

Letters on Mr. and Mrs. Smith and Batman

4 July 2005

On “Why are they smirking? A review of Mr. and Mrs. Smith”

You wrote, “From time to time readers will write in to the WSWs and criticize what they perceive to be our relentlessly ‘negative’ attitude toward mainstream films.” Thank a god that you do keep up your “negative” attitude toward today’s mish-mash of so-called filmmaking. I don’t go to films but read and appreciate all of your reviews.

You might want to turn your attention to the plethora of the current hour-long mysteries being televised. Brutal depiction of body parts assaulted and then the reliance on unknowable (to the viewer) scientific technology used in the solutions. I sometimes wonder if the public’s acceptance of these horrific depictions does not prepare us for the brutality of the military use of captive “enemies.”

MS

24 June 2005

Thank you! I am new to WSWs. I am thoroughly enjoying the entire web site; this is the first movie review on WSWs that I have read, and I agree. I also feel that the movie specifically encouraged domestic violence against women. I fear that the average moviegoer will not discriminate between a trained assassin and a normal woman with no self-defense training whatsoever. Most of the folks who live near me seem oblivious to the fact that it is difficult to live a lifetime as a woman without being assaulted in some way at least once.

BR

Another good analysis. Of course, you are not providing brain candy as the entertainment industry does, but rather politically insightful comments. Many of these comments have been recognized by those of us who teach film and retreat to DVD for better foreign and alternative home-grown works which will never gain distribution. However, I’m eagerly awaiting your review of *Land of the Dead*.

TW

24 June 2005

The billions spent on advertising aren’t wasted. Nor are films like this pointless. Dehumanization of anyone but the American “heroes” is usually the point. Propaganda has many forms.

WC

26 June 2005

I love your film reviews, and am happy to see that you have come back to the WSWs after some absence. But, please, just as Hollywood takes the easy way out by offering expensive banality, so, too, are you taking the easy way out in reviewing so much crap. Why not turn your attentions to some international films, or marginally released films? For anyone who is not a child or halfwit, it’s easy to see that the summer blockbusters will be hideous, pointless exercises; one such review per year, perhaps, is sufficient to the point. Please turn your excellent eye to worthier films!

MB

29 June 2005

I am very sorry that your superb web site receives criticisms for its intelligent and highly critical film reviews. It is highly distressing when politically astute readers feel compelled to “check their brains at the door” when they attend the cinema. I cannot conceive of such readers applying the same logic to book or music reviews (when was the last time a reader opined: “I prefer to check my brain at the door whenever I enter the symphonic hall”?)

It seems that we are so contaminated by the mindless gushings of “Infotainment” media writers that any reasoned, incredibly skeptical assessment of a major film release is tantamount to heresy. As the major media continue to consolidate, and the Hollywood transnationals continue to exert tremendous influence over the corporate media both here and abroad, the need for unabashedly critical film reviews by such forums as WSWs is more vital than ever.

Please continue to probe and criticize without apology or reluctance. If fragile readers cannot tolerate intense criticisms of the latest expensive ultra-reactionary studio fodder, then they need to spend more time browsing *Entertainment Weekly*, *People*, *USA Today*, or, for that matter, the *New York Times*. And remember, when people ask you, "Don't you ever like anything?" it's a sure sign that you are doing your job efficiently and effectively.

MA

Washington, DC

28 June 2005

On "Over his head: Batman Begins, directed by Christopher Nolan"

Excellent review! I kind of figured that's how it would turn out, but now I don't have to see it to know for sure. I'll likely end up watching it eventually, at some fool's house, listening to him say, "That is a badass gun," etc. Hopefully that day is far from now.

I'd love to see more entertainment reviews. Obviously it's not the main focus of WSWs, but aren't the American people brainwashed and hypnotized by insincere musicians, record companies, filmmakers and reality-show creators? Bush says, "You keep 'em busy, I'm going to blow stuff up."

I visit the site almost daily and I'll just say, keep up the fine work.

CM

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

29 June 2005

I agree that Batman was a bit clumsy; was the setting in China a way of discrediting socialism as a viable alternative? However, what about the central theme of Batman which is thoroughly materialistic, and a call to action in the midst of a city (civilization) in decline: "It's not who you are inside, but what you do that defines you," said by both Holmes and Bale? Is this not fairly redeeming? The film also does a fair job characterizing the capitalist class as parasitic, despite the best liberal efforts of the elder Wayne. Also, the "state" is thoroughly indicted for its subservience to exploiters of all colors, the mafia, and the corporate CEOs. I enjoyed the "League of Shadows" as a personification of the decay of socioeconomic systems; they seemed like they embraced a vaguely dialectical outlook. Batman may leave people looking for a savior instead of taking initiative, but it seems to be quite

uplifting in that it smashes Raz's plans in favor of empowering people to better their lives, and save civilization.

JF

Portland, Oregon

29 June 2005



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