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Why Star Wars Took From Dune

Number of striking similarities between George Lucas' much-loved Star Wars franchise and Frank Herbert's seminal 1965 novel, Dune.

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Despite its status as one of the most successful and original sci-fi series of all time, Star Wars simply wouldn't be the same without Dune. Although George Lucas' epic space opera changed the game for the genre, it's clear that the series took serious inspiration from Frank Herbert's celebrated novel. As a result, it's not unreasonable to say that without Dune there would be no Star Wars as it exists today.

Released in 1965, Dune was initially something of a slow-burner. In fact, compared to other contemporary science fiction works, the story took some time to find its audience. However, in years since, the story of Paul Atreides has been recognized as one of the most significant and influential works in the entirety of science fiction, spawning several adaptations and pale imitations. Set on the desert planet of Arrakis, the saga centers around the mythical substance spice – a drug capable of imbuing enhanced consciousness and facilitating intergalactic travel. The story also incorporates elements of religion, politics and philosophy, causing comparisons to everything from Game of Thrones to The Lord of the Rings.

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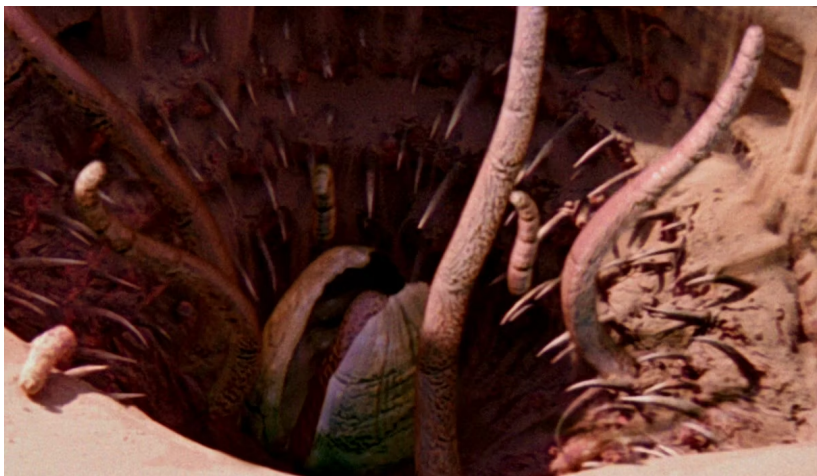
the novel's widespread acclaim, its influence has permeated many aspects of culture. However, perhaps because of its shared genre, the book's most obvious influence is probably the *Star Wars* universe. In fact, in the 2003 *Herbert* *Reader of Dune*, written by his son Brian, it is claimed that "(Herbert) & the other *Dune* writers who thought they saw their work in Lucas's movie formed a loose organization that my father called, with his tongue firmly placed in his cheek, the *We're Too Close to George Lucas Society*." This demonstrates the clear parallels that Herbert himself drew between his work and the *Star Wars* movies. Upon closer inspection, it's clear that he made a claim. Here is everything that *Star Wars* took from *Dune*.

Tatooine



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- ✕ most obvious similarity between the two is the setting. *Dune's* defining feature is to clipboard environment of Arrakis, which boasts oceans of sand in place of actual water.
- + Tatooine seems to have a slightly more prosperous population and natural
- + at the physical and climatological similarities between the two planets are
- + ditionally, one of Tatooine's most famous characteristics is the twin suns that
- + ie horizon. While Arrakis only orbits a single star, it does have two prominent
- + h may have influenced Lucas' thinking about Tatooine.



Both *Dune* and *Star Wars* boast an array of incredible and terrifying creatures. However, none are perhaps more iconic than Arrakis' gigantic sandworms, which can grow to several hundreds of meters long and are even used as a means of transportation by the planet's local Fremen people. Although there are no direct equivalents in the *Star Wars* universe, the sandworms do share some characteristics with the infamous Sarlacc pit from the *Return of the Jedi*. Although the Sarlacc's complete physiology is never fully revealed, the creature's sharp teeth bear a striking resemblance to those of the sandworms, from which the Fremen make their fabled Kris knives. To make the comparison even more concrete, the Sarlacc itself even lives in a region of Tatooine known as the Dune Sea.

Spice

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most important plot points in *Dune* is the so-called spice melange, a mind-altering substance that allows for interstellar travel and that's only known source – at least in the first part of the story – is on the planet Arrakis. Possession of the spice influences everything in the world of *Dune*. It is one of the factors that shapes the Harkonnen/Atreides feud at the center of the story. Although the spice of *Star Wars* is not as significant to the overall plot as the spice of *Dune*, George Lucas' films do feature so-called spice mines on the planet Kessel, a clear connection between the two works.



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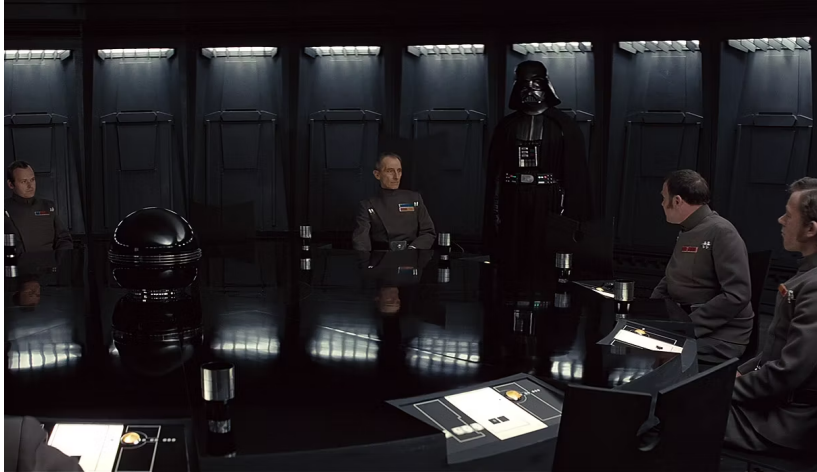
Star Wars Season 7 Shows A Very Different Side Of Kessel

Uncle Owen's Job



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 In the arid sandflats of Tatooine, Owen Lars worked as a moisture farmer in the desert, ably assisted by his nephew, Luke Skywalker, and – for a limited time – by the droids R2-D2 and C-3PO. Although Lars' profession initially seems like fairly unremarkable backstory, it is actually another example of the link between the franchise and Dune. On Arrakis, devices known as dew collectors allow the inhabitants to harvest water in a way that most exactly mimics the function of the moisture farmers of Tatooine.



In Star Wars, the Empire serves as the clear antagonists of the story, subjugating planets and dissenters. However, although they remain one of the most iconic villains in the franchise, the Empire owes a clear debt to *Dune's* Imperium. As the center of political power in the galaxy, the Imperium is arguably a slightly more morally ambiguous presence than the Empire. However, the Padashar Emperor's clear ambition and aggression towards the novel's protagonists firmly places them in opposition – much like *Star Wars*'s Galactic Empire.

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The Rebel Alliance

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ars and *Dune* feature guerilla warbands fighting for freedom from the oppression
 alist incursion. However, while the Rebel Alliance owes a clear debt to
 en, there are differences between the two. For instance, *Star Wars'* rebels are
 all corners of the galaxy, whereas *Dune's* initially hail entirely from Arrakis.
 , the presence of freedom fighters in both works provides another unmistakable

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Not only do both *Star Wars* and *Dune* feature an oppressive empire, but both versions also
 boast their own crack troops. Although the fighting abilities of *Star Wars'* stormtroopers have
 been much-debated, what is undeniable is that they share some clear similarities with the
 Imperium's Sardaukar. Both sets of soldiers are supposed to represent an elite fighting force
 that is feared throughout the galaxy. Although the two designs are quite different, there can be
 no doubt the stormtrooper concept owes a debt to *Dune*.

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ing a ceremony in Star Wars: A New Hope.



r's Princess Leia is one of the most significant characters in the entire *Star Wars* franchise, driving the narrative throughout. Although her role as a strong and iconic rebel leader is unquestionable, it's also clear that there are undoubted similarities between her character and *Dune's* Alia Atreides. The younger sibling of main protagonist Paul – which, in itself, suggests another *Star Wars* connection thanks to Luke and Leia's familial bond – is a serious character, blessed with preternatural insight and mind control abilities. Similarly, Leia is not only a close relation of the *Star Wars* protagonist Luke, but is also Force-sensitive, suggesting that the link between them and *Dune* is more than just etymological.

Jedi Mind Tricks

 Obi Wan fools a trooper in A New Hope

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ing influence of The Force can be felt throughout the *Star Wars* story.



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... the equivalent of an omnipresent spiritual power, there are traits of The
hout the story – one of which is the ability to practice mind control. Certain
the story, such as Paul and his mother, the Lady Jessica, are capable of layering
; their voices in such a way as to be able to influence and control others. While
; grant them the ability to move objects with their minds, it does bear a striking
to Obi Wan's ability to control the stormtroopers on Tatooine.



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Jedi Council in Star Wars Phantom Menace



in the prequel trilogy, the Jedi order is revealed to sit adjacent to politics, offering counsel to political leaders while subtly influencing affairs from the sidelines. Similarly, the world of *Dune* is shepherded by the Bene Gesserit cult – a matriarchal group manipulating events behind the scenes and often accused of witchcraft. Much like the Jedi, Bene Gesserit members can be found throughout the galaxy, highlighting their importance to the world of *Dune*. Though the all-female make-up of the Bene Gesserit differs from the Jedi order, both groups' status as pseudo-religious organizations demonstrates another clear connection.

The Chosen One

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lightsaber ignited, stands on rocks near a river of lava in Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith

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biggest link between the Bene Gesserit and the Jedi, beyond their spirituality, is quest for a so-called "Chosen One". In the world of Star Wars, it is said that this ing balance to the Force and cause the destruction of the Jedi's enemies, the Sith. the Bene Gesserit believe that their Kwisatz Haderach will bring about the the human race – a process that the group attempts to initiate by means of ipulation. Although there are differences, the presence of a messianic figure in ses is probably more than a mere coincidence.



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Star Wars Reveals Palpatine Wasn't Lying To Anakin About Darth Plagueis

"I am your Father"

The 'I am your father' twist in The Empire Strikes Back

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's revelation about Luke Skywalker's true parentage in *The Empire Strikes Back* is to clipboard
 scenes in movie history. However, although the dramatic moment
 ic, it perhaps wouldn't have existed at all without *Dune*. Much like the shocking
 ud City, it is explained halfway through *Dune* that Paul Atreides is actually the
 is sworn enemy, Baron Vladimir Harkonnen. Although it is not Vladimir himself
 s this information, the role of heritage for both Paul in *Dune* and Luke in *Star*
 ghts how the two stories remain closely connected.



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ectic career incorporating scuba diving, cheffing and teaching, Tommy eventually found his calling as a writer. With
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