

How the *Star Wars* Saga Evokes the Creative Promise of Homosexual Love: A Gay-Centered Psychological Perspective

Roger Kaufman

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On the surface, it appears that few of the main characters in the six-film *Star Wars* space opera have any sexual romantic love in their lives. Only two heterosexual romances are featured in the movie saga, and the first of these, the fateful courtship of Padmé Naberrie (Natalie Portman) and Anakin Skywalker (Hayden Christensen), is portrayed as horribly destructive for the individuals involved and for their entire civilization. The second relationship, a fitful flirtation between Han Solo (Harrison Ford) and Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher), is distinctly secondary to the primary plot.

Yet when the *Star Wars* film narrative is viewed from a gay-centered psychological perspective, a vibrant galaxy imbued with the propulsive, creative “intelligence” of archetypal homosexual love is revealed. It’s not clear to what extent George Lucas knowingly intended these themes of gay love to be a primary aspect of *Star Wars* symbolic meaning, but I will suggest that, whether the filmmaker is conscious of it or not, the distinctive allure of homosexual romance is so potent, inspiring, politically relevant and potentially curative that it has found its way from the depths of his mind to the scripts and screen. At the same time, I will highlight what I suspect are homophobic aspects of Lucas’s approach, which muffles and sometimes twists the depiction of same-sex love and its archetypal significance in the *Star Wars* universe.

This analysis focuses primarily on the six feature-length *Star Wars* films produced, written and/or directed by Lucas, and does not address story aspects portrayed in some ancillary novels, games or other materials.

Laying the Groundwork: The Theory of Gay-Centered Psychology

My exploration of homosexual themes in the *Star Wars* films is informed by the gay-centered psychoanalytic point-of-view pioneered by contemporary psychologist Mitch Walker, who has explicated a penetrating archetypal understanding of gay subjectivity and homosexual love through a synthesis of the concepts of Freudian psychoanalysis and Jungian psychology with the homocentric thought of numerous generations of gay liberation thinkers, many of whom based their work on the foundational ideas seminally expressed by the Greek philosopher Plato. Writing almost 2,400 years ago, the ancient sage described “celestial” homosexual love in his *Symposium* as uniquely capable of birthing immortal “children” of the mind in the form of wisdom, poetry and art (53). Significantly inspired by Plato, the German activist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825-1895) became the first Western person since the days of antiquity to publicly “come out” as a homosexual, followed by the writer Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), who was the first English-speaking person to discourse openly about the distinctive qualities of homosexual individuals. In 1950, the political activist Harry Hay (1914-2002) co-founded the

first gay rights organization in the United States, the Mattachine Society. He helped to inspire the modern gay liberation movement by describing homosexuals as “a separate people whose time has come” with distinctive social, creative and spiritual qualities (Hay 279).

In order to develop and deepen the revolutionary ideas of these homosexual visionaries, Walker has grounded his gay-centered theory in the work of the psychologist C.G. Jung, who articulated an unparalleled appreciation for the unconscious human psyche as a vast, subjectively “real” inner world structured by *archetypes*, or root feeling-laden images, that shape and inspire people’s experiences and actions when they manifest as *complexes* or semi-autonomous “persons” within the mind that interact with each other in a constant internal drama. Jung suggested that this dynamic interior world is driven by the *libido*, which he understood as the vital “energy” of the mind, featuring its own symbolic intelligence and “intentionality,” encompassing but not limited to the central sexual instinct first articulated by Sigmund Freud (Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* 137). Moving beyond Jung and Freud in his 1991 article, “Jung and Homophobia,” Walker proposed the concept of *homosexual libido*, which describes the distinctive archetypal configuration of purposive psychic energy that can be seen to provide the impetus for same-sex romantic love, modern gay identity and homosexual self-realization (60).

Prior to his clarification of homosexual libido, Walker introduced another archetypal concept that is fundamental to understanding homosexual romance and its psychological meaning, as well as virtually all same-sex relationships. In his 1976 article, “The Double: An Archetypal Configuration,” Walker elucidated the archetype of the *double* as a distinct same-sex figure in the psyche of each individual, understood as a metaphoric foundation for congruent ego identity and also as the basis for “brotherly” and “sisterly” love when projected onto other persons of the same sex (165). It is frequently symbolized by the image of twins, such as the zodiacal Gemini or the inseparable Dioscouri of Greek myth, as well as myriad other similar images of same-sex partners throughout art, literature and mythology.

Walker further described how, when the double archetype is infused by homosexual libido in the psyche of an individual, it functions as what Jung called the *soul-figure*. This autonomous complex of singular erotic romantic charge within the mind of each individual must be related to consciously in a most important way as a central personification of the psyche in order for a person to fully *individuate* and achieve integrated *psychological wholeness*. According to Jung, it is when this inner complex is projected onto another person that romantic love occurs. In his homophobia and heterosexism, Jung thought that the soul-figure always manifested in the image of the sexually alluring opposite sex, known as the *anima* in men and the *animus* in women, but Walker has shown how the double archetype, when charged by homosexual libido, provides just such a soul-figure relationship—in this case same-sex—for an individual’s ego identity (“Jung” 62). As Walker describes it for gay men, this is the experience of “having a special, erotic, twin ‘brother’ who is felt to be the ‘source of inspiration’” inside the psyche (62). Such a homosexual dynamic is naturally most prominent in the psychology of gay-identified individuals, but I would suggest that the visceral experience of watching the *Star Wars* films combined with their symbolic evocation of homosexual love may help people of *all* sexualities in their journey of individuation. In this understanding, affection inspired by the double has a distinctive quality of *libidinal twinship mutuality* that can be developed inside the mind of both gay and non-gay people, leading toward a homosexually “romantic” relationship between the conscious ego and the unconscious psyche that can birth a more spirited, profound and politically alive experience of autonomous individuality, vital new creativity and personal moral centeredness.

This depthful view of human subjectivity is intentionally introverted, focusing primary attention on the libidinal “inner world” of the psyche, and could be described as “essentialist,” in contradistinction to the academically popular theories of “social constructionism” or “postmodernism” as exemplified by French theorist Michel Foucault in such works as *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*. While certain superficial aspects of personal identity and cultural style may indeed be influenced by the insidious power dynamics that Foucault and his followers highlight, the central libidinal urge of a positive attraction for the same sex, in my view, cannot be determinatively so “constructed” by external factors. I argue that homosexual libido aboriginally arises from the deepest center of the unconscious, where the social forces and discourses of any particular historical period have minimal influence. This essentialist perspective is grounded in my own felt experience of my homosexual libido as indigenous and numinous, a term Jung used to highlight the hypnotically compelling and fascinating quality of psychic contents when they rise into consciousness. This “soulful,” gay-centered point-of-view is further supported by recent historical research conducted by, for example, Louis Crompton in his *Homosexuality and Civilization*. He has documented how countless individuals have experienced romantic same-sex love and even a kind of stable homosexual personhood since at least the earliest days of recorded history—often in the face of condemnation or even the threat of death—long before there were modern terms such as “homosexuality” or “gay identity.”

My theoretical approach also departs from the standard Jungian literature, which, with the notable exception of Mitch Walker’s work and that of a handful of other writers, has almost completely ignored homosexual archetypes. A typical example of this homophobic lacuna appears in the “classical” Jungian analysis of *Episodes IV-VI* entitled, *The Journey of Luke Skywalker*, by psychotherapist Steven Galipeau, who otherwise provides a reasonable assessment of *Star Wars* symbolism yet who completely disregards any possible homosexual themes in the trilogy, thereby seriously limiting the depth and import of his discussion.

While Jung himself was unable to fully appreciate the significance of homosexual archetypes, I agree with him that “the psyche is the greatest of all cosmic wonders” (qtd. in *Matter of Heart*), and the *Star Wars* epic, for all its imperfections, provides a richly condensed, symbolic representation of the grandly numinous, evolving unconscious psyche. Many of the other essays in this anthology that highlight such limitations in the *Star Wars* films as sexism, racism, violence and fascism do have their merits, just as my own analysis identifies homophobia in the saga. Yet these largely extroverted concerns, often making highly literal interpretations of details in the films, are not able to uncover the kind of meaning revealed when a more introverted and symbolic—though no less politically aware—perspective is embraced instead, as I will endeavor to demonstrate below.

Romance by Any Other Name: Same-Sex Partnerships in *Star Wars*

The *Star Wars* galaxy is notable for the prominence of the many abiding same-sex partnerships depicted, with at least 28 different pairs of “twin” relationships featured in the six films of the narrative, as listed in Figure 1. All of these same-sex bonds evoke the archetype of the double, and I propose that many can also be seen as meaningfully inspired by homosexual libido, because when viewed in their fullest depth these companionships strongly resemble the typical patterns of same-sex romantic love even though there is no sexual contact shown or implied on the screen. To explore this hypothesis, I have identified seven qualities that are conspicuous in many of the same-sex partnerships portrayed in the *Star Wars* narrative. They describe relationships that are: 1) *mutual*; 2) *primary*; 3) *enduring*; 4) *lifesaving*; 5) *transformative*; 6) *transmissive*; and 7) *transcendent*. Each of these facets will now be described and illustrated with pertinent examples from the films.

1. *Mutual Relationships*

In a caring bond between two people of the same sex, there is often a distinct, twin-like mirroring quality achieved that, as Walker writes, “creates an atmosphere...of profound equality and deep familiarity, a mysterious joyful sharing of feelings and needs, a dynamic, intuitive understanding” (“Double” 169). Mutual regard of this sort is a most notable feature in many *Star Wars* relationships where commensurate worth of personhood is present, even though the participants are often not of the same rank or age. Walker has described a particular manifestation of the double archetype termed the *youth-adult* where “an older person [is] guiding a younger one into adulthood, while in return the younger person inspires new strength in the principles or the particular quest of the older” (“Double” 171). This is perhaps the most common type of twinship in the *Star Wars* galaxy, especially as it is the foundation for the eons-old training method of the Jedi Knights, who as padawan learners are each linked in a close one-on-one relationship with their masters. A prominent example of this tradition is shown by the kind fellowship between Jedi Knight Qui-Gon Jinn (Liam Neeson) and his apprentice Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor). Lucas emphasizes the mutual, twin-like aspect of this mentor relationship by first showing the two Knights enter in *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* (1999) wearing matching hooded robes, identical except for the shade of brown used. Through the course of the film, we see Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon experience some disagreements, but overall they operate together as highly synchronized partners who can respond intuitively to one another’s cues. We watch their reciprocal regard and respect steadily grow until, when Qui-Gon is impaled by Darth Maul (Ray Park), Obi-Wan cries out an extended, painful, “NOOOOO!” of agony, thereby revealing the depth of his affection. After he succeeds in destroying Darth Maul, Obi-Wan rushes to his fallen master, who fondly strokes Obi-Wan’s cheek with his finger just before dying. Overwhelmed by grief, Obi-Wan rests his face on Qui-Gon’s. Only death is able to interrupt the intimate mutuality of their steadfast bond.

Another prominent example of twinship mutuality can be seen in the relationship between Obi-Wan and Anakin Skywalker. At the opening of *Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones* (2002), there is substantial “father-son” friction between the two characters, but a more brotherly dynamic of their friendship develops to the point where, in the opening sequence of *Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith* (2005), we see two identical Jedi fighter spacecraft swirling and twirling together in a beautiful duet through a breathtaking space battle, the occupants of which are soon revealed as Obi-Wan and a newly mature Anakin. When Obi-Wan’s craft is inundated by buzz droids, Anakin disobeys his order to abandon him, saying, “I’m not leaving without you, Master.” Obi-Wan may officially hold the senior position, but the relationship has been equalized by his padawan learner’s growing prowess. The immensely close bond that develops between Obi-Wan and Anakin is strikingly evoked in the authorized novel version of *Revenge of the Sith* by Matthew Stover, who writes: “Blade-to-blade, they were identical. After thousands of hours in lightsaber sparring, they knew each other better than brothers, more intimately than lovers; they were complementary halves of a single warrior” (397).

An additional example of abiding mutual regard can be seen in the odd-couple partnership of R2-D2 (Kenny Baker) and C-3PO (Anthony Daniels). These two droids may not look at all like each other, and have distinctly different personalities, but their unique, mirroring kinship is obvious through many trials and tribulations over the course of the film saga. Indeed, C-3PO sometimes refers to R2-D2 as his “counterpart,” which Webster’s Dictionary defines as “a person or thing closely resembling another, esp. in function...a copy or duplicate...one of two parts that fit, complete or complement one another,” which is an ideal description of mutuality,

effectively echoing the novelized description of Obi-Wan and Anakin cited above as “complementary halves of a single warrior.”

Double imagery that provides supportive visual and thematic echoes of mutuality, equality and mirroring appears virtually everywhere in the *Star Wars* galaxy. There’s the intimate affiliation of Queen Amidala and her loyal bodyguard Padmé shown in *The Phantom Menace*, where both characters are played by the same actress, Natalie Portman. In *Attack of the Clones*, bounty hunter Jango Fett (Temuera Morrison) is raising an identical cloned copy of himself as his son, Bobba (Daniel Logan). There’s also the resilient alliance of Viceroy Nute Gunray (Silas Carson) and his attaché, Rune Haako (Jerome Blake), lasting through *Episodes I-III* until they are murdered together at the end of *Revenge of the Sith*. Even the planet of Tatooine, childhood home of both Anakin and Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill), features twin suns. And although it is between members of the opposite sex, the biological brother-sister twinship of Luke and Princess Leia provides an echoing variation on the more ubiquitous theme of same-sex twinships throughout the narrative.

As Walker puts it, “Double fuses the fate of two into one (“Double” 169). This ultimate unity of the twins can be seen imaginatively depicted in *The Phantom Menace* by the enthusiastic, bi-lingual, two-headed, four-armed celebrity announcer for the dramatic pod race on Tatooine, a Troig named Fode and Beed, two male personalities in one body who speak and even sway together in mutual harmony.

2. Primary Relationships

As can be seen in the above example of the two-headed Troig, mutual twin partnerships in *Star Wars* are often also the *primary* relationship in the characters’ lives, superceding all others in intensity, quality, significance and sheer amount of time spent together. For example, Obi-Wan successively shares primary bonds with both Qui-Gon and Anakin. In each case, the partners are virtually inseparable during their time together, traveling everywhere throughout the galaxy as a team, with the physical and emotional closeness that such space-faring logistics require. As noted above, this pattern of same-sex primary relationship is the *standard* mode of operation for the Jedi Order, which has operated as guardian of the Republic’s basic values for thousands of years. It’s also relevant to note that with the single exception of Anakin, none of the male Jedi Knights are ever shown in the films to be married or have any sort of romantic liaisons with women. In fact, it is explained in *Attack of the Clones* that such attachments are forbidden in the Order.

Primary same-sex partnerships are also the standard mode of relationship on the dark side of The Force, which features principal affiliations between Darth Sidious, a.k.a. Chancellor Palpatine, a.k.a. The Emperor (Ian McDiarmid) and his successive apprentices, including Darth Maul, Darth Tyranus (Christopher Lee), and Darth Vader (Hayden Christensen/David Prowse/voice by James Earl Jones). In all these cases, the apprentice’s life is utterly devoted to his master’s wishes. In *Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi* (1983), the dark Sith Lord even proposes such a relationship to Luke Skywalker when he says, “Fulfill your destiny and take your father’s place at my side!”

Luke is strong enough to refuse the offer partly because of the nurturing he has gained from his more fruitful primary relationship with “Ben” Obi-Wan Kenobi (Alec Guinness), as first shown in *Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope* (1977). Although the time-span of the relationship while both are alive is relatively short, there is no question of their prime importance to each other. A similar statement could be made about Luke’s relationship with Darth Vader, as will be discussed below. One more example of note is the “counterpart” bond between R2-D2 and C-3PO, who are clearly the primary “person” in one another’s lives. They each have

meaningful relationships with other characters, but always, without fail, return to one another's company after any separation. As R2-D2 heads off into the climactic space battle shown in *A New Hope*, C-3PO cries out, "Hang on R2, you've got to come back. You wouldn't want my life to get boring, would you?"

3. Enduring Relationships

The resilient affection between many characters of the same sex in the *Star Wars* films lasts throughout their lifetimes, sometimes shaken but never fully broken by the tensions within the relationship or by external threats. Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon clearly have an indissoluble kinship, suspended only when Qui-Gon is slain by Darth Maul. Another prominent example is the affiliation between Obi-Wan and Yoda (Frank Oz), who are not often the primary figures in one another's lives, but who appear to have a fecund and steadfast lifelong connection. Luke Skywalker's bonds with Obi-Wan and Yoda do not last long in life, but do have an abiding quality once the bond is made. And all of these relationships just named eventually continue past death, as will be discussed below. One more example is the reliable pair of R2-D2 and C-3PO, whose enduring partnership survives multiple separations, dismantlings, and even C-3PO's mind-wipe at the end of *Revenge of the Sith*.

4. Lifesaving Acts in Relationships

The stakes are often extraordinarily high in same-sex partnerships throughout the saga. In *Revenge of the Sith*, Anakin must carry an unconscious Obi-Wan on his back through a burning spaceship in order to keep him alive. Afterward, the partners playfully argue about whether Anakin has saved Obi-Wan's life nine times or ten. As they are constantly in "life-or-death" situations together, it's safe to say that in almost all of the master-padawan relationships, there are multiple opportunities for each to save the other's life. On the dark side of The Force, it is Darth Sidious who saves what's left of Anakin's life after Obi-Wan has left him amputated and on fire beside the lava flows of Mustafar. While in *A New Hope*, Obi-Wan saves Luke from the vicious sand people, and even uses a little Jedi power to bring him back to consciousness. As Walker has written, "The double is a powerful helper, full of magic to aid in an individual's struggles" ("Double" 168). Later in the same film, Obi-Wan sacrifices his own life, instantly transforming into a still-helpful spirit, so that Luke, Han, Leia, R2-D2 and C-3PO can escape from the clutches of Darth Vader.

5. Transformative Relationships

One of the most symbolically meaningful aspects of same-sex pairs in *Star Wars* is their life-changing, transformative nature. Anakin could never have become a powerful Jedi Knight if it wasn't for his fast bond with Qui-Gon, who managed to free him from slavery and whose offer of Jedi training was strong enough to separate the pre-pubescent boy from his mother. Along these lines, it seems reasonable to state that the very *purpose* of the relationships between Jedi masters and their padawan learners is to transform the younger person into a full-fledged Jedi Knight who is capable of effectively manipulating The Force, while the intensity of the relationship often ends up transforming the master, too. Clearly, the course of Obi-Wan's life is set in motion by his meeting and partnership with Anakin, even as his influential training of Anakin spurs the "chosen one" toward many fateful choices that utterly transform *his* life, including a gruesome, Frankenstein-like metamorphosis into Darth Vader by Darth Sidious. Additional examples of life-changing relationships are seen in Luke Skywalker's journey, which is defined by mutually transformative encounters with Obi-Wan, Yoda and Darth Vader.

6. *Transmissive Dynamics in Relationships*

Transformative relationships in the *Star Wars* films most often also have what I am naming here as a “transmissive” nature, which means that mystical knowledge and powers are experientially transferred from the mind and body of the master to his apprentice. This concept is derived from, for example, Buddhist meditative traditions where a true enlightenment experience cannot be merely described but must be impelled to occur in the monk by his or her spiritual teacher through various techniques and exercises over many years of dedicated practice in close proximity.

It may be helpful to imagine an embodied sense of what these *Star Wars* relationships *feel* like for the characters involved, particularly as they revolve around intimate training in the perception and manipulation of The Force. To appreciate this more viscerally, consider the experience as a padawan of being taught by your master how to move The Force with and through your body. As one aspect of this experience, perhaps your master would give you a felt experience of The Force by propelling it through your anatomy for you. As Obi-Wan says about The Force to Luke in *A New Hope*, “It surrounds us, it penetrates us, it binds the galaxy together.” Learning the special “penetrative” properties of The Force is not something a padawan can do merely by reading some sort of high-tech Jedi textbook. As depicted in the *Star Wars* films, the manipulation of this fundamental life energy with “magical” properties must be taught through an intimate, transmissive same-sex partnership extending over many years. A similar dynamic can just as easily be imagined in the relationship between Darth Sidious and his apprentices, as he transmits to each of them what he claims to be the even-more-powerful magic of the dark side of The Force.

7. *Transcendent Relationships*

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of certain same-sex twinships in *Star Wars* is that their enduring quality continues past the death of one or both of the partners. This ultimate achievement is first articulated at the end of *Revenge of the Sith* when Yoda explains to Obi-Wan that his former beloved master, Qui-Gon, has transcended death and achieved immortality. “How to commune with him, I will teach you,” Yoda says to a very surprised and heartened Obi-Wan. A once-durable relationship that had seemingly ended in the tragic slaying of Qui-Gon at the end of *The Phantom Menace* is finally revealed to be stronger than death. And perhaps now it’s easier to imagine how Obi-Wan spends his time while living “alone” during the 19 years of exile in his Tatooine hide-out.

Using the skills he has presumably learned from Qui-Gon during that period, Obi-Wan is able to keep his own spirit intact beyond the sacrifice of his bodily life at the stroke of Darth Vader’s lightsaber, as shown in *A New Hope* and *Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back* (1980). Now as a sentient ghost he continues his mentorship of Luke throughout the young man’s heroic journey. Obi-Wan’s spirit is joined at the very end of the saga by those of Yoda and the pre-Vader Anakin, once he has been redeemed by Luke. Amongst the still-living characters, the younger male Jedi is the only one who has the ability to commune with the ghosts of his father and male mentors. It also seems particularly relevant that these three older male Jedi are shown together in the afterlife, no spirits of the opposite sex anywhere in sight, their bonds now apparently eternal.

Section Summary: The Symbolic Meaning of Same-Sex Relationships in Star Wars

Most of the prominent same-sex partnerships in *Star Wars* feature several, if not all, of the fundamental relationship qualities described above. As an initial summarizing example,

emblematic of the Jedi Order tradition, the warm companionship between Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon can now be seen as mutual, primary, enduring, lifesaving, transformative, transmissive and ultimately transcendent of death, possibly lasting into eternity. What could be a better description of romantic love, in this case between members of the same sex? That we are never shown the two Jedi sexually relating seems like an insignificant detail when these aggregate qualities are considered together. Along these same lines, it can be seen that Luke Skywalker has mutual, primary, enduring, lifesaving, transformative, transmissive, and transcendent relationships with both Obi-Wan and Yoda. A much more complicated but similarly libidinal relationship also occurs between Luke and Darth Vader, as will be discussed below. One more prominent example is the lifelong dynamic between Obi-Wan and Anakin. This passionate alliance includes a horrible descent for both men into antagonistic destructiveness, and yet when viewed from its ultimately immortal perspective, the overall pattern can be seen to have all seven qualities of intimate bonds as delineated above.

Many of these facets of relationships are especially prominent in—if not exclusive to—romantic same-sex love. In particular, I wish to highlight the distinct mutuality that is a central feature of the mirroring that occurs when members of the same sex love each other, which can be contrasted with the typical dynamics of heterosexual romance in virtually all human cultures where there are blatant, problematic power imbalances between women and men.

Along these lines, I would suggest that it's not accidental that many of the ardent same-sex relationships in *Star Wars* and in our own world that feature twinship mutuality are also transformative, transmissive and transcendent. Just as Plato suggested that homosexual love has its own “mentally pregnant” non-biological creativity (52), so it can be additionally seen, as Walker has described, that same-sex romance is a particularly rich catalyst for shamanic endeavors moving toward self-realization and enlightenment (“Double” 170; “Jung” 64). Support for this concept can be found in Will Roscoe's *Jesus and the Shamanic Tradition of Same-Sex Love*, which describes the central importance of transmissive, same-sex rituals that were an integral part of many mystical sects in the Middle East during the time of Jesus, including possibly how this central figure in Western civilization may have related to his own disciples and other followers (12). It was in particular the reciprocal, equal and mirroring aspects of same-sex intimacy that provided the “charge” for these often-naked rituals, Roscoe explains, and he bolsters his thesis with examples of homosexual shamanic traditions that have appeared in cultures throughout human history, ranging from the spiritual “soft man” of Siberian indigenous peoples (119) to the Native American “two-spirit” *berdaches*, who often crossed gender lines and lived homosexually with other men as “married” while they descended into the unseen mystical underworld in order to bring new consciousness and healing to their people (139). Similarly, a Jedi master is a kind of “shaman” in a same-sex primary relationship that transmits his knowledge of the invisible Force underlying the visible world to his padawan learner.

Here, I'd like to suggest that as it inspires both the Jedi and Sith, The Force functions in the same way that homosexual libido can be seen to spur the spiritual traditions described above as well as same-sex romantic love itself. In other words, The Force can be understood as a vivid conceptualization of homosexual libido, especially as it becomes the focus of Jedi and Sith relationships.

Objections might be raised that I am describing same-sex relationships as “romantic” and inspired by “homosexual libido” that are at best “homoerotic” or “homosocial.” In my view, these two latter terms are homophobic euphemisms intended to avoid what may actually be the psychologically meaningful libidinal roots of such partnerships. An honest exploration of what really drives passionate same-sex relationships in *Star Wars* and in our own world must consider the role that homosexual libido may play in their fundamental dynamics.

Homosexual Samurai Love as Inspiration for the Jedi Partnerships

At this juncture, another useful historical reference may help to further flesh out the possibly romantic nature of same-sex relationships in *Star Wars*. On the DVD commentary of *A New Hope*, George Lucas describes how his original concept for the Jedi Knights and their lightsaber weapons was inspired in part by the Samurai ethic of Japan, which offered “a more humane way of being a warrior.” In a previous article for *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, “High Camp in a Galaxy Far Away,” I have described how this Samurai tradition actually revolved around the homosexual partnership pattern known as *shudo*—the “way of the youth”—where a young man would learn his spiritual warrior’s path through a loving sexual relationship with an older male Samurai, closely paralleled in *Star Wars* by the padawan learner’s committed relationship with his Jedi master (35). In their book, *The Love of The Samurai: A Thousand Years of Japanese Homosexuality*, Tsuneo Watanabe and Jun’ichi Iwata cite the essayist Ijiri Chusuke, who wrote in 1492 that:

In the world of the nobles and warriors, [male] lovers would swear perfect and eternal love, relying on no more than their mutual goodwill...[and] they were greatly moved by the spirit of this way...[which] must be truly respected and...must never be permitted to disappear. (qtd. in Watanabe and Iwata 109)

The “mutual” and transcendent nature of “eternal love” is effectively revealed in these words, while the transformative and transmissive nature of such homosexual relationships is captured in a text from 1653:

If you learn the teachings of the Buddha and expect to achieve Awakening, you will surely practice *shudo*. For this way is really like that of the true Awakening, in that we may give ourselves wholly to it. (qtd. in Watanabe and Iwata 113)

By devoting themselves “wholly” to homosexual love, the Samurai warriors were able to experience psychological and spiritual enlightenment. The 15th century Zen monk Ikkyu, who also practiced *shudo*, expressed it this way, “its pleasures are like an endless circle; men shout with pleasure when they attain entrance” (qtd. in Crompton 414). Likewise, the padawan learners in *Star Wars* can be seen to experience their own kind of “awakening” in The Force through close, transmissive partnerships with their Jedi masters.

In certain cases, as discussed above, this magical relationship in *Star Wars* continues transcendentally beyond the death of the master. The vivid images of the spirits of Obi-Wan, Yoda and Anakin as they aid and support Luke poetically evoke the idea of the same-sex soul-figure, which Walker has described as the “wraith-buddy” or “ghost-twin” of the gay man’s psyche, functioning as an internal guide into greater consciousness (“Uranian Coniunctio” 145). Just as the Samurai and Jedi could be said to have found connection with their enlightening soul-figures through love between warrior and youth, likewise viewers of the *Star Wars* films can foster their own psychological self-realization by utilizing *Star Wars* imagery to spur their imagination for relating to the double soul-figure within their own minds.

The Love That *Still Dare Not Speak Its Name*

Many particular qualities of relationships, some of them specific to homosexual romance, have been identified above in the *Star Wars* twinships, and I have discussed how Lucas’s original idea for the Jedi Knights was inspired by the homosexual Samurai tradition, but it’s also true that this kind of romance in the *Star Wars* films is still mostly “the love that dare not speak its name,” as Oscar Wilde famously described it. For the most part, Lucas assiduously avoids showing the Jedi as overtly affectionate with each other, only allowing love to be expressed in the darkest moments of their relationships. As noted above, Obi-Wan and Anakin are described as “complementary halves of a single warrior” in the authorized novel version of *Revenge of the*

Sith, but this potent two-in-one image of the Jedi pair only comes in the midst of their ultimate fight *against* one other on the primeval volcanic planet of Mustafar. Through many tensions and competing influences, their fond partnership has collapsed. When Anakin attempts to attack him, Obi-Wan slices off Anakin's legs and remaining arm, as shown in the film version. Reduced to a helpless, limbless trunk on the ground, Anakin screams out in excruciating pain, "I hate you," and only then at the most gruesome moment of the entire saga can Obi-Wan cry out in despair, "You were my brother, Anakin; I loved you," at which point Anakin's dismembered body bursts into flames. Thus, the only blatant statement of love between Jedi Knights throughout the six-film narrative occurs at the grotesque conclusion of an almost-lethal battle between two of them.

Conflicting forces within the filmmaker's psyche may be revealed by this scene. On the one hand, the director has created a dazzling climax overflowing with primeval libidinal energy as the two men fervently wield The Force in their battle amidst surging red-hot lava, but Lucas also seems to struggle with homophobic influences, as he chooses only this moment, when the Jedi are combating each other, to reveal the depth of passion and love between them. As I am imagining it here, this conflict between creative homosexual libido and destructive homophobia within the filmmaker's psyche plays out in many other places throughout the chronicle as male-male affection is consistently muted, in contrast with the two heterosexual romances portrayed, where the erotic charge between characters is shown explicitly.

But it's not only the filmmaker's homophobia that's at issue here. When Lucas has fleshed out particular male characters with more obviously "queer" characteristics, he has been lambasted by many critics and fans. As Richard Goldstein described in his June 9, 1999 *Village Voice* cover story, "The Nelly Menace," Jar Jar Binks (Ahmed Best) has been so meanly hated and attacked by journalists and filmgoers mostly because he has been perceived as gay. Here is an uninhibited, organically libidinal creature, who freely exclaims, "Oh mooee, mooee, I wuv you," after Qui-Gon rescues him from a fast-approaching military hovercraft. Just one of many possible ways to appreciate Jar Jar's archetypal significance is to recognize his arrival in the midst of the partnership of Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon, thereby functioning perhaps in his whimsical vitality as a symbol of otherwise-hidden, vigorous homosexual libido growing stronger between the two Jedi.

Another overtly "queer" character in the films, C-3PO, has managed to avoid the level of hatred that Jar Jar has suffered. Yet in a venomous review of *Revenge of the Sith* in *The New Yorker* (May 23, 2005), Anthony Lane writes, "I still fail to understand why I should be expected to waste twenty-five years of my life following the progress of a beeping trash can and a gay, gold-plated Jeeves." In answer to this dismissive statement, I would suggest that the loyal, lifesaving, resilient bond between R2-D2 and C-3PO, as discussed above, demonstrates a humanity superior to the behavior of many actual humans and clearly demonstrates in a symbolic way the life-giving qualities of libidinal twinship mutuality possible in the archetypal double relationship. Although he often complains to R2-D2, C-3PO always shows his true love when the stakes are high. Just one of many examples throughout the narrative occurs at the end of *A New Hope* when R2-D2 returns from battle badly damaged, and C-3PO exclaims, "You must repair him. If any of my circuits are useful, I'll gladly donate them." It could even be suggested that R2-D2 and C-3PO experience a particular kind of "transcendence" in their relationship, in the sense that they grow beyond their metallic construction to feel and love as conscious "living" beings.

Just as Jar Jar can be seen to represent the veiled libidinal energy between Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan, so C-3PO can be seen as a symbol of Anakin Skywalker's homosexual libido. As a boy, Anakin builds C-3PO and first brings the "gay" protocol droid with six million forms of communication to life, thereby evoking and foreshadowing the "Frankenstein" motif that will be

more darkly activated when Anakin himself is transformed into Darth Vader. As Mitch Walker has discussed, the Frankenstein “monster” can be understood as the personification of the libidinal same-sex soul-figure made ugly by the creator’s projection of his own homophobic shadow (“Frankenstein” 12). The fact that C-3PO is not really monstrous at all as Anakin’s childhood creation suggests the secretly homosexual, possibly redemptive “treasure” buried in this dark theme.

As discussed in the film documentary of *The Celluloid Closet* (1995), homosexual characters could only be portrayed in Hollywood films during much of the 20th century if they were comic sissies, evil villains, or both. In this context, Jar Jar and C-3PO as significant characters seem like a partial redemption by Lucas of the sissy stock character, especially as they are both eventually given a certain dignity, Jar Jar as a mature senator in his elegant floor-length robes and C-3PO as a golden god for the Ewoks. But in the character of the treacherous Darth Sidious, Lucas has echoed the all-too-familiar stereotype of the “queeny” villain. Aspects of this characterization can be seen, especially during *Revenge of the Sith*, in the Sith Lord’s effete tone-of-voice, smarmy smile, big puffy sleeves—and most of all in his seductive attitude toward Anakin, where homosexual libido manifests more blatantly than in the Jedi bonds or perhaps anywhere else in the saga. The salient point here is not that there is anything wrong *per se* with an effeminate male nemesis. Rather, it’s the gross imbalance caused by the fact that the heroes in Hollywood films are to this day almost *never* shown as openly gay, even in *Star Wars*. That said, accepting that a villain *could* be homosexual or at least queeny, it’s important to illuminate the dynamics of the portentous relationship between these two main characters, as will be explored in the next section.

Consumed by the Shadow: the Terrible Descent of Anakin Skywalker

To more deeply understand possible homosexual symbolism in the *Star Wars* epic, it’s necessary to explore the odyssey of the central character who links all six films, Anakin Skywalker, grappling initially with his highly problematic and unique venture into love with a woman.

Homophobia as an influence in Lucas’s psyche may have spurred him to dampen and mask the depiction of same-sex love in the *Star Wars* films, but the filmmaker appears to be downright negative about the prospects of heterosexual romance, at least as he portrays it in the painful, fateful relationship and marriage of Anakin and Padmé. Here is the *only* opposite-sex courtship amongst main characters shown to be fully consummated in the whole six-movie chronicle—Han Solo and Princess Leia never go beyond a couple of kisses in the films—yet the manifestly romantic scenes between Anakin and Padmé are shown in a strange manner that is vividly operatic on the surface while feeling “flat” in its heart. Lucas has explained on the DVD commentary for *The Phantom Menace* and *Attack of the Clones* that the dialogue of the films is *intended* to reflect the stilted style of such 1930’s Saturday-matinee film serials as *Flash Gordon’s Trip to Mars* (1938) and *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe* (1940). This homage gives these scenes in particular what can best be described as a subtle “camp” quality, as I have discussed in an earlier article, suggesting an ironic intent on the part of the filmmaker (Kaufman, “Galaxy” 33).

In the relationship between Anakin and Padmé, romantic heterosexual love is shown primarily as bitter suffering. In an especially dramatic moment Anakin says to Padmé, “Now that I’m with you again, I’m in agony. The closer I get to you, the worse it gets...I can’t breathe...What can I do? I will do anything you ask.” Anakin’s obsession with Padmé throws him off-balance, making him unable to partner his anger and fear, thereby triggering a violent descent for both individuals. His original “excuse” for going over to the dark side, in order to

save Padmé's life, is soon enough replaced by his quest for ever-greater power, as shown at the climax of *Revenge of the Sith*. Anakin reveals how tortured he has become when he exclaims, "Love won't save you, Padmé. Only my new powers can do that."

When viewed from the perspective of the full character arc, Anakin's psychology appears to be bisexually influenced alternately by both heterosexual and homosexual libido. It seems that homosexual libido is strongly activated in both loving and competitive ways with Obi-Wan, but then gradually shifts to Darth Sidious, while his heterosexual libido once directed toward Padmé greatly subsides as his relationship with the Sith Lord becomes primary. Evidence of this shift is revealed when Anakin uses almost the same words to pledge allegiance to his new master that he once spoke to her. "I will do whatever you ask," he says, kneeling in front of the Dark Lord who appears deeply satiated for having won-over the handsome young Jedi. Proclaims the greatly aroused, triumphant Sidious, his voice reverberating through the depths of the dark side, "The Force is strong with you!"

The great Sith Lord can be understood here as a vivid embodiment of the dark side of the double archetype. In Jungian psychology, *every* archetype is understood to have a negative side. In an ideal situation, when the double is charged by homosexual libido and functions as the soul-figure, leading the individual into deeper relationship with the archetypal inner world, then it can be seen that the light and dark aspects of the complex "work together" in a balanced, dialectical manner to spur a person's individuation. As Walker has written, "...the negative archetype always contains the force of the positive, including the drive toward individuation" ("Double" 174). Echoing this idea in his own dark way, Chancellor Palpatine says to Anakin in *Episode III*, "The Sith and the Jedi are similar in almost every way, including their quest for greater power." But in Anakin's case, there appears to be an imbalance in the constellation of the archetype, where its dark side is able to almost completely dominate him.

Yet it is not merely the "negative" aspect of the double archetype that an individual must contend with. As Jung described, every person has a distinct *shadow complex* in the psyche, understood here as the most shamefully violent and painful aspects of the personality resulting in large part from the after-effects of early childhood trauma. In our own world, Judeo-Christian society has demonized this dark side of the psyche for more than two millennia, encouraging individuals to become over-identified with the light, which spurs them to project the dark out onto others, thereby making it extremely difficult for anyone to take full, personal, moral responsibility for their own aggressive and controlling urges. In *Star Wars*, Anakin does not have sufficient support from Obi-Wan—who could be understood in this context to represent the light side of the double archetype—in order to effectively work through this complex in a psychological manner. Obi-Wan admits his own imperfections as a mentor when he says in despair to Anakin during the climax of *Revenge of the Sith*, "I have failed you." Soon after, he leaves Anakin amputated and on fire to die by a river of lava, and in a painful irony where light and dark trade places, it is Darth Sidious who saves Anakin's life.

In a distinct echo of the Frankenstein story, the older Sith Lord now transforms what's left of Anakin into the great dark phallus of Darth Vader, who could be viewed as a stark symbol of the cruel exploitation of homosexual love's promise twisted and mechanized for nefarious purposes by evil. As Darth Vader, Anakin becomes grossly over-identified with his shadow complex rather than partnering and integrating this black half of his psyche, thereby halting almost forever his humane individuation.

Homosexual Oedipal Dynamics: Luke Skywalker's Redemption of Darth Vader

In contrast with his father, Anakin, who as discussed above becomes almost completely consumed by the dark side after giving over to his disorienting lust for a woman, Luke

Skywalker merely flirts with a princess who turns out to be his *sister*, and instead finds his own creative potency through intense same-sex bonds with Obi-Wan Kenobi, Han Solo, Yoda, and ultimately, his father.

In his analysis of *Episodes IV-VI*, Steven Galipeau appropriately suggests that Princess Leia represents Luke's anima, or the feminine, receptive side of his personality (23), but the author fails to adequately explain why Luke is not actually romantically involved with Leia, a dynamic which is a key aspect of the complex's libidinal coalescence in the psychology of heterosexual men. This is because Galipeau does not recognize the possibility of a *homosexual* relationship to the anima, which takes on a more sisterly, less sexual tone than in heterosexual psychology. In a gay-centered understanding it is through his relationship with his anima that a man can become receptive to penetrative love from another man—as well as the forcefully inspiring imagery of the libidinal psyche itself—while still maintaining his deeply felt phallic masculinity sourced in the erotically charged double soul-figure that is central in that psychic imagery. Luke begins to learn about this particular kind of masculine receptivity in *The Empire Strikes Back*, when he begins his training with Yoda, who encourages him to be “passive” as a Jedi, instead of merely aggressive.

Not yet aware that Darth Vader is his father, Luke first faces his nemesis in a magical sequence where an “imaginary” Vader is revealed to have Luke's own face—to be Luke's own shadow but also foreshadowing the redemptive, twinship aspects of their relationship. At the end of *The Empire Strikes Back*, Luke confronts the actual Darth Vader for the first time. Vader symbolically “castrates” Luke by slicing off his hand with a lightsaber in an attempt to dominate him, then reveals his true identity as Luke's father and passionately invites him to the dark side: “Luke, join me and together we can rule the galaxy as father and son!”

A consideration of oedipal dynamics between gay boys and their fathers can possibly shed light on this devastatingly climactic scene, as well as the ones that follow between Darth Vader and Luke. In a reversal of Freud's oedipal complex, young gay boys at about the age of four or five can be seen to fall into romantic love with their fathers instead of their mothers in a crucial developmental initiation usually played out unconsciously. In most cases, especially in our homophobic society, the father will cruelly reject the son, rather than gently, lovingly frustrate his desire to physically act out the incest (Isay 29; Sadownick 68; Walker, “Uranian Complex” 46).

I would suggest that the fateful encounters between Darth Vader and Luke get much of their great pathos and impact from the intensity of homosexual libido incestuously activated between father and son. In contrast with how the situation usually plays out between gay sons and their fathers in our culture, Darth Vader is initially the one actively seducing his son, albeit for dark purposes, using the persuasively libidinal method that Darth Sidious originally used on him. At this point, Luke says “I will never join you!” Yet after this scene, Luke and his father are newly connected through the libidinal Force, able to sense one another's presence as well as intuit each other's thoughts and feelings. The incestuous romantic yearning between father and son has been awakened for both of them and ultimately demands resolution.

In their final battle at the climax of *Return of the Jedi*, it appears that Luke may kill Darth Vader as Obi-Wan has encouraged him to do. He does indeed aggressively “castrate” his father by slicing off his mechanical hand. This can be seen as retaliation for his father's earlier metaphoric castration of him and also as an act to separate out his ego identity from that of his father, but this only reveals their twin nature, because Luke himself has a mechanical hand resulting from his father's earlier attack, as he recognizes in this pivotal moment. Finally, Luke realizes that some key ethical action other than aggression is required here. He tosses away his lightsaber, rejecting its aggressive phallic qualities, refusing to kill his father, fight the Emperor,

or even defend himself. In this instant, as I see it, Luke has learned how to *partner* his own shadow complex, in the form of vengful hostility, and contain it rather than act it out any further. This allows him to “re-collect” the projection of his own darkness that he had placed on Darth Vader and see “the good” deep within his father, and then become so phallically secure in his newly whole sense of self that he can make himself completely receptive to his father’s love, potentially reborn. Now masterfully in touch with his own homosexual libido as symbolized by The Force, no longer needing a weapon as a violent substitute for genuinely individuated masculinity, Luke has an inner sense that his father’s capacity to love will prevail over the Emperor’s unredeemable evil.

Only in this psychological and, I would say, homosexual way, is Luke Skywalker able to “bring balance to The Force” for the galaxy, his father and himself. Darth Vader’s sincere love for his son, as opposed to his earlier exploitive seduction, is reactivated by his son’s homosexual receptivity, and he is finally able to reclaim his humanity and save Luke from the Emperor, who seems hell-bent on annihilating the young Jedi. After Darth Vader destroys the Emperor by throwing him down an open shaft into the nuclear core of the battle station, a great blue surge of what could be seen as homosexual libido is released from its exploited entrapment in the Emperor, now newly available to propel a profound father-son reunion. Luke removes the shadow-phallic metallic helmet and mask to reveal the loving-phallic, bald crown of his true father, finally redeemed just before dying. Soon after, Luke is reunited once again with his father who is now in spirit form along with the ghosts of Obi-Wan and Yoda, symbolically suggesting the soul-figure as eternally present in Luke, and also potentially in the psyche of the individuals watching the film. Through the creativity that was cooked in him through his twinship bonds with Obi-Wan and Yoda, Luke finally has grown beyond them both. He has begun to realize the true creative promise of homosexual love: by being openly receptive at the same time that he is phallically strong, a man can gain a uniquely rich experience of the meaningful wholeness of the psyche in both its light and dark aspects. He can then birth from the tension of the two a new, non-aggressive, truly humane awareness and action.

Watching *Star Wars*: Getting Off By Being Receptive to Penetrative Imagination

Now this integrative “phallic receptivity” can be further seen in how many enthusiastic audience members actually experience the *Star Wars* films. In the May 20, 2005 issue of *Entertainment Weekly*, reflecting on the memory of initially seeing the first *Star Wars* in 1977 with its groundbreaking special effects and mythic grandeur, Steven Spielberg said, “We all lost our virginity, in a sense. We joined The Force. All of us” (26). Never before had people been stimulated in that particular way by a motion picture. Since that time, each successive *Star Wars* film has grown more and more imaginatively stunning, culminating in *Revenge of the Sith*, with its overwhelming visual-aural depth, texture and grandeur, allowing viewers to be, I would suggest, penetrated by their own unconscious psyches as those inner worlds are projected onto the film’s imagery and drama, in what can be described as a homosexual experience for male members of the audience in particular.

Twinship Themes and Visual Spectacle in Other Fantasy Films

This phenomenon of impactful creativity combined with what I understand as abundant homosexual symbolism is not unique to the *Star Wars* space opera and can be seen in many of the most imaginative fantasy and science fiction films of the past four decades. Perhaps the most pertinent example of this theme is found in Steven Spielberg’s *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), originally released between *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Return of the Jedi* (1983). This uniquely heartfelt film could be seen as a highly emotive “brother” to the *Star Wars*

films, inspired in part by them, even sharing the same composer, John Williams, who in the liner notes for the 20th Anniversary soundtrack of *E.T.* freely describes the film as a “love story.”

Here is the journey of a modern human boy, Elliott (Henry Thomas), who has already seen the first two *Star Wars* movies—as evidenced by his excitement over his Lando Calrissian and Bobba Fett action figures—and who now develops his own “real-life” relationship with a whimsical, magical alien creature. (Lucas later returned Spielberg’s homage by placing a group of E.T.s in one of the Senate “pods” in *The Phantom Menace*.) Together, Elliott and E.T. achieve an unabashedly affectionate bond that becomes mutual, primary, lifesaving, transformative, transmissive, and transcendent, referencing the relationship categories described above. The human boy and male alien learn to communicate by “mirroring” each other’s gestures, and then quickly become emotionally, telepathically linked. When E.T. is drinking beer, for example, Elliott gets drunk. And when E.T. feels frightened or homesick, Elliott experiences similar emotions. As the film progresses, the boy and the alien become ever-more attached, to the point where at the climax of the narrative, one of the doctors tending to them together says, “EEG analysis shows complete coherence and synchronization of brain wave activity between both subjects.” When E.T. dies, Elliott offers a poignant speech culminating in the vow, “I’ll believe in you all my life, every day. E.T., I love you.” The film ends when the resurrected E.T. explains that he “will be right here” in Elliott’s mind in a love that will last forever. This final gesture can be understood as E.T. letting Elliott know that he will continue to exist transcendentally as an internal same-sex soul-figure in the boy’s psyche.

Experiencing the double soul-figure complex and the vast psyche as subjectively “real” is the central theme of Wolfgang Peterson’s *The NeverEnding Story* (1984), where a human boy named Bastian (Barret Oliver) reads in a magical book about an imaginal hero-boy Atreyu (Noah Hathaway) who is embarking on a great heroic quest. The developing plot of the story requires that these two boys must find a way to connect with each other across the divide between reality and imagination in order to save the colorful dreamworld of Fantasia.

More recently, Peter Jackson has brought J.R.R. Tolkien’s novel, *The Lord of the Rings* to the big screen, where in a series of three visually dynamic films—*The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001); *The Two Towers* (2002); and *The Return of the King* (2003)—enduring, loving same-sex partnerships are the primary focus of the narrative, as I have discussed in my previous article, “*Lord of the Ring* Taps a Gay Archetype.” In this moving chronicle, the fate of Middle Earth completely hinges on the resilient bond between hobbits Frodo (Elijah Wood) and Sam (Sean Astin)—a companionship that can be meaningfully described as mutual, primary, enduring, lifesaving, transformative, and transcendent. The steadfast affection of this heroic twosome is beautifully echoed in the warm closeness found in many other same-sex partnerships, including the fond fellowship of hobbits Merry (Dominic Monaghan) and Pippin (Billy Boyd), as well as the “odd couple” pairing of Legolas the elf (Orlando Bloom) and Gimli the dwarf (John Rhys-Davies).

It’s no accident that vivid depictions of transformative same-sex love come hand-in-hand with the pictorial and auditory virtuosity that is the hallmark of these prominent fantasy films. Although they may publicly (and personally?) identify as heterosexuals, I would argue that archetypal homosexual libido is a central factor in the filmmakers’ creativity, as richly evidenced by the plentiful imagery in their movies that can be implicatively, reasonably understood as homosexual. In this gayly seen way, these imaginative films can be appreciated as contemporary versions of the children of the mind that Plato suggested were birthed out of homosexual love, because “the offspring [art, poetry, etc.] of this [kind of] relationship are particularly attractive and are closer to immortality than ordinary children. We’d all prefer to have children of this sort rather than the human kind...” (52-53).

Conclusion: *Our New Hope*

In this essay, I have fleshed out a vision of transformative, same-sex relationships in the *Star Wars* films as romantic, patterned by the archetype of the double and charged by galvanic homosexual libido. I have also described how the phallic receptivity actualized by homosexual love's libidinal twinship mutuality offers a new, potent attitude for relations with the unconscious, where individuals of all sexualities can potentially become receptively open to loving penetration and subsequent enlightenment by the archetypal richness of the living psyche.

Such a gay-centered psychological perspective reclaims the films, first of all, for gay men seeking archetypal imagery supportively reflective of their distinct psychology, offering in particular many quickening soul-figure images as portrayed by the heroic *Star Wars* characters and their transformations. Lesbians, too, with some necessary gender translating, can possibly resonate with the plethora of twinship imagery that spurs a particular kind of homosexual creativity. For non-gay people, cultivating the spirit of libidinal twinship mutuality in their minds has the potential to radically enhance their experience of their own particular archetypal dynamics, beneficially leading toward a newly "romantic" relationship with their own psychology. This may be particularly challenging and important for many non-gay men in our culture, whose oppressive strictures against the expression of same-sex love has, it seems to me, made it especially difficult for them to be sufficiently receptive to a meaningful relationship with the fullness of their own unconscious psyches.

The *Star Wars* narrative as analyzed here shows why the symbolic birth of homosexual "children" of the mind in the form of creative revolutionary ideas is so desperately needed in our own contemporary world, where, it seems to me, the extroverted, worn-out platitudes of both "left" and "right" political positions hold no legitimate promise for humanity's viable survival. Especially in *Attack of the Clones* and *Revenge of the Sith*, the epic depicts an obscenely overgrown civilization disquietingly all too much like ours that through an ultimately catastrophic lack of psychological awareness tragically descends into utter disaster. Even the Jedi, supposedly so full of wisdom, are unable to anticipate the coming devastation that consequently befalls them and are almost completely, murderously wiped out.

In his depiction of the nascent coalescence of a titanic, galaxy-dominating Empire, it appears that Lucas is offering a clear warning about the dark side of our own current "American Empire," which can perhaps not so unrealistically be seen as a "pseudo-democracy" much like the one in *Star Wars*. Dominated by unjust political power that is forcefully maintained through the massive manipulation of ubiquitous unconscious group-mindedness, this oppressive organization of societies all too well enables the intensifying destructive juggernaut of militaristic state violence and regimenting control, as well as, in the case of our present world, soul-killing consumerism and severe environmental degradation.

True emancipation for all human beings will come, in my view, only when primary value is placed on the introverted, psychological project of deepening human subjectivity, with the clear intent of ideologically supporting the empowered development of authentically self-determined individuality and personal moral authority that can stand in autonomous political opposition to the destructive group-mind dynamics of corrupt contemporary civilization. The primary culminating themes of the *Star Wars* film saga suggest just such a hopeful development in human self-awareness. By beginning to experience what I have described as a non-aggressive phallic receptivity birthed out of romantic, transformative same-sex relationships, the character of Luke Skywalker laudably represents in his portrayed psychological growth an inspiring movement toward the kind of homosexually creative and conscientiously individuated personhood so ethically and politically necessary for humanity's future.

Figure 1—Archetype of the Double: Significant Same-Sex Twinship Pairs in the Six-Film *Star Wars* Saga

Qui-Gon Jinn & Obi-Wan Kenobi	M, P, E, L, TF, TM, TS
Qui-Gon Jinn & Anakin Skywalker	M, P, L, TF, TM
Qui-Gon Jinn & Yoda	M, E, TF, TM, TS
Qui-Gon Jinn & Jar Jar Binks	M, L, TF
Obi-Wan Kenobi & Anakin Skywalker	M, P, E, L, TF, TM, TS, C, FS
Obi-Wan Kenobi & Yoda	M, E, L, TF, TM, TS
Anakin Skywalker & Yoda	M, L, TF, TM, TS
Anakin Skywalker & Watto	EX, FS
Darth Sidious & Darth Vader	EX, P, L, TF, TM, FS, F
Darth Sidious & Darth Tyrannus	EX, P, TF, TM
Darth Sidious & Darth Maul	EX, P, TF, TM
Luke Skywalker & Obi-Wan Kenobi	M, P, E, L, TF, TM, TS
Luke Skywalker & Han Solo	C, M, E, L, TF
Luke Skywalker & Yoda	M, P, E, L, TF, TM, TS
Luke Skywalker & Darth Vader	C, P, L, TF, TS, FS, R
Padmé & Queen Amidala	M, P, E, L
Padmé Naberrie & Cordé	M, L
Padmé Naberrie & Dormé	M, L
R2-D2 & C-3PO	M, P, E, L, TF, TS
R2-D2 & Anakin Skywalker	M, L
R2-D2 & Luke Skywalker	M, E, L
C-3PO & Anakin Skywalker	M, L, TF, F
Han Solo & Lando Calrissian	C, M, E, L
Chewbacca & Han Solo	M, P, E, L
Chewbacca & C-3PO	M, L
Bobba & Jango Fett	M, P, E, L, TF, FS
Nute Gunray & Rune Haako	M, P, E
Two-Headed Troig: Fode & Beed	M, P, E
Luke Skywalker & Princess Leia	E, L, TF, O

KEY

**M=mutual; P=primary; E=enduring; L=lifesaving;
 TF=transformative; TM=transmissive; TS=transcendent;
 EX=exploitive; C=competitive; R=redemptive;
 F=Frankenstein motif; FS=father-son motif;
 O=opposite-sex biological twins**

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