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Some Revolutionary Thoughts

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Before I start with the main body of this article, let me state that the kind of analysis this article concerns itself with has little if any bearing on George Lucas' vision of the STAR WARS universe, since he doesn't really seem to consider, or even care, about the implications and possibilities of his story and I don't expect him to. He's just a good filmmaker with a simple story to tell and any such analyses would probably be considered silly by him and, quite frankly, he's probably right. Still, silliness can be fun and there is a wealth of speculation to be done with the saga. So I simply offer the following as one person's random, meandering speculations. With hope, it will interest a few readers.

I am a student of history, politics, economics, law and, especially, revolutions, and I thought it might be interesting to analyze the SW revolt. Most rebellions begin by the protests of a few or several groups, whether new or old, whether violent or non-violent. Most of them start with a strong reformist tendency while a very few--sometimes only one--are openly revolutionary and advocate armed struggle. But even these usually start protesting peacefully, often in loose association with the others. It is during this stage that negotiations are the major protest strategy. Tactics include peaceful demonstrations, petitions, rallies, boycotts, civil disobedience, calls for meetings with government officials, and so on. This was true for the American Revolution as it is for today's El Salvadoran revolution. After fruitless years of peaceful attempts at reforms, in which the government increases its repression and grows even more intransigent than it was initially, the more organized and more militant groups may decide to practice openly revolutionary goals, going underground and taking armed action. They are soon joined by the more reformist organizations whose members are continuously murdered by government forces. It may or may not be an uneasy alliance, since one side of the coalition may still work for negotiations as a secondary strategy while the other side may not. A few groups remain peaceful until almost the

very last minute. Yet they are still sympathetic to their armed counterparts. Only at the last minute, when the rebels are practically at the capitol's doorstep, does the government make a few changes in defense of its continued existence. By then, however, it is far too late, even if these changes are truly systemic ones, which they rarely are.

Some of these points fit in with the Alliance's revolt, some don't. To begin with, armed opposition against the Empire by former Republicans (who seem to form the backbone of the Alliance) seems to have begun right at its inception, if not in its embryonic stages. And these Repub-



licans still command a certain amount of power so that much of the conflict between the Alliance and the Empire can be characterized as a competition between two power interests, one currently eclipsing the other. So, just what and who forms the Alliance? It must be a coalition of forces but, clearly, the most influential faction are the Republican interests. Is part of the old Republic's military apparatus still extant? Probably, and much of the Alliance's military equipment is likely furnished by these Republican interests. Was the Alliance's strategy armed action from the beginning? This is probable since with part of the old military still around and, no doubt, the Empire's violent purges and reprisals, it is more likely that negotiations were never considered viable.

But just exactly who is the Alliance fighting? In the novel STAR WARS, the Emperor Palpatine is described as being a pawn of bureaucrats, greedy officials and "massive organs of commerce." This is, of course, in direct contradiction to the Emperor we see in JEDI, who may or may not be Palpatine. He doesn't seem to be a pawn of anyone, unless of course there is someone even more powerful than he that we haven't seen. I offer that as an "out" to explain the contention in the novel that he is being used by others. I think perhaps the most important element there is the "massive organs of commerce." These are the vast units that control great wealth and the galactic market and are therefore the backbone of the Empire. Who suffers from these "supermonopolies"? Small entrepreneurs, laborers (probably the largest group), whether organized or not, and perhaps some local planetary governments who are impoverished and whose loyalties lie with their dying, squeezed-out industries. Most of these governments can easily be co-opted and controlled, however, by the supermonopolies who pacify their leaders with wealth. (Witness the regimes of the Third World.) Certainly these co-opted governments may at times dislike their alliance with the Empire for purely selfish reasons, but they would never dream of challenging it--for it keeps them in power. Their own oppressed people would boot them out instantly if given the chance. So the only planetary governments who would support the Alliance would be the most enlightened ones with a feeling of patriotism toward their own world's sovereignty.

It is these three groups that would compromise the rest of the Alliance and it is quite probable that this coalition is an uneasy one. Why? Because of the predominance of Republican interests in the Alliance. Why just this as a point of contention? As I said, these Republican interests represent old, moneyed power. The other side of the Alliance does not. It has been mentioned in the novel STAR WARS that there was great discontent throughout the galaxy against the Republic and that Palpatine capitalized on this and promised to end the suffering. It is likely that

perhaps some of these other non-Republican interests within the Alliance initially supported Palpatine, naively believing his promises for change. It is also likely that others within these interests were disaffected from the entire Republic itself and saw Palpatine as just a part of it, correctly realizing he would end nothing and would probably be worse. Therefore, there may be these non-Republicans within the Alliance who struggle alongside with the Republicans only because the latter have the most power to effect the overthrow of the Empire, because they particularly trust these Republicans. They may rationalize to themselves that they will be able to gain independence and true freedom once the Alliance has succeeded. But there may be some who refuse to even associate themselves with the Alliance. After all, the Alliance is just a force of the Old Republic which caused all the trouble in the first place. These elements--probably a few impoverished worlds and laborer groups--may form their own resistance movement. It is not uncommon to have two or more separate rebel forces within a revolution. And the groups in this separate movement, and those who have uneasily chosen the Alliance as their base of struggle, may even be the Republic's old opposition. Planetary governments with stringent regulations about their own economic and planetary sovereignty, now with the Alliance, may have been strongly opposed by the Republic since increasing centralization seems to have been the course it took.

From where did these supermonopolies originate? Probably from a few richer, elite worlds who have the most modern in everything and who pacify their populations with wealth and propaganda. Alderaan was perhaps a moderately wealthy elite world representing the small entrepreneur guilds with its own strong sense of independence within the increasingly concentrated galactic market. The Alderaan interests are probably the most powerful and most prestigious within the Alliance, with perhaps excessive influence. This too may be a factor in the basic disharmony within the grouping of the Alliance, since others may resent the hierarchy and inequality of the power within it.

It is therefore likely that after victory, the Alliance will break up and squabble. The Alderaan and similar interests may want to institute another Republic with few differences in the old system. Its former allies and the other smaller resistance movement may join together in opposition, and the new Republic just may have another rebellion on its hands, this time against itself. These anti-Republic groups have perhaps been struggling for centuries, during the old Republic itself and by this time, they are not about to forget the demands for greater independence and dignity just because the Empire has been overthrown. These groups may see the Empire as the logical extension of the Republic and will want to set up something

altogether different. A Republic that allows supermonopolies and greedy bureaucrats to gain power must have some serious flaws at its base. It probably suffered from lack of enough regulations against concentration of markets, not enough consideration for the more powerless elements and too much hierarchy and bureaucracy. Probably a compromise solution would be a strong representation by each planet in the Senate and stringent regulations about interference and exploitation of world economies. Provisions for cross-planetary laborer, artisan and other guilds with equally strong regulations for their maintenance and power could also be implemented. I resist the notion of a president but prefer a rotating election of 100 or 200 senators to serve for a very limited term and to be extremely subordinate to the galactic population. Some sort of body should be made to monitor it. There are many problems with representative democracy so the less concentration of power in the hands of the Senate, the better. As for the military, that sentiment is doubled. Actually, I prefer greater autonomy and independence for the planets themselves, and for the guilds (excluding the more powerful business ones), even isolation if they choose it. Each world should be made to depend on itself, to prevent any exploitation by a galactic government and its entrepreneurial interests. However, is it realistic to believe that these supermonopolies and their allies will simply disappear? They still control the markets. They will either seek to replace the Emperor immediately (and the Empire's bureaucratic and military apparatus is still there) or will try to co-opt less militant sections of the Alliance and seek a compromise, or both. A debate will probably spark within the Alliance between those who seek to keep their rebellion pure by not associating with those who kept the Empire in power (and by sanctioning them severely, possibly even with violence) and those who will call themselves "practical" by compromising with the supermonopolies and greedy bureaucrats. The latter will be the easier thing to do since dismantling the Empire is not going to be a one-two-three job. These "practical" elements may also consider the lucrative benefits the Republic will accrue through association with the monopolies. Unless the Alliance simply exterminates them--which will mean more years of war against the monopolies and the Imperial military--it may force itself into keeping them around and rationalizing that they can be kept in check. The only real solution is breaking up these monopolies immediately and completely which will, again, require a very bloody war. But that solution in itself will cause many problems, since super-concentration of politics and economics creates an extremely delicate, fragile, interdependent structure. The results would hurt many planets and entrepreneurs who simply may not want to take the risk.

Certainly these consequences would last only temporarily until each world and group learned how to prosper independently but the lessons would be hard and bitter to learn. Then, too, there are those populations of elite worlds who would lose most of their privileges and would certainly put up a fight. It is more likely that the Alliance has a difficult war on its hands still. In its last days, the Empire made no moves to change things even slightly (apparently), so there's no reason to believe its old inflexibility is suddenly gone just because their figurehead is dead.

I haven't mentioned the religious component which, in most revolutions, is an extremely important factor. Today, religion has a very crucial role to play in the rebellions of Latin America (with its liberation theologians), the Middle East (with its anti-West Islamic fundamentalist revival, much of which has been wholly misperceived in this country) and the Catholic Church of Poland and Eastern Europe, whose hierarchy collaborates with the government. It is the same for Asian philosophies such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Hinduism, and so on. In ANH, the Force is referred to as a "religion." It's apparent that the Empire holds no devotion to it. This is probably the single most important divergence between the Republic and the Empire. The Jedi "know the ways of the Force." But are they the only users? And are there Force-worshippers, that is, actual religious sects that perhaps don't use the Force in the way Jedi do? Or is there just one galactic Force religion? And are there other religions that may even deny the Force? Is it possible that there may be some religions that hold the Jedi as gods? Perhaps the Alliance has within it a strong religious group or groups that exert great influence on certain devout populations. It is clear the Empire had no use for religion of any kind and probably attempted to erase the memory of all religion or religions that existed and thrived during the Republic. It is possible that the more powerful religious elements (such as the Jedi) had a great deal to lose if the disaffected populations and groups who supported Palpatine gained prominence and perhaps they encouraged directly or indirectly the suffering that was rampant throughout the galaxy which eventually helped Palpatine gain power. Perhaps the Jedi had become too much associated with the power and abuses of the old Republic so that the Empire's attempts to erase all memory of the Jedi was an easy task when considering the disaffected populations. Perhaps Vader was a trend and not an exception. And maybe the Emperor we saw in ROTJ was further proof of the corruption to be found in the Republic. There may still be some distrust of the Force and the Jedi throughout the galaxy that the new Republic will have to contend with.

One thing to remember always about revolutions: they are never artificially

created. A revolution is a legitimate expression of popular will. It is true that there may be thousands who do not actively participate in the revolt. I'm sure the Alliance does not comprise the majority of disaffected peoples in the galaxy, but it has their sympathy and support. An oppressed and repressed people is controlled through fear so that it takes a great deal of courage to challenge the source of that fear. Powerlessness and submission becomes institutionalized and a part of the popular mind-set so that only a few among many comprise the revolt. Yet they are just as much a part of the many as those who stay home. Still, the Empire certainly must have capitalized on this and spread propaganda characterizing the Alliance as just a bunch of minority malcontents, terrorists and bullies, thereby lulling the galactic population into believing the rebels have no legitimacy. And certainly any sporadic, exceptional instances of Alliance abuse of violence (contradiction of terms, I know) would be paraded through the news as proof of Alliance terror. This was the kind of propaganda spread by Britain and its allies about the

American rebels in the 18th century and it's the same sort of propaganda we hear today about Central America and Middle Eastern revolutionaries. The Alliance will have a difficult time breaking through these planted preconceptions. There is also a good chance that the Alliance's new Republic will have to withstand constant threats and attacks from former Empire forces for years to come which may cause it to take drastic actions, such as curbing certain freedoms. This is the all-too-frequent circumstance in many revolutions.

One final observation concerning Lucas' stated theme of abuse of technology and the evils in it against humanistic values. The former is represented by the atheistic, mechanistic Empire, the latter by the humane, Force-believers of the Alliance. Yet the Emperor is a very strong Force-wielder. There seems to be a "separation" between him and his atheistic military and, presumably, other forces who support him. I point this contradiction out because it may show that the conflict between the Empire and the Alliance may simply be two sides of the same coin.

Now You're Getting Nasty, or Will the Real Obi-Wan Kenobi Please Stand Up? by Marcia Brin

(with all credit to Jean Stevenson, Juanita Salicrup and Melody Corbett*)

Let me begin by saying that this is speculative, an idea and a question that occurred to us while we were discussing the film. What it provides is a new way of looking at certain things that are going on--or being said--in ROTJ, as well as clearing up some problems that taking the film on the surface presents. It's the sort of idea that calls forth one of three reactions: (1) hey, I like that; (2) it's interesting and I'll have to think about it; or (3) did an elephant sit on your brain?!

Well, we can't put it off any longer. The hypothesis reads somewhat as follows: the Emperor, in the guise of Ben Kenobi (both between TESB and ROTJ) and in the Dagobah sequence in ROTJ, has taught Luke the darker aspects of the Force, continues to feed him misinformation and plants further seeds for Luke's destruction by setting up the Leia situation.

OK, OK, let's quit laughing; it's hard to write over all that noise! This is serious business! Actually, the seeds for the idea really started with discussions of some of the questions and problems raised by the film. The most obvious problem is Obi-Wan Kenobi. What happened to good old

Ben? There is something more than a little bit unlikeable about the person we see in this film. I've been a fan of Obi-Wan's since ANH and I've had considerable trouble reconciling my feelings for that character with those toward the one in ROTJ. In addition, quotes from Lucas, in SKYWALKING, as well as in interviews given since the film, indicate that Lucas still considers Obi-Wan to be one of the good guys, the good father figure. Therefore, if that is correct, then something is going on in the Dagobah sequence not at first visible.

There are three possibilities regarding "Obi-Wan's" behavior in that scene. One is the aforementioned hypothesis, and we'll get more into that later. A second is that the figure is Obi-Wan and he is telling Luke the truth. In that case, the question is, why? By that I mean, why tell Luke now? Obi-Wan has guarded this secret for twenty years. Why reveal it at a time when he knows that Luke is going to face at least one, if not both, of the evil presences, and when, in addition, it is obvious that Luke cannot block his thoughts? As Vader said, that would make Obi-Wan's failure complete indeed. Why not wait until you know if Luke will be successful and tell him at that time. If he is not, and Leia is indeed the Other, you can always tell her. Besides, according to Lucas on the PBS special, Luke's belief that Leia was his sister was the reason for "his final turn...to the bad side...". Why provide the enemy with this ammunition?

* You didn't think I was going to stand alone on this, did you?

The last possibility is that it is Obi-Wan--and he is lying to Luke. Again the question is, why? It is easy to understand why Ben lied in ANH: it's hard to tell a boy you've just met that his father--presumed dead--is really one of the most hated thugs in the galaxy. However, this is no longer true. Yoda already told Luke the reason (and perhaps he should not have asked it again of Ben): he had not been ready. All Ben had to do was tell him the same thing, since it was true--from TESB we can see that Luke was not ready for that info. So, why the lie, especially, as noted above, as it carried the seeds of potential destruction for Luke? The only reason I can come up with is that Ben doesn't feel he can trust Luke with the real information on the Other, etc., because Luke still cannot handle it or guard it properly from the bad guys. Along the way, Ben is helping to set Leia up. This is complimentary neither to Luke nor to Ben.

There were other starting points for the hypothesis. One is Luke's total misinformation about Jedi and the Force, as well as some of his actions in the film. Examples of misinformation are spelled out in the novel, but are supported by the film, which, therefore, lends validity to what we are told in the novel. One statement Luke makes in the novel is that Jedi wear black. As he is wearing black in the film, either he is trying to be like the bad guys, or he really believes that Jedi do dress that way. However, we see three Jedi in the Saga--Yoda, Obi-Wan and, at the end of ROTJ, Anakin, who has finally passed his test--and none of them wear black. A second example is Luke's saying that the Jedi's first rule of thumb is to attack. Yet, Yoda told Luke that a Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack. The novel tells us that Luke believes that Vader saved him over the Death Star--which is probably why Han Solo got a medal for doing it! And why does Luke think he's a Jedi, as he tells Jabba? Whence cometh this (mis)information?

Then there are any number of Luke's actions in the film. His first onscreen gesture is to choke the pig guards; the only other person we have ever seen do this is Vader. His next is to take over someone's mind and force him to do Luke's bidding--a lot of people have criticized Obi-Wan for his action in ANH, yet there he was using the power defensively, putting a shield between Luke and the droids and the stormtroopers; here, Luke is using it offensively, forcing someone to do something that might very well get him killed. He betrays 3PO, treats old friends with contempt, leaves his responsibilities on Endor for his personal quest, etc. Yet, he seems to think he is behaving correctly. This is not the way I would see the person in ANH acting.

If Obi-Wan were Obi-Wan, and telling Luke the truth, then there are also other problems and questions. If Leia is the Other, then the film becomes extremely

sexist. It does not make anyone who has complained of sexism in the Saga happy to give Leia an empty title, because that's what it is as the film stands. In addition, there is the question of why Obi-Wan, who apparently knew about the twins from their birth and had a hand in separating them, forgot about Leia in TESB: "That boy is our last hope." Melody Corbett, in a letter, has already identified this as the "How dumb you get when you're dead" syndrome.

You can also note both physical and attitudinal differences. The Obi-Wan in this film looks considerably less substantial than did the Obi-Wan in TESB (this has been noted by critics, who also complained about his "bad TV reception" image)--almost as if it were a holo projection, rather than the image we had in the earlier film. As to attitudinal changes: one example would be his approach to droids/machines. Ben, in ANH, is a warm man who appears to revere all life, human and non-human, organic and non-organic. In the midst of everything, he thinks to give the Jawas a burial. His behavior toward Artoo is also very kind: he uses terms like "little one", he recognizes the fact that the droid has emotions--including fear for his existence. He does not seem to recognize one form of life as superior over another. Yet, in ROTJ, in response to Luke's statement that there is some good in Vader, he replies with a non sequitor: "He's more machine than man." Not only doesn't this answer Luke's query, but it also suggests that Vader is somehow less, not as good, because he has mechanical parts--which is contrary to his apparent feelings in ANH.

The question now becomes, how does adopting the hypothesis affect the questions and problems raised above? To begin with, it entirely eliminates the sexism and "How dumb ..." problems. Yoda and Ben made no effort to train Leia, because the twin sister is a creation of the Emperor (as the film reads now, it appears that Yoda would have waited ten years for Luke to return rather than teach a female). For that same reason, Obi-Wan's not knowing about the Other makes sense. Yoda tells us (and him) earlier in TESB, "My own counsel will I keep on who is to be trained." The Other of which Yoda spoke now becomes someone Yoda trained and knows of, but who has been kept secret from Ben. In short, a mystery still to be unravelled in the third trilogy.

We can now see the source of Luke's misinformation concerning the Force and the Jedi. Luke did not return to Dagobah, as he had promised (sorry; I do not consider returning for approval after you've gone off by yourself to be keeping the promise made in TESB); yet, at the beginning of ROTJ, he appears to consider himself a Jedi. Why? He must believe himself to be more advanced now than he was at the end of TESB, therefore, some instruction had to have been received. From whom? The

real Obi-Wan told Luke, in TESB, that he could not help Luke if Luke chose to leave. He did not limit that solely to the events on Bespin. Do we know that Obi-Wan was not still prohibited from assisting Luke while he was still AWOL? As well, the content of what Luke seems to have learned during this between-films period certainly does not seem like anything the real Obi-Wan would teach him.

A second possibility is that Luke attempted to train himself. This is a considerably stronger possibility than the first one, but it does not auger particularly well for Luke. Obi-Wan might have been able, during the twenty years on Tatooine, to learn the more esoteric aspects of the Force, but he was a Master when he first came there. He had more than a foundation; he had an entire house built. If, on the other hand, you have left before even the foundation was completed, then you don't know enough to teach yourself. There's an old saying to the effect that if you represent yourself in court, you have a fool for a client. I think the same is true if you try to be your own teacher, and I like to think that Luke realizes this, too.

The last possibility is that the Emperor, pretending to be the "shade" of Obi-Wan, has been instructing Luke. This removes the onus from Luke of having tried to teach himself and of having failed to honor his promise to return to Dagobah: he thought he was receiving instruction from Ben. It also explains the nature of the instruction, which is very Dark Side and which is designed to be used against Luke at a later date. And I don't think that Vader knows what is going on; the Emperor, who no longer appears to have complete faith in Darth, is playing his own game, fashioning his own tool.

This approach also gives us a new perspective on what "Obi-Wan" tells Luke on Dagobah. As noted before, instilling the belief that Leia is Luke's sister sets Luke up for a fall on the Death Star, as per Lucas' words. In addition, the comment about Vader being more machine than man is a very subtle play on an attitude that appears to have been part of Luke's upbringing. Luke was raised on a farm in the middle of nowhere on a backwater planet. Since the climate on Tatooine does not seem conducive to the development of human life, the humans thereon are probably colonists, or the descendants thereof. In short, it has all the virtues and failings of an isolated, rural pioneer community. On the other hand, you will find a great sense of family and community, a willingness to help others in need and sturdy self-reliance. On the other, however, is often a very provincial attitude, a sort of tunnelvision that sees "different" as "lesser" or "inferior" or "wrong". Frontier life also often engenders an "us against them" mentality. We can see that Luke does not deal with aliens in the same manner as someone with a more cosmopolitan

background would. Mark Hamill, in an interview after ANH, discussing Luke's action in shooting the Jawa away from his speeder (so shortly after seeing a whole community of them slaughtered) indicated that it was the way people deal with "those things." I think he's describing the attitude that the average Tatooinian would have and which would have been imparted to Luke while he was growing up. This same attitude seems to extend to droids: in the ANH novel--the only one to bear Lucas' name--Luke leaves a family droid that they have had for twenty years--sort of an old family retainer--behind because he's in a rush to tell his friends about what he saw. And in TESB, he leaves Artoo standing out in the rain.

Therefore, by emphasizing that Vader is "more machine than man", the Emperor makes it easier for Luke to kill him. He is, after all, a set up. Even more, "Obi-Wan" seems to be telling Luke that he has to kill his father. This is not what Yoda said. Yoda merely spoke of "confronting". It avails you nothing to defeat Vader if you have done it all wrong and violated the rules along the way; the ends do not justify the means. The key to Luke's succeeding in becoming a Jedi was to confront Vader as a Jedi: calm, passive, in control of himself and the Force and because it is his duty to face and eliminate the Dark Side where he can. If he can help Anakin along the way, fine, but that cannot be his sole motivation. And if he had to destroy Vader, it should have been with regret but with full knowledge of his duty. Instead, the words and information given to him by "Obi-Wan" on Dagobah were designed to do the opposite, to send him on a personal quest, more concerned with his father than his responsibilities and primed like dynamite to explode. Hardly the actions of a mentor with his best interests at heart.

Some further observations to consider vis-a-vis this hypothesis: notice that the image of "Obi-Wan" does not appear until the light goes out in Yoda's hut, that is, until the Jedi Master is well and truly gone. With the passing of Yoda, the shields that have guarded Dagobah from the Emperor have also gone, leaving Luke totally exposed. The Emperor seems to have enormous power (in fact, an article that I remember reading some time after TESB indicated that he was a Dark Side counterpart to Yoda) and we don't have any reason to assume that, once the protective influence of Yoda has been removed, he could not pick up Luke's location or send a holographic image of Obi-Wan. Note also that the section on the Emperor in THE ART OF ROTJ subtly suggests that he may have some shapeshifting qualities (borne out, perhaps, by the fact that he looks different--and sounds different--in ROTJ from TESB). And, of course, as discussed in greater length before, there is the fact that the "Obi-Wan" who appears on Dagobah seems to be giving different info to Luke than Yoda

Many people have observed that during the first view we have of the Emperor--one or two scenes later--we can see through him, especially around the edges. As well, he is moving slowly and leaning on a cane. Yet, later in the film, we see that he does not need the cane and moves in a strong and vigorous manner. It almost appears as if, when we first see him, he has just expended a great deal of power, which has drained him and made him "fade out" partially (we are, after all, dealing with a "magic" universe).

Further, this approach gives new meaning to lines like, "And your faith in your friends is yours." As it stands, that line redounds badly on Luke, because we see very shortly after that, unlike Lando, who stands fast, sure that Han and the others will destroy the shield, Luke loses faith and goes for his lightsaber. However, what if that is not to what the Emperor is referring? What if he means, instead, that Luke believed the misinformation he was receiving because he thought it was coming from Obi-Wan, and he did not question those statements that must have run counter to Yoda's teaching. Perhaps this is what Lucas meant when he advised "Question authority": if what you are being told is morally wrong, you should question it; if it advises you in a way that would make you ignore your duties,

eye it warily.

Besides, if we take the film on the surface, then we have the rather contradictory spectacle of a thoroughly evil individual playing the game according to Hoyle, that is, fighting fair. He seems to be offering Luke every chance to make his own decisions, merely urging him on verbally (and, in fact, giving Luke the same warnings as Yoda; he just wants Luke to ignore them). If, however, we view it from the point of view that he is acting as the hypothesis suggests, then he becomes a truly Machiavellian and complex figure, capable of great treachery and great craftiness.

The consequences of viewing the film from this angle is that the Emperor takes on added depths, Obi-Wan Kenobi regains the stature he had in ANH and much of the onus has been removed from Luke. He still bears some responsibility for his actions, especially those in TESB which opened him up to the blandishments of the Dark, and perhaps he should have questioned what he was doing more in ROTJ, but he no longer is doing things that he knows are wrong; now he is being misled by the servants of the Dark. It also adds depth and complexity to the story, giving us a twist that can reverberate through future trilogies. And a better look at the workings of the Dark Side.

Return of the Hero's Hero

Jean L. Stevenson

Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations (Vulcan precept, STAR TREK)

Consider the seven-foot man of fur and fangs who can be understood by few of the beings he is friendly with, much less those he meets casually. Consider the crustacean-like leaders of a rebellion, the mammoth slug who rules a world, the small Jedi master and the woodfolk who equal him in size and internal strength.

Here is diversity. And fans of the STAR WARS universe have joyfully incorporated these individuals or representatives of them into their own work, developing new and more intricate interactions between creatures. Not only fiction has been the scene of this concern. In a universe first presented in stark blacks and whites, as a teaching tale for the young and learning, it is a subject for continuing discussion. It is the rebel generation speaking to the Me Decade through the medium of fancy, where all can venture. But there is a disturbance here, a darkness, and like much of the best of drama, while the conflict is reflected in all characters, in others it is made most clear.

Consider a metal-made creature with intelligence and feelings, with friends and

enemies of its own kind, albeit of differing shapes and specialities. Consider it a man. Consider him a hero.

See-Threepio. The name is made of numbers and letters, like any other machine. The form, though man-like, is obviously an imitation of man--bipedal with limited maneuverability; visual sensors where eyes should be, eyes that glow in the dark; even a mouth-hole for vocal expression and a metal ridge to suggest breathing passages. He is machine and being at one and the same time, although the two would seem to be irreconcilable in a single character. In fact, much of modern attitudes stress the separation of men and machines and the innate superiority of the former over the latter. But it is that very dichotomy which creates his story, his heroism.

"Curse my metal body! I wasn't fast enough!" (See-Threepio, A NEW HOPE)

First, look at the machine. Threepio has a function and a form to assist him in performing his duties. He is a protocol droid, "human-cyborg relations," fluent in over six million forms of communication, and probably a top model, competent and trustworthy enough to be employed on a

diplomatic--and rebel--ship. (If he knows of the secret mission being undertaken by Princess Leia, he keeps that information to himself from beginning to end.) And the value of his specialty in this universe is evidenced by the number of people who cannot communicate with the machines they employ: Luke's Uncle Owen needs a droid that can speak Bocce; Han Solo requires someone to "talk to the Falcon" although he can himself understand non-English speaking droids. (In addition, droids in general are needed since we see that to operate an X-wing absolutely requires the assistance of an astro-droid such as Artoo-Detoo.)

We meet Threepio in the midst of battle, but he is a bystander, a non-entity the combatants do not bother to attack or attach. His friend and he, in fact, escape and (unknown to him) carry the great secret away in safety because only life forms are subject to destruction in the conflict. In the course of the next few years (subjective), he wanders through a wasteland, is captured and sold by scavengers, helps invade a great weapon, assists in repairing a starship, is blown apart and put back together, endures slavery, loses an eye, becomes a god, and offers himself as sacrifice in order to save the day on Endor. Indeed. His is a very action-adventure existence--for a machine.

What is a machine? The simplest answer would be "a tool", a lawnmower that one keeps in the garage, takes out to use, cleans and then returns to its place. Like a familiar friend the mower may have quirks of obedience which give it the seeming of a personality, but it is, in fact, just a tool. It is a mechanical extension of the body of a human.

A computer--an electronic extension of the mind of a human--is higher on the mechanical evolutionary scale. It may have a voice; it can be given new information to effect new/different responses; it can even collect information on its own and synthesize to a certain extent, returning more fully developed service to its human handler. Given the near instantaneous reaction times of the computer, scientists have even learned to program a hesitation into the machines which guard/control destructive weapons. (In War Games, for instance, the computer three times asks if its opponent would not rather play a harmless game instead of nuclear war on a world scale.)

But that is very nearly a person's reaction. A human being, when faced with the unexpected, the frightening, the intolerable, will inevitably experience a moment of doubt: he will hesitate. So in programming our own self-preservation, the delineation between machine and man loses sharpness of definition in our own world.

In the STAR WARS universe the difference is seemingly non-existent. Here, the machine is married to the computer (body to mind) in much the same manner as the primitive robots employed in automobile

assembly plants on Earth--but with the final magical element added, the soul. As represented by Threepio and Artoo (who has more functions and gizmos than there are stormtroopers), they do everything a machine can do, everything a computer can do--and they feel. They have sorrows, regrets, joys, shocks. Part of the "mechanism" of an Artoo unit or the Millennium Falcon's hyperdrive is a motivator (for motivation). They may not be human, but they are people.

George Lucas has made them people. He says he made them people; but we need not take only his word. His actions, his films say the same thing; the characters in this universe treat them as equals. Leia Organa has no hesitation in trusting the Death Star plans to Artoo Detoo and giving him the task of getting them to Obi-Wan Kenobi. Chewbacca, admittedly a second or third class citizen in the eyes of the Empire, nevertheless is a person in the eyes of his friends, and he takes pleasure in playing holo-chess with Artoo. During the escape from Hoth, when Threepio's slower speed places him on the wrong side of a hanger barrier ("How typical!"), Solo remembers him as more than a convenient machine one can get anywhere. In fact, Solo has given him a nickname, Goldenrod--a sure sign in a human that he/she accords the machine being spoken of both personhood and affection. And Solo, though greatly exasperated by Threepio's helpful advice at various times in TESB, never gives a command that a droid must obey. Han may clamp a hand over Threepio's mouth-hole, hold up a commanding finger, even invite Leia to turn off the droid, but the approach is still one of human to equal. At any point, Threepio has the human option of striking away the hand, continuing to talk in the face of that finger, even fighting off the Princess.

His programming as a servitor (much like a human can be programmed by early life to being incapable of crossing a parent or religious head or other authority figure) is a factor in preventing these actions, as well as his own knowledge that he's a part of the team throughout. They are his friends just as he is treated by them as a friend. He feels for them. And in interaction with Solo, he is vindicated each time by being able to provide for the ship's captain the missing piece of information which has stymied all attempts to resolve the conflict, or to go to hyperdrive.

"I never knew I had it in me!"
(See-Threepio, RETURN OF THE JEDI)

The drama of people is predicated upon change, upon the capacity of the sentient and sapient mind to grow from one set of attitudes and ideals to another. As bad as he is, without Ebenezer Scrooge, there would be no "Christmas Carol"; it is his opportunity to change--and his fear and struggle against that change--which makes the story. In STAR WARS, Luke Skywalker's initial keen desire is to go out and experience adventure; and the contrast between

what he sought and what he finds forms one part of the drama. Just so is Threepio changed by his adventures.

The outward evidences are subtle, but they can be seen clearly in a few places. The subservient droid in ANH--who must be driven to enter a lifeboat ("You're not allowed in there!"), who automatically assumes a human is addressed as "sir" or "master", who isn't very good at telling stories ("or not at making them interesting")--becomes quite a different person by the end of Return of the Jedi.

While he retains the protocol of addressing humans by their proper titles, he has also, in the height of stress and action, called a human by only his proper name: "We've got to save Han from the bounty hunter!" He has been encouraged to seek answers ("Sir, may I ask a question?" "Why not?") and he questions orders ("What could possibly have come over Master Luke?"). He must have learned how to tell stories somewhere along the line, because he is able to enchant the Ewoks and the audience with a stirring version of the adventure to date--complete with gestures and sound effects.

Oddly enough, the one human (not caring for tin people) most visibly impatient with Threepio also is the catalyst for many of his changes. "Nobody cares about upsetting a droid!" Threepio complains during the chess game. Comes the reply: "That's 'cause droids don't pull peoples' arms out of their sockets when they lose!" The scene is filled with humor and designed for laughter, yet a statement has been made. If you don't want people to stomp on you, you have to stand up for yourself. If you can get away with it, go ahead and be a Wookiee, be a person. (And why play a scam, the threat from a soon-to-be-proven "cowardly" Wookiee, on a machine to win the game? Why not just order him to lose the game?)

Although Threepio recommends letting the Wookiee win in that circumstance, the information must have been filed away, just the first of many building blocks to his own freedom. Later in the film, when told to remain where he is (with Artoo just across from the Millennium Falcon on the Death Star), he makes an independent and correct decision to head for the safety of the ship the minute the way is cleared. And Threepio clearly considers himself and Artoo people when he offers parts of himself to fix the damaged astro-droid.

In the next film, the "Why not?" quoted before occurs. It's a response guaranteed to get the questioner's goat and it does. But the message is still there: why are you asking me for permission to ask a question? Why allow me that control over you? Thus challenged, Threepio seems to view the task, as well as the man, as "impossible." But gradually, through the course of Empire, Threepio begins to assert himself--offering advice and information with the faulty timing of the newly freed, heady with his freedom: "Surrender is a perfectly

viable alternative!" "Sir, I don't think this asteroid is entirely stable." "I've located the reverse power flux coupling." (And the reply, though forced through clenched teeth, is that of any polite human being to another: "Thank you!") Threepio continues, however, poking his nose into dangerous corners ("That sounds like an Artoo unit in there!"), and snapping his displeasure at his treatment at the hands of friends ("I'm backward! Only a flea-bitten old furball--") as well as enemies.

"We're made to suffer. It's our lot in life." (Threepio, A NEW HOPE)

I have said Threepio experiences an action-adventure life. Unfortunately, that is true because he is a person only to a few of those who know him best. The powers-that-be have been shown to consider living beings as lesser--second- or third- or even fourth- class--citizens ("Where are you taking this 'thing'?"). The average citizen, just trying to get along beneath a repressive society, exhibits the same attitude. Droids are even less in their eyes.

As such, droids are subject to the arbitrary nature of life as possessions--servants, slaves-- machines, not men. We see Luke Skywalker's Uncle Owen, struggling farmer, average citizen to all appearances, casually purchase the droids to work on his farm. Artoo is the one, his references to an Obi-Wan Kenobi disturbing human complacency, who is threatened with having his memory erased.

What would Artoo be like without his personality? From the beginning, he is shown to have his own feistiness and a range of vocal expression that, expressed in short bursts of sound, is nonetheless communicative of emotion as well as information. Without memory experience to show him the irony of life, how could he let loose a Bronx cheer at the correct provocation--how know a raspberry at all?

Even more, of what use would a protocol droid be without his memory? He may hold not only the record of millions of transactions between machine and machine and person and machine, of political nature or personal, but he must also have memory of interactions--both good and bad, productive and non--in order to perform his function, at least among humans. And the memory of incidents and beings and happenings and hurts and slights and happiness gives Threepio his own personality as well.

This situation reaches its dramatic nadir in Jedi when the two droids are given into Jabba's possession. There they meet the worst side of their experience: Nine-D-Nine, overseer in the palace, is lord of a room in which droids torture other droids--who cry out in pain.

"It is at times like this when Artoo and I wish we were truly human."

(See-Threepio, SW HOLIDAY SPECIAL)

But finally, also here in Jedi, we see the full growth of this character. Back with his small companion, he is enslaved. But his human friends help free him--even

as he helps to free them. Again, the attitude of the Alliance toward droids is shown in the presence of Threepio and Artoo (as well as the medical droid Two-One-Bee) at the briefing session where they participate in the planning, execution and triumph of the final push to free the galaxy from the domination of an evil Empire.

But how can they help? Who would expect them to? As pointed out before, the Imperial troops in the very first sequence of A New Hope do not shoot at Artoo and Threepio. The droids' lifeboat is allowed to pass safely because there are no life-forms aboard. Droids are, it would seem, nothing to worry about, for like good servants, they would never interfere for or against the actions of their "betters."

But the Empire is wrong. Droids are powerful enemies. They can move about unhindered and unnoticed. [For instance, without Lobot (man-seeming but obviously partially machine), Lando Calrissian could never have freed Leia and Chewbacca from the Imperial troops, and Luke would not have been saved on Bespin.] And they have motivators--for motivation to act.

Face to face with Nine-D-Nine (the worst of droids) are the best of droids that we've met. They have not only been entrusted with the interaction and lives of human beings, they have surpassed what

friends have asked of them. Only Artoo's communication with the city central computer enables him to give the final push to the Millennium Falcon (which Threepio had helped heal in the asteroid field) to take them into hyperspace at the close of Empire. Threepio's presence brings the assistance of the primitive Ewoks in a fashion no other of their group could have contributed. And Skywalker's expressed gratitude signals Threepio's realization that he is a person. He has a soul.

And like any other character, he can be a hero, one who finally acts rather than being acted upon. He is the one, who, having seen the danger the Imperial troops on Endor present to the mission team inside the bunker, steps out into the open to draw both attention and possible gunfire. "I say, over there! Were you looking for me?"

There he is, the golden man. He has been a symbol of kingship and autonomy and self-determination since the beginning of the stories. Now he is a hero. At the moment he frees himself--offers himself for humans as foreshadowed by offering himself for Artoo--the galaxy is also freed. The culmination of that long process which leads from youth to adult, boy to man, man to hero, he had triumphed, and his victory is that of his world.

NOTE: Opinions expressed herein are those of the speaker and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the editor and staff of SOUTHERN ENCLAVE.

Consumer Corner

Equal space will be offered for replies.

FROM: Hilary Halperin, 2180 Holland Avenue #6B, Bronx, NY 10462:

In October 1981, I sent Candace Wiggins \$6.00 to reserve her zines FANFARE III and JEDI, TOO. After about 6 months, I sent a SASE inquiring about the zines, but she never wrote back. Later, I saw an ad in JUNDLAND WASTES for JEDI, TOO with a final price. But she never contacted me in all this time. I have requested assistance from several consumer organizations including the Better Business Bureau but they have been unable to help me. I have only to conclude that I have been robbed of my money. I wonder if others have had this problem with Ms. Wiggins? I strongly recommend that no one do any business with her in the future.

FROM: Debra Talley, 1356 Talcott Place, Decatur, GA 30033:

I sent Jani Hicks a \$30 check on July 29, 1983, for xerox copies of TWIN SUNS I and II. I have written her five times inquiring about my order. I received a reply only to the first one, promising delivery when she received enough orders to make a trip to the xerox machine worthwhile. Even my certified letter went unanswered. I asked for a refund on two occasions but have so far received nothing. I also advise everyone to avoid this offer.

Profile

Just out of sheer curiosity and so we can all get to know each other a little better and not just be names on paper, I'd like to start a "Fan Profile" column in SE. I'd like to invite anyone who feels so inclined to send in a short paragraph about themselves--married, number of children, hobbies (besides SW), colleges attended and degrees, majors, profession, etc. Just to get the ball rolling, I'll start:

Cheree Townsend Cargill, age 31, married for nine years to Randy Cargill, no children. We have two dogs, a German Shepherd (Thor) and a Beagle (Mandy). I have a BA in European history from East Texas State University and am currently working on a degree in geology (possibly specializing in vertebrate paleontology) from the University of Texas at Dallas. I'm a 3rd generation Texan, born and raised in the Dallas area. I am currently working as a legal word processing specialist for one of Dallas' major law firms. (I also very sneakily do my zines on my Wang word processor in my spare time!) Hobbies include needlecraft, reading, writing, video and talking geology with anyone ~~damn~~ interested enough to listen. Interests in fandom center primarily on SW, Raiders and Harrison Ford.

Reviewing the Fleet

Outland Chronicles #1, Phantom Press, Christine Jeffords, 630 Bloomfield Ave., Bloomfield, NJ 07044; \$7 by hand, \$9.75 fc, \$12 overseas air. 130pp.

Reviewed by Sandra H. Necchi

OC generally has neat, clear typing and few typos, but there are a few pages which could have benefitted from better centering as some of the inside margins are too close to the binding. The nicely stylized title typefaces are attractive.

OC#1 is an all-Han issue but the editor stresses that she doesn't intend OC to be a specifically Han zine. She has a good selection of stories and art, starting with "Chase to Karmack" by Charles Garofalo. "Karmack" is one of the very few stories that combine action/adventure with characterization. The former does predominate, occasionally to the detriment of the latter, but generally, it's a wonderful tour-de-force about Han's escape from Jabba and his subsequent adventures with Imperials, Boba Fett, a cowardly doctor and a near-empty, vulnerable rebel base.

Wanda Lybarger's illos are very apt for the story. They are filled with action, reaction, stark black and white contrast and a sense of humor.

"A Spark of Darkness and Light" by Scheherezade is part of a series, one of the few that has captured me. It's set after the revolution, written in Han's point of view, in the middle of Alliance political maneuvers against those who prospered under the Empire. The author intelligently identifies and characterizes the Empire supporters. Wendy Ikeguchi's illos are fitting, as they are dark, rough, strongly indicative of the danger the Alliance is in.

The one unsuccessful story in OC#1 is, sadly, the editor's. I say "sadly" because she put together such a successful zine that the one story she wrote for it should have had OC's general quality of exciting diversity and sensitivity. "Search", however, by Christine Jeffords, generally lacks this quality. It is nice to see a sympathetic portrayal of Lando, however; it has some good original ideas about aliens, and the writing, though rough, has obvious talent. I especially liked certain word choices, like "the door slid arthritically..." But other than that, the rest of the story doesn't ring true. The main character is Mari Sevenstars, a recurring character in Jeffords' "Brightstar" series. She is an "Azaeli" with--we are repeatedly told--a fierce and sometimes dangerous temperament. Han is her "swordbrother" and she sets about to organize a galaxy-wide search for Han, who is still in Jabba's clutches. [OC was published before the release of ROTJ, by the way.]

The problems come with the subplot, which resembles a soap opera. Here, Han's real lady is a Jedi named Skye, with whom he's fathered a child. He really doesn't love Leia, but was only trying to test her to see if she really has a heart and, if so, to "open her up" so she can give her love to Luke. Han doesn't appear well at all in this version of things. In this role, he's merely an officious, arrogant and presumptuous manipulator, playing with Leia's feelings, probably misunderstanding her totally, as well as Luke. Sevenstars, who feels loyalty and protectiveness to Han's "woman", takes it upon herself to whisk Skye away from the evil clutches of Princess Leia, Skye's rival. Can anybody honestly imagine Leia Organa being so petty and vicious that she would hate a rival so much as to endanger her and her unborn child's life?

As for the characterizations, Sevenstars, for all that we're told that she's something to fear, doesn't seem at all frightening, just a busybody. Skye is nothing but a pitiful little martyr who always has to be taken care of.

I haven't formed an entirely negative opinion of Jeffords' series, because I have only read this one story. She has a good alien character, but she should take care to flesh her out more.

Lin Stack's illos for "Search" are a little too uniform. One of Stack's illos, though, is heart-tugging: Chewie holding Han's newborn son who's busily tugging at the Wookiee's fur.

Karen Miller's "Where No Corellian Has Gone Before..." is fascinating, if a little too sentimental in places. It's a "mind dialogue" wherein Ben contacts Han, who's still in carbon freeze and who fights to the end against "the old man's" craziness, and leads Han's mind to Luke's. The interplay between Han and Ben is funny and warm. Between Han and Luke, it is poignant. Ikeguchi's illos are two of my favorites in the zine.

"An Interview with Harrison Ford" (accompanied by Lybarger's adorable stationery drawings of various HF film roles) is much too short! I wanted more! The editor transcribed it from a radio talk show. I don't know if too many people realize how really intelligent and articulate Harrison is.

"A Visit to Corell" by Helen Montgomery is an intriguing article about Han's world. The most interesting are the sections about the rigors of the climate and the various beasts waiting to eat you. Unfortunately, it ends just when it gets even more interesting, with a few tantalizing generalizations about the inhabitants.

Perhaps the best story in OC is Eva Albertsson's "Year of the Dragon," a story of 13-year-old Han Solo and his 6-year-old sister, Bethi, on a summer visit to their

country kin, one of whom is 14-year-old Zera, who becomes Han's first love. Although I found the traditional family roles a bit provincial, the story itself has its own reality and life because Albertsson writes well, vividly and sensitively. Despite the fact that Han and Zera are the principles, my favorite has to be Bethi, whose characterization is honest and funny. There are some hilarious moments here, especially with the kids' droid babysitter who, under Albertsson's skillful hands, comes to life. I sympathized with the indignities he is made to suffer under Corell's brutal climate, devouring bug-eyed monsters and the kids' own rewiring job.

This is a funny, warm, engrossing story

but there were two problems. There is precious little description of all the dangerous creatures and the ending is a bit questionable. Zera, who all along has been a tough, outspoken, imaginative girl becomes properly silent, almost subordinate, to her new boyfriend. Han does all the talking while she just "smiles indulgently" at him.

Martynn's illos of Han and Zera don't really look like teenagers; they more resemble 20-year-olds. But she does a convincing face for Han as a young boy.

Gennie Summers has some hilarious cartoons throughout and Cathye Paraci has a stunning, almost surrealistic cover of Vader. I can't describe it in words. Buy the zine and appreciate it for yourself.

Art Credits:

Cheri Tripp - 27, 40

Danaline Bryant - 1, 19R, 22, 36, 39

Jeanine Hennig - 41, 43R, 44, 49

Cheree Cargill - all other art

Carol Peters - 15, 17, 18, 19L, 20, 29, 30, 46, 51

An Editorial Comment

Take It Easy, Kid--It's Only a Movie!

Tweet! That's the signal for time out. Let's pause here and catch our breath and get back to reality for a moment.

Most of you have noticed that the level of emotions has been rising steadily over the last few issues among certain segments of our correspondents. A lot of you have commented on the fact and now I want to do so as well.

It's been a whole year now since ROTJ premiered. We've all made our feelings on the subject known, whether we absolutely love it or absolutely hate it. We are all entitled to our own opinions and sharing those opinions is what SOUTHERN ENCLAVE is all about. However, in the heat of debate over our respective opinions, ugliness has started to rear its head. I stated in the first issue that I didn't want a letter war to be carried on in these pages, but that is what is rapidly forming. I have had to zap more and more offensive statements in LoCs--things like "racist" and "stupid idiot" with names attached to them. I have printed other letters that hotly attacked the viewpoints of others, either arguing for the Fall of Luke Skywalker or against it.

Quite frankly, I'm getting weary of rehashing the same argument in every issue. Nobody is going to change anybody else's mind on this and the debate is starting to get out of hand, dredging up eight-year-old newspaper clippings or citing who said what about which character on a radio show in 1978 to lend support to a particular viewpoint.

COME ON, PEOPLE--IT'S ONLY A MOVIE! We are not arguing the future of mankind here or holding nuclear arms talks with the Soviets or even debating creationism versus

evolution. We are talking about a group of fictional characters in a fictional universe. It is not worth ending friendships over. We are supposedly doing this for fun, but attacking other people who don't agree with your viewpoint and hurting other people's feelings is not fun. So, can we please back off this subject for a while and let our tempers cool down? If you feel that you just can't drop it right now, then can you please submerge it to a private correspondence level?

There are lots of other things in the SW universe to discuss. Two excellent examples are the articles in this issue by Sandra Necchi and Jean Stevenson, regarding the reasons behind the Rebellion and the humanity of See-Threepio, respectively. How about discussing some of the other unanswered questions from the Saga? How did Leia get the plans for the Death Star in the first place? Darth told her, "You're not on any mercy mission this time." What did he mean by that? What sort of cover had Leia been using? In ESB, when 3PO commented that the Falcon spoke a most peculiar dialect, what did he mean? Is the Falcon semi-sentient, too? Was it maybe the ship and not necessarily Han's piloting that got them through the asteroid field?

This is a wide open universe and there are a lot of topics that need to be discussed. Let's get back to the reason we're doing this in the first place--because our imaginations are stretched and stimulated by these movies. As Tarkin said, "This bickering is pointless." It's also very destructive. Let's get back to the Light Side of the Force for a while.