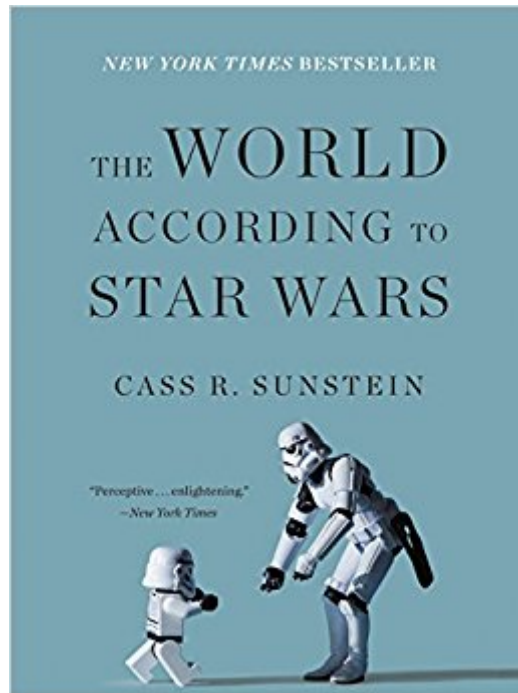


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# The World According To Star Wars



## Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER#1 Washington Post Bestseller *There's Nothing Quite Like Santa Claus, Shakespeare, Mickey Mouse, the Bible, and then there's Star Wars*. Nothing quite compares to sitting down with a young child and hearing the sound of John Williams's score as those beloved golden letters fill the screen. In this fun, erudite, and often moving book, Cass R. Sunstein explores the lessons of Star Wars as they relate to childhood, fathers, the Dark Side, rebellion, and redemption. As it turns out, Star Wars also has a lot to teach us about constitutional law, economics, and political uprisings. In rich detail, Sunstein tells the story of the films' wildly unanticipated success and explores why some things succeed while others fail. Ultimately, Sunstein argues, Star Wars is about freedom of choice and our never-ending ability to make the right decision when the chips are down. Written with buoyant prose and considerable heart, *The World According to Star Wars* shines a bright new light on the most beloved story of our time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

[View larger](#) Cass Sunstein Talks With Baratunde Thurston Baratunde Thurston is a comedian, writer, and cultural critic. Baratunde Thurston (BT): I love the chapter on the secrets of success and why Star Wars became such a phenomenon. You identify three factors: quality, timing, and social influences. So let's talk about Donald Trump. Why do you think he's been so successful? Cass Sunstein (CT): Star Wars shows that in a time of division and polarization, a lot

of people like a Tough Guy. His bluntness, humor, and edge have obviously appealed to many people. He also caught a wave: Once he seemed popular, he got more popular. Many voters like him because they think other voters like him. BT: One of the great themes of the book is forgiveness, and the bond between father and son. I read in an interview that your son helped inspire this book. What do you want him to take away from it? CS: You're free to choose: Your path will be your own. And even if you make mistakes, you can always be redeemed. (Visit the Dark Side, at least once, but please, boy, don't linger!) BT: When the first Star Wars film was released in 1977, there were no YouTube cat videos or internet memes. Do you think it's even possible in our current media landscape to experience another phenomenon on the scale of Star Wars? CS: Sure. Possible anything is. Think about Harry Potter or Taylor Swift. Also: The Force Has Awakened. BT: Screenwriter Lawrence Kasdan wanted to kill off Luke and felt movies have "more emotional weight if someone you love is lost along the way." Lucas obviously didn't agree. Decades later, we live in the world of Game of Thrones, where main characters get killed all the time. Did Kasdan's viewpoint win out in the long run? CS: Nope. No. No! George Lucas was right and the amazing and brilliant Kasdan was wrong. Han Solo should not have died! In many shows, no one you loves ends up dying. Seen Begin Again, that underrated masterpiece? (True, the Game of Thrones team knows what it's doing.) BT: In the chapter on rebellion and group polarization, you cite research that says "if you put a bunch of rebels in a room and ask them to discuss the rebellion, they'll get more extreme." Have modern news media and digital social networks increased polarization by limiting our information pools? I just want to blame Mark Zuckerberg, so I'm asking, can you help me do that? CS: There's no doubt that a fragmented media market and social media increase polarization and group polarization (which means that when people talk to like-minded others, they get more extreme). That's a big source of our current divisions. People live in different communications universes (even if everyone sees Star Wars). BT: You claim (convincingly) that Star Wars brings people together: young and old, Republican and Democrat. What is the single most important lesson our gridlocked Congress can learn from Star Wars? CS: "Only a Sith deals in absolutes."  
•Obi-Wan Kenobi

"[Sunstein's] enthusiasm is endearing...[the] Harvard Law professor uses George Lucas's cinematic phenomenon to tackle such disparate topics as the creative process, the writing of constitutional law, and why people commit terrorist acts." (New Yorker) "Enlightening...perceptive...Mr. Sunstein comes across as an energetic, friendly

dinner-party tablemate. (New York Times) "Entertaining|the ultimate primer for guiding a Star Wars padawan to the level of Jedi Knight. (TIME) "Delightful|informative without being boring, funny without being silly.. a marvelous swift read. The force is strong with this one. (The Economist) "If you love Star Wars or are a nerd and want an engaging introduction to concepts in legal theory or behavioural economics, Sunstein does the trick with levity and clarity. (The Times) "An enlightening and surprisingly personal tour of a galaxy...Sunstein offers plenty of fun details and opinions. (Washington Post) "Sunstein makes a strong case that [Star Wars] contains real insights into the way we think about religion, work, and family...the book's takeaways are universal. (Fortune) "In this gem of a book, Cass Sunstein uses the Star Wars series to explore profound questions about being a parent, a child, and a human. It will change the way you think about your own journey, might even make you pick up the phone and call your dad. (Walter Isaacson) "Irresistibly charming, acclaimed legal scholar Sunstein writes partly as a rigorous academic and partly as a helpless fanboy as he explores our fascination with Star Wars and what the series can teach us about the law, behavioral economics, history, even fatherhood. This book is fun, brilliant, and deeply original. (Lee Child) "In this remarkable, book Sunstein manages to connect invisible gorillas, hit songs, conspiracy theories, and constitutional law. For anyone who loves the movies, or loves to think about how the world works, or simply loves their father The World According to Star Wars will provoke and inspire. (Duncan Watts, Principal Researcher at Microsoft Research and author of Everything is Obvious (Once You Know the Answer)) "Fun and informative without getting bogged down with being too analytic or too fan-ish. (Jeffrey Brown, author of the bestselling Goodnight Darth Vader) "Smart and interesting. (Kirkus Reviews) "A light and breezy read filled with beautiful and funny anecdotes|worth the price of admission. (Allen Voivod, Star Wars 7x7 Podcast) "Cass R. Sunstein has done it: He's made Star Wars into a valuable legal text. In The World According to Star Wars, he considers the social, political, and moral ramifications of the films' mythology| Sunstein provides new insights into a series we love. (Slate) "[a] soon-to-be-required-for-college text (Geeks of Doom)

There's Santa Claus, Shakespeare, Mickey Mouse, the Bible, and then there's Star Wars. Nothing quite compares to sitting down with a young child and hearing the sound of John Williams's score as those beloved golden letters fill the screen. In this fun, erudite, and

often moving book, Cass R. Sunstein explores the lessons of Star Wars as they relate to childhood, fathers, the Dark Side, rebellion, and redemption. As it turns out, Star Wars also has a lot to teach us about constitutional law, economics, and political uprisings. In rich detail, Sunstein tells the story of the films' wildly unanticipated success and explores why some things succeed while others fail. Ultimately, Sunstein argues, Star Wars is about freedom of choice and our never-ending ability to make the right decision when the chips are down. Written with buoyant prose and considerable heart, *The World According to Star Wars* shines a bright new light on the most beloved story of our time. Praise for *The World According to Star Wars* "Star Wars is the ultimate mythological tale of our age, a hero's journey that is a tribute to the beauty of human freedom as well as an exploration of its dark complexities. In this gem of a book, the brilliant Cass Sunstein uses the series to explore profound questions about being a parent, a child, and a human. It will change the way you think about your own journey, and it might even make you pick up the phone and call your dad." •Walter Isaacson "Irresistibly charming, acclaimed legal scholar Sunstein writes partly as a rigorous academic and partly as a helpless fanboy as he explores our fascination with Star Wars and what the series can teach us about the law, behavioral economics, history, and even fatherhood. This book is fun, brilliant, and deeply original." •Lee Child "For anyone who loves the movies, or loves to think about how the world works, or simply loves their father, this book will provoke and inspire." •Duncan Watts

I bought this little book following an outstanding lecture by the author that I recently heard. Coincidentally on archived cable TV, I had the chance to watch all first 6 Star War films in a 2-day marathon. I was initially put off by the book because its format is a bit confusing--since I didn't know the films in detail, his use of the word "Episodes" in the Contents not representing the film "episodes" was confusing, and the chart on page 143 was even more confusing as I tried to figure out the sequence of films. Also, nowhere were their short summaries of the plots of each film. But, I looked at several other Star Wars books elsewhere, and everywhere there seemed a paucity of plot summaries. I almost wonder if copyright prohibits summarizing the story in a clear way in "unauthorized" books. These and other criticisms I could mention aside, this is an outstanding book by a brilliant author, even if the topic is outside his usual professional arena. But, the author does explain how he developed a profound interest in Star Wars. Basically, he chose to address a wide variety of topics which put the epic venture in various relevant social contexts and widely explore just why the Star War series is both so popular and so significant.

As with so many other books on Star Wars I have seen, one can become very confused if one has not seen the films with enjoyment, curiosity, and a good memory. Having not read the extensive other literature on the films, I nevertheless suspect that this book is one of the essentials.

Excellent telling of the back story that led Lucas on a wild journey to create Star Wars. Using that backdrop, Sunstone uses social psychology, behavioral science and surprise - constitutional law to weave in modern day examples of how the principles in the story mirror our experiences today. Highly recommend!

Not sure what I was expecting from this title when I started, but it was a more fun read than I had expected. I was worried that he might be overly intellectual or a bit too dry with this fun subject matter. However, this was not the case at all. It was a fun read throughout, but still made me question and look at Star Wars in ways I never had before. I give it 4 stars because I thought at times it seemed like he was only skimming the surface where I wished he'd dug deeper than in others it was just the opposite. I highly recommend it to any passionate fan of Star Wars.

This book delves moderately into some of the big themes of Star Wars and life since Star Wars premiered. Readers who adore Star Wars and readers who know little about Vader and Yoda will appreciate the insight into the franchise's popularity and myth.

it was a fun read. a little confusing sometimes but a good read.

I have read many books on Star Wars. From J. W. Rinzler to Chris Taylor. What I really appreciated about this book is that it doesn't try to be the only Star Wars book you need to read. Instead it uses Star Wars as the basis, to make a lot of broad points, about the world we live in. The author has read the books I like, and even quotes them here. Hopefully we get more like this. Books that build upon the lore and legacy of that Galaxy Far Far Away. I knocked a star off because while I really enjoyed the book it just doesn't ever reach great heights. No Chapters are particularly absorbing. It is all just steady and good the way through. Yet the lack of any great revelations make it not a five star for me. All Star Wars fans should read this. Even non hardcore fans could get a lot out of this.

I bought this for my adult son, the Star Wars fan. He loves it, and so did I.

Here is what I expected: Legal analysis of Star Wars, science fiction, or anything really. What I got: Some cursory analysis of Star Wars, familiar to anyone interested enough in the series to pick up a copy of this book and devoid of meaningful legal analysis that sheds light on our constitutional system or the one submerged beneath the Empire. My takeaway: Not worth it. If you are interested enough in Star Wars to be considering this book, then it doesn't provide anything interesting (and most of the book will frustrate you as Sunstein flips between wildly speculating and plagiarizing from reddit). If you are a committed Star Wars fan (as I am), though, the book is enjoyable for its focus on the early history of Star Wars alone. For that, I give it three stars. But in the end the book is just one person's summary of various Star Wars theories without any of the interesting analysis you might expect from someone as qualified as Sunstein.

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