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Subject: The Force Awakens (SPOILERS!!!!!!)  
Posted by [Sandman](#) on Thu, 17 Dec 2015 08:50:02 GMT  
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Lots of spoilers here, do NOT read if you haven't seen it and don't want it spoiled!

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So, I thought I'd comment on the movie on a more point-by-point basis. When the Phantom Menace was released, I was very excited and left the theater feeling good about it, but as time passed I slowly realized what a piece of junk it was.

So when going to the Force Awakens, I felt that it was important to stay as objective as possible, and if I enjoyed it, I would enjoy it not just because it was Star Wars, but because it was a well made movie.

So, some comments:

Practical effects! Abrams really delivers here. Tons and tons of special effects are practical in this movie. Sure, whenever they're flying around in the Millennium Falcon it's all CGI, but that's where CGI works.

And there are some CGI that was unneeded, like Maz and Snoke. They could have been people in makeup and costumes and it would have been more fitting. There are some scenes, especially towards the end, that are obvious green screens, but most of the settings are real and on location and obviously so.

The lead characters, Finn and Rey, do a pretty good job. While Rey being force-sensitive is a bit of a coincidence in the whole scheme of things, the original trilogy is also filled with similar unlikely coincidences, so I don't mind that.

Finn doesn't really add much to the movie or to the plot, and could have been left out entirely.

The plot is most of the time a cut'n'paste of the plot of ANH, sometimes subtly, sometimes in your face. At times you get the feeling of "Didn't we see exactly this" when the resistance (rebels) are seconds away of being shot to pieces by a world-destroying weapon and fighter pilots need to do a trench run and shot a specific target to blow it up. Or when a droid holds the map to find Luke Skywalker, stranded on a desert planet after its owner has been captured by the First Order (Empire), where it meets the one person that seems to be the key to once again defeat the Sith.

Kylo Ren, being the son of Han and Leia, first sounded cheesy, but it was actually quite well done. Him, being the son of force-sensitive Leia but having "too much of Vader" in him made a good connection to Luke and ANH. And while the actor playing Ren didn't feel "right" at all times, I think that was deliberate. He is young, he has been seduced by the dark side, he is conflicted and insecure, and the way it plays off him wanting to be as powerful as Vader is well done. And seeing how he is wounded in the end I predict we'll see a more powerful and more hateful version of him in movies to come.

So - the Force then. In the start of the movie, Kylo Ren stops a blaster shot in mid air. Not deflects it, stops it - meaning it is stuck "hovering". While I have no problem imagining that someone powerful in the force doing this, it felt a bit "show offy" so to speak, and felt a bit out of place.

And in the end of the movie we see Rey, recently having found out that she's force-sensitive, successfully fighting Kylo with a light saber after having broken out of containment using mind tricks. And yes, we saw Luke do the same with Vader in ESB without much training, but he was clumsy and unpolished, while Rey looks like she's been trained by a Jedi master. Even Finn puts up a good fight with a light saber. It just felt out of place.

So, Harrison Ford did a great job with Han, and it felt 100% like Han. Very good. Same with Chewie. Carrie Fisher, not so much. Leia is wooden, looks out of place and just doesn't cut it. Mark Hamill is just on-screen for about 30 seconds and has no lines, but he looks awesome.

While Han is central to most of the movies plot advancement, Leia and Luke aren't, which is good. I think the right choice is to keep these characters low-profile and let us follow new characters.

So set design. A lot of things are slightly updated, new storm trooper armour, new coloring of the Tie Fighters, the X-Wings are now styled as in the old Ralph McQuarrie designs. But most of it looks like a organic evolution and makes sense. When inside the First Order premises, the set design is very (\*very\*) similar to the Empire set design. It's a bit darker and maybe a bit more polished, but very similar, in a good way.

The resistance base bears a striking resemblance to the Yavin base, with lots of greenery, stone temple etc etc. Dirty and used machines and such.

There is exactly no politics in this movie - Yay! The opening crawl talks a bit about the republic and the new perils of the new first order.

Talking about the First Order, it is visually - at least in one scene - a lot like Nazi germany, visually. There are rows of storm troopers amidst red banners and a man speaking to them from a central podium with a huge red banner/flag behind him. This must have been deliberate of course, but it also feels a bit cheap to borrow the nazi connotations so obviously.

Also, while I like the entire "drop into the story" of TFA, where not much backstory is revealed, it seems a bit weird that the First Order managed to build a world-destroying weapon without the resistance knowing about it in the time between ROTJ and TFA.

But like I said, I like that we're not given a backstory to just about anything in the start of the movie. We're promptly thrust into the action. Who is Finn? Who is Rey? Don't matter, just roll with it. Great! We get a bit of a force-induced flashback of Rey but that's about it.

I also like the fact that the family bonds between Kylo and Han/Leia isn't kept as a reveal later on. We learn early that he is their son, before it would have been a "huge" reveal. Maybe we'll get another later (like Rey actually being Luke's daughter).

All in all - great movie!

--

Sandman

Subject: Re: The Force Awakens (SPOILERS!!!!!!)  
Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Thu, 17 Dec 2015 09:47:46 GMT  
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Originally posted by: C'Pi

On Thursday, December 17, 2015 at 4:50:05 PM UTC+8, Sandman wrote:

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- > All in all - great movie!
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> Sandman

All in all - ok. Not great, just ok.

Yes, the movie looks great but it has two major problems, well, one major problem, J.J. Abrams, who causes the two major problems. It's the same two problems that are in his Star Trek movies. Everything is rushed and everything feels like a repeat of what we have seen before. For Star Trek I never had a problem with these things, but for Star Wars I do. Will J.J. ever make a movie that is not just repeating someone else's ideas? Can he? I'm beginning to wonder.

I liked Fin. Loved Rey. Really have no complaints about the characters. Gives me hope for the future movies. Unless we just get a repeat of Luke - Yoda with Luke - Rey and then a repeat of the the bad guys trying to turn the good guy. Try to be original J.J.!!

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Subject: Re: The Force Awakens (SPOILERS!!!!!!)  
Posted by [Sandman](#) on Thu, 17 Dec 2015 12:36:24 GMT  
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In article <aa04ed27-3c1d-40f9-ac52-865950e7b669@googlegroups.com>, C'Pi wrote:

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> before. For Star Trek I never had a problem with these things, but  
> for Star Wars I do. Will J.J. ever make a movie that is not just  
> repeating someone else's ideas? Can he? I'm beginning to wonder.

I hear you, and I agree with you - but I think it's deliberate. Meaning, in order to win \*back\* the old fans, he had to go back to the roots, to what made those movies great. Could he have done it differently? Maybe, but not drastically differently. Remember, the train wreck that was the prequels was largely due to it being a completely different kind of story.

Star Wars have always been the little guy against the big guy, good vs. evil, the light and the dark side of the force. It's what captivated us 30+ years ago and it is what can bring Star Wars back to being Star Wars again.

The original trilogy had no great story, no unique way of telling it. It as a classic good vs. bad movie set in a visually stunning space scenario with awesome special effects and awesome music and some really interesting design choices that stood the test of time.

If Episode VII ever could have a chance, it had to build on what is Star Wars at the core.

If Ep7 would have been Luke, Leia and Han thirty years later in a "what happened then??" kind of setup, it would have been pretty underwhelming. We obviously need a conflict, we need our "good guys" to be on the good side of that conflict, we need the bad side to be overwhelmingly powerful.

That said, I think the parallels could have been toned down a bit without it having a negative effect. I.e. maybe the first run on the "Oscillator" was successful, but Finn had lied about that being the key to destroying it? So it was all in vein?



Perhaps we didn't need a trench run, and perhaps Jakku didn't have to be a Tatooine-like desert planet, nor maybe the droid needn't be on his own, looking for the right person. I don't mind that this is what we got, but I think some similarities could have been... less similar.

- > I liked Fin. Loved Rey. Really have no complaints about the
- > characters. Gives me hope for the future movies. Unless we just get
- > a repeat of Luke - Yoda with Luke - Rey and then a repeat of the the
- > bad guys trying to turn the good guy. Try to be original J.J.!!

Or don't - try to please the fans! Try to make a captivating movie using a formula that feels right, and be creative within that formula.

Kylo Ren is a good example. He is a Darth Maul, an unknown Sith lord, but with a twist. He is the son of Leia, naturally force sensitive and with a lot of "Vader" in him. It works organically and logically. He is conflicted, he's just a boy, and in the end, he makes a decision that cements his path going forward.

The next two movies will certainly focus more on Ren, and his possible redemption. On Luke's failure and \*his\* redemption.

Perhaps Snokes will try to win over Rey, maybe not. Ten already tried to lure her over and she resisted, so another similar scene might not work story-wise.

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Sandman

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Subject: Re: The Force Awakens (SPOILERS!!!!!!)  
Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Fri, 18 Dec 2015 13:30:24 GMT  
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Originally posted by: C'Pi

It's not the heroes journey premise that bugs me. That, at least is expected. It's all the little things copied what we had already seen in the movies.. you listed many of them. There were just so many it took me out of the movie. When they showed the giant death star planet, I could help but think to myself, 'really, are you shitting me?' There was just so much of that. These are the things that keep me from calling it a great movie. It's why I feel it's just ok. That and the pace of the movies. Everything was always frantic and rushed. The original movies weren't like that. That's just J.J.'s style and I could have done without it and I think it was the major reason I did not feel like I was watching a Star Wars movie. No matter what the flaws of the PT, I still felt like I was in the Star Wars universe. A huge diverse universe. Not one were everything seems to be happening in the same place. Destroy a cluster of planets and now the entire Republic is destroyed? And it can all be seen from whatever place the first order and resistance is located? Seeing nothing really new shrank the Star Wars universe.. Not that I blame J.J. for that. That's

Disney and their rush to get these movies out. One more year of planning and developing would have help I think. Maybe then they would have realized that the stormtrooper with whatever that was battling Fin with a lightsaber was just dumb. And Han has never fired Chewie's gun? Ever? And Han is surprised by it? After decades together? Dumb.

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Subject: Re: The Force Awakens (SPOILERS!!!!!!)  
Posted by [Sandman](#) on Fri, 18 Dec 2015 14:53:48 GMT  
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In article <63b588d9-044b-4bbd-b8cf-9cd64b1eef04@googlegroups.com>, C'Pi wrote:

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> planet, I could help but think to myself, 'really, are you shitting  
> me?' There was just so much of that.

Fair enough, no argument there. I will agree that the introduction of the new "death star planet", can't remember its name, would have been more ok if it wasn't also destroyed moments later.

It worked in ANH because it was so awesome in itself, but it's been done now. Rather, use the weapon, build up its importance and looming danger over the trilogy and culminate with its destruction.

In ANH, seeing how they didn't know whether they would make a sequel or not, the destruction of the death star spelled the end of the enemy, since as far as the viewer knew, the vast majority of the enemy personell would have been on that death star.

In TFA, there is no such need for closure, so if they really needed to keep the DSIII or whatever you'd call it, keep for a while longer.

Or even better, since the plot of the movie deals with finding Luke, create the sense of urgency out of the resistance finding him before the first order blows up the planet he is on? Perhaps Kylo was successful in getting the location form Rey etc etc.

> These are the things that keep me from calling it a great movie.  
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> weren't like that. That's just J.J.'s style and I could have done  
> without it and I think it was the major reason I did not feel like I  
> was watching a Star Wars movie.

I agree with this, with a slower pace the classic Star Wars feeling would have been even stronger. Throw in a couple of wipe transitions and you'd been there completely.

That said, this is less of a thing about Abrams, and more a thing about how movies are made in 2015 vs how movies were made in 1977. slow-paced dialogues and scenes are rare, especially in sci-fi/fantasy movies.

- > No matter what the flaws of the PT, I still felt like I was in the
- > Star Wars universe.

I didn't. Since the acting was so bad, due to the script being so atrocious, there were no dialogues.

And since 75% of all scenes are filmed on a 10 meter catwalk in a green screen room, no scene can contain any urgency. We can't have Han run after some five storm troopers because there is no place to run.

When Anakin tells Windu that Palpatine is the sith lord, the rest of the dialogue can only be carried out while slowly pacing down the 10 meter catwalk (in a scene that is a huge hangar). No sense of "Shit, we need to do something now!"

Contrast that with scenes in the OT, where the millenium falcon breaking down results in Han scurrying around all over the ship while the empire is shooting at them.

Or when they finally see an opening to run to the MF in the DS docking bay, everyone is sprinting to the ship and Luke sees Kenobi and Vader.

Only places in the PT where the characters could actually move at some form of urgency was on Tatooine (which was rarely used) and in specialized action scenes like the droid factor or Kenobi/Anakin duel. Otherwise, all motion was in scenes that were 99%-100% CGI

I could go on forever, of course.

- > A huge diverse universe. Not one were everything
- > seems to be happening in the same place.

That was one of my biggest gripes with the PT, that in spite of there supposedly being this huge galaxy available, we still ended up on Tatooine. Granted, in TFA, we have another very similar desert planet, but still - no locales in TFA have been seen before, even if they may appear similar-looking. It's sort of a bummer they didn't use this to show something more alien-looking, of course, but still.

- > Destroy a cluster of planets and now the entire Republic is

- > destroyed? And it can all be seen from whatever place the first
- > order and resistance is located?

More or less - they destroyed some 5-7 planets, all with one shot, all in plain sight from each other, apparently. That was a bit odd.

- > Seeing nothing really new shrank the Star Wars universe.

Only, everything you saw were new places, though. Even though they looked similar to some of the old places.

- > Not that I blame J.J. for that. That's Disney and their rush to get
- > these movies out. One more year of planning and developing would
- > have help I think. Maybe then they would have realized that the
- > stormtrooper with whatever that was battling Fin with a lightsaber
- > was just dumb. And Han has never fired Chewie's gun? Ever? And Han
- > is surprised by it? After decades together? Dumb.

Agreed on both accounts.

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Sandman

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Subject: Re: The Force Awakens (SPOILERS!!!!!!)  
Posted by [Your Name](#) on Fri, 18 Dec 2015 21:43:22 GMT  
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In article <63b588d9-044b-4bbd-b8cf-9cd64b1eef04@googlegroups.com>, C'Pi <jas221@yahoo.com> wrote:

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Pretty much every review I se is saying this new movie is basically just a re-hash of the original move / Original trilogy with Jar Jar Abrams' own silly fank-wank ideas and Political Correctness idiocy thrown in. Just another in the ever-growing list of Hollyweird reboot fad crap (even if it is a slightly better fit than most of them). :-(

Of course it was almost certainly going to be a disappointment. Even ignoring the massive expectancy from fans and the over-hyping it got, it was simply stupid to try and extend the Saga in the first place and even stupider to do it without George Lucas' involvement.

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Subject: Re: The Force Awakens (SPOILERS!!!!!!)  
Posted by [Sandman](#) on Fri, 18 Dec 2015 23:03:17 GMT  
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In article <191220151043223421%YourName@YourISP.com>, Your Name wrote:

> In article <63b588d9-044b-4bbd-b8cf-9cd64b1eef04@googlegroups.com>,

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> place and even stupider to do it without George Lucas' involvement.

It's George Lucas that got us the prequel train wreck, thank god he wasn't  
around to ruin this movie as well.

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Sandman

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Subject: Re: The Force Awakens (SPOILERS!!!!!!)

Posted by [Your Name](#) on Fri, 18 Dec 2015 23:53:09 GMT

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In article <sandman-936356abf58287b7711fd2815c6127fa@individual.net>,  
Sandman <mr@sandman.net> wrote:

> In article <191220151043223421%YourName@YourISP.com>, Your Name wrote:

>> In article <63b588d9-044b-4bbd-b8cf-9cd64b1eef04@googlegroups.com>,

>>> C'Pi:

>>> It's not the heroes journey premise that bugs me. That, at least  
>>> is expected. It's all the little things copied what we had already  
>>> seen in the movies. you listed many of them. There were just so  
>>> many it took me out of the movie. When they showed the giant death  
>>> star planet, I could help but think to myself, 'really, are you  
>>> shitting me?' There was just so much of that. These are the things  
>>> that keep me from calling it a great movie. It's why I feel it's  
>>> just ok. That and the pace of the movies. Everything was always  
>>> frantic and rushed. The original movies weren't like that. That's  
>>> just J.J.'s style and I could have done without it and I think it  
>>> was the major reason I did not feel like I was watching a Star  
>>> Wars movie. No matter what the flaws of the PT, I still felt like  
>>> I was in the Star Wars universe. A huge diverse universe. Not  
>>> one were everything seems to be happening in the same place.  
>>> Destroy a cluster of planets and now the entire Republic is  
>>> destroyed? And it can all be seen from whatever place the first  
>>> order and resistance is located? Seeing nothing really new shrank  
>>> the Star Wars universe. Not that I blame J.J. for that. That's



>>> Disney and their rush to get these movies out. One more year of  
>>> planning and developing would have help I think. Maybe then they  
>>> would have realized that the stormtrooper with whatever that was  
>>> battling Fin with a lightsaber was just dumb. And Han has never  
>>> fired Chewie's gun? Ever? And Han is surprised by it? After  
>>> decades together? Dumb.

>>  
>> Pretty much every review I se is saying this new movie is basically  
>> just a re-hash of the original move / Original trilogy with Jar Jar  
>> Abrams' own silly fank-wank ideas and Political Correctness idiocy  
>> thrown in. Just another in the ever-growing list of Hollyweird  
>> reboot fad crap (even if it is a slightly better fit than most of  
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Jar Jar Abrams has managed to ruin the franchise all by himself ...  
which was virtually a foregone conclusion since he's already ruined  
everything else he's got his sticky talentless mitts on. :-(

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Subject: Re: The Force Awakens (SPOILERS!!!!!!)  
Posted by [Sandman](#) on Sat, 19 Dec 2015 09:55:44 GMT  
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In article <191220151253094269%YourName@YourISP.com>, Your Name wrote:

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>> Sandman:

>> It's George Lucas that got us the prequel train wreck, thank god  
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>

> Jar Jar Abrams has managed to ruin the franchise all by himself ...

Like I said, that was done with the prequels idiocy and George Lucas. Stop trying to fool yourself.

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> everything else he's got his sticky talentless mitts on. :-(

Your mother?

--

Sandman