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# Lucas' Empire: Star Wars and Nazi Germany

By: Karli Dean; Mentor: Christoph Schiessl, Ph.D.; Class: HONORS 3030

## Introduction

- Who is George Lucas?
- Famous film director (Star Wars)
- Films influenced by many pieces of history
- Creator of the Galactic Empire
  - Modeled after Nazi Party from World War 2 era
- Food for Thought:
  - Why would Lucas choose to model the Empire on Nazi Germany?
  - What defines an interest?
  - How does that translate to influence?



FIG 3-4: A comparison of two pictures of guerilla warfare, that of the Ewoks (left) and the Americans in the Vietnam War (right).

## Findings

### What are interests, and what makes someone interested in something?

- “We define interests as trait-like preferences for activities, contexts in which activities occur, or outcomes associated with preferred activities that motivate goal-oriented behaviors and orient individuals toward certain environments.”
  - Interests can be conceptualized or contextualized
    - Conceptualized interests - intangible
    - Contextualized interests - tangible

• Interests are a value of influence- our interests lead us

### Why would George Lucas model the Empire after Nazi Germany?

- Manufactured Fascism
  - Inspirations by not only the Nazis, but also by then current United States politics and the Vietnam War
  - Using Star Wars as a parable

### What are some of the major influences and connections?

- Nazi Party
  - Rise to power by Adolf Hitler compared to Emperor Palpatine
  - Technology and equipment
    - Messerschmitt (Luftwaffe Fighter Force) v. TIE Fighters
  - Imagery and unspoken language
    - The way Nazis gathered for rallies v. Stormtroopers
- Vietnam War
  - Guerilla warfare from United States v. Jedi rebels
- United States political climate
  - Initial meaning of Star Wars
  - “Democracies aren’t overthrown; they’re given away.” –George Lucas
  - George Lucas taking stabs at President Nixon in interviews

## Conclusion

- The story of Star Wars details the fall of democracy and the rise of a fascist dictatorship.
- Using visuals similar to that of the Nazis, very famous fascists, it is clear they are supposed to be negatively connotated.
- Through Lucas’ interest in current events and history, he was able to generate a parable-like story as a warning.
- Lucas’ work is still applicable today, as his characters are not bound to our galaxy or timeline, therefore not aging.

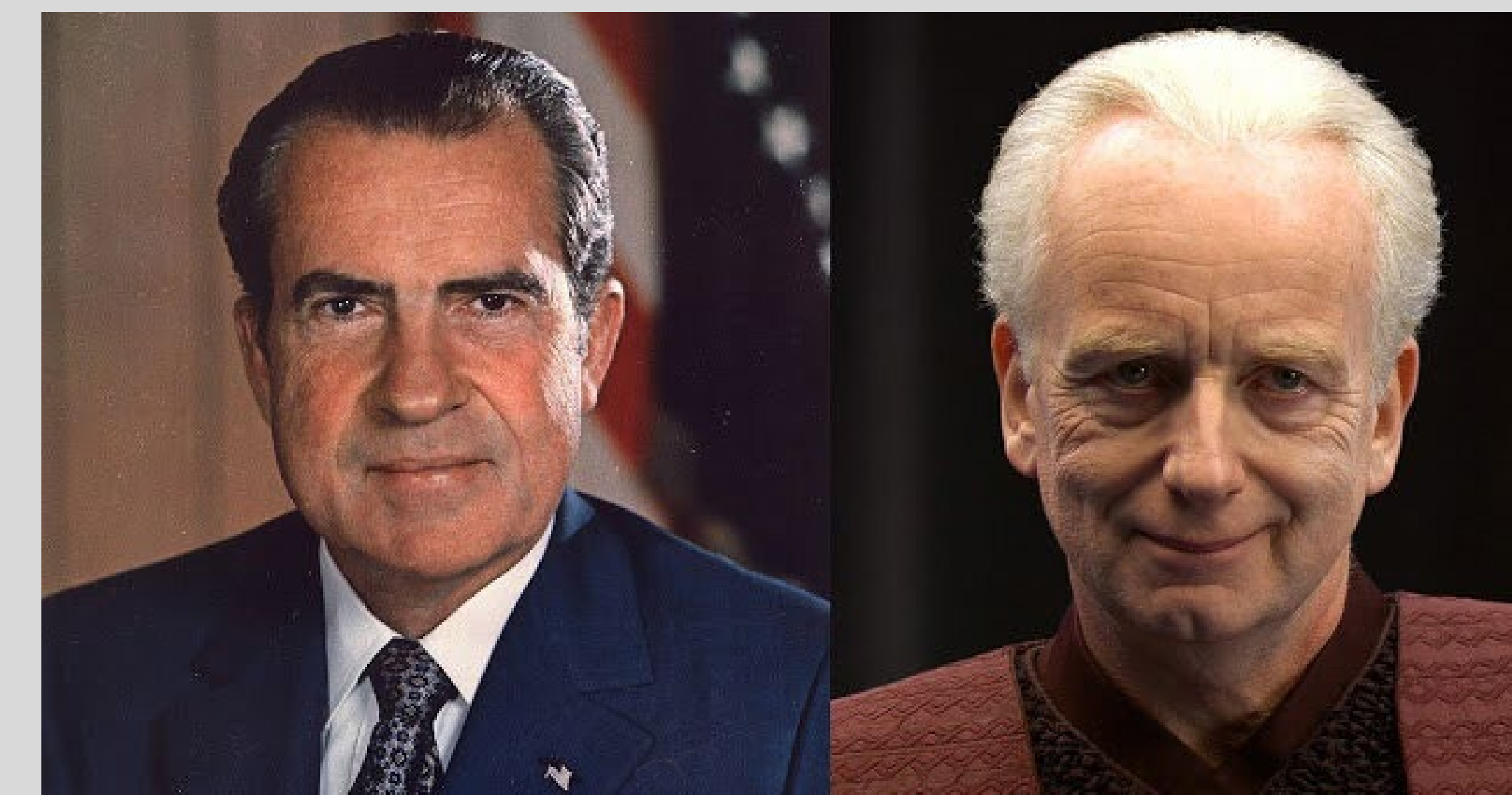


FIG 5: Former President Richard Nixon next to Emperor Palpatine, as they were compared to each other by George Lucas.

## Methodology and Image Sources

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TIE Advanced X1 Fighter: [https://starwars.fandom.com/wiki/TIE\\_Series](https://starwars.fandom.com/wiki/TIE_Series)



FIG 1-2: The Messerschmitt BF-109 (upper) and TIE Advanced X1 Fighter (lower) in comparison to each other. The Messerschmitt is the closest comparison for the TIE Fighter Series.