

GRAMMATICA

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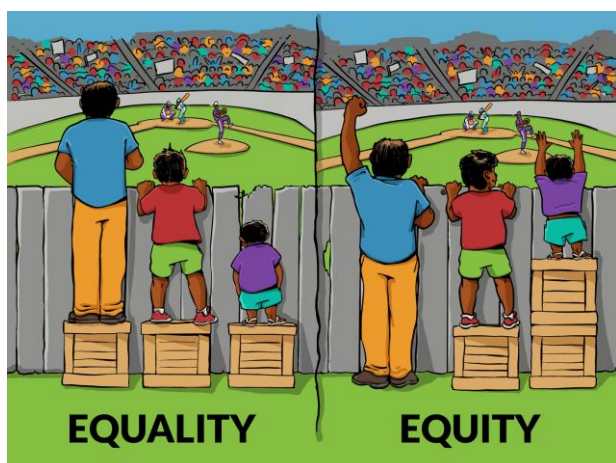
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Review of *Solo*

From what has been heard from critics and the public, *Solo* seems to be a bit of a failed experiment. At the moment, it's looking like it might suffer the same fate as the prequel movies. You may have heard that it is suffering the enormous humiliation of being the least profitable *Star Wars* movie, grossing just 160 million in its opening weekend with its estimated final profit around 200-400 million. That might not seem too bad, but when compared to *The Force Awakens*' gross of 529 million - in just its opening weekend, no less - and the fact every *Star Wars* movie has made at least a billion dollars in total gross, adjusted for inflation, you can see the problem *Solo* has on its hands.

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Why Social Justice and Equity in Western Civilisation is Detrimental and Inherently Flawed

In today's Western societies, the words social justice and equity are often used, often by the left in the continuing Western phenomena of the pursuit of equality. Often, we are told that social justice and equity (instead of blanket equality of opportunity) are the most beneficial in achieving full equality of outcome. However, I believe that this latest pursuit of equality is inherently flawed in that it is unable to account for some key facts and factors.

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Isle of Dogs Review – Riley Landfear

There was a time when Wes Anderson's style was new. A time when it was fresh, and exciting. While he didn't really find his stride until *The Royal Tenenbaums*, for years afterwards what he was doing onscreen was something nobody had really ever done. He seemed to be projecting himself onscreen for everyone to see: deeply flawed and endlessly pedantic, but also with an enormous heart. Indeed, the typical Anderson hero tends to mimic Anderson himself as a director: they spend their whole time trying to exert control over the environment around them, even as their situation spirals out of control. That's consistent with what we can see of him from his films – his need for total control over every frame and colour choice remains one of the defining aspects of his work.

And the interesting thing about this style was that it never seemed to grow old: every time we began to tire, he did something new to keep us entertained. *The Royal Tenenbaums* was lovely, but had problems with pace and characterisation; those



were two of the things that he got most right in *The Life Aquatic* – unfortunately, though, he forgot about a *lot* of other things. Then came *The Darjeeling Limited*, which was the first (and only) time that watching a film by the American auteur has been an exercise in anything other than pure joy. Thankfully, he realised that audiences the world over were tiring of his style, and did something so utterly unexpected that his next film became one of his best-known. He experimented with stop-motion, and, somehow, it worked. *Moonrise Kingdom* and *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, after said stop-motion exercise, both allowed him to return to his normal form, perhaps even better than usual.

And then came *Isle of Dogs*, which is the first time Anderson has not

attempted to self-correct after a film, and the first time his distinctive visual style seems stale and old. The only problems in *The Grand Budapest Hotel* lay in its incredibly fast pace and excess of characters; *Isle of Dogs* only exacerbates this, with a pace so fast that some shots are blurred in the process, and about 40 different dogs – none of which you really need to know the personalities of, but all of which are onscreen at some point, detracting from what should be a young boy's (excessively bizarre) coming-of-age story. Not to mention that by now, we know enough about Anderson's style to understand his key shots – and rather than making us laugh, in *Isle of Dogs* they just seem gimmicky – as if Anderson is trying to imitate himself at his best.

Don't get me wrong, they're still visually audacious, but they're also somehow lacking.

He also seems to know that audiences are tiring of his style, and overcompensates hugely through his "homages" to Japanese culture. The sumo wrestlers, the 2-minute sushi preparation, the fact that Yoko Ono voices a character named Yoko Ono – everything a foreign audience knows about Japan is in here in some capacity, often needlessly and usually to disguise a lack of an actual plot. It's also slightly offensive, unfortunately – I don't think it was particularly wise to have the Japanese characters speak without subtitles, which makes them come across as caricatures. Also not a good choice: the Japanese population is saved, in the end, by an

American exchange student (do I really need to explain this one?).

Even though I can't endorse this film – it might be his worst yet – there are still a number of things to enjoy about *Isle of Dogs*, first and foremost of which is Alexandre Desplat's extraordinary taiko-drum score. Desplat has frequently collaborated with Anderson in the past (indeed, they produced one of the best scores of the decade in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*), and he, unlike Anderson, is still functioning at his peak. Intense and complex: *Isle of Dogs*' soundtrack will undoubtedly be one of the best of the year, and is by far the best part of the film. I don't know that the same can be said for the film's song choices, which are often oddly timed, but the fact remains that Desplat,

who just won an Oscar for his work on *The Shape of Water*, has created yet another great set of music. Aside from that, a shoutout must go to the voice actors, many of whom shine through despite almost everyone having basically zero screen time. Cranston, Norton, Balaban, Abraham... all of the acting is solid or better.

When recommending this to other people, the other thing of note here is that it's pretty fun. It is goofy, joyful, conclusive and generally one of the best times I've had in the cinema in a long time. Unfortunately, though, there are just too many things here that are out of sync or poorly misjudged for me to love it as much as I do Anderson's other work.

5.5/10

Review of SOLO – Jaemin Lee

(Just a note, this article contains some spoilers, so if you haven't seen the film, I'd advise you not to read this past the opening paragraph)

From a logical point of view, the movie might well have been doomed from the start. It had the unfortunate luck of being released at a time when multiple other box-office favourites, including *Avengers: Infinity War*, *The Incredibles 2* and the *Jurassic World* sequel, are being released. More importantly, however, people are saying that the movie is just a bland collection of fan service, with the idea that another actor could play the role of Han Solo a miscalculation – in other words, it wasn't going to go

down well among the fanbase even before it was released. The production of the movie was also troubled, mostly due to the firing of the original directors. They were then replaced, forcing the movie to have 80% of its scenes re-shot and an extra few million dollars added to its budget. With the release of *Solo*, it seems as if the franchise is slowly prioritizing quantity over quality (a fact which people should have seen coming from the moment Disney bought the franchise).

However, despite all of this, *Solo* is, at heart, not a horrible movie. It's entertaining enough and is full of references and action sequences, but it suffers from a few problems in storyline and execution. It's not great, but there's enough going on for it to convince you that you haven't wasted your time. Mostly saving itself via its high-octane action sequences (which, truth be told, are usually great – an escape from a black hole and a train heist are the standouts), the story is nonetheless a bit ill-



suiting to the *Star Wars* brand. It's more like a heist movie, which would probably better suit the *Ocean's* or *Mission Impossible* franchise.

The whole basic plot revolves around an incredibly valuable substance called 'coaxium', a 'hyperfuel' which multiple crime syndicates want to control. Han gets caught between them, and joins a group of smugglers who have taken up a job to steal some. If they succeed, a crime syndicate will pay them, but if they fail, they will be assassinated. And that's pretty much the whole setup of the movie. It's not a bad idea, exactly, but it seems dreadfully out of place in a *Star Wars* movie, a franchise which is typically filled with lightsabre duels and space dogfights. There is not one lightsabre, use of the Force, or reference to the Jedi in the two hours this film fills. Instead, the movie is purely about Han Solo himself. The character made it clear in the original *Star Wars* that he has no belief in the Force, but for many fans the departure of the norms of the franchise was a standout flaw.



Han himself seems slightly unlike the smuggler we know and love. Yes, the charm and skills are there, but something's missing. Of course it isn't the fault of the actor, Alden Ehrenreich – as we all know, it's almost impossible to match Harrison Ford. The other major role is the excellent Emilia Clarke, who plays, Qi'Ra, Han's former girlfriend. Some of the other key characters include a group of vicious space pirates, new to the *Star Wars* universe, and some decidedly more familiar faces. The supporting characters are generally either unpleasant, confusing, or one-dimensional – not at all like those we have grown to love, and more closely

resembling some of George Lucas' hideous prequel creations. The cast generally does a good job, but that doesn't excuse the fact that this is a movie about Han Solo without Harrison Ford, Billy Dee Williams, Peter Mayhew or any of the other actors who helped to make the character so iconic.

The main problem is the end of the movie, where everything crashes down and leaves you confused and vaguely dissatisfied. *Solo* builds itself up well for its first two acts, but it all crashes and burns in the climax, with an ending involving an uncountable number of double-crosses. Not only does this leave the audience confused, it's a waste of *Solo's* fundamental potential. The first two acts seemed to play into generic heist-movie tropes, but the last act destroys this, almost destroying all of the careful build-up done by the directors. Let's just say that the ending makes the whole movie crash down pretty much completely, and doesn't make any logical sense at all. There's a 'Big Reveal' at the end, too, where we see a classic character come back, but that was pretty awful. *Solo*

could be twice as good if the end scene was wrapped up tightly and without any lose ends.

Solo isn't great in any sense of the word, but it does have high points and the movie is moderately good until the horrendous ending. It saves itself in a couple ways, sure (most noticeably, being the 8th-most-expensive film ever made, which means the CGI here is stunning), but



overall it's one of the worse *Star Wars* movies. It's watchable enough and

generally entertaining, but it doesn't add anything much to the franchise.

Rating: 6.7 out of 10

Why Social Justice and Equity in Western Civilisation is Detrimental and Inherently Flawed – William Chen

(Continued from page 1) ...

Firstly, we must distinguish between 2 types of equality: equality of outcome and equality of opportunity. Social justice has invariably been supportive of the former, equality of outcome, a reflection of the socialist ideas of its advocates. In line with the prevailing ideas of academics and courses in the humanities, it argues that equality of opportunity is not achievable because of a historical oppression against minorities that continues to persist, even if the

discriminatory laws are removed, because society is still filled with casual discrimination, casual bias, unconscious bias and a dominant white male patriarchy. Ironically, this places people into categories and leads to deep divisions in society, which then leads to tribalism (whose effects are best seen in the polarised United States or in *Lord of the Flies*) and the assuming of either malevolence, unearned privilege (leading to feelings of envy, which



are once again detrimental to cohesion in a society) or helplessness of a person based on the groups they belong to. When group 'justice' is used against a person, it over-rides a key value of Western civilisation that many civilisations were slow to develop – only the guilty person is punished, rather than their family or their ethnic group. Ironically, for all the branding of people who disagree with social justice as fascists, this judgement of people based on group membership rather than behaviour and individual actions is the real demonstration of fascism; as we all know, the Nazis (who were fascist) often used Sippenhaft (group-punishment) and discriminated against people based on their group membership. Additionally, this unjust discrimination then leads not only to actual racists on the alternative right and neo-Nazis who take advantage of the anger, but also for right-wing populists to do so as well, which would actually be detrimental to the left, the advocates of social justice.

However, the real, and most fundamental issue (from an analytical view rather than a moral view) of social justice and the resulting push for 'equity' is the fact it ignores a key factor, the factor of individual choice. Due to the comparatively greater liberty of Western civilisation; the fact that the barriers against those not in the ruling classes to achieve their ambitions have been removed; and the economic freedom from a capitalist society, those living under Western civilisation are living in a time where individual choices and individual decisions will mainly, if not entirely, in some cases, influence how high

you go. The group-justice approach of the left (the main advocates of social justice) assumes that, even in a free and prosperous society like ours, both the 'oppressors' and the 'oppressed' are pawns of their class who run along virtual train tracks in an almost Medieval belief of destiny that is quite ironic when the left advertises itself as an atheist, scientific group. A common argument countering this is the cases of children raised by single parents or children in broken families. Yes, these do exist (15% in Australia), but according to the Brookings Institute, the three ways to get out of poverty in the United States (and therefore any Western nation, since the economic and political system is quite similar) are:

1. Finish high school
2. Do not have babies before marriage
3. Get a job

Obviously, all these are things that can be done if people actually make the right choices. Nothing constrains you from following these three tips. Free public education exists in the Western world, and the impetus therefore falls on the mentally able to perform to the best of their abilities in school. Indeed, 75% of Australians will finish high school. Sexual restraint is actually something rather simple – and even if two people feel the urge to engage in such activity, condoms are readily available in the Western world and costs very little (a male condom will cost between \$0.50 to \$1.00). On the last tip, if you are determined enough, look constantly, and learn from failed applications,

you will eventually get one. The unemployment rate in Australia is only 5.6%, meaning that nearly everyone will get a job. There is not a society that actively urges non-ruling class people to drop-out of high school, reproduce before marriage or not get a job, and consequently, only 2% of Americans who follow this will still be poor, the vast majority entering the middle class or even higher. Clearly then, individual choices are an important part in choosing your career path and your path to a higher social status, and the fact that the social justice in its current form of 'equity' fails to address this is a major flaw.

Before I address the other issues, consider the commonly used cartoon picture comparing equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. As you can see, it assumes that the Low are destined to remain in the low. This of course has been disproven by the above. Additionally, the reality would be that these three people would be building their own boxes. The fact that they are given these boxes implies that the state/society is still being institutionally racist/discriminatory. Obviously, this is not true, as evidenced by the various anti-racism laws and the removal of policies such as White Australia and Jim Crow.

The next biggest issue is the fact that social justice, in the form of equity and affirmative action, penalise people who have actually demonstrated the ability to be in the high positions subject to affirmative action, whilst incompetent people who got into these

positions via social justice will be unable to compete effectively. Firstly, if individual choices are the main influence in how far we get, group identity and race should not be the mechanism that allows someone to receive over 200 points on their SAT score (when it was still out of 1600), as has happened in the case of African Americans. In one case, an Asian American (who made the right choices by being studious), despite living in a bad neighbourhood, got 1510 and failed to enter a prestigious educational institution, while an African-American from a similarly bad neighbourhood who got significantly (over 200 marks) below that got into that said educational institution. Often cited is the fact that Asian Americans and other high-performing groups are wealthy enough to afford tutoring. The reality is that in many cases, the parents save their money, cutting corners wherever possible and investing it on that said tutoring in the hope one child may rise up to succeed in entering to a higher class. There are many examples of the children of taxi drivers, laundry workers or small business owners who relied on the materiel sacrifice of their parents in the hope that one might just be able to succeed in climbing up. Again, this is a matter of individual choices, in this case, sacrificing materiel comfort to help your child succeed and not live through the hardship you lived through.

Often, the term 'white privilege' is used to justify social justice. It turns out that, for instance, Britain, only ~30% of whites are university educated, while many other minorities have significantly higher

percentages, for instance, over 60 or 70 percent in the case of those of Subcontinent descent and those of East Asian descent. This has also been true in the United States. Clearly then, white privilege is not something that exists. What we need is a culture of self-responsibility, not, social justice in its current form which gives rise to low expectations and a culture of blaming others for your own problems.

Additionally, this will lead to the 'Imposter Effect' on minority members of prestigious positions and target minority members being questioned by others about their competence. Not only that, statistics show that many members of groups targeted by educational affirmative action in the US will drop out of the institution because they lack the actual capability to compete in that competitive environment. Clearly then, social justice in its current form is a detriment to all concerned; the 'oppressor' group and the 'oppressed' ones (note the apostrophes because terms such as white privilege are false). Furthermore, this constant hammering of the current 'privilege' narrative leads to discrimination by low expectations against minorities, preventing them from actually having the ability to rise out of their problems by their own means. This leads to a cycle of poverty that cannot be broken, a detrimental effect for both the state (since more people will require welfare) and members of these minorities.

Another example of numbers over competence is gender quotas and 'equal pay'.

Often cited by social justice advocates is oppression of women by males. Notwithstanding the silence on actual female oppression in foreign cultures such as Islam, it is a fact, as confirmed by studies, that males are extremely competitive and more likely to be workaholic, compared to females who *prefer* a more 'balanced' life style – in other words, spending more time with family. Additionally, the gender wage gap is often measured by dividing median full-time female wage over median full-time male wage. This is inaccurate for a number of reasons:

- Males prefer higher-paying degrees on average. These are often degrees that prepare for a job that involves 'things' – reflective of a general preference among males for 'things' rather than 'people'. Since a job that involves 'things' is more easily measured than a job that involves 'people' in terms of measuring success, then it makes sense for a job that involves 'things' to be more well-paid. Additionally, dangerous jobs are typically well-paid, and males are more likely to pick these jobs than females are.
- Females are the opposite. On average, they prefer jobs that involve empathy and 'people'. This is not a social construct but the result of females having more connections on the frontal lobe of the brain, translating to greater capacity for empathy and nurturing. In modern Western society,

NO-ONE is forcing females to take these jobs, it is a CHOICE.

- Therefore, calculating the wage gap by this formula is erroneous since males will prefer fields that are higher-paid than females.

Even if we take the ‘equal work, equal pay’ argument, we have to account for work dedication and different qualifications from university. If males are on average more workaholic, then it makes more sense for more males to be receiving OT than females receiving OT, and probably males receiving higher OT. This then of course leads to higher average wage among males. Additionally, different people choose different degrees and qualifications, even in the same field. These are all factors that lead to different wages among people. And I will note: there is not a patriarchy that makes males on average more dedicated or making females prefer these ‘people’ jobs. It is choices that we, as individuals, make. Furthermore, until their 30s, university-educated females, in the same job, receive a higher wage than their male counterparts. Afterwards, the reverse is true, which can be explained by the fact that this is the age in which many have children, and as a general trend, the majority of females want a balanced life style between work and looking after the family. When all factors are considered, the constantly cited ~25% statistic in the West narrows down dramatically. For instance, the US gender ‘pay gap’ narrows down to only 6%, according to a feminist organisation.

Furthermore, in a capitalist economic system where performance is crucial, if females were really part of a system of discrimination, would it not make sense for more females to be hired to reduce costs, if the wage gap actually existed? But males are still employed, so clearly then, this is a matter of individual of choices on the part of the individual.

The fact that males tend to be more work-driven also results in them having a higher chance of promotion, which would only make sense, since it would be sensible to promote someone who demonstrates dedication to their job. Therefore, just as in these other cases that supposedly require ‘social justice’, all of these ‘inequities’ go down to individual choices of individual people. Yet, since it is fashionable in mainstream circles to cry against female under-representation in executive positions or to complain of a glass ceiling, we have gender quotas. Studies have already shown that, in the Scandinavian countries, where this is prevalent, company performance has either stagnated or declined.

My final objection to social justice is the name of the word itself. Justice means: just behaviour or treatment. So, what then is the definition of just? The definition is: based on or behaving according to what is morally right and fair. I am sure that we can all agree that it is morally bad to give something to someone who hasn’t deserved it and deprive someone who actually has. Similarly, I am sure that we can all agree that justice is one of those words that ‘does not need a modifier’, to quote Ben

Shapiro. When we add 'social', as in a social group, we move into that dangerous realm of group justice, which has led to the deaths of millions. It was Hitler and mainstream Germany's envy of the wealth of the Jews and the perceived group 'injustice' that led to the deaths of 6 million in the concentration camps. It was the hatred and envy of productive small-scale farmers who had been serfs only a few decades before that led to the deaths of the Kulaks, which numbered between 700,000 to 6 million, the same number of Jews gassed by the Nazis. These killings were all motivated by group 'justice' and envy of the productive, the same philosophy that guides the social 'justice' advocates of today. Group justice is also what leads to the concentration camps in North Korea, where, for the political crimes of one, the entire family is sent to the camps. It is therefore absolutely reprehensible that we even think about going down the same road of philosophy that has led to the unjust deaths of so many.



For these reasons, I have a major objection to today's current mainstream, faith-based dogma of social justice and 'equity'. Clearly, it

ignores the fact that in the West, the individual choices of the individual counts significantly; the fact that it places merit and work under 'diversity'; and the fact that group justice, the result of social justice, has already, in the recent past, led to the deaths of millions. Therefore, as a society, we cannot continue accepting the social justice narrative of oppressors and oppressed and the need for compensation for the 'oppressed', because today in the West, the only people who are oppressed are those oppressed by the social justice advocates, with their penalisation of merit and hard work; discrimination through low expectations; and oppression of society through the forcing through of the 'oppressed and oppressors' narrative in the humanities, starting from high school and culminating in the indoctrination of university students in humanities courses. What we need is a culture of self-responsibility, where we must place responsibility on our own actions and choices, rather than blaming it on others or imaginary phantom ideas such as 'white male privilege'. We cannot continue this societal and cultural suicide where we lower standards and penalise achievement to counter these imaginary societal problems. No other society or culture commits this societal suicide, and in the face of the very real possibility that certain non-Western countries may rise and eclipse overtake us, we cannot continue with the ideology that is social justice, an ideology that is flawed, lowers standards and divides our society.

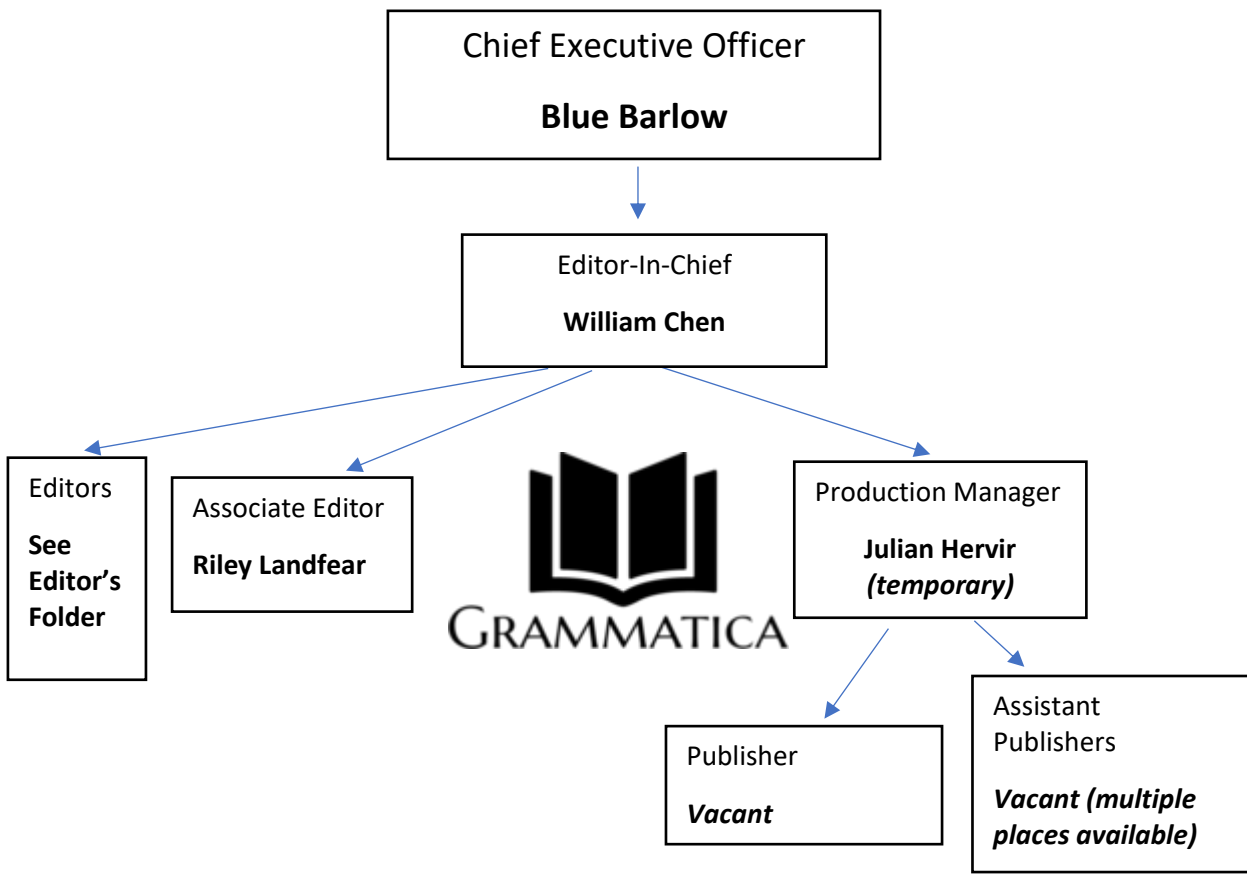
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The Death of Star Wars – Riley Landfear

Star Wars is dying.

Not a calm death, either. The galaxy far, far away is hurtling into the void at lightspeed, and there's nothing anyone can do to stop it. The problem is, to put it frankly, greed. This can be traced from the moment Disney acquired George Lucas' brainchild for \$4 billion, which signalled one of the greatest, saddest changes to have occurred to entertainment since Michael Bay. No longer would the world's one man thought up be what was projected onscreen for audiences to see. Instead, we'd get whatever the entertainment machine over at Disney's headquarters thought would generate the most money.

In 1977, something happened, and it will never happen again. Before *Star Wars*, there were no mega-budget, crowd-pleasing epics. George Lucas thought something up, a combination of homages to Akira Kurosawa, Joseph Campbell story tropes and subtle references to Vietnam, and then blasted it directly on to screens. Nobody thought it would

take off. Almost no theatres booked it. But then it captured the hearts of every watching person on the planet, and almost singlehandedly spawned the entertainment machine we all know today. Then, to cement *Star Wars*' status as the film that made the blockbuster, Lucas produced a sequel that was an absolute masterwork. You know the one I'm talking about.

Return of the Jedi followed. But then, in 1983, Lucas realised what he had created. *Jedi* was far and away the worst of the three he'd made, and interest was plummeting. So he and his imagination went away for 16 years. Until, well... we all know what happened in 1999, and it was the first nail in the coffin of *Star Wars*. The hideously awful

first two prequels (and the mildly average third one which everyone hates by association) should have killed *Star Wars* for good. They should have stopped it from becoming one of the many dead franchises it helped to create.

But, miraculously, it survived. And it survived so well that 2015's entry into the franchise, after a 10-year break, became the third highest-grossing film of all time. It was also, to the surprise of everyone (given that Disney and its well-meaning band of producers were micro-managing every aspect of the film), quite good. Oh, and then there was another movie the next year. And then another one the next year. Don't forget 2018's entry, which takes all the mystery making *Star Wars*'



best character great and reveals it in nauseating, over-the-top detail. In case you missed it, we have the ninth linear episode, and eleventh 'Star Wars story' coming up next year. And possibly another one in 2020, which, as a side note, has thankfully been put on hold after *Solo* happened.

That's not to mention the three-movie contract that Rian Johnson signed onto, after his *The Last Jedi* became the most critically-acclaimed entry into the series since *Empire*. Or the ones that the showrunners behind *Game of Thrones* are producing.

Do you see my point? *Star Wars* is so iconic because it's so light, because it's a

treat when it comes along only once or twice every decade. By making so many films, the executives over at Disney are good-naturedly, unknowingly suffocating the franchise. I can feel George Lucas, who's been completely cut out, sadly shaking his head, and watching everything he's built crumbling.

Already audiences have noted a sense of 'Star Wars fatigue.' *Solo* might be the first in the franchise to lose money. Professional critics and audiences alike took a dislike to it, making it the worst-reviewed entry since *Clones*. People around the world have stopped truly caring about *Star Wars*, about seeing these movies,

and that will kill *Star Wars*' brand. We have seen it happen with the books, which nobody reads. We have seen it happen with the TV shows, which began losing money quite a while back. And soon it will happen with the movies.

There's no more sense of wonder to these movies, only dull exposition and fan service. The world has realised that, and it has stopped caring. If Disney makes all the right moves and stops production on everything except *Episode IX*, *Star Wars* may survive. But for now, my message is this: rest in peace, *Star Wars*. 1977-2018.

Why Bernie Sanders actually won – Oliver Brindley

Not really, he lost fair and square to Crooked Hillary. But the fact still remains that the Electoral College, winner-takes-all-by-state electoral system of the US goes a long way to explaining the slightly...off...results of the 2016 election. Donald Trump lost the popular vote by 65,853,625 votes (48.0%) for the Democrats to 62,985,106 votes

(45.9%) for the Republicans. This is the fifth time this has happened in US history. Thus Trump lost the popular vote by nearly 3 million, but won 306 electors – 56% of them. The Democrats, in contrast, won only 44% of the electors. How can an electoral system reflect the wishes of the people this badly? The answer lies in

the compromises made by the original Thirteen Colonies upon the formation of the United States, which set up the Electoral College system, which is my bone of contention with the American system. The Electoral College system effectively nullifies the popular vote as a political force for half the American states, vastly favours



smaller states, and effectively makes a Democrat voter in Georgia or a Republican voter in California a nonentity.

The first thing about the Electoral College system is that the popular vote doesn't actually directly count towards presidential elections – the votes of the electors do. Each state has a certain number of electors based on population, and *their* votes are what counts towards the election. In 25 states, there are no requirements for the electors to vote according to the popular vote – electors who don't are called 'faithless electors,' and they recently resurfaced in force in the 2016 election. Six electors

voted against Clinton – 3 for Colin Powell and 1 for Faith Spotted Eagle, both in Washington, one for Bernie Sanders in Hawaii, and one for Trump in Maine (although this was subsequently invalidated). Two electors voted against Trump, both in Texas – one for Ron Paul and one for John Kasich. Four further electors resigned rather than follow the state's vote. It's rather ironic that a country that considers itself the arsenal of democracy has such an oligarchic voting system. However, the undemocratic nature of the system is by no means its only problem.

There is a lower limit of three electors for a state –

no matter how small it is, a state must have at least three electors. There are four states with three electors: Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota, and this means they have undue power in the system. Take Wyoming and California – Wyoming with three electors has one per 195 000 people; California with 55 has one per approximately 700 000 people. As all four of the three-electror states voted for Trump, the innate bias of this system convincingly favoured the Republicans. There is also inequality on the larger side of the system too – you can win an election with only eleven states: California, Texas,

New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina and New Jersey. Thus the mathematical minimum for winning an election (50% in these 11 states) is a miniscule 28% of the popular vote.

The aforementioned eleven-state victory method shows another glaring problem with the Electoral College system – the winner-takes-all system. In every state, the party that gains the majority of the popular vote (usually) takes *every single elector in that state*. This means that if you're a Republican voter in California (five million) or a Democrat voter in Georgia (1.8 million), your vote effectively didn't count. Zoom into the county map in states that seem very Republican or very Democrat and you get a very split picture. Take Texas, for example. All the major cities except for Fort Worth convincingly voted

Democrat, as did most of the south and west of the state. Trump won 52.2% of the popular vote in Texas – and got all but two of their 38 electors. This is blatantly unfair to the 47.8% of voters who did not vote for Trump, as their votes were effectively annulled. Likewise in California, most of the north and east of the state voted Republican, but once again their vote was annulled by the winner-takes-all system, with Clinton winning 61.5% of the popular vote but getting all 55 of California's electors – more than a quarter of what it takes to win the election as a whole (270 electors). This means that not only can you win an entire state by winning a very slim majority, but also renders your vote against the majority in a non-swing state practically worthless.

And that is why the American electoral system is a complete shambles. It's

very undemocratic, weighed against both larger states and smaller states in different areas, and renders millions of votes null. This shaky system is a result of compromises made in the early days of the US between Southern landowners (of which George Washington was one) and northern liberals. The effects of these unfair compromises have echoed through US history. To take the median of elections by elector votes (subtracting unopposed elections), that of James Madison in 1808, won 70% of electors but only 64% of the popular vote. While this isn't exactly a gap on the same scale as Trump's in the 2016 election, it's a sure sign that the American system needs to change. Perhaps taking away the winner-takes-all method would be a good start, and making it proportional instead – maybe a third party will get a look in for once.

Splatoon 2 Octo Expansion Review – Will Woods

Well it's finally here: Splatoon 2 Octo Expansion, the first paid DLC for Splatoon 2. Nintendo has been associating with DLC a lot more ever since the Switch came out and so far it's all been legitimately good DLC that supplied enough bang for its buck. Octo expansion is no different, offering something like 80 unique challenge levels and enough lore to make Skyrim quiver. Sales pitch aside, what do I think of this DLC? Let's find out.

This game, being in the same engine as Splatoon 2 (obviously), manages to have a surprisingly different feel to its presentation. You see, Octo expansion follows the story of your character, an Octoling of all things (You know, the race we massacred in the main campaign? The one that Inklings have had literal race wars against? More on that later.), as they find themselves trapped in an underground series of test chambers. Meeting the captain from Splatoon 1, you team up and try to escape. This means that this game has a much darker and mechanical/robotic feel to its appearance that sets it apart from the main game and looks frankly incredible. It reuses a lot of assets in levels, to be sure, but where it counts there have been no sacrifices and the neon, nineties tech feel is executed incredibly. The music is equally cared for and boy does it show. The tracks added easily match up to the tough competition from the main game, dare I say surpassing it. I still slightly prefer the squid sisters' music over off the hook though. Probably because I played the first game.



But I'm sure you're all wondering how good the actual new challenge levels are. Not only are they fun and easy to pick up and play or binge, they are surprisingly diverse. Some challenges just involve killing enemies but some will require you to roll an 8-ball to the goal or snipe at explosive balloons. Diversity is further improved by most challenges allowing a variety of weapons that offer different difficulties or play styles depending on the challenge. If you want to know more about Splatoon 2's core mechanics you can see my review of the main game on

the *Grammatica* website (www.grammaticahome.weebly.com), but know that it's funky fresh for the whole journey. Before I delve into spoilers I implore anyone reading that is even slightly interested to buy this DLC and play through it without spoilers. I can assure you that it's more than worth your time and your money.

////////// SPOILERS START HERE //////////

For my first time I will be discussing the spoilers of a game I review. I normally try to avoid this but most of the dlc's plot is late game and worth discussing and this review would be pretty short without reviewing the story. As you work through the challenges you eventually find four "things" which are put together by the telephone robot thing, that has been guiding you to find them, into a blender. The robot tries to kill you only for the main character from Splatoon 1's story, Agent 3, to save you from death. After fighting your way up through the facility you eventually reach the surface (not before fighting a brainwashed Agent 3). Upon reaching the surface you have a final climactic battle with the robot phone who turns out to be a crazy AI built by a human like 10,000 years ago before humans were wiped out who now tries to take down Inkopolis with a massive ink laser protruding from a gigantic greek sculpture. Needless to say the ending is pretty nuts (and the final boss music is one of my favorite tracks ever) but it actually seems to take a surprising amount from Portal of all things. Let's make a list:

1. MC is forced to progress through "test chambers" in order to reach some vague end goal prize.
2. The AI that leads you into this turns out to be the main antagonist and the "prize" is actually a death trap.
3. There is a sequence of more difficult levels before the final boss that involve you fighting through the inside of the facility where you aren't meant to be.
4. The final battle involves a very unconventional fighting method where MC must sabotage some massive attack under timed pressure.

I'm not trying to call the story out on anything I just think it's interesting how much they can manage to include and still feel so different in presentation. Plus, to be honest, similarities to Portal are only going to make a game better in my eyes.

////////// SPOILERS END HERE //////////

To conclude, Splatoon 2: Octo Expansion is DLC done right. Chock full of content and noticeably different to the main game in both style and story. If you've been with grammatica for a while you might remember that I gave the main game a very high score. Well this is no different. I give this expansion a solid 9/10.

PS: Finally being able to play as an Octoling in multiplayer might just be Nintendo's smartest decision since Jump Man.