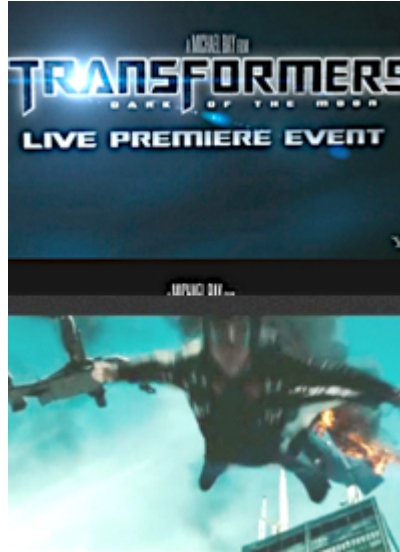




Transformers: Dark of the Moon Review

In the third installment of the Transformers series, *Dark of the Moon* (also known as *Transformers 3*) focuses on the Autobots' mission to search for a Cybertronian spacecraft that has been hidden. The Autobots must reach the spacecraft before the Decepticons do in order to learn of its secrets. While the movie contains a strong moral, as well as some patriotic themes, the absurd dialogue, failed attempts at humor, and intense violence may keep many potential viewers at home.



While there are a number of storylines taking place, the chief plot of *Transformers 3* is that Sam Witwicky (Shia LeBeouf) and the Autobots team up to fight the Decepticons in their quest to gain control of the Autobots' spaceship, which crashed on the moon. The spaceship holds secrets that would allow the Decepticons to take control over Earth, and ones that would help the Autobots defeat the Decepticons.

The film begins with a number of storylines taking place simultaneously. Sam struggles to find employment, though he graduated from an Ivy League college, and fears his parents will learn that he is unemployed. Eventually, he manages to find a job for a rather strange individual named Bruce (John Malkovich) after his girlfriend's supervisor puts in a good word for him. Though Sam managed to save the Earth twice already, he struggles to find purpose through the day-to-day routine of his life.

At the same time, the Autobots have undertaken a number of humanitarian missions, including eliminating a nuclear reactor in the Middle East and solving an alien Decepticon problem at Chernobyl. In the process, they learn that the infamous 1960s race to the moon was not merely for bragging rights but over the crash landing of Autobot Sentinel Prime's spaceship, which took place on the dark side of the moon. They also learn that the Decepticons were victorious in a war on their home planet and that Sentinel Prime had escaped with the necessary tools for the salvation of the Autobots, but crashed on the moon before he reached them.

Meanwhile, the Decepticons have constructed a plan to take over the world once again. Sam learns of these plans through an encounter with an Asian man named Wang, who provides him with the paper evidence of the plot. Wang is later killed by a Decepticon for his betrayal.

Recognizing the overwhelming nature of the mission with which he is faced, Sam reunites with Optimus Prime, the Autobot leader, to conquer the Decepticons before they destroy Earth, and discovers a number of secrets and enemies along the way.

The film ultimately becomes a race to save the world, and for that reason, is quite thrilling.



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Likewise, Sam enlists the aid of a group of Marines in an effort to defeat the Decepticons, which certainly draws upon the pride and patriotism of moviegoers. The film contains both patriotic and spiritual elements, including prayer and the offering of refuge within a cathedral. It also portrays a strong opposition to tyranny, communism, and radical Islam, all of which are positive elements within the film.

Unfortunately, the movie also falls into some clichéd Hollywood traps, such as the inclusion of an evil big Businessman who will do whatever it takes to make money, even if it involves the betrayal of mankind.

Likewise, Sam's parents are trite versions of antagonistic movie parents who cannot seem to find a good thing to say about their child.

Also, the film's conspiratorial portrayal of the race to the moon is one in which movie audiences are all too familiar. Everything Americans knew about the space race was a cover-up for the mission by a few insiders to reach the Autobot spacecraft. Been there, done that!

The absence of Megan Fox from this installment of Transformers somehow downplays any of the sexual elements. Though her replacement of sorts, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, is certainly attractive, she does not possess the same promiscuity that Fox seems to virtually secrete. However, far too much attention is drawn to Carly's figure, as she is scantily clad through most of the film, and a number of close-ups reveal more than some would like. Throughout the film, jokes are made regarding Carly's seductiveness, and one particular scene involving licorice is needlessly sexual.

Another disturbing element in the movie is the notion that Carly and Sam made the decision to live with one another, but still have not braved the ever-daunting terrain of saying "I love you."

Sam's mother is a bit too comfortable with her own sexuality, as well as her son's, and takes no issue with providing for her son a book on the female orgasm.

Much of the comedy in the film seems to fall flat. For example, the montage of Sam's failed job interviews is unrealistic and over the top. Also, Sam's collection of tiny Transformers is a clear attempt at levity but comes off as more annoying than anything else.

On a more positive note, however, Sam's parents, clearly written in the film to provide some comic relief (which they barely do), do emphasize the beauty of marriage and encourage Sam to make his relationship with Carly work.

Likewise, the film does highlight sacrifice and courage. It also encourages the importance of finding happiness in the day-to-day routines, as portrayed by Carly's concern over Sam's constant pursuit for an adrenaline rush.

There also seems to be an emphasis on the importance of individual liberties and freedom versus the will of the majority.

Playing the character of Wang is Ken Jeong, best known for his role in *Hangover*. In *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*, viewers encounter the same sort of energy and humor Jeong brought to the screen in *Hangover*.

The action and special effects within the film may be enough keep some moviegoers entertained, though much of it involves utter violence.

It seems worth mentioning that Buzz Aldrin makes a surprise appearance in the film. Also, the film



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touches some on politics, but whether it has a particular leaning is confusing at times, given contradictory references and portrayals made throughout the movie.

Overall, *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* is an entertaining film, particularly for teenagers and young adults, but parents would likely be perturbed by some of the film's content. The film suffers in some areas though it is redeemed in others, but absolutely fails as a family film.



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