

Film Review: Rousing ‘Avengers: Age of Ultron’ Hits Modern Society’s Central Nervous System

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CHICAGO – *Look.* We all know sequels usually suck. And blockbuster films often get panned for overprioritizing special effects at the expense of a well-written story and character development. Even when a story in a big-budget film is redeeming, it’s practically impossible not to shoot holes through it.

Taking three years as a follow up to 2012’s “The Avengers,” “Avengers: Age of *James Spader*” – I mean, “Avengers: Age of Ultron” – kicks off 2015’s summer blockbuster season in true Hollywood style. Regardless of what he said or she said, you know you’re very likely going to see it in theatres or eventually at home. A perfect film it is not (as most aren’t), but an enjoyable film it definitely is for 141 minutes that certainly don’t feel too long.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

This sequel features a rich story that’s much deeper than surface level, memorable characters that all play a purpose and need to be there, humor appropriately dotted in to break up the action and, oh yeah, *the action*. I mention the action last because you’re going into a film like this fully expecting a CGI eyegasm. Anyone (moviegoer or critic) who says “Avengers: Age of Ultron” doesn’t deliver on that is just wrong. Sure, we all have opinions and we’re entitled to them, but this one’s simply a fact without room for debate.

The film starts out strong with a fight that reminds us who the Avengers are: Tony Stark/Iron Man, Bruce Banner/Hulk, Steve Rogers/Captain America, Natasha Romanoff/Black Widow, Clint Barton/Hawkeye and Thor. All the while, the sequence simultaneously uses humor (“language”! – you’ll get it when you see it) and shows off each superhero’s skills. And watch for Stan Lee’s famous cameo, of course – this time as a drunk.



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It doesn’t let up as we’re introduced to a host of powerful new allies and adversaries. James Spader as Ultron takes center stage from the moment he’s accidentally AI amalgamated to his plans for – *dun dun dun!* – yes, global annihilation. The current star of NBC’s hit drama “The Blacklist,” Spader delivers some of the best voice work (villainous or otherwise) in recent memory and the evil lone rogue Ultron affords this story an omnipresent and nearly omnipotent antagonist.

Ultron cleverly plays on current realities and fears and his timing couldn’t be more prescient. In a day and age of so much technology, the concept of artificial intelligence taking matters into its own evil hands certainly isn’t a new one. Though we saw it long before, AI was prominently put on the map with Skynet from Cyberdyne Systems. As you likely recall, Skynet was a self-aware synthetic intelligence that forced Earth into a nuclear winter starting with 1984’s “The Terminator”.

“Avengers: Age of Ultron” stars James Spader, Paul Bettany, Robert Downey Jr., Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Chris Evans, Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner, Samuel L. Jackson, Don Cheadle, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Elizabeth Olsen, Cobie Smulders, Anthony Mackie and Hayley Atwell from writer and director Joss Whedon based on the comic book by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. The film is rated “PG-13” for intense sequences of sci-fi action, violence and destruction and for some suggestive comments. It has a running time of 141 minutes and opened on May 1, 2015.

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James Spader as Ultron in “Avengers: Age of Ultron”.
Image credit: Walt Disney Studios, Marvel Studios

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