



# **The Star Wars Heresies: Interpreting the Themes, Symbols and Philosophies of Episodes I, II and III**

*Paul F. McDonald*

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Despite the insatiable public appetite for all things Star Wars, the more analytical side of the saga is all too often ignored. This book offers a new way of seeing George Lucas' space opera--particularly the prequel trilogy, a series never given a fair chance because of constant comparisons to the iconic originals.

In the classic style of Joseph Campbell, the trilogy is viewed through the lens of myth and metaphor, revealing a body of work not only worthy of scholarly study but perhaps destined to find therein its home. A wide variety of philosophical and mythological themes are presented and expounded upon, drawing from a rich source of scholars, thinkers, writers, and poets from East and West alike. Heretical or not, the Star Wars prequels are a surprisingly rich source of insight into the saga--as well as the human drama--as a whole.

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## **From Reader Review The Star Wars Heresies: Interpreting the Themes, Symbols and Philosophies of Episodes I, II and III for online ebook**

### **Amy Sturgis says**

In this deceptively slim volume, Paul F. McDonald takes the *Star Wars* prequel film trilogy seriously as a work of art with literary, mythological, religious, and philosophical content. McDonald divides his work into three sections (one for each movie), and within each section he devotes a chapter to a discussion of every one of the film's main characters (including the Force itself). His analysis runs the gamut, drawing from sources from John Milton to the Dalai Lama.

McDonald makes no claims that the resonances he notes were intended by George Lucas. In this, he follows the lead of NYU Professor of Fine Arts Joan Breton Connelly, who said, "And what's fun for me personally is when I get to a point where I say, 'Did George Lucas mean for this connection to be made or am I making it, am I participating as part of the poet, the creator, in making connections?'" The key word here is fun. McDonald's presentation of his insights, despite the citations, is a bit too casual and stream-of-consciousness to qualify as traditional scholarship, but that doesn't mean that it's not of use (or delight) to academics. This is an excellent resource for anyone seeking to analyze and appreciate the prequel films, and it's also an inspiring and entertaining read.

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### **Craig Dickinson says**

Amazing insights.

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### **G.S. says**

Superb! A thoughtful and insightful analysis of the reoccurring themes and mythological underpinnings of the prequel trilogy. This book approaches the prequels as works of art, and uses various philosophical points of view to both examine and justify theories on the deeper meanings and symbology used by Lucas. Comparisons run the intellectual gamut, from Dante's Divine Comedy and Milton's Paradise Lost, to Zen Buddhism and the Dalai Lama. Of course, the works of Joseph Campbell come up repeatedly, as one would naturally expect. Most surprisingly, as a Star Wars mythology junkie, I learned some new things, and now see some scenes in a different light - an impressive feat.

The *Star Wars Heresies* is erudite, well researched, and an absolute pleasure. A love letter to *Star Wars*, this is a must read for those with an open mind, and a love of mythology, philosophy and *Star Wars*.

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### **Shane Grier says**

Fantastic

Loved this book. Yep, that about covers it. Highly recommend to the lovers and especially the haters. They might just learn a thing or four.

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### **Anthony Parisi says**

I can't believe I didn't pick this up earlier. This is essential reading for any serious study of George Lucas and his work on the six Star Wars films. I initially feared this would be overreaching or speculative, but McDonald's approach is quite conservative and skillfully brings to light the mythological underpinnings and thematic intentionality of the prequel trilogy. It is very difficult to find attentive, charitable exposition of these three films but this book helpfully walks through every motif and the importance of these stories to the saga. This kind of scholarship is sorely needed for these misunderstood films.

McDonald's knowledge of comparative religion and Joseph Campbell is very robust and he more than makes the case for these readings with detailed examinations of mythological and literary influences. He manages to exposit the trilogy in all its complexity while remaining very accessible for casual readers. Although primarily focused on symbols and themes over cinematic craft, the result of this careful analysis ends up delivering some of the best film criticism available on Lucas. McDonald demonstrates how understanding the prequels is absolutely critical to interpreting the Star Wars saga as a whole.

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### **Layla Green says**

Intelligent, well informed, and very entertaining. Overall, it was excellent.

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