

# Letters on the 77th Academy Awards ceremony

3 March 2005

*The following is a selection of letters received by the World Socialist Web Site on David Walsh's article, "77th Academy Awards ceremony—a miserable showing".*

Thank you for your brilliant article. I felt much the same way about the blissful arrogance of the gala event. Though, David, as Hollywood is generally perceived to be, from where I am in Australia anyway, did you really expect anything more...or less? If anything, it's entertainment in itself watching this crudeness from the other side of the world.

DE  
Australia

Your article was interesting, especially at the end. Those in Hollywood, and elsewhere, who earn tens of millions of dollars are indeed divorced from the reality of the masses. Yes, we can again speak of the masses. "Bread and Circuses" staved off the masses in ancient Rome, but only for a while. Then came the barbarians. For us, the barbarians could well be China's eventual and deserved economic takeover of the United States.

Only if we correct the imbalances in today's American society can we save ourselves from the fate brought upon us by our excesses. It is time to end the disparities in our society. The only mechanism by which that can be done is to tax excess wealth, and to tax it heavily. This will not discourage enterprise—it will encourage it. We can return to a world with more than a handful of true movie stars, as Chris Rock pointed out. This will counteract the effect of modern technology, where the masses follow the few, the very few. Is this Socialism? Maybe, but more importantly, it is Survival, even for the elite.

JH  
Phoenix, Arizona

Yeah, right on, David. I can only watch a bare few minutes of this sort of self-importance and jingoism. Boy—the end is near.

JS  
Krakow, Poland

I am 53 years old. I remember when there were no African-Americans in the movies or on television either. I remember

Sidney Poitier's movies. I remember how my uncle would not let his teenage daughter go see *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* because it depicted interracial romance and marriage. Today things are better than the 50s, but only marginally.

There are still very few African-Americans in the movies or on TV. What the entertainment industry does is take a very few and make them into very big stars. So you see them in films time and time again, and it seems like there are a lot of African-American actors in the movies and TV.

This situation seems to bear a strange similarity to what happened in Haiti. When the whites could no longer control the black population, they appointed a comprador class of blacks, who became fabulously wealthy, to control the natives for the whites, who did not then live in Haiti, but still extracted its wealth. So the visual entertainment industry employs a few blacks, whom they feel comfortable with, makes them immensely wealthy and famous, and lets these African-Americans intercede for them with the black public.

Enjoyed the article. Maybe someone should make a movie on the vacuity and desolation of the movies, melodrama instead of drama, the conspicuous consumption of movie stars, and how the public seems to love it. Occasionally Hollywood used to make such movies.

TR  
Garland, Texas

What a shoddy article! If this is indicative of the level of research, fact finding, and opinion by your so-called journalists, then you are no better than all the other ignorant bloggers out there with more bandwidth than brains.

Here's the real reason why Michael Moore's film [*Fahrenheit 9/11*] wasn't nominated:

<http://www.michaelmoore.com/words/message/index.php?messageDate=2004-09-06>

From Moore's personal account on his website:

"Therefore, I have decided not to submit *Fahrenheit 9/11* for consideration for the Best Documentary Oscar. If there is even the remotest of chances that I can get this film seen by a few million more Americans before election day, then that

is more important to me than winning another documentary Oscar. I have already won a Best Documentary statue. Having a second one would be nice, but not as nice as getting this country back in the hands of the majority.

“The deadline to submit the film for the documentary Oscar was last Wednesday. I told my crew who worked on the film, let’s let someone else have that Oscar. We have already helped to ignite the biggest year ever for nonfiction films.”

BM

*David Walsh replies: For the information of this reader, Michael Moore did not submit his Fahrenheit 9/11 in the best documentary category in order that he could submit it instead in the best picture category. It was the failure of the Academy to nominate the film in the latter category that I was referring to.*

You are delusional. I was never a fan of the awards; I didn’t watch. I taped. The awards were not great and the pics were not earthmoving, but your whiny objections are just weird...slamming Rock for funning about George ...

Well, I am sure Ashcroft and Gonzales will be proud of you....

DS

Athens, Pennsylvania

What an interesting and brilliantly thought-out article by Mr. David Walsh. It was just by chance I read his article and discovered the WSWS. After sending this letter, I shall place a “shortcut” on my desktop for the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Thank you WSWS and thank YOU, David Walsh.

AJ

Victoria, British Columbia

I think you’re just a really negative sad person. Anyways it was a great show. Since the ratings were up since 2000 the people decided it was good. Who the hell are you?

JS

*David Walsh replies: As it turned out, more precise figures revealed that the number of television viewers fell by 5 percent from 2004 to some 41.5 million. Ratings were down for all three major awards programs this year, the Golden Globes, the Grammy Awards and the Oscars, deservedly so. As recently as 1998, the Academy Awards ceremony attracted 55 million viewers.*

I thoroughly enjoyed reading your article. You covered all the major points. The show was a sad disappointment, even from the entertainment point of view. Again, it is the “rich patting the backs of another bunch of rich.” The entertainment industry is incredibly out of touch with the reality of life of the average American worker, who works pennies on the dollar and copes with life, from check to check, to survive in today’s America.

E.g., an actor like John Travolta’s or Julia Roberts’s

asking fee for a movie is \$20 million. That alone is absurd and outrageous. Their fees will probably go up, as the US dollar further slides against the world currencies.

What irks me further, is that actors with political inputs will travel to Third World countries, hug the starving and the poor, and return happily to their million-dollar homes and lifestyles. I rather they did not participate in it at all. Such a travesty!

Thank you for writing this wonderful article.

MCH

Phoenix, Arizona

David Walsh’s scolding of the 77th Oscars was a fascinating study in steam-powered Old Left rectitude. Surely, David, there was at least one particle of amusement to be snuffed up? For an answer Brother Walsh simply grimaces; life under capitalism sure sucks, especially when your analysis of art went out with socialist realism. It’s maddening to see this sort of humorless cultural Stalinism still afflicting Marxist critics, especially when it leads to patent inanities like accusing Chris Rock of engaging in “unserious jibes”! Dude, he’s a comedian!

David, good comrade: well-intentioned but mechanistic criticisms such as you’ve written are one of the reasons people like Claude McKay abandoned left party politics. Where is your sense of pleasure? Why not entertain the question of what we like about films even when they don’t demonstrate sufficient historical consciousness? Remember: irony and satire are tools for revolution.

At least learn to laugh, just a little; it will help with your digestion.

SC

Santa Cruz, California

*David Walsh replies: I suppose that I would ask, in the first place, to be given something amusing to laugh at. Chris Rock was simply vulgar and obvious, even in his brief anti-Bush routine. How is it an expression of “Stalinism” to ask for some insight and “seriousness” in comedy? It used to be quite common. As for “irony and satire,” those “tools of the revolution,” where, oh where were they on display at this year’s Academy Awards? It’s a problem today that many people ask so little.*



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