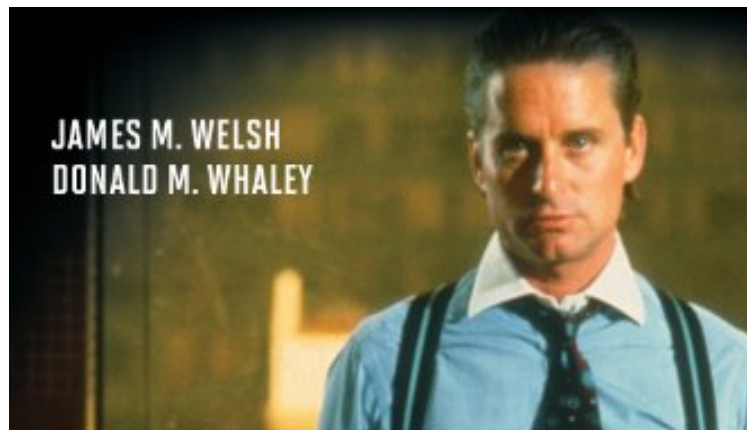


(Download pdf) The Oliver Stone Encyclopedia


The Oliver Stone Encyclopedia

James M. Welsh, Donald M. Whaley
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THE OLIVER STONE ENCYCLOPEDIA



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James M. Welsh, Donald M. Whaley : The Oliver Stone Encyclopedia before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oliver Stone Encyclopedia:

Oliver Stone has written and directed many memorable films while also developing a reputation for tackling controversial subjects, such as the Turkish prison system (Midnight Express), the Vietnam war (Platoon and Born on the Fourth of July), insider trading (Wall Street), presidential assassination (JFK), and a voyeuristic media (Natural Born Killers). Along the way, Stone has been nominated for more than 10 Academy Awards and three times received

Oscars for his work. In *The Oliver Stone Encyclopedia*, James M. Welsh and Donald M. Whaley provide an overarching evaluation of Stone's work as screenwriter, producer, and director. While the entries in this volume address all of the usual aspects of Stone's career, they also explore new avenues of critical evaluation, especially influences such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Buddhism, which Stone converted to in the 1990s. In addition, this volume traces Stone's obsession with Latin American politics, evident in his film *Salvador* (1986), his screenplay for Alan Parkes's *Evita* (1996), and the documentaries *Commandante* (2003), *Looking for Fidel* (2004), and *South of the Border* (2010). Each entry is followed by a bibliography of published sources, both in print and online. A comprehensive and engaging examination of the director, *The Oliver Stone Encyclopedia* will appeal to scholars and fans alike as the most comprehensive reference on this director's body of work.

From *Booklist*: This detailed, well-cited work presents the minutiae of Stone's philosophies and career, particularly in relation to five themes: corporate greed, Vietnam, U.S. foreign policy and Latin America, corruption in politics and government, and the media. While it's not unbiased—Welsh and Whaley are confessed fans of Stone, and criticism of his work is often scathingly described (for example, a feminist reviewer is described as “screeching” in her displeasure with a Stone movie; other reviewers are dismissed because they apparently just didn't understand Stone's vision)—it is concise. Although its goal is to be a resource for fans and scholars alike, it contains only sparse black-and-white images and feels a bit dry for the average movie buff. Recommended for larger public libraries and academic libraries supporting a film-studies program. —Emily Weak

The entries are well written and thoughtful. ... This work is recommended for comprehensive public and academic library film collections. (*American Reference Books Annual*) This detailed, well-cited work presents the minutiae of Stone's philosophies and career, particularly in relation to five themes: corporate greed, Vietnam, U.S. foreign policy and Latin America, corruption in politics and government, and the media. While it's not unbiased—Welsh and Whaley are confessed fans of Stone ... it is concise. Its goal is to be a resource of fans and scholars alike. ... Recommended for larger public libraries and academic libraries supporting a film studies program. (*Booklist*) Welsh (independent scholar) and Whaley (formerly, Salisbury Univ.), who wrote all the entries in this volume, pride themselves on having created a personalized encyclopedia rather than an objective, authoritative work. They aim “to re-create the intellectual world behind [Oliver] Stone's films” by researching the “literary, cinematic, philosophical” sources that have influenced the filmmaker. The authors offer their essay on Gabriel Garcia Marquez as a model; other examples examine *Viva Zapata*, James Dean, *The Red Badge of Courage*, and Sam Peckinpah in the context of Stone's work, e.g., Dean and Peckinpah as inspirations for *Natural Born Killers*. The encyclopedia also contains many brief entries for actors, photographers, and others with whom Stone has worked. The longest entries, which run several pages, are devoted to Stone's films, including the background, plot synopsis, critique, and description of the critical reception of each title. A few entries seem tenuous, e.g., Camille Paglia is included, apparently on the basis of having referenced Stone's *The Doors* in a review of a book about the band. The focus on cultural texts and figures that have influenced the director, a cultural icon himself, make this encyclopedia a unique addition for film studies collections. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Lower- and upper-level undergraduates; general readers. (CHOICE) The A-Z entries are enjoyable, not a word I usually use for an encyclopedia. Going back to the print versus online encyclopedia arguments, this encyclopedia has the true ‘browsing’ quality which the directness of the online encyclopedia lacks, and probably, will forever lack. Not only do the A-Z entries include all of the films, producers, actors, personalities, etc., but there are entries for notable films that Stone has influenced (doubtless there are many others). ... There are numerous black and white illustrations in this book which is laid out well with a good size and clear type font. . . . there are two enjoyable appendices. . . . The book ends with a selected bibliography, and an extremely thorough index. ... I found this book thoroughly enjoyable. I could talk forever about it — there are so many gems in the A-Z entries. There is a point in the introduction where the author-editors refer to themselves in writing the book as ‘we have struggled through this book’. I can think of quite a number of works where it may well have been a struggle for the author, but where the reading is a struggle for the reader. This is, happily, not one of those works; it is thorough but perfectly readable and a work that strongly deserves a wide readership. I would have no hesitation in placing it among film books in a public library as well as recommending it for students of the cinema and film studies courses at university and college. It really is a great read. (Reference s) About the Author James M. Welsh is co-editor of *The Literature/Film Reader* (Scarecrow, 2007) and *The Francis Ford Coppola Encyclopedia* (Scarecrow, 2010). Donald M. Whaley, retired, directed the American Studies program at Salisbury University (Maryland) and was guest editor of the Vietnam War issue of *Literature/Film Quarterly*.