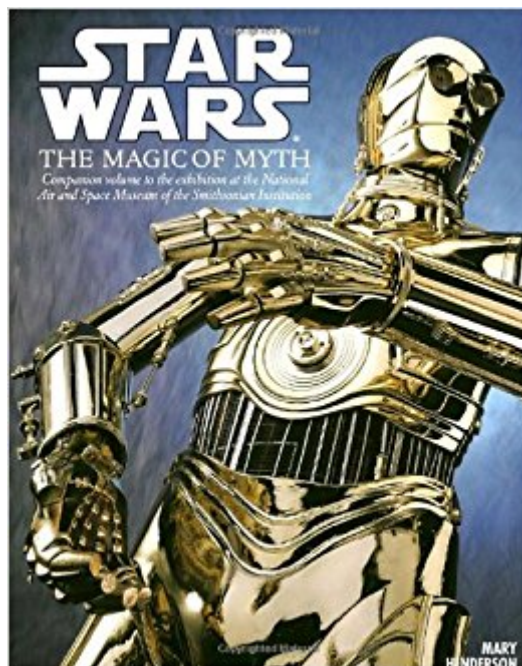


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Star Wars: The Magic Of Myth



Synopsis

Star Wars(r)™ has captured the hearts and imaginations of millions and millions of people like no other story of our time. This official companion volume to the landmark exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum explores the mythological roots of the Star Wars saga, a story that will continue to unfold into the next millennium. Written by the exhibit's curator and illustrated with hundreds of photographs, drawings and images, Star Wars(r): The Magic of Myth illuminates this modern tale of the ageless and mythic battle of good versus evil.

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Customer Reviews

The companion to the Star WarsR exhibition at the Smithsonian. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...."The fairy-tale opening of George Lucas's 1977 movie Star Wars set the stage for a blockbuster trilogy that has become the stuff of cinematic legend. And through October 1998 the eclectic enchantment of Star Wars is re-created at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. In Star Wars: The Magic of Myth, the museum plays host to a cosmic menagerie of Jawas, Tusken raiders and Imperial storm troopers, not to mention the ludicrous droids R2-D2 and C-3PO. The exhibit and the companion volume by its curator offer insightful commentary on the luxuriant symbolism of Lucas's "alternative universe." The costumes

and production models on display illustrate Lucas's cleverness in creating not just a futuristic world of gleaming metal and overfriendly machines but one that is also ancient and battered, filled with characters drawn more from the imagery of medieval romance than from science fiction. The strategy works. We recognize the wizened guards and the virginal princesses from stories we have heard. Leather bindings, wooden accoutrements and frayed sackcloth are more prominent than Lycra and precision robotics, and Lucas ensured that the spaceships in his tale were well rubbed with dirt before he let the cameras roll. Only Princess Leia remained unsullied. In the forms of the strange creatures that lurk behind every pillar, too, Lucas borrowed shapes and textures familiar from a trip to the zoo. Greedo's face is a cross between that of a tarsier and a hatchet fish; Chewbacca is a friendly orangutan. And surely Jabba the Hutt's amphibian squint and bulging belly are made all the more abhorrent by his taste for live toads. Naturalistic touches such as these remind us that what we are seeing is really not so implausible. Mythological interpretations of the elements in the hero's journey of Luke Skywalker are outlined at appropriate points in the exhibit and explored at greater length in the book. This decoding of the story, expanded (with due credit) from the late Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth*, shows that the fairy-tale quality of the saga is far from coincidental. Indeed, Lucas, in a taped interview that visitors can watch, explains how he spent two years studying mythology when he was writing the *Star Wars* scripts. No wonder we feel the hand of fate at work when a plea for help serves as Luke's call to adventure. It was ever thus with damsels in distress, as Perseus learned with Andromeda. And it should be no surprise when a fatherly magician gives Lucas's hero an Excaliburesque light saber. High technology, of course, appears in the *Star Wars* movies in the horrific, labyrinthine Death Star, a space battle station capable of exploding entire planets. In the exhibit, a few malevolent minions serve as tokens of the dehumanizing dark empire and the wheezing prince of evil incarnate, Darth Vader, whom Luke battles as a rebel fighter pilot. The fascist symbolism in the empire's force is blatant, as is the significance of our gunslinging rescuers' leather holsters. The mystical, invisible Force is not on display, but its message is nonetheless clear: we want technology on our human terms, not its own impersonal ones. Whatever is lacking in subtlety in Lucas's cinematic creations is more than compensated for by their exuberant inventiveness. Nostalgia is worth a visit.

very cool read. Learned a lot. Fantastic illustrations.

Ms Henderson has taken from many, many sources to present a succinct analysis of myths from the past, works by many scholars, and today's world in order to show the need for all of us to have

myths in our lives. Beginning with George Lucas' journey to creating Star Wars, moving into the cultural milieu in which the films were made to the that which the audiences brought and continue to bring, the author gives us the "reasons" for the motivation and then success of the 3 and later 6 movies done by Lucas. The book is well-illustrated with scenes from the movies, storyboards of its development, and art representing other myths, stories and legends of many cultures and times. A fantastic book for anyone looking for the core ideas of Lucas and his greatest work.

perfect addition to any star wars fan collection!

excellent book for the star wars fan

Will fit in perfect with the rest of my Mythology class curriculum

Great book, good condition and my copy even came with an autograph from the author.

Excellent, prompt delivery of a great book. The book and dust jacket were in great shape, and the book was so good, I couldn't put it down! I wish I had seen the exhibit at the time. Thanks for your great service in getting the book to me so quickly. Now that I am teaching a film appreciation course, this book will be a invaluable tool in my arsenal of knowledge to impart to my students. Thanks!!!

This book attempts to explain Star Wars in the context of patterns found throughout the mythology and legends of various cultures. The success of the film, the book claims, is due in no small part to the fact that the film's story is a composite of all the things that make mythical stories endure as myths. To my surprise, however, I found the book to be an excellent commentary on mythology itself - the book is almost as informative in pointing out elements that repeat themselves in mythical stories - the concept of the "hero's journey" - with Luke being our hero - mystical forests as a place of healing (Dagobah), etc, as it is in relating these elements to the story of Star Wars. This book was written to accompany an exhibit of the same name at the National Air & Space Museum in Washington DC, and I was fortunate enough to see the exhibit on tour in San Diego last year. While the exhibit itself was amazing, and filled with various props and spaceship models used in the film, this book is actually more informative than the exhibit and stands exceedingly well on its own. I love the Star Wars films, though I am certainly no hard-core Star Wars buff. I feel that just about anyone

who, like me, loves these films will get a lot of enjoyment from this book.

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