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The Best Movies of the Decade

The 2000s: A Decade in Review

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JOHN'S TOP TEN OF THE DECADE

1. **"Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind"** – Having seen the movie innumerable times and read the shooting script multiple times now, I still cannot find fault with Charlie Kaufman's masterpiece. A perfect script, however, doesn't make a perfect film. This is where Michel Gondry's appropriately stylized directing comes in. Gondry directs Kate Winslet and Jim Carrey, in their finest performances to date, as Joel and Clementine, polar opposites who fall in love, fall out of love, and literally erase each other from one another's minds. The movie says more about memory, regret, and the phenomenon of love than any other movie this decade, or, perhaps, any decade, could ever hope to say.

2. **"Where the Wild Things Are"** – A rapturous movie that doesn't steer clear from, post-rumpus, reminding you that, even in the deep recesses of your own imagination, pain and sadness are unavoidable abstractions.

3. **"Adaptation"** – Perhaps an interest in the craft of writing is needed to really enjoy this wacky, non-linear story about being a writer. Or maybe you have to be really interested in orchids. I don't know if I cared much about either of these things before I saw Spike Jonze's first masterpiece of the 00's, but I know that, after watching Adaptation, I cared



WHAT ARE THE **BEST MOVIES OF THE DECADE?** THAT'S SOMETHING OUR CRITICS CAN'T AGREE ON, BUT HERE'S THE **TOP TWENTY FILMS** IN OUR LISTS:

THE 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN
ADAPTATION
ALMOST FAMOUS
AVATAR
BEFORE SUNSET
CHICAGO
THE DIVING BELL & THE BUTTERFLY
DONNIE DARKO
ETERNAL SUNSHINE...
FINDING NEVERLAND
KILL BILL
LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE
LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS
PAN'S LABYRINTH
THERE WILL BE BLOOD
WALL-E

more about, not only flowers and writing, but filmmaking in general.

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

4. **"The Diving Bell and the Butterfly"** – Not an easy film to watch (particularly the jarring first half-hour or so), but one that is worth everyone's time. It is a remarkable story told remarkably.
5. **"Before Sunset"**– The best sequel ever. Seeing Richard Linklater's Before Sunrise isn't completely necessary if you want to enjoy Before Sunset, but it makes an already deeply philosophical and rich film infinitely richer.
6. **"Dear Zachary: a letter to a song about his father"** – I don't know if I feel comfortable calling this one of my "favorite" films of the decade, but I know for sure it is one of the best. A documentary where the less you know about the subject matter going in, the better, Dear Zachary moved me to tears (of sadness and of rage) the first, second, and third time I saw it.
7. **"Finding Nemo"** – Choosing my favorite Pixar film is like choosing my favorite type of sweet and delicious thing. I love Finding Nemo the most, but Wall-E and Monsters, Inc. are almost equally fantastic. Ultimately, Nemo wins out, if only because every time Dory says her line about how when she's with Nemo, she's home, my heart plummets.
8. **"High Fidelity"** – Everything about this movie is enjoyable. The dialogue, the performances, the soundtrack, the lists. It's a great comedy about breaking up and getting together.
9. **"Little Children"** – A perfect drama about suburban life and infidelity (why is it that they so often went hand in hand in films this decade?). The theatrical trailer is an absolute work of art, as is the full-length film, which has flawless performances from Kate Winslet, Patrick Wilson, and Jackie Earle Haley.
10. **"The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford"** – When I asked a friend of mine what he thought of this film, he told me that it was not actually a movie, but, instead, an audiobook with visuals. The narration may spell things out, annoyingly, at times, but most of the time it does what good narration is supposed to do; enhance the storytelling. Not that the storytelling needed enhancing, as the great performances, combined with the amazing cinematography, make The Assassination captivating and entertaining enough.

KEVIN'S TOP TEN OF THE DECADE

1. **"The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King"** – Easily the best movie of the decade, and one of the best all time. Epic is the only real word to describe it. Perfect directing, acting, just perfect everything. The whole series is classic, but the third entry is the one any fan of film should see before they die.
2. **"Pan's Labyrinth"** – Guillermo Del Toro sticks with the weird in this great fantasy about postwar repression in Franco's Spain.

3. **"WALL-E"** – One of the only movies where the kids had a great time and the parents were terrified. Seeing what could possibly be our future in a cutesy way in this amazing environmental tail only the way Disney/Pixar could. The only animated film I have see that makes adults really think about their actions.
4. **"The 40 Year-Old Virgin"** – I know it's very high up, but it that good of a movie. Leading the way for all the rated R comedies that have been coming out, "The 40 Year-Old Virgin" is hilarious while being very emotional. It also questions many of the common thoughts guys have about sex and virginity.
5. **"Avatar"** – It did just come out, but it deserves to be on this list all the same. Not a second is wasted and a perfect reimagining of "person befriends the natives and joins them" plot device. Oh yeah, it's a technological breakthrough, did you hear about that?
6. **"The Departed"** – The quintessential Boston movie. Leonardo DiCaprio gives a great performance (and Boston accent). Only bad part is now "Shipping Up to Boston" is overplayed at Fenway and the TD Bank Garden.
7. **"No Country For Old Men"** – The Coen Brothers crown jewel, Tommy Lee Jones gives a great performance, as well as Javier Bardem
8. **"The Dark Knight"** – A crime drama with spandex. Christopher Nolan solidifies his status as a big name director with this Batman sequel