



Outbound Flight

Timothy Zahn

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It began as the ultimate voyage of discovery—only to become the stuff of lost Republic legend . . . and a dark chapter in Jedi history. Now, at last, acclaimed author Timothy Zahn returns to tell the whole extraordinary story of the remarkable—and doomed—Outbound Flight Project.

The Clone Wars have yet to erupt when Jedi Master Jorus C’baoth petitions the Senate for support of a singularly ambitious undertaking. Six Jedi Masters, twelve Jedi Knights, and fifty thousand men, women, and children will embark—aboard a gargantuan vessel, equipped for years of travel—on a mission to contact intelligent life and colonize undiscovered worlds beyond the known galaxy. The government bureaucracy threatens to scuttle the expedition before it can even start—until Master C’baoth foils a murderous conspiracy plot, winning him the political capital he needs to set in motion the dream of Outbound Flight.

Or so it would seem. For unknown to the famed Jedi Master, the successful launch of the mission is secretly being orchestrated by an unlikely ally: the evil Sith Lord, Darth Sidious, who has his own reasons for wanting Outbound Flight to move forward . . . and, ultimately, to fail.

Yet Darth Sidious is not the mission’s most dangerous challenge. Once underway, the starship crosses paths at the edge of Unknown Space with the forces of the alien Chiss Ascendancy and the brilliant mastermind best known as “Thrawn.” Even Jedi Knight Obi-Wan Kenobi, aboard Outbound Flight with his young Padawan student, Anakin Skywalker, cannot help avert disaster. Thus what begins as a peaceful Jedi mission is violently transformed into an all-out war for survival against staggering odds—and the most diabolical of adversaries.

Timothy Zahn’s unique mix of espionage, political gamesmanship, and deadly interstellar combat breathes electrifying life into a Star Wars legend.

From the Hardcover edition.

Outbound Flight Details

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From Reader Review Outbound Flight for online ebook

Leo says

This book told the origin of Outbound Flight, gave the first glimpse (chronologically) of Thrawn and told of Jorus C'baoth and his obsession. I think it was good background for the events in the Heir to the Empire Trilogy. Unfortunately I found the story a little flat, and actually wished that Obi-Wan and Anakin hadn't been involved, if just to give some of the other characters a little more time and spotlight.

Markus says

The rating may be a little bit unfair, considering that the book itself does little wrong. Unfortunately, I got the impression that it didn't do much right either. The most impressive part here is Zahn's ability to adapt quickly to the "completely" new setting provided by the prequel trilogy. *Outbound Flight* is basically the book where Thrawn meets the prequels.

The problem is that the book was hardly exciting at all and the characters were more or less all uninteresting. Most of it consists of people running around talking to each other and otherwise doing nothing. The younger Thrawn is more fallible and less in control of every situation than the older version (which is natural of course, but also takes away all that was cool about him). And while the concept of Outbound Flight (talking about the project itself now, not the book) is quite intriguing, it does not come anywhere near to discovering anything new, not to mention reaching another galaxy. The only interesting part of this book was Jorus C'baoth engaged in debates over Jedi philosophy with Obi-Wan Kenobi.

Timothy Zahn is one of the best things to have happened to the Star Wars universe. This book is not.

Amy says

Great SW book that is set during the near-end of the Clone Wars. Zahn is one of my favorite authors of SW-related material! Introduces readers to Thrawn, and weaves this storyline in with 2 others. Highly recommended!

Ilona says

Very interesting to see Thrawn before he was recruited by The Empire and the ultimately disastrous fate of the Outbound Flight project. Also very interesting how they are already setting up the Yuuzhan Vong invasion which will happen during the New Jedi Order Era. 5 Stars of course.

Katrin von Martin says

It isn't a secret that I rather dislike Timothy Zahn's "Star Wars" books; they're just never been quite what I've wanted to see in the EU. However, after reading "Survivor's Quest," I found that I was intrigued with the story of the ill-fated mission known as Outbound Flight. "Outbound Flight" fills in the gaps and tells that story...kind of. Spoilers follow.

"Outbound Flight" takes place sometime before the Clone Wars, during the time of the Old Republic. There are three main plots that all come together at the end: the story of Outbound Flight, Thrawn's first contact with humans from the Republic, and Doriana's attempts to ensure Outbound Flight's destruction.

Despite being the title of the book, Outbound Flight isn't the primary plot of the novel. The first hundred pages or so that deal with it are actually spent on a side mission in which C'boath and Lorana (eventually joined by Obi-Wan and Anakin) mediate a civil conflict on another planet. Afterward, the project is given the go-ahead and all supplies and personnel C'boath demands are provided. Not long after the gigantic craft launches, however, C'boath takes over, ruling in an arbitrary, cruel manner and sparking discontent among his fellow Jedi and Outbound Flight's colonists. The ship is soon confronted by the Chiss and almost destroyed, ending up in the position "Survivor's Quest" finds it (crashed with marooned survivors that hate Jedi).

The second plot, the one concerning Thrawn, gets the most attention. Jorj Car'das and his shipmates, Maris Ferasi and Dubrak Qennto, are captured and find themselves entangled in Chiss military politics. Their captor is none other than Thrawn, at this time commander of the Chiss Expansionary Defense Fleet. Curious about one another, culture and language classes ensue and the situation becomes more difficult when a group of pirates, the Vagaari, become a threat to the Chiss. One thing leads to another and Thrawn's military genius and Doriana combine to destroy Outbound Flight. The first meeting of Thrawn and Sidious also occurs.

The third and by far least important story is that of Doriana, aide to Palpatine and servant to Darth Sidious. He's out to annihilate Outbound Flight before it can reach the Unknown Regions. Really, all he does is try to foil C'boath's negotiations early in the book, confront Thrawn with a Nemoidian fleet, provide Thrawn with the equipment to fight the Vagaari and Outbound Flight, and constantly praise Thrawn for being such a noble commander. He's more background than anything else, providing the tools necessary to move the plot along, and that's about it.

Unfortunately, I'll have to start my opinion of the overall story with a pretty big complaint. The title of book is "Outbound Flight," it claims to tell the story of a somewhat famous mission by the same name; however, most of the book is dedicated to Thrawn. It is very apparent that Zahn loves this character (more on that later), and anyone who has read his other books knows that Thrawn is associated with Outbound Flight, so he is expected to appear at some point in the story. Instead, he dominates the book with his story comprising at least half of the pages. Outbound Flight, the tale I wanted to read, is secondary to the author's pet character.

For the most part, the story of Outbound Flight itself is fairly interesting, at least as far as seeing how it leads to what is seen in "Survivor's Quest." It's actually pretty neat to watch the whole story unfold when you know what happens forty or so years down the road. There is one major problem with this story, however: Jorus C'boath. The whole plot hinges on C'boath being an obvious villain and the Jedi Counsel being completely stupid. Perhaps had Zahn dedicated more of the book to Outbound Flight, we could have seen a more fleshed out, ambiguously realistic C'boath and his fall to the Dark Side. Instead, this plot feels rushed and therefore doesn't live up to its potential. It also doesn't help that the first hundred pages or so aren't spent on Outbound Flight at all, but rather on a side mission for C'boath to get the funding and approval for the project, which could have been easily shortened or even skipped.

Writing-wise, Zahn has vastly improved since "Survivor's Quest." The writing itself was actually very enjoyable to read, largely because the phrases that the author used to repeat ad nauseam are absent from "Outbound Flight." Characters don't quirk eyebrows, wince, or comment wryly on things; no one ends an argument with "Point" or "Agreed." The action scenes were well written (though I would have appreciated more of them) and most of the dialogue is well done. Honestly, I can't really complain about the writing itself.

Characters are another story entirely and vary greatly.

My usual complaint with Zahn's books is that he tends to ignore movie and other book characters in favour of his own. Oddly, the opposite issue is present here. This is one case where the author probably could have used his own cast entirely with it still being connected to the "Star Wars" universe through Palpatine, the Jedi Counsel, the Republic, and other such entities. However, perhaps because it seems to be a necessity for prequel novels, Obi-Wan and Anakin are awkwardly shoved into the story, only to be conveniently removed just before Outbound Flight's destruction. The two aren't necessary at all, and it feels like Zahn was really stretching to include them. In regards to the characters themselves, they're really quite well-written; I could picture Obi-Wan actually saying his lines, and Anakin's hero-worship of the powerful C'boath is a nice little bit of foreshadowing of what is to come. Very in-character, yet so unnecessary.

As mentioned above, Zahn likes Thrawn (and by extension the Chiss) a little too much. He's simply too perfect. Seriously, the guy is almost never wrong (and when he does make a mistake, it's more the fault of others involved). While reading the large portions of the book devoted to this character, I got the impression that this plot line was written primarily to show just how brilliant Thrawn is, whether it's his uncanny ability to pick up on languages, his masterful deductions from art, his prowess on the battlefield, or his carefully laid and perfectly executed plans. If you like Thrawn, then this probably won't be much of a problem, but I find him to be too perfect, almost Mary Sue-like. As if the majority of the book being devoted to this figure wasn't enough, several characters (Maris, Car'das, and Doriana) repeatedly praise the Commander for how noble, honourable, and honest he is. He's not a horrible character to read about on his own, but Zahn's tailoring of the situation to demonstrate Thrawn's brilliance, his dominance of the book, and other characters' praise of him make him almost unbearable.

There are a couple other character duds, the worst being C'boath's one-dimensional, evil persona, but I've already discussed that. Maris, Doriana, and to an extent Car'das seem present strictly to praise Thrawn and be convenient for the plot. Not all are bad, though.

I found Lorana Jinzler to be an intriguing character. The general opinion on her seems pretty mixed, but I enjoyed seeing her struggle with her confidence issues brought on by her Master's oppressive personality and, later, discovering her family. She wasn't a perfect Jedi and demonstrated character growth. She also seemed to illustrate a problem within the Jedi Order: how an inadequate Master can stunt a Padawan's potential. Along with Lorana, the various non-Jedi characters aboard Outbound Flight were also interesting, though I would have liked to see more of them. It also would have been nice to see more of Thrass, Thrawn's brother. Car'das, while sometimes falling victim to Thrawn-worship, does manage to do some useful, brave things that make the story that much better. As with most of Zahn's books, the cast is pretty large, and some of the characters really do shine.

On a random note, despite disliking the dominance of Thrawn, I very much enjoyed the language sessions and thought they were amusing and...dare I say...cute.

"Outbound Flight" is a great follow up to "Survivor's Quest" and answers a lot of questions that were

presented in the previous book. Zahn's writing has improved and is very enjoyable, and the story of Outbound Flight itself is mostly interesting. However, Zahn's love of Thrawn really overpowers this novel and forces other plots (like that of Outbound Flight) to race to the finish, rather than telling their full story. There are some great characters and some that are a little flat, but the good ones really are good. The overwhelming obsession with Thrawn puts this book in the two-and-a-half star range, but finally getting to know the story of Outbound Flight, good writing, and some very intriguing characters bumps "Outbound Flight" to a solid 3 stars.

This review is also posted on Amazon.com.

Patrick says

I know I'm a nerd, but I love the Star Wars books. The first ones I read were my mother-in-law's Thrawn trilogy that take place 5 years after Return of the Jedi. Great series! That said, I've not been especially drawn to the 40+ other books that take place after the Star Wars movies. I love the books that take place before and during the first three episodes. The life of the Jedi order and the plotting of Palpatine/Sidious totally suck me in. The books in this timeframe also almost all indirectly revolve around the question of whether the Jedi Code is correct and how to morally use their power. The characters have diverse opinions about the Force and it gives the Jedi 100 times more depth than the movies. I think it makes the movies a lot more enjoyable too because you see them in context of the larger, decades-long story of Palpatine's conquest.

This book is pretty good. It has some cool action and strategy, plus a lot of questioning among the Jedi. It also has a lot of tragedy as events inevitably lead to Sidious winning.

It's by the same author as the Thrawn trilogy and acts as a prequel for much of it. Read that trilogy first and this will be better. I think it may be less enjoyable without that backdrop.

Crystal Starr Light says

Timothy Zahn, often considered the Father of Star Wars Expanded Universe, returns to the Galaxy Far, Far Away to detail the story behind Outbound Flight, Jorus C'baoth, and, most importantly, Thrawn. Since he is my favorite author, I definitely couldn't miss this one.

Plot:

Jedi Master Jorus C'baoth has come up with the ultimate mission: to send a group of beings out beyond the Republic, to the Unknown Regions to colonize and perhaps penetrate to the next galaxy. After winning approval from the Senate, he begins his mission. Unbeknownst to him, Darth Sidious fears this mission will flush out hidden enemies that the fragmented Republic is not prepared to fight so he sends team to destroy Outbound Flight.

Meanwhile, Jorj Cardas, Maris Ferasi, and Dubrak Quennto flee a Hutt's wrath and end up smack dab in the Unknown Regions at the mercy of the Chiss Defense Fleet, commanded by the mysterious Thrawn who has many schemes up his sleeve.

Good:

One word: Thrawn. He is a brilliant military mastermind, able to penetrate people's thoughts and desires and

determine rather accurately how they will react to a certain set of circumstances. In my opinion, he is the best part of the book.

Some people aren't fond of how Obi-Wan and Anakin appear in this book, and while they are trivial, I was very impressed with how Timothy Zahn was about to translate Obi-Wan to the written word. Anakin is flat, but what do you expect for a fifteen year old Padawan?

Jorj Cardas is another good character. He is a rather real guy, someone you can sympathize with and relate to. I found his parts more enjoyable in many aspects than any of the others (but part of that was because it was through his parts I learned more about Thrawn).

I enjoyed reading how Maris admired Thrawn. It would have been cool had Zahn spent more time on a perhaps romance between the two (although that would probably have disrupted the storyline and dragged it down some).

Zahn also did a grand job with the plot (minus a few hiccups at the beginning). He weaves the story between the Jedi (Lorana and Obi-Wan), Jorj, and Doriana, Palpatine's duplicitous aide. Through their eyes, we get to see how they all intertwine and the fate of the Outbound Flight. The ending is powerful, bittersweet and reminiscent of *Revenge of the Sith* (I half wanted to cry at the end!). Although I discovered partially how the tragedy unfolded (but then, everyone had a vague idea), I read on intrigued and hoping that it wouldn't yield the grim results I speculated.

Lastly, Zahn does a great job with the dialogue, the pacing, and other narration. Obi-Wan talked like Obi-Wan. Palpatine was Palpatine. His own characters (Jorj, Jorus, Thrawn, etc.) are more "malleable" in the sense that his books are the ones in which they primarily turn up, but their characters are pretty much the same as in other materials. Zahn knows how to evenly pace his story, not jolting you through many, many years over 5 pages and slowing to a halt to cover a few days in 200+ pages. Further, his narration is delightful to read.

Bad:

I hadn't thought that Jorus C'baoth would have been a jerk. I understand why his clone was crazy, and I guess I knew that he was likely crazy, but somehow, I expected Jorus to be different than in this portrayal.

Also, I found Lorana a little difficult as a character. Here, she has been C'baoth's Padawan for 10+ years, putting up with his arrogance, self-importance, and rudeness, and she becomes a mediocre Jedi? I would have thought she would have been as arrogant, self-important, and rude as her Master, not a wimpy doormat! Lastly, although it is important that Thrawn learn Basic, the whole concept of the language lessons at the beginning is a little corny.

Dialogue/Sexual Situations/Violence:

Typical Star Wars made-up "colorful language" or alluded to. Maris and Quennto are said to share a room. Violence is typical Star Wars fare (although aliens are told to have been cut nearly in half by laser fire and are used as human shields).

Overall:

Zahn, pat yourself on the back. Another job well done! My only complaint? Where's the story about Thrawn's rise to power?

Kathryn says

Outbound Flight gives the back story on the mission Outbound Flight, alluded to briefly in *Heir to the Empire*, and also serves as a bit of an origin story for Grand Admiral Thrawn, then known as Commander Mitth'raw'nuruodo of the Chiss Expansionary Fleet.

Basically, if you love Thrawn, you'll love this book. It's very well-done, much better than any of Zahn's previous Star Wars novels (nostalgia doesn't influence this rating as it does with the Thrawn trilogy ratings). Characterization and plot continue to be Zahn's strength, while the various annoying tics, such as quoting the original movies, that plagued his earlier books are nearly absent from this one.

I highly recommend *Outbound Flight* to anyone who enjoys the character of Grand Admiral Thrawn.

(There's also a bit of foreshadowing of the Yuuzhan Vong; the Chiss have encountered them already.)

Ron says

Actually 3.5 stars.

Timothy Zahn succeeds again. Kind of a Thrawn prequel. Well done.

Zahn escapes the curse of fan fiction by hardly involving main stream Star Wars characters (Obi-Wan, et al.) in the main plot.

A fun story. Not great literature, but 99.9 per cent of books aren't.

Ashley says

This book was a dream come true. I'd been waiting ever since we got that bit of Thrawn's backstory in *Vision of the Future*, hoping that someday we'd get the whole story. At last, we did, and I couldn't be more pleased with it. Seeing a young Thrawn in his natural habitat was such a treat!

Gregory says

While I usually enjoy Zahn's Star Wars books, this one was a bit of a hit and miss for me. There was something a little off about the pacing and how the overall story unfolded. There was more of a "forced" feeling to this story than most of his other books. It was like he had a couple of core elements to work from (introduction of a young Thrawn and the fall of Jedi Master Jorus C'baoth) and tried to wedge a story in and around them that just didn't feel natural to me. It's not to say that parts weren't enjoyable with some interesting character interactions and story lines but as a whole, it seemed disjointed.

Camille says

As a big fan of the "Heir to the Empire" series (I think they should make movies of this series, but Mark Hammil would have to loose a ton of weight) I really enjoyed this book, which is a look at Admiral Thrawn and the Chiss before even the clone wars began. Timothy Zahn is my favorite author of Star Wars novels and this one did not disappoint.

Holden Attradies says

When I think of Star Wars novels "Timothy Zahn" is always first in my head. He jump started the expanded universe into existence and his work is still the best out there, hands down. Lucas may have made it so a lot of his original stories no longer properly fit into canon, but ya know what? I liked his novels FAR better than the newer stuff and in my heart I view his books as truer to the feel and soul of the original trilogy.

So how does it pan out when Zahn tried to re-incorporate part of his stories into what has been made of the clone wars era? Well, it pans out quite well. I chalk this down to Zahn being just a really good author. He puts in just enough about characters we knew from his Thrawn trilogy in the new setting, mixed with enough cameos of time appropriate characters as well as a dash of hints for what became of the expanded universe (the fact that Palpatine was using knowledge of the Yuuzhan Vong massing at the galaxies edge to destroy outbound flight, as well as Outbound Flights mission partially being about hunting down Vergere who was taken by them in Rogue Planet).

The thing for me that made this such an enjoyable read was that yes, the story featured tons of jedi and people who would one day shape the fate of the galaxy, but none of that happened in this story and the Jedi weren't even the center of attention. I adore the Star Wars universe, but there is sooooo much more to it than Jedi and get sick of them hogging the show. This story is very much the tale of a group of smugglers that end up in a weird place with a weird alien race and witness some medium sized events. It's not universe shattering but its intensely interesting.

And in the end, I finish the book wanting MORE. More of these specific characters and events. But, it's not in a bad way. It's in a nearly perfect way of reading a novel that's not part of a specific series but part of a larger world.

Bryan says

An interesting look into the past, that finally provides us with motivations for some of the mysterious actions of Grand Admiral Thrawn (as well as giving some fascinating insights into the motivations of Emperor Palpatine himself). A great way to end the Thrawn saga, by showing us how it all began.

Samantha says

I really enjoyed this book. I wasn't sure I would. I didn't enjoy all the Thrawn novels before and didn't like some Timothy Zahn's novels, but I really got into this book. It has a dual story that comes together at the end. I'm not going to go into a long plot summary. I liked how we finally got to see how Thrawn got involved with the Republic. I was intrigued by C'boath's Jedi philosophies and how he relates to others. I agreed with a lot of the reviewers that I felt Anakin and Kenobi were thrown in there just to say they were there. They didn't really lend anything to the story. I recommend this book to Star Wars fans and it does make Survivor's Quest more understandable.

TheBookHunter says

Continuing my quest to read through the Star Wars Expanded Universe, I have reached possibly one of my favorite Star Wars books of all time: Outbound Flight.

This novel, written by (God Emperor) Timothy Zahn tells the story of the character of Grand Admiral Thrawn's mysterious appearance in the galaxy in the days of the Republic, roughly five or six years before the Clone Wars and about four-five years after events of the Phantom Menace.

Firstly, I have to say regardless of what your opinion may be of the Prequel Trilogy, a book such as Outbound Flight does a good job of telling a story of that era, in fact this and a handful of novels help me appreciate George Lucas's 'prelogy' when I rewatch them. So props for the fantastic writers such as Zahn who endeavour to write a good prequel within a prequel era!

Aside from that, if you've read Zahn's other Star Wars books centered around the blue-skinned alien military genius that is Thrawn, Outbound Flight was the perfect back story for such a character pre-Disney canon.

Outbound Flight is a rather dark novel, centered around the story mentioned in Zahns original books about a Republic-based, Jedi-led expeditionary space mission to explore and settle worlds in the mysterious Unknown Regions of space outside of the Republic. However, things take a grim turn when secret Dark Lord of the Sith, Darth Sidious wants to sabotage the mission. At this time, a group of smugglers encounter a shadowy alien fleet commanded by an equally shadowy alien man known as Mitth'raw'nuruodo aka Thrawn.

When I say this novel is dark, I had a very bad-er, unsettled feeling about this. Mainly for the characters, and when the stuff hits the fan in the climax of the book, you hold to hope some will come out unscathed, others right off the bat you'll know will. Such as Obi-wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker, who really don't participate much but, more or so are there because Preequel Cooneectionn. See you guys in Episode 2!

But other than that, you as the reader go along in the story getting to see the dangers of the Unknown Regions and seeing this failed mission just go to hell in a hand basket.

Spoiler

Thrawndidit

#ThrawnDidNothingWrong
#JorusC'Baothisalunatic

Oh yeah, crazy jerk clone Jorus C'Baoth from the Thrawn Trilogy? You do see him here in this story and you really do see how unhinged this guy really was. From the get go you know this guy is destined to fail with this project of his, and he's even more unlikeable here when he's not a Dark Side clone.

So yeah. In conclusion, this story is awesome regardless. Pick it up to read if you like Star Wars, if you like the prequel era, and if you like Thrawn as well as Timothy Zahn.

Also read it if you're someone who is finding Balance in the Canon and Legends continuities. If you've read

the new canon book Thrawn, give Outbound Flight a read and have fun comparing some things, especially the included epilogue story called "Mist Encounter" ;)

Jake says

My usual caveat: I am a Timothy Zahn fanboy. I have yet to read a work of his I didn't like. Some, of course, are better than others, but I've loved 'em all. So read this review understanding that.

For those not in the know; a number of years ago, Timothy Zahn effectively re-launched the Star Wars novels with his Heir to the Empire trilogy. It was a smash hit, and rightly so. Zahn managed to capture the SW universe perfectly, while introducing plots and threats that were actually interesting, instead of just throwing our heroes up against another version of the Death Star (Kevin Anderson, I'm looking at you!). Zahn eventually followed that series up with a duology, and finally, a stand-alone book that serves as a bit of a prequel to the New Jedi Order series, which I have not read, though I own the first book of it. I can't decide if I should read it or not.

But I digress.

Somewhere in the course of his novels, Zahn introduced the Outbound Flight—an Old Republic expeditionary force that had been sent to try and explore another galaxy. It was launched during the midst of the Clone Wars, and eventually disappeared into history. Years later, Luke & co. would eventually find out about it, and...well, read Zahn's other SW books if you want the full story on that.

Outbound Flight is (surprise) the story of Outbound Flight itself. It begins with the last minute negotiations of the set-up, the flights launch, and its ultimate destruction. The story moves along at an appropriate clip, and as always, Zahn does a nice job of setting up some intriguing politics, mysteries, and manipulations along the way. We also finally get to see the original Jorus C'baoth, and the return of (or prelude to) Mitth'raw'nuruodo, aka Grand Admiral Thrawn, the greatest non-movie villain in Star Wars canon.

Outbound Flight has its downsides too. There's a little too much Republic politicking that goes on, in part because of what seems to be a very forced cameo by Obi-Wan and Anakin. This takes up a part of the book that really could have been spent doing more interesting things with the Outbound Flight itself, or with Thrawn's activities. It also ends up distracting from Zahn's characters, who are frankly, way more interesting than Obi-Wan and Darth Child. Besides, we already have a bunch of movies about them. I want to see other characters now! I have the distinct impression that this was editorial decision-making getting in the way of good storytelling, though I have no proof of that.

Also, there's a twist/big reveal concerning Darth Sideous/Chancellor Palpatine/The Emperor that I really didn't like. I GET why it's there (it serves to tie ALL the SW stuff together) but it feels wrong to me. It also serves to make Palpatine vaguely sympathetic, which, in my opinion, he should not be (I love Palpatine, but sympathetic he ain't).

In the end, I enjoyed Outbound Flight quite a bit, and any Star Wars fan, or Zahn fan, ought to read it (fans of both, doubly so). While Zahn is somewhat hampered by what I think are bad editorial decisions, he still manages to tell a fun and interesting Star Wars style romp, and answer some questions about Zahn-specific plots that have come up before.

Corey says

This book was fun, I loved seeing the young Thrawn and how Darth Sidious started to scout him out for his purposes. Thrawn is probably one of my favorite villains in Star Wars because he does what needs to happen. The book makes me hate C'boath, a lot. I wish there had been more background on him for his craziness. I loved seeing characters like Obi-Wan in it. Good book that does well expanding the Star Wars universe

Daniel Kukwa says

This is to the old Legends continuity what the more recent "Thrawn" is to the new Disney continuity: telling the introductory story of one of the most interesting characters to come out of any version of the extended "Star Wars" universe. In some respects it isn't quite as successful, as much of Thrawn's character doesn't get the exclusive focus it does in the more recent novel. But its only a minor complains, as Timothy Zahn manages to incorporate the introduction as part of a much wider, far more operatic tale...one that makes the universe of the prequels far more interesting than any of the actual films. The best description for this epic novel would be "sweeping".

Brad says

My healing as a Star Wars fan has come a long way since my trip to the theatre for my final kick in the balls at the booted foot of *Revenge of the Sith*. My tender testes put up with a whole bunch of abuse from Episodes I-III, and I thought I'd never be able to fall in love again, but much to the delight of my healing privates that fall is happening again.

I have two reasons, and both of those reasons have to do with the Expanded Galaxy of Star Wars and nothing to do with *Star Wars* itself.

Reason #1 -- This has nothing to do with *Outbound Flight*, but bear with me. *Clone Wars*, the animated series run by Dave Filoni, is better than any on-screen version of *Star Wars* barring *Empire Strikes Back*. If you've not seen any of them or only watched the first few episodes, you have missed out on a wonderful piece of filmmaking. It expanded the Anakin Skywalker story in just the ways I hoped it would, made his fall from Jedi glory understandable and sympathetic, and it introduced us to some of the coolest characters anywhere in the *Star Wars* Galaxy: Ahsoka Tano, Cad Bane, Hondo the Pirate and Asajj Ventress. I love all of them as much as I love anyone in the movies (with the exception of Han, Lando and Chewie), and I would be willing to bet that my kids' favourite characters in Star Wars spring from that group (Ahsoka for Scout, Cad Bane for Beans, and Ventress for Te).

Reason #2 -- For much the same reason, I adore the work Timothy Zahn's been doing, for quite a while now, in the Expanded Galaxy. He has created characters as cool and important and worth knowing as any in the official films. Jorus C'baoth (arrogant, dickhead Jedi Master), Mara Jade (bad ass guard to Emperor Palpatine and wife-to-be of Luke Skywalker), Talon Karrde (smuggler, gambler, scoundrel, so what's not to like), and best of all Commander Mitth'raw'nuruodo (the eventual Grand Admiral Thrawn). All of these characters are

fantastic additions to the Galaxy, but it is the last -- Thrawn -- who I most want to see on screen.

Thrawn, when written by Zahn, is a tactical genius of autistic levels without the problems. He is cultured, suave, able to overcome Darth Sidious' hatred for aliens, honourable, kind, willing to make the pre-emptive strike, loyal, pragmatic, occassionally bellicose, and uncompromising when it comes to success. He is, in short, one of the most complex charactes anywhere in the Star Wars Galaxy, and I will read anything about him.

In *Outbound Flight* we're lucky enough to get two Thrawn tales, the larger origin of Thrawn's entrance to the Galaxy proper -- a tale of Jedi aggression, Sidiuos manipulation, and Thrawn master -- and a smaller, even cooler tale called "Mist Encounter," wherein an exiled Thrawn takes on the Imperial Navy, a pack of Storm Troopers, smuggling his way abournd a Star Destroyer and into the Imperial Navy for his troubles.

These tales might not be great literature, but they are great entertainment, and I think they are essential reading for anyone who still fancies themselves Star Wars fans after all these years.
