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Residual Humanities:
From the Cultural *Déjà Vu* to Reclaimed Narrations

Abstract: This paper proposes a new interpretative framework, the residual humanities approach, situated at the limits of rubbish theory, of "trash aesthetics" (Warner 2014), and other traditional "garbologies" (Rathje and Murphy 2001). Residual humanities is intended as a theoretical framework that takes previous methods, like archetypal interpretations or ideological criticism, in the area of trans-political and trans-mythological accounts. The new set of interpretive terms proposed are designed to extracting their true residual dimensions by searching for insights into the immaterial functions of such narrative and media transmogrifications. The working hypothesis of this approach is applied in the Star Wars universe, a complex story-world which has recycled innumerable cultural elements, generating a melange of religious and political themes, in a large collection of previously used myths, showcasing a symbiosis of images and fantasies joined together by a galactic saga attractive for entire generations of children and adults. Using the trilogies that have begun with *Star Wars: A New Hope* (1977) and continued up to *Star Wars:The Last Jedi* (2017), the study takes into consideration that the multiple replications happening in Lucasverse are making visible the inherent mechanisms of residuality, which is now a contemporary cultural production mode.

Keywords: Appropriation, Cultural Residue, Discarded Cultural Artifacts, Recycling, Reuse, Residual Media, Old and New Narrative Forms, Recuperated Mythologies, Star Wars Trilogy, Reclaimed Storytelling.

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We are living in a world filled with residues, cluttered by a multitude of trash and discarded materials, which not only pollute our environment, but have become part of our daily existence. Our lands, oceans and even the low orbit of the Earth, where debris have accumulated into a cloud of space waste, are now littered by the remains of unused materials. More importantly for this discussion, there

is an accumulation of residual materials that have become integral for our cultural interactions and creations. A multitude of contents, narratives and representations have been recycled into various modes and modalities of expression, constantly mutated into various mediascapes, recuperated and then discarded from literature to games, from cartoons and comics to cinema, from classical art to new media. The intermingling of old and new stories, the revival and recuperation of mythologies and the recycling of meanings accumulated into cultural practices were discussed by many researchers, including myself (Pop 2018). In spite of excellent works already dealing with issues like intertextuality, remediation, transmediality or intermediality, the further questioning of the recuperated remnants in our culture deserves some added theoretical nuances. My suggestion here is that the metadiscourses about how the humanities are affected by such transmedia phenomena have ignored its most marginal manifestations. In order to open the debate and find further explanations, I advance the concept of *residual humanities* as a working theoretical framework.

The debris, the rubbish and the residual in the Humanities

The importance of recording and recuperating the past has always been fundamental in the formation and the functioning of what we call the Humanities. As Jaques Derrida (1995) noted, there is an "archival drive" governing the Humanities, by their very nature operating with materials (ideas, texts, signs) that are coalesced in "institutions of consignation". The signs from the past are put together in various cultural repositories, stored for future re-consideration and reprocessing. Some of these signs of human creativity are privileged, recurrently brought back and re-evaluated, while others are considered to be irrelevant, unimportant. These are cultural residues, always left behind, forgotten on shelves, losing their identifiable labels and treated like rubbish. These contents, which no longer have a "traceable" identity (in documents or representations), that have lost their original attribution or lack the precise information about their place in these repositories of cultural memory are so faint that they behave as cultural debris. When the "signs of consigned memory" are unable to point towards the past, considers Derrida, they are utterly affected by archival virus, the infestation produced by the *mal d'archive*, when the archive becomes an "anarchive" (Derrida 1995 20), which he later identified as "différance", an impossible reconnection with the creation of meanings, now disjoined from the initial origin, appearing as a trace of a trace (Derrida 1976 61).

The observation of the French philosopher were further developed by many other authors, who observed a practical finality in that any humanities research and the search to find remnants of past cultural actions define our understanding of all the disciplines of the field (Proctor 1998). Constantly driven by the need to "rediscover" ancient traditions, philosophies or ideas, the permanent return of the "old" and its reinvigoration by the re-appropriation of classical imagination, or the inherent revitalization of previous representations, has become integral to our

cultural practices. There are multiple approaches which are dealing with interpreting such cultural manifestations. Although not identified as residues, there are various forms of content recuperation, from the simplest quotation to intertextual dialogue. These practices can be categorized into distinct groups, each handling various forms of residues: cultural, political, psychological, narratological or media related, yet it is my contention that all these major directions could be integrated into a larger field of research, that of *residual humanities.*

Before proposing a coherent study of how the debris from literature, history, philosophy and other traditional disciplines, meanings and representations that have been forgotten, marginalized and discarded and are recuperated, some terminological clarifications are necessary. In order to fully understand the category of residue we must understand it as any form of cultural manifestation (material or conceptual) that was abandoned and then partially recuperated. When comparing this definition with the classical notion of rubbish, proposed by Michael Thompson (1979), we must observe from the start that Thompson's "rubbish theory", although giving importance to the discarded and based on notions such as marginality, is focused on the processes of devaluation and re-evaluation of material objects.

The notion of *cultural residue* must be distinguished from "the rubbish" in the sense that it includes all the discarded cultural manifestations, not just those visible or material. More importantly, the residues are intruding into our imaginary and imagination not only by representations, but also as unrecognizable cultural forms. Like the rubbish, the cultural residues can be found in materials that are not perceived as "valuable". Cultural remains, relics of the past that are discarded or depreciated are not simply "rubbish", mostly because the residues are manifested only as traces of the cultural past signs, which are transformed into more "durable" forms, but do not maintain links (or traces) from the ancient meaning. The residue will never become a part of the primary waste recuperated, like "classics" or "antiques" in Thompson's, theory. They are neither transient nor durable, because they lack the obvious connections with the original qualities of the discarded object. Thus the residue is that part of the abandoned cultural waste which remains unremarkable and even unrecognizable, while the rubbish can be recovered as such, with new social (and cultural) transfers of meanings (and added value). Thus residuals are past significations that were exhausted to the point of the dissolution their traceable marks.

The conceptual difference is perhaps best illustrated using a comparison between residuality and the usage of rediscovered archeological fragments. Well preserved statues, easily identifiable and closely carrying their original meanings or functions, were often reclaimed or reused in our culture history. There are many examples of Hellenistic art works which, as pointed out by Leonard Barkan (1999*)* in his study on the classical revival of Renaissance, can be connected with the renewed representations of the time. The late rediscovery of works like "Laocoön" influenced and inspired Michelangelo's statues and we can trace the relationship between the

recovered ancient object and its new meaning. The abandoned cultural artifacts, when recuperated and revalued, are transformed from "rubbish" to "classics".

At another level, as Robert Harbison (2015) suggests in his exploration of architecture, art, literature, film and popular culture, another important process takes place, the "transmogrifications" of materials. While some remains and broken pieces of cultural artefacts, like those found in the ancient Egyptian garbage dump at the site of Oxyrhynchus, were proved to be lost Aeschilus works, in what Harbinson calls the "*valuable rubbish*", there is plenty of cultural detritus which cannot be identified. The residual is an invaluable rubbish, or compared to the traditional example of Joyce's restoration of "Ulysses", the notion of cultural salvage and recuperation from ruins must be joined with another concept, that of cultural ballast, that can never be identified.

Thus the residual, on the contrary, can be compared with an ancient object like the famous "Torso Belvedere", from the Vatican Museums, which remains without a clear and identifiable source, meaning or form, nevertheless inspiring and influencing contemporary representations and creative thinking. This is why a residual humanities approach must be positioned at the limits of rubbish theory, different from "junk aesthetics" (Whiteley 2011) and other traditional "garbologies" (Rathje and Murphy). These similar methodologies are, as observed by Michael Fehr (1994), focusing on the material dimensions, and sometimes oblivious to cultural manifestations that do not get re-valued, that have lost their original meanings and lack any traces of their past significance and are untraceable.

Palimpsests, cultural *déjà vu* and the hieroglyphs of meanings

The resuscitation of ancient original texts, that were obliterated or erased, was extensively discussed in literary and cultural studies. For Dillon (2007) it was Thomas De Quincey who, already in 1845, inaugurated the practice of deconstructing "hidden" or "repressed" narratives, meanings and representations. Later resurrected in the modern philosophies and in classical psychoanalysis, as "the metaphors of the Unconscious", there is an important dimension of examining residuality which deals with tracing the marks of past meaning formations in our psyche (or collective psyche, for Jung). As it has been observed (Le Rider 2015), Freud's works were replete with residual materials, and almost all his concepts can be linked to ancient Greek myths and stories (from Oedipus to the relationship between Eros and Thanatos). More importantly, as confirmed by recent cognitive neuroscience research (Demertzi and Laureys 814), proving that residual events are often more important than the dominant thought-processes, the fundamental revolution of Freudian psychology was that the operations of our mind are determined by the presence of what the Viennese doctor called "the day residue". These untraceable imprints in our mind are left behind by the pleasant or unpleasant experiences we have during daytime, by unfulfilled desires, repressed wishes and sometimes by apparently insignificant events

(Freud *The Interpretation of Dreams*). These impressions, later processed by dreams and by our unconscious mind are behaving like *residues*, having lost connection with the initial traumatic event or person, they are generating new meanings in the form of guilt, anxieties or painful memories. Day-residues and thought-residues are signs that "remind us of something", yet, as the founder of psychoanalysis explained when discussing the phenomenon of déjà vu, there are familiar representations which are generating false recollections of objects, people and sensations (Freud 320-24).

Psychoanalysis and, discontentedly, Jungian archetype theory, claimed to develop interpretative methods to access latent, hidden or underground significations. Freud's understanding of the role played by residually in constructing dreams was often exported in other sites of signification production, with latent meanings built in literary texts, visual signs and artistic images, most often exemplified by cinema studies. The theory of universal archetypes, proposed by Gustav Jung and his disciples, together with the idea that psychic residues and the suppressed meanings are reprocessed and then transformed into art and culture, were also widely applied in film interpretations. According to the archetypal approach, "primordial images", which accumulate into the depths of our "collective Unconscious", can be recognized later in myths, literature and art.

The overlap with the method I called residual humanities seems inevitable, yet these explanations for how the residual patterns and materials, that persist in cultural representations and subconscious manifestations, is not always satisfactory. Recognizable images from the past, mythological forms and narratives reappearing in various cultures and epochs of humanity, used as universal truths by many studies providing coherent descriptions of the archetypal manifestations in films or art, are analyzing only manifest presences. The inherent residual nature of archetypes is only external and is not accounting for those residues that are beyond recognition. It is as if we would try to interpret hieroglyphs when we are missing the Rosetta stone, making an effort to read those messages to which we do not have access to the original coding. Residues are operating like cultural echoes, reverberations of indiscernible sounds coming from an unidentifiable source.

Re-focusing on non-manifest cultural phenomena, defined as *residual*, could open the way for a new methodology, maybe to the development of another discipline in the humanities that would make possible the research of unrecognizable cultural events, of manifestations residing in areas of contemporary culture that often remain unremarked or ignored. Only a residual analysis could bring about some ignored answers in the existing scholarship.

Intertextuality, narrative residues and storytelling detritus

More problematic are the issues raised by the relationship between residuality and intertextual meaning formation. Residuality, which is treatable in myths and other storytelling modalities, was previously explained by intertextuality. Julia Kristeva,

who initially used the notion of *intertextuality* in the field of literary theory, observed that texts and meanings can be related to each other, and then connected to larger, historical and ideological contexts, creating a relationship between the contemporary cultural signified and past signifieds. This creates an *intertextual space* (Kristeva 255), where "old" texts are behaving like residual elements, recycled and reused in "newer" texts.

Intertextual interpretations are establishing connections between previous contents and representations and the recent textual manifestations through a mechanism best described by the formula later proposed by Genette (1997). Thus, an intertextual context can be identified whenever a *hypotext* (defined as the "original text") reappears in any form in a *hypertext*. Thus, *transtextuality* (the concept preferred by Genette instead of intertextuality) can be manifested in multiple ways, from the simple citation, to direct and indirect allusions. Whenever an existing work is purposefully related to preceding meanings, the interpreter can trace back these connections. This is why the cross-fertilization of texts, based on the notion of cultural palimpsest, is extremely important when searching for explanations for the reoccurrence of significances. The metaphor of the palimpsest, the parchment sheets which were re-used multiple times due to the scarcity of materials, has lead Genette to the notion of "second degree" literature, that is the co-presence identifiable (and multiple) forms of meanings.

The difference between residuality and intertextuality (or transtextuality) relies, as noted before, on those types of cultural residues that cross over the boundaries of intertextuality. A residual humanities approach must be understood as a methodological instrument for handling those dimensions of contemporary culture which are manifested as content recycling and re-circulations of elements "deposited" at impervious layers. The residue is traceless and odorless; it cannot be identified by its physical appearance or by its material reusability. The surface of its source is effaced, illegible and even unintelligible. Intertextuality deals with direct connections and identifiable influences, that is it operates with *discrete textual* presences, yet it ignores the fact that, while all human cultural products were designed to be preserved, the already-used, the already-written or the already-thought take place at levels beyond the immediate recognizability. This is why the residual humanities approach handles critically some important concepts (intertextuality, remediation or multimodality) and advances a new set of interpretive terms, such as trans-mythological, trans-historical, intra-media contamination.

Another major issue with the intertextual/transtextual explanations resides in the fact that most often the intertextual dialogue is taking into consideration the relationship between similar media. Such limitations of intertextual studies were addressed, more recently, by transmedia (or cross-media) studies. In the research of storytelling in digital environments this was expanded into a separate discipline, appropriately identified as "new humanities", where the study of multimodality in

multimedia environments coalesced into a coherent approach. Transmedia narrations, manifested in various media practices (from video-games to comics and tv series) and the development of "transmedia storyworld crossing multiple platforms can be analyzed from the multiple perspectives: convergence theory, participatory and collaborative practices or digital storytelling. As it is substantiated by the collective work edited by Guynes and Hassler-Forest (2018), heavily based on the concepts advanced by Henry Jenkins (2008), the Star Wars universe can be described by cross media exchanges, yet it fails to provide what the authors promise to be the disclosure of how "precarious, unpredictable, and strangely unstable" nature of the Star Wars story-world (Guynes and Hassler-Forest 13).

While observing *intertextual* connections is relevant and discussing *transmedia* connections can be extremely relevant, and acknowledging that many studies were dealing with the various forms of residually and recurrence in literature and culture, as is the case with the researchers interpreting postmodern features like pastiche and parody, or dealing with the cultural *déjà vu* in terms of textual connections, we must also take into consideration the creation of meanings which are neither atemporal (archetypal), nor adaptive or intertextual. Some contents are behaving like "residual networks", functioning without immediate reference and signification. The premise of my approach also takes into consideration one of the main limitations of the existing research in adaptation studies. A relevant example in this direction is provided by the extensive discussions about the contemporary versions of William Shakespeare, most commonly interpreted in their relationship with the original, either from the perspective of how those works are faithful to the initial plays (like Zefirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*) or those which can are interpreted as allusions or derivative work (like *West Side Story* or Baz Luhrman's version). Such transformations remain forms of explicit transfer of meaning and, while extensively studied and providing relevant intertextual and a transmedia explanations, do not account for many other manifestations.

The concept of cultural residue must be connected with the hieroglyphic nature of cinematic manifestations. I am following here a suggestion proposed by Mikhail Iampolski (1998) who, in his study on cinematic intertextuality, underlined the hieroglyphic nature of films (26), as related to the notion of repressed or "dead" intertexts (82). In fact, this is a specificity of cinema, a relation previously observed by Sergei Eisenstein in his theory about Japanese hieroglyphic signs (29-30). In the process of intertextual overlapping (or copulative hieroglyph), cinematic images generate a form of visuality that is highly ambiguous, covering the traces of previous meanings by its very nature.

Addressing the question why use cinematic examples when it comes to the Humanities remains an important issue. The best explanation for choosing cinema as a relevant medium for residuality is contained by the concept of *remediation*, as proposed by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (45). Meanwhile, their argument was related to the so-called "new digital media", which gained cultural significance

by absorbing and refashioning earlier media and previous artistic practices, all contemporary "new media" are in fact containers of traditional media, they are meaning carriers of other forms of communication that have predated them. Charles Acland (2007) who explored the famous assumption advanced by McLuhan, showed that all media contain at least one "older" medium. More importantly, Acland considered that cinema is an expression of the "residual modern", a state specific for modernity. By using the tachistoscope as a media device that indicates how cinematic apparatus is based on fragmentation and reassembling of fragments, apparently discarded cultural signification are remediated into cinema.

Ideology, residuality and marginality

Another conceptual reference for developing the residual perspective on culture and elaborating a residual analysis of representations in humanities must relate to the ideological interpretation, proposed by Raymond Williams in a seminal essay published in 1977. The culture and media critic introduced an important distinction between hegemonic and dominant cultural significations and the residual ones. His argument was that non-dominant groups, that have no access to generating media discourses, are represented by the hegemonic capitalism as unimportant. To simply put it, some social classes are excessively "made visible" while entire other social categories and groups are represented as "trash" (marginalized, criminalized, associated with negative traits).

Although these residual characteristics, that come from the opposition between cultural power and the representation of marginal social groups, were amply interpreted, there are several forms of "residuality" that are beyond the explicit political dichotomies. Recently the dominant (mostly Hollywood made) cinema is spreading pro-capitalist fantasies not only by comparison with the high-culture and the elites. The underclasses are no longer described as discardable, as social trash, as is the case with traditional media representations, where an analysis of disenfranchised groups (by class, gender or race) and their images could be coupled with political dichotomies. This understanding of media representations of the underclasses and the outsiders is rapidly changing. Not all ideological residues are expressions of contemporary political dialectical tensions, as we are witnessing an excess of representations that use various forms of marginalization integrated into the overall processes of cultural formation.

Some of the best examples are provided by the recent success of "poverty porn" movies, like Danny Boyles's *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008). As noted by other authors, there is a tendency of "slumming drama" (Gandal 6-7), visible in movies such as *Titanic*, which presents an untruthful life of the poor and the disenfranchised, or *Fight Club*, where degradation is glorified. This transformation of contemporary cinema makes uncertain the ideological explanations, where the mechanisms of representation are simply dependent on their opposition to hegemonic discourse. The

powerless, the downtrodden, the economically disenfranchised have been included in the cinematic narratives. Other examples are *District 9* (2009) and *Elysium* (2013) by Neill Blomkamp, where exploitation and marginalization become natural backdrops for fantasy and science fiction narrations, with the political dimension pushed back into the realm of illusion.

In this context, a *residual humanities* approach could provide access to understanding such re-writings of the underclasses, that are not explicitly historical or political. It also opens way for interpreting many cultural materials are trans-political and trans-mythological since they do not account directly for their ideological purpose. A new set of interpretive terms allowing us to extracting their true residual dimensions is offering insights into the immaterial functions of such transmogrifications.

Last but not least, a line of questioning should take into account the importance of cultural economy today and its impact on market driven storytelling practices. In consumption environments where cultural objects are easily "antiquated" and the overall processes of constant transformation of almost all cultural objects into "abandonware" quickly makes everything obsolete, the nature of what is made residual in consumption has to be connected with the re-evaluation of "artistic trash".

All these concerns are going to be addressed by using Star Wars (SW) as a case study, intended not as a film criticism effort, rather as a methodological sketch of how representations, ideas, images, stories and myths are recycled in popular culture. The following discussions will analyze the relationship between the theoretical framework presented and the practices of cultural crossings, focusing mostly on the three main trilogies of the so called "Skywalker saga" – the early films (Episodes *IV, V, VI*, 1977–1983); the prequels (Episodes *I, II, III*, 1999–2005) and the Disney versions (Episodes *VII, VIII, IX*, 2015–2019).

The SW universe not only showcases a wide range of hybridity in terms of media representations and transmediation, with different sites of meaning production, from "traditional" cinematic, to books, graphic media, comic books, video games and so on, it also allows interpretations that take us beyond the typical modes of intertextuality. The transmedia characteristic of SW provides plenty examples for the transformation of already existing contents, so we can follow what is happening when "texts" are transferred across media platforms and are recovered over a long time span. More importantly, it offers to necessary context to apply a new set of interpretive terms, such as residual, trans-mythological, intra-media contamination, opening a better understanding of this cultural phenomenon.

Star Wars saga: a case study in residuality

As I have acknowledged before, my understanding of *residual humanities* as the foundation of a specific methodology is based on a transdisciplinarity that re-evaluates previous concepts and interpretative methods. And, as the SW saga is now covering a vast transmedia storytelling environment (functioning like a storytelling

system), it provides suggestive examples for the important distinction between residuality and transmediality.

As shown by numerous studies based on further elaborations of the concept proposed by Henry Jenkins, SW is a universe where various media are interchanging their traits, where elements from video games, toy production and merchandise creation, comic books or novelizations are co-existing with cinema and animation. Another overview of the evolution of this amalgamated universe, that has generated a new form of impure cinematic narrative, would be redundant. What is more relevant is the transformation of storytelling strategies from one trilogy to the other. Often described in their transmedia dimension (Guynes and Hassler-Forest) by comparing various cross-media influences within the SW franchise, we must add another dimension of cultural poaching. The concept, proposed two decades ago by Jenkins (1988), who considered that the fan inspired works were forms of scavenging, as fans "reclaimed" parts of cultural products considered to be "worthless and trash" then recycled them into reusable materials, opened way to the theory of the participatory culture and the cultural economy of fandom. Moving away from his initial intuition, Jenkins defined the fans as "reluctant poachers", who were creating a new form of culture by reclaiming and appropriating existing materials. Closely inspired by Michel de Certeau's notion of bricolage (1994), these activities are part of a larger *practice of bricoleurs*.

We must observe how, in the evolution of the SW saga, many "new" narrative elements were actually driven by previous contents, residues of the already consumed storytelling. When characters and story worlds are exerting a reverse influence and the familiar tropes of the past became repetitive mechanisms of the present films, the directors of the new trilogies have turned into "premeditated poachers". As many critics have noted, the similarities between the first SW movie (E IV) and the first Disney version (E VII) are transparently redundant. In *The Force Awakens*, the new character Rey functions as a recuperated residue of several elements already used for developing Luke in *A New Hope*.

Dan Golding (2019) calls this "backward-looking" strategy of Disney, pointing to the fact that the reboot produced and directed by J. J. Abrams was a form of re-aggregation and rescuing of previously functional elements of the franchise. Not only the character of Luke Skywalker is recuperated, but Supreme Leader Snoke is only a version of Palpatine and Kylo Ren is an almost caricatural reuse of Darth Vader, who is also his grandfather. While the logic of any reboot fringes and overlaps with residuality, since it is forced to revive old and "dormant" elements of the storytelling building blocks, the storytellers (directors, screenwriters) are transformed into poachers of mainstream residues. In order to reconnect with the fans the reboot performs many reclaiming practices. They can be iconographic, as is the case with "recuperating" the Millenium Falcon or the "old" droids C3PO and R2D2. Other forms of intentional poaching are structural, by bringing back dimensions of

characters, elements of plots and even backdrops and entire worlds. Although many fans have been disappointed with the recycling of the iconography of Darth Vader in the new antagonist, Kylo Ren, the residuality of these two negative heroes is more profound than the simple dark mask and suit correspondence. In fact, Kylo (formely Ben Solo) shares the same Oedipal theme with Anakin and Luke before him, fighting with their respective fathers/sons. Their hybris is linked to a type of mentor-disciple antagonism which recuperates a much older archetypal residue.

In the melting pot of this intergalactic saga, various mythologies and old narrative forms were constantly recuperated, as George Lucas purposefully recycled in his fictional worlds elements that made them attractive for entire generations of children and influenced our cultural imagination. Millions of viewers all over the world were fascinated by this infantile melange of religious and political themes, collections of previously unused myths, a total symbiosis of images and fantasies joined together by a melodramatic storyline. The "Lucasverse" is a mixture of Christian motifs and tropes, elements of Buddhist philosophies and half-digested psychoanalytical principles, a kind of mixing which ushered a new era in popular culture, one that the director himself branded as the "Empire of Dreams".

As the cultural materials of these "dreams" were coalesced from multiple disjoined sources, analyzing how the stories were developed as a result of amalgamating fairy tales creatures with science fiction tropes, putting together ready-made gadgets and artifacts with easily recognizable characters could provide an better understanding of residuality. In the process of developing the story from *Star Wars: A New Hope* (1977) to *Star Wars:The Last Jedi* (2017), more than half a decade of transformations took place, which expose the multiple replications happening in the SW galaxy and which make visible the inherent *déjà vu* of all our contemporary cultural production modes.

Scavengers, poachers and other scoundrels

The difficulty of analyzing such narrative recycling examples comes from the fact that they are conscious repurposing of elements. Real residual manifestations share a different trait than cultural rubbish or junk art objects. The SW universe presents us with examples of residuals that are not only direct and explicit manifestations of previously used elements, but also latent significations. For example, in Episode IV the fans and moviegoers were familiarized with a particular visual settings, a desert planet where salvaging operations, scavengers and marginals, various forms of reclamation were integrated into the narrative. The Jawa scavengers from Tatooine in the first episode of the first trilogy were later completed with the character of Watto, the Toydarian junk dealer in E I, then the Disney trilogy exploited further this development. Rey, the main character of the new SW saga, is an abandoned girl who survives on yet another desert planet, Jakku, where she recovers remnants from the imperial battleships crashed on this world populated by new breeds of scavengers. The structure of the entire fictional universe created by Lucas appears to be populated

with creatures that make a living by collecting lost or abandoned items, recovering or recycling abandoned technologies.

Even the character construction follows this logic. Just like Luke, who is abandoned on a marginal planet, Rey does not know her parents, described only as "junk traders". Both their environments are populated by other scavengers and/ or shady dealers of discarded merchandise. The similarities between Jabba the Hutt and the new character Unkar Plutt, who is a junk boss ruling over the scrap trade or the salvaging ring run by Lady Proxima, the worm-like creature who uses children (called scrumrats) in criminal activities, many involving stealing and reselling valuables from the *Han Solo* (2018) spin-off are other suggestive examples. This inclination continues whenever new characters are introduced, many falling under the residual category. With Han Solo as the generic scoundrel, many other smugglers and bounty hunters are central to the narratives, most recently in the new installment announced by Disney, the TV series entitled "The Mandalorian". There is also the famous Mos Eisley Cantina on Tatooine, designed as a smuggler's heaven, a model is repeated in various forms in all the movies of the franchise. An explicit recuperation of such space is Maz Kanata's outpost, the outlaw castle on Takodana, playing a similar role with all the cantinas in the SW galaxy. And Katana, a collector of ancient and discarded objects is yet another millenary being who functions as a revision of Yoda.

The tropes of the dumping ground or generally the wasted objects, which are central to the visual representations in SW imagination, have a multitude of manifestations in derelict equipments, recuperated old-fashioned artifacts and objects. This is explicit with clothes (the Jedi wardrobe or the garments of the Queen of Naboo) and other residual objects like robots and technologies. The classical couple of robots, C3PO and R2D2, who recurrently reappear are also constantly re-cycled in other robotic creatures (BB8, K2SO or the revolutionary L3-37). In this context it would be worth pointing that Anakin's lightsaber functions as a unifying residual object, which is circulating from one story to another. Many more examples can be provided for the argument that these productions are "wasteland stories", where material debris are allegorical references to previous cultural representations that work as cultural rubbish, transformed from irrelevant trash into a revered objects. Even characters address each other with "garbage" invectives, for instance Han is described by Leia as "scruffy looking" and Grievous scoffs at his enemies as "Jedi scum".

All these residual characters and settings, or trash representations, amplify the fascination for junk in every SW movie. Here the notion of "palimpsest aesthetics", advanced by Robert Stam (1999) when discussing some of the practices of recuperating "cinematic waste materials", provides an important insight. Taking the idea of the "aesthetics of garbage", practiced by cinema-makers belonging to the "Third cinemas" of South-America or Africa, Stam points out that garbage always "signals the return of the repressed" (69), both politically, culturally and aesthetically. More importantly, it coagulates the "Id" of every society (70). Not only marginal cinema

represents people living in slums and the outskirts of society, but also dominant cinema uses a similar garbage and marginality reprocessing. This is another reference that deserves further explorations.

Archetypes, marginals, residual ideologies

Once more, marginality and peripheral spaces are important for understanding the residual dimension of the SW Universe. The visual contrast between the center of the Galaxy, represented by the city-planet of Coruscant (which is extremely similar to Isaac Asimov's vision of Trantor), and places like the Outer Rim or the hidden planets (like Kamino), mirrors the apparently natural distribution of wealth in capitalist societies. This "state of mind" is further amplified by the distribution of civilizations, where the Gungans on Naboo, the Ewoks on Endor and even the Tuskans on Tatooine are normally described as marginal and accepting their peripheral existence. As in many other sci-fi movies, these representations are recuperated from mimicking the life of reals social groups living on our planet. Several elements are obviously recycling literary tropes or recuperating familiar images from other and popular culture productions, as is the notion of the last remaining descendant of a once dominant group (from The Last of the Mohicans), recuperated by SW, both in the early films and the new Disney versions, with The Jedi order presented as an extinct remnant of a galactic monastic bloodline. Marginality is also a driving element of many the narrative devices – we have recluse heroes (Yoda on Dagobah, Obi-Wan on Tatooine or Luke on Anch-To), which reuses the trope of the hermit from both in Christian monasticism and the Buddhist storytelling.

This residual function has also a political dimension in SW, as both the Republic and the Empire are functioning as remnants of their own representations. If in the early trilogy the Republican ideas are presented as marginal, in the Disney version the First Order operates as a recuperated organizational structure of the derelict Empire. When mirrored in the first trilogy, the end of episode VIII, The Last Jedi (2017), has again the entire rebellion presented as a meager remnant, a scattered group of displaced individuals.

A commonsensical explanation, often considered as the best interpretation for this type of storytelling has been to describe it either by using the Proppian morphological model (Berger 2012) or the Campbell's famous monomyth (McDowell 2007). Such structural similarities are reinforcing the idea of archetypal residuality. In fact Luke Skywalker "fulfills" all the functions of the formula which makes him part of a "prototypical tale, an UR tale" (Berger 17). While accepting that an interpretation of archetypes is, fundamentally, a residual reading, there is a major paradigmatic problem with these approaches. The explanations provided by the Jungian analysis, and its popularizing versions like the notion of the "monomyth" that clearly inspired Lucas (Kaminski 2007) are searching for remnants based on a paradoxical notion, that somehow cultural elements are never discarded and can never be removed from

our collective psyche. As Karl Popper (16) famously criticized the methodological limitation of this approach, the evidence provided by this theory is speculative and must be accepted on metaphysical grounds, which makes almost every manifestation a possible expression of one of the archetypes.

My proposal is that, instead of archetypal interpretations, we could perform a residual analysis, either ideological, political, aesthetic or cultural, of the recurrent elements that are unaccounted for. The best example for such substitution is again provided by the SW storytelling, where the residual nature of the orphan trope stimulates further investigation. When explained with the help of archetypal theory, the "mythologem" of the Primordial Child and the myth of the Divine Child (Kerényi 2002) is presented as the source of the orphan representations. Luke and Rey are both orphans, living at the margins of the galactic empire, who end up as saviors, and this is one key formula used and reused both by the middle trilogy (in Episodes 1-3 Anakin is also an orphan without father) and the rebooted Disney continuations (the orphans living in the fathier stables on Canto Bight). The myth of the poor and disenfranchised saving the universe is not necessarily the only motif and its sources are not just borrowed from mythology.

Besides working as a monomyth or an archetype, the orphan trope must be linked with its residual nature in modern storytelling. The orphan story is intrinsic to almost every fantasy film today (from Frodo in *Lord of the Rings*, to Harry Potter) and, more importantly, it is form of **intra-media contamination**, since the story of Luke Skywalker, who lives as an adopted child on the desert planet of Tatooine, then Anakin Skywalker, and later Rey abandoned on Jakku, a similarly barren world has a residual dimension.

The purposeful development of this residual orphan can be linked to what David Floyd (2014) described as "the century of the orphan" (1-2), observing that this cultural trope was pervading most of the Victorian literature, providing a narrative context in the nineteenth century that allowed the criticism of society, social structures, class relationships and, more importantly, performing a function of self-identity. The orphan motif should be linked, as Nina Auerbach (1975) suggested, with its hidden ideological function. The abandoned child always becomes a rebel, where rebellion and resistance (yet another residual element of the entire SW fictional universe) provides a "medicinal" presence, healing through fiction the defects of society and offering the promise (of a "new hope") that things could be better. Just as in Barrie's "Peter Pan", Luke Skywalker is an orphan searching for identity in an alien world and finally achieves this goal of establishing himself in the social hierarchy. Again, as Auerbach underlines (409), there is a transcendental and supernatural dimension of the orphan in the English novel, where the entire Universe and Providence itself (read "The Force") conspire to help him, which is expanded in contemporary popular culture.

The orphan is the ultimate cultural residue, coalescing in terms of social and political marginality all the disenfranchised of early capitalism, as with the Dickensian orphan, and those of late capitalism, with Luke, Anakin and Rey.

The trans-mythological universe and historical residues

Some of the most relevant components of residual practices can be found in the mythological structures of the Star Wars universe, as various myth-making practices combined into what appears to be a coherent mythological imagination. As pertinently indicated Han Solo himself, the "hokey religion" of SW is a **spiritually hybrid** construction, a mixture of multiple religious belief system, including Christianity, elements of Buddhist philosophies and other Eastern metaphysical principles. Sometimes the Sith vs. the Jedi dichotomy, which is following the Western scheme of Evil (Devil) vs. Divine (Angels) dualism is visually explicit, as is the case with the appearance of Darth Maul as a horned creature.

Cross-mythological influences are everywhere in SW although, as noted by Fielding (25), they are predominantly taken from the traditions of Judeo-Christianity. Integrated throughout the saga these inspirations range from the satanic dimensions of the Sith Lords to individual names (like Luke or Leia). Even the newer productions follow this mechanism, as explicit in the animated series "Star Wars: Rebels" where the main characters are Kanan, a direct hint to the Promised Land of Canaan, and Ezra. There is also an Eastern-Western hybridization, since the Jedi apparel is imitating the samurai and the Budhist warrior monks, and we have a plethora of names like Qigong, the Chinese martial art technique, which mixed in the name of Qui-Gon Jinn or the famous Yoda – Yoga alliteration. Other impervious connections have lead some fans to explain the name of Queen Amidala as an anagram for "Dalai Lama". Recycling and mingling spiritual meanings is recurrent in SW, probably the most famous aphorism from SW, "May the Force be with you!" is a rephrasing of many religious greetings, while Yoda's declaration that "Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering..." is a mixture of Buddhist philosophy and Christian thinking, where renunciation and contemplation are brought together.

The true mythological residue does not rely with such obvious references, but rather in those instances in which the SW universe are reclaiming previous cultural elements that are hard to be traced. One illustrative character remains Anakin Skywalker, the "dark" Messiah of the Galaxy, called The Chosen One, born of virgin pregnancy and a pure incarnation of the Force. At the first look, he is clearly recuperating numerous elements from Christology. A less visible connection is with the primordial Greek goddess Ananke, Anankaiê from Orphic cosmogonies, which is suggesting that all things in the universe are inevitable and products of necessity, just as the fate of the young boy believed to be a manifestation of an ancient prophecy. Ananke is less known not only to the general public, but also very rarely mentioned in classical sources. However, this does not make it a *residual figure*, since it is otherwise a well-known part of Greek mythological lore.

Instead, a trans-mythological universe is created, with the true residual dimensions of the Jedi religion fully developed in the real spiritual congregations developed

by the fans. Today the Jedi Church (jedichurch.org) claims that "the faith in the force existed well before the fictional Star Wars movies brought popular recognition to the terminology and concepts that our members always innately held", which makes it a public statement of the residual nature of this concocted religion. Parodically represented in *The Men Who Stare at Goats* (2009) where a super-soldier community called the "Jedi warriors" are part of an experiment of the Pentagon, Jediism has become more than just an official church, recognized by several countries as a legitimate affiliation, but also a common reference that can no longer be removed from our cultural heritage.

At another level, from the very first episode the SW storytelling was based on real historical elements to create fictional worlds. These sources of inspiration function as historical residues, pointing to the fact that this is a galaxy... not so far away. Real events from ancient or recent human history, authentic political contexts and figures constantly serve as a source of creativity. Some of these connections were thoroughly examines, as are for example the essays published by Martin Winkler (2001) on the connections with the Roman Empire, or the suggestions that *The Phantom Menace* was alluding to the American post-9/11 foreign policies (Kellner 2011), as Amidala decries that: *"This is how liberty dies...with thunderous applause"*, when she is assisting to the power take-over by Palpatine, which indirectly quotes from Bush era discourses. From the ending of Episode IV, linked to Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, to the obvious similarities between the SS uniforms and the Imperial officers, such associations remain in the realm of explicitness. More complex and profoundly residual are the characteristics of the Rebellion (or the Resistance in the Disney trilogy), which use representation tools beyond the immediate connections with politics. Such a residual character is Saw Gerrera, from *Rogue One* and the animated TV series *The Clone Wars,* who's name not only sounds like Che Guevara, but who is depicted as a "radical" revolutionary, marginalized by the already marginal Rebellion. Such trans-mythological and trans-historical mixtures offer the necessary context for a residual analysis disclosing traces of meanings that are disconnected from their source of inspiration.

Residual inspiration, parody and self-recuperating narrations

A major function of narrative residuality is the appropriation of discarded narratives and the recuperation of abandoned tropes and motifs. Some of the influences on the SW universe are direct inspirations, elements from comic books (like Valerian and Laureline or Flash Gordon), classical science fiction books (*Dune* by Frank Herbert or the Federation series by Isaac Asimov) are manifested as reoccurrences which indicate the cultural and cross-media influences. Spaceships, costumes and even characters created by the French artists Jean-Claude Mézières and Jean "Moebius" Giraud are recognizable in the visuals of the Hollywood space opera. Herbert's desert planet and Asimov's vision about a galaxy divided between a powerful Empire and a marginal group are also placeable in an intertextual, intermedia exchange.

The SW saga, in turn, has inspired many other productions, mostly in parodies and pastiches, illustrated by the numerous spoofs and other postmodern takes on the SW narratives, either as intertextual parody, as early as in Mel Brooks' *Spaceballs* (1987), to recent examples like *The Lego Movie* (2014), ironically revisiting several SW cliches. Parodical cinema, however, is displaying an extremely low form of residuality, since the meanings are transparently linked to the original material. Such intertextual influences are a fundamental mechanism of SW, many authors observing that the saga functions as a "matrix of quotation, allusion, pastiche and reference" (Roberts 70), incorporating multiple sources and texts, which in turn has influenced the genre itself, making it a model for the "science-fictional mode" of cinematic representations.

More importantly for the residual nature of such exchanges are the cultural citations which are acting not just like intertextual cross-pollinations, but also intra-textual debris. One of the most relevant examples, often used to showcase how cultural influences take place in the SW movies is the influence of Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950) and *The Hidden Fortress* (1958) in the development of the vision George Lucas had for his saga, explicitly acknowledged by the director (Kaminski 57). When the intertextual dimensions are explicit, as the director openly uses the references, providing the viewers the necessary elements in order to make the connections between the two texts, we are in the "intersubjective" dimension of absorption, as Kristeva noted (66). Here we must observe another form of *residual references* which are not intertextual or subjective, in the sense that they are not purposefully designed by the author/director to appear as hypertextual connotations, but rather a secondary, even metatextual function. *Rogue One* (2016) shows how the reverence of Lucas towards *The Seven Samurai* can be performed as a metatextual link between the new series and the "old" trilogy. The characters of Chirrut Imwe and Baze Malbus are retroversions, backward inspirations to the original source (that is Kurosawa), but with another layer of meanings added (as the band of seven rebels).

Finally, the inter-media influences, that is narrative elements that are driven by other media within the same story-world, are indicative for the mechanics of residuality. In SW the toys and merchandise, video games and other extra-cinematic tools are playing a part in the plot device development. An example is the pod-race in *The Phantom Menace*, which was designed as a gameplay, in turn a source for narrative elements are recuperated reversely – the movie was created so that a future game could be developed. Such inter-media changes happen the other way around, the Star Wars Battlefront game created visual elements, which were further used in developing *Rogue One.*

As many critics pointed out (Matthiessen 2013), the economy of SW has become an important factor that alters the storytelling, thus functioning as a final form of residual influence. The process was accelerated once Lucas sold the franchise to Disney, as it became clear that the narrative elements were pushed by marketing decision making and that increasingly the SW movies became merchandise driven stories. The Porgs,

are an example for this transformation. These creatures that populate planet Ahch-To have not narrative value and are strange creatures designed for sales as plushy toys, without producing any real storytelling impact. They are a residue in terms of creativity, an impossible house pet that is a mixture reminding of penguins and cats, yet in terms of the economics of storytelling the benefits from merchandise and other related object, that are residual to the narratives, are immense. With an estimated value of 32 billion USD provided by products derived from the films globally, and only 9 billion USD from the ticket sales, the cultural and metaphysical residues are making way to economic rubbish.

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