Letters in response to “Best films of 2009 and the decade”

4 January 2010

Here is my Best of 2009 followed by my Best of the decade. I find it hard to whittle down, and it is a whole 10 years, so my decade list is up to 45. I also think some of the boldest film work was done on TV, in the serial form, which allowed for exploration of characters and delineation of social forces—as in *The Wire*, *Deadwood*, *Six Feet Under*, *Mad Men*, *The Sopranos*, *The Street* (British TV), and *State of Play* (British version).

Best of 2009:

A Serious Man (dir. Joel and Ethan Coen)
Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans (dir. Werner Herzog)
Of Time and the City (dir. Terence Davies)

Best of the decade:

3-Iron (*Bin-Jip*) (dir. Ki-duk Kim)
4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days (*4 luni, 3 saptamini si 2 zile*) (dir. Cristian Munglu)
49 Up (dir. Michael Apted)
AI: Artificial Intelligence (dir. Steven Spielberg)
All or Nothing (dir. Mike Leigh)
Away from Her (dir. Sarah Polley)
Brokeback Mountain (dir. Ang Lee)
Downfall (*Der Untergang*) (dir. Oliver Hirschbiegel)
George Washington (dir. David Gordon Green)
Good Bye Lenin! (dir. Wolfgang Becker)
Gosford Park (dir. Robert Altman)
Happy-Go-Lucky (dir. Mike Leigh)
Her Name Is Sabine (*Elle S’Appelle Sabine*) (dir. Sandrine Bonnaire)
Into the Wild (dir. Sean Penn)
Kadosh (dir. Amos Gitai)
La Moustache (dir. Emmanuel Carrere)
Let the Right One In (*Låt den rätte komma in*) (dir. Tomas Alfredson)
Man on the Train (*L’Homme du Train*) (dir. Patrice Leconte)
My Architect: A Son’s Journey (dir. Nathaniel Kahn)
Ned Kelly (dir. Gregor Jordan)
Nine Queens (*Nueve reinas*) (dir. Fabian Bielinsky)
Pan’s Labyrinth (*El Laberinto del Fauno*) (dir. Guillermo del Toro)
Personal Velocity (dir. Rebecca Miller)
Private Fears in Public Places (*Coeurs*) (dir. Alain Resnais)
Ripley’s Game (dir. Liliana Cavani)
Safe Conduct (*Laissez-passer*) (dir. Bertrand Tavernier)
Saraband (dir. Ingmar Bergman)
Songs from the Second Floor (*Sånger Från Andra Våningen*) (dir. Roy Andersson)
Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter…and Spring (*Bom, Yeoreum, Gaeul, Gyeowool, Geurigo Bom*) (dir. Ki-duk Kim)
Stander (dir. Bronwen Hughes)
Starting Out in the Evening (dir. Andrew Wagner)
The Aura (*El Aura*) (dir. Fabian Bielinsky)
The Bothersome Man (*Den Brysomme Mannen*) (dir. Jens Lien)
The Bridesmaid (*La Demoiselle D’honneur*) (dir. Claude Chabrol)
The Celebration (*Festen*) (dir. Thomas Vinterberg)
The Counterfeiters (*Die Fälscher*) (dir. Stefan Ruzowitzky)
The Inheritance (*Arven*) (dir. Per Fly)
The Man of the Year (dir. Jose Henrique Fonseca)
The Quiet American (dir. Philip Noyce)
The Secret Lives of Dentists (dir. Alan Rudolph)
The Violin (dir. Francisco Vargas)
The Yacoubian Building (*Omaret yakobean*) (dir. Marwan Hamed)
Triple Agent (dir. Eric Rohmer)
Venus (dir. Roger Michell)
Yi Yi (dir. Edward Yang)

Marty Jonas
Cambridge, Massachusetts
1 January 2010

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An interesting selection, but why no mention of George A. Romero's two politically charged horror films, *Land Of The Dead* and *Diary Of The Dead*? The first is one of the few (if only films of the decade) to criticize George Bush and the Iraq debacle, albeit in allegorical terms. The second has already been discussed on the WSWS and in letters, in terms of critiquing the power of the image that disavows any form of radical activism.

Tony W
1 January 2010

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Flawed list ... *Pan's Labyrinth*, *March of the Penguins*, *Boy in Striped Pyjamas*, and *Up in the Air* are better than stupid *Men Who Stare at Goats*.

Jeffrey M
31 December 2009

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I agree 2009 and the 2000s in general were a dire time at the movies. And although I haven't seen nearly as many movies as Mr. Walsh and others at the WSWS have from the past decade, I've seen a few hundred and just wanted to share with you three lists I contributed to a thread over at imdb.com about a month ago which I considered represented some stand-outs from the decade. If you'll indulge me:

Ten best films of the 2000s (fiction):

1. *Crimson Gold* (Jafar Panahi, 2003)
2. *Wendy and Lucy* (Kelly Reichardt, 2008)
3. *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Michel Gondry, 2004)
4. *The Assassination of Richard Nixon* (Niels Mueller, 2004)
5. *Dancer in the Dark* (Lars von Trier, 2000)
6. *About Schmidt* (Alexander Payne, 2002)
7. *Oasis* (Chang-Dong Lee, 2002)
8. *Elephant* (Gus Van Sant, 2003)
9. *Palindromes* (Todd Solondz, 2004)
10. *Children of Men* (Alfonso Cuaron, 2006)

Honorable Mentions: *The Royal Tenenbaums* and *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*, both by Wes Anderson; *Lost in Translation* by Sofia Coppola; *Vera Drake* by Mike Leigh; *The Wrestler* by Darren Aronofsky; *Beijing Bicycle* by Xiaoshuai Wang; and *I Heart Huckabees* by David O. Russell.

Ten best documentary films of the 2000s:

1. *Touching the Void* (Kevin Macdonald, 2003)
2. *Capturing the Friedmans* (Andrew Jarecki, 2003)
3. *Bowling for Columbine* (Michael Moore, 2002)
4. *Comedian* (Christian Charles, 2002)
5. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan* (Martin Scorsese, 2005)
6. *Grizzly Man* (Werner Herzog, 2005)
7. *Man on Wire* (James Marsh, 2008)
8. *Trouble the Water* (Carl Deal and Tia Lessin, 2008)
9. *Food, Inc.* (Robert Kenner, 2008)
10. *Fahrenheit 9/11* (Michael Moore, 2004)

Honorable mentions: *This Film Is Not Yet Rated* by Kirby Dick, *Bukowski: Born Into This* by John Dullaghan, and *Cinemania* by Angela Christlieb and Stephan Kijak.

Ten most overrated films of the 2000s:

1-3. *Lord of the Rings Trilogy* (Peter Jackson, 2001-2003)
4. *Donnie Darko* (Richard Kelly, 2001)
5. *The Departed* (Martin Scorsese, 2006)
6. *Cache* (Michael Haneke, 2005)
7. *Notre Musique* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2004)
8. *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2000)
9. *The Dark Knight* (Christopher Nolan, 2008)
10. *Moulin Rouge!* (Baz Luhrmann, 2001)

Dishonorable mentions: *A Beautiful Mind* by Ron Howard; *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* by Ang Lee; and anything directed by M. Night Shyamalan.

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Jamestown New York
31 December 2009

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