

Star Wars, Why the Last Episode Let us Down

Monica Straniero (January 06, 2020)



The last episode of the famed series started by George Lucas in 1977 is not an easy film to absorb. You leave the theatre visually fulfilled but with the impression that director J.J. Abrams doesn't have a clear notion of where the line between good and evil stands.

For Star Wars newbies, watching the latest episode can be a satisfying experience. However, long-standing fans, aficionados, the young jedis who have been following the adventures of the Skywalker family since they were little, leave the film feeling like they've been played. The wait is over but a feeling of confusion persists in those who feel like they've been deceived, though they don't know how.

Shot on film like the two previous ones, this episode can boast impeccable visual qualities and photography. However, the plot has many problems. It's a circus of contradictions and paradoxes



running towards the final battle scene amidst time jumps and the various what ifs that stem from them. The film doesn't provide many surprises: anything that's somewhat coherent or at least not completely absurd is fairly predictable. It's essentially flawed. Before you even have the time to understand what exactly isn't working, the next mistake arrives.

The movie is a universe of new and useless characters that appear and disappear, like meteors. Rey, a young woman sensible to the Force and trained by Luke Skywalker, continues on her journey dragging Finn and Poe Dameron with her, while the last surviving members of the Resistance take on the First Order. Everyone runs. It's the fastest Resistance in film history.

Poe (Oscar Isaac), a lukewarm character from the start, verbally attacks Rey (Daisy Ridley) because she decides to remain with Princess Leia, interpreted by the late star of the franchise Carrie Fisher, to pursue her Jedi training instead of staying with him and Finn (John Boyega). It feels like whoever wrote Poe's dialogs has never seen an episode of the saga. And as if that wasn't enough, everything he and Finn do, they do it badly or else it's useless - a desperate cry goes out across the galaxies: Harrison Ford/Han Solo where are you?

Not to mention the revenant Emperor Palpatine (Ian McDiarmid) and especially Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) Han Solo's (and Leia's) parricidal son. After his first appearance in the seventh episode, 'The Force Awakens,' renowned Italian cartoonist Leo Ortolani nicknamed him "il fregnetta," which he remained in all three films. You end up feeling for him though because, in the end, he is also the victim of a system, of a tradition of Skywalker men who have often proved themselves unfit to be jedi.

All this leads up to a painful ending, which sees Rey emancipate herself from the old generation, and seemingly hang up her lightsabers once and for all.

"Star Wars: the Rise of Skywalker," maybe in part due to the acquisition of Lucasfilm by Disney, feels like a "Mary Poppins" gone wrong. If we were to imagine Palpatine sing a song, the Stormtroopers improvise a dance, and a series of choreographed battles taking place across the galaxies it would all make sense, for both new fans as well as for those who started 43 years ago.

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