



Melody Corbett
35 West 92nd Street
New York, NY 10025

I really liked Terri Black's essay on color symbology in the Saga and I essentially agree with everything she said. The only place that I would draw a different conclusion is to the fact that Luke has completely overcome his inner conflict at the end although I do agree with Terri that he seems to have come through his darkest period and now has sighted the doorway that leads to the light.

Michelle Malkin seems to have taken the meaning of what I was saying about the alchemic process in the wrong direction. Although I tried to make myself really clear, some of the misinterpretation might have been due to my inability to express the concepts. Anyway, if it was my fault, I apologize. I did not say that Luke didn't pass this test (the alchemic transformation). Quite frankly, I see no place in these films where Luke participated in the ascending steps of this process. Now, like his training, the alchemic process might have happened off screen, but in the existing films this does not take place as far as I can tell. (By the way, I think that Luke's tests are what we are seeing all the way through JEDI.)

Mickey, you say that Han could not have survived the fire. I certainly agree with the fact that that seems to be

an impossibility, but according to the script (from THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK NOTEBOOK, p. 107), that is exactly what happened, and I think that is the whole point. On a fairy tale level, this heat, fire, burning is often a test to determine a hero, and when this test does happen, he is the one who can surmount intact such an ordeal. In this story, we have examples of other characters facing this trial and we can see how it affects them: Owen and Beru are completely destroyed; according to George Lucas in his first ROLLING STONE interview, Darth Vader fell into a volcano, and we can see the consequences of that; and you yourself point out that Luke is crying out in pain at the results of the Emperor's deadly rays (although I'm not at all sure if what the Emperor is emitting is related to heat or fire).

If I shift my thinking from a magic/fairy tale mode to a realistic scientific plane, and then assume that it is not the fire that Han survives, I am left with the freezing process, still an unpleasant prospect. (I'm pretty sure that I wouldn't survive this one either.) We are still faced with examples of what the effects of freezing do to characters in this galaxy: the warning against being caught on Hoth's Ice Plains after dark; the expiration of the Taun-taun; the effects on Luke in the same situation. Perhaps you mean flash-freezing followed by the heat. I think that would serve to crystallize the body and in that case that crash after he (Han) is pushed over by the Ugnaughts sure leads me to believe that instead of one fried Corellian to retrieve, Leia would now be able to scoop up the pieces. That is, if the heat that came after the freezing had not already thawed him out. (What a mess!) Baked Alaska, anyone?

Though I suppose it's possible, I find it hard to conceive of this process as being carried out on anything other than a magic or fairy tale level (and Lucas did say he was telling a fairy tale). And this test does seem to fit into that motif, as does the "belly of the whale" situation, one which is covered in great detail in Campbell's HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES. As such, Han's actions with the blaster are indeed quite appropriate: he is using

his weapon to gain knowledge or confirmation of what he suspects. This, once again, is not a realistic, mundane set-up. If it were, our star warriors would be floating all over the slug's tummy once they exited the Falcon (not to mention that Han's breath mask comes off before he re-enters the safety of his beloved ship--great lungs). This plus the successful navigation of the asteroid field (passing the symplegades, the clashing rocks--yet another hero test) are but two more explicit myth/fairy tale motifs. I'm certainly not saying that you must see the story on this level, but in my piece on alchemy I was addressing this interpretation. Whether Mr. Lucas was utilizing these concepts I have no idea, but on this level, these elements do exist and they seem to work beautifully.

Once again, by way of apology, I must say that in identifying Chewie as Han's animal nature, I was applying the concept of fairy tale, and in this realm that certainly would be his function along with animal protector and helper. That does not mean I would ever entertain the idea of lessening or denigrating his role as individual, friend and intelligent being. Nor would I view or want him treated with less than respect. So I know you will agree with and understand my position of 3PO.

In SKYWALKING, Lucas says the robots were put in the Saga to make a statement about discrimination, and Chewbacca and the robots were used to show that no matter how odd or different people seem, they can be true and faithful friends. In the third trailer for JEDI this view was again stated as it was during the narrative portion of the CBS showing on STAR WARS.

Yet in JEDI, we have 3PO subjected to slavery without his prior knowledge or his willing consent. 3PO expressed shock that Luke could do such a thing to him. And you know what? He had every right to feel this way.

In response to Marcia Brin's saying that Lucas never said Luke was his alter-ego, Mickey says that in a PREVUE/MEDIASCENE interview Lucas stated he was identifying with Luke. Mickey is right. But my question is which Luke was he identifying with? Was it the young man we

see in the films? Or was it a 40-year-old general (in SKYWALKING I see the age of that general is 60)? Or maybe it was a young girl off to find her brother. Each of these statements about Luke's identity I had seen before the one Mickey speaks of. I'm not sure about Marcia, but I had not applied the same interpretation that Mickey seems to have. Instead, I assumed that Lucas' identification with Luke went hand in hand with whichever Luke was created first or whichever Luke he was identifying with at the time.

To make matters worse, all of the Han Solo books were printed with the title "From the Adventures of Luke Skywalker", a character not even alluded to within the books themselves. And then there was the statement in TIME magazine (July 1980) that in STAR WARS Luke was his alter ego but that now in EMPIRE that alter-ego character had shifted to Yoda. In fact, Gerald Clarke, the interviewer, indicates that Lucas' entire philosophy of the Force is voiced by this character. That seems to be confirmed by Lucas' statement on the PBS special on the making of JEDI and in an interview that ran in FAMILY magazine.

Now, I must say that the Clarke statement is not a direct quote of Lucas, and that, I think, is very significant. I believe the reason that most of the public thinks of Luke as the sole alter-ego is because of assumptions made by reporters and not based on statements Mr. Lucas himself made. To me, the statement that most explicitly seems to ring true on this matter is that they all play a part of his (Lucas') makeup (from the paperback about the making of EMPIRE), and this to me is the one that fits, mainly because it seems that at some point in the telling, indeed, virtually every character in the Saga has played this role. In reference to the July 1983 TIME magazine article Mickey talks about (Lucas saying that there is a great deal of himself in the story), once again it is the interviewer's assumption that Luke/Mark Hamill is that specific alter-ego (although I think I do agree that to a great measure, he is; I rather suspect that Lucas also has his own darkness to work out as do we all).

As to Mr. Ford's statement, I would be most careful in put-

ting a literal interpretation on this fellow's words. The gentleman seems to have the ability to be very cryptic and on some points quite contradictory. On that same subject (his position in the films) in an interview that I have on tape (that was conducted with Mr. Ford when he was plugging BLADE RUNNER), he was asked about his concerns about playing Indiana Jones. He indicated that one of the problems was to draw a distinction between the two characters (Han and Indy) because there were surface similarities and because "they had the same kind of place in the film." (Oh, jinkies!)

Onward. In STAR WARS we have an Obi-Wan who tells Luke that the blue saber that he takes from his trunk is one his father wanted him to have when he was old enough. Yet the person who claims the Obi-Wan identity in JEDI tells Luke that he (Luke) and his twin sister had been hidden from their father. Indeed, even the fact of their conception must have been concealed to keep this knowledge from Anakin and the Emperor. But that means he left a saber for--a son he didn't know he had. Huh?

Speaking of sabers, I was wondering if there might be an analogous relationship to these weapons and the rings of power in the Tolkien books. I remember Gary Kurtz at Noreascon in Boston after EMPIRE opened being asked if Vader really was Luke's father. His answer was, if I recall correctly, just remember that Vader says this at the same time that Luke loses his saber. Is it possible that that "good" blue saber was a protection for Luke against the dark and that the point that he lost it was when the dark/Emperor could make its/his inroads? And conversely at the point that Vader loses his evil/red saber in JEDI is there a chance offered for the good/Anakin to re-emerge? Just a thought.

Bev Lorenstein points out that Lucas' own stated purpose in creating SW was to "impart religious and/or psychological morality standards" and Luke was the central character. On the morality issue, I couldn't agree with her more. That is certainly what I expected; and I also expected this body of work to be stated in such a way as to be clearly understood by

even his very youngest audience. (They are the ones he said that his message was primarily aimed at.)

It seems that this is not the case. If fandom (I assume a fairly rational group of adults) can't agree on Luke's behavior, it's beyond me how an adolescent should be able to figure out the finer points of Luke's actions. Within this letterzine alone the opinions seem to run from one pole to the other--and hit every point in between. This seems to add up to a very ambiguous character, not a clear cut, positive role model.

Bev indicates that, because Luke is the central character and everything is fine at the film's end, Luke must be doing fine. Also, I suppose, that with that, one should assume that he is a good character for children to identify with. I say please justify to me, in a way that a seven-year-old can understand, Luke's treatment of 3PO.

The SW films do seem to offer many lessons and on many levels. I think one of the lessons offered in the Saga (by example) is how to treat friends and that one of the determinations as to whether you have learned those lessons and passed those tests is exactly in how you do treat those friends.

I think Luke's true moment of redemption will come not only when he makes atonement with the powerful, important and misunderstood Darth, but when he can also make atonement with the insignificant, irritating and faithful 3PO. For Luke there is one scene I would dearly love to have seen--for his sake and for my own--one that for me would have taken much of the taint of ambiguity away from his destiny. That scene would have shown Luke offering his apology to 3PO.

As the film ends now, with Luke's unresolved problems, it is not the moral tale I would want or maybe it's just not the simple happy conclusion I would desire. I don't know.

I do hope Mr. Lucas will address this problem, because at this point, Luke's moral victory is not plainly evident to me although I suspect that there are many seven- and eight-year olds out there much brighter than I am. I also think that for most of us kids, the message is more than a little bit cloudy.

But just remember, as Tim Blaes points out, the opera's not over till the fat lady sings.



Sandra H. Necchi
73 Campbell Street
Fall River, MA 02723

April 2, 1984

The group of fans who some of us understandably refer to as the "Church of Ford" would have us believe that George Lucas is as much in love with Han Solo/Harrison Ford as they are, and--the inevitable corollary--that he hates Luke Skywalker as much as they do. They have taken the SW saga and distorted so many basic elements in it to make the story "fit" into the mold they want it to be. They have twisted and chopped and selected and dismissed the story beyond recognition, so that their version of what we saw on screen bears almost no resemblance to what actually went on screen and what George himself created. They have become so obsessed with one character/actor that he is all they see behind everything in the SW story. I can't think of a similar instance where devotion to a character/actor has been taken to such an extreme so that the most basic concepts in the story itself are denied. I certainly do not include the more objective Han fans who may not be particularly interested in the character of Luke. I was one once (before JEDI). Now I love both of them. I refer to a small group who have a bizarre insecurity about the character they love, for they seem to feel Han has no value as Lucas presents him, that he simply has

to be the central hero and, of course, a Jedi. Oh, yes, but then they use the excuse that Lucas himself sees things as they do and that he's been playing a hoax on all of us. Actually, their premises are great for alternate story ideas but as "canon"? Can someone explain this phenomenon to me? Why have they lost all their objectivity? It's clear that their assertions about the saga are based solely on this worship of Solo/Ford. It's the most bizarre thing I've ever run across in any fandom and I've been a fan for 11 years. Why must they rewrite Lucas (under the guise of invoking his authority, of course), ignore his obvious intent and deliberately fish for rotten things to say about his hero simply because they don't like him? The simple fact is, NO ONE, absolutely NO ordinary human being or even a heroic fictional character could ever fulfill their demands for Luke. The reason this is so is due to the fact that no matter what Luke does, says, would do or say, doesn't do or say, did so or say, they will always twist some venomous criticism out of it. He could be the most saintly character ever created and they would still hate him. The reason is very simple: he's not Han, which to them is the be-all and end-all of the SW universe. There were some good, concrete examples last issue of the weakness in their arguments which prove their basic prejudice and lack of logic. Last issue's article by Jean Stevenson has the following quote: "If Luke succeeds in confronting his father and becoming a Jedi, then the 'other' is a piece of slipshod dramatic folderol." You don't have to be a logician to notice the obvious flaw in that statement. The conclusion simply is not imbedded in the premise and therefore there is no necessity which calls for it. Many of their arguments are based on sweeping assumptions that can be easily punctured by anyone. This one in particular is an example of the "slippery slope" argument which calls for a leap in believability. I thought everyone by now realized that you simply can't hold Lucas to every line in his films because of the many contradictions within them. Lucas is a simple storyteller, no more, no less, with some good, fun ideas.

But you can't take his scripts for the SW films so seriously that you search for hidden meanings to fit some premise of your own. You can explore ideas and postulate, certainly, but with a healthy understanding that it's your own theorizing and not Lucas'. If anyone of us pointed out all the contradictions and holes in the SW saga to him, he'd probably shrug and say "so what?" Another good example of a deliberate twisting of what's on screen (so much so that you have to strain to understand it) is Marcia Brin's contention that Luke's conclusion about Leia's sibling relationship to him is based on his desire to assuage his pride and jealousy over her choosing Han and not him. My only reaction to that is "Wha...?" There is positively NOTHING on screen that gives any serious validity to that, so it's obviously a deliberate misinterpretation. As I said, everything this character does or says is distorted to fit a preconceived prejudice. One other example concerns Melody Corbett's involved speculations on one simple, random quote made by Marquand. Her arguments are riddled with conveniently dismissed possibilities and unconvincing conclusions. But that's not important, because the entire reading of the quote is based on one easily challenged assumption: that Marquand was talking about "the other", as Melody assumed. Once you say "Maybe he wasn't talking about the 'other'," you can just ignore the rest of the letter. One other questionable assumption in her letter is her statement that the "other" was to "complete the task that Luke was being groomed for." Possibly. This one has a little more basis than the others but it can still be challenged. I have yet to read a convincing, objective argument that supports all these "Evil Luke" statements. I'm still waiting. I'm open to persuasion but I'll only believe someone who's not a rabid Han fan, who hasn't developed some sort of "vested interest" in destroying Luke and making Han out to be something he clearly has not been shown to be by anyone.

I can't understand the objections to Luke's screams. I was eminently glad Lucas included that because it's an extremely powerful dramatic moment

(which seems to be why he put it in). I've seen ROTJ 16 times and each time, without fail, I and the audience around me react --vocally and physically--to his cries of pain. We're meant to feel it with him and that was definitely the effect. Lucas has set up an extremely difficult situation for his hero. It's a wonder Luke just doesn't chuck it all and go off somewhere alone to go quietly nuts. He has such conflicting information and feelings within and around him that any lesser hero would've gone permanently to the dark side long before. I don't understand why certain fans refuse to let Luke be human. They are guilty of a genuine lack of sensitivity to the powerful drama Lucas has set up and to the character. They have unreasonable, inflexible, super-human expectations of Luke. Why is it all right for Han to scream in TESB (and he, "of course," has the Force, right?) and not Luke? Just because he knows there's a "Jedi after-life", and just because he's a Jedi (or almost one) doesn't mean he's suddenly become totally fearless. I hope not. Otherwise, Jedis are just too boring. Stop dredging up (and limiting the characters to) all these continuous fairy tale parallels, some of which work, some of which don't, to show some negative premise about Luke. There are as many, if not more, such parallels that easily refute any you can come up with.

To Mary Urhausen: You don't really believe that our complaints about JEDI will influence Lucas in any way about his future plans for SW, do you? He'll do whatever he damn well pleases, and I doubt he cares about what a few fans think. The mundanes give him plenty of profit just by themselves.

To Michelle Malkin: your letters are always a joy, lucid and reasonable. I agree with practically everything you say. I can't think of anything you've written that I don't. You know, I think the Church of Ford people must walk out of the theater when Luke attacks Vader and so they miss the ending of the scene, when he regains control. That's the only explanation I can come up with for their strange ignorance of Lucas' obvious statement at the end--that Luke stopped himself, making him a greater individual than his

father.

To Barbara Tennison: another rational voice. Your point about Leia is good. I'm sick and tired of Leia being referred to as a passive reward. Some fans analyze Luke and Leia so one-dimensionally I wonder why they're SW fans. Your comments on Lucas were perfect.

Here is a can of worms: I found the Ewoks and their civilization (and the backhanded condescension of their presentation) somewhat racist on Lucas' part. On the recent PBS special, Lucas said that the Ewoks originated from an idea he had for a Vietnam film centered around the concept of a "weak," "primitive" people beating a mighty modern power. Gee. How enlightened of Lucas to replace the Vietnamese people with cuddly, carnivorous teddy bears. The Third World was portrayed in a very prejudiced way in RAIDERS as well. But that's nothing new in American films.

To Terri Black: Luke does not attack Vader with "blood-lust". In the PBS special, Lucas mentioned the difficulty he had in finding a reason for Luke's "final turn" to the dark side. He said it took him a while but he finally hit upon Luke's feelings for Leia (whether brotherly or otherwise, he probably meant "protective") and for Vader to exploit that. That is his major weakness, apparently, which makes him lose control. It wasn't mindless lust for blood, but fierce protectiveness. There's no basis in the contention that Luke at that point felt hatred. At that moment Luke is not thinking rationally. All he is thinking about is destroying the threat to Leia. Whether it's hatred or love or any other emotion involved simply does not enter into it, except his deep emotions for Leia, not against Vader. By the way, I wonder if Ben or Yoda ever hated Vader or the Emperor, hmm? You can't clinically pick apart a person's feelings and motives in a moment like that, people. Even Jedis experience profound rage. They're not saints.

To Tim Blaes: no, one person need not take control. What's wrong with planetary governments taking over their own jurisdictions? You sound like you want another dictatorship again.

One question about Han: if he's such a Force-sensitive, why

was he wrong about his feelings concerning the Falcon?

By the way, this past November I picked up a script outline at a con by a John L. Flynn called STAR WARS: FALL OF THE REPUBLIC (that looks official). Further down on the red cover, it says "Adapted from Part 1: 'The Adventures of Obi-Wan Kenobi', The Journal of the Whills by George Lucas." It is described as a screen treatment. It has several interesting things in it, including the story of how Ben hid Leia and Luke. Their mother appears, as does a ten-year-old Corellian cabin boy of Captain Antilles, the Monastic Order of the Sith who help Anakin live again as Vader, Mon Mothma, Bail Organa, something called the Merchants Guild and a lot of other fascinating things, including the birth of the twins and Palpatine's attempts to kill all newborn infants a la King Herod. Anyone else besides me see this? If anyone is interested in a xerox copy, SASE me and I'll give you the details.

Marcia Brin: you can invoke Lucas' name all you want to add authority to your unproven assertions but it changes nothing. You can claim that you're not tearing down one character to upgrade another, but it's clear to me that that's what you're doing. You may want to believe desperately that Lucas has indeed shown Luke to be a worm, but, again, your desire changes nothing. And yes, Han is the most mysterious character, in that we know little about him. Instead of putting some great weight on this fact, it's much easier to see that apparently Lucas doesn't find him important enough to show us his past as much as Luke or Leia.

This letter has been pretty aggressive and forthright, but before people say I've made personal attacks, get the term straight. I have attacked the arguments, not the people. There's a distinct difference.

One last point about the Church of Ford before I close, and this is probably the most important: Even if George Lucas himself were to stand in front of them and say that Luke Skywalker is the central character, the main hero, that he did not go down the Dark Side permanently, that he regained control, that his motives and feelings were good ones, that Leia is

indeed his sister and the "other," and that Han is not the "hidden hero" or "hidden god" or whatever theory they've come up with, in absolute, unequivocal, unarguable terms, they would (a) say he's stupid and doesn't know how to do things right; (b) tell him he's totally wrong, that they know better; (c) come up with some way to again twist his words and tell us he didn't really mean what we understood him to mean but something more cryptic, implying as they are now that Lucas is a trickster, a liar or both; or (d) all of the above. Which is why logical, reasonable debate is futile. And emotional debate is even worse. You simply can't open firmly closed minds. The rest of us--at least I am--are pretty open to serious speculations about Luke's imperfections and Han's possible greater role in the saga but not to the extremes this group of people has taken them.



Marlene D. Karkoska
1656 South Belvoir Blvd.
South Euclid, OH 44121

I am new to fan fiction, having discovered it about 4 months ago, and this issue of SOUTHERN ENCLAVE (#3) is my very first experience with a letterzine. I am not a writer and I hesitated in writing this, my very first letter to a letterzine, because I recognized almost all of the names of the contributors to SE#3 as authors and/or editors of various fanzines. I realize that writers of fan fiction are not professionals, but many of the stories and poems they write are quite good, so I'm a little nervous about writing this, since I am

not very good with words. However, I felt compelled to write anyway to express my shock and dismay at the amount of anti-Luke sentiment that seems to be present among "fans" of STAR WARS. There are so many fanzines and stories devoted to Han Solo, and Luke is often either not mentioned at all, is a very secondary character, or is portrayed as a weak, helpless, unstable, naive farm-boy with no potential for ever growing up. Han Solo comes across in most stories and comments as the Force's gift to the Galaxy. I would be happy to just sit back quietly and let others have their fun. After all, I like Han Solo, too. He's not my favorite character, but he's handsome and courageous, and he's always good for a laugh in a tense situation. What bothers me, and what I can't ignore, is that many people are not content to just portray Han Solo as the ultimate hero, perfect man, and near-god; they degrade and ridicule the character of Luke Skywalker at the same time. This is unfair and unnecessary.

First of all, I really don't understand how anyone can question who the hero of the STAR WARS films is. Ask any 6 year old. He/she knows who the hero is. Six-year-olds will tell you without hesitation that it's Luke Skywalker. If you ask them why, they'll tell you in the simple words of children, "...because he's good, he tries to help people, and he fights the bad Darth Vader." George Lucas knows what he's doing. His moral message is clear to little ones. I know. I have taught first graders for six years. It was because of my first graders and their enthusiasm for STAR WARS that I went to see the movie in the first place (April, 1978), and I've been hooked ever since. If you ask little children to name their favorite characters from STAR WARS, Luke Skywalker is far and away the number one choice, followed by Wicket, Princess Leia, Artoo-Detoo, and Han Solo. Small children have no difficulty accepting Luke Skywalker as the hero of the STAR WARS films. Why do adults?

I am also puzzled as to why some fans think that Luke has turned to the dark side of the Force at the end of RETURN OF THE JEDI. It's true that he nearly fell when he fought Vader

in anger because of his love and concern for Leia, but he did throw away his sword. I feel his declaration, "I'll never turn to the dark side. You have failed, Your Highness. I am a Jedi..." was exactly that--a declaration that he had finally passed his test and was indeed a Jedi. Remember that Yoda told him that only one thing remained before he was officially a Jedi: "You must confront Vader." By the end of ROTJ, he had done that and he had faced his own dark side as well, and had renounced the darkness with his toss of the saber.

Another proof that Luke did not turn to the dark side is the very end of the film itself where the three Jedi--Yoda, Ben and Anakin Skywalker--appear to Luke and smile their approval. They certainly wouldn't be smiling if he had fallen to the dark side or were in danger of doing so! Anyone who maintains that Luke fell to the dark side of the Force at the end of ROTJ or that he appeared to be heading towards it either didn't see the same film I did or for some reason is trying to fool himself into believing he saw something that simply wasn't there. The fact is, Luke did indeed earn the title of Jedi Knight at the end of RETURN OF THE JEDI. My feeling is that people who claim that Luke has started down the dark path or is about to do so at the end of JEDI are not giving Luke the credit he deserves. Are these people denying Luke's victory over the dark side because their own hero, Han Solo, was not the "other" Jedi that so many seemed to feel he was? If Han can't be a Jedi, then Luke can't either--is this their attitude? If so, how childish! Are people really that petty? I totally agree with Ann Wortham who says, "I think it is extremely silly to postulate that Luke headed down the dark path as his father before him." As she pointed out, "...there is really nothing in ROTJ that points to Luke going bad. How could there be when he turns Darth Vader, the intergalactic bad guy, into a pussycat?"

I disagree with Marcia Brin and others who seem to feel that Luke has not yet made his "rites of passage." Personally, I was surprised when Yoda said that Luke still needed to face Vader again. I feel Luke did

enough to qualify as having passed his test already at the end of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, when he jumped from the gantry on Bespin in order to free himself from Darth Vader and avoid the dark side of the Force. Luke knew that that jump could quite possibly result in his death, yet he was willing to take that chance rather than give in to his father's temptations. I don't feel that he should have had to face any further trials to prove that he was good enough or committed enough to be a Jedi. The fact that he was willing to sacrifice his life, if necessary, rather than embrace the dark side, should have been test enough. What more can you offer than your life? It's true that Luke's life was ultimately spared, but I'm sure he doubted that his chances were very good when he jumped rather than succumb to Vader and the darkness he represented. In my opinion, that willingness to sacrifice himself rather than become an instrument of evil like his father should have been enough. The Bible's Abraham didn't actually have to sacrifice his son, Isaac. His willingness to do so was enough to ensure that Abraham passed his personal test of loyalty and faith in God.

In addition, Luke Skywalker has gone through more other trials and suffered more losses than any other character through the three SW movies. Among other things, he has lost his home, his childhood family, his fairy-tale princess, his hand, a carefree youth, his Jedi teachers, his sainted image of his father, many friends to war, and to some degree, his faith in Ben Kenobi and his Jedi teachings. Yet he managed to remain a good, compassionate, caring, thoughtful human being despite all of these losses. Some examples are: (1) Although he has not yet resolved all of his own conflicts, he puts them aside temporarily to help his friend Han, and he is instrumental in executing Solo's release from Jabba the Hutt. (2) When he realizes that Vader knows that he is on Endor, he is worried not about himself, but about others! "As long as I remain, I'm endangering the group and our mission here." (3) In spite of all the evil things his father has done to the Alliance and to the Galaxy

and all of the personal pain that he has caused Luke physically and emotionally, Skywalker is still willing to risk his own life to try to turn Vader back to the good side. If all of these things were not enough to qualify him as having made his "rites of passage," then certainly tossing away his lightsaber and renouncing the darkness in this act and saving Darth Vader by turning him back to the good side of the Force should have. Hasn't Luke been through enough to prove his worthiness?

At this point I'd also like to comment that I agree with Terri Black and Debbie Gilbert that Luke's calling to Vader was not begging for his own life, but was making a last active effort to turn his father from the dark side. In helping Luke, Vader would return to the good side of the Force. This was something Luke seemed to want almost as much as life itself. After all, he was willing to take the risk of losing his life when he surrendered to Vader's troops knowing they would bring him before Vader. He was willing to take that risk on the outside chance that he could persuade his father to turn away from darkness and return to the Alliance with him. It makes sense then that as he realized he was dying, he would try one more time to reach his father and bring him back to the good side, so his death would not be in vain.

Also, Ms. Brin, what do you mean when you say regarding Luke, "I see a lot of loneliness ahead for him if he doesn't do some real fence-mending?" When I think of "fence-mending", I think of trying to correct wrongs done to others in order to get back into their good graces. What did Luke do to his friends in the Alliance that he needs to correct? With whom does he need to mend fences? I didn't see anything in any of the three films that leads me to believe that Luke needs to mend fences with anyone. Quite the contrary: he seems to be a popular, respected member of the Rebel Alliance. Do you think people are going to turn their backs on him now because he is Darth Vader's son? That's sheer nonsense, because they would also have to do the same to Leia, who is Vader's daughter. I didn't see too many

other people chatting with Han or hugging Leia either. In fact, the main characters basically interacted only with each other in ROTJ and there was very little interaction with less significant characters. The others were more background window dressing than anything else.

If you are referring to the fact that Luke is alone near the end of RETURN OF THE JEDI, it seems to me that this was more his choice than anyone else's. A lot has happened in a very short time and I think it's only natural that he would want to be alone with his thoughts for a while. For one thing, at the point in question, Luke has just left his father's funeral pyre and he doesn't seem to be quite certain about his father's fate. Was his father's final good act enough to save him? It is only after he sees the vision of Yoda, Ben and his father that he seems much happier and goes back with Leia to join his friends.

I do, however, agree with you about one thing, Marcia. I do feel that despite his friends in the Alliance and his close friends (Han, Chewie, Lando) and his new-found sister, Luke would still be somewhat lonely without a girl of his own. I hope George Lucas plans to have him find one in the future. I think it's about time his life held some happiness and laughter. He deserves it. I agree with Mary Urhausen that "Luke's story doesn't end with ROTJ. Considering the possibilities and responsibilities he had ahead of him, much of his story is just beginning." I'm sure that story is going to include reestablishing the Order of Jedi Knights and maybe Leia will be his first student, but I hope Luke's story will include finding a worthy mate as well.

That brings me to another point: My personal feeling is that while everyone in the universe of George Lucas has some measure of the Force, not everyone can learn to use it or become a Jedi. Now, of course, I could be very wrong about this and I don't have a whole lot of proof to back up my claim, but if anyone could become a Jedi, why didn't the Alliance have a school working non-stop to teach as many people as possible to become Jedi Knights? After all, Jedi skills can be rather useful

in a battle! The Alliance (or the Empire for that matter), could have won easily if lots of people in their ranks were Jedi Knights.

You might argue that they didn't have any teachers because no one seemed to know about Yoda but Ben Kenobi had trained at least one Jedi previously (and he started to teach Luke). He could have taught others before his death instead of living in retirement in the desert on Tatooine. Darth Vader had told Luke, "Come with me. I will complete your training," so he had some idea about how to teach, too. He could have set up an Imperial School of Fallen Jedi Knights. The fact that Kenobi and Vader didn't teach anyone else leads me to believe that the ability to use the Force is found in only a very few people at this time in George's universe and even less become Jedi. Kenobi and Vader didn't have any other students because there were no other students to teach.

When Ben says in TESB, "That boy is our last hope," Yoda says "No, there is another." He does not say there are 256,000 others, or 2,560 others, or 256 others, or 25 others or even 2 others. He simply says, "There is another." We find out in ROTJ that the "other" is Leia. Yet she is not a Jedi and has not yet had any training. Therefore, even she is only a possible Jedi. She has the Force, but she still needs to learn to use it and needs to pass her own personal test before she can be a Jedi. Yoda says to Luke, "When gone am I, the last of the Jedi will you be."

If everyone (or even many) had the potential to use the Force and become a Jedi, why was Luke such a prize for the Emperor? Why was he so anxious to have him?

Therefore, while the Force is present in all living things, it seems to me that at this particular time in the history of that galaxy far, far away, only 2 people (Luke and Leia) possess the Force strongly enough to be Jedi. (Remember that about the time of the twins' birth, most of the Jedi were murdered. Obi-Wan says, "Today the Jedi are all but extinct." Apparently, the amount of the Force a person possesses is hereditary, which explains why Luke and Leia have it. If others in the Galaxy were

strong with the Force, certainly Yoda would have known of them and trained them. Since he said there was only "another", I am assuming that Leia is the only one besides Luke capable of becoming a Jedi at this time, and that the other Jedi Knights of the Clone Wars must have died without leaving any heirs. ((Editor's Note: Or that their heirs, indeed probably their whole families, were murdered along with them in the Purge.))

If all this is so, then Luke and Leia are the only ones who can pass on the ability to become Force-users/Jedi to their offspring. This may be one reason why Lucas made Luke and Leia siblings in ROTJ (much to my chagrin!) instead of having the Prince (well, Jedi Knight, anyway) marry the Princess at the end of the fairy-tale and live "happily ever after." There is a possibility of more future Jedi being born with two couples (Leia & Han and Luke & another as yet unknown young lady) than with one (Luke & Leia--non-siblings, of course; let's keep this PG!). If each couple had 4 or 5 children, it could be the start of a new Enclave of Jedi Knights. (Someone wanted to know who the villain of the 3rd trilogy would be. Perhaps one of these 8 or 10 Solo or Skywalker children could fall to the dark side of the Force and be the possible future villain.)

By the way, I didn't get to read the comment about a Luke "free" to "share the Force" with hundreds of young women theory that some people made reference to in SE#3, but I'm assuming it was a joke. It would be totally out of character for Luke for one thing, and not exactly George Lucas' style either! ((Editor's Note: the postulation was first put forth by Susan Matthews in SE#2 as a way to repopulate the Jedi--have Luke impregnate as many women as possible, instead of having just one mate.))

I object to Martie Benedict classifying Luke as "boring." What makes you think Luke Skywalker is boring?! Just because a guy is good, dependable, compassionate, idealistic, trustworthy, caring and nice, not to mention good-looking, does not mean he's boring. Luke was always full of surprises even from the beginning. Who would think, for example, that a farmer would

know how to repair droids, pilot spaceships, and be interested in the rebellion and in joining the Academy? People who are surprising are not boring. Luke actively sought adventure and excitement all of his life as we know from Yoda's chiding him. People who seek adventure and excitement can't be too boring. Luke is also a risk taker. He was willing to barge into the Imperial detention center to rescue Leia. He was willing to delay the completion of his Jedi training in order to go to Bespin to help his friends. He was willing to risk facing Vader in order to try to bring him back to the good side of the Force. People who are risk takers are hardly boring! Luke is also spontaneous and resourceful and finds creative solutions to problems and difficult situations. In SW, he used his cable to swing himself and the Princess across the chasm on the Death Star. In TESB, he used his lightsaber and a hand-explosive to single handedly destroy an AT-AT, and in ROTJ, he "presented" Jabba the Hutt with the "gift" of his droids because he knew he would need them in his rescue of Han, and he hid his weapon in R2D2's dome because who would think to look for it there? People who are creative and spontaneous are rarely boring. In my opinion, if Luke Skywalker is "boring," then I say this galaxy (and any other galaxy for that matter) can use more "boring" men!

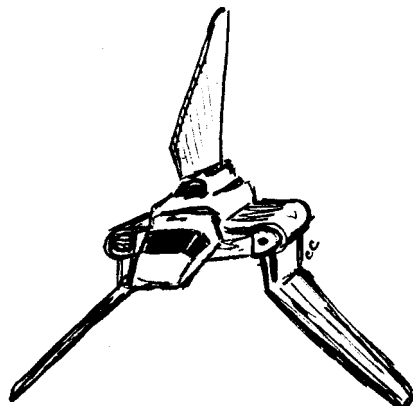
I do have one burning question that I would really be grateful to have someone answer for me. My question is: Why were Ben Kenobi and Yoda so anxious for Luke to face Darth Vader again? Both of them insisted that he needed to do so, yet it seems to me that they were knowingly sending him into a no-win situation. If he killed Vader, he would become like his father and fall to the dark side. If he gave in to his father or embraced the darkness, Vader would kill him. The only way that Luke could have lived and remained on the good side of the Force would have been if Luke had killed his father in self-defense. Even this was no solution for Luke. I doubt that he would have found it easy to live with himself knowing he had caused his father's death. Being a Jedi would have been no joy or victory for

him either if it had come at the expense of his father's death by his own hand.

Those were the only possibilities, yet Kenobi and Yoda said that Luke "must" face Vader. Why? And why did they want to send him on a seemingly hopeless mission? You would have thought that they would have demanded that he stay as far away from Vader as possible, knowing the possible outcome. Just what was Luke supposed to accomplish? I really wish that someone would explain to me why they wanted Luke to face Vader, because I really don't understand what it was that they wanted Luke to do! It seems to me that if Luke hadn't been right about his father (that there was good in him), that he either would have been dead, or on his way down the dark path, or he would have been a very unhappy Jedi Knight at the end of JEDI.

((Ed's Note: I don't think Ben and Yoda ever said that Luke was to kill Vader. Yoda said that he and the Emperor must be stopped ("on this all depends"). Someone had to make a confrontation and only another Jedi could confront Vader. Luke couldn't make that confrontation by running away. He had to face him. If Luke had stayed away, then Vader and the Emperor would have continued to grow stronger and stronger. Someone had to go into the dragon's lair and that someone was Luke.))

Well, I'm sorry I rambled on and on. If you read this whole letter, you have the patience of a Jedi! As I said at the beginning, I am no writer, and I can't express myself as eloquently as most of you can, but I really felt a need to respond to some of the negativity that I have seen directed towards the character of Luke, and to share some of my opinions about the trilogy. Luke does have his fans. We may be quieter than our Solo counterparts, but we are no less loyal! Walk the skies!



Jean L. Stevenson
61 Union Place
Lynbrook, NY 11563

Sometimes I wonder that we dare in a few words to contemplate a whole galaxy-worth of ideas and images and patterns. Which is what this letter is all about. Ideas, in no particular order, just to share. So...

Answering Chris Jeffords' query in SE#2: The English words to "Lapti Nek" can be made out partially from both the CBS making-of monsters special and the PBS SW-to-ROTJ making-of special. Unfortunately, both narrators (Fisher and Hamill) talk over the chorus, as can be seen from this incomplete transcript. The phonetic vowel sounds are correct. As to what the consonants and meaning are--"I know nothing."

Lapti Nek

My body's heat is rising.
My soul is synthesizing.
My lover man is coming',
So I'm shapin' up and
workin' out.
I feel my heart a-pumpin'.
My whole frame is thumpin'.
My fancy man is comin'.
I'm shapin' up and
workin' out.

(chorus)

So the people say
Fancy man (or Handsome man
or Han's the man)
[sing twice]
(Response is indistinct)
[sing twice]
Fancy man (or...)
Gotta move your body,
Gotta work your feet.
Start workin' out!

Well, that's all I've got to say on that.

SE in general continues to be a breeding ground for ideas that don't really answer anyone specifically. Such as, have you noticed how many times the words possible/impossible arise in SW? "More wealth than you can possibly imagine." "...more power than you can possibly imagine." "Impossible man!" "You ask the impossible." "The hyperdrive motivator has been damaged. It's impossible to go..." "I am your father." "That's impossible!" "He asks the impossible!" "But Master Luke, what magic? I couldn't possibly--"

Somebody mentioned that the only true story is on screen. And from a "certain point of view"?

I think Chris Jeffords' reviews of the Lando books are

excellently done. I like the writing of these books better than the Solo ones, but I do have one question on Flamewind (reviewed in SE#3): Lando's cargo is made up of tinklewood rods and Wintemberry jellies and bollem hides, all three of which items I first encountered in the pages of James Schmitz' The Witches of Karres (Ace 1973). Is this a salute to a good writer (and if you like Wars, you will like Schmitz--Witches especially), or what?

Loved the conversation with Michael Carter (and am fascinated by Bib Fortuna himself), a well-written and presented piece of journalism. Cheree, watch out! Looks like you're taking on class. I don't know how long I'll be able to keep up with your level of quality. But keep going, please! ((Editor's Note: All the credit for that piece goes to Shaun Dawkins and Michael Stubbington, along with the photo of the "real" Michael Carter! Shaun just wrote and asked if I'd be interested in it and I pounced on it like a mynock on a power cable!))

I stood up and cheered every time someone addressed Ann Worthingam and the eternal "fans don't do anything worthy" problem. I recently read an interview in which Katherine Kurtz said she started by writing scripts for Star Trek. None of them ever got used (she didn't even say whether she submitted them), but she found the experience invaluable for learning to write catchy, moving dialogue and detailing plots that didn't get hung up in the rafters.

Back to the movie per se. The really interesting thing about Leia's lack of emotion in the walkway scene with Luke (notice how when she's freeing Han and talking to Luke here, there is bright moonlight--a woman's time of strongest magic?) is that it's followed immediately by the scene with Han in which she finally gets to break down and be human. She even gets a close-up. And you know, the man has to be besotted or he doesn't care that his lady love looks a lot worse for a long and exhausting day capped by emotion-ripping revelations. Or he can't see her through the mist.

That brings back a brace of questions I had way-back-when that haven't been answered so far. How come the seeming se-

condary male is the romantic lead and how come the romantic lead gets his eyesight back offscreen? Actually, I would first ask why is Han blind at all? (Or why is Chewie wounded? Why is Leia shot? Why is her blood the only human blood we see in the entire saga?)

Ann Wortham asks why argue who the hero is. Because there are still two approaches to solving a problem being portrayed. Perhaps the simplest way to describe the situation is to start with Kenobi's line to Solo in ANH: "There are alternatives to fighting." Thereafter, it takes Solo the rest of that movie and most of TESB to agree and to show his agreement in the carbon freezing sequence by taking Threepio's advice: "Surrender is a perfectly viable alternative." And the correctness of this methodology is proven repeatedly in ROTJ when a whole series of characters and groups of characters on both sides are ordered to "Freeze!"--at which point someone (Wicket, the Emperor's crack troops, 3PO and the Ewok hordes, Leia with blaster) strikes from hiding to turn the tide of the battle.

The other course of action is Luke's--also apparently taught by the Jedi: when in doubt or outnumbered, attack (once known as the Han Solo School of Action Without Thought)--for instance, leaving a blind man, a wounded Wookiee and a Bad Guy on one skiff to attack a whole crowd on the other skiff; anything you do against evil is okay (putting the droids and Leia in Jabba's control, choking the pig guards, manipulating Bib Fortuna). I'll say I think both Luke and Han, et al, are heroes, but Luke's actions tend to excuse and perpetuate as "right" attitudes which are questionable to me.

Which leads me to Luke's green saber. I look at the spectrum and see green as one step along the road to red from blue. But I did like Lorenstein's color wheels. As for the color-symbolism, I think I'd agree that it depends on what system one applies. In discussing Lucas-worlds, though, I point to one of the differences between Kurtz' Deryni Chronicles and Norton's Witch World series. In the latter, blue magic is positive; red is negative. In the former it's the exact oppo-

site. But in both the users/workers of red are opponents of the blue. In SW, we were first presented with a blue saber in the hands of three good guys (Luke, Kenobi, even Han). The red saber has been wielded by a destroyer. Again, opposing positions.

In addition, someone pointed out to me that in film processing and in television technology, the basic colors are red, blue and green--not yellow as in pigments. It seems an appropriate color scheme for Lucas to use (since he's a creator in the medium of film and light projection). Thing is, in JEDI Vader is red and Luke is now green--which combination is what happens when a TV set loses its blue (as Luke lost his saber on Bespin). So how come the JEDI poster has a blue saber? Who wields that saber--or represents its position in the balance of the "natural" color scheme?

And it occurred to me to look at the "should Luke love Vader" question from another point of view. Why shouldn't Luke love Vader? He's never seen him as Leia has or any of the Imperial officers in TESB have or as Han has. Along with those characters, we see Vader--from the moment of his entry in ANH--behave in the manner of a bad guy. Luke does not. He engages in knightly combat with Vader, converses with him of equality and balances of power. It's easy for him to say there's good inside there, to maintain the "lovable" fiction. He does not know the bad father, only the good one. Is there perhaps a greater disillusionment on this score waiting for Luke?

While I'm on questions: the music on JEDI still fascinates me. There are the twins, Luke and Leia, kiting along through the forest of Endor, in look-alike costumes, matching actions--and no music. No Main Theme (which used to be Luke's theme until TESB), no Leia theme, no Luke and Leia theme, no Daddy theme, nothing. And then the title cut from JEDI (for the most part a hodge-podge of two films--old-themes which was nominated by who-knows-who for a People's Choice award) plays over the barge-skiff escape battle and introduces its only new theme over the actions of Han Solo.

The People's Choice... Did anybody see the show? They get

real cute at the PC and announce their foregone conclusions (already publicized so they can get folks there) with sidelong references to what each of three choices is known for or all about. Billy Dee Williams, Tony Daniels (as Threepio) and Artoo were there to accept for JEDI, which won Favorite Film over TERMS OF ENDEARMENT and SILKWOOD; but in announcing it, Dudley Moore didn't mention the two very popular runners-up at all. Instead, he choked through one of the most convoluted introductions I've ever heard, all about how in Medieval times you could tell a person's rank by their position in relation to the king: the queen on the left, the best friend on the right, and other ministers, etc., in circles out from there, and the jester at the king's feet. I thought of the closing shot in JEDI.

Speaking of things Medieval, I loved one bit in the PBS special (actually several bits, but this one caught me) where Mark Hamill (as narrator) says Luke gets his early training from a "gentle and perfect knight." This is from the description Chaucer gives of the knight who first regales the pilgrims on the road to Canterbury. His story is about two knights (cousins, if not brothers) who battle for a lady they both love: one prays to Mars for victory; the other to Venus for love. Both the gods granted the requests. The first won the battle, but during his triumphant march after, he fell off his horse on his head and died. The other then married the lady--after a suitable funeral, complete with knight on pyre.

Another question, and convoluted. Background material tells us that the temple on Yavin's moon is 1,000 years old, as is the cloud city on Bespin. Yoda is 900+ years old--close enough. And then there's the Millennium Falcon, a thousand-year-old bird of the hunt and the preferred choice of kings.

The victims of the Sarlacc are digested (doesn't necessarily mean killed when you think about it) for 1,000 years. And, then in RAIDERS, of all places, there's that bit from Belloq: "Look at this [watch]. Ten dollars from a vendor in the street, but if I bury it in the sand for a thousand years, it becomes priceless. Men will

kill for it. Men like you and me." Followed much later (Indy about to be sealed in the Well of Souls) by, "Who knows? In a thousand years even you may be worth something!" I wonder about that Sarlacc. What might have happened to Luke had he gone in? What might be happening to Boba Fett even now? Was his character really wasted?

Finally, have you noticed how many of the things that happen to Threepio happen to Han and vice versa? For instance, 3PO gets hauled along in Artoo's wake (in ANH) just as Han follows Luke into Death Star trouble in the same film. And in TESB (leaving the asteroid cave), 3PO falls right-to-left in the Falcon; cut to Han falling at the same angle. Or in ANH Luke and Kenobi lift 3PO as a wipe follows them up the screen, and the same happens with Han (TESB, Bespin) when Leia and Chewie lift him in the cell. And 3PO is blown apart on Bespin shortly before Han goes to carbon freeze where 3PO (fixed, sort of) is saying, "I can't see!" And then on Tatooine, Salacious Crumb plucks 3PO's eye as Han's shooting the Sarlacc; 3PO falls head-first into the sand, which is what Han would have done if he hadn't had loooooong toes. It even comes down to Han being threatened with burning again (in 3PO's place) because even the Ewoks can tell their god won't burn.

And folks keep telling me that Lucas isn't complex! Fly casual...



Marcia Brin
39 Crescent Drive
Old Bethpage, NY 11804

Any number of people are jumping up and down because some of us have criticized Luke in this film. Well, we didn't write the film; George Lucas did. We didn't put the events on the screen; George Lucas did. We didn't do ROTJ in such a way as to raise the issues of bigotry, responsibility, etc.; George Lucas did. It's like killing the messenger for delivering bad news.

This film is neither what I expected nor what I wanted. I expected the failures of TESB to be Luke's coming of age, that he would mature into the hero everyone--myself included--expected him to be, that, as much as I wanted Han rescued, Luke would, as the TESB novelization states clearly, return to Dagobah to admit his failures and continue his training. I wanted a film that would make everyone happy, that would leave enough openings for zines and the like to continue (well, that much I got: this film has certainly left openings!). Lucas gave me neither, and while I'm not happy with it, I cannot deny what is there.

I have no problem with someone telling me that Luke has done things wrong in ROTJ, had some wrong attitudes, but that he caught himself at the end and has turned the corner, and is on his way up. I may think it's darker, simply because I do not believe in instantaneous redemption, and that Luke still has to work at coming back up that path, but I can agree that he may be seeing himself more clearly. My disagreement is with those who tell me that, despite his violating the rules we've been given and despite his betraying 3PO, etc., etc., he has done nothing wrong, that he was always right and Yoda (who merely has been teaching it for 800 years) is wrong, and that Luke knows best. That attitude is ridiculous as someone saying that Luke has fallen into the deepest abyss possible and is irredeemably lost.

As far as I'm concerned, it is not those who criticize him who threaten to doom him, but those who defend him blindly and say that he is perfect. If Luke believes that same way, he is doomed for he will never recog-

nize those flaws in himself that brought him to the edge, and you cannot defend against something you do not recognize exists. Do you simply stand by while someone you care about walks over the edge of a cliff because you don't want to criticize him? No, you grab him by the collar, shake him and demand to know what the hell he is doing! Luke has a lot of problems here; he has to see them to survive.

It's funny but any number of people find it offensive if you raise the idea that Lucas might be toying with godhead implications for any other character, especially Han, but find nothing wrong in ascribing those characteristics to Luke. What else is saying that Luke was always right, that he knew when no one else did, that Yoda, et al, is wrong, that the rules don't apply (Luke can find his own solutions), that he is above criticism, if it is not calling him, in so many words, a god? Who else but a god can violate the rules without paying? Who else but a god can follow his whims whenever he chooses, regardless of responsibilities, without paying? Who else but a god can treat his companions in any manner he chooses and never apologize, without paying?

Lucas himself has said that Luke is the one with the problems (ROLLING STONE), yet those taking the attitude that Luke has done nothing wrong, that Luke has no problems at all. How could he, when everything he did or thought was right? (Is that the problem to which Lucas referred, how boring it is to be always right? Somehow, I doubt it!). Question Authority--which is being offered by some fans as Lucas' dictum--means question Luke as well as anyone else in the Saga.

Leaving the film itself aside for a moment, there have been enough quotes from Lucas and Marquand to indicate that Luke is in trouble (there are some who will say, what does Marquand know--he is, after all, only the director of the film! Well, a darn sight more than any fan. Especially as he indicated that Lucas gave him the treatments for all nine films). The most obvious statement is the one Lucas made on the PBS special about "...his final turn...to the bad side..." when he tried to kill his father. Luke was not there to try to

kill his father; he was supposed to be there to try and defeat evil. He ended up not fighting Vader as a Jedi, but as a son attempting patricide. Those are two very different things. And Lucas is pointing out this failure on Luke's part. When Yoda said "confront", the key was how Luke confronted Vader. Lucas is telling us that Luke confronted him incorrectly, that Luke's reason for going to the Death Star--to turn his father rather than to confront evil--was the wrong one, and that Luke paid the price for his failure and his violation of the rules concerning Force-usage.

Note that Luke defeats Vader at this point precisely because he is stronger in the Dark Side than Vader. Luke is fighting with all the negative emotions, especially hate, and Yoda tells us that these are the Dark Side (not that they merely lead to it). Had Luke been fighting correctly, in control of himself and for the right reasons, he would have defeated Vader because he was strong in the Light. The fact that it was the other way is a bad sign.

Some other statements of note: Marquand stated that throughout ROTJ, Luke's character steadily darkens, and that it's "...not me, it's in the script." He also stated that, in ROTJ, Vader has to finally realize that there "...is a power greater and darker than himself." (emphasis added) Clearly, Marquand cannot be referring to the Emperor since Vader has been aware of him for over twenty years. Then there was the remark that Mark had to come to terms with the fact that there was no more Luke Skywalker. "Oh, dear, I've given something away." Certainly that last comment does not seem to refer to the first trilogy not being directly about Luke, since there wouldn't be anyone reading the interview in question who did not already know that. When you add this to a remark by Lucas in SKYWALKING about the struggle between Luke and Vader that ends with the comment, "...but will he [Luke] become Darth Vader?", it suddenly takes on ominous overtones. ((Ed's note: A stray thought here... Could it be that "Darth Vader" is not a proper name, but a title of some sort? Like "Grand Moff Tarkin"? That might put a new perspective on things.))

Especially as, at the end of the film, Luke still looks so much like dear old Dad. He is still wearing the glove--suggesting he never got his hand fixed, though it was shot in the controls (from the book on the making of ROTJ). Luke is still out of control?--he is still wearing the saber in a peaceful gathering and he is still dressed 95% in black. This is a point where I disagree with Terri Black's article--though I thought it was very good and very interesting. The little flap we see is not white, but gray, which is better than black, but certainly not the symbolic equivalent of white. Even more, we do not know that the entire lining of Luke's outfit is this gray, only that this little bit of flap that we see is so lined (for all we know, Vader's outfit might be lined the same way. I think that it does have definite symbolic meaning--exactly what the physical look indicates: a sliver of gray amidst a "sea" of black, and I think it means that Luke has been offered hope, that he has the possibility before him of finding his way back. I think it's a very good sign for him.

One further observation on this: All the negative actions that have engendered the criticism appear virtually unchallenged on the screen. The excuses, on the other hand, are purely speculative (isn't it possible that...? perhaps... etc.). One has to ask why the film would be constructed this way. You do not write a story so that it disputes the actions of the putative hero; you write it so that it supports him, since he is supposed to represent the message of the tale. Lucas did it in such a way that everything Luke does virtually has to be fought over, explained away, excused, so that all the other characters have to be diminished or declared wrong or stupid to avoid having Luke labelled as doing things wrong. It doesn't make any sense--unless Luke is supposed to be judged as behaving wrongly.

Ever onward: any number of people have said that Luke turns it all around (or becomes a Jedi, etc.) when he throws the lightsaber away on the Death Star. I have to say that I don't agree. First, if this is true, then what does it mean

that Luke has it back again at the end (you can check this from the PBS special, if the film isn't still in your area)? That he went out of his way while the Death Star was falling apart to go back and get it (he did not have it when he was hauling DV)? If, as this theory postulates, he should have thrown it away because it was tainted with his negative use of the Force, is it any less tainted when he takes it back and carries it into a peaceful gathering, the only weapon there?

I feel the opposite about it: I feel that his throwing it away was a sign of defeat, because it stated that he had to divest himself of his power and his external symbol of Jedi-hood in order to avoid falling to the Dark. That he could not fight and remain in control, so he had to stop fighting, even if that meant simply quitting and letting evil survive. There would have been nothing wrong with Luke's using the saber had he used it as a Jedi, in control. His throwing it away seemed to me to be a tacit recognition on his part that he could not use it and remain in control.

However, his taking it back may symbolize his determination to master himself, and his recognition that he had not yet learned to do so; that he would learn to use it as a Jedi and that it would be not only a symbol of what he wished to become, but also a warning or reminder of what happened on the Death Star.

There have been complaints that we are being too hard on Luke, too judgmental. Well, I don't think you can be too hard on Luke. First, he is no longer just off the farm; that cannot be used as an excuse for his behavior. Second, the same people making this claim also claim Luke is the hero. Well, you can't judge the hero too harshly; he is held to the highest standard of all, not to a lesser standard than anyone else. If he cannot live to this standard, perhaps his hero status should be re-evaluated until he can.

Lastly, myths and fairy tales are extremely harsh in their judgments. You absolutely cannot violate the rules of morality without being severely punished. Even an innocent violation calls for payment. An example: there is a Hindu tale in which a man was married to a

demi-urge. The only condition was that he could not see her naked. One night, while they were undressing in the dark, a bolt of lightning lit up the room and he saw her. He could not have been more innocent, yet he was punished for it, and it took years for him to work his way back into a state of grace. Luke's violations are not either innocent or unintentional. Why would he not be required to make payment? In fairy tales, only those victims of a curse can receive instantaneous redemption, like Sleeping Beauty. (There is in fact a Sleeping Beauty figure in the Saga, but more on that another letter. Interestingly enough, it means something very different when the figure is male than when it is female.)

To Mickey Malkin: I have to admit I find your particular criticisms of Melody Corbett's alchemy article somewhat incredible. Some have self-evident fallacies, some I'm sure others will address and some are for another time. However, certain statements I would like to examine now. First, though, I am glad to see that you do not disagree that Han did go through the process successfully (I'm sure in light of your other criticisms that it would have been the first thing you had said if you did disagree).

Incredibly, though, the underlying theory behind your criticisms seems to be that the article is not about Luke! Contrary to your statement, Melody never said Luke failed the process, merely that he never went through it (if you feel otherwise, I would be very interested in seeing an article to that effect, with each step set out in much the same fashion; it would certainly raise certain implications). You seem annoyed because Melody suggested that Lucas was doing something with Han that he was not also doing with Luke. This seems to be a strange attitude on your part, since you've always claimed that everyone was treated fairly in ROTJ. Well, fairly means everyone gets a fair share of the pie, not that everyone gets the same thing.

When you speak of the fact that Melody is wrong about the three "uniting", you are talking about the fact that they are still friends at the end. Melody, on the other hand, is talk-

ing about spiritual development. The three characters represent different characteristics that the one passing through the process must integrate into himself. You also ask if Luke's leaving Dagobah might not have been a test known only to Yoda that Luke passed. Not according to ROTJ it isn't: it is Yoda himself who still says that Luke's leaving was wrong. Yoda has not changed his position on this at all.

I really found your remarks about Chewie astounding, and I can only assume you had a bad day when you read that part of the article! It seems a clear case of misreading what was being said. Melody was talking about the elements of fairy tale. Fairy tales were designed by cultures that, while extremely sophisticated socially, were technologically less advanced. They did not think in terms of space and alien species, but of Earth equivalents, of elves and gremlins--and animals. Lucas took this framework and applied it to an outer space location and the elves became Yoda and the animal element became Chewie.

Surely you are aware that the "animals" in fairy tales weren't really animals at all, but magical creatures who were intelligent, spoke in understandable tongues and acted as advisors and/or Companion-Protectors to the hero--a perfect description of Chewie. It's interesting that an earlier article--"Button, Button" [in JUNDLAND WASTES?]-went so far as to use the term "animal helper" to describe Chewie--and there did not seem to be any outcry on anyone's part I can recall.

However, in light of your attitude toward Chewie, I find it hard to believe that you wrote what you did just a couple of paragraphs earlier: "Yoda doesn't seem to be interested in training Leia, who he knows is the Other. Instead, he waits for Luke to return to Dagobah, as Luke said he would (and does)." Yes, indeed. Leaving aside the fact that Luke did not really return as he was expected to do and even assuming that the statement that Yoda knows Leia is the Other is correct (though there is nothing in the film to support it), don't you find this an itsy-bit-sy, teensy-weensy bit sexist?

This is a clear slap at women, a bit of tokenism that means nothing, since a woman doesn't seem worthy of training. As a Leia fan from the beginning, it certainly bothers me. I'm surprised it doesn't seem to bother you, considering how you feel about Chewie.

All this leads us to one of the most questionable actions in the film: Luke's behavior toward 3PO. This person, according to the creator of the film, is treated like furniture by Luke. This companion, who has helped save and who has worried over Luke through two films, is callously betrayed and sold into slavery. There have been those who claim it's O.K. because 3PO is a blabbermouth. Hardly. There has not been one instance in which 3PO has given away the plans of the good guys, and the rebels trust him enough to have him at the conference (besides, who says you can betray someone simply because he talks--especially when he is not needed in the first place and could just have easily been left home?).

Others claim it doesn't matter because 3PO is a machine. Not according to Lucas he isn't. Lucas has continually referred to him as "people". Most directly on point, however, is SKYWALKING, page 213, where it is pointed out that the droids and Chewie are in the film to show that no matter how odd or different people seem, they can still be true and faithful friends (emphasis added). "Lucas says he uses aliens and robots to make (however subtly) a point about discrimination--at one point, R2D2 and C3PO are barred from entering the space cantina." The droids and Chewie are Lucas' minorities. Lucas takes this issue seriously: he does not market in South Africa.

It has been claimed that 3PO knew and his comments were only to cover up the plan. Not only were the comments unnecessary if this is true and the stand unanswered, thereby blotting Luke's character, but there also is nothing in the film to support this theory. In fact, as the film goes on, you can see that 3PO is angry with Luke: he doesn't really speak to him after Tatooine, he has to be reminded to put Luke into his story at the Ewok village and he stops worrying about Luke, something he did in ANH and

TESB. Anthony Daniels, in fact, stated that Lucas made 3PO a god to make up for making him a slave, so he clearly doesn't think the droid knew! I am reminded of an exchange in 1776 between John Adams and Edward Rutledge about a passage in the proposed Declaration about freeing the slaves. Rutledge protests that they are property and Adams replies, "No, sir. They are people being treated like property." At Jabba's palace, so is 3PO.

To Terri Black: I agree that compassion is a valued quality--though, like mercy, it is a double-edged sword. If you give it to the tiger, you keep it from the lamb; we must always be aware of this dual nature--but I doubt the "compassion" presumably being displayed. Where is the compassion for 3PO or for those on board the sand barge? There does not seem to be any need for this action--Jabba is dead and the deck is cleared of all resistance--and there does not seem to be any thought for any slaves that might be on board or for the pathetic hangers-on like the band, who probably never harmed anyone and were just trying to stay alive in a nasty galaxy.

As for compassion toward DV: what about for his victims, to whom Luke seems to give no thought? He sees no evil in Vader at all. Who speaks for them? And Luke does not stop from killing Dad because of compassion, but because of fear, fear that he will be just like Vader. What of the rebels, whom he deserts when they might need his skills? Lastly, what about the rest of the galaxy? Luke goes, according to his own words, to turn his father. He states several times that if he cannot, he will not fight, even if that leaves evil in control. Where is his feeling for those under the heel of the Empire?

No, I think there was compassion in the person I saw in ANH, but not in the person in ROTJ, no matter what his words say. I think part of the point of ROTJ is what can happen even to a good person when he opens himself to the blandishments of the Dark.

A last comment: I think the fact that Han and Leia still care for Luke at the end tells us not about Luke, as has been suggested, but about them, and what kind of people they are.



Liz Sharpe
6020 Westchester Park Drive T-2
College Park, MD 20740

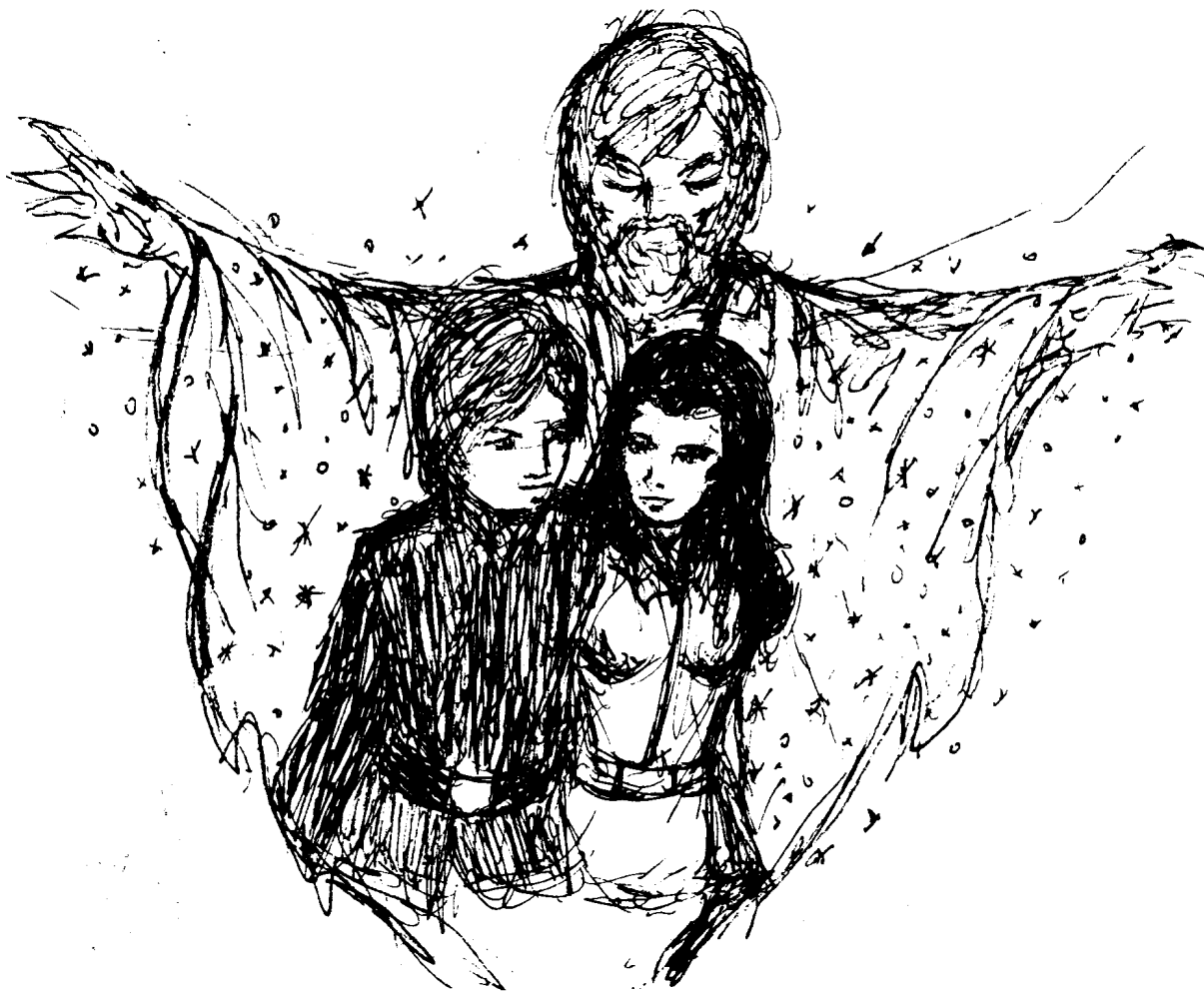
April 11, 1984

I found, as usual, the letters in your last issue (#3) to be both provocative and engrossing. I'd really like to reply to or comment on all of them, but (being more merciful than the Emperor, at any rate) I'll restrain my prolixic tendencies and focus on one particular topic which seemed to have become sort of a de facto "theme" in #3: the statement, "question authority." In addition to Jean L. Stevenson's article, this phrase appeared verbatim in two other places, and thematically, in several more; but the statement itself was never properly explored.

I don't wish to attack Ms. Stevenson personally, especially as I have seen (and enjoyed) enough of her excellent work elsewhere to know that she is a thoughtful writer and a conscientious craftsperson on the whole. But I found this particular article to be dissatisfying and distractingly disorganized, not up to Ms. Stevenson's usual standards. There are ways of structuring an examination of this topic without name-dropping, without flopping belly-up in the face of self-inflicted random thought associations, and without straying into the dim and nebulous realms of Jedi cosmology as applied to Fantasy, the Real World, and Everything (not to mention the burning issue of the precise degree of George Lucas' social consciousness). Also, I admit to feeling rather irritated at the peculiar distinction Ms. Stevenson chose to draw between Catholic, Chris-

tian and Protestant analogical symbolism; I realize that she was merely trying to make a point about the discrepancies between types of analogical "tools" theoretically available for use in discussing the Force (this in itself a digression from the original theme of the article), but I would've appreciated it if she had either picked something less touchy to use for her examples, or at least handled the matter more tactfully. But despite my ruffled sensibilities, I found Ms. Stevenson's article to contain considerable food for thought; and it may be that the provocative format in which her ideas were presented made me pay more attention to the subject than I might have otherwise. Perhaps she didn't intend to analyze this particular subject in depth at all. But if that was the case, both the title of the article and its opening paragraphs are misleading, intriguing as they are. The statement "question authority" deserves detailed examination in and of itself. Before attempting to apply a precept like "question authority," it is well to understand something of what the precept (or its exponent) intends.

The statement "question authority" is most commonly interpreted to mean "challenge" authority, with the additional implication that authority is likely to prove unequal to the test, and that such false authority should be deposed. This isn't "wrong", it's just simplistic, only a part of the larger meaning of the statement. There are many obvious examples of this (quite proper) interpretation in the STAR WARS movies: you can see it in the actions of the Rebels in general (they are challenging and seeking to depose an authoritarian government which has proved to be unworthy), and of Luke Skywalker in particular (as he challenges Darth Vader and the Emperor). However, it is important to keep in mind, when considering this statement, that "authority" need not be assumed to be intrinsically wrong, damned by the mere fact of its title. Upon being challenged, authority may quite easily prove to be genuine: for instance, Yoda may in fact know more about the mechanics of using the Force than oneself. "Question" authority does



not mean "automatically defy" authority--especially, it does not mean thoughtless, reflexive rejection of superior knowledge, ability, intuition, what-have-you. The word "question" can also (and should) be interpreted as "test": "question authority" is as much an injunction to identify true authority as it is to challenge purported mastery. The act of questioning authority, in this manner, can be beneficial both to the individual and to individuals en masse. If you discover a need for instruction, it is well to make sure (as far as you are able) that you find a worthy (or at least capable) master from whom to learn.

And besides, nobody said that the "authorities" themselves are ever beyond the stage where they can learn from the experience of being challenged themselves; and neither the challenged nor the challenger necessarily suffers a diminishing of expertise/mastery/authority merely because of having been tested.

Bereft of its complex implications, the statement "question authority" remains a useful instruction: in the most literal sense, it means ask for answers. Having presumably found an authority (of whatever nature "authority is in the eye of the pupil

--no pun intended), one should seek to learn what the authority has to impart. The use of the imperative "question" reflects the fact that learning is an active, not a passive, experience. (So, of course, is teaching, but the statement under discussion doesn't deal with that aspect of the problem.) This is particularly useful if, being a scientist, you consider your "authorities" to be the laws of physics: not all authorities are equally loquacious. Even those capable of speech may not speak to the point; it is necessary to be able to identify the matters about which you are curious or seek instruction. In its most literal interpretation, the statement "question authority" still makes sense, though not, perhaps, in the way the statement is most commonly understood.

Finally, it is important to realize that in the most fundamental terms, the statement "question authority" is an oxymoron, a sort of perverse, Zen-like joke. The statement contradicts itself: being cast in the imperative, the precept promotes itself as an authority, the very thing it warns you to approach with caution. It alerts a perceptive mind to the need of examining even the simplest, most obvious sources of

instruction with a certain amount of dubiousness from the beginning--though the statement does not proscribe an attitude of respect; a healthy scepticism is not necessarily incompatible with due reverence/courtesy for someone or something of superior knowledge, experience, ability (etc.). If the "student" is sufficiently nimble-minded, that basic questioning will grow to encompass even her/himself. As a joke, the statement fosters a positive (albeit somewhat wry and ironic) approach to existence; but the humor of the statement in no way detracts from the wisdom it has to offer. One might say that the precept "question authority" serves to encourage doubt; but doubt, and curiosity, are very much two aspects of the same quality. This quality can also be described as maintaining a fundamental receptivity towards learning, however large, small or apparently unlikely the source of experience/education. "Question authority"--keep an open mind at all times, even in the presence of (an) Authority.

Learn.

Rather than end on such a decidedly conclusive note, I'm going to stick in one more comment, sort of a propos nothing. To Terri Black: I enjoyed your observations about ROTJ contain-

ing a "true space battle; all three dimensions are in constant use"; I agree! But (always but) there is one fairly common means of Terran transportation which involves all three dimensions at once: (underwater) swimming. Me, I've always felt as though I was flying, underwater; that's one of the reasons I love swimming so much. A small point--and quite possibly many/most people simply orient themselves to the surface of the water in place of the surface of the ground.



Karen Finch
13 Van Buren Avenue
Ravena, NY 12143

March 11, 1984

Well, after sitting on the sidelines for three issues, I've finally decided to participate. The discussions have been getting better and better, so I couldn't help but add my input!

Christine Jeffords: In your letter, you mentioned that the Empire is "not yet overthrown." How right! "A battle (or two) does not a war make." There are plenty of young Imperial officers eager to take over, now that both Vader and Palpatine are dead. If, as you say, the Emperor didn't have an heir or heiress, though that's possible, maybe Vader had other children, raised with the Dark Side, or the late Tarkin raised a son or daughter to inherit the throne. All possibilities, but one thing is for sure--the Rebels still have one helluva fight on their hands!

Cheree mentioned in this letter that Mon Mothma was a highly placed senator or something, but what I want to know is, why, if she's such an important part of the Rebellion, she wasn't heard of before? ((Ed's Note: I think Mon Mothma will be featured heavily in the first trilogy, dealing with the Clone

Wars, the rise of Palpatine and the fall of the Republic. It's even possible that she and Obi-Wan were lovers once.)) It was also mentioned that Leia might still be a senator, but I for one think she would get a higher post, in addition, like governor, or such, if that is applicable in the "new" society created. I mean, Leia dedicated a lot to the Rebellion, she should be rewarded.

Christine, I don't agree; I think Luke was justified in crying out when the Emperor was "Force-torturing" him. I think it wasn't only the physical pain he was objecting to, but to all extents and purposes, he had FAILED. The Rebellion was doomed, as were Han and Leia, and he had been wrong about Vader (or so he must have thought at the time). That would be enough to destroy anyone, much less the fact he was under bolts of intense pain.

You also mentioned that Ben proved that death wasn't the end, but in all truth, Ben wasn't much help physically, he was limited to advising Luke. Sure, the "deceased" Luke could advise Leia, but (1) she might not have survived the attack on the bunker and (2) it would have taken a while to "train" her, and if Ben, with years of experience, didn't do that well, why would Luke?

Mary Urhausen: I loved your ideas for Lucasfilm merchandise! Seriously, though, I kinda miss the "ultimate personification of evil" that Vader was, but for him to stay the villain would have defeated the purpose of ROTJ. I think Han Solo got the reputation of "super stud" due to his cocky (no pun intended) attitude. I mean, there are some guys you can just TELL are womanizers; we've all met them. Granted, Han has never given any evidence, but even Brian Daley has conjured Han up this way. Protecting Han's reputation is gonna be a losing battle! Maybe Cheree explained it best in her editor's note!

Mary, you say that "Ben and Yoda were WRONG...", well, I think Yoda had a "master plan" in his head at all times. Ben, unfortunately, was wrong a good deal, but I don't remember Yoda as ever being so. At the beginning, in TESB, Yoda says, "But will he finish what he begins?", perhaps foreseeing Luke's departure to save his friends. This

could have been a test, also, to see if Luke had the independence to do what his heart and emotions tell him. Luke was constantly told, "You must do what you feel is right, of course." Also, Yoda never said Luke couldn't turn Vader, he said he must FACE him. This could be a reference to Vader's unmasking, if taken literally, also. I'm reasonably sure it was stated in ROTJ that Yoda wanted to tell Luke about his father's identity, but Ben disagreed. Maybe it was the novelization, but I'm sure I heard that somewhere. It's my opinion that Yoda always knew what he was doing, and that Luke has surpassed Ben, at least, though he needs more experience to reach Yoda's level of Force-understanding.

One last comment, Mary, and then onward. You asked why Leia had changed from fatigues in the Ewok village. Well, I'd imagine that getting thrown from a speeder-bike at close to two hundred miles an hour and then ambushed by an Imperial biker scout tends to leave one's clothes a little ripped and dirty!

Michelle Malkin: You mention that "Luke is never prickly with either of them [Han or Leia]..." I tend to disagree, at least, partially. Luke acts a little "prickly" with Han in both the computer terminal room, where they are dressed as stormtroopers and Han has just shot all the guards, and then again when Han refuses to join the Rebellion on Yavin. Then, in the Falcon's cockpit, there is a little tension when Leia is being discussed ("Do you think a Princess and a guy like me--?" "NO!"). But besides those few circumstances, the duo had a pretty good relationship.

I agree with both you, Mickey, and anyone else who has mentioned this fact, that it's Lucas' saga and people say "he's wrong, that's not how it should be." For God's sake, the man CREATED the saga! How can he be WRONG?!

You also mentioned that people were dumping on the Alliance for not mourning Vader's death, well, why should they? Vader was the villain and participated in the deaths of thousands or so we have been led to believe. Vader was "the bad guy", so why should the "good guys" mourn his death? Especially

ally Leia! Vader was part of the destruction of Alderaan and also a big part of her interrogation. Granted, Luke had reason; Vader was his father, and he knew Vader had good in him. I'll bet the Rebel on the Blockade Runner (the one Vader choked) wouldn't believe that, though!

Barbara Tennison: You mention that the right team is as important as the right individual. I agree. This idea is predominant on television. THE A TEAM, SIMON & SIMON, etc., support this theory.

Why does Luke have to suspect someone close to him is his sister? That is, if we go by the premise that the Force didn't give this away, then maybe his sister was millions of miles (or the SW equivalent) away. That would have been more feasible to me, though it wouldn't have solved the "triangle."

Barbara, you brought up the point of having someone else do the remaining SW movies. I think if the person made it a labor of love, like George did, and not just another job, the saga could work out. I'd like to see Lucas with his hand in it somehow, though.

Carole Regine: HI! Well, here I am, writing to you again! This time, though, we're going public!

You mention the topic of "conditional love" between Vader and Luke, commenting on Karen Osman's letter. Truthfully, though, the conditions HAD TO be made. It would have been impossible for Vader and Luke to have a relationship as things were. Someone has to change, if they were to "become" father and son. Unfortunately, this sacrifice led to Vader's death.

I think Luke WAS consumed by the Dark Side for a moment. Yoda says, "Once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny." Does this mean Luke is to be forever plagued by Dark thoughts and deeds, not becoming EVIL, but forever being open to temptation? Or does it mean he is to follow in the late, great Sith Lord's ominous footsteps? Loved the idea of Vader remembering his own pain through Luke!

Ann Wortham: I have to disagree with your statement that Luke was the only character in ROTJ that went through emotional changes. I feel Han

did, too. Maybe his change started in TESB, or even ANH, but then, in reality, do did Luke's. Han has grown from a self-serving space pirate to a dedicated leader in the Rebellion--a BIG change. It was a long process, but I think ROTJ illustrates how Han had come full circle.

Bev Lorestein: I agree with you and Chris Jeffords. I think anyone can use the Force, though not everyone can be a Jedi. If it is created by all living things, why can't all living things use it? In the Daley novels, he writes, "At times, Han's luck had rivalled anything he'd ever seen," or something to that extent. I think this is Han's way of unconsciously using the Force. Maybe that is part of the reason he has stayed alive so long in a dangerous occupation.

Debbie Gilbert: I would like to see other Sith Lords, or Ladies, try to re-establish the Empire. That is, if there are other Sith, as we'd been led to believe. Maybe a type of Roman triumvirate could be established.

A quick thought about Corellians: I had always thought they were a race or nationality, or such, as in Italian. The word structure of the two is similar, maybe that is a hint from Lucas.

Jean Stevenson: Luke couldn't very well tell Jabba, "Well, I'm ALMOST a Jedi!" First impressions count and an Almost-Jedi wouldn't seem too frightening to a crime lord. Unfortunately, neither did a Jedi...at first.

It's been mentioned that perhaps only barren women would be allowed to become warriors. This would make one assume that barren women are not considered for "marriage." Maybe this explains an absence of mention of Leia's past loves. But, if this is true, you would think Leia would feel obligated to tell Han she can't have children. You would also suspect she would be upset that maybe she's good enough to sleep with, but not good enough to marry, join, mate, seal, graft to, or whatever the SW term is. She would probably also be upset that Han might reject her when he finds she's "unacceptable." ((Editor's Note: this is, of course, assuming that the SW universe works on the Judeo-Christian

morality system and also assuming that Alderaanians and Corellians have only two sexes. As long as we're playing "what if", we can postulate that perhaps there are several sexes here and that Leia may be a non-producing female. Or, if we stay within Earth/human norms, there are still plenty of women who choose not to have children and are still perfectly acceptable members of society. I don't think, from what we've been shown, that Han would reject her simply because she might not be able to give him children. For all we know, Corellians may be polygamous and he may have several families elsewhere in the galaxy. The possibilities are endless!)) Besides, the majority of the three films centers on our heroic trio, so the absence of other women isn't surprising. Female pilots seemed few (I didn't see any, though that doesn't mean they weren't there) but the women could have been diplomats, technicians, etc.

Tim Blaes: You mention that one person would have to take control of the "new" government. Who would you think that would be? Mon Mothma seems unlikely, because I don't think she is "ruthless" enough to hold a galaxy together. Any ideas? Leia might be a good choice, but does she have enough experience?

Tim, I loved your hypothesis of Luke "doing his Duty" through artificial insemination! Those poor girls! I'd like to add to your "what-if" list: WHAT IF Leia had fallen for Lando instead of Han? What if Han had escorted Luke to Dagobah? What if Luke had died in the blizzard on Hoth, or Han, or both?

One final comment to Marcia Brin: You ask how many married fen consider their sibling relationship less important than their married one. How many married couples have a Force relationship (which would be pretty binding, I'd think)? I'm not saying Luke and Leia's relationship is more important than Han and Leia's, but being "Forcefully" bound to her brother, who is also a close friend, makes a strong relationship. Also, where did you get the impression that Leia was searching for a mate? As far as I could see, she was doing alright independently and not looking for an attachment.

Well, now that I've taken

up more than my share of space, I can't wait to get the next issue! Until then...CLEAR SKIES!



Kathryn Agel
51 West 2nd Street
Bayonne, NJ 07002

Glad you went to reduction, Cheree. I don't know about anybody else out there, but I find reduced type easier to read.

I'd like to go back to SE#2 for a moment, if I may, to reply to Ann Wortham. I've had both my best friend and my husband say fundamentally the same things to me as was said to you. I'll tell you the same things I told them: that fannish writing has been a springboard to the pro world for many established writers. I may never make the transition, but I'm sure havin' a lot of fun trying to get there. Meanwhile, I have a story to tell (a series, actually--the Starbird's Children Series. There are 38 of them so far, with ten in zines due out around MediaWest. Hey, Chris--if you can plug your stuff, I can plug mine, right? Especially since I have one in your OUTLANDS CHRONICLES #2, and two poems in A TREMOR IN THE FORCE. How's that for equal time, Cheree?) Hopefully, fen will enjoy my stories as much as I enjoy writing them. What more could I ask?

Dr. Mary Urhausen: Han Solo on intimate apparel? Lead me to it! ((Ed's note: Personally, I'd like to see Our Corellian doing a Jockey shorts ad a la Jim Palmer! Yum! Martynn and I did the next best thing with a vignette and illo in TREMOR

#1, in which we succeeded at least in getting Han down to his BVD's! See? I can plug my own stuff!)) Actually, I think it's Solo's attitude, the way he carries himself, aided and abetted by Harrison Ford's natural projection of sexuality (DROOL!) that has prompted the "Superstud" image. I personally have no designs on Solo's bod, but I can understand anyone who does.

Barbara Tennison: You're right--probably only Luke could see the three old Jedi at the Endor celebration. I think if Han, Leia or Chewie had seen them, they would have been a bit startled. They didn't seem startled; complacent is a better word.

If Lucas does decide to farm the remaining movies out, I hope Spielberg is his choice. It would seem logical, considering the friendship and work relationship between the two men. I think Spielberg would care about the films; he'd certainly pay more attention to characterization than Marquand did in ROTJ.

Carole Regine: I read more than thirty books a year (perhaps twice that, including horror and straight fiction in addition to F/SF), but zines have more of an attraction for me than does most of the media pro-fic I read. Fanfic is, for me as it is for you, more emotionally satisfying. Not only that, it's the only supply of SW fiction I have. (Unless I write the stories myself and I can only write so quickly.)

Bev Clark: Perhaps, to Obi-Wan, Anakin Skywalker, having abandoned the Light Side of the Force, was truly dead, his place having been taken by the newer incarnation of Darth Vader.

Marcia Brin: Luke will be very busy for a few years, training potential Jedi. The full burden will be on his shoulders until he has enough well-trained students to aid him. And I think he'll be very careful in whom he picks as his assistants--he won't want to repeat Ben's mistakes, will he?

Without resorting to re-reading the novelization of ANH, I believe I remember mentioning having been made of many Alliance techs being female. Of course, I would have like to have seen more women in positions of responsibility in the Alliance, but maybe we will in the last trilogy.

Hey, Cheree, it was great to see Thor in SE (what is he, anyway--Husky? German Shepherd? Elkhound?) but now my dogs want equal time! ((Ed's Note: Black Lady's Thor [Leisa Black Man Nemo x McMillan's Black Lady] is an AKC registered black German Shepherd Dog. He has no championships before his name and we have, in fact, never showed him, but he is our faithful friend, the fierce defender of our home, a tireless and loving companion and the joy of our lives. I really wanted to name him Darth Vader, but my husband wouldn't let me, perhaps because he still cringes over the fact that I had named my now 11-year-old Shepherd "Spock" (that was back in my Star Trek days and he does have pointed ears!). If I could get a decent picture of Thor, I'd show you what he really looks like, but he is so coal black that he won't photograph! I mean, you can't see any details--it's just a dog-shaped black shadow with gold-brown eyes!))



Pat Nussman
5851-C Western Run Drive
Baltimore, MD 21209

April 21, 1984

First of all, Cheree, I'd like to congratulate you on how wonderful SOUTHERN ENCLAVE 3 looks! Everything about it--layout, printing, etc. looks crisp, sharp and professional. Good work. ((Ed: ...purrrr.))

And the contents match the look. Everything, from articles to letters, was so thought-provoking that I found myself constantly interrupting my reading to jot down my own ideas and opinions while they were fresh in my mind. I'll try to control

myself, though, on how many I pass on, as to leave a few columns of blank space for someone else.

Dr. Mary Urhausen is one lady I found myself agreeing with almost all the way down the line. I especially would like to join S.P.P.H.S.I.S. I'm not sure where this myth came from about Han Solo--it relates to nothing in the films. And that the women who further this idea seem to like Solo (I could understand it from enemies) absolutely mystifies me. Frankly, I don't like (to put it mildly) the type of man who will "make it" with anything that will lie down long enough. Indicates a certain lack of discrimination, if you know what I mean, besides being likely to lead to intergalactic clap or AIDS. I'd hate to think of Leia having to be dosed with the SW equivalent of penicillin after her wedding night. To my mind, there's nothing in the least romantic about the type of man some people imagine Han Solo to be.

Michelle Malkin: Again, I agree with almost everything Mickey says here, but there is one point I'd like to not so much disagree with as nitpick. I think Luke not so much simply saw and rejected his Dark Side, as saw and, in a sense, accepted that it was there, while not giving in to it. Without going over the mythical edge, I do see Jungian aspects to ROTJ and that is one of them...Luke accepting his Shadow, an important step toward self-actualization.

I much enjoyed Carole Regine's marvellous analysis of the climatic duel of ROTJ. Yes, I do agree that when Luke says, "I am a Jedi, like my father before me," that this took Vader's mind back to what he was once... and might be still. But I hadn't thought of the possibility that his son being in pain reminded him of his own accident...good point.

((Editor's Note: Martie Benedict has a song called "The Ballad of Traeger Jona" which is about a spacer much like Han, but down on his luck and finally put into a desperate situation in which he chooses to die with courage and honor; I have often thought of the last stanza of her song in relation to what Darth must have been feeling as he watched Luke renounce the Dark. I hope Martie won't mind if I quote it here:

"Now, space is full of tragedies, and songs of grief and loss, the widow's wail and fortune's cruel turns. But sometimes, like a laser flare, amid the darkness and despair, amid the senseless violence, it burns--
A song of triumph in defeat, of one who beats the odds.
A man who has his back against the wall,
Who fights the course that fortune winds, a man who lost and dying finds, the purpose of existence and the meaning of it all."

[copyright Martie Benedict, "The Ballad of Traeger Jona," Starsongs/Lovesongs.]

I think that Darth had a sudden moment of realization in which he saw himself twenty years before, being subjected by Palpatine to much the same thing that Luke was now going through and he realized that it had to end there. I admit to being a Vaderphile long before I was a Hanfan so I, for one, cheered when Darth turned on the Emperor, and his death had me close to tears. Sorry for the long digression here, Pat. Back to you...))

It will be interesting (if Lucas does make the first trilogy) to see the exact nature of Vader's accident. We've all been making assumptions about that volcano, but that isn't, after all, in the films, so it could really turn out to be anything.

At any rate, I'm finding it ironic that ROTJ has turned many Vader fans against the Dark Lord, while it's brought me to admire him for the first time. And not just as Anakin. There's a certain grandeur about the Vader persona, as well, especially in the last half of ROTJ.

Debbie Gilbert: Good point about the Emperor not being Jedi. But that brings up a whole other can of worms...if he's not a Jedi, just what the hell is he? That's the real mystery, isn't it?

Jean Stevenson's idea about Jabba being "enchanted" is marvellous...it's straight from the kind of fairy tale I like the most, though I fear he didn't make a whole lot of progress with getting the Princess to love him. But I do wish Jean would consider an alternate--it would be particularly suited

to her style of writing.

Tim Blaes: I like his list of "what if's". The one about "what if Leia had been put into carbon freeze" is perhaps my favorite. I would love to see a story on that one.

Well, I've taken up quite enough room in your zine, I think. Good luck on future issues--if they're anything like #3, they'll be terrific.



Ellie Uader

Terri Black
Ambassador College
Big Sandy, TX 75755

April 24, 1984

Can I be a member of Mary Urhausen's S.P.P.H.S.I.S.? I've gotten a little tired of the Intergalactic Superstud myth of Han Solo myself. Now, those kind of stories have been nixed anyway, but the problem is that the attitudes they reflect seem to have become part of fandom's tradition. Bev Clark mentions the tidbits of information in the novelizations that have become part of that body of tradition. Most of these are either "facts", such as Owen's surname being Lars, or extrapolation, such as the inference of a home planet Corell for Han from his being classed as a Corellian. But Han as Intergalactic Superstud is neither a stated fact nor an extrapolation from specific incidents or statements; it's an interpolation--an alteration, an insertion, a corruption. But despite this, it's become part of the fannish SW tradition. We have to be careful about tradition...it's been treated like canon, but it isn't canon. Remember what Jesus said to the Jews--"Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. 15:6). It's not that tradition is wrong--it's just that the Jews took it too far by adding

to and changing the law with their traditions. Many SW traditions are useful and fill in details that couldn't be given on screen, but we must learn the distinction between tradition and canon. We should be free to accept or reject any part of tradition. I can't prove that Han is not an Intergalactic Superstud, so I can't criticize anyone who wants to think of him that way. I just don't choose to believe it myself because I'm not happy with that characterization and it can't be proved to me with canon.

Speaking of canon, I was glad to see Bev's comments and agree that only the movies should be regarded as canon. In my discussion of canon in #3, I made that clear, but I think what I was really after was a hierarchy of secondary canon. What is secondary canon and what is alternate universe? Where does tradition fit in? What is their order of importance or believability? My tentative list would go like this: (1) "Making Of" books & specials (because they deal with what happened on screen); (2) novelizations; (3) the radio shows; (4) script versions; (5) extrapolated tradition. Under "alternate universe" I file the authorized novels and stories, and interpolated tradition...as I've said before, useful for individual stories if the author cares to use them. ((Editor's Note: Personally, I tend to group the authorized novels and even the storybooks--the Wookiee one in particular--about equal with "extrapolated tradition", since they were written in conjunction with Lucasfilm and therefore must have a handle on "official" information. That is, of course, unless it directly contradicts what we have seen on screen, the primary example being "Splinter of the Mind's Eye," which must be a slip-up on somebody's part.))

Martie Benedict: I missed the comment by Lucas that you refer to, about Luke having made the "final turn to the bad side of the Force," but it seems to me he must have meant the final turn before going back to the good side. That savage attack on Vader was a momentary turn to the dark side; it was fueled by anger and fear, which add up to hatred. And it gave him power--Yoda had said the dark side was "easier...quick

to join you in a fight." Suddenly, Luke was able to beat down Vader, who normally was quite competent against his less experienced son. Luke's return to light immediately after he severs Vader's hand is not, perhaps, as obvious. But if his turning to the dark side was permanent, he certainly would have finished off Vader--that was what the Emperor wanted him to do, in order to solidify that turning. If we assume that the Emperor knows what it takes to turn someone, then Luke falls short of the conditions. He refuses to kill Vader and, turning to the Emperor, assumes a passive role by throwing away his lightsaber--passiveness is also a trait of the light side. And had Luke been on the dark side, I can't help thinking he would have found some way to lash back at the Emperor when he zapped him...and the power, again, would have come quickly, while as a novice Jedi, he couldn't even defend himself. I think I would define "starting down the dark path" as rejecting the light and deciding in your leisure that you want to go the way of the dark side. A momentary lapse such as Luke suffered is not willful--he didn't sit down and decide to attack, he just lost control of himself. So he didn't actually start down the dark path--he just stepped on it for a minute, knowingly, perhaps, and maybe even willingly--but not willfully, with malice aforethought.

I'm becoming a bit bothered by a tendency in many to be so open-minded their brains fall out. The Empire pictured as a valid government because it's "good from its own point of view"; the idea that it would be fine if Luke wanted to go out and have sex with everyone and his bantha; the interpretation of "Question Authority" that says Luke can do what he wants because Ben and Yoda are wrong about everything anyway; these points of view are interesting, perhaps, to speculate about, but they run counter to Lucas' attitudes in the films. The Empire is called evil on screen--in the canon--and not by Rebels, either, but by the narrator (opening rollups). The movies project a fairly traditional morality, and George backs that up by insisting on the same in fanlit. But what I really want to focus on is the

question of authority. Jean L. Stevenson's article questions authority in the right way; asking questions, finding out what the authority means by what he says so that it is more clear in your mind. Several people point out that Luke makes his own choice and takes the responsibility for it. But Ben and Yoda aren't there for nothing. The individual must choose for himself, but if there are no standards, no guidelines, no rules, what does he base his choice on? Luke didn't know what to do while he lived on Tatooine, so he did nothing until Ben came along to tell him what he should do. It was then Luke's choice whether to do it or not. He attained success in ANH by doing what Ben, the authority, said. He was unsuccessful in TESB because he went against Ben and Yoda's advice; he suffered the loss of his hand and suffered under learning Vader's identity as his father in a pressure situation where it caused more agitation than it needed to, and he didn't accomplish the goal for which he defied Ben and Yoda in the first place, namely rescuing Han and Leia, but had to be rescued himself. In ROTJ he does what he's told and faces Vader, and therefore succeeds in becoming a Jedi. "Question Authority" doesn't mean "Defy Authority", and I don't think George meant it to. Certainly Ben and Yoda aren't always right--they're only human and fungus. To question authority means to not accept it on blind faith but to consider it and weigh the alternatives. If you can prove the authority is wrong, fine. But Luke obviously didn't feel very good about going against Ben and Yoda's judgment in TESB--he hadn't proven they were wrong, he was just letting his emotions lead him into a choice in which he had not weighed the alternatives or the possible outcome. Certainly he took the responsibility for that choice; but why, oh why can't man learn from his teachers instead of painful experience? I'd like to see Tim Blaes' what-if story #5--"what if Luke had stayed on Dagobah and not tried to rescue Han, Leia, Chewie and the droids?" I'm sure Han wouldn't have been subjected to carbon freeze, and Lando would probably have rescued them before they could be killed. Already

the outcome is better. No loss of a hand, no time wasted rescuing Han from Jabba, no time lost in becoming a Jedi. Quite a lot of suffering avoided. Call me an authoritarian, but I stand by the Jedi Masters.

Back to Bev Clark, this time on the subject of LoCs. I wonder if the decline in LoCs comes from a feeling in readers that a higher standard is expected than one can produce. Perhaps people are daunted by the erudite tomes of Literary Criticism some of us put out. I guess this is an elaboration of Bev's point #2 (that some fans are intimidated by BNF's and hesitate to write and criticize). But I think her #4 is probably the other major factor--passivity. Add to this the time factor: it seems like once upon a time zines came out more frequently--a given zine would be on a bimonthly or quarterly basis. But with rising expectations of quality, and the boom in mega-zines of up to 500 pages or more, an editor can't get her zine out that quickly. The result is that when you see your own LoC printed, you almost have to go back and re-read the stories to know what you were talking about. And one more thing--sometimes we can read a megazine and not have the foggiest notion where to start LoCing it! And have you ever finished a zine and found you couldn't remember what the first story was about? Not to say we should abolish megazines--they're great! (My only objection to them is I can't afford them.) But maybe we just need a campaign--in the story zines, not the letterzines--to encourage people to write. Tell them how easy it is, perhaps give a few tips. Editors could mention it in their editorials, and maybe even (as finances allow) give a discount for having LoC printed.

((Editor's Note: Another problem to add to the ones you mention above is the tendency in the last few years of zine editors to gear their zines to debut at MediaWest...a sin of which I am guilty myself. This leads to long dry spells with no zines at all, only to be suddenly inundated by them in May. It takes months sometimes to get through them all. In fact I still have one or two of last year's crop that I haven't read and, by the time, SE#4 is in the reader's hands, the 1984

models will be stacked up waiting to be perused. This also leads to tremendous strain on all the editors, writers and artists involved, rushing headlong to meet that deadline. I think artists especially suffer because so many editors are calling on their talents at the same time and all badgering them to hurry-hurry. Again, I am guilty of this and I apologize to all the artists whose work graces the pages of TREMOR IN THE FORCE. I'm not knocking MediaWest because I think it is absolutely great and the one con that fandom NEEDS every year. But I have also vowed that I will never again set up a zine publishing date strictly to coincide with it. From now on, TIF will be published on a floating schedule and to more modest standards. After I regained consciousness from receiving the bids from printers on TIF#1, I decided that it's back to the old collate-it-yourself and staple-it-instead-of-perfect-binding method that so many of us used in the Olden Days. This has the added advantages of saving both me and the buyer money and will allow more frequent publication. Well, I didn't mean to get on a soapbox there, Terri; you just hit a nerve! Back to you...))

To Melody Corbett: I didn't notice the transposition of Tatooine's suns in the sunset in ROTJ from that in ANH--I'm afraid I wasn't looking. But could it be that the planet has made a half-revolution around the suns and is now looking at them from the other side?



Debbie Gilbert
5287 Haleville
Memphis, TN 38116

April 23, 1984

I have to admit I didn't care for the new look of issue #3. I don't mind reduced print, but I wish you'd leave a space between paragraphs. It's hard to tell where one sentence ends and another begins.

Barbara Tennison: I think your idea (that someone can be detected only when he is actively using the Force) is valid. It would explain several inconsistencies, such as Vader not realizing that he was torturing his own daughter. The phenomenon could be likened to a radio in a dark room. Unless it is turned on and broadcasting, no one's going to know it's there.

Bev Lorestein: I agreed thoroughly with most of your letter, and now that I think of it, you're right about Mark Hamill being the only one who seemed genuinely interested. Harrison and Carrie tend to joke about the Saga when interviewed, seeing it as just a job, just something to entertain the kiddies.

Cheree: I appreciated your interrupting my letter in order to explain the Supreme Court's position on VCRs, but I had been referring only to audio tapes and theatrical movies. I don't own a VCR. What I do is smuggle a tape recorder into the theater, which is much more risky since you have to evade the ushers who threaten to confiscate your equipment. The VCR people have it easy; they can commit their crimes in the privacy of their own homes. (Ed: true, but I was also referring to those tapes that most of us have in our video collections that are highly contraband and which appear from mysterious sources far down the line!))

Tim Blaes: First of all, congrats on your very sensible letter in STARLOG #82. As for your letter in SE, you echoed my sentiments exactly when you said that it doesn't matter whether people react favorably to your comments; what matters is that they react, period. I was also fascinated by your ten "what-if" stories. Are you into alternate universes? ((Ed: see Tim's letter which follows this one!)) You really should petition your local paper to