

Christiaan,

You've done very good work once again. Your analysis of your sources and setting them in context is exemplary. About the only thing you could have done a bit more explicitly on a few occasions is link your discussion back to popular culture theory to reinforce the point – the connections are obvious to me but you have to remember that it's your job to take your reader along with your argument instead of leaving them to do the work themselves. But really that's just me scratching around for something to pick on – you don't leave your markers much scope to have much fun at all!

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Assignment Question

How can the study of popular culture enable us to understand and analyse the Cold War?

- Utilising: Topics Five and Six (Film) and Eight (Television)

Synopsis

Popular culture of the Cold War can be used as historical tools to identify the forms that the Cold War took and assist in historical analysis of contemporary societies. This essay defines the term 'popular culture' before demonstrating its historical usefulness through the movies *High Noon* and *Forbidden Planet*, and the television series *Star Trek*, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and *Smiley's People*.

Essay Response

The study of popular culture provides historians with insights into the manifestations of episodes in history, and assists in historical analysis of a society's values. Popular culture is a field where the 'humanities and social sciences [can] fruitfully meet.'¹ The Cold War period was significant for popular culture as globalization and greater access to technologies such as television ensured a rapidly growing widespread audience.² This essay examines how popular culture can be used as a historical tool with a focus on the Cold War period in the United States (US) and Britain. After defining 'popular culture', its historical uses will firstly be analysed using the film *Dr Strangelove: or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Dr Strangelove). Secondly, five examples of popular culture released during the Cold War will be examined as case studies; the films *High Noon* and *Forbidden Planet*; and the television series *Star Trek*, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and *Smiley's People*. This study assumes these are legitimate examples of popular culture and will focus on their historical use in the Cold War context. It will be shown that popular culture: firstly allows historians to understand the varying forms of the Cold War and their effect on US and British societies; secondly allows analysis of these societies' values; thirdly identifies the manner in which these values were shaped. ✓

Popular culture comprises 'artifacts' accepted by the greater part of society. 'Culture' is meaning given to, and encountered in, everyday life.³ This meaning is typically realised through artifacts including films and television series. Nachbar and Lause claim there are three types of culture, 'elite', 'folk' and 'popular'.⁴ Elite artifacts reflect specific interests or knowledge such as Opera. Folk culture is produced within limited communities including family histories passed down the generations. Popular artifacts have been approved by the majority of society, existing to make money and do not reflect the quality of an artifact.⁵ The 1969 film *The Green Berets* was poorly received upon release yet grossed over 11 million

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¹ John Rickard, 'Cultural history : the high and the popular' in *Australian Cultural History*, eds. S L Goldberg and F B Smith, Surry Hills, 1988, p. 179. (FULL STOPS AFTER INITIALS ie S L. Goldberg)

² Paul Buhle, 'Popular culture' in *The Cambridge companion to modern American culture*, ed. Christopher Bigsby. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p 403.

³ John Storey, *Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture*, 2nd Edition, Edinburgh, 2003, p. 2.

⁴ Jack Nachbar and Kevin Lause, 'Getting to Know Us. An Introduction to the Study of Popular Culture: What is this Stuff that Dreams are Made of?' in *Popular Culture: An Introductory Text*, eds. Jack Nachbar and Kevin Lause, Ohio, 1992, p. 10.

⁵ Storey, *Cultural Studies*, p. 2; Nachbar and Lause, 'Getting to Know Us', p. 15.

dollars US at the cinema.⁶ Artifacts identified as successful often spawn imitations attempting to take advantage of their success.⁷ In 1963 Marlon Brando announced his film studio's first movie was to be a Western, a genre popular at the time because it 'had to make money. Otherwise there won't be another'.⁸ Popular Culture consists of artifacts created to give meaning to everyday life, make money and are accepted by the majority of society, regardless of quality. ✓

An artifact's success hinges on its ability to engage an audience. Popular culture reflects the mindset of society at a particular period in time, or 'zeitgeist'.⁹ One way which films and television do this is to reflect contemporary events. For example, the film *Dr Strangelove* was released in 1964 with the memory of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis fresh in the minds of audiences.¹⁰ Contemporary events reflect the general manifestations of the zeitgeist. The Cuban Missile Crisis depicted the nuclear arms race and threat of Mutually Assured Destruction.¹¹ Crucial to an artifact's approval is its focus on societies' beliefs and values, which can be separated into two groups, concrete and transitory.¹² Concrete values reflect a society's traditional way of life, remaining relatively stable over different eras. *Dr Strangelove* reflects the masculine society of the 1950s and 1960s with men in key government positions including military and political.¹³ In contrast, transitory values acknowledge trends or events of a specific zeitgeist such as the fear of nuclear extermination of the 1960s. Historians therefore can use popular culture to examine artifacts in the context of contemporary events to understand the manifestations of the Cold War and to assess which values were important to society at the time.

Having engaged an audience popular culture serves to influence its audience's opinions. Artifacts can help identify and deal with internal anxieties by providing solutions for social

⁶ Flixster, Inc, 'The Green Berets (1968)', *Rotten Tomatoes*, 2013, http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1008931-green_berets/, accessed 12 May 2013.

⁷ Russell Nye, 'Notes for an Introduction to a Discussion of Popular Culture', *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 5, 1971, p.1036. (SPACE BETWEEN p1036 ie p 1036)

⁸ Truman Capote, 'The Duke in His Domain' in *Selected Writings of Truman Capote*, London, 1963, pp. 417-418.

⁹ Nachbar and Lause, 'Getting to Know Us', p. 4.

¹⁰ Paul Boyer, 'Dr Strangelove', in *Past imperfect : history according to the movies*, general editor. Mark C. Carnes, eds. Ted Mico, John Miller-Monzon and David Rubel, New York, 1996, p. 266.

¹¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War*, London, 2005, p. 80.

¹² Nachbar and Lause, 'Getting to Know Us', p. 5.

¹³ Kathleen Starck, 'I Am Better Than You Are - Mad Politics and Hypermasculinity in Cold War Films' in *Between Fear and Freedom: Cultural Representations of the Cold War*, ed. Kathleen Starck, Cambridge, 2010, pp. 57-61.

problems. Films can provide energy to exhausted societies or offer the prospect of wealth in place of poverty.¹⁴ *Dr Strangelove* acknowledges society's nuclear anxiety and meets it with comedy allowing the audience to overcome their fear of destruction. One of the more powerful uses of popular culture is its ideological manipulation of an audience. Storey refers to 'regimes of truth' whereby the representation of an artifact is intended to convince audiences to interpret events or people using a particular way of thinking. ✓ This ensures popular culture's value as a commercial and ideological tool.¹⁵ *Dr Strangelove* depicts the fate of the world under the control of trigger-happy generals and convinces its audience that 'macho' men in power are to blame rather than nuclear technology.¹⁶ In this way popular culture is a useful historical tool for understanding the psychological fears of Cold War manifestations as well as shaping the ideologies of an audience. ✓

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Comment: Or at least laugh at it!

High Noon tells the story of Sheriff Kane who faces an old adversary, Frank Miller, alone after the people of Hadleyville abandon him. The film was released during the post-World War II (WWII) 'Red Scare'. During the late 1940s, Soviet spies such as State Department official Alger Hiss were uncovered in the US and in 1949 China turned Communist ensuring heightened American fears of Communism.¹⁷ In February 1950 Senator Joseph McCarthy raised tensions when he produced a list of names in the US State Department he claimed were Communists.¹⁸ It was believed that Communist propaganda had rooted itself into the fabric of American life with Hollywood a particular threat. Author Ayn Rand claimed the 'purpose of Communists in Hollywood... is to corrupt our moral premises by corrupting non-political movies'.¹⁹ The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) set about rooting out Communists. Those who chose to reveal Communist sympathisers to HUAC such as film director Elia Kazan continued working.²⁰ Many, such as the 'Hollywood Ten' who refused, were imprisoned for contempt of Congress or were blacklisted such as *High Noon* screenwriter Carl Foreman.²¹ By 1954 HUAC produced a list of 350 blacklisted Hollywood

¹⁴ Richard Dyer, 'Entertainment and Utopia' in *Genre: The Musical*, ed. Ric Altman, London, 1982, p. 177.

¹⁵ Storey, *Cultural Studies*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁶ Starck, 'I Am Better Than You Are', p. 64.

¹⁷ Lynne Joiner, *Honorable Survivor*, Maryland, 2009, p. 223.

¹⁸ Uwe Zagratzki, 'Elvis Presley and McCarthyism - Rock'n'Roll and Paranoia' in *Between Fear and Freedom: Cultural Representations of the Cold War*, ed. Kathleen Starck, Cambridge, 2010, p. 116.

¹⁹ Ayn Rand, 'Screen Guide for Americans', 1950, *Michigan State University Library Archive*, <http://archive.lib.msu.edu/DMC/AmRad/screenguideamericans.pdf>, accessed 17 May 2013, p. 1.

²⁰ Stephen J Whitfield, 'The Culture of the Cold War' in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture*, ed. Christopher Bigsby, Cambridge, 2006, pp. 264-265.

²¹ Brian Neve, *Film and Politics in America: A Social Tradition*, London, 1992, p. 173.

employees.²² *High Noon* was released in the midst of a heightened fear of Communism in post-war Hollywood. ✓

The most notable Cold War manifestation of this period was McCarthyism.²³ Liberals and left-wing thinkers were accused of ‘subversive plots’ and those choosing not to conform to American ideals were victimised.²⁴ Many in Hollywood fled abroad rather than face McCarthy and the HUAC witch-hunts. Those who stood up to HUAC found it virtually impossible to find employment.²⁵ *High Noon* defines the motivation of the few, such as Carl Foreman, as one of personal principles. Kane is pitted not only against Miller (McCarthy) and his gang (HUAC), but against the real enemy, the people of Hadleyville (Hollywood).²⁶

✓ Rather than evacuate, Kane acts according to his conscience, ‘they’re making me run. I’ve never run from anyone before.’²⁷ In contrast the townspeople prefer that Kane leave. The hotel owner and barman see Miller’s presence as a potential money-spinner, while the churchgoers fear the loss of external investment.²⁸ Ultimately the townspeople unite to sell out Kane, an allegory of Hollywood’s ‘self-obsessed relativism.’²⁹ *High Noon* illustrates that strong personal principles motivated those who chose against conforming to McCarthyism. ✓

High Noon utilises 1950s concrete values to assist audiences identify with the protagonists before denouncing these archetypes. The 1950s image of the suburban American household was that of a devout Church-going family where the mother raised the children and father worked to support his family.³⁰ ✓ The people of Hadleyville are typical of the American middle class; all white, male dominated Christians. The use of a politically safe Westerns genre amidst the transitory climate of McCarthyism helped Americans understand their anxieties.³¹ Westerns were typified by shabbily dressed ‘bad guys’ from the wilderness

²² Peter Clements, *Prosperity, Depression and the New Deal: The USA 1890-1954*, 4th Edition, London, 2008, p. 234.

²³ Zagratzki, ‘Elvis Presley and McCarthyism’, p. 115.

²⁴ Peter J Kuznick and James Gilbert, ‘U.S. Culture and the Cold War’ in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, eds. Peter J Kuznick and James Gilbert, Washington, 2001, p. 4.

²⁵ Neve, *Film and Politics*, pp. 175-6.

²⁶ Stephen J Whitfield, ‘Reeling: The Politics of Film’ in *The Culture of the Cold War*, Baltimore, 1991, p. 146.

²⁷ Quote from Kane in Fred Zinnemann (director), *High Noon* (DVD), Australia, 2006.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Michael Atkinson, ‘A Classic Movie Metaphor Returns for Another Showdown’, *The Village Choice*, April 2004, p. c68.

³⁰ Diane Crispell, ‘Myths of the 1950s’, *American Demographics*, Vol. 14, No. 8, August 1992, pp. 38-42.

³¹ [REFERENCE NACHBAR AND LAUSE HERE TOO](#)

³¹ Philip French, *Westerns*, Manchester, 2011, p. 22.

outside society, against the clean-cut, strong ‘good guys’ living inside society.³² Frank Miller’s gang, hot and sweaty are camped outside Hadleyville, while Kane, well dressed and popular lived amongst the townspeople.³³ As the movie progresses stereotyped roles reverse conveying the film’s political message. As Kane is ostracised, Miller’s gang is welcomed, with only women such as Kane’s Quaker wife and the half-Mexican Helen having principles aside from Kane. The men of Hadleyville become cowards.³⁴ *High Noon* finally persuades audiences that personal principles are more valuable than state institutions, the traditional protector.³⁵ Neither religious faith, nor the politicians who released Miller help the hero who triumphs instead through strong will and moral conscience. *High Noon* utilises traditional American values to identify conventional heroes before convincing audiences that the heroes are those who stood up to HUAC as opposed to the conformist values of Hollywood.

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Comment: It has been pointed out that the movie can be interpreted as being both for and against McCarthyism

Set in the twenty-third century, the film *Forbidden Planet* portrays the story of a military crew from Earth led by Captain John Adams on a mission to the planet Altair IV in search of survivors of a missing research vessel.³⁶ The film was released in 1956 during the development of increasingly powerful nuclear weapons. The first atomic bomb was dropped by the US on Hiroshima in 1945 prompting the Soviet Union to commission its scientists to develop atomic technology. With successful Soviet atomic bomb tests in 1949, the US responded by testing their first Hydrogen bomb (H-Bomb) in November 1952. The Soviets followed suit again in August 1953.³⁷ Robert Oppenheimer, head of the Manhattan Project responsible for the Hiroshima bomb was America’s most influential scientist, holding a top advisory position to the government after WWII.³⁸ Although advocating atomic technology, Oppenheimer felt the H-Bomb was a weapon of genocide.³⁹ Despite the US government’s commitment to the H-Bomb Oppenheimer remained opposed and when his advisory role expired in 1952, it was not renewed.⁴⁰ In 1953 Oppenheimer was accused of being a

³² Will Wright, *Sixguns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western*, Berkely, 1975, p. 49.

³³ Zinneman, *High Noon*.

³⁴ Joanna E Rapf, ‘Myth, Ideology, and Feminism in High Noon’, *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1990, p. 80.

³⁵ Whitfield, ‘Reeling’, p. 135.

³⁶ Fred M Wilcox (director), *Forbidden Planet* (DVD), Sydney, 2002.

³⁷ Jeremy Isaacs and Taylor Downing, *Cold War*, London, 2008, pp. 166-167.

³⁸ Herbert York, *The Advisors: Oppenheimer, Teller and the Superbomb*, San Francisco, 1976, p. 17 reproduced in Charles Thorpe, ‘Disciplining Experts: Scientific Authority and Liberal Democracy in the Oppenheimer Case’, *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 32, No. 4, August 2002, p. 526.

³⁹ Thorpe, ‘Disciplining Experts’, p. 526

⁴⁰ ‘Statement of the Atomic Energy Commission’, June 29 1954 in Henry D Smyth, *Decision and Opinions of the United States Atomic Energy Commission in the Matter of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer*, 2008, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/opp06.asp, accessed 15 May 2013.

Communist and though cleared of disloyalty, he was deemed a 'security risk'.⁴¹ *Forbidden Planet* was released during the first generation of nuclear consciousness when scientists and super-weapons were influential in Cold War thinking. ✓

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Comment: So reflecting current events/attitudes? Keep up the references to Nachbar and Lause as well

The nuclear arms race and the promotion of science characterised the Cold War between the 1940s and 1960s causing anxiety in the minds of US society. With the seemingly unstoppable drive for greater destructive technology, demand for scientists grew in the US. The US government increased spending on science education ensuring the scientists were thought of as 'shapers of the nation's destiny'.⁴² Yet a general fear of scientists rose in line with anxiety over nuclear technology.⁴³ Many feared that nuclear proliferation would lead to humanity's demise and drew a link between technology and scientists. In *Forbidden Planet* the extinct Altair IV civilisation, the Krell, had developed technology which inadvertently created 'monsters from the subconscious', a depiction of the fear that scientist's 'brilliance could drift into insanity; confidence could become megalomania'.⁴⁴ While the Cold War of the 1950s promoted scientific education and research, it increased public anxiety over the issues of nuclear extermination caused by what they perceived as scientists 'out of control'. ✓

One important Cold War motivation examined by *Forbidden Planet* is state versus the individual scientist's ownership of technology. Scientists' expertise was essential to the Cold War era, however the role of scientific advisors was undefined generating alarm that scientists were 'on top' rather than 'on tap'.⁴⁵ Some believed that Oppenheimer could 'block [policies] merely by expressing his dislike'.⁴⁶ REFERENCE TO NACHBAR AND LAUSE This scenario is depicted when Morbius, the only character able to develop technology of the Krell, is confronted by Adams' demand that Earth supervise this technology. Morbius, a representation of Oppenheimer, states that 'man is unfit... to receive... such almost limitless power'.⁴⁷ 'Such portions' he continues, 'of the Krell science as I... deem suitable... I shall

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Andrew J Huebner, 'Lost in Space: Technology and Turbulence in Futuristic Cinema of the 1950s', *Film and History*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2010, p. 12.

⁴³ Susan Sontag, 'The Imagination of Disaster' in *The Science Fiction Film Reader*, ed. Gregg Rickman, New York, 2004, p. 108.

⁴⁴ Huebner, 'Lost in Space', p. 13.

⁴⁵ Thorpe, 'Disciplining Scientists', p. 528.

⁴⁶ Robert Coughlan, 'The Equivocal Man of Science: Robert Oppenheimer', *Life Magazine*, February 1967, p. 34A reproduced in Thorpe, 'Disciplining Scientists', p. 526.

⁴⁷ Ian F Roberts, 'Morbius and Atomic Technology In *Forbidden Planet*', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, Vol. 38, No. 4, October 2010, p. 172.

dispense to Earth. I shall be answerable exclusively to my own... judgement.'⁴⁸ Thorpe asserts that Oppenheimer's security hearing in 1954 was intended to discredit him as well as curb individuals' influence and legitimise state control of science.⁴⁹ *Forbidden Planet* helps to demonstrate that individual scientists had become too influential in the eyes of the US state who sought to bring science under its wing. ✓

Conservative values of contemporary times were shown to be just as important in the future as they were in the 1950s. The Earth crew and Morbius represent the familiar image of the military and science; all white, all men.⁵⁰ Gender is also displayed through traditional women's roles. Robby the Robot is portrayed as the obedient 'housewife' and when Morbius' daughter Altaira is admonished by Adams for naivety and miniskirts, she responds by seeking his approval through conservative clothing in which 'nothing must show below, above or through'.⁵¹ *Forbidden Planet* allays its audience's anxieties through the positive role of traditional US institutions. ✓ When Morbius refuses to acknowledge his subconscious' violent actions, Adams reminds him 'we're all part monsters in our subconscious! So we have laws and religion.'⁵² The 'mad scientist' then proves he is human after all. Morbius, finally accepting his guilt, repents his sins before sacrificing himself, thus demonstrating scientists are capable of redemption. *Forbidden Planet* convinces the audience that, in the right hands, science has positive virtues. Science has the ability to cure world hunger as demonstrated by Robby's ability to replicate food. The most important message *Forbidden Planet* attempts to convey is faith in state institutions.⁵³ Adams convinces Morbius of his part in the preceding disasters and helps Morbius destroy the Krell's technology proving that the US military can contain whatever madness science inflicts on the world. *Forbidden Planet* convinces audiences that Western religious, government and military institutions will protect their traditional way of life against any threat, from science to Communism. ✓ NACHBAR AND LAUSE IN THIS PARAGRAPH

Star Trek was an American television series that aired between 1966 and 1969. It showcases the adventures of the crew of the Federation Starship Enterprise led by Captain Kirk who, when not exploring 'strange new worlds' and seeking out 'new life and new civilisations' is

⁴⁸ Morbius quoted in Wilcox, *Forbidden Planet*.

⁴⁹ Thorpe, 'Disciplining Scientists', p. 550.

⁵⁰ Matthew Farish, *The Contours of America's Cold War*, Minneapolis, 2010, p. 241.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 244; Altaira quoted in Wilcox, *Forbidden Planet*.

⁵² John Adams quoted in Wilcox, *Forbidden Planet*.

⁵³ Whitfield, 'Reeling', p. 135.

often in conflict with the warlike and subversive Klingons. Star Trek was released during the Vietnam War. After the French departed Indochina in the 1950s, North and South Vietnam were separated along the seventeenth parallel.⁵⁴ The US feared that elections to unify the country would be won overwhelmingly by the Communist Ho Chi Minh and reacted ‘the same as... Greece in 1947 and... Korea in 1950’, pledging support to South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem.⁵⁵ In the mid-1960s American troops began fighting alongside the South Vietnamese.⁵⁶ The conflict raged until the 1970s when President Nixon finally withdrew the US military presence. As the Vietnam War continued, anti-war movements and counterculture grew in the US as support for the war waned.⁵⁷ ✓

Star Trek illustrates Cold War manifestations of third world intervention and counterculture. ‘A Private Little War’ is an allegory of the US entry into the Vietnam War showing an escalation of tensions between two peaceful tribes influenced firstly by the Klingons, then the Federation.⁵⁸ North Vietnamese forces supported by Chinese and Soviet weaponry began attacks inside South Vietnam.⁵⁹ The US feared the realisation of Eisenhower’s ‘Domino Theory’ whereby if one country fell to Communism the rest in the region would follow and in March 1965 US President Johnson pledged an open-ended military commitment.⁶⁰ The US public’s anxieties over the Vietnam War were realised through anti-war protests and counterculture as reflected in ‘The Way to Eden’. The Enterprise captures anti-Federation ‘space hippies’ who then proceed to take over the Enterprise through their ability to ‘reach’ the crew.⁶¹ In 1965 the first anti-war protests were held in Washington and ‘teach-ins’ around American universities taught people the ‘truth’ behind the conflict in Vietnam.⁶² By 1968 only forty-two percent of the population supported the war, a rate that declined as the war continued.⁶³ Coupled with the anti-war movements was counterculture. As Rozsak states

⁵⁴ Andrew Wiest, *Essential Histories: The Vietnam War 1956-1975*, ed. Rebecca Cullen, Oxford, 2002, p16.

⁵⁵ Adlai Stevenson, ‘The U.S. Is Involved in Viet-Nam’, *The Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 50, June 1964, p. 908.

⁵⁶ Joe Allen, *Vietnam: the (last) war the U.S. lost*, Chicago, 2008, p. 25.

⁵⁷ Mark Philip Bradley, *Vietnam At War*, Oxford, 2009, pp. 154-155.

⁵⁸ Marc Daniels (director), *Star Trek The Original Series: A Private Little War* (DVD), California, 1999.

⁵⁹ Gary R Hess, *Vietnam: Explaining America's Lost War*, Malden, 2009, p. 1.

⁶⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower, 7 April 1954 in John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: The President's News Conference*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=10202&st=&st1=>, accessed 11 May 2013.

⁶¹ David Alexander (director), *Star Trek The Original Series: The Way to Eden* (DVD), California, 1999.

⁶² H Bruce Franklin, ‘Star Trek in the Vietnam Era’, *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 21, March 1994, p. 3.

⁶³ Nick Worland, ‘Captain Kirk: Cold Warrior’, *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1988, p. 114.

counterculture was ‘radically disaffiliated from the mainstream assumptions of our society’.⁶⁴ Groups such as ‘hippies’ rejected conformity in forms such as militarism and materialism, and embraced open sexuality alongside non-Western political and spiritual attitudes.⁶⁵ *Star Trek* demonstrates how the Cold War was characterised by third world intervention, anti-war movements and counterculture. ✓ NACHBAR AND LAUSE IN THIS PARAGRAPH

Star Trek offers motivations for both third world intervention and counterculture. In ‘A Private Little War’ Kirk justifies intervention as the maintenance of the balance of power. While the primitive tribes have previously coexisted peacefully, the Klingons have provided weapons technology to one of the tribes. Despite the Prime Directive’s strict prohibition of intervention into underdeveloped societies, Kirk chooses to ‘arm our side with exactly that much more’ as the opposition. Kirk is aware of the moral dilemma; ‘A balance of power, the trickiest... dirtiest game of them all, but the only one that preserves both sides.’⁶⁶ ✓ From a US perspective, intervention served to maintain or tip the balance of power and was in line with its policy of ‘containment’.⁶⁷ According to Worland, the ‘right’s version of... counterculture’ is portrayed in ‘The Way to Eden’.⁶⁸ To the space-hippies, Starfleet is militaristic and bureaucratic. Though their free-loving attitude is well received by the majority of the Enterprise’s crew, ultimately the space-hippies, led by a madman, are subversive and working towards their own goals.⁶⁹ As *Star Trek* progressed however, it reflected the increasingly strong anti-war movement. In ‘The Omega Glory’ the Enterprise encounters a planet filled with ‘Kohms’ (Communists) and ‘Yangs’ (Yankees) who have been engaged in centuries of prolonged conflict resulting in the degradation of their societies.⁷⁰ The episode echoes the cries of the anti-war movement, that the Vietnam War is unwinnable.⁷¹ While *Star Trek* portrays the motivations of the Vietnam War as one of a ‘tragic’ balance of power influenced by subversive counterculture, it ultimately supports anti-war sentiment that the Vietnam War was futile. ✓ NACHBAR AND LAUSE CHANGING ATTITUDES

⁶⁴ Theodore Roszak. *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*. New York, 1969, p. 42 reproduced in Matt Becker, ‘A Point of Little Hope: Hippie Horror Films and the Politics of Ambivalence’, *Velvet Light Trap*, Vol. 57, 2006, p. 45.

⁶⁵ Becker, ‘A Point of Little Hope’, p. 44.

⁶⁶ James T Kirk quoted in Daniels, *A Private Little War*.

⁶⁷ George Kennan. ‘The Sources of Soviet Conduct’, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 25, July 1947, pp. 575; Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 123.

⁶⁸ Worland, ‘Cold Warrior’, p 116.

⁶⁹ Alexander, *The Way to Eden*.

⁷⁰ Vincent McEveety (director), *Star Trek The Original Series: The Omega Glory* (DVD), California, 1999.

⁷¹ Franklin, ‘Vietnam Era’, p. 14.

Star Trek used newly evolving concrete values to demonstrate that racially diverse liberal institutions would provide ‘liberty and freedom’.⁷² *Star Trek* demonstrated the shift towards the transitory concept of racial diversity. The Federation, an allegory of the free world, included Russians, Americans, blacks, whites and even ‘Vulcans’ demonstrating that a truly united world was one worthy of aspiration.⁷³ *Star Trek* clearly polarises sides of conflict allowing the audience to identify good and bad. In ‘A Private Little War’ the use of white and black hair signifies the good and evil, and in ‘The Omega Glory’ the Asian and Caucasians illustrate Communists and non-Communists.⁷⁴ *Star Trek* allowed audiences to identify with its characters and plots by utilising ‘good versus bad’ imagery while demonstrating how traditional society had evolved to include racial diversity. ✓ [NEED NACHBAR AND LAUSE HERE](#)

At the end of most episodes, audience anxieties were alleviated with misguided protagonists learning their lesson.⁷⁵ For example, in ‘The Omega Glory’ the leader of the Yongs agrees to cease hostilities with the Kohms after Kirk teaches him the meaning of the phrase ‘We the People’ from their sacred scrolls (the US Constitution).⁷⁶ While promoting the anti-war message, *Star Trek* continued to convince audiences that US institutions were the protectors of liberal values. Starfleet is the ‘defensive’ military wing of the Federation and always reacts to, rather than initiates attacks against subversive elements such as the Klingons.⁷⁷ Indeed intervention is encouraged according to Weldes who states that the Enterprise is never limited by the Prime Directive.⁷⁸ *Star Trek* allays audience fears courtesy of reformed villains and reinforcing the role of liberal US institutions’ policy of intervention. ✓ [NACHBAR AND LAUSE](#)

The television series *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (TTSS), released in 1979, relates the story of retired Secret Service agent George Smiley’s task in uncovering a Soviet spy at the head of the ‘Circus’ (British Secret Service). Its follow-up in 1982, *Smiley’s People* (SP) follows Smiley’s attempts to blackmail the head of Moscow’s Secret Service, Karla, into defecting to

⁷² McEveety, *The Omega Glory*.

⁷³ Worland, ‘Cold Warrior’, p. 110.

⁷⁴ Daniels, *A Private Little War*; McEveety, *The Omega Glory*.

⁷⁵ Worland, ‘Cold Warrior’, p. 112.

⁷⁶ McEveety, *The Omega Glory*.

⁷⁷ Jutta Weldes, ‘Going Cultural: Star Trek, State Action and Popular Culture’, *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, March 1999, pp. 126-127.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

the West. In 1979, Britain emerged from its 'Winter of Discontent' characterised by inflation and union strikes, under a Conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher.⁷⁹ Thatcher, dubbed the 'Iron Lady' by a Russian journalist, had been openly anti-Communist accusing the Soviet Union of abandoning détente over its intervention in Eastern Europe such as Czechoslovakia in 1968, and in the third world such as Angola in 1975.⁸⁰ In 1979 Thatcher revealed that British art historian Anthony Blunt had been uncovered as a Soviet spy bringing espionage to the forefront of people's minds.⁸¹ *TTSS* and *SP* were released amongst escalated Cold War tensions. ✓

TTSS and *SP* reveal the Cold War world of espionage. Spies had existed within the East and West since before the Cold War. The Soviet Union, through its organisation Communist International, took advantage of anti-capitalist sentiment resulting from the Great Depression of 1929, and the fight against fascism to recruit agents in the West. Universities such as Cambridge in the 1930s were major recruiting centres.⁸² The most notable recruits in Britain were the 'Cambridge Five'; Donald Maclean, Anthony Blunt, Kim Philby, Guy Burgess and John Cairncross.⁸³ The discovery of spies such as Manhattan Project scientist Klaus Fuchs and the defections of Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean and Kim Philby (whom the character Bill Haydon represents in *TTSS*) in the 1950s and 1960s served to fuel Western interest in the spy world. The anxiety felt by the audience as a result of espionage was one of frustration at the 'affairs of state beyond our comprehension or ability to believe.'⁸⁴ A person's perception of the 'myth of agency' in these affairs was 'utterly unattainable'.⁸⁵ Audiences sought to understand their own place in the world and find a purpose by following a single protagonist, the spy, through his quest for identity and truth. NACHBAR AND LAUSE

The motivations of the characters Smiley and Haydon are influenced by, and reflect a Britain bereft of its former glory. After WWII the British Empire diminished as most of its colonies

⁷⁹ Lawrence Black, 'An Enlightening Decade? New Histories of 1970s Britain', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, Vol. 82, 2012, p. 176.

⁸⁰ Margaret Thatcher, 'Speech to Chelsea Conservative Association (Attacking Détente)', 26 July 1976, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, 2013, <http://www.margarethatcher.org/document/102750>, accessed May 10 2013; Margaret Thatcher, 'Speech at Kensington Town Hall ("Britain Awake") (The Iron Lady)', 19 January 1976, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, 2013, <http://www.margarethatcher.org/document/102939>, accessed May 10 2013.

⁸¹ James Parker, 'The Anti-James Bond' *The Atlantic Monthly*, December 2011, p. 46.

⁸² Neil Root, *Twentieth Century Spies*, Chichester, 2010, p. 81.

⁸³ H Keith Melton, *Ultimate Spy*, 3rd Edition, London, 2009, p. 9.

⁸⁴ John R Snyder, 'The Spy Story as Modern Tragedy', *Literature / Film Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1977, p. 232.

⁸⁵ Michael Kackman, *Citizen Spy*, Minneapolis, 2005, p. XVII.

claimed independence.⁸⁶ In 1953 the Suez Canal was lost to Egypt and British attempts to retake the canal drew US and world condemnation.⁸⁷ For the ‘mole’ Haydon, Britain’s degraded democracy and identity resulting from American influence caused his betrayal. ‘What’s killing Western democracy [is]... greed; the economic repression of the masses, institutionalised,’ Haydon continues, ‘...until the mid-fifties I still had hopes... loyalty to what we represented. [But] we were already America’s Street Walkers.’⁸⁸ This mirrors Kim Philby’s anti-capitalist sentiments after his experience of the Great Depression.⁸⁹ Much as the ‘James Bond’ series is an attempt at a resurgence of British glory, so too are Smiley’s pursuits for the mole in *TTSS*, and Karla in *SP*.⁹⁰ Parallels can be drawn with the resurgence of Conservatism in Britain in the late 1970s. Having suffered the lows of national morale in the 1970s, Thatcher’s anti-Soviet foreign policy can be seen as the beginnings of a new British international identity.⁹¹ The protagonists *TTSS* and *SP* are motivated by the loss of British identity with Haydon acting to undermine Britain and Smiley searching to regain her glory. ✓

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TTSS and *SP* are rooted in traditional class values, the issue of sexuality and the transitory ‘fantasy’ world of espionage. Viewers are able to identify class origins of protagonists. The upper echelon of the Circus is predominantly upper class. For instance Percy Alleline with his ‘pipe and buying drinks for all the moguls.’⁹² As Parker states, ‘to be born into the British ruling class was to sign up for a lifelong career as a double agent.’⁹³ In contrast, field agents who get their hands dirty such as Ricky Tarr find their place amongst the lower classes.⁹⁴ Even Roy Bland, a lower-class man who has made it to the top has ‘paid a packet... Two bloody nervous breakdowns and still between the shafts.’⁹⁵ Homosexuality was traditionally frowned upon and was seen as a trait open to the threat of blackmail, and therefore, Communism.⁹⁶ The mole, Haydon, freely admits his bisexuality to Smiley comparable to

⁸⁶ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 121.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

⁸⁸ Bill Haydon quoted in John Irving (director), *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (DVD), London, 2003, Episode Seven.

⁸⁹ Root, *Twentieth Century Spies*, p. 81.

⁹⁰ Tony Bennett and Janet Woolcott, *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero*, London, Macmillan, 1987, p. 28.

⁹¹ Malcolm Rifkind, ‘Britain retored in the world’ in *Margaret Thatcher's Revolution*, eds. Subroto Roy and John Clarke, London, 2005, pp. 26-27.

⁹² Roddy Martindale quote in Irving, *Tinker Tailor*, Episode One.

⁹³ Parker, ‘The Anti-James Bond’, p. 46.

⁹⁴ Snyder, ‘The Spy Story’, p. 230.

⁹⁵ Roy Bland quoted in Irving, *Tinker Tailor*, Episode Three.

⁹⁶ Naoko Shubisawa, ‘The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics’, *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 36, No. 4, September 2012, p. 725.

‘Cambridge Five’ members Guy Burgess and Anthony Blunt.⁹⁷ *TTSS* and *SP* further engage audiences by immersing them in the transitory espionage world. ‘Tradecraft’ such as utilising codenames like ‘Gerald’ (Haydon) mimicked the real life ‘Stanley’ (Philby), and terms like ‘Moscow Rules’ absorb audiences in the world of the Cold War spy.⁹⁸ *TTSS* and *SP* use traditional perceptions of class and homosexuality along with elements of the spy world to engage an audience’s preconceived knowledge of the Cold War conflict. ✓

With the audience captivated, the inner workings of the state are revealed. Snyder refers to the spy genre as modern tragedy, merely ‘numbing’ viewers to the prospect of further frustration at a mysterious bureaucratic state.⁹⁹ *TTSS* and *SP* convince the audience of the bitter reality that the world of espionage is grey; ‘Half-devils versus half-angels. Nobody knows where the goodies are.’¹⁰⁰ In *TTSS*, Smiley is adamant that Karla’s lack of moderation as fanatical ruler of Moscow Centre will lead to his downfall. Yet in *SP* in the final moment of victory when Karla defects to the West, Smiley realises that his own lack of moderation, his use of blackmail and kidnapping, has rendered him as corrupt as Karla.¹⁰¹ The audience is convinced that spies share a common ‘inhumanity’ and are merely cogs in an ‘exploitative bureaucratic madness’.¹⁰² *TTSS* and *SP* immerse viewers in the espionage world before persuading them of the truth; espionage has no concept of good and bad. ✓

This essay demonstrates firstly that historians can use popular culture to understand the forms in which the Cold War manifested itself, its underlying motivations and society’s resulting anxieties. The film *High Noon* reveals the presence of McCarthyism amidst HUAC’s witch-hunts to root out Communists in Hollywood during the 1950s and claimed that those who chose not to name names did so out of principle. The result was the public’s heightened fear of Communism. *Forbidden Planet* raised the issue of scientists and weapons technology with Robert Oppenheimer a pivotal figure, and demonstrated that US institutions like the military sought to control science in order to quell audience’s fears of mad scientists and their inventions. *Star Trek* reflected third world intervention, in particular Vietnam, which was

⁹⁷ David McKnight, *Espionage and the Roots of the Cold War: The Conspiratorial Heritage*, London, 2005, p. 127.

⁹⁸ Irving, *Tinker Tailor*; Simon Langton (director), *Smiley’s People* (DVD), London, 2004, Episode One.

⁹⁹ Snyder, ‘The Spy Story’, pp. 232-233.

¹⁰⁰ Toby Esterhase quoted in Langton, *Smiley’s People*, Episode Three.

¹⁰¹ Langton, *Smiley’s People*, Episode Six.

¹⁰² Mark Fisher, ‘The Smiley Factor’, *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 65, No. 2, 2011, pp. 40-41; Snyder, ‘The Spy Story’, p. 217

motivated by the maintenance of the 'balance of power' between the US and Soviets. The fear of an endless war would be the trigger for anti-war protestors including 'hippies' who embraced counterculture. *TTSS* and *SP* highlighted espionage and the discovery of undercover Soviet agents like Kim Philby. These series demonstrated that agents of both sides in Britain were influenced by Britain's diminished world standing and reflected people's sense of helplessness regarding secretive institutions. As a historical tool popular culture's primary use is the examination of society. While depictions of transitory and traditional values both helped engage audiences' prior knowledge of the Cold War, concrete values were integral in shaping society's thoughts. *Forbidden Planet* and *Star Trek* utilised traditional representations of women's roles and the military in futuristic settings to convince audiences that masculinity and traditional US institutions could contain any scientific or Communist evil. Conversely *High Noon*, *TTSS* and *SP* utilised concrete beliefs against traditional institutions. *High Noon* demonstrated that, under pressure to conform, men, unlike women, were unprincipled cowards. *TTSS* and *SP* immersed audiences in the spy world, but did little to allay their anxieties. These series proved that neither homosexual Communists, nor traditional British class bureaucracy could disprove that East and West sides of the Iron Curtain were as amoral as the other.

GOOD WORK!

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