Subjectivity in the New Hollywood Cinema: Fathers, Sons and Other Ghosts

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Chapter

The Father, the Son and the Haunted Look: The Star Wars Trilogy
The Eclipse of the Father

As opposed to the Indiana Jones trilogy, the historical period in the Star Wars trilogy is not specified. The words, “A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...” that appear on the screen with each film of the trilogy conflict, however, with the futuristic space vehicles in the shots that follow. In the generic clash between fairy tale and science fiction we can immediately note a temporal disjunction: on the one hand we are told that the events took place in the far-away past, but on the other hand it is clear that this past is also the future in which the events are yet to take place. In this far-away time and space, in the past that is yet to come, a civil war is being fought between the Rebel forces and the evil Galactic Empire. It is a time of darkness and fear in the galaxy, because the Empire has invented its ultimate weapon, an armored space station called the Death Star, which has enough power to destroy an entire planet. In this constellation where life on the planets is determined by the Death Star, the central figure is lord Darth Vader, a former Jedi knight and at present an agent of evil. Before he was seduced by the evil side his name was Anakin Skywalker, and his special predisposition to harness and control the life energy or the “Force,” as the Jedis call it, was in the service of good.

Vader’s children, the twins Luke and Leia were separated at birth and sent off to different destinations in order to ensure that Vader would not find them and make them heirs to his throne of evil. Both Luke and Leia are ignorant of the fact that they have a sibling, and they believe that their father is dead. In the course of the trilogy their paths will intersect, because both the son and the daughter will fight on the side of the rebellion, hence, against Vader’s evil Empire. Vader, as they will find out in the third film of the trilogy, is of course their father. The master myth-maker of the new Hollywood cinema, George Lucas, has clearly spelled out his personal motivations and his conscious employment of cinematic means to transform the future, the outer space, into a mythic universe. According to Lucas, in the case of America, the hero’s wanderings across the vast universe emerged as a necessity, after all the “mythical spaces” in the country itself were already settled. In other parts of the globe, as he remarked, there is still that place “over the hill,” the place of the mythic past. The only place over the hill that remained for Americans after the exhaustion of the Wild West was
the vast universe.ii

Through the clash of genres, pretexts and media, typical of the new Hollywood cinema, and of which the Star Wars trilogy is the precursor, Lucas not only invents a mythic universe but he also reconstructs a symbolic universe. In that respect, as I will explain in the course of this study, the trilogy thematizes the conditions of the construction and decomposition of the cinematographic apparatus and accordingly, reveals the constructed nature of the order that endorses its ideological effects. The de/composition of both the apparatus and the symbolic universe involves bringing into relation formerly incompatible or seemingly irreconcilable elements. It sets up a highly complex and conflicting semantic field. Just as importantly, however, it involves an overall organizing principle or structure that governs these events which will have taken place in the future. It is a structure that orders the adventure of the hero and it consists of three parts: departure, initiation and return (Campbell, 1948); Lucas has identified Joseph Campbell's The Hero With a Thousand Faces as his major source of inspiration for turning the outer space into his own mythic universe.iii In the course of this chapter I will demonstrate the ways this basic structure is bound up with the structure of différence, implying in the first place that the structure of the narrative reinforces the structure of character subjectivity.

Although the hero is composed as a son/daughter, the son, Luke Skywalker, is the one who will go through the process of initiation in order to face the father ultimately. For that reason, in the subsequent analysis I will place the major emphasis on the discursive interdependency between the father and the son as the underlying motor of this filmic narrative.iv In episode IV, the first film of the trilogy, we encounter Luke and Leia as young adults. Leia is a princess fighting on the side of the rebellion, Luke is living with his aunt and uncle, unhappy and bored with his life as a farmer, dreaming of going away to the pilot academy. Their paths will intersect in the first film of the trilogy, although it is not until the last film that they will come to know that they are brother and sister. The first film begins with a battle between Rebel spies and the Imperial troopers on board of the Death Star: Princess Leia and her rebel companions have stolen secret plans of the battle station which reveal a deficiency of the Death Star system. Just before she is
arrested by the troopers, Leia manages to place a message into the android R2D2. It is a message for Obi-Wan-Kenobi, the old Jedi knight, to whom she appeals for help. R2D2 who is also the keeper of the secret plans, manages to leave the battle station together with another android, 3CPO. They travel to the planet Tatooine, where R2D2 is to find Obi-Wan and deliver the message. After arriving on Tatooine, both androids are snatched by android dealers, Jahvas, who put them on the market and as it turns out, sell them to Luke’s uncle Owen. During the first night R2D2 escapes, driven by his mission to reach Obi-Wan. Feeling responsible for the android’s escape, Luke rushes to retrieve him before uncle Owen finds out what happened. Chasing after the android, Luke comes in contact with Obi-Wan and Princess Leia’s desperate plea for help. Just as importantly, Luke comes closer to information regarding his origin.

Unlike uncle Owen who has declared Luke’s father dead and avoids talking about him, Obi-Wan shares important pieces of information with Luke. Obi-Wan tells Luke that his father was not just a navigator but that he was also the best Jedi in the galaxy, and that he was betrayed and murdered by Darth Vader. Obi-Wan is introduced as Luke’s first teacher, with whom the process of initiation will begin. The first step Luke will have to take is to learn to use the so-called life-saber, the elegant weapon which belonged to his father when he was a Jedi. Obi-Wan offers the life-saber to Luke, tells him that he needs his help in delivering the android to the rebels, and that the time has come for Luke to start learning about the Force. The Force is all around us, the old Jedi tells Luke, but it can be harnessed to produce either evil or good deeds. The people in the galaxy are suffering because there hasn’t been a Jedi who is strong enough to face Vader, the servant of evil. Luke is reluctant at first to respond, in Campbell’s terms, to “the call for adventure,” which means becoming involved in the war against the Empire. But when he returns home and sees that the Imperial troopers have burned everything and killed his aunt and uncle, he firmly decides that he will become a Jedi knight like his father and fight against evil. Luke is ready to depart.

The sudden absence of Luke Skywalker’s substitute father opens up the possibility for a new substitution as well as the “re-invention” of a father. Apart from Obi-Wan who will partially occupy the evacuated place of the father in Luke’s life, there is another
character who will fulfill this function. This is the ancient Jedi master Yoda, whose tiny stature seems to be in discrepancy with his great strength. Just as Obi-Wan teaches Luke not to trust his sight, for eyes may deceive, Yoda teaches him that the appearance and size of a body do not show one's actual strength. Luke will go through the process of initiation and he will gradually learn that Vader is his father. The Jedi training will teach him to follow his instincts and thus, by holding on to the feeling that there is still some good in Vader, Luke will eventually re-invent him. He will make Darth Vader remove the mask of evil and reveal the face of the good Jedi, Anakin Skywalker. In other words, this “hero’s return” will entail supplying the image of his father.

It is important at the outset to grasp the ambiguity that the name Vader is invested with, because the eclipse of the father is already marked in his name. Vader, the Dutch word for father, simultaneously hides and alludes to his father-identity. The name Vader would thus infer a darkened father, a father hiding behind vader. In Lethal Love, Bal discusses the typical art of naming in biblical love stories and the way that art exposes specific attitudes toward sexuality. By examining the construction of characters in the Book of Ruth, from the point of view of the function of proper names, Bal demonstrates that a specific meaning that integrates the character into its life, can also imprison it there:

Not only is the name [...] so well adapted to the character that we could say that it is iconic rather than the symbolic, keeping its indexical aspect; it is also narrative. For, far from describing just a feature of the character, it tells its action - an emblematic action, indeed, which thus becomes predictive, but which remains narrated action. This entails the problem of chronology and its relation to analogy. (Bal, 1987: 73)

Bal points out that a particular name charges the character with a narrative role and a semantic content, but she also emphasizes that there are cases where the character is not completely defenseless against the name, and in such situations it can assume the focalization of its own life. Vader assumes focalization of his own life with Luke's help. It is through the intersubjective exchange, but also through the collapse of the fabula onto the story, as I will demon-
strate in the subsequent sections, that Vader will come to stand for the father. As I have argued earlier, in the case of new Hollywood cinema, and specifically the Star Wars trilogy, focalization needs to be considered in relation to fabulation, and it is therefore the subject of vision who is also the myth-maker who is ultimately responsible for clearing up the father’s name. The double teleology implied in the name Vader enables us to follow the relation between analogy and chronology and in that respect, I would suggest, Vader’s name summarizes and interprets Vader’s function in the trilogy.

Bal asserts that since the names that tell can only tell the crucial, determining action by which the destiny of the character is summarized, “the bond they make between chronology and analogy comes close to mise en abyme, a microstructure that contains a summary of the overall fabula in which it functions” (Bal, 1987:75). The mise en abyme does not propose only one interpretation, as Bal points out, but offers different possibilities. Since the problems regarding the name have to do with narrative subjects, with social life and unconscious allusions, Bal pursues three lines of analysis in relation to such an account: narratological, historical and psychoanalytic (77). In terms of my study, the narratological aspect will be conceived as intertwined with the historical and the psychoanalytic aspect; giving a face to the father’s ghost via an intersubjective exchange, implies also “facing” the past, or giving a face to history, which then, breaks the chain of haunting, of visitations, that would otherwise keep recurring in the future.

**The Structure of the Haunted Look**

First of all, Vader wears a helmet-like mask which conceals his face, and his chest is shielded with protective armor. His entire costume is black including his long, appropriately villain-like cape. He operates with the help of technical gadgets. The most prominent apparatus is the microphone installed in Vader’s mask which modulates his voice and amplifies the breathing. Vader is thus, literally elaborated as both a technical and an institutional body whose main function is to engender fear. Just as it is not possible to see Hamlet’s dead father who returns as a ghost dressed in armor, Luke Skywalker’s father, Darth Vader, remains hidden behind his techno-institutional body until the last film of the trilogy. In both instances, there is a spectral effect, or “visor-effect” as Derrida names it, which marks the
supreme power to see without being seen (Derrida, 1994).

Because the father is hidden behind the dark moon, the Death Star, the mask of Vader, and the stories which describe him as dead, it is ultimately the father's voice that will inform the son of his presence. It is precisely the spectral effect that conditions this split between the voice and the body, and consequently enables the son to supply the image of the father. As in the case of Hamlet's dead father, who speaks the words, "I am Thy Father's Spirit" while hiding behind a visor and a body of armor, Luke's father will also make himself present via the spectral body. In both cases, there is an alien body impersonating the father, but in the trilogy, the spirit appears entrapped in the techno-institutional body of the evil Galactic Empire. Therefore, as the analysis will show, when Luke learns that Vader is his father, he finds it difficult to attach this body to the father's voice, because he perceives Vader as a body that has come to usurp the place of the father. It is on condition of a split between the body and the voice that the name of the father can be marked separately from the place of the father. This tension, or the split between the name and the place, conditions the spectral effect and produces what Derrida describes as the "haunted look." Derrida asserts that the haunted look presupposes the secrecy of origin. Since we do not see the one who sees us and who makes the law, who delivers the injunction, we must fall back on his voice:

The armor lets one see nothing of the spectral body, but at the level of the head and beneath the visor/curtain/screen/shade/blind/cover, it permits him to see without being seen but to speak in order to be heard. (Derrida, 1994: 9)

The spectral body can be faced when the separation between the body and the voice is realized; this realization is a precondition for an intersubjective exchange whereby the empty screen/visor can acquire a face. I would suggest that the tension Vader/father emblematizes Derrida's notion of a spectral body, and that the trilogy thematizes the problem of facing this specter. The trilogy ultimately stages the conditions where Vader as a screen acquires a face and hence, the "darkened" father can be atoned. For the purpose of this study I have taken the concept of the haunted look as a point
of departure in dealing with the following interrelated themes: 1) facing the father, or giving the father a face, as the motor of the narrative; 2) de/composing the wall of Plato's cave as the screen which discloses the conditions of its function, in order to re-read the apparatus theory of cinema in the light of the haunted look; and 3) problematizing the haunted look with respect to the de/composition and reinstitution of patriarchy. The relationship between the themes is to be understood as follows.

1. **Facing the Father, or Giving the Ghost a Face**: The double movement of ghosts and dead fathers, as dependent on the past that is yet to come, exemplifies Derrida's thinking of the past as a legacy that can come only from that which has not yet arrived, the future.VII Problematizing the temporal aspect of the process of "haunting" or "visitation," that is, emphasizing the relation to both the past and the future, implies in the first place that ghosts are not something we can do away with, simply by sweeping them under a door marked "the past." Freud already warned us that they will just continue to return.VIII There is, however, more at stake here than the perpetual return (of the repressed). We also have responsibility for the ghosts. This raises the question of whether, and how, one will engage in an interaction with the ghost. What emerges then, is the problem of facing the ghost, of giving him a face, of positing oneself as a mirror reflection, and hence, of lending a face to the spectral image. Once the father's voice that delivers the law acquires a face via the son, as is the case with the Star Wars trilogy, the law of the father is necessarily affected, interrupted and decomposed. The law that governs the "son's destiny," and imposes parricide as well as the perpetual haunting, loses its force, and can no longer be endorsed.

2. **De/composing the Wall of Plato's Cave**: When fabulation is taken into account, the concept of the haunted look helps us illuminate the ways the father-son relations are constructed. This in turn bears on the ways the idealist notion of the bedazzling Sun, as the Parent of light, can be decomposed.ix As in Platonic, Aristotelian or Cartesian discourse, the sun is interpreted as a specular circle, as a return to itself without a loss of meaning. It rises in the East, but in the evening of its journey it becomes interiorized in the eye and a heart of the Westerner, that is, in the man of metaphysics.x The new Hollywood texts such as the Star Wars trilogy put pressure on this ideal-
ist image of the sun: just as the sun retains its blinding power during an eclipse and forces us to turn toward its reflection, the father, obscured by the dark moon, comes to show his face via the son. We can see the father/sun by looking at the son/projected image. In other words, we can see the sun when we turn toward the son. And vice versa.\textsuperscript{11}

Plato’s dialogues, especially Book VII from the \textit{Republic}, which played such an important role in psychoanalytic film theory, can be related to the division of subject construction introduced by Jean-Louis Baudry into film studies: between the cinematic apparatus itself, and the signifying processes generated through narrative. The double teleology implied in the concept of the haunted look sharpens our awareness that the notion of the “subject-effect” produced through the concealment of the technical base of the apparatus needs to be re-examined. I will demonstrate the ways the trilogy thematizes a decomposition of Plato’s myth and discloses the ideological function of the apparatus. By drawing on Baudry’s apparatus theory I will explain that in the case of the new Hollywood texts such as the \textit{Star Wars} trilogy, the techniques of the symbolic collapse onto the techniques of the imaginary. In the classical Hollywood cinema the ideological function of the apparatus was principally maintained through misrecognition, or rather through the conditions of “forgetting” the discontinuity and the constructed nature of the apparatus. In the new Hollywood cinema, I am arguing, this is no longer the case.

In that respect, I will explain that the shadows projected on “the wall of Plato’s cave” as “mirror images,” can be understood beyond the specular/imaginary dimension. Moreover, we need to take into consideration the collapse of the fabula onto the story, hence we also have to take into account the symbolic dimension. The trilogy’s simultaneous decomposition and reconstruction of the father as the apparatus, that is, the process of giving the ghost a “face,” presupposes an opening up of narrative spaces which were only implicit in the classical Hollywood cinema. What we see, then, is dependent on the structure of the haunted look. Via the haunted look the father as both the sun and the apparatus appears on the wall of Plato’s cave.

3. Reinstating Patriarchy: Finally, the concept of the haunted look can be observed as a link between the scopic regimes that the trilo-
gy brings into play. On the one hand, there is Vader's all-encompassing ocularcentric eye; but on the other hand, through the process of "facing," the look of this blinding "rotten sun" is transfigured. The "rotten sun" that imposes the law, from whose penetrating eye nothing can be concealed, is also the father who monitors the offspring, and thus, conditions judgement upon their actions. By tracing the process of facing, we can note a shift from the look that objectifies, that imposes subjection and submission, and blocks the production of subjectivity, toward the production of the reciprocal exchange of looks which yields the possibility of an intersubjective relationship. Through the intersubjective exchange, the confrontation implied in the term "facing" is extended or better yet, reduced to its literal meaning - giving the ghost, but also the institution, a face.

Although the haunted look presupposes taking into account the fact that ghosts will keep on arriving from the future unless we gather the courage to face them, this position cannot be understood as *a priori* productive. The immediate critique we can extend to Lucas echoes Gayatri Spivak's critique of Derrida's concept. She comments on the absence of the woman in his *Specters of Marx* and states, "If Derrida plays Hamlet to Marx's Ghost, there are no takers for Gertrude and Ophelia" (Spivak, 1995).\textsuperscript{xii} Since Vader is elaborated as a spectral body conditioned by the split between the body and the voice, the operation of constructing the father through the decomposition of Vader underscores the new Hollywood's appropriation of critical discourse for its own purposes.\textsuperscript{xiii} The aspects and characteristics of this narrative text are predicated on its fabula, and as I have argued in the previous chapters, fabulas of narrative texts are co-dependent with the critical, philosophical or personal concerns of the subject of vision even if we are ultimately dealing with mythic discourse. For that reason, I will bring into the discussion Racine's *Phèdre*, the daughter of the rotten sun, whose forefather delivers his injunction through his gaze, who inflicts pain, and ultimately, scorches the life out of his offspring.

Unlike Luke Skywalker, who manages to confer his gaze upon the father without being burned, Phèdre does not attain a positive intersubjective exchange. The result of the blocking of the exchange of looks with the Sun leaves no other solution for Phèdre except projecting the look back onto herself, hence, ripping herself
apart. By granting the son the possibility of supplying the image of the father, the Star Wars trilogy thematizes the production of looking that works toward un-masking the (evil) father, and inserting the face of the good father. Thus, as this new Hollywood space fantasy has it, through the haunted look which governs the process of “facing,” the son is (again) generating his own father. By becoming the father’s creator, Lucas’s son subverts the mythological role assigned to him – the role of his father’s assassin. He gives a new “face” to his destiny, as it were, and escapes the tragedy that awaits Racine’s daughter.

**Facing the Father: The Motor of the Narrative**

It is the impossibility to see the spectral body that conditions Darth Vader’s paternal presence. But even more importantly, this paradoxical incorporation of the father as “being present without being seen,” conditions also the embodiment of the force of evil that Vader represents in the trilogy. Since Vader figures as a spectral body, it is not possible to look him in the face just as it is not possible to see the face of an institution of evil. One can “see” the institution of evil only when a face is projected on the specter’s screen. Hence, there is a job for the son, Luke Skywalker, who will provide the father-image for this in/visible entity. This difficulty of looking at the father’s face, of facing him is the motor of the narrative. Correspondingly, the skills Luke is taught by Yoda as well as Obi-Wan are intended to improve Luke’s defense mechanisms and to protect him from being “burned” at the sight of the father.

Luke and Vader interact on three occasions. The first encounter is Luke’s premonition of the task that awaits him in the future. It occurs in the second film of the trilogy, The Empire Strikes Back, in a scene which literally elaborates the tension between facing the father, and giving the father a face. Luke is at the Degoba system, a dark, misty, damp, and jungle-like environment, and the home of Yoda. The Jedi master is full of doubts regarding his pupil’s ability to learn to control the Force. For Luke is impatient and impulsive, and has trouble un-learning what he has previously learned. He is opinionated and judgmental, which limits his capacities to execute the “impossible.” In other words, Luke cannot let go of attaching meaning to things on the basis of what he sees, or what is commonly understood. Just as he is shocked to find out that
the “great Jedi master-Yoda” is actually an extremely small, and painfully ridiculous creature, Luke is a priori intimidated by big objects. He fails to harness the Force which would enable him to lift his space vehicle out of the swamp telepathically, because he confuses strength of mind with bodily strength.

During his learning process, however, Luke slowly starts to develop a “feeling,” a sense of “seeing” without relying on his eyes. After one training session, he tells Yoda that he is disturbed by a strange, cold feeling of discomfort, but instead of engaging in a discussion, Yoda instructs Luke to descend into a huge cavity, under a tree. When Luke asks him what he will find there, Yoda answers, “Only what you take with you.” Interestingly enough, in the cave Luke encounters Vader, more precisely, a vision of himself engaged in a life-saber duel with Vader (scene 1). In the sequence of shots 1-6, Luke is depicted as the subject as well as the object of his vision. In shots 1, 2 and 5, he is looking. In shots 4 and 6, which are seemingly the product of his vision, his back is turned to the camera. In the first instance then, we can attribute this vision to Luke. The only other creature present in the cave is a lizard (shot 3). The shot of the lizard rhymes with the shot of Luke looking (shot 5) but it also announces the possibility that Luke may be watched from an unexpected point of vision. In fact, when Vader appears at the end of shot 6 we can also retrospectively attribute the vision of Luke (shots 4 and 6) to him.

The doubling of Luke’s character-image builds up the initial impression that he is watching himself, that the event played out in the cave is disengaged from his own spatio-temporal continuum. The arrival of Vader on the scene, however, will introduce a contradictory impression. Vader, emerging at the end of shot 6 and positioning himself opposite Luke, can be understood as a product of Luke’s vision in shot 5, and in the opening of shot 7. Nevertheless, shot 7 is at the same time elaborated as a reverse-shot to shot 6. In the course of shot 7 Luke pulls out his life-saber and engages in a duel with Vader. What occurs here is a collapse of sites. The clash between the real and imaginary space will enhance the force of Luke’s premonition. In shot 12, he strikes Vader with a fatal blow and decapitates him. When the head hits the ground the front piece of the helmet explodes (shot 15), but instead of Vader’s face, Luke’s face appears in the cavity of Vader’s helmet as an uncanny supple-
ment to the evil agency (17).

The cave where Luke accomplishes both feats, facing the father and giving the ghost a face is not Plato's cave, but the scene nevertheless functions as an indication of Luke's imprisonment in the world of shadows. Oblivious to the fact that Vader is his father, and not advanced enough to face him, outside, in the "upper world," Luke is faced with the "cave allegory." The content of his vision projected on the imaginary screen (world of reflections) overlaps with the outside (world of "truth"). In the cave scene the imaginary space and reality overlap echoing the double function of Luke's face - belonging both to himself and to Vader. The scene can then also be understood as an "allegory of subjectivity," where facing presupposes an exchange of subject positions, or, as is the case with new Hollywood cinema, a literal exchange of faces.\textsuperscript{xvi} Via the process of facing the father or giving the ghost a face, the process of mirroring is at the same time posited and decomposed. If the scene is taken as a precognition of the task that awaits Luke, we could conclude that "facing" Vader will be resolved through an intersubjective exchange. Luke can give a face to Vader on condition that his own subjectivity be decomposed. The resolution is suspended, however, until the last film of the trilogy, \textit{The Return of the Jedi}.

The second encounter between Vader and Luke in \textit{The Empire Strikes Back} is an elaboration of Vader's wrath, triggered by Luke's refusal to submit to the law of his corrupt universe. In the first film of the trilogy, the Rebel forces have succeeded in destroying the Empire's greatest weapon, the armored space station - The Death Star. And in the second film, as the title indicates, the Empire takes revenge. Solo's old friend Lando Calrissian in Cloud City takes in fleeing from the Imperial forces, Princess Leia, Han Solo, Chewbacca the Wookie, and the androids. But unfortunately, Lando is forced to cooperate with the Empire and deliver Solo and his company to Darth Vader. Luke is at the Degoba system at the time, but with his newly acquired skills, he "senses" that his friends are in danger. Even though Yoda advises him to stay and complete his training, Luke insists on rushing to their rescue.

Because his feelings for his friends are so strong, Luke fails to sense that Vader has set up this entire ordeal in order to lure him into a trap. Hence, Luke's mission is a total failure: Solo ends up frozen in carbonite and taken away by the bounty hunter Boba Fett,
and Luke's encounter with Vader proves that it is Luke in fact who needs to be rescued. Luke and Vader meet in a space adjoining the carbon-freezing chamber, with pipes all around them, and the accompanying sound of hissing coming from the discharge of steam. The steam hinders Luke's and our own sense of orientation. Vader makes himself present through his voice and he manages to surprise Luke. Indulging in his immediate advantage over Luke, Vader reminds him that even though the Force is with him, he is not a Jedi yet. As the one who dictates the course of events, Vader thereby provokes Luke to reach for his life-saber, and to enter the terrain for which he is not yet ready, and where he will be crushed.

Vader begins the life-saber duel by inviting Luke to join the Empire but as Luke persistently resists, the attempt at persuasion gradually progresses into an ultimatum delivered in a most forceful manner. At first, Vader allows Luke to demonstrate what he has hitherto learned, but when Luke repeatedly refuses to listen and comply, the duel turns into a ruthless beating of the son, and a display of the father's dark powers. Ultimately Vader holds his life-saber still while he telepathically moves heavy objects, and directing them at Luke, makes it impossible for Luke to defend himself. Nevertheless, all he manages to accomplish is an intensification of Luke's resistance (scene 2). As the final punishment, and a closure of his fatherly invitation to join forces, Vader strikes Luke's hand holding the life-saber, and cuts it off (shots 14-16). At this moment, when Luke is creeping on the bridge, totally defeated, Vader tells him that his father is not dead as Obi-Wan has told him, but that he is his father, and that it is Luke's destiny to join him.

This new information constitutes Vader's ultimate attempt to convince Luke to enter into his symbolic universe. He tries to exert his power over Luke by presenting himself as the father, worse yet, as a dead father who has returned, who has come to haunt Luke. The following dialogue is indicative of the clash between the past and the present echoed in the split between the body and the voice:

Vader: Obi-Wan never told you what happened to your father.
Luke: He told me enough, he told me you killed him.
Vader: I am your father.
Luke: No, no. That's not true! That's impossible!
Vader: Search your feelings. You know it to be true.
Luke: No! No! No!

At this moment the father traverses from the past into the present, right into the body of his own murderer; the traversal emphasizes Vader's status as a specter, and explains Luke's refusal to accept the genealogy where the father's murderer is, paradoxically enough, the father himself. Having disclosed his other identity Vader acquires a double status, a double face, for he comes to stand for the father who is both dead and alive. Luke tells Vader he will never join him, and to express his determination, he throws himself into the abyssal shaft of Cloud City. After what seems a never-ending fall, Luke is catapulted into the vast space underneath the city, but he manages to hold on to some fragile instrument, which appears to be the "gallows" of Cloud City. There, hanging upside down like a martyr, alone and suffering the pains of mutilation, he pleads that someone hear his cry for help.

In terms of the *mise-en-scène*, the duel between the father and the son is staged on a bridge hanging above what seems to be a bottomless hole. They are in an undefined, in-between space, and both characters appear suspended. When Luke is defeated, he crawls away from the bridge onto a narrow extension where he can barely maintain balance. Vader remains on the bridge which now acquires the function of a stable ground. To interpret this scene we need to take into consideration the ways the fabula intervenes into the story: even though Vader has staged an initiation ritual where he literally cuts off a piece of Luke, Luke does not want to enter his universe. The piece of Luke that has literally been cut off will need to be restituted. Luke will be supplied with a mechanical hand. This new hand implants a piece of machinery into Luke that symbolizes that stuff of which Vader and his universe are made. This new connection between Vader and Luke recalls the conditions for
entering into the symbolic order; the Law of the Father presupposes not only subjection, but also the forceful amputation of the self. But Luke’s task is not only to take Vader’s place. The process of Oedipalization is reversed, for here, instead of taking the father’s place, the son’s task is to give the father a face.

*The Empire Strikes Back* also brings to the fore the analogy between the father elaborated as suffering eclipse and the characters’ universe itself suffering eclipse. There is little reason for joy in the closing of this film: Solo is frozen and shipped off to the wicked Jabba the Hutt, Luke is saved by princess Leia, but he is damaged emotionally and physically. Looking back, there is a morbid family picture in the last scene of the film: Luke puts his arm on Leia’s shoulder as they are heading off into the unknown. The androids 3CPO and R2D2, placed next to the young couple on board of the star cruiser, come to figure as their offspring.

As I mentioned earlier, the vision in which Luke gives a face to Vader actually takes place in the third film of the trilogy, *The Return of the Jedi*, and it is here that the bond between chronology and analogy invested in the name Vader becomes evident. By resisting the dark side, and believing that he can reveal the good in Vader, Luke succeeds in establishing an intersubjective relationship and providing Vader with the face of his father. As if aware that he cannot kill the living-dead, Luke puts himself at Vader’s mercy in the ultimate confrontation with the evil Emperor. The Emperor is torturing Luke with electric bolts that pour from his fingers, while Luke is on the floor, reaching out toward Vader, but repeatedly calling out for his father to help him. Just as the Emperor is about to increase the intensity of impulses to a level that would finally kill Luke, Vader grabs the evil master from behind and throws him into the bottomless shaft of the throne room. All this is happening while the Death Star is under attack from the Rebel fleet, and the Imperial troops are in confused disarray. Luke carries the weakening spectral body trying to find an escape route, but collapses (scene 3, 3A):

Vader: Luke, help me take this mask off.
Luke: But you’ll die.
Vader: Nothing can stop that now. Just for once, let me look on you with my own eyes.
When the mask comes off an incredibly pleasant and warm face appears (shot 9). Just like the Wizard of Oz whose authority was implemented through masquerade, or more precisely, through technical apparatus which made him look magnificent and powerful, Darth Vader as an institution of evil suddenly disintegrates and all that remains is a timid, vulnerable man who is ready to die, purged, as it were, of his horrific spectral body. The Jedi returns in the guise of Luke but this return also implies the return of the Jedi Anakin Skywalker who was obscured by Vader. In this scene both characters are focalized externally and there is a reciprocal exchange of looks. In the shots 3, 5 and 7 Anakin Skywalker is still wearing the mask, without which, as the story goes, he cannot survive. In shots 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21 and 23 he is without the mask, engaged in an intersubjective exchange with Luke. At the end of the scene, he dies, as if unable to survive the reciprocal exchange of subject positions with his son. Accordingly, this scene where the “facing” of the father takes place through the exchange of looks, indicates also that Luke’s face has acquired the status of the solar face, the face that burns those who look at it without protection, while the status of reflection or the projected image is displaced onto Vader. The son is then elaborated as both the condition of the father-image and its consequence. This process confirms that the son is the condition and the consequence of the structure of différence implied in the term “sun,” just as the name Vader both implies and obscures the identity of the father.

The interaction whereby the son and the father exchange looks radicalizes Bal’s notion of the correction of analogy through chronology, that is, of turning Vader into the father. The fact that the name Vader tells a story, that it is tied up with the double teleology implied in the deferral of meaning between father and Vader, is mirrored in the intersubjective relationship between the son and the father. The analogy reflects
the chronology of *différance* - the son's face in which the father is reflected, the face that brings the father to life, is also the face that causes Vader's death. In other words, the birth of the father is conditioned on the death of Vader. It is thus through the focalization of the son that the productive, repairing look can be conferred, and that both Vader and his evil universe can acquire a new face. This is also the principle of an intersubjective exchange, and to engage in it, to let oneself be re-born in the process, one is at the same time subjected to death. When Luke tells his dying father that he wants to save him, the father replies, "you already have." This operation of saving is ultimately conditioned on two levels: that of the story and that of the fabula. The level on which the intersubjective exchange is played out is the level of the story, marked in a separate discursive unit (scene 3). The exchange of looks that occurs in the final interaction between Vader and Luke, where the subject positions of both characters are marked by the reciprocal capacity to focalize, corrects the view expressed by Vader's name. The myth that the father is a despot, a "Vader" who needs to be devoured, is re-figured. Fabula intervening into story conditions the resolution of the narrative: through the operation of facing, the son manages to reinsert the father into the universe obscured by Vader. The father will live on, safely stored in our mnemonic archives.

**Facing the Wall of Plato's Cave**

Even though the sun in the *Star Wars* trilogy is not directly compared to the father, the father is elaborated as suffering eclipse. The fact that he is hidden behind the dark moon, the Death Star, or the mask of Darth Vader, makes the father no less powerful. On the contrary, the fact that his strength is concealed makes Luke's mission to face him even more difficult. As I have noted earlier, the concept of the haunted look helps us trace the ways the father-son relations are
constructed, or rather, the ways the idealist notion of the bedazzling Sun, as the Parent of light, is decomposed through the process of narration. The double teleology implied in the concept of the haunted look, or the telling en abyme triggered by the tension between father/Vader, as well as sun/son, implies also that the ideological apparatus, in this case the cinematographic apparatus, overtly displays the conditions of its de/composition.

In the previous chapter I have established an encounter between Spielberg and Freud, in order to explore the relation between narrative, history and issues such as race and ethnicity. My present aim is to establish a connection between the symbolic universe of the new Hollywood cinema and the wall of Plato’s cave, in order to demonstrate that via the structuring of the narrative, both the former and the latter can be decomposed. At this point it is important to recall that critical narratology takes issue with the narrativity traceable in critical discourses that inform the world views and by extension fabulas of filmic narratives in this case (Bal, 1997). It is along these lines that it can become even clearer that this approach does not presuppose application but rather encourages the setting up of a context where complementary or opposing agents can speak to each other.xx By thematizing the father through the structure of différance, Lucas brings to the fore the split between the sun and the son, that speaks to Derrida’s deconstructive reading of Plato’s cave myth, just as Spielberg’s oxymoron “Indiana Jones” addresses Freud’s oxymoron “Egyptian Moses.”

The tension between father and offspring in the Star Wars trilogy enables us to trace the ways psychoanalysis becomes entangled with Platonic idealism, as well as Derridian deconstruction. Finally, the fact that Vader as the spectral body or as invisible institution, is ultimately supplied with a face, displays the preoccupation of the new Hollywood cinema with altering the symbolic order. The specificity of this cinema is that it makes the invisible apparatus that predefine the representational field visible.xxx For it stages the conditions of their altering, facing and impairment. Jean-Louis Baudry’s apparatus theory is the crucial point of departure because its founding argument regarding the ideological effects of the apparatus is that the spectators, much like the chained prisoners in Plato’s cave myth, are oblivious to the strategies which endorse control.xxxi According to Baudry, the ideological surplus value is attained
through the concealment of the production.\textsuperscript{xxiv}

It is useful to remind ourselves of the analogy Baudry draws between the imaginary constitution of the self and spectators' identification with the images projected on the screen. Baudry compares the discrepancy Lacan noted at the mirror stage, between the infant's immature powers of mobility and maturation of his visual organization, with two conditions repeated during cinematographic projection: suspension of mobility and predominance of the visual function. Mobility is suspended in the sense that the spectator occupies a central and illusory position in the entire cinematic arrangement. He or she is positioned in such a way that the images, or in Baudry's terms "reality" is coming from behind the head onto the screen which lies ahead. One of the two essential means of restoring continuity of movement and temporal dimension to the sequence of static images is through projection. The second means relies on the particular kind of narrative, in this case, the classical Hollywood narrative, predicated on cinematic devices such as continuity editing, character-bound vision and shot/reverse shot cutting.\textsuperscript{xxv} In Baudry's view, when continuity is restored, meaning and consciousness are restored as well.

As a result of the technical bases of the apparatus, the spectator identifies less with what is represented, the spectacle itself, than with what stages the spectacle. As I have noted above, Baudry compares this to the effect of the mirror which assembles the fragmented body in a sort of imaginary integration of the self. Baudry points out that there is a double identification at work here:

First level of identification attached to the image itself derives from the character portrayed as a center of secondary identification, which constantly must be seized and reestablished. The second level permits the appearance of the first and places it "in action" - this is the transcendental subject/apparatus whose place is taken by the camera which constitutes and rules the objects of this world. (Baudry 1986:295)

In relation to this, I would suggest that by thematizing the de/composition of the father, the new Hollywood cinema is also problematizing the transcendental gaze of the camera, or the transcendental subject/apparatus. In terms of Baudry's apparatus theory, the pro-
duction of the ideological value is conditioned by the invisibility of its production. In terms of new Hollywood films, as I am arguing, this production is visible and hence, explicit. Furthermore, this cinema reflects on the conditions of the construction of the apparatus, and it raises our awareness that we are “imprisoned” in its fantastic effects to the extent that we are imprisoned in the idealist/essentialist/positivist notion of the (unified) subject. By narrativizing the operation of “facing” (the father/sun), as well as the double teleology implied in the verb “to face,” Lucas’ trilogy inevitably complicates the relation between two psychic fields, the imaginary and the symbolic. While the imaginary designates the relation between the ego and its images, the symbolic is defined as the determining order of the subject; the symbolic produces the subject through language and realizes its closed order by the Law, that is, the Law of the Father. In the symbolic universe of the new Hollywood cinema, the Law of the Father is simultaneously produced and effaced.

As I have stated earlier, it is the idealist philosophy that serves as the basis for Baudry’s theorizing of the effect of the real in cinema: in the darkness of Plato’s cave Baudry locates both the origin of what has become known as the cinematic apparatus and the human desire for imprisonment in the world of dreams, hallucinations, and illusions. The idealist conception of the fullness and homogeneity of being, according to Baudry, corresponds to the transcendental subject incorporated into the apparatus. In his view this type of subject can be located in Plato’s prison-house narrative from the Republic. Since Baudry does not make a reference to Book VII where the famous allegory is described, it will be useful to remind ourselves of Plato’s allegory.

In the world of shadows live prisoners like ourselves who are chained by their necks and ankles and who can only see their shadows or the shadows of one another which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave. According to Plato, to the prisoners, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images. What will naturally follow if a prisoner is released is that the glare of light will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows. The shadows he formerly saw will seem truer than the objects which are now shown to him, and when he approaches the light, his eyes will be dazzled.
He will require growing accustomed to the sight of the upper world: first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in water, and then the objects themselves. Last of all he will be able to see the sun. As Plato explains, the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and the journey upwards is the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world (Plato, 1937: Book VII 773-780).

In setting up the apparatus theory, Baudry approaches the referential effect of cinema as an aspect of the viewing situation by elaborating an analogy of it with Plato’s scene described above. Then, he sets up another analogy by comparing the scene of the cave with the Freudian unconscious, and as a result of this second analogy, the Freudian conscious becomes analogous to Plato’s idea of Good located outside of the cave. Baudry asserts that the access to the world of truth or to the conscious is only through dreams, through shadows, through the unconscious. As a result, the viewer remains eternally helpless, for as Baudry explains, “the unfolding of images, the rhythm of vision and movement, are imposed on a person in the same way as images in dream and hallucination.” According to Baudry, cinema just like dreams does not offer the dreamer the possibility of exercising any kind of immediate control:

In dream and hallucination, representations are taken as reality in the absence of perception; in cinema, images are taken for reality but require the mediation of perception. This is why, on the one hand, for the realists, cinema is thought of as a duplicate of reality - and on the other cinema is taken as an equivalent of dream - but the comparison stops here, leaving unresolved the problem raised by the impression of reality. It is evident that cinema is not a dream: but it reproduces an impression of reality, it unlocks, releases a cinema effect which is comparable to the impression of reality caused by dream. The entire cinematographic apparatus is activated in order to provoke this simulation: it is indeed a simulation of a condition of the subject, a position of the subject, a subject and not reality. (Baudry, 1986a: 316)

In Baudry’s view, the images projected on the screen appear to be a simulation of a condition of the subject, and this simulation is pro-
voked by the cinematographic apparatus. Cinema, just like the
dream, does not offer the viewer the possibility of exercising any
kind of immediate control, and in that respect, the spectators as well
as dreamers can be compared to the "positioned prisoners" of Plato's
cave. Therefore, this disposition of cinema to submit the spectator
to the transcendental gaze of the camera/apparatus/ideology is the-
orized by means of psychoanalysis and idealist philosophy: Plato's
scene is read through Freud and into the cinematographic apparatus.

Regardless of the technical constraints, however, the subject
of the new Hollywood cinema is not fixed. The analyses repeatedly
demonstrate that this subject is emphatically decentered, which is
clearly noticeable in the decomposition of the character-image.
Instead of the idealist preoccupation with the wholeness of being
conditioned on the denial of difference, this cinema employs the
structure of *différance*. Therefore, in this case, difference is at the
same time denied and asserted. In that respect, Vader can be taken
as a concept comparable to Derrida's neologism *différance* pointing
explicitly to something that would, within the idealist conception,
remain implicit and hidden, that is, unified. By pointing to the fact
that the Law of the Father is not unified, it accordingly demon-
strates that the symbolic can be re-ordered.

This operation of deconstruction can also be observed in
terms of Derrida's preoccupation with disclosing the father of mythi-
cal discourse, or rather, with breaking up the fullness of being,
 implied by Plato's idealism. In "Plato's Pharmacy" Derrida reads the
ambiguities in Plato's dialogues especially by comparing the passage
from the *Republic*, with a passage from *Phaedo*. In the prison-house
allegory, the bedazzlement experienced in facing the sun forces one
to look at the shadows and reflections. It is only the ascent of the
soul into the intellectual world that allows one to see the sun in its
proper place as the parent of light. In *Phaedo*, however, as Derrida
points out, Socrates fears that in the contemplation of true existence
he could lose the eye of his soul in the same way that people may
injure their bodily eye by observing and gazing on the sun during an
eclipse:

Socrates (to Ceber): Well, at that point, when I had wearied of
my investigations, I felt that I must be careful not to meet
the fate which befalls those who observe and investigate an
eclipse of the sun; sometimes, I believe, they ruin their eyesight, unless they look at its image in water or some other medium. I had the same sort of idea: I was afraid I might be completely blinded in my mind if I looked at things with my eyes and attempted to apprehend them with one or other of my senses; so I decided I must take refuge in propositions, and study the truth of things in them. (Plato 1972: 99D-100)

Hence, Socrates proposes that reality be approached not by the “direct” method of sense-perception and observation, but by the “indirect” method of propositions (logos).

In the section “The Father of Logos,” of “Plato’s Pharmacy,” Derrida establishes a filial relation between the sun and logos, and he asserts that the Good, in the visible-invisible figure of the father, the sun, or capital, is the origin of all onta (being), responsible for their appearing and their coming into logos, which both assembles and distinguishes them:

The good (father, sun, capital) is thus the hidden illuminating, blinding source of logos. And since one cannot speak of that which enables one to speak (being forbidden to speak of it or to speak to it face to face), one will speak only of that which speaks and of things that, with a single exception, one is constantly speaking of. And since an account of reason cannot be given of what logos (account or reason: ratio) is accountable of owing to, since the capital cannot be counted nor the chief looked in the eye, it will be necessary, by means of discriminative, diacritical operation, to count up the plurality of interests, returns, products, and offspring [...]. (Derrida, 1981: 83)

The movement through which the sun presents itself as absent and becomes invisible requires that its place be supplied along with différenciation and diacriticity. The recourse to logos, out of fear of being blinded by any direct intuition of the face of the father, is a recourse that protects us from the sun - protects us, as Socrates proposes, in a way analogous to what occurs on the level of the sensible or the visible:

Logos is thus a resource. One must turn to it, and not merely
when the solar source is *present* and risks burning the eyes if stared at; one has also to turn away toward *logos* when the sun seems to withdraw during its eclipse. Dead, extinguished, or hidden, that star is more dangerous than ever. (Derrida, 1981: 84)

Derrida's consistent preoccupation with deconstructing the father of discourse suggests that even Plato, if read from a philosophical position which seeks critical accountability for the discourse, can appear as the father of logos. Once the eye of the philosopher comes to be theorized as potentially incapable of apprehending the Sun, the strict borderline between the world inside the cave and the world outside the cave comes into question. In a broader sense this is comparable to the technical line that divides the “first” from the “third” person. In other words, if we take into consideration the analogous order of the sensible or the visible that Derrida brings into focus, we cannot make a strict separation between the eyes imprisoned in the cave, and the eyes outside of the cave that need protection from the face of the sun.

Just as the sun is reflected in its reflection/offset/los, the subject is reflected in the discourse/logos. Hence, to account for the logos/discourse/offset/son, the place of the sun/father needs to be supplied. And vice versa. The relation between the two is that of *différance*, which implies ultimately both analogy and chronology. Thus, the subject-effect is conditioned through supplement, and “imprisonment” can be taken as one particular mode of conditioning subjectivity. This is to a considerable extent the distinction we could establish between the new Hollywood films in question and the classical Hollywood films on which Baudry's findings were based.

In Baudry's theory, the subject that is reflected in the screen - a positioned and a hallucinating subject - implies that there is a universal subject-effect. This premise is based on the supposition that there is a mythical movie theater, a mythical viewer and a mythical filmic text: in short, the time, space and the protagonists of a myth. As a result, all the responsibility for the discourse eternally remains in the hands of the reality-in-dream emitting apparatus. By contrast, Lucas's new Hollywood trilogy demonstrates the ways the screen can be affected when the apparatus/gaze acquires a new face. The figure of Vader elaborated as a specter, as the one whose
supreme power is re/instituted through the haunted look, confirms that specters and apparati can be challenged, or more precisely, reconstructed through the process of “facing.”

This is reinforced, as I have stated earlier, through the separation between Vader’s body and his voice which comes to mark the place of the father. Vader’s voice is not a voice-over, but because he wears a mask, his voice cannot be perceived as strictly synchronous with his body. Hence, his voice transcends his body. In *The Acoustic Mirror*, Silverman discusses the implications of the violation of the rule of synchronization, and she asserts that when the voice is left without an identifiable locus it becomes privileged to the degree that it transcends the body. Conversely, she asserts, the voice loses power and authority with every corporeal encroachment, “from a regional ‘grain’ to definitive localization in the image. Synchronization marks the final moment in any such localization, the point of full and complete ‘embodiment’ (Silverman 1988: 49). Silverman suggests that the dominant cinema holds the female subject much more fully than the male subject to the unity of sound and image, and she asserts that in his most exemplary guise, “classic cinema’s male subject sees without being seen, and speaks from an inaccessible vantage point” (51). In the new Hollywood cinema, however, the separation between the body and the voice, suggests on the one hand, an extreme example of the invisible power. On the other hand, this split at the same time alludes to a crisis of the father: the father’s voice appears entrapped in an institutional body. The father does not have absolute power for he is obscured by Vader, hence, both the power of the invisible institution and its subversion can be understood as a construct. This implies that we can note a transformation on the level of the filmic text: more specifically in terms of the difference between the classical Hollywood cinema and the new Hollywood cinema this yields the assumption that the effects of the cinematographic apparatus itself are susceptible to change.

Vader, symbolizing the spectral body, is ultimately dependent on the fact that he is emblematic of *différence*, while as I have stated at the outset of the chapter, the name Vader conveys the father suffering eclipse. The operation of “correcting” Vader into the father is linked to the haunted look. The haunted look in the trilogy is the semiotic product of narration that tells that the father is trapped in Vader’s spectral body. In Bal’s terms, this narrative func-
tion corresponds with a philosophical "reflecting reflection":

The dramatic confrontation with the *same* by the perception of the *different* is staged in the *mise en abyme*. The identity is constructed by a dialectic between the unique and the identical. The *mise en abyme*, then, is unique in that it tells metatextually its own version of the fabula, its own story, by repeating the fabula. The figure integrates the mirroring between the imaginary and the symbolic reflection. In the mirror, the subject recognizes itself as a topic, by the mutual focalization of the mirroring and the mirrored subject. In intellectual reflection, the speaking/thinking subject reflects on its own status, thus becoming in its turn an object, radically different. (Bal 1987: 88)

The name Vader tells its own version of the transgenerational father-son conflict. This conflict is mirrored in the name Vader but it is also re-figured through the tension between the different and the same. If the screen is taken as a mirror, Lucas also takes into account both aspects of the term reflection distinguished in the passage I just quoted. Bal points out that the ambiguity of the word reflection, meaning both mirroring and thinking, leads to two considerations of self-reflection: self-reflection as mirroring leads one to considerations of the Lacanian mirror stage, as a first, visually based construction of the self in self-alienation, whereas discursive self-reflection leads to self-critique. I would suggest that on the overt level, this is exactly what new Hollywood cinema is doing: reflecting, repairing and reinstituting the order of patriarchy.

Baudry's theory proves a useful point of departure for theorizing the dependency between the three apparatus, of ideology, of cinema and of the psyche. In spite of the fact that the cinematographic apparatus is susceptible to change, its connection to the ideological fixations which affect the psychic mechanisms still holds. My own stakes in the debate are related to the central aim of this study, that is, examining the role of narrative in the entire process. I will return to this issue in later chapters and in particular in the concluding chapter.³³³

**Luke Skywalker vs. Phèdre**
In “White Mythology” Derrida argues against Aristotle’s thesis in *Topics* that heliotropic metaphors are bad metaphors because it is difficult to know what is proper to the sun, and thus, every metaphor which implies the sun does not bring about clear and certain knowledge. According to Aristotle, every object of sensation when it passes outside the range of sensation becomes obscure because it is not clear whether or not it still exists. If we say, for example, that the sun is the brightest star that circles the earth, this property of the sun would not have been correctly assigned, for when the sun sets, we can not see whether it is still moving above the earth because sensation then fails us.

Derrida contends, however, that since the metaphoric trope always implies a sensory kernel, which cannot always be present in act and in person, the turning of the sun always will have been the trajectory of metaphor - certainly of bad metaphor, as Derrida asserts, which furnishes only improper knowledge. But as the best metaphor is never absolutely good (without which shortcoming it would not be a metaphor), Derrida asks whether it is not the bad metaphor that always yields the best example. Thus, metaphor means heliotrope, both a movement toward the sun and the turning movement of the sun. Because the metaphoric does not reduce syntax, Derrida writes, but on the contrary organizes its division within syntax, it is carried away with itself; it cannot be what it is except in erasing itself, indefinitely constructing its destruction. Hence, the sun as a bad metaphor always implies delay, deferral and detour; its presence always needs to be supplied and the condition for supplementation is precisely its absence.

What emerges from the *Star Wars* trilogy is that the father is also a bad metaphor, because the father, just as the sun, or the Parent of light is produced as dependent upon logos, Vader, and through an exchange with the son. Like the sun, a “white mythology” effaces itself from view even as it continues to structure our reality. The trilogy thematizes the father as a heliotropic metaphor, but by decomposing the father it displays the awareness that the father is a “bad metaphor,” and accordingly it displays the conditions of “white mythology.”

On the one hand, then, Lucas’s Vader/father works to reveal the ideology that imposes the Law of the Father, but on the other hand, the metatextual intervention enwrapped in the *mise en abyme* works to improve and re-institute
the father. Critical discourse thereby comes to be reflected, in the double sense of the word, in the artistic discourse of the trilogy.

In the following chapter 1 will examine the ways a de-centering of subjectivity governs the representation of female subjectivity. The critique of the authority of presence will be brought into relation with the discourse of the two masters of suspicion who have inspired Derrida's project, namely, Nietzsche and Freud. When it comes to the representation of women, the "white mythology" that haunts Aristotle, I would suggest, in a similar manner haunts the critical discourse of deconstruction which is ostensibly invested in re-affirming the father's responsibility for the discourse. In philosophical discourse, for example, there is an obvious preoccupation with the Father of the discourse, and the logos, or the son; similarly, in psychoanalytic discourse the order in the symbolic universe is predicated on the Law of the Father. xxxii

I have suggested earlier that the process of facing presupposes a haunted look because it breaks the chain of haunting - through the intersubjective exchange, the term "facing" is extended to "giving the ghost a face." This look questions the terms under which the myth of philogenesis is constructed. For the transgenerational father-son conflict which generates the murder of the father is replaced by the process of facing the father. The structure of mise en abyme, or reflecting reflection, as well as the structure of différence inherent in the process of facing, confirms that looking is tied up not only with seeing, but also with telling. In that sense, the trilogy can be understood as doubly subversive. It decomposes the Cartesian perspectivalism, but it also makes possible the exchange of positions along the vertical axis whereby the son gazes at the father without getting burned. It is the son in the final scene who acquires the position of the blinding sun. xxxiii

I would like to make a comparison between Luke Skywalker and Racine's Phèdre in order to demonstrate how gender difference is constructed precisely through the play between the sun and the son. In Racine's Phèdre we can trace only the thematizing of ocular-centrism, hence, Phèdre does not manage to escape the eyes of her invisible ancestor Helios the sungod, or of her father Minos, nor does she succeed in giving a face to her destiny. She is predestined to take on her tragic role as both the (grand)daughter of the sun, and as mother of the (step-) son. I would suggest that Phèdre is
torn in-between the sun and the son on more than one level - she figures as both the connection and the break between the father and his offspring. In his study *On Racine*, Roland Barthes emphasizes the visual order in *Phèdre*, and he asserts that to love is to see. According to Barthes, imagination is retrospective, and memory always has the distinctness of an image. As a connection between the sun and the son, Phèdre evokes the image of Hyppolitus in the face of Theseus, and vice versa. Barthes asserts that there is an ever-immanent but never achieved exchange, the image is repeated, never transcended. I would argue that it is precisely because Phèdre is stuck in-between, and made to figure as the tension that the exchange cannot be achieved; she is both the condition and the consequence of tension between the father and the son.

When Phèdre reveals her love for her step-son to Oenone, her nurse and confidante, for the first time she describes the power of her infatuation with Hyppolitus as the power to evoke his image everywhere:

Phèdre:
Even when my lips invoked the goddess’ name,
I worshipped him. His image followed me.
Even on the altar’s steps, my offerings
Were only to the god I dared not name.
I shunned him everywhere. O crowning woe!
I found him mirrored in his father’s face! (285)

The son mirrored in the image of the father will prove fatal for Phèdre. When she receives the news that her husband and Hyppolitus’s father King Theseus is dead, she is encouraged by Oenone to act on her feelings for her step-son. As she is disclosing her feelings to the son, Phèdre invokes through him the image of his father. Just as the face of the son was invoked in the face of the sun, here, the face of the sun is invoked in the face of son:

Phèdre:
I love King Theseus, not as he once was,
The fickle worshipper at countless shrines,
Dishonouring the couch of Hades’ god;
But constant, proud, and even a little shy;
Enchanting, young, the darling of all hearts,
Fair as the gods; or fair as you are now.
He had your eyes, your bearing, and your speech.
His face flushed with your noble modesty. (635)

Were Theseus alive, Phèdre’s desire for Hyppolitus could be described as adulterous and incestuous. Since his death, however, a new constellation is possible. Phèdre’s prospects turn out to be extremely dismal because, firstly, Theseus who was believed to be dead is actually alive and returning home, and secondly, Hyppolitus is in love with princess Aricia.

Struck by panic and fear, and obsessed with jealousy, Phèdre succumbs to Oenone’s ill advice; she tells her husband that it was Hyppolitus who tried to seduce her. The father, as the unconditional master of the son’s life, condemns him to death. Hence, Phèdre, who hitherto secured a connection between the father and the son, comes to function as a break between the son and the sun. For this paradoxical role that destiny conferred upon her she will be punished:

Phèdre:
Wretch! and I live and can endure the gaze
Of the most sacred sun from which I spring.
My grandsire is the lord of all the gods;
My forebears fill the sky, the universe.
Where can I hide? In dark infernal night?
No, there my father holds the urn of doom.
Destiny placed it in his ruthless hands.
Minos judges in hell the trembling dead.
Ah! how his horror-stricken shade will start
To see before him his own daughter stand,
Forced to admit to such a host of sins
And some perhaps, unknown even in hell!
What, father, will you say to that dread sight?
I see your hand slip from the fateful urn;
I see you searching for new punishments,
Yourself your own kin’s executioner. (1285)

Phèdre cannot escape the eyes of the invisible, merciless “father”
who gazes down upon her and induces judgment upon her actions. It is difficult to pinpoint Phèdre’s transgression, for she is elaborated as the transgression itself. Furthermore, as I have already noted, she appears to be both the condition and the consequence of the father-son relations geared by the law of the primeval horde.

Unlike Luke Skywalker from the *Star Wars* trilogy, who is both the condition and the consequence of the father-image, Phèdre is stuck in-between the father-son image. As a condition for father-son relations based on parricide, Phèdre will need to commit suicide once the murder is executed, in order to atone for the transgenerational father-son conflict.xxxiv

Therefore, Phèdre serves as the condition, a consequence as well as expiation for the conflictual sun-son relations. As something in-between, the sun and the son, as a source of tension, she also “gets in-between” the son and the sun, and hence, robs the sun of its purity, as it were. She becomes a stain, a reminder of the crime and therefore, she must disappear. Paradoxically enough, her status as a connection and break between the two poles secures protection for Phèdre from the burning gaze of the forefather. Again, unlike Luke Skywalker, she cannot exchange looks with the father/sun, she cannot escape the look that kills, nor can she “face” the father. She can only project the lethal gaze onto herself. Phèdre’s death is also an expiation of Theseus’s “mad atrocious wish,” and ultimately, a new father-daughter relationship will be formed; now that the son is gone, his beloved, Aricia, will become Theseus’s “daughter.”xxxv

If looking is to be considered in terms of the specters that need to be faced, this brief analysis of the state of things in Racine’s *Phèdre*, in comparison with the *Star Wars* trilogy, enables us to note the various levels of interdependency between looking and myth-making or fabulating. On the one hand, the new Hollywood cinema has come a long way from the myth of philogenesis in *Totem and Taboo*, as well as regarding the de-centering of Platonic heliocentrism. On the other hand, however, a character such as Phèdre echoes the status of a certain type of female character in the new Hollywood blockbusters; as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, these women still do not have the position to give a new “face” to their destiny. Unlike Luke Skywalker, Phèdre cannot give a face either to history or myth - as the one who remains outside of an intersubjective relationship, she neither has the look that heals nor
the look that kills. The specter does not come to haunt her, because she is not the one who executed the killing nor is she the one who has the capacity to face him. The act of re-instituting the law of the father conditioned on the tension between the sun and the son is evidently dependent on fabulations which constrain the woman to the in-between spaces. It would be unjust, however, to claim that Lucas did not take into consideration the potentially productive value of an in-between space where the female subject can be “housed.” xxxvi Women's existence in a “non-place,” a “non-territory,” need not necessarily end with a critique of the narrational mode which reinstitutes dominant patriarchal myths, because the in-between space can be taken as a possibility from which a subject regardless of gender can view him- or herself within his or her cultural present.

**The Haunted Look and the Productive Look**

My point of departure in relation to the process of construction and reconstruction of the symbolic universe of the new Hollywood cinema is that this process is dependent on a world-view expressed on the level of the fabula. To recapitulate briefly, the world-view generated on the level of the fabula is bound up with a vision into which the vision of a character is embedded. Therefore, I argue that the vision produced through the fabula, the discursive interdependency between fathers and sons manifested on the level of the story, is ultimately dependent on the third mobility of the narrative, that is, on a vision predicated by the fabula. Fabulas of narrative texts, as I have suggested earlier, are dependent on critical and philosophical concerns of the outer world.

Narration in the new Hollywood cinema then, involves the level of the story traceable on the level of the filmic text, and it is dependent on the level of the fabula, that level where the general preoccupations, conceptions and misconceptions of the outer world are generated. While this process is at work in all narratives, the specificity of this cinema lies in its treatment of the fabula. The films thematize and renegotiate the rules and laws expressed on the level of the fabula, and thereby they make visible that which was invisible in the classical Hollywood cinema. They make visible the conditions for decomposing and restructuring the Law of the Father. Hence, they display the former suppression of the ideological effects
of the cinematographic apparatus, and the concealment of the fact that what we consciously see is actually the effect of the unconscious. The unconscious itself has become the scene of the discourse where a character such as Marty McFly takes on the function of a Freudian symptom as it were, entrapped in the perpetual movement of Nachträglichkeit.

This is so because the functioning of the cinematic apparatus which creates the conditions of reception specific to the film spectator and generates the fantasmatistic quality of cinematic signification is very much dependent on the filmic text itself. In addition, in new Hollywood blockbuster films, the mode of production, the distribution as well as the viewing conditions, put pressure on the notion of the apparatus resembling the spatial logic of Plato's cave. The technical basis which enhances the "forgetting of the technical apparatus" has been transformed, and the denial of difference necessary for the enforcement of the ideological effect has been disclosed. This historical, technological and economic phenomenon has had a profound effect on the transmigration of discourses, creating a clash, as I suggested in chapter two, between the apparatus interlocked with the narrative, offering a fixed point that is conceived to be a source of meaning, and the questioning thereof in contemporary epistemology, feminism and postmodernism. In that respect, we can say that on one level, the new Hollywood is playing out the postmodernist desire to rescue history from oblivion which can be confirmed through the general tendency to "set history in order."

The de-centering of subjectivity that is manifested in the suspension of characters and temporal continuums naturally displays, its own agenda.

The prominent characteristic of the subjectivities generated via these narratives is a high level of de-centeredness and the capacity to incorporate the image of the "other." When the level of the fabula is taken into consideration, however, we can conclude that the repairing of both the subject and history is dependent on the repairing of the father. The father, stepping overtly into the fabula, as demonstrated earlier, underscores the intervention of the Law, creating an overlapping of the diegetic and the extradiegetic world. This coalesces with my contention that, in the films in question, subjectivity is ultimately generated through the third mobility, that is, through vision mobilized on the level of the fabula. Subjectivity
produced on this level, I would suggest, is in broader terms comparable to the psychoanalytic concept of subjectivity as it is predefined by the gaze, which functions as the visual variant of the symbolic order.

While the gaze can be defined as the inapprehensible agency that predefines the subject generally, the specificity of the new Hollywood films in question is that they thematize the production of subjectivity within the symbolic universe. Thereby they display the strategies necessary for the re-ordering of the symbolic, implying that the inapprehensible agency is ultimately brought into the realm of the apprehensible. In that respect, I would argue, the fabula has a crucial impact on both narration and subjectivity in the new Hollywood cinema. Although the principal preoccupation with repairing the father involves a close cooperation between the discursive strategies expressed on the level of the story, the decomposition and restructuring the Law of the Father which informs the world of the fabula points to the ways fabulas may be deployed to fashion a particular symbolic universe.

In The Threshold of the Visible World, Kaja Silverman asserts that it is the look that helps us to determine the parameters through which the world is pictured, regardless the limitations of the visual field and the material practices which organize the visual field (Silverman, 1996). Here, I would emphasize on the basis of my analyses of the new Hollywood films, that the look can also be understood in terms of the fabulas played out in the visual field. According to Silverman, productive looking necessarily requires a constant conscious reworking of the terms under which we unconsciously look at objects that make up our visual landscape.xxxvii Thus, Silverman calls for texts which are capable of implanting in the viewer “synthetic” memories - texts which are in a position to put marginal elements of the cultural screen in contact with the viewer’s most meaningful memories, and thereby validate what would otherwise be neglected or despised. In such an act of heteropathic recollection, other memories are woven into my mnemonic reserve, such that not only what resides outside the given-to-be-seen, but what my moi excludes - in other words, the “not me” - is introduced into my memory reserve (180-5).xxxviii

Silverman points to aesthetic works as privileged domains for displacing us from the geometrical point and encouraging us to
see in ways not dictated in advance by the dominant fiction/gaze. Investing marginalized subjects with the power to tell and see, fabricating new relays and new stories is one of the crucial conditions for delimiting what Silverman calls the “look’s agency.” In my view there can be more ways of achieving this aim. Because subjectivity can be observed as the effect of the discourse and by extension the imaginary, but also as the effect of the fabula and by extension the gaze/symbolic, the displacement of the look on the level of the threshold between the ego and its images is not the only way of attaining a restorative effect.

In addition to the fact that it is invested in the re-institution of patriarchy, the new Hollywood cinema itself displays exemplary cases of the potentially restorative function of cinema. One of the most convincing examples is the case of heteropathic identification in *ET-The Extraterrestrial*, manifested in the relationship between Elliot and ET. According to Silverman’s definition, through heteropathic identification the subject identifies at a distance from his or her visual imago; this type of identification is introjective, incorporating the other as an external ego ideal. That is, a heteropath negates the self in favor of the other, and he or she can be provisionally described as a selfless person. The ideality invested via Elliot in the alien and curious looking creature, to the extent that it became adored by millions of (not only) children, is an effect that cannot be ignored or undermined. The analysis of the interdependency of subject positions between Elliot and ET demonstrates precisely the ways cinema can invest marginal or unattractive subjects with ideality. In other words, it shows us how “others” can be invested with attraction. Indiana Jones’s capacity to oscillate between the self and the other, similarly confirms this cinema’s pre-occupation with the self-image, rather than just the image. 

The *Star Wars* trilogy, with its allegory of subjectivity and its reframing of the entrance into the symbolic order, brings to the fore the conditions that regulate both telling and seeing. Seeing differently, that is, forging the possibility of attaching a new face to the future history is bound up with fabulation. This is most pronounced in the multiple function of the process of facing the father. Luke’s character-image is doubled, and as this is elaborated in the trilogy, the decomposition of his character-image – his acquiring a double face, as well as a mechanical hand – is dependent on his “destiny.”
The son urgently needs to respond to the call of destiny, because the father’s universe is eclipsed by Vader. Precisely because the process in question is the motor of the narrative, it can, ultimately yield an intersubjective exchange. Through the process of facing, the father, the fabula, and ultimately the destiny of the son come into being. And conversely, the vision expressed on the level of the fabula is reflected in the (new) face that the son will attach to his father and his destiny.

The “destiny” of male characters is clearly bound up with the structure of différance. In the following chapter I will take this issue further and demonstrate that in the case of female characters in the new Hollywood’s symbolic universe, destiny is conceived in opposite ways. More precisely, just like Phèdre, the women are entrapped in the play between the sun and the son, that is, they emerge as the negative emblem of différance. I will argue that it is precisely narrative that plays a crucial role in re/conceptualizing identities and subjectivities.

footnotes

† Even though George Lucas directed only the first film of the sequel, The Star Wars, he not only wrote the stories of all three films, but he has invented the entire mythology of the series. See the discussion in notes 2 and 3. The first film of the trilogy, The Star Wars, is also referred to as episode IV, and it was only after having made episode V and VI, hence twenty-two years later, that Lucas returned to the beginning to make episode I, The Phantom Menace.
‡ “I researched kids’ movies and how they work and how myths work; and I looked very carefully at the elements of films within that fairy tale genre which made them successful. [. . .] I found that myths always took place over the hill, in some exotic far-off land. For the Greeks it was Ulysses going off into the unknown. For Victorian England it was India or North Africa or treasure islands. For America it was out West. There had to be strange savages and bizarre things in an exotic land. Now the last of that mythology died out in the mid-1950s, with the last of the men who knew the old West. The last place left ‘over the hill’ is space.” Quoted in The Movie Brats (133). The vast universe, however, does not only allude to the trilogy’s appropriation of the future/the science-fiction genre; figuring as the past, it also alludes to the
appropriation of new spaces/new territories. The term “appropriation” may appear both suited and problematic because Lucas does not draw on a concrete pretext. He invents his mythic universe by taking recourse to a plethora of sources: samurai tales, fairy tales, myths of the Knights of the Round Table, and these sources are combined with the pretexts generated through mass media.

In the article by Orville Schell titled “A Galaxy of Myth, Money and Kids” in *The New York Times*, March 21, 1999, an interview with Lucas is included. The interviewer reminds Lucas that while, as he himself stated, mythologies evolve over a long period of time, the mythology of *Star Wars* is “created out of whole cloth” which could imply that there is “a kind of distortion in the process.” Lucas’ response is indicative of his being inspired by Campbell: “I haven’t really distorted the process. Even though ‘Star Wars’ is a completely new story, it’s using the same old motifs. I mean it’s still ‘The Hero with a Thousand Faces.’ The hero does have a thousand faces and this is just one of them. I’m obviously contemporizing my stories and personalizing them. What I am saying in my films is: these are emotional issues that I care about, that came out of my time, which are the 50s, 60s and 70s. But they embody ageless themes, a distillation of a lot of different mythologies from around the world” (28). The “multiple faces” are even more pronounced in the *Indiana Jones* trilogy, as I have pointed out in the previous chapter. Indiana Jones is overtly interpellated within Judaic, Christian and Hindu mythology.

In chapter six I will discuss the implications of the shift the trilogy takes from Leia as the leader of the Rebel forces, to Luke as the hero who will restore freedom to the galaxy. There, I will also draw a comparison between Leia and Kurosawa’s Princess Yuki from *The Hidden Fortress*.


I am drawing here on Silverman’s discussion in *The Acoustic Mirror*. The relationship between the body and voice with respect to Vader will be addressed in a later section of this chapter.

Derrida’s own inspiration, as I have noted in chapter 1, comes from Benjamin’s notion of our “weak messianic power.” Derrida quotes from Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in order to underscore the “now” of history: “We should quote and reread here all these pages - which are dense, enigmatic, burning - up to the final allusion to the ‘chip’ (shard, splinter: *Splitter*) that the messianic inscribes in the body of the at-present (*Jetztzeit*) [ . . . ].” *Specters of Marx*, (181).

See Freud’s discussion “The ‘Uncanny’.” Amongst the multiple effects of the uncanny, Freud mentions that many people experience the feeling in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts (1955: 241).

I am referring here to Plato’s *Republic* particularly Book VII. I will address Plato’s discussion in the subsequent sections of this chapter, in relation to Derrida’s rereading of Plato’s text in the section “The Father of Logos,” in his *Dissemination*. I will draw a connection between Derrida’s interpretation and Baudry’s recourse to Plato’s cave allegory from the *Republic*.

I am drawing on Derrida’s discussion in “White Mythology” from *Margins of Philosophy*, that is, his critique of Aristotle’s view that heliotropic
metaphors are bad metaphors. Derrida contends that although the sun, just like a cultural fixation, I would add, hides itself, does not mean it does not exist.

Apart from staging a tension between the sun as the father, and the son as the offspring, the trilogy additionally introduces another constellation: Luke's home planet of Tatooine receives solar energy from "twin suns." The sunset on Tatooine is a double sunset, or the setting of two suns.

Spivak adds, "In the current global conjuncture, woman is the dubious felicitous out-of-joint subject of the strictly Marxian vision, in a number of ways." Spivak argues that if rereading Marx is important in post-Soviet Europe, rethinking woman in Islam is crucial in the context of that internationality "which does not have the convenient name of a continent." She reads Assia Djebar's Far from Medina in terms of author's struggles to reconfigure the past, "to imagine the ancestors (daughter, father, historians) as ghosts." In "Ghostwriting." I will discuss this problem further in chapter six in relation to Judith Butler's concepts.

I have addressed this issue in chapter 2; through the narrativizing of time travel, the new Hollywood film in question there incorporates the concerns of contemporary epistemology influenced by feminism and postmodernism. The primacy given to intersubjectivity displays a postmodernist desire to rescue those histories and subjectivities which were silenced by the dominant fiction. Nevertheless, the play with the intersubjective exchange and the demythologizing of the Cartesian subject is enveloped within a vision which forges its own agenda - the re-invention of the father.

Lucas has proposed this generic term to emphasize that it is broader in scope than "science fiction." In The Movie Brats (133).

Or Icarus, Prometheus or the Mithraic bull.

Literalization of facing is radicalized in John Woo's Face Off. In this film, by means of plastic surgery, two male characters exchange faces. The new face conditions a new destiny.

For an inspiring elaboration of the notion of traversal, see Catherine Lord's The Intimacy of Influence.

The scene can be understood as a "rite of passage." Arnold van Gennep first used this term in 1907 in his book The Rites of Passage to refer to those rituals that mark the passage of the individual through various stages in the life cycle. Victor Turner reminds us that Van Gennep first grouped all the rituals "that accompany transitions from one situation to another and from one cosmic or social world to another" (13). Quoted in Turner's "Religious Celebrations" (201-219) from Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual, ed. Victor Turner. Turner explains that these transitional rites can be divided into three phases: separation, margin (or limen, denoting "threshold" in Latin) and reaggregation. "The first phase clearly demarcates sacred space-time from mundane space-time. Sometimes violent acts (circumcision, knocking out teeth, shaving hair, animal sacrifice) betoken the 'death' of the novice from his former socio-cultural state. The third phase represent the often exuberant return of the novice to society and the desacralization of the entire situation. Symbols of birth and renewal are frequently displayed in reaggregation rites [ . . . ] For between separation and reintegration there occurs the liminal stage, a period and area of ambiguity, a sort of social limbo [ . . . ] In
liminality the novice enters a ritual time and space that are betwixt and between those ordered by the categories of past and future mundane social existence” (202).

The notion of the characters' universe suffering eclipse is comparable to the situation introduced in the opening of Back to the Future, where the entire family is affected by the father being “stuck in time,” that is, elaborated as the negative emblem of différence. Similarly in ET-The Extraterrestrial, discussed in chapter one, the absence of the father causes a crisis of son's subjectivity.

The presence of the evil Emperor implies that the authority of the “father” is always dependent on a higher narratorial authority. The Emperor personifies the highest authority in the trilogy, whereas Vader as the darkened father is the direct consequence of this evil force.

Bal particularly elaborates this view in Double Exposures: The Subject of Cultural Analysis.

In The Rise of the Network Society, Manuel Castells defines the information age as a culture of “real virtuality,” which presupposes a collapse of a symbolic environment on our everyday reality. A mechanism which operated implicitly, as the hidden foundation of our lives, now, with the new technology becomes explicit. From a different theoretical perspective, Slavoj Zizek also discusses the consequences that the previously concealed “symbolic order” has for “reality” itself. In “‘The Thing That Thinks’: The Kantian Background of the Noir Subject,” Zizek discusses the replicants in Blade Runner, who have arrived at the impossible point of knowing how they are structured (qua Thing). As such, they have a “full recollection” which amounts to filling out the void that constitutes them qua subject of consciousness. In Shades of Noir ed. Joan Copjec (199-227). The (un)making of the symbolic order is also thematized in films such as The Matrix, The Truman Show and Pleasantville. See also Zizek’s discussion in “The Matrix: The Truth of Exaggerations.” Zizek’s discussion can also be related to Cameron’s film Titanic.

In the Sublime Object of Ideology, Zizek relates the symbolic overdetermination of the actual “unsinkable ship” to the images taken by the undersea cameras: “[...] its last resort is not that of representation but that of a certain inert presence. The Titanic is a Thing in the Lacanian sense: the material leftover, the materialization of the terrifying, impossible jouissance” (71). In connection to this I would add that in Cameron’s film documentary images of the actual Titanic are combined with the digitalized, that is, fabricated images of the ship. If the sinking of the Titanic can be taken as a symbolic “sinking of the 19th Century, then the “sinking of the 20th Century” can be seen through this process whereby symbolic is overlapping with the real.

In the first part of the discussion I will be referring to both articles.

“Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus,” is the first article which influenced Metz’s conception of primary cinematic identification. The second is “The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in the Cinema. In the latter text Baudry sets up a stronger connection between the scene of representation as presented by Plato and the Freudian unconscious.

In “The Idealogical Effects,” Baudry asserts that cinematographic specificity refers to a work, that is, “to a process of transformation. The question
becomes: is the work made evident, does consumption of the product bring about a 'knowledge effect' [Althusser], or is the work concealed? If the latter, consumption of the product will obviously be accompanied by ideological surplus value. [ . . . ] one may ask, do the instruments (the technical base) produce specific ideological effects, and are these effects themselves determined by the dominant ideology” (288-9).

xxvi Film theorists have not referred to character-bound vision but rather first person point-of-view. As I have noted in the introduction, this implies that there is no difference between internal and external focalization. One of the specificities of the new Hollywood cinema is to engage in playing with the hierarchy of narrative authority traceable precisely in the difference between first and third person.

xxvi Lacan’s notion or rather metaphor, as he calls it, the Name-of-the-Father derives from the mythical, symbolic father of Freud’s Totem and Taboo. “How, indeed, could Freud fail to recognize such an affinity, when the necessity of his reflexion led him to link the appearance of the signifier of the Father, as author of the Law, with death, even to the murder of the Father - thus showing that if this murder is the fruitful moment of debt through which the subject binds himself for life to the Law, the symbolic Father is, in so far as he signifies this Law, the dead Father.” “On the Possible Treatment of Psychosis” (199) in Écrits.

xxvii Baudry’s ideological approach is informed by Husserl’s idealist philosophy.

xxviii In the commentary to Plato’s Phaedo, R. Hackforth asserts that it is impossible to find an English word that would suit the shift of meaning invested in logos. “In some sense the logos are images of reality: they are like real being, but in what sense?” (138)

xxix In that respect, feminist film theory was quick to note that the identification induced by the cinematographic apparatus was based on the relay between the male characters and male viewer, while the female characters came to embody the excess. Rather than narrative agents they functioned as icons. See Laura Mulvey’s “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” and Claire Johnston’s “Towards a Feminist Film Practice: Some Theses.”

xxx Jean-Louis Comolli was even more resolute than Baudry that the cinematographic apparatus is ideological in itself. In “Technique and Ideology: Camera, Perspective, Depth of Field” he argued that cinematic technology is part of the complex of determinations and norms. His critique was very much aimed at André Bazin's ideas of the “realism” of the filmic image. In Techniques of the Observer, Johnathan Crary takes Comolli’s argument further and argues that the nineteenth century witnessed the shift from a “geometrical” to a “physiological” optics. Keeping in mind the theoretical concerns regarding cinematic technology, what is of particular interest to my project is the way narrative affects the working of the cinematographic apparatus.

xxi For a discussion on “white mythology” see also Robert Young’s White Mythologies: Writing History and the West.

xxiii Jean-Joseph Goux has advanced the argument that in Greek philosophy phallus was aligned with logos. Even though the paternal signifier is no longer available to us consciously, according to Goux, it is present in the contemporary unconscious and it governs Lacanian theory of the phallus. In “The Phallus: Masculine Identity and the Exchange of Women,” differences.
See also Silverman's discussion on this topic in "The Lacanian Phallus," in the same issue. Luce Irigaray discusses Plato's *hystera* in *Speculum of the Other Woman* and asserts that Plato's cave is a metaphor for a womb, but this womb is in fact a matrix for reproducing images of the father.

The clash that the trilogy thematizes between the Sun of elevated beauty/father, and the Sun of combustion/Vader, is comparable to the Mithraic cult of the Sun, as it is represented in the myths of Icarus, Prometheus, or the Mithraic bull. In "The Disenchantment of the Eye: Surrealism and the Crisis of Ocularcentrism," Martin Jay discusses the ways that the surrealists subverted the Platonic tradition of rational heliocentrism by turning to mythic alternatives. Jay introduces Georges Bataille's assertion that if the sun could be split into an elevating, rational source of light, not to be looked at directly, and an aggressive, dismembering, blinding, sacrificial source of destruction, so too the eye itself could have several conflicting meanings. Bataille makes a distinction between the horizontal and the vertical axis of vision - and it is within the vertical axis that the sun destroys all that enters into conflict with it.

Phèdre:

Each moment's precious. Listen. It was I,
Theseus, who on your virtuous, filial son
Made bold to cast a lewd, incestuous eye. (1625)
[...] I have instilled into my burning veins
A poison that Medea brought to Greece.
Already it has reached my heart and spread
A strange chill through my body. Even now
Only as through a cloud do I see the bright
Heaven and the husband whom I still defile.
But death, robbing my eyes of light, will give
Back to the sun its tarnished purity.

Theseus:

Would the memory
Of her appalling misdeeds die with her!
Let us, now that my error's all too clear,
Go out and mourn over my ill-starred son.
Let us embrace my cherished son's remains
And expiate my mad atrocious wish,
Rendering him the honours he deserves,
And, to appease the anger of his shade,
Let his beloved, despite her brothers' crime,
Be a daughter to me from this day. 1650

I will address the productive and the limiting aspects of princess Leia's character in chapter 6.

It may suffice to mention at this point that Silverman re-reads Lacan's theory of the mirror stage which can be understood as threshold between the ego and the images of which the visual world consists. This includes the self-image, assuming that the mirror stage lays the foundation of a self-image that is idealized, the ideal ego. Silverman reminds us that not every image is framed by a positive response from the outer world, whereas the subject is dependent on such affirmation for the formation of the ego. The world can
send back an image of the self that is fragmented due to an insufficient confirmation of the mirrored image as a whole. I will deal with this issue in chapters 5 and 6.

Libidinal investment as it is related to the look’s desire is very much dependent on narrative. This is the case with a type of cinema such as that by Fassbinder, discussed by Elsaesser in *Fassbinder’s Germany*. Elsaesser identifies these films as pertaining to Fassbinder’s symbolic universe, hence, they are predicated on a “synthetic mythology.” This thesis is worked through in his study of the New German Cinema. In Elsaesser’s view myths are “fables of identity, promises of reconciliation, the assertion of unity in the face of and as protest against fragmentation and division in the fabric of lived continuities” (214). On this subject see also Anton Kaes’ *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film*.

Nevertheless, as I will demonstrate in the following chapter, the productive strategies are generally appropriated for the purpose of reasserting territorial control on the cultural screen. The crucial issue here is the new Hollywood’s capacity to engage in a play with those discourses which criticize phallocentrism and territorialism. We are confronted with a contradiction where “selfless” male subjects who are capable of identifying heteropathically are at the same reaffirming their dominance on the cultural screen. My argument in relation to this problem is that productive vision has to inform the fabula, or rather new myths have to be invented for an alternative possibility of female (and other) existence to occur. Only then can the structures of looking, linked to heteropathic identification have a truly productive effect. For a discussion on the current difficulty of positing a politically progressive filmic mode against an ideologically counterproductive counterpart, see David Rodowick’s *The Crisis of Political Modernism: Criticism and Ideology in Contemporary Film*, in particular the preface of the book.