

*S A G A*  
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# SAGA JOURNAL

*An academic Star Wars fan journal*

The Saga Journal is a monthly on-line academic review dedicated to the in-depth study of the *Star Wars* saga as presented in George Lucas's six-film series. Our goal is to deliver one of the best collections of scholarly essays on the subject that the internet has to offer.

Here at the Saga Journal, we believe *Star Wars* is more than just an enjoyable space opera set in a galaxy far, far away. We recognize it as a modern myth, a cultural phenomenon all its own. We want to encourage the literary exploration of all aspects of the story as presented in the Prequel and Original Trilogy films.

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# What if Dreams Came True?

by rhonderoo

*What if dreams came true? And you can be who you wanted to be, and you could do what you wanted to do, and you could help who you wanted to help? What if dreams came true, and the world opened up, and you were never, ever afraid? What if dreams came true? But dreams do come true, don't they?*

~ Anakin Skywalker

The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung describes dreams as “the personalized myth, myth the personalized dream.”<sup>1</sup> In George Lucas’ saga, the archetypal tragic hero, Anakin Skywalker, suffers from premonitions at an early age, causing him to make many important decisions that will affect not only him but the entire galaxy. In *The Phantom Menace* we learn that Anakin has had a dream that he grew up to become a Jedi and came back to free the slaves. We haven’t seen this culminate to fruition yet in the prequels, but it’s evident that the dream had significance to Anakin’s place in the universe in the galaxy far, far away. Many fans of the saga hypothesize that this comes when he frees the galaxy from the rule of Palpatine in *Return of the Jedi*. In the Episode I novelization by Terry Brooks, Anakin also speaks of a dream in which Padmé will lead troops into battle. This is later brought about by her re-taking of the capital of Theed with the Jedi’s help and by the destruction of the Trade Federation ship by Anakin.

Later, in *Attack of the Clones*, a more mature Anakin has a dream that his mother is in pain. We see this vague portent come true as Anakin is lured back to his home planet of Tatooine by the incessant nightmares of his mother, Shmi Skywalker, being in danger and suffering. From what we’ve seen of the new movie from official sources and spoilers, in *Revenge of the Sith* another dream plays a major part in Anakin’s destiny, that of the death of his beloved wife Padmé in the birth of their child. After the events on Tatooine that led to his mother’s fate, Anakin feels he must do something to change Padmé’s destiny and sets about trying to find a way to save her. This causes him to make a decision that will cause the very thing he is trying most to deter. In a Faustian like move, Anakin makes a deal with “the devil,” in this case with a Sith Lord, to stop the events of his dream from happening. This brings about with dire consequences for not only himself, but for the Jedi and the galaxy as a whole.

Mythology has always used the concept of dreams and premonitions as something attributed to those with special powers. In the *Star Wars* universe Jedi Knights draw their power from the Force. The Force can lend extrasensory powers and give insight into the future, the past, or the thoughts of others. It is these glimpses into the future that cause the most confusion, heartache, and pain. Yoda tells Luke that the future is always in motion, but, like his father, Luke finds it hard to give his destiny or the destiny of those that he loves over to fate. In Anakin’s case, due to his past experiences, he views his nightmares as literal premonitions instead of the metaphoric dreams that Yoda speaks of, and therefore fails on a much larger scale than his son.

In our universe, dreams are our way of seeing our life from the outside looking in. One could say everything we plan or do comes from a dream or vision of some kind, maybe not the psychic, ethereal kind, but most certainly the ability to see something before we make it tangible or real. Our dreams, vision, and imagination make up part of who we are. The imagination is a wonderful thing, but in the instance of nightmares or unsettling visions, it can make our vision into what feels like a terrible reality. This is the case with the tragic hero and central character of the saga, Anakin Skywalker. In certain

instances, he dreams of those he loves being in peril, and can't give control of the situation over to the Force.

Anakin has trouble separating his prophetic dreams from reality throughout his life. He leans on them as a guide, when perhaps he should take more of Yoda's advice and wait and see what will happen. Anakin Skywalker has never been someone to wait and see, and therein lies the heart of the problem: Anakin is a doer. Even in his later years as Darth Vader, Anakin cannot sit and wait for the answer to come to him; he must go out and find it. He cannot trust someone else to take care of his needs, as it is his nature to do for his own self, to always find a way. His early formative years as a slave instill a survival instinct in him that forms him into what he is later in life.

Anakin's mistake is that in trying to interpret his dreams, he is taking each detail as literal and not listening to the will of the Force. Even in our own universe, Freud states that we should not expect an interpretation of our dreams to fall like manna from the sky.<sup>2</sup> The interpretation of dreams is not always accomplished at a single sitting. When a chain of associations have been followed with no clear picture, it is inevitable that nothing more can be learned from the dream at that point. Based on one previous experience, Anakin decides to take Padmé's fate into his own hands and try to stop the dream from happening. Knowing what we know, we in the audience can safely say it might be the Force's way of warning Anakin of what his future actions will be if he chooses the dark side, but in context of the story Anakin sees it as the Force once again warning him of something that will happen if he doesn't stop it himself.

Anakin has been told or is lead to believe in some way that the Jedi don't have nightmares. Everything is a view into the events of the past, present or future, when it's possible that they are, in fact, just dreams. Part of the problem with the Jedi's handling of Anakin is that they can't understand the experiences he has had as a normal sentient being in the galaxy. He has had dreams before, but they were never made out to be anything other than dreams, with perhaps some special insight. Shmi Skywalker seemed to realize that Anakin had the power to see certain things, but never dwelled on this fact with Anakin. Little Annie seemed to be able to take his dreams in stride as a child and not lend so much credit to them as a guide for any certain path. He told Qui-Gon of his dream, but seemed to view it as something no bigger than it actually was.

One could argue that in the scheme of things in the galaxy far, far away, maybe Anakin was destined to live out his life on Tatooine listening to the Force via his dreams and interpreting them as the Force saw fit. Perhaps it has always spoken to him through dreams for a reason, and like Yoda, he is supposed to divine his purpose through these. According to Jung, even in our own reality, we can think all of our lives that we are following our own purpose, and may never discover that we are, for the most part, "supernumeraries on the stage of the world theater."<sup>3</sup> There are factors which, although we do not know of them, nevertheless influence our lives, the more so if they are unconscious.

Campbell writes, "The unconscious sends all sorts of vapors, odd beings, terrors, and deluding messages up into the mind – whether in dream, broad daylight, or insanity..."<sup>4</sup> Dreams show how things are quirked by the troubles of the dreamer, whereas myths show the problems and solutions are directly valid for all mankind. In mythology, how a dream is interpreted is the part of the journey a hero must make. Anakin must cross the rivers of hell to his own purgatory caused by his dreams in *Revenge of the Sith*. His life from there seems to be one long purgatory until his redemption in *Return of the Jedi*.

Even into his life as Darth Vader, Anakin seems to rely heavily on his feelings and intuition, something he attributes to his gifts in the Force. Luckily for his son and the galaxy at the end, it is what the Force is

telling him through his own conscious that brings about his decision to end the horror and subjugation and do away with Palpatine. At the end, he finally realized it is what he does with this information that counts, and this is the lesson on choices that George Lucas has been trying to teach each of us with his story.

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<sup>4</sup> Campbell, pg.5

# New Hopes: Mothers in the Star Wars Saga

by Sarah

The relationship between fathers and sons has always been a big part of the *Star Wars* saga. After all, it is difficult to find anyone who doesn't remember the first time they learned that Darth Vader was Luke Skywalker's father. But after being introduced to new characters from the prequel trilogy, and meeting old characters in their younger days, it is proved that mothers play a big part in the *Star Wars* saga as well. After all, without Padmé Amidala, the mysterious (until *The Phantom Menace*) mother of Luke and Leia, there would be very little of the saga to be watching...

"The world-generating spirit of the father passes into the manifold of earthly experience through a transforming medium – the mother of the world," writes Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.<sup>1</sup> We have met two natural mothers in the saga so far, Padmé Amidala and Shmi Skywalker. (In the deleted scenes of *Attack of the Clones*, we also meet Padmé's own mother, and her sister who has children of her own). Luke has another mother figure in his Aunt Beru, and Leia also mothers him in *A New Hope* as he grieves for Obi-Wan. But the first we meet in the saga, when it is viewed in order, is Shmi, Anakin's mother.

Shmi Skywalker was kidnapped by pirates as a young girl, and became a slave on Tatooine. She gave birth to Anakin there, and as she tells Qui-Gon many years later, there was no father. Shmi's story has ties with Christianity – she gives birth to a messiah, who she gives up, but later it is her and not her son who is crucified. Lucas and the makers of *Star Wars* came under fire for including a virgin birth as part of *The Phantom Menace*'s storyline, but it adds to the mythology – countless myths and legends have begun with a hero with no father. (Campbell relates a few of them in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Chapter II, Part 4, *Folk Stories of Virgin Motherhood*.) An argument could be made that Anakin's lack of a father is part of what leads him to seek out father substitutes: Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, and lastly Palpatine.

Following Anakin's journey along, after he leaves his mother he becomes closer to Padmé, who he still believes is just a handmaiden. In the junior novel, *Queen Amidala's Journal*, Padmé writes, "For a moment, Shmi and I locked eyes. Something passed between us. As if she was giving her son to me."<sup>2</sup> Padmé at first is a mother figure to Anakin, before his feelings for her grow into lust. She comforts him after they leave Tatooine, the same way Leia will later comfort Luke. Their relationship is quiet and innocent – after all, they are only ten and fourteen – until they meet again as young adults and their feelings towards each other change. Padmé still treats him like a child – she is surprised at how much he's grown, especially when he gives her advice like "Sometimes we must put away our pride and do what is expected of us." And Anakin is seemingly hurt by her refusal to acknowledge his newfound maturity –

*"When you say Annie, it's like I'm still a little boy. And I'm not."*

*Padmé paused and looked him over, head to toe, nodding as she took the sight of him in completely. He could see sincerity on her face as she nodded her agreement, and her tone, too, became one of more respect. "I'm sorry, Anakin. It's impossible to deny you've...that you've grown up."*<sup>3</sup>

Throughout *Attack of the Clones*, Anakin remains focused on the two most important women in his life: Shmi and Padmé. He is too late to save one, which only increases his desire to save the other. When Padmé is separated from him during the battle of Geonosis, he is willing to risk expulsion from the Jedi

Order to save her. Perhaps with his mother now gone, she embodies both roles: mother and lover. It is also probably not a coincidence on the part of the casting team for the movies that Padmé and Shmi look so alike – in fact, Shmi looks not entirely unlike an aged Padmé. In *The Phantom Menace*, she looks like the traditional mother figure – the elementary character of the feminine, who “tends to be associated with earth colors and vegetation imagery.”<sup>4</sup> Padmé is often, especially in *Attack of the Clones*, wearing earth colors.

Padmé is what keeps Anakin sane as the Clone Wars drag on. Despite being warned against possessiveness, Anakin loves her to the point that he’d do anything to avoid ever losing her. This is obvious from just the ending of *Attack of the Clones*, and about to be expanded on in *Revenge of the Sith*. Anakin’s love for her leads into tragedy, tragedy for the entire galaxy as well as just for him. Campbell writes of the Goddess, one who has the features of the Universal Mother: “She is also the death of everything that dies. The whole round of existence is accomplished through her sway, from birth, through adolescence, maturity, and senescence, to the grave.”<sup>5</sup> After Padmé’s death, the galaxy is plunged into darkness. Naboo, her planet, is not seen again, the Empire employs few women, and all the colour has gone out of the galaxy. However, there is hope in the form of Padmé’s children.

As any *Star Wars* fan knows, Padmé Amidala is the mother of Luke and Leia. In the original trilogy she is mentioned only once in *Return of the Jedi*, during Luke and Leia’s conversation. “She was very beautiful,” says Leia, who has very vague memories of her mother that Luke does not, “kind, but sad.” She is never mentioned by Luke in *A New Hope*, although he speaks about his father often. Likewise Leia never before now mentions a mother, only the man she previously thought was her father. Fathers definitely seem to dominate Episodes Four and Five. It is probable that Luke felt like his aunt was a mother to him, and never wanted another mother figure in his life. After she is gone, he has Leia. We still don’t know who is the oldest twin, but it seems likely it is her, as she treats Luke much in the way an older sister would treat her brother. (The twins themselves, though, almost certainly don’t know who was born first, and probably never will).

Padmé has been called the most important woman in the saga – certainly, without her there would be no Luke, and thus Anakin remains Vader. Not only is Luke Anakin’s son, he is Padmé’s son as well – he is the way their love survives. It could almost be the case that Padmé redeems her husband, through her son, while Leia carries on her work in the politics of the galaxy. Padmé is never mentioned by name in the original trilogy, but her legacy lives on.

As has been mentioned, Luke’s other mother figure is his Aunt Beru. She is more sympathetic to him than his uncle is, taking his side during any arguments. In fact, she is not unlike Shmi in the prequel trilogy – she also meets a cruel end, being killed by stormtroopers along with her husband. However, unlike Anakin’s avenging of his mother’s death, Luke is not motivated to murder – instead he asks that he go with Ben Kenobi to Alderaan. His aunt and uncle are never mentioned again – admittedly Luke soon winds up with quite a bit on his mind – but the last chapter of the prequel trilogy will hopefully show that it was them, especially Beru, who gave Luke another chance at life, and a family to replace the one he couldn’t remember. Anakin had no such thing – he did have a family, but was separated from her, and found no mother-replacement in the Jedi Order. The Jedi rules are specifically designed to avoid families, and Anakin pays the price. Eventually, so do the rest of the Jedi.

Both parental figures are important to the saga – *family* is important to the saga, and one of the major themes. The fact that Darth Vader is Luke’s father is obviously of great importance, but the fact that he is Padmé’s son no less so – her strength coupled with his is enough to win the day. Shmi is one of the strongest forces for goodness in the whole saga. Anakin’s love for her and for Padmé may lead him on

his first step towards the dark side, but his son, who is one of the last people in the world now who he could love, brings him back. (A brief spoiler-of-sorts for *Revenge of the Sith*: apparently there is a line towards the end which makes deeper the connection between Padmé and Luke, making Luke not the only one who never stopped seeing the good in Anakin.)

And lastly, at the end of the saga, Leia makes clear her feelings for Han Solo. Even for those who have never read the books where she goes on to have twins, the audience may well think that she will grow to have children, and some of them may be force-sensitive, and thus the circle will continue in her.

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<sup>3</sup> Salvatore, R. A. *Star Wars: Episode II, Attack of the Clones*, p. 120.

<sup>4</sup> McManus, Barbara F. "Structure of Feminine Archetype," *McManus Home Page*, <<http://www.cnr.edu/home/bmcmanus/femarchstructure.html>>.

<sup>5</sup> Campbell, p. 105.

# Recommendation

## Philosophical Force

**Title:** *Star Wars* And Philosophy: More Powerful Than You Can Imagine

**Editors:** Kevin S. Decker and Jason T. Eberl

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*Reviewed by lazypadawan.*

Open Court's Popular Culture and Philosophy Series has produced titles like *Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling In Sunnyvale*, and *The Simpsons and Philosophy: The D'oh of Homer*. The publishers have also explored *The Matrix* (in two volumes, no less), *Lord of the Rings*, *Seinfeld*, and *The Sopranos*. Next they plan on tackling superheroes and hip-hop, among other phenomena.

With the sixth and final *Star Wars* film upon us, Open Court gives the saga the philosophical treatment. The book is a collection of essays written by philosophers, professors, and others examining the questions raised by the films, such as could droids be considered "people"? Why do Jedi lie while Sith tell the truth? Is Yoda a classical Stoic? Was Anakin always meant to fall to the dark side? Other essays use the films to illustrate and discuss various philosophical perspectives. Everything from Taoism to politics to cloning to religion is discussed and the philosophers cited include Hegel, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, and Hume, among others. The book is split into four parts: "May the Force Be With You: The Philosophical Messages of 'Star Wars,'" "Try Not – Do Or Do Not: Ethics In A Galaxy Far, Far Away," "Don't Call Me A Mindless Philosopher!: The Alien Technologies and Metaphysics of The Force," and "There's Always A Bigger Fish: Truth, Faith, and A Galactic Society."

The best thing about the book is that all of the essays are thought-provoking and intelligently-written, even if not every topic will be of interest to every person and even if you find yourself disagreeing with the philosophical slant or with their perception of the films. Many of the authors are clearly fans of the series and are sufficiently knowledgeable about the story. My favorite essays were "The Force Is With Us: Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit Strikes Back At The Empire," mostly for its sympathetic view of Anakin and its admiration for the saga as a whole, "By Any Means Necessary: Tyranny, Democracy, Republic, and Empire," "A Certain Point of View: Lying Jedi, Honest Sith, and the Viewers Who Love Them" for its interesting take on that issue, and "You Cannot Escape Your Destiny (Or Can You?): Freedom and Predetermination in the Skywalker Family."

Another nice aspect of the book is that the mix of essays covers the whole saga, not just one trilogy over the other. For the most part there isn't any editorializing about the films with the exception of one essay that accuses the saga, by solely examining *The Empire Strikes Back*, of humanizing technology while dehumanizing the human characters. This is strange since the films emphasize over and over that technology has the potential to dehumanize.

The oddest essay is one about environmental ethics. When the author is questioning the ethics of Luke taking out womprats, she's going to have quite a few people rolling their eyes and otherwise ignoring the points of the rest of her essay.

But even so, the essays beat fanboy message board rants any day of the week. The book will please those who have always viewed the saga as more than simple entertainment and perhaps make reading about philosophy a bit easier for those who would otherwise avoid the topic.

# Discovering *Star Wars*

## AnakinAdvocate

My genesis as a *Star Wars* fan began a few days after *Star Wars*' 1977 debut. Two radio DJs were talking about the new science fiction movie in terms I had seldom heard. This jaded pair was almost giggly about the film, but what got me was the comment, "How about that battle at the end – was that some kind of rumble or what?!" I'm indebted to these anonymous jocks, because from that moment I was hooked and had to see what caused such a reaction.

I was 27, raised on the likes of *Buck Rogers* and *Flash Gordon*. My gold standard of science fiction was *Forbidden Planet*, *War of the Worlds*, and *Star Trek*. It's hard to convey to those too young to remember the pre-modern special effects days just what effect the opening shot of Princess Leia's spaceship and the pursuing Star Destroyer had on people like me. I had been raised on Emperor Ming the Merciless' spaceships suspended by visible strings. *Star Wars* was quite the epiphany for me.

Lucas had me from that moment. And yeah, I thought the "rumble" at the end was incredible, just like the DJs. Since then, I've followed the saga faithfully, raising a new generation of fanatics (my three kids). However, though I know my kids love the saga, I somehow regret that they – having grown up in the post-Episode IV era – never quite experienced the thrill my generation did following those opening credits. What a rush!

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