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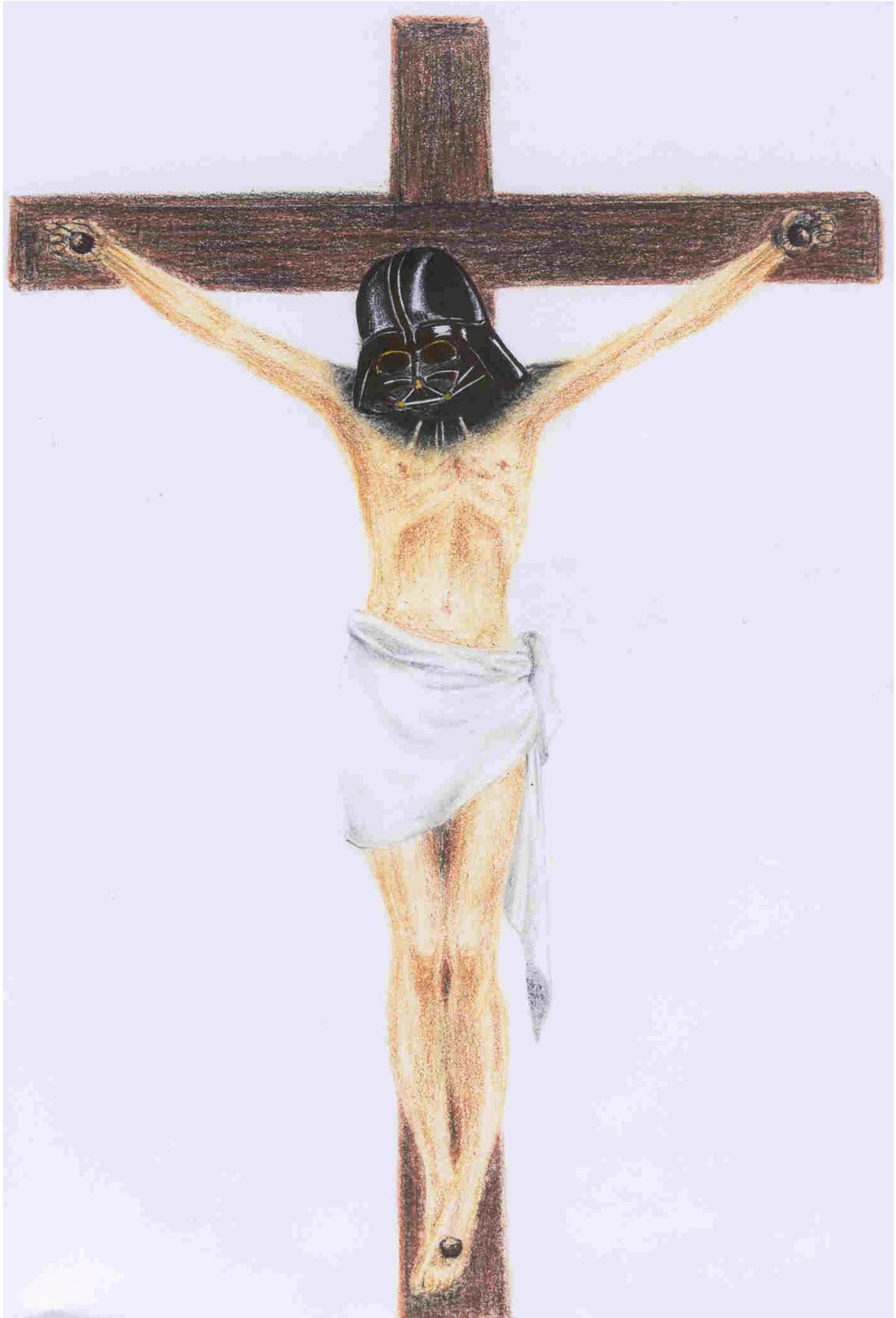
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From Fall to Redemption:  
Christianity and the Hero's Quest  
in Star Wars

Master's Thesis

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NOTE TO THE READER:

This Master's thesis was written in 1999-2000. It is presented here in its unaltered original version. The views expressed are those of 2000, when Episode II and Episode III had not been released. Even with the final revelations of Episode III, I did not want to modify my theories, which remain valid nonetheless. I let everything as it was, but for one thing: the two complementary references to the February 2005 issue of Vanity Fair, because it concurred with my theory on midi-chlorians, only to make it more to the point.

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## Introduction

In the history of American cinema, few films have at once greatly influenced the cinematographic conception, and aroused such a quasi-unanimous popular success that they have marked the spectator's consciousness indelibly. Films are predominantly remembered either for their huge commercial success (like Victor Fleming's 1939 Gone With the Wind, Steven Spielberg's 1993 Jurassic Park, or James Cameron's 1997 Titanic), or for their contribution to the progress of filmmaking (like Fritz Lang's 1926-27 Metropolis, Orson Welles' 1941 Citizen Kane, or Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 Psycho). Evidently, every creative motion picture in itself pushes forward the evolution of cinema, and the films regarded as ultimate masterpieces must have given form to a certain enthusiasm to influence Hollywood's moviemakers. Moreover, it is practically impossible to compare films of different epochs in term of gross, if only because of inflation. Even so, these days, a blockbuster is released on thousands of screens across the United States (Roland Emmerich's 1998 Godzilla, for instance, was released in 3,310 theaters [Box Office]) whereas such a film as Steven Spielberg's 1975 Jaws, which had nonetheless had an almost unprecedented promotional campaign, was, twenty-five years ago, released on 450 screens (Cooper). Cinema has now become the popular medium *par excellence*. Conversely, to consider a film a masterpiece is subjective. Nevertheless, whether such a film has actively participated in the transformation of moviemaking is customarily not a matter of controversy. Be that as it may, no other film in American cinema history has both captured the imagination of the entire planet, and considerably changed the way films are made and sold, as Star Wars has.

When it was released in May 1977, George Lucas' Star Wars instantly triumphed nationwide and later, worldwide. But beyond the warm reception the movie got in term of theatrical release, an unprecedented phenomenon emerged. It was Star Wars that started the concept of merchandising – the selling of various products derived from a film: T-shirts, toys, video games, novelization, etc. – from as early on as 1977. Nowadays, no blockbuster is launched without a merchandising campaign.

Writer/director/producer George Lucas who had, prior to Star Wars, directed only two other motion pictures, THX 1138 (1971) and American Graffiti (1973) was in the financial capacity, thanks to the commercial results, to shoot the two sequels he had imagined. He asked Irvin Kershner to direct The Empire Strikes Back (1980), and Richard Marquand Return of the Jedi (1983). (Even if Lucas only wrote and directed the first Star Wars, he is still referred to as the creator of the saga, for he supervised every step of the creative process, from the early drafts of the script to the post-synchronization of sound. The crew's task, on the sequels, was to make his vision come true). Once again, both films met with massive success – though they never equaled the original one – and, from then on, Hollywood has incessantly kept producing sequels to successful movies (Ridley Scott's 1979 Alien, or Richard Donner's 1987 Lethal Weapon have had three sequels each).

But the domain in which Star Wars has most revolutionized cinema history is the one of special effects. Hollywood started producing films with more and more special effects (in 1977 Star Wars had 365 special effects shots [Verat 20], in 1999 The Phantom Menace had more than 2,200 [Corliss, Booth, and Taylor 55]), for people thought it was the reason why Star Wars was so lucrative. Many pictures never met their expenses. Lucas has always promoted his vision of cinema: the success of a movie depends on its story, not on its special effects. Special effects are only a means to help one believe in a universe made up from start

to finish. But what is this particular story at the core of Star Wars which, for twenty-three years now, has been fascinating people all over the world?

In 1997, when the Star Wars trilogy was re-released worldwide in a special edition (with digitally remastered sound and image, new scenes, new special effects, etc.), it grossed more money than any other film ever re-released (Ridley Scott's 1982, 1992 Blade Runner, or James Cameron's 1989, 1992 The Abyss). Twenty years after the original theatrical release of Star Wars, the trilogy was still a great success, in spite of numerous video issues, especially in 1993 and in 1995, both of which sold a prodigious number of copies. Lastly, in 1999, The Phantom Menace (the fourth episode to be shot in the Star Wars saga) hit the screens and has now become the third most successful film in the U.S.A. and the second worldwide (Movie Times). In the year 2000, Star Wars-related sites may be found on the web by thousands; fan clubs in the U.S.A., France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, gather hundreds of thousands of fans; each year a customizable card game world tournament is organized (based on Star Wars' role-playing game [Snyder, World Tournament 64-65]); an exhibition by the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, entitled The Magic of Myth, is on tour across the United States to introduce people to the original props, costumes, conceptual drawings, etc. used on the trilogy (another one, The Art of "Star Wars", is also currently exhibited at the Barbican Center in London); each book, each video game connected to Star Wars becomes a best seller; and the merchandising is incredible: one could not think of something that has not yet been made with the Star Wars stamp, one can buy a whole range of products, from pins at \$4 to the life size Darth Vader replica, molded in fiberglass and latex from the original one in Lucasfilm archives, at \$4,900. Star Wars may also be found in popular American culture: on television (Friends, "The One With Princess Leia", The Simpson, "Bart Wars"), in many movies (as in Kevin Smith's 1994 Clerks, or in Mel Brooks' 1987 Star Wars parody, Spaceballs), in disco music (Mecco has remixed some

of Star Wars' main musical themes), and even in politics (Ronald Reagan's 1983 Strategic Defense Initiative was nicknamed "Star Wars" by the media). Star Wars is present in every layer of American popular culture. It hits a chord with people: Dan Madsen, president and publisher of the American fan club magazine, the Star Wars Insider, reports that, " 'We actually have a bin that says, STAR WARS CHANGED MY LIFE letters [...]. Because we get ten or 20 of those a day' " (Russo 57). So how is it possible that a three-part movie has marked people's lives so deeply? How can a film change one's life?

It was from this interrogation that the present study originated. Beyond every aspect that could have played a role in the success of the film (revolutionary special effects, vividly portrayed characters, etc.), eventually, what is central to Star Wars? As has just been succinctly alluded to, one cannot talk about Star Wars without evoking the exceptional success and impact that it had on many generations. But this aspect deserves a study of its own. The object of inquiry of the present research does not partake of a sociological analysis of the phenomenon, but takes for granted the non-polemic success as a ground to adopt an anthropological point of view of the success. In other words, the attempt lies in the search for the deep causes of success, and not in its manifestations or consequences.

Every time one asks George Lucas if he has an explanation for such a phenomenon, he always provides more or less the same kind of answer: "I think one of the big successes of Star Wars is that it does still work today. People look at Star Wars and say it's a special effects movie, but it's really not – it's really just an updated mythological psychology piece" (Down Under II 54). As, according to him, the success may be due to timeless mythological ideas (Lucas, Neon 46) buried under "lots of levels [...]" that compose Star Wars (Lucas, Down Under II 52), the course followed in this study has been to find back the traces of mythological themes, not directly observable, that Lucas had put there consciously and in a predetermined goal, which remained to be discovered.

The Magic of Myth, written by Mary Henderson as a companion volume to the exhibition of the Smithsonian Institution, unveiled the mythological references present in the trilogy. But the reading of Joseph Campbell's The Power of Myth, put to the fore the fact that even mythology encompasses more basic patterns, known as archetypes, a notion fully developed by Carl Gustav Jung in his theory of archetypes as being the contents of the collective unconscious. These primitive models would be the basis of any work of art and, in the case of Star Wars, would enable the spectator to identify with the hero. Because the identification with the characters is a primordial condition for the success of a movie, the notion of archetypes was at the heart of the developing investigation. Yet, even if the basis was set up, the real cause of success was still to be unearthed. Thereafter, Joseph Campbell's The Hero With a Thousand Faces imparted the archetypal nature of Star Wars. Then, semiotics proved efficient in the perception of the cinematographic ways implemented to actualize the identification, and a reflection on the scenarios was the key to find the depth of the philosophy of life involved and transmitted to the audience (especially through the religious dimension). Conclusively, René Girard's Je vois Satan tomber comme l'éclair was the book that put those elements all together by divulging the mimetic cycle from the Gospels. This is the cycle on which the interpretation of the final message is based, and toward which the audience is gradually conveyed, through the identification with archetypes. A logic then appeared: to understand the true nature of Star Wars' universal and enduring success, it would be significant to uncover the nature of the archetypes forming the basis of the trilogy, that is, to demonstrate how and why the spectator may identify with those archetypes, and to their contents, and finally, to point at the ultimate goal achieved by the entire process. In other words, how is the spectator, thanks to archetypes, enabled to absorb the values underlying the story, and let himself be guided toward the ultimate message?

Considering the origin of the final message, the first chapter endeavors, on the one hand, to establish the roots of Christianity in Star Wars, and on the other hand, to explain the nature of archetypes. The second chapter scrutinizes the progressive identification with archetypes through cinematographic devices toward the final message, and the philosophy at the heart of Star Wars. Ultimately, the third chapter discloses the message based on Christ's crucifixion that the audience is likely to accept at that stage in the process of identification.

## **P A R T I** **Fear and Desire**

It took two years for George Lucas to finish the screenplay for Star Wars. At last, in 1975, he had written such an extensive script that he cut it into three acts, hoping to shoot the other two if the first one was successful enough. But the first act he was willing to shoot also had a whole back story he had previously developed to get to know how and why the characters are where they are at the beginning of the film (Lucas, Down Under 60). As a matter of truth, the whole saga is called Star Wars, but each episode has its own title. The first Star Wars (1977) known as “Star Wars”, is in fact the fourth episode, entitled A New Hope. Thanks to the huge success of A New Hope, the two sequels he was able to shoot were therefore Episode V The Empire Strikes Back, and Episode VI Return of the Jedi. Last year, Lucas finally unveiled Episode I The Phantom Menace to the public, first act of the first trilogy he had developed as a background story for the 1977 Star Wars. The two other prequels, Episode II and Episode III, are respectively expected in 2002 and 2005. So that, in the end, the Star Wars saga will consist of six episodes, constituting a “twelve-hour movie” narrating the story of the Skywalker family. In order to avoid any confusion, the films will be referred to by the number of the episode to which they correspond.

The galaxy Lucas created in writing and directing Episode IV was meant to propel spectators to faraway, futuristic planets, populated by aliens and creatures from outer-space, in order to inspire their imagination. Yet, in that galaxy far away from the Solar System, the central theme remains the eternal struggle of Good vs. Evil, fought by human heroes and heroines. Episode I occurs at a time when the Republic governing the galaxy’s planets is crumbling. On Coruscant, the center of the Republic, two institutions reside: the Senate in

which debates are held on the issues of the galaxy, and the Jedi Temple in which Jedi Knights, using a mystical power known as the Force, are trained to be “the guardians of peace and justice [...]” (Titelman 49). Episode I features the phantom menace that eventually provokes the fall of the Republic and the coming of the Galactic Empire: Senator Palpatine uses Queen Amidala, ruler of the planet Naboo, to accede to the title of Supreme Chancellor of the galaxy, until, little by little in Episode II and Episode III, he has absolute powers and crowns himself Emperor, ruthlessly dominating the galaxy. This is the historical background in Star Wars, the struggle for liberty; but the story is in fact grounded on the correlated theme of fall and redemption.

Episode I recounts the adventures of two Jedi, Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi, who, apart from helping Queen Amidala from an invasion of Naboo, secretly orchestrated by Senator Palpatine, discover on a planet called Tatooine, a nine-year-old slave boy – Anakin Skywalker. Qui-Gon feels Anakin has certain Jedi traits, so he succeeds in freeing Anakin, and takes him away from his mother Shmi to Coruscant to be trained as a Jedi. At the end of Episode I, Qui-Gon is killed in a combat against a highly-trained adversary, and young Anakin’s formation is taken care of by Obi-Wan Kenobi. Episode II comprises Anakin’s marriage with Amidala, and Episode III, his fall from grace. The new crowned Emperor seduces Anakin with the might and power he offers him, and Anakin succumbs, thus betraying his master Obi-Wan. Anakin is transformed into Darth Vader, an evil Jedi – a Sith – who, at the Emperor’s service, murders most of the Jedi Knights. The Galactic Empire increases its domination onto planets, the now-called Old Republic definitely collapses, there is no Jedi to ensure peace, and in Episode IV the Emperor dissolves the Senate, so that “The last remnants of the Old Republic have been swept away” (Titelman 52). It is a dark epoch, a period of doom for the entire galaxy.

But, even at the bottom of the abyss, there is still hope. Before becoming Vader, Anakin had begotten twins, Luke and Leia, and Obi-Wan Kenobi, now known as Ben Kenobi, is the only Jedi left with Yoda, a Jedi that chaired at the Jedi Council in the Temple of the Old Republic, to train Luke, the new hope for the galaxy. Because his father has fallen, Luke has to overcome the causes of Vader's fall in his training to become a Jedi, that is, learning the ways of the Jedi religion, the Force. Through it, he will evolve from an impatient farm boy in Episode IV, to an accomplished, mature Jedi Knight, in Episode VI. Luke's evolution will allow him to help Vader redeem himself, and thus to reestablish the equilibrium destroyed twenty-three years before by Vader's fall.

The outlines of the Star Wars story do not account for its tremendous success for the past twenty-three years. Yet, the central theme, of fall and redemption, may. Even if Lucas has a broader perspective than one distinct religion, the present reading of Star Wars leans toward a Christian allegory. The comparison between Anakin Skywalker and Jesus Christ is not trivial. Apart from the fact that, as a close study of the films will attempt to establish, their life-cycles bear striking similarities, it will become apparent that in the second trilogy – Episode IV to Episode VI – the audience is prepared for the final message, whose interpretation is, as the rest of the analysis, anchored in two elements recurring in Judeo-Christianity, and accordingly gives consistency to the entire cycle of Star Wars – fear and desire.

This chapter examines the Christian roots of Star Wars (the birth of Jesus and the Fall from the Garden Of Eden) to establish the causes of Anakin's fall, and that being so, to provide an explanation for Luke's ordeals in the process of vindicating his father. The second chapter takes into account the active role of the audience in Luke's quest, explaining why and how the identification is possible, especially via a cinematographic analysis of the journey's archetypal steps, and it discloses the philosophy the spectator is immersed in while evolving

with Luke toward redemption. The third and last chapter will therefore deal with the achievement of atonement and its meaning, at a point when the audience is ready to accept it.

## A. The Virgin Birth

In The Power of Myth – the transcript of an interview that took place at Lucas' Skywalker Ranch – Joseph Campbell (1904-87), who studied and taught comparative mythology, deals with the common occurrence in mythology of the story of the virgin giving birth to a hero who dies, is resurrected, and out of whose death life emerges (Flowers 106). Although the message Jesus brings to mankind's conscience distinguishes himself from the classic hero's pattern, his life-cycle is encompassed in the classic scheme of the mythological hero. He is a common, simple man – born either from the union of Mary and her husband, Joseph, a carpenter, or from an Immaculate Conception, depending on the version. He then becomes the Savior by the message of compassion he brings to humanity. He is the one who redeems mankind. Like many heroes from the world's mythologies, he gives his own life to his cause, and his death opens a new era of compassion which is a rebirth. This is also the central pattern of Star Wars. The first trilogy depicts the story of a slave, Anakin Skywalker, also born from an Immaculate Conception, who becomes one of the greatest Jedi of the Republic. But his dark passions initiate his disgrace, and from his symbolical death and resurrection (for he becomes Darth Vader), a new age emerges: the Galactic Empire. The second trilogy narrates the adventures of Luke Skywalker, Anakin Skywalker's son, who, in his ultimate mastering of the Force – thus overcoming the causes of Anakin's fall – will redeem his father, the Savior figure, and out of whose death freedom will be returned to the galaxy.

Since Luke rounds up Anakin's circle, i.e., his redemption before death, and since the purpose of this analysis is to display how the audience identifies step by step with Luke's ordeals in his father quest, to eventually fathom the message originating from Christianity, the outlines will be founded on the chronological order of the six-part story. Even if the main

concern is directed toward the classic trilogy of Star Wars, the 1999 release of the first part of the saga provides substantial information for the comparison between Jesus and Anakin. Ergo, it seems sensible to make a linear scanning of the saga, since in the diegesis<sup>1</sup>, it all started with Episode I, which involves Anakin's discovery by Qui-Gon Jinn on his home planet of Tatooine, on the outer-rim of the galaxy.

When asked by Qui-Gon who is the father, Anakin's mother, Shmi Skywalker, answers: "There was no father, that I know of... I carried him, I gave birth... I can't explain what happened" (Lucas, Screenplay 61). His virgin birth is what makes him unique, and this is reflected in the special powers he is endowed with: he can see things before they happen, he has quick reflexes, and he is shrewd for a nine-year-old boy. Qui-Gon believes that "He is the chosen one [...]" (Lucas, Screenplay 106). But what is substantial in the fact that Anakin was born of a virgin mother, apart from the analogy of his birth with Jesus', is that it is the cornerstone of fear and desire, two aspects around which Anakin's fall and redemption revolve.

Material drawn from H. Roux's article on Mary in the Encyclopædia Universalis provides information on her role in the process of mankind's redemption by the begetting of Jesus (525-26). His virgin birth is an aspect of the New Testament which Christians have been debating, especially since the sixteenth-century Reformation. Even if the controversy over the role of Mary in the redemption of the human race is not directly significant for the present purpose, it is, however, part and parcel of Jesus' message of compassion, and by the subsequent reading of the Fall, of fear and desire.

The Gospels point at the developing faith in the piety of Mary, among the first Christian communities, at the end of the first century AD. Then in the second and third centuries, when the four Gospels of the New Testament are thought to have been written

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<sup>1</sup> The universe created by the story (Pavis 118-19).

(Van Loon 10-11), the seeds of the belief in the virgin birth are sown. But even if the Gospels According to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are supposed to give an account of Christ's life, it is relevant to notice not only that the Virgin Mary is rarely alluded to, but also that they may be in contradiction with each other. For instance, in the Gospel According to Matthew, it is Joseph who is announced the miraculous conception and birth (Matt. 1.16-25)<sup>1</sup>, whereas in the Gospel According to Luke, the angel Gabriel announces Mary that God has elected her to deliver Jesus, His Son (Luke 1.26-38). To be more specific, in the New Testament, the Gospels According to Matthew and Luke are the only two that describe Jesus' virgin birth and childhood, while the Gospel According to Mark skips the birth, the Gospel According to John makes brief references to Mary (John 2.1-12, 19.25-27), and the Epistles of Saint Paul ignore Mary (Rom.-Philem.).

Anyhow, even if not always explicit and clear-cut, the theme of the virgin birth was, from then on, definitively rooted in Christian tradition. At that time people simply believed in the piousness of Mary. But from the fifth century, her role in the redemption of mankind was to be given a new scope. In AD 431, paving the way for the Trinitarian doctrine<sup>2</sup>, the Ephesus Council declared Mary "Mother of God" (*theotokos*). She was seen as the "new Eve". First of all, she had been the begetter of a new generation by giving birth to the Savior. And second of all, contrary to Eve who, as a punishment for her sin, had been forced to bring forth humanity in grief, and to experience the human field of time, where birth, life, and death were only parts of its imperfection, Mary had transcended the physical conception, and had thus placed herself above the cycle of life. In that period her role grew, though it remained inferior to Jesus'. It was Mariology<sup>3</sup>, which, later on, would reverse the comparative relation:

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<sup>1</sup> Except when otherwise mentioned, the biblical references are drawn from The Bible: Authorized King James Version.

<sup>2</sup> The belief in the doctrine of "the union of three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) in one Godhead [...]" (Webster, Def. 1.).

<sup>3</sup> "the study of and beliefs concerning the Virgin Mary" (Webster).

between the fifth and the sixteenth century AD, the Trinitarian and the Christological doctrines<sup>1</sup> being strongly settled, people, even prior to the clergy, began to adopt the concept of Immaculate Conception. The watershed consisted in the widely held conviction that Mary, preserved from the physical conception of Jesus, had been detached from the Original Sin, and consequently, from corporal corruption and death. People commenced to think that she was the Savior, she was the one who had reconciled man with God. An increasing number of feasts commemorating Mary, and the use of the “Ave Maria” became part of the customs. In a word, the Middle Ages witnessed a popular and monastic revival of the cult of Mary.

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century threw it off balance. The Protestants refused the role given to Mary by the Catholics because it diminished the part Jesus had played. Mariology became a specialized branch in the theology of the Roman Catholic Church. But debates went on within this Church until Pope Pie IX, to terminate them, defined the Immaculate Conception dogma in 1854. (Pie XII laid down the Assumption dogma in 1950, the Assumption being the ascension of Mary to Heaven after her death).

Nowadays, the idea of the conception of Jesus by the Word of God whispered to Mary, is largely shared among Catholics. Albeit the physical birth is thought to have actually occurred, her virginity is restored as if nothing had happened. She is a virgin again.

The interest of this brief review lies in the admittedly debatable notion that Mary’s virginity has participated in the development of the Catholic tenet, that is, the perspective that, beyond her faithful obedience to God, the opening of her heart to compassion redeemed mankind – either as an active participant or by the mere delivering of Jesus – which is the emitted thesis on the meaning of the virgin birth.

Among the various cultures in which the theme of the virgin birth recurs, the Indians’

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<sup>1</sup> Christology is the “theological interpretation of the nature, person, and deeds of Christ” (Webster).

belief in the “system of seven psychological centers up the spine” gives credit to the hypothesis according to which Mary and Shmi’s character have opened their heart to compassion. Campbell lists the first four centers and explains their symbolic functions (Flowers 173-74). The first one, the rectum, symbolizes the primary function of life, eating. The second one, the sex organs, stands for procreation. The third, the navel, corresponds to “the will to power [...]”, and the fourth, the heart, incarnates “the opening to compassion”. The first three are located in the lower part of the body, they are derived from purely animal instincts. The last one, however, prevails over the other three. The Indians symbolize the second center by “the lingam and yoni<sup>1</sup>, the male and female organs in conjunction” and the fourth center is again symbolized by the lingam and yoni, but this time “they are represented in gold as symbolic of the virgin birth [...]”. The Indian belief that a virgin birth occurs at the level of the heart, and not at the sex organs’, reveals a “move out of the field of animal action into a field that is properly human and spiritual”. The heart transcends the body: “The begetter is of the spirit. This is a spiritual birth”. That is the explanation why no sexual act is required, the union is settled in the heart. In that respect, because the infant is born out of compassion, it will be his primary motivation in life, his message to the world.

Jesus’ message to humanity cannot be summarized as conveying compassion, but it certainly does encompass it. Anakin’s message to the spectator, based on Christ’s, uses compassion, though it goes beyond it (see III. C.). Since Jesus and Anakin’s character bring a message derived from compassion, it is not unreasonable to assume that, as the Indians believe, Mary opened her heart to compassion, and that Lucas used this notion for Shmi’s character. In addition, Campbell maintains that the transition from animal instincts to human feelings is supposed to happen for everyone in the process of growing old (Flowers 174). In

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<sup>1</sup> The lingam is “(in popular Hinduism) a phallus, symbol of Shiva”. The yoni is “(in Shaktism) a representation of the external female genitals, regarded as the symbol of Shakti”, the wife of Shiva ([Webster](#)).

childhood, we only care about eating and enjoying life as it presents itself, in adolescence we discover the sexual dimension, and in adulthood we are supposed to transcend these two aspects, not reject them, but go past them (Flowers 176), to arrive at the level of the heart, where we realize that the other's suffering is our suffering, where we are one with the other (Flowers 210). Where we feel "com-passion, shared suffering: experienced participation in the suffering of another person" (Flowers 174). In other words, the level of spirituality is brought off, among other things, by the opening of the heart to compassion, in which case, if one is supposed to reach compassion, that could be the justification for the attraction to Jesus' message of "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. 19.18; Matt. 22.39)<sup>1</sup>. Likewise, but in a different way, Anakin, being born out of compassion was supposed to bring that message to the galaxy, but as he falls, his message can only be delivered through his redemption by his son, who must obliterate his "sin" to compensate his fall.

Apart from Anakin's mere likeness to the first stage of Jesus' cycle, a more thorough examination of Lucas' explanation for his birth is to prove that Anakin in the Star Wars universe is liable to be compared to Jesus in the Christian world. Even if the symbolism behind the concept of the Force will be dealt with in the second chapter, one should be acquainted with the elements that makes the Force the Jedi's religion and god. " 'It's a distillation of a lot of mythological religious teachings,' Lucas says" in a 1997 interview to Time (Handy and Corliss 82). As such, the Force's principles and philosophy of life are a blend of occidental and oriental religions. Even if not definable as a Buddhist- or a Christian-based religion, the Force is nonetheless a kind of god for the Jedi, were it be only by the frequently used expression "May the Force be with you", close to the Christian's "May God bless you". Anyhow, to understand the religious nature of the Force, one has to wonder what a religion's hallmarks are. A religion worships a supernatural force, a god. Believers often

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. page 94.

live by the rules the god had once transmitted to a prophet, and these rules and way of living are carried out by the priesthood. Their role is to mediate between the believers and the god. Each religion has its own beliefs, moral code, and rites that relate the individual to the sacred. Hence, a religion is an institution promoting a faith in a supernatural entity through doctrine.

In Episode IV, Ben Kenobi defines the Force to young Luke Skywalker, while imitating a sphere with gestures: “It’s an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together” (Titelman 49). At the heart of Star Wars’ battle of Good and Evil, of fall and redemption, the Force has two faces, the light side and the dark side. As a supernatural entity, the Force may be used either way, each side having its own powers and ideology. Jedi Knights use the light side for “knowledge and defense, never for attack” (Brackett and Kasdan 79), for, as Ben Kenobi says in Episode IV, “there are alternatives to fighting”. Sith Lords use the dark side for domination and destruction: “Anger, fear, aggression. The dark side are they” (Kasdan and Lucas 39). Historically, the Siths are fallen Jedi that felt that Jedi philosophy denied them a part of the Force’s powers. The Chinese concept of the yin and the yang, right and wrong, one completing the other to form a circle, symbolizing divinity, much resembles the difference between the light and dark sides, each one emanating from the Force.

The Force may therefore be regarded as a religion: it is something in which the Jedi believe, and the faith is even conceptually institutionalized by a Council and a Temple with an established code. The training of a Jedi is in accord with the creed of the Council, as seen in Episode V, in which Yoda’s teachings to Luke put an emphasis on identical beliefs, he admonishes fear, anger, aggressiveness. The Force is a supernatural entity, which is “worshiped” by the Jedi whose faith is institutionalized to carry the doctrine according to their philosophy of life. Moreover, similarly to Jesus who was viewed as the Messiah (John 4.25-26), Episode I alludes to “the prophesy of the one who will bring balance to the Force

[...]” (Lucas, Screenplay 96). The prophecy refers to “a chosen one [...]” that “would appear, imbued with an abundance of midi-chlorians<sup>1</sup>, a being strong with the Force and destined to alter it forever” (Brooks 217). But at that point in the Star Wars saga (Episode I), the odds may be either for the good side or for the dark side of the Force<sup>2</sup>.

Joseph Campbell names other aspects of religion that may be taken into consideration. He defines a god as being “a personification of a motivating power or a value system that functions in human life and in the universe [...]” (Flowers 22). The Force, though impersonal, induces Jedi to favor “knowledge and defense”, representative of Zen philosophy (Buddhism). But Campbell further states that “There is a definition of God which has been repeated by many philosophers. God is an intelligible sphere – a sphere known to the mind, not to the senses – whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere” (Flowers 89), a definition close to Ben’s of the Force. Not only does he mimic a sphere, but the Force is only accessed by a Jedi through the unconscious, thus making it known “to the mind, not to the senses”. In that sense, the Jedi is close to the shaman, who is described as “a person who acts as intermediary between the natural and supernatural worlds, using magic to cure illness, foretell the future, control spiritual forces, etc.” (Webster). In keeping with Campbell’s clarification of the shaman as someone who “has an overwhelming psychological experience that turns him totally inward”, his “unconscious opens up [...]” (Flowers 85), a Jedi accesses the Force through an unconscious state of mind. For instance, Ben says to Luke in Episode IV: “let go of your conscious self and act on instinct. [...] Stretch out with your feelings” (Titelman 78). Moreover, in Star Wars, Lucas endowed Jedi with the ability to cure people (in Episode IV Ben heals Luke, who has been attacked in the desert, by a mere touch) and to see the future, as Yoda informs Luke “Through the Force, things you will see. Other

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. pages 25-27.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. page 104 for the signification of this definitive altering.

places. The future... the past” (Brackett and Kasdan 91). And contrary to the Middle Ages’ tripartite organization of warriors, priests, and commoners (the first ensure peace with God, the second assure defense, and the third feed the other two), Jedi are priests and warriors at once. A priest fulfills the role of “a functionary of a social sort. The society worships certain deities in a certain way, and the priest becomes ordained as a functionary to carry out that ritual” (Flowers 99-100). Jedi are priests in the sense that they stand for mediators between the galaxy and the Force, only they have access to its powers and wisdom. And, armed with their lightsabers, they perform the role of the warrior, even if they practice it parsimoniously, only in self-defense or to protect other individuals.

But contrary to the occidental thinking of a personified God – often a white male – the Force in Star Wars is closer to the oriental thinking of an impersonal source of energy (Flowers 207). The Force has no gender, no color, it is beyond pairs of opposites, it is “an energy field” that embodies both light and dark, feminine and masculine, strong and weak, because it is “created by all living things”. It is only the way the characters (Jedi or Sith) use it that makes the Force good or evil. The fact that in the diegesis, the Force “obeys your commands” (Titelman 78), is a foreign notion in western culture. God tells one how to behave, He cannot be controlled.

Lastly, intriguing is the observation that even if in the story-lines the Force is rarely set forth as such, the word *religion* is nonetheless pronounced on some occasions, often to dismiss it as an “ancient religion [...]” (Titelman 52), or as being part of “Hokey religions [...]” (Titelman 78). Everything hints at the comparison (supernatural force, Jedi-priests, institutionalization, ideology, prophecy), but nothing states it explicitly. However, Campbell points at the origin of the word *religion*, which etymologically comes from “*religio*, linking back. If we say it is the one life in both of us, then my separate life has been linked to the one life, *religio*, linked back” (Flowers 214). This concept is suggested in the definition of the

Force as binding “the galaxy together”. The Force links man to man, fictionally, but also in reality. This is a point that is developed in the part dedicated to archetypes. Religion, as one is about to understand, is a way to make the connection between men themselves, and between men and nature, through values carried at a symbolical level. What is paramount in most religions is not the belief in one particular god, or controversies over such objects of faith as the virginity of Mary, but the wisdom behind the symbols. The philosophy behind the Force and the relation it establishes between spectators and mankind, and between spectators and nature is gradually put to the fore in the chapter dealing with the identification with Luke’s quest through archetypes. Anyway, one should now acknowledge the Force as a religion. There is no label to put on it (Handy 82), but some elements tend toward Buddhism, others toward Christianity, as for instance, the nature of Anakin’s virgin birth.

In Episode I, when Qui-Gon introduces Anakin to the Jedi Council, he reports that the child could be the one of the prophecy, for “his cells have the highest concentration of midi-chlorians [...]” he has ever seen in a life form. “It is possible he was conceived by the midi-chlorians” (Lucas 96). That is what makes him so special. Lucas’ explanation for Anakin’s virgin birth is provided through Qui-Gon:

QUI-GON. Midi-chlorians are a microscopic life form that resides within all living cells and communicates with the Force.

ANAKIN. They live inside of me?

QUI-GON. In your cells. We are symbionts with the midi-chlorians.

ANAKIN. Symbionts?

QUI-GON. Life forms living together for mutual advantage. Without the midi-chlorians, life could not exist, and we would have no knowledge of the Force.

They continually speak to you, telling you the will of the Force. (Lucas 108)

It is through the midi-chlorians that a Jedi acquires the mastery of the power of the Force. Ipso facto the higher the concentration of the midi-chlorians in the cell, the acuter a Jedi's understanding of the Force. But Qui-Gon suggests the possibility that "the boy was conceived not by human contact, but by the essence of all life, by the connectors to the Force itself [...]" (Brooks 216). Anakin, having evolved from the constituents of the Force is, similarly to Jesus whose father was God Himself, the son of the Jedi god – the Force. Thus, he possesses the unique aptitude to shape the future of the galaxy (see III. C.).

But in point of fact, midi-chlorians could be found in what is called cytoplasm. Cytoplasm is defined as "the cell substance between the cell membrane and the nucleus, containing [...] various particles" (Webster), among which could dwell midi-chlorians. In that way they could be the quintessence of what makes one a living being – cells. The cytoplasm "is in movement all the time, flowing. [...] It has a potentiality for bringing things into shape" (Flowers 167).

This theory has just been confirmed by Lucas himself in a recent article: " 'It was a virgin birth in an ecosystem of symbiotic relationships. It means that between the Force, which is sort of a life force, and reality, the connectors between these two things are what we call' " midi-chlorians. " 'They're kind of based on mitochondria, which are a completely different species, a different animal, that live inside every single cell and allow it to live, allow it to reproduce, allow life to exist' " (Windolf 57). Mitochondrion (singular form) is defined as being "an organelle in the cell cytoplasm that has its own DNA, inherited solely from the maternal line, and that produces enzymes essential for energy metabolism" (Webster). Mitochondria provide all the energy a cell needs. Thus the Force as "an energy field created by all living things" (Titelman 49) is born out of the mitochondria present in every people's cells.

As one knows, fertilization is the union of two cells, each one bearing  $n$  chromosomes: the female gamete, or ovum, and the male gamete, or spermatozoon. It results in a zygote – an egg – that contains  $2n$  chromosomes and that divides itself to give shape to the fetus. But in the spiritual conception, the male gamete is not supplied by human contact. In the instance of Jesus, Mary's ovum is fertilized by the Divine Word. He creates the  $n$  chromosomes missing so that the female gamete auto-fertilizes itself and produces the zygote. As for Anakin, what provides the  $n$  chromosomes, normally contained in the male gamete, are the midi-chlorians. They bring into being the DNA<sup>1</sup> necessary for the making of the twenty-two male chromosomes, so that in the ovum's nucleus, the twenty-two female chromosomes already present encounter the twenty-two male chromosomes spiritually fostered, to form pairs. The  $2n$ -chromosomes zygote is thus forged.

The fact that Lucas defined the substance of the Force as being “scientifically” plausible is in no way to persuade the audience of the existence of the Force, or at least, not directly. But since he developed Episode I after the classic trilogy, in which the Force was defined and exploited, he may have wished to remain in conformity with the philosophy behind it, that the Force is for one to find within (see II. B.). But if the midi-chlorians have conceived Anakin, then he may be seen as the son of the Force<sup>2</sup>. It thus completes the first stage in the analogy with Jesus' life-cycle, his spiritual birth from the union of a virgin mother and the Word of God, paving the way for his message of compassion. The only difference is that the character of Anakin, instead of directly bringing to completion his role of Savior for the galaxy, falls.

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<sup>1</sup> “Deoxyribonucleic acid [...]”, “the main constituent of the chromosome [...]” that “carries the genes [...]” (Webster).

<sup>2</sup> This is confirmed by Lucas when he declares: “ ‘Ultimately, I would say the Force itself created Anakin’ ” (Windolf 57).

## B. The Fall

Although one may know from the four Gospels the miracles performed by Jesus, the thirty years between his miraculous birth and his baptism by John the Baptist are shrouded in mystery. One can only be conversant with his learning of carpentry when, one day, impressed by John the Baptist's vision of life and criticism of Roman society in public, he decided to be baptized, and then spent forty days and forty nights (a symbolical number in the Jewish tradition) in the wilderness where he was tempted by the Devil (see II. C.). He returned, determined to voice his singular appreciation of life, that is, basically of "Love thy neighbor as thyself", even if at the peril of his life.

Because Episode II takes place about ten years after Episode I, the mystery is, for the moment, equivalent. At the conclusion of Episode I, Anakin becomes Obi-Wan Kenobi's apprentice, and in Episode II, when he is close to twenty, he has a deep apprehension of the Force, so that during the ten-year gap Anakin has probably spent his time in training. Anakin's fall from grace comes about in Episode III, twenty-three years after his Immaculate Conception, and is derived from the Judeo-Christian myth of the Fall from the Garden of Eden depicted in Genesis 3.

In the creation story in Genesis, after God had created Heaven and Earth, he created man in His own image from "the dust of the ground, and breathed into his [man] nostrils the breath of life [...]" (Gen. 2.7). God then planted the Garden of Eden where he put man and woman – made of one of Adam's ribs. They wandered in the fertile Garden, naked, eating from time to time fruits of various trees. But God had forbidden them to eat "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil [...]" (Gen. 2.17). One day, the serpent, "more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Gen. 3.1), enticed Eve into eating an apple of the forbidden tree, which she did, before giving it to Adam. Thus, the Original Sin was

committed and God banished them from Eden: Eve, the corrupter, would bring forth humankind in grief, and Adam would eat bread until he became dust again.

Aside from having disobeyed God, Adam and Eve were banished from Paradise for having tasted the apple of “the Tree of Conscience, giving knowledge of Good and Bad” (Living Bible, Gen. 2.9). It is a door to a world of duality, a door to the temporal world, a door to the world as everybody knows it – mankind’s world. Another explanation for the wrath of God may be that Adam and Eve, by eating the forbidden fruit, have unconsciously tried to emulate God: “ ‘Now that the man has become as we are, knowing good from bad, what if he eats the fruit of the Tree of Life and lives forever?’ ” (Living Bible, Gen. 3.22). Hence, God expels Adam and Eve from Eden.

However that may be, the serpent is the initiator of the Fall, it “represents immortal energy and consciousness engaged in the field of time, constantly throwing off death and being born again” (Flowers 45). So that, when Adam and Eve eat of the forbidden tree, they are entering the temporal world, where one is born, dies, and is resurrected. This life-cycle was not necessary in the Garden. But what is worse, they will now have to eat to survive. And that is the second aspect embodied by the serpent: it “represents the primary function of life, mainly eating” (Flowers 45). Moreover, as Campbell puts it “Life lives on lives [...]”: human beings are condemned to eat other living forms to survive (Flowers 42). Even if, previous to the Fall, Adam and Eve occasionally ate fruits of other trees, they only did it for the pleasure of the taste. Now they will have no choice but to eat daily.

Ergo, what the Roman Church exposed in the story of Genesis, namely, the cycle of life, was the very nature of human beings. Because Adam and Eve, everybody’s ancestors, had not been able to resist temptation, men were born out of sin. Accordingly, the Christian religion puts to the fore the going back to Paradise after death, where one is united with God again, where one transcends the dualities of the earthly world to reach the singularity residing

at the core of Eden, for “God, the ultimate, is beyond the pairs of opposites [...]” (Flowers 49). Christianity, in its attempt to reunite man and God after death tends to that definition of Paradise, where there is no opposite, man is equal to woman, there is no Evil, and there is no transitoriness of living things. The Garden of Eden is in the field of eternity. The whole concept of the Fall from the Garden revolves around the fact that “Adam and Eve have thrown themselves out of the Garden of Timeless Unity, [...] just by that act of recognizing duality” (Flowers 48). That being so, the serpent was the one which gave them Knowledge, and with it dualities, imperfection – human nature.

In The Power of Myth, Joseph Campbell describes a painting of the Fall by Titian, an Italian painter (1488-1576), in the following terms:

At the right is Eve, who sees the tempter in the form of a child, offering the apple, and she is moved by desire. Adam, however, from the opposite point of view, sees the serpent-legs of the ambiguous tempter and is touched with fear. Desire and fear: these are the two emotions by which all life in the world is governed. Desire is the bait, death is the hook. (Flowers 140)

It would then be the two primal instincts, fear and desire, that would be the foundation of the Fall and the dualities of mankind’s world. But if Mary had, as in the Catholic dogma, put herself above the cycle of life, if she had transcended the Fall, the pairs of opposites in the temporal world, thus placing herself in a higher sphere of consciousness, she had transcended fear and desire, the two causes of the Original Sin. And, as the theory on the meaning of the virgin birth is that the mother had opened her heart to compassion, and by consequence detached herself from the Original Sin, Mary had in fact achieved compassion through the transcending of fear and desire. Mary’s role in the redemption of mankind is to have permitted Jesus to convey compassion. In Star Wars, one could suppose that Anakin’s character is in a comparable situation: he was born out of compassion because his mother had

prevailed over fear and desire, and his purpose is to bring a similar message. But Anakin, instead of immediately fulfilling his destiny, is seduced by the power of fear, and only Luke will be able to set in train his father's redemption, the latter being at last in a position to complete the circle. Because fear and desire precipitated his father's fall, Luke's goal will be to overcome them. That is the reason why the virgin birth is the cornerstone of the present analysis. It gives shape to the fundamental theme at the core of the saga.

The Fall in Star Wars is Anakin Skywalker physical and spiritual transformation into Darth Vader, the Dark Lord of the Sith, in Episode III. He is said by Ben Kenobi to have been "seduced by the dark side of the Force. He ceased to be Anakin Skywalker and became Darth Vader" (Kasdan and Lucas 40). For a Jedi, the seduction of the dark side tallies with a desire to experiment with a new range of powers easily accessible by fear. According to Master Yoda, the dark side is not stronger than the good side (Brackett and Kasdan 79). But as the Emperor utters it in a haughty tone to Luke "Your feeble skills are no match for the power of the dark side" (Kasdan and Lucas 103). As illustrated in Episode VI, the kind of powers the dark side endows the Emperor with, is far beyond what a Jedi Knight is allowed to display, because fallen Jedi do not care about the consequences of their powers – death and destruction. A Sith's power is unlimited. Due to their conviction that "power denied [...]" is "power wasted", Siths' viewpoint consists in the "acquisition of power in any form [...]" (Brooks 134-35). The significance of this principle, in contradiction with the Jedi's, is that there is no limit to the process of acquirement. Whereas a Jedi Knight controls his dark impulses – "anger, fear, aggression" – a Sith pours them out purposefully. A Jedi has a restricted access to the span of powers rendered available by the mastering of the Force. He cannot, according to his own ideology, let himself be overwhelmed by his fear, even if it makes him more powerful. A Sith, conversely, aspires after his dark instincts, for their use specifically consolidates his powers. In Episode VI, after Luke has momentarily lost control

of his emotions, he fights Vader in a burst of anger that enables him to have the upper hand and to defeat him. Delighted, the Emperor says, “Good! Your hate has made you powerful” (Kasdan and Lucas 101). Hatred may procure a unique strength, but anger makes one act clumsily, unthinkingly. And a Jedi, who preaches patience and self-control, may use this weakness to the disadvantage of his adversary.

Nevertheless, this is one of Anakin’s incentives for choosing the dark side. It was easier for him to yield to his emotions rather than struggling to control them. To be instructed in dominating emotions is a long process and a Jedi acquires his powers after a hard, trying initiation. For a Sith apprentice, the reverse is that being hateful and angry is quite easy. Consequently, the acquisition of powers is quicker. Yoda summarizes the dark side to Luke in Episode V as being “Quicker, easier, more seductive” (Brackett and Kasdan 79).

Therefore, the dark side of the Force is accessed through fear, “Fear is the path to the dark side... fear leads to anger... anger leads to hate... hate leads to suffering”, Yoda advises in Episode I (Lucas, Screenplay 104). It is easy to be overwhelmed by fear. It leads to anger, the fountain of might. Anakin fell because he did not want to take the long way, he could not resist to fear, and he desired to be more powerful without making efforts. He opted for the dark side. This is the source of Luke’s quest. He will have to surpass what his father succumbed to – fear and desire.

The metamorphosis of Anakin Skywalker into Darth Vader takes place at two levels. First and foremost, he undergoes a spiritual remodeling for he is now the apprentice of a Sith Master. His deeds are in accord with what characterizes the dark side: he strangles his victims by the only power of his mind (two occurrences in Episode V). Secondly, he is physically changed into a humanoid: “He’s more machine now than man. Twisted and evil” (Kasdan and Lucas 41), declares Ben Kenobi in Episode VI. He has to bear a mask to be able to breathe, and his dark armor is vital for him to stand up. Even if the screenplay for Episode III

has not been written yet, certain sources, accredited by Lucas, briefly mention the story of his transfiguration. When Obi-Wan discovered Anakin's betrayal in his turning to the dark side, they engaged in an epic single combat with their lightsabers. Anakin was so wounded that he was obliged to wear a life-sustaining armor. That was the price to pay for the betrayal (Slavicsek and Smith 141).

Even if symbolical, this death gives rise to life. Vader gives birth to twins, Luke and Leia, representing a new hope for the galaxy. It is wise to suppose that Luke and Leia were conceived on the eve of Anakin's downfall, and that they were born at about the time he became Vader: "To protect you [Luke and Leia] from the Emperor, you were hidden from your father when you were born" (Kasdan and Lucas 42). Moreover, in becoming Vader, Anakin has participated in the extermination of the Jedi at the Emperor's service over the falling apart galaxy. Together they have originated a new stage – the Galactic Empire. So not only does his symbolical death give rise to a physical birth, but it also generates a new era of domination for the galaxy as a whole. The only hope for the return of liberty is embodied by the twins.

This chapter has provided the sufficient back story and elements to understand the trials imposed on Luke in his training to become a Jedi. He will have to overcome fear and desire, taking the long way his father has refused. But the most important feature is to bring to light why the audience has identified with Luke's quest, and how.

### C. Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious

Since the present object of inquiry is the deep causes of Star Wars' success, the developed arguments tend toward the final message Lucas delivers through Vader's vindication. But to redeem his father, Luke must be trained in the ways of the Force. His journey, the one the audience identifies with, is anchored in an archetypal pattern, enabling Luke to become a model. In point of fact, archetypes are at the basis of the identification, they constitute the framework of the philosophy symbolized by the quest through the Force (see II.). The whole saga depends on them. The following lines provide the necessary, but non-exhaustive information on the origin, evolution, meaning, and effects of archetypes, so that the reader will be in a position to comprehend the real genesis of Star Wars' success. They compile several theories from different fields of studies, to point at the importance of archetypes in one's life.

Archetypes of the collective unconscious were discovered by Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), a disciple of Sigmund Freud, as he was studying pathological cases. In the same way as Freud, he scrutinized the dreams of patients suffering from psychological disorders, in an attempt to reveal the cause of their afflictions. In 1933, he published a book entitled The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious, in which his theories on the unconscious departed from Freud's. (Their divergence already began in 1912 when Jung published The Psychology of the Unconscious: A Study of the Transformations and Symbolisms of the Libido, in which he openly disagreed with Freud's conception of the libido as being limited to sexual impulses). As maintained by the latter, the unconscious only contains childhood memories repressed by education (Jung, Inconscient 23).

As for Jung, he distinguished two aspects of the unconscious – the personal and the collective unconscious (Inconscient 23-45). The revelation of a twofold unconscious

appeared when he realized that in certain dreams, there are some images that cannot be the result of a personal life. In The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious, Jung takes the example of a patient of his. The patient, in her life, put a person she was close to on a pedestal. At one point in one of her dreams, she is standing at the top of a hill in the presence of the idealized person, wind blowing into her hair. The wind element is the key manifestation of her disorder. For ages, it has been related to the image of God, the divine breath of life: “And the Lord God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2.7). In the present matter, the wind corresponds to the patient’s overestimation of the person. As Jung interviewed his patient, he established the fact that she had never been acquainted with the signification of this symbol. The wind image must have come from deeper layers of the unconscious. (To the potential objection that the image could have been a cryptomnesia, i.e., “an unconscious memory of a thought the dreamer would have read or grabbed some day, by chance”<sup>1</sup>, Jung cannot be certain, but he points at the fact that he encountered so many similar cases that it is unlikely [Inconscient 43-44]). In therapies, most images have some kind of connection with the patient’s past, but when they do not, Jung formulates the hypothesis according to which some images cannot come from personal experience, and must then come from a collective experience that he calls the collective psyche. As Campbell states, the dream of passing an exam is not only a personal dream: “Everyone has to pass a threshold of some kind. That is an archetypal thing. So there is a basic mythological theme there even though it is a personal dream. These two levels – the personal aspect and then the big general problem of which the person’s problem is a local example – are found in all cultures” (Flowers 40).

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<sup>1</sup> Not speaking German and having been unable to locate English translations of Jung’s works, the quotations from Jung are personal English translations of French translations. References in the text to the List of Works Cited thus correspond to the French translations.

So, not only does the unconscious stock personal contents resulting from a person's life-acquisitions in superficial layers, but it "encompasses, so to speak in its deep layers, collective material relatively alive and active [...]" (Inconscient 45). Therefore, Jung discovered a public dimension to the unconscious by unearthing in his patients' dreams universal, timeless images – archetypes. The universal attribute of archetypes is based on the claim that:

the unconscious of the races and peoples at the farthest from each other presents analogies, [...] which express themselves in, among other things, the phenomenon, frequently before put to the fore, of the extraordinary concordance of autochthonous mythical themes and forms, in the most varied latitudes. (Inconscient 63)

It is a point on which Joseph Campbell agrees. Cultures separated by time and space, he apprehended, produce identical myths underlain by archetypes (Flowers 51). In The Power of Myth, in order to give credit to his findings on the universality of myths, or in a larger perspective of archetypes, he gives the example of the commonness of creation story. What the first Book of Moses, Genesis, depicts in the Bible may be traced back in other cultures around the world. While the interviewer, Bill Moyers, reads from Genesis, Campbell reads from other creation stories, and in that way, parts of the Judeo-Christian's creation story are minutely compared to creation stories of the Hindu Upanishads, the Bassari people, or the Pima Indians<sup>1</sup> (42-45). Genesis 3 could serve as an exemplification of this comparison:

MOYERS. " 'Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.' "

CAMPBELL. [...] The Bassari legend continues in the same way. "One day Snake

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<sup>1</sup> The Bassari people live in Senegal. The Pima people are native Americans, inhabiting south-central Arizona.

said, 'We too should eat these fruits. Why must we go hungry?' Antelope said, 'But we don't know anything about this fruit.' Then Man and his wife took some of the fruit and ate it. Unumbotte came down from the sky and asked, 'Who ate the fruit?' They answered, 'We did.' Unumbotte asked, 'Who told you that you could eat that fruit?' They replied, 'Snake did.' ” It is very much the same story. (45)

An instantiation of the timeless facet of archetypes is provided by Campbell's statement that one has “the same body, [...] the same organs and energies, that Cro-Magnon man had thirty thousand years ago” (Flowers 37). Hence, modern man has always been producing the same themes, because he has always had the same instincts, fears, desires, needs and energies; that all of those come from bodily organs (Flowers 51); and that one reacts to the same stages in life regardless of the epoch: “childhood, coming to sexual maturity, transformation of the dependency of childhood into the responsibility of manhood or womanhood, marriage, then failure of the body, gradual loss of its powers, and death” (Flowers 37). But the idea of a possible transmission of the primitive themes in the course of human evolution to the modern man's collective unconscious must be grounded on a rationale in favor of a genetic heritage.

Taking up again for the issue at hand Noam Chomsky's theories on inherited capacities for language, it is not unreasonable to suppose that one is endowed at birth with an inherited collective unconscious. In Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (1965), Chomsky argues that, in truth, one could talk of only one human language with variations: the “deep structure” (Chomsky 16) is identical in all the languages of the world, then each particular language generates its own specificities. He postulates the existence of a genetically inherited linguistic state of mind that he terms “Universal Grammar” (Smith 42), comprising the essential rules for the “deep structure” of the human language. Chomsky's standpoint is that one is pre-disposed for language (innate) but not for a particular tongue (acquired). This is to be

connected with Jung's opinion when he asserts that, "The form and nature of the world in which the being was born and grows up are innate and prefigured in him in form of *virtual images*" (Inconscient 142). One has some kind of built-in visual images. Thus, on account of Chomsky's view that all human beings are endowed at birth with an uniform basic set of linguistic principles, there is only one step to the collective unconscious, since language and thought are part and parcel of each other. Even if the debate over the nature of the mutual link between language and thought is not the object of the present matter, it is not unnecessary to point at some different opinions, in order to underline the obvious existence of that tie. Chomsky adheres to the Cartesian idea according to which, "language is the mirror of the mind" (Smith 47).

This viewpoint is representative of the Port Royal Grammar (1660). Due to the discovering of the same principles governing the diversity of languages, and by reason of the belief that language represents the logical processes of thought, the Port Royal Grammar favored the belief according to which reason was universal. Although the structure of language and the structure of thought are connected, Chomsky tends to dissociate them.

At the opposite, Edward Sapir asserts in Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech (1921) that "language, as a structure, is on its inner face the mold of thought [...]" (25). The relation between language and thought has always been a controversial subject. Even Greek philosophers studied language and attempted to give their own interpretations of the connection.

Plato's distinction of two worlds, the world of Ideas and the world of Senses, underscores his assertion that the essence of things precedes their existence. In the world of Ideas reside the perfect models, which are imperfectly copied in the world of Senses. Everything we say is formed with words that imperfectly translate their true essence in the world of thoughts.

Another standpoint is the one expressed by Aristotle: it is in experiencing things, in making the inventory of things (that is, the list of their predicates<sup>1</sup>) that we apprehend the essence of things (*ousía*). Unlike Plato, Aristotle sets forth that essence and existence are on the same plane. The essence is in the existence (the genre tree is found in every tree and not prior to their existence). From that angle, Aristotle puts to the fore the possibility that the inventory he makes of the categories of language are to be paralleled with the same categories for thought.

And, eventually, the third main position on the matter is expressed by the Stoics. For them, things reflect themselves in the soul through successive layers, then the soul is able to form contents of thought, and to abstract the single character out of each thing to reach their essence. (For instance, a child sees an oak in his parents' garden, then he sees a pine tree at his friend's, then an almond tree, etc., until, by successive impressions, his soul develops contents of thought that will enable him to disregard the unique character of each tree he has encountered so as to keep only the essence of the genus tree [the oak, the pine tree, and the almond tree are of the tree family]). Language is what enables thought to be corporal. The utterance, is what enables the signified and the signifier to join. Hence, language antecedes the mind.

However, whether the mind is the model for language, or modeled on language, or is united with language in utterances, the connection between language and thought is undeniable. In fact, Chomsky's derivational theory of syntax (the "grammatical transformations" from a "deep structure" to a "surface structure") could then be applied in psychoanalysis. If language has a unique structure on which are based specific language variations, so could the psyche be. "The universal uniformity of brains determines the universal possibility of an analogous mental functioning. This functioning is precisely the

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<sup>1</sup> A predicate is "that which is affirmed or denied concerning the subject of a proposition" (Webster, Def. 9.).

collective psyche” (Jung, Inconscient 63-64). The collective psyche may be the key structure of mankind’s psyche, and each individual develops personal layers, rooted in the collective unconscious, according to his environment. The personal psyche may thus present variations of the collective’s. The collective unconscious precedes the personal unconscious; the former is universally inherited, the latter is personally acquired. Thus each person is both unique and equal to others. But in order to grasp the hypothesis according to which one’s collective unconscious is inherited, it is instrumental that the study now focuses on the origin of archetypes and their evolution until modern man.

The present paragraph is dedicated to the interpretation of Jung on the origin and evolution of archetypes from primitive to modern times in The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious (16-25). He holds that the primitive man had established an immediate contact between his unconscious psyche and a sensitive exterior experience of things:

Watching the sun rising and setting is not enough for the primitive, this exterior observation *also* has to be *a psychical event at the same time*, that is to say that the sun has to represent in its metamorphosis the destiny of a god or a hero who lives, eventually, nowhere else than in man’s soul. (16)

All the natural events directly observable to the primitive man were interpreted in term of symbols, and those could only have come from his unconscious psyche because he had not acquired reason, and was just interpreting events in the most natural manner. The evolution of language bears out Jung’s opinion: for the primitive man, language was supposed to be directly linked to nature (e.g., the “sorcerer” that summons the rain). In fact, by creating the first symbols extracted from his unconscious, the primitive man created what became archetypes, i.e., primitive models that humanity, since then, has been reproducing under different forms depending on one’s personal unconscious. In the course of evolution, man commenced to make the distinction between what was directly observable in nature by

his senses, and the real (that is, not symbolic) significance. The role of sciences was substantial in the sense that they demystified nature. When people came to understand that a natural event such as the sun could be explained in scientific, rational terms, and that they could not attribute the rising and setting of it to the destiny of a god, natural phenomena were not symbolically reflected in the soul any more. Thus, by the progressive acquisition of reason – by the development of the conscious – mankind lost the direct contact it had had between its unconscious soul and nature, it lost track of archetypes. The conscious became a barrier between natural experience of things and the symbols they awoke in the unconscious. (Similarly, the role of the Sophists [Socrates and Plato] in the evolution of language illustrates the coming of this barrier. They introduced a mediator between the word and the object the word referred to – meaning. Between language and nature arose semantics). Then, religion came forward. Christianity was one of the religions that made the reconnection possible: “Dogma replaces the collective unconscious and gives it an expression of a greater scope” (23), that is to say that the symbols present in Christianity bridged the gap. People touched with Christian faith felt an attachment to the images behind the Scriptures because they appealed to unvarying images present in their collective unconscious. Religion served as a mediator for man to reach the images he had lost contact with. Yet, gradually, Christian symbols such as the virgin birth and the concept of Trinity became objects of faith, and Christianity did not trigger enthusiasm, mystery, or fascination any more. One more time, man lost his tracks, lost the connection to archetypes so that “we ended up with the dreadful indigence from symbols that prevails these days” (25). That is the explanation for Jung’s belief that, because modern man’s life is deprived from any symbols, archetypes manifest themselves in dreams. And it was in disinterring the presence of mythic images in his patients’ dreams, that Jung voiced the theory of a collective unconscious. Archetypes are the collective unconscious’ contents.

Thus, archetypes come from the symbolic expressions of the primitive man's soul, and because we still have the same organs, the same way of physiologically working, we produce and react to the same archetypal themes. But nowadays, there is no mediator to recover the path to the inherited archetypes of our collective unconscious. Hence, when we come in presence of primitive symbols, it strikes a chord in us: "*unconscious processes are themselves in a compensating position in relation to the conscious*" (Jung, Inconscient 118). Because of its collective aspect, archetypes link man to man: what we feel is also felt by everybody else (universal facet). And by reason of its initial interpretation of natural phenomena, archetypes link man to nature (timeless facet). Archetypes are therefore a way to find one's bearings, they integrate "the individual into his society and the society into the field of nature" (Flowers 55). Archetypes replace man in his context.

Star Wars was deliberately created to be a modern myth that would meet with the lack of modern symbols, and that would help the American audience to relate to its society. When George Lucas began to write the first draft of Star Wars in 1973, he had realized that "there was no modern mythology, no modern myths being created" so that he "decided to make a film for young people that would move forward the values and the logical thinking that our society has passed down for generations" (Lucas, Down Under II 54). Having studied Campbell who often relates his theories to Jung's works on the unconscious, Lucas could have voluntarily imbued Star Wars with archetypal themes to carry lost values and touch the spectator's collective unconscious. Even if Star Wars was aimed at young Americans, it met, as one knows, with an international and enduring success, which is coherent with the universal and timeless nature of archetypes. Nonetheless, this cannot be an argument for Star Wars' success for it is not the only creative piece of work infused with archetypes. Several studies on the concept of the similarity of structures and the recurrence of themes in certain

fields of literature, have brought to light the fact that there is only one story repeated many times under different disguises.

This was first discovered by Vladimir Iakovlevitch Propp in Morphology of the Folktale (1928). The Russian folklorist, studied, as the title speaks for itself, the form (from the Greek *morphê*) of Russian tales. By comparing the structures of an apparently polymorph corpus of tales, Propp discerned that there was, behind the many modulations, only one kind of tale. His typology reconstituted a unique sequence of actions that may not all appear at once in a tale, though their order cannot be altered. Therefore, Propp dug up the primary configuration hidden under a variety of Russian tales, and simplified the various events occurring in them, until he was able to establish the unique sequence of the tale (initial wrongdoing, hero's departure, acquisition of a magical auxiliary, victorious battle, and triumphal return are its main stages). Moreover, Propp identified seven "spheres of action" belonging to the story-type: the villain, the donor (who attributes the object or value searched for by the hero), the helper, the sought-for person and her father, the dispatcher, the hero, and the false hero (129-30). The villain, for instance, may take different forms; he may be a goose, a witch, or a dragon, but the role is fulfilled anyway. In Russian folklore, Propp established that tales only bore an unaltered sequence of events repeated over and over under different forms.

In 1950, Etienne Souriau in Les deux cent mille situations dramatiques proposed a similar conception. He identified, instead of Propp's seven "spheres of action", six "dramatic functions" (*fonctions dramaturgiques*) that, he contended, were valid for any drama (57-141). In the same perspective as Propp, Souriau found the presence of an underlying organization. Although he gave astrologically-connoted names to his functions, a similarity may be noticed between Propp and Souriau. From Souriau's standpoint, drama bears six roles: the Lion (the hero), the Sun (the sought-for person or value), the Earth (the receiver of the Sun, which may

be either the hero himself or a larger group, a community), Mars (the opponent to the Sun), the Scale (the arbitrator who decides of the attribution of the Sun to the Lion or to Mars), the Moon (the helper of one of the other five). Five of Propp's seven roles are present: the hero, the sought-for person, the villain, the donor, and the helper. So, not only have they both discovered an "underlying grammar" to tales and drama, but the two fields seem to bear approximately the same "actants", as A.J. Greimas calls them.

Greimas' 1966 Sémantique structurale: recherche de méthode was inspired by the works of Propp and Souriau on the field (172-91). He was the one who spoke of what is now famous as "actants", that is, narrative functions. The terms he picked out to name his actantial roles were primarily derived from grammar: Subject, Object, Addresser, and Addressee. The Subject, which covers Propp's hero and Souriau's Lion, is the one who performs the action in the grammatical sense of the term. In that way, Greimas established a system of six actantial roles (Subject, Object, Addresser, Addressee, Adjuvant, and Opponent) supposed to be minimal categories generating every "surface structure" in a story.

What is to be concluded from these aspects is the fact that every folktale, play, drama, in fact every story has the same structure whatever the variations, an archetypal scheme in the Jungian sense of the term: universal, repeated ideas drawn from the collective unconscious. As Joseph Campbell puts it to recapitulate the many forms myths take: "It's as though the same play were taken from one place to another, and at each place the local players put on local costumes and enact the same old play" (Flowers 38). In any product that, at one time or another, appealed to human creativity (mythology, religion, tales, theater, and drama), there seems to be a recurrence of archetypal patterns, because creativity draws a part of its inspiration from the collective unconscious, which has been producing the same themes since the primitive man. For Campbell, archetypes have a biological origin: "The imagination is grounded in the energy of the organs of the body, and these are the same in all human beings.

Since imagination comes out of one biological ground, it is bound to produce certain themes” (Flowers 42). And by relying on the collective unconscious in the process of creation, the artist extracts archetypes from it and applies them to his personal work of art. And that was what Lucas did with Star Wars:

I was trying to take certain mythological principles and apply them to a story. Ultimately, I had to abandon that and just simply write the story. I found that when I went back and read it, then started applying it against the sort of principles that I was trying to work with originally, they were all there. It’s just that I didn’t put them in there consciously. I’d sort of immersed myself in the principles that I was trying to put into the script... [And] these things were just indelibly infused into the script. Then I went back and honed that a little bit. I would find something where I’d sort of gotten slightly off the track, and I would then make it more, let’s say, universal, in its mythological application... (Henderson 10)

Having attended Joseph Campbell’s classes on comparative mythology, Lucas seemed to know what could catch the attention of spectators – mythological themes. But as the notion of “actants” has been dug up in the last paragraph, one may now understand why this very notion cannot be at the core of Star Wars’ success: archetypes in a creation may be used as a way to attract the spectator’s interest unconsciously, but as every creation is formed with archetypes, this does not suffice to explain the success. Considering the nature of archetypes and knowing their effect on the psyche, what needs to be unearthed is not only the archetypal nature of Luke’s quest and the means by which the spectator comes to identify with them (that is, how they are presented to him, their cinematographic treatment), but also the goal attained thanks to the process of identification.

## **PART II**

### **Identification to the Hero's Quest**

Because Anakin Skywalker has deviated from Jesus' life-cycle when he fell, it is now up to his son to fight for redemption, imperative for the father to complete the circle. But it can only be executed through the many ordeals comprising the archetypal pattern of the hero's journey. As archetypes appeal to the spectators' collective unconscious, they will identify with the quest, with their hero and his goal.

Episode IV A New Hope's opening title situates the action: "It is a period of civil war" between an "evil Empire" ruling the galaxy, and a small rebel group fighting for freedom. Rebel leader Princess Leia has stolen the plans of the Empire's Death Star, a "space station with enough power to destroy an entire planet". The only hope for the Rebel Alliance is to exploit those plans to attempt an offensive against the Death Star and preserve the galaxy from its doom.

Lucas often quotes Billy Wilder who once said that "the first thing you do when you finish your movie is cut off the first reel [...]" and Lucas "simply did it in the script stage" (Lucas, Down Under 60; Ferenczi 46). Thus, the first scene of the classic Star Wars trilogy (1977-83), enacting Princess Leia's capture, begins in *medias res* so that the audience is thrown into the middle of a star ships' battle in an unknown universe. Instead of progressively presenting the story and characters, Lucas deliberately catches the spectator's attention.

Although Star Wars is an absolutely strange world, it rests on a familiar dimension to enable the spectator to find his or her bearings. This idea is reflected in the concept of "alternate reality" from myths, legends, or folktales. Charles Champlin in George Lucas: The Creative Impulse, Lucasfilm's First Twenty Years affirms that, "What the myths revealed to

Lucas, among many other things, was the capacity of the human imagination to conceive alternate realities to cope with reality: figures and places and events that were before now or beyond now but were rich with meaning to our present” (41). An “alternate reality” situates the action beyond time and space to inspire the imagination and convey human values at once. In his introduction to Myths and Folk Stories of Britain and Ireland, Kenneth McLeish reports that, even if people did not believe in the events narrated in the legends of the Knights of the Round Table, they nonetheless enjoyed it. “The stories give a kind of alternative, invented account of the British Isles, located not in real time and space but in the imagination. There are no time-charts or maps to them: magic needs no such boundaries” (McLeish ix). Star Wars works in the same way. The famous recurring phrase at the beginning of each episode, prior to the opening titles, is “A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...”. This phrase summarizes the visual aspect of the films, being both futuristic and in the past.

Form is essential to carry the values delivered by content, since it is capital that the spectator should believe in what he sees in order to identify with the hero and with the universe in which he evolves. This is what the classic trilogy brings about by combining a sense of the past to a futuristic aspect. Henderson points at the whole new universe based on out-of-the-past elements Lucas and his team of artists have created – Fijian and Scottish weapons, Western costumes, Japanese and Indian garbs, World War II ships and planes, etc. (125-93). Some were modified so as to make them look futuristic, others were just influences exerted on the conceptual design. It gave a subconscious sense of an advanced technological society existing “a long time ago”. Even the soundtrack is based on transformed natural elements to sound familiar, but original. Sound designer Ben Burtt notes that Lucas “wanted an *organic* sound track [...]” with “acoustic sounds, rather than synthesized things” (Burtt 69). In that perspective, Burtt, for instance, recorded different types of animal sounds for Chewbacca’s voice (Han Solo’s furry companion), real dialects such as Zulu for the Jawas,

and real sounds, such as the buzzing of the lightsabers coming from an old school's film projector (Burt 69-71). As for visuals, every single sound created for Star Wars is a compilation of modified, real sounds, all those contributing to give naturalness in a transformed reality. Besides, this concept of "alternate reality" is, according to Lucas, what makes science fiction a convenient medium: "The thing I find interesting about science fiction is that it's a form where you can deal with contemporary issues in a way that's non-inflammatory to people. You can deal with issues and ideas, take them out of their natural setting, and deal with them in a more interesting way" (Lucas, An Interview 17). Lucas could invent Jedi Knights piloting star ships in medieval costumes. If the heavy-armored knights, armed with swords, have been replaced by Jedi Knights in kimono, mastering the art of the lightsaber, the values preached in the Middle Ages have not changed – chivalry, heroism, and loyalty. But where one would have found dwarf, giants, and goblins, the Star Wars universe brings in creatures and aliens from the outer reaches of the galactical system. This promotes entertainment, though it transmits, during the protagonist's journey, values and a message.

In the opening sequence, before Princess Leia is actually captured by Darth Vader, she hides the plans in a little astrodroid, R2-D2 (Artoo-Detoo), which escapes the ship with his human-like, robot counterpart, C-3PO (See-Threepio). They land on Tatooine, the home planet of the Skywalkers in the whole saga, to deliver the message the Princess has recorded, and the Death Star plans, to a certain Obi-Wan Kenobi, living on the same planet. On Tatooine, Lucas introduces the main character for the rest of the trilogy, Luke Skywalker, a teenager living with his uncle Owen and his aunt Beru. Contrary to the action of the introductory sequence, Lucas now seems to linger over Luke. As the film started in *medias res* in an "alternate reality", Luke now becomes the audience's shepherd in the cinematographic environment so that the spectator, being as inexperienced as Luke, will identify with his adventures.

Luke's journey matches the classic hero's journey exposed by Joseph Campbell in The Hero With a Thousand Faces, the very title of which sums up his analyses. There "is a certain typical hero sequence of actions which can be detected in stories from all over the world and from many periods of history. Essentially, it might even be said there is but one archetypal mythic hero whose life has been replicated in many lands by many, many people" (Flowers 136). Taking examples from numerous mythologies around the globe, he deciphered the various steps the unique hero must take to reach his goal. The stages are basically all the same, even if they usually take different forms of expressions (as for Propp who uncovered the sequential steps of Russian tales, in fact consisting in an initiatory voyage). The gradual developing of Luke's heroic journey, the archetypal pattern of Star Wars, is grounded on Campbell's stages of the mythological hero, which, on the whole, corresponds to the adventures of an inexperienced boy who departs from his home, is initiated, and returns. This cycle may also be traced in literature as far back as Homer's Odysseus up to Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (what is known as the *bildungsroman*, literally, the "novel of formation"). But if Luke's initiatory voyage encourages identification from the audience, it is, apart from the fact that Luke becomes a guide in the diegesis, because his very "sequence of actions" binds the spectator's collective unconscious together.

Authors like Jung (in psychoanalysis), Campbell (in comparative mythology), and René Girard (in religious anthropology) agree on the origin of the hero's classic scheme: primitive communities. Many archaic societies functioned on rituals. There were rites for matrimony, hunting, fishing, etc., virtually every aspect of the community. There were also rites for the passage from childhood to adulthood (Girard 145-46; Jung, Inconscient 231-32). Campbell gives the example of the aborigines in Australia where children are taken away from their mothers to become men: "they're really put through an ordeal – circumcision, subincision, the drinking of men's blood [...]" (Flowers 81). An entire ceremony is enacted to

celebrate the passage from the child to the man. Girard sees it as a sacrificial rite because there is a “resurrection rooted in the preceding death [...]” (Girard 145)<sup>1</sup>. There is no way for the man to go back to childhood, the child in the emerging man has died (Flowers 82). Girard further claims that what we know today as educational systems are derived from primal initiation rites polished by centuries – modern society’s institutions come from rituals (Girard 145-46). The passage from childhood to adulthood is not as brutal and radical as in archaic societies, yet, one still makes the transition from childhood to youth to adulthood, and these transitions are institutionalized (a child goes to primary school, a youth to high school, and an adult to college). What the part dealing with archetypes allowed us to grasp is that our stages in life are archetypal in the sense that they have been the same since primitive man, because we have the same body, the same organs as the primitive man of thirty thousand years ago (even if we have to adapt to a different environment). Campbell establishes the classic hero’s pattern as chiefly holding three stages: first, the hero leaves the familiar place where he has grown up, then, he must overcome obstacles, to finally return, transformed by his initiation, to transmit what he has learned (Campbell 30). This three-stage journey tallies with the archetypal passage rite from childhood to manhood or womanhood through an initiation. As everyone makes the transition, the hero is a model to enact what has been done for ages. Even if the rites have been eroded, the passage is something everyone goes through. And by introducing the spectator to a young farm boy who grows up in the progress of the three films, Lucas appeals to a universal human trait. The present study is to reveal what makes Luke’s character a model for spectators, that is, why his archetypal pattern connects him to the audience, and when he returns transformed, what it is that he passes on to the audience.

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<sup>1</sup> “résurrection enracinée dans la mort qui la précède [...]”.

## A. The Origins of the Father Quest

To understand how the audience identifies with Luke, the recourse to semiology in an examination of cinematographic devices is instrumental. Contrary to theater, in which the audience has the liberty to look everywhere on the stage, cinema forces it to focus on what is specifically shown. It is the combination of signs that enables the characters' emotions to be conveyed to the audience. A travelling shot of a character has little meaning in itself. But if it is associated with a specific moment in the film, the character's costume, the lines, the lighting, the music, etc., then the whole scene has a significance the audience perceives more or less consciously. The audience may not notice that a scene's photography is symbolic of the evolution of the character at a determined point within the movie, but at an unconscious level, the syntagma of signs utilized, immerses the witnesses of the adventure to a point that favors identification.

The present work drafts the premise according to which the success of any movie is based on the identification with one or more characters. The spectator does not simply follow what unravels on the screen, he penetrates the diegesis. But this is an issue valid for any medium telling a story. However, the identification is possible only if the story enacts events to which people can relate. As the brief account on archetypes tried to show, any story of any kind is always anchored on equivalent themes. What Lucas brought about with Star Wars was to present the audience with the classic story of a hero who undergoes a transformation in the course of extraordinary adventures. This entire chapter, which develops the most conspicuous scenes in the second trilogy, first establishes that each scene corresponds to an archetype, then details the semiology used for identification, and finally explores its efficiency on the audience.

In Episode IV, it happens by accident that Artoo and Threepio are bought by Luke's uncle to help him work at the farm. When cleaning Artoo, Luke switches on the recorded message of Princess Leia. Then, Artoo leads him right into the hands of Ben Kenobi to whom the message is destined. The droids are the ones that launch the adventure, the ones that make Luke's setting out coincide with the second type of departure of the hero Campbell identified (in the first one, the hero undertakes the journey willingly [Flowers 129]). Without them, Luke would never have left to follow his father's footsteps. But it is insufficient. The hero needs "The Call to Adventure" (Campbell 49), of which the following scene is a modern modulation. In myths, the hero is regularly aided by a helper that may have numerous "surface structures", he "may be some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears, to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will require" (Campbell 72). Ben is both a wizard (a Jedi has supernatural powers) and a "strange old hermit", as Owen calls him. But more than counsel, he will supply Luke with the necessary goal for the beginning of his journey. Ben is the one that gives Luke reasons to accept the adventure.

The scene starts in *medias verba*, once again capturing the attention of the audience. Luke and Ben sit side by side in Ben's hovel. Luke is repairing Threepio's arm detached after an attack of the Sandpeople in the desert, while Ben talks about the past, the age of the Old Republic. Luke has been told by his uncle that his father was "a navigator on a spice freighter". But Ben informs Luke that his father was in fact a Jedi Knight. Luke, head bowed, admits in a sigh "I wish I'd known him". Ben continues, his father was the "best star-pilot in the galaxy", a "cunning warrior", and a "good friend". More than that, Ben gives Luke something that his father wanted him to have when he was old enough – his lightsaber (Campbell's "amulet"). The sword of knighthood inheritance, transmitted from father to son, is an image drawn from medieval times.

According to certain legends in the Arthurian cycle, the famous sword Excalibur was pulled out of a block of stone by Arthur Pendragon, who, by the legitimacy he inherited from it, acquired the throne. Not only was he the only one gifted with the power to retrieve the sword, but he was the direct descendant, the son, of the previous king Uther. So, similarly to Arthur who then aspired to become a king like his father, Luke longs to become like his father, that is, according to Ben's information, a Jedi Knight – hence giving Luke his purpose. This is exhibited in the scene by Luke's turning away from Threepio and getting up to test the lightsaber. Once ignited, he plays with it while Ben, seated in the background, bitterly recounts the better times of the Old Republic. But Luke barely pays attention to what he says, he seems really interested in his father's lightsaber. Besides, the fact that Ben's voice is covered by the buzzing of the sword proves that Lucas favors the amazing discovery for the audience to enjoy the new weapon too.

Luke switches it off, sits back next to Ben, and catches him unawares by asking him how his father has died. Ben looks away, balances his chest, and takes a few seconds to think before answering, “a young Jedi named Darth Vader, who was a pupil of mine until he turned to evil, helped the Empire hunt down and destroy the Jedi Knights. He betrayed and murdered your father”. If one pays attention (which should not be difficult because close-up shots, highlighted by a shallow focus – blurring the background – bring out the characters' facial expressions, in a way that forbids the audience to look anywhere else), Ben seems quite uneasy, he strains to look Luke into the eyes, and he almost whispers the last sentence (it is less voiced, i.e., his vocal cords do not vibrate as much as usual), as if did not dare to say so. Something disturbs Ben, although at this point in the trilogy the spectator does not know what. Composer and conductor John Williams underscores the passage with a cue that indicates Luke's sadness in learning the murder of his father by Vader. “A solo clarinet states Darth Vader's theme” in a low sound, the rhythm is slow, and Williams dwells upon each

note, so that the cue carries in itself Luke's emotions (Matessino, *New Hope* 15). The contrast with "descending flutes" gives some kind of mysterious dimension to the scene (Matessino, *New Hope* 15). Unlike many other sounds present on the soundtrack (the voices of characters, the noise of a closing door, etc.), the score is extradiegetic. It is an instrumental medium to promote the identification, because its chief function is to communicate the emotions of the characters (though it may also serve to punctuate the action, warn of danger, etc.). It is destined to the audience only. This first part of the scene paves the way for the father quest: Luke is eager to find out details about his father, Ben's attitude and the music reflect the mystery around the father, and finally, the sword symbolizes a token of Luke's destiny. The father quest is drafting itself.

A common device put into practice to encourage identification is the similarity of plane: the knowledge about the father is revealed to Luke and the audience at the same time. Luke's character is easily identifiable with, for he is as uninitiated as the audience. This is a technique frequently used by writers. An omniscient narrator, who has the ability to read personae's minds, to make use of analepsis, and even sometimes of prolepsis, is certainly less likely to be identified with than a narrator that has the same perspective, the same restrictions of point of view as the reader. Internal focalization stimulates identification.

However, Luke's youth and innocence penetrate the spectator at an unconscious level through various ways: his high-pitched voice betrays his age and enthusiasm (in contrast with Ben's grave, old voice), and his farmer's white clothes also stress his purity and immaturity. The first way is Mark Hamill's natural trait, and the second is a commonly used symbol. Yet, two more aspects may indirectly strike the spectator. When Luke is sitting next to Ben, his face alone is directly illuminated (an under-the-shoulder shadow marks the brutal transition) whereas Ben is lit by indirect sources. The use of direct light sources to illuminate a face is rare. Most of the time, whether on location or on a set, directors of photography employ

reflectors to obtain a softer light. But the crude light in this case may emphasize Luke's naiveté. Finally, during the previously described scene, one can see several times Luke's eyes literally shining, hence spotlighting the only hope he represents. Making the spectator an active participant in the film by placing him on the same level as Luke, blended with cinematographic devices to accent Luke's inexperience, is an efficient way to render the beginnings of the identification not possible but probable. And the content of what one discovers with Luke – the past of his father – is substantial in Luke's quest. It is going to be the incentive for his departure.

As the reader may have noticed, contrary to the classic treatment of redemption, in which it is usually the father who redeems the son, Lucas has reversed the roles. The reason for this may simply be that he wanted to use the archetypal theme of fall and redemption while promoting the identification with the hero. With the normal scheme, spectators could have found it difficult to identify with the father in his attempt to vindicate the son, for the father has already made the transition from youth to adulthood. The identification would have been thwarted by the lack of initiation, whereas in reversing the roles, not only are spectators in a position to follow Luke in his journey toward redemption, but they are more likely to identify with him.

The second part of the scene introduces Luke in the ways of the Force. Ben tells him that "Vader was seduced by the dark side of the Force", hence changing the subject. This is the first occurrence of the word in the trilogy. Luke asks in wonder, "the Force?". Now Ben is on a more familiar ground. The spectator still learns with Luke that "the Force is what gives the Jedi his power. It's an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together." While Ben says these lines, his musical theme (the Force's theme) is played by a "French horn against a background of harp" (Matessino, *New Hope* 15). The French horn stands for the noble aspect of the Force, the harp displays its

mystical, magical one. The loudly-mixed music discloses Luke's amazement, but is mainly a way to attract the audience's interest for the Force. In the Star Wars universe, many elements are presupposed, that is, they are not explicit, just alluded to (such as the Clone Wars which Ben fought). Lucas, instead of sketching a character who is already aware of what the Force is, makes Luke ask the question. Such devices are employed to actualize Luke and the audience's initiation. Instead of following Luke's evolution, one becomes involved in it.

The third part of the scene features Princess Leia's holographic message played by Artoo. The camera shows Leia, Ben (the message is addressed to him), and Artoo (it carries the Death Star plans). Luke is only seen at the beginning and the end of the message. At the beginning, the camera centers on Luke, because he may see, at last, the entire message (in a previous scene at his uncle's, he accidentally saw a bit of the message when cleaning Artoo, but the latter would not allow Luke to see it in its entirety). While the message approaches the end, the camera photographs Luke: "Help me Obi-Wan Kenobi, you're my only hope". The fact that Lucas edited the scene with a shot of Luke, and a voice over of Princess Leia's last words, hints at the chord she strikes in him. He is captivated by her beauty, he "has stars in his eyes" (Titelman 49) and, as she is now begging for help against the evil Empire, he seems to be willing to help her. The message ends, Luke and Ben remains centered on their thoughts. The music that underscored the message fades. An unusual silence appears. An insert of Ben pictures him probably thinking about the importance of the message for the Rebellion, but then he turns to Luke, catching his wonder at the Princess, and in a faint smile, he bends toward Luke – and thus toward the camera – and says, "You must learn the ways of the Force if you're to come with me to Alderaan" (the planet where Ben is supposed to bring the Death Star plans). "Alderaan?!", Luke responds, almost defensively, moving back (refusal) – by contrast to Ben's leaning toward him (attractiveness). He gets up and tells Ben he is not going with him. Ben has read Luke's thoughts, the use of *must* instead of *have to*

and of *if you're to come* proves that Ben knows Luke would like to help the Princess. Ben, still seated while Luke stands on the dwelling's threshold, understands that Luke is not ready to make a decision in accord with his innermost will. Thus, instead of appealing to Luke's desire, he asks for his generosity, "I need your help, Luke. She needs your help. I'm getting too old for this sort of thing". He lifts his eyebrows, looking at Luke expectantly. The difference of posture, and the use of ground shots for Luke and high angle shots for Ben, highlights Ben's demeanor of request. He hopes Luke will listen to his heart. But the latter retracts and utters, "I can't get involved!" (with an emphasis on *can't* and an ascending melody that denote an "it is not possible for me to"). Luke then gives his main arguments against his leaving Tatooine:

LUKE. I've got work to do! It's not that I like the Empire. I hate it! But there's nothing I can do about it right now. And it's such a long way from here.

BEN. That's your uncle talking.

In refusing to help Ben, two devices are operated to oppose his will to go and his attachment to his duties – lighting and music. At the complete opposite of the direct light that symbolized his naiveté, Luke's face is now in obscurity, and a low and dramatic descending cello triplet conveys Luke's decision. The audience feels that Luke acts in contradiction to his will.

Hence, in spite of the fact that Ben has provided Luke with every necessary element to launch the adventure (information about his father, his lightsaber, first initiation to the Force which his father controlled [and the possibility to help the Rebellion]; in brief, a goal to link back to his "source" [Flowers 129]), Luke reacts in the typical way of heroes in his "Refusal of the Call" (Campbell 59). He is torn between duties (embodied by his uncle) and what his heart tells him to do.

Through this typical chain of events, from “The Call to Adventure” to “Refusal of the Call”, the audience senses a closeness to Luke. Many people often live their lives according to a mold that is cast for them. They, too, would refuse “The Call to Adventure”. Status quo is more secure than change, since change rhymes with hardship. The scene therefore has a more general import: the *mise-en-scène* encourages people to follow their hearts, and denounces what is expected of them. Yet, the audience expects Luke to follow Ben, for the latter is associated with everything that is attractive – the mystery around the father (stressed by Ben’s uneasiness), around the religion (heightened by a colorful music), and the adventure to free the Princess. Luke’s refusal is capital in the process of identification because the spectator makes the step before Luke does. He knows Luke will eventually follow Ben, or there is no story, no film. The identification with Luke is made possible because the spectator wants him to do what he himself would probably not do in actual life. Luke is the object of a *mimesis*, he is a model.

However, the scene ends with Ben’s assenting with Luke’s refusal. In myths, Campbell uncovered a recurrent function that eventually launches the hero into the adventure; this is what he calls the “Supernatural Aid” (Campbell 69). In Star Wars, Luke is held back by his obligations. The only way for him to accept the voyage to Alderaan is to give up his attachment. After the scene at Ben’s, the film cuts to the Imperial Council held in the Death Star, and then cuts back to Luke’s discovery of the slaughtering of his foster parents. The montage speeds up the passage from refusal to “The Crossing of the First Threshold” (Campbell 77). Luke is now ready, for there is no dilemma any more. He tells Ben, “I want to come with you to Alderaan. There’s nothing here for me now. I want to learn the ways of the Force and become a Jedi like my father”. The passing of “the First Threshold” is celebrated by “a dramatic French horn statement of Ben’s theme” with a high-pitched background of strings (Matessino, *New Hope* 17). The former announces the courage of the decision, the

latter its dangerousness. Hence, the opposition is musically underscored by cellos (refusal) vs. French horn (consent). Luke, at last, satisfies the audience. “The Crossing of the First Threshold” characterizes the moment when Luke becomes a model for the audience. He chooses the risks and challenges of adventure, which few would do. Thus, we identify with Luke because he does what we would not dare to do. Everyone of us has a quest of his own, choices of life at different key periods, and even if in our lives there is no such choice as deciding to go saving a princess and learning supernatural powers, Luke’s character is nevertheless a model. In identifying with a hero who crosses thresholds, bravely opens new doors, Luke guides us in fulfilling ourselves, in choosing difficulty if the ultimate goal is worth it. Even if our trials in real life have another aspect, the underlying significance is equivalent.

When Luke says “I want to come with you to Alderaan. There’s nothing here for me now. I want to learn the ways of the Force and become a Jedi like my father”, he recapitulates the three parts of “The Call to Adventure” in inverse order: the goal of his quest (his father was a Jedi, so he aspires to be one himself), the ordeals of his quest (through the Force), and the rescuing of Princess Leia (in following Ben to Alderaan). But more than that, these lines foreshadows Campbell’s three-stage hero’s journey: departure (Episode IV), initiation through the Force, that is, the overcoming of fear and desire (Episode V), and return as a Jedi, providing atonement and a message (Episode VI). The trilogy hinges on a father quest, and Episode IV stands for its origins. Campbell states that:

Frequently, in the epics, when the hero is born, his father has died, or his father is in some other place, and then the hero has to go in quest of his father. [...] the finding of the father has to do with finding your own character and destiny<sup>1</sup>. There’s a notion that the character is inherited from the father, and the body and very often the mind

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of destiny will be evoked in III. A.

from the mother. But it's your character that is the mystery, and your character is your destiny. So it is the discovery of your destiny that is symbolized by the father quest.

(Flowers 166)

Luke, in leaving Tatooine to follow his father, goes in search of his own "source". To reach it, he must redeem his father, he must transcend fear and desire, which is accessed through a "transformation of consciousness" (Flowers 126).

## B. The Symbolism of the Force

Before a spiritual transmutation is to be carried out, a milestone in the hero's quest, a "physical deed" (Flowers 123) has to be performed. In ancient stories the hero usually had to slay a monster (Henderson 47), or, in the Greek mythology, to kill the Minotaur (Henderson 54). As for Luke, his hero's deed is nonetheless impressive: he rescues Princess Leia – an exploit representative of the Arthurian cycle – and blows up the Death Star, the monster. But his "first step into a large world" (Titelman 79) is delimited by the blasting of the Death Star without the help of any technological device, just by the mediation of the Force, acting on intuitions. Episode IV closes on a ceremony promoting Luke commander in the Rebel Alliance.

Episode V The Empire Strikes Back is set three years after the battle of Yavin in which the Death Star was destroyed. The Imperial fleet, having located the Rebel base, had forced the rebels to secretly establish their new headquarters on the ice planet of Hoth. Vader, when engaged in the battle of Yavin over the Death Star, had sensed that the Force was strong with Luke. It has been three years that Vader has been desperately seeking his son throughout the galaxy. On the world of Hoth, Luke, while barely conscious (as a consequence of a trek in the snow) has a vision of Ben (Vader has killed him after Leia's rescue, he now comes back as a ghost). Ben bids Luke to go to the planet Dabogah to be trained by a Jedi Master named Yoda. With him, Luke will learn the power of the Force, and the audience its symbolism, in accord with the interpretation of the final message.

Although Ben Kenobi gives a brief definition of the Force in Episode IV, and though the audience has witnessed the powers of the Force (e.g., Luke stretching out for his lightsaber by telekinesis when confronted to the Wampa ice creature at the beginning of

Episode V), the following scene is a course for Luke on the true nature of the Force, and for spectators, a “guide-sign” (Flowers 4) in their lives<sup>1</sup>.

The scene takes place in Dagobah’s swamps, a place filled with gigantic, ancient trees. They are so high that only their enormous, entangled roots are seen within the frame. A mist crawling on the ground conveys a sense of mystery, as if something were hiding under it, something to discover (see II. C.). Yoda is a two foot tall (Vaz and Hata 61), green alien creature who speaks an odd English, putting words in the wrong order, omitting some, etc. He is said to be nine hundred years old. His age is transcribed by his slow motions with a cane, but also in his elderly, low, and saturated voice. The fact that he speaks an incorrect English forces the audience to pay attention, and the shortness of his sentences enhances the impact of their content. And, finally, like Ben, Yoda wears a white kimono, proving his belonging to the Jedi order.

The scene begins with an establishing shot of Luke and Yoda. The former is standing up side down on one hand, Yoda perched on his feet. The shot integrates them into the set, it reflects their harmony with the ambient nature, whose presence is transcribed by a dominance of green hue (the trees, Yoda’s color of skin, and Luke’s clothes). Luke lifts, by the power of his mind, using the Force, a rock that comes to rest on another one. But Artoo disturbs him by his electronic whistles and Luke loses his concentration and tumbles down. Artoo wants to caution him against the sinking of his ship in the swamp.

LUKE. Oh, no. We’ll never get it out now.

YODA. So certain are you. Always with you it cannot be done. Hear you nothing that I say?

LUKE. Master, moving stones around is one thing. This is totally different.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. II. C.

YODA. No! No different! Only different in your mind. You must unlearn what you have learned.

LUKE. All right. I'll give it a try.

YODA. No! Try not. Do. Or do not. There is no try.

Luke, arm raised, concentrates to recover the ship from the waters. The X-Wing's nose begins to surface. Yoda's ears raise, the music rises, the audience expects Luke to succeed. But in the end, the ship fully disappears (Yoda's ears lower and the music falls).

LUKE. I can't. It's too big.

YODA. Size matters not. Look at me. Judge me by my size, do you? Mm? Mmmm.

And well you should not.

Yoda teaches Luke that if he uses the Force, moving stones or an entire ship is the same. "Size matters not." But in fact, Yoda denounces Luke's pessimism, "Always with you it cannot be done". The symbolism behind this passage is the difficulty of a task. This may appear more clearly in paraphrasing: "The difficulty of the task does not matter. Look at me. Is my size a fair assessment of the difficulty of the task I can take upon myself?". "Size matters not" may hence have two correlated meanings. First, not to judge by appearances, and second, that the apparent arduousness of a task should not be a problem in deciding whether to undertake it or not. Yoda resumes while his musical theme begins:

YODA. For my ally is the Force. And a powerful ally it is. Life creates it, makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and binds us. Luminous beings are we...

(Yoda pinches Luke's shoulder)

... not this crude matter.

(a sweeping gesture)

You must feel the Force around you.

(gesturing)

Here, between you... me... the tree... the rock... everywhere! Yes, even between this land and that ship! (Brackett and Kasdan 87)

“A Jedi’s strength flows from the Force” (Episode VI), but the Force is within the body, life creates the Force and makes people, in the diegesis, “luminous beings”. This is in keeping with the definition Lucas gives of the midi-chlorians in Episode I as being the constituents of the Force, living in the characters’ cells. The “Force moves from within” (Flowers 145). Therefore, the Force originates in the body and expands to nature, the Force is “everywhere”. The Force, like a religion, is a mediator to gain access to the two facets of archetypes. First it links man to man: its energy “binds us” (universal); second, it links man to nature (timeless). But this is in the diegesis. Nevertheless, as for the Scriptures that recount stories imbued with symbolism, the Force in Star Wars incites the audience to link back (“*religio*”) to archetypes through symbols. The Force, in furthering the belief in oneself, compensates for a certain lack of faith people have in themselves. The Force links us to the other in the extradiegesis too. And the timeless aspect is present by the link to nature the primitive man has transmitted to our collective unconscious. The Force, as an image for the audience, may be related to what Campbell says about the effect of myths: “Every mythology [...] integrates the individual into his society and the society into the field of nature. It unites the field of nature with my nature. It’s a harmonizing force” (Flowers 55). It seems plain that the symbolism in the Force does not directly strike the audience. Yet, because it refers to the two facets of archetypes present in everybody’s collective unconscious, Yoda’s teachings are somehow unconsciously assimilated. The Force, as any religion, mediates by a hidden wisdom. As usual, many cinematographic devices are used to give substance to Yoda’s words. He gestures a sphere when he whispers “surrounds us and binds us”, by contrast to his highly-saturated voice in “Luminous beings are we... not this crude matter”. He contracts his fist in lingering over *feel* in “You must feel the Force around you”. Variations in voice,

duration, and the associated gestures are likely to have a certain impact, they show Yoda's conviction, giving a sense of depth to the link to nature, a sense of "reality". One could almost believe in the Force. Furthermore, Williams' theme for Yoda is meant to convey his benevolence and gentility. It is orchestrated in a way that echoes the quietness of his instruction to Luke, leaving space for the words themselves. The theme conveys Yoda's congruity with the Force, with nature. Thanks to the Force, Yoda could lift the ship up. But the message for the spectator is that if he has a goal, he must strive to reach it, in spite of potential hardships. The size of the task does not matter. With an inner will, one may accomplish everything that is humanly possible. The Force is an image – the Force is for one to find within. "Try not. Do. Or do not. There is no try", is consistent with this idea – to try is to admit the possibility of failure. To do, does not let any other choice than success.

Yet, Luke is not convinced. Yoda's statement that the size should not be a parameter to judge one's capabilities is here highlighted by a shot of Yoda standing with his cane, while Luke gets up. Instead of using a ground shot from Yoda's angle or a crane shot from Luke's, director Irvin Kershner centers his camera on Yoda, so that only Luke's lower limbs are visible, his line being in voice over: "You want the impossible". Thus, the *mise-en-scène* remains consistent with the philosophy. Another type of shot would have put Yoda in a position of inferiority because of his size. Luke goes and sits somewhere else, and Yoda bows his head and raises his hand (a harp and a triangle reflect the beginning of the Force's magic). He is about to give Luke the reason for his failure to lift the ship. If the following scene had been shot from Luke's angle, the scene would never have worked on the audience.

Instead, the shot of the actual levitation of the ship is retarded, and one can hear unseen noises, while the music swells to a crescendo – the shot is longed for. The camera cuts to a shot of the swamp, bubbles breaking the surface, then it cuts to Artoo frantic beeps that catch Luke's attention. He stands up and gazes in surprise at the swamp. The next shot should

picture the ship, but the film then cuts to a close-up of Yoda, eyes closed, rising his head to lift the ship up, a clarinet rendition of his theme foreshadows the awaited event. An establishing shot then shows Artoo and Luke on the banks of the swamp, the sound of water noisily dripping on the surface is heard – the ship must be coming out of the swamp. And, at last, Kershner edits the shot of the ship in levitation above the water. The musical theme gloriously swells with harp and flute backing the clarinet. The ship is viewed from under its fuselage to underline the floating. The depth of field enables one to see Luke and Artoo in the distance, waiting for it on the land. The ship moves slowly, indicating the laboriousness of the task. Yoda turns to guide the ship toward the shore, and a general shot pictures it high in the air, a sign of Yoda's harmony with surrounding nature. Lighting comes from where Luke stands, toward where the ship heads. Eventually, the ship lands, welcomed by Artoo's whistles. A crane shot states Luke's inferiority – he was wrong not to believe Yoda, whose demonstration is concluded by an ascending brass phrase. Yoda opens his eyes, and Luke says:

LUKE. I don't... I don't believe it.

YODA. That is why you fail.

Luke has failed for he has no faith in himself. Without believing in his inner self, he cannot control the Force. Yoda, even if small, has been capable to elevate an entire ship by virtue of his harmony with the Force, because he is in accord with himself, he has faith. Thus, Lucas criticizes pessimism, skepticism, and the lack of self-confidence to communicate to the audience the message of the Force. "You've got to find the Force inside you" (Flowers 148). Without believing in ourselves, we cannot succeed in anything in life. The singular mise-en-scène of that passage is requisite for the demonstration of Yoda's lesson on faith. Even if at the beginning, the action is only implicit out of the field, the spectator may guess what Yoda does. But it is only the shot of the levitation that actualizes the belief. Customarily, one

believes what one sees. As the spectator guesses the unseen action, he begins to believe, so that the delaying of the awaited shot intensifies Yoda's lesson to Luke because the audience has believed before him. Another aspect of the Force's ideology that is likely to have penetrated the audience due to its many repetitions is the notion that the dark side stands for the easy way. "Luke, don't give in to hate – that leads to the dark side", Ben later says (Brackett and Kasdan 101). As formerly mentioned, the dark side is more effortlessly accessible, one only has to act in hatred, which is triggered by fear. And desire is also part of the dark side – the desire of its powers. Thus, the light side of the Force is, in its long and hard training to become a Jedi, a prevailing over fear and desire, an overcoming of the easy way. So that, on the whole, the Force tells the spectator that the force is within him, he has to have faith in his own strength, and in that way he will be in the capacity to undertake any task, whatever the obstacles, even if the path is long. This is a choice we are constantly confronted to in real life – taking the long or the short way. The short one is more seductive for its simplicity. The long one is discouraging. But the choice depends on the purpose. If the long way gives access to something we really want, we have to make the effort to succeed. And we can only do so if we have faith in our inner strength. Faith is a vital parameter in Luke's quest and in the spectator's life.

### C. Transcendence of Fear and Desire

What “all the myths have to deal with is transformations of consciousness [...]. You have been thinking one way, you now have to think a different way” (Flowers 126). This concept is reflected in Yoda’s words when addressing Luke: “You must unlearn what you have learned”. Consciousness is transformed “Either by the trials themselves or by illuminating revelations” (Flowers 126). The first way to alter consciousness was Luke’s test of his faith. The second, the “illuminating revelation”, occurs in a dark cave strong with the dark side of the Force. Luke asks Yoda what there is in it, and Yoda replies, “Only what you take with you”. The cave is accessible through a hole in the ground under a grove. The place is darker than above the surface, yet it is filled with luxuriant vegetation. The presence of lizards and snakes contributes to the evil of the cave, the music is exceptionally dissonant, a blue-gray lighting casts a cold light, and a blanket of fog makes things all blurred. The whole atmosphere of the scene is heavy, it makes the audience uneasy. Luke goes deeper into the cave and stops. He looks around him and stops at something, looking at the camera (shooting him in a close-up). Suddenly, a faint blue light lightens his face, and a step breaking a dead bough is heard out of the frame. Luke is frightened, though one cannot see why. The music is now mixed high above other sounds – a high-pitched, eerie flute. Luke backs up, trembling in fear. All the shots of the scene are from that point on in slow motion. Luke is now viewed from behind, still moving backward. On the left of the frame, a wall thwarts the view of the origin of Luke’s dismay. A gloomy form slowly appears – Darth Vader. The rhythm of the music accelerates to intensify the action. Williams, for the first time in his nineteenth-century style music, uses strident synthesized sounds to justify Luke’s fear. (Instead of making use of Vader’s Imperial March famous theme, recurring at each appearance of the latter, Williams prefers discordant cues backed up by a synthesizer, which give Vader a more menacing form.

Moreover, the lack of musical familiarity corroborates the dream-like sequence). They both ignite their lightsabers. The fight is short – Luke decapitates his adversary in four moves. Vader’s helmet rolls on the ground and explodes, revealing Luke’s own face. In the last shot, Luke “gasps at the sight, wide-eyed in terror” (Brackett and Kasdan 81).

This scene is of a paramount importance in the hero’s journey. To enter the cave by a hole could well stand for Luke’s access to his unconscious, since the scene is an imaginary fight Luke has with Vader. The nightmarish nature of the scene is enhanced by the slow motion. Not only does it heighten the scene, but it is a clue for the spectator to perceive the imbedded story. The “illuminating revelation” for Luke, passed on to the audience, is that he was so scared that he slashed Vader’s head in fear. The message he receives at the end is crystal clear – Luke will become like Vader if he acts in fear. This is what he “took” with him when he entered the cave, he was confronted with the first cause of Vader’s fall. This is his first challenge in the linking back to his source. Fear is something he discovers about himself, he does not “take” anything new, he only acknowledges his “shadow side” (Henderson 73). He, too, may be swiftly submerged by inherent dark instincts that lead to the dark side. In consideration of the remarkable *mise-en-scène*, the audience should be inclined to fathom the message. Fear is a universal reaction. It is an emotion that may appear suddenly and overwhelm one hastily.

Emitting the hypothesis that, since the origins of the father quest in Episode IV, the spectator has identified with Luke, it can be assumed that he was as scared as Luke at the appearance of Vader (due to the surprise effect emphasized by the suspense), so that he would have done the same mistake. The message must have worked on him too. The fact that, as in the levitation of the ship, though on a lower scale, the shot featuring the danger that triggers Luke's fear is postponed, intensifies the suspense. The music is also typically in keeping with the message. For that reason, it is loudly mixed, and the only noises are those of

the clashing lightsabers and of Vader's breath. When Luke and Vader engage in single combat, during the three moves before the beheading, the music is so dissonant, so ominous that it takes the form of a high-pitched, strident alarm to warn the audience that what Luke does is wrong. Most of the time the score reflects the characters' emotions, but sometimes it takes a more objective point of view to criticize the action, which is possible since the score is here extradiegetic. The weight of the scene is underlined by an entire sequence filmed in slow motion (the only instance in the entire trilogy) and Williams' synthesizer. In correlation with all the previous instances of Yoda's philosophy about fear, anger, and aggressiveness this scene lays bare how the spectator and Luke transcend fear. They are not supposed to reject it – fear is part of one's primal instincts. What one is supposed to understand through Star Wars is that emotions must be controlled; this is the long way, but faith makes that possible. Apart from the possibility that the audience transcends fear in its identification with Luke's journey, the passage in the cave may also have an impact on reality.

Jung says that, "The encounter of oneself primarily means the encounter of one's own shadow" (Archetypes 34-35). Luke's whole journey is closely linked to the finding of who he is, which is capital to apprehend his objective in life. In the extradiegesis, one may not have to approach the unconscious to control such a primal instinct as fear, but Luke is the embodiment of the successful self-analysis, thanks to which he accepts his shadow, and spectators acknowledge their flaws. Thus, the lesson is that one must learn to "*know oneself to be aware of what one is [...]*" (Jung, Archetypes 35). As a model, Luke stimulates the encounter of each person's shadow. Anyhow, in the diegesis, Luke, by his admittance of his "shadow side", counterbalances two opposites, dark and light, fear and courage.

But his initiation is interrupted by a vision of Han Solo and Leia in danger on Bespin, and he rushes to help them, however incomplete his training. The suffering of his friends is but a trap devised by Vader to catch Luke, and, as foreseen by Vader, Luke falls into the trap

at the moment he enters Cloud City, on Bespin. Now Luke is facing Vader, and the latter tempts him with the dark side of the Force.

In the story of Christ, after his baptism by John the Baptist, God leads Jesus into the wilderness where he spends forty days and forty nights without eating. Then God sends Satan to tempt His son (Matt. 4.1-11; Luke 4.1-13). The first temptation, known as the “economic temptation” (Flowers 139), corresponds to Satan telling Jesus that if he is hungry, he may ask God to change the stones into food. The second, the “spiritual inflation” (Flowers 140), is when Satan says to Jesus that if he is above “concerns of the flesh” (Flowers 140), he may cast himself down Herod’s Temple, God will bear him up. The “political temptation” (Flowers 139), the last, consists in Satan proposing Jesus to rule with him. (In the Gospel According to Luke, the last two temptations are reversed). The Three Temptations of Christ give shape to the climactic scene of Episode V. Here Luke takes up again Christ’s role. On the whole, Anakin’s life-cycle may be compared to Jesus’ (especially concerning the virgin birth and the final message transmitted through death), but Anakin departs from Jesus’ cycle when he falls. Because Anakin has succumbed to fear and desire, his son must transcend them to enable his father to complete his cycle, to recover his role as Savior.

The scene takes place on a gantry platform above a bottomless reactor shaft. It notably relies on sound since the expressions of Vader’s character are practically limited to his voice<sup>1</sup>, the music still has an important role to play, and the sound of a strong wind is very much present throughout. The first temptation coincides with Vader telling Luke, “It is useless to resist”. Spectators expect Luke to resist Vader’s “economic temptation”, for they have been informed that to abandon is to yield to the easy way, to the dark side. Indeed, Yoda’s instruction on that matter should have proved efficient on the audience. It is not God

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. pages 73-74.

who tests the hero, but the audience. Unsurprisingly, Luke refuses the straightforward path and keeps on fighting off Vader's strong offensives.

Unfortunately, Luke is constantly forced backward until he approaches the end of the platform. Establishing crane shots reveal Luke's precarious situation, and the whistling of the wind is so high-pitched that it tortures the audience. In that respect, the scene is conceived to convey the feeling that Luke is trapped, in order to justify the heroic nature of his refusal. Vader severs his arm, which has been holding his lightsaber. Luke is now defenseless and vulnerable. This is stressed by a ground shot of Vader from Luke's viewpoint when Vader says, "There is no escape. Don't make me destroy you". But Luke keeps stepping away from Vader's reach until he cannot go any further. He is at a dead end above emptiness. Vader puts away his lightsaber and tries to beckon Luke. Williams uses eerie strings to underscore Vader's plea to Luke, and to support the spectator's awareness that Vader's model is not the one to adopt (Matessino, *Empire* 26). Then Vader deliberately divulges to Luke the nature of their familial bond for it will be easier to allure him when the breach is made:

VADER. Obi-Wan never told you what happened to your father.

LUKE. He told me enough! He told me you killed him.

VADER. No. *I*... am your father.

A close-up of Luke with a weak depth of field (the first since the beginning of the scene) is edited for the audience to perceive Luke's reaction. For a second, one can only hear the wind. Then a "dramatic rendition" of Vader's theme begins to convey Luke's pain at the revelation (Matessino, *Empire* 26):

LUKE. No. No. That's not true! That's impossible!

He emphasizes the second syllable of *impossible* at a such a degree that his voice saturates.

VADER. Search your feelings. You know it to be true.

LUKE. (screaming) No! No! No!

His face is deformed by pain. The more Luke denies, the more he senses the truth in Vader's words. He is confused deep inside himself. Vader chooses this precise moment for the "political temptation":

VADER. Join me, and together we can rule the galaxy as father and son. Come with me. It is the only way.

In Episode IV, Luke's incentives for his departure was in the first place a desire to imitate his father. At that time, he thought he was an exceptional Jedi, whereas he is only a fallen one, devoted to the dark side of the Force. Luke is all of a sudden deprived of his model. He does not want to adhere to the dark side. His beliefs lie at the opposite end. The denial of the model is the sine qua non condition for the transcendence of his desire. Without a model to pursue, the purpose of his quest loses its significance. His wish to be like his father falls apart. He triumphs over his primal motivation – desire. The chief reason for the audience's transcending of desire in synchronization with Luke's, is the cinematographic prevailing of Vader's maleficence.

The character of Darth Vader epitomizes Evil. First and foremost, he is dehumanized by his physical appearance: his costume bears a chest plate and a belt that light in a monotonous sequence and he bears a dark breathing mask and armor. Not an inch of human flesh transpires from his costume, even his hands are dark-gloved. In fact every item of his outfit are black-colored. Measuring over six and a half feet tall (Vaz and Hata 14), his might is enhanced by his robe and cape. Since his movements are limited to occasional gestures by his armor, his stature remains constant. Hence, the substance of his character is mainly given by his voice, which conveys power and communicates terror. It is strikingly grave, resonant, and hoarse – almost mechanical, due to the breathing mask. He abnormally dwells on words, that is, he stresses accents more than one would. In other terms, he articulates every single

word so that he ends up speaking rather slowly. His voice participates in his robot-like appearance. Darth Vader is a machine. Of course, John Williams' theme for Vader is written to underline this attribute – a brassy martial march with a highly-rated tempo. Except for a few occasions in the trilogy (some of which have been and will be referred to) each of his appearances is pointed up by his musical theme.

This is the concept of Richard Wagner's leitmotif that Williams uses in Star Wars. Its effect is simple: it helps the audience to relate to the character. In the trilogy almost every character has its own theme – Luke, Ben, Leia, Vader, Yoda, the Emperor, and other subsidiary characters such as Threepio and Artoo, the Ewoks, Jabba the Hutt, and Boba Fett. The principle of the leitmotif hinges on the playing of the same theme every time the character appears on the screen, or if an element refers to it, but each occurrence of the motif is differently orchestrated. In that respect, the score is rich (although themes recur they do not constitute the entire score) and familiar to the ear.

Be that as it may, Vader's theme is the principal motif in Episode V and it contributes to turning Vader into a monster in the eyes of the audience. But this is only for Vader's physical appearance, voice, and theme. What makes Vader the evil character in Episode IV and Episode V is eventually his deeds in accord to his ideology. At the moment in the film that corresponds to the Three Temptations, Vader has already executed two subordinates. The *mise-en-scène* of the last one deserves a special concern for the reader to grasp why the audience is likely to have prevailed over desire.

On Hoth, at the opening of Episode V, the newly-established Rebel base is besieged by the Empire. At the end of the battle, rebels are forced to escape from the planet in a hurry. After a vision he has of Ben, Luke resolves to go and search for Yoda on Dabogah, while Han and Leia escape aboard the Millenium Falcon, pursued by Vader's star destroyers. They manage to miraculously vanish from sight, and Captain Needa, in charge of the operation, has

to apologize to Lord Vader for their disappearance. The film then cuts to a scene on Dagobah and cuts back to a shot of the Imperial fleet floating in space.

In a crane shot of a star destroyer's ground, a man falls on his knees, "Clutching desperately at his throat [...]" (Brackett and Kasdan 88). One hears a muffled, yet crackling noise that saturates the soundtrack, a sound characteristic of Vader's telepathic choking. Then his heavy breath is perceived. Without even seeing him, the audience knows Vader is behind all this. Needa raises his head to look at his executioner. The lighting of his face from the ground gives him a ghastly look, and suffocating sounds are heard – he is dying. He finally collapses on his back at Vader's feet. While the latter walks around the body, the camera pans up to shoot his boots, cape, and then his helmet in a ground-shot (it has been a sequence shot). Meanwhile he says in a voice more raucous than usual, "Apology accepted Captain Needa". He utters this cynical sentence in a tone perfectly devoid of human emotion – flat. His voice mixed above other sounds (there is no music, almost no sounds from the surrounding crew on the bridge) puts to the fore his ruthlessness. The fact that the execution takes place in public on the bridge is an opportune example for his subordinates – Vader does not accept failure. But in this case it was not Needa's fault if the rebels escaped. Vader killed him to calm his nerves.

What is interesting in the described scene is that, once again, the delaying of the expected shot of Vader as the executioner serves only one purpose – to make the audience aware of what is out of the field before actually showing it. The spectators have thus a preconceived idea of who is doing what they see. They already know Vader is the bad guy, it *must* be him. The moment when the audience can see at last Vader's feet and the camera panning up to his helmet validates one's bias. Vader is merciless, and the spectator is thus confirmed in his fright of him. Therefore, when the audience learns that this evil character is the father of the hero, spectators are expected to lose the initial desire of the father quest.

Even if only the most prominent scenes have been selected, Episode V is partly conceived to establish Vader in the role of the villain. The film gradually leads the audience toward the overcoming of desire, though the definite separation from Vader as a model does happen when he unveils the truth to Luke. In addition to the loss of the primary model at the same time as Luke, the audience suffers with him in witnessing the ache on his face, the pain in his voice, underscored by the music.

In turning down the model his father offers him, it leaves Luke no other choice but to cast himself down the pit, the deformed second temptation. Luke's defiant look at his father before stepping off the platform spotlights the pride of his determined refusal. This sacrifice also betokens Luke's overcoming of fear for he does not fear self-sacrifice and death. Fortunately, even if his overconfidence and enthusiasm made him reckless in his departure from Dagobah in the middle of his training, the message in the cave seems to have worked. He controls his fear and transcends it to the glory of his belief in the values transmitted by the light side of the Force. As Christ, but unlike Anakin, Luke resists the Three Temptations.

This crucial scene in the classic trilogy thus serves several purposes. The first one is that of a trial "designed to see to it that the intending hero should be really a hero" (Flowers 126). As in many heroes' adventures in which the hero is tested by wicked powers to prove his worth (McLeish 101-04), or as in the story of Christ, by God Himself, Luke is tested by the audience to check out his belonging to the light side, his heroic commitment – they expect Luke to resist temptation. The other function is that of the revelation. It joins the secret surrounding Luke's father and the mystery around Vader. When the two are finally tied to become one, spectators are meant to refuse Vader's model, for it is in contradiction with everything they have learned in their identification with Luke. And Vader's malevolence has no other purpose but to make the audience repudiate the father quest, the original desire of

the mimesis. Ultimately, in acclaiming Luke's transcendence of fear in his sacrifice, the audience as well as the hero, are now ready for compassion.

## **PART III**

### **The Message of Christianity**

Luke Skywalker has thus succeeded in transcending fear and desire. He has acknowledged his shadow side and has rejected the model of his father. Yet, two steps remain for Luke to become the perfect hero – the completion of the balancing of opposites and the finding of his destiny.

After Luke's fall into the shaft, he is rescued by Leia aboard the Millennium Falcon, which is immediately chased by Imperial TIE Fighters. Vader is trying to catch the Falcon with a tractor beam. A brief scene enables the audience to be aware of Luke's acceptance of Vader as his father. The latter calls for Luke by telepathy, the montage making the transitions from Vader's ship to the Falcon by rapid dissolving. Each line coincides with a close-up shot of the corresponding character, while a subtle, attractive flute rendition of Vader's theme conveys the beguilement of his son:

VADER. Luke.

LUKE. Father.

VADER. Son, come with me. (duration on the last word)

LUKE. Ben, why didn't you tell me?

The editing of shots of Vader rapidly dissolving in shots of Luke and vice versa is the only occurrence throughout the saga. Commonly, the film simply cuts from one shot to another to end up with a succession of shots. But this process clearly reflects the "melting" of Vader into Luke and Luke into Vader. It pictures their bond. Moreover, as the transition is fast, Luke's response to Vader is immediate. He admits Vader as his father, though he rejects the model. Hence, the process is designed to communicate to the audience Luke's resignation

to his lineage. This kinship is confirmed one year later in Episode VI, by the dying Yoda, when Luke returns to Dagobah. Luke's acceptance of his "shadow side" is now over. The former, before passing away, tells Luke he must confront Vader to be an accomplished Jedi Knight. When Yoda dies, Luke is left alone, confronted to his destiny. But Ben appears to Luke under the form of a ghost and, among other things, reveals to Luke he has a twin sister. Intuitively, Luke already knows she is Leia before Ben actually says so. He accepts his feminine side. The balancing of opposites is ended. As always, this characteristic stage in the hero's journey (Campbell 108) has a broader impact. Everyone bears in himself or herself a part of the opposite sex. Refusing the opposite side as an inherent part of our personality leads to behavioral disturbances. We must accept it as such.

## A. Compassion, Destiny, and Bliss

As the first chapter claimed, the overcoming of fear and desire gives access to compassion. This is reflected in Luke's will to try to redeem his father. Although the characters around Luke have tried to guide him in what they thought was his destiny, his path is for him only to be found. The very word *destiny* often recurs in the classic trilogy. For example, in Episode V, Vader says to Luke to lure him, "Your destiny lies with me, Skywalker". And Yoda and Ben would like Luke, even if not explicit, to kill Vader, as shown in these lines, after Yoda has passed away:

LUKE. I can't do it, Ben.

BEN. You cannot escape your destiny. You must face Darth Vader again.

LUKE. I can't kill my own father.

BEN. Then the Emperor has already won.

Yet, the concept of destiny in Star Wars is only an image. Yoda says that "Always in motion is the future" (Brackett and Kasdan 92). Luke does not have a predetermined path, he has choices to make that can change his future. But if he makes the right choices he will fulfill his destiny, his heroic goal. Similarly, Shmi says to Anakin in Episode I, "This path has been placed before you, Annie; the choice to take it is yours alone" (Lucas, Screenplay 83). The concept of destiny in fact represents the finding and following of one's innermost purpose in life. That is the reason why Luke chooses not to listen to Ben. What he feels is right, his destiny, is to redeem his father, he wants to "turn him back to the good side" for he has felt there was "good in him" (Kasdan and Lucas 73). In spite of outward advice, in spite of Vader's evil (cinematographically enhanced for the audience), Luke suffers with his father, with his condition, he feels Vader may not wish to remain what he is, he has compassion for him, and craves to save him. This is the direct consequence of his Jedi training, he has found

strength in himself, he has overcome fear and desire, so that now he has attained the level of the heart. In view of the theory developed in the previous chapter, according to which the audience has followed Luke's evolution toward compassion in its identification, spectators are also supposed to have reached the level of compassion for Vader. Actually, what Lucas did with Luke's character was to create the perfect hero to give people an ideal to follow in their own lives. In reaching compassion, Luke has found his destiny, his bliss. This is a notion Campbell explained in The Power of Myth:

Plato has said [...] that the soul is a circle. I took this idea to suggest [...] the whole sphere of the psyche. Then I drew a horizontal line across the circle to represent the line of separation of the conscious and unconscious. The center from which all our energy comes I represented as a dot in the center of the circle, below the horizontal line. [...] Now, above the horizontal line there is the ego, which I represent as a square: that aspect of our consciousness that we identify as our center. But, you see, it's very much off center. We think that this is what's running the show, but it isn't.

(Flowers 142) (See fig. 1.a.)

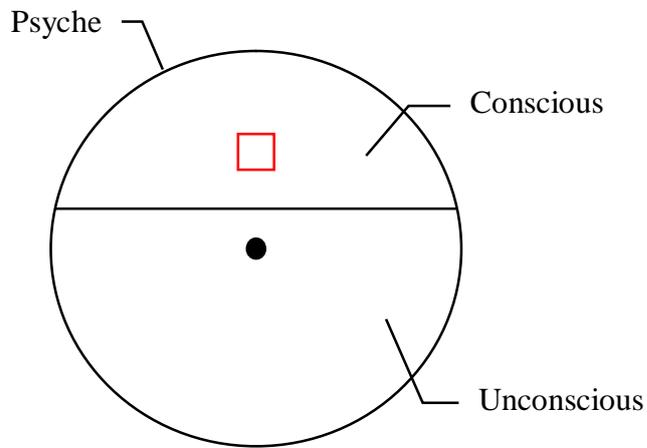
For Joseph Campbell this idea of the "whole sphere of the psyche" was just a "pedagogical stunt" (Flowers 142) for his students. To that end, he simplified the conceptual drawing with a square for the ego and a dot for the id. But the psyche is made, as the theory goes, of four components existing in the two parts separated by the horizontal line: the conscious and the unconscious. In the conscious part resides the ego, while the unconscious bears the superego, the id, and the libido. The ego is defined as "the conscious, rational component of the psyche that experiences and reacts to the outside world and mediates between the demands of the id and superego" (Webster, Def. 2.). The id is "the part of the psyche that is the source of unconscious and instinctive impulses that seek satisfaction in accordance with the pleasure principle" (Webster). From the id is derived the libido, "all of

the instinctual energies and desires [...]” (Webster, Def. 1.). As for the superego, it corresponds to “the part of the personality representing the conscience, formed in early life by internalization of the standards of parents and other models of behavior”(Webster). Thus the ego, the thinking and conscious part of the self, tries at once to master improper instincts provided by the libido, and to make one behave in accordance to the mold of society, as expected by what the superego stands for, while forgetting about the bliss, or id.

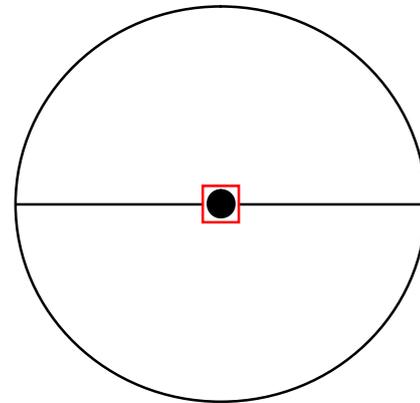
In the Middle Ages, a favorite image that occurs in many, many contexts is the wheel of fortune. There’s the hub of the wheel, and there is the revolving rim of the wheel. For example, if you are attached to the rim of the wheel of fortune, you will be either above going down or at the bottom coming up. But if you are at the hub, you are in the same place all the time. (Flowers 118)

And the hub, the center of the soul, is bliss. Joseph Campbell’s leitmotif holds in three simple words: “ ‘Follow your bliss’ ” (Flowers 148), which means to be in harmony with one’s self. Someone who follows his bliss listens to his emotions and intuitions, even if it clashes with what is expected of him. The unearthing of the hero’s bliss is a vital stage for the hero’s journey to be final. The only means to gain access to the core of one’s soul, that is, to truly comprehend one’s nature, is to undertake an “inward journey” (Flowers 37-67) to the center of the psyche. Someone who does not make the exertion to find himself, to make a self-analysis, will associate his conscious self, his ego, to his needs and envies. He will think “that this is what’s running the show”. But in truth he will not be permitted to reach his source but in dream or in a state of trance, i.e., unconsciously, for the impulse of life will not be touched, and the person will live unhappily, certainly guided by what others expect of him, and not according to his bliss.

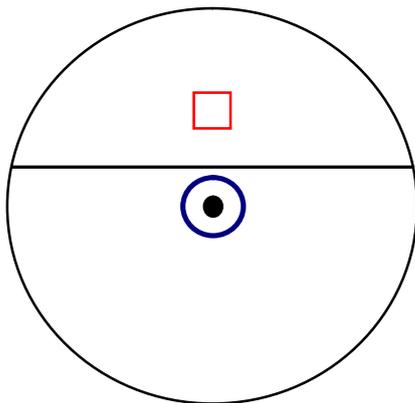
**Fig. 1. The “whole sphere of the psyche”**



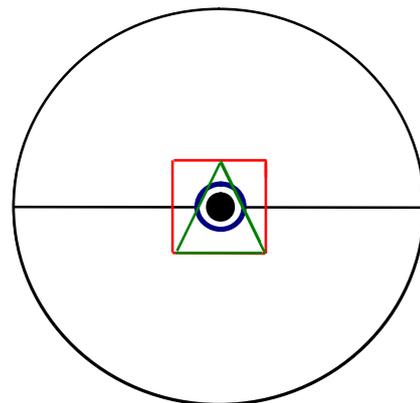
a. Joseph Campbell's  
“whole sphere of the psyche”



b. The hero's psyche  
derived from Joseph Campbell



c. The four components  
of the psyche



d. The hero's complete psyche

A hero, though, will be the one who will succeed in making contact with his bliss through an alteration of consciousness, and to accord his ego and his id. He will know what is good for him and what is not. He will know what he must do, and not what he has to do. Taking up again Joseph Campbell's idea of the "whole sphere of the psyche", one could, without difficulty, imagine what the hero's psyche may look like (Fig. 1.b.).

As pointed out, Joseph Campbell only used, probably for simplicity, the ego and the id in his perception of the psyche. In order to properly grasp what the hero has to undergo prior to the matching of his bliss, I propose to draft the complete hero's psyche, using all the four components. Based on the definitions previously cited, I have drawn a circle around the dot to represent the libido – since it is the energies and desires derived from the id – and a triangle to stand for the superego. (Fig. 1.c.). Obviously, the circle and the dot are drawn in the unconscious part, but the superego, for it basically represents one's education and its sequels on one's life, should also be drawn in the unconscious. Nevertheless, an extension of this definition could be that, first of all, the superego is one's instruction in infancy and childhood, but that in youth, the triangle swells with the models imposed on one, that is, the behaviors to adopt. In any case, the superego should be used as a representation of one's conscience – morality. In that respect, the base of the triangle is drawn in the unconscious and its vertex in the conscious, for some standards are sufficiently conscious for one to act upon them.

As for the hero's psyche derived from Joseph Campbell's idea of the "whole sphere of the psyche", the perfect hero will first and foremost be the one able to balance his conscious and unconscious parts in order for him to reach his bliss – lowering the horizontal line at the level of the center. Through a spiritual transformation, he will take an inner trip to the origin of his soul, compounding his thinking-self, his ego, to his primitive energies, his id. In that manner, whether consciously or unconsciously, the perfect hero will be in keeping with his

true self. He will be at the hub of the wheel of fortune. And the challenge is to keep it that way. But more than that, he will succeed in encompassing his superego and his libido within his ego. As a result, he will accomplish, respectively, the controlling of the models that had been imposed on his education as a child, and that have been put upon his life by society as a grown-up, and the dominating of his primary, quasi-animal, desires and energies (Fig. 1.d). Furthermore, it is of some importance to notice that the different sizes on the four drafts are not at random. Between the third and the fourth draft (Fig. 1.c, 1.d), the dot has enlarged, because in his identification of and to his bliss, the hero's central energy has made him stronger. In the fourth draft the square is bigger than the triangle, due to the choices he has made about his life style, and the circle has decreased, for he also has the faculty to overcome dark impulses (always inherent), and so to compete with the dark side of his libido. Only a "transformation of consciousness", through a spiritual and psychological initiation, allows the hero to make the "inward journey" in search for his bliss.

The steps of Luke's initiation in Episode V all tend toward the perfect hero's psyche as formerly described. First, Luke accessed his unconscious when he entered the cave on Dabogah through a hole (he dreamed the whole sequence). This "inward journey" enabled him to identify and assimilate an aspect of his innermost "instinctual energies" – fear. This acknowledgment was the key to equalize his conscious and unconscious, owing to the fact that it was a lesson he extracted from his unconscious to keep it conscious. Then, thanks to Yoda's demonstration of his lack of faith, he began to unlearn what he had learned. He underwent a "transformation of consciousness". Then, when the truth about Vader was revealed, Luke lost his model and desire at once. His desire was another aspect of his libido that he could be in charge of. He attained compassion. And, as his desire was a desire to imitate, the loss of a model and the rejection of Ben's wish to kill Vader, permitted him to control his superego. He found his destiny. The subsequent admittance of a feminine side

finished the balancing of opposites with his shadow side. He knew where his source of happiness lay, his bliss, it corresponded to his destiny – to redeem his father. As Campbell puts it, “if you do follow your bliss you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living” (Flowers 120).

The spectator, who has been guided toward compassion, now understands in witnessing Luke’s decision to rescue his father, that it was Luke’s destiny. He shall do what he must. Therefore, the spectator may grasp that in his life, he must follow his own path to be in harmony with his bliss, that is, the “satisfaction in accordance with the pleasure principle”. By creating the purely perfect hero and promoting his identification, Lucas has conceived a model for the audience. The message of Luke’s hero’s journey is that one has to find one’s bliss, and to endeavor to reach it in spite of the difficulties. This is possible through self-confidence. Nevertheless, to find our bliss, we have to make a self-analysis in order to balance our opposites. And to follow it, we have to reject the models opposed to it. Luke, in accepting his shadow, his feminine part, and in listening to his own will of redemption, shows to the audience the pattern leading to the sought-for goal. Each person has his own quest, but the wheels are universal. Campbell’s “bliss” could correspond to what Jung terms “individuation”, i.e., “ ‘self fulfillment’ [...]”, to “tend to become a truly individual being [...]”, in the sense of reaching “our final and irrevocable uniqueness [...]” (Inconscient 111). We all have the ability to discover our bliss, to know what makes us utterly happy. If we want to stick to it, we will have to open new doors. Heroes are not the only ones capable of doing so. Everyone can. Heroes are guides only. Of course, as Campbell formulates it, “It’s ridiculous not to live in terms of [...] society because, unless I do, I’m not living. But I mustn’t allow this society to dictate to me how I should live” (Flowers 198). Luke is too perfect a model: he clashes with the Empire’s yoke and is a major figure in its prospective

decline. Yet, we may tend toward it. The world being crowded with individuals, each one that follows his or her bliss participates in bringing life to that world, by the mere fact of being truly alive.

## B. The Mimetic Cycle

When, in Episode VI, Luke reaches his bliss, he is finally ready to come up against Vader. As redemption is going to be brought off, the content of its ensuing message is revealed thanks to René Girard's analysis of the mimetic cycle, on which the interpretation of the moral is rooted. In Je vois Satan tomber comme l'éclair, Girard undertakes an anthropological analysis of the Gospels, depicting Jesus Christ's Crucifixion. Taking evidences from the Scriptures, the Gospels, and mythological texts he demonstrates the apparent resemblance between the Cross and myths, but he mainly disinters the difference that permitted Christianity to last two thousand years. Since his chain of reasoning is rather original, his views almost revolutionary, the following paragraphs recapitulate the main points of his book, often using his own expressions to transcribe the impact of his theory.

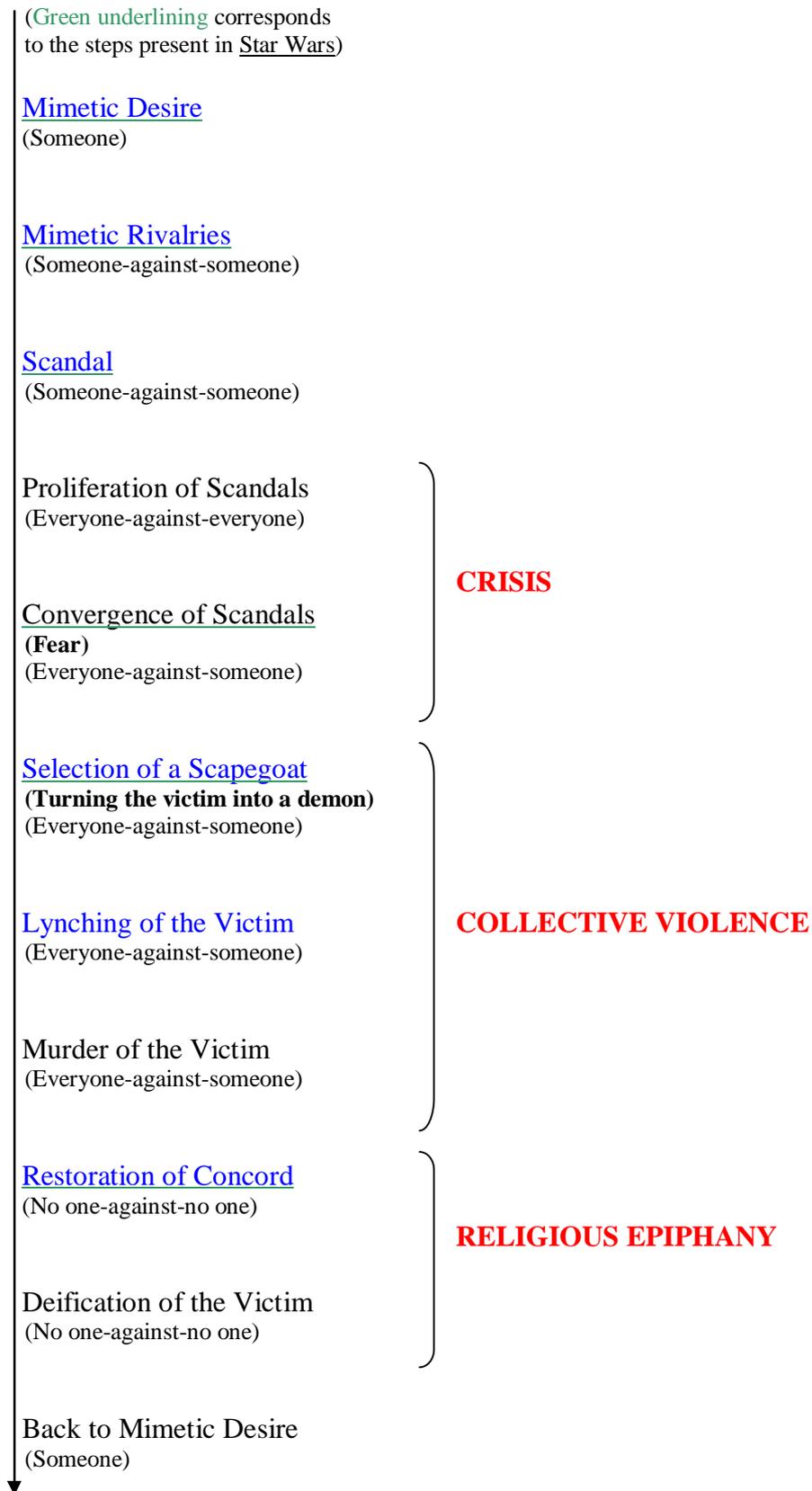
Its entirety rests on the principle of the mimetic cycle (see fig. 2.), at the basis of which lies what Girard calls the mimetic desire: "the neighbor is the model of our desires" (27)<sup>1</sup>. We desire to possess what the other has. Indubitably, the imitation of the other's desire entails mimetic rivalries, because "if the objects we desire always belong to the neighbor, it is the neighbor, quite obviously, who makes them desirable" (27)<sup>2</sup>. It results in a struggle embedded in a vicious circle: the witnessing of a person's desire for the object reinforces the rival's desire, and the former's desire, thus finding an opposition in the very person that inspires his desire, has the sole effect to exacerbate it. When the object of rivalry is constant or regularly occurs, this is what Girard calls a scandal. These three steps (mimetic desire, mimetic rivalries, and scandal) are the genesis of the mimetic cycle.

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<sup>1</sup> "le prochain est le modèle de nos désirs."

<sup>2</sup> "si les objets que nous désirons appartiennent toujours au prochain, c'est le prochain, de toute évidence, qui les rend désirables."

**Fig. 2. René Girard's Mimetic Cycle of Collective Violence**



The first stage of the cycle, the crisis, corresponds to a proliferation of scandals within a community. And when, in a flash of mimetism, these unique scandals merge in a general, unanimous one, it ends up in a “collective victimage”. The flash of mimetism is anchored on the loss of difference (everybody’s desire is identical) and on fear. In every case, what leads to mimetic violence against an isolated victim is a threat of destruction hanging over the community (famine, drought, in fact any disaster, or simply a foreigner who directly incites fear; any reason that is later used by Satan to accuse the victim). However, the “unique victim upgraded to the role of universal scandal”<sup>1</sup> is someone who does not fulfill the community’s criteria of normality (44). Hence in a crisis, there is a transition from proliferation of scandals in an “everyone-against-everyone”, to a convergence of scandals in an “everyone-against-someone”.

Collective violence is the second stage. It corresponds, primo, to the selection of a scapegoat who is “transformed into a demon” (to justify the violence and cleanse the community from its rivalries if the “collective victimage” is powerful enough), secundo to the lynching and, tertio, at the paroxysm of violence, to the collective murder of the victim.

The third stage corresponds to the religious epiphany. The fierce and relentless action against the victim in a spontaneous, unanimous phenomenon has a cathartic effect. Indeed, any individual having participated in the lynching of the scapegoat will have worked off his tensions by the termination of the person everybody held to be responsible for the crisis, and by means of which, peace will be returned to the community. The community’s members will probably take this as a token of divine intervention. The victim who had been transformed into a demon is now going to be deified, since perceived as a benefactor.

This mimetic cycle is the one that, according to Girard, governs the genesis of myths: the founding murder. Few years after the initial murder in communities, the people recalled

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<sup>1</sup> “victime unique promue au rôle de scandale universel.”

that in a near past a crowd phenomenon, leading to the justified lynching of a person, had reestablished concord. That is the reason why these communities perpetuate the cycle at each arising crisis. The quelling of the community after a murder is an experience that can be distinguished, on the one hand, in sacrificial rites (first of humans, then of animals), because the community's members try to please the gods that had taught them the rituals of sacrifice, and they wish to bring back the formerly disturbed peace, and on the other hand, in spontaneous mass hysterias. The latter are the one that had engendered fake divinities, firmly entrenched in the collective murder of an innocent.

Unfortunately, in a flash of mimetism the participants are themselves victims of an illusion. Because they have been deceived, people are not in the capacity to denounce the process. This is what Girard discloses in myths: "No text can shed light on the flash of mimetism on which it rests, no text can rest on the flash of mimetism on which it sheds light" (226)<sup>1</sup>. The Bible and the Gospels are framed in the last type of text. If one exposes the illusion, one is not duped by it. And the illusion is the guilt of the victim. Never was in myths a victim's murder condemned, on the contrary, it was even justified (by the demoniacal trait of the victim). But Christ's Crucifixion, his unanimous expulsion, does correspond to the third stage of the mimetic cycle. In that case, Girard wonders, what makes the story of the Passion so singular.

In the Hebraic bible, the first two stages are present, but quite normally, not the third, for it reflects the renouncement to idolatry, to deification. "The Bible rejects gods grounded on sacralized violence" (187)<sup>2</sup>. To give credit to his point, Girard compares the mythological story of Oedipus, and the biblical one of Joseph<sup>3</sup>. In the former, Oedipus' expulsion is

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<sup>1</sup> "Aucun texte ne peut éclairer l'emballement mimétique sur lequel il repose, aucun texte ne peut reposer sur l'emballement mimétique qu'il éclaire."

<sup>2</sup> "La Bible rejette les dieux fondés sur la violence sacralisée."

<sup>3</sup> Joseph, son of Jacob, was sold to Egyptian travelers by his eleven jealous brothers. But he became Pharaoh's right hand, and when his brothers came to Egypt to seek substantial help against famine, he forgave them by the mere showing of remorse of one of them.

justified (he “sinned” by killing his father and marrying his mother; he is thus responsible for the epidemic sent by the gods to punish Thebes). As for Joseph, the authors of the Biblical text bring attention to the injustice to which he is exposed. They criticize collective violence and by contrast they put to the fore the innocence of the victim. In brief, even if the first two moments of the cycle are present, the Bible exhibits the illegitimacy of collective violence and renounces the process of transforming victims into gods. But more than giving detailed accounts of flash of mimetism, and thus to lay bare its mechanisms, the Bible, in the Decalogue, plainly expresses the primary cause of any subsequent violence. The authors had well understood that violence was the direct result of rivalries, the source of which was nothing else but the mimetic desire of the neighbor’s goods. The last commandment forbids covetousness, i.e., the desire of anything that belongs to the neighbor: “Though shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour’s” (Exod. 20. 17), for they were conscious of the fact that it generates the violence depicted in the four preceding commandments (murder, adultery, theft, and false testimony [Exod. 20. 13-16]).

In the Gospels the third moment, the epiphany, is present. How, then, can a new deification be prevented in a monotheist religion? Christian dogma solves the dilemma in two ways. First, the Trinitarian concept of the unique God (the biblical Yahveh, Jesus [half-man, half-God], and the Holy Ghost [power that reveals Christ’s Resurrection]) is a precaution against the proliferation of gods in the deification of Jesus. Second, the Resurrection, and thus the deification of Jesus is not the fruit of a collective violence (unlike myths) since it comes about three days after Jesus’ death and that it has for origin, in Christian faith, the Holy Ghost, not the community. Contrary to myths, in which the deification is instantaneous and unanimous, Jesus’ deification only progressively emerges from a minority, essentially constituted of the Apostles. The Passion uncovers “collective persecutions, whenever they

happened in human history [...]” (202)<sup>1</sup>. Thanks to the Resurrection, Jesus’ disciples realize their mistake. They, too, have been led into mass hysteria. Written after the awareness of the “collective victimage”, the Gospels narrate the mimetic cycle that leads to the Cross. Beyond the mimetic cycle itself, ending up in the quasi-unanimous expulsion of Jesus, the Gospels display the wheels of the cycle, the contagion, the “collective victimage”, valid for all myths. The Gospels condemn their genesis – the mass murder of a scapegoat.

The historical epoch till Jesus’ Crucifixion coincides with the duration of Satan’s kingdom. Satan is the bad mimetism, the one of rivalries, the one that talks a crowd into lynching an innocent believed guilty. (Girard distinguishes the bad mimetism from the one that is “intrinsically good” [35], the one that is essential for a child to evolve into an adult). Satan foments the mimetic desire concentrated on the neighbor’s goods, hence triggering the mimetic cycle that will eventually lead to a human sacrifice. The finality of the cycle corresponds to the expression “Satan cast out Satan” (Mark 3.23). The Satan who expels is the one that has been fomented by Satan – the crowd. In seducing people, Satan entices them into giving way to their fondness of the perpetual desire of the other’s goods. He amuses himself sowing discord and fomenting scandals. At the moment of the crisis (proliferation and convergence of scandals), the mass, battling with mimetic rivalries, becomes Satan. Satan is mimetism. But in order to prevent his kingdom from auto-destructing in an “everybody-against-everybody”, Satan, the accuser (Zech. 3. 1-2), talks the crowd into believing the guilt of the scapegoat. In that manner, the risen-up-in-arms crowd, the fomented Satan, casts out Satan in transforming the unique scandals into one – the “everybody-against-someone”. Satan casts out Satan. He will be able to perpetuate the cycle for ever: sow disorder and cast himself at the last minute. “Satan is the mimetism that persuades the whole community, unanimous,

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<sup>1</sup> “les persécutions collectives, quelle que soit leur date dans l’histoire humaine [...]”.

that this guilt is real” (65)<sup>1</sup>. Another name for Satan, apart from the accuser, is the prince of darkness (199). Darkness is necessary for the illusion of the accusation. By shedding light on Satan’s secret, the Gospels free mankind from its servitude. They dispel the darkness vital for his secret (flash of mimetism and casting out), instead of acting under it, as in myths.

That is the precise reason why God offers His son Jesus to the Cross. God knows that after the stories of the Passion, Satan’s secret will be unveiled. In reproaching the deification of mythical gods (repetition of the original murder by spontaneous ones) and archaic rites (ritual reproduction of the original murder to please the gods and to consolidate or reestablish order), the Gospels preach, in the end, the concern for victims, the love of the neighbor: compassion. (To prevent mimetic desire, the love for one’s neighbor must be equal to the love for oneself, no more, no less: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”).

Girard also presents the Passion as being a possible trap into which Satan has fallen. Satan thinks Crucifixion is going to be the routine of casting himself out when Jesus dies. Afterwards he will sow disorder again, as always. But God sends Jesus to terminate the cycle. Jesus performs a sacrifice to free mankind from its duplicity, from its servitude to Satan – the bad mimetism, the one of mimetic rivalries. Jesus breaks up the circle, for the innocence of all-time victims having been brought to light, the “collective victimage” can no longer have a cathartic effect.

Girard concludes by giving some of the Passion’s consequences on mankind. First, the preaching to foreign countries triggered the disappearance of archaic religions. (Since one is supposed to reach the level of the heart in adulthood, it may thus be the reason why people felt a connection to Jesus’ wisdom, and that archaic religions, based on the deification of murdered victims, disappeared). Second, rites have been polished until modern time so as to become institutions – if the modern world has evolved from archaic societies, perpetuating

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<sup>1</sup> “Satan, c’est le mimétisme qui persuade la communauté entière, unanime, que cette culpabilité est réelle.”

the original murder, our society is initially anchored on murder. And finally, nowadays the concern for victims increases: “Our age has not made up compassion, indeed, but it has universalized it” (261)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> “Notre monde n’a pas inventé la compassion, certes, mais il l’a universalisée.”

### C. The Humanistic Moral of Vindication

René Girard's mimetic cycle, as the finale is about to disclose, is present in Star Wars, though some of its aspects are deformed. First of all, a mimetic desire exists between the audience and Luke. Every spectator, if he identifies with Luke, would want to handle a lightsaber, pilot an X-Wing fighter, lead a Rebellion for freedom, and redeem a fallen father. In identifying with Luke, in taking him for a model, his desires are the audience's. Second of all, in the diegesis itself, at the origin of the cycle is also the same mimetic desire. This is the desire Luke had in his imitation of his father at the beginning of Episode IV. More than simply desiring an object belonging to a rival, Luke desired to have his father as a model in life. (With these two levels of mimesis, the audience ends up imitating Luke's imitation). Then, when Luke learns the real identity of his father at the end of Episode V, he loses his model, though his father wants Luke to join him. Indeed, Vader's character has spent his time trying to catch Luke. It was a son quest. At truth time, the two quests clash and trigger mimetic rivalries. Luke in Episode VI, having ripened into what was his father before the fall, wants Vader to follow his model, he wants him to turn away from the dark side. He goes from a desire to imitate to a desire to be imitated. But since he has achieved the perfect hero's psyche, similarly to Jesus who encouraged people to follow his model, the one of God, Luke is the model in accord with the light side of the Force. Thus, the mimetic rivalry around the model to imitate becomes a duality around a choice of life, of philosophy, of values. And because it is a rivalry to which the two protagonists collide frequently, and stronger each time, until the end of Episode VI, a scandal emerges.

As has been mentioned earlier on, when Luke returns to Dagobah, Yoda and Ben talk Luke into confronting Vader. The choice to take is Luke's alone, but Ben is clear that only Vader's death can restore freedom. Unlike the classic mimetic cycle, in which an object of

dispute exists between two individuals, another object of dispute between two others, etc. (proliferation of different scandals to merge into a general one), in Star Wars the scandals are not manifold. The only scandal, the general one supposed to bring back concord, is embodied by Vader. Mimetic rivalries are already between the potential victim and executioner. There is no proliferation of scandals for there is only one matter of dispute. Yet, there is some type of convergence of scandals in the sense that other characters (Ben and Yoda) tend to take Vader's death as the unique condition for cleansing the "community" from its "disaster" – the Galactic Empire. Moreover, there is no selection of a scapegoat. It speaks for itself. Vader has been turned into a demon by every cinematographic means, he contributed to the decay of the Old Republic (and thus to the disorder now reigning), and he has arbitrarily executed two subordinates in Episode V. Vader is the perfect scapegoat. If he was to be killed, there would be no regret. His death would be justified. If Luke kills his father, he will act on behalf of Ben and Yoda, the "everybody-against-someone".

Luke has reached a point when he must decide what to do. In fact, as has been demonstrated, Luke has just transcended the mimetic cycle. By overcoming the desire to follow his father, he rejects the origin of the mimetic desire, and by controlling his fear, he cannot perform the execution (fear of the victim is primordial to believe in his demoniacal nature and in the justified murder). Luke, by transcending fear and desire, has reached compassion, he has put himself above the mimetic cycle, preparing for the completion of his destiny by following his bliss. When he is going to face Vader for the last time, Luke will not desire to follow him, and will fear neither him nor death in his refusal. The only act to perform, is redemption.

And so, Luke surrenders to Vader, who leads him to the Emperor in the unfinished, second Death Star. They arrive in the Throne Room, the scandal between them, ready to burst out one way or the other. The entire set is immersed in a cold, blue light. The Emperor is a

stooped form, shrouded in a dark cloak, his face is veiled by a hood. For the first time in the second trilogy the audience sees his face as he welcomes Luke. It is white and wrinkled, it has big bumps on the forehead, and his eyes glow red. His mouth is twisted with cruelty whenever he speaks. He is the evil figure of the dark side.

The finale of Episode VI narrates three actions occurring simultaneously. The Rebel Fleet makes a surprise attack on the Death Star, while a small rebel group led by Leia and Han must destroy the source of its deflector shield on the nearby planet of Endor. Once the shield is down, the Rebel fleet will penetrate the superstructure to knock out the main reactor. If Luke succeeds in redeeming his father, he must escape before the final deflagration. In the Throne Room, Luke's hopes vanish. The Emperor has trapped the Rebel fleet: a legion of his best troops awaits the rebels on Endor, and the Imperial fleet, which was supposed to be dispatched in the galaxy, outnumbers Rebel star ships. The Emperor uses the desperate situation of Luke's friends to yield him to the dark side. For the audience to understand Luke's strain to control his anger, the film edits the two other sets of action to support the Emperor's sayings. For instance, while Luke, the Emperor, and Vader witness the space battle from a Death Star's window, the Emperor bids the Death Star's commander to fire at will on the Rebel fleet. The film then shows the destruction of major Rebel ships, Han and Leia in a delicate situation on Endor, and cuts back to the Throne Room. Luke watches the extermination of his fleet. The Emperor then says:

EMPEROR. Your fleet has lost. And your friends on the Endor moon will not survive.

There is no escape, my young apprentice. [...] Good. I can feel your anger. I am defenseless. Take your weapon! Strike me down with your hatred and your journey towards the dark side will be complete.

Every scene on the Death Star tends at exasperating Luke. And the film's montage is consistent with those scenes for the spectator to understand why Luke, eventually, breaks

down. “He ignites [...]” his lightsaber “in an instant and swings at the Emperor. Vader’s lightsaber flashes into view, blocking Luke’s blow before it can reach the Emperor” (Kasdan and Lucas 95). Luke and Vader fight begins. But Luke is conscious of what the Emperor is trying to do. He makes every effort not to fight, but in the end, he is obliged to hide somewhere in the Throne Room to avoid the combat. This is the scene that foreshadows the criticism of the “collective victimage”.

Vader inveigles his son for the last time. He uses every argument at his disposal. If he succeeds in finding Luke’s sore point, he can make him angry.

VADER. Give yourself to the dark side. It is the only way you can save your friends.

A travelling forward on Luke accents Vader’s pressure on him. Because of Luke’s entirely dark outfit, only his face stands out. The lighting split it in two, one side is blue-lit, the other is naturally-lit, an opposition between the color of his skin, life, and the dark-blue atmosphere reigning in the Throne Room, death. Luke is torn between the dark and the light sides of the Force. A low-sound, solo tuba, intensified by a synthesizer, underscores Vader’s search for a leak in Luke’s mind.

VADER. Yes, your thoughts betray you. Your feelings for them are strong. Especially for...(blank) *Sister!*

He emphasizes in an atypical high-pitched, intense voice the first syllable of *sister*. At last he has found his Achilles’ heel. The *s* consonance reminds one of the image of the seductively evil snake.

VADER. So... (drum’s stroke) you have a twin *sister*.

Little by little, Vader concentrates on the weakness until he comes to say what Luke fears the most:

VADER. Your feelings are now betraying her too. Obi-Wan was wise to hide her from me. Now his failure is complete. If you will not turn to the dark side, then perhaps she will.

Fearing for his sister, Luke “screams in anger [...]” and ignites his lightsaber to meet Vader’s (Kasdan and Lucas 101). The music reaches operatic proportions – a male chorus gives an almost religious dimension to the scene while they fight. If Luke had fought Vader according to the philosophy of the light side, the music would probably have been written as a heroic brass rendition of Luke’s theme. But the fact that the music conveys such dramatic features is a criticism of the picture directed to the audience. It tells one that Luke is succumbing to the dark side. As their lightsabers clash, “Luke’s hatred forces Vader to retreat [...]” until he slices off his hand, holding his blade to Vader’s throat (Kasdan and Lucas 101). Vader has succeeded. “Fear leads to anger... anger leads to hate... hate leads to suffering” (Yoda in Episode I). Luke has almost completed the circle in the path toward the dark side. But the Emperor, who has been watching the scene in unconcealed delight, resurges, accompanied by his musical theme. He proposes Luke to finish what he has begun, “Now, fulfill your destiny and take your father’s place at my side!”. It reminds Luke of the path he has taken for an instant. He realizes how much he is becoming like his father when he glances at the sparks spurting out of wires, and of a mechanical apparatus, from Vader’s arm. The opposition of humanity and freedom embodied by Luke, to machinery and servitude embodied by Vader, is enhanced by inverse angles of a ground shot of Luke watching his hand, and a crane shot of Vader’s cut off arm. Suffering, physical “dismemberment” (Henderson 87), and transmutation lie before him – the last step in the pattern triggered by fear.

After Luke has surrendered to Vader in Episode VI, he proposes his father to come with him, but Vader’s response clearly shows his servitude: “You don’t know the power of

the dark side. I *must* obey my Master". Even if his father's redemption is compromised, Luke does not want to be his father's executioner – he does not want to fulfill the process of "victimage". The last stage he will reach if he goes on, is suffering, like his father. He feels pity for his father as the latter is trapped in his condition. In fact, when Vader triggered Luke's anger, he was obliged to do so in the presence of his master. His role was to unleash Luke's hatred at his own expense. This role of bait of violence is made clear when the Emperor proposes Luke to take his father's place at his side. Vader is a toy, ensnared in his mold. Killing him will not solve anything. So Luke does the ultimate hero's sacrifice in proudly refusing the Emperor's proposal, knowing he will not survive it. But at least, he is a Jedi, like his father before him. He does follow his bliss. He does not listen to outward advice or commands. He controls his desire of power and ignores his fear of death. By overcoming his primal animal instincts, he is above desire and fear, above the mimetic cycle, at the level of the heart.

The Emperor, most displeased, chooses to destroy him. Lightning-bolts come out of his outstretched fingers to hit Luke. Luke is twisted with suffering in front of Vader's eyes, begging for help. His vulnerability is laid bare by crane shots from the Emperor's viewpoint. But then, the camera closes on Vader's helmet – he is watching Luke suffering. The corresponding next shot of Luke is not viewed from above, as if Vader did not look at his son in superiority. The camera cuts back to Vader's helmet, looking at his son, then at the Emperor. A close-up shot of the Emperor displays his cruelty: only a small part of his face is visible under his hood as he clenches his teeth to concentrate his hatred in the raw power of his bolts. He has the face of Death itself. Vader's look comes back on Luke, and again on his master. The scene does not only picture Luke dying, it is aimed at Vader. The audience cannot see what is going on under his mask, but the tracking shot heightens the impact of Luke's pain on Vader, and the shots of Vader looking at Luke and the Emperor are clearly a

token of what is. Vader is torn between suffering with his son and his twenty-years of service, his state of mind devoted to the dark side. But he has realized he was a puppet and now the son that had refused to kill him when he had the chance is dying before him. If he wants to prove to Luke he was right about his father, if he wants to help his son, it is now or never. Moreover, the audience also witnesses the suffering of its hero. The *mise-en-scène* is highlighted by a great crescendo of the chorus and orchestra that stimulates the suffering with Luke, and the spectator's wish that Vader may act in favor of his son. It encourages spectators to hope that there is still good in him. Vader thus gathers strength and grabs the Emperor. For the first time, Vader's deed is accentuated by a glorious brass rendition of the Force's theme. He casts out the Emperor in a bottomless shaft and collapses on the floor, fatally wounded by the Emperor's electrical discharges. He has achieved vindication.

Luke comes toward him. Vader asks his son to take his mask off, to see Luke with his own eyes before dying. While Luke slowly removes the helmet, the audience progressively discovers with Luke, for the first time in the second trilogy, Vader's human face. He has a bald, scarred, white head, red circles around his eyes. One may see the mike used to amplify his voice, which is now weak and trembling. "When the mask of Darth Vader is removed, you see an unformed man, one who has not developed as a human individual. [...] Darth Vader has not developed his own humanity. He's a robot. He's a bureaucrat, living not in terms of himself but in terms of an imposed system" (Flowers 144). From the moment when Anakin Skywalker became Darth Vader, he was caught into the net of the dark side. Luke was right to have compassion for him.

VADER. Now... go, my son. Leave me.

LUKE. No. You're coming with me. [...] I've got to save you.

VADER. You already have, Luke. You were right. You were right about me. Tell your sister... you were right.

Before giving up his life, Vader summarizes the message of the unexpected denouement – Luke saved his father by his compassion for him, by his faith in mankind. There may be good where one expects it the least. Redemption may be accomplished beyond evil and ugliness. The score also musically reflects Luke’s feelings for his father. Williams composed a “bittersweet rendition of the Imperial March played in succession by violins, flute, oboe, French horn and harp” (Matessino, Jedi 26). Violins stand for pity (at his certain death by taking off his mask), flute for grief (while discovering his condition), French horn for Vader’s courage (in sacrifice), and harp for his death.

By sacrificing his life to save his son, Vader has been vindicated. It was Luke’s compassion for him that awoke his. Luke refused to kill him when he had the opportunity. And Vader could not remain insensitive to Luke’s suffering. Luke’s transcendence of fear and desire made Vader’s possible. His fall is balanced. He is a Jedi again – the Return of the Jedi. Ergo, the moral could be that, against all odds, in spite of Vader’s evilness, of what other characters thought, there was still good in him. One should give people another chance. Luke proves Yoda was wrong on one point, when the latter affirmed that, “If once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny [...]” (Brackett and Kasdan 79). It is not because someone has made a mistake that he or she should suffer from it the rest of his or her life. Even if the passage from fear to suffering is prompt, people must be forgiven for their mistakes. Luke’s persistence shows that we must strive against what is expected of us, we must follow our bliss irrespective of obstacles. Thus, Luke overcomes the mimetic cycle by refusing to kill Vader. The latter, taking up again his role as Jesus, having achieved redemption through his son, may die. And as Jesus’ message which was, according to Girard, the criticism of arbitrary executions, the finale of the Star Wars saga promotes faith in humankind. Differently from Jesus, who was innocent of all charge, Vader was guilty of murder. Not only does it expose the “collective victimage”, but it puts to the fore the belief

that someone, mean in appearance, is liable to be redeemed. We must have compassion even if the wrongs are not illusory. This is the first meaning of “Size matters not”. Not to judge by appearances, for people may change. And this is also in keeping with the philosophy at the core of the notion of the Force: if you have faith in yourself, you should have faith in humanity. The message of the finale anchored on Christianity may also be, in the diegesis, the “balance of the Force”. By proving he was not devoid of humanity, Vader brought balance to the Force. He altered it forever, owing to the hope that even in darkness, light may emerge.

After having escaped the Death Star before its explosion, Luke lands on Endor and lights a funeral pyre for his father. An establishing shot pictures Luke’s silhouette in front of the bonfire. The camera pans up, from the flames to the fireworks in the blue sky, from Hell to Paradise. The music also makes the transition – from the mirror of Luke’s grief in a flamboyant rendition of the Force’s theme, to the jovial chants of the Ewoks, celebrating the victory. The audience is as sad as Luke, for at the very moment Vader was ultimately vindicated, he died. The spectator has, indeed, reached the level of compassion for Vader in his diegetic world. However, the fire takes on a purging function and, as in the classic hero’s pattern, from Vader’s death life pours out. Luke permits the “ ‘at-one-ment’ with the father” (Flowers 166), i.e., the completion of the linking back to his source. The word *atonement* also corresponds, in the Christian doctrine, to “the reconciliation of God and mankind [...] accomplished through Christ” (Webster, Def. 2.). In Star Wars, Vader’s atonement makes possible the restoration of liberty throughout the galaxy, and hence, the reconciliation of the galaxy with the Jedi god, the Force. His atonement is the balance of the Force. The Republic is reinstated as the New Republic. Vader is the Savior of the galaxy and the embodiment of Lucas’ message for the audience.

But contrary to the classic mimetic cycle disclosed by Girard in myths, there is no deification of Vader, as for Christ. He is resurrected as a ghost at Ben and Yoda's sides. The circle is now being brought to an end in Anakin's pattern – virgin birth, rise, fall, redemption, death, and resurrection.

Although Jesus' and Anakin's cycles are based on the mythological hero's quest, the final message distinguishes them from it. Since, according to Girard, a mythological hero is someone who has been the victim of a mimetic cycle, to be later deified (the epiphany), any mythological hero is hence rooted in murder. As Jesus' Resurrection was meant to expose the violence regarded as sacred, to pave the way for the concern of victims, Anakin's message, based on Jesus – though going beyond it by expanding the notion of victim to guilt – is also singled out of mythology.

Lucas has probably imbued Star Wars with the scheme of the archetypal hero's journey so as to nourish the connection with people, since it appeals to stages of life everyone goes through. And by departing from it, he was able to deliver the message of vindication. Lucas created a manichean universe – Luke is the perfect superhero, Vader is the bad guy *par excellence*. Besides, the opening credits of Episode IV present it as such: an “evil Galactic Empire”, a “Death Star”, and the issue is to “restore freedom to the galaxy”. But even if idealistic, the world he created bears “guide-signs” for the audience. All are at a symbolical level, but the promoting of the identification with the hero should hit a chord with people. They have all chances to assimilate the philosophy and the message.

Because the real causes of success have remained unexplained, it is not unwise to presume that the different aspects here developed have participated in it. The presence of archetypes links us to others and to nature, it replaces us in our context – society. The transcending of fear and desire is probably not an aspect the audience has retained for its daily life, but in extenso, the correlation of notions such as self-confidence, the path to choose

as being the most difficult in order to reach our goal, the following of our bliss, and the faith in human nature, may have been prominent factors of success.

## Conclusion

In spite of the minute analysis of the most conspicuous scenes in the classic trilogy, it should be noticed that the process of identification has been idealized. Although it seems unquestionable that the audience has identified with Luke's quest, it is however most likely that all the philosophy at stake has not penetrated all the spectators' minds. The message delivered in the cave is buried under many layers, and is not immediately interpretable. It is then possible that a part of the audience has witnessed the scene, or even identified with Luke's fear at the appearance of Vader, but that it has missed the message of the revelation of Luke's face. In that case, if a spectator has not prevailed over fear, he will certainly have based his judgment on what is more directly observable, the superficial layers, which is, the cinematographic transformation of Vader into a hopelessly evil character. Consequently, this type of spectator is led to think that Vader deserves whatever Luke decides to do. If a spectator comes to wish Vader's death, he participates in the "collective victimage". When Vader executes Captain Needa, the shot of Vader's feet is postponed in a way that promotes the audience's belief in Vader's malevolence. This kind of technique may well be used to that end.

As a matter of fact, the devices used to make Vader the archvillain of the story could have been designed to fulfill two interrelated purposes: either to make one lose Luke's model in the journey leading to compassion, or to encourage the flash of mimetism against Vader in the extradiegesis for the one who has not learned to overcome fear, so that the final message of the possible redemption, which is quite plain, should teach the latter an even greater lesson.

Moreover, although the interpretation of the moral is based on Girard's analysis of the meaning of Christ's Crucifixion, one should be acquainted with the fact that his lack of objectivity does not alter the finality of the present investigation. Girard has attempted to adopt an anthropological perspective of the Cross. Unfortunately, the last stage of his mimetic cycle, the epiphany – that supposedly provides the key element in comprehending why the stories of the Passion exposed the illusion of the cycle – relies on the Holy Ghost. Girard claims the Holy Ghost has dispelled the darkness by which the Apostles had been duped, to permit the subsequent Gospels to make the mechanisms public. Girard has come up against the source of the Gospel's unique point of view on victims. The mimetic cycle remains valid for Star Wars, though it has not been penetrated why the four stories of the Passion are the only ones that disclose the nature of the cycle.

Furthermore, since the basis of the present research hinges on the transcendence of fear and desire to reach compassion, and since, according to Campbell, it is a feeling one is supposed to reach in adulthood, it is of some wonder that Star Wars has hit so many teenagers. Still, it had an impact on people of every age. The older ones may have reached compassion through Luke for Vader, but what about the younger ones? As a Star Wars aficionado since the age of ten, I must admit I have always felt drawn toward the trilogy, although I did not know why. Nevertheless, the philosophy at its core had a grip on my imagination. Even if the research I have conducted to write this paper only gave me the opportunity, twelve years later, to comprehend its real scope, its deep layers, even if I have never been in the capacity to formulate it into words, the model of the hero did work on me. Maybe, then, contrary to what Campbell claims, the level of the heart may be attained in childhood. Besides, it is not negligible to remark that Vader is one of the most cherished characters in the saga. In spite of its wickedness, if young people like him, it must be because they understand the message of redemption. In a poll published in a Star Wars fan club

magazine in 1998, Vader was the fourth favorite character. “ ‘I love the way he strangles people.’ ‘He tortured his own daughter and tried to murder his own son! Yet for all the terrible wrongs he committed, there was still a small spark of good left in his twisted, evil, soul’ [...]”, a fan said (Snyder, Characters 70).

Anyway, there have been many theories on the significance of the movies. A well-argued one is from Mary Henderson, who affirms that, “The message is clear: one cannot develop one’s humanity by serving a system” (112). Lucas has always been reluctant to give the real meaning, the real message. One only knows that the reasons he attributes to the success (mythological themes) are consistent with his initial intentions to create a modern myth for young people. Time Out remarked in 1999 that, “The blend of archetypes has provided countless hours of fun for those looking for the ‘meaning’ of the films. The latest theory is that the virgin birth of Anakin Skywalker [...] is proof that it’s all a Christ allegory. ‘Most of the motifs are pre-Christian. Christ was not the first immaculate conception in history; almost every culture has an immaculate conception of whoever their prophets or saviours are,’ points out Lucas” (Eimer 19). Although Lucas says he believes in God, his “spiritual perspective [...] is broader than the Judeo-Christian” (Handy 82).

What I hope to have shown is that, indeed, even if the message is based on Christianity, the pattern of Anakin’s life-cycle, the one of Luke’s quest, the theme of Fall and redemption, the transcendence of fear and desire, are archetypal, thus having meaning beyond Christianity. But many elements developed tend toward a Christ allegory, which is in itself based on more primitive models. In view of the similarities between Anakin and Christ, the analogy was worth establishing. Be that as it may, the attempt was to dig up the deep causes of Star Wars’ success. There are so many layers it would be almost impossible to study them all. But the most substantial ones could be those previously presented. And in gathering them all, it appears that the chief power of Star Wars is that it satisfies a need for religion. The

voyage of the hero is a model for our lives. We learn to see within ourselves our real nature, to grab our bliss, and to follow it no matter what other people say. It tells people to “go down” before “coming up”. This notion of bliss is archetypal. Everyone has to find and follow his or her intuitions. The hero’s adventure, on the whole, by its stages, by the universal contents it carries, links man to man. The Force, anchored in the hero’s journey, for it participates in it, links man to nature through symbols. It also gives people values on the behavior to adopt (cautions against fear, anger, hate, aggressiveness). But more than that, it bears a philosophy of life, that the “size of the task does not matter” in following our bliss. The Force, through its ideology and its connection to the two facets of archetypes, is a way for us to find our bearings in society. The Force in Star Wars is a mediator for us to have access to our collective unconscious. The Force, as a provider of an inner strength, a purpose, a meaning to our life, and a sense of belonging, has the function of any other religion. I think that is the reason for its success. The Force delivers images that replace religion. It is a way to link back to the symbols of the primitive man’s unconscious. Jung wrote:

Whether one wishes it or not, the access to the collective psyche creates in the individual, [...] a revival of life [...]. This revival of life, one intends to captivate it and keep it; sometimes because the subject feels elation in his innermost being, sometimes because another promises himself a vast enrichment of his knowledge; and finally, sometimes because a third discerns in it a key or a means that will enable him to metamorphose his life. (Inconscient 103)

That is the reason why, in having found a mediator to access their collective psyche, people of all ages have returned to see Star Wars in theaters (It was re-released in American cinemas in 1978, 1979, 1981, and 1982 [Snyder and Kausch 40-41]), and have seen it again in their homes on television. Apart from the special case of fans, Star Wars is a movie many

people around the globe have seen time and time again, for they have felt a “revival of life” that gave them a “vast enrichment” of their being. Star Wars is a key to transform our lives.

As a matter of fact, Lucas only fulfilled his role of artist: “Myth must be kept alive. The people who can keep it alive are artists of one kind or another. The function of the artist is the mythologization of the environment [...]” (Flowers 85). The artists’ role is to transmit their knowledge to future generations through myths, through archetypes. But it has to be “appropriate to the time in which you are living [...]” (Flowers 13). So Star Wars was an old story in new clothes, but appropriate in the sense that Lucas transmitted lost images and symbols at a time when people needed them, and original due to Lucas’ treatment of archetypes through the Force and the hero’s journey in a futuristic, though belonging-to-the-past, universe. The passing on of knowledge is something in which Lucas believes, as he said in front of students at the University of Southern California in 1994: “The human race is fighting for its survival every day and our only weapon is knowledge. [...] Gaining knowledge is our only hope for survival. Passing that knowledge on to the future generations is our most important challenge” (Speech 8). The passing on of knowledge is accomplished through archetypes. They link the audience to the hero’s quest, through which a philosophy is carried, and at the end of which a message is delivered. In a world where the most pessimistic views on mankind are held (the modern thinking is often that of man bound to destroy himself by the technological tools he has created), Lucas in Star Wars reasserted a humanistic view of humankind that could basically be paraphrased by the expression, “Love thy enemy as thyself”.

In the end, Luke Skywalker, in his adventures, learns how to live an authentic life, and thus what Lucas has done in supervising the identification with the hero, was to pass the knowledge the hero has progressively assimilated on to the audience. What Lucas has learned, he delivers it through Luke. Yoda, when on the verge of death in Episode VI, when

Luke is ultimately ready to redeem his father, says to the latter: “Pass on what you have learned [...]” (Kasdan and Lucas 39). This is the bond between the audience and Luke. That is what Lucas accomplished. He provided symbols for those who lacked them. He helped us fulfill ourselves. He built a bridge to touch our collective unconscious.

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