Best Movies of 2009 (that I've seen, anyway . . .)

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Hi Everybody.

Earlier this year, a friend who lived in Africa asked about what my movie picks for 2009 were. I know it's a little late, but I thought: What they hey. It's a movie blog. So here's my letter to her.

Hey Jen,

Sorry it's taken me so long to get back to you. It's been a crazy week (as all my weeks shall be until perhaps mid-June). The movie's name was An Education, and it is certainly one of my top 10 for 2009.

Before I name others, here's a link that I've found very helpful: http://www.pastemagazine.com/blogs/lists/2009/11/50-best-movies-of-the-decade-2000-2009.html [1]. I haven't seen all of the movies, but the ones I have seen, the only one I violently disagreed with was their #50 pick, The Squid and the Whale, whiny upper-middle-class screwed up, overeducated, self-centered white folks put their kids through hell in their messy divorce. Watching it was sort of like having some take a cheese grater to your knuckles. Avoid.

OK, **some of the best movies from 2010 according to me** (actually, I'm not going to confine myself to the top 10), in no particular order:

Moon: directed by Duncan Jones. One of the most original sci-fi movies in a while. Sam Rockwell plays a worker at a moon base who's been alone a little too long.

Star Trek: directed by J. J. Abrams. More mainstream, but one heck of a reboot. Not a perfect movie, but a lot of fun, as was...

Sherlock Holmes: directed by Guy Ritchie. More muscular, but still cerebral Sherlock (Robert Downey Jr.). Not much brain-food here, but a nice, wild ride.

District 9: directed by Neill Blomkamp. Really brutal, but also a fascinating story (towards the end it sort of degenerates into a first-person-shooter type video game, though). It's got a very clear racial subtext which might make it of especial interest to those in Africa. But not for the kids, or anyone who has problems with on-screen violence.

Fantastic Mr. Fox: directed by Wes Anderson. A quirky adaptation of a quirky author's (Roald Dahl) quirky book. Stop action animation, for kids, but we loved it as well.

Where the Wild Things Are: directed by Spike Jonze. Another children's film, but done with a lot of emotional sensitivity. Who knew monsters could be so emotionally complicated?

Coraline: directed by Henry Selick. Creepy, but still a good film. Nice effects, and a nice story.

Avatar: directed by James Cameron. See this on the big screen if you can, because the best thing about this is the artistic design and effects. The story is only meh. It's basically a rip-off of Pocohontas.

Up in the Air: directed by Jason Reitman. Very funny comedy with a bit of a dark message about travel. George Clooney does a great job.

Up: directed by Pete Docter, Bob Peterson. Not my favorite Pixar, but a great look, nice story, and I love Ed Asner's voice.

Yuki and Nina: directed by Hippolyte Giradot and Nobuhiro Suwa. Took Claire to see this at a film festival. We both really liked it. Two best friends separated by Yuki's mom's decision to move back to Japan after her divorce. Really gets into the girls' heads and the magical world they live in.

One other category -- **some movies that I should watch but haven't gotten to yet:**

Crazy Heart
The Road
Ponyo (it's Miyazaki, so it's gotta be good)
A Serious Man (Cohen Brothers, so it's gonna be good)
Public Enemies
Precious

There were tons of other movies I liked that we saw this year (The Forest, La Vie en Rose, The Wrestler) that weren't released in 2009, but this should be enough for you to start on. Not all of them are "serious" movies, but all of them are well-made and good to watch, in my humble opinion.

Peace,

Ted

Final note: I actually did get to see Ponyo. It's perhaps the most deliriously happy movie I've seen in my life. A must-see.

My wife has made me promise to do no productive work this week (I'm officially on a week's vacation), so I'll use some of that time to catch up with movie entries to the Movie Night Kit. That's not too productive, right?

Take care everyone.

Peace,

Ted

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Links:
[1] http://www.pastemagazine.com/blogs/lists/2009/11/50-best-movies-of-the-decade-2000-2009.html