Where are the blueberry muffins?" he booms, craning his neck and scanning the breakfast breads and bowls of fruit. "She's really hungry. We just flew in. From Minneapolis." And so he prattles on, expressing astonishment, though no resentment, that there are no blueberry muffins — "How can you have breakfast without blueberry muffins?" he wonders aloud — and then

expresses surprise at the absence of bagels and veggie cream cheese. He mentions that he's flown all night, from Minneapolis, where he's from; his wife too.

All eyes have turned to him by now. Trying to disguise his dissatisfaction, he heaps two plastic plates with booty and cradles them in his arms. Offering a final update, he announces, loudly, that he will take the food upstairs to his wife, who has flown, sleepless, all night. From Minneapolis.

"Have a nice day," he calls out as the elevator door slides shut, just in time to avoid hearing the snickers from the other guests. One of the children looks up from her buttered toast. "Americaine!" she says. "D'oh!" She's doing a Homer Simpson, and the breakfast room rings out in laughter.

This was written by Andrew Ferguson as an introduction to IIP Publication titled "Pop Culture and Real America".

Read more : <http://www.america.gov/publications/books-content/pop-culture-vs-real-america.html>



Homer Simpson: "Lord help me, I'm just not that bright."

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