

Essence of Chinese Taoist Thoughts Mirrored in *Star Wars*

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Abstract: This essay discusses the similarities between the Taoist philosophical thoughts on “Tao” (道) and the concept of “Force” (原力) in American science fiction movies—*Star Wars* (《星球大战》) series. Taking 81 Chapters *Tao Te Ching* (《道德经》) for example, the author finds that the contents of nearly 30 chapters are closed related to the movies. It concludes that the cultural communication has been influencing, penetrating and interacting mutually from the angles of ontology, methodology, epistemology and practice. The assimilation of Chinese and Western culture is a stream in process of the integration of the world cultures.

Keywords: Taoist Thoughts, *Star Wars*, unity of opposites, change and balance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Lao Zi (also called *Tao Te Ching*) is the representative work by Lao Zi (老子), and it is one of the main classics of traditional culture that was compiled in the pre-Qin days. The Thoughts are a great treasure in Chinese culture, having been influencing China over two thousand years and spreading all over the world (Ren Jiyu, 2009:1) [1]. *Tao Te Ching* is composed of 81 chapters with only 5000 Chinese characters, but having nearly 500 translation versions (Cai Xiqin, 2009:4) [2]. *Tao Te Ching*, after the Bible, as one of the most translated book in the world, covers subjects comprehensively ranging from philosophy, religion, history, politics, ethics to cosmology. Among them, philosophy is the cornerstone of Lao Zi's the thought.



Fig-1: The sculpture of Lao Zi

The core conflict in *Star Wars* series is actually a battle of philosophical concepts, which derives the struggle “a long time ago, in a Galaxy far, far away...” between the two intelligent groups—Jedi and Sith. The fights evolve soul-stirring star wars, forming the spectacular epic.

There are nine episodes, starting from Episode IV *A New Hope* in 1977, Episode V *The Empire Strikes Back* in 1980, and Episode VI *Return of the Jedi* in 1983, then Episode I *The Phantom Menace* in 1999, Episode II *Attack of the Clones* in 2002, and Episode III *Revenge of the Sith* in 2005. Episode VII *The Force Awakens* will be shown in 2015, Episode VIII and IX in 2017 and 2019, respectively. With the time span of 42 years, many Star-fans will regret permanently that they cannot wait for finishing enjoying the whole epic of alien civilization.

In terms of definition, the Force is almost as nebulous as the Tao. George Lucas, the producer of the series of *Star Wars* stated: “I read a lot of books about mythology and theories behind mythology... and basically worked out a general theory for the Force, and then I played with it. The more detail I went into, the more detracted from the concept I was trying to put forward. I wanted to take all religions, major religions and primitive religions, and come up with something they might have in common. It worked better as I got

less specific...So the real essence was to try to deal with the Force but not to be too specific about it... (Laurent, 1997:35) [3]”. It is quite clear the reason why they are closely resembled.

2. COMPARISON

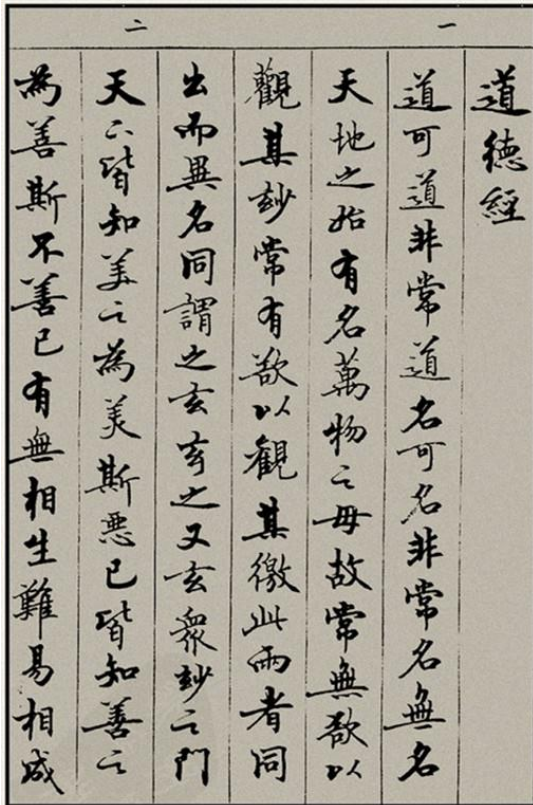


Fig-2: The calligraphy of Tao Te Ching

In *Tao Te Ching*, Tao refers to the law of movements and developments among objective things; Te is exposed function which observes this law. The best value in *Tao Te Ching* is that it covers abundant simple dialectics thoughts. Lao Zi is the first Chinese who presents this thought to theory altitude and applies to a variety of fields flexibly. They will be elaborated as follows.

Generally, Tao is systematically constructed with four parts (Gu Zhengkun, 2007:30-56 [4]) : 1. Ontology; 2. Methodology; 3. Epistemology; 4. Practice.

2.1 Ontology

In the history of Chinese philosophy, Lao Zi is the first who puts forward the ontology which covers the origins, noumena, rules and theories to illustrate the world in philosophical thoughts system.

2.1.1 Tao is the origin of all things

In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 25*: “There was something formless yet complete, that existed before heaven and earth; without sound, without substance,

dependent on nothing, unchanging, all pervading, unending. One may think of it as the mother of all things under heaven. Its true name we do not know; Tao is the by-name that we give it.”¹

The Force is central to the *Star Wars* mythology. The discussion to it runs through the whole saga. The Force is a very complicated concept. There is no definition in it. Similar to *Tao Te Ching Chapter 1* elaborated: “The Tao that can be expressed in words is not the true and eternal Tao.”² “With the two sides--light side and dark side, the Force is the power that can be directed toward good or bad ends. Both the well-trained Jedi knights (light side) and the Sith lords (dark side) can use it to serve them. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 62*: “Tao is the innermost recess of all things. It is the treasure of a good man, the support of the bad.”³ It directs the destiny of everything.

2.1.2 Tao begets all things

In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 42*: “Tao begets the One; The One consists of Two in opposition: the Yin (阴) and Yang (阳) ; The two begets the Three; The Three begets all things of the world. All things connote the Yin and Yang. The Yin and Yang keep acting upon each other. And thus things keep changing and unifying themselves.”⁴ Lao Zi considers that human and nature originate from Yin and Yang, releasing between Heaven and Earth to create “energy field”.

In *Star Wars Episode V*, Yoda told Luke: “For my ally is the Force. And a powerful ally it is. Life creates it and makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and binds us...Feel it you must. Feel the flow. Feel the Force around you...” This is the Taoist thought of “Unity of Man and Nature”, emphasizing that man is an integral part of nature.

2.1.3 Tao and Ch'i originate from the same root

In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 4*: “The Tao is like an empty vessel, that yet may be drawn from without ever needing to be filled. It is bottomless; the very progenitor of all things in the world.”⁵

As George Lucas developed in *Star War* series, the Force resembled the concept “Ch'i (气)” in Chinese. In *Star Wars Episode IV*, Obi-Wan described it as “an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together.” This is an extremely incisive description of what is known in Chinese as Ch'i, integrating with Taoist practice. In the martial arts of China, Ch'i is cultivated to give special fighting advantage over rival who relies only on physical strength. This is most true in relation to the fighting arts both Jedi and Sith with the philosophy beginning with Tao. Maybe, this physical myth still cannot be explained by scientists in outer space times.

2.2 Methodology

Lao Zi's dialectic ideas mark the peak of classical Chinese philosophy. Today, almost all the philosophers admit that Lao Zi's ideas have been repeated by thinkers at home and abroad.

2.2.1 Tao takes what is natural as its model

Lao Zi considers that nature is top priority. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 25*: "...Tao takes what is natural as its model."⁶ In *Star Wars Episode III*, Anakin had an ominous presentiment that his wife would die in childbirth, so he was disturbed. Yoda exhorted him: "The fear of loss is a path to the dark side. Death is a natural part of life. Rejoice for those around you who transform into the Force. Mourn them, do not. Miss them, do not. Attachment leads to jealousy. The shadow of greed that is. Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose." But the Sith lord, Palpatine surely had confidence in saving the humans from dying. To avoid reenacting mother's tragedy, Anakin turned to the dark side of Force for a way out.

2.2.2 Yin and Yang—the law of the unity of opposites

Among old traditional Chinese terms regarding cosmic Forces and universe, we find Yin and Yang, which have no counterparts in English and are explained as two Forces through whose essences, according to Taoist cosmology, the universe was produced and cosmic harmony is maintained. Yin represents dark, female, and negative whereas Yang represents light, male and positive. The oneness of Tao expresses itself as a fundamental duality that is Yin and Yang. Although they are indeed opposites, they are also complementary pairs in that they can exist together. The dynamic relationship Yin and Yang creates the appearance of many things from the potentiality of the oneness.

In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 42*: "The Yin and Yang keep acting upon each other, and thus things keep changing and unifying themselves."⁷

Lucas said: "The idea of positive and negative, that there are two sides to an entity, a push and pull, a Yin and Yang, and the struggle between the two sides are issues of nature that I wanted to include in the film (John, 2003:23) [5]".

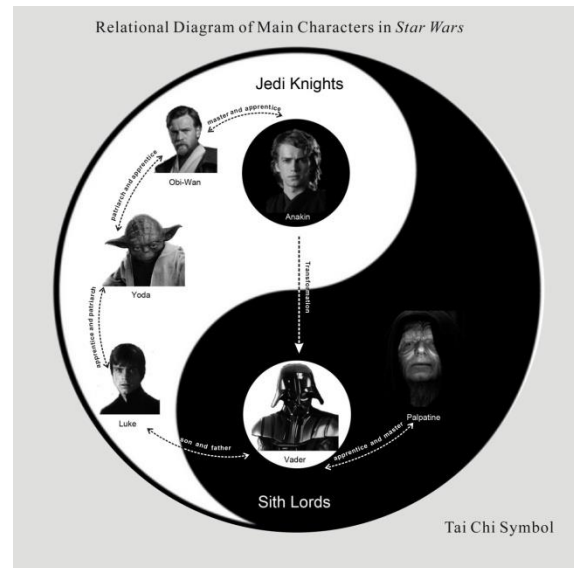


Fig-3: The Tai Chi symbol

It is classically represented throughout the *Star Wars* series as the light side and dark side of the Force. The Jedi view the dark side of the Force as forbidden zone. In *Star Wars Episode III*, the Sith lord told Anakin in a charismatic way: "if one is to understand the great mystery, one must study all its aspects, not just the dogmatic narrow view of the Jedi. If you wish to become a complete and wise leader, you must embrace a large view of the Jedi...Learn to know the dark side of the Force and you will be able to save your wife."

But the Force is neutral; it is how it is applied and how the characters flow with it and in it that determine their ultimate reality. Although Anakin turning to Vader clearly went down the path to the dark side, the good in him had to still exist. Sometimes, we become so focused on one side of a pair that we can no longer see the existence of the other. That is not the way of the Force and is definitely not the way of the Tao.

From the already taken six Episodes, Anakin's life is a destiny. He is bound to join the upright Jedi, and then turn against it. He is destined to have a son who will awaken him to destroy the dark power in the Galaxy. This design reminds Chinese people of "Tai Chi symbol" (太极图) (Tai Chi, which literally means Supreme Ultimate, is a circle, inside of which is divided by a wavy line, one half being light with a dark dot, and the other half dark with a light dot). The white dot in the dark side and dark dot in the light side symbolize the interdependence of opposites. In Episode 1-3, Anakin is the dark dot in the light side, whereas in Episode 4-6, Vader is the white dot in the dark side.

From the *Star Wars Episode VII* (will be shown in Dec, 2015), it will be a breakthrough on the understanding to the Force. Outside the Galaxy by the Yuuzhan Vong invasion, it shook the Jedi for a long

time for the knowledge base of the Force. The new generation of Jedi found in a variety of ways the force performance, and no real light or dark side, it was more profound personal inner control mode decision of good and evil. Luke finally decided not to return to Jedi for justice to defend the role of the Force, he pointed out that the Old Republic of meditation was a republican conspiracy. The Galactic Supreme Chancellor asked them to mediate disputes, finally to expand as the Clone Wars; the Jedi lost attention to the nature of the Force by focusing on the division of good and evil as the light and the dark side of the Force. This kind of understanding is not comprehensive. To maintain the balance of the Force, both sides must coexist. Perhaps this is result that western filmmakers made innovation to science fiction movies through researching eastern mystical philosophy.

2.2.3 The theory of relativity

In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 2*: “It is because everyone under Heaven recognizes beauty as beauty, that the idea of ugliness exists. And equally if everyone recognized virtue as virtue, this would merely create fresh conceptions of wickedness.” “Being and Not-being grow out of one another; Difficult and easy complete one another. Long and short test on another; High and low determine one another. Pitch and mode give harmony to one another. Front and back give sequence to one another.”⁸

In *Star Wars*, Jedi and Sith are the opposites in the Force. The Jedi knights are a noble order of protectors unified by their belief and observance of the Force. On the light side of the Universe, the Jedi represents peace, lightness, calmness, defence and justice, using the Force to protect the Galactic Republic. They believe in the following Commandments: There is no emotion; there is peace. There is no ignorance; there is knowledge. There is no passion; there is serenity. There is no death; there is the Force.

The Sith lords are the sworn enemies of the Jedi, bent on domination through subservience to the Force's dark side. The Sith represents war, darkness, anger, attack and evil, seeking the power from the Force's hateful energies. They believe in the following Commandments: There is no peace; there is anger. There is no fear; there is power. There is no death; there is immortality. There is no weakness; there is the Dark Side.

The Jedi knights are blessed with the philosophical concept, similar to harsh Oriental Zen (禪). It makes them far away from dark side. The Sith lords instill their anger and hate to daily life for power. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 68*: “A skillful fighter does not fight based on his anger.”⁹ Two different kinds of approaches determine their control to the Force and the general trends of universe.

The different philosophical concepts create different characters. If the persons with different characters attempt to rule the one and only universe, then the war is doomed to break out. Maybe, it is the introspection to our society from the angle of Lucas. In *Star Wars*, light side has been fighting with the dark side for millions of years, with no one side surpassing the other. In reality, human beings have undergone the similar struggles in modes of thinking, ideas of philosophy, and views of politics throughout the human history.

2.2.4 The law of change between quality and quantity

Lao Zi realizes that not only the process of things changing from the small into the big, from the weak into the strong, but also the result of the conversation between quality and quantity. The only constant in life is change. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 64*: “A big tree grows from a tiny sprout; a nine-storey tower rises from a heap of earth; a thousand-li journey starts from the first step.”¹⁰ These examples suggest that the quantitative nature of things in their course of development.

In *Star Wars* series, it mentioned that the Jedi knights were the most powerful, most respected force in the Galaxy for over a thousand generations. They served as the guardians and guarantors of peace and justice in the Old Republic. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 35*: He who holding the Great Tao attracts all the people to him.¹¹

But everything was changing: The Force was in the disturbance, and it covered the future. The prophecy was becoming true: the dark side of the Force was growing; the Jedi's ability to use the Force inexplicably began to diminish. All the Jedi masters sensed the Force was on the dark side. Only the Sith lord could sense the future. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 23*: A hurricane never lasts a whole morning, nor a rainstorm all day. Who is it that makes the wind and rain? It is Tao.¹² The mystery Sith was using the Force to serve them. At last, the Sith lord Palatine stood out conspicuously, turning Anakin into Darth Vader and using the Clone army to destroy the Jedi order (*The Star Wars Episode I-III*). When the Sith lord claimed to be emperor at ease, Jedi's new hope appeared: Anakin's son and daughter led the rebellions to revolt against the Galactic Empire and overthrew the Sith tyranny (*The Star Wars Episode IV -VI*).

In *Star Wars* series, the balance is also a theme. Although both Jedi and Sith suppose that the Force will keep balance only after destroying the opposite side, the two sides are in the process of changing between quality and quantity. The Force will make adjustment automatically: it is because the light side is much stronger, Anakin is doomed to degenerate and killed

most of Jedi Knights. After that, the dark side is much stronger, he acts as the pawn of the Force again to destroy the Sith. It is the reflection of fatalism on Anakin(Vader), also a tragedy: A genius (Chosen One) being the scapegoat of Force, towards the end with broken body for the balance of the universe.

2.2.5 The law of negation of negation

As an old Chinese saying goes: “When the sun reaches its top position, it is inclined to sunset; when the moon is full, there is a tendency to wane”. Lao Zi supposes that extremes meet. The two opposite sides in a contradiction develop and finally transform into their opposites. Now we definite it as “the law of negation of negation”. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 40*: “In Tao the only motion is returning, the only useful quality, weakness. For though all creatures under heaven are the products of Being; Being itself is the product of No-being.”¹³

In *Star Wars* series, the balance of Force is a dynamic development process. To the Force, Jedi and Sith are just like daytime and nighttime to a whole day. When Jedi is at its heyday, it is predicted that the fall is unavoidable. In the same way, when the Sith takes the power to rule the Galaxy, it is the beginning of destruction.

In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 58*: “Disaster hides itself behind good fortune; Good fortune leans against disaster.”¹⁴ From the perspective of personal development, Anakin caught the opportunity to be a hopeful Jedi, casting off the identity of slavery. It should be celebrated. But from then on, he was walking on a much rougher way, full of hardships and dangers. Several decades later, his son led a normal life on the farm. One day, faced with disintegration of families, he had to follow Obi-Wan, taking the path of revolting against the Empire. At last, he became the savior of his father—the Chosen One and the whole Galaxy with great sacrifice. From the perspective of Galactic fate, it should be grateful for Jedi to find the Chose One for his power to establish unusual merits repeatedly for Jedi group. But he served as the big push to destroy the Jedi order. (In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 77*: “The Tao of heaven means to compensate the deficient by reducing the excess.”)¹⁵

2.3. Epistemology

Lao Zi’s Taoist epistemology is mainly based on the discard of knowledge, the suppression of desire, and the bodily perception of the truth of the Universe. It is quite different from the epistemological method characterizing modern philosophy on science and pragmatics. The western science and civilization hopes to exert the people’s will not only over other people but also over nature itself. That is not the way of the Tao.

Then, Lao Zi points out the concept of “Wu wei (无为)”, arguing that knowledge prevents man from knowing the world. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 19*: “Banish wisdom, discard knowledge...Keep being simple in nature and mind, discard selfishness and weaken desires, discard cultural knowledge and worries will disappear.”¹⁶ Wu wei is not non-action but effortless action. It is action without doing, causing or making. It is action without meddlesome, contentious or egotistical exertion. Wu wei is the effortless action that results from combining your inner nature with the natural law operating around you. He adds in *Tao Te Ching Chapter 48*: “...The practice of Tao consists in subtracting his knowledge day by day.”¹⁷, suggesting two approaches: meditative approach and keeping-to-stillness approach.

2.3.1 Meditative approach

Lao Zi considers that people benefit a lot from deep meditation in perceiving the truth of the world. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 10*: “...getting rid of your distracting thoughts for a deeper mediation”.¹⁸ A successful meditation needs to get rid of one’s distracting thoughts which stem from knowledge and desires. Knowledge is a chaotic system of concepts and ideas which are biasing and misleading. Culture distorts our view of the physical world, rendering us unable to observe and examine the world calmly and objectively. A deep meditation summons up the great necessity of the discarding knowledge and desires (Kevin,2005:112) [6]. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 3*: “...striving to make the people knowledgeless and desireless...”.¹⁹ The core text of Taoism is to “unlearn” and “to undo”.

In *Star Wars Episode V*, Luke accepted the training from Yoda. He asked why he could not succeed in doing something. Yoda interrupted him and let him clear his mind of questions. It is clear that the master hoped Luke to empty his mind so that he can learn new things. When Yoda taught Luke to know by way of being calm, at peace, passive, this is the process of teaching Tao. When Yoda said to be passive, he did not intend for Luke to become inactive, for the Force is ever in motion, like water flowing in a river—passively in action without effort. A deep meditation summons up the great necessity of discarding knowledge and desires. When people are engaged in deep-breathing (Qigong) exercises, they will feel relaxed, entering into a spiritual state.

2.3.2 Keeping-to-stillness approach

In modern society, our new technological vision clouds our old understanding of the world. We common people rely on our five senses—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body to perceive the world. But Lao Zi considers that our organs of sense are far from being reliable for their bondage with old knowledge and different kinds of desires. He preaches the combination

of body and mind as a whole devoid of knowledge and desires that provides mankind with a supreme state in which Tao is most clearly perceptible. Earth and man be in perfect harmony, and all distracting thoughts troubling mind will be gone, thus we can calmly observe the secrets of all things.

In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 16*: “Push far enough toward the Void; Hold fast enough to Quietness...All things howsoever they flourish. Return to the root is called Quietness; Quietness is called submission to Fate.”²⁰

In *Star Wars*, some figures do not believe in the existence of the Force, taking the famous character Han Solo for example: when he saw Obi-Wan training Luke lightsaber skills, he called it “luck”. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 41*: “Hearing Tao, the man of highest capacity assiduously practices it; the average one half believes and half doubts it; the low one bursts into laughter about it. If he did not laugh, it would not be worth the name of Tao.”²¹

Lao Zi, the reputed author of *Tao Te Ching* lived about 2600 years ago, felt that the corrupt and competitive society had lost Tao and that was the cause of civilization declining, therefore he left society riding upon an ox to mountains where are closer to nature (In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 18*: “The great Tao declines...”²²) . In *Star Wars Episode III*, Jedi Master Yoda witnessed the fall of the Old Republic and “liberty dying with thunderous applause”, he began his self-imposed exile in Planet Dagobah until the end of life. The two great minds think alike with the choice of being a “hermit”.

2.4. Practice

Lao Zi uses Tao to explain philosophy, politics, society and nature rules, offering a complete system of views in ancient Chinese culture. Generally, his view is negative, self-restrained. I would like to illustrate and compare in the following aspects.

2.4.1 Anti-competition

Having witnessed a world of injustices and troubles caused by hostilities among mankind, Lao Zi advocates anti-competition. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 8*: “The highest good is like that of water. The goodness of water is that it benefits the ten thousand creatures; Yet itself does not scramble, but is content with the places that all men disdain. It is this that makes water so near to the Way...”²³ Only does he never compete with others, he will never commit mistakes.

In *Star Wars Episode I*, Jedi knight Qui-Gon kept calm in front of the ill-tempered Watto. In a Podrace, he did not use his ability to help Anakin though he can do it with his Jedi’s power.

2.4.2 Anti-war

In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 31*: “Weapons are the tools of fear; A decent man will avoid them...Peace is his highest, if the peace has been shattered, how can he be content...”²⁴

The *Star Wars* is entitled “War”, but the content expression hates war, though the audiences enjoy watching the splendid battle scenes in the movies, from ground to sea, from glaciers to deserts, from sky to whole galaxy.

When Luke met Yoda for the first time, he said, “I’m looking for a great warrior.” But Yoda’s answer was “Wars not make one great.” Taoism is essentially a pacifist philosophy. It is suggested that wars should be avoided at all costs, but if unavoidable, we should exercise restraint. In the training, Yoda warned Luke, “Jedi use the Force to defend, not attack.”

In the design of unique weapon of Jedi knights, it is also showed. In the space battle, cold weapons are doomed to be dropped out. But people are keen on enjoying the “PK” between warriors. Lucas endows swords the space symbol to be laser lightsabers. The Jedi knights use the Force to wield lightsabers (The Jedi’s laser beams are mainly blue and green, symbolizing peace), rebounding the bullets from the gunners to protect themselves and kill enemies. The Sith lords also use lightsabers (The Sith’s laser beam is red, symbolizing aggression). Additionally, they can use Force lightning to attack violently.

2.4.3 Simplicity

In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 67*: “I have just three things to teach: simplicity, patience, refusal to be foremost of all things under heaven”.²⁵

Yoda, the great Jedi master maintains his simplicity in Dagobah. Luke described Yoda’s home as a slimy mudhole, which was closed to the ground and simple (Little did Luke know, Yoda had lived in grand Jedi Temple in the Republic capital planet Coruscant for hundreds of years, but as Jedi, they care not about that. During the “dark times” of the imperial rule times, the surviving Jedi hid among the natural caves or swampy marshes. They lived with nature in simple dwellings. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 8*, it also mentions that “in dwelling, live close to the ground; in thinking, keep to the simple”.²⁶

The interesting thing is that in *Star Wars*, the vicious Emperor, as the Sith lord was also the devotee of the Force, though he was to the dark side. Similar to Jedi, he wore simple robes, leading the monkish lives of religious devotion. Neither was tempted by bodily pleasures. Like Yoda, the Emperor had a serious mind and deepest commitment. He never thought that he was

evil, but a “Messiah” who could bring peace and justice for the whole Galaxy.

2.4.4 Patience

Patience is one of the three treasures of Taoism. One of the most important benefits of having patience is that it allows people to learn and to be taught. People are anxious to accomplish their purposes, but reality usually does not accord with hopes. Success takes time, wait and patience. The Sith lords are waiting for the time of revenging for a millennium with several generations. Also, the Jedi knights expect the chance of rising from the ashes for decades. (In *Star Wars*, Episode III takes the name “revenge”, while Episode IV uses the title “return”. It makes a big difference on concept.)

When Luke showed his great eagerness to see the “great warrior”, Yoda told Obi-Wan’s spirit, “I cannot teach him. The boy has no patience.” In the training, Luke foresaw his friends in danger in Cloud City, ignoring his mentors’ plea for patience to save them. It nearly destroyed Jedi’s last hope. Therefore, only when patience and perseverance work together, can they yield results. Similarly, in his father’ childhood, Anakin was taught by Qui-Gon the importance of patience and persistence. For the end of whole Jedi group, taking Obi-Wan for example, he trained Anakin obtrusively, which caused his apprentice’s betrayal indirectly. The Emperor, as the opposite side, also persuaded Vader to be patient in the process of searching for Luke to join the dark side of Force.

2.4.5 Prediction

In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 21*: “Such the scope of the All-pervading Power. That it alone can act through the Tao. For the Tao is a thing impalpable, incommensurable. Incommensurable. impalpable. Yet latent in it are forms; Impalpable, incommensurable. Yet within it are entities. Shadowy it is and dim; Yet within it there is a Force. A Force that though rarefied. Is none the less efficacious...”²⁷

It mainly talks about the uncertainty before it is formed. We can sense the tendency to the factors for the future. Although it is invisible, unfathomable and indescribable, it is powerful to determine the forms of the future. It reveals a variety of information by means of different ways. The natural laws decide the future of matter and individuals.

Both Jedi and Sith are prophetic which originate from the inspiration and guidance from the Force. But it is not always correct. As Yoda said: the future is in a state of fluctuation.

In the beginning of the whole story, the Jedi knight Qui-Gon firmly believed that the nine-year-old boy Anakin was the Chosen One, who would bring the

balance to the universe at the first sight. But all the other Jedi including Obi-Wan had foreseen “the boy is dangerous for his future is clouded.” Qui-Gon was not wrong, for he saw the end instead of the process. Therefore, all are correct from a certain point of view.

Anakin sensed that his wife would die in labour, but the fact was that his wife lost the willingness to live during children birth, when she knew that Anakin had turned to the dark side, killing all the Jedi youngsters in the Jedi temple.

The Sith lord (Emperor Palatine) foresaw that Luke would destroy Vader and himself, so did Vader take Luke to him. Although he realized a countercurrent which he had never sensed, an elusive transformation of the Force, he did not expect that it was Vader who killed him for saving his son-Luke.

Anakin was seduced to Sith lord from Jedi knight, exterminating Jedi order and Galactic Republic. After several decades, he killed Sith lord and himself for saving his son, extinguishing the Sith order. He completed the cycle of his destiny and the Force. (Anakin has no father. He was created by Palatine (Emperor)’s Master--Plaguus who attempted to create life by the dark side of Force, unleashing in the Galaxy.)

2.4.6 Life-and-death

If life philosophy is the wise introspection to primal problems in life, then the matter of “life-and-death” is the core. From it, we can benefit the essence from the existence of life. The “Tao” of Lao Zi contains the recognition to the intrinsic quality, value and transcendence of life-and-death.

Life and death are complementary pairs, two sides of one ultimate reality, each defining the other. In Taoism, death is just a part of life. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 50*: “When given to birth men live and when being buried they die.”²⁸ Lao Zi notices the mutual infiltration and transformation of opposites between the life and death. Although life and death are the two extremes, they are not isolated, nor impenetrable. From Lao Zi’s point of view, when a man comes into the world, he finds strength in its vitality as well as the elements of death. It lasts for the end of life. Lao Zi’s attitude towards death is to face calmly since it is irresistible. In *Tao Te Ching Chapter 33*: “...He who dies physically but preserves the Tao will obtain longevity.”²⁹ It reflects the highest state towards life-and-death. Lao Zi can exceed life-and-death, therefore he reaches the top realm of death but eternity, birthlessness and deathlessness.

In *Star Wars Episode III*, Yoda enlightened Anakin: “Death is a natural part of life.” In *Star Wars Episode IV*, Obi-Wan accepted his death without

resistance facing Vader. (In Episode III, Obi-Wan admitted that Anakin had saved his life for nine times.) In *Star Wars Episode VI*, Yoda said: “Twilight is upon me, and soon night must fall. That is the way of things, the way of the Force...Soon I will rest. Yes, forever sleep. Earned it I have.” As the survivors of Jedi, Yoda and Obi-Wan regarded death as an inevitability of spontaneous change and confronted it in a calm attitude. It shares with Lao Zi’s practice.

3. CONCLUSION

In the process of the development of American films, it is never interval to throw the Chinese cultural elements onto the screen in different forms, from unconscious mixture in the beginning to deliberate imitation, to real understanding, to complement between oriental and occidental culture recently. The major characters in *Star Wars* are the father and son with humble birth. They could have “been contented with food, pleased with clothing, satisfied with homes and delight in plain customs (*Tao Te Ching Chapter 80*)”.³⁰ Though they were not renowned, they could feed themselves with technical skills. It is because they were born “in a wrong time and wrong place” which made them become two thundering men in Galaxy. In my humble opinion, the two stars over Planet Tatooine have heralded the birth of the miracle and legend. In terms of the content, it is in the pursuit of the American dream with the core of patience, determination, bravery and freedom.

In today’s world, with rapid development of science and technology, combined with the era of economic globalization trend, the world is getting smaller. It results in mutual understanding, acceptance and integration by frequent exchanges among all nationalities in different countries. It is a tendency to seek common ground while putting aside differences, which has broken the original narrow boundaries and formed a new pattern of “world culture”. That is the great influence brought by culture assimilation.

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End Notes

1. 《道德经》第 25 章：有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，独立不改，周行而不殆，可以为天下母。吾不知其名，字之曰道。
2. 《道德经》第 1 章：道可道，非常道。
3. 《道德经》第 62 章：道者，万物之奥，善人之宝，不善人之所保。
4. 《道德经》第 42 章：道生一，一生二，二生三，三生万物。万物负阴而抱阳，冲气以为和。
5. 《道德经》第 4 章：道冲而用之，或不盈。渊兮，似万物之宗。
6. 《道德经》第 25 章：.....道法自然。
7. 《道德经》第 42 章：.....万物负阴而抱阳，冲气以为和。
8. 《道德经》第 2 章：有无相生，难易相成，长短相形，高下相倾，音声相和，前后相随。
9. 《道德经》第 68 章：.....善战者不怒.....。
10. 《道德经》第 64 章：合抱之木，生于毫末；九层之台，起于累土；千里之行，始于足下。
11. 《道德经》第 35 章：执大象，天下往。
12. 《道德经》第 23 章：飘风不终朝，骤雨不终日。孰为此者？道。
13. 《道德经》第 40 章：反者道之动，强者道之用。天上万物生于有，有生于无。
14. 《道德经》第 58 章：祸兮，福之所倚；福兮，祸之所伏。
15. 《道德经》第 77 章：.....天之道，损有余而补不足.....。
16. 《道德经》第 19 章：绝圣弃智.....见素抱朴，少私寡欲。绝学无忧。
17. 《道德经》第 48 章：.....为道日损。
18. 《道德经》第 10 章：.....涤除玄鉴。
19. 《道德经》第 3 章：.....常使民无知无欲.....。
20. 《道德经》第 16 章：致虚极，守静笃.....夫物芸芸，各复归其根。归根曰静，是谓复命.....。
21. 《道德经》第 41 章：上士闻道，勤而行之；中士闻道，若存若亡；下士闻道，大笑之。不笑不足以谓为道。
22. 《道德经》第 18 章：大道废.....。
23. 《道德经》第 8 章：上善若水，水善利万物而不争。处众人之所恶，故几于道.....夫唯不争，故无尤。
24. 《道德经》第 31 章：夫兵者，不祥之器，物或恶之.....不得已而用之，恬淡为上，胜而不美，而美之者，是乐杀人.....。
25. 《道德经》第 67 章：我有三宝，持而保之：一曰慈，二曰俭，三曰不敢为天下先。
26. 《道德经》第 8 章：.....居善地，心善渊.....。
27. 《道德经》第 21 章：孔德之容，惟道是从。道之为物，惟恍惟惚。惚兮恍兮，其中有象；恍兮惚兮，其中有物；窈兮冥兮，其中有精；其精甚真，其中有信.....。
28. 《道德经》第 50 章：出生入死.....。
29. 《道德经》第 33 章：.....不失其所者久也，死而不亡者寿也.....。
30. 《道德经》第 80 章：.....甘其食，美其服，安其居，乐其俗.....。

