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First off, I'd like to say that I'm highly insulted that MY apologies weren't offered when I missed the deadline for the last issue of SE. For shame, Cheree, leaving me out like that. ((Ed's note: I would henceforce like to apologize for Annie Wortham. She can't help how she is. People like her just have to be humored.)) Even the infamous Nenni Henni gets better treatment at your hands--and she even got to have her letter first and an article on the front page last time. Jeez, there's no justice in the universe. What's worse, certain people seem to think that my "feud" with Jenni constitutes a COMPLAINT and to have taken exception to it--well, the more fool they. If they can't tell that Jenni and I are GOOD friends then they're pretty dense. Why don't you people take exception to some of the REAL mud-slinging that's going on? Jenni and I are trying to show you how silly it all is but you're obviously NOT listening...

Hmmmm, as to whether or not I MALIGNED poor Mark Hamill in the piece I wrote about him--I hardly think so. I enjoyed his performance, as I enjoy all his performances, and I wasn't aware that I had stated otherwise. I simply reported the facts in regard to the way he acted following the performance I saw of HARRIGAN 'N HART. I certainly didn't make any judgments about the man and I resent anyone trying to say that I did. I must reiterate, however, that he was accompanied by a bodyguard. Not only do I have witnesses in the form of other fans who were there with me (all of them, incidentally, Mark Hamill fans) but Mark himself has talked about his bodyguard in interviews. Anthony Daniels has also talked about having to "get past" Mark's bodyguard in order to visit his friend. Frankly, if the large burly man who had his arms wrapped completely around Mark WASN'T his bodyguard, then I must conclude that (a) Mark has a penchant for other men or (b) Mark's wife is very strange looking. Well, enough of that. The folks who seemed to think I'd maligned their "hero" really could have told us all about their experiences with Mark and his play and not been rude about it. Oh, one more thing: Leah Rosenthal and the New York crowd may be many things, but they have NEVER been mundanes.

Ah, on happier subjects, I was appalled to learn that Sally Smith has antenna, too. You poor thing. Aren't they a pain?

Lin Ward: Next time you sit next to me, you'll know that you should ask me what I've been up to! I get into (and usually out of) everything imaginable in the course of the year. No telling what will have happened by the next time you see me!

Personally, I enjoyed all the articles in SE#9, especially Jenni's (but don't tell her I said so). It was nice to see Linda Billington's article, too. You didn't tell me she was a reporter when you introduced us, Cheree! Jeez, I would have worn make up or something! ((Ed: That's because I wanted her to get the REAL story on you, Annie!))

I don't have much else to say this time around--I'm doing the production work on my fourth zine in less than a year and am literally worn out. Except, I haven't said it in a while so I'll say it now: thanks for a good letterzine, Cheree--an UNbiased one, at that. I'll be around complaining and making your life miserable for a while yet...



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October 5, 1985

I suspect that this will be a grab bag letter this time as I comment on all the checkmarks in #9.

SF fandom is indeed overwhelmingly male, as Jeannie Webster points out; though the proportions are not as lopsided as they were 30 years ago, they're still pretty high toward the masculine side. Why this should be the case has been a matter of discussion on and off in SF fandom for a while. It may be the nature of the material, although the SF=gadgets and hardware, media=characters and cultures is a little simplistic by now. SF has not been "gadgets and hardware", except for one strain sometimes called the "Analog story," since the 1940's; and since the 1960's, science hasn't played that big a part either (to the dismay of the SF fans). The image of SF has certainly never attracted women and girls, though, whatever its content. Whether or not girls liked or were encouraged to like science itself, old SF magazines with half-naked women and assorted phallic symbols were not likely to draw their interest the way boys and young men were attracted. I've been reading SF for 24 years, and I still don't like the conventional packaging even though I know the packaging is a convention and does not necessarily reflect a book's content. A young girl at the age when SF is most attractive--young teens--is likely to be even more put off, kids at that age being concerned about

social acceptability and girls probably more so than boys.

Does this mean I think the superficial aspects of SF--book covers and so on--are partly responsible for the dearth of women in SF? Yes, it does. I suspect a lot of girls would like what they found inside the covers if they could get beyond the covers. But as long as the primary audience for SF is teenage boys, covers of SF books will be designed to catch their interest--just as the covers of romance novels are designed to attract adult women, and the covers of a certain sort of fantasy are aimed at younger women. This sets up a vicious circle of sorts. Of course, I think that Jeannie's point about girls not being encouraged to like science or things connected with it is also part of the reason why there are not many girls in SF fandom. Interestingly, among younger women who suffer less of that expectation, interest in SF is still not very high. For instance, among the computer types at work, almost all the young (early to mid-20's) men read SF; none of the young women do. In the next age group up, a large percentage of men read SF, but only 3 or 4 of the women do. Do I understand this? No. I love SF, and my favorite kind of SF is the "hard" kind (but not gadget stories!), which makes me rare even among female SF fans.

An article in AMERICAN FILM a few months ago about the portrayal of India in films touched on the discussion of Indiana Jones and India. The author, an Indian himself, was much more upset by movies such as A PASSAGE TO INDIA that purported to be both more historically accurate and more serious (which is often equated by audiences and critics with "true") than with INDIANA JONES. He wasn't too happy with IJ, but he felt that, on the evidence of their other films, neither Lucas nor Spielberg was guilty of anything more than insensitivity; more important, he didn't think anyone was going to take the movie as an authentic portrayal of India and its people. But he was very disturbed by A PASSAGE TO INDIA because it was serious, its portrayal of India was ultimately more negative although superficially positive, and its director had uttered statements in public that led the author of the article to strongly suspect him of racism (e.g., he changed characterizations from those in the book deliberately to emphasize the "silliness" of the Indians and the "nobility" of the British).

But unconscious Force users do believe in whatever they think explains their unusual abilities, or luck, or whatever. They don't believe in the Force, true, but they're also not trying to use the Force deliberately, as Luke was when Yoda made the comment to him about unbelief. If they did try to use the Force--if they could be brought to try something they think doesn't exist--they would probably fail for the same reason Luke failed to raise the x-wing.

Why did Ben train Vader, instead of Yoda? I think it was implied in his explanation to Luke in ROTJ, that he did so out of pride: that is, he thought he could be just as good a teacher as Yoda. The further implication is that his taking on Vader as a student was not a usual thing. One could speculate that Obi-Wan recognized Anakin Skywalker's great talent and lusted after the glory that would reflect on himself as the teacher of such a potent Jedi. It's possible that, had he not disincorporated and removed himself from the physical fray, he would have attempted to teach Luke himself rather than directing Luke to Yoda. And he might have failed

again, creating a second Vader. Of course, he might have succeeded this time, knowing his errors the first time.

I have no trouble seeing Leia as a brilliant 16-year-old senator even without the Force, if she has been trained to rule all her life, as presumably she has been (being the daughter of the Viceroy of Alderaan, with no siblings ever mentioned). It's only the 20th century, and to a lesser extent the 18th and 19th, that assumes that teenagers are still children and incapable of great deeds. In earlier times, a 15-year-old might have been considered an adult. For instance, King Arthur in the legends (not T. H. White's version) is traditionally 15 years old when he assumes the kingship and wins his first battles; by the time he is 21, he has subdued most of Great Britain. Joan of Arc was a teenager. Alexander the Great was winning battles when he was not much older than 16 and had conquered the whole known world when he died at only 33. Victoria was only 18 when she became Queen. Children with the expectation of rule ahead of them are raised from early childhood to be capable of exercising rule by their teens, if necessary. It frequently is.

Back to SF for a minute--Sally Syrjala is right that I participate in SF fandom. However, I didn't exactly cross over from media fandom; I discovered media fandom and SF fandom within 3 months of each other in 1973, and I've been at least a sporadic participant in SF fandom ever since--attending cons, publishing an apazine. Many of the people I know who are active in both fandoms are like me, people who discovered both relatively simultaneously, not people who started as media fans and then became SF fans as well. There are some of the latter, including a couple of BNF SF fans who like to deny their long ago origins in SF fandom. Their names shall remain anonymous...

Darth Vader could also have known--or deduced with a high degree of probability--that Luke made his own lightsaber because he knew what happened to the others and knew that there were none around for Luke to find after his own was lost on Bespin. Depending on how he betrayed the Jedi, he might have been in a position to acquire or destroy most of the extant lightsabers at the time of the Jedi's destruction.

Liz Sharpe raises an interesting point about the loss of Luke's hand being a possible sacrifice to the guardian of the underworld and a prerequisite to wisdom. What does Luke learn? He learns who he really is, something many traditional heroes have also had to learn. He also learns that who he is as a person does not depend on who he is biologically--even if Darth Vader cannot be "returned" to Anakin Skywalker, the idealized father, Luke is still an honorable man and the loving son of Anakin. Beyond that, he learns that he too has a Dark Side and that it can be seductive, but also that it can be controlled. That may be the hardest thing he has to learn, in fact: self-illusions are the hardest of all to face and acknowledge for what they are.

Hmm I wonder if, traditionally, the descent into hell did not symbolize exactly this kind of self-knowledge: the facing of the dark and anti-life elements in one's own personality. Luke's descent is more psychological than metaphorical, but it does have all the traditional elements of some form. Of course the hero would not return happier, however much wiser, because he would have learned of his own capacity for evil. But many of the cultures who have such traditions (and it isn't just Greco-Roman; there have been versions of the descent in

many societies, including the Sumerian, one of the earliest on record, and the Celtic) would not have valued happiness above wisdom; they would consider it a failing of our culture that we do.

Another point to be made about Luke's losing his hand, one which ties into his learning who he is, is that the loss symbolizes castration; in this case, it symbolizes Luke's castration by his own father--in other words, he is still a child, not yet the equal of his father. The father can still "unman" him. By the end of ROTJ, Luke has become an adult and can "unman" his father, again symbolically. And by unmanning his father, he recognizes the kinship to what his father has done to him and thus his own capacity to become what his father has become. I like the way this symbol is used, perhaps more than any other in SW, because it's one of the more complex ones and works on several levels simultaneously. (Did Lucas know the unhanding of Luke was a symbol of castration? According to Dale Pollock, he not only knew it, he was so worried that it was too obvious and would scare small children that he called in Bruno Bettelheim as a consultant. Bettelheim's opinion was that children would, in fact, unconsciously understand what was going on but that the scene was not too scary.)

Comment on Cheree's comments about Lancelot: Lancelot's first known appearance is in a romance (story) by Chretien de Troyes, c. 1190, in which he appears as the rescuer of Guinevere when she is abducted by an evil knight. In the next 100 years, a vast number of stories grew up around him in France; these are collectively called the "prose Lancelot", and many have still not been translated into English. Lancelot was not as popular in England, possibly because he was a French creation and addition to the "matter of Britain". In a telling of the Arthurian legend written about the same time as Chretien by Layamon, Lancelot does not appear. Malory makes Lancelot a major character because he drew heavily on the French sources, more than on the English; and T. H. White based THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING on Malory. Geoffrey of Monmouth's HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF BRITAIN was written c. 1150; Guinevere figures in the story largely for two reasons: it is by marrying her that Arthur gains the round table (it's a wedding present from Guinevere's father), and it is by kidnapping and threatening to marry her that Mordred precipitates the final conflict with Arthur. In slightly later versions of the tale, there is the implication that Mordred and Guinevere had been adulterously involved, or that Arthur believed that they had been.

I agree with Liz that TOAFK and even Malory, because he compiled from so many marginally related sources--are not the best places to go for the Arthurian legends. On the other hand, it is possible that TOAFK could have been a source if it were the only version of the story Lucas and the other writers of SW were familiar with. I find this unlikely--Lucas seems to be enough of a purist to go to original sources, or at least as original as he can get; and even the secondary sources about Arthur dismiss TOAFK--but it's possible.

It may be that Yoda's comment that "now matters are worse" indicates that he didn't believe Luke would be successful--as I suspect Ben didn't believe. It also may be what we may politely call a slip in the continuity--a set-up line for something that didn't, in the end, come off, for whatever reason. In a reference to Yoda possibly not believing that Luke could survive a confrontation with Vader at that point: it seems clear that Yoda

cannot see the future exactly, perhaps even that the future is of such a nature that it cannot be seen precisely. What he saw when Luke left may, in fact, have been worse; but it doesn't seem to have come about. Ben never believes in Luke's ability to succeed where he had failed, as can be seen in the conversation in which he reveals a little of the past to Luke. He believes Vader is irrevocably evil and that Luke will have to kill him. Luke, on the other hand, believes that Vader can be turned--and he does not fail this time, because he does believe. In other words, all of this indicates that the SW universe is not determinist; even one who (theoretically) has the ability to see the future can be wrong about the future.

On this matter of incest: first, I agree with Marlene Karkoska. While the subject was hinted at in SW, it was never developed and is simply not an issue. It was raised in a previous letter as a red herring, in my opinion.

However, I want to play devil's advocate about the entire subject. (I realize I'm now about to descend to the ninth and last circle of hell in some people's opinion, but I've always been able to cope reasonably well with cold...) It is true that all human cultures have condemned incest. However, they haven't all defined it the same way. In some cultures--ancient Egyptian, for instance--brother/sister mating was not only not condemned, it was recommended (among the later Egyptians, it was mandatory in the royal family to concentrate the godly essence). In several mythologies, the original gods were created as brother/sister mates, and from these "incestuous" unions sprang all the other gods; examples are Sumerian, Egyptian and Japanese mythologies. About the only relationship that has been universally considered incest and condemned is parent/child, possibly because of the element of coercion involved and possibly because it disturbs the natural hierarchy.

In relation to SW, of course, it's permissible to apply contemporary Western standards, because it was made primarily for a contemporary Western audience, and secondarily for a contemporary Eastern audience that no longer shares its ancestors' beliefs about brother/sister mating. No matter how one argued that not all cultures condemned what we consider incest, Lucas could not have made a movie that contained overt or strongly covert incest between a brother and sister. That's simply pragmatism. But I do think it's worth pointing out that our definitions of incest are not the only ones there are, and brother/sister incest in particular has been practiced or tolerated by other societies.

Also agree with Marlene's "theory" about the Han/Luke controversy and so on, and commend her guts in stating it openly, under her own name.

I don't think the reason we can't "solve" SW yet is that George L. has twisted all the pieces, as in a Rubik's cube, but that we don't have all the pieces yet.

I'm a little puzzled by Tim's complaint that the house of George McFly, in BACK TO THE FUTURE, looked like something out of BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS, and was therefore not the house of a fan or pro writer. Umm, is there a rule that fans' houses have to look a certain way? By Tim's standards, my home is decidedly non-fannish (though there are SF paintings on the wall of the living room, they're rather subdued and some are not immediately recognizable as having fantastic themes). The office is rather more fannish, with posters and so on all over the place--and, even if a SF writer has to

have a certain sort of house, who's to say, in BTTF, that McFly's office isn't fancish? We get to see only the living room, dining room, and kitchen of the new and improved house at the end of the movie.

It may be true that in one of the early versions of SW, Luke and Han were brothers--no, I'm sorry, that's an inference--that there were two brothers in SW, the older of whom comes for the younger, and that the two of them go looking for their father. It's also true that in the first draft of ANH, Han Solo was a green lizard, and that in other versions he was a grizzled mercenary. Leia is about 12 or 13 in the early versions, and in another version she's the character who is trying to rescue her brother. These are all very interesting, and do throw light on what eventually made it to the screen. Lucas may indeed never throw away an idea--certainly lots of people have made that comment about him--but the ideas don't always show up as one would expect, certainly not as one would like.

Finally--though there are lots more check marks, probably enough for another four or five pages!--in answer to Maggie's implied question: AGAINST THE SITH came out a few weeks before SKYWALKER, no more than six. Neither was the first SW fanzine, exactly. The very first fanzine was a small, poorly produced effort out of Long Beach, called THE FORCE; it was more like a traditional SF fanzine in that it didn't have much fiction. It was also what is bluntly called in SF fandom, a crudzine. The first fanzine to print all SW fiction, though admittedly as a single issue of a fanzine that was not devoted to SW to the exclusion of all else, was MOONBEAM 3, which came out in the late fall of 1977 or the early spring of 1978--before either AGAINST THE SITH or SKYWALKER, at any rate. SKYWALKER was certainly in preparation by then, however; it began in September, 1977.

I WANT MY LIGHTSABER!

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October 1, 1985

Hello, everybody! Hope everybody is enjoying "fall." We've just had our first cool spell and it is wonderful!

I missed writing on SE#8 and just wanted to say, thank you, Jean Stevenson, for your comments on the Wormie/King Arthur connection! They were enjoyable!

Enjoyed Jenni's article on lightsabers. Instead of "I want my MTV", it's "I want my lightsaber!"

Also enjoyed the clips on pages 6 and 7 from MediaWest*Con. Thanks for including them!

Jeannie Webster: Enjoyed your comments about Empire/Nazi Germany. I think even now, the Republic will try to put on trial Imperials for their part in the Empire. And what if they try to "blame" Luke, i.e., he is Vader's son, it's his responsibility, too. SCARY!

Ronda Henderson: And how about Luke's black glove? It sends shivers up my spine! Whoa! I love Darth, too. I've always been attracted to

him. What is it about a man in black?? Liked your comments about Falcon/Hepburn.

Lin Ward: I really enjoyed your letter. You brought up some interesting ideas. I especially like your idea about Leia leading a "splinter" group. It sounds very feasible to me.

Sally Syrjala: Hey! I really love your explanation of "Wormie". I think it's the best so far. He went through so much pain, turmoil and emotional gut-wrenching. It makes a lot of sense.

Michelle Malkin: On the subject of Imperials being represented in the New Republic (sort of), I imagine a lot of these guys were just ordinary people from Podunkville. Probably drafted or maybe even forced into serving the Empire. I'm sure a lot of Imperials were glad when the Rebellion was over!

While reading Michelle's comments on the Luke screaming/begging issue, I decided to put in my two cents' worth on this "electrifying" subject. First and foremost, Luke was in PAIN. My husband works on blue-line machines and he got fried last year. He got shocked with 220 volts, 15 to 20 amps. It burnt a hole in his hand. Now, it may not have been electricity per se, that the Emperor was throwing Luke's way, but it had to be very similar. I've discussed this with Buzz and he said he called out a few names. Father and Mother were two of them! Luke had to be in pain, real electricity or not. And it had to have been more than the equivalent of 220 volts. I don't think he was begging Darth/Anakin to save him. I think he was yelling the first thing to come to his mind, what anyone in a lot of pain would do. There, I've said it and I feel much better.

Carolyn Gollledge: Enjoyed your letter. My personal feelings on Luke being a virgin... I just believe he is. He is so shy around Leia in ANH and when she kisses him for luck, that look! And he hasn't had much time for girls either, by the look of it. Lars works him hard everyday. I mean, working him hard moisture-farming (sorry, I couldn't resist). I haven't found any proof that he was (except for those Jedi briefs Jenni was hanging on her rearview...hee) but I believe he was/is.

Marlene Karkoska: Enjoyed your letter. Thanks for the tip on the story in SOUTHERN KNIGHTS. That zine is in my pile just waiting to be read. Liked your "murder" reply to Brin. And the last part of your letter did not bore me. It was very informative.

Lisa Thomas: Hi! Thanks for the birthday wish. Your "Girl Gives Birth to Cabbage Patch Doll" had me in stitches!! Enjoyed your letter. (I promise I'll write soon.) I loved ULTRA MAN. I wish it would come on again. I watched it after school everyday!!

Carole Regine: I love the aliens persuading GL to tell their story! Could I get copies of that from you? I agree with your second mistake about underestimating Luke. They did seem to think he was hopeless. He proved them wrong, though.

Yeah, Cheree! I'll be waiting for TREMOR #3 and "The Dark Side of the Force". I'm a glutton for emotional turmoil!

Cindy Rodriguez: I was at a Rick Springfield concert at which Corey Hart was the opening act. The girls that I went with didn't know I liked SW. During Corey's act, one of them punched my arm and said, "Doesn't he look just like a punk Han Solo?"

BACK TO THE FUTURE was the first movie, since the SW trio, that when I was through I thought... whoosh, what a trip! I felt like I was in all the

action with Marty. I great flick!

Tim Blaes: Hi! Enjoyed your letter. I loved TWILIGHT ZONE. It was everything I thought it would be and more. I love the beginning. I enjoyed AMAZING STORIES. But I thought at the end they ruined it with the wife running around like a real ditz (I'm commenting on the first episodes). I'm anxious to see more of each. I especially want to see the "Gramma" episode of TZ. The King story is scary. I read that the people reading the script got terrified. And the girls transferring the script to word processor had to stop and give it to someone else to do. I can't wait!!!

Sally Smith: Yep, I bought that magazine! I'll get the copies to you soon...I hope.

Maggie Nowakowska: Enjoyed your letter. I had never heard of the "Duncan scandal". It shed some light.

Loved the cartoon on page 52. After my heart, eh?

Well, it's been fun. And to quote my favorite singer, Adam Ant: "Look out rockers going STAR WARS".

Opinions on the EWOK and DROIDS cartoon? I think they ruined C3PO by giving him facial expressions.

One more for Tim: How about Conan the Barbarian vs. the Terminator (with Arnie playing both parts)??

"DROIDS" -- TOO FAMILIAR

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October 15, 1985

Lots to say, so I'll get right to it...

EWOKS AND DROIDS ADVENTURE HOUR: "Ewoks" is cute kidfare, nothing more, nothing less than I'd expected, but "Droids" is another matter. R2 and 3PO, other familiar faces, familiar ships, reference to the Empire and the Alliance, have all combined to give me a feeling of being "so near and yet so far"! In the case of one episode, I had a feeling of *deja vu*: walls closing on on characters...Jan stopping short at the edge of a walkway that suddenly runs out... The episode entitled "The New King" was too familiar! Yet, I'm enjoying this cartoon series more than I'd thought I would. Did anyone notice (probably everyone noticed!) the chairbound villain's resemblance to an earlier version of Jabba the Hutt? I'd like to know how this villain acquired an Imperial Shuttle. By theft? From the Empire as payment for services rendered? From Kenner Toy Corp. because they want to generate interest in nice, but expensive, toy ships that they couldn't unload on the public last Christmas? Kenner's already put out new toys in connection with these cartoons and one of the new items is an improved toy lightsaber. Does this mean there's hope that we'll see Vader, other dark lords or fugitive Jedi? Appearances, in the series, by the Max Rebo Band, Boba Fett, IG-88, have left me waiting

and wondering, who's next? Ackbar, Mon Mothma, Bail Organa?

Upcoming First Trilogy Film: When I saw the newspaper article (Philadelphia Inquirer) in which GL promised a new SW film by '88, my excited babbling rivaled 3PO's. Geez, I'm gonna laugh, cry, cheer and spend too much money, all over again! Has the OSWFC confirmed that there'll be a new SW movie by 1988?

Ronda Henderson: We could argue forever about C3PO but we seem to agree on just about everything else--especially black capes and Luke's body! I enjoyed M. Stewart's Merlin novels and I love Herbert's DUNE series. (As for DUNE, the movie, all I can say is, Aarrgggh, yuk!) Have you read HERETICS OF DUNE? If so, did you catch the line on page 331 referring to an object in the Dune universe? Quote: "He's a three P-O," they said, meaning that such a person surrounded himself with cheap copies made from declassé substances."

No comments here...I'm just quoting Frank Herbert.

Still with you, Ronda. I liked your comparison of Vader to a caged lion and your description of Yoda as "an irascible old goat." On fan fiction: Yes, I agree, there are always possibilities. I just dislike stories that seem to use--abuse--one character for the purpose of showing another character's virtues. You know, stories that seem to say Luke/Han/Darth/Kirk/Spock/whoever is a real horse's ass but look how brave, intelligent, noble (fill in blank) is, by comparison.

Lin Ward: Interesting questions you ask! I think Ben (rather than Yoda) trained Anakin because, as Ben said, "I thought I could instruct him as well as Yoda." Since I don't believe that Yoda was omniscient, I suspect he didn't know that Ben had taken an apprentice of Anakin's exceptional potential. Danaline Bryant and I (in private correspondence) have theorized that it was traditional for Jedi to take apprentices, but that apprentices of Anakin's powerful potential were turned over to masters of Yoda's level. We believe that Ben's pride prevented him from admitting, even to himself, that he'd bitten off more than he could chew and that he refused to admit he couldn't handle Anakin until it was too late. On a slight tangent: Ben seems to have compounded his original mistake, by trying to bring Anakin back into the fold himself, rather than asking for Yoda's help. One wonders if Yoda might've brought about a return of the Jedi before Anakin had fully become Darth Vader.

You're right about Vader and Leia. Vader gave no indication that he knew who Luke's sister was. I'd love to see this idea explored in an a/u ending and sequel to ROTJ.

Carolyn Gollidge: Hello, down there! Much enjoyed your letter and found the idea of reincarnation of Jedi, fascinating. Re: Yoda's comment, "Now things are worse...", I think this is further evidence that the SW films provide "food for thought, but not food for war." Unfortunately, almost any thing can be converted into a weapon. I'd enjoy the debates in SE so much more if some of the opinions didn't come with the childish notion that disagreement equals moral bankruptcy.

All Alone in the Universe Dept.: Am I the only person in fandom who admired Palpatine's nerve? He didn't bat an eye when Luke and Vader crossed sabers inches from his face. What made him that certain of Vader's speed and loyalty? If a Jedi slammed a saber down at my head, I'd be under the throne chair at lightspeed, no matter who was there to deflect the blow! ((Ed's note: Perhaps Palpatine had pro-

tected himself with a Force-shield and knew that nothing could penetrate it. After all, Luke had been told repeatedly not to underestimate the Emperor's power. If this is so, then it would probably have been consciously applied. It didn't prevent Vader from hurling him down the shaft because he was either occupied with zapping Luke and didn't detect DV's attack or he was using so much energy in zapping Luke that he lowered his shields. Opinions?))

Susan Henderson: By the time this letter sees print, I'll be 36. I'd consider myself an Alliance-side fan, but don't take that too seriously. In real life, I'd want to know a lot more about both sides before waving anyone's flag. Hey, what's this stuff about Alliance-side fans "whitewashing" Rebel characters? I've called Yoda a liar, Kenobi an arrogant bastard, and cast a few shadows on my favorite Sex Object, Luke... Honorable folks, moral lepers and everything-in-between exist on both sides of every war. I really enjoyed your comments on Imperial characters, a few letters ago. Made me look at them more carefully and think about them as individuals. Yes, it is a damned shame we didn't learn more about them on screen. Maybe the First Trilogy will fill in some of the gaps.

Jeannie Webster: Enjoyed your theory on how and why the Jedi Order was formed. Another thought: in the ANH novelization, Kenobi implied that Force-users had once been persecuted ("They were misunderstood by their fellows...and worse."). Perhaps the Jedi Order began to evolve when Force-users banded together for self-protection. This may have been the period when they'd developed their effective self-defense skills and adopted the lightsaber as their symbol. It's been suggested in fanfic that an order of Force-users predated the Jedi as represented on screen. Other fans suggest (and are supported by the ANH novel) that an order of dark lords co-existed with and outlived the Jedi Order. Perhaps, originally, a group of Force-users, concerned only with self-protection, grew dark with paranoia, but spawned an enlightened few; perhaps these few reached beyond self-interest and became self-appointed protection of all downtrodden beings. Supported by the grateful, these few may have grown to outnumber and later break from adherents to older, isolationist ways. An idealistic few may have, over centuries, become the lightside Jedi Order that guarded the galaxy from all threats, including the threat posed by an older order that didn't share the Jedi Knighthood's views. That older and shrunken order may have produced Palpatine and may have regarded him, and Vader, as deliverers from what they perceived as persecution by Jedi.

Well, SE#9 was full of many more things I'd like to comment on, but I'd better stop here while there's still space for other folks' comments.

Happy holidays to all!



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Hi, Everyone!

I was pleasantly surprised to find that most people seemed to basically agree with my position on Imperial involvement in the New Republican government. Frankly, I had expected to be blasted from all directions! Fortunately, my fears were unfounded (in one issue anyway!).

After considering the comments of Carole Regine, Carolyn Gollege, and Cindy Rodriguez about why they thought Ben Kenobi was wise not to tell Luke that Darth Vader was his father immediately, I've come to the conclusion that they may be right. If he had found out in Kenobi's hut on Tatooine that his father was alive, Luke might have sought him out and been lost to the Dark. As Cindy pointed out, at that time, Luke knew nothing about the Force, "...much less that there is a Light side and a Dark," and his unknown father was very important to the young man. However, I don't think that Ben should have told Luke lies or partial truths either. If he couldn't tell Luke that his father was the fallen Knight, Darth Vader, I don't think he should have told him that his father had been a Jedi and had been killed by Vader either. Giving Luke a more idealistic image of his father was a mistake, because it only meant that Luke was in for an even more rude awakening and a greater emotional fall later... And lies can only lessen one's credibility when discovered. Ben must have known that Luke would learn the truth eventually. I think it would have been better if Kenobi would have simply told Luke about the Force and Jedi Knights, and avoided discussing young Skywalker's father completely. I think Luke could easily have been persuaded to follow Ben even without the knowledge that his father had been a Jedi Knight. After all, Luke had yearned all his life for excitement and adventure. Accompanying a Jedi Knight on a dangerous mission and learning about the mysterious Force, not to mention possibly meeting and helping a beautiful Princess, would have been very tempting for a bold, very bored, idealistic young man, who was eager to leave the planet farthest from the "bright center of the Universe."

Although I'm willing to concede that it may not have been a good idea for Ben to tell Luke that Vader was his father at their initial meeting, I concur with Carole Regine that Ben and Yoda should have told Luke the truth on Dagobah before he left for Bespin. As Carole said, "Here their sound judgment reversed into stupidity." I heartily agree, Carole! ...And this is where I part company with Cindy Rodriguez. Not telling Luke the truth before he went to confront Vader was very UNWISE. Ben and Yoda were just fortunate that Luke was a strong enough individual that he was not totally destroyed by the Bespin ordeal and by what he must have looked upon as the betrayal of Ben and Yoda, whom he had trusted implicitly and whose guidance and teachings he had accepted. Yoda and Ben were lucky that their lies and withholding of the truth didn't DRIVE Luke to the Dark side. After all, if Luke's mentors couldn't be honest with him about something as important as his parentage, how could he be sure that anything Ben and Yoda had told him was true? ...And when Luke left, Kenobi and Yoda didn't seem to think that the Bespin experience would cause Luke to emerge stronger. Yoda even said, "Now matters are worse." He obviously hadn't

envisioned that Luke would successfully resist the Dark Side on Bespin or Yoda wouldn't have made that comment. I think Ben and Yoda were probably surprised and very relieved when they didn't lose Luke. No, I don't think they were wise to keep the truth from Luke. They were simply lucky that young Skywalker did not react in anger to their partial truths and manipulations and wasn't lost to the Dark because of them. Fortunately, he was patient, forgiving, and accepting.

Carole, you brought up a point that I had not considered before. You're right! Yoda did seem to die peacefully! He didn't wring his little green hands and moan and fret about what would happen to the Galaxy after he, the Jedi Master, left it. Perhaps Yoda had seen visions of a happy, bright future for the Jedi and the Galaxy. Although "always in motion is the future," it's possible that some events can be seen more clearly and definitely than others because all visions pertaining to certain events move in the same direction and point to the same outcome. Maybe Yoda was able to calmly and peacefully "join the Force" because he was confident that Luke would successfully confront Vader and the Emperor, and would be a good and worthy future Jedi Master and Founder of a New Order of Jedi Knights.

I found everyone's discussions about droids very interesting and informative. However, my personal position has not changed. As long as robots are programmed by their organic creators, they aren't totally free-thinking individuals with their own free wills, and they remain the inferiors of those organic creators. As Bev Clark pointed out in her letter, robots or droids only know what they're programmed to know; they can only learn to the extent that their programming allows them, and their "emotions" are limited by their programming as well. I agree with Bev's statement completely: "I could not regard as my moral equal a mechanical being whose moral choices depended on a program written by some intelligent, biological being no better or worse than me... As long as robots or droids are totally dependent on their biological creators or programmers for their individuality and so on, they are slaves in the deepest sense and I see nothing wrong with programming them to function as servants or with treating them as such." Robots or droids are created to serve man, and as Bev said, one of the major reasons robots are made is so that they can do things which would be dangerous for living beings. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with sending them into danger. Personally, I feel that Chewie, Admiral Ackbar, and Nien Nunb are the equals of Han, Luke, and Leia, but Threepio, Artoo, and Two-One-Bee are not. Chewie, Admiral Ackbar, Nien Nunb, Han, Luke, and Leia are not programmed by others, but Threepio, Artoo and Two-One Bee are.

Also, even though I realize that religion is a touchy subject, I do think that one's religious beliefs greatly influence one's attitudes towards droids and robots, so I'm going to briefly plunge into that controversial area. Because I believe in the existence of a soul created by God, it's my belief that even the most severely retarded human being would be the superior of the most sophisticated, "intelligent" robot that man could possibly produce, because that retarded individual has a soul, and the robot does not. I believe that God created man, and I do not see man as God's equal. Similarly, man creates robots, and I do not think that robots are the equals of man either. They are created to serve man, as man was created to serve

God.

Barbara Brayton & Pam LaVasseur: I agree with your comments to Elsie Bartok; Han could have known about the Force and could have respected the beliefs and practices of the Wookiees without following them or believing in them himself. I have several Jewish friends and I send them cards for Rosh Hashonah and Hannukah, and I'm careful about what foods I serve them when I invite them for dinner, but I don't personally share their beliefs. I do, however, show respect for those beliefs.

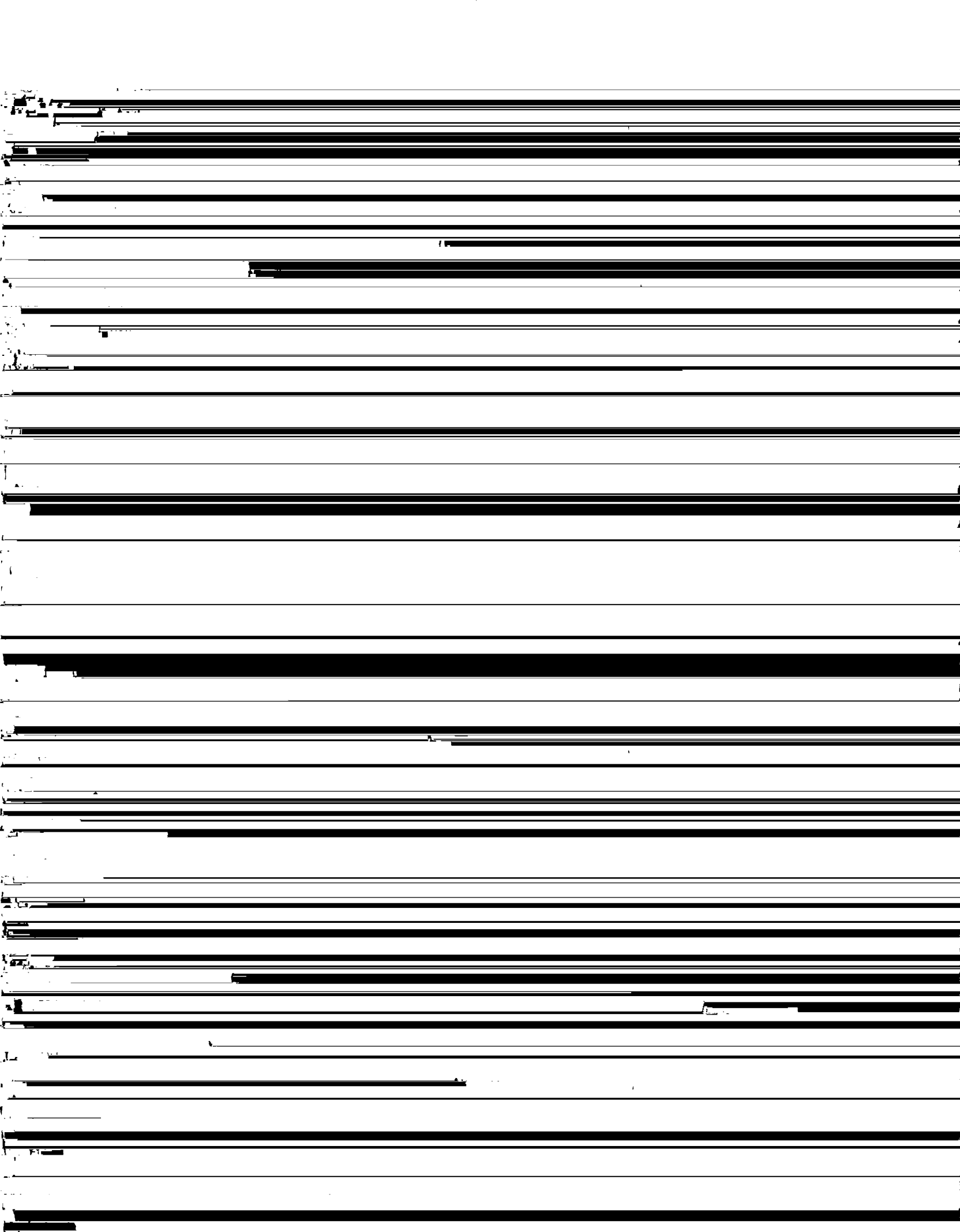
Pat Easley: I too shudder to think about what might have happened had Luke not left Endor! If Luke had not been on Death Star II diverting the attention of Palpatine and Vader, those two Dark Siders probably would have been aware of events transpiring on Endor, and would have taken appropriate action to stop the Rebels on that moon. They probably would have directed the space battle more effectively too. Most likely, Endor would have been reduced to a few asteroids as was Alderaan by that fully operational planet zapper, the Death Star. That, of course, would have caused the deaths of Luke, Leia, Han, and the entire strike team, not to mention all those cute little Ewoks. Then the Emperor and his nasty toy probably would have picked off the entire Rebel fleet ship by ship, turkey shoot style.

Sandi Jones: I like what you said to Marcia Brin: "What I would ask you and other critics of Luke to state is your alternative actions and what consequences would have resulted from those actions." I think that if some of Luke's critics would take the time to think about the results of possible alternative actions, they might come to the conclusion that Luke made the right decisions and took the right course of action after all. I have just given an example of what probably would have happened if Luke had chosen an alternative action and remained on Endor instead of going to confront his father. Luke's decision to leave Endor resulted in a happy ending. It's easy to say, "Luke was wrong." It's harder to say what Luke should have done instead. It's harder still to prove that this alternative action would have had better results than the course Luke chose to follow.

Tim Blaes: I thought your comments to Marcia Brin were quite apt. I particularly enjoyed your reply to Marcia's quote, "Luke is the one with problems." EXACTLY! A hero can't possibly BE a hero if he doesn't have problems that he has to overcome. If an individual has NO problems to solve or rise above, how can he prove his courage and nobility and BE heroic?!!

Jeanine Hennig: I want a lightsaber too! I don't really want to USE it for anything, I'd just like to HAVE one and turn it on and LOOK at it every once in a while!

I agree with you, Jenni. As much as I love the little green guy, I too have always been a bit annoyed with Yoda and his treatment of Luke. For one who espoused the importance and necessity of patience, I don't think that Yoda was always such a marvelous model of this particular virtue himself. He often let his own irritation with Luke show quite clearly. He was often grouchy and critical. Yet, as a teacher, he shouldn't have expected Luke to be perfect immediately. Students are bound to falter and make mistakes from time to time. It's part of the learning process, and much can be gained from those errors. Yoda obviously didn't believe in a positive approach or positive reinforcement. He criticized Luke for his mistakes, but he rarely



going off to find their father..." Well, Marcia, as I see it, Lucas has already used that idea, except that he turned the older brother into a sister, and he made the sister the brother's twin instead of his elder. It would be rather repetitious to use the idea again. Lucas simply changed his mind and did it a bit differently than he originally intended--just as he changed his mind with Luke. Luke was originally supposed to be a girl. (Lucy Skywalker?) No, I don't think that Han is Luke's brother and I don't think that ROTJ contains any mysterious, "secret" dialogue that completely changes the story.

I hope all is well with everyone, and until next time, May The Force Be With You! Happy Holidays!

ASCENDING SANITY

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October 20, 1985

Very, very good issue. Sanity is coming into ascendancy and it is indeed pleasant. I'm very sorry to hear about Sara Campbell, though; I had no dealings with her but it's still very saddening.

Maggie, I have a couple of songs for you. Perhaps you're aware of Billy Joel's "You're Only Human (Second Wind)"--it seems more appropriate if you've seen the video, where he plays an angel (reconstituted Jedi, if you will) persuading a teenage boy not to jump off a bridge. A very nice one for chasing the bogieman away. Also, if you don't mind late-60's psychedelic mumbo-jumbo, Donovan's "Happiness Runs" is a soothing selection:

"Happiness runs in a circular motion
Thought is like a little boat upon the sea
Everybody is a part of everything anyway
You can have everything if you let yourself be"

It's sung as a round; it's catchy, if none too intellectual.

If I'd had a letter in #8, I probably would have made a similar comment to yours on articles about the actors' current projects. These remind me of nothing so much as Beatles fandom, where many fanzines consist of news and "how I got John/Paul/George/Ringo's autograph." This is expected in a personality-oriented fandom, but even so it got wearing. It feels strange to me in a magazine which I've always read for literary criticism (of whatever order). And, of course, the lusting after the male actors goes with it. I'd be lying if I said I never lusted after an actor but I prefer movies that don't give me time to think about that. Case in point: Rutger Hauer in BLADERUNNER barely fazed me, even though in LADYHAWKE, the only thing that saved me from breaking the spirit of the 7th Commandment over him was that I was too busy breaking the 10th over his horse and sword. I'm not saying I liked the movie less, I'm just saying I would rather that the plot keep moving instead of having scenes where

you're supposed to just look at someone and say "Wow." Michelle Malkin mentioned the scene where Navarre and his lady tried to touch hands during the change. Were any of you lusting after his body then? I wasn't either; I was crying just like Mickey. That's what I mean; I was involved in the plot and undistracted.

While I'm looking at your letter, Mickey, let me thank you for the quote from LANGUAGE IN ACTION. I think everyone should review it before they start writing their letters.

I have to agree with Tim Blaes that it's not the job of an adventure film to provide an indepth documentary on the culture and industries of the nation it happens to take place in. In addition, I recently spoke to a man from Colombia and asked him how accurately ROMANCING THE STONE portrayed his country. He said that, in terms of what the movie showed, the rural areas and the drug industry, "it was perfect."

Also, Tim, I think Buckaroo Banzai vs. the Visitors has been done. It's called BUCKAROO BANZAI. But seriously, I do know someone who might just take you up on that. If he does, I'll pass it on. Me, I'd like to see Buckaroo find a copy of a real HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY, and an Electronic Thumb. That would be fun.

Carolyn Gollidge: Excellent point on how Luke perhaps learned from Han to accept people non-judgmentally. Everyone has different talents and abilities, and suppressing them can only be damaging. I've heard of people deciding that their newborn child shall be a doctor...and then being dreadfully disappointed when the child turns out to be squeamish about blood. Rats, he'll have to be a lawyer. How shortsighted. But then, the same happened to Luke, didn't it--Owen wanted him to be a farmer, and tried to bully, wheedle, and intimidate him into staying. This is the modus operandi Luke grew up with, and at first he was turning it right around on Han, expecting others to feel just as strongly as he on whatever subject he feels strongly about. It's very fortunate that he was straightened out early.

Well, the whole coop is clucking about what we do with the Imperials now. Some people realized that we have to define our terms--after all, in the broadest sense, any citizen of the Empire who never engaged in Rebel activities was an Imperial. Owen and Beru were Imperials. It's apparent that we're not speaking that broadly. What it comes down to is a question of who can successfully make the adjustment to being a citizen of the New Republic and who is too entrenched in the evil core of the Empire. It would seem to me that only the highest echelons of the military would be incorrigible. I wonder, however, about junior officers and even stormtroopers who have perhaps grown up in the equivalent of Hitler Youth and been indoctrinated into the Cult of the True Imperial, who believe that "Rebel scum" is a redundancy. (Chuckle- love it, Susan!) Maybe some of these people will have done too little to be convicted of war crimes, yet they will never accept the New Republic. What happens to them? I don't have answers--many of you are far more knowledgeable about such things than I am. I just want to make sure we're asking the right questions.

One thing I really want to address is the problem of Palpatine's taunting of Luke. But I can't remember what Barbara Tennison said in SE#8, and my copy is still in Kirkland. So, if I get redundant, please forgive me. It does seem that ol' Mellow



Before I close, what's all this stuff about the "Cathedral of Luke" and the "Church of Ford" and the "Tabernacle of Wedge", etc., etc.???! Where are all the Imperial shrines??? (Surely, Admiral Ackbar & Co. didn't get them, too!) Just imagine: we could have the "Temple of Tarkin"; or how about the "Pagoda of Palpatine"??? Any further suggestions of the matter are most welcome! ((Ed's note: Did you miss Susan Henderson's "The Cult of the True Imperial"??)) And, whilst on the subject of slogans, I live in Victoria, known throughout Australia as "the Garden State"; when the Empire takes over here, we shall change this title to something more appropriate. After all, "Victoria--the Vader State" would be far more suitable (how could it be anything else with me in residence!). Well, now you know I'm nuts; so on that note, I'll finish. (Do I hear cries of "Hooray!"?? I thought so!)

Until next letter, may the Force be with you, and remember: "Asteroids do not concern me"--now there's something Darth and Han do have in common!

QUESTIONS TO MULL OVER

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Australia

As you can see, I have been doing some recruiting of letter writers down here...I am a rebel fan but by some strange twist of fate the only recruit I could find was my friend, the Vader nut--a loyal Imperialist! So now you will be hearing from the Dark Side (otherwise known as Victoria); since the unfortunate southern residents rarely see sunlight, it is only natural that they be attracted to doom and gloom! Personally, I think Darth Vader looks like a shoe-shine boy who fell in the boot polish. Despite these slight variations in hero worship, we down-under SW fans have to stick together. Believe me, Vonnice and I have had some interesting duels, er, debates about Vader's treatment of poor defenseless Han!

Ronda Henderson: It was great to find out I was not the only one unfortunate enough to discover SW zines so late--but what a wonderful discovery! I'm hooked, too. I agree with Katharine Hepburn for the Falcon's voice.

Sally Syrjala: Like your idea of the Force as nature which is then channelled by a user for their personal objectives, good or bad.

Sandi Jones/Terri Black: Lightsabers as an extension of personality sounds most feasible to me. Sort of similar to the dragons and rider bond on Pern, re each is a reflection of the other.

NEWSFLASH: As I said before, N.S.W. is the REBEL STATE, Victoria the IMPERIAL. Well, the Imperials have sabotaged the Postal Service here, so I am forced to curtail this letter to make sure it gets in ahead of the deadline my Imp fan friend (Vonnice, take a bow!) will mail it for me from Victoria. Geez, couldn't you just cry over all those scintillating remarks you'll miss out on? I will finish my comments in another letter but it may not make it until next time.

Some quick questions to mull over in the meantime:

(1) How much time has elapsed between Han's rescue on Tatooine and the mission to Endor? Implications, if it were months?

(2) Why does Vader let the disguised shuttle land on Endor? He wanted a "private" interview with Luke before bringing him to the Emperor, perhaps? If so, why? He was running a hell of a risk letting a sabotage team through, even if he had taken preventative measures.

(3) As to the questions raised about Luke leaving the Endor mission to surrender to his father--could it be possible that he had already confided in Han and that Solo subsequently lost his temper with Leia not out of jealousy but because she would not share her concern with him?

(4) The Ewoks are supposed to be capable of making moral judgments, i.e., siding with the Alliance after 3PO's speech; yet earlier, they are quite prepared to cook a living being alive. Even the most primitive of cultures would not stoop to such cruelty. They'd kill their "food" first. This whole scene seemed farcical to me as a result.

Before I forget--congratulations to Martynn and Cheree for that promotion of FIELD STUDIES. It is a top quality zine, so natch it would be chosen to illustrate the newspaper article. Enjoyed reading the outsider view of MediaWest*Con--especially since I'll probably never get to go to one (sob).

Jeanine Hennig: Hey, you forgot to tell us the most important thing about a lightsaber--where do we buy one?!



((Editor's note: After I had typed up Carolyn Gollidge's letter, I received part 2 that she had managed to get past the Australian postal strike:))

This is the second half of my letter to SE. Sorry about the mix-up; the Post Office has decided to go on strike, so I forwarded the first half with my friend who was returning to Victoria. It will have a better chance of reaching you.

Well, here's the rest of my interrupted letter:

Lin S. Ward: As to why Ben, instead of Yoda, trained Vader, I have an image of General Kenobi meeting up with this young, hot-shot pilot (Anakin) during the Clone Wars, sensing his unusual Force ability, needing him on the battle front and therefore training him himself rather than sending him off to Yoda. Anakin, seeing death, destruction and injustice all about him, would have had far greater temptation to use the Dark Side out of vengeance or simply to win a battle. His training may therefore have not been as complete in emotional control as it would have been had he had the benefit of Yoda's teaching in isolated, peaceful surroundings. I do not, however, believe that Yoda is the only trainer of Jedi, just that he was number one. Perhaps he specialized in training teachers/masters. As to Yoda's not wanting Luke to go to Bespin, he was the one who prompted Luke to "see" his friends' fate in the first place! Why? What was his purpose? He must have known what Luke would discover.

Liz Sharpe: Thanks for the tale about Fennir and Tyr. Fascinating stuff. Now I know where Georgie gets all his inspiration. (Or at least from what kind of material.) Have to say I think Tyr was a bit of a dill to trust the wolf... Luke on the other hand (groan) got off lightly considering he still had his life. He must have known he was facing almost certain death.

Michelle Malkin: I too wondered about the ending of BLADE RUNNER. I did not catch that it was meant to be Canada, but I assumed it was not off-world. A possible reason why not more people left the pollution of the cities would be the lack of services, i.e., they would have to find their own food, shelter and other needs. Most of the people we see in BR would have had neither the ability nor the self-reliance to undertake such a challenge, nor would they desire it.

WITNESS those of you who have read my "trash Han" stories will not need two guesses to know my favorite scenes were those involving Rachel's tending of Book's wounds. I love vulnerable heroes.

Sorry, Michelle, I'm dumb I know, but what's a "secular humanist"?

As to Dagobah existing on another plane, I picture it as being the Avalon of the SW universe, i.e., outside the normal parameters of time/space. Also, the name Dagobah is reminiscent of the Buddhist word for a holy shrine. Dead right; Luke would be betraying his friends if he allowed himself to be killed. He had to appeal to Vader. It was the only chance for everyone.

Marlene Karkoska: Thanks for reminding us of the everyday, law-abiding common people of the Empire who would have been appalled by Alderaan's destruction (if they were ever told the truth) but who still could not agree with violent, outright rebellion. Their wishes would certainly have to be considered by any new government. I second your opinion about Liz Sharpe's story, "Command Performance" which appears in SOUTHERN KNIGHTS. It is a must. Liz retains the humor and affection of the bond between the SW characters PERFECTLY. Take a

bow, Liz...then get back to work on the sequel! NOW!! (See, Annie, I am doing my bit to brow-beat her into submission!) Opposing viewpoints as regards "manufacturing people" seems an almost certain cause of the Clone Wars. Perhaps something similar would occur in Earth's future in BLADE RUNNER as a result of the mistreatment of replicants. Agree with every word of your summary of the Han/ESB v. Luke/ROTJ theory. While I admit to being disappointed over the dreadful lines given to Solo in ROTJ (and the lack of a proper reunion scene between he and Leia), I was thrilled by the new look, mature Luke. (Drool.) I did not feel ROTJ was as well photographed as was ESB. The Ewoks were a real downer for me, and I do not think I am being biased in saying it would have been nice to know how and why Solo wound up a general when he had been so anti-involvement before.

Lisa Thomas: Threepio's programming would have been thoroughly checked by Jabba's minions; after all he could have been a saboteur or even a timebomb in disguise for all the Hutt knew. Perhaps Luke simply had no way of hiding the information within Threepio's circuitry if he had told him the truth. In this sense, he may have been protecting 3PO from possible torture should his inspection reveal a code barred sequence of instructions.

When Han said "I know", I had a lump in my throat and that's all that saved the people in the row behind me from a tongue lashing when they laughed and spoiled the whole scene for me.

Carole Regine: What you said about loving ROTJ despite it not being your story goes double for me, regardless of the above minor complaints. How I wish I could have seen this film without knowing all about it in advance. (We got it six months later here. Maybe that's the real reason for my slight disappointments; there was no suspense in it for me.) Excellent point about Kenobi's reasons for not answering Luke directly. He would quite possibly have turned Skywalker against him, the Rebellion and the Jedi Order for all time. I like your idea of stormtroopers wanting to keep their past activities secret. Good material for a story.

Pat Easley: Brilliant idea that Darth may have used the Dark Side to get the Jedi fighting amongst themselves, divided we fall, etc. Maybe this was what was meant by "betrayal."

Tim Blaes: I hereby nominate you as my official spokesman. You say everything I want to say but much better. Your comments on the action vs. character issue was what I meant to say, but it didn't come out right. As to why should we beat the bushes looking for you men...well, if there were more out there with your sense of humor and honesty, I wouldn't get this letter finished because I'd be out there a huntin'! Sorry, my youngest sister claims to be the world's number one Queen fan. Hear, hear, about the attempted polarization of SW fans. I am a Han fan, but I will never agree with Luke's detractors. "Day-glo spooks" indeed! I love your sense of humor, Tim. It sounds very Corellian/irreverent to me!

Possibly if Vader had picked up his lightsaber to kill Palpatine, its evil emanations would have destroyed the Anakin part of him again. Also, Darth was now minus his artificial hand, as noted previously. Luke was in agony when Palpatine's bolts contacted his artificial hand. Is there any possibility that being "more machine than man" could make it easier for Palpatine to harm or convert a Jedi? Anakin/Vader would have had far greater problems since more of him was "machine."

Modesty Blaes, huh? Good one!

Marcia Brin: Yes, I could hear the word "father" in the choir-like voices which were part of the musical background to the confrontation scene. I'm not sure I could hear "save him", however, and I feel it would be impossible to discern if this was really Ford's voice. I think not. As for Vader's dying rasps being, "Han", well, yes, you could interpret it that way, but his hissing always did sound a bit that way. Personally, I think your idea is very imaginative, an excellent idea for an alternate story, but no more.

Lynne Kennedy: I feel you were unnecessarily harsh in your judgment of Ann Wortham's article. It was meant for fun. You should take into consideration that Ann was not privileged to the information on Hamill's state of health as were you. Ann's comments were those of an admiring, loyal fan. If she had known Mark was ill, she would have been just as concerned for him and equally considerate.

Jeanine Hennig: Agree with you about Leia's emotional susceptibility to the Dark Side. She shows her father's interest in power as a means to achieving justice for all. (I feel Anakin's original intentions were just as well-meaning.) Perhaps it is Solo's destiny to keep her from using this power incorrectly; he has a very neutral stance, coming from a smuggler's world and an instinctive dislike of any heavy-handed authoritarianism. Your end summation about wisdom coming from the heart was beautifully stated.

Maggie Nowakowska: Thought provoking comments re tryers and doers. Am inclined to agree.

Cheree: Thanks again for giving us a meeting place for an exchange of ideas.

tion simply didn't seem sufficient if he knew who it was.

As to the theory on Leia's leading a splinter of the rebellion (sorry, I don't remember right now who it was discussing this), that would fit if the rebellion is organized like the resistance movements of WWII. They were usually organized in cells, each with its own leader, with its own specialized job. In the case of large objectives, one or more cells would collaborate in the effort. My opinion is that the group we saw in ANH and TESB was the cell Leia was in charge of. Quite a large group, it's true, but perhaps their tactics required a group of that size. Also, after the visible victory of the first Death Star following on the heels of the dissolution of the Imperial Senate, there was more reason for individuals and/or planets to revolt against the Empire. The victory of a small, maquis like band of rebels against the Empire's "impregnable" battle station proved that the Empire could be defeated. This may be why the group shown in ROTJ is so much larger (many more beings joining the rebellion as its chances of success grow greater), and why Leia no longer seems to be the leader. In other words, Mon Mothma as the leader of the cell leaders, and Leia just as the leader of one cell of the rebellion.

Thank you, Marlene Karkoska! I wish I'd said that, especially the way you did. That's exactly what I wanted to say, but got tangled up in qualifying my statement instead. Your argument and the theories backing it up were very well formulated and expressed.

That's about it for now. Hope my ideas weren't too incoherent this time around. I'm typing this thing late at night, AS USUAL, and the brain is slowly turning to Dagobah swamp mush. I think it was Maggie Nowakowska who said it best: "Fandom is just another place to miss deadlines."

REBEL SPLINTER GROUPS

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First off, a clarification on something in one of my last letters. I didn't mean to imply that I hadn't heard of the Thuggees before, just that the ones in the film didn't jibe with their historical counterparts. Two letters and an article does that mean both Annie and Jenni are going to be quivering lips and antennae at me? I can guarantee that's the one and only time I'll ever be first in the zine. I have enough trouble just getting the things in on time.

Yeah, Jenni, on your rebuttal to the light hair/dark hair controversy. Like you, I have schizophrenic brown hair, so I really couldn't see the flap about the hair color.

Ronda Henderson: Liked Katharine Hepburn for the Falcon. There's a couple other sassy, classy ladies from the 30's who'd also be good--Carole Lombard and Barbara Stanwyck. Think about it, folks; Ma Barkley as the Falcon!

Lin Ward: I honestly don't think Vader knew just who the "sister" was. That would have been a real shock, especially in light of the fact that he'd captured her twice and never knew. His reac-



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The new printstyle and two-column format are nice and even more readable than before; I think I prefer two columns (not three) on zine-sized pages. And thanks for the accounts of the Worldcon trilogy filmshow and the "review" of MWC*V; I'm always fascinated to see what outsiders think of fandom when they really look at it.

Following the topic of why traditional SF fans see themselves as different from mediafens, it's certainly ironic, since movies are so well suited to conveying the "new wave" qualities beloved of the strongest rejecters of media fandom as a legitimate part of SF interests. Perhaps they feel SW and similar space-opera-type movies and shows are letting the visual media down; SF movies "should" be like 2001, like THX-1138, or in a real pinch like DUNE, where visual effects are not only stage dressing, but integral to the message, even if there IS a plot with characters as well. 2001, et al, have an honored place in SF and in cinema; I'm not knocking them. But Larry Niven (who writes hardware-and-story-oriented SF) wins awards at least as often as Samuel Delaney (who tends toward obscure, "stylist" SF writing), and I see no reason to scorn well-done films just because they have conventional storyline structures. (In other words, I don't know WHAT is wrong with the media-detractors either. Maybe they ARE just jealous of the simple fun such movies provide.)

Lin Ward has presented some lovely ideas in her last two letters to SE. Her analysis of possible reasons for Luke and Leia being out of Alliance Leadership positions is believable: a good brief discussion of the movies from a new slant. She has good questions about Yoda and Jedi training, too. Surely it's not an accident that the preeminent Jedi master we see is also the oldest living being (we know of) in the saga. Age and wisdom ARE linked, unavoidably, in organic intelligence as we know-it. Yoda's people as the original Jedi race is another believable notion. (Or was that an editor's suggestion? It's a good idea either way.)

Enjoyed Jean Stevenson's comparison of SW and CAMELOT (and Arthurian legendry), as well as the discussion of love and its effects throughout the SW saga. That makes sense out of ESB in a way that really hadn't occurred to me before! While Liz Sharpe is perfectly right in saying that the musical CAMELOT is exceedingly popular, inexact and modern as a version of the Arthurian legends, I'm not sure that's more than marginally relevant. SW is an exceedingly popular and modern piece of entertainment itself, however deeply it draws on ancient literary sources. The love triangle, whether with Lancelot or Bedevere as the third party, seems to have been part of the legend in all versions. SW does omit the Mordred development (at least in the trilogy we have now), as well as the character of Morgan le Fay, Arthur's half-sister and lover and Mordred's mother (which was at the root of most of the trouble Mordred kicked up). Jeaning Hennig mentions the religious conflict as analogous to arguments in SW over the Force, which reminds me that Morgan le Fay, far more than Arthur, represented the older, pagan culture in the legends, too. Speculations that Leia may have, or will, take on Morgan le Fay's role as well as Guinevere's are fascinating--if someone has done more than a vignette on this theme, please let us know!--but I

don't see it as implied more than very incidentally in the SW canon.

Marlene Karkoska: in regard to the 'droids-as-free-beings' debate, you might be interested in some arguments for "living artifacts" and "artificial persons" presented in Heinlein's FRIDAY. These refer to DNA constructed living beings who may be indistinguishable from natural humans (or may not, depending on the construction). Heinlein's characters conclude that a being who can never been mistaken for a human would never be completely trustworthy in positions of life-or-death over humans--this might be what you mean in not wanting a robot as a competitor or boss. Of course, Heinlein's book is set on 21st-century Earth at that point, so that mixed-alien societies aren't part of the question, nor are machines of the gear-and-transister sort which act "human." The point of FRIDAY, otherwise, is that a being who CAN function as a human ends up BEING a human in all practical senses; this, too, may be relevant to the question of 'droids and sentient-beings' rights in SW, in a universe where personhood isn't dependent on a particular set of DNA.

Carole Regine: You know, the suggestion that "Old Ben" Kenobi might not have been a credible source to Luke when they first met on Tatooine is very reasonable. Kenobi had enough trouble convincing Luke to follow him to Alderaan. Luke might accept the glamorous image of his father as a Jedi from the mysterious hermit his Uncle Owen didn't like, but a complicated explanation about Anakin/Vader wouldn't have gone over nearly as well. And Kenobi didn't live long enough to find a better opportunity just then. It is possible that Yoda didn't know the details of Vader's antecedents, and knew of Anakin Skywalker only as an impatient apprentice of Obi-Wan's? If Yoda didn't know, and Kenobi wasn't saying, where Vader had come from, the Jedi image takes a beating but that would account for neither of them telling Luke who his father was during his first spell on Dagobah.

I'd guess you're right about ex-Imperials having a hard time of it, depending on how obviously ex-Imperial they are (former public figures of the Empire would have it worse than the rank and file, for instance), and whether they carry a grudge against the Rebels or not, also. I don't know if many or any worlds would remain largely loyal to the Empire, though. If the Empire was only twenty or so years old and was essentially a powergrab by some top-level governors, it would itself be using, probably taken over Republic bureaucracy at many levels of administration, so that a re-established Republic might leave very little official trace of Palpatine's empire on most worlds.

Pat Easley: Your comment about the "I know" line is exactly what I wanted to say--it's not funny as a joke, but as an unexpected, exactly right reaction for that one character. It is still one of the high points of the carbon-chamber scene for me. (The other is seeing Han enveloped by the mist and "die," knowing he's accepted that course of action.)

RAEBNC is old-line SF fandom's letter jargon for "read and enjoyed but no comment."

Tim Blaes: A thought on why, as you ask, Vader didn't kill the Emperor sooner during their three-way struggle with Luke on the Death Star. (I loved your "luncheon meat" imagery, but who'd eat the sandwiches? Yuch!) Whatever influence the Emperor had over Vader was probably still active to some extent--notice how Vader leapt automatically to

defend Palpatine when Luke attacked him the first time- so what Vader couldn't kill him directly, and had to cause his death by letting the Death Star's generators (or whatever it was in that shaft) do the actual killing. (I should credit Asimov with the inspiration from this idea, which parallels one of his "robot" stories: a robot with the First Law couldn't kill a human, but it could, with some modifications, allow a human to die after putting him/her in a dangerous situation.)

EXPLORERS was a bit messy, but I liked it better than COCOON, if only because it seemed to know what an SF fan was. I winced when the kids' unknown force ploughed holes through a shelf of '50's and '60's SF, but I doubt those old paperbacks were used at random. Someone knew more about SF than just TREK. BACK TO THE FUTURE was fun, too, no matter how many gimmicks it used. Every generation has trouble believing its parents were just as ram-bunctious in their youth, and Marty's dismay in 1955 was most realistic. (And shame on you for even thinking of a "Modesty Blaes"!)

Mary Urhausen: Leia as having her own hard decisions to make on Endor is a good point. She's an experienced leader herself by this time, used to thinking in terms of the whole mission as well as her personal feelings--and her personal feelings are getting an unprecedented workout just there. Her having to think out what to tell Han, not wanting for once to make a snap decision, makes sense. And she had the rest of the night before the proposed assault on the shield bunker, so it wasn't a this-minute situation.

Bev Clark: The thing that's always attracted me to media fandom is that it produced written material, copiously and from many viewpoints, about visual-media shows. That is, it does the opposite of threaten SF fandom's dependence on literacy, rather extends it into movies/TV fandom. I don't think the hardline anti media SF fen realize this, for reasons which have been cited extensively already; it may be worth using as an argument.

A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS

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October 24, 1985

Ronda Henderson: May I quote you on what you said about fish and zebras? Those were my thoughts exactly, but I couldn't put it as eloquently before, and I may have use for your turn of phrase some day. About "human"ized Vulcans; I remember on the TODAY SHOW, Gene Shalit panned ST III and criticized Dame Judith Anderson's performance as T'Lar as being unemotional. Somebody should tell that fuzzy-faced cockroach about Vulcans.

Michelle Malkin: I had always wondered if there had been some beneficial effects on the galaxy because of the Empire. If the Old Republic had been just a loose confederation, then a unifying government would solve some problems. But George isn't really concerned with a realistic political world

in his saga. The Emperor seems to worship evil. Just how long can you sustain a government whose goal is entropy? It's a contradiction in terms.

Marlene Karkoska: Regarding your analysis of the motivation behind the anti-Luke campaign, ya' hit the nail on the head, sister. The Church of Ford is a dying cult, you may have noticed. The Duncan sisters didn't last long, either.

Lisa Thomas: I've been watching these STAR INVADERS/STARBLAZERS mags, and I really think it is improving. Nowhere near top notch yet, but their development is fascinating. But now those supermarket rags are another matter. "Honor Student Robs Banks to Support Pac-Man Habit", "Plague From Mummy's Tomb Threatens U.S.", and "Ghost of Elvis Advises President Reagan." These people can't be serious! ((Ed's note: Unfortunately, there is a very large proportion of the American populace that believes if they see it in print, it must be so!)) I remember one tabloid that seemed to have it in for Carrie Fisher in the years between ANH and TESB. According to them, she was continually pregnant with either Richard Dreyfuss' child or Steven Spielberg's. I kid you not. I have this picture in my mind of Carrie looking upset, holding an E.T. doll, with a headline like, "It's Steven's child, but he won't even hold her!", says anguished Carrie.

Me? Try to kill you? What makes you think I'm capable of such a thing? (he said, hiding the bloody knife under a stack of fanzines). Besides, I'm the one who has to fear for his internal organs. Never should have let on that I knew. Should have just skipped the country, that's what I should have done.

I am glad to see that my theory that Leia has had some Jedi training has gone over well. It is a very subtle and elegant implication. But it is only a theory. I almost wish it wasn't so logical; despite the wishes of those who ignore and attempt to refute the fact that she is Luke's sister, it is so, and the Force runs strong in his family. But I want it clear that it doesn't mean that much to me what her Force potential is. George will hopefully let on what her role will be, in his own time.

Pam & Barb: Can't find that issue of SCIENCE DIGEST that had that article on twins I mentioned, but I think a "mosaic" twin what what it mentioned. The notion that Luke and Leia could have different fathers is admittedly a remote possibility, but if they did then they most definitely are still twins. If they share the same mother, in the same womb together, conceived in a natural fashion, then they are twins in my book. So what if they are only half-sibs? To say that such children are not twins because they do not share the same father makes no more sense than saying that fraternal are not twins but just two different sisters sharing the same gestation period. Sounds rather sexist to me.

Myself: I prefer to set my thoughts down on paper when I present a complex idea or reply in public debate; something that I feel quite clearly can take me a while to express clearly in words. And you can't hear me stammer or watch me reach in futility for the right term or turn of phrase. I like letterzines, a lot, for this reason. This is not to say I do not crave direct conversation with other fans, but I look a lot smoother and express myself more clearly in print. Most of the time. It can be difficult to explain a 3-dimensional concept/attitude in 2-dimensional prose. It always seems like I forgot to mention something.

Though I still stand by my comments on the state of fan fiction, they do need a healthy dose of qualification. First off, my fanzine buying

habits changed radically after my first MediaWest-Con. Before then, I had fewer selections of fanzines to choose from, they were cheaper but I had less money to buy them with, and I had to buy them sight unseen through the mail. That gave me a fair cross-section of what was going on in fandom until midway between TESB and ROTJ. Then came MediaWest and suddenly I could see what was in what I would buy. I am most likely to buy a zine with lots of short stories (TIME WARP), the female characters featured predominantly (very rare), and a generally eccentric slant. Most everyone else in fandom is interested in the Hunks (big surprise here, eh, what?), fannish renditions of War and Peace, and only a few of you out there are really My Kind of Weird. My judgment of fanfic also involves my perception of fanzines that I haven't read, but which just didn't look the slightest bit interesting to me (though they might have been nominated for a Fan Q). So, if any of you out there want to say, "Tim doesn't know what he's talking about", then you are welcome to that view, but I still see fandom as being in something of a rut.

I'm not really sure there is any point in discussing the male/female ratio in fandom. I know I don't want to talk about it anymore, and I was the one who suggested the "Men in Media Fandom" panel way back at MediaWest II. At first, I was curious about the disparity, but now the subject makes me feel like I'm some sort of anomaly, a curiosity, a social mutant. I've been to four MediaWests so far and it still seems like everyone knows everyone else, except me. I think about this and I remember Pat Nussman's article of a few years back, "Where the Boys Are." One of the women quoted in that article liked the imbalance. She seemed to see media fandom as some sort of feminist enclave and she really didn't want men around. I have enough trouble socializing with any group of people without having to worry about breaking into fandom's "Old Girl Network."

I have half an inclination to pull a "Tootsie" and attend the next MediaWest in drag, and then publish the resulting expose in this letterzine. But I'd make an ugly woman, anyway.

After saying that I don't want to be known primarily as a male fan, I'm going to risk seeming hypocritical and say that I'd love to contribute to an all-male fanzine. Such a project might dig out some of my counterparts and it would certainly produce a zine with a different slant. On the other hand, you might find out that we're not all that different from you womenfolk, after all. I'd thought about such a zine years ago, but I couldn't think of who to nominate for editor; it wouldn't do to have a woman edit an "all-male" fanzine. Truth in advertising, and all.

Once, in a moment of madness, I decided What The Hell, I was going to Mary Sue myself into a relationship with Leia. It was aborted, not because of my alter ego, however. I stopped it dead when I realized the story was about to leap out of control and turn into something rather psychotic (before my Mary Sue even entered the story) that I know none of you would want to read and I knew I didn't want to write. So, I considered jumping directly to the Mary Sue part. But I just couldn't see myself as a romantic partner with Leia; she has a mind of her own and she didn't want to fall in love with me, even if I was a super-ninja/samurai with an 8-year-old mutant child for a sidekick. We were going to clean up a planet that had been overrun with vampires. Sort of Bruce Lee meets "I Am Legend". I

forgot to mention the rats. The rats on this planet were intelligent and had opposable thumbs, and they didn't like vampires much, either. A real romantic setting and cast of characters, huh?

A Jedi must trust his feelings, right? "Feelings" and instincts are similar, if not the same. Let's assume that Jedi have sound instincts, in any case. When the Emperor was blasting Luke's guts out, Luke may not have been able to make any conscious choice of action. The instinct to survive is probably written somewhere on our DNA in indelible ink. "Freed" of conscious action, he reached out to Darth and touched that part of him Luke knew existed. Vader, at that moment, was in a state of flux, of catharsis. He was more susceptible to Luke's plea than he was on Endor. Luke's crying out to his father was a reflex action that saved his life.

I'll keep an eye out in the video store for NATE AND HAYES. Have you by any chance seen SWASH-BUCKLER with Robert Shaw and James Earl Jones? It's a great movie. It was a shame Shaw died before they could make a sequel. ((Ed: Haven't caught that one, but will watch for it.))

Francis is older than Mr. Ed, so Ed couldn't be Francis' father. But they could share a common relative. Perhaps their mother was an extra-terrestrial equine.

Marcia Brin: You're right, I don't swallow any of this business about "hidden dialogue". No matter how thin you slice it, Brin, it's still baloney. About the only way you could convince me would be to take a fresh print of ROTJ and separate the sound track. Just because you hear something garbled in the background, it doesn't mean that there is anything there. If you search long enough for hidden dialogue, you will hear "hidden dialogue".

After I found out that Joan Shumsky had kicked Sandra Necchi out of SCOUNDREL for apparently political reasons, I wrote a strong protest into my Loc for SCOUNDREL #7. Joan printed everything I wrote except those comments dealing with her treatment of Necchi. Everything I have seen indicates that she doesn't want it widely known what she has done. Her editorial in #7 was extremely hypocritical.

Since Joan Shumsky will not allow her actions to bare close scrutiny within her own letterzine, then I have no choice but to mention it in another letterzine. In the "Consumer's Corner" of various letterzines, fanzine editors/publishers are called to account for their actions. Are letterzine editors any less accountable? Indeed, I object to anyone who thinks they can play games with one of the most important tools of fannish communications.

((Editor's note: In his letter to SE#9, Tim had brought up this same subject in a paragraph that I chose to delete because I felt Tim's phrasing of it that time read too much like a personal attack. Tim wrote privately, taking me to task for cutting the paragraph from his letter, but I still feel that it would have been unethical of me to print that particular paragraph, in the way it was phrased. I apologize to Tim for not discussing it with him at the time and can only plead illness and a schedule that has not permitted private correspondence for the last few months. By the time this sees print, Tim and I should have discussed it in private.))

Ben most likely took the saber from Vader after their duel that resulted in the Dark Lord's need of prosthetics and life support. That was really Anakin's lightsaber, anyway; Vader made his own later. While I'm at it, I may as well point out a contradiction of Lucas made by Marquand. I don't have

the issue handy, but in an issue of STARLOG, Marquand, just before ROTJ was out, said something along the lines of, "I don't know how this rumor about Darth Vader falling into a volcano came about. George never said any such thing." Funny, but I have an issue ROLLING STONE Magazine with an interview with George Lucas in it, and George was quoted as saying that Vader fell into a volcano after losing a lightsaber duel to Obi-Wan. I can dig out both interviews if anyone doesn't believe me. Any comments/speculation, anyone?

It's an interesting chain of logic you have, Brin. If we do not agree that Luke mistreated C3PO, then we must also support apartheid and possibly Germany's "final solution" to the Jews. Do you realize what you have implied? This isn't a mere personal attack, this is a general insult to anyone who does not share your narrow, rigid viewpoint. This may astound you, but some of us do not consider robots "people", or believe Lucas regards them the way you say he does.

Jean Stevenson: Hey, I've always thought of Harrison Ford as more than just a body. The second role I saw him in was HEROES, and I said to myself, "That's the guy who played Han Solo? That is the guy who played Han Solo!" I haven't seen every HF movie to come out (I haven't even seen WITNESS yet. Before anyone shoots me, I do intend to see it, even if I have to wait for it to come out on video tape.), but his movies I have seen are very enjoyable. I am not a "Ford fan", but I will admit to being a "Ford appreciator."

Bev Clark: I take it that you are a "Nelvana appreciator", also? Boy, have I got ~~gossip~~ news for you. Nelvana, as a sort of test-run for their Elfquest movie, produced their first theatrical release, ROCK & RULE. I finally got a chance to see it at the last MediaWest. Those of you who didn't see the late night showing really missed something. R&R didn't do diddly at the box office, for two reasons, I think. (1) It was not distributed very well and there was no advertising (none that I could see anyway), and (2) any animated movie that doesn't have Disney stamped on it, or a "G" rating at least, will be ignored by the movie going public. The kiddies don't go to see the HEAVY METAL MOVIE, and the adults are conditioned to think of animation only in terms of Mickey Mouse and Daffy Duck.

Anyway, Nelvana took the (financial) failure of R&R hard, very hard. They must have gone bananas over there, because they said they were giving up animation to take up live action productions. This is not unlike the Rookie of the Year saying that he is giving up baseball to take up football. They had been talking about doing live action for some time, but they haven't tried it yet, to my knowledge. The Pinis did a double take at their plans to do Elfquest in live action. "Uh, just how do you plan to go about that?" the Pinis asked them. We'll use teenagers on trained wolves, they told them. "Bye!" said the Pinis. Sometime since then, Nelvana came to their senses and now they are doing the Ewoks/Droids, but they won't be doing Elfquest. It's rather sad; when I was first turned onto Elfquest, I thought that Nelvana would be the perfect people to do it in animation.

Mary Urhausen: There was so much of DUNE that didn't make it on screen that, when it hits network TV, it will be a mini-series. I am not exaggerating. There were approximately between five and six hours of DUNE filmed.

Something I've always suspected Darth had, and

something I've always wanted to see, is a collection of lightsabers. Besides just wanting to see as many different designs in one place, there are several plot possibilities resulting from such a collection. ((Ed's note: See Maggie Nowakowska's "ThousandWorlds" series for one such.))

AMAZING STORIES is very good but not great. The first show was just an excuse to ram a train through someone's house and the director almost seemed to be parodying Spielberg. But the show does have a light-hearted approach, and I'll keep watching it. ((Ed: Wasn't that first show actually directed by Spielberg?))

TWILIGHT ZONE, on the other hand, is mostly solid drama and a worthy successor to the original TZ. "Nightcrawlers" and "Children's Zoo" are my favorite stories so far. I hope they consider using some of the stories in the TZ magazine on the show.

The DROID cartoon is very good, but it's EWOKS counterpart really bothers me. Just like THE EWOK ADVENTURE, it doesn't seem consistent with the movies or spin-off novels. It is one thing to talk about the SW saga being thematically a fairy tale, but this stuff seems silly to anyone over the age of eight. The movies appeal to "children" of all ages. I understand that there is going to be an other Ewok Adventure this Thanksgiving and probably one a year for as long as they get good ratings. Lucas has said that Ewoks are the only TV movies he will consider doing. ((Ed: I rather agree with Tim. I tried watching the two cartoons shows but found my teeth rotting from the sweetness and light early on in EWOKS. DROID just seemed like any number of other Saturday morning adventure cartoon--boring and the punk look and green mohawk cuts didn't appeal to me at all. I realize that these two shows were designed to appeal to a strictly different generation than mine the Ewoks for the pre school crowd and Droids for the elementary through junior high group. But, it is a shame that us older kids can't have something more to our tastes as well.))

AGREE COMPLETELY

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October 28, 1985

SE#9 was a terrific issue. As a librarian, I don't approve of marking up books (at least not the library's), but here I have stars and right on's in the margins. The vitriol was certainly toned down. Often even though I disagree with various viewpoints, I usually find them thought-provoking, but it is the scathing, condescending tone that offends me. The last issue was relatively free of this, and I heartily approve.

For the record, since I am a very infrequent contributor, I do want to state that I am a Luke fan, and a George Lucas fan, and a Han Solo fan. From my correspondence and discussions at cons, I

find that there are a lot of Luke fans who like Han, and Han fans who like Luke. I resent the assumption that if you like one, you can't appreciate the other. Well, you can and I do.

I agree completely with Marlene Karkoska's letter and particularly her opinion on why we have the anti-Luke faction. I also liked Carole Regine's solution to the problem. Instead of this steady dose of acrimony, fans should be using their imaginations in a constructive way of writing. Many of these letters are chock full of plot possibilities. I particularly liked the one where the Obi-Wan who appeared to Luke after Yoda's death was the Emperor. That would have been a perfect vehicle for a whole series of alternates to the events of ROTJ. If you think Luke is flirting with the Dark Side, write a story or article that shows how this would affect all the characters. In fiction, anything is possible, but in letterzines, we're all reduced to petty bickering based on "my character is better than yours."

One subject I feel needs to be discussed in the letterzines is the future of fanzines. I found a letter of Pat Molitor in SHADOWSTAR #18 upsetting. She has written a series of stories about the fall of Anakin Skywalker that have been published in several zines, but she is so demoralized by the lack of any kind of feedback, good or bad, that she isn't writing anymore. If this situation applies to other authors and artists, then something needs to be done. Letters to the editors and writers would undoubtedly help, but from a practical point of view there are limits to how many letters one person can write. Thus, I was pleased to notice Mary Urhausen's recommendation of Liz Sharpe's "Command Performance" in SOUTHERN KNIGHTS #1 and Maggie Nowakowska's mention of Ellen Randolph's A NEW CHALLENGE. As SW fans, we need to encourage writers because without them, there will be no fanzines. I hope we could use SE as a forum to compliment writers and artists. Nothing excessive, but if we find a story we particularly like, then mention it in our letters. I don't think it should be the place to criticize, just recommend. SE reaches a lot of fans and it would be one way to support writers. ((Ed's note: I think it's great. And people can always check the ad section of SE to see if those zines are still available or where they can get them if they're not!))

I've been impressed with Carolyn Gollidge's stories, particularly "Mindlink" in A TREMOR IN THE FORCE #2. Take a bow, Cheree and Carolyn. And Ellen Randolph's novel, A NEW CHALLENGE is a perfect example of what post-Jedi fiction can be. With writers like these, SW fanfiction has an excellent future. As for Pat Molitor, I like her stories a lot, and I hope she writes more because I'm looking forward to them.

At More Eastly, there was a panel on post-Jedi fiction and the consensus was that there was no lack of interest or plot possibilities. It seems that we are in a lull between the Old Guard and the New since the sheer number of fanzines scheduled for publication is down from the post-Empire heights. Several editors discussed the expense of publishing a zine, and the market for SW as opposed to ST zines. And writers and artists of my acquaintance complain about the lack of response from editors and readers. As a purchaser, I gripe about the endless delays and the SASE's that seem to vanish into the void. It is obviously a problem of communication, a problem that discussion might solve. But I feel that the frustration level from editors,

readers and writers is growing, and it might make life easier for all of us if we started working on these problems.

Now that I've brought this cloud to the ever-fascinating pages of SE, please everyone keep writing and arguing. It is perfect proof of how much we all care about the SW saga. Clear skies!

WRITER'S DIGEST

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SE readers who don't regularly get WRITER'S DIGEST might want to borrow a copy of the October issue from the library or a friend and take a look at an article entitled "The Hidden Market for Fiction" by Susan Schwartz. Among the markets she writes about are fanzines, and I thought she did a great job of explaining what fanzines are and the merits of writing for them.

Also worth looking at (for amusement value) is J. Michael Straczynski's column, "Scripts", in the same issue, which he devotes to answering letters this time around. The first letter is from two women who wrote an Indiana Jones novel "just for the fun of it", then made it into a screenplay. They were wondering what to do with it. Mr. Straczynski obviously hadn't read Ms. Schwartz's article (at any rate, he didn't suggest a fanzine), but he did suggest they change Indiana's name and turn it into a generic adventure for someone else, which I suppose is pretty good advice for anyone wanting to go pro. At any rate, I was amused to see two fanzish items in the same issue of WD.

Miscellaneous comments:

Sandi Jones is right in suggesting that we see too little of the pre-Kenobi Luke to know if he showed any prior Force ability. I meant the idea only as a possibility--one that intrigued me. You could argue it both ways, but I don't think you could prove it one way or another. And that brings up an interesting subject. I think it's worth emphasizing that most of the ideas brought up in letterzines can never be "proven" as true or real (if you can use those terms for a work of fiction), but can only be taken as individual perceptions of characters and/or themes of the saga. George Lucas is the only person who could settle most SW arguments.

Of course, that's an obvious statement, but I can't help thinking that a lot of letterzine acrimony stems from letter writers stating their opinions as "fact" or readers perceiving that the writers so stated their opinions.

Example: In several letters recently, writers have stated they couldn't see Leia joining Han in his free roving life--that Leia would want to be part of the new government order. Well, my opinions tend to be directly the opposite to that--I see Leia as perhaps getting sick of constant responsibility and reaching out post-Jedi for the freedom which she's never had. And I think I could make an argument for it, based on the films. But then, so could others, based on the opposite point of view. And I've read good stories based on both ideas.

Equally, you could argue several povs as to whether the Jedi are a race, a genetic trait, or whatever (actually, there's not much hard evidence from the films to support any theory). Or the structure of the Jedi organization (or whether there was any organization or structure). Or whether Han Solo is an ordinary man or latent Force sensitive. All you need is a possibility that's not contradicted by anything in the films. Too often, I think people lash out at ideas because these ideas don't fit their own particular perceptions of the saga.

The same thing goes for stories as well as letters--I've seen fans (in LoCs or conversations) flatly reject the premise or ideas advanced in a story because it doesn't fit their own personal conceptions. I've done it myself (though these days I try to catch myself at it). Perhaps we all need to remember that as long as an idea or story is possible in terms of the films, it's valid. We can argue against it, certainly, or say it doesn't fit our personal views, but let's not reject ideas out of hand. That's how fights get started.

On to other subjects...

I agree with Pat Easley that Luke's "flavor of the Dark" only adds to his charm. Personally, I feel that Luke's facing up to himself in his father relates very directly to the hero in THE WIZARD OF EARTHSEA, who faces his shadow--Luke has accepted the Darkness (or Shadow) within him, and that adds a mature appeal to Luke's character. Frankly, I was rather (if you'll excuse the pun!) lukewarm toward the character in ROTJ, but since then the temperature has gone up considerably. "Perfect" heroes don't appeal to me but a man who can face his own imperfections and overcome them definitely does.

Also, I have to agree with Mary Urhausen about the no-plot stories--fandom seems to produce an excessive amount of these. On the other hand, fan-writers are mostly (to one extent or the other) beginning writers, and I think it's easier to write a "feelings" story than a tightly plotted one. Personally, I think plotting is the hardest part of fiction writing and I'm just starting to feel like I have any kind of grasp on it at all. So, if it's a choice between plotless story and no story at all from a beginner, I'll plow through a few clumsy pieces while the writer is honing her skill.

On a related subject, I very much appreciate the references Maggie Nowakowska and a few others made to specific fan stories as examples of some point of discussion. Zineds have commented on how few LoCs most zines are receiving these days and, as a writer, I see this as a real problem. Since writing fanfic does nothing for the wallet, I think it's fair to say that most of us do it for the feedback which is getting increasingly sparse. The end result is likely to be less feedback, less writing. Letterzines would seem a perfect forum for at least occasional comments on fan stories, since many of the ideas we discuss serve as the basis of pieces of fanfic. I'd definitely like to see more of this.



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Cheree, I know I'm probably going to be last, I'm probably the last letter you'll get before the deadline--and I KNOW THAT AINT WORTHIT GOT HER LETTER IN BEFORE ME AND I DON'T CARE...nyahh, nyahh. You see, I changed the rules of our game at the last minute to who could be LAST in this of SE, so I won after all! Hah! ((Ed: Hah on you! Did you actually think you'd win the coveted Under-The Wire Award when you have such veterans as Jeannie Webster and Mary Urhausen to compete with? Anyway, at this point, I don't know myself who got in last since I'm about a week from finishing all the typing!))

Ahem. On to business. Lin Ward--as to Palpatine's getting mush-brained, well, fanatacism does that to you. Close attention to one thing (yes, I know, who am I to talk--shut up, guys, and let me finish--this is serious philosophy!), be it Light or Dark, can close your perspective. Too much of one thing is not balanced. So what does that say of Yoda, hmmm?

Sandi Jones: Re the comments on "Renaissance". Gee, thanks! (Your check's in the mail...)

Liz Sharpe: Oh, goody- MYTHOLOGY!! You spoke of Tyr, I've got one for you. Nuada, the king of the Tuatha de Dannan, the "faery-folk" of Ireland. He was King, lost his hand and his right to be king, for the Children of Danu would not tolerate a crippled leader. Then Goibniu, the great smith, forged him a hand of silver, the great doctor Dianecht replaced his hand and he became known as Nuada of the Silver Hand and became King once more. He was closely associated with Lugh of the Long Arm, and together they fought a Vader-type villain named Balor, of whose race Lugh's mother was. Interesting... Stick Lugh and Nuada together and who do you get? (And if someone says "Han", I'll start to snicker yet again...) It could make for an interesting story as to where Luke is not allowed to be a Jedi because he is "deformed"--and maybe that's why they threw Vader out... Gads, get the wheels turning, but who has time to write MORE?!!

Mickey Malkin: You know that I also like the idea that one Jedi can trigger another--it runs havoc through my own stuff!!

Okay, Carolyn Golledge--I'm getting confused right now, and I think I'm confusing everyone else, too. The Jedi to me are not a race as caucasian, negro, hispanic, etc., but the inheritors of a certain condition that enables them to USE the Force effectively. Everyone does have the Force, true, but not everyone can CONSCIOUSLY use it, even as in this galaxy, everyone can draw, but not everyone can make the pictures come out as a conscious effort that means something. I'm going to have to make up a new word that describes a "race" that isn't quite a "race."

Reincarnation is an interesting possibility to explore in regards to the SW universe. I would hope that not every dead Jedi can come back as a "ghost"--else Luke would get NO privacy. It's doubtful that he'll get any now, as it is! (I like to think that the "three stooges" were saying goodbye in that final shot.) Perhaps certain individuals CHOOSE to stay on in this existence, after a fashion--a theory which I also go heavily into in "Catalyst!". In this case, the soul chooses to stay on in somewhat the same form s/he took upon entering this life, to watch over or what have you. Then, when their "task" that they have set themselves

is done, they are free to go onto the next existence or incarnation. ((Ed: It could be that appearing a la Obi-Wan takes a tremendous amount of energy and that once a Jedi goes "to the Force" he or she has to consciously reassemble his or her mortal form; that in the Force, there is only mingling of atoms. Thus, as time passes, the mortal form is slowly forgotten and thereby harder and harder to reform, or that the atoms mingle even further with the Force and it would take something extraordinarily important for those who've passed on to contact those still living. Kinda sounds like a regular ghost story, huh?))

THANK YOU, MARLENE KARKOSKA! Your theory WORKS, whether the ones who are the "Theorees" wish to believe it or not.

All right, Pat Easley! Let's hear it for magic! (Which, by the way, is becoming a "scientific" exploration in itself...aahhh, I won't get started now, I'll never stop!).

Marcia Brin: Re hidden dialogue...

Did you know that, if you are quiet and still enough and WANT to hear something badly enough, that you will? The human mind is a wondrous thing. Don't underestimate it.

Jenny, Lynne and Lorie...I hate to break it to you like this, but--Annie and I are friends. Good friends, as a matter of fact, who have learned that there's a fine art to teasing each other. Her "complaining" was a joke, peoples. Why take everything so seriously? If Cheree and myself weren't offended by her "complaints", as we were targets for them, why should you be? We can take care of ourselves, really. Thanks for the offer, though.

Bev, I want one of your "Moral Litmus" T-shirts! I can be as "morally accomodating" as the next person, I promise! And I am one Luke fan that still likes George Lucas for what he's accomplished--even if I don't agree with his organization's tactics and ethics all the time. I think I fit all the required "qualifications." Oh, but I am an admirer of other characters in SW, too...but if I don't qualify for the label (Ghads, I hate labels) of "Luke Fan"...

This media fen vs. SF fen thing is a crock of @&*%\$*!! I had never realized how it was until about a year ago, at a Chicago convention. And then, months later, I ran into a few committee members of NASFIC, for which I served as Media Programmer, who were very uppity towards me. I just shrugged it off and did my job, and some of those people came to me at the end of the con and commented on what a nice job I did! I guess they had expected a drooling simple minded individual with Spock ears, a movie T-shirt and buttons plastered over every available surface. (Well, I did wear T-shirts!) But the crusader in me likes to think I struck a blow for media fans, since I was obviously unlike what they had envisioned. It was the first time Media Programming had been included in a worldcon calibre convention. Many were upset about that, for it means we have a voice finally. Yes, people, while there are extremes in EVERY field, I would hazard a guess that most media fen also--gasp!--READ. We can carry on intelligent conversations about the mythos of the planet so-and-so. We can adequately run programming and not screw it up like many of the so-called "tru" fans! Damn it, folks, how can we survive if we keep HACKING at each other? *pant, pant* There. Tirade over.

Mary Urhausen, you forgot to tell all the fen about the glitter child that you got taking off John's pants in the art auction...

Jedi/Force Songs--hee! As anyone who has read my stuff can tell you, I use songs like crazy to set readers into a mood for the story. A lot of "my" songs are by the group Renaissance, not to mention that the group Journey has some interesting lyrics. I said in a recent letter that I'd get some together and send to you, Maggie, and I will.

While we're plugging "grey" Jedi stories, I think I'll be unabashed (so what's new!) and plug mine. I subscribe to the Light, Dark and "Neutral" Sides of the Force, thus brining all the elements together. Not that the Force is definable per se, but beings need definitions and symbols, since we live in a world of reality and symbols. This gets into the "belief" that Maggie was talking about. The energy one puts out in belief can have results upon reality, so the statement that, if you don't believe in something, you can fail, has true merit. And, I believe it was last ish when you were talking about Robin Hood and the melding of the powers of Light and Darkness and what bearing that had upon the Force. There is Light, there is Dark, there is the Shadow in-between, but they are all the same. Only beings need to define, as those powers are neutral. Power is power, when you come right down to it--it is the way in which that power is used that makes it "good" or "evil" or even a blend of both.

Moderation in all things...

DIGNIFIED

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October 26, 1985

Oh, no, deadline time again...

Jeannie: In your report on the Worldcon triple feature, you forgot Cathy's Burger King run, the fact that folks were dancing during the end of ROTJ, and we did eat afterwards at the infamous Coffee Shop of the Living Dead. And I'm not the only one who gets the MCI wires all wet. Your stupid cat keeps licking the phone when I'm talking to you, remember?

Ronda Henderson: Welcome! Oboy, another Luke luster. "If you wrote a letter to fish, would you spend all your time trying to describe zebras?"--beautifully put! I'm going to use that one.

Lin Ward: What a great idea about Leia and Luke leading only a part of the Rebellion in ANH and TESB. The TESB rollup does say, "a group of freedom fighters led by Luke Skywalker"--not "the whole rebellion led by..." etc. Re the development of computer graphics before more SW movies. I've seen/heard somebody connected with LFL at some con say that (can't remember who, there's always such a herd of them). I've also seen some of the LFL computer folks showing what they're working on, and so far it looks pretty good. What's the address on Starstone for the radio shows? My tapes are copies of Barb Brayton's and I could use better ones (no offense, Barb). Gotta disagree with you that Perry King sounded like "a fugitive from SPANKY AND OUR GANG" (no comments from you, Webster), but I guess that makes him a prime candidate for Tim's "Ming

vs. the Little Rascals", huh?

Sandi Jones: Just wanted to say hi, said everything else privately.

Carolyn: G'day! I agree with all of your ideas regarding why DV left the room when Han was being tortured, but on this particular night I'm writing (this may change without notice), I think possibly he left because he disapproved of physical torture. It's so inelegant, and Vader was nothing if not elegant.

Marlene: Bravo! You said everything I wanted to say and more. Insert sound of me applauding vigorously.

Lin Thomas: Yes, I caught the CNN story. It cracked me up, too. I think I've got it on tape somewhere.

Pam and Barb: Which of us is Sparky, which Bubba and which Smokey? Hope to see you at Christmas.

Pat Easley: I agree with your comments about why Han's "I know" is funny. Not "ha-ha" funny but "awwww" funny because it's so very in character.

Tim: See you in Atlanta, I hope (with or without your pancreas). If you ever do manage to write a Mary Sue, I'd be interested in reading it. It'd be something different, at least. And, sure, I lust after Luke, but none of my SW stuff has been on that topic, so it isn't just that. Ditto my Indy stuff and anything else I've written/am writing. I thought the house at the end of the BTTF looked awfully mundane, too. About TWILIGHT ZONE and AMAZING STORIES, I'm really enjoying them both. The new TZ is a LOT less preachy than the old -the stories still have morals, but they don't feel compelled to beat you over the head with them. And tonight's AS ("Mummy, Daddy") had me howling with laughter. VERY Spielberg. Of course, the second Ewok movie is scheduled opposite AS -figures.

Marcia: About the "hidden dialogue"--I will say only that people hear what they want to hear or what it has been suggested to them that they will hear.

Bev: I gotta admit, I watch EWOKS and DROIDS every week. Not exactly intellectually stimulating, but fun. The animation isn't up to Japanese standards, but it beats the heck out of He Man, et al. If I had little kids, I'd let them watch, especially EWOKS. I was in a media vs. SF debate once and each side kept making points for the other side. I might add that I consider myself both a media fan and an SF fan. I've probably read a lot more than I've watched movies.

Dr. Mary: Yeah, media fans do have more fun, in my experience. Thanks for your response to my comments on female fen, I agree.

Jenni: Where's my Luke porn? You promised! I'll quiver my lip! Regarding blonde hair darkening...yup, me too. And about heroes being blond, I read where the guy on MISFITS OF SCIENCE (no, I don't watch it, except for the ROTLA/IJ&TOD ripoff episode) had to dye his hair darker since the producers thought otherwise he wouldn't be heroic enough. Sheesh! They want it both ways! And I always got stuck playing twelve year-old brats or 86 year-old weirdos.

OK, just a couple of last comments (aren't you glad?). This may have been brought up before, and I apologize if so. Seems to me that Luke had to be tempted by the Dark Side to truly be a Jedi. "You cannot hide forever," and avoiding the confrontation won't make it go away. I see it as akin to grokking (STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND), or the Bene Gesserit Litany against Fear in DUNE ("I will face my fear.

I will permit it to pass over me and through me... Only I will remain"). And, I don't think Luke's going to fall to the Dark Side now. He had the perfect chance when he could've killed Vader (and it WAS extraordinarily stupid of the Emperor to taunt him then), but he rejected it (I just LOVE that part). That's how I interpret GL's comment "where Luke makes the final turn to the Dark Side". The final turn towards, but not consumed by it; the final turn to it before he rejects it completely. So there, phsst, as Ronda said (hee hee).

On reading hidden meanings into every gesture or nuance: I've been on some movie and TV sets before, and I'd guess some of these things that people are trying to put a heavy interpretation on are probably just accidents. Maybe it was the best take they had. Maybe something that seems philosophical and Fraught With Inner Meaning just means the actor was thinking it was time for lunch, or had a cold, or whatever.

Finally, a bone to pick with Ye Ed. How come you cut one paragraph out of my last LoC? Not that I'm really upset, it wasn't very important anyway (I may have just answered my own question there!). And why do I keep getting all these mildly insulting headers to my LoCs? First it's Jabba drooling, next it's "Luke Lust", then it's "Has Antenna, Too!" Can't you find anything a little more dignified in my letters? ((Ed: What?? Moi?? Actually, there are two reasons why a paragraph got left out of your last letter. The most likely is that I probably just missed it. I type SE at work between projects. If I can find a time when my boss is gone, I can get a lot typed. Other times, it takes me days to do a long letter because I only have a few minutes here and there. Being scatter brained at my best, I might have just skipped it inadvertently. Or, if it was a signing off paragraph, I might have chosen to delete it to save space. I don't know. Now, as for mildly insulting head lines--I thought I was complimenting you!! I'll try to keep in mind to say something nicer next time, like "Luke Love" instead of "Lust", and "Doesn't Have Antenna", although you, yourself, sent me a photo of you with antenna, which is here by run in this issue!))



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Hello, everyone. Great to read the pages of SE again. I'll get right into some of the issues brought up in past issues that I didn't respond to. Such as: Why are more women in media fandom than men? I suspect it does have something to do with star adulation. I know for myself that Harrison Ford, Mark Hamill and Billy Dee Williams are a sexual turn on. But I'm not turned on by Carrie Fisher. I don't even care what other movies or TV shows she's in. No offense, but that's the way it is. Funny, but that's NOT what turned me onto SW. My initial attraction to SW was TESB and it's heavily philosophical bent, plus Luke's personal/spiritual quest. Why women in general get so involved emotionally with their fan interests, I think has a lot to do with personal fantasy and romantic notions. (Sometimes it isn't romance in the sexual sense, but the romance of pretend and adventure.) Fantasy in this vein is something different than fantasy in the pure SF/F outlook. ROMANCING THE STONE is a good example of this. In this film, the woman's fantasy comes true. Aren't we all envious of the female in this movie, just a tad bit? There is also a great deal of influence, in our early socialization...our young tender years...from the chauvinist society we exist in. It's repercussions of repression on our female psyches that demands some release. Sure, we can fight to stop repression, but we also need that "break." Fantasy is it. And fandom writing, reading and art is fantasy.

I've been enjoying Jeanine Hennig's articles on the Jedi, as well as her letters. My ideas on the conscious use of the Force follows my Buddhist ideology. Everything sentient and non-sentient has potential Buddhahood which is enlightenment, meaning being conscious of his/her/its truth of being. But only a sentient being can act upon itself and its environment. Why? Because sentient beings have Mindpower and Willpower/desires. And this is the fuel of action. And action creates the stuff that expansion and learning comes from. (It stirs the psychic energies.) From lifetime to lifetime, growth occurs. The blend of energies in each lifetime are affected by its environment as the environment is affected by the blend of energies with it or upon it. (Well, everything is ONE yet separate...energy included.) That's how Karma, cause and effect, comes to being. In SW, it's the same thing to my mind. The Jedi are people, humans and other sentient beings, discovering the "truth of being" for themselves and their environment. They may know how to use the Force instinctively, but probably because once taking the path, it's more open to their usage. Genetics may have something to do with it, particularly with an individual's style of usage. Upon birth, one person may use telepathy, for example, and another may be skilled in empathic ability. Or because of psychological blocks created since birth, many psychic skills may not be able to be brought forth. It totally depends on that person's own Karma and surrounding Karma of the environment. Karma acts upon and to time (age), place (environment), the individual (needs, desires, willpower), and past life tendencies/experiences.

There may be other religious sects in SW other than the Jedi. I have a feeling, though, that Lucas intended the Jedi to be IT. The one and only group to join for the Lightside. And that psychic skills are only brought to the surface through studies of

the Force, and the individual's own inherent abilities. In other words, environment and genetics work together, but everything is questionable and no one theory is definitely IT.

I find that like the early Buddhists, separations exist in SW. There are the laymen (people), and then the Jedi. Back 3,000 years ago, there were the monks and the laypeople. Laypeople could never become "whole" Buddhists. Maybe in the next life, he or she would follow the "true path" and be a monk to reach Nirvana. Seems to be this way with the Jedi, too. Psychic skills were varied with the Buddhist monks. But they were not necessary; not a requirement. I like that about the Jedi in a way. Especially since I believe we all have psychic powers, of some sort, just not surfaced. (And for certain individuals, it is far better!) As we evolve individually from life to life, the powers become more evident. So with the Jedi, in my estimation.

The whole controversy on Luke and C3PO is beyond the wildest imagination. Whether R2D2 knew but didn't tell C3PO the plans, or if Luke didn't tell the robots is simply not important. They are ROBOTS, and non-sentient robots at that. (The question of sentience is fascinating, but I think in Lucas' universe, artificial intelligence is non-sentient). Now, if one reads Cordwainer Smith's SF, there are examples of sentient robots. That thin line between human and machinery intelligence is described very well. Anyone else ever read Smith's works?

There is a parallel between ROTJ and ANH with given messages. R2D2 gave a message to Ben Kenobi in ANH. Couldn't we blame Leia for getting the droids into trouble on Tatooine? I think if we are to consider droids as having rights, then it was cruel of Leia NOT to inform C3PO of the message AND to have put R2D2 in such a dangerous position. Bit ridiculous, don't you think?

Wormie, well...YUCK. But I liked everyone's explanations, especially the comparison with Wart.

Sally Syrjala: Yoda an ELF? I like the idea of Yoda being a Vulcan. Well, he is GREEN, isn't he?

Sandi Jones: I agree with you. Marcia Brin took Michelle's comments the wrong way. But she didn't have to be so rude. If someone disagrees with her, she seems to have trouble with rational discussion. I don't want to discuss anything with her. I'll just find myself going in circles. A waste of time! About the lights, green, by Jeanine's explanation, is growth and red is death. Green in a warrior ship is the growth of destruction. Red in a warrior ship is the death of destruction.

Marlene Karkoska: Your theory on the few overzealous Han fans was excellent. Thanks.

Tim Blaes: Talking about robots and artificial intelligence, I think you'd enjoy Cordwainer Smith's SF as much as I did. You're a fan of Queen, hey? I like them, too. Also U2 and Tears for Fear. Love those British groups. Love mixed universes in fan stories, too. Right now I'm very much into THE PROFESSIONALS and I've read one story with SW and Prof. I'd like more. How about Ray and Luke are the world-savers, Han and Bodie the smugglers? Love it! And Cowley meets Yoda and they have a contest on who is the most surly. Well, I wouldn't mind the slash angle either. (Mickey, remember the two Corellians who work for Han? Won't let you forget, will I?) Thanks for the Tarot image of Luke. Well done.