

'Apocalypse' tops of 1979 in Moore's movie ratings

By TOM MOORE

At the end of each year, for some odd reason, movie critics make lists of the 10 best films of the year. I have been reading and arguing with various movie critics' 10-best lists for God knows how long. And, as a film reviewer for the *Tar Heel*, I have my first chance to engage in the trivial task.

Cinema

1979 was a smorgasbord for film-goers; easily the best year for films in the past decade. It would be easy to list the 20 best films of the year, but that would be against the rules of the game.

My 10-best list reflects my prejudices. There are no foreign films on my list. I like American films more than I do those foreign jobs (I'm not overly fond of having to read when I go to the movies).

Also, most of the films on my list deal with male-oriented topics. I'm not sure whether this is because of my maleness or because there still are few good films about women.

One final note before we get to our feature attraction: Some people may quarrel that a few of the films on my list were released in 1978. Well, that's true—they were released in 1978 in New York and Los Angeles and a few other big cities, but they didn't make it down to little ol' North Carolina until 1979.

And now, without further delay—Tom Moore's 10 Best Films Of 1979:

1. *Apocalypse Now*. Francis Coppola's Vietnam epic manages to convey the

ambivalence of war—the glory and the horror—at the same time. *Apocalypse* is one of the greatest American films ever made. Visually dazzling and with a perfect cast: Robert Duvall, Martin Sheen, Frederic Forrest, Dennis Hopper and Marlon Brando were all amazing in their performances.

But *Apocalypse* was surprisingly unappreciated by audiences. It even became chic to degrade the film for such things as its huge budget and because Brando was a bit overweight when it was made.

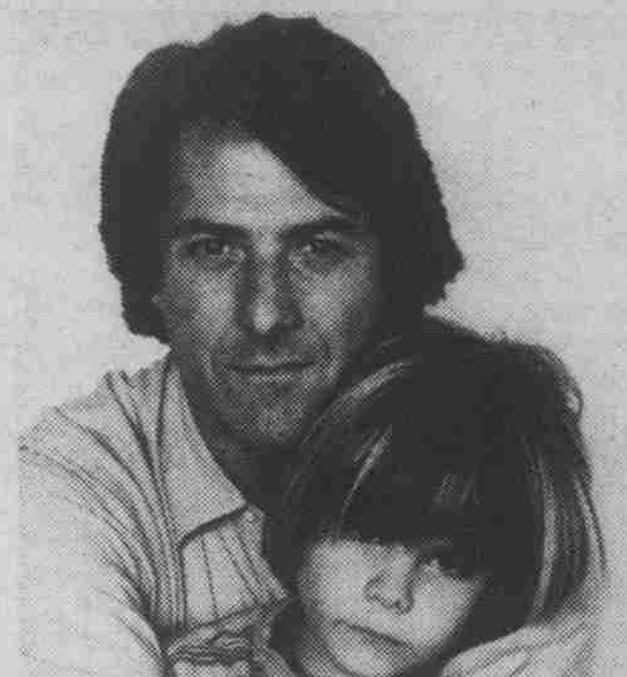
2. *Manhattan*. Woody Allen's complex masterpiece combines hilarious comedy, a scathing critique of our decadent times and a love song to New York City.

Amazingly, Allen was able to combine all this and more in one film without faltering. The question is whether Allen is a better director, actor or writer.

3. *Days of Heaven*. Terence Malick displays several weaknesses as a filmmaker in this film. The story in *Days of Heaven* is rather simple-minded and the characters are one-dimensional. Yet the haunting visual style and music overcome the film's weaknesses and make *Days of Heaven* unforgettable.

4. *The Deer Hunter*. The first part of the film set in the small steel-mill town was the most realistic portrayal I've ever seen on the screen of what "boys" do when they're out together. From there the film went downhill quite a bit, becoming fantasy. The much-criticized Russian roulette sequences, however, seem the perfect metaphor for the insanity of war and Vietnam.

5. *Breaking Away*. A fine little film about people whose lives are going nowhere. *Breaking Away* had the most



Some of the best

Brando and Duvall in Coppola's Vietnam epic *Apocalypse Now*; Hoffman and Henry in heartwarming *Kramer vs. Kramer*; Field as country girl in *Norma Rae*.

appealing characters of any of the 1979 films. Paul Dooley as the father gave the funniest performance of the year. If he doesn't get an Oscar, there is no justice in this world.

6. *Kramer vs. Kramer*. A tear-jerker that never becomes sappy sentimental. Brilliant work by Dustin Hoffman, Meryl Streep and writer-director Robert Benton manages to create a touching horror story of modern times that has no villains.

What I like most about *Kramer* is the kid, Justin Henry. He is cute and funny and also a little brat—a definite twist on the repulsively sweet youngsters that Hollywood usually gives us.

7. *Escape From Alcatraz*. Director Don Siegel is the master of suspense. He keeps you on the edge of your seat all through this one though you know exactly what is going to happen.

Clint Eastwood, who has the reputation of turning in tree-like performances, was amazingly good in this prison yarn.

8. *Halloween*. Director John Carpenter takes the most over-used cliché in horror

moves—the escaped psychopath on a killing rampage—and made the scariest film of the decade.

9. *Norma Rae*. The movie seems out of place in the '70s. *Norma Rae* has the innocent type of liberal plot that was popular 30 years ago in pre-McCarthy Hollywood. What makes *Norma Rae* great is Sally Field's incredible performance. Field plays the part of hick Norma Rae with incredible precision. She is able to get the Southern accent exactly right, a feat few actors can accomplish without coming off as hammy overdone. This alone should earn her the Academy Award for best actress.

10. *10*. It has the best slapstick of any film the decade except *Animal House*. And it has a few nice points to make about life. Unfortunately, *10* doesn't fuse its humor and its poignancy with complete success. But who cares, when you can look at Bo Derek for two hours?

Tom Moore is a staff writer for *The Daily Tar Heel*.

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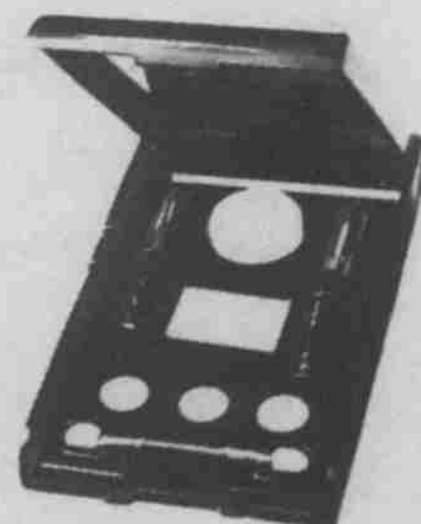
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