

SAGA
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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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The Women In Anakin's Life

by lazypadawan

Anakin Skywalker's downfall was the result of his overpowering emotions and the determination to literally do anything in his power to save his beloved wife from dying. "I won't lose you the way I lost my mother," Darth Vader tells Padmé in *Revenge of the Sith*. Anakin has suffered losses in his life, but none haunt him more than losing his mother and his wife.

More than one observer has noticed a connection between Anakin's intense love for his mother and the intense love he has for Padmé. Several of them have labeled this connection as Oedipal, a Freudian term for the period in a young boy's life when he is unconsciously in love with his mother and desires that love exclusively. The term is drawn from Greek tragic hero Oedipus who usurps his father Laius's throne by killing him and then unwittingly marries his mother Jocasta¹. Certainly one must wonder if it is coincidental that Shmi and Padmé both happen to be dark-haired and dark-eyed. But it is not to say Anakin was in love with his mother in the way he was in love with Padmé. More accurately, Anakin goes from cleaving to his mother to cleaving to Padmé.

Since there is no natural or step father in the Skywalker household, Anakin is the de facto "man of the house" at birth (slave owners notwithstanding). Anakin is blessed and cursed with a depth of feeling greater than that of most people and the only one to accept his affections as a child was his mother. Add to that the adversities of a slave's life bringing mother and son closer together as well as the possibility Shmi may have some Force sensitivity, and you have the makings of a very powerful bond. They were each other's world and it's in Shmi's presence that Anakin feels safe and loved. Conversely, Anakin's protective tendencies began as a child. He feels a natural obligation to protect his mother, an obligation that takes on different forms throughout his life. During the events of *The Phantom Menace*, Anakin's life changes forever when he is offered freedom and the Jedi path. At age 10, he is filled with curiosity and a desire for adventure yet he is not ready to leave his mother. He is still deeply attached to her. Shmi is prepared to sacrifice the relationship with her son in order to give him a better life. She must realize she may never see him again. But Anakin is too young to fully appreciate that sacrifice, nor did he know that he was entering a culture that forbade even familial ties outside of the Jedi Order. His first experience with this culture shock was when he was being questioned by the Jedi Council in *The Phantom Menace*. He doesn't understand why it is significant that he would miss his mother or fear for her. It is natural for him to cherish the intense bond between mother and son, or to want to protect his mother.

The Phantom Menace marks not only Anakin's separation from his mother, it also marks his first meeting with Padmé Naberrie, his future wife. Padmé enters his life just as he is being separated from Shmi. In fact, her presence is the catalyst that leads to the separation of mother and son. Padmé is the herald of Anakin's destiny, for better or worse. It is the mechanical problems on her ship that brings it to Tatooine. This allows Qui-Gon Jinn to encounter Anakin and discover that he's the Chosen One. Anakin races in the Boonta Eve competition to help Padmé and when he leaves Tatooine, she looks after him. It is not coincidental Padmé is older than Anakin, just old enough for her to be in the beginning of adolescence while he is still pre-pubescent. Moreover she is entrusted with ruling her planet. This greater responsibility makes her more mature than most girls her age. So she is not only a peer and a friend to Anakin, "(b)efore she becomes lover, she also acts as a surrogate mother for Anakin in the absence of Shmi."² She provides the maternal gesture of covering Anakin with a blanket when he's cold and listens sympathetically as he admits he misses his mother. He gives her a gift of love, the pure love

of a young boy, in the form of the japor snippet. She will literally carry this amulet to her grave. Throughout *The Phantom Menace*, Padmé expresses caring for Anakin and concern for his well-being. She doesn't want him to race in the Boonta Eve and during the race, she looks on nervously. She takes the time to talk to him on the ship and even when she is constrained by her duties as Queen, she finds a few moments to tell Anakin she still cares about him. Her kindness is not forgotten after the events of *The Phantom Menace*.

Anakin's boyish love for Padmé only grows over the decade apart from her. Interestingly enough, Anakin's love for and devotion to his mother does not fade over the years either. He carries a powerful love for both women in his heart despite not having seen either one of them in years. But fate in *Attack of the Clones* will bring them both back into his life.

It is interesting to note that Anakin first mentions the nightmares about his mother as he and Obi-Wan are standing guard in Padmé's apartment. Already, Anakin's protectiveness toward his mother has been transferred to a protectiveness toward Padmé. In *The Phantom Menace*, Anakin acquiesced to Padmé's greater age and experience. But as a young man, he is now in a position to be the man of Padmé's house as well, and he possesses the skills to keep her from harm. This is why he is insistent on taking a proactive role in finding Padmé's assassin. He wants to show her that he cares for her and is able to protect her.

As Anakin pursues Padmé romantically, his nightmares of his mother's pain and suffering vanish and are temporarily forgotten. They're of less concern to him as he and Padmé grow closer. Then there is the pivotal scene where Anakin expresses his feelings for Padmé. She makes it clear their relationship can go no further. Anakin separates from Padmé and not so coincidentally, he dreams of his mother that night. Moreover, the nightmare is so bad, he's motivated to go find Shmi. Without the possibility of Padmé's love, Anakin reverts to his "first" love, his mother. But once Anakin is troubled, Padmé steps into her role as surrogate mother again. She goes with Anakin to Tatooine, partially to keep him out of trouble with the Council, partially to provide him with comfort and support. For most of the time, Padmé looks on with concern instead of acting authoritatively as she tries to act earlier in the film. She gives Anakin an embrace before he goes in search of Shmi and when he returns, she comforts him in his darkest moments. She also absolves him of murdering the Sand People in retaliation for Shmi's death, telling him "to be angry is to be human." When Anakin won't act to rescue Obi-Wan, out of insecurities from a perceived failure to save his mother, Padmé stirs him to action, helping to bring Anakin back to his old self.

With Shmi gone and with Padmé accepting his love, Anakin's feelings for Padmé grow in intensity. She's the only woman in his life by the end of *Attack of the Clones*, the only mother figure remaining. With the galaxy at war and tensions with the Jedi Council, Anakin feels safe, loved, and secure with Padmé. Moreover, there are two aspects of their relationship that create a more intimate bond than what he had with Shmi. First there are shared secrets: their marriage and the Sand People incident. Second is the sexual nature of their relationship. Anakin is the sort who doesn't take his feelings for anyone lightly, so assuming Padmé is the only woman he's been intimate with, it stands to reason he'd consider their relationship closer than with any other. "She's a substitute mother, lover...all the things the Jedi Order won't let him have."³

"[Padmé]'s a substitute mother, lover...all the things the Jedi Order won't let [Anakin] have."

Therefore, when Anakin is faced with the premonition of his wife's death, all of the emotional and psychological baggage he'd carried from his relationship with Shmi comes to the forefront. He'd sworn

at his mother's grave not to fail again but this time the quest is to save his mother's emotional surrogate, Padmé. Unfortunately, it is Anakin's obsession with cheating death that leads to Padmé's own death. The tragedy isn't just Padmé's death leading to decades of isolation for Vader. It's also that his commitment to evil all but destroys the relationship with the final woman in his life, Leia. Another man ends up raising his only daughter, and for the rest of Vader's life, his relationship with Leia is adversarial. Had Anakin remained in the light and raised Leia himself, they would have undoubtedly been very close. In fact, it's interesting that the very last thoughts of a redeemed Anakin are of her.

Footnotes:

¹ "Oedipus complex," Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oedipal_complex>

² Hanson, Michael J. & Kay, Max S. *Star Wars: The New Myth*. Xlibris. 2001, pg. 359.

³ Smith, Jim. *Virgin Film: George Lucas*. Virgin Books: London. 2003, pg. 253.

“That Boy Is Our Last Hope”: Andrew, *Star Wars* and the Figure of the Jedi in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

by Sophia van Gameren

When the first installment of George Lucas’s *Star Wars* trilogy was released in 1977 it became a cinematic cultural phenomenon with a large cult following. Joss Whedon’s *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (*BtVS*) came to our television screens twenty years later and, like the *Star Wars* trilogy, Whedon’s show instantly drew a cult audience. Cult films and television series draw on themes and ideas used in myth and legend. Although “everyday life” changes from generation to generation, the timeless nature of myth enables the human experience to have continuity throughout the ages that “real life” cannot provide (Sakal 2003, p.239). In all mythology, there are common images, motifs and symbols that together become story patterns. Both *Star Wars* and *BtVS* use mythical story patterns. By comparing the *Star Wars* characters Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader to *BtVS* character Andrew Wells, this paper will explore the story pattern Joseph Campbell refers to as the conflict of good and evil. The mythic pattern of the journey of the hero will be examined by contrasting the two differing yet important journeys undertaken by Luke Skywalker and Andrew.

Cult fandom is of vital importance to *BtVS* as every episode since the pilot actively acknowledges the show’s dedicated audience (Larbalestier 2002, p.228). The word “cult” is defined in *The Macquarie Concise Dictionary* (2003) as “an instance of an almost religious veneration for a person or thing, especially as manifested by a body of admirers.” This definition suggests that certain films and television series are, like religious icons, “worshipped” by a dedicated, yet often small, audience. In this sense, *BtVS* fandom has a great deal in common with the first media fandom, *Star Trek* (Larbalestier 2002, p.229). When the *Star Wars* trilogy hit cinema screens, *Star Wars* fandom mirrored *Star Trek*’s cult fandom. *BtVS* and other cult phenomena such as *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* are full of mythical implications and overtones and the ageless theme of good versus evil is predominant in each of them.

In season six of *BtVS*, Whedon plays on the idea that *BtVS* is a television series with a cult following. Whedon creates a “Big Bad” of human “geeks” – called the Trio – who are fanatics of cult films and series such as *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, James Bond and *The X-Files*. The Trio is made up of Warren Meers, Jonathan Levinson and Andrew Wells, who team up to “take over Sunnydale” (*BtVS*, season six) and become Buffy’s “arch-nemesises...ses” (*BtVS*, season six).

In his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell states that good versus evil, especially within the individual, has always been of great importance. Campbell argues that “it has always been the prime function of mythology...to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back” (Campbell 1993, p.11). Mary Henderson supports this idea suggesting “a myth shows us what we’re up against; it identifies the ‘bad guys’ – who often turn out to be within us...and it helps us find a way to defeat them” (Henderson 1997, p.6). Both Whedon and Lucas explore this idea that the hero and the villain are not opposites but rather they are of the same flesh (Campbell 1993, p.108).

Through the characters of Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, Lucas demonstrates that both good and evil exist within the individual, and how easy it is to give in to the Dark Side. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Luke Skywalker takes his first journey to the Dagobah System. It is here that Luke is shown that both good and evil reside within him. Luke enters a cave where he has a vision of Darth Vader. Vader and Luke embark in a light saber duel, resulting in Luke decapitating Vader. Vader’s mask blows up and

reveals Luke's face. The vision suggests that Luke's shadow side is Darth Vader, and that the Dark Side of the Force exists within Luke as much as it does in Vader (Henderson 1997, p.6). Henderson argues that although Vader personifies evil, he has the potential to be redeemed, yet while Luke personifies good, he has the potential to become evil (Henderson 1997, p.120). Just as opposing characters Luke and Vader demonstrate the individual internal struggle between good and evil in *Star Wars*, so does Andrew in *BtVS*.

Andrew Wells is just one character in the Buffyverse who illustrates the conflict between good and evil within the individual. Andrew is reflective of the *Star Wars* character Anakin Skywalker (Darth Vader). Like Anakin, Andrew is lured to the Dark Side. While Anakin turns evil because he underestimates the power of the Dark Side, Andrew turns to black magicks and summoning demons in order to "belong" in the world and acquire friends.

Andrew is introduced to us in "Flooded" (*BtVS*, season six), when we first meet the Trio. Warren, Jonathan and Andrew are considered to be "geeks"; they have no other friends and do not fit in with the rest of the Sunnydale community. Andrew and Jonathan are illustrated as the "weak" members of the Trio who follow Warren's orders. While Andrew and Jonathan join the Trio in order to do things such as control the weather, miniaturize Fort Knox, conjure fake IDs, use shrink rays and get girls, Warren's intentions for the Trio are purely evil. Like Anakin Skywalker, Andrew underestimates the power of the Dark Side. In "Dead Things" (*BtVS*, season six), Warren hypnotizes his ex-girlfriend Katrina with one of the Trio's gadgets and she becomes his sex slave. When Katrina comes out of her hypnotic state she tells the Trio that what they are doing is rape. After Warren kills her, Andrew sits crying next to Katrina's body. It is at this point that Andrew realizes that Warren's villainous plans are becoming criminal and truly evil. Towards the end of the episode, however, the power of evil begins to change Andrew's ideas and the innocence that both he and Jonathan brought to the Trio. When the Trio discovers that Katrina's death has been labeled a suicide in the police report, Andrew starts to taste the power of evil, and says to Warren and Jonathan, "We really got away with murder. That's...kinda cool."

Previously, in the episode "Flooded" (*BtVS*, season six), Andrew tells Warren that he has no intention of killing anybody: "But aside from the moral issues and the mess, we can get in trouble for murder." But after Katrina's death, Andrew, like Warren, tastes the dark power that comes from murder (Tracy 2003, p.47). Andrew begins to help Warren in his attempts to destroy Buffy and eliminate Jonathan from the Trio. Unlike Andrew, Jonathan is not lured to the Dark Side; he simply wanted to be a part of the Trio in order to "belong." Andrew is quickly seduced by the power of evil, as was Warren, and follows in Warren's footsteps by becoming a murderer.

The journey of the individual is of extreme importance for both Whedon and Lucas throughout their respective stories. Throughout the *Star Wars* trilogy we watch Luke Skywalker, a naïve farm boy, go on a journey that sees him learn about the Force, save the princess, begin his training as a Jedi Knight and learn of his family lineage. Whedon, like Lucas, understands the importance of the journey to his characters. Although Andrew is not a hero like Luke Skywalker, the two characters both embark on life-altering journeys. Andrew's and Luke's physical and spiritual journeys, although very different, are equally important.

Andrew is introduced to us as a morally ambiguous "evil genius," who treats the Trio alliance as a game (Tracy 2003, p.47). But the influence of the evil Warren transforms Andrew into a sinister young man who becomes a murderer. In "Conversations with Dead People" (*BtVS*, season seven) Andrew kills his only remaining friend, Jonathan. Although under the influence of The First, in the guise of Warren, Andrew still consciously chooses to murder Jonathan. It is not until Andrew becomes the Scoobies'

Like Lucas, Whedon understands that evil is necessary in order for salvation and redemption to occur.

“guestage” that he begins to realize that he was evil, and now wants to help the Scoobies fight against The First: “I admit, I went over to the Dark Side, but just to pick up a few things, and now I’m back” (*BtVS*, season seven). It is his redemptive journey, however, that is vital in understanding the character of Andrew and his development, more so than his journey to the Dark Side.

Redemption is an important and recurring theme in *BtVS*. Gregory J. Sakal proposes that “without evil, there would be no struggle, no sacrifice, and hence no possibility of or need for redemption” (Sakal 2003, p.251). In *Return of the Jedi*, the Emperor tries to turn Luke to the Dark Side. In his attempts to turn Luke evil, the Emperor ultimately gives Darth Vader the strength to redeem himself by saving Luke’s life. Luke’s father dies as Anakin Skywalker, rather than the evil Darth Vader. At the end of *Return of the Jedi*, when Luke and the Rebellion are celebrating in Endor, Luke sees his father, Anakin Skywalker, reunited with the other two deceased Jedi Masters, Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi. Like Lucas, Whedon understands that evil is necessary in order for salvation and redemption to occur.

Andrew’s redemptive journey begins after he accepts the fact that he was evil. In “First Date” (*BtVS*, season seven) Andrew tells The First: “I follow Buffy’s orders now. I’m redeeming myself for...killing Jonathan.” After wearing a wire when speaking to The First, Andrew discovers that “redemption is hard” (*BtVS*, season seven). Despite the challenge, Andrew is prepared to work hard, and even to suffer, to amend his murderous past: “I’m good now. When the fight is over, I’m gonna pay for killing Jonathan” (*BtVS*, season seven).

Although Andrew recognizes that he and Darth Vader share similarities – “I’m like Vader in the last five minutes of *Jedi*” (*BtVS*, season seven) – their redemptive journeys differ greatly. By saving Luke’s life and destroying the Emperor, Anakin Skywalker receives redemption just before he dies. Whedon’s characters, on the other hand, are redeemed through living. Although Anakin died as one of the “good guys,” had he lived, would he have been seduced by the Dark Side again? It is one thing to return from the Dark Side just before death, but for Whedon, redemption is about living and making amends for the past, as well as resisting the temptation of the Dark Side day after day. Yet Whedon also questions whether people are ever really redeemed for their actions.

Andrew’s episode “Storyteller” (*BtVS*, season seven) poses an important question to *BtVS* viewers – is redemption ever possible? In this episode Andrew records Buffy’s fight against evil, in order to leave “a legacy for future generations.” Buffy tells Andrew, “You make everything into a story so no one’s responsible for anything because they’re just following a script.” This episode sees Buffy take Andrew to the Seal of Danzalthar. It is here, when Buffy threatens to kill Andrew, that Andrew becomes frightened of suffering the same fate as Jonathan and begins to cry, illustrating his sorrow and regret of his “dark past.” Andrew’s tears close the Seal of Danzalthar, but his grief and remorse continue. Andrew finally takes responsibility for murdering Jonathan, and accepts that he is a murderer who perhaps may never be redeemed: “I killed him. Because I listened to Warren, and I pretended I thought it was him, but I knew – I knew it wasn’t. And I killed Jonathan.” Andrew tells the audience at the end of the episode, “Here’s the thing. I killed my best friend. There’s a big fight coming and I don’t know what’s going to happen. I don’t even think I’m going to live through it. That’s, uh, probably the way it should be.” Andrew abruptly turns off the video camera, letting the audience know he is done telling stories and is ready to take responsibility for his actions. Andrew also accepts that even if he is redeemed, nothing will bring Jonathan back or take away the fact that he murdered another human being.

“Chosen” (*BtVS*), the final episode of the series, implies that Andrew is on the path to redemption. In the battle against The First, although not heroic like Luke Skywalker, Andrew discovers that he has finally found a genuine friend (besides Jonathan). Just as Darth Vader sacrificed his life for his son Luke, Anya sacrifices her life for Andrew. Anya sacrifices herself for a simple human being, not a hero. The significance of this is that Anya thought Andrew was a person worth dying for. Sakal defines sacrifice in *BtVS* as an act that consecrates a higher purpose and is an important part of the journey (Sakal 2003, pp.240-1). Although Anya may have sacrificed her life in order to redeem herself for running away from the Apocalypse of Graduation Day, her sacrifice ultimately enables Andrew to continue his redemptive journey and make amends for his past by living a meaningful existence. This suggests that Anya’s death not only protected Andrew’s life, but also had a higher purpose – Andrew’s life and redemptive journey was not complete, yet Anya’s was. Not only does Andrew appreciate Anya’s sacrifice – “She was incredible. She died saving my life” – but he questions his survival, “Why didn’t I die?” From here, Andrew continues on his redemptive journey and starts to become a person who really “belongs.”

After the destruction of Sunnydale, Andrew appears in the Angel episode “Damage” (*Angel*, season five). In this episode we discover that Andrew has begun to live a purposeful life as he is being trained by Giles to be a Watcher. Although Andrew still appears as his comical self, he takes his role as a Watcher seriously and we see that he is finally living a meaningful life fighting evil and is surrounded by a circle of friends – just like Luke Skywalker.

By drawing on themes from George Lucas’s *Star Wars* trilogy, which was heavily influenced by the content of Joseph Campbell’s book, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, Joss Whedon’s *BtVS* not only has elements of contemporary pop culture but also ancient mythology and legend. Although Andrew provides comic relief in *BtVS*, he is a central character in demonstrating the mythical story patterns of good versus evil and the journey of the hero in the Buffyverse. Andrew demonstrates how easy it is to be seduced by the Dark Side. In his journey to the Dark Side and back, Andrew reflects Anakin Skywalker with similarities so obvious that even Andrew comments on them. Both Andrew and Anakin demonstrate the conflict between good and evil within the individual. Ultimately, however, Andrew wants to emulate the Jedi Knights and what they represent – courage, strength and responsibility. Andrew often quotes and talks about Jedi. He wants to be admired, respected and needed, just as Luke Skywalker was. Andrew’s redemptive journey illustrates that by living a meaningful and remorseful life, he is slowly beginning to reflect the Jedi Knights. Like Luke Skywalker, Andrew wants someone to say of him “that boy is our last hope.”

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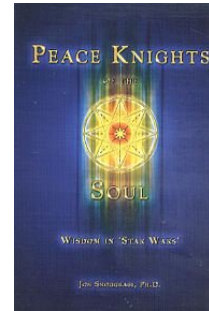
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Recommendation

The Quest for Peace Consciousness

Title: *Peace Knights of the Soul: Wisdom in Star Wars*
Author: Jon Snodgrass, Ph.D. (calstatela.edu/faculty/jsnodgr/jsnodgr.htm)
ISBN: 0-9755214-7-0
Publisher: Inner Circle
Copyright: 2006



Reviewed by Reihla.

When I agreed to review *Peace Knights of the Soul*, I didn't have any preconceived ideas of what to expect from the book. The concept of Jedi Knighthood has always been near and dear to my heart, so mostly I was looking forward to learning a new perspective on that order, while seeing what about this book might be of interest to the typical *Star Wars* fan. Of course, the first thing I noticed was that this book wasn't written specifically for *Star Wars* fans. Rather, its appeal is for anyone interested in learning how to deal with world influences in a forgiving, peaceful manner.

The foreword from Campbellian scholar Dr. Jonathan Young launches the book nicely with a brief discussion of the Jedi mythos as perceived by popular culture. Of special importance is the reputation the Jedi have as seekers of knowledge who are devoted to great causes and dedicated to service.

From that springboard, the author opens by boldly stating that *Peace Knights* was written "for anyone interested in learning forgiveness and non-violent thinking." The prevalent themes used to do this are found in the religions and philosophies of many cultures. Rather than distilling wisdom from these typical channels, however, the author uses examples from *Star Wars* and popular culture to help the reader understand spiritual concepts that bring peace.

There are several points upon which the author bases his thesis which, in my opinion, are pure speculation or matters of his own interpretation, such as the idea that Qui-Gon could have been Anakin's biological father and the idea that the Jedi are celibate as a rule. These are things that *Star Wars* books and films do not specify. Even so, *Star Wars* fans are often given to similar fantastical speculations, especially when their ideas don't conflict with anything on-screen. Even if the Qui-Gon-fathered-Anakin theory isn't the reader's cup of tea, I believe even die-hard fans will be willing to overlook that to get to the important message of the book.

Although there were points I couldn't buy into, I found many others that I agreed with wholeheartedly. What was most refreshing was the humor with which many of these ideas were presented. Most prevalent in my mind is the author's statement that the closest Padmé ever came to infidelity was oiling Artoo Detoo in *The Phantom Menace*. Other ideas that rang true were the suggestion that Yoda's hypocritical fear of Anakin was what ultimately brought about the fall of the Jedi Order and that Anakin's own guilt led to his attacking others, most especially the incident with the Tusken.

Though there are many aspects of the saga used to highlight specific points, the bulk of the job is assigned to Luke Skywalker and his individual journey to Jedi Knighthood. In fact, the heart and soul of this work can be found in Obi-Wan Kenobi's admonition to Luke that "Many of the truths we cling to

depend on our own point of view.” One of the main themes, stated over and over throughout the text, is that reality is created within the mind of the individual. One by one, the author explains how Luke’s preconceived notions are shot down, right up to the point where he realizes that his worst enemy, Darth Vader, is in reality the father he had long idealized and believed dead. From the internal conflict this revelation generated comes Luke’s discovery that peace – refusing to fight – is the key to victory. By redeeming his enemy rather than killing him, Luke’s elevation to the status of “Peace Knight” is achieved.

If you are a fan of *Star Wars* and you like to think beyond the surface ideas of the saga, this book will provide you an opportunity to do that. The author’s sense of humor and his affection for the *Star Wars* saga are evident and make *Peace Knights of the Soul* an enjoyable read. Yes, even for fans whose interests don’t lie in the realm of metaphysics.

Discovering *Star Wars*

Larissa

I remember watching the movies as a child. But I really became a fan through the EU Novels. I was failing English and my mother forced me to start reading books instead of comics. I found most of the books in the library boring, so she said I should read some of my brother's *Star Wars* books. I read the Zahn trilogy and was hooked but I didn't see the movies again until the SE came out. I saw them at the theatre and got the videos for Christmas. When I heard about the Prequel trilogy I was really excited – I even nagged my mother into buying a *Vanity Fair* magazine because it had an article about the new movie. I ripped out the bit about *The Phantom Menace* and threw the rest away. On first viewing, I had a lukewarm reaction *The Phantom Menace*, but I've found that it grows on you, and every time I watch it I like it a bit more. I loved *Attack of the Clones*; it is still my favourite. For a few years after I strayed from *Star Wars* – I even gave away my large collection of books, duh! But *Revenge of the Sith* has brought me back and made me just as obsessed now as I ever was before.

Trent

I didn't care much about *Star Wars* until I saw *The Phantom Menace* on opening day when I was a high school senior. I was blown away by the mythology of the storyline and the sheer scope and spectacle packed in each frame. It's not a common starting point for most fans, but that's where it all happened for me.

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