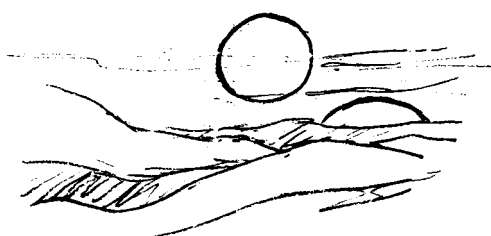


Lin Ward asks why, if the Force occurs naturally in a person, does it have to be taught? My guess would be for the same reason a person has to be taught to walk, talk, make love, and so forth. The higher the sentience, the more that sentience seems to overprint instinct. The response has simply become too complex, and information regarding it has to be passed on some way other than genes. Example has taught that children not exposed to human language by a certain age, never learn to communicate in a human manner, no matter the attention paid to them once they are rescued from their deprived condition (and no matter the Tarzan myth). Second languages are more readily learned before puberty; mothering must be taught, etc.

I wonder if all the cliches about power-users remaining virgins started in the days when puberty equalled sexual activity (as in marriage) and people confused the differences in learning ability that comes about with puberty with a loss of skill due to the loss of virginity that accompanied that sexual development. (Much like a current theory that the bloody bedsheets as proof of female virginity came about not because all female virgins bleed, but because those early virgins were so young that their hymens hadn't had a chance to stretch or break yet. People simply made an assumption based on incomplete information; unfortunate, since the belief is still about and plaguing females to this day.)

Let's see, what else? Oh, yes, I've been curious for some time now why no discussion of the political uses to which the name STAR WARS is being used has come up in the letterzines. I know I've been irritated by what seems to me to be a misuse of the spirit of the movie. After all, the bad guys were the ones who were so gosh-wow over all the fancy technology. The heroes constantly put people first when it came to the machinery. And, as the Joseph Campbell quote noted last issue, in Lucas is presentation of humankind's dilemma of people vs. machine, Lucas comes down strongly on the people side.

I can understand that the term was an easy way for the media to identify a defense system known officially by the letters SDI, but at least at first columnists and cartoonists seemed to understand which side Reagan's blind faith in machinery to solve human problems stood on. Now, the High Frontier ads are using the kids' self-identification with SW to promote their parents' support of the SDI; now a Federal judge has said that a creator cannot keep people from distorting a given work, or from using the creation to promote ideas the creator does not wish to have connected with his work. Fandom has taught me that many people do not think a creator has such rights; I'm resigned to that. But, coming during an administration that claims to support business above all other human concerns, it seems odd that the judge would not recognize at least the business need to protect one's investment. The judge, in the court, told LF that a negative ruling would destroy all trademark protection; anyone could (and probably will) use the term STAR WARS to promote anything at all.



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January 15, 1986

SE#10 was a mind-bender! There is simply too much to cover in one letter. My copy is covered in scribbled comments! Congratulations to everyone on so many thought-provoking ideas! Speaking of congratulations, thank you, Cheree, for the kind words.

The highlight of #10 was beyond doubt Sandra Necchi's amazingly comprehensive discussion of "Race Relations in the SW Universe". There is enough material here alone to keep us all talking for a year or more! The idea that the Alliance may be unconsciously reflecting racist images of the Old Republic, and that such may have caused reluctance among non-humans to join them is intriguing. This was certainly the impression in SW:ANH. Perhaps the Alliance Council recognized this fault and took active measures to promote equality, or included new anti-racist legislation in their proposed new government's constitution which then attracted the Mon Calimari, Nien Nunb's people, etc., which gained them the new allies they needed to defeat the Empire in ROTJ. It seems to me the Imperial's referring to Chewie as "a thing" in SW:ANH must have been a deliberate effort on Lucas' part to portray the prevalent attitude of the Empire. This may well be another reason for Solo being a loner, he is a non-human lover, in the same sense that an "Indian lover" would have been disliked by say both British and Americans in pre-Independence days. The comments about the Ewoks in this regard were also fascinating. The Rebels would have ignored them (apparently) if not for being forcibly made aware of their potential. It seems odd that the Rebels had not even considered using what must have been an invaluable (if admittedly, hard to get at) source of inside information. Either they simply did not know of the Ewoks' presence (which is evidenced by their initial reaction to them) or they were aware that the Imperials would not harm the Ewoks if they stayed out of the fight, and therefore were reluctant to pressure them into joining. It seems the Ewoks freely volunteered their services after hearing Threepio's story, rather than after a formal request from the Alliance representatives in their midst. In that sense, the Alliance attitude would have been one of protection rather than condescension. However, it does seem that human bias toward non-humans is an automatic reflex in both Rebel and Imperial. The point is that the Alliance is taking active measures to correct this problem. These new equal rights laws could lead to problems with their electorates in post-Empire times. Thank you, Sandra, for pointing out the droids' roles as neutral observers. Liked the comparison between droid rights and animal rights on Earth. Animals are non-sentients, but certainly entitled to laws protecting them from deliberate abuse.

Sandi Jones: Thank you for so concisely stating Luke's case. The alternates are well-explained. One question, about Luke's insistence on rescuing Leia aboard the Death Star. Did he not endanger the entire mission (to safeguard the information in the droids) by so-doing? Morally, his action was justified, militarily and in Solo's opinion, logically, it may not have been. If rescuing Leia was vital to the survival of the Alliance, Luke would have had military approval, otherwise, if he had

been under Alliance orders at this point, he may have been ordered to leave Leia where she was. The information in R2D2 could have saved hundreds of lives; Luke risked it to save one life (albeit a VIP). What about all the other prisoners undoubtedly held in the detention bay, probably all (if this was a "death row") scheduled for execution? Luke's action was heroic and morally sound, but militarily questionable...perhaps this was also a factor in Solo's hesitancy. He has a military background, and would have been more accustomed to the harsh realities of war than was Luke.

Linda Deneroff: Thank you for the manuscript. I made many marks for comment...but space forbids elaborating on everything. This was a heck of an issue!

Lin S. Ward: Best delving into Clone Wars yet. Agree the Emperor and Vader's auras were somehow linked. Reason for Obi-Wan's smile? Like it, but don't see Han as a Force-talent (personally). Maybe the smile was because Ben foresaw Solo's involvement.

Linda Kerry: Hello and welcome! Share your opinion of MISTS OF AVALON.

Michelle Malkin: Thanks for an excellent summation of emotional growth of Han, Leia and Luke. Too true about zealotry and extremism. That's the real DARK SIDE! Re stormtroopers being clones and chances for retraining...tough one. Agree Vader did not kill Needa and like your evidence for same.

Chris Callahan: BACK TO THE FUTURE, best mad scientist for sure!

Matthew Whitney: Hiya mate! Absorbing comments. Good point that Yoda and Ben did not "lie", they were simply wrong. Good point about Ben giving Luke his "best edge" in the upcoming confrontation on Bespin. Agree about Vader shattering Luke's fantasy world, hero-father image...thus worsening things for himself. Like your "there is no way to define 'soul' in this reality." And lastly...AHA!! Tim! Competition!

Ronda Henderson: "Soul feeders" to describe WITNESS scenes is perfect.

Sandi Jones: Interesting point about parallel between Lucas and Luke's "brush with death" leading to "spiritual change." As to Yoda's terseness with Luke. Maybe this is not his natural self? Could have been a deliberate teaching ploy, to test Luke's weak point...patience. Luke was facing a severe test. Maybe Yoda was applying Marine sergeant tactics.

Barbara Brayton, Pam L.: Could Han have already said "I love you" off-screen, and Leia be the one who couldn't get the words out? If so, Han's "I know" would have been sort of a forgiveness. To mention one of my favorite stories, "Love's Mystery" (KESSEL RUN #2) by Pat Nussman (a must for Han/Leia fans), I think Pat wrote it somewhat like this. Han said, "I love you" while Leia was asleep in the cell. (Right, Pat?) Anyway, I LOVED it! As I do all of Pat's work, but this is really special. ((Ed: I agree--I think this one story is probably the best Han/Leia story ever written!))

Like the comparison between U.S. Civil War end and position of stormtroopers.

Sally Syrjala: Thanks for the haiku and a satisfying answer to Vader's feelings concerning Solo's torture. Brilliant parallel of Luke's answering Han's cries, and Vader answering Luke's. Notice Vader could and did leave the scene of Solo's suffering but he could not leave the throne room. I suggest Luke being his son was only one factor in Vader's response. Vader did not like or approve of

torture.

Bev Clark: Good point about SF magazine covers. Old ones in particular were degrading to both authors and readers. Sort of as if you had to apologize for being a female SF fan when you bought one. For Vader's reaction to handling Luke's (Anakin's) lightsaber, see Matthew Whitney's upcoming story "Aftermath on Bespin" (FAR REALMS #8?).

Solo as a green lizard!!! Aughhh!!!

Mary Keever: Thanks for the insight on reactions to extreme pain. Most unlikely that a victim does ANY thinking.

Carole Regine: Good point about stories that abuse one character to highlight another. I don't like 'em either.

Cheree: I think you've probably hit on the truth about Palpatine's lack of fear of injury being due to a protective shield which was weakened by his attack on Luke. Your ideas on the origins of the Jedi order were fascinating and highly probable.

Marlene Karkoska: Agree Ben should not have told half-truths, thus giving Luke a false hero image.

Terri Black: I coveted Han Solo's ship! Like your idea about Luke's learning "wheedling" from his uncle. Well said about Owen and Beru's technically being Imperials. But wouldn't hiding Luke from his father make them Rebels?

Vonnie: I am suffering withdrawal symptoms, having no one to duel with! Right on, "asteroids do not concern" Han either!! Ha! ((Ed: Not that it has to do with anything, but I remember reading or hearing somewhere years ago that David Prowse did not always strictly do his lines in some scenes, just to crack up the other actors. In that scene, what he actually said was, "Hemorrhoids do not concern me, Admiral; I need to shit!"))

Jeannie Webster: Like your mention of Mordred. What if Han has an illegitimate son somewhere who later appears to claim his right to the throne (if Leia were made Empress and Han was her husband)? Agree most moving moment in TESB was Han's "death", equivalent to Luke's choosing death when (1) he jumps from the gantry and (2) he defies Palpatine with the words, "I am a Jedi, like my father before me," thus again choosing death rather than betrayal. Both learned much in facing their mortality.

Tim Blaes: Like the idea that Luke's crying out was "a reflex action that saved his life." Ties in with Mary Keever's evidence for lack of conscious decision. I have been ordered by me good mate Vonnie (on pain of Imperial interrogation) to include my response to your question about Richard Marquand. You ask "any comments?" Yes. Marquand is a twit. (Not very intellectual, but effective.)

Sharon Saye: As of right now you are included in my will! THANK YOU! What a lovely compliment! As the recipient, I can vouch for the fact that your ideas on feedback for authors are 100% right! (I have an insatiable ego!) Your rubber check is in the mail! I have a return suggestion: how about the authors write one or two sentences at the beginning of their stories stating what sparked them to write about that particular theme? I know I'd like to read such insights...(i.e., steal sources of inspiration!). Seriously, it would make for deeper reader satisfaction, and the plot need not be given away, the comments could be made at the end of the story. So where can I get a copy of Ellen Randolph's A NEW CHALLENGE? (Like the follow on to A NEW HOPE). ((Ed: Check the ads in the back of this zine. I know she is advertising a sequel called REVENGE OF THE SITH. Perhaps they still

have copies of the first story.))

Pat Nussman: Take your point about Leia maybe being fed up with politics. Coming close to paying for that dedication with Han's life may be the straw that broke the camel's back, so to speak. Still, I think HAN may be involved in the show now...

Jeanine: Thanks for clarifying your point on Jedi "as inheritors of a certain condition that enables them to USE the Force effectively." I get it now. Next time I'll read with BOTH eyes open. Like your crack about reincarnation and Luke's privacy! Ha! I wonder if there's any way you can join the "dayglo spooks" club! C'mon, Ann, you could write a great parody on this stuff!

Cheree (again): Great exposition on Kenobi's appearances on this plane and how they may affect his eventual total dissipation. (Luke hopes!)

Sally Smith: Like your total forward answer about why Vader left the torture room. It does fit. I think the torture was out of character for Vader. He was not proud of himself, but he WAS desperate.

Bev Lorenstein: Hope ol' Wart Face is gone for good, but have my doubts that the evil which used him as a channel will ever die.

Jean L. Stevenson: Thanks for the info on Rio Bravo. Thought it had a familiar, warm, close-to-the-characters feel. As for your add about young Han...he was kidnapped by yours truly! No ransom acceptable. Last seen in the clutches of one C. Cargill. (He's on loan for the holiday season only, Cheree! Don't damage him!) ((Ed: Moi?? Never! He has received only the most tender, loving care!))

Would argue your reasoning for Luke's holding off telling Leia about their relationship. We don't know how much time elapsed between Sullust and Endor, Luke may have been stalling for the "right" moment, and thought that such an emotional shock was not right on the eve of battle. Then, when he thought he might die, he was (ahem) forced to tell her. Being his sister also means being Vader's daughter, that's the catch. Otherwise, he would have thrown a party to celebrate. I'm not much of a one for Luke-being-jealous-of-Han theories. You say in ANH Leia "throws herself into Solo's arms". Luke was suffering from puppy love. He is a man by the time we see him on Bespin, and it must have been obvious which way the romance was developing long before then.

Lisa Thomas: So where do I get my Ewok exterminator t-shirt?

Rose Arnold: I never think of Han while watching Indy either. Too different. A compliment to Ford's acting talents.

Sandra Necchi: Three cheers for your comments on audience manipulation! Well, your letter earned the most scrawls, but I is outa space! Thank you for the Nuremberg information and ideas. Applaud your point that Leia's triumph in the freeze scene is not given credit. (See Pat Nussman's story for this. It's very moving. A tribute to Leia's emotional development which could have come straight from the missing scenes in ESB.) Clever point about rebellions having clashing political and military wings. Israel pre-1947 is a case in point. Also like economical arguments for clone war. Have mercy on us, Sandra! You'll strain our brains with so many ideas so fast!

Gotta take pity on Cheree or there'll be no #1! Hope you lot ain't too cold Up Over!

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January 20, 1986

Once again SE has given me many hours of enjoyment and food for thought. It was actually a rather mild issue with little, if any, name calling.

I really enjoyed the interview with Dale Pollack provided by Bev and transcribed by Linda. I really found it very interesting and informative. I'd love to see other interviews transcribed this way so that those of us who were unable to hear the interview could enjoy it.

I think that the Guest Editorial "Question Authority" was a real eye-opener. Luckily, I have never had to have anything to do with LFL or anyone involved with them. I think the frustration of trying to deal with them was expressed very well by the authors. I certainly hope that SW fandom is not on its last leg. But I would imagine that if we get nothing more than Lucas Land in Anaheim, DROIDS and--Lord help us--another EWOK ADVENTURE, there will be little to support the continuation of fandom. Personally, I have too many ideas and things I want to explore about SW to see myself getting out its fandom in the near future, but I can imagine that some of the fans who have been around since the beginning are getting a little restless for something new.

There are only so many things you can speculate on how Anakin fell. My own feelings are that we will get new SW movies, but they will not be what we as adult fans want. Personally, I'd be happy to just know what happens between the characters and LFL could keep all of the hardware and space battles, but I guess that is just wishful thinking. I am sure that we will have bigger and better (?) space battles, and worst of all new monsters for all of the kiddies who these movies are supposedly made for. If GL has no plans to make anymore movies, I think he should just turn his notes over to a ghost writer and let that person write Trilogy #1. Now I wonder how many of us would give anything for just a peak at those notebooks.

One thing about fandom is that many of the stories that I have read are far more complex and seem to have a deeper insight into the characters than what we saw on screen. But then GL wasn't making movies for us, but for himself and he wanted to see the action and forget about characterization.

As long as fandom is a place for those of us who do what we do for the love of it and not to make a buck, I can't see how anyone can say anything against us. Copyright law applies only to those cases where someone is attempting to make a profit. I suggest anyone who thinks any of us are making a profit talk to any zine editor and see if we are rolling in profits. None of us do it for the money but for the love of something that means a great deal to us. As for writers, or for that matter, artists, using fandom as a springboard to the pros, why not? What better way to work on one's skills or to even find out that one has the ability to write than to use fandom?

On to comments on last issue's LoCs:

Michelle Malkin: I liked your comments on all the characters having changed. It wasn't until I had been away from the films for awhile and then went back to them that it struck me you were right about Luke having whined a lot through ANH. I still have problems relating to his immaturity in ANH. It



has often been said that the Luke of ANH would be appalled by some of the actions of the Luke in ROTJ. I personally think that the reverse is true. I think that the Luke of ROTJ must have wondered how he could have been so immature in his attitudes in ANH.

Matthew Whitney: Loved your LoC as always. I really liked your interpretation of Palpatine's taunting of Luke. It makes a great deal of sense and is a way of looking at the incident that shows that Palpatine was not some senile old fossil.

Ronda Henderson: Regarding my comment on hearing from people I have written to regarding their fiction or art, I have now been fortunate enough to hear from most everyone I have written to. It may take some of them some time to write, but most of them do.

It is so refreshing to find someone who is not a "Luke fan" who recognizes that it is Luke's story and that all characters are seen in their relationship to him.

You surely know why I would be intimidated by a BNF. You know that I am a very shy and reticent fan who has a hard time expressing herself and finds it very difficult to think of things to talk about or write about. (Now, if anyone believes that I have some lake front property for sale on Tatooine!)

Barbara Brayton: Yes, I think that Leia knew in her heart that Han loved her when she said, "I know." It's just too bad that it took such a tragedy to make them realize how they felt about each other.

Marlene Karkoska: As always, I agree with the majority of your LoC. One point that struck me about the debate as to whether or not Ben should have told Luke that Anakin had become Vader, is that perhaps to Ben, Anakin was dead. What I mean is that perhaps after 20 some years, Ben has come to feel that Anakin, whom he considers to be Luke's true father, is dead. In his thoughts over the past two decades, he may not have considered Vader to have been Luke's true father. It is a small point, but Ben may have come to believe in his heart that his friend Anakin was lost to him.

Vonnie Fleming: Thanks for your kind words on my LoC. I am glad to see that you think that my idea of Luke having shown some Force-ability as a child would be a good story idea. I guess I better keep those ideas to myself until I get the story completed and submitted.

Carolyn Golledge: One of the questions that you posed asked, "Why Vader let the disguised shuttle land on Endor?" I think he still had the hope of turning Luke to his side before the Emperor got his last chance at him. Vader still seemed to think he had a chance to get Luke to join him in his plans to overthrow the Emperor.

You asked Jeanine Hennig where you could buy a lightsaber. Well, I saw a few for sale at our local Toys-R-Us. The only thing is they are battery operated.

Pat Nussman: I agree completely with you that there is no way to prove or disprove the majority of our conjectures and that most everything we speculate about the trilogy is just that, speculation. I agree too that as long as a story is possible, it must therefore be considered valid. I'll try to keep this in mind whenever I get a migraine headache because of someone's outlandish theory. I guess what I object to is when these theories are turned into fact and I am expected to swallow them whole. There is very little that we can take as gospel in the trilogy.

Jeanine Hennig: Ah, I don't know how to tell you this but your check never reached me. If you plan to continue to use my cheerleading services for "Catalyst!", I suggest you be more prompt in your payments.

I'd like to thank you for your further explanation of your use of the term "race" in reference to the Jedi. I had not quite understood the use of the term and now see that your ideas on the Jedi coincide more closely with mine. Cheree's and your comments on reincarnation were also very interesting. I like the idea of individuals sticking around until their job is done and then going on to other things. I think though that Luke will always have a visitor or two since Ben had told him that Yoda would be with him always. Hopefully, for Luke's sake, Yoda will be available to him only as a "will call" status.

Sally Smith: (A likely name) Hope you were happy with Cheree's labeling your LoC "Dignified." Though knowing the source of the letter, I wonder how she could have come up with that title. Also, I hope that you are happy since you also got such a cute illo next to your letter. Talk at ya later.

Bev Lorenstein: Thanks for your comments on my question regarding the colors of the laser blasts from the various ships. Your answer was most insightful but how do I explain it to a 10-year-old kid?

Jean Stevenson: To the first part of your last LoC, I can only say, "Huh?" You make a lot of interesting observations but I can find no conclusion that I can draw from all of them. One observation that I found most interesting was your comments on Frank Herbert and DUNE. In his new book, EYE, he makes comments about the similarities between DUNE and SW and says that he and David Lynch were able to find "sixteen points of identity between" the novel and SW. I think that part of this antagonism stems from the fact that DUNE the movie was a virtual flop and that Lynch has decided to put part of the blame on GL. I believe if I read between the lines properly, that Herbert is saying that part of the reason for the lack of success of DUNE comes from the fact that it had already been done in SW. I will admit to some similarities between SW and DUNE, but in no way do I think that the success of SW was the reason for the failure of DUNE. I have watched the movie DUNE several times and have enjoyed parts of it, but can in no way consider it to be anywhere near as good as ANH. I think that too much of the gore and violence in DUNE was gratuitous and that it must be absolutely impossible for anyone who hasn't read the book to understand the movie.

Another comment you made about the DUNE books was about Duncan Idaho becoming the true center of the stories. I have only read up to book five, HERETICS OF DUNE, but do not see Duncan usurping Paul's place. In HERETICS, he is a tool of the Bene Gesserit. I have not read CHAPTERHOUSE yet, but as soon as it comes out in paperback will be sure to read it so I can see if what your friend says is true and if Duncan comes out being the ultimate hero. One other thing, you must remember that there is a great deal of time that has passed between DUNE and HERETICS. Also, if Herbert has a bad taste in his mouth because of the similarities between the two stories, I seriously doubt that he in any way would use your idea that Han is the true center of the story in his later books. I doubt that Herbert even would have given SW a thought when he wrote any of his later books, except for his comments on "three P-0" that Carole Regine

brought up last issue. (By the way, thank you for bringing that up, Carole; it got me interested enough to finally plod through the book.)

I must say that I think, Jean, you have misunderstood Marlene's comments on people who are involved with a crime lord not being a nice person. I don't know how you can assume that Leia, Lando or any of the others are involved with Jabba. To be involved with a person, to me, means that you may do business with them or something else like that. The main characters are not with Jabba for a social engagement but to rescue Han. ((Ed: Of course, it was Han's involvement with Jabba that got him into trouble in the first place.))

Maggie Nowakowska: Once again your LoC serves as food for thought. I thoroughly enjoyed your comments on the fact that it was planned and necessary for Palpatine to encourage Luke to turn the Dark Side. Luke had to openly embrace the Darkness and could not just fall into it. Some great ideas to think about.

Well, that's it for this issue. I have more comments to make but I also have some other things that are taking up my computer time right now, like a trilogy to finish and a new zine to get out. I figure that if others can be bold enough to plug their own zines, I can put in a word about A CLOSE CIRCLE OF FRIENDS. Hope you'll all take a look at it.

## STORMTROOPERS

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January 20, 1986

I enjoyed reading Sandi Necchi's article, though I didn't agree with everything she says (it's more fun that way). Assigning terrestrial-human categories and assumptions to a universe containing distinctly non-human inhabitants is tricky. That is, most human beings share certain characteristics that affect their relations with each other. Territoriality, clannishness, and xenophobia, for instance, affect relationships negatively. There's no reason to believe that non-humans will share or even understand these things, any more than we may share or understand certain non-human traits.

Non-humans may not be part of the Empire or even the old Republic, for instance, not (only) because humans are racist (species-ist?) but because the non-humans are unconcerned with such things or themselves are what we would call racist. Their societies may have entirely different ways of governing themselves, which may or may not overlap the human system. They may have nothing we would recognize as a government at all, or a society, or even individuality, which we take for granted. Humans may have difficult relations with other species because we smell bad to each other, or because one species resembles a common phobia of the other, or for a variety of other reasons that have little to do with racism as we usually think of it. In short, even in the fictional universe of SW, this whole question is a difficult one, and there won't be any

easy answers.

Random comments: Nonconformity to majority social conventions doesn't necessarily imply any greater egalitarianism or less hierarchy--look at fandom. Or among the underworld, to use Sandi's example, look at the Mafia or gangs: they are strongly hierarchical and tend to be ethnocentric as well. There might also be something approaching a "natural" hierarchy--that is, a hierarchy of skill--which most beings who are part of the underworld will know, or learn quickly.

On the way the Empire has treated the Ewoks--not assigned them to labor battalions and so on--I'd speculate that the Empire (a) doesn't consider them a threat, as Sandi suggests, and (b) doesn't even consider them people (viz. the cellblock officer's reaction to Chewbacca in ANH). That is, it may regard Ewoks rather as we might regard chimpanzees, until it learns, to its sorrow, how wrong it was.

Finally, the attitude of colonists who move into territory already held by other people--or beings--that the natives are inferior and the colonists thus "deserve" the new land seems to be common to all human races, not just Europeans moving into what's now called the Third World. "Western" peoples have displayed that attitude toward each other (Greeks against the various Middle Eastern peoples, when those peoples were probably more civilized than the Greeks; ancient Jews and Romans against almost everyone else; Saxons against Celts; Normans against Saxons), and non-Westerners have also been guilty (Japanese against Ainu, Moors against the native peoples of Spain, and so on). I wouldn't be surprised if Homo sapiens sapiens regarded Homo sapiens neandertalensis in the same way. It would be interesting to speculate, in the SW universe, about whether this attitude is a characteristic of the human species in general and how it affects their relations with other species that do or don't share it.

The Dale Pollack interview was on the Los Angeles SF radio show HOUR 25, and the original tape was made by Lisa Cowan (ON THE MARK). I don't know the names of the interviewers, because Lisa didn't tell me and the opening of the program, where presumably they identify themselves, is not on the tape.

Yeah, what was Obi-Wan originally planning to do with Luke in ANH, before he was so rudely incorporated?

What ex-Stormtroopers will do will probably be similar to whatever old Nazi soldiers, especially SS troops, did after WWII, and will depend on how they were regarded by the citizens of the Empire. If, for example, the Stormtroopers were merely the enlisted personnel of the Empire--the infantry--rather than a special or elite force, they probably wouldn't have much trouble. As a rule, low-level troops are not accused of war crimes because it is assumed that they were under orders, and military discipline requires obedience to orders, especially of enlisted personnel. Their fellow citizens would probably not be particularly hostile, especially if they saw the troops as also victims to some extent: draftees, young people who had few other choices in life, or honest (if deceived) "patriots". (Probably, there would also be some ex-Stormtroopers, not to mention citizens, who privately feel that the Empire was right all along, just as there are Germans and even Americans who think that the Nazis were right.)

On the other hand, if the Stormtroopers were an elite military unit, like the American Special For-

ces, or a particularly feared one, like the German SS, or were disliked because they were clones, their life after the Alliance victory might be different. It would still likely be their officers who were held liable for war crimes (if trials are held), though the troops might be held as prisoners of war during the transition to prevent a counter-coup. Later, they would probably be as interested as former SS troops in concealing their past: dissociating themselves from the military, maybe moving someplace other than their home city or planet.

This brings up the interesting question of how the Empire itself will be thought of in a generation or so. Will it be regarded as a temporary aberration, forced on unwilling citizens; an inevitable result of events and characteristics of the Old Republic; the result of one man's madness; an object lesson? Will future generations, especially on planets that welcomed the Empire, ignore it as much as possible (as many Germans prefer to ignore Nazism and WWII) or engage in a little historical revisionism (as the Japanese tried over WWII a couple of years ago, to the outrage of the Chinese, Koreans and Filipinos)?

Why may Leia have been free to go after Han and later to join the mission to Endor, Sally Syrala asks. Maybe she didn't have to give up power in the rebellion for personal reasons. Maybe the rebellion had reached the point where Leia's particular skills were not required for the moment. She's of no more value politically until the Alliance wins--she is probably publicly known as a rebel and thus outlaw, and the Senate is disbanded, anyway, so she doesn't have its cover. In addition, her outpost has been destroyed and she appears to have rejoined the main force of the rebellion, where she is not the overall leader but apparently one of a number of "executives". (If they are still alive, Generals Rieeken and Dodonna are probably in the same position under General Madine, who appears to be the military commander-in-chief.) While she could be reassigned, if the rebellion has come to outright military confrontation, she might not have a leading position anyway and is thus flexible.

Luke seems to be more or less autonomous. Perhaps the old Jedi operated in parallel with, but not subject to, the usual authorities, and Luke's title and position reflect a similar position. Or perhaps they are honorary and/or given for immediate skill, as Han's and Lando's new titles appear to be--neither of them has exactly worked their way up through the ranks in the usual fashion! This is related to Sandra Necchi's comment about the loose structure of rebel groups and armies--rather like the rag-tag American army of the American Revolution. Besides, the Rebellion probably has incorporated bits and pieces of already existing military units, maybe even the entire military, from sympathetic planets, and these already have their own hierarchy and leaders that have to be accommodated for morale.

Then there's the ever-fertile subject of Obi-Wan and Yoda's plans for and actions regarding Luke. For instance, why didn't they tell Luke about Vader being his father, at least before he went off to face Vader at the end of TESB? (Then there's what Owen told Luke and why, but no one seems to care much about that.) Earlier, presumably Obi-Wan didn't want to wreck Luke's vision of his father at a point where he couldn't deal with the whole truth. Also, Obi-Wan was at that point setting Luke up to be the destroyer of Darth Vader by arousing hatred at the most primal of levels. This would serve

Obi-Wan's purpose (and maybe Yoda's?) but also accomplish a greater good, even though it might do those things in a less than ideal manner.

Just before Bespin: not telling him was a risk, but the greater risk may have been that Luke would react by being paralyzed and/or totally demoralized. He was not ready to accept the greater truth about Anakin/Vader he came to understand on his own. He certainly wouldn't have gotten it from Obi-Wan, who still thinks in ROTJ that Luke must kill Vader. He would probably have been unable to kill his own father, and the shock of learning that his greatest enemy was his own father--from someone he had every reason to believe, as opposed to Vader, whose veracity he might doubt--might have caused him to doubt everything about himself, including everything he had learned from Yoda, and thus to fail.

I have my suspicions about what Yoda had in mind for Luke at the end of TESB, based on his treatment of Luke up to that point. That is, Yoda does goad and challenge Luke and forces him to succeed by telling him he will fail. Luke is the kind of person who responds to "You can't do it" or "You're not good enough" by saying, "I'll show you!" and doing so. It may not be the best pedagogical method according to the theory, but some people do respond better to negative input (as I can testify from personal experience). To some extent, that's the way Yoda handles Luke when Luke decides to go to Bespin. All his and Obi-Wan's reasons why Luke shouldn't go and probably won't succeed only reinforce Luke's belief that he must go and can succeed. In other words, maybe Yoda actually wanted Luke to go to Bespin and face Vader, so was protesting in a way he suspected would provoke Luke's contrary streak.

Yoda's seeming impatience with Luke could stem from the fact that he has to train Luke in a hurry; he doesn't have time for long-suffering or gentle encouragement. And the impatience is largely superficial, despite the time pressure. That is, Yoda waits for Luke to come to him (or Obi-Wan to send him); he doesn't throw Luke out when Luke's original attitude is defiant and doubting, or later when he fails certain tests; and he doesn't rebuke Luke or berate him when he returns to Dagobah in ROTJ. It may be that Yoda's tendency toward impatience at some levels better prepares him to understand and train Jedi like Luke and Obi-Wan, who are themselves impatient and contrary. Perhaps his role has always been to train "special-need" Jedi: the unusually powerful, the problem personalities, the ones who must be trained in a hurry or in secret.

A speculation: though this has always been Yoda's role, even when there were other Jedi masters, he is now in fact the last of the Jedi teachers. At some time in the past, he saw enough of the "always in motion" future to anticipate the fall of the Republic and the Jedi, removed himself to Dagobah for some reason, and caused it to be unknown or clouded to the rest of the universe, like Avalon or fairyland, but available in times of special need. In other words, he made himself a sort of insurance policy for the Jedi.

Some shorter comments (Aren't you glad this is nearing the end, Cheree? It's really getting out of hand!):

The hard-line SF fans do know about written media-fan material but they reject it as unoriginal, uncreative, and so on--without reading it, of course. Mostly, I think, they reject it because our fan writing doesn't meet their definitions or their interests.

Another problem with their perception of media fans is that there are at least two separate groups of people who might be called "media fans", but they see only one group. There's us, the "active" fans who write, draw, publish fanzines, and attend cons--all the usual things an SF fan might do, only with a slightly differing focus. Then there's a much larger group, generally younger and sometimes obnoxious, who show up at cons, often in costumes from a movie or TV show, but otherwise don't participate in fandom or care much about it. Because the basis of their interest in SF is the visual media, they are also "media fans." Because there are more of them and they're more visible than we are, they tend to subsume the entire category of "media fans" in the eyes of some SF fans.

It's also my personal belief that many of these kids, 25 years ago, would have been obnoxious young print SF fans--read some of Harlan Ellison's exploits as a teenage fan!--and that part of the dislike directed at them, and us by confusion, comes from fear. That is, the new young fans aren't coming into mainstream SF fandom but into some sort of media fandom, and SF fans of the older sort are afraid their fandom may lose importance or die out entirely.

Interesting reading comments on the new SF and fantasy TV shows. I prefer TWILIGHT ZONE to AMAZING STORIES. I haven't been impressed with the overall quality of AS, while TZ has had several excellent and more very good episodes (even if it did destroy the point of "The Star"). EWOKS doesn't do much for me, but it seems to appeal to kids in its intended audience--under 8--despite some problems (like didacticism). There's nothing inherently wrong with making a TV show for young children, any more than there is in writing a book for young children--even if you're very talented, even if you don't make TV shows, movies or books for adults, even if some of your fans who aren't children desperately want you to make movies and TV shows for them.

I'll add my voice to Pat Nussman's and Mary Urhausen's about the prevalence of "feelings" stories and the lack of fan fiction with decent plots, not to mention themes. It's only partly that plot is hard, as Pat suggests; many writers find plotting easy but characterization difficult, such as space opera writers of the 1930's or Robert L. Forward currently. It's also partly that media fans tend to be more interested in characters and relationships than in plots and themes. And it's partly that much of the work is already done in the characterizations of the continuing characters; except for new characters, characters don't have to be created from scratch like plots or themes. I prefer to read stories with plots and themes (though I am guilty of writing vignettes myself), which is one reason why I don't read much fan fiction anymore.

If droids are often made in the image of their makers, what kind of race made R2D2? On a related subject: I recommend a couple of books for an introduction to artificial intelligence. THE COGNITIVE COMPUTER (Schanck) discusses some of the technical issues in very nontechnical and accessible (if sometimes patronizing) language. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: HUMAN EFFECTS (Narayanan) contains essays on the technical, legal, psychological, and philosophical implications of artificial intelligence and robotics.

Finally, I have a question. I ask it sincerely because I really don't know the answer. What do fans want from Lucasfilm? "Fans" I define here

narrowly as "people engaged in active, fanzine-oriented SW fandom." "Respect" is not specific enough. What is an acceptable demonstration of respect, if it isn't being demonstrated now? What do fans want to see in the newsletter? There are lots of complaints about what everyone doesn't like, but seldom any positive suggestions.

My own biases, and probably my position as well, are well known. First, I don't think Lucasfilm disrespects fans, though it doesn't always understand media fandom. Second, there are at most 1,000 SW fans in the sense defined above (and that's stretching it), and a combined attendance of less than 25,000 at all the SF cons Lucasfilm sends representatives to during the year, while the SW fan club has 250,000 or so members. It is naive at best and arrogant at worst to expect Lucasfilm to cater to us. STAR WARS does not exist for the benefit of SW fandom; fandom is secondary to SW. To suggest that George Lucas must make more SW movies, whether or not he wants to, just so that SW fandom will continue, is, to be blunt, to attempt to hold him creatively hostage to the desires of a thousand or so people.

Before I dig a deeper hole, I'd better end this!

## EWOKS AND DROIDS

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January 26, 1986

Now that Christmas and inventory are both over, I've finally got time to sit down and write my LoC to SE. As usual, time is growing short before the deadline, and I'm probably going to once again be hands down winner of Mary Urhausen's "Under the Wire" Award.

I was terribly sorry to hear about your dog, Spaak. I know how difficult a decision that was to make; I've been through it myself.

Mickey Malkin: I agree with you that the Emperor had to be totally destroyed. When I discussed the Rebellion's possible plans for him, I was looking at it from their PoV. They may or may not have realized that he had to be destroyed, and perhaps thought that he would be taken alive.

Matthew Whitney and Maggie Nowakowska brought up interesting points in reference to the Emperor's taunts. In thinking about it, their theories dovetail nicely. If the turn to the Darkside had to be made in total consciousness of the acts one would be committing, the taunts are perhaps necessary to be certain that the turn is made consciously. As Matthew pointed out, this could also insure that the Emperor maintained control of him once he did turn.

Thanks to Matthew also for mentioning Asimov's "Bicentennial Man". I wish I'd thought of it; it's just so perfect for the "droid rights" debate.

Sandi Jones: Liked your hypotheses about Ben and Owen's possible agreement concerning Luke. As you said, it would certainly explain why Owen seemed so reluctant for Luke to leave. A different side of the character, perhaps?

Tim Blaes and Carole Regine: The two of you gave a pretty good run down on EWOKS and DROIDS. Both shows, though, have improved a bit. EWOKS is a bit sweet and sickly at times, as Cheree pointed out. It's obviously intended for the very young set and seems better than most cartoons for that age group. One good thing is that they seem intent on preserving the standards and lessons shown both obviously and overtly in the Saga itself. Belief in oneself, loyalty, an outcast coming through at the end to be more than his peers expected, are some of the themes in recent episodes.

DROIDS has also improved somewhat, although the continuing format has been a nuisance to me until this week, when my erratic work schedule was switched to a normal Mon-Fri. Haven't noticed any punk aspects lately, Cheree, but there is a considerable amount of SW crossover. And, shades of early SW fanfic, one current major character is a female freighter pilot (though, thanks goodness, she is NOT Corellian).

Mary Keever: The powers that be in the Rebellion might well turn against Luke if it comes out that he is Vader's son. I've seen a couple of stories dealing with that possibility, and am trying to put one together myself.

As for Luke crying out to his father when in pain, after you pointed it out, it seemed so obvious. People in great pain or delirium DO tend to call out for mother or father. ((Ed's note: I was watching "The Making of a Saga" this weekend for the first time in quite sometime and, during the zapping scene, Mark Hamill, in his voice-over narration, said, "At last we come to the climactic event of the Saga--a son cries out to his father and the father responds." I actually felt a chill go over me because I suddenly understood. It was a mutual reaching. Luke was humbled of his pride and had to reach for help; and Darth was finally touched inside his armor and reached back. It had to be that way, not a confrontation of powerful forces but a meeting on an elemental level between the two.))

Oops, almost forgot some comments for Carole Regine. I see we share a pet peeve about fanfic--those stories which make "X" an utter imbecile just to show how great "Y" is make me crazy. I remember when it used to be only "Mary Sue" characters who were built up at the expense of other characters but now the principals are twisted around to make each other look great/horrible.

Also, your offshoot from my theory on the Jedi order was quite intriguing. Especially liked the point about Force users banding together to form the Jedi order and this being the time when they developed self-defense skills and the lightsaber (yes, Jenni--I want one too!).

Tim: Greetings to you and your pancreas. I was a bit disappointed in TZ and AMAZING STORIES, too. The quality on both shows is very inconsistent. When they have good episodes, they're excellent, but many of the scripts simply miss their mark. I really would have liked to see the TZ episode that CBS wouldn't let Harlan Ellison do. For good or bad, it certainly would have grabbed people. At least, they did get "The Star" on for Christmas. I remember reading that story years ago, when I was a kid--and couldn't forget it. World class Booga-Booga!

Interesting thing. I was discussing AMAZING STORIES with someone on the phone, probably Sally the Spielberg fanatic, and the point came up that the episodes that worked best on that show were the comedies; "Mummy-Daddy", "Magnetic Attraction",

"The Sitter" I thought were quite good.

Pat Nussman: Thanks for mentioning the two items in October's WRITER'S DIGEST. Did you also see the letter to the editor in the December issue that A. C. Crispin wrote in response to the article?

Seems Crispin took rather a strong exception to being used as an example of fanzine writers turned pro. She took great pains to point out that she only had two stories printed in fanzines, neither of which had been originally written for that purpose. What really bothered me, though, was her cautioning prospective pro writers against writing for zines. Her reason was, to quote: "...writers lose the habit of creating their own characters and settings. I've seen promising writers get 'trapped' in genre fanzine writing and forget their original ambitions."

Personally, I wonder just how much fan fiction she's read to make such a sweeping generalization. I can't think of any really good fan writers who don't create their own new characters and settings for stories. Even when just using the "given" characters, all writers have slightly different perceptions of the characters, making their characterization different from another author's.

Quite frankly, it sounds to me like another variation of the SF/Media flap, looking down on media fans because they don't sell their work. Another thing that strikes me on re-reading her letter is that she differentiates between "prestigious, non-paying semi-pro zines, such as that edited by Jessica Amanda Salmondson, and media fanzines..."

((Ed: Would it be sour grapes to point out that her first two books were a STAR TREK novel and the novelization of "V"? Hrumph...))

On a more pleasant note, Pat, it's comforting to someone like me to hear that even as good a writer as yourself thinks that they're only starting to feel like you have a grasp on plotting. A strong plot is just so hard to put together; it's the weakest thing about my writing, I know.

Sally "Cody" Smith: As for forgetting Cathy's Burger King run, I didn't include it because it wasn't weird. She went, she got burgers, she came back. And as for my stupid cat licking the phone--he likes you, Turkey! Oh well, what can you expect from someone who moved to a town named after Mr. Wilson's dog in "Dennis the Menace"!

Bev Loreinstein: Very good point you made about the droids in ANH. If Luke is so very wrong to put them in unknowing danger in ROTJ, Leia was just as wrong for doing the same thing in ANH.

Maggie Nowakowska: Loved your explanation of the parallelism of Anakin being dead. If Vader described it that way, then Obi-Wan used it to tell Luke what happened to his father, then Luke proves to Vader that Anakin is in fact not dead, it goes full circle. It at least explains why Obi-Wan latched onto that particular explanation, and shows him as more mistaken than devious.

Thanks to everyone for the fascinating mythology discussion. Just because I haven't commented on it doesn't mean I'm not interested; I just haven't anything to contribute, as everyone else has gone over the sources so well.

Sandra Necchi: When I read your letter, I really wanted to allow enough time to backtrack and reread all your past letters, to make sure I was remembering what you said correctly. Unfortunately, my job, plus the fact that a friend borrowed my last issue of SE, have decreed otherwise. I did go back, though, to your letter in #7, which is what originally started me off. I can remember that, upon



reading your last letter, I did realize that we were somewhat at cross purposes. However, due to the overlapping of my two letters, you ended up reading both of them in one issue. If I had read your letter in that issue first, I would have changed the focus of my argument slightly.

I can't speak for Mary Urhausen, of course, but I do know that my impressions of what you were referring to came from some statements you made in your letter in #7. You referred to the food scene (which I later explained in light of Hindu dietary laws). The thing that really rubbed me the wrong way, though, was your quote of the Indian group protesting the movie, as I just couldn't see their description of the movie as "...seeing Indians depicted as stupid, smelly brutes to be blown away to the cheers and applause of a youthful audience..." Jean Stevenson more closely addressed the treatment of Indians in TOD, and did it much better than I did, when she pointed out the attempt at balance in TOD; the self-serving actions of Mola Ram and Chatar Lal in contrast with the kindness of the Shaman and villagers. If you think about it, the Chinese have more reason for complaint than the Indians--the Chinese gangsters aren't as well-balanced by the other characters as are the Kali worshippers.

I really can't agree with you that "...the most important assumption behind TOD is that places like India are where you find barbarism and savagery, in contrast to the "civilized" West..." My opinion is that India was used simply because of the historical existence of the Thuggee, a convenient group of villains, as were the Nazis in ROTLA. I think we'd agree that cults and fanatics are never and have never been limited to a single group of any type.

I think I'd better cut this discussion short here. Rest assured that by the time the next SE comes out, I will have reread the letters in #9 and be able to better clarify my position on this.

One more thing before signing off. As I write this, I am watching the end of the NIGHTLINE concerning the shuttle disaster. A horrifying end to the attempt "...to boldly go where no man has gone before." Most fans, as has been pointed out before, are of the baby boomer generation, and many of those in turn are probably "Sputnik babies", like myself, or of the still younger generation who can't even remember a time without the space program. To most SF fans, it's something special; the true-life realization of the fantasies in print and film, the proof that the future can be ours, if we have the courage to try and make these dreams come true. But it's become such a part of our lives that we've forgotten the dangers involved, the price which has to be paid to gain these things. There will be setbacks, delaying exploration, but thank goodness, no hysteria, no outcry against the whole program. The atmosphere I sense is one of determination to find the problem, so we can determine how to go onward from here. Maybe we're finally growing up.

In thinking of these things, I find myself thinking of Luke. He was not willing to settle for the easy out, killing Vader. He had the courage to try and find another way, knowingly and willingly facing the risks in order to do so.

Better end this now, for sure, before I end up being the first letter in #12! I may backtrack to a couple of points in this next time. I've just thought of a couple of things I left out, but it's much too late to do anything about that now.

Corellians have more fun...



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January 17, 1986

This will be a solo performance.

"Luke's Responsibilities"--Excellent defense of Luke.

"Question Authority"--I don't see where fanzines do any harm. Nor do I see that it matters whether someone writes for zines, or professionally, or what. This doesn't make sense.

I see no harm in putting out books until such time as future SW films are made. It will probably be a long time before that happens. I don't necessarily expect Lucas to rush out and do them. It's possible he's suffering from at least temporary burn out, which is not surprising. ((Ed: It occurs to me, too, that maybe it's a smart move on his part in putting some space between this trilogy and the next one (first one?). Comparison is inevitable and so is the "I didn't like it because it didn't have Luke/Han/Leia in it" cry. Maybe he's giving us all some breathing space so that trilogy will be able to stand more or less on its own.))

I think people were well aware of the trilogy showings, and that JEDI opened the day after. But it would be incorrect to say it "didn't make money." As I understand it, since little has to be spent on promotion, whatever comes in is "gravy." I was afraid that once these films started coming out on video, we wouldn't see them in theaters. Maybe that the real reason.

We could certainly take 'em down, but it wouldn't be much fun.

That's really all I can say based on what I read. There seems to be no goodwill or communication on either side; that makes me more sad than angry. Maybe Ms. Garrett felt on the defensive. I don't know. If anyone has a tape on the panel, I would like to hear it.

I understand how you feel about your dog, Cher-ee. We lost our Suzy over ten years ago and I still miss her.

Carolyn Gollodge: In response to your questions: The time between Han's rescue and the Endor mission was probably no more than a few weeks, maybe a month. If Vader wanted a private interview with Luke, probably the case, it would have been to again try to persuade Luke to join him. You could even say he was trying to spare Luke any undue suffering, *i.e.*, it is better for him to give in.

I don't think Luke had already told Han he was leaving the mission. There really wasn't time. As to the Ewoks, I was thinking that the Aztecs and Mayans weren't exactly kind to their victims. I think the Ewoks wanted to cook Han because he had insulted their god; it didn't look like they had the same thing in mind for the others. Maybe they were just bluffing. It almost seemed from the novel that they were trying to get Threepio to show his stuff. I just interpret this as a humorous scene.

Luke actually "saw" the events on Bespin without any prompting from Yoda. Part of his mind was wandering during his balancing act. All Yoda said was that he would see things, not what he would see. I don't think he had any idea.

Bev Clark: Your comments on the AMERICAN FILM article were interesting. I thought PASSAGE TO INDIA was a good film; perhaps the director didn't succeed with me. Did the article say anything about THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN?

My favorite episode in AMAZING STORIES so far is "The Main Attraction". I was laughing out loud. The episodes with Gregory Hines and Sid Ceasar were also very good. On TWILIGHT ZONE, I liked "A Message from Charity" and "Paladin of the Lost Hour" best. Wonder what will happen now that Ellison has left the show. He's not one of my favorite people, but in this case I agree with him.

Sandra Necchi: I agree that Allied atrocities in WWII should not have gone unpunished. I also agree that we should not have harbored Nazis (such as those from Byelorussia and the Ukraine). That was wrong. However, it does not follow that I think there should have been no Nuremberg Trials. The Nazi leaders were not on trial because they lost the war. They were on trial for what they did, and would have continued to do, had they not been stopped.

Certainly the Alliance is not perfect, but they are striving toward perfection. I don't want to tar them with the same brush as the Empire.

I believe humanity as a whole is striving toward perfection. We may fall short, through both action and inaction, but that does not make us evil. Sin comes from the Greek word "amartia", which means simply, "to miss the mark." We do sometimes miss the mark, but we keep trying, and I think we move forward in spite of that.

Good letters by Michelle Malkin (I like the reference to "zillions of scattered Emperor atoms"), Matthew Whitney (welcome!), Sandi Jones, Carole Regine (interesting theory on the origin of the Jedi Order), Carolyn Gollodge, and, of course, MARLENE KARKOSKA!

## HUMANS VS. ROBOTS

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January 19, 1986

Thanks again for another issue of SE, and full of excellent discussion, too. Necchi's and Sandi Jones' articles are thoughtful analyses, and both the reviews were of publications significant to SW fandom. I'm particularly glad to be reminded of IN A FARAWAY GALAXY.

I like Mickey Malkin's approach to the main SW characters, noting how they've grown and improved over the course of the movies, as well as how they have functioned in the story and mistakes or flaws they've shown. This is a saga of the hero (all three heroes) maturing, among its other reasons for existence. Mickey also mentions Vader "having an off day" over Hoth, which reminds me that every battle victory is also a defeat for someone (just hope the someone richly deserves it), two-sided by its nature. Just another bit of emphasis on the "balance" theme, there.

Goodess knows, mediafen have no corner on fan-nish vendettas. The self-called trufen have been writhing in a particularly nasty quarrel (which has every earmark of a personal attack and reprisals thereunto) this last year over Trans Atlantic Fan Fund administration, for instance, complete with

some of the most vituperative, nit-picking and generally boring commentary I have ever seen addressed to innocent bystanders, in zines or anywhere. Media-fen have been at least arguing over ethics, esthetics and personal tastes in something approaching the abstract (even if it didn't always stay there). There are worse things to debate over, as I hope we can avoid having to prove for ourselves.

Thanks to Chris Callahan for the information about material cut and changed from the original BLADERUNNER. It would've been a better translation of the book, but Hollywood Knows Best. Which do we want? Good art or box-office returns? Remember that without the box-office, we can't afford the art at all... With the question also of whether the public might not take to honest art, given the chance. With BR presented as a thriller movie, the ending had to conform to the genre or risk major failure, which is more or less how it was handled. If it's seen as dystopic story full of fascinating imagery (obligatory reference to TAXI DRIVER inserted via this parenthesis), as both Philip Dick and the bulk of the movie seem to be saying, its audience is smaller but more satisfied with the original ending.

Speaking of Harrison Ford, the actor, has anyone else noticed a similarity to Jeff Bridges, in JAGGED EDGE, and maybe even in STARMAN, where he was not entirely profound, but it would be a disservice to call him ditzy. He was okay, and so was Karen Allen, even if the script had a few problems.

On the question of who should have told Luke about his father, and when, Kenobi and Yoda seem to be in something of a bind. As Matthew Whitney points out, the human tendency is to blame the messenger for the news, so that (if his teachers trust Luke to consider Vader bad news) they'd prefer Luke to hear it from Vader and direct his consequent revulsion at Vader. On the other hand, Luke is presumably learning to use his head as well as his Force-talent, and will spot the inconsistencies in what they told him, lessening his trust in Kenobi and Yoda. This last, of course, may have been a point--Luke is of necessity being prepared for independence. Whatever the Jedi tradition (and it doesn't seem to rest on blind obedience if the "trust your feelings" line, and Kenobi's and Yoda's self-sufficiency, are to be taken as evidence), Luke is going to be acting very much on his own as a Jedi after leaving Dagobah, as Kenobi and Yoda both know.

I like the notion in Sandi Jones' letter that Owen Lars was consciously protecting Luke by keeping him out of the Academy and away from Imperial notice. If Lars knew all of Luke's parentage, that gives him another rationalization for telling Luke less than the truth about his father. (We don't seem to think less of Owen Lars for this as we do of Kenobi. Of course, we didn't think all that much of Lars in the first place...) Lars not wanting to tell Luke his father was a Jedi sounds like jealousy of the elder Skywalker's achievements, and self-serving desire to keep Luke at home. Lars not wanting to talk about Vader and the Empire in what amounts to (as the Empire would see it) treasonous terms, let alone explain a close family connection to him, to an impressionable and excitable youngster, is more sympathetic a motive.

Carole Regine mentioned Palpatine's seeming unconcern at a lightsaber duel taking place within meters (or less) of his nose. This display of sangfroid strikes me as more a product of Palpatine's utter single-mindedness than anything else. Luke's

progress in turning to him--and suggestions that he had to make sure Luke was aware of the significance of it ring true--was paramount to him then. If he even recognized that he was in danger, it didn't matter: He was Palpatine the Great and Terrible, and nothing happened that he didn't ordain. That's my reading of his character, anyway. If he was rational then at all, well, you don't get to be Emperor of the Galaxy by being weak-kneed about a little force (or Force) in the open. He had no doubt had practice in keeping his nerve during tense moments.

As a contrast (not rebuttal) to Marlene Karkoska's statement of the worth of humans vs. robots, I'd like to present an athiest-based view. I'd consider a being, whether organic or machine, to be a full person according to the degree of self-awareness and self-determination it has. That is, according to whether it can and will take responsibility for its own actions. A machine, if its mind is sufficiently complex to know what it is doing and alter its behavior to fit circumstances not covered in its programming, would be valued the same as an organic intelligent being, regardless of what or who constructed either of them. Our current level of technology, and for all we know that of the SW galaxy, has yet to develop machines that are truly intelligent by any test we can devise, though to some extent there are now machines that present programmed responses capable of appearing "human" for brief periods of time. Whether the SW droids belong in this category or are self-aware (the latter thesis is often more interesting in discussion) isn't absolutely clear. Organics, of course, have the inconvenient habit of requiring several years' nature and "programming" before they become recognizable persons, so even a being's immediate behavior isn't the only test of worth. However, to me a permanently unintelligent organic wouldn't be as valuable or worthy of consideration as a self-aware machine.

One service SE performs is presenting many fans' perceptions (peculiar and otherwise) of SW. Even after several years of discussion, I'm still learning things, finding and alternate interpretations, in the discussions here. Jean Stevenson has another batch of interesting parallels to various sorts of myth (including instances of public figures whose lives are transformed into "instant myth" via the news media). Maggie Nowakowska takes the opposite tack, presenting parallels from her own life and individual psychology which can illuminate the SW characters' behavior as personalities.



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January 28, 1986

Here's another letter for your Under the Wire Award. The deadline crept up on me before I realized it, but I think this letter should reach you before then.

Bad news on the radio as I write this. The space shuttle exploded just after lift off this morning. I sincerely hope that the parachute that was seen means someone survived, and I also hope that this doesn't cause the program to be terminated. Force knows that the exploration and colonization of space is necessary to our survival as a whole. ((Ed's note: Unfortunately, the parachute was apparently a drogue chute on one of the rocket boosters.))

Onward to SE#10--when I saw the brown envelope in my mail, I wondered what zine had come. I was surprised to find SE inside, but it seems to have grown beyond letterzine size lately.

I find the articles, interviews and book reviews interesting. There are no fanzines published in my neck of the woods so anything and everything is worth reading.

Hey, Cheree, my birthday's next Monday. Can I borrow Han for a while? I promise not to keep him long and I'll send him back in exactly the same condition I got him in. Whaddaya say? ((Ed: Sorry, Han can't make it. He's...er...all tied up right now.))

Everybody that wrote to SE#10 had some good points to make and I found myself nodding in agreement more often than saying, "No, that can't be right."

I was sorry to read in the guest editorial that Lucasfilm has such a bad attitude toward fandom. Don't these people realize that George Lucas brought a lot of fans back to SF--people that go to see these films? I myself almost left fandom because of the lack of good, new SF, both print and film. STAR WARS made me, and many others, aware that it was not dying as I had feared and I have slowly moved back into SF circles. Let's hope the Lucas-film folk come to their senses soon.

Lin Ward: Like your theory about Palpatine, the Jedi and the Clone Issue. It makes sense to me and is as good an explanation for the fall of the Republic and the Jedi as any other I've read. I think you're right that they did fall together. Besides, isn't there an old saying that history repeats itself? I am sure there are plenty of examples of this, even in Lucas' galaxy.

Linda Kerry: I loved ROMANCING THE STONE, too! I've seen JEWEL OF THE NILE and think it's terrific. As I was watching JEWEL, I got to thinking what a great Han Solo Michael Douglas would've made. Wonder if he auditioned for the part?

I am also a fan of Marion Zimmer Bradley and Mary Stewart's Arthurian stuff. I haven't read T. H. White, so I can't really compare them.

Michelle Malkin: Hi! Re Leia as Luke's sister--Although D.V. obviously didn't know on the Death Star that she was anyone other than who she said she was, I believe that in ROTJ he found out from Luke.

I believe the knowledge was still too fresh in Luke's mind for him to hide his sister's identity from Vader. I wonder, though, what the results

would have been for the Rebellion if Vader had known who Leia really was earlier.

These three characters have become like real people to a lot of fans. Were it possible, I would be glad to have them for my friends. I think a lot of fans feel this way.

We've grown to love these people, feel protective of them, just as we do with our friends. Perhaps that's why the Luke/Han thing has become such a tempest in a tea cup.

Of course, Leia would fly off with Han. She's carried a heavy load of responsibility far too long. Let her have a little fun for a change.

Cindy Rodriguez: On my birthday, I will be 35. I don't consider myself "old" and fandom is definitely not just for anyone under 30.

Chris Callahan: Thanks for the info on Aussie Con. The DUNE panel sounds interesting. I saw the movie and wasn't too impressed, except by the sand worms. Perhaps the movie suffered from trying to condense too much material into too little time. Two films would have been much better.

I wondered about Deckard. What a fascinating idea--using a replicant to retire a replicant. Got to think about this one a little. Does this mean Deckard is a Nexus 6 or an earlier model? ((Ed: I am disinclined, personally, to believe that Deckard is a replicant, despite all this. I think it makes for a much more interesting movie if he's human and slowly discovers the humanity of the replicants, that they're not all that different from him. Plus, as my husband pointed out, the replicants beat the holy crap out of him constantly, which implies that he's a pretty inferior model of replicant if he is one.))

Matthew Whitney: Like your theory about the dark path dominating Luke's destiny. Of course, Ben and Yoda can be wrong. No one, even a Jedi Master, is infallible. Perhaps that line of reasoning is one reason the Jedi fell.

Bev Clark: A good point about unconscious Force users. It helps me with an idea I've been kicking around in the back of my mind concerning just such a thing.

Carole Regine: So far no confirmation of a new SW movie. In an interview in STARLOG, GL said that he would get back to SW eventually--as movies.

Marlene Karkoska: My point exactly. If Ben and Yoda lied to Luke about DV, how can he be sure that Leia really is his sister?

This brings me to your statement that if Han and Luke are brothers, that means Leia is also Han's sister. How do we really know this? I know Ben said she was, but he's already lied once. What's to keep him from lying again?

Jeannie Webster: With that breath mask, how could you tell what Vader's reaction would be to the knowledge that Leia is Luke's sister?

I also think Leia led a cell of the Alliance. After all, the Rebellion is very large and even if she has trained for it all her life, she is too young to be leading the entire group.

Tim Blaes: All right if my cats send their hellos to their fur sister, T'Poww? Seven, you say. Well, I live on a five-acre farm in the country.

I would love to see a zine 'tribbed entirely by men. Keep looking, Tim. I know they're all out there somewhere. Whaddaya say, guys? Let's see things from your POV.

Jean Stevenson: An interesting point about film references and the color of the lightsabers. Have to take this aside and check this out.

Guess it's just about time to close this off. Sorry, it's in longhand, Cheree, but my typewriter is in the shop.

Before I go, though, one thing. Kudos to Harrison and Melissa for donating part of their Snake River property to the Jackson Hole Land Trust in Wyoming. It's nice to know that they want to preserve the wild country for future generations.

Keep flyin' casual!

## SF BOOK COVERS

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January 28, 1986

Are you by chance aiming to put out a letterzine version of PEGASUS?! My sympathies to the letter carriers with several SE readers on the route! Not that I'm complaining, mind you--#10 is a good solid issue with plenty to enjoy reading and thinking about.

I found Sandra Necchi's essay very interesting and well thought out. Some comments: her suggestion that perhaps the mainly human appearance of the Alliance is due to the thinking by others that the whole thing is a battle between human factions makes sense, especially in view of the apparently totally human Empire side. The analogy with some "real world" political movements is well made. Concerning the ease with which Threepio converts the Ewoks to his group's cause, I refer Sandra and others to the novelization, in which the story is filled with references to the Empire as a danger to the ecologically-oriented way of life of the Ewoks and a danger to life-loving races in general. Unfortunately, the scene on screen gives the impressions that the Ewoks are simpletons easily taken in by a tale of good guys and bad guys; the novel shows the philosophical basis for their joining the war. On the subject of droids and their status, I think I'm pretty much on the other side of the fence. I see the droids (and real-world robots, current and future) as creations of humans or whatever, not individual beings with automatic rights based on intelligence, etc. Threepio (and Artoo at times) do show a great deal of personality and initiative, true. But both of them, and especially Threepio, are very sophisticated machines with programming that can allow for a great deal of latitude in behavior and "thought" processes--incredibly flexible programming that's probably not likely to ever occur in reality for whatever reason. Threepio in particular would need this flexibility, including the capability for apparently emotional reactions, because of his diplomatic function; the capability doesn't mean he's a totally autonomous individual with rights normally reserved for sentient organics. Droids might be somewhat accepted socially in various situations for reasons of convenience (the bartender in Mos Eisley with his dismissal of the droids and Luke's reaction seem to indicate that they ARE rather commonly accepted in some places). But to draw an analogy between droids and slaves in

the real universe is, in my personal opinion, reaching too far. At least the question isn't something we'll personally have to deal with in our lifetimes. And a good thing, too, when we still have to deal with people who don't accept human women as the social/intellectual/legal equals of human men, not to mention the racial/ethnic problems we still have.

Thanks to Sandi Jones for a clear, logical, succinct defense of Luke as a responsible person. (I wonder how some of the people who came down against him as irresponsible for various reasons would have reacted if he'd done the opposite e.g., if he'd stayed on Dagobah instead of going to Bespin. Would he have been condemned for selfishness and lack of consideration for his friends?) I especially like Sandi's emphasis on Luke's insistence on being sure of what he's doing and not simply accepting authority blindly. As she says, he bases his actions on what he believes is right for him, acts according to his own nature, when given alternatives.

Bev Clark makes a number of good points in her analysis of the sex imbalance in SF fandom. The issue of zine and book covers is still good--not zines so much any more, but book covers seem to be regressing to the bad old days after a few years of improvement. There are a few books I'd be embarrassed to be seen with because of the covers (the worst at the moment, that I've seen personally, is the cover for something called WIND RIDER--a fantasy, I think; the female lead is shown riding a horse while wearing a couple of strategically placed narrow leather strips and in a pose that along with facial expression--and remember the horse! looks like a Penthouse cover with a model simulating orgasm. The story, according to reviews, is about a warrior woman who pretty well conquers all, which might seem aimed at a female audience, but with a cover like that, I can't see many women buying it). Even when the cover female figure is supposedly a spacer of some kind, the pose and costume are manipulated to emphasize the body, even if the pose ends up being uncomfortable, improbable, all-but impossible, or any combination thereof--just so she looks like a sex symbol. Even a spacesuit or working suit is likely to be painted-on tight, gapping open to extravagant cleavage (maybe both), and of course the footwear is generally high-heeled regardless of how the character is described in the book--a perfectly competent spacer or whatever is made to look on the cover like a ninny who can't even dress right for the job. (SF cover in point--STAR ROAMER'S FATE; the man and woman are both wearing jumpsuits, but his is fastened to the neck and he stands straight; hers is open to the cleavage on one side and she poses like a hooker.) I do keep seeing more women at cons, but it's hard to tell these days how many con-goers are readers, how many are medievalists (when not in costume) with not much interest in SF per se, how many are primarily media-oriented with little interest in books, etc. And the increasing visibility of women in the field as writers and as editors may help over time. One possible problem is the sudden increase in carbon-copy fantasy and several-book stories in both fantasy and SF, which might turn off young women from getting into reading because it all looks alike, or getting started on a story that goes on for volumes is more than they want to take on. Actually, the flood of fantasy is a threat to SF in general as it takes over rack space, gives non-readers a totally skewed view of the speculative fiction field, and catches the eye of readers who might otherwise try science

fiction--and frankly, most of the fantasy available now does not encourage the reader to think much, while even half-decent science fiction requires at least a gesture toward using the brain. I enjoy some fantasy, but I'm very leery of trying authors I don't know, whereas in SF I'll happily take chances with new writers. I started reading SF back in 1954 or so, with Heinlein (having gotten a lot of mythology and fantasy before I worked my way through the shelves to ROCKET SHIP GALILEO and SPACE CADET) and it's always been my first love, whether hard (high tech) or soft (psychological, sociological). It always did take a large degree of intestinal fortitude and a considerable disregard for others' opinions to keep reading SF in the 50's and 60's, for a girl--Bev's right about the problem of social acceptability, and not just where the covers are concerned. By the way, I'm not a scientist of any kind, my math ability is practically nonexistent, I maintain a very wary relationship with any type of machinery--but I early on developed an interest in reading popularizations of scientific subjects (in spite of its "unsuitability" for a girl) and this and the SF interest seem to have reinforced each other over the years. My education is in the humanities, my professional experience is as a librarian (and if all the librarians in SF and/or media fandom got together, we could take over!); on the surface therefore I'm a poor prospect for science fiction. But only on the surface. And that's part of the problem, I think. People look at the surface (the covers, the at least apparent subject matter, the social expectations), and people who happen to be female let the surface turn them away even now (and perhaps some people who happen to be male still hold to at least the social expectations and discourage women they know from getting interested? Or am I reaching too far here?) Hopes for the future: children of long-time readers/fans who grow up with SF as a normal part of life; women like Shawna McCarthy becoming visible as editors (she got a Hugo for Best Editor of ASIMOV'S, and is now editing Bantam's Spectra line, which advertises heavily in publishing journals); the presence of women in the space program (we can pray the deaths of Judith Resnik and teacher Christa McAuliffe this morning don't deter girls from science and science fiction). The imbalance at cons is less than it was when I started going to cons 13 years ago, and at that time it was apparently less than it had been a few years before.

Enough for now! I'll never get this in by deadline if I don't cut off! MTFBWY!

## NEW CAN OF WORMS

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Well, here I am, late again, late again, jiggedy-jig. I've just finished typing up the article on "The PRIVATE Life of the Jedi" this time around, so please excuse if I'm incredibly silly. (I hear you and your "what's new", Cheree--go suck a rock!!) ((Ed: Oh, yeah? Well, you're ugly and your mother dresses you funny, so there!))

Did anyone catch Mark Hamill on AMAZING STORIES? I wonder if there's any truth to the rumor that he has, after that appearance, been asked to join the rock group ZZ Top?

STAR WARS tarot--I started drawing for a deck a long time ago and have recently rediscovered them going through my vast inroads of back-illos. I'm thinking about re-working them for an art show or something--wouldn't it be neat to try and get a whole deck done? Maybe with different artists doing certain cards? Uh-oh, another project for the fire...ohmigosh! I'm already stressed out for this month! Maybe next time around... Is anyone interested? I always saw Luke as the Fool in his wonder and Leia as the High Priestess in her keeping the faith, so to speak. Han would make a good Hanged Man, for that card denotes sacrifice and a new beginning. But then, it would be good for Luke, too--or Leia. Interesting how the characters have basically the same "awakenings," just their handling of them being different.

Before I go on with comments, I would like to open a whole new can of worms. Now, I'm not saying that I agree or disagree with either side of this argument I'm about to put forth. I can, truly, see both sides. (Blame it on being a Libra.) But these thoughts have been roaming about in my head for some time now, and have started rampaging, so I'm doing what I do when I write fan-fic. Write them down and hit someone with them!

The SW characters were created by George Lucas. No one can deny that. He gave us a world that many of us feel "at home" in, looking at the screen and saying, "I belong there!" Some say that this gives him absolute rights over what is written about his characters. Some disagree. Some say that writers should stick as much to the original storyline as possible. Some like to deviate wildly into their own heads, bringing out meanings that they see and want others to see. Be that as it may, we all write and put what we feel the characters are into the writing. Does this, therefore, make the characters Lucas' or ours?

I have seen so many versions of Han, Luke and Leia that I've lost count. All are different in their own ways. Whether they conform to the events of only one of the movies, or two, or all three, the characters are changed by what we put them through in our writing. They attain different characteristics. They become part of us. Therefore, we start out with Lucas' characters, and make them into our own. For example, Karen Ripley's Luke is close in many ways to "my" Luke, but they are not the same and never will be. Or take Marcia Brin's Han and Cheree Cargill's Han. Totally divergent in many ways, but still the same basic man that was started with. Who is to say whose characters these people end up being? And who can judge what we do to these characters which become, in a very true sense, "ours"? I'm not talking about the characters that are created in the author's mind to interact with the "main" ones. I am talking about the ones we are given in the SW trilogy. The characters made up are in every sense the author's own, and if s/he wants to make them have sex with a turnip, suffer from extreme wimpage, or kill everyone in sight, that's his or her own business! The main question I'm asking here, and throwing open for honest debate, is whether or not the "established" characters can be considered "ours."

The attitude of "this is mine, and you can't play because you'll take it away from me" can be taken entirely too far. Credit for creation is

something no one can take away from another. The knowledge that you have done something, even if only in your own mind, is proof enough--there shouldn't be any squabbling. If someone wrote something about my character that I didn't agree with, I doubt that I would care. After all, that's not my character, after all, if they are doing something with the character that, in my opinion, would never happen. It is someone taking the name of my character and putting it on someone else's body. There are, of course, thousands of arguments to repeat or refute all I've said. Well, bring 'em on! I want to hear some ideas that either clash or correlate with my own.

On to the LoCs again...

Well, Mickey, the "PLOJ" article is a bit short, this time out, too, but I think by the time everyone stops groaning, they'll be glad! Truthfully, I will be getting into some lengthy dissertations. I mean, I've gotta keep up my rep!

Emperor Brainburncase (that's quite good!) was obviously not all with it in the mental department. While he was powerful and made me pin my ears back because he was such an evil persona, he was a bit slow on the uptake. What sense? What intelligence? "Absolute power corrupts absolutely" is a good way to put this--in Himself's case, it obviously corrupted the old alpha waves! Who else would have, when Luke was so obviously in his back pocket, started laughing and given our sweet Jedi some time to think about what he was doing?

Matthew Whitney, your opinion about the Emperor's taunting of Luke is a very valid point. I like it.

Ronda Henderson: BNF should be changed to BMF. Big mouth fan. After all, in most cases, it fits. BNFs are usually only so in that they open their mouths and assert their opinions a lot, which can be either good or bad, depending on how far it's taken. As an example, Annie Wortham is a BMF! (hee--gotcha, Annie!) This "new kid on the block" stuff is ridiculous! All of us have started out that way, and if any editors have treated you bad, Ronda, it's definitely their loss!

Sandi Jones: A lot of your ideas about the Force I really agree with, and as my next article will be about the various ideas of the Force, I won't say more. But bravo! And I'm dying to see those sculptures! (I could say some really suggestive things, but I won't...)

Yeah, Bev Clark--I'm glad you brought up the incest taboo. One could get into a very interesting debate on taboos and sociological customs here. (And since I've already been to hell and back, I don't care what people think!) Which taboos are necessary? In each culture, it differs. In STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND (in my humble opinion, Heinlein's best book), Jubal Harshaw makes an interesting comment on cannibalism. One of his cohorts (I believe it was Duke) was reacting negatively to the fact that the Martians were cannibals, saying that it was a sin, he'd always known it was a sin, hell, it was instinct to be revolted by cannibalism. Jubal replied that it wasn't an instinct, that he'd been trained from birth to hate it, and that it was a good thing that such hatred was so ingrained, because he had neighbors that he wouldn't trust with his back turned--the price of beef being what it was. His overall comment was that we weren't civilized--thus the "protecting" taboo. While, granted, we aren't talking cannibalism here, this same statement can be broadened to incest, or any other sociological taboo. The main rule here is that no one

has The Only Right And True Way. We all have a slice of the truth...

Mary Keever: Were those Jedi briefs you were talking about the ones with the little silver J's? And we could talk nonstop about the possibilities for Luke's bionic hand...

Carole Regine: Re Palpatine's nerve--yeah, it was there all right. But no brain, no pain, I always say.

Marlene Karkoska: I know, I know, I owe you a letter! It should be winging your way soon--probably (hopefully) you'll have it before this ish of SE comes out! Bravo on respecting others' beliefs. If only more people would do the same... And I wanna use my lightsaber! I know a couple of people that I would be justified in defending myself against! Not only that--seriously, the discipline appeals to me. You can't grow up dancing--and continue such--without a love of the self-discipline that one must have.

Ah, Carolyn Gollege, don't get me started on the three sides of every dualism. I won't ever stop! Yes, Han is a perfect neutral.

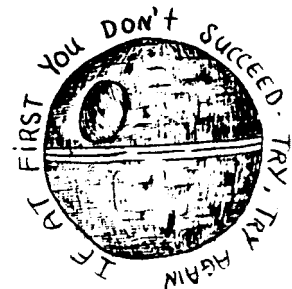
Jean Stevenson: I must disagree with you on the lightsaber/pocket knife issue. What about Luke opening the belly of that AT-AT? Han opening the belly of the taun-taun. Luke's learning control of the Force with it in SW under Kenobi's instruction. The lightsaber has been used for many things in the movies that I'm sure the original Jedi never thought of! But I will be sinking my teeth in more next time. I haven't had the time to, lately.

Yes, Maggie, the kids love those monsters! Bekah has grown quite a bit since she first saw the original EWOK adventure and is no longer a lap-climber. She drools over the monsters and demands that I watch, too! \*sigh\* It's amazing how much you learn about the human race, watching a child grow up. I don't agree with the parents who think that their children shouldn't play with toy guns, either. Normal aggression is good for kids. I think that there's not much that can hurt a child, as long as s/he has the steady, consistent moral upbringing at home.

Sandra Necchi: Welcome back! Your political arguments, as always, stun me with their intricacies. I won't comment, because I'm not sure that I'm qualified--I tend to be rather an anarchist in a lot of ways! But the "I know" line was an absolute triumph for Leia--she admitted to herself and to Han, in front of those she despised--that she loved him. It was a giving action in the true sense of the word and I felt like giving forth a cheer when she did it. Leia grew up!! Compassion is not a weakness--it is a strength--and it was sad that it took that horrible consequence to make her see the truth.

Gads, I just realized how many pages I've typed! Oh, well, I know: "Jenni, get off the phone!" ((Ed: And you call Annie a BMF!))

Walk the skies!



6/21/84  
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January 31, 1986

Hello, out there... Sometimes I feel like I'm on a loooooonnnnnng cometary orbit--I only manage to come within hailing range of SOUTHERN ENCLAVE once every 76 years or so, subjective time. SIGH. Well, gravity has done its dirty work once more, and here I am.

As of this writing, I'm still numb with shock at the fate of CHALLENGER. Requiescat in pace, pretty bird, and all the brave women and men who took the last flight with you. Now we know what an exploding starship really looks like.

Horrible.

In the midst of our shock and grief, let's hope that this disaster won't set our exploration of the outward frontier back for long.

Onwards.

I was going to write something in response to Jean Stevenson's letter in the last issue of SE (#10), since at least part of it ("...and now Camelot seems to be out unless one is a serious Arthurian scholar") appears to be directed at me. (As a matter of fact, I only recall making a plea that heavy, in-depth comparisons between SW and "Arthurian legend" be done carefully--a plea I would make again on the subject of intensive examination of any topic.) However, before replying to Ms. Stevenson's letter I would first have to try to explain what I think it means. I'm afraid that would require a prohibitive amount of time and space--if, in fact, I could accomplish the task at all. Then, when I finished, I'd still have to reply to what I thought she'd said.

Perhaps another day.

Cats, huh? Well, then. I have stewardship of a cat ("Princess" or "Bagpipes", depending on which she sounds more like at a given moment), but I confess my first and chief love is my animal-shelter-adoptee canine, Raffles. He has been a constant companion in my travels and travails from coast to coast for the past eight years, and he had had tremendous patience with my aberrations the while. He is not small (75 pounds) or terribly cute (difficult for a pit bull/German Shepherd cross), but he is quiet, intelligent, brave (except for thunderstorms), and extremely well-mannered. Granted, he's a long way from perfect--but what the heck. That's one of the reasons we have "Mary Sues", right? If GL could do it, I can. My dog has a SW (very trivial!) fanfic "alter ego". By the way, he tolerates the cat (his junior by 7 years) nobly. In fact, at times I suspect the pair of them are in collusion--particularly when they make a nest together in my formerly clean laundry...

Recently, there has been some discussions in these pages on the issue of feedback to writers, particularly in light of the fact that LoCs (for whatever reasons) seem to be less common than formerly. In the interests of spreading the word about Good Stuff, and encouraging the production of more Good Stuff, it has been suggested that we mention items that have caught our interest when writing to the letterzines. I think this is a fine idea, speaking both as a writer who has had the heartening and ego-bolstering experience of receiving favorable mention in this way, and as a consumer who paid attention to other peoples' comments and thereby

found out about Ellen Randolph's excellent work. A little positive feedback is a wonderful thing. In my case, at least, knowing people liked my story has given me a strong incentive to struggle forward with other projects. New writers, in particular, are very much in need of proof that someone has seen their work, and cared enough to comment on it.

(Thank you very, very much to everyone who put in a good word for my story, by the way!)

In hopes of spreading nice feelings of this sort around, I think it would be great if "honorable mentions" were extended to artists, too. You know--those under-appreciated people who convert ugly, unaesthetic white space into a joy to behold. Artists definitely do not get enough support. Ask any artist. Just being asked can make an artist's day--it's an expression of interest... Or ask an editor who's desperately searching for someone to do artwork for a zine. I realize that many of us would like to wriggle out of commenting on artwork, pleading lack of expertise--but c'mon, that's just an excuse. We're quick enough to comment when a zine doesn't have "enough" art! You like an illo, or you don't. A picture resembles a known character, illustrates a scene from a story, makes you giggle (cartoonists are especially neglected), or snivel--or it doesn't. If you like a piece, say so; maybe the artist is just waiting for a few kind words.

I'll lead off. Artists whose work has impressed me over the past year (I have not gone back to my zine collection, being short of time, so if my memory falters, I hope the artists will forgive me) include Dani, Suzy Sansom, Laura Virgil, Ronda Henderson (there's a person with a strong "different" style which can be quite compelling if you're not wed to one particular form of visual interpretation), and Ye Editor. ((Ed: Why, thank you, Liz! Your check is in the mail!)) There are many others (Wanda Lybarger is so consistent it seems redundant to mention her name and quality artwork together), but those were the names that sprang to my mind at once.

Artists, like writers and editors, move on to other topics of interest: someone who is illustrating SW now may be doing BLAKE'S 7 next month, and something else the month after that. But I'm sure they don't mind positive comments on "old" work. Maybe they'll stick around longer if we show 'em some appreciation.

Let's give it a shot.

Finally, a note to Sally Smith concerning Annie Wortham and those silly head-decorations of hers, er, ours, er whatever. Sally, you and I know antennae are the farthestest thing from being a nuisance: they're decorative, useful, and adaptable, too. Maybe Annie's are a pain to her. But then, it's no secret that she's never mastered the skill of retracting them when ~~impersonating~~ ~~being~~ necessary. But then, Annie's cute, but not too...well... Tell you what. I'll invite you over some time to watch her battle it out with her shoe laces. It's quite a show.

Annie--don't point that thing at me. Can't a clone take a joke? Annie? Annie--don't--

Th-th-th-that's all for now, folks!





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January 29, 1986

Well, I said that I wouldn't wait as long to LoC this time, and I haven't--I'm a day earlier than last ish! (It's a start, anyway.)

First of all, I'm sure that everyone is as deeply saddened as I am over the space shuttle disaster. It's just something I never dreamed possible. Every time I watch the explosion on the news is as bad as the first time. My prayers go with those seven on board and their families...

On to more pleasant subjects...

I was hard at work on the next installment of the SW saga--EPISODE VII: RETURN OF THE EMPIRE--when I heard that Lucasfilm announced pre-production has started on the first trilogy during a recent convention in Austin. Has anyone else heard about this? Well, never fear, I will continue to work on the third trilogy.

I'm glad that TESB has finally made its way to cable. In fact, it premieres on the three-year anniversary of ANH's cable debut--February 1.

It looks like my VCR will be doing extra duty in February--TESB on cable, Mark Hamill on AMAZING STORIES, and ROTJ being released on video February 25th.

I hope everyone had a great holiday. For me, it was a zine-filled Christmas. I'm still not caught up. If I ever live through all the Shakespeares that I've been studying lately, I'll be able to finish reading them. I throw SW into Shakespeare, though, by relating every possible similarity between the two. There are many.

Sandi Jones: I must say that I thoroughly enjoyed your article on "Luke's Responsibilities". I'm glad that somebody took the time to analyze the subject as you did.

Michelle Malkin: This is probably going to sound like a really stupid question, but here goes. If the stormtroopers were clones, then wouldn't they all be the same size? The troopers in ANH could not have possibly been equally proportioned if both Luke and Han could fit into their disguises. True, Luke's helmet was too big, but the rest seemed to fit perfectly as did Han's. Different sets of clones?

A Dark Side Chewie does sound extremely crude, but being the psycho that I am, I'd still love to read it!

Matthew Whitney: I totally agree with your comments to Carole Regine concerning "to tell Luke or not to tell Luke". Telling Luke that DV was his father would have been even more detrimental than not telling him.

Hey, I thought I was in the running for the "Most Theater Trips to see ROTJ" award (I've seen it at the theater 33 times), but now I discover that I have been surpassed.

Mary Keever: When I first received my copy of SE#10 two months ago (has it really been that long?), I read your letter, but for some reason I forgot half of what you had written until I reread it-- SHAME on you! How could you say such things about our innocent Luke? (We'll have to talk about it in further detail privately--heh heh--I got a rep to protect, y'know.)

Tim Blaes: Now that I've seen more episodes of the new TZ, I must say that I like it. "Dead Woman's Shoes" and "The Shadowman" have restored my faith

in the show. (Does anyone get a new TZ spinoff called TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE [no relation to SW] aired late nites on Friday? It's pretty wild!) I, too, hope the producers will use some of the TZ magazine stories for episodes. (Remember "Pumpkin"? I loved it!) Another good TZ episode could come from a short story by Shirley Jackson called "The Lottery", which I found in my lit book recently. ((Ed: "The Lottery" is a classic story and was adapted for television as a TV movie, several years ago, if memory serves me correctly.))

Sorry to hear that you are no longer involved with VERTIGO.

Glad that you have finally "revealed" yourself to SE readers. I LOVE your Smurfbusters t-shirt! Maybe I should get an Ewokbusters symbol for the back of my EWOK EXTERMINATOR t-shirt.

I wish that I had more time so that I could comment on all of the letters in #10 because they were all so interesting.

One more thing--"Question Authority" was very thought-provoking. Point well taken. Not that it would do much good, but has a copy of the editorial been sent to Lucasfilm?

Well, next time, I'll write such a long letter that Cheree will have to give it a title--even if all it says is "to be continued". Until then--fly casual!

## UNDER-THE-WIRE AWARD

Pat Easley  
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February 9, 1986

Hi, all--

First off, I wanted to mention how much I enjoyed last issue. I really appreciate the zine reviews, newspaper clippings and consumer corner. Also enjoy the profile very much. It's nice to know a little something about the folks who, to date, have been only names. The photos are an extra added attraction!

Lin Ward: Speaking of recent viewings of ANH and Ben's expressions--does anyone else out there see the guilt in Ben's averted gaze as he tells Luke about the "death" of his father? Never really noticed it 'til after ROTJ.

Matthew Whitney: Re the Emperor's taunting of Luke...maybe in order to truly become Dark, Luke had to consciously know he was falling and go ahead anyway, as opposed to just slipping to the Dark while in a blind rage. This is expanded upon in Maggie Nowakowska's letter (same issue) and she explains it very well. Re your comment that "not for a second did Luke ever feel drawn to Vader, etc., I agree that Luke's immediate feeling is revulsion as you say, but shortly afterward, as the Falcon is escaping, during the telepathic "Son, come to me"--"Father" dialogue, I see longing in Luke's face and I interpret the agony he endures, at least in part, as being caused by the struggle he is having to reject his father. What do you think?

Ronda Henderson: As you say, let's hear it for

those editors who are willing to talk to and help those of us who are new in fandom. If not for Cheree and Jenni H., I'd still be sitting around, wondering why I was the only post-30 kid in the world and using my children as my excuse to see a SW movie just one more time. Thanks, guys!

Sandi Jones: On Yoda's "You must believe" statement--I have a lovely little bookmark, picturing a unicorn in a forest, which says, "Some things have to be believed to be seen." It's really lovely.

Barbara Brayton: On your comments about Yoda's training--for no really valid reason whatsoever, I see it like this: Yoda--"Anakin who? You did what? He did WHAT?? Darth Who?! Headstrong are you, Ben! Reckless, yes! Now things will be worse!" Doesn't really make sense--seems like Yoda would have known something was up, but that's how my mind's eye persists in viewing it.

Carole Regine: Thoroughly enjoyed your theorizing on the history of the Force-users and the Jedi Order. Fascinating! How 'bout more on this--in detail!? Especially the "older and shrunken order that may have produced Palpatine," etc. I have long been curious about the origins of the Jedi, Force users in general, and "Dark Lords" in particular.

Marlene Karkoska: I'm not so sure that "Luke could easily have been persuaded to follow Ben" without knowing about his supposed father. You know, Luke had already turned him down, even after hearing about his father and receiving the lightsaber. He was only going to take Ben to Anchorhead until his family was wiped out. Also, how to explain why he was giving Luke the lightsaber. Luke would not have appreciated the gift nearly as much without the emotional tie inherent in the fact that it had once belonged to his unknown father who "wanted him to have it when he was old enough." Totally agree that Ben and Yoda were extremely fortunate that Luke's disillusionment with their lies or evasions didn't push him over the edge. Says a lot for Luke's innate goodness, doesn't it? Also, Marlene, re your opinions on droid equality--perfectly put, especially the religious aspect. Exactly how I feel and thanks for having the courage to delve into this "touchy subject"!

One little glitch in Jedi that always catches me up is when Luke and Leia are on the sailbarge preparing to disembark. Luke grabs the rope, motions to Leia and says, "Come on," but the words and gestures and lip movements are out of sync and it always bugs me.

Terri Black: Very interesting ideas on the Throne Room "hynotism session," and very believable, too!

Carolyn Gollledge: Yes, I think Vader did indeed wish a private interview with Luke. Why? Well, the obvious reason may be the correct one...to try one more time to sway Luke to the Dark. I think, however, that Vader (maybe subconsciously, maybe not) just wanted to see and talk to Luke alone. I feel that as early as TESB, Anakin was peeking out and loving his son whether Darth knew it or not and I personally think he did. As far as the risk of letting the sabotage team through, don't forget Vader's supreme arrogance and total self-confidence in his own abilities.

I don't think Yoda had Han and Leia strictly in mind when he encouraged Luke to "see his friends" fate. As I recall, he said, "Old friends, long gone." Is that right? (My memory is lousy.) If so, rather ambiguous. I think he was just showing Luke how to use the Force to "see" past, present

and future possibilities and had no idea of what was going on with Han and Leia.

"The new look--mature Luke"? Drool is right! And pant and whoop. However, I did all those things over the old immature Luke, too. (But, ah-h-h, that black.)

If it's true that being part machine makes it easier to convert a Jedi, then maybe Anakin did not fall to the Dark until after his confrontation with Ben. Possibly he and Ben had some differences during Anakin's training over something or other. Ben, thinking rightly or wrongly (or maybe having seen a vision of the future Vader) that Anakin's disobedience or whatever was a sign of his imminent fall, decided to discontinue his training and cast him out. This led to the duel and Anakin's near death. Surviving in a partly mechanical state, disillusioned with and hurt by his mentor and friend, Anakin would then be easy prey for the Emperor to turn. After he regained his health, he became DV and then wiped out the Jedi. What do you think?

Jeannie Webster: Re the hair color controversy --Luke will always be blonde to me, even if he goes bald.

I agree with you about Vader's not realizing that the "sister" was Leia. It just seems that he would have had a bit more to say if he'd known and, after all, Luke was trying very hard to block Vader. Maybe he succeeded in blocking her identity if not her existence.

Tim Blaes: First time I ran across anyone who'd heard of "I Am Legend." Wasn't that a terrific book and didn't you think the movie based on it, THE OMEGA MAN, was a real travesty? Not a bad movie, I guess, but nothing like the book! At all!

Pat Nussman: Re your comments on the scarcity of LoCs--I found, when I got my first batch of zines, that I didn't want to stop and write letters. I wanted to read! Then when they were all finished, I thought, "There's plenty of time, I'll write later." Well, now it's later and my memory being as pathetic as it is, I can't remember what I wanted to say. So now I have to start over again, review the zines to refresh my memory if I want to write--and now there's no time left. I've decided that from now on, I'll not let myself start reading the second zine 'til I've LoC'ed the first! LoCs didn't really seem that important--after all, who's going to miss one little letter? But I guess they do add up. I know I'd like a little feedback, pro or con, on anything I contributed.

Hi, Jenni! Enjoyed your letter but...moderation? Who? Us?

Bev Lorenstein: Romance of pretend and adventure. Absolutely!! Are there many of us (at least from my baby boom generation), who did not grow up pretending to be princesses, Indian maidens, Egyptian queens, etc.? I spent 3 years being Thuvia, Maid of Mars, as well as Queen Nefertiti and never took a bath without spending some time as a mermaid. That was and is exactly why SW is so very dear to me and magical. (Of course, if that ever palls, there is always good old sex personified by you-know-who to keep me interested.) ((Ed: I guess I was truly a media child from the beginning. One of my first fantasies was that I was a Martian--a la MY FAVORITE MARTIAN. Then I went through a few stages in which I was alternately an UNCLE agent or Jonny Quest and finally a Vulcan.))

I love cross-universe stories, too. In fact, I just read one coming up in Jenni's FAR REALMS that's really nifty! Be sure to catch it. (Did I do that right, Jen?)