

*SAGA*  
*JOURNAL*

*Volume 3*

*Issue 2*

*February 2007*

# 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.

---

## EDITORIAL TEAM

ami-padme

Keith Palmer

Lady Aeryn

lazypadawan

Matril

Reihla

# Contents

Saving a Scoundrel: Han Solo and the Anti-hero's Journey, <i>by Reihla</i> .....	1
The Role of the Idealized Image in Anakin Skywalker's Transition to the Dark Side, <i>by Scott Miller, MSW</i> .....	6
Recommendation: <i>Dressing a Galaxy: The Costumes of Star Wars</i> .....	9
Discovering <i>Star Wars</i> stories.....	10

# Saving a Scoundrel: Han Solo and the Anti-hero's Journey

## by Reihla

*"Your friend is quite a mercenary. I wonder if he really cares about anything... or anybody.*  
~ Princess Leia, A New Hope

Hollywood films are full of heroes engaged in heroic journeys in the Campbellian sense of the phrase. Each protagonist follows a calling and is tested by the forces of evil as they seek to complete the quest that will fulfill their destiny. Without question, in the original trilogy of the *Star Wars* saga the protagonist and hero is Luke Skywalker, however much can also be learned by examining the character of Han Solo from a similar perspective.

Han plays a supporting role, pulling many of the Campbellian ingredients into Luke's hero's journey. He engineers the "rescue from without" when he saves Luke in the trench battle. He brings in the "animal familiar" in the form of Chewbacca. He shares "the belly of the whale" with Luke in the Death Star trash compactor, and perhaps most importantly, he fills the role of shapeshifter – the archetypal character whose loyalties are ambiguous or changing. I believe his role in the original trilogy films is greater, though, than simply adding a few key ingredients to the monomyth mix.

Luke is clearly a hero in the traditional sense, with a story comprised of a departure, an initiation and a return. Han, in many ways is Luke's antithesis; his anti-hero, yet as such he undergoes his own heroic transformation and follows his own unique path to redemption. This paper will focus on the ways Han portrays a literary anti-hero, while also touching on aspects of his own heroic journey.

Wikipedia gives us a solid working definition of the term "anti-hero" by explaining that this character "has some characteristics that are antithetical to those of the traditional hero" and that he "will perform acts generally deemed 'heroic' but will do so with methods, manners or intentions that may not be heroic."<sup>1</sup>

When the audience is first introduced to Han there is nothing of the hero about him. We see a roguish pirate, pursued by dark forces and living on the fringes of society. As author Susan Mackey-Kallis defines the anti-hero, Han is "a protagonist who lacks the attributes that make a heroic figure, as nobility of mind and spirit, a life or attitude marked by action or purpose."<sup>2</sup> Han is a brash self-centered braggart – all of which are normally off-putting personality traits – and he is concerned primarily with financial profit and how he might benefit from it. In his world, he is surrounded by people he can't trust, people who would sell him out with very little reason. Ironically enough, these things are the very reason he finds our heroes of value and why he becomes of value to them.

Han's identity as the anti-hero of the original trilogy is the primary reason so many fans were up in arms about the edits director George Lucas made in subsequent releases of *A New Hope*. Much as Clint Eastwood's the Man with No Name (perhaps Hollywood's best known anti-hero), Han Solo has no problem being the one to shoot first in a situation where his life is threatened. It is this innate ability to go about doing the right thing in the wrong way that is at the core of an anti-hero. Han *has* to shoot first to be true to – and perhaps even to define – his character. Changing his response to one of self-defense changes his character on a visceral level and removes the moral ambiguity he represents at this stage of the film.

Kal Bishop, author of an on-line series called “Screenwriting and the Hero’s Journey” writes “the difference between hero, anti-hero and other variations simply lies in situation, motivation and result.”<sup>3</sup> The strongest point of contrast between Han and Luke initially is their motivation. Luke’s hero’s journey begins somewhat altruistically. He sets out to save a beautiful princess because, in the simplest terms, that is what heroes do. Han’s journey begins as he seeks money to save his own neck. It is marked by a complete lack of idealism and it is this lack that separates Han clearly from the wide-eyed wonder and naiveté that is Luke’s stock-in-trade.

As Han begins his journey with our hero we see him eschewing heroic concepts like spirituality or a belief in the greater good. He prefers luck and a good blaster to “hokey religions and ancient weapons.” He laughs derisively as he watches Luke practice with a lightsaber and takes his disdain a step further in his conversation with Obi-Wan Kenobi. It is in this conversation that he denies the concept of fate, saying “there’s no mystical energy field that controls my destiny.” Once again we see a clear delineation between Han’s principles and Luke’s.

Even after our party is captured by Imperials and learns that Princess Leia is being held prisoner nearby, Han has no inclination whatsoever to run to the aid of a damsel in distress. Luke pleads with Han to help him, insisting that if they don’t rescue her “she’ll be killed.” Han coldly replies “Better her than me.” This scene is the first, and perhaps the best, example to illustrate Han’s total devotion to himself. He doesn’t agree to help until Luke appeals to his selfish motives by pointing out that there will be tremendous financial gain to whoever rescues Leia.

Once the party has rescued the princess and reaches the rebel base, Han is quick to grab his promised reward and depart. He leaves Luke behind, disappointed by his new friend’s refusal to stay and fight for the noble cause. As a parting shot, Luke tells the older man to “take care of yourself, Han, but I guess that’s what you’re best at, isn’t it?” The audience, too, is taken off-guard by Han’s decision to leave the rebels in their hour of need. By that point they’ve come to care about the character despite his lack of heroic tendencies and his leaving fills them with a sense of disbelief. It is precisely this leaving that reaffirms Han’s position as the anti-hero.

It isn’t until the last few minutes of the trench battle that Han’s first step on the road to redemption becomes apparent. One of the highest points in the original trilogy is the moment where Vader’s tie fighter is blasted and spins off into space just before we see the familiar outline of the *Millennium Falcon*. This is our affirmation that Han is more than just an opportunist out to feed his own interests. The elation this turn of events inspires and the subsequent medal ceremony might lead us to believe that Han has already changed his selfish ways, however, in the opening of the next film we find him once again determined to leave the rebel forces when they desperately need him.

While the truth is that Han must clear his name to avoid being killed, Leia sees this departure as a return to his former life as a smuggler. She treats him as if he is deliberately turning his back on his new friends and their cause. To some extent that is true. Noble as the cause of the Rebels is and as badly as he is needed, Han is still determined to look out for himself first. Han, in his own self-centered way, understands that Leia cares about him. Even so, her love isn’t sufficient motivation to keep him there, which is a stark contrast to the heroic, unwavering devotion Luke displays.

Han’s transformation from anti-hero into hero begins in earnest when the Imperials attack the Rebel Base on Hoth. Once the assault begins Han does not simply leave as he said he would. He goes back after Leia, much to her surprise. In this fashion, Han has taken up Luke’s hero’s gauntlet, saving the Princess because it is the right thing to do. Perhaps, on some level, he is aware that he loves her even if

he hasn't admitted it to her or to himself. Even then he does not abandon his plan to leave the rebels. He insists he will follow through once he's seen Leia safely to her own ship. Of course, in good dramatic form, these plans are thwarted and he is forced to take her with him.

The next leg of the journey in Han's story is crucial as we watch the movie's heroine, Leia, battle with her romantic interest in this character. Ultimately she will be forced to admit that she loves Han despite the qualities he possesses which aren't particularly heroic. In one particular exchange, she admits to liking him when he isn't acting like a scoundrel. He insists that she likes him *because* he is a scoundrel. On some level, he recognizes that Leia is attracted to him because he isn't noble or heroic. This is an odd turn for the film to take...the romantic triumph of a scoundrel over a traditional hero, yet even before she knows Luke is her brother, she clearly prefers Han.

In the subsequent scenes we see Han evading the Imperials through a series of clever maneuvers that land him in the lap of an old friend and ally, Lando Calrissian. Once again, the anti-hero's archetype is fulfilled. As Kal Bishop puts it, "where the hero's allies will come to his aid, the anti-hero's allies will betray."<sup>4</sup> No place is this more evident than when we are surprised by Lando Calrissian's defection. In truth, this is Han's shady past catching up to him as he is passed into the hands of the very bounty hunters he has avoided since the original trilogy's outset.

It is worth noting, that even before he is handed over to the bounty hunter Han still planned to leave Leia and the rebels. Leia said it best when Han was reassuring her that they would soon be on their way when she replied "Well, then, you're as good as gone, aren't you?" His responding silence is typically taken as agreement. Particularly telling is the scene in the carbon freeze chamber when, at the eleventh hour, Leia admits her love. Rather than replying in kind he chooses to continue his anti-hero's isolation.

**Some might feel Han loses his true isolation the moment he...goes back to fight...the first Death Star...I don't think this takes place until...shortly after his rescue from Jabba's Palace in *Return of the Jedi*.**

At what point does Han become more hero than an anti-hero? To determine this we need to consider at what point he loses those traits that make him an anti-hero, most especially, his self-centered nature and his self-imposed isolation.

Some might feel Han loses his true isolation the moment he turns the Falcon around and goes back to fight in the first Death Star battle. I don't think this takes place until he truly accepts his place in his new circle of friends, shortly after his rescue from Jabba's Palace in *Return of the Jedi*. It isn't until after that point that Han eases into his new roles: that of Leia's love and a rebel hero. It could be that it is only when his friends rescue him from the Jabba's palace that Han begins to realize the depth of their caring. This is especially true about Leia. Despite the objections she raised about Han leaving the rebellion when he was most needed, she herself didn't hesitate to put everything else on hold to go and rescue *him*. After all the saving Han had done, *he* is finally the one his friends rush to save. With so many years of self-imposed isolation behind him, that fact can't be lost on him. Once he realizes how much his friends care about him, what they would sacrifice to save him, then he finally understands that he truly is no longer alone. In a sense, he is reborn and is now free of the darker aspects of his past.

Even after he gains this understanding, he is reluctant to shed his selfish, scoundrel façade. It is possible that he truly is afraid Leia loves him only *because* he is a scoundrel. Perhaps he is reluctant to show her the new, more responsible side of his nature. Midway through *Return of the Jedi* Leia, despite being a

ranking leader in the rebel forces, is surprised by the news that Han is now a General and intends to lead a strike team on the very dangerous mission to capture Endor's forest moon. Clearly Han is as reluctant to advertise his newfound heroic tendencies as he is to openly profess his love for Leia.

On the forest moon this tide changes. Leia disappears during a high speed chase and once Han is reunited with her their relationship is markedly different. He no longer approaches her with sarcasm. We see flashes of his selfish nature the moment he turns away from her while she reels from the shock of learning Luke is her brother. The audience, used to Han's self-centered reactions, is surprised but elated when he deliberately squashes this impulse to turn back to her and offer comfort.

In Archbishop Lazar Puhalo's paper on *Star Wars*, he writes that "The main hero-anti-hero of the series, Han Solo, is reformed and gradually converted to nobility by the direct influence of Luke Skywalker's moral purity and self-sacrificing love."<sup>5</sup> While Luke's influence is critical, I feel Han's conversion was due at least in equal measure to Leia Organa. The basic plot – an anti-hero being redeemed by love – comes close to mirroring the story of one of the first literary anti-heroes, Dostoevsky's underground man. This anti-hero was sarcastic and desperate, lacking a fundamental belief in the good of mankind. He became involved with a prostitute, then hypocritically lectured her about her lifestyle, then gave her his own address to invite further contact. She sought him out again but refused the money he tried to give her. In the end, his eyes were opened by her love and her nobility of spirit.<sup>6</sup>

Han is not in any way as repulsive a figure as Dostoevsky's character, but he is the same kind of paradox and we are clearly meant to question him from the outset. Han is meant to confuse us right up to the moment when we recognize that he has become a hero. Han's overall role in the saga is even more critical than this. His primary purpose, I believe, is to do what anti-heroes do best, to give the audience a character to identify with directly. John Fitch explains this well when he writes that "The anti-hero is often a reluctant savior – one that we follow and adore in spite of his own fallibility and his fundamentally flawed human nature."<sup>7</sup>

Author Victor Brombert takes it a step further and claims "The negative hero, more keenly perhaps than the traditional hero, challenges our assumptions, raising anew the question of how we see, or wish to see ourselves."<sup>8</sup> The audience identifies on a more personal level with an anti-hero than a hero because his flaws make him believable and real to us. In other words, in *Star Wars*, Luke Skywalker is an ideal. He is the hero we all *want* to be, whereas Han Solo is the hero we're convinced we *could* be.

Han's redemption underlines the heroism in the story. He shows conflicts between individual and collective values. He has resisted conformity, both by leaving the Empire (or so we are told) and by being reluctant to join the rebellion. He radically questions authority. He critiques rationalism and traditional values. He represents the common man who raises himself up to a place where ideals have value. He is redeemed by love and by his own choices. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he reaffirms the human spirit in terms of resilience and tenacity.

For Luke Skywalker and Han Solo, the difference between the culminations of their journeys is significant. Luke becomes a true hero in the Campbellian sense by fulfilling his destiny. Han Solo finds the home his heart has been searching for and achieves a moral victory that makes him a better man. Both heroes are victorious and the audience cheers for both, but the latter is a more intimate victory, one that common man can relate to on a personal level.

Works Cited:

<sup>1</sup> (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-hero>)

<sup>2</sup> Mackey-Kallis, Susan. *The Hero and the Perennial Journey Home in American Film*. University of Pennsylvania Press. Philadelphia. 2001. p. 91

<sup>3</sup> Bishop, Kal. "Screenwriting and Hero's Journey – Contrasting the Hero with the Anti-hero," <<http://ezinearticles.com/?Screenwriting-and-Heros-Journey---Contrasting-the-Hero-with-the-AntiHero&id=85602>>

<sup>4</sup> Bishop, et. al.

<sup>5</sup> Puhalo, Lazar. "Star Wars: Another Point of View" <<http://www.new-ostrog.org/starwars.html/>> previously printed in "The Canadian Orthodox Missionary" 1984.

<sup>6</sup> Dostoevsky, Fyodor. (translated by Ralph E. Matlaw). *Notes from the Underground*. New York. Dutton. 1960.

<sup>7</sup> Fitch, John III. "Archetypes on the American Screen: Heroes and Anti-Heroes." *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*. v. 7. Summer 2004. <<http://www.usask.ca/relst/jrpc/art7-archetypes-print.html>>

<sup>8</sup> Brombert, Victor. *In Praise of Antiheroes: Figures and themes in Modern European Literature*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 1999. p. 2

# The Role of the Idealized Image in Anakin Skywalker's Transition to the Dark Side

by Scott Miller, MSW

George Lucas' use of the character of Anakin Skywalker/Darth Vader as a means to explore the meaning and symbolism of the tragic hero myth is particularly evident in *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*. This episode conveys the final pieces of the story of an aspiring young man whose intense need for security leads him to fatally align himself with the antilibidinal forces of the Dark Side. It is therefore a key part of saga's identity as a modern myth, or monomyth, the numerous allusions to mythological and classical themes of which are apparent from multiple theoretical perspectives. The Campbellian emphasis on separation, initiation and return is apparent throughout the saga, and renders its plot particularly susceptible to comparative analysis along the lines of the hero's journey. A Jungian approach examines separation, initiation and return in the context of such basic primal categories as the Wise Old Man, Shadow and Anima/Animus, thus facilitating the study of the interconnectedness of the saga and other cultural myths, both past and present, according to universal archetypes associated with the collective unconscious. Freud's review of this collective unconscious, which he called archaic heritage, identified religiosity as the principle outcome of Man's defensive regression in the face death. His analysis of Moses' transition from Egyptian prince to Jewish rebel identifies the objective psyche as a repository of the collective memory of the murdered primeval Father, thereby raising oedipal themes very similar to those laid out in the canon of the saga.

It is clear, then, that the saga is susceptible to many interpretations, none of which may be said to take literal presence over the others. *Revenge* differs from the rest of the saga, however, in that it reveals a more interpersonal application of Lucas' vision, one that allows for a closer examination of the psychology of its key mythical characters. Nowhere is this more evident than in *Revenge's* portrayal of the process of neurosis and growth in the character of Anakin Skywalker, who despite his seemingly limitless intellectual and physical potential is plagued by behavioral impulsivity, emotional dysregulation and unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships. In this way *Revenge* is susceptible to an interpersonal psychoanalytic analysis. Such an approach offers to provide a deeper understanding of the unconscious forces that facilitated Anakin's transition to the Dark Side, particularly the roles of and conflicts between his egosyntonic idealized image and his egodystonic true self. Such an analysis suggests Anakin's transition to the Dark Side, which is seen as directly related to his fascination in becoming the indestructible, all-powerful warrior-hero, is not due to cosmic predetermination, but to an unconscious striving for security via an idealized image rooted in an unconscious sadistic need to control.

A brief review of Anakin's origins quickly reveals the etiology of this insecurity and its subsequent behavioral and intrapsychic trends. The son of a slave woman, Anakin Skywalker is currently one of the most powerful Jedi in the galaxy. His Jedi teacher, Obi-Wan Kenobi, views him as the Chosen One, or the prodigal Jedi who will bring peace and order back to the galaxy. Indeed, Anakin's superb physical and intellectual abilities suggest an innate, almost messianic strength. Nevertheless, he suffers from intrapsychic and interpersonal deficits that speak to his humanity and mortality. As a child he was forced to find his way in the world without the guidance of a father figure, and during young adulthood he experienced the premature loss of his mother. Anakin's status as a Jedi offered him the chance to avenge his mother's death and the ongoing ability to protect others like her from similar fates. He remains plagued by feelings of insecurity, however, and uses his position to demand respect from those he saves and as a means to consolidate his personal and political power.

Time and again Anakin's behavior puts him at odds with his adopted family, the Jedi Knights. The Jedi emphasis on peace and justice is congruent with Anakin's values, but their belief in restraint and a monastic lifestyle conflicts with his impulsivity and social position as a husband and father-to-be. When the Jedi council denies him the title Jedi Master, Anakin experiences their decision as a parent's failure to uphold a promise and as disregard for his professional potential. In response, he turns to Chancellor Palpatine, an alternative father figure into whom Anakin's ego and libidinal energies are cathected. Palpatine offers to provide Anakin the means to avert the imagery put forth in his allegedly prophetic dreams, which suggest his wife, Padmé, will die during childbirth. In so doing, Anakin associates himself with the Dark Side, a part of the Force that consolidates and validates the feelings, morals and behaviors Anakin views as key to the actualization of a secure self.

Anakin's transition to the dark side is facilitated through the actualization of an idealized image via classical moving against behavior. According to Horney's neo-Freudian school, the idealized image is a set of inauthentic behaviors, beliefs and goals that are unconsciously formulated in response to interpersonal events that elicit feelings of insecurity. Anakin's idealized image emphasizes power and shuns introspection, restraint and humility. It prefers the rigidity of moral absolutes to free choice and displays a narcissistic preference for sameness. Anakin's idealized image is rooted in an unconscious sadistic need to control that resulted from the premature death of his mother and its resultant feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. This is apparent in Anakin's dream imagery, which includes manifest images of his wife's impending death and suggests excessive feelings of guilt, a desire for revenge and a latent belief that he is incapable of assuming the paternal role of protector, perhaps related to the fact that he lacked a father figure as a child.

The gradual actualization of Anakin's idealized image begins when he murders Count Dooku. This act conflicts with the moral code of the Jedi knights and sets the stage for his eventual conversion to the Dark Side. After killing Dooku, Anakin is immediately remorseful. Chancellor Palpatine offers him absolution by concluding that the need to neutralize the political threat Dooku posed justified Anakin's impulsive act despite its being incongruent with the stipulations of the Jedi Code. Anakin's acceptance of this defense speaks to his nascent belief that the Jedi Code, with its emphasis on introspection and restraint, inhibits those behaviors that are most likely to provide him with a sense of security. Rejecting the Jedi Code enables him to avoid the personal responsibility associated with free choice and allows him to engage in unchecked expressions of anger that increase his feelings of strength and security. The murder of Count Dooku therefore shows Anakin how the Dark Side can offer him a respite from the anxiety induced by his chronic inability to consistently apply the Force in a manner that satisfies the moral obligations of the Jedi code and his personal desire for revenge.

Following Dooku's death, Anakin officially begins his apprenticeship to Palpatine. This relationship is the basis of Anakin's final move towards his idealized image, a major part of which grew out of the feelings of insecurity that resulted from a childhood devoid of a protective father figure. Anakin's idealized image places great emphasis on power, strength and other qualities typically associated with masculinity. It categorically rejects such stereotypical feminine traits as introspection and restraint by externalizing them onto others, who are increasingly viewed as worthless and expendable. Anakin's slaughter of the Jedi younglings reflects his sadistic tendency to externalize blame onto those in whom he sees unacceptable parts of himself. A less dramatic but equally powerful example of this is seen in Anakin's falling out with his former teacher, Obi-Wan Kenobi. Obi-Wan represents those aspects of the Jedi movement Anakin sees as weak, threatening and disappointing. He reminds Anakin of the narcissistic injury the Jedi instilled when they denied him the title Jedi Master and comes to be seen as a threat to the actualization of Anakin's idealized image.

Anakin becomes more interested in the rigid application of his idealized image and less focused on the moral and societal issues that initially attracted him to the Jedi cause.

We see, then, that as the plot unfolds Anakin becomes more interested in the rigid application of his idealized image and less focused on the moral and societal issues that initially attracted him to the Jedi cause. When disappointments and betrayals reveal the inauthenticity of this image, Anakin succumbs to feelings of self-hatred, particularly whenever he is obliged to engage in challenges where his true self may reveal its inadequacies vis-à-vis the narcissistic expectations of his idealized image. To such challenges Anakin responds with defensive disavowal, employing sadism, externalization and other means which misdirect his ego and libidinal energies into the Dark side as represented by Palpatine, who seems a narcissistic alternative ego-ideal. As his psyche succumbs to the toxicity of this artificial image, so too does his body, which falls prey to the dissolution of metal and machines.

In *Revenge*, we see Anakin as we have never seen him before; He is a man in the fullest physical sense of the word who possesses the power of Darth Vader and the emotional complexity of a youth no longer protected by the innocence of latency. *Revenge* is therefore unique in that it portrays an intermittent period of Anakin's life that might seem insignificant due to its brevity and simplicity in the face of the saga's more colorful depiction of mythological archetypes, but nevertheless offers the most complete picture we have of Anakin's overall personality. We see an Anakin whose memories of the past influence his actions of the present and color his hopes for the future. We watch him as he struggles with the personal responsibility associated with free choice and lives with the thoughts, feelings and behaviors induced by an authentic erotic fascination. Such emotions are not to be seen again until Episode VI when, after years of repressing any striving for pleasure, he becomes unable to handle his drives when the repressed returns and longs for an erotic abandonment in death. An interpersonal analysis of Anakin's neuroses can therefore be said to offer greater understanding of the unconscious forces that facilitated his transition to the Dark Side. It suggests the film's outcome is not related to cosmic predetermination, a specific archetype, or even the entropy of Thanatos. Rather, Anakin's succumbing to the Dark Side is related to his need for security, an obsession whose origins reside in the interpersonal deficits of his childhood, specifically his mother's untimely death and his lack of a father figure. The resultant compensatory need to re-establish a sense of control is at the root of his unconscious sadistic need to control, his narcissism and his tendency to externalize blame. These parts of Anakin's idealized image are similar to the values and behaviors espoused by the Dark Side, and facilitate his transition from Anakin to Darth Vader.

### Bibliography

Campbell, J. (1972). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Campbell, J. (Ed.). (1976). *The Portable Jung*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Freud, S. (1939). *Moses and Monotheism*. New York: Vintage Books.

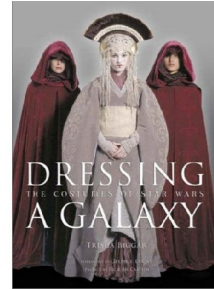
Horney, K. (1945). *Our Inner Conflicts: A Constructive Theory of Neurosis*. New York, NY: W. Norton & Company.

Pannell, Joan. (2006). *Mann's Death in Venice: Half in Love with Easeful Death, and Self-Hatred*.

# Recommendation

## For the Fashion-Minded Fan

Title: *Dressing a Galaxy: The Costumes of Star Wars*  
Author: Trisha Biggar  
ISBN: 0-8109-6567-4, limited edition hardcover 0-8109-5964-X  
Publisher: Abrams  
Copyright: 2005



*Reviewed by Matril.*

For fans of the exquisite costumes worn by the myriad characters of the *Star Wars* saga, this book is a great treat. It is vast in its scope and detail, offering a close look at hundreds of the costumes designed by Trisha Biggar for the prequels, as well as a comprehensive pictorial index at the back that includes a snapshot of every costume from both trilogies. The main section of the book is organized into chapters such as “Jedi Vs. Sith” or “Slaves, Rogues and Bounty Hunters,” each chapter entailing the costumes associated with those characters. Each chapter begins with an introduction by Biggar elaborating on a particular aspect of costume design and creation, as well a page or two of the concept art that inspired the costumes that follow. The pictures of the costumes include a few words by Biggar about the materials and techniques used to create each detail. As would be expected, an entire chapter is devoted to some of Padmé Amidala’s costumes, although her wardrobe is so vast that many of her other outfits appear in other chapters. There are also picture and insights regarding the costumes of the original trilogy, though the far more costume-oriented prequels are clearly the focus.

This is a collector’s book, made of high-quality materials and lush colors, with features such as fold-out pages for details of particularly ornate costumes. It is essentially a book of art and is, not surprisingly, rather pricey. But would it hold any interest for fans for whom the costumes are simply part of the backdrop, who would be frankly bored to read about which materials were used to create Padmé’s wedding dress? Perhaps it can. It offers both a glimpse behind the scenes of the *Star Wars* films, as well as opportunities to gain insights into the development of each character. The book includes quotations from multiple actors and actresses who wore these costumes, regarding their clothing and how it affected their roles. Their quotes range from amusing to illuminating, and it can definitely be worth the read. Perhaps the more casual readers would do better to visit the library rather than purchasing this book, but for die-hard costume fans, *Dressing a Galaxy* is a must-have.

The book was also released in a limited edition hardcover, which comes in a decorative box and includes actual samples of fabric used to make the costumes.

## Discovering *Star Wars*

**wakybz2**

I was introduced to *Star Wars* at the age of about six. I was watching the sixth movie with my cousin. The only thing I that I could remember is eating Ding-Dongs and watching little Ewoks stroll around the screen. From that day on, all I could think of was *Star Wars*. In 1999, two significant things occurred. My baby brother was born and *The Phantom Menace* came out. One thing I specifically remember is dangling my little feet with my Darth Maul sandals whenever he came on the screen. I've since enjoyed many birthdays and Christmases being bombarded with *Star Wars* toys and apparel. Episode III is my favorite of the movies; I followed the big hype even before it came out. I bought the tell-all video game and went to the movie on opening day. I currently have every movie on DVD. The *Star Wars* saga will be something I will always remember, for my entire life.

© 2004-2007, the SagaJournal.com Team

The copyright protects the selection and arrangement of all material posted herein. Individual essays, papers, reviews, and Discovering Star Wars stories are © 2004-2007 by the respective authors.

We are in no way asserting rights in anything that is the sole property of Lucasfilm, Ltd.

All things related to the Star Wars saga are the property of Lucasfilm, Ltd.

Saga Journal  
Volume 3, Issue 2, February 2007  
[www.sagajournal.com](http://www.sagajournal.com)  
[editorialteam@sagajournal.com](mailto:editorialteam@sagajournal.com)