

John Smith

Mr. Barham

AH English I: 4th Period

22 Feb. 2016

X-Men: Days of Future Past is an X-ceptional Movie

The seventh addition to the *X-Men* series, *Days of Future Past* directed by Bryan Singer, thrills *X-Men* fans everywhere with a mind-boggling plot that has them contemplating the film for days. This movie follows Wolverine from a war in the apocalyptic future back in time to the '70s in an attempt to save the entire mutant race from a mass genocide. This is even more difficult than it sounds, since he has to unite the young drug addicted Professor X with his arch nemesis, Magneto, who is locked up in the Pentagon, so they can stop Mystique from killing the antagonist, Dr. Bolivar Trask, and accidentally causing the genocide of mutants. Despite the overly complicated plot, *X-Men: Days of Future Past* is an overall success due to its amazing director, stunning cast, and phenomenal characters.

The largest fault in *X-Men: Days of Future Past* is the overly complicated plot. The main contributor to this is the confusing storyline, which switches between the near apocalyptic future and the 1970's. *New York Times* critic A.O. Scott voices the opinion of many viewers by comparing the "time-travel pretzel" to old *Star Trek* episodes, for so much effort is required to understand it. Although the concept of time travel to prevent a genocide sounds interesting, it creates too many subplots that form an intricate web, which most people find too complicated for a movie. The contraption-like movie not only manages to confuse its viewers but also the characters in it, so the plot must be explained several times (Nayman). The presence of irrelevant scenes only adds to the muddled mess. One of these is when Magneto lifts up a football stadium

and carries it to the White House in a fit of rage. This scene was unnecessary, and it looks faulty on the parts of Magneto and director Bryan Singer (Scott). The already confusing storyline combined with unnecessary scenes like this form an overly complicated plot, which is one of the only problems with *X-Men: Days of Future Past*.

Although Singer is partially responsible for the mind-boggling plot, without his amazing directing, this film wouldn't be half as successful as it is. The main reason is that he managed everything so smoothly. For instance, he "successfully juggles the massive cast, as well as the labyrinthine narrative complications required to get them all together" (Suderman). Singer also made the transition between Matthew Vaughn's directing of *X-Men: First Class* back to his own directing smooth by combining Vaughn's more comical mood with his own dramatic "pow", which was seen in earlier films of the series (Travers). Since Singer already directed *X-Men* movies, he was already familiar with the material and cast, so he handled everything with comfort and ease (Nayman). Another reason Singer's directing is successful is that he makes the movie more relatable. One way he does so is by showing the faults in larger-than-life characters. *Washington Times* critic Peter Suderman points out how Singer has an understanding of the flawed characters and makes them relatable by displaying their problems, which molds them into more tragic and realistic characters. Singer also includes real world history into the plot, so viewers have a sense of connection to the outlandish time travel story. Some examples of this are when Mystique travels to Saigon to save a group of mutants and when Magneto's suspected assassination of President John F. Kennedy, which are both based on actual events (Chang 88). Singer's smooth managing and more realistic characters and history show that he is an amazing director for *X-Men: Days of Future Past*.

To go along with Singer's amazing directing, the cast for this movie is absolutely stunning. One of the impressive actors of *Days of Future Past* is Michael Fassbender, who joined the series in *First Class* as a young Magneto. *Telegram and Gazette* critic David Rooney compliments Fassbender's acting by stating how it is full of charm and composure. Fassbender also does an excellent job at playing the character convincingly, so the aging from himself into Ian McKellen, who plays the older Magneto, is believable (Nayman). Another magnificent actor is Evan Peters as Quicksilver; acclaimed critic Justin Chang points out how, in every scene, especially the one where he wrecks the Pentagon's kitchen, Peters has the spotlight (88). Due to this, Quicksilver quickly became a crowd favorite. Peters is unforgettable as one of the newest additions to the X-Men crew (Travers). Although all of "The actors tackle the roles without winking or condescension," Hugh Jackman stole the show as Wolverine (Scott). Jackman fits the role of Wolverine so well that it is difficult to picture one without the other, and the comic creators have even recognized this and redrawn Wolverine to resemble Jackman (Suderman). Rooney declares this to be one of Jackman's best performances as Wolverine because of his humor and subtle but deep emotions. One of those perfectly captured emotions is confusion created by the complicated plot and unusual level-headedness required for Wolverine's role (Chang 88). Fassbender's, Peters', and Jackman's acting in *X-Men: Days of Future Past* prove how stunning of a cast the movie had, which is one of the main factors that made it a success.

In addition to the cast and directing, the characters of *Days of Future Past* are phenomenal. The characters that stole the show were mainly the new ones that brought new life to the series. The one that quickly owned everyone's attention was Quicksilver. Quicksilver is an impish teenager with super speed, who assists Wolverine in breaking Magneto out of the Pentagon and who brings a comical mood to the film (Rooney). The most notable scene he is in

is the Magneto breakout when Quicksilver takes the spotlight and wrecks the Pentagon's kitchen by moving faster than speeding bullets, so he can save his teammates (Nayman). On the other side of the war, the antagonist Dr. Bolivar Trask, played by Peter Dinklage, also entertains the audiences. The name and personality of Trask are both marvelous for the latest and greatest *X-Men* villain (Scott). Dinklage himself even appears to enjoy this new character, so the viewers' amusement only intensifies (Travers). Along with these more entertaining characters, emotional relationships also resurface and make the movie more dramatic. One of these is between Wolverine and Major Bill Stryker, which was featured in *X2: X-Men United*. In *Days of Future Past*, Wolverine relives his painful memories from his encounter in *X2* when he sees Stryker in the '70s; this flash-forward leaves him incapacitated and almost jeopardizes his mission (Rooney). This scene created a downcast mood for the characters and viewers alike. The relationship between Mystique, Professor X, and Magneto has similar effects but for a different reason; the different views of the three sit at the heart of the plot and continuously threaten to tear apart the lifelong friendships. One example of this is when Professor X attempts to win over Mystique in an airport by communicating to her through other people there, but her independence wins but only barely, which shows how their beliefs pull them apart (Rooney). A second example is how complicated the emotions are that bond Magneto and Professor X; some of which are deception, friendship, resentment, and love seen throughout the entire series (Chang 88). From new and entertaining to old and emotional, the characters of *X-Men: Days of Future Past* are phenomenal and truly complete the film.

Like all movies, *X-Men: Days of Future Past* has its flaws. The major flaw for this film is the overly complicated plot. Even though the plot is extremely confusing, the director, cast, and characters are all close to perfect and make it an X-ceptional movie.

Works Cited

Chang, Justin C. "X-cellent Return to Form." *Variety* 19 May 2014: 87-88. Print.

Nayman, Adam. "X-Men: Skin Deep, But Somehow Satisfying." *The Globe and Mail*. Globe and Mail, 23 May 2014. Web. 14 Jan. 2016.

Rooney, David. "X-Men: *Days of Future Past* a Good Reason for Mutant Pride." *Telegram & Gazette* [Worcester, MA] 23 May 2014: Lifestyle. *Infotrac Newsstand*. Web. 14 Jan. 2016.

Scott, A.O. "Saving Their Future, in Bell-Bottoms." *The New York Times*. New York Times, 22 May 2014. Web. 14 Jan. 2016.

Suderman, Peter. "X-Men Seem Both Real and Super in *Future Past*." *The Washington Times*. Washington Times, 22 May 2014. Web. 14 Jan. 2016.

Travers, Peter. "X-Men: *Days of Future Past* Movie Review." *Rolling Stone*. Rolling Stone, 22 May 2014. Web. 14 Jan. 2016.