

Star Wars: The Theory of the Prequels

Shane O'Leary

I would like to preface this paper by saying that my theory is based almost entirely on the movies and not the extended universe. While I may reference an Old Republic book or simply allude to a fact that is stated outside of the movies, I am by no means dependent on the EU nor may my theory be compatible with some aspects of it. I am specifically basing this on what is seen in episodes 1-6. Also, this is NOT a justification for the terrible dialogue, abusively boring political scenes, and poor acting of the cast. My entire purpose is to show that the storyline, as well as the message, in the prequels is not only compatible with what is found in the original trilogy, but it serves to strengthen the ideas found in them and paints a very clear picture about the message of the Jedi and how one properly uses the force.

Many people have made reference to the fact the message of the Ben Kenobi and Yoda in the original trilogy is completely different from the message of the Jedi Order in the prequels. When looking at both trilogies side by side, the way the Jedi wields the lightsaber seems to be the major differing point. Two scenes – one from episode II and the other from episode V – clearly display the difference in ideology between them. In episode II, Anakin drops his lightsaber during his chase of Zam Wessel on Coruscant. When Obi-Wan recovers it and returns it to his rash padawan, he scolds him for losing it, saying “This weapon is your life.” Clearly the message is not just Obi-Wan’s opinion, but the basis of the whole Jedi Order, which he is trying to burn into Anakin’s head. However, on Dagobah in episode V, Yoda tells Luke to go into the Cave of Evil and face his biggest fear, and that he should not bring his lightsaber. Luke refuses Yoda’s advice and when he encounters an illusion of Darth Vader, he strikes him down only to see that the man behind the mask was himself.

In the prequels, we can sum up the purpose of the lightsaber as the weapon which the Jedi uses to keep peace, even if that requires killing a dangerous threat. On Geonosis in episode II,

Mace Windu strikes down Jango Fett without a second thought because killing Fett would keep him from killing other Jedi. The only plan of the Jedi in that scene was the lightsaber, as Windu used it as a threat to Dooku and the rest of the Jedi used it to signal their presence in the arena. However, in the original trilogy, we see that the lightsaber is not the life of the Jedi, according to Yoda, as he never once trains Luke how to use it. Similarly, Ben teaches Luke that the lightsaber is only for defense, and the only time he uses it apart from his duel with Vader is in protecting Luke in the Mos Eisley cantina. Yet, even there, Ben does not kill the attacker. Luke, in episode 6, uses it only in defense of his friends on Tatooine, and that is only in a desperate circumstance as his initial plan to free Han did not work. We can sum up the original trilogy's stance by saying that the lightsaber should always be regarded as an emergency option, and when used, it should only be for protection of others.

Many fans before me, and I myself for a long time, took this difference as proof of the inconsistencies between the two trilogies. It revealed the sloppy work by George Lucas, who forgot the heart of the message of the first three films in his creation of the prequels. However, this difference can be rationalized in another way, one that provides life to a dead spot in the Star Wars universe: The Jedi Order of the prequels is corrupt.

Don't believe me? Instead of the peace-loving message of the original trilogy, the 'peacemakers' of the prequels are completely content with war. While they stand willing to fight for the freedom of planets under oppression, like Naboo in episode I, the main reason for this is their desire to maintain power and authority in the galaxy. The Separatists are not only a threat because of their use of an army, but their presence means that the Jedi have places that are not under their control. While their message may be of peace and strictly for the people, the dark

side of their thought, which is clouded, is that it is for personal gain that they keep peace in the galaxy.

To begin to show this corruption, we must look at the oppression of the dark side by the Jedi, or at least what they *think* is the dark side. Inside the Jedi temple, there are younglings being raised in the ways of the Jedi, kids that can be as young as infants. How did these kids get here? Most were taken from their families, sometimes forcefully, once it was determined that they were strong in the force. They were raised as children in the Order, believing everything that the Order told them was true. They were never allowed to think for themselves because their thoughts could betray them and lead them to the dark side. They were taught to suppress emotions in order to not be afraid, because fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, etc. If they broke all emotional connections, there would be nothing for them to fear. This is why they must be young when they join the Order: so they have nothing else to cling to except the Jedi way. Consequentially, the way of the Jedi in the prequels more resembles a Nazi training camp than anything you would expect to come out of a peacekeeping organization.

The Jedi also forbid many things in order to keep the Order pristine and clean from all dark side influences. They swear off love, because that emotional connection would cloud their judgement and may force them to make irrational, fear-based decisions that would endanger the order. Granted, Yoda teaches Luke to face his fears, but he does not tell him to forgo his emotional connection to his friends. Instead, he tells him that he needs to properly control them so it would not cause him to go into a fit of rage and do something he would regret, like kill Vader. The Jedi of the prequels forbid emotional connection, not because it might cause them to give a mass murdering dark lord what he has coming to him, but because it might bring other Jedi to question what the Order really stands for. The Jedi influence would start to slip away if

some began to cause division within, so keeping a clamp on emotions is essential for the Order to survive. In fact, the irony is that the teachings of the Order are based off a fear of losing control to the dark side, showing just how seeped in the dark side they really are. The perfect metaphor for showing this, one that I think is intentional on the part of Lucas, is that Palpatine, the Sith Lord whom the Jedi are desperately searching for, sits and talks with them every day and governs their every move. Why do they not notice his true identity? The dark side clouds their thoughts, and that is not simply the work of Palpatine.

Episode I

This is where we will jump into the movies and begin to see this corruption more clearly. It starts with Qui-Gon Jinn and his consistent butting of heads with the Jedi council. He expresses to Obi-Wan his dislike of being a diplomat for the council and questions their judgement at almost every turn. It is obvious that he senses that something is wrong within the order, regardless of whether or not he knows what it is or how to combat it. Since he has been entrenched with Jedi ideology since he was an infant, it makes sense why he would not be able to put his finger on what is bothering him. Obi-Wan listens to his master but does not fully comprehend his qualms, agreeing with Yoda and the council that Qui-Gon is simply stubborn.

When the ship from Naboo crashes on Tatooine, Qui-Gon meets a child who he determines is incredibly strong in the force: Anakin. With his force sensitivity at unheard-of levels, Qui-Gon does the Jedi thing and attempts to take him from his home and raise him to be a Jedi, hoping that Anakin could possibly be the Chosen One that would one day bring peace to the galaxy. Obi-Wan once again questions the tactics of his master, knowing that Anakin is far too old to begin the training and that his connection to his mom could be a threat to his judgement. This is why the council initially forbids Anakin's training, because his age would mean that he

would be able to think for himself and that could become a problem for the Order. Qui-Gon sees right through this reasoning and openly defies the council for making what he believes is incredibly stupid decision, and says that he will train the boy himself, with or without the permission of the council. The fact that the Jedi then concede to Qui-Gon's wishes, on the grounds that he will not be Anakin's master, gives a quick glance at their corruption. The threat of the blunt and forceful Qui-Gon training the child is more dangerous to the council than training him themselves because the child might grow up to be an even greater threat to their way of life than Qui-Gon is at the present moment. Because of this, they take the less risky option and agree to the training of Anakin.

Another thing happens on Tatooine, one that reveals the presence of the dark side in the affairs of the Jedi. When running back to the ship to leave Tatooine with Anakin, Qui-Gon falls under attack by an unknown Sith for... no reason? How are we to understand the purpose of this attack, which lasts for maybe thirty seconds? The movie seems to want you to believe that Palpatine needs Padme to sign the treaty with the Separatists so he sends his apprentice after her. Yet, why would he reveal the presence of the Sith to get a treaty signed by a queen whom he already has manipulative control over? It simply doesn't add up. Instead, this attack must be viewed in another way. It could simply be Palpatine's way of stirring the council into a flurry, causing chaos within as they begin to frantically search for an unknown Sith Lord. This would give Palpatine enough of a smokescreen to gain the trust of the Order while also remaining undetected, knowing the Jedi are looking elsewhere. While this is certainly part of Palpatine's plan, why would he need to do it if the Jedi think the Sith are all gone? I think there is another reason, one that makes greater sense in light of the fact that Darth Maul attacks Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan again on Naboo at the end of episode I: Palpatine needs Qui-Gon dead. The Sith Lord

has been playing off the Jedi's selfish intentions up to this point and needs them to remain that way. The dark side has a firm grip on the council and Qui-Gon's antics is causing a stir, which is the last thing that Palpatine wants. If Qui-Gon ends up being taken seriously, it could reveal to the council the plague of the dark side that surrounds them, ultimately giving away the Sith Lord's location. By sending Maul after Qui-Gon, it serves the twofold purpose of causing chaos in the order and killing Palpatine's greatest threat, even if it means awakening the council to presence of the Sith.

When Maul shows up again on Naboo, it is clear his intentions are not to help the Separatists – although by occupying the Jedi, he does just that – but to kill Qui-Gon. He pushes Obi-Wan away multiple times, trying to get Qui-Gon alone in the fight. He is finally successful at doing this when Obi-Wan gets trapped behind a magnetic field and can only watch in horror as Maul sends his blade through Qui-Gon's chest. With his mission successful, the Sith lays his guard down, not expecting much of a fight from the younger padawan. Obi-Wan is not even an afterthought for Maul so he taunts the horrified Jedi, knowing the fight would end quickly.

This is the first part in the prequels where we notice something blatantly wrong with the Jedi. In Episode V, Yoda specifically warns Luke to not kill Vader because it will lead him to the Dark Side. In this battle on Naboo, it is clear that Obi-Wan is consumed with hate for his master's killer, and his further actions specifically contradict Yoda's teaching. In fact, when Maul finally falls to his death in two pieces, Obi-Wan is relieved that he has won; not horrified that he just killed someone in a rage. The Jedi council is not even afraid of Obi-Wan's actions; they too are relieved that peace has been won, even at the price of a life. Obi-Wan's ignorance of the depth of the crime he just committed against the Light Side, combined with the council's celebration of it, shows that the Dark Side possesses a firm grip on the ways of the Jedi.

Episode II

This brings us to my least favorite of the films, the movie “that proved Phantom Menace wasn’t an accident” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nJS-LPcFfw>). Anakin is full grown now and has an angst that seems ridiculous considering the gentle, loving boy we saw in Episode I. We are forced to ask the question almost immediately: how did he become like this? The movie gives us an answer – he misses his mother – but I think the problem goes deeper than that. As I stated earlier, Anakin’s age and connection to his mother made him risky to train because he could think for himself and felt strong emotions. The training he received from the Jedi needed to be swift, so to compensate for lost time, and rigorous to help him forget his mother. The intensity of the training has clearly left him emotionally unstable, which is the exact thing that the Jedi were concerned about. Though he may not say it or even notice it, his hatred for the Jedi has already been planted in his mind and started to grow. His anger is justified: he has been too busy training with the Jedi to even see his mother, the one he swore he would save one day. While his training is necessary, ten years away is ridiculous, showing that the Jedi want him as far from her as possible.

Enter Padme, the woman that Anakin has secretly been obsessing over for ten years. With no contact with his mom and the re-acquaintance with Padme, Anakin obviously becomes overwhelmed with emotion, which the Jedi demand he must keep in check. He cannot even tell his master of the things he is feeling because that would be enough reason for the Jedi to keep him away from her. He tries to express them, and his master does well in teaching him to relax, but he remains anxious. Because the fear of emotion is so deeply ingrained in Anakin’s mind, he struggles to tell Obi-Wan and is left to fester in his confusing feelings and dwell on them night after night. During the assassination attempt and ensuing chase, we notice that master and

apprentice clearly do not see eye to eye; a result of Anakin's unwillingness to share his struggles with his master.

While the movie clearly wants to paint Anakin as an unruly teenager whom Obi-Wan is doing his best to guide, we must not view it in that way. He is described as impatient, yet the boy on Tatooine patiently waited for deliverance from slavery before springing at the opportunity for freedom. He is called reckless, yet every time he is reckless in Episode I, it is to protect the people he loves. He helps his new friends get home by entering the podrace and he joins the fight above Naboo to help his friends that are on the planet. Those actions seem more like the actions of a Jedi than anything the Order has done. When he joins the Jedi, he is told to become less reckless and more patient, suppressing his natural instinct to protect. During the chase, we see Anakin doing his best to catch the assassin, but Obi-Wan scolds him for his actions. Instead of letting Anakin protect the way he knows how, the Jedi have tried to shape him into a carbon copy of their kind. Anakin however, cannot be contained to a mold, and that is a massive threat to the Jedi way of life.

Up until now, I have avoided mentioning in detail the presence of Chancellor Palpatine and his role in the turning of Anakin to the dark side. We will now turn our attention to the deceptive Sith Lord and introduce his role in relation to the Jedi and Anakin. As I mentioned earlier, he needs the Jedi to remain in their arrogance and pride in order to keep their thoughts hidden from the truth. Those who have questioned the order, Dooku and Qui-Gon, are no longer threats to him, as Qui-Gon is now dead and Dooku has left, and the Council does not hold him in high regard. This is proved when he straight up tells Obi-Wan that a Sith Lord is running the galaxy, and Obi-Wan denies it like Dooku is crazy. Palpatine uses this to his advantage and reaches out to Dooku, helping him learn the ways of the Dark Side. While Dooku does serve as a

helpful tool, he is ultimately a distraction and a filler for Palpatine as he turns his eyes toward his real prize: Anakin. It is Palpatine who suggests that the Obi-Wan and Anakin should guard Padme, knowing that it will cause Anakin to feel strong emotions. Since Palpatine is the only one whom Anakin feels comfortable talking to, he understands Anakin's feelings are a mess and looks to exploit them. With the Jedi tightening their grip as they search for the Sith Lord, Palpatine encourages Anakin and makes him feel comfortable in a way the Jedi do not. Anakin of course is grateful for the warmth in the midst of such a cold place as the Jedi Temple.

With orders from the council, Anakin goes off to hide away with Padme. In her, he finds a new confidant to share his overwhelming fears, creating even more distance between the Jedi and himself. He is finding people outside the Order to trust because he doesn't trust the Order. During their time together, they develop a bond, and Anakin finally feels free to express his emotions. This is the most joyful that Anakin appears in the prequels, although it is soon taken from him as his dreams about his mother intensify. His fear of losing her, a fear which could have been comforted if the Jedi had allowed him to see her, controls him, so he and Padme leave for Tatooine.

On Tatooine, we see Anakin lose control over his emotions, as they finally boil over in the death of his mother. He could not save her because he could not get to her in time, something he will hold against the Jedi for the rest of his life. He takes out his anger on the Tuskan Raiders who captured her, killing them all. He knows afterwards that his actions were not the Jedi way, yet none of his actions while with Padme have been in service to them either. This, however, is a pure act of the dark side, and while he seems to recognize the wrong in it, he does not realize the depth of his actions. He has killed in hatred; scratch that, he has *slaughtered* in hatred. How can he still consider himself a Jedi after what has taken place? The lines between light and dark have

become so blurred that this seems like a minor misstep to him, while for Yoda in episode V and Palpatine in episode VI, it is the final step towards the dark side. The magnitude of this teaching cannot be overlooked.

Meanwhile, in his search for the bounty hunter who directed the assassination attempt on Padme, Obi-Wan stumbles upon a clone army... ordered by a Jedi master. The question that needs to be asked is: why do peacekeeping Jedi need an army? The only reason for the creation of an army is out of fear of losing control. The corruption of the dark side is obvious, yet Obi-Wan is merely perplexed. He is not sure what to think, even with the threat of an oppressive empire staring him right in the face. The dark side has clouded the judgement of the Jedi to the point where, not only did they not know of the creation of this army, but they begin to consider actually using it! When Yoda steps off the carrier on Geonosis with an army of clones under his command, it is displayed in such triumph, as the droids go running and the Separatists are defeated. Yet, it is the paranoia of the Jedi that has driven them to such desperation that they would declare war rather than lose control. The Galactic Empire has begun, and the Jedi do not even realize it.

The entire scene on Geonosis is proof of the corruption of the Jedi. Instead of acting in a protective manner, trying to save their comrades without the needless shedding of blood, they enter the scene with lightsabers blazing. They end the lives of Geonosian soldiers like they do not even matter. Anyone who shoots at them, they regard as an enemy who is standing in their way of peace. While the light side is supposed to give life and end oppression, the Jedi take life and oppress. Jango Fett is slain by Mace Windu without a blink of an eye from the wise master. Dooku would have been next had his droids not kept Windu away after he threatened Dooku

with a lightsaber to the throat. It is only via Yoda that the Jedi survive, something they could have avoided by acting in the wisdom of the light side.

This scene is comparative to Jabba's palace in episode VI. His lightsaber is his last option, as he would rather save without the death of anyone. He even faces the rancor without his lightsaber, even though R2 could have given it to him there and allowed Luke to set them all free. He gives Jabba chance after chance to surrender but the gangster refuses which ultimately leads Luke to ending the reign of the mighty Jabba the Hutt.

While at first glance, the scenes appear to teach the same message: only in the most desperate circumstances do you use your lightsaber (I do not deny that the situation on Geonosis was dire). Yet, the Jedi had more options than Luke did. It took Luke until the moment he had to walk off the plank to the sarlacc pit to finally grab his lightsaber, while the Jedi on Geonosis used theirs as threats to the Separatists. The defeat and death of Jabba is the destruction of an oppressive regime, a foreshadowing of the defeat of the Empire. The defeat of the droids and death of Jango Fett is simply revealing that the Jedi will stop at nothing to maintain order and control over the galaxy, a foreshadowing of the events of episode III, which we will get to later.

In the final battle scene, the lightsaber takes center stage as Obi-Wan, Anakin, and eventually Yoda try to detain Dooku. While this scene is great for special effects and fun for young children, it is simply not in line with the teachings of the originals. Anakin and Obi-Wan engage the attack, while Jedi are only supposed to attack in an act of protection. I honestly wonder what the purpose of attacking Dooku was. To disarm and "disarm" and arrest him? To charge him with crimes and put him away in Jedi prison? Or was it to eliminate him? Would they have been more disappointed that he died needlessly or that he could no longer give them the information they desired? Many questions arise but one thing stands out: the same Yoda that

insists that Luke not bring his lightsaber to face his darkest fear fights Dooku with his own tiny lightsaber. The one who teaches wisdom and peace to Luke on Dagobah acts irrationally in an attempt to capture the threat to his way of life. Yes, he meditates. Yes, his lightsaber is not his first option. But it is an option, one that he takes full advantage of. In the end, he does the Jedi thing and saves Obi-Wan and Anakin, but the fight with Dooku costs each of them something. For Obi-Wan, it is his dignity in the eyes his master's master. For Yoda, it is his pride in his power, as he is unable to save his friends and capture the bad guy at the same time. For Anakin, it is both of those things combined with the loss of his arm showing that he has suffered the greatest defeat. We are left with the image of three worn out, defeated Jedi lying on the ground – the product of their attack on Dooku. Obi-Wan makes the mistake of thinking that the battle resulted in victory for the Republic but Yoda corrects him, saying that no victory is found in war. For once in this episode, Yoda is indeed right.

Episode III

The best movie of the prequels by a long shot, Episode III was able to somewhat redeem the prequels and made some fans forget the atrocities of the first two films, at least for a time. It is also the movie that opened my eyes to the corruption of the Jedi Order, which allowed me to be at peace with episodes I and II. It is by no means a masterpiece of film, as we all hoped it would be, but it ultimately serves as a great final stepping stone to the message of the original trilogy. Many questions may remain unanswered, like how Leia remembers her mother even though Padme dies in childbirth, but some of the biggest questions in Star Wars become answered with a careful observation of the Revenge of the Sith. So without further ado, we now enter Episode III.

In the opening scene, we find out that Palpatine has been kidnapped by the new leader of the droid army: General Grievous. We enter in the heat of a rescue mission led by Obi-Wan and Anakin as they attack the ship which holds the Chancellor. Many questions come from observing this battle and the eventual rescue of Palpatine. Why does the droid army want him in the first place? Either they clearly do not know that Palpatine is the mastermind behind the Separatists, or it's Palpatine's plan to have them capture him and eventually allow him to be rescued. Perhaps Dooku knows and helped him set all of it up while Grievous remains out of the loop. What if both or neither of them know? However we understand this, it seems to be a foolish move to have the two leaders of the Separatists on the SAME ship leading the SAME kidnapping. One would think that one of them could have been doing something more productive while the entirety of the Republic's forces were busy saving Palpatine.

With these facts in play, I think it's safe to conclude that Dooku is in on Palpatine's secret and is part of the trap that Palpatine has set,¹ while Grievous is unaware that the man he just captured is his boss. He remains a mere pawn in Palpatine's scheme, but then again, so is Dooku. When Obi-Wan senses a trap, he is correct, but he doesn't realize the depth of the trap that he and Anakin are about to spring. Dooku thinks that the trap is set to kill the Jedi, but Palpatine's trap is set for Anakin to continue his path to the dark side by killing Dooku. Anakin and Obi-Wan arrive and engage Dooku in a smarter way than in Episode II, attacking together, but Obi-Wan ends up unconscious, leaving Anakin to fight with only his ever building rage.

The battle between Dooku and Anakin is fierce, but Anakin remains surprisingly calm given what happened last time they met. With Palpatine chained to a throne-like chair, Anakin

¹ Although the look of horror on his face when Palpatine tells Anakin to kill him could imply that he did not know the Sith Lord's identity until that point. However, the truth behind this is relatively unimportant in the storyline.

defeats Dooku and holds both blades up to his neck. This scene recalls Episode VI, where the emperor eggs on Luke to strike him down with all his hatred so that his journey to the dark side will be complete. On the ship above Coruscant, Palpatine does the same thing except, instead of taunting Anakin, he tells him that Dooku “is too dangerous” so he must kill him. Anakin knows he should not, but succumbs to the pressure, once again not realizing the weight of his choice. He has killed a defenseless opponent. The lines between light and dark become more blurry by the second. In Episode I, Obi-Wan killed a dangerous Sith who would have killed him if given the chance, but he does it in hatred. In Episode II, Windu ended the life of a less threatening bounty hunter who he could have easily disarmed and disabled instead. Now, a defenseless Sith with no hands lies defeated at Anakin’s feet and the young Jedi determines that he as well is too dangerous to remain alive. Listening to the commands of Palpatine, Anakin mercilessly beheads his opponent.

After returning safely to Coruscant, Obi-Wan is tasked with chasing down Grievous, which leaves Anakin time to spend with Padme. His dreams return, this time about her, and he confides in Palpatine, the only person he feels he can trust with his dreams. Both men know what happened the last time Anakin had dreams like this, so Palpatine knows that Anakin will obviously be desperate to save her. Anakin is so distraught and blinded by his trust in Palpatine that he does not even recognize that he is a Sith when he basically tells him just that. The fact that Palpatine knows legends of the Sith should have been enough to make Anakin jump back in caution, but his desperation is too great to think logically about this information. Palpatine furthers his plan when he asks Anakin what the difference is between the Jedi and the Sith. Anakin says that the Jedi are selfless and defend others while the Sith only look out for themselves, but he cannot respond when Palpatine challenges this. The Jedi have asked Anakin

to spy on the Chancellor, just as they accuse Palpatine of using Anakin to spy on them. All the Sith Lord does is point out the truth of the dark side in the Order, further blurring the lines that Anakin once thought was so clear. He is caught in the middle of a power struggle between the Order and the Sith Lord, and all he wants to do is protect Padme.

The story continues with time splitting between Anakin and Obi-Wan. For the sake of simplicity, we will follow along with Obi-Wan on Utapau before we return to Anakin and Palpatine. Obi-Wan has one job on Utapau: lead an army of clones to find Grievous and arrest him. Before leaving, Windu tells Obi-Wan that catching Grievous will end the war, so the council is convinced that once Grievous is out of the picture, the Republic will be safe. In other words, with Dooku checked off the hit list, Grievous is the only one standing in the way of peace. Obi-Wan is to do whatever it takes to bring him to justice.

Obi-Wan finds Grievous and ends up engaged in a battle with this Jedi-slaying robot while his clones fight the droid army outside. The quick battle ends in a chase, with Obi-Wan thinking that as long as Grievous is out there, the war will not end. The battle reaches its height in the hanger, with Obi-Wan dangling off a ledge and Grievous closing in on him. In a similar situation as that in episode I, Obi-Wan summons a weapon to his hand with the force, this time a gun, and uses it to blast Grievous in the heart. Killing for Obi-Wan is once again a necessary evil, however this time, it is not out of rage but out of defense for himself and the Republic that he slays the general of the droid army.

While Obi-Wan is in the heat of this battle, Anakin reaches a breaking point and confides in Palpatine with the intention of learning how to save Padme. It is at this moment when the veil that blinds Anakin is removed and he sees the truth of Palpatine: he is the Sith Lord they have been looking for. Horrified, Anakin is left with a decision: he could slay Palpatine right then and

end it (or would it really solve anything?), he could keep quiet and learn from the Sith Lord, or he can turn him in, which I argue is the most Jedi thing he could do in such a situation. He does turn him in to the council under full assumption that the Jedi will do what is right. He even offers to act as peacekeeper in the discussion, yet Windu shuts him down. The Jedi Master decides that direct confrontation is the only way to end it, and he gathers the best remaining Jedi to attack Palpatine.

Let me be clear, this battle between Palpatine and the Jedi is not one of light side vs dark side: it is a strict power struggle between two equally corrupt groups. When the Jedi are slain, it is because of their own desire to stop at nothing in order to achieve peace. Their way is the right way, and this man has intruded upon and threatened the system that puts them at the top. He must be destroyed. Just as Grievous and Dooku and Maul must perish in the name of peace, so too must this evil Sith Lord – the puppet master behind the corruption in the government and the war against the Republic. Certainly this man is evil, but the Jedi never stop to think that maybe the dark side reaches beyond him, that it corrupts even the most noble of people, and that it could be guiding their actions just as Palpatine had been before. This is not a battle of light vs dark: it is dark side through and through and only the dark side can win this fight.

That is where Anakin stands when faced with Windu and Palpatine on the ledge. What he sees as a choice between good and evil is actually corrupted to the point where a true act of the light side would be unknown to the situation. Palpatine has won the game because no matter which option Anakin chooses, his path is set, and it is towards the dark side. If he watches Windu kill Palpatine, it will haunt him like his mother's death and his resentment for the Jedi will push him over to become a dedicated follower of the dark side. If he acts in defense of

Palpatine, he is saving a Sith Lord, an action he will view as pure dark side. There is nowhere to go but towards darkness. The Empire has already begun.

Anakin pleads with Windu to allow Palpatine to live, but Windu refuses, using the same argument that Palpatine used earlier in reference to Dooku: he is too dangerous to be kept alive. Anakin is shocked to hear these words come out of the mouth of this esteemed Jedi and all hope of knowing right from wrong vanishes. He acts on instinct, the way he has since the beginning and the thing that has driven him to this point: he defends the person he loves. I argue that this is a proper expression of the light side and the way a Jedi should act. Luke is told to not protect his friends because it could lead to killing Vader, not because his personal feelings keep him from doing his duty. When Luke defends his friends against Jabba, he acts in a Jedi way, even if his actions are not entirely peaceful. Defending loved ones is glorified in the originals as the Jedi way, but only if it is done correctly. To put this in perspective, the Jedi of the Republic would have told Luke to not let the fact that Vader was his father get in the way of killing him to restore peace. Anakin does what is *right* and *light* by defending Palpatine, but the Sith Lord uses this act of mercy to his advantage (like the dark side does) and he throws Windu off the edge. Anakin sees his choice as *evil* and *dark* so he is left with no choice but to submit to the full weight of the dark side. He becomes a Sith when he sees no other option, and being without the restrictions of the Jedi, feels free at last, leading to the atrocities that he eventually commits as Darth Vader.

Order 66 is the next command of Palpatine, ordering the deaths of all remaining Jedi. The brutal irony is obvious, as the army designed to save the Republic is now used to overthrow it. The clones that serve the “peacekeepers” now keep the peace by turning on their commanders. The Jedi who were so comfortable with leading in a war now fall because of that war. The casualties are not just the experienced Jedi, but the younglings too. While Vader’s actions in the

temple can by no means be justified, it is the Jedi who have brought it to this day, and all but two fall at the hands of the Sith.

And so brings us to the most dramatic and revealing part in the entire prequels: the battles between the two Jedi and the two Sith. It is here where this theory began taking form as these scenes make explicit connections to the originals as it is the last we will see of our heroes until we return to Tatooine. If there is anything we need to learn about them that will make us understand their characters in the originals, it is here where we must find them. In order for this theory to make sense, it must start here and work its way back to episode I because it is here, in the end, where everything becomes clear.

We must set the scene in the context of the originals, and to do so, we begin with a return to Dagobah as Luke is prepping his X-Wing to fly off and save his friends. Our two heroes are there, desperately pleading with him to stay and complete his training. They urge him to not confront Vader because he is not ready. One needs to only look to Episode VI to understand what they mean: Luke must go to help Vader, not kill him. Killing him will only lead to the dark side so any confrontation must be one of peace, which is what Luke does on Endor.

What are these heroes doing here in Episode III? They plan to confront the Sith with only one goal in mind: to kill them. How can this be? Are these not the same Jedi that we remember from Episode V? They do the exact opposite of what they instructed Luke to do! There is no difference between the two situations! Yoda and Obi-Wan justify it on the grounds of, yet again, restoring peace to the galaxy. They seek to overthrow a newly-born oppressive Empire using the same tactics that the Empire was born out of. There can be no bigger and clearer mistake than this, as these Jedi heroes look a whole lot like the Sith they are trying to stop. Yoda, the peaceful hermit who never once teaches Luke how to use a lightsaber, confronts the Emperor with

lightsaber in hand. Obi-Wan, the one who teaches Luke to only use a lightsaber for defense, uses it to attack his old padawan. They are corrupt, and nothing else makes it more obvious.

First, we will look more in depth at the battle between Yoda and Palpatine before we return to Mustafar to examine the most important battle of the prequels, Obi-Wan and Anakin. The battle with Yoda and Palpatine begins with a quick exchange of words, with Palpatine telling Yoda that his arrogance blinds him. This is truth slapping Yoda in the face as throughout the prequels, Yoda mentions many times that the dark side clouds everything. His pride and arrogance was what caused him to be blind, and Palpatine took advantage of it. It is because of Yoda's pride that this battle is about to happen, and the Emperor's force lightning awakes him to that fact. They begin fighting and their battle escalates as they enter the empty senate chamber, which I argue is a metaphor. One could be tempted to say that the fate of the galaxy rest in this battle, the good Yoda versus the evil Palpatine, but I think it goes far deeper than that. As senate chairs fly, we begin to understand that whoever the victorious party is, the loser is the people. Neither cares about the well-being of the galaxy at this point; they only care about their control over it. Force lightning flies at Yoda, same as in the battle with Dooku, except this time Yoda is overwhelmed. As he fights to push back the lightning, he realizes that he is going to lose and there is nothing he can do about it. He falls to the senate floor, lightsaber lost and body broken. With a look of horror, he finally understands the mistakes he has made. He does not retrieve his lightsaber and he limps to get as far away from this battle as possible; as far away from his past as he possibly can.

That brings us to the battle between Anakin and Obi-Wan. The first thing I want to address is how Obi-Wan finds Anakin. After Padme will not tell him where Anakin is, he decides to board her ship without her knowledge in order to assassinate her husband. It is Obi-

Wan's presence on Mustafar that sends Anakin into a rage that makes him almost kill her. The actions of this Jedi Master put an innocent person in grave danger, counter to Luke's actions in episode VI when he turns himself in to Vader in order to protect his friends. These are not the actions of a Jedi Master, but are the actions of a desperate soldier who is afraid of losing control. As far as Anakin is concerned, it is apparent that he is no longer seeking to protect his loved ones. The quality that made him a great Jedi is gone, washed away in his desire for power.

When Anakin and Obi-Wan begin talking, Anakin lays numerous charges against the Order, most of which are easy to gloss over given his state, but they must not be ignored. In Anakin's mind, the Jedi have turned Padme against him. The person he swore to protect has become his enemy and now he has to kill his best friend. He tells Obi-Wan that he "sees through the lies of the Jedi" and that he "does not fear the dark side" like Obi-Wan does. It is ironic how he accuses Obi-Wan of fearing the dark side when Yoda says in episode I that fear is what ultimately leads to the dark side. The Jedi have lied by saying they are the noble and light side when all Anakin has seen since he arrived was oppression and hunger for power. This last move by Obi-Wan, coming to Mustafar to kill him, is what confirms the lies in his mind. In his closing statement, Obi-Wan tells Anakin that he will do what he must, even if it means killing his old friend. Anakin responds with a mocking of Yoda, "You will try," and the battle begins.

The fight is passionate, brother against brother, friend against friend. Obi-Wan tries to convince Anakin to return to the light but Anakin wants no part of what Obi-Wan calls light. The Jedi are the reason his mother is dead. The Jedi are the reason Padme is now his enemy. If that is the light side, Anakin would much rather embrace the dark. Obi-Wan sees the look of hatred in his eyes and accepts the truth that he has failed Anakin. In one last attempt to convince him to turn, Obi-Wan tells Anakin that Palpatine is evil to which Anakin responds "From my point of

view, the Jedi are evil.” Obi-Wan thinks he is lost, but is he really that far from the truth? The Jedi may not have been explicitly trying to take over, but they certainly did not want to lose control. What Palpatine told him was true “from a certain point of view” (sound familiar? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jobWnQ_OPA).

Noticing that he is overpowered, Obi-Wan looks to escape the fight he has regretted starting and he jumps to the volcanic shore. He tells Anakin the fight is over because he no longer wants to kill him. He has realized the futility of fighting and wants to escape with his life and without killing his former padawan. Anakin thinks he has enough power to gain the upper hand so he leaps at Obi-Wan. The Jedi Master has a perfect attempt to kill him, but he acts in mercy and allows his blade to render Anakin useless. Obi-Wan, the man who has slain Darth Maul and General Grievous without a second thought, finally acts in a Jedi way but not ending the life of his best friend.

Obi-Wan screams at Anakin as he lies defeated on the ground. Remember that the Jedi are forbidden to love and are not allowed to let their personal feelings get in the way, but Obi-Wan throws that away. He tells Anakin that they were brothers and that he loved him as a brother. It is this love that kept him from killing Anakin. The light side is finally visible in a Jedi, but Anakin is too angry to notice. He screams his hatred at Obi-Wan, his hatred for all that the Jedi had done, for the dark side has consumed him to the core. Obi-Wan walks away in tears, regretting his choice to come to Mustafar.

And so ends the prequels: darkness and evil has triumphed through the corrupt actions of the Jedi and the manipulation of the Sith. A vicious power struggle which included war and many bloody lightsaber battles has ended in the victory of the dark side. The light side is rarely seen throughout the movies as the Jedi are confused as to what the light side really is. The

prequels end with blurred lines, a broken and confused galaxy, and two Jedi who do not know what to believe anymore. There is hope in the two Skywalker children, but unless the Jedi figure out what it truly means to be Jedi, they will fall into the same trap as their father. Obi-Wan and Yoda go into exile, not to hide from the Empire, but to relearn the ways of the force.

It is with great joy that we can now move beyond the prequels and examine the original trilogy in light of what we have already uncovered. We will not go through the originals in as much detail as the prequels as we will only point out things that the prequels shines a light upon. We will not look at questions of why editors had the nerve to suggest that Greedo shot first or give a detailed explanation of the complicated Han Solo. We will instead look at the implications of the prequels on how we understand characters like Obi-Wan, Yoda, the Emperor, and Darth Vader and how the implications of this lead to a better understanding of the Jedi and what Luke Skywalker is ultimately on a journey to discover.

Episode IV

When we are introduced to Ben Kenobi on Tatooine, the first thing we realize is his wisdom has grown. He does not waste his lightsaber on the Tuskan Raiders and he speaks calmly to Luke and his droids. When he gives Luke his father's lightsaber, he points out the elegance of the weapon, but he is not determined to show Luke how to use it immediately. He would rather teach him to be peaceful and patient, and not let his anger get the best of him. He defends Luke in the cantina with his lightsaber, the only time he will even turn it on until he confronts Vader. This is not the reckless Obi-Wan from the prequels who told Anakin that the lightsaber was his life. If anything, this Obi-Wan is convinced that the lightsaber is only to be used in dire circumstances to protect one's friends.

On the journey to Alderaan, Obi-Wan looks like he is at peace and finally teaches Luke the proper way to handle a lightsaber. Luke must close his eyes and let the force guide his actions, and the force helps him protect himself, not attack the training droid. All of a sudden, Luke must abandon his lightsaber training, *the only training he will receive in the entire trilogy*, when Obi-Wan feels the great disturbance of Alderaan getting blasted into oblivion. The atrocities of the Empire have reached their climax and it feels as though all hope for defeating them is gone.

When they get pulled inside the Death Star, Obi-Wan leaves his companions behind to shut off the tractor beam. His main purpose in leaving, however, is so that he can confront Vader. One may be confused as to why he does this, especially considering our discussion of what Jedi should not do, one of which is confront. At the start, it looks as though he is making the same mistake that he did years earlier!

We must recall the trend we noticed in Obi-Wan's actions throughout the prequels. He confronts Maul and then kills him. He confronts Grievous and then kills him. When he confronts Anakin, it is with the intention of killing him but he instead shows mercy. One may be tempted to say that he is now going back to finish the job. The years on Tatooine have cleared his head and separated him enough from his old padawan that he is finally comfortable with killing him. Is this really why he confronts him now?

When they see each other in the hallway, they draw their lightsabers, just as they did in episode III. Vader recognizes his old master and mocks him saying that he is now the master, to which Obi-Wan retorts that Vader is a "only a master of evil." The man that was once Anakin is so far gone from the light side that it only makes sense that Obi-Wan would have given up on

attempting to turn him. The battle looks as though it is going to go in the same direction as the last one, but maybe Obi-Wan will be the one lying on the ground in defeat.

Yet something is different, as Obi-Wan tells Vader that if he is struck down he will become more powerful than one can possibly imagine. With that comment, Luke enters the scene and gazes in the direction of the battle. The feel of the battle shifts as Obi-Wan offers a knowing smile and raises his lightsaber. Vader takes advantage and swings but Obi-Wan vanishes with the touch of his blade, leading to the question that every Star Wars fan has asked since the beginning: what the heck is that about?

In the prequels, Obi-Wan kills without a second thought and it was only the fact that it was Anakin that stopped him from doing so on Mustafar. In his time on Tatooine, he connected to the force and learned the ways of the light side, leading him to conclude that his actions before and during the clone wars were wrong. He had failed Anakin by not teaching him the ways of the Jedi, and in this move he rights his wrongs. A Jedi does not kill, but protects and is willing to sacrifice himself for the good of the galaxy. A Jedi does not use violence to promote peace, but it is only through peace that an evil, oppressive Empire can be overcome. In lifting his blade, he acknowledges to Anakin the failure of his ways. He shows him that he never should have gone to Mustafar and that he regrets defending himself by turning Anakin into the monstrous robot he is now. In giving himself up, he offers Vader a glimpse of what a true Jedi looks like. As Luke looks on in anger and confusion, we realize that Obi-Wan has also shown the young Skywalker what it means to be a Jedi, refusing to make the same mistake again. Both Vader and Luke are left in complete confusion, and their journey towards understanding the light side will progress simultaneously through the next films. Our journey towards understanding it begins as well.

Episode V

I have already mentioned episode V in great detail during my discussion of the prequels, but I will recall many of the themes here. We start on Dagobah, with an impatient and angry Luke stranded on this swamp planet. In many ways, we are dealing with the same character as Anakin, something that Aunt Beru had pointed out in episode IV. He is impatient and he wants action, but he also feels a strong desire to protect his friends. Obi-Wan recognized this and made sure Luke was watching as he gave himself up so that both he and his father could begin questioning the significance of it. When Yoda meets Luke, he sees the same thing, and he acts crazy in order to see how Luke will respond. He intentionally makes him wait and steals his stuff in order to get a rise out of him. When Luke responds like Anakin, Yoda does not want to train him and resorts to old habits, saying he is “too old” to begin training. It is only Luke’s passion (that’s right, passion) to become a Jedi that changes Yoda’s mind.

Surprising to us, Yoda has learned so much from his time in exile and he passes it on to Luke, aware of the risks of his failure. When we last saw Yoda, he was defeated and broken at the hands of the Emperor but now he is empowered. He no longer believes that a lightsaber solves problems and he condemns his actions in the prequels by stating that “war does not make one great.” He knows that the Cave of Origin is home to one’s greatest fears because he has been there already. He has faced his fears and has come to understand that they only lead to the dark side when not handled properly.

While training with Yoda, Luke does not once learn proper fighting techniques. Instead, Yoda puts him through an intense physical exercise so that he may feel the force flowing around him. This is not the Jedi Temple of the prequels nor is it the suppression of feelings that the Jedi were so adamant about. Luke is told to master his emotions but to feel the universe moving with him. He has no need to fear because the force will guide his actions, not some silly rules that the

Jedi made up. Luke is told to face his fears and understand them, not hide from them and hope they go away. This is all done with the knowledge that Luke will one day have to confront Vader and the Emperor, and Yoda does not want Luke to make the same mistakes that he and Obi-Wan did. Luke is their only hope to right the wrongs that they committed, so when he flies away to fight Vader, they know all too well what is about to happen

Luke confronts Vader on Cloud City and the battle that the Jedi were afraid of takes place. Vader makes the shrewd comment that Obi-Wan has taught Luke well, in reference to his skills with a lightsaber, yet we know that Obi-Wan barely taught him any of that! In Vader's mind, a Jedi is simply a Sith who has not given in to the full power of the dark side. Jedi train by dueling, at least that is all Vader has ever known. Luke's actions only serve to confirm that assumption, making this a mistake that negates what Obi-Wan did in episode IV.

The battle grows fierce and Luke begins to see that he is not going to win the fight. He calls on his anger, but Vader is far too powerful. By confronting the Empire with violence, Luke has lost before he even began and it wears him down. Luke gets pushed back to the edge of the platform and Vader slices through his arm, leaving him defeated overhanging the core of the city. Vader offers his hand to Luke, declaring that he is his father, but turning away in horror, Luke drops off the ledge, choosing to die rather than to join Vader.

Somehow Luke survives and he and his friends escape to the Rebel blockade. He gets fitted with a robotic arm, just as Anakin did in episode II, both being the consequences of their actions. Anakin charged Dooku on Geonosis just as Luke charged Vader here. Both end with scars reminding them that violence is not the answer. One only hopes that Luke can learn from this mistake better than his father.

With that, we now turn to my favorite episode, the one that will confirm the legitimacy of this theory. It is finally time to look at episode VI.

Episode VI

The first example anyone will use to refute this theory comes from episode VI, when Luke and his friends use violence to overthrow Jabba the Hutt. If a Jedi is not supposed to use violence and if violence is never the answer, how come both elements are in play here? That question is complex so it must be taken rather slowly. First, we must recognize that Luke is *not* a Jedi, at least not yet. Yoda confirms this when Luke returns to Dagobah and Yoda laughs in his face when he says he is a Jedi, but I will explain that more in a little bit. Second, the plan to free Han was not one of violence. It was designed to sneak Leia and all of her companions into Jabba's palace so they could distract the Hutt and allow Leia time to escape with Han. It is only when that plan fails does Luke step in and foolishly think that his Jedi powers were attuned enough to trick the mighty Jabba. Luke did not want to resort to violence, and the fact that he left his lightsaber with R2 confirms that it is his last option. When all else fails, Luke finally resorts to using his lightsaber in order to protect his friends, which is properly Jedi. Jabba and his empire die through the somewhat Jedi actions of Luke, but it is clear that "somewhat Jedi" will not be enough to end the ultimate evil, the Empire.

After this, Luke returns to Dagobah to complete his training but is surprised to hear Yoda tell him that he has nothing left to learn. With that comment, Luke assumes he is a Jedi but Yoda scoffs at that remark. In order to become a Jedi, Luke must confront Vader. It is unfortunate that Luke rushed to face Vader before because he was not ready to deal with that truth. Now, with the truth revealed, Luke must return to his father and "then, only then, a Jedi will you be." Yoda breathes his last, and just like Obi-Wan he vanishes into the force.

Luke returns to the Rebel fleet and accompanies his friends on their mission to Endor and right away he realizes that he should not have gone with them. He senses Vader's presence and knows that he is searching for him and he remembers Yoda's words. On Endor, he defends his friends against the scout troopers, but his mind is elsewhere. He is feeling pulled to confront his father and finally, realizing that his presence with his friends is only putting them in danger, he sacrifices his own safety and turns himself in to Vader. He gives up his lightsaber and does not flinch when Vader threatens to take him to the Emperor.

This is already a very different encounter than the last time they met. In episode V, it was Vader trying to convince Luke to join the dark side but now Luke has turned the tables on him. Instead of being overly emotional, Luke is controlled even when Vader attempts to intimidate him. Vader now recognizes this and confirms again that Obi-Wan has taught him well. Vader seems to be impressed by his son's composure but he will not turn back to the light because he thinks that the dark side has too fully consumed him. His actions in Palpatine's office that led to Windu's death, the murdering of younglings, and all the evil he has done since donning the suit has left him thinking that he cannot be redeemed. Even if the light side were as good as Luke is convinced it is, it is too late for Vader to turn around.

Vader brings Luke to the Emperor and we can now begin drawing comparisons to the character we saw in the prequels. He has a plan that he has foreseen which will end the Rebellion, similar to his plan to destroy the Jedi earlier. He has complete control over Vader and Vader is merely reduced to a puppet when compared to him. He is confident, and Luke accuses him of being too much so, but since his plans have never failed before, he certainly is justified in it. At the end of episode III, we realize that it was Palpatine who was behind everything, directing his malicious plan to take over the galaxy and using even the Jedi to do it. Here, he uses

the Rebels as puppets in order to get Luke at his side and then squash them once and for all. We become terrified at all he knows and all the moves he has directed, and Luke begins to think that the only way to keep this from happening is to strike him down.

The Emperor entices Luke to go through with his thoughts and kill him. If Luke does that, he will have turned to the dark side by attempting to fight violence with violence. Luke is trapped as he watches his friends get destroyed before his very eyes and the Jedi conflict arises: when faced with a decision to protect loved ones, how does a Jedi protect them? If he uses violence, he will have lost to the dark side. If he does not, he will have to sit by and watch his friends perish. The conflict arises in Luke to its boiling point as he hears the Emperor taunt him and he finally breaks, grabbing for his lightsaber and swinging it at the Emperor. It is only Vader's blade that saves him.

Luke and Vader begin to duel and it is clear that Luke is more powerful this time around. He kicks Vader down the steps but upon hearing the Emperor's laugh, he comes to his senses and composes himself. He shuts off his blade and watches as Vader slowly moves toward him. He only turns it back on when Vader swings and he quickly gets away from combat, jumping to a crosswalk. He shuts off his blade again and attempts to change Vader's mind by telling him that he feels the good in him. Vader, however, refuses to listen and sets his mind on destroying Luke if he will not turn. Luke decides to hide and meditate in order to not fight. He is not fighting like any Jedi we see in the prequels. No, this is how a Jedi is supposed to confront evil and both Vader and the Emperor know it.

Vader taunts him and finally lures him out of hiding by mentioning Leia, with Luke rising out of the darkness to defend her. He is enraged and only attacks the retreating Vader. He overpowers him on a ledge, slicing off his arm in the same way that Vader sliced his. His face is

filled with anger until he looks down at his hand and realizes what he has done. His father is a machine because of his own violent actions. Luke is part machine because of his own actions. With each act of violence they committed, they became less human and more like a man-slaughtering robot. This is not the fate that Luke wants. He turns toward the Emperor who laughs and tells him to finish off Vader and take his place with the dark side of the force. When Anakin was faced with this decision in episode III, he chose to behead Dooku at the command of Palpatine. Every single Jedi in the prequels was a puppet used by Palpatine to further his plan of total control.

But he is not like his father, nor is he like the Jedi Order of the prequels. He stares the Emperor in the eyes and throws his lightsaber to the side, refusing to fight violence with violence. He chooses to abandon self-defense in the name of the Force. He chooses the path that Obi-Wan took in episode IV and he completes what Obi-Wan started: he shows his father what it means to be a Jedi. At this, the Emperor gives up trying to turn him because he knows that he can no longer be turned.

Luke Skywalker has become a Jedi.

With disgust, the Emperor realizes that the plan he had foreseen – Luke as his right hand man – has failed. Since there is no hope for a true Jedi to turn to the dark side, the Emperor decides to let him experience the full power of the dark side by blasting him with force lightning. Luke is defenseless and collapses under the Emperor's power. It appears that once again, the Emperor will be too powerful to stop. The Jedi way, even the true Jedi way, is no match for the oppression and violence of the dark side.

Meanwhile, Vader walks over to his master's side and watches as his son suffers. It is in this moment where Vader has his life flash before his eyes. When he was a kid, he provided for his mom on Tatooine and he protected the random strangers who showed up needing parts to get their ship off the ground. He protected Padme from assassins and swore to not let anything hurt her. He cried because he could not protect his mom and he grew terrified that he could not protect Padme. This was Anakin Skywalker: a man who did whatever it took to protect those he loved. It was the Jedi that kept him from doing this so he turned from them. By choosing the dark side, he chose power over protection and day by day, the good man that was Anakin vanished into the monster that was Darth Vader. He became more power hungry, more violent, and more self-seeking and did not have any loved ones to protect. In this moment, the Jedi slaughtering Darth Vader vanishes, and the protective love of Anakin Skywalker emerges from beneath the mask. He grabs his master, an event that Palpatine did not foresee, and he chucks him off the edge, ending the reign of the dark side.

In the last scene, Luke is on Endor and he looks over and sees the ghosts of Obi-Wan and Yoda and watches as his father appears next to them. The obvious question if we have the prequels in mind is why the Jedi who were killed during Order 66 have not become ghosts. This is glossed over in episode III as a "special power" that Qui-Gon discovered in his death. Yet I do not think that is the answer. The Jedi of the prequels do not disappear because they are not true Jedi. The Force justifies the sacrifices of Obi-Wan and Anakin and commends the actions of Yoda. They live on in the Force because they gave themselves up in overthrowing the dark side.

Violence is overcome with love. The Empire is destroyed because of self-sacrifice. The light side of the Force is fully revealed in the actions of the Skywalkers. The Jedi of the prequels did not understand this as they tried to fight in order to keep the peace. It is only through love

and self-sacrifice that peace can be truly achieved and oppression can end. This is the message of Star Wars, from *The Phantom Menace* to *The Return of the Jedi*. The prequels serve to illuminate this message, not override it and only through understanding the prequels can one grasp the full picture of what it means to be a Jedi. We must not look at the prequels as a mistake, but as a necessary evil in order to develop a greater appreciation for the franchise as a whole.

Let Episode VII begin.