

Sample Proposal

Working title: Why Don't Yoda and R2D2 Like Each Other?

R2D2 and Yoda are alike in many ways. They are short. They are cute. They are not human, and as such their communication styles can be difficult to understand. Beyond this, R2 and Yoda often play the same crucial role in the Star Wars stories—the just-in-time hero, the one who pulls off the impossible at precisely the right moment. Without the timely interventions of R2 and Yoda, the Rebels would surely have been destroyed before the end of the first trilogy.

Yet R2 and Yoda don't get along. This chapter will examine why two of the most beloved characters in the Star Wars universe—characters who are absolutely essential to the successful resolution of the conflicts of the story—are themselves in some degree of conflict. The wars of *Star Wars* cannot be won without R2 and Yoda. Why does the narrative logic of the story put these characters at odds? Analyzing their relationship provides us with greater insight into how interpersonal and team conflicts are unavoidable and actually can be constructive.

Further, examining the apparent friction between Yoda and R2 helps illuminate two competing fantasies that animate conflict resolution studies: the fantasy of technology and the fantasy of the exotic other. We often believe that we need extraordinary interventions to deal with the complexities of the conflicts around us. These interventions may be “built” (technology, system design, formal process) or may come from the ancient wisdom of cultures outside our own (the talking stick, the council of elders). These fantasies serve as foundational mythologies for many practitioners engaged in conflict resolution, and they can be inspiring and also somewhat limiting. Thinking through how R2 and Yoda exemplify the technological/exotic deus ex machina in the Star Wars universe provides perspective on our own assumptions around what is possible in conflict situations.