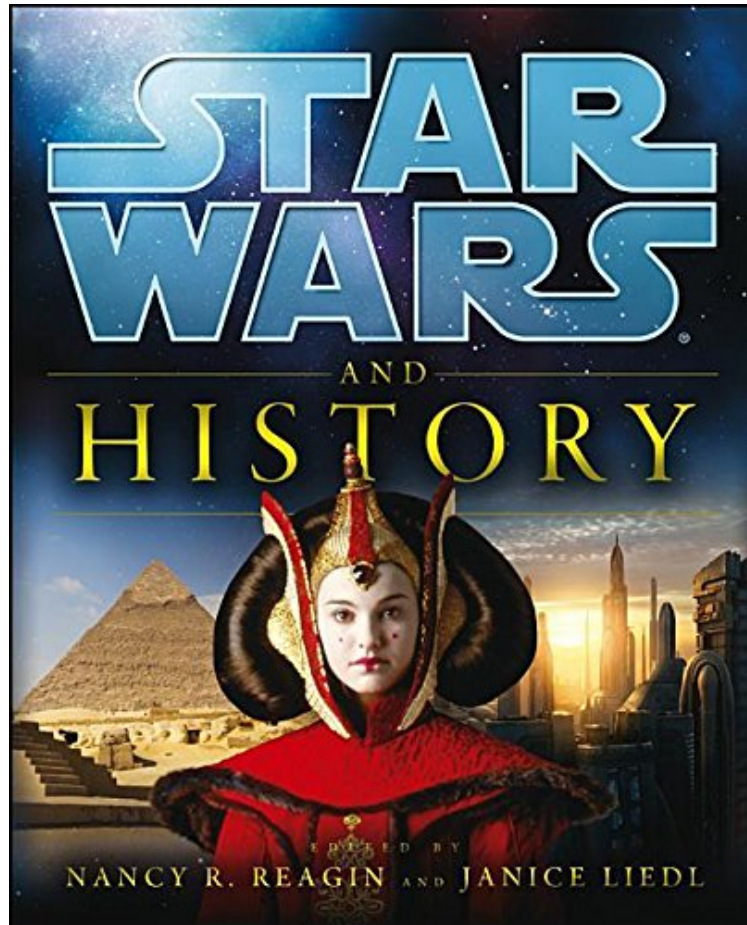


Star Wars and History

Lucasfilm

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Lucasfilm : Star Wars and History before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Star Wars and History:

25 of 26 people found the following review helpful. where history and Star Wars overlap By ArnoldI eagerly anticipated this book, being both a Star Wars fan and a scholar of politics. I've always felt there was a lot of potential for scholarship about the historical/political influences on Star Wars. Upon reading the book, I find myself coming away with mixed feelings. THE GOOD I suspect the book was aimed towards younger audiences or readers with only a passing familiarity with history. In some ways, this book is a great way to encourage wider interest in history. The authors universally convey their passion for history and placing Star Wars side by side with real history shows how exciting reality can be. If George Lucas wants to encourage education, I think this book will go a long way. One thing I really appreciate about the book is that the authors are clearly fans of the Star Wars movies. They refer to characters, events, and aliens with ease and no hint of a patronizing tone. There's no attempt to explain the basics of Star Wars to readers. Some authors even refer to characters from the EU and the Clone Wars TV series, such as Ashoka Tano. At

the least, the book doesn't waste time or space introducing the saga. The book is organized by topic, not by chronology or Star Wars movies. So authors write about insurgencies, cities, corporations, etc. Organizing the material this way allows for more focused comparisons between Star Wars and history. THE BAD Where I felt the book fell short was in analyzing those historical influences and whether and how they influenced Star Wars. There are three strains of analysis that would have made the book more interesting. First, most of the authors seem satisfied simply showing a correlation between history and Star Wars. In other words, there was an insurgency in Vietnam and an insurgency in the Original Trilogy, this is how insurgencies work, and presto! The authors generally don't take the next step and analyze the differences between how political phenomena are portrayed in Star Wars as opposed to the real world. Does Star Wars get it right? What do those differences mean? Second, there's relatively little discussion of whether and when history actually influenced Lucas' scripts for Star Wars. Some authors mention the obvious cases, such as Lucas drawing on the model of the Viet Cong for the Ewoks, but by and large the authors don't actually try to make a case that these historical events actually helped shape the Star Wars saga. For that, check out *The Secret History of Star Wars*. Finally, I think the authors should have challenged common moralistic or overly simplistic interpretations of history. Fortunately, the history isn't "dumbed down", but in some chapters there is little discussion of alternative interpretations of historical motives. For example, the author writing about insurgencies claims that insurgents fight because they believe in their cause and have moral claims. However, the flies in the face of much of the political science literature. Incorporating a bit of this debate might have thrown an interesting light on the Rebellion for instance.

CHAPTERS Here is a chapter-by-chapter breakdown of the book:

- 1) **Rebellions** The chapter draws some neat parallels between the Rebel alliance and resistance movements in history. However, this is the chapter I think would have benefitted most from more discussion of alternative perspectives on Rebellion. A big remaining question I have is whether the Star Wars Rebellion's tactics are realistic. We never see the Rebels attack non-military targets, such as power generators, railroads, etc (even in the EU, the targets are almost always military). Is the Star Wars Rebellion sanitized?
- 2) **Femme Fatales** This is a fun chapter about women in resistance movements. Definitely for fans of Leia or Padme.
- 3) **Monastic Warriors** This chapter provides interesting historical analogues for the Jedi. The comparisons between the Knights Templar and Jedi were eerie. However, there's no indication as to whether Lucas actually modeled the Jedi after the Knights Templar.
- 4) **Civil War** I felt like some of the comparisons in this chapter were a stretch. That's not all the author's fault - the politics behind the Clone Wars are pretty murky. However, it was fun to see Dooku compared to John C. Calhoun.
- 5) **Dictatorship** This is probably the central chapter, just as the rise and fall of the Emperor is central to the Star Wars saga. The chapter does a pretty good job drawing the now familiar connections between the Roman Emperors, Hitler, and Palpatine. Other authors have covered similar ground, but this chapter is great for those unfamiliar with the comparisons.
- 6) **Queens** Padme's role as queen in the movies was pretty short. We see her mostly as a fighter in Episode I and a Senator thereafter. However, this chapter was fun because of the variety of anecdotes about powerful female rulers. I really like to comparison between Cleopatra and Padme as teen queens. No seduction of course, but other than that there are some striking parallels.
- 7) **Tyranny** I like that this chapter tries to asses whether the depiction of tyranny in Star Wars rings true to life. It also notes some political features not present in the Galaxy, such as patriotism.
- 8) **Military Technology** For readers too young to remember Reagan's "Star Wars" program in the 1980s, this chapter will probably be the most shocking. There's a good recap of how Star Wars influenced the terms of the Cold War.
- 9) **Slavery** Of all the chapters, this is the one that problem raises the most moral questions about the Star Wars universe by highlighting not only slavery but also bondage. However, I thought some of the moral arguments (such as Luke Skywalker being in bondage to his uncle in ANH) went a bit far.
- 10) **Corporations** I was wary of this chapter (I feared it might simply be an anti-corporate screed), but it turned out to be my favorite of the entire book. The chapter draws fascinating parallels between the Trade Federation and the Dutch and British East India Companies during the height of colonialism. While many viewers could never accept the idea that Episode I's main villain was a company, this chapter shows exactly how some companies combined military and political might to conquer territories. It actually increased my appreciation for TPM and made me appreciate Lucas' decision all the more. Of course, there's no evidence Lucas actually drew inspiration from this period of history, but the parallels are so striking I'd be he did.
- 11) **Cities** This chapter seemed a bit out of place for a book about the historic parallels to Star Wars. Much of it focused on comparing London and New York with Coruscant as a metropole, but we frankly don't ever learn enough about Coruscant to assess its urban management problems. From the movies at least, we don't really know if Coruscant suffers from pollution, epidemics, etc. In the EU novels there are suggestions of a vast, slimy underworld, but this chapter doesn't go into the EU depictions as much. While it didn't go as far as I'd have liked, this book has a lot to offer Star Wars fans who are also interested in history. I could even see this being used as a high school textbook in basic historical/political concepts. As such, I'm glad to see a book about Star Wars and history come out. Fortunately, I also think there's so much more potential for richer analysis - meaning one day I can write my own book about Star Wars and politics!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a great history book to learn how where the scenes in ...

By Kilogauss This is a great history book to learn how where the scenes in Star Wars originate in real history. This book is not for all ages. I glued a few pages together that weren't appropriate for my young Star Wars loving children to learn about yet.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting look

at the Star Wars universe By MWGI found this a good way to fill in gaps of the expand universe not a lot of boring information it's a good book to read for entertainment, but not a must have type of book, just interesting reading

At last an analysis of the historical patterns that influenced the creation and storyline of the Star Wars saga Star Wars took place long ago in a galaxy far, far away, but its epic stories are based on our own history. From Ancient Egypt and the Roman Empire to the French Revolution and the Vietnam War, *Star Wars and History* explores the major historical turning points, heroes, and villains in human history and their impact on the creation of the Star Wars saga. *Star Wars and History* shows how the atomic and hydrogen bombs led to the Death Star; how Princess Leia's leadership in the Rebel Alliance resembled the daring work of intrepid women in the French Resistance during World War II and the Mexican Revolution; historical parallels between the Jedi Code and Bushido as well as those linking the Jedi culture with that of the Templar Knights and other warrior monks; and all of the history that underlies the Star Wars galaxy. Read how our own civilization's civil wars, slavery, international corporation states, and teenage queens were transformed into the epic Star Wars history and discover how Tatooine reflects the lawless frontiers of the past and Coruscant our own history of glittering and greedy capitals. The first book devoted to analyzing the actual historical events in our past that influenced the creation of the space fantasy, *Star Wars* Features 11 essays by a wise "council" of history scholars, written in close collaboration with George Lucas and Lucasfilm Gives new insights into central Star Wars characters and historical figures who helped inspire them (including Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, Han Solo, Darth Vader, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Queen Amidala, Yoda, Jabba the Hutt, Lando Calrissian, Emperor Palpatine, and others) Includes both stunning photos from the Lucasfilm Image Archives and historical photos that demonstrate the parallels between both worlds Filled with fascinating historical comparisons and background that will take your experience of the Star Wars saga to a new level, *Star Wars and History* is an essential companion for every Star Wars fan.

From the Inside Flap Not so long ago, in our very own galaxy, George Lucas created the most successful and acclaimed film series of all time. The Star Wars saga transports us to exotic new worlds and the farthest reaches of space, where humans and hundreds of alien species fight for their freedom against the immensely powerful and heartless Galactic Empire. Star Wars delivers all of the ingredients that delight moviegoers but another, less obvious, ingredient makes the stories both extremely compelling and, at times, oddly familiar: history. From Ancient Egypt and the Roman Empire to the French Revolution and the Vietnam War, *Star Wars and History* explores the major turning points, heroes, and villains in human history that inspired the stories, cultures, and characters of the Star Wars galaxy. Written in close collaboration with George Lucas, *Star Wars and History* is the first book devoted to analyzing the actual historical events in our past that influenced the creation of his space fantasy saga. This fascinating book reveals how Princess Leia's leadership in the Rebel Alliance parallels the daring work of intrepid women in the French Resistance during World War II and the Mexican Revolution, as well as the astounding exploits of Joan of Arc. It also points out historical connections between the Jedi Code and Bushido, along with distinct similarities between Jedi culture and those of the Knights Templar and other warrior monks. Have you ever wondered whether the rebellion against the Empire bears any resemblance to the American Revolution or the Vietnam War? Has it occurred to you that such characters as Han Solo, Luke Skywalker, Emperor Palpatine, and other Star Wars favorites might have been inspired by actual historical figures? Could the Death Star be the ultimate extension of nuclear weapons? You will also read about how our own civilization's civil wars, slavery, corporate empire-building, and teenage queens were transformed into epic Star Wars history, and you'll discover how Tatooine reflects the lawless seaports of the past and Coruscant embodies our more recent history of glittering, greedy capitalism. Packed with stunning photos from the Lucasfilm Archives as well as historical illustrations and photos that demonstrate the parallels between film and historical reality, *Star Wars and History* is the perfect companion for Star Wars fans, history buffs, and anyone who wants to get the most out of every film in the Star Wars saga. From the Back Cover A fascinating tour through the true history that underlies the storyline of the Star Wars saga "A timely, insightful collection that honors Star Wars fandom by acknowledging its intelligence. Even readers who've always assumed history is a dull, stale subject will be captivated by these scholarly meditations upon the links between our world and a galaxy far, far away . . ." Dr. Andrea Cremer, author of the New York Times bestselling *Nightshade* series "A brilliant illumination of how the remembrance of things past shapes the popular representation of the future. This top-notch cast of scholars embarks on this mind-bending mission with all the requisite wit, erudition and, yes, courage." Dr. Mark C. Carnes, Professor of History, Barnard College, Columbia University, and author of *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies* "This is the way to become fascinated with history. Discover current analyses of major events and trends from the Roman and Meiji Empires to Vietnam and modern urban culture through the intergalactic adventures of queens, princesses, Ewoks, the Sith, and their heroic rivals, the Jedi Knights." Dr. Judith P. Zinsser, Professor Emerita of History, Miami University, Ohio "Star Wars has been so successful precisely because it has spoken to myths, legends, and, above all, historical episodes and types familiar to its fans. The well-written and highly readable chapters cover everything from political intrigue and the role of women as leaders, to the ability of rebels to achieve victory against overwhelming

odds, and the capacity of an individual to ride the forces of history or in this case, the Forceto success." Dr. Daniel Woolf, Professor of History, Queen's University, Ontario, Canada "Attention, Jedi warriors! The thrill lives on through this fascinating volume, packed with highly imaginative and distinguished scholarship, and boasting rare access to the filmmakers. Highly readable and richly illustrated, Star Wars and History will deepen the enjoyment of fans and bring startling illumination to students of popular culture." Dr. Belinda Davis, Professor of History and Vice Chair for Graduate Education, Rutgers University "Star Wars fans will love the way this book connects events in our world to those that took place a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. History geeks will love the way this book makes the patterns of real-world history visible in the Star Wars universe, too. For those of us who are both, I can't imagine a more satisfying read. And as a history teacher, I can see how useful this book will be in supplementing more standard texts in world history classes." Dr. Anne Rubenstein, Associate Professor of History, York University, United Kingdom "Star Wars and History isn't only a nod to the old adage 'history repeats itself'; rather, by examining such themes as political power and rebellion, diplomacy, slavery and civil rights, and more, this book reminds us that historical people and events have influenced how George Lucas fashioned those moments and how much Star Wars in turn has informed our understanding of these universal themes." Dr. Erica L. Fraser, Assistant Professor of History and Historic Preservation, Goucher College "Crafted by diehard Star Wars fans with deep historical expertise, this book not only teases out the Nazi and Imperial Roman imagery of the Empire, but also draws out startling parallels between Jabba the Hutt's machinations and early modern pirates on the South China Seas. The dramatic historical images and film stills enhance nearly every page, and help readers see a beloved film epic in a whole new light." Dr. Krista O'Donnell, Associate Professor of History, William Paterson University "This collection of engaging essays reveals the many historical models that inspired the culture and histories contained in the Star Wars galaxy. The similarities between Palpatine's seizure of power and the rise of Adolf Hitler are laid out in convincing detail, and the visual historical influences shown in side-by-side images are chilling." Dr. Marion Kaplan, Skirball Professor of Modern Jewish History, New York University, and author of *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*

About the Author
NANCY R. REAGIN is professor of history and women's and gender studies at Pace University. She has been active in fan organizations for more years than she cares to admit; her current research project focuses on the history of fan communities since the late nineteenth century. She is the editor of *Twilight and History*, *Harry Potter and History*, and *Star Trek and History*.
JANICE LIEDL is associate professor of history at Laurentian University. She has been an avid fan of Star Wars since the first film's 1977 release. Her present research deals with the history of English stepmothers from the sixteenth century. She contributed to both *Twilight and History* and *Harry Potter and History* and is the editor of *The Hobbit and History*.