Lucas' Empire: Star Wars and Nazi Germany

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Lucas’ Empire: Star Wars and Nazi Germany
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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.

Methodology and Image Sources

Image Sources:
Ewoks: https://www.sandboxx.us/blog/the-real-military-history-on-display-in-the-star-wars-saga/
Messerschmitt BF-109 Aircraft: https://vintageaviationecho.com/bf109e/
Vietnam Guerilla Warfare: https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/vietnam-war-348f4a40-adce-4186-b8db-138b81b5eb00

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.

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

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