The book emphasizes three 'cornerstones of the international relations' – the balance of power, international law, and diplomacy (p. 25). These aspects are to maintain 'relative equilibrium' (p. 24) between strong and weak states in the ambit of the international system. Referring to what is known as the golden age of the balance of power, the book argues that a "shared outlook" was a factor in "international tranquility" (p. 24). This assertion is necessarily problematic, because the era the book is referring to is pre-WWI. 'Tranquility' should thus be understood as tranquility among colonial powers rather than international tranquility. To its credit, the book leaves open space for students to discuss counter perspectives of how powerful states influence international structures to achieve their hegemonic goals.

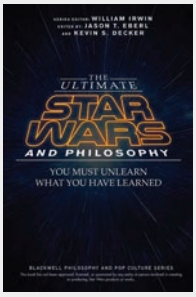
There is a significant commentary on topics ranging from liberalism to law, from history to human rights, and from terrorism to global notions of peace. Although the first edition of this book provided significant information about all of these topics, the second version includes topics about crucial areas like migration and feminist theory that makes it more comprehensive.

All of the authors of book have prestigious academic backgrounds. The book, published by Sage, gives a graphic view of related issues in between chapters in the form of 'reflection boxes' which invite debate over the relevant topics. It is easy to read and also offers suggestions via annotated readings which are very helpful in extended research.

The Ultimate Star Wars and Philosophy:
You Must Unlearn What You Have Learned

Edited by Jason T. Eberl *and* Kevin S. Decker
Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2016, 336 pages, $17.95, ISBN: 9781119038061

Reviewed by Natasha Chevik, Ibn Haldun University



In a philosophy-themed book series pandering to a general audience and including pop cultural phenomena ranging from *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* to *House* and *Game of Thrones* (all relatively recent bestsellers, blockbusters, and hit TV series), *Star Wars* takes an honorary place, with its die-hard fan base spanning generations. Analogous to the seven episodes of the saga released by the time of its publishing, the book has seven parts, each containing three to five chapters which are grouped conceptually (morals, metaphysics, the non-human, etc.). This edition is a miscellaneous assortment with an interdisciplinary perspective, covering a kaleidoscopic range of topics, with no discernible common thread (even though the leitmotif of Platonism recurs in several articles). Some chapters have only tangential relation to the storyline and the characters, instead dealing with the minutiae of *Star Wars* merchandise; for instance, in "The Mind of Blue Snaggletooth," Dennis Knepp takes the reader down the rabbit hole of the three levels of understanding (namely, the physical, design, and intentional stance) as developed by the American philosopher and cognitive scientist Daniel

Dennett, rather bizarrely demonstrated on a Blue Snaggletooth action figure. Many of the articles are in dialogue with each other (cross-referencing each other), and quite expectedly, not all of them are of equal quality in terms of originality, coherence, and philosophical insight – many contributors take recourse to, and heavily rely on the original *Star Wars and Philosophy* book, and some only marginally touch upon philosophical topics, whereas others offer comparatively much more substance and genuinely compelling ideas; I will focus on the latter, or to be more specific: on three high points of the volume – in numerical order.

Luke Skywalker is stuck between a rock and hard place at the end of *Return of the Jedi*, when he has to bring balance to the Force without murdering his father (an act that would potentially save the galaxy, but propel him to the dark side). In the chapter "The Jedi Knights of Faith," William A. Lindenmuth juxtaposes Luke to Abraham (the patriarch of the three Abrahamic religions) who is in a reverse position – God requires him to kill his own son. This perspicacious comparison is based on the ruminations of the Danish existentialist philosopher and theologian *Søren Kierkegaard in his work Fear and Trembling/Repetition*. Giving precedence to faith over reason, Kierkegaard favors the counterintuitive notion "that somehow, through losing everything, one will gain everything" (p. 35). What God and the Force want from Abraham and Luke, respectively, feels morally wrong (killing one's son, and *not* killing Darth Vader), and yet they take a leap of faith and disregard their ethical principles, thus becoming knights of faith. Lindenmuth goes on to extrapolate Kierkegaard's aesthetic and ethical modes of life to Han Solo's character development.

Cole Bowman employs feminist methodology in the chapter "Pregnant Padmé and Slave Leia." His astute analysis of the female characters in the saga makes two relevant points. In short, Padmé is valued primarily through the prism of motherhood, and Leia through sexual objectification, echoing the patriarchal premise that women operate within the binary of motherhood and sexuality (which, if I might add, has given rise to an array of derogatory labels, from the Madonna/whore complex in psychoanalysis to the Angel/monster dichotomy in literature, to name a few). Bowman, however, provides counterexamples for both propositions, somewhat rectifying the blatant stereotypes: he lists Padmé's accomplishments unrelated to the birth of the twins, and recalls Leia's role-reversal when she symbolically strangles her captor, Jabba the Hutt, with her own chain (on a related note, another nickname for Leia has become canon – "Huttslayer," with the tendency to replace the demeaning "Slave Leia," synonymous with her infamous gold bikini). Secondly, the problem is not (only) that women are so conspicuously underrepresented, but rather *how* they are represented. "It just happens that the women who do get our attention occupy the kind of margin we can look at and say, 'Well that's not so bad, is it? She gets to be a queen!' But the fact that Padmé and Leia are important political figures appears to be the only reason that they are even *able* to have a say in anything that happens" (p. 169). Hence, the other crucial point that Bowman makes is the lack of intersectionality, with Padmé and Leia being the affluent few (I would further relate the female representation in *Star Wars* to white feminism, whose practitioners enjoy privileged status in terms of race, class, and education). As a result, the two female protagonists serve the purpose of tokenism rather that inclusion.

In the ingeniously written chapter "What Is It Like to Be a Jedi?" Marek McGann uses Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology as

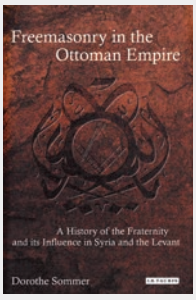
an analytical tool for understanding the Jedi's spiritual and, more importantly, bodily perception of the Force. McGann uses the progression of dance moves – the way they overlap and coincide – to illustrate how the processes of perceiving, thinking, and acting are indelibly intertwined. He brings forward the enactivists' holistic approach to experiencing the world around us (without breaking the "perception–action" loop) in such an illuminating way that my newly found awareness of being an embodied person made me feel the Force, if only for a second.

This comprehensive volume is wrapped up with lighthearted biographies of the contributors laden with *Star Wars* references. As a whole, the book is an interesting read, articulately reminding us of the saga's ideological roots. Bearing in mind that it encompasses the complete media franchise (cartoons, books, action figures, and the like), it seems to be geared towards *Star Wars* aficionados (one of the authors explains what a walkman is, so I assume that the target audience includes the younger demographic too); nonetheless, a penchant for philosophy is a prerequisite.

Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire:
A History of the Fraternity and its Influence in Syria and the Levant

By Dorothe Sommer
New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015, p. 317, $87.64 ISBN: 9781780763132

Reviewed by Esra Balanlı, Sabancı University



The modernization attempts of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and the 20th centuries were widely perceived as limited in the areas of military and the bureaucracy. However, transformation within the process of modernization in the structures of the Empire affected the general society as well. During this time, freemasonry came to be seen as a salvation formula for the survival of the state by local actors and the masonic ideas were adapted to compose a sense of unity in Ottoman society to resist against the deterioration derived from the weakening of the state authority.

This book is about the freemasons of the Ottoman Empire, especially in the areas of Tripoli, Beirut and Mount Lebanon around the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The book analyses the masonic lodges and their social networks to provide an insight from their influence on politics and social life in the Empire. The thesis of the book is that freemasonry developed in Tripoli and its surrounding area with the intent of strengthening the unity of the society by dissolving the denominational and religious divisions under masonic ideology.

Sommer successfully deals with the reasons why people were drawn to become members of the lodges. The aim of the book is to display the role of local fraternity and its development within the changes in socio-cultural life in the Empire. Adapting to new conditions encouraged a proliferation of "native" freemasons who belonged mainly to the upper