

An exchange on Woody Allen's *Celebrity*

11 December 1998

To David Walsh:

I've enjoyed your reviews so far until I found out you like Woody Allen! Woody Allen?!?!? A little A nothing of a filmmaker! I'm so disappointed!

Keep up the good work on pieces such as the Kiarostami review.

Sincerely,

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David Walsh replies:

I'm not a dogmatist. I watch films and I draw conclusions. The history of the filmmaker is an important element in an evaluation, but it is *not the only* element. Otherwise, why even bother to go see a given film? I could stay at home and simply write a comment based on what I already know. In that case every new film would simply be a confirmation of my established opinions. Is that a serious way to develop knowledge?

Life has an impact on people; they change. They take steps forward, they take steps backward. Do limited people sometimes have interesting things to say? Is there no one in your life who sometimes surprises you? I'm not a Steven Spielberg admirer. On the contrary. But I felt there were very valuable aspects to *Schindler's List*.

I'm not in general a Woody Allen admirer. I liked aspects of *Celebrity*; I thought they were entirely legitimate. I thought the attack on him, by people who found the film's criticism striking too close for comfort, significant. Have you seen the film?

Kiarostami is obviously in a different category. But life and art are contradictory.

See:

Woody Allen strikes a nerve--good for him!

Celebrity, written and directed by Woody Allen

A review by David Walsh

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