‘Nietzsche is a marvelous antidote to all fundamentally anti-Biblical efforts to turn mythology into a kind of Bible, and that is the project of the Jungians of this world, or to boil the Bible down to myth, and that is the project of more or less everyone else.’
– René Girard.
Star Wars is a movie saga about the mythical Galactic Republic.

From episode I to VI, the saga shows four stages of a cycle through which societies in general organize their particular cultures in a 'mythological' fashion.
In a first stage, on a psychological level, people always imitate and reinforce each other’s anxious desire and greed for things like prestige, riches, honor and power.

Right image: Daedalus and Icarus (C.P. Landon, 1799).
From mutual reinforcement of desires comes competition, rivalry and violence, resulting in a second stage: a social crisis.

Right image: The Abduction of the Sabine Women (Nicolas Poussin, 1594).
The third stage, the political solution to the crisis, is usually found in the expulsion or destruction of a common enemy or victim – an individual or a group –, which restores order, peace and unity within a community.

Left image: Oedipus and Antigone (C.F. Jalabert, 1842).
The leaders of the newly found order justify the sacrifice as well as their own leadership by presenting the sacrificed victims as creatures who had to be eliminated in order to prevent further disorder.

The recollection of sacrifice results in a fourth, cultural stage: (sacrificial) rituals and mythological stories gratefully reenact or retell the events that kept (and still keep) the community together, while all sorts of taboos remind the community of the dangers of certain objects and actions associated with crisis situations.

Right image: Romulus kills his twin brother Remus (Augustyn Mirys, 18th century).
Of course the whole cycle of events starts again when a mutually reinforced desire for things like power resurfaces: as those in power increasingly fear that they might lose their status, they more anxiously will hold on to it, thus making their status more desirable for others and thus (tragically and ironically) reinforcing the rivalry they wanted to prevent.
The principle of disorder coming from a rivalry based on mutually reinforced desires for things like power, as well as the principle of order coming from the elimination of those who are presented as mainly responsible for that disorder, is personified as "Satan" in the Gospel.

Satan is the 'prince of this world', the personification of the murders and the lies people in power use to solidify and justify their position.

'The kings of this world' indeed often refer to all kinds of possible threats in order to present themselves as 'saviors' of their community, providing safety and security. The tragic and ironic truth, of course, is that they can only secure their own position for as long as their citizens don't feel safe but fear those possible threats. Thus the people are never really saved from those threats.
It is no coincidence that the Star Wars saga represents a mythological structure.

Joseph Campbell (1904-1987), a well-known scholar in the field of mythology, became a mentor to George Lucas, the creator of Star Wars. Campbell discovered that thousands of myths and stories from around the globe shared many common characteristics. Eventually, Campbell developed the concept of the ‘monomyth’, an overall tale consisting of seventeen stages, of which many stories are ever so many (incomplete) variations. A widespread specification of the monomyth is the so-called ‘hero’s journey’. 
The seventeen stages of the hero monomyth belong to three main parts, which Campbell names departure (or separation), initiation and return.

Every hero departs from the world he knows in a time of crisis.

His initiation into a realm of adventure results in the death of his former identity while he confronts the crisis in a series of ordeals.

The return of the hero, one way or the other ‘from beyond the grave’, restores order in the world. In short, thanks to the sacrifices the hero was willing to make, the world is created again.
René Girard (1923-2015), another famous literary critic and anthropologist, discovered similar patterns in mythology. However, Girard's assessment of mythology turned out to be quite different from Joseph Campbell's assessment. This difference ultimately springs from their different understanding of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.
A closer look at the myth of the hero’s journey in Star Wars (episode I to VI) will reveal some of the major similarities and differences between the works of Joseph Campbell and René Girard.

In light of Girard's work on the difference between myth and Gospel, between archaic religion and Christianity, this will also answer the question as to what extent the Star Wars saga remains ‘mythical’.
‘If you see all six films, then you realize the story is really about Darth Vader.’
– George Lucas.
The Star Wars universe is governed by an all-pervading energy known as the Force.

The Jedi Knights are guardians of peace and order in the Galactic Republic.

The Jedi make use of the so-called light side of the Force.

The opponents of the Jedi are the Sith Lords, who make use of the so-called dark side of the Force.
Anakin Skywalker is the saga’s first hero. He is considered by some as ‘the Chosen One’ of a prophecy, the One who ‘will bring balance to the Force’.

Anakin is a promising Jedi apprentice to Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi.

However, after losing his mother, Anakin is overwhelmed by the nightmare of losing his beloved Padmé Amidala, the wife he secretly married.
Aware of Anakin’s fears as a result of his tendency to forge strong emotional attachments, Yoda (and the other Jedi Masters) do not allow Anakin to become a full member of the Jedi Council.

Yoda senses Anakin’s dark side.

The Revenge of the Sith, Scene 10 33:57-34:42 (script number 77):

YODA: Careful you must be when sensing the future, Anakin. The fear of loss is a path to the dark side.
ANAKIN: I won’t let these visions come true, Master Yoda.
YODA: 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.**
ANAKIN: What must I do, Master Yoda?
YODA: Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose.
Increasingly frustrated about the Jedi Council's prohibitions, Anakin seeks advice from Senator Palpatine.

The Senator recounts Anakin the Sith tragedy of Darth Plagueis, 'the wise'.

By using the dark side of the Force, Darth Plagueis had been able to create life and to keep his beloved ones from dying. Ironically however, Darth Plagueis could not save himself as he was eventually killed by his own apprentice.

The Revenge of the Sith, Scene 16 46:06-47:48 (script number 88):

PALPATINE: (continuing) Did you ever hear the tragedy of Darth Plagueis "the wise"?
ANAKIN: No.

PALPATINE: I thought not. It's not a story the Jedi would tell you. It's a Sith legend. Darth Plagueis was a Dark Lord of the Sith, so powerful and so wise he could use the Force to influence the midi-chlorians to create life... He had such a knowledge of the dark side that he could even keep the ones he cared about from dying.
ANAKIN: He could actually save people from death?
PALPATINE: The dark side of the Force is a pathway to many abilities some consider to be unnatural.
ANAKIN: What happened to him?
PALPATINE: He became so powerful... the only thing he was afraid of was losing his power, which eventually, of course, he did. Unfortunately, he taught his apprentice everything he knew, then his apprentice killed him in his sleep. (smiles) Plagueis never saw it coming. It's ironic he could save others from death, but not himself.
Palpatine not only influences Anakin with his stories. He also secretly instigates civil war in the Galactic Republic and shrewdly presents himself as the solution to this crisis. He is voted Supreme Chancellor.

In a dramatic turn of events, Palpatine reveals himself to Anakin as Darth Sidious, a Sith Lord.

Seduced by promises of everlasting power over the fate of himself and his beloved ones, Anakin turns to the dark side of the Force. He becomes Darth Vader, apprentice to Palpatine, Darth Sidious.

With public support, Darth Sidious eventually reorganizes the Republic into the first Galactic Empire and names himself Emperor.

Anakin leads the Empire's destruction of the Jedi Order in an attempt to establish peace in the galaxy.

The Revenge of the Sith, Scene 28 1:17:46-1:19:14 (script number 130):

PALPATINE: Every single Jedi, including your friend Obi-Wan Kenobi, is now an enemy of the Republic. You understand that, don't you?
ANAKIN: I understand, Master.
PALPATINE: We must move quickly. The Jedi are relentless; if they are not all destroyed, it will be civil war without end. First, I want you to go to the Jedi Temple. We will catch them off balance. Do what must be done, Lord Vader. Do not hesitate. Show no mercy. Only then will you be strong enough with the dark side to save Padme.
ANAKIN: What about the other Jedi spread across the galaxy?
PALPATINE: Their betrayal will be dealt with. After you have killed all the Jedi in the Temple, go to the Mustafar system. Wipe out Viceroy Gunray and the other Separatist leaders. Once more, the Sith will rule the galaxy, and we shall have peace.
Power-hungry, Anakin reframes his ambitions. He plans to overthrow the Emperor and rule the galaxy with his wife.

However, supported by Obi-Wan Kenobi, Padmé refuses to take part in this scenario.

Feeling betrayed, Anakin first chokes his wife, leaving her unconscious. He then duels his former Master Obi-Wan Kenobi, who used to be a brother to him.

Anakin ends up being dismembered and heavily burned.
The Revenge of the Sith, Scene 43 1:58:55-2:00:40 (script number 214):

ANAKIN: This is the end for you, My Master. I wish it were otherwise.
ANAKIN jumps and flips onto OBI-WAN's platform. The fighting continues again until OBI-WAN jumps toward the safety of the black sandy edge of the lava river. He yells at Anakin.
OBI-WAN: It's over, Anakin. I have the high ground.
ANAKIN: You underestimate my power!
OBI-WAN: Don't try it.
ANAKIN follows, and OBI-WAN cuts his young apprentice at the knees, then cuts off his left arm in the blink of an eye. ANAKIN tumbles down the embankment and rolls to a stop near the edge of the lava. ANAKIN struggles to pull himself up the embankment with his mechanical hand. His thin leather glove has been burned off. He keeps sliding down in the black sand.
OBI-WAN: (continuing)... You were the Chosen One! It was said that you would, destroy the Sith, not join them. It was you who would bring balance to the Force, not leave it in Darkness.
OBI-WAN picks up Anakin's light saber and begins to walk away. He stops and looks back.
ANAKIN: I hate you!
OBI-WAN: You were my brother, Anakin. I loved you.
Eventually, the Emperor saves Anakin, only to enslave him as his servant.

Anakin is encased in black machine armor, which keeps him alive.

Padmé, on the other hand, dies after giving birth to a boy and a girl, the twins Luke and Leia.
Luke Skywalker grows up on a remote planet as the sole child of his adoptive parents, who are farmers.

He eventually leaves his home to become a Jedi, trained by Jedi Masters Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda, survivors of the Empire’s attempt to eradicate the Jedi Order.
Gradually, Luke discovers that a certain Princess Leia is his sister, as he also learns that the Jedi’s big enemy, Darth Vader, is his father Anakin Skywalker.

In a final battle between Anakin and Luke, the father finds himself on the losing side. Darth Vader is on the verge of being killed by Luke.

Witnessing the battle, the Emperor encourages Luke to kill his father and to take his place as Sith Lord. Luke refuses, which directs the Emperor’s mortal rage at Luke.

Darth Vader aka Anakin Skywalker intervenes, however, choosing his son’s side. The tragic hero is able to kill the monstrous Emperor, but during the battle he himself is mortally wounded as well.

Anakin makes his peace with his son Luke before dying.
‘By a monster I mean someone who breaks all of your standards for harmony and for ethical conduct.’
– Joseph Campbell.

‘The god of the end of the world, Vishnu, at the end of the world is a monster. I mean, good night, he’s destroying the world, first with fire and then with a torrential flood that drowns out the fire and everything else and nothing’s left but ash. The whole universe has been wiped out. That’s God.’
– Joseph Campbell.

The Return of the Jedi, Scene 41 1:53:24-1:54:36 (script number 122):

EMPEROR: Good! Your hate has made you powerful. Now, fulfill your destiny and take your father’s place at my side!
Luke looks at his father’s mechanical hand, then to his own mechanical, black-gloved hand, and realizes how much he is becoming like his father. He makes the decision for which he has spent a lifetime in preparation. Luke steps back and hurls his lightsaber away.
LUKE: Never! I’ll never turn to the dark side. You’ve failed, Your Highness. I am a Jedi, like my father before me. The Emperor’s glee turns to rage.
EMPEROR: So be it... Jedi.

The Return of the Jedi, Scene 43-44 1:55:07-1:57:36 (script number 125):

Luke stands still, as the Emperor reaches the bottom of the stairs. The Emperor’s laughter has turned to anger. He raises his arms toward Luke.
EMPEROR: If you will not be turned, you will be destroyed. Blinding bolts of energy, evil lightning, shoot from the Emperor’s hands at Luke. Even in his surprise, the young Jedi tries to use the Force to deflect them. At first he is half successful, but after a moment the bolts of energy are coming with such speed and power the young Jedi shrinks before them, his knees buckling. The wounded Vader struggles to his feet, and moves to stand at his master’s side.
EMPEROR: Young fool... only now, at the end, do you understand. Luke is almost unconscious beneath the continuing assault of the Emperor’s lightning. He clutches a canister to keep from falling into the bottomless shaft as the bolts tear through him.
EMPEROR: Your feeble skills are no match for the power of the dark side. You have paid the price for your lack of vision.
Luke writhes on the floor in unbearable pain, reaching weakly up toward where Vader stands watching.
LUKE (groans): Father, please. Help me.
Again Vader stands, watching Luke. He looks at his master, the Emperor, then back to Luke on the floor.
EMPEROR: Now, young Skywalker...you will die. [The outpouring of bolts from the Emperor’s fingers actually increases in intensity, the sound screaming through the room. Luke’s body writhes in pain. Vader grabs the Emperor from behind, fighting for control of the robed figure despite the Dark Lord’s weakened body and gravely weakened arm. The Emperor struggles in his embrace, his bolt-shooting hands now lifted high, away from Luke. Now the white lightning arcs back to strike at Vader. He stumbles with his load as the sparks rain off his helmet and flow down over his black cape. He holds his evil master high over his head and walks to the edge of the abyss at the central core of the throne room. With one final burst of his once awesome strength, Darth Vader hurls the Emperor’s body into the bottomless shaft. Luke crawls to his father’s side and pulls him away from the edge of the abyss to safety. Both the young Jedi and the giant warrior are too weak to move.]
'A source of violence and disorder during his sojourn among men, the hero appears as a redeemer as soon as he has been eliminated, invariably by violent means.

It also happens that the hero, while remaining a transgressor, is cast primarily as a destroyer of monsters. In myths the hero draws to himself a violent reaction, whose effects are felt throughout the community. He unwittingly conjures up a baleful, infectious force that his own death – or triumph – transforms into a guarantee of order and tranquility.

There are stories of collective salvation, in which the death of a single victim serves to appease the anger of some god or spirit. A lone individual, who may or may not have been guilty of some past crime, is offered up to a ferocious monster or demon in order to appease him, and he ends up killing that monster as he is killed by him.'

– René Girard.
‘Whether you call someone a hero or a monster is all relative to where the focus of your consciousness may be.’ – Joseph Campbell.

The Return of the Jedi, Scene 46 1:59:52-2:01:56 (script number 130):

VADER (a whisper): 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.
Slowly, hesitantly, Luke removes the mask from his father's face. There beneath the scars is an elderly man. His eyes do not focus. But the dying man smiles at the sight before him.
ANAKIN (very weak): Now... go, my son. Leave me.
LUKE: No. You're coming with me. I can't leave you here. I've got to save you.
ANAKIN: You already have, Luke. You were right about me. Tell your sister... you were right.
LUKE: Father... I won't leave you.
Darth Vader, Anakin Skywalker... Luke's father, dies.
Thus Anakin fulfills the prophecy of the One who brings balance to the Force.

**The hero's journey is complete.**

By killing the monster and sacrificing himself during the process, Anakin restores peace and harmony in the world.

The plague of unbridled rivalry and violence ends with the destruction of one of the fighting parties, the two Sith Lords. Moreover, Anakin's restorative heroic deed also turns the tragedy of Darth Plagueis into a prophecy. The story of Darth Plagueis becomes a type of Palpatine's own fate. Like Darth Plagueis, Palpatine aka Darth Sidious is eventually killed by his own apprentice.

The rivalry between 'the monstrous doubles' Darth Sidious and Darth Vader dies as they kill each other; Darth Sidious and Darth Vader die as the embodiment of the plague of violence.
However, as the ensuing episodes of the Star Wars saga make clear, it is only a matter of time for the monstrous doubles of the Sith to return, and with them the contagious spirit of rivalry and violence.

As more and more members of the galaxy imitate each other’s desire for power, a new crisis arises, until a so-called necessary and justified sacrifice once again temporarily turns violent disorder into order.

The balance between the light side and the dark side of the sacred Force is thus mediated by acts of violence. In the Star Wars universe the mythic cycle of crisis, (heroic) sacrifice and order is repeated endlessly, as an inevitable state of affairs.
‘Life lives on lives, and the reconciliation of the human mind and sensibilities to that fundamental fact is one of the functions of some of those very brutal rites in which the ritual consists chiefly of killing – in imitation, as it were, of that first, primordial crime, out of which arose this temporal world, in which we all participate. The reconciliation of the mind to the conditions of life is fundamental to all creation stories.’ – Joseph Campbell.
'It's a marvelous thing. One after another, you can see these gods. Ghede, the death god of the Haitian voodoo, is also the sex god. Wotan had one eye covered and the other uncovered, do you see, and at the same time was the lord of life. Osiris, the lord of death and the lord of the generation of life. It's a basic theme: that which dies is born. You have to have death in order to have life. Now, this is the origin thought really of the head hunt in Southeast Asia, and particularly in the Indonesian zone. The head hunt, right up to now, has been a sacred act, it's a sacred killing: Unless there is death, there cannot be birth, and a young man, before he can be permitted to marry and become a father, must have gone forth and had his kill.' – Joseph Campbell.
Joseph Campbell defends the mythological worldview and its inevitable sacrificial character. According to him, Biblical stories can only be interpreted adequately as representations of the mythic cycle.

By contrast, according to René Girard, the Bible can only be interpreted adequately as a gradual but eventually radical criticism of mythology. Especially through the Passion story of Jesus, the Gospels characterize the mythic cycle as ‘satanic’ (meaning murderous and untruthful).
The mechanism that reintroduces difference into a situation in which everyone has come to resemble everyone else is sacrifice. Humanity results from sacrifice; we are thus the children of religion. What I call after Freud the founding murder, in other words, the immolation of a sacrificial victim that is both guilty of disorder and able to restore order, is constantly re-enacted in the rituals at the origin of our institutions. Since the dawn of humanity, millions of innocent victims have been killed in this way in order to enable their fellow humans to live together, or at least not to destroy one another. This is the implacable logic of the sacred, which myths dissimulate less and less as humans become increasingly self-aware. The decisive point in this evolution is Christian revelation. – René Girard.
René Girard notices that mythological heroes like Oedipus are accused of things they cannot be responsible for. King Oedipus is perceived as the cause of a plague in the city of Thebes. He is said to have provoked the wrath of the gods by unwittingly marrying his mother after (equally unwittingly) killing his father. Oedipus comes to believe that he can only save the community of Thebes by punishing himself and by banning himself from the city. The myth of Oedipus presents this sacrifice as necessary, inevitable and justified.
The ancients believed that a sacred power or the gods caused all sorts of violent crises if they were not respected. They also believed that a whole set of taboos and (sacrificial) rituals could prevent the wrath of whatever sacred power.

Today, however, secularized minds no longer believe that the violence of natural disasters, wars and pandemics is the result of ‘divine anger’. Contrary to the ancient mindset, they would never accuse a patricidal and incestuous man of being the cause of a plague. After all, there is no causal relationship between those facts.

In other words, when Oedipus is blamed for the plague on the basis of patricide and incest, he is considered responsible for things he is not really responsible for. In yet other words, Oedipus is a scapegoat.
René Girard maintains that myths in general defend scapegoat mechanisms as the cornerstones of culture. Myths justify all sorts of taboos, rituals and sacrifices by making one or more sacred powers responsible for demanding those cultural ordering devices. In reality, however, the realm of the sacred does not exist, so it cannot be responsible for anything. Hence, the realm of the sacred – defined whether as a ‘Force’ or as a multitude of gods – is the ultimate scapegoat.
'Religion protects man from his own violence by taking it out of his hands, transforming it into a transcendent and ever-present danger to be kept in check by the appropriate rites appropriately observed and by a modest and prudent demeanor. To think religiously (in the primitive sense) is to see violence as something superhuman, to be kept always at a distance and ultimately renounced.'

– René Girard.
René Girard shows how the Gospel reveals the scapegoat mechanism as the age-old untruthful basis of myth and culture as a whole.

‘Christianity demystifies religion. The Passion unveiled the sacrificial origin of humanity once and for all. It dismantled the sacred and revealed its violence. In order to function, archaic religions need to hide their founding murder, which was being repeated continually in ritual sacrifices, thereby protecting human societies from their own violence. By revealing the founding murder, Christianity destroyed the ignorance and superstition that are indispensable to such religions. It thus made possible an advance in knowledge that was until then unimaginable.’ – René Girard.
Like Oedipus, Jesus is blamed for being a threat to the survival of the community he is part of. Unlike the Oedipus myth, however, the Gospel maintains that the accusations directed against Jesus are false: Jesus is innocent of the charges brought against him. Moreover, unlike the sacred powers in the Oedipus story, the God of Jesus 'desires mercy, not sacrifice'. Hence Jesus is prepared to die because he refuses to kill, even if killing would be a matter of 'self-defense'. 
‘A non-violent deity can only signal his existence to mankind by having himself driven out by violence – by demonstrating that he is not able to establish himself in the Kingdom of Violence. But this very demonstration is bound to remain ambiguous for a long time, and it is not capable of achieving a decisive result, since it looks like total impotence to those who live under the regime of violence.’ – René Girard.
At all times, independent of whatever circumstance (and in that sense ‘almighty’), Jesus is guided by a divine love that allows him to save others, especially social outcasts – the ‘bullied’. Nevertheless, the consequence of this love is that Jesus loses control over the reaction of ‘bullies’: Jesus cannot save himself. It remains to be seen whether the bullies will show mercy or will sacrifice Jesus too because he associates himself with the bullied. In any way, paradoxically Jesus is prepared to run the risk of being sacrificed because he refuses to take part in a system that deceivingly justifies sacrifice.

Mark 15:31: ‘The chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked Jesus among themselves. ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he can’t save himself!’”
In short, myth ultimately justifies the sacrifice of someone like Oedipus while the Gospel denounces the justification of the sacrifice of Jesus.

The Gospel reveals that Jesus is a scapegoat while the myth does not recognize Oedipus as a scapegoat.

According to myth, sacrifices are always inevitable and justified. According to the Gospel, sacrifices can be avoided if communities no longer create peace and order at the expense of so-called ‘monstrous’ common enemies.
‘In bounded communities, aggression is projected outward. The myths of participation and love pertain only to the in-group, and the out-group is totally other.’ – Joseph Campbell.

‘The preference that cultures grant to themselves is inseparably bound up with the identity, the autonomy, the very existence of these cultures.’ – René Girard.
"Love your enemies," Jesus says. Everyone who no longer condemns the external enemy of his own particular culture or 'household', generates internal discord – and so Jesus says: "I did not come to bring peace but a sword... A person's enemies will be those of his own household." Jesus argues in favor of the non-violent conflict of respectful debate in order to end the violent peace that is based on the sacrifice of external common enemies – who are really scapegoats. Thus the peace of Jesus is different from the violent peace in our mythical world – and so he says: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you."
The Star Wars saga comes very close to the revelation of the scapegoat mechanism.

The story shows how the Sith and the Jedi share each other's desires.

Both parties want control over the galaxy.

The Revenge of the Sith, Scene 16 44:15-45:28 (script number 88):

PALPATINE: You must sense what I have come to suspect... the Jedi Council want control of the Republic... they're planning to betray me.

ANAKIN: I don't think...

PALPATINE: Anakin, search your feelings. You know, don't you?

ANAKIN: I know they don't trust you...

PALPATINE: Or the Senate... or the Republic... or democracy for that matter.

ANAKIN: I have to admit my trust in them has been shaken.

PALPATINE: Why? They asked you to do something that made you feel dishonest, didn't they?

ANAKIN doesn't say anything. He simply looks down.

PALPATINE: (continuing) They asked you to spy on me, didn't they?

ANAKIN: I don't know... I don't know what to say.

 PALPATINE: Remember back to your early teachings. Anakin. "All those who gain power are afraid to lose it." Even the Jedi.
Palpatine further elaborates on this point.

The Revenge of the Sith, Scene 16 45:18-46:04 (script number 88):

PALPATINE: Remember back to your early teachings. Anakin. "All those who gain power are afraid to lose it." Even the Jedi.
ANAKIN: The Jedi use their power for good.
PALPATINE: **Good is a point of view**, Anakin. And the Jedi point of view is not the only valid one. **The Dark Lords of the Sith believe in security and justice also**, yet they are considered by the Jedi to be...
ANAKIN: ... evil.
PALPATINE: ... from a Jedi’s point of view. **The Sith and the Jedi are similar in almost every way, including their quest for greater power.** The difference between the two is the Sith are not afraid of the dark side of the Force. That is why they are more powerful.
ANAKIN: The Sith rely on their passion for their strength. They think inward, only about themselves.
PALPATINE: And the Jedi don’t?
ANAKIN: The Jedi are selfless ... they only care about others.
PALPATINE smiles.
PALPATINE: Or so you’ve been trained to believe. Why is it, then, that they have asked you to do something you feel is wrong?
ANAKIN: I’m not sure it’s wrong.
PALPATINE: Have they asked you to betray the Jedi code? The Constitution? A friendship? Your own values? Think. Consider their motives. Keep your mind clear of assumptions. **The fear of losing power is a weakness of both the Jedi and the Sith.**
Palpatine fears that the Jedi want to remove him as Chancellor as soon as Grievous, a monstrous enemy of the Republic, is destroyed. Therefore Palpatine secretly supports Grievous to establish himself as ‘savior’ and to justify his extended ‘emergency’ powers.

The Jedi, on the other hand, fear that Palpatine plays a fundamental role in a plot to destroy the Jedi Order. Unwittingly imitating their Sith adversary, the Jedi take measures to deal with this ‘emergency’ situation. They plan to take over the power from Chancellor Palpatine.

Thus the mimetic (imitative) desire for power rules both the Sith and the Jedi.
Both the Sith and the Jedi are convinced that their "mortal" enemy must be destroyed in order to establish the desired peace and order. They distrust each other in a profound way. Both the Sith and the Jedi justify their own violence against their enemy as an act of self-defense.
‘What the Bible tells you and no other religion tells you, is that sacrifice is so inborn in human beings, so important in human society, that you can refuse sacrifice only if you accept to die. Because the moment will come where rivalry, mimetic rivalry between your brother and you, will put you in a situation where either he kills you or you kill him. And I think Greek tragedy stops right there – it says: ‘Well, I have the right of self-defense. It is mine.’ What I think the Bible does, is saying: ‘You have to go beyond that.’” – René Girard.
"Imitation becomes intensified at the heart of hostility, but the rivals do all they can to conceal from each other and from themselves the cause of this intensification. Unfortunately, concealment doesn't work. In imitating my rival's desire I give him the impression that he has good reasons to desire what he desires, to possess what he possesses, and so the intensity of his desire keeps increasing." – René Girard.

**The Case for the Violent "Self-Defense" of the Sith – Violence Justified as an Imitation of "First" Violence by the "Enemy"**

The Revenge of the Sith, Scene 28 1:17:46-1:19:14 (script number 130):

PALPATINE: Every single Jedi, including your friend Obi-Wan Kenobi, is now an enemy of the Republic. You understand that, don't you?
ANAKIN: I understand, Master.
PALPATINE: We must move quickly. The Jedi are relentless; if they are not all destroyed, it will be civil war without end. First, I want you to go to the Jedi Temple. We will catch them off balance. Do what must be done, Lord Vader. Do not hesitate. Show no mercy. Only then will you be strong enough with the dark side to save Padme.
ANAKIN: What about the other Jedi spread across the galaxy?
PALPATINE: Their betrayal will be dealt with. After you have killed all the Jedi in the Temple, go to the Mustafar system. Wipe out Viceroy Gunray and the other Separatist leaders. Once more, the Sith will rule the galaxy, and we shall have peace.

**The Case for the Violent "Self-Defense" of the Jedi – Violence Justified as an Imitation of "First" Violence by the "Enemy"**

The Revenge of the Sith, Scene 22 1:01:26-1:01:55 (script number 117):

MACE WINDU: I sense a plot to destroy the Jedi. The dark side of the Force surrounds the Chancellor.
Kl-ADI-MUNDI: If he does not give up his emergency powers after the destruction of Grievous, then he should be removed from office.
MACE WINDU: That could be a dangerous move... the Jedi Council would have to take control of the Senate in order to secure a peaceful transition...
Kl-ADI-MUNDI: ... and replace the Congress with Senators who are not filled with greed and corruption.
YODA: To a dark place this line of thought will carry us. Hmm... great care we must take.

The Revenge of the Sith, Scene 35 1:37:21-1:37:53 (script number 185):

OBI-WAN: Anakin did not take to his assignment with much enthusiasm.
YODA: Too much under the sway of the Chancellor, he is. Much anger there is in him. Too much pride in his powers.
MACE: It's very dangerous, putting them together. I don't think the boy can handle it. I don't trust him.
OBI-WAN: He'll be all right. I trust him with my life.
MACE: I wish I did.
OBI-WAN: With all due respect, Master, is he not the Chosen One? Is he not to destroy the Sith and bring balance to the Force?

The Revenge of the Sith, Scene 14 40:22-40:43 (script number 86):

OBI-WAN moves to a panel and flips some switches. He sees a Hologram of ANAKIN slaughtering JEDI, including the YOUNG ONES. OBI-WAN and YODA react.
OBI-WAN: (continuing) It can't be... It can't be...
As ANAKIN surveys the carnage, a DARK-ROBED SITH LORD enters. ANAKIN turns to DARTH SIDIOUS and kneels before him.
ANAKIN: The traitors have been taken care of, Lord Sidious.
DARTH SIDIOUS: Good... good... You have done well, my new apprentice. Do you feel your power growing?
ANAKIN: Yes, My Master.
DARTH SIDIOUS: Now, Lord Vader, now go and bring peace to the Empire.
OBI-WAN watches in horror. Tears well up in his eyes.
OBI-WAN: I can't watch any more.
OBI-WAN switches off the hologram. The TWO JEDI stand in silence for a few moments.
YODA: Destroy the Sith, we must.
'Men always find it distasteful to admit that the ‘reasons’ on both sides of a dispute are equally valid – which is to say that violence operates without reason.' – René Girard.
‘Mimetic doubles’ refers to the situation in which rivals become so obsessed with each other that they mirror each other’s emotions and actions. The doubles are alike but they mistakenly see a great difference between them. Mimetic doubles are quite dangerous to one another and to others and can be quite self-destructive.’ – René Girard.
Governed by ‘mimetic’ (imitative) desire, the Jedi and the Sith become mimetic doubles: they resemble each other more and more as they tragically try to distinguish themselves from each other in a violent battle.

Thus the Jedi and the Sith are equally guilty of the crisis in the galaxy.

This insight comes to light in the duel between Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker.

Scene 43 1:58:30-1:58:46 (script number 214):

OBI-WAN: I have failed you, Anakin. I was never able to teach you to think.
ANAKIN and OBI-WAN confront each other on the lava river.
ANAKIN: I should have known the Jedi were plotting to take over...
OBI-WAN: From the Sith! Anakin, Chancellor Palpatine is evil.
ANAKIN: From the Jedi point of view! From my point of view, the Jedi are evil.
OBI-WAN: Well, then you are lost!
ANAKIN: This is the end for you, my Master. I wish it were otherwise.
'Myths are the retrospective transfiguration of sacrificial crises, the reinterpretation of those crises in light of the cultural order that has arisen from them.' – René Girard.

'In myth, violent death is always justified.' – René Girard.
‘A scapegoat remains effective as long as we believe in its guilt. Having a scapegoat means not knowing that we have one. Learning that we have a scapegoat is to lose it forever and to expose ourselves to mimetic conflicts with no possible resolution. This is the implacable law of the escalation to extremes.’ – René Girard.
In the end the Star Wars saga rather deceivingly presents the Sith Lords as the exclusive evil causes of crisis and disorder.

**Hence the Star Wars saga eventually perpetuates the scapegoat mechanism.**

The sacrifices of both Darth Sidious and Darth Vader bring an end to the crisis in the galaxy. The sacrifices establish a radical difference between the Sith and the other members of the galaxy, which creates order.
'A source of violence and disorder during his sojourn among men, the hero appears as a redeemer as soon as he has been eliminated, invariably by violent means.

It also happens that the hero, while remaining a transgressor, is cast primarily as a destroyer of monsters. In myths the hero draws to himself a violent reaction, whose effects are felt throughout the community. He unwittingly conjures up a baleful, infectious force that his own death—or triumph—transforms into a guarantee of order and tranquility.

There are stories of collective salvation, in which the death of a single victim serves to appease the anger of some god or spirit. A lone individual, who may or may not have been guilty of some past crime, is offered up to a ferocious monster or demon in order to appease him, and he ends up killing that monster as he is killed by him.'

– René Girard.
As the sacred embodiment of violence, Sith Lords should not return to the galaxy. They are taboo.

The mythology of Star Wars makes this especially clear in its assessment of Darth Vader aka Anakin Skywalker.

As long as Darth Vader lives, he is presented as a sacred force of death and violence. When he dies, however, he becomes a sacred force of life and peace as an elevated Anakin Skywalker.

Self-sacrifice turns the monster into a hero: Anakin slays his alter ego Darth Vader.
‘Whether you call someone a hero or a monster is all relative to where the focus of your consciousness may be.’ – Joseph Campbell.
Too bad Anakin Skywalker is remembered – after being "dismembered" – as a monstrous hero, and not as a scapegoat.

Or is he?
‘That Satan is temptation, that Satan is rivalry that turns against itself – all the traditions see this; succumbing to temptation always means tempting others. What the Gospel adds, and what is unique to it, I think, is that Satan is order. The order of this world is not divine, it’s sacrificial, it’s satanic in a certain sense. That doesn’t mean that religions are satanic, it means that the mimetic system, in its eternal return, enslaves humanity. Satan’s transcendence is precisely that violence temporarily masters itself in the scapegoat phenomenon: Satan never expels himself once and for all – only the Spirit of God can do that – but he more or less ‘chains himself’ by means of the sacrificial order. All medieval legends tell you: the devil asks for but one victim, but as for that victim, he can’t do without it. If you don’t obey the rules of the Kingdom of God, you are necessarily dependent on Satan. Satan means ‘the Accuser’. And the Spirit of God is called Paraclete, that is to say ‘the Defender of Victims’, it’s all there. The defender of victims reveals the inanity of Satan by showing that his accusations are untruthful. Oedipus’s parricide and incest, which give the plague to a whole community – they’re a joke, a very bad joke that helps cause quite a bit of damage among us when we take it seriously.’ – René Girard.
Duration of the above texts in the film
[without the scenes from the movie and without chapter titles used in between!]:

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2) 15s
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