

Images of Power in Hollywood Films:  
The Example of Star Wars

Jeffrey A. Hart  
Department of Political Science  
Indiana University  
Woodburn Hall 210  
Bloomington, IN 47405  
Tel (812) 855-9002  
Email: [hartj@indiana.edu](mailto:hartj@indiana.edu)  
Web: <http://mypage.iu.edu/~hartj>

Paper prepared for delivery at a conference on The Image of Power in Literature, Media, and Society, sponsored by the Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery and Colorado State University, Pueblo, to be held at Colorado Springs, Colorado, March 9-11, 2006. Please do not cite or quote without the written permission of the author.

**Abstract:** Feature-length motion pictures distributed by Hollywood studios frequently deal with issues of power, although sometimes indirectly and often only as a sideline to the main story. Science fiction and fantasy films in particular are frequently vehicles for telling stories about power and the abuse of power. In this paper, I focus on images of power in the Star Wars series and examine them in comparison with other ways of portraying power in Hollywood films. Tyranny (evil) vs. democracy (good) is the unifying theme in Star Wars, whereas in other Hollywood films we find different images of power. For example, images of power based on class are more likely to be found in movies of the 1930s than now. In the 1950s, we began to see films that portrayed large private corporations as holders of great power, in some cases greater than that held by governments. Is there a general trend or tendency in Hollywood's power imagery?

## **Power**

Power has been defined in a variety of different ways by sociologists and political scientists so it behooves us to review those definitions before launching into an exploration of the imagery of power. The simplest definition of power is an ability to get others to do something that they would not otherwise have done. This is sometimes referred to as power as “capabilities” or “potential” power and is measured in terms of the attributes of the social actor that allegedly possesses it. An individual is powerful if she is rich, well-educated, a member of a social elite, etc. A country is powerful if it is big in population and has a well equipped army, a rich economy, a large territory, or access to valuable resources. The power as capabilities approach assumes that capabilities (potential power) can be converted into actual power in some predictable manner.

A second way to define power is in terms of a relationship in which one actor is observed to attempt to influence another directly and succeeds. This is sometimes called “actualized” power. The attempt to influence results from differing preferences over outcomes, and the attempt is successful if the attempt of actor A to influence actor B results in an outcome preferred by A. A may convince B that A’s preferred outcome is also B’s preferred outcome without the threat of force by engaging in persuasive discourse, but if A threatens B with force to get B to act against B’s preferences then we are talking about “coercion.” Thus, power can be persuasive or coercive.

A third way to define power is in terms of the ability to structure an environment of choice, to determine the “rules of the game” of some sphere of human activity. Also called structural power, this notion focuses on how individuals or groups of individuals influence “regimes” –sets of rules, norms, procedures, and institutions in a particular area. An example of structural power would be the ability of the Motion Picture Association to prevent government censorship of movies by adopting a variety of self-regulatory measures (such as voluntary ratings schemes).

Power is related to a set of concepts which may be represented by images. We have already spoken about noncoercive forms of power, influence and persuasion, and one can imagine various ways of graphically representing those noncoercive activities. Power that has been institutionalized in the form of institutions is often represented in terms of the buildings housing those institutions or symbols of the institution or the functions it performs. Thus, a picture of the Supreme Court building could be used to represent the institution and an image of a blindfolded woman in a toga holding a balance might represent the justice dispensed by that court. Some forms of power are more legitimate than others. Power bestowed upon state institutions under the rule of law and subject to democratic checks and balances tends to be considered more legitimate than power obtained by an individual through threats of violence (assuming the individual is not claiming to act on behalf of the democratic state and under the rule of law). One would expect therefore that the imagery of illegitimate coercive power would be quite different from the imagery of legitimate power and authority.

### **The Imagery of Power vs. the Power of Imagery**

It is hard to see how images could be used to coerce people or other social actors, so we are mostly in the realm of persuasion when we talk about the power of imagery. However, the imagery of power, in contrast, may include graphic or abstract depictions of power and related concepts, particularly coercive military power such as in the paintings of warships or the representation of cannon fire by kettle drums in musical compositions. Images of international power are also likely to include depictions of armies and military might. Map or globes are sometimes used, as in the hilarious scene of Adenoid Hinkel (played by Charlie Chaplin) in *The Great Dictator*. As wars and war-fighting have become less a focus of great power politics, especially in the wake of the two World Wars and the development of nuclear weapons, power imagery increasingly includes

non-military symbols of power. An example would be the attack on the World Trade towers by Al Queda as a symbol of American economic power.

The questions we ask when we analyze the power of imagery tend to focus on how images affect the viewer. In advertising, for example, one uses attractive images to persuade the viewer that there is something about the product that is desirable (Inglis 1972). The images do not have to be of the product itself but something else that the advertiser wants to associate with the product (e.g., the Marlboro man or Tony the Tiger). The images used in advertising are rarely the same as the images used to portray political power, however, unless we are talking about political ads. As we will see below, political ads use many of the same types of imagery that are used to depict power and power politics in other media.

### **An Abbreviated History of Power Imagery**

Besides military themes, power imagery often focuses on representing various aspects of government and often includes important legitimating symbols of a specific political system. Thus the power imagery of the Roman empire included portraits of the emperors (on statuary and on coins, for example) and symbols of the Empire like the eagle. But other symbols of the empire, such as imperial staffs, the wolf who raised Romulus and Remus, canopies of heaven, and so forth were used to underline the power and legitimacy of the empire. Echoes of this can be seen in the paintings of the Napoleonic era, where Napoleon himself is portrayed in the guise of a Roman emperor and surrounded by symbols of his imperial state.



In non-Western civilizations, different symbols of power arose from distinctive cultures. In the Meso-American world, for example, the jaguar and other felines were often used as symbols of power (Saunders 1998). In ancient Egypt, besides images of the Pharaoh, the pyramids (pharaonic tombs) and obelisks, the ankh symbol (representing the sun god), and sculptured images of the gods represented both religious and secular power. In China, the dragon represented the might of the emperor. In Japan, each feudal clan had its own logo-like symbol, just as in the West similar icons were used on battle flags and on armor to represent feudal claims to power via military prowess.

The contrast between good and evil, especially in government, but also in religion, became a theme in the power imagery of the middle ages, often in association with images that portrayed the differences between the Roman Catholic Church its predecessors. The images of beautiful gothic architecture are juxtaposed with images of crooked or damaged buildings of the pre-Christian era. Christ is contrasted with the

Anti-Christ and other false prophets. In the many depictions of the last judgment, the blessed are contrasted with the damned. The recognition that even the agents of the Church could be corrupt was evidenced in the inclusion of priests, monks and nuns in the numbers of the damned. These types of contrasting images were secularized in paintings and frescoes depicting good and bad government in the Renaissance.

Portraits of royalty and nobility emphasized qualities that were supposed to differentiate them from the masses, not just in terms of their wealth but in terms of inherited attributes. The portraits of generations of great warriors, churchmen, scholars, artists of noble families were arrayed on the walls of their country houses as a proof of their superior breeding. By the eighteenth century, they began to include images of their estates and the houses themselves on those same walls. In the age of the absolute monarchies, royal power imagery tended to focus on legitimation of monarchs, frequently in terms of conquest and empire, but also in terms of the older claims of divine rights via divine intervention.

The images of power of the time included both Christian and pagan imagery. Royalty and nobility favored images that underlined their piety and adherence to Christian beliefs, but strangely combined them with images of Greek and Roman gods and bacchic pursuits of pleasure. The latter tended to be reserved for private spaces, the former for public ones.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the imagery of power shifted to reflect changes in how power was legitimized. After the American and French revolutions, there was a marked decline in the use of religious symbols to legitimate power. In America, the founding fathers and the Constitution became legitimizing symbols of the regime, while in France the Revolution itself produced images that were used by Napoleon and his successors to legitimate their regimes. In Britain, the church and the monarchy continued to figure prominently in power imagery but began to be displaced somewhat by images of empire, industry, and science as the industrial revolution took hold and the British Empire and economy grew. This use of industrial images as a type of power imagery spread with the growth of industrial competition to Britain in countries such as Germany and the United States in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin invented power imageries that were consistent with their efforts to legitimate authoritarian regimes. They drew upon a set of party-specific and national symbols that they hoped would attract new followers and neutralize opponents. Militarism was a common element in all three regimes, as was leader worship, invocations of social solidarity, along with a hefty dose of racism. The Nazis and the Fascists revived a lot of imperial symbolism from Roman times. Like the Romans, they favored larger than life images of the dictators themselves in all media as symbols of power. Like the Romans,



they used huge stadiums to stage political rallies, sporting events, and pro-regime demonstrations, often with a great deal of pomp and pageantry.

“Triumph of the Will,” a documentary film of the Nuremberg rally of directed by Leni Riefenstahl in 1935, is still considered to be one of the finest examples of film as propaganda. In this film, you can see many of the elements that will be used later by George Lucas in his portrayal of the evil Galactic Empire:

- triumphal descent of the leader to earth from the clouds
- huge mobs of cheering and saluting bystanders
- long processions with singing, banners waving, and colorful pageants
- large numbers of soldiers marching in unison

The Swastika, however, predated the Romans. The name itself is a Sanskrit word and the symbol has been used by a variety of cultures for about three thousand years. For Hitler, the Swastika symbolized “the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man...” (Mein Kampf, pp. 496-497). The colors of the Nazi flag were red, black, and white. The black swastika was set in the middle of a white circle upon in a red field symbolizing the National Socialist political movement (Mein Kampf, *ibid.*). We will see later that the colors of the Galactic Empire in Star Wars are also red, black, and white.



### **Power Imagery in Films**

The invention of motion pictures made possible new forms of power imagery. An example would be a moving image of a waving flag. Initially, many people thought that the ability to represent realistic moving images was the key distinguishing feature of film as an art form. Audiences were drawn to short films showing railroad trains, horseback riders, city traffic, and so forth. Once the novelty of realistic moving images wore off, however, even short films were used to tell stories. The short films of the Georges Méliès, distributed by Louis and Auguste Lumière, used special effects to depict fantasies such as “A Trip to the Moon” (1902) and “Jupiter’s Thunderbolts” (1904).

When the feature film made its debut after the turn of the century, narrative films that depended on stage plays, operas, or novels for their content began to include power imagery inherited from those media. The costume dramas in particular represented kings and queens and their royal courts just as they had been represented on the stage. Silent films of the 1920s represented pirates and swash-buckling defenders of the realm like the Three Musketeers. Sword fights continued to please audiences long after swords had been displaced by firearms on the battlefields.

Whereas the newsclips shown in theaters continued to focus on events involving heads of state, wars, disasters, and the doings of the rich and famous, feature films and later newsclips began also to include the activities of everyday people and reflected their

concerns. Films based on competitive sports, in particular, appealed to the masses in ways that costume dramas could not. Part of this shift in content was the result of the growth in the size of the movie audiences, but other media that prided themselves on realism – newspapers and magazines, realistic novels and plays – also had moved away from a focus on elites to a broader representation of society.

This democratizing trend may have been one of the reasons that Walter Benjamin was optimistic about the revolutionary potential of the arts of “mechanical reproduction.” In contrast with other more central members of the Frankfurt School such as Theodor Adorno, Benjamin believed that photography, film, and sound recording could not be harnessed by conservative forces. Adorno argued instead that these media would all be used by the capitalist classes to bolster capitalism because capitalists controlled the culture industries. The main point of agreement between Benjamin and Adorno was that popular culture was an important part of the class struggle that required serious analysis.

### **Power Imagery in Hollywood Films**

After the establishment of the major motion picture studios in Hollywood in the 1920s, the management of the motion picture industry was dominated by immigrants, mainly Jews, from Central Europe. These individuals were not secure in their positions in the America of the first half of the twentieth century. Neil Gabler has argued that the heads of the studios constructed an image of America in their films that was amenable to their assimilation into American society, an America of the melting pot. Gabler cites evidence for this in a variety of themes popularized by Hollywood films of the time:

- the condemnation of vigilante “justice”
- the exposure of ethnocentrism and racism in all its forms
- the successful mixing of people of different races and creeds in the military (especially in films about World War II)
- the positive depiction of African-Americans and African-American music

The avoidance of direct statements against the Nazis and anti-semitism until the 1950s and failure to confront McCarthyism were cited as evidence of the moguls’ insecurity regarding their in American society (Gabler 1989).

One debate in the literature on Hollywood films concerns the question of whether Hollywood is a conservative or radical force. Gabler clearly argues for its conservative tendencies, although with an idealistic view that America might become a more tolerant and multicultural nation. Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner take the perspective of marxist thinkers like Theodor Adorno and argue that Hollywood films serve to legitimate the dominant institutions and values of the capitalist system (Ryan and Kellner 1988), while other scholars, such as Ian Scott, have argued that Hollywood occasionally deviates from that line to produce subversive films or at least films that go against the mainstream for a time (Scott 2000).

Hollywood films use American symbols like the Stars and Stripes, the Statue of Liberty, the Capitol Building, the Lincoln Memorial, or the White House (Scott 2000, 7-8). An example of this is the scene in “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” (1939) when Jimmy Stewart’s character, Jefferson Smith, revisits the Lincoln Memorial after a series of defeats and disappointments and walks away with a spirit of rededication to his cause of establishing a national boys’ camp. Similarly, in “The American President” (1995), the White House provides the setting for almost the entire story and symbolizes the power of the Presidency.

The Statue of Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial



### Power Imagery in Films of the Cold War Era

During the Cold War, power imagery in Hollywood films began to reflect the new status of the United States as a nuclear superpower. Hollywood films did not directly confront this change of status until after the path had been broken by fringe films like “Dr. Strangelove” (1964). But there are hints of what was to come with *films noir* like “Kiss Me Deadly” (1955) and science fiction films like “The Day the Earth Stood Still” (1951). In “Kiss Me Deadly,” a box containing radioactive material stolen from the Manhattan Project provides what Alfred Hitchcock called the “McGuffin” for the plot. When the box is opened by a female killer near the end of the film, the result is both a horrifying death for the woman and an explosion that levels a beachfront villa in Malibu. “The Day the Earth Stood Still” revolves around the efforts of “friendly” aliens to force the Earth’s people to cooperate with one another to prevent Earth’s destruction. U.S. government officials react to the aliens by accusing them of being agents of the Soviet Union, but eventually the scientists and the United Nations save the day.

“Dr. Strangelove” is the first film to use images of B-52s and mushroom clouds to highlight the potential dangers presented by the nuclear arms race. Earlier Hollywood films had used images of bombers in support of the building up of the air force. Stanley Kubrick used these images and others to signal the continuity in militaristic values from World War II to the Cold War in order to express the problematic nature of that continuity.

Nothing comes close to “Dr. Strangelove” even today in highlighting the dangers inherent in the nuclear arms race and the dark motives behind the building of weapons of

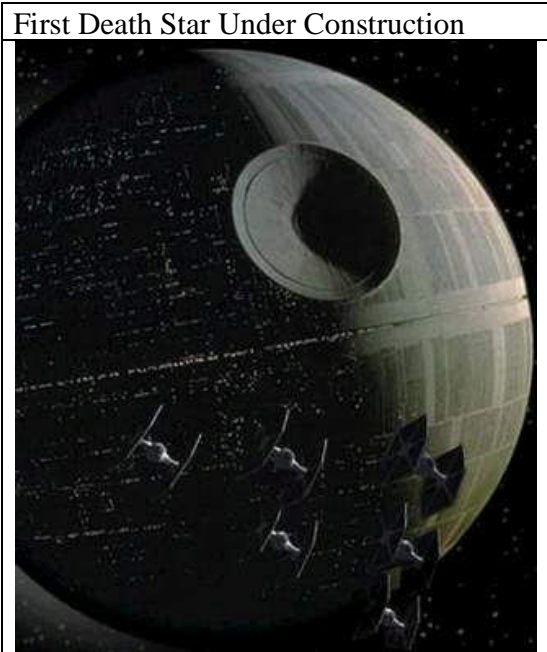
mass destruction. Dr. Strangelove himself is a former Nazi scientist now in charge of dreaming up new weapons. Some have criticized the film for its use of humor, in this case a rather dark shade of black, but the film succeeds in spite of its flippant tone. The subject matter stays with you long after you stop laughing, and if you were paying attention you have to ask yourself why you were cheering for Colonel King Kong (played by Chill Wills) to succeed in dislodging the nuclear warhead from the B-52's damaged bomb bay.

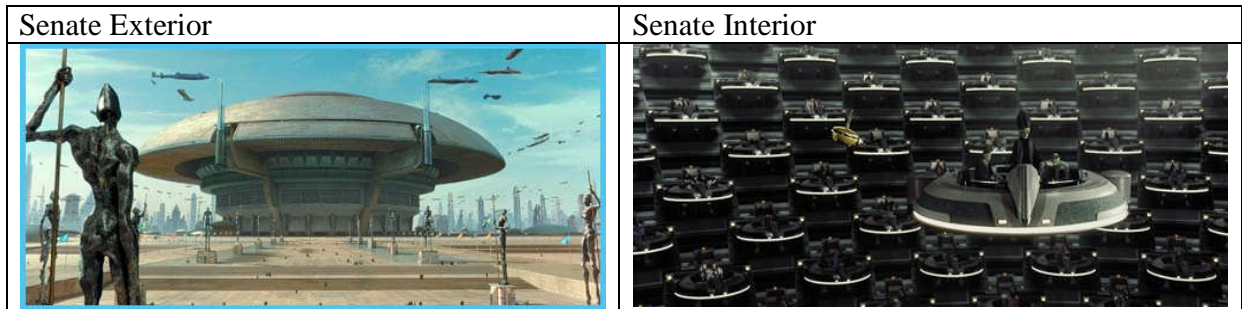
### **Power Imagery in Star Wars**

The six episodes of the Star Wars series of films contain many types of power imagery. I would like to discuss them separately first and then talk about the way they work together in the underlying story that unifies the series.

First, and most obvious, there is power imagery in Star Wars that reflects that of the Cold War. It is an imagery of good versus evil. The main examples of this concern the construction of the first and second "Death Stars" – large spherical space stations containing gigantic laser beams that when focused on a planet result in total destruction. The evil Galactic Empire is responsible for building these weapons, of course, and the Rebels are responsible for destroying them (although not before their awesome power is used to destroy the unfortunate planet of Alderaan). The Death Stars are clearly analogs to the nuclear weapons arsenals of the superpowers during the Cold War. Interestingly, it reverses the historical sequence (from democratic republic to autocratic empire) of the building and deploying nuclear weapons.

The two main political institutions of the Republic are the Senate and the Jedi Council. The Senate building is a rotunda containing flying round platforms set into niches in its interior walls that permit the Senators to float into the middle of the interior when they wish to address the chamber. Each planet is represented by an elected Senator.





The Jedi perform a combination of services for the Republic besides battling the Sith. They do simple policing, serve as negotiators when there is a dispute between planetary and Galactic authorities, and collect intelligence on actual or potential evildoers. The Jedi have their own building called the Jedi Temple not too far from the Senate on Coruscant. The Council meets there, but it is also the place where the children who are taken from their parents at an early age because of high levels of “mitichlorians” in their blood receive their training. The Jedi report to the Chancellor, the head of the Galactic Senate, but have their own internal council to make major decisions.

The independence of the Jedi council becomes particularly problematic after the Senate comes under the control of the Sith Lord, Darth Sidious (who masquerades as Senator Palpatine, the elected representative of the Planet of Naboo). In Episode III, Palpatine persuades Anakin Skywalker to support the Senate against the Jedi Council, which he claims has decided to overthrow the Senate and rule the Galaxy in its stead. In the course of supporting Palpatine, Anakin loses his way, embraces the dark side and becomes Darth Vader.

At a less macro level, the power of the two groups that harness “the Force” to become the most important warriors – that is the Jedi (who fight to defend the Galactic Republic) and the Sith (who fight to rule the galaxy under the Galactic Empire) – is represented in a variety of ways but most obviously in their possession and use of “light sabers.” Light sabers are sword-like weapons with laser cutting capabilities that can be used against flesh or machinery that comes within reach of the weapon. They also wear clothing that reflects their status as warriors. The Jedi wear monk-like cloaks over samurai-like garments. The Sith also wear cloaks but seem to have a bit more freedom in clothing style and makeup. One easily observable difference is that the Sith’s light sabers are red, while those of the Jedi are blue or green. Another is that the eyes of the Sith turn red when they are doing battle. Jedi masters can move objects telekinetically, while Sith lords can shoot blue lightning bolts from their fingertips. Both try to keep a low profile and blend in when out in public.

Jedi knights are recruited as children after their blood is tested for the presence of “mitichlorians.” A mitichlorian is an alien microorganism that lives symbiotically in the blood of a host being and gives that being special abilities, including the ability to use “The Force” which is a source of power. According to Jonathan Young,

The Jedi describe the force as an energy field that sustains all living things. An individual may sense the force as intuition, or something spiritual. It is something beyond individual skill or wisdom. Whether I say I trust my inner voice or use more traditional language, like trusting the Holy Spirit, somehow I am listening for something beyond my own calculations. I'm trying to tune into a larger field of energy and knowledge. When a Jedi advises the hero to trust the force, he is saying that we must not put all our trust in what we can know clearly. There are mysteries and powers that are larger than our knowing and seeing.<sup>1</sup>

A child candidate for Jedi knighthood is taken away from his/her parents at a very young age to receive training at the Jedi Temple. Jedi trainees are instructed in both spiritual matters and martial arts. The martial arts training involves learning to use the Force to, for example, fight well with a light saber. The spiritual training is a bit vague, but seems to focus mainly on learning patience, selflessness, etc. – essentially Buddhist values. The Jedi are not permitted to live with family or to form permanent attachments of any sort so as to be ready at all times to sacrifice for the greater good. This becomes an important plot element as the story of Anakin Skywalker unfolds.



### **Good (The Force) vs. Evil (The Dark Side)**

There is a clear opposition of good vs. evil in the Star Wars films. The Jedi are good, the Sith are evil. The Sith have embraced the dark side while the Jedi resist its temptations. The Sith are more powerful fighters than the Jedi as individuals but tends to engage in rather counterproductive leadership skills. Darth Vader, for example, not unlike Saddam Hussein, kills off his generals one by one by asphyxiating them (without actually touching them). The Sith rule through intimidation and subterfuge in what is clearly a totalitarian dictatorship, whereas the Jedi are committed to upholding the

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Young, "Star Wars as Personal Mythology," <http://www.folkstory.com/articles/starwars.html>.

principles of Galactic democracy. In this sense the battle between the Jedi and the Sith is modelled on the Cold War, but interestingly also fits the Bush administration's vision of good vs. evil in the post-Cold-War era.

The end of the Galactic Republic and the beginning of the Galactic Empire reads very much like the story of the fall of the Weimar Republic. Disorder and civil war and the endless fighting associated with it creates demand for a concentration of power in the person of the Chancellor and a reduction in the power of the Senate. The Chancellor proceeds to disband the Senate and rule by fiat. Shades of Hitler. The Jedi are part of a general rebellion against the Empire that begins in Episode IV (which is actually the first Star Wars film released) and finally succeeds in Episode VI.

More Nazi imagery is used in characterizing the evil Empire. Darth Vader's helmet strongly resembles a Nazi battle helmet (although black and shiny), the uniforms of his generals are the same shade of gray seen in SS uniforms, the general color scheme of the Empire emphasizes black, red, and white (just like the Nazi flag).



Darth Maul, the Sith apprentice of Darth Sidious, not only uses diabolic makeup which is consistent with the Empire color scheme, he actually has horns on his head.

### Star Wars Mythology and the Myth of Lucas

The creator of the series, George Lukas, has become something of a mythical entity unto himself. It is no secret that Lucas was strongly influenced by the writing of Joseph Campbell on heroic myths. Campbell himself was influenced by the work of Carl Jung on archetypes. Lucas admitted that he watched a television series produced by Bill Moyers for PBS called "The Power of Myth" that featured ideas in Campbell's *The Hero*

*with a Thousand Faces* (1949).<sup>2</sup> As a result, there are strong correspondences between the model of heroic quest in Campbell's work and the histories of Lucas' heroes, particularly Luke and Anakin Skywalker. Whereas Luke measured up to his heroic potential, Anakin fell short when he embraced the dark side, but of course Anakin (Darth Vader) redeemed himself at the end when he had to choose between killing his son (Luke) or the Emperor. Here is a quote from an interview with Lucas on the reasons for the faults in Anakin's character:

"In this film, you begin to see that he has a fear of losing things, a fear of losing his mother, and as a result, he wants to begin to control things, he wants to become powerful, and these are not Jedi traits," he said. "And part of these are because he was starting to be trained so late in life, that he'd already formed these attachments. And for a Jedi, attachment is forbidden."<sup>3</sup>

Some writers argue that this mythological character of the Star Wars films accounts for both their box-office successes and a Star Wars cult that continues to grow. The greater Lucas empire now includes Lucas' residence and personal workshop, Skywalker Ranch, along with Lucasfilm, Ltd., Lucas Online, Lucas Digital (which includes Industrial Light and Magic and Skywalker Sound), LucasArts Entertainment, Inc., and spinoffs like THX and Pixar. The economy of Northern California owes a lot to these businesses.

## Conclusions

I have used the example of Star Wars to highlight aspects of power imagery that have become typical of Hollywood films in recent years in order to contrast them with the power imageries of other media and of Hollywood films of an earlier period. The imagery of Star Wars fits a world view very much shaped by World War II and the Cold War but continues to fit the altered world that came into being with the end of the Cold War.

Because the plots of the six films were modeled after ancient mythology, the saga remained compelling to audiences even as James Bond and John Le Carre began to seem archaic. There is a bit of this also in both the Matrix films and the Lord of the Rings trilogy. The spectacular digital effects that were added made for images that no one had ever seen before but that were also hauntingly familiar and in many ways comforting (because they did not challenge deeply held views). Another generation of Hollywood film goers was being exposed to images that persuaded viewers that dictatorships needed to be destroyed and democracies were worth dying for. A self-appointed elite of warriors

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.jitterbug.com/origins/myth.html>; Steve Persall, "Move Over, Odysseus, Here Comes Luke Skywalker," St. Petersburg Times, 1999, <http://www.folkstory.com/articles/petersburg.html>

<sup>3</sup> "George Lucas: Mapping the Mythology," interview with Anderson Cooper of CNN on May 8, 2002, <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/SHOWBIZ/Movies/05/07/ca.s02.george.lucas/>.

with the Bond-like power to kill anyone or anything in the name of democracy would do battle with demonic authoritarian opponents, including some with superhuman powers but highly flawed personalities.

It is now more than twenty years since the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was first proposed by the Reagan Administration. Popularly called “Star Wars” because of the space-based nature of the ballistic missile defense program and its extensive use of lasers, SDI had problems defending itself against critics who attacked it as an unworkable idea and overly expensive. If Darth Vader loved his Death Star, and Vader was obviously evil, then did that make Ronald Reagan an evil Sith Lord? Reagan turned this logic around eventually by negotiating a reduction of nuclear weapons with the Soviets. That did not prevent his followers from claiming later that it was SDI (and not the Soviet failures in handling their political dissidents, Chernobyl and Afghanistan) that caused the collapse of the Soviet empire. George Bush, Sr., got rid of SDI as soon as he could after taking office in 1988. It was dead in the water in the Democrat-controlled Congress anyway.

George Bush, Jr., did not resurrect SDI. Instead, he went after the satanic “evildoers,” the builders of weapons of mass destruction, the terrorists, and the tyrants in the name of defending and spreading democracy. Sound familiar?

## LIST OF REFERENCES

Gabler, Neil, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989).

Giglio, Ernest, *Here's Looking at You: Hollywood, Film, and Politics* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001)

Hearn, Marcus, *The Cinema of George Lucas* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2005).

Hirst, Paul Q., *Space and Power: Politics, War and Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Polity, 2005).

Hozic, Aida, *Hollyworld: Space, Power, and Fantasy in the American Economy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001).

Inglis, Fred, *The Imagery of Power: A Critique of Advertising* (London: Heineman, 1972).

Lasswell, Harold D., *The Signature of Power: Buildings, Communication, and Policy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1979).

Lipschutz, Ronnie D., *Cold War Fantasies: Film, Fiction and Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Md.: Peter Lang, 2001).

Monaco, James, *How to Read a Film: The World of Movies, Media, Multimedia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Ryan, Michael and Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Films* (Bloomington, In.: Indiana University Press, 1988).

Saunders, Nicholas J., ed., *Icons of Power: Feline Symbolism in the Americas* (London: Routledge, 1998).

Scott, Ian, *American Politics in Hollywood Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

Skelton, Tracey and Tim Allen, eds., *Culture and Global Change* (London: Routledge, 1999).

Speer, Albert, *Technik und Macht* (Esslinger am Neckar: Bechtle, 1979).

Windham, Ryder, *Star Wars: The Ultimate Visual Guide* (New York: DK Publishing, 2005).