



Menni's Movies Top 100

I'm a child of the eighties. I worked on this list for over a year. It's insanely personal. In the nineties, depression hit me hard, thus i discovered crying and arthouse cinema. In the 2000s, film festivals were enjoyed, downloading became real and i moved back. In the 2010s, year and decade reviews started, plus i wisely quit stars & linear rating. In the 2020s, ridiculous return to the 80s was set into motion, for the rest of my life.

So there you have it, some decades will be overrepresented, always for ample reason. Many good things have been lost, evolving from rental in the small town i grew up in to endless digital hauls, superbly grainy vhs to way too smooth 4K, tiny black & white television to gigantic 3D IMAX. All movies are amazing, now go expand your horizons!

**** HONORABLE MENTIONS ****

Leading up to the carefully crafted end result, here are some titles that did not make the cut, for a wide variety of reasons. These ten movies represent a whole lot more, all in their own unique way. A list like this is a puzzle without a definite solution.

'i feel like my head's just gonna explode or something and i don't know what to do..'



Into My Heart

(1998, Sean Smith & Anthony Stark)

Claire Forlani's giggle is one of the best things in motion picture history, but it hardly compensates cheating on your boyfriend with his best friend. Eye patch suicide contrasts Pooh bridge cuteness, lifesaver candy chewed on in a car here became a beloved metaphor. Unknown, underrated, all mine *Into My Heart* came along at the exact right time.

Movies offer great comfort: this was the last film i ever watched (post-breakup) with my first love, realizing that we never fucked up *this* badly. A couple of years later, all video stores were dumping vhs tapes in favor of dvd. Somehow i found out online (!) that one store in Eindhoven had just one copy of *Into My Heart*. Received it for free.

I enjoy a good love story more than anything in the world. Intellectual or sentimental; have someone's heart broken and i'll always cry along. Laughter is just as important.

Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans

(1927, F.W. Murnau)

While *Wings* officially won the very first Oscar for best picture, *Sunrise* was given the award for best unique & artistic production in the same category. And so for historical value alone, it's a no-brainer in any all-time list. However, a most recent revisit brought out the moralist feminist in me. You see, it's about a woman who almost gets murdered by her husband, then immediately forgives him. City woman is evil. Beautiful, just a tad bit annoying.



No worries though, Murnau is still in the top 25. *Sunset Boulevard* (1950, Billy Wilder) however, another one that slightly suffered from re-evaluation, even after having been to the actual street myself, is not. Any 'murder mystery' part tends to get me bored.



'you're so right, dear..'

Women and children first, but not in all-time movie lists, check out IMDb, there's still a long way to progressively go! High up in my own list are Italian, French and Dutch kids, and i would have loved to include **Shirley Temple** as well, but those early movies are just too sugary. She was 18 in most enjoyable, best screenplay Oscar winner *The Bachelor and the Bobby-Soxer* (1947, Irving Reis), a classic age-difference romcom and the very last title to drop from this Top 100. Shirley is sparkling in here.

Mouchette (1967, Robert Bresson) and *L'Atalante* (1934, Jean Vigo) are questionable omissions, proving once again that for some reason, classic French cinema has always appealed to me more than its Italian counterpart. Antonioni, Fellini, Visconti, scusi.

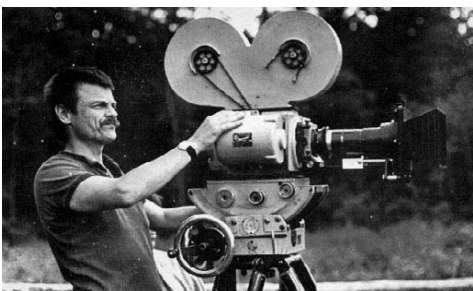
Persona

(1966, Ingmar Bergman)

Bergman always reaches the head, but never the heart, a psychologically fascinating phenomenon. In his best film out of many masterpieces, nurse and patient mirror each other in an increasingly concerning poetic grip. The legendary Swedish director not necessarily wanted his audience to understand, but to feel. Which makes me think.



Preferences can change, often related to real life experience, but some directors just don't fully connect and never will. Also absent: Akira Kurosawa and Alfred Hitchcock.



Your cue to stop taking me seriously, know who else starting with an A is shamelessly missing in action? It's that revered Russian maestro, justified deity for any film student and those who are just discovering world cinema, **Andrei Tarkovsky**!! *Andrey Rublyov* (1966) was in my lists forever, but it's time to admit that while pièce de résistance, it's not personal.



Kilkenny Cross


(2006, Eric Oosthoek)

Moviemeter.nl was my go to area for years, before realizing it's just as inept as all other online places when it comes to feigned interest and handling of trolls. However, through it, one day this scriptwriter contacted me, recruiting Menni as Magic: The Gathering consultant for a new Dutch television film. We met a couple of times, i visited the magical set in Amsterdam and attended a nice prerelease screening.

It's a poorly directed, average production, confirmed by its writer. And my name was spelled wrong on the end credits; my only IMDb entry is faulty, story of my life. However, the cute film has a bunch of lines from *my* tournament reports, poetry, plus a well-executed mother-son chatting scene.

Additional Crew

Previous · 1

 **Kilkenny Cross**
★ 7.0 TV Movie
story contributor (uncredited)

Personal details

Alternative name Menno Peters



The Stendhal Syndrome

(*La Sindrome di Stendhal*, 1996, Dario Argento)

Asia Argento walks right into paintings and that's the least bizarre thing of this horror based on a fascinating psychosomatic condition also known as *really* feeling your art. Probably because of that, *The Stendhal Syndrome* has become my favorite Giallo. The subgenre, with all its peculiar dubbing and frequent absence of logic, might take some time and effort to fully appreciate. Personality changes, role reversal, boxing, trauma, Ennio Morricone, Uffizi and the first Italian CGI effects make this a razor-sharp classic.

During the Amsterdam Fantastic Film Festival 2001, we had the honor of sitting right behind Argento during a screening of his latest. Before it started though, the film fell off the projector, dropped right on the floor with a loud thud... Dario smiled, i think.



Alien

(1979, Ridley Scott)

In 2003, a world record for film watching (or as i liked to call it: a world record sitting in a cinema, talking over movies) was attempted by a crowd of people in Amsterdam, sponsored by Pringles. I joined as a spectator here and there and a definite highlight was an early morning showing of the entire *Alien* quadrilogy. Like my future awesome friend who was in the audience too, i'm a staunch defender of part 3, but the original remains the best. Halfway through though, i'm always bored for a couple of minutes, so sorry Sigourney, you're out. Fueling further alienation, male co-stars Tom Skerritt, Ian Holm, John Hurt and Harry Dean Stanton will all be represented by other movies.



Whenever i try to come up with a list of favorite actors, **Brion James** pops up soon. Mostly known as replicant in science fiction majesty *Blade Runner* (1982, Ridley Scott), he came to my attention first through personal cult classic *House III* (a.k.a. *The Horror Show*, 1989, James Isaac & David



Blythe). Oh boy, did that chair scene electrify me, not to mention Dedee Pfeiffer in the obligatory shower! I have always held a soft spot for this underrated cheesy shocker. Perfect villain faced Brion, who died in 1999, is a supporting actor legend in my book.

The amount of missing horror movie directors is scary: John Carpenter, Tobe Hooper, Wes Craven and George A. Romero will murder me, if i don't kill myself over *Society* (1989, Brian Yuzna) and *An American Werewolf in London* (1981, John Landis) first.



Every movie fan goes through this 'quirky directors' phase. And there's nothing wrong with remaining a fan boy/girl forever! For some reason though, every usual suspect in this area, be it **Tim Burton** (who received a career award at AFFF 2008 where i got to see him up close), David Lynch, Jim Jarmusch, Abel Ferrara or Terry Gilliam, they were all heroes forever at some point in time, but have faded from favorites slightly. Struggling to remain on top, many of their peculiar shenanigans came close, but no cigar.

'this is better than lab, this is life..'



Gross Anatomy

(1989, Thom Eberhardt)

Like a college Breakfast Club except with actual studying, *Gross Anatomy* cuts into the heart. Right mindset is needed though: approached with post-eighties cynicism, with a misguided idea that cute romcom and deep humanism can't mix, the film will fail. And i am so glad i discovered this gem decades later, now wondering how i have survived all those years without knowing Daphne Zuniga; somehow i completely missed out on her during the heighdays. This nice film, about med students meeting life & death, is my current frontrunner for best jogging, nominated for best pizza and best basketball and yes, there is a banana. Oh and besides Matthew Modine, solid as always, the guy who plays the stressed-depressed student? It's Todd Field, who would go on to direct Oscar darlings *In the Bedroom*, *Little Children* and *Tár*, objectively better cinema, but objectivity is extremely overrated, because it doesn't exist. Here, gut instinct reigns.



As for those peculiar categories, it all started when i got tired of seeing the exact same lists over and over again, the same awards over and over again: best actor, best actress, best director, best film, etcetera. Everyone should know now that **Michael Douglas**



(*Wall Street*) and **Jodie Foster** (*The Accused*) deliver some of the best acting of the eighties, there really is no need to reiterate, over and over again. So now in my book they're nominated for best sunrise/sunset and best smoking respectively. They're two of many, menni eighties classics that ultimately, unfortunately fell out of the top 100.



Pregnant teen romcomdram **For Keeps?** (1988, John G. Avildsen) is just as valid to be appreciated and liked as holocaust überdocu **Shoah** (1985, Claude Lanzmann) and they more than deserve one co-existing honorable mention.



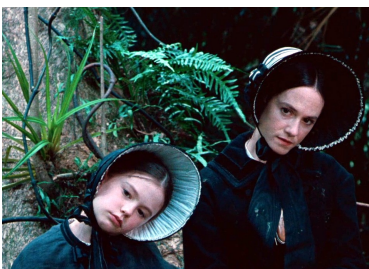
The decade that i love most, mostly for nostalgic reasons but also because of a wildly open mind, is widely regarded as the worst decade for films ever; such a cliché. From teen joyride flick *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986, John Hughes) to arthouse road movie *Paris, Texas* (1984, Wim Wenders), from body horror to world cinema, i beg to differ and i'm all in. Still, even totally funny Zucker-Abrahams-Zucker comedies are all out.



Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael

(1990, Jim Abrahams)

Winona Ryder shall remain my biggest idol forever, black-pink bullying romcomkitsch *Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael* being the film that triggered this healthy obsession straight through my most difficult years. I still absolutely love it, perhaps even more than *Heathers* and *Mermaids*, more than her deserved consecutive Oscar nominations for *The Age of Innocence* and *Little Women*. In the early nineties i also hunted down her lesser-known films and found one vhs copy of *Square Dance* (1987, Daniel Petrie) in a video store, a special feeling that will never be matched by today's online world, even with quite a few exceptional digital rarities in my top 100. Winona finds herself with only one entry though and that's awkward, but at the same time it's beautiful.



My list is already embarrassingly chock-full of nineties titles, that era of my depression, my rebirth, my discovery of binge-watching quality cinema. Unforgettable **Anna Paquin** (*The Piano*) and **Anna Chlumsky** (*My Girl*) have become two of the main victims;



it just feels so nauseatingly wrong to drop them from the absolute upper echelons of movie memories. But at least they're not alone, unlike me during those pre-internet, bulletin board system & sneak preview years, we didn't even have a proper IMDb yet! *Leaving Las Vegas* to *Twelve Monkeys*, even the highly popular titles were awesome.



American basketball comedy joy **White Men Can't Jump** (1992, Ron Shelton) and exceptionally hard-hitting Australian romantic schizophrenidrama **Angel Baby** (1995, Michael Rymer) both are seriously recommended as well.





Made in Hong Kong (*Heung Gong jai jo*, 1997, Fruit Chan)

For 25 years, all i remembered was that mesmerizing cemetery scene, screaming the name of a dead friend. I saw *Made in Hong Kong* with my mother in an Amsterdam cinema, which once again proves how i inherited her open-mindedness. Back then, i was susceptible to hysterical chaos much more than i am today. Memories are fond.

Every movie fan, in fact every teenager these days, goes through this 'Asian Phase': suddenly everything western sucks and everything eastern is cool, hip and happening or the worst: spiritual. The trick is to balance things, avoid getting stuck in immature rebellious nonsense forever. In the mid-nineties, i myself might have drifted towards 'depressing' arthouse a bit too much, devouring awesome films like *Kids* (1995, Larry Clark), *Gummo* (1997, Harmony Korine), *Christiane F.* (1981, Uli Edel) and especially *Go, Go Second Time Virgin* (*Yuke yuke nidome no shojo*, 1969, Kôji Wakamatsu) to prove how different i was. Having kicked them all out, who is the different one now?

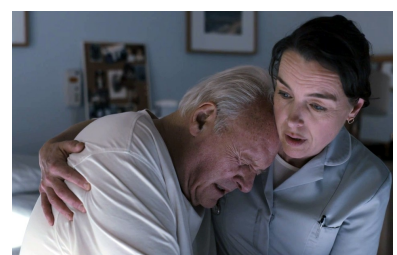


Fan Girl (2020, Antoinette Jadaone)

This personal drama turning societal, about universal cuteness and dangers of idolizing, pitches naivety against numb temptation. And it's so so fucking good, shocking even; debunking superstardom through a shifting perspective, questioning morale both ways. Not feeling anything anymore, the desire to feel *something*, never felt this sadly real.

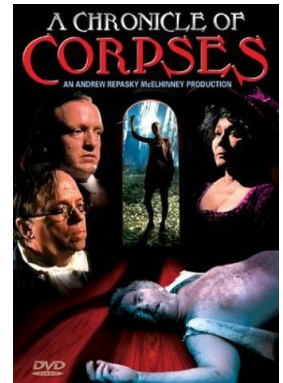
Filipino films have been my best discovery of the millennium so far: two other titles, one of which is directed by Jadaone as well, are in my top 30. Definitely keep an eye on *Fan Girl* too; it nabs a guaranteed top 10 entry in my next decade review, 2029.

Strict rules aren't necessary, but new movies should be shelved a while before being considered for an all-time list. For this reason alone, two most recent best of the year award winners *Babylon* (2022, Damien Chazelle) and *The Fallout* (2021, Megan Park) are still on the substitute bench. Some of their peers from earlier decades drifted from huge initial impact a bit, like *Strange Colours* (2017, Alena Lodkina) and *Garden State* (2004, Zach Braff), very capable of pinch-hitting. However, honorable apologies go to **Anthony Hopkins**, three of his films have missed the boat by an inch: *The Elephant Man*, *The Silence of the Lambs* and most recently, *The Father*.



To round off this extensive, quite over-the-top section of honorable mentions, my appreciated influential movie buddy must be set in the bloemetjes. Over the course of 25 turbulent years and oh how we wouldn't have wanted it any other way, through him i struggled through, discovered, re-evaluated over a dozen films that have all become contenders for my ultimate countdown, starting in a sec.

Life wouldn't have been the same, certainly less awesome, without **A Chronicle of Corpses** (2000) and the too low supply of Andrew Repasky McElhinney's other stylish yet provocative masterpieces. He also introduced me to the intoxicating and quite naked dream world of Jean Rollin (*Le frisson des vampires*, 1971), while teaching me the true value of the entire Godzilla franchise, all seventy years of it. Previously mentioned Argento, Fulci/Lenzi/Bava, but even insufferable *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980, Ruggero Deodato) and incredible *What Dreams May Come* (1998, Vincent Ward) will be safe with you.



Here we go. Just don't start yapping about missing titles, genres, languages or Peter Jackson. For every outed blockbuster, there's no Bollywood either. For every black life that matters, there's no Chinese delegation, none. I'm hardly into biopics and crime!



100. Lake Tahoe

(2008, Fernando Eimbcke)

Filmed near the place where the meteorite hit that destroyed the dinosaurs, this is the calm balmy story of a young man looking for a car part, a Mexican road movie without a trip. Taking life slowly, several people are met: an old man having breakfast with his dog, a young mother who knows nothing about cars (or does she?), and a kung fu kid actually able to fix engines. Coming to terms with a deceased father and a depressed mother, a hammock and a hug offer comfort, slightly absurd, heartwarmingly simple.

Steady shots of crossroads and streets, buildings and backyards, combine well with black screen interludes that always last a little too long enough to realize it's done on purpose. These lil moments of contemplation are great for identification, accepting life the way it is. At first Juan wants to leave, in the end he chooses to stay. Then, the peculiar title is finally kind of explained: never having been to the actual lake, a pretty picture.



'i tried to have cybersex once, but i kept getting a busy signal..'



99. You've Got Mail

(1998, Nora Ephron)

If you're unable to enjoy this harmless 90s romcom, you probably don't like movies at all. And that is the exact kind of judgmental attitude that *You've Got Mail* happens to be arguing against: *The Godfather* versus *Pride & Prejudice*, Starbucks versus coffee, cute little bookstore versus giant evil corporation. Online, without knowing they know each other in real life, Kathleen and Joe compliment and complement each other just fine, chatting and flirting, peacefully co-existing like arthouse and blockbuster should.

Tom Hanks excels at backspacing a sentence and scooping up caviar, Meg Ryan steals the show with physical comedy, her handling of a cart in the supermarket echoing the very best black & white 40s classics. The ultimate 90s pairing had superb chemistry.

Supporting cast is simply sparkling. Personal favorite Heather 'excuse me?' Burns always cracks me up with delight, Steve Zahn is a perfect friendly dufus, Parker Posey a perfect bitchy wife, etcetera, etcetera. List is long, having not even mentioned the adorable kids.



'goodnight, dear void..'

The most important reason for having this film deep in the heart however, is personal. For many years up to 2016, i have been e-mailing back and forth with the best Cure buddy, a Belgian girl. While miles apart physically, intellectually, probably emotionally as well, we adored and quoted *You've Got Mail*. I don't know what happened to her.



98. Romeo und Julia im Schnee

(1920, Ernst Lubitsch)

Twenty years before he directed *The Shop around the Corner*, a James Stewart starring film that *You've Got Mail* adorably ripped off half a century later, German born Lubitsch turned the most classic love story of all into a very funny, completely silent, cute short film. Long live not adding music decades later, because no matter how good intentions are, it always pushes the viewers into a certain direction that was not in the

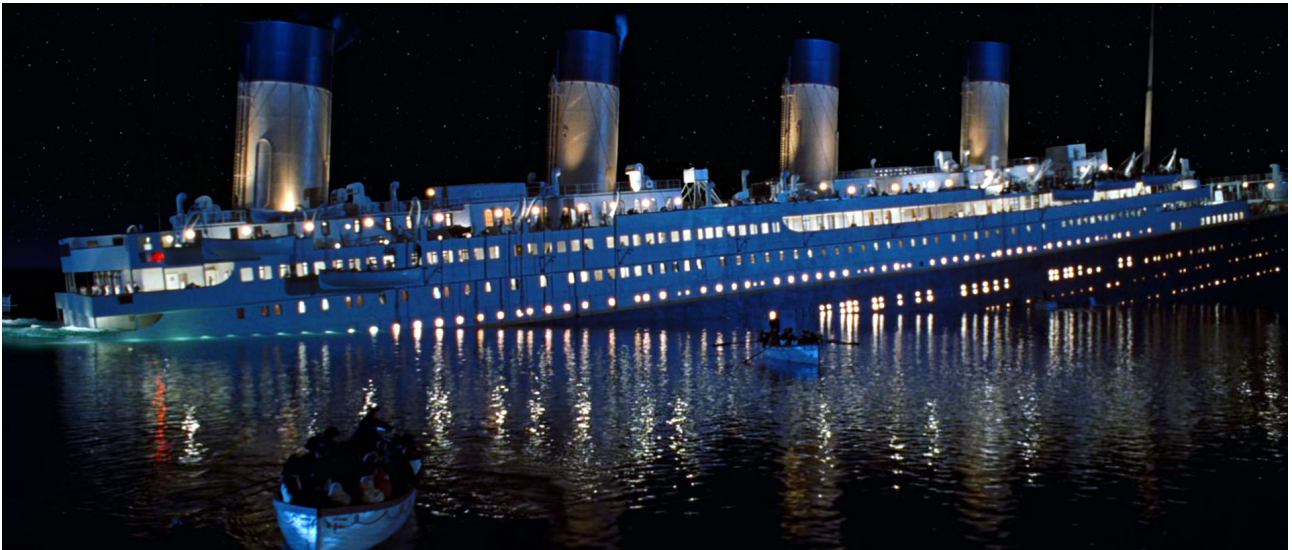
original. *Romeo and Juliet in the Snow* – certainly not the last version in this list – has ridiculous costumes, lots of love, a hefty snowball fight, but most refreshing: a prank twist on the tragic ending. Shakespeare would have approved and laughed out loud.



97. Let Them All Talk

(2020, Steven Soderbergh)

Talking, talking, talking. Can you imagine, it won't be long before the world of cinema will have to do without Meryl Streep! Partially improvised *Let Them All Talk* should be enjoyed even more when i'm 74 myself. On a cruise ship, it hands the torch to a next generation: Lucas Hedges (with two titles in this top 100, better than Streep already), discusses pretense and prejudice, insecurity and envy, death and young hope of love. Dianne Wiest wins all board games, in a future-proof talkie that because of untimely release, missed the boat on both my year and decade review. It rose to the surface.



96. Titanic

(1997, James Cameron)

It's been 27 years and we can still smell the fresh paint! Suicidal on stern and happy on bow, king of the world and heart of the ocean, *Titanic* was a true cinematic event of a lifetime. A perfect balance of disaster movie and costume drama profited big time off of tragedy, juggling moral responsibility and historical accuracy to ice-cold sinking emotional effect with dated vfx, starring always splendid Billy Zane and Kathy Bates. It is highly recommended to also watch comparably excellent *A Night to Remember* (1958, Roy Ward Baker), but i can't deny often feeling more at home on upper deck.



95. Napoleon (1927, Abel Gance)

One of the most groundbreaking films in history, oh and it tells the story of Napoleon's early years (the original plan was six films), uses so many impressive techniques it's mindblowing: camera movement, superimposition, Keller-Dorian cinematography, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. After five hours, *La Grande Finale* involves the rarely seen epic Polyvision triptych; widescreen on steroids. It deserves a standing ovation.

Napoléon vu par Abel Gance was released in the same year as the first film with sound *The Jazz Singer*, what a time to be alive that must've been. However, supposed to be the end of civilization 2012 was not bad either: we started our California road trip as honored guests in a majestic Oakland cinema, to see the finally restored masterpiece in all its glory, then have dinner at the table with legendary reviewer Leonard Maltin. And what do i remember most about that day? The snowball fight opening scene.



94. Cleopatra (1963, Joseph L. Mankiewicz)

Adjusted to inflation, one of the most expensive films in history is still up there with the modern blockbuster franchises. And it has a marvelous amount of talking, feeling like a proper stage play. Nevertheless, it's all buildup to those two major epic scenes: the entrance in Rome and the naval battle, while honorable mentions go to Caesar's assassination/cremation and Cleopatra's suicide. Elizabeth Taylor in the title role and Richard Burton as Marcus Antonius only added to the historical celebrity madness.

'the corridors are dark, gentlemen.. but you mustn't be afraid, i am with you..'



93. The Ghouls

(2003, Chad Ferrin)

Adjusted to inflation, one of the cheapest films in history is still down there with the bottom of the barrel. Could be mistaken for a poor zombie flick, but *The Ghouls* is a gritty look on sensationalism, capitalism and homelessness. Rape, cannibalism, skinning, all those fun things to do on a random night in the underbelly of L.A., get outclassed by explicit use of the word 'retard', aimed at a real

life retard who feels inspired by *Taxi Driver*. The offender is a guy with a nasty cough, a camera and a car, struggling with both work and love, when suddenly he runs into a bunch of scary creatures; the opportunity of a lifetime, a chance to make a living.

Timothy Muskatell has the softest hand i've ever had the pleasure of shaking; meeting him at AFFF 2009 definitely helped his status as one of my absolute favorite actors. Buddy Chad Ferrin wasn't present, Timothy told me that was because of aerophobia, knowledge making his later film *Exorcism at 60,000 Feet* (2019) slightly interesting.

Production company Crappy World Films Inc. is one of those many, many antidotes to the idea that money makes the movie. *The Ghouls* is like watching a soap opera with much darker themes, including a sound that sounds just like my loud doorbell. Yaiks.



92. Gremlins

(1984, Joe Dante)

No bright light, no water, no feeding after midnight, remember. Produced by Spielberg and written by Columbus, *Gremlins* is the best Christmas movie ever, for those of us who have had less jolly experiences. Forty years old now, it's better than ever, with a completely effective and highly entertaining blend of cute comedy and violent horror, action adventure and teen romance, snow and fire. Right beneath the surface, there are wildly varying themes like animal testing, bullying and a love for classic cinema: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Forbidden Planet*, shameless *E.T.*, plus many more easter eggs. The one truest irresistible charm however, is Phoebe Cates and her sudden sad drama. Turtleneck sweaters over bikinis any day, if you know you know.

Gremlins was the first movie i ever rented, right after my parents had wisely treated our household to a VCR, not realizing the lifelong passion which would be triggered. The tape turned out to be a German dubbed version, precious memory funny as hell.

'look mama, see daddy, i wrote you a poem on my wrists..'



91. Surviving (1985, Waris Hussein)

Too serious for the mainstream, too mainstream for the serious, but it feels very real; suicide, in all its sadness, right in the heart of the eighties. It's a long, beyond heavy tv film, which is probably why it's so ridiculously unknown. Cuts, fades to black that are obviously made for commercials contrast heavily with the subject material, plus a change of perspective half way through, this is no easy matinee viewing. And there is the way of acting, which is different on tv (or on stage) than if it's meant for cinemas. Just a random thought: we've all had our moments of real life behavior that would be considered 'bad acting' in the movies. Keep an open mind and don't slit your wrists.

Romeo & Juliet extended version, including aftermath, has an almost unbearable mid-section, when their bodies are found. Lonnie (Molly Ringwald) has a long history of useless therapy, Rick (Zach Galligan) finds out his dad is cheating on his mom, school sucks. End of story, but it's just the beginning for their parents, flawed but not evil, blaming each other then blaming themselves, for what was supposed to be 'just a phase'.



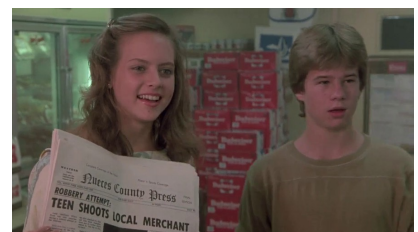
The cast is incredible: two of the hottest eighties stars, plus two veteran pairs of parents, ultimately this film belongs to Ellen Burstyn. Shivers come however seeing River Phoenix (one year before *Stand By Me*) and Heather O'Rourke (the little girl in *Poltergeist*) as her children. They both would be dead soon, Burstyn is still very much alive today. Childhood pictures of the main actors in the opening credits only add to this weird, sad realization how fragile and unfair this life is.

Despite all the big names, *Surviving* was hard to find for a very, very long time, i had to order it on expensive imported VHS. Soon after, of course someone uploaded it.

'you should take a day and go to the lake and just lie in the sun..'



Exceptional honorable mention goes to an actress you've never heard of: **Kim Valentine** stars in my Top 100 with her first two films! I developed a crush on her like any teenage boy would through entertaining eighties horror *Grandmother's House* (1988,



Peter Rader) and did not think of her for thirty years. Creating lists like this brings up all these fun facts, personal trivia. Kim is blink-and-miss-her, spot her in #72 as well.



90. The Egg and I

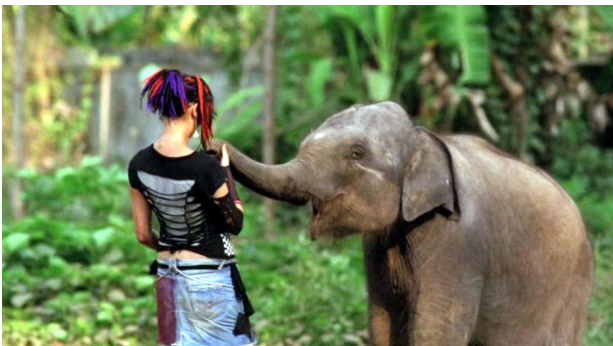
(1947, Chester Erskine)

Clumsy husband Bob buys a chicken farm and drags his clumsy wife Betty along. The house is not in the best shape, but he remains optimistic. Many locals visit, some friendlier and more helpful than others. A too sweet guard dog, a pig called Cleopatra and many other animals contribute to the desired result of home sweet home: *Ik Vertrek avant la lettre*.

The first half of this film is slapstick: opening credits with farm sounds set the initial tone. A peculiar turn of events lead to this remarkably serious second act, in which she gets really, really jealous and the marriage is threatened. Fear of infidelity, business not taking off as hoped, forest fire and a touching sense of community: *The Egg and I* is probably too heavy for comedy lovers, too light for those that prefer drama. Awkward dancing sums it up nicely.



Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray star, but the lovely lone Oscar nomination was for Marjorie Main playing a scene chewing, quilt competition winning, country woman with a house full of kids that she can't keep apart. It's a fun character in a fun movie.



89. Zoop in India

(2006, Johan Nijenhuis)

Appeltaart! Our favorite rangers are back for their second full-length film, after *Afrika*, before *Zuid-Amerika*, and in sequel quality it truly outshines *The Empire Strikes Back*. All kinds of Indian things are explained, they are just as stereotypical and completely silly as their Dutch counterparts: don't take yourself, or anything for that matter, too seriously. There are life lessons for the scientist, the punk, the pink and all the others. These kids played by adults are split into two groups of four: one heads to the jungle to rescue some elephants, the other visits Bombay to trace the bad guys led by an evil Bollywood star who speaks ridiculous Dutch. Trivia: that's the voice of Tygo Gernandt.

'schop 'm in z'n bek!'

In the mid-2000s, a soap in a zoo was insanely popular in Holland, Madame Tussauds level fame. Three seasons of *Zoop* were produced and all main actors are well-known to this very day, having moved into wildly different directions. Monique van der Werff, colorful emo Taffie, stole my heart and an award. I will never forget our lengthy talk about depression, after a stage play she produced. She wisely quit acting soon after.



88. Charulata

(1964, Satyajit Ray)

Set in Calcutta, 1879, based on *The Broken Nest* (*Nastanirh*) by Rabindranath Tagore, *Charulata* is a touching story of the clash between intellect and emotions, showing a politically involved husband caring for, but not understanding his artistic wife. She watches him through binoculars, he invites a family member over to save her from loneliness. A well-meant initiative backfires, she falls in love.

Directed by renowned director Ray, mostly known for his Apu Trilogy, hypnotic cinematography creates numerous unforgettable scenes: an embroidering opening, swingin' in the garden and that chilling freeze frame at the end. Meanwhile, the meaning of marriage and importance of shared passion is seen through the eyes of phenomenal actress Madhabi Mukherjee, 82 now and slowing down. Historical portrayal, British occupation takes a backseat, but a dream of visiting London is mentioned, in Bengali.



87. Touki Bouki

(1973, Djibril Diop Mambéty)

A dream of visiting Paris is mentioned, in Wolof, over and over over again; associated song *Paris, Paris, Paris* will never leave your head. Senegal slums and Dakar harbor are the main settings of this peculiar road movie, obviously influenced by *Easy Rider* and *Bonnie & Clyde*, endorsed by all #celebritiesmatter, from Scorsese to Beyoncé.

The Journey of the Hyena comes with a warning: while frivolous comedy is a welcome approach to the obvious doom and gloom of people trying to flee their country, right from the beginning an uncensored slaughterhouse makes for uncomfortable contrast. French colonialism however, the huge gap between rich and poor, struggle for money, causes even more increasingly surrealistic situations. Unheimlich and funny, adventurous, erotic, violent and gay, poetic *Touki Bouki* really is a wild one.



**'once you overcome the 1-inch-tall barrier of subtitles,
you will be introduced to so many more amazing films..'**

(Bong Joon Ho, after *Parasite* won a Golden Globe)

Diversity doesn't come naturally, people simply suck way too much for that. Say what you want about Hollywood and yes, aggressive wokeism is a problem for progression, but at least they're trying. Just like i am trying every year to leave my comfort zones for a while, to watch uncomfortable cinema long enough to finally understand appeal. I am a heterosexual white male. And i love that fact that the world of popular cinema is getting less and less dominantly heterosexual white male. Still, Spike Lee is not on my list, *Parasite* is not my list. Use the force to not be forced, but expand horizons.

'one minute she dissing me, giving me a hard time,
next minute she showing me things i ain't never seen before..'



86. Jason's Lyric

(1994, Doug McHenry)

A dream of leaving Houston is mentioned, that's why Lyric, fed up with the violence, tells well-meaning Jason, son of a Vietnam vet (Forest Whitaker, shown in flashback), to walk away. They both have extremely 'troubled' brothers, who can't and won't be saved. Romance is tender, but hood nonsense always looms; family loyalty has limits.

Jason's Lyric, besides having one of the most beautiful film titles ever, is a classic love story with an absolutely devastating finale. All in all though, way more time is spent on sweetness than on gangsta shit and that's what sets this barely noticed nineties gem apart from all its more male oriented counterparts. It's a movie for those that see loved ones spiraling down.



Jada Pinkett is a joy, Allen Payne's career should have taken off properly, but the show gets stolen by Bokeem Woodbine as terrifyingly hopeless, alcoholic Josh. Between the blues, soul, gospel, hip-hop, ballads, a great soundtrack, his world is gonna explode.



85. Hiroshima Mon Amour

(1959, Alain Resnais)

Two vastly different, somehow comparable traumatic experiences meet for a brief moment in time: French actress and Japanese architect, both happily married. Comparing failed relationships with atomic bombing seems inappropriate, until her actual background is explained, through flashbacks that may be memory.

I always seem to forget large parts of this legendary masterpiece, which makes sense, being about things that can't ever be forgotten. This way, it continues to linger in the back of the head even more, as a tragic mystery, a classic reminder that love is an explosion. She ('Elle') is Nevers, he ('Lui') is Hiroshima.

If you have visited every museum, read every book, do you know anything? It's all appropriately vague.





84. Come and See

(*Idi i smotri*, 1985, Elem Klimov)

Belarus 1943, kids playing. Opening credits, German national anthem. The rest is hell. The amount of unbearable imagery in this horrifying war film about young 'partisans', is absolutely stunning. This includes deafening explosions and crawling through mud, that's just the beginning. Mass murder by fire, suggested rape and the sound of flies seem to contrast with beautiful full frontal laughing and crying, but they're all part of the insanity. In just a short period of history, Flyora and Glasha seem to age decades. *Idi i smotri*, initial title *Kill Hitler*, was Klimov's last film and can't ever be unseen.



83. Moscow Zero

(2006, María Lidón)

The gates of hell are rumored to be opened up deep down below, in the catacombs. An American priest goes down into the tunnels to find a missing friend. Guided by a local group, the entrance may be closed behind them, children and demons roam. Don't expect horror, don't expect arthouse, don't expect to understand. *Moscow Zero* is a niche market picture, starring primary colors and an incredible international cast: Vincent Gallo, Oksana Akinshina (the girl in *Lilya 4-Ever*), Joaquim de Almeida, Rade Šerbedžija, Val Kilmer and Sage Stallone wander a dreamlike, gothic, bilingual maze. Highly intriguing, completely original Spanish poet María Lidón hasn't directed since.

'according to legend, we live on the threshold of hell..'



82. WarGames

(1983, John Badham)

During the Cold War, Matthew Broderick hacks the government without realizing how much danger it causes. A cynical old man who wouldn't mind the end of the world, teaches him real life tic-tac-toe.

World war meets teenage love, what's not to like! Remember, back in the 80s not everyone and their mom were online; the idea of an actual girl in your nerdy room, honestly interested in computer stuff, flirting while at it, was way ahead of its time. And so, even if her role is relatively minor, Ally Sheedy became the dream of Generation Matrix Printers.

Don't believe everything you see on a screen; the early message clearly hasn't sunk in very well yet. Resonating on multiple levels until this day, still it never gets heavy: American-Russian tensions, the threat of global nuclear war, fear of getting hacked and risk of incarceration, handled with eighties joy.

WarGames is a silly film but not comedy, a serious film but not intellectual, a romantic film just a crush. Twitch gamer girl, while soaking up community attention streaming shooters, feel free to think of nostalgic old me. The only winning move is not to play.

81. Adventures in Babysitting

(1987, Chris Columbus)

Known as *A Night on the Town* back then, this was the first film i ever copied. I had this feeling that if you hooked up a rental 'movie box' to your video recorder, it should work, and it did! *Adventures in Babysitting* topped my wishlist. Real time copying, be kind rewind, countless visits to all video stores in a wide area on my bicycle in the rain; how could i have suspected that 30 years later you'd be able to fit ALL eighties movies ever made, downloaded, onto ONE hard drive. Where do we go from here?

Into the big city, that's where we'll go. After being lied to by her shitty boyfriend, Chris decides to go babysitting instead and one thing leads to another: a guy with a hook who turns out to be nice, a thief who turns out to be nice, a (babysitting) blues club filled with nice people, a frat party with at least one nice guy, and last but not least, Vincent D'Onofrio as car mechanic a.k.a. Thor, Gay God of Thunder.

From the dancing around to *Then He Kissed Me* in the opening scene, not a clue what chaos the day has in store, to a kiss with the very same song before end credits roll, Elisabeth Shue shines. She is sixty years old now and that brings an unexpected tear to my eye. Never forget why you started watching movies in the first place. For FUN.



'chivalry is not only dead, it's decomposed..'



80. The Palm Beach Story

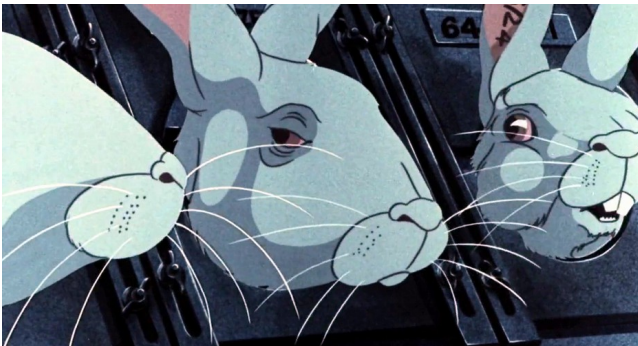
(1942, Preston Sturges)

Money is a bitch, talking about it always leads to misunderstandings, resulting in turbulent travels. Geraldine's worries seems to come to an end when a hard of hearing funny old man also known as the Wienie King (basically B2 from *Bassie & Adriaan*) helps her out. Marriage had gone stale anyway, so she leaves and takes her female charm with her.

Always delightful Claudette Colbert won one Oscar, for Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night* (1934), it could easily have been her third entry on this list. Major movie stars are almost always overrated, but Claudette is an exception to the rule, lifting literally everything she ever did with peppy charisma. *The Palm Beach Story* displays her undisputable talent for pajama comedy to levels that upstage her male companions. This includes her husband, a train full of hunters and a slightly naive but friendly rich guy.



Watch this speedy comedy on a Sunday afternoon. By taxi, train, plane and yacht, the adventures of this questionable, understandable woman are riddled with idiotic names and terrible wordplay jokes. Highlight is a guy named Toto falling flat on his face.



79. The Plague Dogs

(1982, Martin Rosen)

Everyone knows *Watership Down* (1978), Rosen's beyond tearjerking bunny story. In its slipstream came this similarly dark Richard Adams adaptation about two dogs that escape an animal research facility, only to be chased by various relentless humans for the entire film. Snitter and Rowf roam the Lake District with little hope, in increasingly bad weather condition. Looking for a master, they meet a fox. Make no mistake about it: this ain't no kids movie, very grim and unbearably unfair. Incineration, accusations of spreading bubonic plague, cold feet due to ceaseless snow, drowning; these mutts deserve someone speaking on their behalf. Through the voices of renowned British actors including John Hurt, Nigel Hawthorne and Patrick Stewart, they'll live on.

'i've left this cruel world behind..'

(Alan Price – *Time and Tide*)



78. Wendy and Lucy

(2008, Kelly Reichardt)

For starters in arthouse cinema, here is your best entry: slow, but just 80 minutes and easy to feel, because it's about a missing dog, or even worse, financially not being able to provide for her.

'you could use a creditcard..'



Based on *Train Choir* by Jonathan Raymond, who is also basically responsible for Kelly Reichardt's other films *Old Joy* and *First Cow*, this story of a homeless girl being separated from her sweetest companion strips all down to the bare minimum. It's about fundamental empathy, as expressed by the friendliest security guard ever, as opposed to

the shittiest counterpart 'just doing his job' and causing all the trouble. Increasing car bills (trust me, you'll google 'milky oil' after this) increases subdued despair and when all comes out, there's no holding back the tears any longer. Just an extremely friendly normal person is looking for stress relief, meaning well, but life continues to be tough. Her desired destination is Alaska by train, but perhaps she's more lost than her dog. *Wendy and Lucy* touches on our very core values, heartwarming and heartbreaking.

Creating lists always reveals peculiar personal preferences that had not been noticed before. I'm a cat person now, but dog movies remain on top. Also, only after pairing #78 and #77 for other reasons, i realized they both include significant humming:



77. Sanctuary

(*Mu*, 2004, Yuhang Ho)

For extremists in arthouse cinema, here is your challenge: just 80 minutes, but slower than slow and hard to comprehend, because it's about sleeping, or even worse, trying to find quiet in a world full of noise. Three loosely connected characters take naps, eat noodles and live in bubbles. It takes a while for a pattern to emerge: there are so, so many annoying sounds. Cars and mopeds, an umbrella scraping across the ground, a toy gun ('fire! fire!'), a copying machine; there's just no peace of mind ever, so there will always be this exhausting exhaustion. These are just people doing their daily stuff, which might include ending it all, but even to that the film provides no clear clarity.

At the screening for his next film at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, i briefly talked to Malaysian director Ho about *Mu* and thanked him for the non-crowdpleaser. He just gave me the biggest smile and said: 'yeah, that was not for everyone eh'.



76. The Keep

(1983, Michael Mann)

Carpathian Alps, Romania, 1941. A group of nazis are about to encounter something so evil, so righteous, but so cut short, that the director disowned the film. What's left, actually shot in Wales, is a very Mannish occult horror drama successfully threading the cheesy thin line between pulp and poetry. An exquisite cast including Scott Glenn, Ian McKellen, Jürgen Prochnow and Gabriel Byrne unravels the mystery of an ancient fortress, not built to keep something out, but to keep something in. Never has a film been so dominated by its music: overwhelmingly present Tangerine Dream truly turns *The Keep* into an unforgettable audiovisual experience. Flawed or not, it's a treasure.



75. Keeping the Faith

(2000, Edward Norton)

A priest and a rabbi, no joke: this is the best romcom ever. They walk into a bar, play basketball and fall in love with the same girl from their childhood a.k.a. Anna Banana. This love triangle leads to laughing and crying at the same time, with a high level of goddamn shabbat shalominess, starring comedy duo Norton & Stiller and support by Anne Bancroft, Miloš Forman and Eli Wallach, all advocating humor and self-belief.

'there's always something so tragic about a hopeless romantic..'

Stylishly similar to great classics, New Yorkish confusion mixes with modern karaoke, cell phone addiction, trading cards and more traditional, less funny religious tension: World Trade Center pre-9/11 and Jenna Elfman before we knew about Scientology.



74. Vanishing Waves

(*Aurora*, 2012, Kristina Buožytė)

Lithuanian love, in an extremely artistic, scientific way. *Aurora* is fiction and delusion, a rational nightmare, sterile logic versus breathtaking emotions, trying to keep lucid dreaming going because it's better than real life, orgy in a neural network. Basically, that's *Vanishing Waves*, in which a troubled guy experimentally connects to the brain of a girl in a coma, immediately falling into a deeply passionate world, an ultimate wet dream. Then, someone seems to be watching them. Beauty and sadness of hedonism terminally lead to the ultimate chase scene, a mindblowingly intense, serene farewell. It's no surprise to find out that Kristina Buožytė gets her inspiration at Burning Man.



73. Waves

(2019, Trey Edward Shults)

No trailer or singled out scenes will do this important film justice; all generation gaps should see the complete picture, both halves of the story, with the devastating effect of aggressive extraverts on lonely introverts, sports versus art, physical injury against mental suffocation. Black lives do matter, but maybe some niggers should calm down. The less you know about the twists and turns that *Waves* provides, the better. Social media are not inherently evil, music shifts from Kendrick Lamar to Tame Impala, but the most stunning contrast is in some extreme resolution changes: widescreen/smart. Intoxicating cinematography is cool, but at Taylor Russell's service. She's phenomenal.



72. The Legend of Billie Jean

(1985, Matthew Robbins)

Helen Slater and unrelated Christian Slater radiate in a road movie about a growing heroine who didn't choose to be chased. Anti-sexist, anti-capitalism and anti-celebrity, it's a fast film, with Joan of Arc inspired haircutting under a Pat Benatar masterpiece, G.I. Joe walkie talkies and friendly reasonable lieutenant Ringwald, what's in a name. Last but definitely not least, it's Menni's alternative awards' frontrunner for Best Fire.

'fair is fair!'

It's unfair. Eighties movies, even if appreciated for fun, are always treated with some degree of chuckling disdain. I disagree. Regardless of nostalgia, i think the decade is responsible for an explosion in much-needed light-hearted colors and most important: don't take yourself so fudging seriously! *The Legend of Billie Jean*, missed back in the days, was my best 'later discovery'. That doesn't mean i don't appreciate the classics.



71. Rebel Without a Cause

(1955, Nicholas Ray)

James Dean impersonating a police siren is the most annoying thing in cinema history, but it doesn't come close to real life realization that each generation won't understand the next one. Rising against parents and other authorities fortunately is one thing that binds us all together. In dark sad *Rebel Without a Cause*, three outsiders + one iconic red jacket are pitched together in L.A., at school, in Griffith observatory/planetarium, then a deserted mansion, after various accidents and incidents. Thinking of the tragic early deaths of all three main actors, we once took the Cali turn where Dean crashed.

'oh ow, sounds like somebody got a case of the Mondays..'



70. Office Space

(1999, Mike Judge)

Best comedy since the millennium bug sees a stressed out software engineer (always pleasant Ron Livingston) go Zen after his hypnotherapist gets a heart attack. Honestly dealing with stupid company stuff, asking a girl (always pleasant Jennifer Aniston) out and coming up with a scam to get rich, everything suddenly becomes easy. Laughing is always best when serious matters are underneath, *Office Space* hits all pet peeves out of the park: the stupid agony caused by traffic jams that we never seem to solve, machines with stupid errors, exaggerated cynicism and Michael Bolton fans. The show gets stolen here by 'the two Bobs', one of which is always pleasant John C. McGinley, who might very well be my favorite supporting actor ever – spot him in #47 as well.



69. Tromeo & Juliet

(1996, Lloyd Kaufman)

Classic Shakespeare introduced by Lemmy, House of Motörhead, is perhaps the most incestuous version of the story ever. Juliet goes vegetarian lesbian, Tromeo lubes up and wears a cow suit, there's death by beauty appliance, piercings, tattoos, farts, car stunts involving children, cameos by The Toxic Avenger, Sgt. Kabukiman N.Y.P.D. and god of independent cinema himself Lloyd Kaufman, whom we have met. With all the dismemberment and other serious injuries, explicit nudity, terrible sex and even worse humor, *Tromeo & Juliet* remains laughably romantic, the glass cage as unforgettable centerpiece. Manhattan will always be traumatized and life is ridiculous, might as well emphasize on that. I need Troma less often now than i used to, gotta be a good sign.



68. Mermaid in a Manhole

(*Ginî piggu: Manhôru no naka no ningyo*, 1988, Hideshi Hino)

Guinea Pig 5 is extreme art, more so than other entries in the notorious series, which are more torture porn oriented. This 60 minutes body shocker depicts a painter and his model, who might also be his cancerous pregnant wife, but we tend to see things differently once it involves loved ones, things like euthanasia. The beautiful mermaid starts decaying rapidly, with severe infections, cutting and squeezing, worms crawling out of tumors, in seven colors. Yes, it's gory, but it's beautiful and thought-provoking, once past the repulsion. Then dying becomes dyeing and blood looks like paint. Calm piano music over dismemberment; not everyone will understand the sad fellow. Once, allegedly the FBI was called over snuff concerns in *Guinea Pig 2* by one Charlie Sheen.



67. Lucas

(1986, David Seltzer)

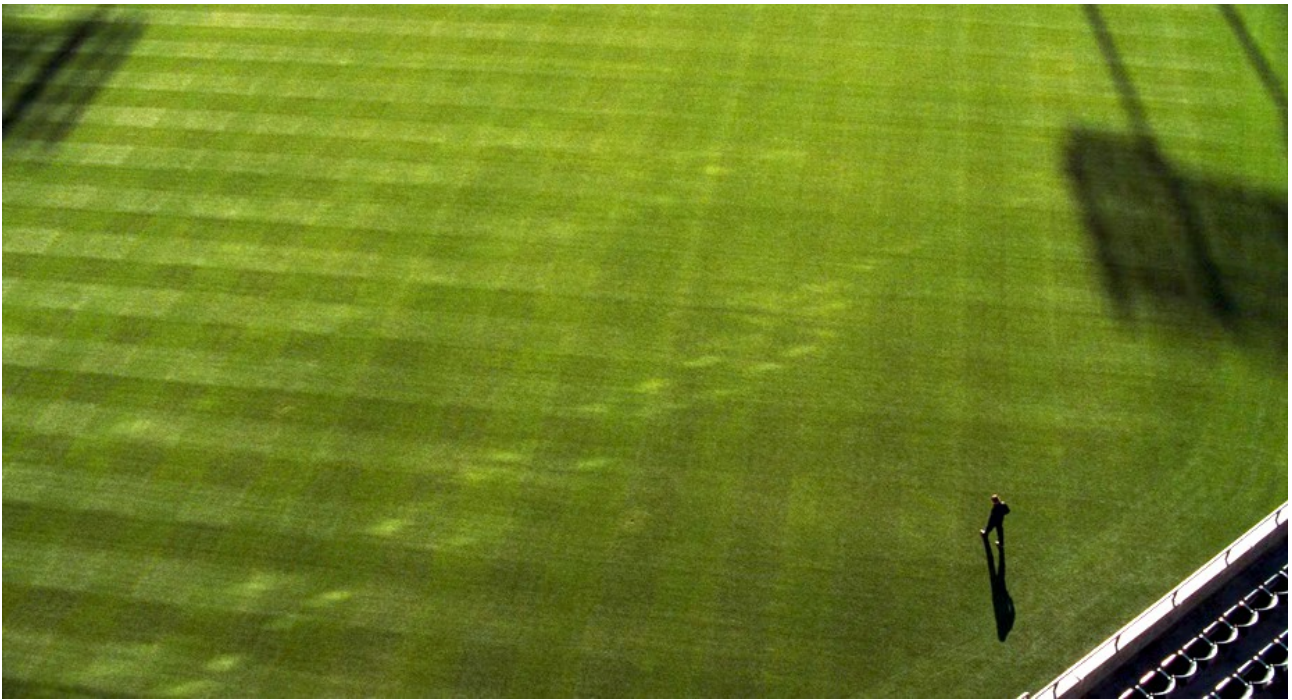
Don't call people superficial just because they wanna have fun. Go eat pizza, don't let me spoil your depression. Your lunch is leaking. Nuanced eighties essential *Lucas* has some unforgettable oneliners, between bullied Locust and sweetest girl ever Magpie.



In fact, Kerri Green – this and *The Goonies*, an eighties queen – is my frontrunner for Best Friend and a serious nominee for Best Crying. This is how you treat a friend who falls in love with you: with empathy. I mean, Kerri almost makes me forget this was Winona's debut, she is *that* amiable. Teenage love pentangle, it really hurts.



Being smart enough to scientifically realize why you're romantically alone, to understand why girls go for the jocks, doesn't make life easier. *Lucas* is in the race for Best Sweater (cheerleaders are not all the same) and Best Insect, plus outside shots at Cinema Visit, Tennis, Fountain and upon a recent revisit, Green Clothing...



66. Moneyball

(2011, Bennett Miller)

Best sports movie ever, especially for those not much into sports, tells the incredible story of the Oakland Athletics and general manager Billy Beane. They beat the rigged system and became a metaphor for believing in fun statistics to defy capitalistic odds. *Moneyball* is a very calm biopic, inviting to get on base and listen to girls with guitars, it is highly recommended to people who cannot imagine they will enjoy a film like this. Fun facts: i first saw this film on the plane to Oakland, intrigued and impressed by its serenity. In the end, Beane gets invited to Boston, covering another memorable flight. Films like this prove that real life is always more unbelievable than any fictional script imaginable: they *really* blew an 11-0 lead in their crazy winning streak record match.



65. Hell's Angels

(1930, Howard Hughes)

Classic love triangle meets spectacular imagery; this is *Titanic* sized contrast. In fact, *Hell's Angels* has an even cheesier romantic portion and more impressive action scenes, with actual planes and dazzling stunts. Movie trivia: Leonardo DiCaprio played rich, eccentric director/pilot Howard Hughes in *The Aviator* (2004).

'all they got to do is make it sound heroic and you fall for it.'

Naive Roy and sensitive brother Monte join the army and get played by a slut, there's no other word for it. With bratwursty stereotypes on both sides, especially ze Germans are laughable, it all borders on slapstick. In the second act however, serious matters come to light in France. Increasingly nihilistic, tired of battle, romance gets compared to warfare and a sad ending is due. Jean Harlow died of kidney failure aged 26.



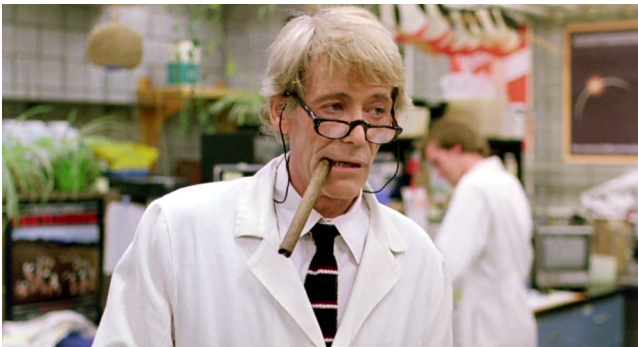


64. The Great Dictator

(1940, Charles Chaplin)

Worst soldier ever has no idea what the future has in store, look at that release year, imagine creating a satire like this about current despotism, extrapolate. Nevertheless, regardless of all scary implications, *The Great Dictator* handles fear with dignity and is funny as hell. The usual Chaplinness is abundant: silly walking, dancing and slapping, combined with shameless sentiment it resulted in the best speech in cinema history.

Their birthdates only four days apart, same moustache, but one made the world laugh and the other did the exact opposite. Chaplin doesn't shy away from sadness though, the raid scenes are terrifying, unsettling real life images always loom. Fortunately the silliness prevails, serious scenes are always followed by ridiculous and/or poetic ones. Diplomatic discussion turns food fight, Adenoid Hynkel is a crazy sauerkraut muncher.



63. Creator

(1985, Ivan Passer)

Mad scientist/teacher Peter O'Toole is looking for eggs to recreate his deceased wife. Meanwhile, student Vincent Spano falls in love with Virginia Madsen, who will tear the heart to pieces in unexpected ways. *Creator* is an easy to digest romcom and the best 80s tearjerker, yet an extraordinary good film. Age difference, sex talk and other juicy subjects, facts versus feelings make relationships exciting. God and The Big Picture get glued together under the radar by feisty Mariel Hemingway in a supporting role.

That's the most invigorating part about this gem: it's about the old man with the cigar and at the same time, it is not. Nominations are due for Best Girlfriend and Best Shower, plus this is one of the very few eighties films that actually has real live penguins. Prepare to cry. Son-of-a-Bitch!

**'you will be in the care of this young lover, who tells me
that he sees his unborn children in your eyes..'**





62. Falling Away (2012, Michael David Trozzo)

Life is way less exciting than the movies make it out to be. Enter boring *Falling Away*, in which nothing happens. This mismarketed, misunderstood tiny masterpiece teases with a nasty bus accident and the impact it should have on the community, but these young people move on, stressing and struggling with daily stuff. Family, friends, they don't all make wise decisions, they don't all take responsibility for their own actions. Hood shit, poverty and stuff do exist, but there *are* options (De'Angelo Wilson, *8 Mile*, killed himself in 2008, *Falling Away* is posthumous release). The only real problem is lack of communication with parents, but even that gets solved with a stale sandwich. Observing quietly, this film is riddled with fences. Fences that we put up ourselves.



61. After Fall, Winter (2011, Eric Schaeffer)

Before Sunrise for really broken people: American man meets French woman in Paris, they fall in love. He doesn't know she's a dominatrix (second job palliative care), she doesn't know he's a paying customer (first job failed writer). Pain and death don't lie.

After Fall, Winter is tough. It displays the kind of completely sincere, cynical sadness that audiences actually get angry about. These are not instantly likeable, nice people. They're extremely complicated, with disturbing fetishes and peculiar pet peeves, least of which is a death wish. Add to that a teenage girl with cancer, mean prostitutes and yoga, you know it's gonna be a hard watch. The only reason this is not in my top 10, is my personal lack of affection for and understanding of BDSM. The scene in which she explains how people might be scared of his open heart and explicit honesty however, hits me like a freight train. It almost makes me forget there's also a Selena mag and the most heartfelt 'je t'aime' ever.





60. Free Zone

(2005, Amos Gitai)

A crying young American (Natalie Portman, born in Jerusalem), a Holocaust survivor's Jewish Israeli daughter and an understandably suspicious Palestinian contact person drive to this trade area. Past, present and future blur together in fleeting memories, connecting personal grief to global conflict. The two main parties will bicker forever.

The fact that this poetic, spot on representation was received quite poorly, is seriously incomprehensible. I really, really don't get it. It's not even hated for political/religious reasons; dreamlike symbolism and... dialogue seem to bother most. I honestly try to understand those who prefer biased clarity or even active violence, but keep failing.



59. The War Zone

(1999, Tim Roth)

Devastating loneliness meets domestic abuse, from suspicion to photos, to videos, to the bunker. *The War Zone* is brutally honest and not for everyone; it comes with a car wreck, naive motherhood and the scariest of all, total denial. In the end though, what lingers on forever is brave Lara Belmont, sobbing uncontrollably at the kitchen table.

'don't trust him, keep him away from the baby..'

We drove all the way to the very first edition of the Film by the Sea festival to catch this sledgehammer of a film. It wouldn't be the only screening where people walked out yelling: 'fuck off with your porn!' – they didn't attend the afterparty either. I once received a handwritten letter by a girl claiming someone entered her room at night.

'kill her if you can, loverboy..'



58. The Evil Dead

(1981, Sam Raimi)

Once upon a time, the 'young people get slaughtered in the woods, one by one' script wasn't a cliché yet. And i got to see *The Evil Dead* as a young teen, 'being allowed' did not even enter conversation. I'm forever grateful to my parents, because this splatter classic scared the living shit out of me and that has never ever felt problematic. Quite the contrary actually: horror movies confronted me with death in general and my own fears specifically, making it much easier to happily deal with these subjects later on in life. Of course this won't be the case for everyone, but sleeping with the lights on for a while never hurt anyone. If you've ever been raped by a tree, i forgive any sensitivity.

As for the film itself, i realize it's way cheesier than my initial experience indicated, but i still don't like the funnification in sequels, appreciating a later serious remake (2013) much more. Possession in general remains my #1 demon for life, more about it later.



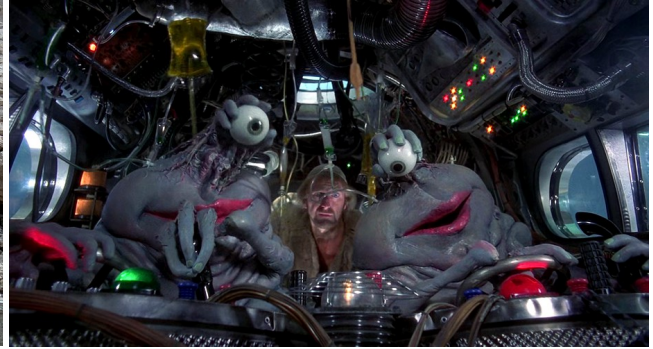
57. Martyrs

(2008, Pascal Laugier)

The less you know the better; the ending of *Martyrs* sums up why movies are life, or in this case, death. Irreversible trauma, a decade of suffering, brutal revenge murder, self-mutilation and suicide, that's just the first half of this feminine drama. It includes everything evil known to mankind except rape, just an observation. Voices in the head and monsters that refuse to stay under the bed; unconditional empathy is dangerous. Behind the sad façade of civilization lies a macabre desire to dissect and understand everything, longing for afterlife, a bloody resistance to accepting doubt as an option.

There's a world before and a world after the French wave of the mid-2000s. Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, this bunch of extremely violent and extremely meaningful horror films appeared. Confronting, physical yet ultimately philosophical near-death experience *Martyrs* is the best of the bunch. Let's just say, it crawls under the skin.

'he's not the messiah, he's a very naughty boy!'

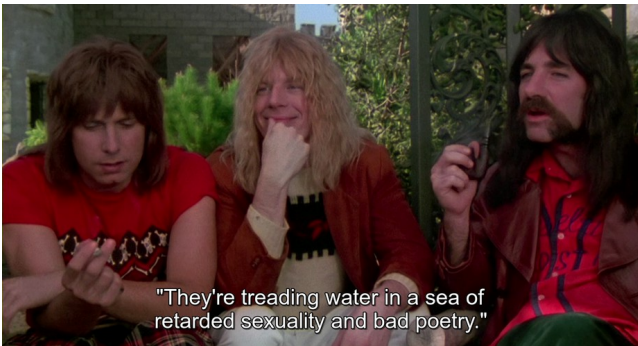


56. Life of Brian

(1979, Terry Jones)

Yes, we're all individuals and crucifixion ain't that bad if you adopt a positive attitude! Have fun with speech impediments, hit women, pick your big nose, then ask yourself: what have the Romans ever done for us? Brian of Nazareth has the answer, they say. And if not, ask the legendary six wise men from the west, Great Britain to be precise.

Jesus, still no one can compare to Monty Python. Jandino Asporaat tried to be funnier and came pretty goddamn close, but he will be stoned anyway. Other Pythons such as *The Holy Grail*, *The Meaning of Life* and the one in the Efteling are held in high regard too, but *Life of Brian* remains the personal favorite, i'm indoctrinated since childhood and not scared to admit that i've been confusing it with *History of the World: Part I* (1981, Mel Brooks) for a couple of decades. I'll be going to hell for that. JEHOVAH!



55. This Is Spinal Tap

(1984, Rob Reiner)

It's such a fine line between stupid and clever innit, this loudest rockumentary ever is clever. Somewhere between Iron Maiden and Nickelback lies the genius of Spinal Tap in dooby: David St. Hubbins, Nigel Tufnel, Derek Smalls and a sad bunch of tragically exploded drummers changed music forever with provocative album covers and hardly soldout tours. The film, presented by its bearded director, shows all the predicaments that are so common for true artists: small sandwiches and girlfriends squirming their way into management. It is still very relevant, with all talk these days about sexism. Right now, a sequel actually is in the works, can't wait to see the guys do #TapTok.

Lick My Love Pump and *Stonehenge* (where the demons dwell!), *Big Bottom* and *Hell Hole*, these are just a few of the incredible hits performed live in The Electric Banana, requiring stage props no one ever saw before. Five times louder, this one goes to 55.



54. The NeverEnding Story

(1984, Wolfgang Petersen)

The nothing is sweeping over the country; it's up to one motherless boy hiding in the school attic, to save Fantasia by finishing *The NeverEnding Story*. The importance of self-worth and imagination, the swamps of sadness, the humor in science and cynics, it's all represented by this magical world featuring Atreyu, Artax, Falcor and Gmork. Question remains after all these years, what name did Bastian yell out the window?

I haven't read properly since mandatory high school, but do feel certain empathy for those who prefer the book: the movie feels rushed here and there. Of course, i only realized this once i started analyzing too much and lost my childhood forever. To this day, i think we all need a luck dragon every now and then. Frontrunner for Best Wink.



53. Ascension

(2002, Karim Hussain)

In a post-apocalyptic setting without any action, three exhausted women are climbing stairs in a factory, finding corpses with their eyes gouged out. As incomprehensible as life itself, for dreamers it somehow makes sense. The Creator was murdered, common people became deities, children shouldn't be gods and other clearly vague descriptions form the backbone of a nightmarish walk up to the end of the world. Meanwhile, as if all the conflicts between sexes and generations weren't horrifying enough already, old suitcase bickers with young pregnancy, everyone thinks they know best. Pretentious it is, long live pretentious art directors. And then suddenly there is this Ladytron trance. Soothing for the chaotic mind, be surprised, be annoyed, go crazy with interpretation.



52. The Turin Horse

(*A torinói ló*, 2011, Béla Tarr & Ágnes Hranitzky)

Six stormy days in the isolated life of an old man and his daughter, the horse is just a Nietzschean starting point. There are subtle differences in behavior, such as speed of eating and amount of drinking, he is crafting while she is caring, but the two are on a path to completely silent darkness together. Halfway through, outside world appears for the first time, their word diarrhea mixed with politics and religion is overbearing. And so, the sadness is comfortable, there's perfect serenity in the candle burning out. Tarr's self-proclaimed final film is black & white philosophical contemplation on dying, with two potatoes and a pinch of salt. Get back to basics and fix your attention span.



51. Sucker Punch

(2011, Zack Snyder)

Sing me to sleep, sweet dreams. Scarily underrated erotic science fiction action drama superhero adventure *Sucker Punch* is feminism at its finest and remember, there's no nudity in this film, none. Like the strong girls in the film, seduction is being used as a diversion. Meanwhile, they develop power over the worlds they create, guided by five things needed: a map, fire, a knife, a key, a deep sacrifice. Oh and cheesy oneliners.

'let the pain go, let the hurt go, let the guilt go..'

A mental fight with hints of split personality gets visualized, turned into an adrenaline pumping, fun video game and best musical of the century. Emily Browning commands, special mention goes to Jena Malone. She still has two more movies coming up here.

next week, May 5th:
#50-41!

featuring:

- colored animals
- collective suicide
- depression and catharsis