A RENEWABLE RESERVE ARMY OF VILLAINS: NOSTALGIA AND MEMORY OF THE COMMUNIST OTHER IN AMERICAN COLD WAR CINEMA

BY

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ABSTRACT

The present dissertation revisits the Cold War on film from the official start of the conflict with the Truman Doctrine in 1947 to the contemporary moment. It argues that in order to understand and account for the continued proliferation of Cold War films with recognizable stereotypes and motifs, it is necessary to apply a critical lens of nostalgia and memory to their analysis. Drawing on previous work on Cold War cinema, Hollywood's production of films that engage with the subject is periodized according to the central chapters of the conflict as well as the main stages of development of the Hollywood film industry. Analysis of films from the "propaganda cycle" of the late 40s and early 50s according to an analytic of memory shows that an imperative to remember a hegemonic conception of the nation is a recurring theme.

While the decades of the 60s and the 70s are generally regarded as a period of Cold War thaw, analysis of films from that period reveals that idiomatic stereotypes established in previous decades continued to find application even in films of the "New Hollywood," which were more morally ambiguous and broadly regarded as politically critical. The present study argues that the 80s conservative turn and the "New Cold War" that brought about the second cycle of Cold War films are best understood through Michael Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory, which turns the focus of analysis to how the conflict had become overdetermined by that point. Lastly, more recent Cold War cinema is analyzed through Svetlana Boym's concepts of reflective and restorative nostalgia and their imbrications with the logic of multicultural neoliberalism. This dissertation concludes that an analytic of memory illuminates not only the continued relevance of Cold War cinema, but also processes of the maintenance of U.S. global hegemony as well as the integration of the post-Cold War Russian state into the global neoliberal order.

To My Parents – Vesela and Rosen,
Bert, and Kathy

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In an impassioned defense of voting rights during a House Oversight Committee hearing on February 6, 2019, Chairman Elijah E. Cummings thunderously proclaimed: "This is not Russia. This is the United States of America!" Cummings' remarks were delivered during a hearing on H.R. 1 – a bill sponsored by Democrats that would "prohibit the purging of voter rolls, compel states to adopt independent redistricting commissions and enact a host of other changes to the electoral process" (Sonmez, 2019). Democrats led by Nancy Pelosi drafted the legislation in response to charges of voter suppression following the Georgia governor race where Republican candidate Brian Kemp purged hundreds of thousands of voters from the rolls. In a closely watched election Kemp narrowly defeated Democratic opponent Stacey Abrams by less than 60,000 votes. Analysts have argued that "Abrams could have won if even one-third of the purged voters had showed up and (as is considered likely) had overwhelmingly voted for her" (Rozsa, 2019). As part of his speech Cummings shared a personal story of his mother's dying words to him: "'Do not let them take our votes away from us."

Cummings' performance from the stand was calibrated for the 24-hour news cycle and media outlets responded by inscribing his blistering remarks into headlines: "'This is not Russia,' Rep. Elijah Cummings says in impassioned defense of voting rights" (*The Washington Post*) and "Elijah Cummings rebukes Republican efforts to erode 'essence of our democracy': 'This is not Russia'" (*Salon*) being just two examples. Propelled by the instantaneousness of online social networks, Cummings' remarks echoed the world over through the largely borderless digital media space. With the Robert Muller investigation of Russian interference into the 2016 U.S. elections still afoot, Cummings' rebuke was bound to strike a chord among the U.S. electorate.

But his comments draw their power not only from the exigencies of the contemporary moment but also – and perhaps crucially – from the long, fraught history of U.S.-Russia relations and the cluster of meanings and associations that have been attached to Russia through decades of political and cultural demonology. Although it became hot on a number of its proxy fronts – most notably, Vietnam – it was primarily a conflict of ideologies fought through symbolic means; through the texts and products of popular culture. Since the mid-20th century cultural products in virtually every medium that engage with the subject of Russia/the Soviet Union or the Cold War have formed a vast and accessible archive that is a constant presence on the horizon of popular memory of the recent past.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the question of how the idiom of Russian otherness continues to sustain itself almost 30 years after the Cold War officially ended by focusing on one of the main sites of its production: Hollywood cinema. Contemporary Cold War film historiography tends to view the U.S. cinematic Cold War as comprised of three main periods: the anti-communist cycle of the late 1940s and 1950s Red Scare, the thaw of the 1960s and 1970s, and the "new" Cold War of the 1980s when the election of Ronald Reagan signaled the rise of the neoconservative right in U.S. politics. Within this broader periodization are more discreet moments. This is particularly true for the 1950s cycle, which Hoberman (2011) breaks up into five moments lasting roughly from 1946 to 1956. Shaw & Youngblood (2010) on the other hand argue that anticommunist films of the 1950s fall within two broader categories: hard-line negative propaganda films (1947-1953) and soft-core, positive propaganda, mixed with the beginnings of negotiated dissent (1953-1962). Shaw & Youngblood further argue that the 80s "new" Cold War cycle can similarly be understood as encompassing two moments: New Right propaganda (1980-1986) and a call for peace (1986-1990).

Shaw & Youngblood and Hoberman's periodizations are informed by a detailed study of the corpus of films that can be generally categorized as Cold War films, knowledge of the structure and transformations of the U.S. film industry, and an understanding of the larger political, social, and cultural forces that shaped it. This is particularly evident in their conceptualization of the "pro-détente propaganda" (1962-1980) period, which is defined in terms of the "film school generation" and independent cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, but also the political agenda of the U.S. counterculture of the period and deeper social anxieties about the transparency of the U.S. government both in the U.S. and abroad. The "pro-détente propaganda" period is thus understood in terms of films like *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), *Seven Days in May* (1964), *Fail-Safe* (Sidney Lumet, 1964), *The Bedford Incident* (James B. Harris, 1965), and *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964), which "took a scalpel to the Cold War consensus" (p. 29). While Youngblood & Shaw are correct that the films self-reflexively understand themselves as a critique of American foreign policy during this period, they stop short of a critical analysis of the frame of that critique.

The present dissertation thus brings a critical analytical framework to the main chapters of the post-World War II Cold War standoff between the U.S. and the Soviet Union by centering questions of memory, identity, power (seen here as the maintenance of U.S. and Western global hegemony), race, and ethnicity. It argues that memory is a productive if largely ignored analytic for understanding Cold War cinema for a number of reasons. Firstly, while it shares similarities with political economic and apparatus theory, a focus on memory differs from those approaches in that it allows for the integration of questions of affect into the analytical framework. This is particularly relevant given the status of many films either as overt, hardline propaganda or to as more subtle vehicles of persuasion. As Steven Shaviro (2010) argues,

> "In the first half of the twentieth century, Fascism and Nazism in particular are noteworthy for their mobilization of cinematic affect; though arguably Soviet communism and liberal capitalism also mobilized such affect in their own ways." (p. 153)

The mobilization of affect, according to Shaviro, is particularly intensified in the regime of neoliberal capitalism, which has been normative in the United States in the late 20th century.

Secondly, focusing on memory as a critical analytic allows us to trace threads of continuity in a conflict, which at various points of its history was considered to have come to an end. As previously mentioned, films of the Cold War thaw (or Youngblood & Shaw's pro-détente propaganda period) explicitly and implicitly set out to interrogate the wisdom of the Cold War consensus after a decade of McCarthyite suppression of dissent and political opposition. By the 1980s, the Cold War had become a multi-layered conflict with films of the "new Cold War" referencing earlier moments of its history. A critical analytic focus on memory allows us to trace the transformations of the conflict through its main stages while foregrounding films' affective investment.

Lastly and related to that point, memory in its function as a central component of the continuity of identity in times of social and cultural change is a valuable analytic for understanding discursive constructions of the Cold War Other. Specifically, an analytic of memory allows us to excavate how cinematic constructions emploting motifs of the respective Cold War period are shaped by preceding periods and constitutive of those that succeeded it. In other words, thinking about the Cold War through an analytic of memory is productive for unearthing the tensions, contradictions, and continuities between the different stages of the Cold War. Returning to the question, outlined earlier in this introduction, a critical analytical

framework of memory through its attention to continuities of meaning and identity allows us to investigate the question of how the idiom of communist/Soviet/Russian otherness continues to sustain itself at one of the main sites of its production – Hollywood cinema.

While the cinematic Cold War is generally understood to have started in the late 1940s with what has widely come to be known among academics as the first cycle of anticommunist propaganda films, Hollywood's attack on communism goes as far back as 1919 (Belton, 2018). Chapter one traces that earlier history and how it established a model for interaction between the Hollywood system and anticommunism as a growing political force since the late 19th century. While its history spans most of the 20th century, anticommunism is in turn an episode of a longer countersubversive tradition of constructing and demonizing alien Others. Anti-Soviet anticommunism is unique, however, in that it emerged and developed parallel to the classical Hollywood system, which was mobilized to propagandistic ends thus making Hollywood cinema a privileged site on inquiry. The chapter further details how an analytic that centers memory and nostalgia can be productive in untangling that history and understanding its continuity and rupture.

Chapter two examines how an imperative to remember in early 1950s anti-communist propaganda films functions for the production of cinematic propaganda intended to "confirm" the hegemony of Western capitalist liberal democracy. While nostalgia in film would not become a popular trend until the 1970s the cycle of 1950s propaganda films already showed signs of nostalgic longing for an imagined preceding state of plentitude that is deployed towards conservative ends. Furthermore, the films' stylistic and aesthetic features work to authenticate the legitimacy of memory and invest it with the authority of truth.

Chapter three focuses on films of the period of the Cold War thaw of the 60s and 70s and argues that while scholarship on cinema of the Cold War tends to frame them in terms of an overarching theme that the Cold War was a relic of the past, it is more productive to think of films of that period in terms of their strategies for continuing to exploit communist stereotypes established in previous decades. As communist stereotypes returned to the comedy genre and stereotyped knowledges of communist difference as inassimilable into Western capitalism continued to structure narratives of Cold War films during the decades of the thaw, a specific emphasis on stereotypes illuminates their spread and consolidation. The chapter draws on Homi Bhabha's theory of the stereotype as it argues that seemingly contradictory representations of communists as frightening but also laughably incompetent are aspects of stereotypes' inherent ambivalence – a central source of their power and resilience.

The 80s marked a conservative turn in politics, which was accompanied by a new cycle of anti-communist films. While scholarship tends to view the films in terms of their fervent patriotism and strident stance against the Soviet Union, the chapter suggests that ideologically, the films function to recapture hegemonic white masculinity and reposition its hegemony for the neoliberal turn in economics and politics. As by the 80s the history of the Cold War itself had become multilayered and overdetermined, the chapter suggests that an analytic of multidimentional memory is productive for understanding operative historical discourses, against which the hegemony of white masculinity is recuperated.

Although the Cold War is understood to have officially ended in 1991, the use of established stereotypes of communists and Russians in cinema has continued steadily. As we approach the threshold of a new decade multiple pop culture outlets have commented on the return of the "Russian baddie" – both on the big screen and on TV. The representations are often

stereotypically heavy-handed but as the chapter would argue, films of the 2010s reconfigure the "the idiom of otherness" of communist/Russian difference in accordance with what Jodi Melamed (2011) calls "neoliberal multiculturalism." Communists and Russians are still demonized according to recognizable traits of the stereotype but in this case stereotypes are inflected to code them for inclusion into the framework of global neoliberal multiculturalism.

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CHAPTER 2: CONSTRUCTING THE COMMUNIST OTHER IN HISTORY, MEMORY, AND NOSTALGIA

While the Cold War is widely understood by academics and the general public to have started in the years after the end of World War II, John Belton (2018) stipulates that "[u]nofficially, [it] began in 1917, when the communist Bolsheviks came to power in Russia…" (p. 283). His claim is supported by the fact that shortly thereafter, 1918 marked the end of World War I and with it the collapse of the "old imperialism," namely – the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires. The global geopolitical tectonic plates shifted, giving way to a reconfiguration of power and spheres of influence that in many ways has persisted into the contemporary moment. The end of the Russian empire a year earlier thus coincided with this global momentum. By explicitly denouncing imperialism, the new Communist government found itself on the other side of a faultline that now separated it from the "new" imperial powers of the West – the U.K., France, and the U.S. Opposition to imperial power was, of course, only one aspect of the colossal ideological challenge that communism presented to the capitalist West. For its part, the U.S. as an ascending capitalist power made it clear early on that it would mount a full-scale resistance to the revolutionary ideology coming from the East. The Red Scare of 1919 was an early glimpse of what was to come some 30 years later, encoded in a fully articulated and comprehensive policy of containment of the communist threat. Although the Soviet Union would not be formally identified as a Cold War archenemy until 1947, the tradition of its demonology within U.S. culture and politics dates back to the first Red Scare.

But even before it consolidated around the Soviet Union, anticommunism as a modern political force had existed since the 1870s (Schrecker, 1998). Business leaders were quick to recognize its utility as a respectable cover for their anti-union activity. Since many factory

workers were foreign-born, business leaders stoked fears of communist infiltration and subversion by foreigners. Anticommunism had thus already been exploited by powerful business interests towards advancing their anti-labor agenda when the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia and formed a communist government as the formal ruling body of a nation-state. It could thus be said that aside from what imminent and tangible threat the Soviet Union may have posed to the U.S., business and political elites appropriated news of the fledgling regime as a catalyst for pursuing domestic political objectives. As communist ideology foregrounded workers' rights and working-class revolution, it overlapped with the agendas of the political left in the West. Branded as a foreign threat, the Soviet Union was thus weaponized by conservatives in attacks on their political opponents.

The Soviet Union thus entered a long tradition of American political demonology and the subsequent Cold War, historian Michael Rogin (1987) argues, introduced the "third moment" in that history. The first moment according to Rogin was racial, "placing race at the center of the most important divisions in American political life" (p. 236), the second one was defined by class and ethnic conflict, which was then absorbed under the larger umbrella of the Cold War as the main site of demonology. Political demonology is an aspect of what Rogin describes as "the countersubversive tradition at the center of American politics" (p. xiii). Both terms "call attention to the creation of monsters as a continuing feature of American politics by the inflation, stigmatization, and dehumanization of political foes." With the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 the Soviet Union thus entered a long line of demonic Others in the American national imaginary – a status it would continue to hold for decades into the future.

During the first Red Scare of 1919-1920 demonization of communists overlapped significantly with the vilification of foreigners, immigrants, and radicals. Foreigners were largely

suspected to be the source of subversive ideas that stoked labor unrest. To stem communist influence spreading through society, the U.S. Attorney General ordered suspected communists and allegedly dangerous radicals rounded up and deported. Between 6,000 and 10,000 people were arrested and hundreds were deported after a series of raids that violated civil liberties with abandon. According to Rogin (1987), "[Attorney General A. Mitchell] Palmer described the target of his raids as 'alien filth,' with 'sly and crafty eyes … lopsided faces, sloping brows, and misshapen features'" (p. 239). It was during the first Red Scare that demonization of immigrants more broadly began to give way to demonization of communists specifically. Rogin argues that the first Red Scare was critical as the moment when "internal Soviet agents had replaced the alien working class as the target of cold war countersubversion." Furthermore, because the difference posed by communism was generally not legible on the body, it was necessary to insist on their otherness and difference of interiority. In Rogin's words – "the imagined danger shifted from the body to the mind" (p. 238) – a point, to which this chapter will return later.

Hollywood responded to the unfolding national crisis with a number of anti-communist films that identified the threat of communism for moviegoing audiences across the U.S. *Bolshevism on Trial* (1919), *The Right to Happiness* (ca. 1919), and *Orphans of the Storm* (1922) clearly established communism as a malevolent force to be opposed through unsubtle intertitles that bluntly announced "[t]he lesson: the French Revolution RIGHTLY overthrew a BAD government. But we in America should be careful lest we with a GOOD government mistake fanatics for leaders and exchange our decent law and order for Anarchy and Bolshevism" (*Orphans of the Storm*).

Production of anticommunist films continued in the decades leading up to World War II, with Hollywood becoming a significant contributor to the construction of the general communist

stereotype in the popular imagination. Concurrently, a vast anticommunist network was taking shape with key players and institutions that would lead the offensive against known and suspected communists post-World War II. The stereotype of communists as phony hypocrites whose concern with the common people is disingenuous at best was already on display in the early 1920s. George Zimmer's *Red Russia Revealed* (1923) showed Lenin and Trotsky with plenty to eat while the Russian people were destitute. The stereotype persisted after the advent of sound in the late 1920s and with the growing popularity of the talkies in the early 30s. Two melodramas from the early 30s are emblematic in that regard – *Heroes for Sale* (1933) and *Little Man, What Now* (1934). In the former, communists are lunatics, "kinda cracked." Adhering to the generic caricature of the two-faced phony, the film constructs Max (Robert Barrat) – a Bolshevik inventor who is largely a misanthrope – resentful of both the "dirty capitalists" and the workers he calls "sheep." Max quotes Lenin and denounces "class servitude" but only until he himself rises up the class ladder thanks to his invention. Once a millionaire, his hypocrisy is exposed – he calls the poor "a cancer on civilization" and, when questioned about his sudden change of heart explains: "I despise [all employers and capitalists], I spit on them. But I'm willing to get rich with them." Indeed, the stereotype of the communist who is idealistic only until presented with the luxuries and material comforts that capitalism provides, is a staple of anticommunist films well into the 60s. The caricature itself seems to be an articulation of the profound doubts harbored in the West about communism, specifically – that communists aimed to supersede the imperialist capitalist stage of development simply because they never achieved it themselves. Their ruse is thus exposed once they find themselves within reach of the material wealth of capitalism. Put differently, the U.S. was already manifesting the best combination of form of government and economic system, therefore any claims to a superior model must be

spurious. By and large Hollywood's communists were thus phonies – their faith in and commitment to socialist ideals was insincere and its artifice was easily exposed as soon as they were presented with the opportunity to escape and enrich themselves. In cases like *Heroes for Sale*, as Belton points out, filmmakers were careful to draw a distinction between the phony communists who were the target of criticism and ex-servicemen – the heroes of the title. Along similar lines, Ford's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) was also mindful of presenting a sympathetic depiction of the plight of the working class that nevertheless steered clear of charges of communist propaganda. This is important in terms of Hollywood's negotiation of liberal and conservative critiques of communism. Historically, communism emerged as an instant antithesis of the conservative right. It was affiliated not only with pro-labor and pro-working class affinities but also progressive ideas associated with the left-wing. More to the point, communism's official embrace of atheism made it an instant enemy of the U.S. religious right. While political liberals often took pains to ensure that they rescued their agenda from conflation with communist propaganda, the political right had no line to toe and indulged in attacks on the character of communists and communism more broadly. Communist ideology's differential interaction with liberalism and conservativism would become particularly relevant in the 40s and 50s when anticommunism intensified leading up to the Second Red Scare and McCarthyism. In the 30s these divisions were more subdued especially given communists' support for anti-fascist movements in Europe. Hollywood pre-World War II made it clear that while it would lean as far left as to support Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, it drew a line at the more radical ideas of millionaire-socialist Upton Sinclair who promised to "End Poverty in California" (Belton, p. 286).

The, demonization of communists on the silver screen in the 30s was more light-hearted and benign than what would come during the Second Red Scare. The particularities of their otherness made them an ideal object of derision in comedies of manners like Ernst Lubitsch's *Ninotchka* (1939). Communists' otherness in the film is underscored by Greta Garbo's morose and dogmatic Nina Yakushova. In the film's main romantic plot between her and Melvyn Douglas' Count Leon d'Algout, Ninotchka is doubly othered – as a communist and as a woman. The film blurs these two categories of difference and the resulting ambivalence propels the romantic plot forward. Notably, when Ninotchka goes with Leon to his apartment she tells him bluntly that he is something they do not have in Russia and that is why she believes in the future of her country. Unfazed, Leon responds that: "I'm beginning to believe in it myself since I've met you. I still don't quite know what it's all about. It confuses me, frightens me. But it fascinates me." The scene is emblematic of the film's main structuring device of concealing sexual difference behind the ideological difference of communism. Ninotchka's otherness, however, is a product not only of filmic elements but also of the paratextual character of Garbo's brand of stardom. Her contemporaneous reputation as a Hollywood outsider shrouded in an air of mystique resonated with Ninotchka's construction as an eccentric oddity in Paris for the first half of the film. Garbo's performance ultimately consolidated the general communist stereotype – the "huskiness" (Schallert, 1930) of her voice and accent are exaggerated to make her sound robotic and alien. Considered exotic and an enigma herself (Szaloky, 2006), Garbo channels those aspects of her stardom into Ninotchka, playing her with a blank expression for the first half of the film and accentuating her otherworldliness. In a way, the film's emphasis on her alien qualities against the landscape of lush Paris foreshadows the cycle of 50s science fiction films, in which aliens are metaphors for communists. As a communist Ninotchka ultimately is constructed

as only dubiously human and emphatically alien. The film similarly draws on Bela Lugosi's star image as Count Dracula and casts him as the formidable upper-echelon party operative Razinin – the film's arch-villain. *Ninotchka* is ultimately benevolent to its communist characters but nevertheless in a way that sustains the stereotype of the communist phony. Later productions of the 40s and 50s would further exploit it and take it in a more sinister direction in accordance with the national security imperatives of the time.

Although the demonization of communism would subside during World War II to reflect the fact that Russia was now an ally in the fight against Nazism, it never completely disappeared and promptly resurfaced after the war. Rogin (1987) provides a detailed overview of communist demonology in Hollywood film after World War II and the subsequent advent of the Cold War. His lens of analysis is U.S. identity and the functions of political demonology for its preservation and maintenance. Similarly to the previous two stages of U.S. political demonology, in the Cold War moment, "the free man [sic] has both depended on and defined himself in opposition to his subversive twin" (p. 237). Furthermore, Rogin argues:

> "American history in each countersubversive moment has constituted itself in binary opposition to the subversive force that threatened it. Demonology begins as a rigid insistence on difference. That insistence has strategic propaganda purposes but it also derives from fears of and forbidden desires for identity with the excluded object." (p. 237)

While with McCarthy's crusade in the 50s communist demonology was spearheaded largely by Republicans and the conservative right, liberals and the political left were similarly entangled in the broad scale national vilification campaign. As Schrecker (1998) elaborates:

> "… mainstream politicians and Cold War liberals like [Hubert] Humphrey focused on the dangers that Communism posed to the government or to those institutions like unions and civil rights groups whose agenda the party shared, while conservatives stressed its spiritual and cultural threat" (p. 144)

As it has become common knowledge, Republican politicians exploited ideological overlaps between the progressive aspects of communist ideology and those of the liberal left. An illustrative example here is Herbert Hoover who "claimed to be especially worried that Communists might succeed in recruiting the well-meaning but unsuspecting men and women who became involved with the ostensibly 'liberal progressive causes' that the CP espoused" (p. 141). Republican attacks on communism were thus often pointedly and simultaneously an effort to mobilize support against their political enemies – the liberal left. Thus, throughout much of the Cold War the Soviet Union was conflated with the threat of liberal, progressive and radical ideas. This is particularly evident in the two cycles of Cold War films in the 50s and the 80s, which were by and large associated with conservative, illiberal political ideology. The propaganda films of the late 40s and 50s, which studios cranked out largely under duress from HUAC, attacked communism from a conservative standpoint and for a conservative audience. This is particularly evident in films like *My Son John* and *Red Menace*, in which the main characters find redemption in the church and Christianity at the end. They articulate specifically the conservative right's coding of the Soviet Union as a hot bed of "fanaticism" and of communism as the ideology of criminals, sociopaths, liars, and cheats.

Nostalgia and Memory in Culture and the Media

Svetlana Boym – one of the forefront scholars of cultural nostalgia describes it as: "a symptom of our age, a historical emotion" (Boym, 2001, p. xvi). Scholars and critics in the U.S. have identified the 70s as the decade when nostalgia emerged as a popular social and cultural condition affecting broad swaths of cultural production. The earliest written accounts that register the occurrence of a condition called nostalgia (from the Greek *nostos* – return home and *algia* – longing) date to 1688 and the work of Swiss doctor Johannes Hofer who identified it as a medical condition affecting individual psychology. While that early form of nostalgia referred to longing for a specific place – a home, with the restructuring of the experience of time in modernity, nostalgia was reconfigured as longing for an earlier time – an imagined simpler time before the rapid processes of change and renewal in late capitalism. Boym thus "regards nostalgia as the alter ego of progress" (Radstone, 2007, p. 112). Indeed, as Radstone points out, nostalgia as a response to anxieties about the constant speeding up of time in late modernity and an uncertain future (Lowenthal, 1989; Denzin, 1991) has by now become a critical commonplace. A significant body of scholarly work focuses specifically on the relationship between nostalgia and rapid social and technological change (Boym, 2001; Huyssen, 1995; Jameson, 1991; Leggatt, 2018). Approaching nostalgia from a historical analytical perspective, Jameson (1991) argues that it is a defining characteristic of the condition of postmodernity. Late capitalism and its ever-accelerating speeds, according to Jameson, have collapsed historical thinking and cultural production has "cannibalized" the past and its dead styles in a haphazard manner, effectively extending the past into the present and blurring distinctions between the two. Nostalgic production according to Jameson thus replicates or reproduces the past in a process resembling "the return of the repressed." Jameson's account of nostalgia is reminiscent of what

Boym (2001) terms “restorative” nostalgia, which “[imagines] and [seeks] to preserve a simplistic, collective vision of an idealized, stable, and self-contained past that never quite existed in the first place” (Sperb, 2016, p. 15). As the name suggests, “restorative” nostalgia wants to project a vision of a pristine and unscathed past and conflate it with the present. It “manifests in total reconstruction of the monuments of the past” (Boym, 2001, p. 41). An example here is the restoration of the Sistine Chapel in the 1980s, which had as its explicitly stated objective to “return ‘back to Michelangelo,’ to the original brightness of the frescoes” (p. 45). In Hollywood blockbuster film restorative nostalgia manifests in films like *Jurassic Park* (1993) that “both [induce] nostalgia and [offer] a tranquilizer; instead of disquieting ambivalence and paradoxical dialectic of past, present and future, it provides a total restoration of extinct creatures [dinosaurs] and a conflict resolution” (p. 33). Parallel and in tension with restorative nostalgia is “reflective” nostalgia, which reconciles the pleasure of nostalgic longing with a sense of critical distance from the imagined past, acknowledging the fact of its pastness as irreversible; “it lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time” (p. 41). A common example of reflective nostalgia in film would be a wistful flashback sequence. Alternatively, an entire film could be edited as a flashback sequence. A recent case in point is Greta Gerwig’s *Ladybird* (2017), which uses color grading to evoke a certain idea of the 90s and, in the words of Gerwig – to make the film look like someone’s memory of the 90s (Galuppo, 2017). While reflective nostalgia holds a critical potential, it nevertheless resists articulating a fully critical position of the past. A more historically analytic engagement with the past is what Le Sueur (1977) calls “anti-nostalgia.” With anti-nostalgia the pleasure of remembering takes a backseat to a more urgent project of formulating an antithesis to convention and tradition. The films of Arthur Penn and Robert Altman, Le Sueur argues present a case of

anti-nostalgia as they "challenge the melancholic view of history by subtler, less expressionistic means" (p. 195). Both Altman and Penn subvert central elements and characters of the private eye and western genres to challenge their conventional meanings. Altman, for example, in an exercise of "genre revisionism" constructs the main protagonist of *The Long Goodbye* (1973) – Philip Marlowe – as a "reflective slob acting in situations over which [he has] little control … [his] tough guy moralism – a completely useless commodity in contemporary culture."

While scholarly work on nostalgia tends to set its focus on social and historical change and the wave of nostalgic cultural production that follows it, identity as a central node, through which these changes are refracted tends to receive less attention. This is significant since nostalgia is about memory/remembrance, which in turn is a central pillar of identity. A notable exception here is Fred Davis' *Yearning for Yesterday* (1979), which investigates the entanglements of nostalgia and identity. Contrary to commonly held negative assessments of nostalgia as retrograde and regressive, Davis argues that it serves a specific, socially necessary function, providing stability and continuity of identity at moments when rapid social change dislocates and destabilizes it. The function is socially necessary because, as Davis contends, "[t]o fail persistently at forging this restitutive link between a past and a present self is quite possibly to expose one's being to that terrifying 'hell of timelessness' which the psychiatrist Meerloo sees as characteristic of schizophrenics" (pp. 36-37). It could thus be argued that Davis presciently foreshadowed Jameson's (1991) work over a decade later that nostalgia as an aspect of pastiche and schizophrenia are the two defining characteristics of postmodernity. Nostalgia therefore "thrives on transition," on threats to the continuity and stability of identity that engender the dreadful prospect of collapse of the structures of identity and timelessness.

What is critical about these mechanisms of nostalgia, however, is that in retracing the steps of identity and remembering previous selves in order to find anchoring in the present, it filters previous selves invested with positive affect. The motivation, Davis suggests, is that "perhaps" universally "people want to think well of themselves" (p. 36). Nostalgia thus is not only a function of the imagination and envisioning an escapist Utopia, but of a resuming a previously felt "structure of feeling" (Williams, 1961) associated with stability of identity and positive affect.

Though identity has rarely been foregrounded in studies of nostalgia, it commonly features as the subtext. Matthew Leggatt's (2018) study of contemporary nostalgia, for example, argues that the current nostalgia moment was set in motion by the encounter with the 21st century sublime "held predominantly in the form of our response to the terror of our confrontation with the global" (p. 4) that triggers a desire to relive the past. Drawing on Kant's (2000) formulation of the sublime, Leggatt posits that aspects of the 21st century such as "divisive politics, the mediatization of terror, and the sheer scale and overwhelming complexity of the global web" (p. 5) overwhelm cognition and disrupt the experience of time, raising the prospect of loss of identity (that, which makes us *Us*). Following Davis, memory and nostalgia function as anchors – metaphorical "training wheels" – as identity adapts to the new status quo. Boym is particularly helpful here in emphasizing the distinction between restorative nostalgia, which will aggressively seek to reinstate an irretrievable, mythical past (i.e. "Make America Great Again") and reflective nostalgia, which is self-aware and leans into the supportive functions of nostalgia without trying to fashion present circumstances to fit the image of an imagined past. Seemingly aligned with Boym, Foucault cautions:

> "[i]t's a good thing to have nostalgia toward some periods on the condition that it's a way to have a thoughtful and positive relation to your own present. But if nostalgia is a reason to be aggressive and uncomprehending toward the present, it has to be excluded." (Martin et al. 1988, p. 12)

An essential aspect of contemporary nostalgia is that the past cohabits with the present (Boym, 2001; Jameson, 1991; Higson, 2014). This is in part an affordance of the vast archive of audiovisual media accumulated over the course of the 20th century, which function as time capsules, rendering "the past" easily and readily available for consumption. As Reynolds (2011, p. xxix) argues, "in the second half of the twentieth century, nostalgia became steadily more and more bound up with popular culture" and at the same time grew "thoroughly entwined with the consumer-entertainment complex" (p. xxix). The co-temporaneity of the past and the present has rendered nostalgia *a*temporal – it "seems to stand outside time" (Higson, 2014, p. 123). Contemporary nostalgia's *a*temporaneity is, according to Higson, the central characteristic differentiating post-modern from modern nostalgia. Following Jameson (1991), Higson argues that the past in advanced capitalism is ubiquitous; it is a consumable good seized on and commodified by the culture industries. Nostalgia therefore does not remain wistful for long, the longing for the past is sooner or later satisfied through consumption. Higson's argument then, similarly to Jameson's, is premised on an overly totalizing conception of the past as fully available through commodities. To the contrary, a more nuanced perspective is helpful here, acknowledging that while some nostalgic affects, associated with specific pasts can be assuaged through consumption, nostalgia not anchored to cultural artifacts, i.e. – a more vague and generalized longing for an idealized past – remains elusive. Drawing a distinction between the two, Menke (2017) focuses on "media nostalgia" – nostalgia for specific media of the past.

Media nostalgia is different from "mediated nostalgia" – the type that seems to be Higson's object of study – where "media serve only as mediators or portals to media-unrelated experiences from the past" (p. 630). Media nostalgia Menke argues sometimes means "turning to media content; in other cases, it means embracing outdated media technology with its formerly genuine social and cultural significance, aesthetic, style, way of operation, smell, or haptic" (p. 631).

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CHAPTER 3: THE 50S PROPAGANDA CYCLE: "CONFIRMING" THE EXCEPTIONALISM OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM

American Cold War cinema of the 50s, loosely understood as that subset of American cinema that overtly or implicitly engaged Cold War topics and themes is not commonly referenced as a paragon of aesthetic or political complexity or popular appeal and box office success. Save for a handful of notable exceptions, a large section of the Cold War film canon is comprised of propaganda films and B-horror and sci-fi features that mined the darker veins of fear of communist brain washing, infiltration of the U.S. social fabric, communist world takeover, and global nuclear annihilation. The descriptor "propaganda" film here denotes a clear pejorative connotation, indicative not only of a political heavy-handedness but also a compromised artistic integrity – whereby the aesthetic possibilities of the medium have been subordinated to questionable political ends.

Films of the early Cold War, produced as World War II was coming to an end and the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union was reconfigured from an alliance over the common goal of defeating Nazism to ideological adversaries advancing two purportedly radically opposite visions of state structure and global order, are considered within scholarly literature some of the most bluntly propagandistic works of the Cold War cannon (Smith, 2014; Sayre, 1982; Hoberman, 2011; Hendershot, 2003; Shaw & Youngblood, 2010). Understanding the films through the lens of political propaganda has in fact been the main analytical approach towards them within the study of film and media. This is in part a result of the dominance and long history of propaganda studies within the field of (communication and) media studies itself. As a young academic discipline in the 1930s, communication and media studies gained legitimacy through its examination and analysis of the use of mass media technologies (including

film) for the spread of war time propaganda. As the analysis moved to the use of propaganda within U.S. media, it implicated central questions about the possibility of democratic governance in a mass media age and lent the discipline contemporary relevance and legitimacy within academia.

Propaganda studies have thus occupied a central focus within the discipline of media studies since the 1930s to more recent decades when Chomsky and Herman's "propaganda model" made a splash and exposed an anti-democratic bias in U.S. news media. When adopted as an analytical lens, propaganda focuses intellectual inquiry on questions surrounding whose interests it serves, in what ways it is deployed and to what effects. Though theoretically it has been argued that propaganda is neither positive nor negative, a number of studies (most notably Chomsky and Herman's) have attributed a negative connotation to the term that comes from the implication that those who control the mass media use propaganda to advance their own self-interest rather than and often against the capacity of the citizenry for self-governance. Since in the United States control of mass media falls largely within private hands, it activates questions of the political economy of the media – another dominant line of theory within the field of media studies.

The purpose of this brief summary of the dominance and significance of propaganda studies within the larger field of media studies (and later media and cinema studies) is to contextualize the use of propaganda as a conceptual framework for looking at Cold War film, specifically those of the early Cold War when propaganda was believed to be rampant in U.S. and foreign media. This is not to deny the objective presence of propaganda in films of that period. Numerous declassified government documents provide undisputed evidence that branches of the state overtly used "propaganda" as a strategic tool in the conflict. Of note is

National Security Council (NSC) document 20/4, which bluntly stated: "We must accept propaganda as a major weapon of policy, tactical as well as strategic, and begin to conduct it on modern realistic lines." As the medium most strongly associated with modernity, that brought a new layer of realism to representation, cinema has a privileged status as a vehicle for propaganda.

The goal at hand, rather, is to contextualize the predominance of literature that focuses on films of the early period of the Cold War for their capacity to serve as channels for propaganda. The latter comprises the widespread promotion of a vast cluster of ideas and strategies for representing the Cold War "Other" that sought to influence the construction of the conflict and the enemy in the popular imagination. Overt and implicit research questions have thus been informed by the legacy of propaganda studies – whose interests does the promotion of certain ideas and representations serve?; what representational strategies are deployed?; what are the possible implications for American democracy? Though the term itself had originated in the 17th century, the availability of new media technologies in the early to mid-20th century was understood to bring dramatic changes to the content of propaganda and how it was disseminated. The availability of new technologies for the spread of propaganda was concurrent with a renewed understanding that in a conflict, in which both parties assiduously avoided direct confrontation due to the potential it presented for complete annihilation, the competition to influence and win allegiances assumed an unprecedented primacy. Much research therefore focused on these novel aspects of propaganda and its uses of film of the early Cold War.

This chapter reviews some of the literature on the films of the early Cold War. It argues that while research and analysis of the films as propaganda artifacts has been illuminating both in understanding the spread of Cold War propaganda and its content, that provides a limited

understanding of the significance of the films for the American national imaginary. I argue that within the contemporary historical juncture moving towards an understanding of the films as mediated memories can be constructive in gaining new insights about their significance and their role in the constitution of nationalist identity around the concept of American exceptionalism. Crucially, as scholars of memory have argued, sites of memory and commemoration are also sites of inclusion and exclusion, which assumes a pointed relevance for the contemporary moment, in which the U.S. and Western democracies grapple with the inclusion of historically marginalized communities and racial groups.

Scholarship of 50s Cold War propaganda films – the dramas and docu-dramas specifically – rarely focuses closely on individual film texts (Shaw, 2007; Shaw & Youngblood, 2010), discussing instead the cycle as a whole. This is a function of the films' perceived generic and ideological simplicity, whereby their politics are clearly legible on the surface, thus obviating the need for close analysis. While it is true that the films are overly didactic, expository, and unsophisticated, a close analysis of their deployment of didacticism speaks not only of a blunt exaltation of the virtues of American capitalist democracy but also of the imperative to remember. Memory or remembering is thus invoked as a way to support the stability of identity in a time of seismic social, cultural and political restructurings brought about by the end of World War II, the soldiers' return home, the Soviet Union's procurement of nuclear power, and many others. Focusing on three films that exemplify the main characteristics of the genre: R. G. Springsteen's *The Red Menace* (1949), Gordon Douglas' *I Was A Communist for The FBI* (1951), and Leo McCarey's *My Son Jon* (1952), this chapter argues that the imperative to remember is central to 50s propaganda to "confirm" and that the film's stylistic

elements work to authenticate it. Tracing the work of memory through the films thus elucidates how cinema can recruit memory ostensibly towards conservative ends.

Early Cold War Propaganda as Reaffirmation of the Hegemony of Western Capitalist Democracy

Propaganda studies have predominantly relied on two theoretical frameworks – the magic bullet theory and Chomsky and Herman's "propaganda model." The former is largely associated with the empirical turn of early media and communications and while its limitations have since come to be well documented, traces of that approach to studying propaganda are evident in more recent works in that area. Shaw and Youngblood's (2010) extensive study of the Cold War film canon thus concludes that "[i]n both the Soviet Union and the United States positive *messages* about 'us' dominated negative *messages* about 'them' on the silver screen" (p. 220). The emphasis on messages harkens the magic bullet theory's central premise that mass media technologies "inject" messages into a receptive audience. Much criticism of Cold War films from that period, informed by ideas of a free and independent press at the service of an informed citizenry, is dedicated to identifying the messages of Cold War films or exposing the ruse of propaganda (Smith, 2014): "[t]he ability to detect propaganda qua propaganda proves to be one of the most important traits of analysis" (p. 23). Film criticism was thus inflected by the broader social discourse on propaganda that described it as public information marked by bias and untruth, whose thinly veiled aim of persuasion is motivated by self-interest. That view was advanced by some of the most prominent public intellectuals of the time including Walter Lippman and John Dewey and later espoused by the nascent discipline of communication and media studies. The perceived attempt at persuasion is a critical component of propaganda, which

can be succinctly described as "a type of discourse that tries, but fails, to conceal its didactic intent" (p. 23). By implication, an attempt at persuasion that goes undetected is received as information. Within this discourse criticism of the films is focused not only on lifting the lid on efforts to promulgate "messages" about the Cold War but also on assessing the truthfulness and realism of information and representations. The necessity for this type of analysis was also evidenced by the fact of FBI's involvement in the production of anti-communist films, most notably, *Walk East on Beacon!* whose publicity campaign overtly urged the general audience to become involved in a surveillance campaign against communism claiming: "The FBI needs your help in its fight to guard our freedom" (Sayre, 92-93). In what reads like an ominous precursor of post-9/11 rhetoric, the ad asks viewers to be watchful for:

"Espionage, sabotage, or subversive activities;

Possession and distribution of foreign-inspired propaganda;

Chartering of aircraft for flights over restricted areas;

Unusual fires or explosions affecting vital industry;

Suspicious individuals loitering near restricted areas;

Theft or unauthorized possession or purchase of large quantities of firearms, ammunition, or explosives, or short-wave radio devices;

Foreign submarine landings;

Suspicious parachute landings;

Poisoning of public water supplies;

Possession of radioactive materials."

Revelations about FBI involvement in the promotion of films served to alert the audience of the need to be watchful for domestic propaganda and the government's attempts to influence

Cold War attitudes and beliefs. Additionally, there was an awareness that propaganda films were shot on a low budget and featured no top-billed talent, suggesting that studios did not expect the films to be major box office successes. Experience had shown that films that took a clear stance for or against a political ideology did not attract a broad audience and usually ended up as box office flops. The presumption was that early Cold War films were made under pressure from anti-communist crusaders, the HUAC, and right-wing critics (Sayre, 1982; Smith, 2014). Interviewed in the late 40s, an irate Samuel Goldwyn who had been subpoenaed by the HUAC reportedly told a *New York Times* reporter: "What do they want us to do? Make anti-communist pictures? Is that the way to bring about peace?" (as in Hoberman, 2011, p. 59).

What the case of *Walk East on Beacon!'s* publicity also suggests, however, is that contrary to the dominant understanding of the period, propaganda need not necessarily be based on explicitly untrue or deceitful information. The FBI may have possessed actual intelligence they believed justified this call to vigilance. As Ellul (1965) pointed out – the question of the veracity of the information was secondary to the campaign's goal to encourage certain attitudes, beliefs, and obvious conclusions. Drawing on literature from psychology and sociology Ellul argues that propaganda works by fostering a sense of belonging within the body politic. That definition thus gestures towards later developments within the field of communication and media studies, specifically, Althusser's contribution of the theory of ideology and its subsequent dominance. Within cinema studies, Comolli & Narboni (1971) have drawn on Althusser's work to argue that film – and Hollywood film specifically – is fundamentally ideological as its inherent function is to reproduce "reality" which invariably reproduces ideology. But the particularity of the 50s anti-communist cycle films is that they are overdetermined – the filmic medium reproduces ideology *and* they are explicitly coded to be ideological. One of the effects

of that overdetermination is that it calls attention to itself – the work of ideology is kept obnoxiously visible, which in turn interferes with the processes of narrative suturing: the viewer is aware of the attempt at persuasion. It becomes propaganda.

In his work Ellul critiques current definitions of propaganda as outdated:

> "The aim of modern propaganda is no longer to modify ideas, but to provoke action. It is no longer to change adherence to a doctrine, but to make the individual cling irrationally to a process of action. It is no longer to transform an opinion but to arouse an active and mythical belief." (p. 25)

Importantly, Ellul makes a crucial observation – propaganda in the U.S. was not about encouraging the adoption of a new set of attitudes and ideas but, rather, the re-affirmation of existing ones. Shaw (2010) also recognizes that aspect of propaganda in his seminal survey of Cold War films:

> "Unlike the Soviet film industry, Hollywood was not seeking to change public opinion, but rather to confirm to Americans and others that the political and economic system they had lived with for generations was (with a few modifications) the best available and what all people would want if they had a choice. Soviet filmmakers, in contrast, first had to prove their system worked, and then to persuade others to follow it as fellow travelers or convert to it as staunch communists." (p. 218)

Shaw's argument of an evident "confirmation" of already existing – "for generations" – beliefs and attitudes in Hollywood Cold War films suggests a broader campaign for the maintenance and preservation of previously established ideological beliefs. Propaganda as confirmation thus is not only about ensuring the seamless continuity of a prior social and political order/system – the projection of the past into the present and future – but also about

securing national coherence and a sense of belonging to the social group (in this case the nation), on the basis of shared attitudes and beliefs. As Ellul details, post-World War II propaganda emerged in part as a response to a perceived decline of traditional social groups, including the family and the church. It thus served to "confirm" the ideological values believed to be at the core of a perceived prior state of higher social cohesion.

The campaign to confirm, however, or reaffirm "the political and economic system they [Americans] had lived with for generations" invariably entails an imperative to remember a socially shared past. At first glance this contention may seem not to be qualitatively different from the now commonplace knowledge that political and economic elites appeal to a preferred reading of history to enlist the allegiance of a target populace (the most obvious example here being the rise of Nazism and its appeals to nostalgia for Germany's past as a European Imperial power). Propaganda here is not at labor to restore something believed to have been lost, which would cause it to pivot to nostalgia. Rather, propaganda is intended to ensure its continuity – the continuity of the U.S. economic and political system (i.e. capitalism) and its attendant system of beliefs and values (i.e. ideology). Memory, though not necessarily nostalgic memory, is nevertheless an integral component of that effort.

It is important to establish the difference between history, memory and myth (Ellul referred to the function of propaganda to instill "mythical belief"). History, Pierre Nora (1992) argued follows events. It is an "intellectual and secular production, [that] calls for analysis and criticism … [it] belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority." (Nora, 1989, p. 8-9). As a formal discipline, history is concerned with producing a reconstruction of the past that meets established standards of intellectual and research rigor, argumentation, and empiricism. Nora contends that history claims a universal authority based on a purported

objectivity – it "belongs to everyone and to no one." History's status as a source of objective truth has come under criticism, most notably by Foucault who has argued that the very notion of "objective truth" is discursive and therefore not neutral (Foucault, 1976, p. 56).

Contrary to history's focus on events, memory attaches itself to sites: "in spaces, gestures, images, and objects" (Nora, 1992, p. 9). It is "perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present" and it can be "collective, plural, and yet individual." It should be noted that Nora's survey of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) in France has come under criticism for its own nostalgia for an organic Frenchness. That being said, in its broad conception of memory, Nora does provide a constructive definition of memory that was later expounded by Svetlana Boym (2001). Specifically, Nora argues that memory is in a state of "permanent evolution," it is malleable, and capable of holding contradictions. Building on the dialectical nature of memory Nora articulates, Boym posits her model of "reflective nostalgia," which conceives of nostalgic remembering as a fusion of both longing and critical thinking. The two "are not opposed to one another, as affective memories do not absolve one from compassion, judgment, or critical reflection" (p. 49-50). Memory in Nora and Boym therefore is not a gaze fixated on that, which no longer is; rather, memory is the projection of the past into the present where it gains a renewed vitality and relevance.

Definitions of myth hew closely to definitions of memory. In his seminal 1957 work on myth, Barthes defined it as a type of language/text that makes certain concepts seem natural and therefore beyond contestation (Barthes, 2012). More recent work on myth builds on the core characteristics of myth described by Barthes:

> "[myths] are deeply rooted identity narratives, which can be reactivated over and over again in the interpretation of new situations; they are associated with 'timeless truths' and

> because their truth is unquestioned they have an enormous power to mobilize affect and the sense of an immutable identity; indeed they are often about the origin of the ethnie itself" (Rigney, 2018, p. 241)

It is in myth's ability to disguise itself as a transparent, "timeless truth" that the possibility of alternative truths is erased or "forgotten" (Bignell, 2017, p. 124). The distinction between myth and memory is therefore not only in the time scale – with memory relating to more recent events and myth being associated with timelessness but also, and more crucially, in the malleability of memory. They are similar in that both myth and memory are constitutive components of identity narratives but while myth projects itself as immutably true, memory is "an act of meaning-making in the present" (Rigney, 2018, p. 242). It is precisely for its capacity for transformative change, for intervening into cycles of repetition and reproduction of the past that memory "can work against the power that myths have acquired over much longer periods of time" (p. 243) and justifies scholarly attention.

A core characteristic of this conception of memory is that it is material. It receives concrete articulation in cultural artifacts – "sites of memory" -- that exist out in the world. This is the external dimension of collective memory – that, which is seen as existing outside of the individual mind. Cultural objects are, in that sense, prosthetic memories. They evoke the remembrance if a given collectively shared past. The examples in that category are wide and varying but some of the most common ones include: public monuments, museums, archives, photographs, film, newspapers, buildings and architectural landmarks, etc. It was in reference to the material, physical aspect of memory that Assmann (2010) coined the term "cultural memory." What defines cultural memory as a sub-category of collective memory is its basis in the "material contact between a remembering mind and a reminding object" (p. 111). Cultural

objects and places are invested with memories, which can then trigger a remembering upon contact. Communications media are key to this dynamic since in order for memory to be shared and become group memory, i.e. constitutive of the identity of a social group, it must be mediated (Rigney, 2018). The mediation of memory in itself poses its own set of questions that demand analysis and investigation. As Rigney reports, studies of Holocaust remembrance show that there is a limit to our capacity to process historical events, especially traumatic events, which overwhelm cognitive schemata for making sense of what had happened or our ability to relay it to others. White (1996) similarly argued that techniques for representing history established at the height of artistic realism showed limitations when deployed in the representation of modernist events. Oliver Stone's *JFK* provides an emblematic illustration of White's point. Though much of journalists', historians' and political pundits' criticism of the film at the time focused on the "content," it elided the complex interrelationships between the event itself, the medium, and the genre, in which it is emplotted. The issues the film raises, according to White, cannot be discussed without consideration of the specific characteristics of the postmodern historical drama as a film genre. Thus, the formal techniques Stone uses to tell the story of JFK's assassination – flashbacks, flashforwards, rapid editing, cross cutting – work to present events in the film – both real and imaginary – as if they were equally historical, their ontological differences subdued. Referring to Nazism and the Final Solution, White asks: "Can these events be responsibly emplotted in any of the modes, symbols, plot types, and genres our culture provides for 'making sense' of such extreme events in our pasts?" (White, 2001, p. 376) Ultimately, he reasons that no event is unrepresentable but that the modernist event poses unique demands on style and form that require the invention of new representational strategies.

The questions White identifies, however, can be extended to analyses of the role of memory in the emplotment of historical events. As Rigney argues, "[m]emorability is not a feature of events themselves" (p. 243) but rather, of how events are mediated, which begs the question of how specific media and their different genres emplot historical events and mediate the cultural memory of them. That inquiry is relevant not only in terms of the constitutive role of memory as a component of individual and cultural identity but also as a factor shaping the future horizon of expectations in politics and public affairs (Sibley, 2012). Apart from questions focused on the specifics techniques of emplotment, the inquiry can and should be extended to consider what the telling of a certain memory reveals about how the past affects the present (Sturken, 1997). To put Sturken's point differently – questions should be raised about what representations of memory suggest about how past events shape the present (or are made to shape the present). Cultural memory, according to Sturken, is particularly relevant to understanding national belonging as "[i]t is a field of contested meanings, in which Americans interact with cultural elements to produce concepts of the nation…" p. 3.

It is particularly with regard to cultural memory's role in producing concepts of the nation that the early Cold War propaganda films merit attention. An aspect of the late 40s and early 50s that is rarely mentioned both in criticism and in analysis is that with the end of World War II the U.S. had to contend with early perceived signs of its declining power – it no longer had monopoly over the production of nuclear weapons. That prerogative was now also claimed by its main ideological rival in the post-war order (Hoberman, 2011, p. xv-xvi). The announcement that the Soviet Union has begun nuclear testing was made in September of 1949, sowed widespread panic and anxiety over the prospect of nuclear annihilation. A certain assurance in the country's unparalleled military might had been lost and in its place a new-found

vulnerability had taken shape. Though the U.S. had emerged from the war as the world's foremost superpower, the Soviet Union's acquisition of nuclear weapons somewhat (though certainly not completely) leveled the playing field. This was in part due to the specific characteristics of nuclear technology – it required no penetration of land borders, overcoming of treacherous physical terrains, a trained army, or the vast resources to prepare it for combat. Nuclear missiles were launched from secure domestic military bases, traveled by air, fell from the sky and guaranteed destruction. Hoberman (2011) calls the impact of the announcement a "crisis for the nation." Invariably the Soviet Union's possession of nuclear weapons lent the threat of communism a renewed urgency. As Shaw and Youngblood (2010) argue, in the face of the looming crisis it was necessary to "confirm to Americans and others that the political economic system they had lived with for generations was (with a few modifications) the best available and what all people would want if they had a choice."

In light of the ongoing crisis, Shaw and Youngblood's concept of "confirmation" of ideology seems particularly apt. A competing ideology with a newly gained nuclear arsenal was posing a challenge to the perceived primacy and superiority of the U.S. political and economic system. Though Shaw and Youngblood (2010) do not identify it as such, the belief they describe is a central aspect of the broader concept of "American exceptionalism" – the idea that specific aspects of U.S.'s history make it first and unique among nations, with a superior system of governance (a vibrant democracy) and an unlimited economic growth potential (Lipset, 1997). As Lipset points out, "the concept could only have arisen by comparing this country with other societies" (p. 18). This is in part due to the fact that research shows that the U.S. has historically been an outlier with respect to statistical indicators rankings nations according to various criteria. The caveat about American exceptionalism is that those differences are unswervingly interpreted

as uniformly positive, eliding nuance and complexity of meaning. The point of comparison is of critical significance here and suggests an understated function of "other societies" to serve as the U.S.'s "self-consolidating Other" (Kim, 2010, p. 48). Kim coined the term specifically with respect to the Soviet Union during the Cold War. A close reading of one of the foundational documents of the Cold War -- George Kennan's *The Sources of Soviet Conduct* (1947) – suggests, according to Kim, "that what has been called a policy of containment appears as a trope of American exceptionalism, a nationalist narrative of American self-identity…" (p. 48).

It should be emphasized that American exceptionalism as a concept and a term predates the beginning of the Cold War. Lipset (1997) traces its origins to the 19th century and Alexis De Toqueville. The belief in the superiority of the U.S. economic and political system as symptomatic of the myth of American exceptionalism therefore had a pre-existing history that could be summoned in the present moment in order to fortify its continued existence and vitality. This again points to the aptness of the concept of confirmation (rather than a persuasion of the validity of something new) – indicating a preservation of continuity, evasion of rupture, and the projection of the past into the present and future. The idea of "confirming" is by necessity retroactive – it evokes something previously believed or feared for the purpose of establishing its truthfulness and validity in the present. When framed in these terms, the role of memory in sustaining the legitimacy of American exceptionalism as a "nationalist narrative of American self-identity" becomes clearer.

U.S. propaganda films compared to their Soviet counterparts therefore had a different agenda – the preservation of an already existing hegemony (Gramsci, 1992) and political and economic order in the face of a newly emerged alternative aspiring to reconfigure the existing relations of power and resources. With an emphasis being placed on the preservation of a

previously existing ideology – a move that invariably entails an act of turning the gaze towards the past – examining how memory is mediated becomes a critical enterprise.

Cold War Propaganda Films and the Directive to Remember

One of the most prominent examples of early Cold War propaganda film is Springsteen's *The Red Menace*. Sayre (1982) calls it not without reason "the choicest of the anti-Communist films" (p. 84). Her irony is not misplaced as the film is one of the bluntest film projects with an easily-identifiable agenda to encourage a set of desirable attitudes and beliefs. It checks most of the "common propaganda devices" identified by Clyde R. Miller in the late 30s at the Institute for Propaganda Analysis:

1. Name-calling – the propagandist applies such bad names as "fascist" or "communist" to the opponent to stimulate hate and fear.
2. Glittering generalities – "the propagandist identifies his program with virtue by use of 'virtue words,' such as truth, freedom, justice.
3. Transfer – "the propagandist carries over the authority, sanction, and prestige from something we respect and revere [often church and nation] to something he would have us accept."
4. Testimonial – to bolster an idea or plan by using a statement from someone recognized by the public.
5. Plain folks – when members of society's political or social elite court the public by appearing to be just ordinary folks and therefore wise and good.
6. Card stacking – the propagandist relies upon half-truths, distractions, and omissions, using "under-emphasis and over-emphasis to dodge issues and evade facts."

7. Bandwagon – the propagandist works to make us "follow the crowd, to accept the propagandist's program en masse.

Unsurprisingly, communists in the film are represented as utterly unscrupulous, immoral, and lethal. The film labors so assiduously to establish their nefariousness, communist characters verge at times on caricatures. They stand in clear opposition to the American protagonists who are either unsuspecting dupes lured into the party because of their naiveté or honest, hard-working, God-fearing citizens and embodiments of virtue who are attempting to rescue their sons and daughters from a calculating, exploitative force of evil. The authority of the church is transferred through the character of Father O'Leary who delivers lofty testimonials on the virtue of the U.S. "Plain folks" like Molly's mother and Uncle Sam who are opposed to the seemingly erudite and philosophical communists. Though it seems to intend to present itself as factually accurate, omissions are clearly evident and done in the service of guiding the viewer towards espousing morally appropriate attitudes and beliefs.

As Hendershot (2003) has argued, the theme of redemption is central to the film – specifically the redemption of Americans who had fallen prey to predatory communists and what the film exposes as their disingenuous, empty promises of bringing about a more socially just world order. Redemption is possible since those who became involved with the communist party did so out of ignorance and youthful idealism – they didn't know any better than to let themselves be used as instruments in the hands of the ruthless, calculating enemy. To the extent, to which it could work as a metaphor, the film suggested that redemption was possible for the friendly witness who testified to the HUAC. It encouraged a favorable view and provided justification for the redemption of Whittaker Chambers and Herbert Philbrick – both friendly witnesses to the HUAC. Furthermore, employing a common propaganda device, the subject of

redemption is emplotted to signify difference and distinction from the communist Other. Thus, towards the end of the film a character, whom children call Uncle Sam tells Bill Jones and Nina Petrovka – the film's central protagonists – that "the communists don't give people a second chance. The United States is different. We give people as many chances as they deserve." The ostensible didacticism of Uncle Sam aside, the scene works to lend validity to Kim's (2010) argument about the function of the Soviet Union as a "self-consolidating Other" in a "nationalist narrative of self-identity" (aka American exceptionalism). The setting echoes the Manichean logic of the film with Bill and Nina arriving in the middle of the night and telling their story in the dead of night and Uncle Sam opening the blinds a few hours later to let the daylight in before he offers them redemption.

Yet even though a propagandistic scaffolding is clearly identifiable throughout the film, its bluntness is never productive of a comedic effect. The loftiness of the issues is secured by merging the elements of film noir with the period's documentary/journalistic genre tropes that had been reserved for documentary newsreels. The entire film is thus accompanied by voiceover narration that explains the film to the viewer and ensures interpretive certainty. Both image and voiceover work to firmly secure meaning and leave little room for ambiguity or alternative interpretation. This can be explained by the intense attention focused on Hollywood in the period surrounding the HUAC hearings and the burden it placed on studios and filmmakers to preemptively make their allegiances apparent and denounce communism. Parts of *The Red Menace* – specifically a montage sequence showing Henry Solomon, a former Communist party member, roaming the streets, finding a job, then losing it when the party sends his membership card to his employer in retaliation for his disloyalty overlaid with voiceover narration – exhibit generic similarities to "attitude-building" shorts like *Duck and Cover* (1952) intended to instill

proper attitudes in elementary and high school children (Cripps, 1993). The aesthetics borrowed from what was at the time a documentary genre lend *The Red Menace* an air of authoritativeness. Its engagement with historical themes demands a serious attitude and attention from the viewer. The Henry Solomon montage sequence serves to stoke fear of social ostracization. His communist party membership exposed, Solomon finds himself in a no-man's-land – eschewed by his former friends and party members alike. It underscores one of the central themes of early Cold War film – anxiety about social belonging and group membership (be it membership in the nation as an imagined community or the communist party).

The propagandistic tinge does not come from overt misinformation or untruthfulness. The Henry Solomon subplot is not implausible since, as it has been widely documented – known communists were blacklisted and subjected to severe social ostracization. Rather, the elements of propaganda are recognizable in the disabling of alternative interpretations; in the soldering of an "if-then" scenario by ensuring that the vocal track reins in the polysemy of the moving image. The stylistic devices of the documentary work side-by-side with noir elements. Thus, at the very beginning of the Solomon montage sequence he is represented in his apartment at night, looking through the window – the shadows cast by the windowpane striping his face before he walks over to a floor lamp that casts a low-angle light as the voiceover narration explains: "The walls are crowding in on him, the suffocating boredom of the drab apartment makes him irritable, restless…" The score exhibiting a similar mix of standard suspense thriller elements blended with patriotic trumpets.

Figure 1: Shepard Menken as Henry Solomon in *The Red Menace*.

But *The Red Menace* is not only a vehicle for emplotting political subjects and themes contemporaneous with the making of the film; it was also a mediation of cultural memory. The film thus starts with Nina and Bill on the run, fleeing an unknown persecutor in the middle of the night. The plot then shifts to a flashback, in which the narrative is developed before it moves back into the present for the final portion of the film to provide a narrative closure. The cut from a shot of the dark vehicle to a bright and sunny California, two palm trees flanking a Veterans' Service Center is accompanied by an unambiguous exhortation to remember: "To understand [what Bill and Nina are running away from], we must go back with Bill Jones; back on the wings of his tortured memory to a city in California." From the beginning the film signals a tug of nostalgia. The present is filled with tension and danger and a powerful enemy on the prowl. Compared with the threat hanging over his life in the present, the squabble at the Vet Center in

the past seems like a minor inconvenience. Furthermore, Bill found himself in the predicament he was in not because of some systemic social injustice but rather – because he didn't bother to seek advice or read the small print in his contract. Bill's response: "That's what I've been hearing every place I go," establishes one of the main ideological points of the film and anti-communism more broadly – that those who don't find economic success are "dimwits" or dupes who have only themselves to blame for their plight. They had all the necessary resources to be successful provided to them but lacked the talents or mental capacities to make use of them, therefore shifting responsibility for economic outcomes solely to the individual.

The frame at the Vet Center is has three planes – the state employee in the foreground, Bill across the counter and in the background – a communist party operative on the prowl, overhearing the conversation. Structuring the plot as an extended flashback sequence, in which the main protagonist moves from being relatively carefree to fearing for his life lends a privileged status to a relatively recent past when the problems of the present were nowhere within sight. Things were not necessarily going well for Bill but by placing the responsibility for his troubles squarely on him the film suggests he had full control over improving his lot compared to the film's present where his troubles come from an alien force.

Another technique for mediating memory is through the characters themselves. Mollie O'Flaherty (Barbara Fuller) is the stereotypical communist woman who uses her charm and sexuality to lure men to join the party. The morning after she spends the night with Bill she is visited by her mother who has come to criticize her daughter for her sexual impropriety and disloyalty towards country. The exchange between them is an exercise in the mediation of memory:

Mollie: “I belong to a party that’s gonna make the world over so that people don’t get the kind of a raw deal that my father got.”

Mrs. O’Flaherty: “What raw deal? Your father worked hard and made a respectable home for us. He and I tried to bring you up the best we could but it’s beginning to look like we didn’t do a very good job of it.”

The scene between Mollie and her mother is interesting because it is emblematic of filmic mediation of memory and the usefulness of the concept of memory vis-à-vis myth or history. Sturken (1997) adds another distinction – that between cultural memory, personal memory, and official historical discourse, arguing that “when personal memories of public events are shared, their meaning changes” (p. 3). In this case, the personal memories of both the mother and the daughter have interacted not so much with public events as with two distinct historical discourses – those of capitalism and Marxism respectively. Memory is therefore distinct from history as an official discourse, which “belongs to everyone and to no one whence its claim to universal authority” (Nora, 1989, p. 9). Though he does not explicitly reference Foucault, Nora’s characterization of history echoes the former’s critique of history as invariably steeped in relations of power and control:

> “…History has no meaning though that is not to say that it is absurd or incoherent. On the contrary, it is intelligible, and should be susceptible to analysis down to the smallest detail but this in accordance with the intelligibility of struggles, of strategies and tactics.” (Foucault, 2010, p. 56)

The idea of a common or universal history thus obscures relations of power. Memory, on the other hand, is embodied past, it suggests the presence of a someone or someones to whom it belongs and it therefore cannot be completely severed from identity (as multiple scholars have

argued and as mentioned previously in this chapter, memory – personal and collective -- is constitutive of identity). The tussle between Mollie and her mother is therefore fundamentally a struggle to revise or reprogram memory with clear implications for imposing a framework for interpreting the present. To push the argument further, memory provides a site where the ruptures of hegemony can be mended and its stability reestablished. Foucault recognizes that in his work on film in popular memory:

> "Since memory is actually a very important factor in struggle (recall, in fact, struggles develop in a kind of conscious moving forward of history), if one controls people's memory, one controls their dynamism. And one also controls their experience, their knowledge of previous struggles." (Foucault, 2011, p. 253)

The Red Menace therefore offers intervention into the correct interpretation of memory. It is notable that the next time we see Mollie's mother in the film is when Mollie returns home – an act of capitulation to the ideological position of the mother but also to nostalgia as the origins of the term/phenomenon are traced to 18th century accounts of homesickness (Boym, 2001). The motif of returning home is reiterated with the only African American character in the film – Sam Wright (Duke Williams) who leaves the party to return home with his father.

Yet while the film engages in reprogramming of memory, in what could be read as a projection of self onto Other, it also simultaneously accuses communists of manipulating historical memory. Solomon's ostracization occurs when he is called to answer for his poem, in which he suggests that Karl Marx's ideas have a basis in Hegel: "This is ridiculous. Every student knows that Marx developed the ideas of Hegel and these went way back to democracy in ancient Greece."

Figure 2: Henry Solomon (Shepard Menken) is questioned by Communist party operatives.

Employing overt symbolism to cue the viewer unfamiliar with the specifics of the history of Marxism as to whose version of history is the correct one, the film represents Solomon through his reflection in a sun-shaped mirror hanging over the mantelpiece. Thus, while the film mounts a defense for the continuity of memory (i.e. the projection of the past into the present) it charges communists with being ahistorical and committing the ultimate sin of them all – the rejection of the intellectual linage of their own ideas. Ultimately, it is a device for further dehumanizing communists as people without historical memory but even more so, of constructing them oppositionally to the U.S. in order to function as a "self-consolidating Other." Historical memory abounds for characters that stand as representatives of national and religious virtue. Back at Mollie's apartment Father O'Leary asks Solomon for half a dollar:

Father O'Leary: "You see what it says on this side of the coin? E pluribus unum. And if you remember your schooldays of Latin, you know what it means.

Solomon: "One out of many."

Father O'Leary: "That's the genius of America. We aren't Irish, or Jewish, or English or Russian. We've taken the best they had and forged them into a common bond."

In this instance, however, Farther O'Leary rehashes memory as the U.S.'s foundation myth. This is not so much a mediated personal memory as it is mythical memory – it is asking the viewer for a personal affective investment into a myth, "deeply rooted identity narratives, which can be reactivated over and over again in the interpretation of new situations" (Rigney, 2018, p. 241). The function of the scene therefore is for Father O'Leary to proclaim the idea of the melting pot as alive and well and "still working." Like the majority of the plot, the scene develops through exposition and character dialogue, in which the authority of Father O'Leary (and therefore the church) is largely unchallenged, moved forward through Solomon's inquisitive questioning. *The Red Menace*'s answer to the question of how one represents political ideologies on film appears overwhelmingly to be – through characters and exposition. As scholars and critics have noted – the film is ostensibly lacking subtlety but in its attempt to make its politics as manifest as they can be, it serves as an artifact of what the politically prescribed line within public space was.

The blurring of documentary and noir elements was broadly characteristic of early Cold War propaganda films. Alfred Werker's *Walk East on Beacon!* (1952) thus starts with an establishing shot of Boston and a voiceover narration announcing: "[t]his is a drama of real life, adapted from the recorded experiences of the Federal Bureau of Investigation." The voiceover continues through the opening montage sequence, which runs as a newsreel with alternating

static camera shots surveying FBI personnel working on various tasks. The film's screenplay was based on J. Edgar Hoover's story *The Crime of the Century* and as the *New York Times'* reviewer notes, "in the course of the chase, it becomes increasingly obvious that the FBI cooperated in the production." Similarly, *I Was A Communist for The FBI* was based on a series of stories that former FBI agent Matt Cvetic wrote for *The Saturday Evening Post* about his time as an under-cover FBI informant infiltrating the communist party. The voiceover in the film is provided by Matt Cvetic (Frank Lovejoy) himself, which serves to give the film the quality of a testimonial – an FBI agent's honest look upon his own life as he reconstructs it from memory for the audience. The autobiographical element thus serves as the ultimate stamp of authenticity – the film's representations are truthful because they are not a complete work of fiction and therefore fictitious. Rather, they are a retelling from memory and therefore worthy of being accorded the validity of truth. The *Variety* review emphasized the documentary value of the film: "From the real life experiences of Matt Cvetic [published in the *Saturday Evening Post* as "I Posed as a Communist for the F.B.I"], scripter Crane Wilbur has fashioned an exciting film. Direction of Gordon Douglas plays up suspense and pace strongly, and the cast, headed by Frank Lovejoy in the title role, punches over the expose of the Communist menace." The discourse of the authenticity of the film's story (it is "real life") was so pervasive that the film was nominated for an Academy Award in 1952 in the Documentary category.

I Was a Communist for the FBI is mediated memory. In this specific case, the memory aspect has been hijacked for the anti-communist cause and the viewer is invited to bear witness to the depravity of communists who are represented as possessing every negative trait that could be attached to their character. The idea of film as looking upon real life – the myth of total cinema (Bazin, 2005) – is brought it its purest form in the case of *I was a Communist* through the

discourse of the film as a truthful, real-life account. Who, after all, would argue with the testimony of an undercover FBI agent? The authority of truth of his testimony is used to lend credibility not only to the near-caricature representations of communists but also to the film's agenda to "reprogram" recent historical memory. Thus, the 1931 legal case of nine African American teenagers accused of raping two white women on a train is recast as a communist plot intended to foment racial hatred in the U.S. and profit off of it. It would be easy to dismiss the film's treatment of the Scottsboro case as crude propaganda – deliberate and misleading – aimed at discrediting the Communist Party's involvement in the Scottsboro case on the side of the defendants but that would be overly dismissive of the legitimacy granted upon the film based on the source material – the testimonial. Contrary to historical discourse, which "belongs to nobody," *I was a Communist for the FBI* presents historical knowledge as the memory of a credible source. As such, it is entangled with the individual/personal memory narrative and the character's arc. Shortly after the scene at the party headquarters, in which Cvetic's voiceover explains the party's tactics to the viewer, the documentary elements give way to melodrama as Cvetic is confronted by his son who demands to know the truth. Having martyred himself for the cause Cvetic admits to being a communist while the camera, firmly planted on his son's face rendered with high-key light reflected in his eyes, shows him on the verge of tears. Stylistic elements associated with the documentary genre at the time give way to melodrama and vice versa in a way that blurs public and private, objective and subjective truth. The blurring of those boundaries is amplified by the ambiguity of the character of the plant – a figure whose task is to be both inside and outside of a situation or an experience (Hendershot, 2003, p. 113).

I was a Communist for the FBI was more successful in box office terms than other anti-communism films. *The Saturday Evening Post* series of stories were later adapted to a best-

selling book and a radio series. Its relative economic success could be attributed to the comparative compatibility of the testimonial format with the classical Hollywood narrative. In contrast to *The Red Menace* and *Walk East in Beacon* where the voiceover narrator is extradiegetic and omniscient, in *I was a Communist for the FBI* the testimonial allows the viewer to identify the narrator from the beginning and integrate him into the narrative plot. The device ultimately serves to conceal to some extent the didactic and propagandistic agenda of the film. More importantly, the status of the story as truth – its precise position on the spectrum from fact to fiction – remains ambivalent. Thus even though its propagandistic thrust could hardly be contested, its truth-value remains obscured.

Not all anti-communist films were produced as "docudramas." Leo McCarey's *My Son Jon* (1952) was one of the more prominent anti-Communist features produced during that period that was constructed as a more conventional drama. Early publicity materials described it as a Hellen Hayes vehicle, emphasizing the actress' return to the big screen after a 15-year hiatus. McCarey himself is reported to have elided the political aspects of the plot, focusing instead on the relationship between parents and son. The anti-communist elements are thus sutured into the familial relationship, with a specific emphasis given to the mother-son bond. The film was a critical and a box office flop, criticized for its lack of nuance, anti-intellectualism and hardline patriotism prescribed at the expense of thoughtful critique. Interestingly, criticism of the film did not challenge its anti-communism per se but the specific way, in which anti-communism was represented – i.e. that the extremism of its purported views matched that of the U.S.'s enemy thus ultimately undermining the anti-communist cause (Hoberman, 2011).

Similarly to *The Red Menace*, *My Son John* is interspersed with nostalgia for an idyllic, trouble-free past. In this case, the main bearer of nostalgic sentiment is Lucille Jefferson (Helen

Hayes) – the mother of the eponymous character. Throughout the film, the emotional bonding with the wayward son is constructed through reminiscing of his childhood and teenage years. Her intermittent segways into memory ultimately serve to interpellate her son into the identity he possessed before he left the family home and became a communist agent. This is the quintessential definition of nostalgia as the gravitational pull of the home, demanding that a previous stage of identity is revisited and reconciled with the present. The nostalgia, however, is Lucille's – the film's main protagonist, through whose point of view the story is told. From her perspective, the image of the son is split – he is her brightest son who left the home and then returned as a communist spy. Her personal drama, culminating in a nervous breakdown towards the end of the film comes from her struggle to reconcile her memory of her son replete with the maternal affect of the mother-son bond and who she perceives him to be in the present. In a climactic scene in the film Lucille stands between her son and an FBI agent clutching a framed photograph of her two other sons who excelled as football players. The camera keeps her in the center of the frame while switching positions along the 180-degree axis to reveal the reactions of the two men.

Figure 3: Lucille Jefferson (Helen Hayes) begs her son John Jefferson (Robert Walker) to turn himself in and confess his membership of the Communist Party.

Her monologue is an extended retelling of a memory of a football game but told in present tense as if the recollected events are developing in the present and she is merely reporting on them. The memory bursts into the filmic present when John interrupts her to assuage her excitation and tell her that the doctor will be arriving soon. Lucille's retelling of the story at this point is revealed to be a metaphor for the action she wants him to take in the film's present – turn himself in and confess his affiliation with the communist party. The push and pull relationship between Lucille's memory of John and her present relationship to him is thus a source of the film's melodrama. John does not respond to her interpellation thus leaving the conflict between the past and the present unresolved or not resolved in a way that allows Lucille a reconciliation between the two. As this is an anti-communist feature, the film ultimately resolves the conflict when John is killed and dies on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, but only after he has written a

commencement speech that serves as the confession that his mother demanded of him. The film is thus resolved in favor of Lucille's memory of John. It is a resolution that alleviates nostalgia by fulfilling nostalgic yearnings for reestablishing the primacy of home and family and eschewing intellectualism as alienating and disruptive of family dynamics.

It is worth noting that criticism contemporaneous with the film's release as well as more recent commentary dismisses Helen Hayes' character as hysterical and pathological with some critics (Sayre, 1982, p. 96) reading her character as a foreshadowing of Angela Lansbury's "disemboweling" mother in *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962). Undoubtedly, the conflict her character represents – the role of nostalgia as a condition in social and private life – is dismissed when she is stereotyped as a hysterical woman whose overweening motherly love is also to be blamed for her son's sexual orientation (the film strongly suggests that John is gay).

Most of the propaganda anti-communist films of the late 40s and early 50s (Smith (2014) reports that roughly 50 anti-communist films were produced between 1948 and 1952) were dismissed out of hand by critics who regarded them as blunt instruments of propaganda unworthy of serious attention. Most of them were also box office flops since, as studio heads already knew, audiences shunned films explicitly advocating a political or ideological position. With their over didacticism, the films fell short of providing the cinematic pleasures that drew audiences to the theater. Nevertheless the films are useful artifacts of cultural memory, of the "field of contested meanings in which Americans interact with cultural elements to produce concepts of the nation, particularly in the events of trauma, where both the structures and fractures of a culture are exposed" (Sturken, 1997, p. 2-3). Issues of nationalism, of how the myth of American exceptionalism sustains itself, of the mediation of public and private memory of the past at a moment of critical juncture came into sharp relief (perhaps sometimes too sharp)

in anti-communist propaganda films in a way that begs the question if they can illuminate subsequent waves of nationalism. As this chapter has argued, nostalgia and memory – both public/collective and private – are mediated in the three films that are subject of the present analysis and the films' formal techniques work to lend memory the validity as truth or at the very least trouble its dismissal as fiction. They are cultural artifacts, on whose surface the struggle over the "reprogramming" of memory – both cultural (the Scottsboro case in *I was a Communist for the FBI*) as well as private (Mollie's memory of her father's plight in *The Red Menace*) are fought with repercussion for the historical present contemporaneous with the films' making as well as future.

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CHAPTER 4: THE COLD WAR THAW AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF AN AMBIVALENT COMMUNIST STEREOTYPE

In political terms, the 60s and 70s marked a period of thaw between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. On the international arena, the Cuban Missile crisis brought about a reevaluation of the stakes of mounting hostility and a realization of the mutual interest in de-escalation. Domestically in the U.S., the political climate changed almost overnight with the widely televised Army-McCarthy hearings, which had momentous negative repercussions for the Wisconsin Senator's perceived power and political influence. McCarthy's demise in 1957 shortly after his disgraced withdrawal from political life officially bookended his repressive reign even though the Hollywood Blacklist itself would continue until 1960. Films of the 60s and 70s seized on the quickly liberalizing climate to more openly critique the excesses of McCarthyism, explore critical perspectives of Cold War questions, laugh at communists, and as a focus of a nostalgic gaze.

Cold War scholarship tends to frame Cold War films of the 60s and 70s primarily in terms of the newly found freedom to question received Cold War wisdom and the view that the Cold War was becoming "an absurd anachronism" (Shaw & Youngblood, 2010, p. 32). The present chapter, on the other hand, argues that while films of this period are largely understood as self-consciously critical of U.S. domestic and foreign policy (Belton, 2018; Shaw & Youngblood, 2010), they nevertheless uncritically reproduce stereotypes of communist and Soviet difference. As the films' pointed deconstructive critique stands side by side with their replication of stereotyped communist identity, applying Bhabha's (1994) theoretical lens of stereotype as a fundamentally ambivalent construction is productive towards understanding the limits of that critique and how rather than stemming the proliferation of stereotypes, it ultimately

sustains and extends it. Bhabha's framework for studying stereotypes is particularly relevant in light of Belton's (2018) contention that a crucial difference from the earlier hard-line propaganda period is that "communists began to function more as traditional villains than as real-life threats to our national security" (p. 300). The main locus of difference is thus in the construction of the communist character and by extension how it telegraphs a stereotype. The idiom of stereotyped communist difference articulated in the 1950s was thus plugged into narrative formulas associated with drama, comedy, and romantic comedy in the 1960s.

The chapter starts with one of the canonic films of the Cold War – John Frankenheimer's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), which came on the heels of the 50s paranoia and presented a more sophisticated variation of the Cold War communist spy as a generic trope. It was one of the earliest films of the thaw period that foreshadowed the coming wave of politically critical films and a cinematic reckoning. It then turns to Billy Wilder's *One, Two, Three* (1961), Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), and Woody Allen's *Bananas* (1971) – three comedies that take the genre in different directions with the first one a slapstick, exemplary of Wilder's style and filmography, the second a black comedy that pushes Cold War scenarios to extremes, and the third one a comedy that engages with imaginaries of communist stereotypes south of the U.S.' southern border. Lastly, the chapter turns to the romantic drama *The Way We Were* (Roth & Stark, & Pollack, 1973). While the film avoids the more blunt stereotypes of the communist other, the plot's dramatic conflict is shaped by the representation of communism as ideological difference that cannot be assimilated into American capitalism. Bhabha's theoretical lens thus allows us to map the contours of an ambivalent stereotype that continued to be operative even as the wider political and cultural discourses suggested that the Cold War was "an absurd anachronism." Focusing on the development and spread of an ambivalent stereotype across genre

rather than a unifying theme of the Cold War as a 50s relic (Shaw & Youngblood, 2010), illuminates the resilience of the Cold War villain as a structuring device in American cinema into the contemporary moment. While immediately after the World War II (late 40s) and throughout the 50s communist stereotypes were no laughing matter and were representable only as villainous and threatening or through metaphors (i.e. monsters, aliens, mutant ants, giant pods, etc.), in the 60s and 70s they are again fearsome (*The Manchurian Candidate*) but also subject of ridicule and humor (*One, Two, Three*, *Dr. Strangelove*, and *Bananas*), and deep-seated ideological difference that cannot be assimilated into capitalism (*The Way We Were*). In *The Way We Were* communism as an ideological difference is interwoven with ethnoreligious difference (Jewishness), foreshadowing the more complicated emplotment of communism in relation to other categories of difference in the 80s.

The Ambivalence of Stereotypes

As Schrecker (1998) points out, however, representations of communists from the period are contradictory. While these contradictions have received little scholarly attention, Bhabha's (1994) work on stereotypes is particularly helpful in understanding their dynamic. Although he constructed his theoretical toolkit for the deconstruction of racial stereotypes within a postcolonial framework, elements of his analysis are applicable to communist stereotypes – specifically, his argument that stereotypes are ambivalent. As an example, Bhabha points to representations of the colonial subject who is depicted simultaneously as a savage and the noblest of servants. Similarly, as early as *Ninotchka*, cinematic representations of communists depict them as both superhuman and subhuman. Ninotchka is exceptionally hard-working, knowledgeable, and possesses a supernatural physical stamina, climbing all 1,000 steps of the

Eifel Tower faster than it takes Leon to get there using the elevator. In the same time, she is primitive, robotic, unsophisticated, and soulless -- "almost a separate species of mankind" (Life Magazine). Aliens and mutants in contemporaneous science fiction films like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, which were largely understood to be metaphors for communists possess superior powers that allow them to enslave the human species in mass numbers but they are also less than human, turning their hosts into a lifeless shell.

The resilience of that stereotype is evidenced by its resurgence during the second cycle of anti-communist films in the 80s. Ivan Drago is its quintessential articulation – while supernaturally strong and physically massive, Drago is also robotic, uncomplicated, unemotional and seemingly devoid of any interior life. Furthermore, communists would be both fearsome and threatening as in the cycle of 50s propaganda films but also laughable and not to be taken seriously as in *Ninotchka* and *One, Two, Three*. As Bhabha argues, stereotypes are ritualistically repeated as it is through repetition that their continuity is ensured. Without repetition, the relationship between the sign and the referent would collapse as it is not held together by logic or reason. Thus, the three Russian envoys in *Ninotchka* resurface in Wilder's *One Two Three* with little updating or transformation. Furthermore, within that stereotype, the character of the communist is fixed and unchangeable. Evidence of that fixity is found not only in the longevity of the cinematic stereotypes – 22 years had elapsed before Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski resurfaced as Peripetchikoff, Borodenko, and Fritz. The fixity is attested by the general discursive construction of communists as irreversibly committed to communism for life. Even though being a communist presented a difference of beliefs and ideology, which theoretically could be repudiated, as Schrecker explains, "[t]he common wisdom held that belonging to the party was such a totalizing experience that one could free oneself from the Kremlin's clutches

only by a painful and public rupture" (p. 134). Similarly, to Bhabha's theory of the stereotype, communists were believed to be internally homogenous but with the significant difference that the source of that homogeneity was the slave state and its totalizing ideology, which devoured its followers' individuality, character, and identity.

The Ambivalence of the Communist Stereotype Across Genres and Genre Variations in the 60s and 70s

The Manchurian Candidate was released on the heels of these events, which signaled the end of an era of intensified fear and surveillance. It seized on the new sense of freedom from political repression, repercussions, and retribution to look back on the previous decade and present bold "What if" scenarios that ventured into subversive territory. Though the film does not seek to disguise its critique of the excesses of McCarthyism, John Frankenheimer admitted later that at the time of its release, he was cautious about the reception of its critical stance:

"Certainly in 1962 or '63 the picture was something that attacked McCarthyism and was very effective then, because we lived with it. I think the only difference is that in 1988, the audience knew it was okay to laugh. But in 1962, everyone took McCarthy so goddmaned seriously because they were right there to witness it" (Tobias, 2000)

Though the film is widely regarded as a conspiracy thriller, scholars have noted that it can be considered "multigeneric, combining aspects of melodrama, romance, and political drama" (Seed, p. 34, 2018). As a conspiracy thriller, the narrative themes that place it in that genre have been traced to Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) (Marcus, 2002; Jacobson & Gonzalez, 2006). Similar to its science fiction predecessor, which features prominently in the 1950s Cold War canon, *The Manchurian Candidate* envisions a hostile foreign menace, which secretly invades the minds and bodies of unsuspecting Americans,

draining them of their character and essence and leaving hollow shells behind. While *Invasion* remains strictly within the bounds of allegory, however, *The Manchurian Candidate* clearly identifies the alien menace as communists and communism. Jacobson & Gonzalez would go even further to argue that in addition to the *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, four other 50s films "contributed cinematic DNA" to *The Manchurian Candidate*: Elia Kazan's *Panic in the Streets* (1950), Leo McCarey's *My Son John* (1952), Lewis Allen's *Suddenly* (1954), and Robert Aldrich's *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955).

Similarly to Seed, Jacobsen & Gonzalez note an ambivalence in the tone and generic elements of the film, which according to them, puts it in closer kinship to *My Son John* than *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) (pp. 98-99). The ambivalence according to Jacobsen & Gonzalez stems from what they refer to as the film's "epistemology of McCarthyism" (p. 96). Elaborating that point, they trace McCarthy's meteoric rise and fall and the role of television in galvanizing public opinion and shaping what would later come to be the collective memory of the senator. As they and others (Schrecker, 1998) point out, the rise of McCarthy coincides with the spread of television as a popular medium and, later on, the televised broadcast of the Army-McCarthy hearings was instrumental in shifting the tide of public opinion against the Senator. Television was indispensable in the mediation of McCarthy as a public figure and his inscription into the collective memory of his reign. Condon and Frankenheimer, according to Jacobsen & Gonzalez are closely attuned to that aspect of McCarthy and focus on it in the novel and in the film (Seed, 2018). In fact, Jacobsen & Gonzalez argue, the scenes in *The Manchurian Candidate* that focus on the public presentation of Senator Iselin are constructed as clear references to McCarthy's self-presentation as seen by audiences of his televised broadcasts as well as those who had a chance to observe him live: "[t]o read the post-Murrow, post-Welch accounts of the televised

McCarthy – the bulging and the smacking, the bumbling and the shuffling, the hollow jibes and empty witticisms – is to read a perfect description of Johnny Iselin as played by James Gregory." (p. 95). The public, by-the-historical-record presentation of Iselin, however, which mobilizes the collective memory of McCarthy marries a behind-the-scenes conspiracy theory about his true motives. It is here, according to Jacobsen and Gonzalez that the film comes to straddle both anti-McCarthyism and McCarthyism:

> The bifurcation of public and private that operates in the depiction of Iselin is precisely the bifurcation that McCarthyism had thrived upon and that Cold War Hollywood film reveled in: a shocking hidden identity lies behind the placid public mask of the State Department employee (the Wheeling speech), an army lawyer (the Army—McCarthy hearings), one's kindly suburban neighbor (*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*), or one's own urbane offspring (*My Son John*) – and now, the demagogic Wisconsin senator. (pp. 95-96)

Thus, a scene of Iselin on the senate floor claiming in a typical blustering fashion that "there are exactly 57 card-carrying members of the Communist party in the Department of Defense at this time" is preceded by another, in which Iselin pleads with Mrs. Iselin (Angela Lansbury) to settle on the number of communists in the Department of Defense. The two visions of Iselin/McCarthy are starkly in contrast. The first one, which shows him in a private setting presents a cowering figure that defers to an imperial and controlling Mrs. Iselin and does as he is told. The second one that captures his public presentation shows him as domineering, confidently holding the Senate floor to sow panic and fear. Crucially, the first scene ends with a set of eye-match shots – of Mrs. Iselin looking down and of what she is looking at – a bottle of Heinz Ketchup in her husband's hands – a reference to Heinz's advertising slogan "57 varieties of pickles" as the inspiration behind the number Iselin throws out on the Senate floor. As Jacobsen

& Gonzalez point out, however, 57 was indeed one of the numbers that McCarthy spouted during his repeated charges of communist infiltration of the Department of Defense. The effect of the juxtaposition, according to them is "to *suggest* an exposé of McCarthyism itself" (p. 94, emphasis in the original). While the film's parodying of the collective memory of the Wisconsin senator signals a critical stance towards McCarthyism, in its epistemology it seems to follow its modus operandi. We learn who Iselin really is when the mask of the public figure is lifted and the camera peeks at the private spaces, the off-camera moments behind the public façade. Ultimately, Jacobsen & Gonzalez argue, "*The Manchurian Candidate* is a text not simply *on* the Cold War, but *of* it, participating subtly but deeply in the fortification of precisely the political edifice it would seem at first glance to demolish" (p. 99).

Jacobsen & Gonzalez's reasoning is also further bolstered by what Marcus identifies as the alternating currents of naturalism and absurdism throughout the film: "… I can't think of another movie that in its smallest details is so naturalistic and in its overarching tone so crazy" (p. 45). Specifically, he praises the film's famed dream sequence as "naturalistic" – "[w]hat we've seen is unlike any other dream sequence in film history: nothing before it bears a comparison and nothing afterward" (p. 25). The validity of that claim aside, what Marcus finds particularly noteworthy is that Frankenheimer manages to avoid "visual clichés" in the filmic representation of dream sequences – there are no blurs, soft edges or milky tones. His use of naturalism thus seems to be synonymous with realism: "[a]s dramatized by the gestures and speech of the people within it, the action is completely naturalistic" (p. 27). Later on, he would in a similar vein remark upon the "realism" of the production design at work in Senator Jordyn's house. Although he does not explicitly link the film's naturalism/realism to its mediation of the

collective memory of McCarthy, it is notable that he repeatedly returns to emphasize that representational aspect.

Ultimately, Jacobsen & Gonzalez contend that the film's McCarthyist epistemology is not a result of conscious calculation or intentionality on Condon or Frankenheimer's part but rather a symptom of how deeply embedded McCarthyism had become in U.S. culture. Their argument takes a Freudian structuralist perspective in that it suggests that beyond Condon and Frankenheimer's awareness, their subconscious is profoundly structured by the trauma of the previous decade and that finds concrete articulation in art – *The Manchurian Candidate* being one example – of the time. Apart from its epistemology, the film's ambivalent approach to McCarthyism and anti-communism is evident in its thematic elements. Its main narrative device – brainwashing – not only had recent history in the wave of 50s anti-communist films but was also an active ingredient of Cold War fear and paranoia. As Dunne (2013) explains, brainwashing as a term first appeared in print in 1950 in reference to a practice by the Chinese Communist Party called *his nao* ("wash brain"). Although later research and evidence suggest that "brainwashing" was likely an intense indoctrination program that took place in prison camps, in the 50s the term became sensationalized across the media landscape as a massive global Communist conspiracy to infiltrate the free world. Dunne suggests that the reasons for its hold on the popular imagination is that it synchronized with existing metaphorical discourse about the threat of communism, specifically – the idea that those espousing pro-Communist sentiments were "dupes" who were somehow tricked into holding the beliefs they have through some form of mental subterfuge (p. 48). In that sense, even though *The Manchurian Candidate* takes a left turn to propose that McCarthyites are complicit with the brainwashing enemy, its central operating conceit represents another point of continuity with the propaganda films of the

previous decade. While its anti-anticommunist sentiments are made sufficiently clear, the film's construction ultimately leaves the sinister prospect of a ruthless Communist brainwashing enemy somewhere out there in Manchuria unscathed.

The representation of the communist enemy similarly follows familiar tropes. The communist scientists are cruel, conniving, and hypocritical about their commitment to Communist ideology. As Hendershot (2003) observes, however, compared to earlier anti-communist films, *The Manchurian Candidate* introduces Chinese communists as even more ruthless and duplicitous than their Russian counterparts. Most notably, in a scene at the sanatorium where Raymond is taken to test his trigger mechanism a Russian scientist, Zilkov, comments that the sanatorium is "one of the few Soviet operations in America that actually showed a profit." When his Chinese colleague – Yen Lo – responds that he should be careful not to be seduced by capitalism, Zilkov is abhorred. But Yen Lo quickly follows up to placate the disconcerted Zilkov and admonish him that he needs to "cultivate a sense of humor." The scene wraps with him bemoaning a trip to Macy's as "Madame Yen has given me a most appalling list." While Zilkov is afforded some ideological integrity, Yen Lo ostensibly has none and is implicitly motivated purely by self-interest and opportunism. As Jacobsen & Gonzalez extensively argue, the representation of Koreans (specifically, the scene at the brothel at the beginning of the film as well as the character of Chunjun) and Chinese Communists (most notably Yen Lo) are Orientalized and the brainwashing plotline is largely racialized. Crucially, as the authors point out, neither Henry Silva (Chunjin) nor Khigh Dhiegh (Yen Lo) were Asian or Asian American but they both "approximate the standard motifs and gestures of the classic 'Oriental" (p. 125) that had entered the Western imagination through productions like *The Adventures of Fu Manchu* (1956).

On stylistic level the film is most well known for the 360-degree pan dream sequence/memory that switches between a meeting of the Ladies Garden Club in an old hotel in Spring Lake, New Jersey and an auditorium in Manchuria where Yen Lo discusses the results of the newly discovered brainwashing technique in front of an audience of Communist cadres. The sequence contributed towards the perception of the film as a "bolt from the blue" (p. xii) at the time in terms of aesthetic and sensibility. But along with its innovative techniques and radical suggestion that it's avowed anticommunists who are enemy subversives, *The Manchurian Candidate* also uses style as a call back to patriotism and a mythical heroic past. Following the intro credit sequence, the film starts with voiceover narration – a stylistic approach associated with the Cold War docu-dramas of the previous decade that seeks to establish a specific relationship to truth and realism – a relationship whose tone is at odds with the conspiracy theory subplot. Even more notable, however, is the emphasis on patriotic symbolism throughout the film. The mise-en-scene involves numerous busts and portraits of Abraham Lincoln emphasized through framing and camera movement that prompted Marcus to ask: "… and what is the Lincoln theme anyway? How did so much Railsplitter stuff get into this picture?" (p. 55) and Jacobsen & Gonzalez to comment on an "obsessive preoccupation with patriotic imagery bordering on the manic" (p. 65). The images are specifically positioned in sequences between Mrs. Iselin and Senator Iselin on one hand and Mrs. Iselin and Raymond on the other. Most conspicuously, the crucial scene during the Iselins' party that reveals that Raymond's American operative is his mother. The scene starts with a close-up on Lincoln's bust looking directly into the camera and pans right to reveal the door of the study opening and Raymond and his mother walking in before Mrs. Iselin turns to her son with the revelatory: "Raymond, why don't you pass the time by playing a little solitaire?" In their analysis of the image both Marcus and Seed

focus on a sense of loss evoked by the image. Seed argues that images of Lincoln in the film suggest a loss of freedom (p. 36) while Marcus posits that the Lincoln of this shot is "as mute, as powerless as we'd be – he is there *as* the audience" (p. 58). Jacobsen & Gonzalez would go even further to suggest that the Lincoln references in the film are "borrowed from the less self-aware films of the decade, films like *My Son John*, only blown up" (p. 66). As they point out, the deployment of patriotic imagery in the film is an aspect of Frankenheimer's direction; Condon's novel makes no references to Lincoln and Senator Iselin who is dressed up as Lincoln at their party is a dairy farmer in the novel. Jacobsen & Gonzalez argue that the Railsplitter imagery in the film serves a practical stylistic purpose – it provides a "counterpoint" to the treasonous dismantling of the republic afoot to the point that his presence in the mis-en-scene would signal the upcoming turns the plot would take. In a later scene, in which Mrs. Iselin would order Raymond to kill Senator Jordyn the Lincoln bust serves as a bounce-off point to the action that takes place between the two of them. The scene, which is only 12 seconds long, starts with Raymond walking into the same study as seen from outside through a window and cuts to the bust of Lincoln as Mrs. Iselin is heard off camera: "Something very important has come up. There is something you have to do." The camera then reframes to show Mrs. Iselin taking the deck of cards out of a drawer underneath the Lincoln bust. Frankenheimer himself explained: "Shooting this thing through a window was a choice to make, and bouncing [the shot] off [a bust of] Lincoln… Because we know what this scene is going to be… you just don't want to see it" (Frankenheimer, *The Manchurian Candidate* voiceover commentary). In a metaphorical sense, the scene is structured according to the logic of nostalgic longing – the camera looks away from the unpleasant reality of the present – what it "[doesn't] want to see" – and focuses instead on a bust of the Great Emancipator – one of the most potent and overdetermined symbols of the

U.S.'s heroic past and American exceptionalism. Furthermore, as a stand-in for McCarthy, Senator Iselin and Mrs. Iselin are presumably members of the Republican party – the original "party of Lincoln" – an element that further serves to establish a contrast between the U.S.' mythical past, in which visionary leaders like Lincoln saved the union and opened up access to the promise of Western liberal democracy and a seedy present, in which scheming members of his own party are secretly enemy operatives.

An equally evocative shot that works along similar lines of establishing visual counterpoints is the opening shot of the scene, in which Mrs. Iselin and Senator Iselin settle on the number of communists in the Department of Defense (57 as inspired by the Heinz Ketchup bottle). It is a medium shot of Senator Iselin in a bath robe as reflected in a framed portrait of Lincoln. As Jacobsen & Gonzalez comment: "[i]t is not a flattering comparison" (p. 65). It is not a flattering comparison because it serves to establish a contrast: the great leaders the country had "back then" versus the narrow-minded, easily manipulated puppets in the hands of the enemies of the Republic now. Here one cannot omit to mention the complex representations of gender in the film. Senator Iselin is a Soviet puppet but only by proxy through his conniving and depraved wife. The film never shows him as aware of the truth about who really is behind her plot to assassinate the president. He is merely an obedient and oblivious husband of a woman who is a fully realized communist implant and the mastermind of the operation. After focusing on his reflection in Lincoln's portrait, the scene cuts to a wide shot of the room as Senator Iselin turns around and pleads with his wife to settle on the number of communists only to be scolded by an irate Mrs. Iselin that he should "… just stop talking like an expert all of a sudden and get out there and say what you're supposed to say." Thus, in counterposing the Wisconsin Senator and Vice Presidential candidate who is a mere puppet in his wife's hands to the mythical past when

Lincoln was his own man and traditional gender roles were the norm, the scene and the film as a whole works to suggest that one of the ills of modern life are overbearing wives and mothers who are themselves easily corruptible and in turn corrupt men. As scholars have noted, the figure of the domineering mother in the film expressed anxieties about what was perceived as the growing influence of "momism" – the idea that "women were turning the country into a matriarchy by upending the traditional gender hierarchy, emasculating their husbands, and infantilizing their sons" (Dunne, p. 130). The unique feat of the film is in seamlessly combining emerging anxieties about women's empowerment with Cold War paranoia about communist infiltration both embodied by Angela Lansbury's Mrs. Iselin. In these troubled times, the image of Lincoln is an anchor and a nostalgic recuperation of American exceptionalism. By the film's end the three main characters counterposed to the images of Lincoln would be dead. In the final scene, in an apparent move to reaffirm its relationship to realism and serious tone Captain Marco reads citations from the U.S. Army book of *Congressional Medal of Honor*. In voiceover commentary Frankenheimer explains that Marco is reading from "the actual book of the *Congressional Medal of Honor* and they are the actual citations awarded for the medal." The "documentary," however, gives way to the fictional plot as Marco puts the book down and the camera reframes to a close-up as he recites Raymond's citation as if he himself had authored it. The citation reinstates Raymond as the rightful hero of the story who "… heroically and unhesitatingly gave his life to save his country." The Republic has been saved, the constellation of values and beliefs evoked by the images of Lincoln has been recaptured and to the extent, to which Raymond frees himself from his mother's control and takes charge of his life (and death), traditional notions of masculinity have been restored.

That the film managed to be both – anti-Communist and anti-anticommunist is reflected in the mixed response it received at the time. It drew criticisms from both the right and left. The Inglewood, California district of the American Legion drew a resolution denouncing it as an example of "Communist infiltration in the motion pictures" and urged reopening Congressional hearings to "determine once again to what extent this vital information medium (motion pictures) has been recaptured by agents of the Communist conspiracy" (p. 99). The *Communist People's World* on the other hand dismissed the film as "the most vicious attempt yet made by the [film] industry to cash in on Soviet-American tensions" (p. 99). Although Frankenheimer has claimed that the film is not "anti-Soviet," the communist enemy, in this case primarily represented by Chinese communists and Chunjin, remains a structuring narrative element, against which the commonwealth, and more specifically American exceptionalism can be recuperated. In recent years the film has resurfaced in critiques of the current administration of President Trump by the American left. In 2016, a *Salon* headline asked: "Is Trump the Manchurian Candidate? Themes in the 1950s classic don't seems far-fetched in 2016 America." A year later, Bill Moyers published an article on his blog, titled "The Manchurian President" followed by a subheading that reads: "A classic Hollywood political thriller may tell us more about what's happening in America than any history book" (Moyers, 2017). That same year an Op-Ed in *The New York Times* asked: "Donald Trump: A Modern Day Manchurian Candidate?" A common baseline denominator that affords the comparisons is the stable structuring role of the Soviet (now Russian) enemy that complements the fantasy of a Republic that is at risk of being destroyed, of becoming "like" its enemy and therefore needs to reclaim its exceptionalism.

The communist enemy in *The Manchurian Candidate* is thus a catalyst for nostalgic introspection and civic soul-searching. The film's critical gaze is directed inward, towards

American history and its imagined greatness – an imagination, which cultural symbols like the Lincoln busts and portraits channel as memory; as an organic connection to the past. The script of the film's liberal critique thus suggests that a recent historical episode (i.e. McCarthyism) represents a betrayal of a previously held higher ideal of the Republic. This is the view of history as decline. What is pertinent to the present argument, however, is that the liberal critique is circumscribed within the hegemonic center. Thus, while the film sets its aim at the betrayal of values believed to be at the core of American exceptionalism, the stereotype of the communist other remains outside of this script of liberal critique. It thus makes its way through the chain of "cinematic DNA" from the propaganda films of the 50s like *My Son John* into one of the canonical texts of the 60s that signaled a new era of reckoning.

One of the reasons the stereotype evaded scrutiny was because there was little factual information available, vis-à-vis which the stereotype could be critiqued. The Soviet Union was geographically and conceptually distant and shrouded in mystery. Thus, the type of critique that involves the evaluation of the symbolic against the real was disabled as there was still relatively little certifiable knowledge about "the real." Arguably, some films dealt with this ambiguity by limiting the representation of Soviets to minimum. Two notable examples here are *The Bedford Incident* (1965) and *Fail Safe* (1964), which mostly eschew representation of the Soviets and focus their critique instead on trigger happy military hawks within the U.S. military.

For all its seriousness, *The Manchurian Candidate* has also been noted for its nascent attempts to joke about a traumatic moment on Hollywood and American history. The Heinz Ketchup reference is one of the film's most cited gags. Beyond it, Pauline Kael has noted: "I have talked to a number of people about why they hated *The Manchurian Candidate* and I swear not one of them can remember that when the liberal senator is killed, milk pours out" (Kael,

1963). The film, however, is not the first to attempt to inject comedy in the treatment of Cold War themes. A year earlier, Billy Wilder's *One, Two, Three* (1961) situated its plot about a Berlin Coca Cola executive who is entrusted with the care for his boss' young and rebellious daughter firmly within the comedy genre. Similar to *The Manchurian Candidate*, contemporaneous audiences were unsettled by the film's invitation to laugh at the traumatic events that still shaped their environment (Sikov, 2018). This was reflected in the film's box office, which totaled less than $4.1 million from the world-wide box office and left producers with a $1,568,500 loss. *One, Two, Three* is notable for its rapid-fire pacing stamped out by James Cagney's dynamic performance and spitting out lines. Reportedly, the script is prefaced by a director's note: " This piece must be played molto furioso – at a rapid-fire, breakneck tempo. Suggested speed: 100 miles an hour on the curves – 140 miles an hour on the straightaway" (p. 46). Its snappy rhythm is partially the source of the comedy and it entailed such precise choreography that one shot, in which James Carney's C. R. "Mac" MacNamara is choosing a tie for his boss's daughter's communist husband required 52 takes (Sikov, 2018). The film rarely features in studies of Cold War filmography, which focus on more "serious" genres like dramas, docu-dramas, and thrillers. Yet, *One, Two, Three* offers interesting insights in terms of continuities and ruptures with the Cold War register of the previous decades.

Interestingly, the film was not based on an original concept. The central premise comes from a 1929 Hungarian one-act play by Ferenc Molnar -- *Egy-kettö-három* – which opened in Berlin that same year as *Ein, Zwei, Drei*. The play was "a wild farce about an agitated capitalist, Norrison, and Lydia, the daughter of an important banking client, who hurls Norrison's life and career into chaos by falling in love with a socialist taxi driver" (p. 46). As Sikov reports, however, although Billy Wilder's adaptation closely follows the story of Molnar's play and

borrows its pacing from it, only one line from the dialogue in the original makes it into the film – Scarlett (Pamela Tiffin) asking MacNamara: "Why didn't you take better care of me?" The central conflict of the play exploits early 20th century tensions between Western and Eastern Europe/Soviet Union. Scarlett (whose name is Lydia) is the daughter of a Swedish industrialist and Piffl (whose name is Anton) is a Socialist taxi driver. The entire action takes place in his office in Paris. Although set well before the beginning of World War II and the subsequent Cold War, the play anticipates what would become the main fissures of division between the East and the West. Contemporaneous reviews of *Egy-kettö-három* focused on its formal characteristics – its staccato pace, which was considered innovative at the time and, more to the point, emblematic of the growing awareness of the "dizziness of the tempo" of early 20th century and the increasing speed of modern life (Schöpflin, 1929). According to reports, Wilder had seen *Egy-kettö-három* on stage in Berlin in 1928 and was impressed with the performances. That he adapted the play for the screen roughly 30 years later conforms to Ellis's (2017) theory about the cycle of nostalgia in popular culture that argues that when of certain age media creators recreate the media of their youth. This is not, however, the film's only nostalgic vein. As scholars have pointed out (Shaw, 2007; Sikov, 2018; Phillips, 2010), *One, Two, Three* borrows from earlier, more recognizable Cold War titles like *Ninotchka* (1939), for which Wilder holds screenwriting credit. Most notably, the curtain-crossing-lovers theme and the three Russian trade commissars: Peripetchikoff (Leon Askin), Borodenko (Ralf Wolter), and Mushkin (Peter Capell) who are based on Buljanoff, Iranoff, and Kopalski – the three Russian envoys in *Ninotchka*. The three characters encapsulate some of the central stereotypes of Communists during the era. They are consummate hypocrites with no real ideological commitment or fidelity to communist principles. They are treacherous, untrustworthy and secretly jealous of everything Western, including

MacNamara's secretary – Fräulein Ingeborg (Liselotte Pulver) – whom the film gleefully treats as an asset to be leveraged in Capitalist-Communist relations. They are dim-witted and, as representatives of communists more broadly, inept. In the film's only car chase scene, MacNamara is racing back to West Berlin, followed by Peripetchikoff, Borodenko, and Mushkin in a Moskvitch, which earlier in the film Peripetchikoff describes as "a wonderful car. Exact copy of 1937 Nash!" As the stereotype would dictate, the knockoff 1973 Nash starts to fall apart during the chase at some point leaving a panicked Peripetchikoff with only a steering wheel in his hands. Not only are the bumbling communists of the film merely copying the West, they can't even copy it right.

Gags that aim to lampoon communist incompetence throughout the film are too many to count and lacking in subtlety. Before wrapping one of their visits to MacNamara's office, Peripetchikoff quips: "We have emergency meeting with Swiss trade delegation. They sent us 20 carloads of cheese. Totally unacceptable. Full of holes!" Earlier during that same meeting the Russians offer MacNamara a Cuban cigar they claim to have procured in exchange for rockets. The one-liners are flying with a distinct rhythm and punch:

MacNamara: "You know what? You guys go cheated. This is a pretty crummy cigar."

Peripetchikoff: "Do not worry. We send them pretty crummy rockets." (as MacNamara is shown flushing the cigar down the toilet).

As Hoberman (2006) points out, the film raises the political stakes of Molnar's play. Compared to their 1939 counterparts, the three Russian trade commissars "have become coarsened with the years" (Kael, 1962). They serve not only to add topicality to the central premise of Molnar's play, but also as a foil to MacNamara's "go-getter" attitude and entrepreneurial spirit. The contrast between them is jarring. Yet while Communism is

overwhelmingly the target of ridicule, most of the discourse surrounding the film treats the satire as targeting equally American Capitalism, Nazism, and Communism. Sikov (2018) stands out as a notable exception in conceding that "…for all of Scarlett's inanity, MacNamara's cruelty, and the thoroughgoing prostitution of the West, Communism ultimately fares worse than Capitalism in *One, Two, Three*" (p. 56). While the film has many of the elements of 1950s propaganda films, it is generally not regarded as a propaganda text, as criticism has focused largely on the form – the humor, the satire, James Cagney's frenetic performance, and the "machine gun" speed, at which one-liners are delivered. It is read within the context of Billy Wilder's broader filmography and directorial style, which serves to obscure the more propagandistic and ideological elements of the film. Only Kael (1962) in her review for *Film Quarterly* upon its release pointed out the tie-ins with Coca Cola:

"This being the age of the big production and the big promotion, there is a tie-in with Coca-Cola which provides truck-banners, supermarket ads, contests, and window displays. Who is laughing at whom? The target has been incorporated in the profits of the joke." (p. 65)

As a fantasy of the symbolic triumph of capitalism over communism the film is fully integrated into the capitalist mode of production whereby Coca Cola benefits from the profuse product placement in the film and the film benefits from the Coca Cola tie-ins. The ones who are not in on the joke are communists and communism more broadly whose characters have been resuscitated from previous decades to move the plot of the triumph of capitalism forward. It is notable that the film is set in Berlin where ten years earlier the Berlin Film Festival was founded with an explicit geo-political agenda to serve "as propaganda under American occupation" (DeValk, p. 53, 2007). It was "the epicenter of Cold War topography," "a celebration of Western values" and "the Western cultural showcase in the East" (p. 53). Although *One, Two, Three* has

characteristics of an anti-communist propaganda film, it evades that categorization through the discourse of all-inclusive satire. That discourse was effectively wielded by Wilder himself who "complained that the Communists had no sense of humor" (Phillips, p. 252, 2010) when he found escalated guard presence around the Brandenburg Gate in response to word spreading that his film mocked the communist regime. Wilder reportedly quipped: "They raised no objection until they got the idea that we were poking fun at them. But we poke fun at everybody!" That the discourse of the film as an equal opportunity offender remained largely unquestioned at the time is indictive of the extent, to which it conformed to existing ideology about the superiority of capitalism. Compared to the films of the anticommunist cycle of the previous decade, however, *One, Two, Three* conceals its ideological appeal under the guise of humor and satire. In that way, the traditionally didactic character of propaganda is blunted by satire or the joke's ostensible status as "not true;" something merely intended to draw laughs that lacks deeper import. The effect is that the film "celebrates as it satirizes American cultural imperialism" (Hoberman, 2006). Its celebration is afforded by the simultaneous affirmation of communism as a failed system – not only its bureaucrats but also its most fervent supporters are closeted capitalists who are seduced by the promises of capitalism and shift allegiances in capitulation to its might. True to stereotypes established in earlier propaganda films, communism is represented for its drab exteriors, dilapidated buildings, shoddy consumer products, and infrastructural decay. Phillips reports that Wilder and Diamond were continuously revising the script in response to unfolding current events to ensure jokes would not be deemed "of bad taste" – at the time of the film's release or a year into the future. *One, Two, Three* starts with a prologue – a convention Wilder intermittently followed throughout his career – in which Cagney's voiceover narration explains contemporaneous political realities in Berlin over a montage of wide shots of the city. It starts off

by identifying August 13, 1961 as the date, on which the border between East and West Berlin was sealed and clarifies this is only mentioned "to show the kind of people we're dealing with – real shifty." The prologue then moves to a jibe at East Berliners for parading while their city is still in rubble before cutting to a panning shot of West Berlin showcasing urban architecture while the voiceover explains that "[t]hese constant provocations failed to provoke the West Berliners. They were too busy rebuilding. The Western sector under Allied protection was peaceful, prosperous, and enjoyed all the blessings of democracy." The pan ends on a billboard advertising Cola Cola. The contrast between the two Berlins is emphasized visually with a cross-dissolve – a tilting shot that follows balloons drifting into the sky over East Berlin gives way to a shot of an empty sky in West Berlin (save for a few clouds) with the top of a high-rise under construction searing into it. The East Berliners' "provocations" have been a waste of time and resources. The balloons never even made it to West Berlin, presumably due to the well-known communist ineptitude that the film repeatedly targets. The same sky that swallowed up the "Yankees Go Home" balloons in the cross-dissolve serves as a backdrop for the architectural achievements of a West Berlin focused on rebuilding. The prologue sets up the tone for the rest of the film whereby references to concurrent political events maintain the film's relevance and topicality, while its propagandistic undertones are obscured by the humor's ostensibly ambivalent relationship to truth and a we-poke-fun-of-everybody discourse. Ultimately, what affords the celebration of cultural imperialism and capitalism more broadly is that a communist frog is transformed into a capitalist Prince thanks to MacNamara's frenetic energy – the energy of capitalism itself – that propels him to tirelessly snap his fingers: *one, two, three!* at his minions. As MacNamara barks at Schlemmer in his office: "That reminds me, call the Frankfurt plant and have them ship us another 100,000 bottles. People keep smuggling cokes into the

Eastern Sectors and not returning the empties." On its surface, the joke is about MacNamara's naïve expectation that people would return the empties but on ideological level, it tugs on notions of the inevitability of cultural imperialism and capitalism – people will "naturally" demand it because of its capacity to provide consumer goods. As Ellul (1965) argued, "propaganda works by making individuals feel a sense of belonging within the body politic and helps them conform to broad cultural norms" (Smith, 2014, p. 23). The sense of belonging in this case in encouraged within Western audiences by the geopolitical imaginary of the Eastern Sectors where as if in a black hole bottles of Coca Cola are lost never to be seen again.

Although critics widely praised the humor of *One, Two, Three*, the film was a box office flop (Sikov, 2018). West German audiences were not amused by the film's treatment of Germans in the film as ex-Nazis. In interviews, Wilder reportedly attributed the flop to the film's treatment of Coca Cola: "I happen to think Coca Cola is funny. A lot of people didn't. Maybe that's why the picture bombed out. I still think it's funny. And when I drink it, it seems even funnier" (Kanin, 1974, p. 185). Wilder's comment echoes Kael's earlier observation that the target of the joke has been integrated into the profits from it. It is notable that the other central target of the joke – communism or the broader and more complicated political reality surrounding it – is absent from accounts of why the film flopped. Though it is overwhelmingly the object of ridicule and, as Sikov concedes, it ultimately fares worse than capitalism, that aspect of the satire is largely absent from the critical discourse or in accounts of the film's box office performance. That the representation of communists, communism or what lies East of the Brandenburg Gate did not seem to attract critical attention is indicative of its perceived irrelevance; the antithesis, against which the film the film can pursue its main conceit.

One, Two, Three was not the only Cold War satire that set out to lampoon both sides of the conflict. A notable mention in the Cold War comedy genre is Staney Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964). The film is generally regarded as one of the best of "bomb" cinema of that period with other notable titles in that category being Stanley Kramer's *On the Beach* (1959), Sidney Lumet's *Fail Safe* (1964), and Peter Watkins' *The War Game* (1965). Similarly to *One, Two, Three* before it, *Dr. Strangelove* exists on the faultlines between seriousness and satire but that tension is qualitatively different from the one Billy Wilder sets up. One of the main differences in their approach to satire is in their relationship to current and historical events. While *One, Two, Three* is preoccupied with plausibility and topicality, however, filling the script with references to concurrent political developments and drawing on those of the recent past, *Dr. Strangelove* is less focused on referentiality to current and past events or realism more broadly. It "pushes the edge of believability – almost to the point where we can dismiss the film as too fantastic, but not quite" (p. 144). Kubrick wrote the screenplay with Terry Southern, whose son claimed that: "Stanley would say to Terry: 'Terry, what's the most outrageous thing this character can say and still be credible?'" Plausibility in *Dr. Strangelove*, however, seems to be an aspect of the diagesis rather extratextual elements. Similarly to earlier Cold War films the film engages with the memory of recent political events, figures, and artifacts. Most notable of those is the character of Dr. Strangelove (Peter Sellers) who was not originally part of *Red Alert* – Peter George's novel, on which the film was based. Kubrick and Southern modeled the character after a number of historic personalities: Nazi rocket scientist Wernher von Braun, John von Neumann author of the strategy of mutually assured destruction, Edward Teller – known as "the father of the hydrogen bomb," and Herman Kahn – a military strategist. Similarly, General "Buck" Turgidson (George

C. Scott) and General Jack D. Ripper (Sterling Hayden) lampoon General Curtis LeMay of the Strategic Air Command. The film itself takes central aim at the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD), which is in turn based on the theory of deterrence – the idea that if all parties to a global conflict possessed nuclear weapons, they would be deterred from using them as they would not risk launching total nuclear annihilation. Kubrick had reportedly been engaged with questions posed by the threat of nuclear annihilation since the late 1950s and had done research on the topic (Dr. Strangelove Documentary). James B. Harris – Kubrick's former producing partner – claimed that when Kubrick approached him with the concept for the film he asked him to read Herman Kahn's *On Thermonuclear War* (1960) in preparation for writing a script that at the time was planned as a "straight drama." The book introduced the Doomsday Device – an idea Kahn himself had gotten from George's *Red Alert* – as a rhetorical strategy intended to demonstrate the limits of the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (Menand, 2005). The "Doomsday Machine" in *Dr. Strangelove* was directly borrowed from Kahn's *On Thermonuclear War*. According to Menand (2005), "Kubrick and Kahn met several times to discuss nuclear strategy."

What these production notes suggest is that one of the factors that sets Dr. Strangelove apart from a broad swath of films in the Cold War register is his intellectual approach to Cold War themes. Compared to Wilder's *One, Two, Three*, the satire is not leveled at specific historical events or political figures (*One, Two, Three* featured images of Stalin and Khrushchev in multiple sequences and some of the most notable scenes of *The Manchurian Candidate* were framed around images of Stalin and Mao) but rather dominant theories, doctrines, and strategies that were part of the larger contemporaneous discourse on the role of nuclear weapons in a bipolar world. Similarly to the Doomsday Machine, the idea of underground mineshafts had been

previously proposed by Nelson Rockefeller, Edward Teller, and Herman Kahn. The multi-billion dollar plan involved the construction of a network of underground shelters capable of holding millions of people. According to Menand, Kahn himself was the biggest proponent of the mineshaft plan:

"But—and this is the strange logic of deterrence—the essential purpose of investing billions in civil defense was not to save lives but to enhance the credibility of America's nuclear threat. 'Any power that can evacuate a high percentage of its urban population to protection is in a much better position to bargain than one which cannot do this,' Kahn explains in "On Thermonuclear War." He contemplated the possibility of several mass evacuations every decade in order to bolster American credibility. Having more shelters than the Soviets is like having more missiles: it is another way of saying, Go ahead, make our day. We can take your nuclear hit and come right back at you. The United States could not afford a mineshaft gap."

Indeed, there is a mineshaft gap gag in *Dr. Strangelove*, delivered by General Turgidson. The film's intimate knowledge of and engagement with Kahn's thinking on nuclear strategy led one commentator to observe that: "The movie could very easily have been written by Herman Kahn himself; he outlines just such plots in his books" (Ghamari-Tabrizi, 2005, p. 304). Kubrick thus engaged with ideas and hypotheticals and pushed them to extremes. According to the documentary *Inside the Making of Dr. Strangelove*, after realizing that the film could not be done as a "serious" film about nuclear gamesmanship, Kubrick decided to make it as absurd as it could be while also setting the story in a "realistic framework." That was his approach not only in constructing the story but also the dialogue. In the process of writing the screenplay, he reportedly asked Southern: "Terry, what's the most outrageous thing this character could say and still be credible?" (Nile Southern). Compared to *One, Two, Three*, however, *Dr. Strangelove*

manages to define verisimilitude within the filmic world that it creates while still drawing on ideas and discourses that shaped contemporaneous nuclear strategy. The film thus seems to not be as engaged with the past and memory as it is with the present and future; pushing "what if" scenarios to extremes. As scholars have noted, the screenplay is ostensibly steeped in Freudian psychology (Shapiro, 2002). That becomes clear from the very opening credits sequence featuring images suggestive of airplanes having sex mid-air. From then on, sexual humor is doled out at a consistent pace throughout the film, suggesting that the nuclear predicament that the world finds itself in is a result of the return of the repressed for those charged with leading it. Similarly, drawing on Freudian psychology Kaja Silverman has argued that "the farther we travel into the future, the more profoundly we encounter the past" (Silverman, 1991, p. 109). The past in *Dr. Strangelove* – and specifically, a Nazi past – is represented by the character of Dr. Strangelove himself. He has an "alien arm" syndrome that periodically bursts into the Nazi salute and uses "mein führer" salute to refer to President Muffley. But apart from the visual and verbal cues, Dr. Strangelove actively steps in during the post-hoc planning to advocate a Nazi-style social engineering campaign to save the human species in underground mineshafts by a strategic culling from survivors. The Nazi past is resuscitated as an ominous prospect haunting the future survival of the human race. The humor is dark and demented. The final scenes of Dr. Strangelove thus suggest a time-loop, a compulsion to repeat the past. The scene of Dr. Strangelove taking control over post-Doomsday planning if followed by the famed mushroom cloud sequence set to Vera Lynn's *We'll Meet Again*. The suggested time-loop at the end is also evidence of the film's subtle connections to the science fiction genre, which is the domain of the time-loop paradox (Penley, 1989). Dr. Strangelove's plan for how computer technology could assist in culling a "nucleus of human specimen" for preservation foreshadows are dystopian

future. Yet the elements of science fiction are eclipsed by Peter Seller's exuberant and exhilarated performance of a deranged scientist who lies in wait and then springs to a renewed vitality upon realizing that his moment has come again.

Although the final scenes of *Dr. Strangelove* turn towards the past, the film resists nostalgic longing or a move to recapture it and satire plays an essential role in that denial and withholding. The character of Dr. Strangelove himself is a representation of Boym's (2002) concept of restorative nostalgia. In restorative nostalgia, Boym argues, there is no sense of distance between the present and the past. It is interested in recreating the past, "rebuilding the lost home." Restorative nostalgia is what propels us to take action to restore or resort to a previously existing state of affairs. It is the driving impulse behind Dr. Strangelove's plan to adopt a Nazi-style approach to the management of the survivors of the Doomsday Device. It is the logical final touch in a plot propelled into motion by a deranged General fixated on defending the purity of "our precious bodily fluids" from Communist interference. The direct references to the Nazi salute and address suggest not only an absence of distance between the present and the past that is characteristic of restorative nostalgia but also, in their exaggeration and distortion, insert distance between Dr. Strangelove and the viewer. The film is not asking the viewer to merely laugh along but reflect on the grotesqueness of the predicament. And it is, indeed grotesque. Peter Sellers is wearing a black glove that he borrowed from Kubrick himself on the hand possessed by "alien arm" syndrome. The hand chokes him, he bites on it, he struggles to contain it while simultaneously laying out his plan in front of the president and his brass. The scene follows a shot of the mushroom could from the missile that hit its target in Russia. Dr. Strangelove is in a dark corner of the War Room and gradually moves towards the light, the rims

of his glasses casting an ominous glow before he is fully revealed. Compared to *One, Two, Three*, satire in *Dr. Strangelove* works to disrupt the lull of restorative nostalgia.

The film ultimately does not grant *Dr. Strangelove*'s plan fruition. It cuts to the final montage sequence of mushroom clouds before it affords clarity on the question of whether the Nazi scheme will come to be, withholding the pleasure of resolution; of succumbing to the pull of restorative nostalgia. In the final montage sequence, it turns to what Boym terms reflective nostalgia – the second type of nostalgia, which rather than seeking to recreate the past, accepts that it is irrevocably sealed off from the present without denying the pleasure of the memory. It is a critical type of nostalgia that is premised on the idea that longing and critical thinking are not mutually exclusive. "The focus here is not on recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth but on the meditation on history and the passage of time" (p. 49). Vera Lynn's *We'll Meet Again* is invariably an artifact of World War II nostalgia. "The song itself was 'unabashedly sentimental' writes Christina L. Baade in her book, *Victory Through Harmony*, with it's (sic) 'romantic longing and an insistent faith in the couple's eventual reunion.'" (Barbash, 2017). The song played as part of Lynn's radio show – *Sincerely Yours – Vera Lynn*, which curiously came under criticism:

"An influential minority blamed the BBC's 'sickly and maudlin programmes' for significant British losses in North Africa and Southeast Asia. Sentimental popular music, they argued, had a 'drugging effect' on the troops and undermined their masculinity and will to fight. Just because Lynn was the 'Forces' Favourite' did not mean she was actually good for their morale." (Barbash, 2017)

Lynn was thus criticized for promoting nostalgia among the troops. While the song is ambivalent and could encourage both – restorative and reflective nostalgia – its meaning at the

end of *Dr. Strangelove* is secured by the mushroom clouds montage sequence, which depicts destruction beyond repair; ruins beyond the possibility of restoration. Restorative nostalgia is subverted by the images of the massive scale of annihilation that the bomb can wreak and the resulting contrast is productive of the film's final moment of satire and reflective nostalgia.

In many ways the film constituted a break from recognizable tropes of Cold War films of the previous decade. The Russians themselves are mostly absent from the film with the notable exception of the Russian Ambassador (Peter Bull) who is constructed according to familiar stereotypes. The satire is primarily leveled at U.S. military brass who are deranged, infantile, and disconnected from the real-life repercussions of their actions. The film reaffirmed Kubrick's reputation as an intellectual filmmaker. As Shapiro (2002) observes: "[b]ecause Dr. Strangelove successfully combined black comedy with criticisms of "the establishment," it gained popularity with general audiences, the movement, and intellectuals" (p. 151).

Apart from *One, Two, Three* and *Dr. Strangelove* another notable comedy during this period that used the genre to engage with the past and present of the Cold War was Allen's *Bananas*. As the director's third film, it represents the early period in Allen's career when his approach was more

"freewheeling, or, as he liked to call it, 'slapdash'. The plot is a rickety framework for his disconnected scenes, which let him do whatever he wants whenever he wants. *Bananas* is chock full of sight gags and one-liners, many of which were ad-libbed during shooting and have nothing at all to do with the central situation. Together with a number of surreal sequences, the whole piece has a formless, maniacal feel to it." (Shaw & Youngblood, 2010, p. 175).

Interestingly, the film was not considered a Cold War film at the time of its release. Potential reasons that could explain how it bypassed that classification are Allen's idiosyncratic

style as a filmmaker as well as the fact that the film is more focused on one of the "proxy" territories of the Cold War – South America – rather than Russia and China – the two main U.S. foes that had dominated the headlines in the past. Rather than taking aim directly at issues and themes that issues and themes at the heart of the Cold War, the humor is directed more at "pillars of the Cold War consensus" – "the FBI, CIA, judiciary, organized religion, marriage, and […] the mass media" (p. 174). The slapdash approach to its structure reflects its orientation to political ideologies. *Bananas* does not have a coherent ideological position but is, rather, sampling political and cultural events in a series of events loosely held together by the main character – Fielding Melish's (Woody Allen) – relentless self-effacement, which seems to be the driving impulse of the film. As Shaw & Youngblood (2010) suggest, the film's overt idiosyncratic style and the fact that vast segments of it were improvised during shooting obscure questions of intentionality. This is particularly true of the plot involving the fictional country of San Marcos:

"It is likely many viewers would have interpreted San Marcos as a thinly veiled Cuba, whose U.S.-backed military dictator, Fulgencio Batista, was topped by Fidel Castro in 1959. This seems not to have been Allen's intention, but the comparisons were inevitable given Esposito's beard, cigar, and green combat fatigues, together with Castro's political excesses in the 1960s." (pp. 181-182)

It can thus be argued that the representation of San Marcos draws on the collective memory of Cuba in the 1960s – a memory that for most Americans at the time was mediated through the mass media. Though Shaw & Youngblood discuss *Bananas* in terms of Allen's use of the genre to express dissent, the films runs into similar issues as *One, Two, Three* before it. Specifically, though ostensibly satirizing "everyone" without rhyme or reason, the film

inadvertently upholds and recasts existing imbalances of power between West and East and Capitalism and Communism with the end goal of valorizing its self-effacing central character. Woody Allen's bumbling idiot with little to no political knowledge travels to San Marcos, joins the rebels, moves up their ranks and when they seize power and their leader goes mad, the rebels ask Fieldish Mellish to take over:

Rebel: "No! The revolution will fail without you!"

Mellish: "Why me?"

Rebel: "Because! The men respect you! You always loved out cause! Besides, compared to these men, you're educated!"

Mellish: "What is this with my education? I have two days of college! I need three years and 363 days to get a degree!"

Rebel: "This is a country of peasants! At least you can read."

The conversation takes place as they descend a flight of stairs, presumably in a government building. While the film's tone covers a significant bandwidth from serious to satirical, the seriousness of this scene is supported by mis-en-scene as well as the camera work. While holding the two rebels and Mellish center-frame, it cuts to a close-up, low-angle shot of one of the rebels as he, with ostensible seriousness delivers the last line. Mellish does become President as the plot appears to take a turn towards a version of the white savior trope. Although "everyone" appears to be panned, the film's overarching goal of valorizing its underachieving, goofy, naïve, and unreliable protagonist ends up reestablishing stereotypes of both communists and Latinos as intellectually inferior to their Western counterparts. Even a bumbling and incompetent American like Fielding Mellish would be a preferable and more capable leader of a South American country like San Marcos because, compared to the local population, he has two

days of college. The comparative naïveté of the people of San Marcos is reaffirmed when upon his return to the U.S. Mellish is exposed as a fraud. U.S. authorities are not as easily duped and Mellish is apprehended and charged as a "subversive importer" conspiring to overthrow the U.S. government. His trial pushes absurdity to its limits. Questions of plausibility are all but abandoned and the judge suspends his jail sentence on the condition he promises not to move into his neighborhood. The film ends with Mellish achieving the objective that set the plot into motion – winning Nancy's love and attention again and marrying her. San Marcos or the people of San Marcos are never heard of again. The hero is back into his ordinary world, reestablishing the center-periphery balance of power between capitalism and communism, the West and the East. What allows this feat to go largely unnoticed by critics and observers is in part the discourse that Allen's "overall attitude toward politics by the early 1970s, when the director was in his mid-thirties, was 'a plague on both of your houses.' 'Political thinking through history has never worked,' he opined. 'As long as it's a question of is it going to be Democrat or Republican, Communist or whatever, 'as long as people delude themselves into thinking they can solve those issues they'd be happy, there's nothing going to happen'" (Shaw & Youngblood, 2010, p. 178). For Allen and *Bananas*, the Cold War in the 1970 was "an absurd anachronism" (p. 32).

By the 70s the intensity of the most pressing Cold War issues had lessened as public attention shifted towards the Watergate scandal and political fallouts from it (Shaw, 2007; Shaw & Youngblood, 2010). Questions of corruption, the erosion of core institutions of American democracy, a crisis of public trust, the U.S. troops in Vietnam, took precedence over the ideological frontline with the U.S.S.R., fears of communist infiltration, and the prospect of nuclear war. These events of the early to mid-70s paved the way to the New Right's campaigns

in the late 1970s and early 1980s to project "an overarching sense of national return to an earlier age after a period of American decline" (Marcus, 2004, p. 37). More importantly, however, and crucially to the present study, scholars (Dwyer, 2015; Davis, 1979; Nadel, 1995) have identified a Fifties "nostalgia wave" in popular culture of the period. Nadel has argued that 50s nostalgia was a main feature of American cinema in the period. Dwyer argues that 1973 is an appropriate year to demarcate the beginning of the nostalgia wave citing Watergate, Vietnam, and the arrival of Ronald Reagan on the political stage. Dwyer estimates the end of the Fifties nostalgia wave at around 1988 and points to critical texts in sociology and cultural studies interrogating the Fifties published during that period.

Two key 70s films that overtly engaged with Cold War topics – *The Way We Were* and *The Front* (Greenhut et al., & Ritt, 1976) – both looked back at events taking place in the 1950s. It should be noted that scholars identify a number of 1970s political thrillers as Cold War films, including *Executive Action* (Bessie et al. & Miller, 1973), *The Paralax View* (Jiras et al. & Pakula, 1974), *Three Days of the Condor* (Schneider & Pollack, 1975), *All the President's Men* (Boorstin et al. & Pakula, 1976), and *Twilight's Last Gleaming* (Adelson & Jedele, & Aldrich, 1977). This study, however, focuses on *The Front* and *The Way We Were* specifically as the two films, for which the Cold War takes up a more central part of the plot. By comparison, political conspiracy thrillers of the 70s engaged with the Cold War more indirectly and were more interested in exploring the idea that the CIA was the "enemy within" (Shaw & Youngblood, 2010, p 32) and capitalizing on the general public's newly-found fascination with conspiracy theories, largely inspired by recent political events.

The Way We Were is a nostalgia text, in which restorative nostalgia gives way to reflective nostalgia in the final scenes of the film. Katie Morosky (Barbara Straisand) and

Hubbell Gardiner (Robert Redford) are in many ways polar opposites. She is a Jewish radical, President of the College Communist League, unafraid to speak her mind and committed to political activism. Hubbell is ostensibly upper class and privileged, politically apathetic, and largely aimless if somewhat talented. They are attracted to each other despite their differences and attempt multiple times to overcome them. The film is in part told as a flashback, which starts early on in the film. The plot starts at the end of World War II when Katie runs into Hubbell falling asleep in his chair, wasted in a club. It then cross-dissolves to a flashback of Katie and Hubbell's college years when they first became aware of each other's existence and started having romantic feelings for each other. In that early part of the film, the cut to a flashback that gives the audience Katie and Hubbell's back story and then back through a cross-dissolve to the present at the club where Hubbell is dozing off works to suggest restorative nostalgia. The past – their college years – is literally inserted into the present moment. While the cross-dissolve as a formal element is often associated with the passage of time, it ultimately blurs the frame of the past into the frame of the present, leaving no distance between them. Memory gaps are patched up as Katie seems to have arrived at a moment she had been waiting for. Furthermore, as she is the subject of the gaze and Hubbell its semi-conscious object, the flashback appears to be Katie's memory of their relationship, from which she feels no critical distance. The cross-dissolves bracketing the flashback thus seem to suggest reflective nostalgia, which "puts emphasis on *nostos* (returning home) and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps" (Boym, 2001, p. 41). In the present, Katie seems to be driven by a desire to live out the fantasy her college self had of a romantic relationship with Hubbell. Much of the dramatifc plot thus involves her working relentlessly to rescue their relationship even as it becomes clear that their differences are jarring and emphasized by both class, race, and ideology. John Burnett – the

film's editor – would continue to use simple cross-dissolves to mark the passage of time between sequences throughout the film. Restorative nostalgia seems to finally pivot to reflective nostalgia in the final scene, which is separated from the previous one in the hospital through a more complex, extended cross-dissolve, in which Katie's image in the hospital bed is held over a montage sequence of shots of New York during different seasons accompanied by a wistful harmonica score. The sequence serves to insert distance and suggest – quite literally – that Katie is facing the distance of time and acknowledging that the past is sealed off from the present. The final scene thus expresses reflective nostalgia. There is pleasure and sadness in the realization that whatever excitement Katie and Hubbell might feel about seeing each other again will lead nowhere. In Boym's words, the final shot of the film "lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time" (p. 41).

The story of the film covers a timeline that starts some time before or during World War II, continues through the height of the Cold War, and ends in the early 60s with Katie canvassing against the atomic bomb. The Cold War is not only a plot device for the construction of Katie's character as a fiery Jewish Marxist but also a broader backdrop for the film. It is the larger ideological front that positions Katie and Hubbell at irreconcilable odds. The film quite literally takes Katie's claim that "People are their ideologies." In that sense, Katie is repeatedly rebuffed by Hubbell's WASP-y social circle. Furthermore, Hubbell's friends casually belittle and humor her socialist principles as she continues to defend them throughout the film. And yet, Hubbell is transfixed by her. One of the moments in the film that clearly telegraphs his fascination is when he and two of his college friends watch old black and white footage from their college years. The footage is appropriately silent – it shows Katie speak at the same college rally where we see her during the earlier flashback, but we don't hear her words. It is an ideal metaphor for how he sees

her: attracted to and jealous of her drive but the substance of that drive – the content of her ideas – are irrelevant. Similarly to Ninotchka decades earlier whose dedication to her cause Count Leon d'Algout found "fascinating," Katie is an object of fascination to Hubbell. His fantasy of her is broken when Katie proceeds to stand up for her principles. A notable example is the sequence when after Roosevelt's death Hubbell's friends joke about "[First Lady] Eleanor down in the mines with those hillbillies." Katie bursts out in anger admonishing the group for their insensitivity to Roosevelt's disability. Her reaction prompts Hubbell to break off their relationship in the following sequence.

The stereotype of the communist other in *The Way We Were* is thus complicated and overdetermined. Katie is not only a Soviet sympathizer but also Jewish. Three categories of difference – gender, race, and ideology – are layered and interwoven. Ostensibly, she is ridiculed for her communist sympathies even as Hubbell and his friends seem to be somewhat fearful of how outspoken and capable she is. The film thus reflects the growing social consciousness in the 60s and 70s of ethnic and racial difference and of a social structure organized around a privileged white (and especially WASP) center, vis-à-vis which other categories of humanity were variously disadvantaged. The film's nostalgia is a crucial component for gluing all of these elements together.

While the nostalgia here is individual for the romantic past Katie and Hubbell shared, it also invariably implicates the historical past. As Robert Burgoyne (1999) argues about the process through which cinema transforms the past into memory, historical films "point to the idea that film has somehow claimed the mantle of authenticity and meaningfulness with relation to the past – not necessarily of accuracy or fidelity to the record, but of meaningfulness, understood in terms of emotional and affective truth." Discussing *Forrest Gump* as a case in

point, Burgoyne argues that "this suturing the spectator, through identification with Forrest Gump, into an actual historical scene collapses the distinction between the personal and the historical and foregrounds multiple and complicated relations between individual and collective memory." It can thus be argued that *The Way We Were* encouraged nostalgia not only for the individual past that the two protagonists shared and is now, at the end of the film lost but also the historical setting, within which their relationship is situated. The implication of reflective nostalgia in this case is, from one hand, that the Cold War is, from the perspective of the present, an anachronism – something that belongs in the past and sealed off from the present. From the other hand, as Symmons (2016) has argued, "nostalgic images of America's recent past reinforce mythical assumptions and valorize dominant culture" (p. 148) where dominant culture is, in part, the "idealized and seductive Wasp milieu," with which Katie's incompatibility is never resolved.

Three years after *The Way We Were* was released, *The Front* would also take a very direct aim at the Hollywood Blacklist emplotting specific events and key personalities. The film's director – Martin Ritt, screenwriter – Walter Bernstein, and several actors: Zero Mostel, Herschel Bernardi, and Lloyd Gough – had all been blacklisted in the 1950s and brought their personal histories and memory of trauma to the script, the film, and the discourse surrounding the film. The plot is thus constructed not only from personal memories and incidents recovered from biographies and autobiographies but also collective memory of the events of the early 1950s. The personal/individual and the collective in the film are in a feedback loop that emphasizes "how the cinema as an apparatus of cultural memory, transforms history into memory… [how] films can translate significant historical events into personal memories that are deeply felt and formative to the identities of individuals separated temporally and geographically from the original event" (Sprengler, 2009, p. 152). In that, despite recounting memories that are

undoubtedly painful, the film simultaneously works to valorize the Fifties. Notably, it starts with a montage sequence of real-life footage from the early 1950s that includes a variety of images, including Marilyn Monroe, bomber planes, dropping bombs, people hiding in nuclear bomb shelters, the Miss America 1952 pageant, and the Rosenbergs among others. The montage sequence is set to Frank Sinatra's *Young at Heart*, which works to emphasize nostalgic longing and wistfulness as the dominant mood. From then on, however, the film treads a rickety relationship between drama and comedy. While reportedly marketed as a "serious" film about McCarthyism and the 1950s Hollywood blacklist (Ebert, 1976), the drama implied by the momentous historical events struggles with Allen's character and star image. As Ebert points out, "…'The Front' has its moments. But they often seem to be moments from a Woody Allen movie – scenes where the insecure Allen character tries to appear competent and win the girl who's taller than he is, all at once." Thus, from the perspective of collective memory, Allen's character – Howard Prince – is overdetermined by his star image. The collective memory of historic events, which the nostalgia sequence at the beginning of the film evokes is at odds with Allen's character arc, which is reminiscent not only of his character arc in *Bananas* but his entire filmography. The two seemingly distinct sub-plots are never quite reconciled and remain in an awkward relationship throughout the film. In a sense, Woody Allen as the film's overdetermined star lead fails to embody or enhance the social and historical themes or invest them with contemporary meaning (which may have been the intention behind casting him as the lead). The end result is that despite tackling serious historical subjects and events, most notably – the suicide of blacklisted actor Philip Loeb after being blacklisted and fired from his TV show *The Goldbergs*, the film's critical edge is blunted by the fantasy of an unlikely hero that Allan's character represents.

Compared to the 1950s when the dominant Cold War genres where propagandistic docu-dramas, science fiction, and horror, in the 60s and 70s Cold War themes were treated primarily through the genres of drama and comedy. The period was marked by a lessening of Cold War tensions, in which Hollywood felt that it was safe to satirize the Cold War. The humor was initially cautious as Diamond and Wilder were assiduously working to update the script of *One, Two, Three* daily to ensure they were carefully treading a line between pushing the humor but not pushing it *too* far in light of the closure of the border between East and West Berlin. Three years later, Kubrick would push Cold War satire further by investing it with political themes that had intellectual heft and were furthermore derived by top documents informing contemporaneous nuclear strategy. By 1971 Allen's satire of a "banana republic" that is a proxy territory for the Cold War evidenced a freewheeling approached that seemed to suggest that "the Cold War was an absurd anachronism" (Shaw & Youngblood, 2010, p. 32). That idea was also supported by the dramas of the period. While in the early 60s The Manchurian Candidate appeared preoccupied with what Boym (2009) terms "restorative nostalgia" as evidenced by the film's preoccupation with nationalistic imagery, by the 70s reflective nostalgia gives way to "reflective nostalgia" as *The Way We Were* and *The Front* both acknowledge and reckon with the irretrievability of the Cold War past. Simultaneously, however, both films are swept into the 70s "nostalgia wave" and while grappling with gaining a critical perspective also inadvertently valorize and glamorize the 50s. The sense of finitude, however, conveyed by both *The Way We Were* and *The Front* would ultimately prove to be transitory as Cold War hostilities would reach a new peak in the following decade.

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CHAPTER 5: MULTIDIRECTIONAL MEMORY AND FILMS OF THE "NEW" COLD WAR

The liberalizing trend of the 60s and 70s in the U.S. came to an abrupt end with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. It marked the beginning of a return to a virulent political conservativism aimed at reversing victories of progressive movements during the previous two decades and revamping U.S. hegemony internationally. Relations with the Soviet Union transitioned from a mild thaw to renewed aggression and hostility that scholars and observers called a "New Cold War." What later became known as a wave of political neoconservatism had a significant influence on the cultural production of the decade, most notably – film production, with a new cycle of politically conservative, anticommunist films emerging in the early 80s. Compared to the 50s cycle, however, films of the New Cold War were generically different and, crucially, ideologically inconsistent. They were marked by what Prince (2000) calls a tendency for "ideological conglomeration" (p. 320). Hollywood executives in the early 80s understood that films with explicit political or ideological allegiances fail to reach popular appeal and large box office numbers. Thus, "[t]o maximize its commercial (audience) base, Hollywood film operates through a process of conglomeration, mixing a variety of sometimes disparate ideological appeals into an ambiguous whole" (p. 315). Holmlund (1990), develops this idea further with respect to the 80s New Cold War cycle:

> "[the films'] strongest appeal often comes from the way they revert to earlier U.S. value systems, or from how they include value systems implicitly or overtly opposed to New Cold War tenets. In other words, these films contain something for everyone. Ideology becomes embedded in and interwoven with entertainment. Cultural diversity and division are not just ignored, they are integrated into the film fictions. As a result, these movies

> are not simply expressions of New Cold War ideology, they also *constitute* it and *undercut* [emphasis in original] it in the process of incorporating a variety of personal and social anxieties and desires into a representational mode."

This chapter argues that what Prince identifies as "disparate ideological appeal" of films of the New Cold War, understood as different and often contradictory operative discursive registers is made legible through Michael Rothberg's (2009) concept of "multidirectional memory." "Multidirectional memory" is a particularly relevant analytic for films of the New Cold War since, as Holmlund argues, their "strongest appeal often comes from the way they revert to earlier U.S. value systems." In other words, as the end of the 20th century was looming on the horizon, U.S. films were looking back on multiple, complicated, and entangled histories. Multidirectional memory allows for these histories and their attendant discourses to be retraced in a way that illuminates their ideological function in their present. Overwhelmingly, that function is to restore and reposition hegemonic white masculinity for a new decade marked by a world-historic shift to neoliberalism that came on the heels of political victories for women and racial minorities. More specifically, the chapter reads three films through the lens of multidirectional memory: Tony Scott's *Top Gun* (1986), Silvester Stallone's *Rocky IV* (1985), and Taylor Hackford's *White Nights* (1985). Each of the three films presents a different conception of the Cold War Other, but the commonality among them is that they are all in some way exceptional. In *Top Gun*, the communist Other is not explicitly named, but metonymically indexed by MiG planes, which the film specifies were responsible for a record number of U.S. fatalities during the Korean War. *Rocky IV* as it is popularly known introduced Ivan Drago – one of the most iconic Russian villains in Cold War filmography (Serafino, 2012) who would return in future installments of the franchise. *White Nights* presents a more complicated binary vision.

On one end is the exceptionally accomplished "good" Russian – Nikolai Rodchenko – played by acclaimed ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikhov while on the other is the KGB whose members are exceptionally "bad:" devious and racist. While all three films are legible through the lens of multidirectional memory, in the case of *White Nights*, the memories of traumatic histories are also displaced onto the Soviet Union.

Rothberg's Multidirectional Memory

Rothberg's theory of multidirectional memory draws from and builds on Freud's (1899) classical theory of screen memories. Crucially, what Freud's analysis of screen memories reveals is that, in psychic terms, memories inhabit the same realm of the unconscious as fantasies and the two can combine into mnemic images, which to the subject appear as a seamless, authentic memory. Despite ambiguity regarding Freud's continued relevance in contemporary film studies, his theory of screen memories has been foundational in the writing of more recent scholars such as Elsaesser (2014) who have argued that "cinema is always 'memory'" (p. 56). Its relevance as an analytical lens for understanding the relationship between cinema and memory has been illustrated in Rothberg's (2009) study of Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005). The study is part of Rothberg's larger project to develop a theory of multidirectional memory. Freud's model of screen memory is a crucial element of that project albeit with certain provisions. In a sense, Rothberg updates it for the 21st century. He posits that the memories in question are not in competition and "while screen memory replaces a disturbing memory with a more comforting, everyday scene, the multidirectional memory explored here frequently juxtaposes two or more disturbing memories" (p. 14). While for Freud screen memories are individual, in multidirectional memory Rothberg analyzes them as a phenomenon of collective memory. That

intervention is significant and necessary not only because Rothberg focuses on the collective memory of collective phenomena (the Holocaust and colonialism) but also because memory (even when initiated by individuals) is mediated through networks and technologies of communication that project it beyond the boundaries of a nation or a social group and into the global.

Lastly, while for Freud screen memories are characterized by banal mnemic images that cover up traumatic, emotionally charged memories, fears and illicit desires, Rothberg sets out to trouble that distinction. Once it has been established that the line between what is "comforting" and what is "disturbing" may not be as clear-cut as originally thought, the emphasis of screen memories falls on processes of substitution and displacement. A specific case that both Rothberg and Miriam Hansen discuss is Holocaust memory in the U.S. According to Hansen,

> "…the popular American fascination with the Holocaust may function as a 'screen memory' in the Freudian sense, covering up a traumatic event – another traumatic event – that cannot be approached directly…The displaced referents…may extend to events as distant as the genocide of Native Americans or as recent as the Vietnam War" (as in Rothberg, 2009, p. 12).

Rothberg proposes the model of multidirectional (screen) memory as a lens of analysis of Michael Haneke's *Caché*. The film, as Rothberg explains, is structured around the return of the colonial repressed. A bourgeois family – Georges Laurent (Daniel Auteuil) and Anne Laurent (Juliette Binoche) – find their home the subject of surveillance. Georges' investigations into who could be behind the surveillance leads him to Majid (Maurice Bénichou) – an Algerian boy who had lived temporarily with Georges' family after his parents disappeared in the events of October 17th, 1961. When Georges finally finds Majid, however, in his apartment he commits suicide by

slashing his throat. Through flashbacks and dream sequences it is revealed that Georges was largely to blame for Majid's expulsion from the Laurent family when they were both children. Georges had been cruel and deceitful, implicating Majid into acts he did not commit.

The film, according to Rothberg speaks to an ethics of multidirectional memory. It functions as a screen memory not only for France's memory of its colonial history with Algiers but also for the repressed memory of the Vichy government's deportation of 1700 Jews from Bordeaux to Germany during WWII. As Rothberg explains, the Vichy government not only complied with the German request for the deportation of those explicitly named on the list but also issued a recommendation "to not dismember Jewish families identified for deportation" (as in Rothberg, 2009, p. 278), which in essence announced the Vichy government's intention to also deport children who originally were not on the list. Some parents were able to save their children by giving them up to schools or Christian families. Collectively, they came to be known in later discourses as "hidden children." *Caché (Hidden)* thus engages that memory multidirectionally: "as an ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 289). The story of Georges and Majid is a moving "mnemic image" that covers the more traumatic memory of the "hidden children" of the Holocaust and the colonial violence against Algerians both in Algiers and France albeit with an ethical responsibility to remember. The emphasis on multidirectionality in this case allows for a more fluid and hybrid conception of memory. Compared to the "real estate" model of memory, which views different memories as in competition over a limited amount of brain space, the multidirectional model sees memories of separate phenomena as interweaving, interpenetrating, and simultaneous. As in the example of *Caché*, one memory can be a screen for another or more memories. Furthermore, while *Caché* escapes consideration within Freud's model of screen memory by virtue of offering affectively

charged, “disturbing” images, multidirectional memory, by troubling the distinction between what is “innocent” and “disturbing,” opens it up for analysis.

Rothberg’s formulation of multidirectional memory is consistent with Elsaesser’s meditation on memory in the works of Freud (2009). The latter characterizes Freud’s idea of memory as a “palimpsest, the writing process whereby mnemic impressions emerge, merge, and re(e)merge through acts of layering and superimposition” (Elsaesser, 2009, p. 106). It is a discontinuous process, marked by ruptures and gaps, propelled by psychic forces and lacking a narrative logic. Rothberg proposes the framework of multifirectional memory against more established notions of memory as “competitive” – “as a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources” (Rothberg, 2014, p. 3). A multidirectional approach, on the other hand, sees memory “as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing: as productive and not privative.” Another critical node of Rothberg’s definition is that memory is “not strictly separable from either history or representation, [it] captures simultaneously the individual, embodied, and lived side *and* the collective, social, and constructed side of our relations to the past” (p. 4).

The conceptual usefulness of Rothberg’s analysis is further supported by Burgin’s (2004) work on the remembered film. Reflecting on Barthes’ work in *Camera Lucida* and Freud, Burgin notes that “emotions, ‘affects,’ may become disassociated from the ‘representations,’ such as memory-traces or fantasy images, to which they were first attached” (p. 61). Of particular relevance is the example of Barthes who, in remembering a photograph, displaces a feeling of sadness and wistfulness from one detail of a family photograph to another. The detail itself functions as a type of hook – a point of entry of sorts – into the multidirectional significance of the photograph.

Reading *Top Gun*, *Rocky IV*, and *White Nights* through an analytical framework of multidirectional memory, certain "hooks" stand out that by the 1980s had acquired an overdetermined significance given that the Cold War was in its third phase and on the threshold of entering a fourth decade. In *Top Gun* that hook is the MiG plane, featured in the first and last segments of the film and, while ostensibly missing from the rest of the plot, invests it with its absence. The hook of *Rocky IV* is its titular character himself as played by an imposing Dolph Lundgren. While Lundgren is ethnically Swedish, his verisimilitude as a Russian (as opposed to, for example, the character being played by an Italian actor) and an exceptional one at that is historically overdetermined. Lastly, in *White Nights* the hook that invites an analytical framework of multidirectional memory is a sequence that takes place in the film's third act in front of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. In its emplotment and linguistic scripting the sequence reverberates with the historic chant "The whole world is watching" (in the film transcribed as "The whole world will know") and the momentous events that provoked it. Reading the films from a perspective of multidirectional memory opens them up from an analysis of the complex interactions between the hook – the image – and the real as it has existed at previous points of Cold War history and now resides in memory.

A New Cold War Cycle

Tony Scott's *Top Gun* is often cited as emblematic of the 80s New Cold War cinema cycle. Propelled into blockbuster status by Jerry Bruckheimer and Don Simpson, the film claimed the number one spot at the 1986 box office, thus passing the litmus test for popular appeal. Though the critical response to the film was mixed, perhaps best summed up by Roger Ebert (1986) who wrote:

> Movies like "Top Gun" are hard to review because the good parts are so good and the bad parts are so relentless. The dogfights are absolutely the best since Clint Eastwood's electrifying aerial scenes in *Firefox*. But look out for the scenes where the people talk to one another,

Top Gun was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry in 2015, which further cemented its perceived cultural significance. It stands out as a single-release film in a decade that prioritized sequels and franchises. Prince (2007) summarizes that industry trend succinctly:

> "The widespread embrace of sequels in the 80s showcased the status of film as pure product merchandising. Sequels were like brand labels, and the studios sought to brand audience loyalty by developing characters and film properties that could be manufactured in perpetuity." (p. 3)

Though not a sequel (*Top Gun*'s actual sequel – *Top Gun: Maverick* – is scheduled to be released in June of 2020), *Top Gun* embodies what *Rolling Stone*'s Anthony DeCurtis (1986) calls a "victory for the marketing men." Apart from Scott's directorial style, which is clearly informed by his commercial advertising background (Tom Cruise putting his aviator sunglasses on and taking them off for no particular reason, sometimes twice in a scene, is staged and shot with the glossy cool of a TV commercial), Simpson and Bruckheimer compiled the soundtrack with an eye on an elaborate marketing plan, optimized to reach "a critical mass of airplay" ahead of the film's release. In that sense, *Top Gun* is an articulation of one of the dominant industry trends of 80s cinema.

But beyond its shiny veneer, the film is probably most well-known for what one reviewer (Ansen, 1986) succinctly calls "macho myth-making." Its obsessive investment into a distinct brand of hard-lined white masculinity has been subject of discussion of both critics and scholars

alike. *Top Gun* is not subtle about linking the pilots' areal prowess to their sexual potency (Modelski, 2007; Wilmington, 1986). As Modleski has noted, the film's script repeatedly links sex and war. When Maverick and his co-pilot Goose (Anthony Edwards) walk into a bar after their first day at Top Gun, Mavericks issues a quick assessment of the environment transposing his military training onto the domain of sexual relations: "This is what I call a target-rich environment." With the fantasy of being "the best of the best," which is directed towards militaristic ends and expressed in highly sexualized terms, the biopolitical implications are plainly on display. The film presents a gallery of disciplined male bodies – in locker rooms, with towels precariously hanging from their waists, before shower, after shower, in impeccably ironed uniform, in underwear, in shorts, and in jeans, playing shirtless volleyball on the beach, the outlines of their muscle groups clearly visible under tan, wholesome skin glistening in the California sun, "clean-limbed young studs" (Denby, 1986). The word "beefcake" comes up in a number of reviews contemporaneous with the film's release (Denby, 1986; Hobermann, 1986; Lamar, 1986; Reed, 1986) in reference to the its fetishization of male bodies. The disciplining of bodies, suspended in eternal fight readiness in the event of a threat by an enemy that has become a fixture on the horizon of expectations since the end of World War II, carries benefits for their sexual realization. They are healthy and bursting with energy in order to be of service in the event of a national security emergency and their fighter readiness is a source of visual pleasure. *Top Gun* might be "a recruiting poster that isn't concerned with recruiting but with being a poster," (Kael, 1986) but in being a shiny poster of healthy, muscular male bodies in action, it wields a disciplining power articulated in sexual terms.

Biopolitics in *Top Gun* is a function not only of the moving image but also of how that image was produced. According to *Time Magazine*'s Jacob V. Lamar Jr. (1986),

> "Once filmmakers win Pentagon assistance for their projects, they tend to go along with changes that the military asks for. One reason *Top Gun* is so flattering to the Navy may be that consultants from the service worked along with the production. In the original script, for instance, Cruise's sidekick dies in a midair collision. When the Navy complained that too many pilots were crashing, the filmmakers opted for an incident that actually occurred at Miramar: a spinout in which a copilot was killed as he tried to eject."

In very literal terms, the state interfered in the production of the film in order to regulate the cinematic representation of life and death in service of its defense. The image of life and death in the military is thus carefully managed and the state reserves final authority to adjudicate over the circumstances, under which death in its service is representable. The power of final authority over the screenplay is exercised to control the frequency of representations of crashing deaths on the screen with the ultimate goal of projecting an as wholesome an image of life in the military as possible. It is "a power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavours to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations" (Foucault, 2014, p. 259). According to the same *Times Magazine* article, following the box office success of *Top Gun*, the Pentagon received more than 200 screenplays for review by November of the same year. Reportedly, many of those projects were turned down as their representations failed to meet strict standards for proper representation of the military:

> "An *Officer and a Gentleman*, which like *Top Gun* dealt with naval aviation training, was turned down because of its rough language, steamy sex and, to the military mind, inaccurate view of boot camp. The Pentagon said no to *WarGames* because the military contends that a teenage computer hacker could never crack the U.S. strategic defense system. Even Rambo's lone-wolf heroics would have failed to pass muster, despite later

praise from President Reagan. The Pentagon guidelines do not condone 'activities by individuals . . . which are properly the actions of the U.S. Government.'"

The influence of biopolitics in *Top Gun* – both onscreen and off – was uniquely suited for the sociopolitical climate of the 80s. Not only did it interlock with the fervent patriotism of the Reagan presidency but also with the historic turn to neoliberalism initiated by the policies of his administration. This is particularly relevant in light of Foucault's theory of biopower, which subjects its deployment to the service of capitalism. Prisons, in Foucault's example, produce docile bodies, which can thus be optimized for capitalist production. On the more anecdotal end, the intersection of biopolitics and neoliberalism manifested through explicit articulations in the form of recruiting exhibits set up in front of theaters playing *Top Gun* "to sign up the young moviegoers intoxicated by the Hollywood fantasy" (Lamar, 1986). According to a later report (Sirota, 2011), enlistment "spiked" when *Top Gun* was released and "polls soon showed rising confidence in the military."

Underneath this biopolitical field, however, that incorporated the visual grammar of advertising into the language of cinema is a memory and trauma of loss. As Simpson and Bruckheimer have elaborated in interviews, *Top Gun* was inspired by a feature article in *California Magazine* in 1983 by Ehud Yonay. The characters of "Maverick" and "Goose" are modeled after the two main pilots profiled in the article – Lieutenants Alex ("Yogi") Hnarakis and Dave ("Possum") Cully. The film directly emplots events described in the article with Yogi and Possum escorting an "enemy" Russian plane away from their aircraft carrier stationed in the Indian Ocean and getting so close that they saw the Russians in the cockpit snapping photographs of them and Possum taking photos of them in return. One of the photographs in the article shows an F-14 Tomcat flying inverted over another F-14 Tomcat at close range – an

image *Top Gun* recreates when Tom Cruise flies inverted over a MiG. It is a risky endeavor that propels the romantic plot between him and Kelly McGillis. Yonay's story bristles with the type of awe and excitement evident in the film, comparing Top Gun pilots to the knights of King Arthur – "the greatest of the greats," a global "elite force," submerged in superlatives such as "glorious" and "supremely healthy." Top Gun itself, however, was created in 1968 in response to two reports by the U.S. Air Command and the U.S. Navy commissioned to investigate the high level of losses in aerial dogfights during the Vietnam War found that U.S. pilots were not properly trained for combat. The school was thus born out of the trauma of Vietnam – the official admission that the U.S. had sustained too many aerial losses. The certified assessment was that U.S. pilots' fighter readiness had declined and needed to be restored to a previous state of glory. That history is succinctly summarized in a title card at the start of the film:

> "On March 3, 1969 the United States Navy established an elite school for the top one percent of its pilots. Its purpose was to teach the lost art of aerial combat and to insure that the handful of men who graduated were the best fighter pilots in the world.
>
> They succeeded.
>
> Today, the Navy calls it Fighter Weapons School.
> The fliers call it: [Top Gun title credits]."

U.S. aerial losses in Vietnam as the impetus for the establishment of Top Gun in the first place are predictably elided as the film announces that it hews closely to "real life." The decline in fighter pilot readiness is brought up during the pilots' training but carefully framed in the

context of the school's success. Thus, while the pilots study video game simulations, Jester (Michael Ironside) explains:

"During Korea, the Navy kill ratio was 12-to-1. We shot down 12 of their jets for every one of ours. During Vietnam that ratio fell to 3-to-1 [2-to-1 in Yonay's article]. Our pilots become dependent on missiles. They had lost some of their dog fighting skills. Top Gun was created to teach ACM: Air Combat Maneuvering. Dogfighting."

[camera cuts to two of the pilots: "This gives me a hard-on."]

"By the end of Vietnam that ratio was back to 12-to-1."

[cut to the two pilots: "Don't tease me"]

The sequence could serve as a metaphor for the organizing logic of *Top Gun* – sampling factual military information and intercutting it with sexual jokes, metaphors, and innuendos, creating a revolving door between the domains of sex and war. The trauma of the past expressed in statistics is sidelined and minimized by the half-feigned homoerotic banter of two present-day recruits. All the "supremely healthy" bodies in the film, presumably stand-ins for the "supremely healthy young males" described in Yonay's article thus mask not only the trauma at the core of Top Gun (referring to those air losses Yonay writes, "the whole thing was a monumental Pentagon screw up"), they revamp the image of the military after a series of critical titles such as *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and *Coming Home* (1978). The verisimilitude or authenticity of the representation is secured by the end credits listing the names of Top Gun admirals and lieutenants, giving "Special thanks for the pilots of the U.S. Navy F-14 aircrew," "Top Gun instructors and MiG pilots," and a slew of consultants and aerial coordinators.

The hook that works multidirectionally here is not Top Gun – the naval academy – itself, which has as its point of origin the official Navy report establishing low pilot training or the

preceding state of glory during the Korean war that Top Gun set out to recapture. Rather, the hood that invites a multidirectional reading is the MiG itself. The MiG is on the screen for a small fraction of the film's total runtime during the first and final flight sequences. The first sequence itself appears to be loosely inspired by events described in Yonay's article involving an encounter of F-14s with MiGs. Yet despite its brief on-screen time, the MiG becomes a significant narrative point, propelling the romantic plot between Maverick and Charlie forward. It is an overdetermined symbol of "the enemy," which is never explicitly named. The MiG thus becomes a stand-in for both – the present (as Wilmington (1986) wrote for the LA Times, "[a] toddler wandering into this movie (…) might come away thinking America was actually at war now…") as well as the past. That symbolism is also anchored by the geography of the encounter, which takes place over the Indian Ocean – Vietnam's southern border. The establishing shot of the aircraft carrier is heavily stylized with a gritty amber-brown sky, green ocean, and deep shadows that lend the frame a dystopian look. It is in the general geographical area of the Navy's F-14s most recent historical encounter with MiGs in the 60s and early 1970s during the Vietnam War. It was out of those dogfights and the heavy losses associated with them that Top Gun was commissioned. But Top Gun was commissioned to restore the Navy's kill ratio to the higher level previously held during the Korean War. That higher kill ratio was again held against MiG planes used by North Korea. The MiG thus becomes a complex symbol that functions multidirectionally, connecting the present to the trauma of Vietnam and a perceived U.S. air superiority during the Korean war before it. What is unique in this case, however, is the conflation of temporalities onto the MiGs. The establishing shot of the aircraft carrier in the Indian Ocean at the beginning of the first dogfight sequence positions it in the present with the MiG as a symbol of both Russia as the contemporaneous enemy, but also the enemy of the past,

during the Vietnam War, and before that, during the Korean war. The multidirectionality of the MiG's signification is in part secured by the duration of the Cold War as a conflict that spanned decades and was fought by proxy wars around the globe.

The MiGs in Top Gun serve as in and out points of the film's first and third acts respectively. During the first sequence over the Indian Ocean the MiGs retreat without casualties for either side. The incident serves to mark Maverick as "the one" in Charlie's book and motivate the romantic plot between them. Maverick's aggressive moves against the MiG and potential outcomes of the encounter become a subject of class discussion, in which his ego takes a hit and Charlie rushes to undo the damage by confessing she has fallen for him. The MiG thus remains a hovering shadow in the background until the action returns to it and the Indian Ocean in the third act where it moves again to the foreground. The same amber-and-green stylized shot, albeit from a different angle announces that the hero is back where he started but this time he has a seal of approval as "America's Best," an official permission to return fire, and a directive to "make us proud." Four MiGs are taken down in a spectacle that fills the screen with their explosions in the sky – a culmination and reward for the pilots' hard work. Top Gun has veritably fulfilled its mission of restoring the U.S. air force to its previous glory. Back on the aircraft carrier Maverick and Iceman (Val Kilmer) receive heroes' welcome with their colleagues – a majority of white men – sharing in the joy of their victory. It is a celebration of their aerial superiority but, more to the point, it is a celebration of white masculinity. The MiGs are the cavass against which normative white masculinity is recuperated. Although the film is careful not to explicitly identify them, their plausibility as a metonym for the Cold War enemy is anchored both by the contemporaneous sociopolitical relations with the Soviet Union as well as the memory of earlier Cold War conflicts that the MiG comes to symbolize multidirectionally.

As a memory symbol the MiG is an illustration of what Barash (2016) describes as the function of memory: "[i]n this capacity to remember the past in the present, memory is the source of the cohesion (Zusammenhang) of history itself in the diversity of its moments" (p. 12). The MiG as the symbol of that memory gives it coherence and continuity, specifically – at a time of sociopolitical renewal of Cold War hostilities.

As Rogin (1990) suggests, the end of the first Cold War was bookmarked by the Vietnam War. It was out of the Navy's Vietnam War reports analyzing the causes for the perceived high rate of U.S. aerial losses that Top Gun was launched with the explicit mission to restore a previously set high kill ratio. As the *Top Gun* introductory title card announces, "it succeeded." What follows is the glossy image of that success, tugging on the past to bear on the present and vice versa. It is a biopolitical image of recovery that lends stability, coherence, and continuity to normative white masculinity. This is particularly relevant in light of the gains made by civil rights movements in the 60s and 70s. As a stand-in for the emancipated woman of the 80s who is financially independent and educated, Charlie is re-inscribed into the narrative of restoration of white masculinity. As Modlesky (2007) argues: "Charlie is raised so high (given an advanced degree in astrophysics) in order to make her conquest, her fall into the arms of Maverick, her admission that he is a 'genius' at flying so much greater" (p. 102). The film thus offers a solution to the question of how the newly emancipated woman can still be reinscribed in service of a traditional white masculinity – her knowledge empowers her to recognize the brilliance of the white male protagonist ("You were in a four-G inverted dive with a MiG-28!?"). Charlie's introduction at the flight school is instructive in that regard:

> "…when Charlie is first introduced by the male instructor (Tom Skerrit) who is in the process of citing her impressive credentials, the film cuts to the lower half of a woman's

body wearing a tight skirt and stockings, with seams, as if this were a World War II film and not a post-Vietnam one" (p. 102).

The echoes of World War II are precisely the point in a film that is the 80s version of a cinematic incitement to "Make America Great Again." But while this is a narrative of restoration, the frontier against which white masculinity is recuperated (and Maverick recovers his self-confidence) is the one demarcated by the MiG. He not only recovers his self-confidence, but in the process solidifies his position within the elite network of Top Gun – both his colleagues and superiors. It is an incident that fosters male bonding and reaffirming the networks of patriarchal power. He is no longer a "lone wolf." Both he and Iceman fly by the air tower before they land and their individual victory against the MiGs becomes collective, celebrated on the deck by their Top Gun colleagues and later "on the front page of every newspaper in the English-speaking world."

The theme of nostalgia is also an aspect of the *California Magazine* article that inspired it, in which Yonay (1983) writes:

> "Like the notion of the single-combat warrior, there is something slightly nostalgic about Naval Air Station Miramar. At night the darkened base could be mistaken for an old From Here to Eternity set, and even earlier in the day, when the base is bustling, it is enveloped in a time warp of unreality. Not just because it looks like a small desert town out of the 1950s - tract houses, a supermarket, a Baskin-Robbins ice cream parlor, a golf course, and a bowling alley complete with a Lucky Strike Tavern and Ten Pin Cafe - but because it has no real reason for being here."

The source material – the nonfiction article – thus frames the elite school in nostalgic terms. Nostalgia is not only built into Top Gun's mission, it also "envelopes" Naval Air Station Miramar. It becomes, as argued here, a central motif throughout the film.

As World War II slid into the Cold War, it established the "covert spectacle," the undercover struggle of good and evil both in domestic and foreign politics as the norm. Furthermore, myth replaces history as representation hides history in plain sight. Nowhere is that more evident in *Top Gun* than in the scene quoted earlier in this chapter when Jester, recounting the history that led to the creation of Top Gun, is sandwiched between Hollywood and Wolfman's sex jokes. Presented while the screen is filled with the image of videogame simulation of dogfights, that history becomes background noise. Hollywood and Wolfman are resorting to sexual banter because the lecture is boring. They are ready for the real thing. And surely enough, upon entering the encounter with the MiGs in the third act, the "I'm getting a hard-on" line is repeated but this time seriously. With the subsequent "great balls of fire" exploding in the sky, aggression is fully transfigured into sex.

Top Gun, however, does not neatly conform to Rogin's description of the covert spectacle film that he specifically associates with Reaganism. The covert spectacle "displays state-supported American heroes in violent, racial combat" (p. 107). The clearest example of that category are the *Rambo* films. While visual spectacles involving the enemy bracket the film, the second incident is reportedly exposed at the end of the film but only after the U.S. emerges as the clear winner of the dogfight. The first incident, which opens the film is classified and its classified, covert nature is turned into a plot point – it marks Maverick as "the one" whom Charlie has to speak to privately in order to pry details about the MiG. Their membership as part of a narrow elite with access to information about covert maneuvers is underscored. The

covertness of the final spectacle, which comes complete with aerial explosions is implied ("…*SS Leyton* has become disabled and has wandered into foreign territory"; in terms of the film's global imaginary, the use of "foreign" is notable, considering the *SS Leyton* is presumably also in the Indian Ocean and would have technically been in "foreign territory" for quite a while). It is only after the success of the mission is secured that Maverick is "on the front page of every newspaper in the English-speaking world." The aerial spectacle serves, however, in Rogin's theory to erase the Cold War past underpinning Top Gun's very existence (what Rogin refers to as amnesia) and shift the attention to the present. Once success is secured, news about the operation can be made public. The state is thus in control of political knowledge and in Top Gun that control is wielded to uphold the elite status and exceptionalism of the white male protagonist. As Rogin suggests, "the payoff for many covert operations is their intended demonstration effect" (p. 116).

The recuperated version of white masculinity that *Top Gun* champions is a "Reaganesque rugged individualism" (Chomsky, 1999), which signals a particular subjectivity at the intersection of white masculinity and neoliberal humanity. Tom Cruise's Maverick is a one-of-a-kind "genius" pilot for whom, the film suggests, flying runs in his blood. He is successful because he relies on his instincts, which never fail him. His instinct is, in fact, more reliable than textbook case studies on how to properly carry out maneuvers. His actions when he defies official protocol are subjected to admonishment by authority figures. After all*, Top Gun* relied on support from the Navy, which meticulously read and demanded adjustments to scripts, and refused support when adjustments were declined. Yet even though Maverick's actions are subjected to checks by authority figures – whether after he defies orders and returns for Cougar (John Stockwell) in the film's first act or when he is summoned for rebuke after buzzing the air

control tower when he was explicitly denied permission – Maverick's exceptionalism is his natural flying talent. He is above textbooks written for the general population. Despite admonishment, in the end the film celebrates his self-confidence and all that comes with it, including unauthorized air tower fly-bys, in which he is now joined by Iceman. More to the point, the film celebrates Maverick's drive to take matters into his own hands. Viper (Tom Skeeritt) – his Top Gun superior – compliments him on his arrogance. This endorsement of "Reaganesque rugged individualism" is critical in light of the fact that the 80s was the decade when the spread of neoliberal principles rapidly accelerated in the U.S. and the U.K. propelled by the administrations of Reagan and Thatcher respectively. Central to the ideology of neoliberalism is the idea of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency; not waiting on the state and state-sponsored institutions for financial and/or material support; "eliminating the concept of public good and replacing it with individual responsibility." The concept is fragmentary. After all, in the first and third acts Maverick takes significant risks to help his colleagues, suggesting moments of selflessness for an otherwise self-centered protagonist bent on taking matters into his own hands. Nevertheless, he is a model neoliberal subject in that he is determined to prove himself by relying on his own personal resources, namely – his mettle and flying genius. White masculinity is thus not only recuperated, it is refashioned for a neoliberal era.

A project of reclaiming white hegemonic masculinity is also front and center in *Rocky IV* – another commercially successful New Cold War title, in which thinking of Cold War memory multidirectionally can be productive for understanding the complex representational work in place. Holmlund (1990) argues that *Rocki IV* "collapses history" by "casting tall, blond Scandinavians – ideal Aryan übermenschen — as Russians […] In *Rocky IV*'s visual logic, Reds equal Nazis." Holmlund is correct that the film establishes links between communists and Nazis

through Drago (Dolph Lundgren) and Ludmilla (Brigitte Nielsen) but understanding them as images that do multidirectional memory work holds greater explanatory power of the film's visual logic. It ultimately allows the image to mediate the present and the past simultaneously, which is particularly relevant for the filmic emplotment of the Cold War – a conflict that characterized the (then) present but also had a long, sustained history before it.

Compared to *Top Gun*, *Rocky* is a franchise with its own history comprised (up to that point) of the first three installments. As Holmlund argues, however, *Rocky IV* represents a break from the focus on class, race, and upward mobility in the first three films and their overall ideological cohesion. Similarly to Maverick, the protagonist of *Rocky IV* is a New Cold War hero who fuses traditional white masculinity with neoliberal individualism and the willingness to take matters into his own hands, especially matters pertaining to the Cold War front.

As many reviewers point out, *Rocky IV* rehashes familiar formulas from the first three installments with little innovation. Arguably, the film's biggest contribution to the *Rocky* franchise is the villain – Ivan Drago – who is touted as a product of Russian advances in science and technology. Medium and long shots capture his extraordinary size – his body is a curiosity, a spectacle in its own right – while low angle close-ups emphasize his icy, contemptuous glares. His face is consistently oily and sweaty. When his close-up is juxtaposed with that of Rocky during the Russian anthem before the big match, Rocky is softly lit (in Paulie's words as they walk up to the arena: "You're all heart, Rock.") while the harsh light on Drago's sweaty face creates patches of overexposure that hold his humanity in question.

With the filmic techniques in place to call the viewers' attention to bodies and their physical characteristics, the question of Drago's race, as Holmlund argues, looms large. Lundgren has said that he auditioned for the role during a "cattle call" in New York City and was

immediately turned down for being too tall. Lundgren, however, was persistent and sent photos of himself to Stallone who ultimately made the call to cast Lundgren in the role. In a recent interview, Stallone elaborated on his decision:

> "I said, 'Everyone's gonna hate this guy, because he's flawless. He's 6-foot-6 and no flaws, no weaknesses.' I said, 'This is interesting, because Rocky's just the opposite. He's really flawed. He's a throwback, and you're a throw-forward. And we both can fight and we both got styles that were perfectly contrasting'" (Means, 2018).

Obvious nods to Lundgren aside, it is clear that the idea of the clash of opposites, central to the film's *raison d'etre* ("East meets West") was essential to Lundgren's casting. This would suggest that Lundgren's ultra-fair appearance was a factor in his casting as it contrasted both Stallone and Carl Weathers' Apollo Creed who is killed by Drago during the first fight. It lent the film resonance within contemporaneous Cold War culture. As Atanasoski (2013) explains: [t]he predominant characterization of Soviet communism as an anachronistic racial and political ideology that sought to end diversity was paramount for portrayals of the Soviet Union as a twentieth-century imperial power opposed to the United States" (p. 22).

But in his emphasis on Lundgren's flawlessness, on him having "no weaknesses" are echoes of Holmlund's point about Drago being coded as an ideal Aryan übermensch, transposing the Nazi regime onto the Soviet State. Furthermore, Stallone himself has disclosed that the idea of the fight between Drago and Rocky was inspired by Joe Louis's 1936 and 1938 boxing matches against Max Schmeling, a German boxing champion who came to be viewed as a puppet of the Nazi regime as it rose to power in the 1930s. In a vague parallel to the two fights in Rocky, Schmeling first knocked out Louis in 1936 but in 1938 Louis evened the score. Also similar to *Rocky IV*, both fights gained cultural significance from the dominant political forces

they were seen to embody with Schmeling seen as a representative of the rising threat of Nazism and Louis as a symbol of popular democracy. Of particular significance were the racial politics of the fight with Louis being African American and a unique point of pride and visibility for the black community in the pre-Civil Rights Era. Maya Angelou reportedly wrote about his fight with Primo Carnera, an Italian boxing champion, widely viewed as a protégé of Benito Mussolini:

> "My race groaned. It was our people falling. It was another lynching, yet another black man hanging on a tree. […] this might be the end of the world. If Joe lost we were back in slavery and beyond help. It would all be true, the accusations that we were lower types of human beings. Only a little higher than apes…" (Bak, 1998).

The fights between Louis and Schmeling were thus imbued with tremendous cultural resonance and attracted much attention due to their high symbolic stakes. In the boxing rink were Nazism vs. democracy, East vs. West. Stallone sought to invest the fights in *Rocky IV* with similar cultural and political significance. The referentiality between Drago and Nazism is sustained not only by Drago's visual construction but also by the film's foundational concept and sampling of historical events.

This analysis, however, is incomplete as it omits a central aspect of the signifying function of Dolph Lundgren as Drago. References to Nazism notwithstanding, Drago *is* Russian and his physical traits conform to the racial features of a dominant Russian ethnic group: he is tall, blonde, blue-eyed, and has a fair complexion. Blonde hair, specifically, has been associated with Russian ethnicity in literature (Pushkin, 1987; Chernyshevsky, 1989). More recently, Russians' association with fairness and blondness resurfaced in the media in reports about Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic states as the main global exporters of blond hair (Kramer, 2010).

Read as an ethnic Russian, Drago activates a different set of discourses. As Todorova (2009) elaborates, the figure of the villainous Slav has been a recurrent figure in literature. In *The Secret of the Chimneys* (1925), Agatha Christie "created a sinister character, Boris Anchoukoff, with Slavic features […]: 'a tall, fair man with high cheekbones, and deep-set blue eyes, and an impassivity of countenance'[who] spoke English with a harsh foreign accent" (Todorova, 2009, p. 122).

This verisimilitude of Drago as an ethnic Russian is key in clearly identifying him as oppositional to Rocky. Allowing for Drago's representativeness of Russian ethnicity, however, introduces new layers of complexity and ambivalence. Russians of the ethnicity whose phenotype he seems to represent – Slavs – have historically occupied Russia, Eastern, and Central Europe and have for centuries been considered an inferior race (Lewis, 1990; Todorova, 2009). Although the Nazi regime did not have a systematic ideological policy towards Slavs, exhibiting a differentiated, contradictory, and opportunistic handling of the various Slavic nations in Eastern and Central Europe leading up to and during World War II, a belief in their inferiority played into policy and atrocities against Poles and Russians in particular: "[i]mages of inferior and hostile Slavs—above all Russians and Poles—had been nurtured in certain quarters for centuries, and served as justification for aggressive designs upon the East" (Connelly, 1999, p. 23). The two groups were "near the bottom of the hierarchy of foreign workers in Germany" (p. 9) but "[b]ecause they figured so centrally in his plans for the future, Hitler had a more distinctly racist conception of the Russians, or as he called them, 'Slavs of the Russian nationality'" (p. 11).

The Nazi regime racialized Russians both on the basis of their Slavic roots but also Asiatic mixture. This is particularly relevant since, as scholars have pointed out: "early Cold War

documents [in the U.S.] described the U.S.S.R. in Orientalizing terms as Asiatic" (Atanasoski, 2013, p. 22). Yet, in spite of this early racialization by the Nazi regime and by the U.S. with the start of the Cold War, "in the wake of the civil right movement in the United States, Soviet global influence was associated with the maintenance of white supremacy" (p. 22). *Rocky IV*, clearly works ideologically towards that end through the casting of Dolph Lundgren and his construction as a representative of what Dyer (1997) calls "extreme whiteness" (p. 222). Although his analysis of extreme whiteness in film and its relationship to ordinary whiteness does not include *Rocky IV*, it is particularly illuminating of its ambivalence in the Stallone-vehicle:

> "… the extreme, very white white image is functional in relation to the ordinary, is even perhaps a condition of establishing whiteness as ordinary.
>
> Extreme whiteness coexists with ordinary whiteness: it is exceptional, excessive, marked. It is what whiteness aspires to and also […] fears. […] The combination of extreme whiteness with plain, unwhite whiteness means that white people can both lay claim to the spirit that aspires to the heights of humanity and yet supposedly speak and act disinterestedly as humanity's most average and unremarkable representatives" (pp. 222-223)

Dyer's analysis is focused on three films: *Falling Down* (1993), *Alien* (1979), and *Blade Runner* (1982). In *Blade Runner* extreme whiteness is represented by the replicants Roy and Pris and serves to create a distinction between them and the more "ordinary" whiteness of Deckard. Roy and Pris are pale, have bleached blonde hair, and they are formidable. In similar lines, reading *Blade Runner* as a Cold War text from a literary perspective, Kaganovsky (2014) has argued that symbolically Roy is legible as the Cold War other. In that context, he is a

manifestation of the monstrous of the Cold War but, "signaled not by deformation or disfigurement, but by perfection" (p. 32). The discourse of the perfection of extreme whiteness as fearsome and aberrant is evident in Stallone's own account of his decision to cast Dolph Lundgren as someone he thought would be hated for being "flawless" or exceptional compared to Rocky who was "flawed" or ordinary. But while *Blade Runner* visually ascribes extreme whiteness to an imaginary class (replicants), which is metaphorically legible within the interpretive codes of science fiction as the monstrous of the Cold War other, *Rocky IV* as a sports drama emplotment of the contemporaneous Cold War other, renders the monstrous of the Cold War literal as Ivan Drago. More to the point, the monstrous, which had in the Cold War filmography of the previous decades been associated with fantasies of communism as an ideology, is here extended to the register of ethnicity as well. Dolph Lundgren is legible as Russian in a way that he would not be legible as Italian, French, or Spanish. Owing to his verisimilitude as a Russian in *Rocky IV*, he has continued to be cast to play Russian characters in films like *Red Scorpion* (1988), *The Russian Specialist* (2005), *One in the Chamber* (2012), and the TV show *Arrow* (2012-present). In 2018 he redeemed the role of Ivan Drago in Steven Caple Jr.'s *Creed II*, where the fight continues through Apollo Creed and Ivan Drago's sons.

Rocky thus recuperates whiteness as an unmarked, invisible category, embodying "the commonality of humanity" (p. 223) by being pitted against the extreme, marked whiteness of Drago as his *Russian* antagonist. The recuperation of ordinary whiteness is made all the more significant since it is coarticulated with the greater battle between the forces of good (i.e. United States) and the "Evil Empire" (the Soviet Union in Reagan's famous speech). *Rocky IV*'s racialization of Drago, which runs parallel to the continued demonization and nazification of the Soviet regime effectively works ideologically to lay the foundation of what Atanasoski calls the

racialization of ideology in the 90s. It presented an instance of conflating political ideology and racial otherness. That conflation, Atanasoski argues, became a central component of the discourse surrounding ethnic conflicts in the 90s when media coverage "set a precedent for using 'religious' and 'ideological' difference to replace 'racial' difference as the predominant mechanism for interpreting non-Western conflicts as irrational, premodern, and genocidal formations" (p. 150).

The legibility of Drago's extreme whiteness as both Nordic and ethnic Russian thus underscores what Dyer saw as its duality – it is both "what whiteness aspires to and also […] fears." If Dolph Lundgren as a Western European embodies the former, Ivan Drago as a Russian (with the attendant imaginaries of an ambiguous East) is a condensation of the latter. Reading *Rocky IV* and Drago specifically through an ethic of multidirectional memory is conducive to understanding some of the contradictions that his image embodies. As a mediation of the memory of the Louis-Schmeling fights of 1936 and 1938, the film invariably symbolized the hopes and fears pinned on Louis as a boxing champion representing a rising Western power. In terms of the film's appropriation of that history, however, *Rocky IV* allocates Louis's loss in 1936 to Apollo Creed (who does not only lose the fight but his life) while assigning his victory in 1938 to Stallone's Rocky. In other words, what was a victory for the representation of African Americans in historic terms, in *Rocky IV* works in the service of the recuperation of ordinary whiteness. Simultaneously, Louis' Nazi opponent is projected on Ivan Drago whose visual representation carries the connotations of ethnic Russianness.

Within an ethic of multidirectional memory, however, Drago is also legible as Russianness as a demonized category in World War II when Russian Slavs as a racial category were considered inferior and subject to the Nazi regime's racializing schemas. While Hitler

thought of Slavs broadly to be an inferior race, he believed that in the expansion of the German state Eastward (the so-called plan for Lebensraum) into the territory of the Soviet Union, in the process of ethnic cleansing, "the best of them" could be "Germanized." As part of his directives, ethnic Russians were to be subsumed into the German state as servants by reading upon them Nordic racial features. Reportedly, "[i]n September 1941 Hitler approved the use of women from the East as domestic servants in Germany, and he instructed aids to revise 'school knowledge about the great migration of peoples,' for the many blond, blue-eyed Ukrainians might be 'peasant descendants of German tribes who never migrated'" (Connelly, p. 15). In effect, it was a plan for the absorbing into the Third Reich that part of the population of the East (Russia was to Hitler a "land between Europe and Asia") that conformed to an ideologically constructed notion of hegemonic whiteness. Although Jews were classified as the prime "enemy," Russian prisoners of war, along with Roma (Gypsies,), people with disabilities, Poles, and Afro-Germans were targeted for "persecution, imprisonment, and annihilation."

In the film's present, Drago's extreme whiteness in *Rocky IV* is racialized, associated with his obtuseness, uttering short, robotic, highly accented sentences like "I must break you" (delivered with a diction and harshness that could be heard decades later in Sacha Baron Cohen's character Borat). He is the realization of Dyer's argument that "to be seen as white is to have one's corporeality registered, yet true whiteness resides in the non-corporeal" (p. 45). And while Drago's white corporeality registers with an added emphasis, the "non-corporeal," the attendant subjectivity of "true" whiteness is missing. His woeful lack of sophistication is underscored through extreme close-ups during the spectacle before the fight with Apollo Creed that capture him as confused and discombobulated, unable to process the rich and campy display in front of him) and expressionless face, intended to render him less than human. His vilification and

racialization is a function of the multiple and contradictory discourses that operate on him: he is a "puppet" of the Soviet regime, on whom the film projects the historical figure of Schmelling – himself a "puppet" of the Nazi regime. Visually, he is legible as a Nazi while also, within the film's text, he is as an ethnic Russian – a class subject to persecution by the Nazi regime. Reading Rocky IV and Drago through the lens of multidirectional memory not only allows holding these separate histories and the attendant memories of trauma and struggle together but also illuminates the discourses that render the recuperation of ordinary whiteness possible against both Apollo Creed's death and Ivan Drago's defeat.

One of *Rocky IV*'s primary operating impulses is thus hegemonic subsuming. Ordinary white masculinity is reestablished as the norm by subsuming within it the social and civil rights gains of African Americans and by establishing its superiority over extreme whiteness (because ordinary whiteness has something extreme whiteness does not – a heart). The film's hegemonic bent is particularly clear during Rocky's incoherent speech after the fight at the end of the film. Wide shots of the Russian crowd cheering for Rocky (after first cheering for Drago) set the tone for a dramatic shift – the Russian audience likes Rocky better now because he is the winner and because he just won them over, with heart. It is ultimately a fantasy of hegemonic expansion with not only extreme whiteness coming in the fold of Western freedom and democracy but also, the entire Russian people.

Contrary to *Rocky IV*, in which Russians are cast as the film's unified block of undisputable villains, *White Night* presents a more complicated image of Russians and Russianness. The film presents a twist on a familiar early Cold War genre trope – defecting Russians who leave the Soviet Union pushed out by how miserable life is under communism

become model capitalists upon coming to the West. *White Nights*, however, has a couple of ingenious narrative innovations. It is a star vehicle for Mikhail Baryshnikov who plays the Russian defector (Nikolai Rodchenko) and co-stars Gregory Hines (Raymond Greenwood) as a U.S. defector to Russia. Stylistically, a core difference from the cycle of 1950s anti-communist films is the emplottment of technology used for surveillance and witnessing, specifically recent innovations in cameras and lenses.

White Nights weaves a number of dance sequences and a thriller plot into what Hackford has called a "political dance thriller." Functionally, most of the dance sequences serve to showcase Baryshnikov and Hines' dance prowess but also to move the narrative forward by bringing together their respective characters whose relationship moves from animosity to friendship through their shared passion for dance. Hackford himself has said that *White Nights* began as his desire to do a dance film. He was first interested in Hines whom he had seen perform before. It was the head of Orion Pictures who suggested to Hackford putting Hines and Baryshnikov together. Ultimately, Hines' role became secondary to that of Baryshnikov who is the film's primary focus. Baryshnikov's Rodchenko is an example of the exceptional Russian who is an Individual (with a capital I) and telegraphs something universal about being human and being an artist. Blue-eyed, with dark blonde hair and a chiseled muscular physique (though far from a pumped muscleman), Rodchenko is legible according to distinguishing characteristics of Russian ethnicity but he is an "Amerikanetz" – he is a U.S. citizen and not only because he has the requisite passport. Crucially, he has developed the proper subjectivity that authorizes inclusion into Western hegemonic white masculinity. His egotistic individualism, which the film presents as an aspect of being a brilliant artist, renders him fit to be subject within the emerging Western neoliberal capitalist order. If Drago was exceptional on the basis of corporeality,

Rodchenko is exceptional on the basis of talent and his ability to master the codes of hegemonic white masculinity albeit within the realm of ballet – what Dyer refers to as the "non-corporeal." This is significant in light of the fact that Rodchenko's plausibility as a character is particularly anchored by Baryshnikov's status as a defector and a world-renowned ballet dancer. In turn, the film invites the viewer to project Rodchenko and the associated discourses of the artists as an egotistic individual onto Baryshnikov.

Both Rodchenko and Greenwood are encoded to embody a certain universal condition of being an artist that transcends both political ideology and race yet Baryshnikov as the film's lead star remains at the vital white center of it. In the end, the U.S. as the champion of artistic freedom and individual enterprise is authenticated by both – an exceptional and sophisticated Russian who has become an exemplary U.S. citizen and a black Vietnam veteran who articulates racial critiques of the U.S. and the Vietnam war. Similarly to *Rocky IV*, the film thus works hegemonically – it allows for difference and dissent only to subsume them into and reestablish dominant ideology about the U.S. as a paragon of liberal multicultural democracy.

As a political thriller *White Nights* is constructed around the tension of visibility/bearing witness and covert activity. There are clear elements of displacement as anxiety about the government spying on its own people that inspired post-Watergate era films like *All the Presidents' Men* (1976), *The Paralax View* (1974), and *Three Days of the Condor* (1975) – is displaced onto the Soviet Union to bolster its construction as a totalitarian state that prevents its subjects from becoming full-fledged individuals. But while the idea of displacement focuses on the present and recent memory, multidirectional memory allows us to trace "transfers between events that have come to seem separate from one another" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 197). Read multidirectionally, the scene that takes place on the square in front of the U.S. Embassy points to

complicated histories of witnessing. As the car carrying Rodchenko and Darya (Isabella Rossellini) near-crashes into two police cars at the square in front of the U.S. Embassy. Scott, a U.S. Embassy diplomat, instructs Rodchenko to get out of the car and "try to be seen." As Rodchenko complies, KGB agents arrive at the scene and charge towards Rodchenko and Darya. As the scene is on the verge of becoming an instance of Soviet repression, Scott warns Chaiko that "We have cameras back there, colonel." Chaiko dismisses the cameras as being too far but Scott points out: "Not with a telephoto. A 200-mm will get a nice, juicy close-up from there. These are Third World diplomats. Explain Rodchenko to them. Algerians, Peruvians, Asians, lots of African nations… Are these countries you want to impress with your Soviet idealism? […] The whole world will know Rodchenko is here." Wide and medium shots frame the "Third World diplomats" flocking at the gates of the Embassy and looking at the developing spectacle and a camera operator with a big telephoto lens who is directed by Rodchenko's assistant Anne (Geraldine Page) to shoot. As Scott is warning Chaiko that the world will bear witness to the Russian state's repression and brutality over its own citizens, Chaiko commands the police to seize Darya. Darya resists and continues to walk towards the U.S. Embassy as three police officers jump on top of her, topple her to the ground, and start to tussle her. The action is captured in long and medium long shots that show Darya's struggle against the three policemen as they try to restrain and apprehend her. A long shot from Chaiko and Rodchenko's perspective shows Darya on the ground in front of the Embassy's gates as the gaze of diplomats and a TV camera are focused on the scene.

Scott and the scene itself thus echo the iconic chant from the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago that weaponized the politics of visibility: "The whole world is watching." The phrase, which was chanted as 23,000 Chicago police officers and National Guard members

descended on 10,000 demonstrators who were protesting the Vietnam war in front of the Conrad Hilton Hotel. Demonstrators were beaten and arrested as cameras bore witness to the brutality of Chicago police and the TV broadcast "drew an estimated 83 million viewers in the U.S." (Goldhammer, 2014). As Goldhammer notes, as a widely televised event, the'68 Democratic National Convention made the chant "The whole world is watching" a "pithy warning that an incident was testing America's commitment to its values." The archive footage, some of which has become available on YouTube,

Yet even though the Convention with its attendant images of police violence popularized the phrase and sealed it in collective memory, the discourse of a "whole world watching" if the U.S. would live up to its ideals of equality first emerged during the coverage of the Little Rock, Arkansas school integration crisis (Dudziak, 2011). As Dudziak (2011) elaborates, International press accounts covering the events in Little Rock converged on the aspect of the world bearing witness:

> "According to the *Montreal Star*, 'The world watched Negroes in the United States going to Southland schools under the muzzles of loaded rifles, just ninety-four years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by another Republican, Abraham Lincoln.' […] Dutch papers noted that Little Rock harmed American prestige. In Stockholm, Sweden, *Svenska Dagbladet* wrote that the event in Arkansas "will be watched with concern throughout [the] Western world.' If the federal government did not take a strong stand, it would pose a serious threat 'not only to President Eisenhower's personal prestige but also to [the] position of [the] U.S. in [the] eyes [of the] free world.'" (p. 120)

Figure 4: *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* editorial cartoon, September 11, 1957.

Thinking of the Embassy square scene in *White Nights* from the perspective of multidirectional memory thus affords us to simultaneously hold the ideological work that the film performs in the present while tracing its connections to complicated pasts, inscribed in collective memory through the process of mass mediation. While past use of "the whole world is watching" has been in the domain of progressive politics and activism in the U.S., in *White Nights* it is weaponized by agents of the U.S. government against the KGB and the Soviet Union. As interconnected memories of state-sanctioned racism and police as the arm of the state perpetrating acts of violence against its own citizens are displaced onto the Soviet Union through the discourse of a whole world watching, the film suggests that the latter engages in ideologies and policies the U.S. had long abandoned (as it could be anticipated, Chaiko is virulent racist). And while clearly motivated by liberal multicultural sensibilities, the film nevertheless positions

the *exceptional* Russian as integrated into Western hegemonic white masculinity and the African American Vietnam vet as his supporting cast. Dyer becomes relevant here:

> "In sum, white as a skin colour is just as unstable, unbounded a category as white as a hue, and therein lies its strength. It enables whiteness to be presented as an apparently attainable, flexible, varied category, while setting up an always movable criterion of inclusion, the ascribed whiteness of your skin." (p. 57)

Thinking of films of the New Cold War multidirectionally allows for a more complex account to emerge than the "us vs. them" category, within which they have traditionally been understood and dismissed as "more of the same" (the same here being the 50s cycle of Cold War films). Multidirectional memory in this case affords not only holding multiple temporalities simultaneously but also tracing continuities of hegemonic ideas and how they absorb and subsume dissent in order to reestablish themselves as dominant. Last but not least, multidirectional memory underscores mechanisms through which the Soviet Union is constructed as a demonic Other, a dark fantasy and a frontier, against which U.S. global exceptionalism can be recaptured.

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CHAPTER 6: THE CONTEMPORARY SPY THRILLER AND NOSTALGIA FOR THE COLD WAR VILLAIN

In his response to Lawless' (2014) study of the construction of Russian otherness in James Bond films, Kent Ono (2014) observes that "[t]he stereotyping of Russia and Russians in Bond films has ossified, producing something akin to a structure" (p. 266). The observation in turn begs the question: "[w]hat accounts for the persistence of such imagery?" Similar tropes to those Lawless describes pervade Cold War spy thrillers of the 2010s albeit with a crucial difference – they rearticulate "the idiom of otherness" (Atanasoski, 2013) that dominated Cold War cinema before the fall of communism in the early 1990s. Compared to its Soviet predecessor, the contemporary Cold War villain is still one dimensional and primitive but also more vicious, brutal, and, crucially – stripped of the finer idealistic and radical nuances of socialism that made it the target of conservative and right-wing attacks during the height of the Cold War. Grafted onto that epistemology are contemporary logics that associate the Russian villain with a primordial, Orientalized and racialized evil. The fact that they are apprehended as racially white further facilitates their demonization as ideologically and culturally other and turns them into a canvas, onto which anxieties about modern terrorism and Islamic radicalism can be projected. As the imagined specter of global terrorist networks loosely dispersed across national borders eludes comprehension, the more knowable and geographically contained villain of the Cold War past who is nevertheless invested with the codes of otherness continues to provide an ideal landscape against which the narrative of Western exceptionalism can be recaptured.

This chapter argues that spy thrillers of the 2010s that engage nostalgically with Cold War history and themes rearticulate "the idiom of Otherness" of the stereotypical villain of the Soviet period in a way that resonates with contemporary dominant political and cultural logics

and extends U.S. cultural hegemony into 21st century. Specifically, the idiom of Russian Otherness is renewed in order to inscribe post-Soviet Russia into global imaginaries of landscapes of ethnic, religious, and cultural monoculturalism and intolerance that in turn warrant Western intervention ostensibly under the banner of safeguarding freedom and diversity. An analytical lens of multicultural neoliberal discourses of freedom and diversity not only illuminates the persistence of stereotypes of Russians on screen but also how ideologies that map the world according to geographies of freedom and diversity and zones of unfreedom and intolerance work through contemporary film. More specifically, the chapter traces these ideological mappings in four Cold War spy thrillers produced and released in the 2010s: Philip Noyce's *Salt* (2010), Thomas Alfredson's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (2011), David Leitch's *Atomic Blonde* (2017), and Stephen Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies* (2015). Both financially and critically successful, the films represent the spy thriller genre across different points of the industry spectrum: *Salt* is a Hollywood blockbuster, *Tinker* is a British art house production, *Bridge of Spies* is a prestige drama, nominated for multiple Oscars, and *Atomic Blonde* is an American indie. As this chapter will further argue, all four spy thrillers are also nostalgia texts, in which nostalgic recollection of the Cold War villain functions towards the reconfiguration and replication of the idiom of Russian otherness.

Discursive Constructions of Soviet Demonology During the Cold War

The advent of the Cold War introduced a significant and substantive transformation in the character and intensity of Communist demonology in discursive constructions. One of the main catalysts of that shift was the formation of the national security state, which according to Rogin, "counteracted Soviet influence by *imitating* Soviet surveillance" (my emphasis). Another

significant source of influence was George Kennan's (1946) "Long Telegram" – a blueprint for the policy of containment – which described the Soviet Union in racializing and Orientalizing terms while also associating it with white supremacy (Kim, 2010; Atanasoski, 2013). Crucially, Atanasoski argues, "[w]ith the end of the Second World War, communism was racialized as a homogenizing totalitarian ideology that destroys human difference and individualism" (p. 19).

Studies of the representation and demonology of communism like Schrecker's and Rogin's while thorough and exhaustive have by and large elided discussion of the Orientalizing aspects of communist stereotypes. More recent scholarship (Atanasoski, 2013; Lawless, 2014, Richardson, 2010) has noted the Orientalist characteristics of depictions of communist otherness. Lawless (2014), draws on Edward Said and Stuart Hall, in her analysis of Russians in the James Bond series. Focusing on 23 Bond films, Lawless argues that in constructing stereotypes along an "us" vs "them" axis, Bond films set up their Russian villains as Oriental Others – a foil – against which the West is produced as sophisticated, cosmopolitan, reasonable, and logical. Russian villains in the series conform to established stereotypes of Russians as "cruel," "wild," "impulsive," and "reckless.". The central function of these stereotypes "is to maintain sharp boundary definitions" (p. 94) between the West as an "in-group" and an "out-group," of those geographically located somewhere East of Europe, to which Russian villains belong. More to the point, the stereotypes function to perpetuate Western "linguistic and cultural hegemony over the Soviet Union and Russia" (p. 92). While the stereotype of the Russian villain in the James Bond franchise is uniquely suited to the spy thriller genre and specific cultural characteristics of the James Bond phenomenon, it nevertheless conforms to the general characteristics of communist demonology of the docu-dramas and science fiction films of the early Cold War as cruel, inhuman, primitive, and soulless.

Lawless' conceptualization of an "us"— "them" binary, along which stereotypes in the Bond films are constructed corresponds to Rogin's description of a structure of splitting and mirroring in communist demonology. That structure is also evident in Neda Atanasoski's (2013) analysis of the discursive construction of the Soviet Union in the U.S. "The 'Communist East,'" Atanasoski argues,

> "emerged as a racialized negative reflection onto which the nation could project imperialist tendencies and a racist past. Apprehending Eastern Europeans as white in the U.S. racial frame facilitated the movement in the modes of racialization that authorize contemporary U.S. imperial rule. Amid the shift in domestic racial formations, Communist systems (more so than Eastern European bodies) were racialized as nonmodern and unfree" (p. 21).

Atanasoski's application of the concept of racialization draws on the work of Jodi Melamed (2011) who defines it as the "'process that constitutes differential relations of human value and valuelessness' through distinct racial categorizations of bodies and spaces" (p. 8). Melamed's definition in turn is similar to that of critical race scholar Nikhil Singh who defines racialization as "historic repertoires and cultural and signifying systems that stigmatize and depreciate one form of humanity for the purposes of another's health, development, safety, profit or pleasure" (as in Melamed, p. 12). Melamed's concept of racialization is in turn a key aspect of what she terms neoliberal multiculturalism – the "incorporation of U.S. multiculturalism into the legitimating and operating procedures of neoliberalism" (2006, p. 15). One of the functions of neoliberal multiculturalism, according to Melamed is that it "codes the wealth, mobility, and political power of neoliberalism's beneficiaries to be the just deserts of 'multicultural world citizens,'" while simultaneously representing those whom "neoliberalism dispossesses" as

"handicapped by their own 'monoculturalism.'" Neoliberal multiculturalism thus engineers "a new racism," one that "rewards or punishes people for being or not being 'multicultural Americans,' an ideological figure that arises out of neoliberal frameworks." In fact, it "extends racializing practices and discipline beyond the color line," or beyond race apprehended as phenotype within white supremacist logics. As a result, "new categories of privilege and stigma determined by ideological, economic, and cultural criteria overlay older, conventional racial categories." In other words, "traditionally recognized racial identities" (i.e. whiteness) "can now occupy both sides of the privilege/stigma opposition." Notably, whiteness remains a privileged category even as neoliberal multiculturalism has produced a new logic of racialization that

> "…deploys economic, ideological, cultural, and religious distinctions to produce lesser personhoods, laying these new categories of privilege and stigma across conventional racial categories, fracturing them into differential status groups" (p. 14).

While Atanasoski's project is more focused on the discursive construction of Eastern Europe, she clarifies that aspects of her analysis are applicable to the Soviet Union as well. One of the most important developments that started in the 50s according to Atanasoski was that "Soviet totalitarianism was described in racializing terms that U.S. citizens could recognize through allusions to America's own record of racism" (p. 22). As U.S. policymakers realized the importance of promoting civil rights at home for winning the Cold War abroad – especially in the so-called "Third World" countries – considerable effort was invested in crafting an image of racial progress under the auspices of Western liberal democracy. It was the only form of government that could produce a cinematic musical adaptation of Prosper Mérimée's novella *Carmen* starring an all-black cast, regardless of the contradictions the concept posed in the context of segregationist U.S. (Atanasoski, 2014). Particularly notable were the "Goodwill

Ambassador" tours by African American jazz musicians, of which *The Afro-American* declared "hot, blues, Dixieland bebop or rock'n'roll has at last been publicly acknowledged as the principal asset of American foreign policy" (von Eschen, 2000, p. 124). And as promoting an image of racial diversity and of "the American Negro as part of America's cultural life" (Saunders, 2013, p. 245) became realized as indispensable weapons for the Cold War front, the Soviet Union became a screen, onto which the U.S. projected its racist past (Atanasoski, 2013). As Atanasoski details, "[a] 1950 National Security Council document explained that 'there is a basic conflict between the idea of freedom under a government of laws, and the idea of *slavery* under the grim oligarchy of the Kremlin'" (p. 22) (my emphasis). Similarly, "[i]n the United States, the process of 'Sovietization' was perceived as 'rigorous enough to threaten '*an end to all diversity*'.'" Communism was thus demonized as a racialized threat of unfreedom – a homogenizing imperialist force that warranted U.S. protection of Third World countries against Soviet encroachment.[1]

Crucially, Atanasoski (2013) argues, "[t]he post-civil rights reordering of U.S. racial ideologies, occurring as it did in the context of the Cold War, was worked out in part through cultural and political knowledge produced about the U.S.S.R" (p. 43). One important site of the production of such knowledge was 50s Cold War cinema where Hollywood drew on the symbolic register of Nazism in its depiction of communist villains, frequently blurring the line between communism and Nazism. The arch-villain in *I Was a Communist for the FBI* is Gerhardt Eisler – a communist with a thick German accent and heavy glasses. In RKO's *The Whip Hand* (1951), Buchholtz (Otto Waldis) is a Nazi scientist working for the Soviet Union. The trend

1. Contrary to Cold War ideology, which cast sovietization as an official policy of homogenization, recent studies (Hirsch, 2005) have argued that homogenization was never a policy objective and the Soviet Union functioned as a multiethnic entity.

would continue well into the 80s where in *Rocky IV* the entire Soviet Union is associated with Nazism. As Sherman (2011) points out, "[t]he idea that Nazis would naturally go to work for communists was a popular one in spy thrillers of the period" (p. 61). In the popular imagination they blended into one general and abstract specter of primordial evil bent on destroying diversity and freedom. Furthermore, almost universally communists were exposed to be closeted virulent racists who preached racial tolerance on the outside while harboring prejudice on the inside.

The split between an inside and an outside is another structuring element of demonology of communism and the Soviet Union. From a psychoanalytic perspective, that split has been read as a manifestation of Freud's uncanny. Inside and outside exist as two separate abstract realms that could refer to the domestic – that, which lies within the national borders – and the foreign: that which lies beyond them. Their relationship to each other is that of an image and its inverted reflection. The boundary keeping the two identities separate is fragile – if one pushes against the inside, it will become the outside and vice versa. The porousness of that boundary that threatens to collapse the distinction between self and other is an essential aspect of the uncanny. Compared to the more overt "us" vs. "them" binary of propaganda films whose ideology is clearly legible on the surface, the uncanny resurfaces in a more symbolic form in films that do not immediately announce themselves as candidates of the Cold War cannon (Kaganovsky, 2014). Suggesting that the sharply articulated "us" vs. "them" dualism of Cold War texts is tethered to a "less clearly delineated space of good and evil" where "the self and its horrifying alien *other* [exist in] a symbiotic relationship" (p. 32), Kaganovsky locates the structure of the Cold War uncanny in the human-replicant binary of Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1984). Compared to earlier versions of the monstrous, however, where it manifests as some type of mutation (*Them!*, 1954) or disfigurement (*The Fly*, 1958), the monstrous in *Blade Runner* presents itself as perfection.

Throughout the Cold War period – both before the official start of the Cold War with the Long Telegram and the Truman Doctrine and after – the Soviet Union was discursively constructed as the U.S.'s alien other; a canvas onto which the U.S. projected its history of slavery and a European-style anachronistic form of imperialism that the U.S. eschewed altogether. While in a more realist and explicitly political sense the Soviet Union was demonized for domestic political ends, symbolically it became a repository for subconscious anxieties over the fragile boundaries of identity. The Soviet system was an Orientalized *other* – "a semi-Asian country, which somehow managed to achieve the status of a military superpower; an 'Upper Volta with missiles'" (Morozov, 2019). More to the point, as Atanasoski (2013) argues, communism as the totalizing ideology of this semi-Asian country was racialized as a specter of unfreedom and the destruction of democracy and diversity. In turn, "[t]he predominant characterization of Soviet communism as an anachronistic racial and political ideology that sought to end diversity was paramount for portrayals of the Soviet Union as a twentieth-century imperial power opposed by the United States" (p. 22). Such constructions were instrumental for the consolidation of American exceptionalism and for the U.S. moving into its 21st century role of a global protector of freedom and diversity. By the end of the Cold War as demarcated by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, representations of Russian demonology – especially as encoded in film – would form a vast archive, securing an "ossified image" (Ono, 2014), against which a distinct U.S. national and global identity can be constructed. And while some may have expected that the end of the Cold War would correspondingly render Russian demonology on the screen no longer culturally or politically relevant, the discursive construction of Russians as villains has continued unabated. It is this chapter's contention that Cold War cinema after the official end of the Cold

War in 1991 has recoded Russian villainy in accordance with the deeper ideological transformations in U.S. global hegemony described by Atanasoski (2013), whereby:

> "[t]he U.S. Cold War conflation of socialism with false consciousness, or ideology, that demanded that the U.S. convert hearts and minds has in the present day been displaced onto emergent illiberal modes of existence, governance, and religiosity, which are figured as being in need of reform just as the Communist world had once been" (p. 12).

As Atanasoski documents in her study of 1990s travelogues, within a post-communist frame Russia was correlated with the categories of religious and cultural difference, which gained a renewed significance. Eastern Orthodox Christianity – the official religion of the new state of Russia – while formally a Christian denomination, has been associated with the East since it developed under Ottoman rule. Kaplan's (2005) travelogue *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* specifically, suggests that through historical imbrications Eastern Orthodox Christianity is more closely aligned with Islam and posits an opposition between Western religions (Protestantism, Judaism, and Catholicism) and Eastern religions (in this case Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Islam). More to the point, "[r]eiterating a belief in the benefits of a protestant work ethic, Kaplan implies that unlike Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestant values are conducive to making capitalism and democracy function" (p. 66). Furthermore, Kaplan suggests that with the end of the Cold War, a more "historically grounded" version of the region re-emerged. Historically however, Russia's status as a European country has been ambivalent. Kagan, Ozmet, & Turner (2003) argue that before the rise of the Romanov Dynasty in 17th century,

> "Russia had been considered part of Europe only by courtesy […]. Geographically and politically, it lay on the periphery. Hemmed by Sweden on the Baltic and by the Ottoman

> Empire on the Black Sea, Russia had no warm water ports. Its chief outlet for trade to the west was Archangel on the White Sea, which was ice free for only part of the year. What Russia did possess was a vast reserve of largely undeveloped natural and human resources." (p. 501)

Thus, even as the Romanovs positioned Russia as a European power in 17th & 18th centuries, deeper cultural rifts stemming from Russia's historical exclusion from dominant global trade routes; its acceptance of Eastern Orthodox Christianity from the Byzantine Empire, which strengthened its cultural ties to Byzantium (present-day Istanbul) as opposed to Rome; Mongol rule (1243-1480), which had "created further cultural divisions between Russia and the West" (p. 311) as early as the Middle Ages; its connections to the Muslim world by being territorially contiguous with majority Muslim nations, were hardly erased. If Kaplan is correct in his contention that with the end of the Cold War a more historically-grounded version of the region re-emerged, it would follow that Russia's "peripherality," its deeper historical, cultural, and religious difference from Europe and the West is relitigated within a contemporary postsocialist neoliberal environment (after all, religion itself was disavowed under communist rule) with the West consolidated as its core. To state this differntly, with the advent of postsocialism, communist ideological difference was remapped onto religious and cultural difference in a way that renewed the terms for U.S. hegemony in the new century. This remapping was ushered by a few key political and economic events in the 90s that are the focus of the next section.

Post-Cold War Reconfiguration of Communist Demonology

Though as of 1987 the U.S. was still in the third moment of American political demonology (Rogin, 1987), that moment was on the verge of a monumental shift, triggered by the collapse of

the Soviet Union and the communist system. On December 25th, 1991 the Soviet Union ceased to exist and in the following years, Boris Yeltsin – the president of the new state of Russia – would continue in the path established by Mikhail Gorbachev towards liberal economic and democratic reform. Both Russia and Eastern Europe presented themselves as newly available for inclusion into the structures of global capitalism, offering fresh opportunities for the application of the revamped neoliberal ideology of the 80s. Known by now as "shock therapy," the series of neoliberal economic reforms based on the Washington Consensus and administered by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United States Department of the Treasury sought to turn the previously socialist countries into free-market economies overnight. The reform package ultimately failed to reach its objectives, producing instead, economic inequality and poverty, excess mortality, and decreased life expectancy. According to Kagan, Ozmet, & Turner (2003), "[t]he economic downturn contributed to further political unrest," (p. 1075) which forced Yeltsin to resign in 1998 and cede the presidency to his Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

While presented here in very broad strokes, this history of Russia in the 90s is of critical importance as, against this backdrop, the demonology of Russia underwent a dramatic reconfiguration. Atanasoski (2013) details and maps that reconfiguration and argues that the Cold War spatial and racializing epistemologies, which conceived of communism as a racialized specter of unfreedom and end to all diversity were in the postsocialist period mapped onto the new state of Russia as the racialization of illiberalism and religious intolerance that prevent the forward momentum of Western-style democracy. This process, according to Atanasoski was part of a broader transformation whereby: "[w]ith the advent of postsocialism, U.S. conceptions of saving the world for history (and historical progress) refigured the Cold War paradigm of saving

the world from communism to that of saving the world from humanitarian atrocities" (p. 39). The "idiom of otherness" (p. 69) was thus reframed and re-centered on religious and cultural difference (specifically – those posed by Christian Orthodoxy and Islam), ethnic, and religious intolerance in order to justify hegemonic domination into the 21st century. Atanasoski contends that following the demise of the U.S.S.R., communism as a totalizing ideology and an idiom of otherness was replaced by racialized "interiorized differences of being and feeling (made manifest in this world as religion) rather than racial differences legible on the skin" (p. 69). Furthermore, this reconfiguring was cast in temporal terms – what Atansoski calls "the racial time of the other" – whereby specific spaces and geographies were coded as "not quite ready for civilization" and "steeped in a backward religiosity that is incompatible with liberal democratic reform" (p. 59). Atanasoski's study is critical in suggesting that rather than demarcating the beginning of the end of the construction of Russia as the Other, the end of the Cold War and the 90s marked a period of a fundamental rearticulation of the terms of that otherness. On the postsocialist global stage where radical Islam replaced communism as the dominant form of radical alterity that "threatens liberal notions of normative (non-threatening, cultural) diversity that can be allowed to flourish, what remains from the Cold War era is the understanding that it is interiority/belief that signifies the differences that matter" (p. 207). One of the examples Atanasoski cites to illustrate her point is from the media discourse surrounding the "Boston bombers" – Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev. While early narratives following the release the of the photos of the two brothers identified the men as Caucasian and drew on the speculative register reserved for white male criminality: "mental illness, anti-government grudges, frustrations at home," once news broke out that the two were Chechen Muslims, "suddenly, they were not so 'white' after all" (Kedzior, 2013). The postsocialist idiom of otherness is thus

tethered to difference of interiority, specifically – beliefs, belief systems, and systems of governance marked as illiberal and in need of reform.

Atanasoski's argument about the reconfiguration of the idiom of difference in the 1990s similarly draws on Melamed's (2011) work on the history of official anti-racisms. According to Melamed, the 2000s marked the transition from liberal multiculturalism to neoliberal multiculturalism, which continues to present day. Within a neoliberal multicultural framework,

> "racialization has made [the disparity of rights and privileges between populations with human capital and those without it] appear fair by ascribing racialized privilege to neoliberalism's beneficiaries and racialized stigma to its dispossessed. In particular, it has valued its beneficiaries as multicultural, law-abiding, and good global citizens and devalued the dispossessed as monocultural, backward, weak, and irrational – unfit for global citizenship because they lack the proper neoliberal subjectivity" (p. 44).

Thinking about these neoliberal logics in terms of a continuity, rather than in terms of a break with the Cold War past, affords us a more thorough investigation of the imbrications of capitalism, neoliberalism, and official anti-racisms. Thus, discursively, what in a Cold War ideological framework is cast as a homogenizing force that threatened an end to diversity and freedom, within a neoliberal multicultural framework becomes Russia as "monocultural, backward, weak, and irrational" – a recoding that naturalizes economic failure to adopt the evolutionary model of economic development, administered by institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the United States Department of the Treasury. As this chapter argues, these reconfigurations of the idioms of otherness are legible in Cold War films of the 2010s.

Nostalgia in Culture and in the Media

It is this chapter's further contention that in spy thrillers of the 2010s the recoding of the idiom of Russian otherness was in part enabled by nostalgia for Russians as the U.S. archvillains of Cold War cinema. That nostalgia is, in turn, part of a broader cultural nostalgia for the 80s that, as Jameson would point out, cannibalizes earlier decades as well. As Davis' analysis in *Yearning for Yesterday* would suggest, the current wave of cultural nostalgia is symptomatic of broadscale dislocations and restructurings of social identity. Though identity has rarely been foregrounded in studies of nostalgia, it commonly features as a subtext. Matthew Leggatt's (2018) study of contemporary nostalgia, for example, argues that the current nostalgia moment was set in motion by the encounter with the 21st century sublime "held predominantly in the form of our response to the terror of our confrontation with the global" (p. 4) that triggers a desire to relive the past. Drawing on Kant's (2000) formulation of the sublime, Leggatt posits that aspects of the 21st century such as "divisive politics, the mediatization of terror, and the sheer scale and overwhelming complexity of the global web" (p. 5) overwhelm cognition and disrupt the experience of time, raising the prospect of loss of identity (that, which makes us *Us*). Following Davis, memory and nostalgia function as anchors – metaphorical "training wheels" – as identity adapts to the new status quo. Boym is particularly helpful here in emphasizing the distinction between restorative nostalgia, which would aggressively seek to reinstate an irretrievable, mythical past (i.e. "Make America Great Again") and reflective nostalgia, which is self-aware and leans into the supportive functions of nostalgia without trying to fashion present circumstances to fit the image of an imagined past.

An essential aspect of contemporary nostalgia is that the past cohabits with the present (Boym, 2001; Jameson, 1991; Higson, 2014). This is in part an affordance of the vast archive of

audiovisual media accumulated over the course of the 20th century, which function as time capsules, rendering "the past" easily and readily available for consumption. As Reynolds (2011) argues, "in the second half of the twentieth century, nostalgia became steadily more and more bound up with popular culture" and at the same time grew "thoroughly entwined with the consumer-entertainment complex" (p. xxix). The co-temporaneity of the past and the present has rendered nostalgia *a*temporal – it "seems to stand outside time" (Higson, 2014, p. 123). Contemporary nostalgia's *a*temporaneity is, according to Higson, the central characteristic differentiating post-modern from modern nostalgia. Following Jameson (1991), Higson argues that the past in advanced capitalism is ubiquitous; it is a consumable good seized on and commodified by the culture industries. Nostalgia therefore does not remain wistful for long, the longing for the past is sooner or later satisfied through consumption. Higson's argument then, similarly to Jameson's, is premised on an overly totalizing conception of the past as fully available through commodities. To the contrary, a more nuanced perspective is helpful here, acknowledging that while some nostalgic affects, associated with specific pasts can be assuaged through consumption, nostalgia not anchored to cultural artifacts, i.e. – a more vague and generalized longing for an idealized past – remains elusive. Drawing a distinction between the two, Menke (2017) focuses on "media nostalgia" – nostalgia for specific media of the past. Media nostalgia is different from "mediated nostalgia" – the type that seems to be Higson's object of study – where "media serve only as mediators or portals to media-unrelated experiences from the past" (p. 630). Media nostalgia Menke argues sometimes means "turning to media content; in other cases, it means embracing outdated media technology with its formerly genuine social and cultural significance, aesthetic, style, way of operation, smell, or haptic" (p. 631). This chapter argues that while reflective and atemporal nostalgias are conducive to the reconfiguration

of the idiom of Russian Otherness, restorative nostalgia replicates it with close adherence to its stereotypical Cold War articulation. In terms of the four films that are the focus of the chapter, reflective and atemporal nostalgias work through *Salt*, *Tinker*, and *Atomic Blonde* while reflective nostalgia is operative in *Bridge of Spies*.

The Contemporary Spy Thriller and Nostalgia for the Russian Villain

In his review of Philip Noyce's thriller *Salt*, Roger Ebert (2010) wrote:

> "Although "Salt" finds an ingenious way to overcome history and resurrect the Russians as movie villains, neither that nor any other elements of the plot demand analysis. It's all a hook to hang a thriller on. It's exhilarating to see a genre picture done really well."

While Ebert is correct that the film successfully resurrects the Russians, the fact that they were regarded as a cultural and filmmaking cliché – something that would presumably register as out of sync with the contemporary zeitgeist – yet continued to resurface in contemporary cinema that was frequently both critically and commercially successful does warrant further analysis. In *Salt*, Angelina Jolie whose action hero bonafides had been consolidated with the *Tomb Raider* films – plays Evelyn Salt, a Soviet sleeper agent who is triggered by her Russian spy master and sent on a mission to sabotage efforts towards building peaceful International relations between the two nations. The film is thus a Jolie action vehicle, comparable to the structure and style of the *Mission: Impossible* and *Bourne* series. In fact, the character of Evelyn Salt was originally written as male with the producers reportedly envisioning Tom Cruise reprising the role. Cruise was reportedly approached about the part but turned it down due to its proximity and similarity to his character Ethan Hunt in the *Mission: Impossible* films. The role was then rewritten as a woman with Angelina Jolie first in line for the job.

In the film Evelyn Salt is represented as an unbreakable, made-of-steel Russian agent trained in various types of physical combat and exceptionally knowledgeable about weaponry, technology, and makeshift bomb construction. It opens with her in a dark North Korean prison cell, stripped down to her underwear, beaten, and bloodied by North Korean interrogators who are using torture to force her to confess that she is a U.S. spy. Even after being dragged through the concrete floor of the prison cell and waterboarded with gasoline, Salt refuses to reveal her true identity as a CIA agent, insisting on her civilian cover as a company executive for a company called Rink Petroleum. Although the film would later provide specific time markers for some events in the Cold War past, it is vague about the time of the present, only stipulating in the opening shot that the events in North Korea occurred "two years ago." Thus, from the start the viewer is introduced to Salt's superhuman endurance as she resists the torture techniques of a "rogue" authoritarian regime to force her to reveal her identity.

Throughout the film, Salt is represented as supernaturally strong and resilient. In that the stereotype of communists as having a superhuman strength and endurance is filtered in the film through Jolie's glamour and paratextual discourse intended to underscore her exceptionalism. A featurette included in the film's DVD, titled *The Ultimate Female Action Hero* heaps praise on Jolie for doing her own stunts and being fearless. The featurette shows behind-the-scenes footage of Jolie walking barefoot on the ledge of the top floor of a 12-story building as Noyce confirms in voiceover that this is Jolie herself, "for real, not a stunt woman, without a net, with no blue screen, she's doing it" even as it is visible that a wire of what is presumably a body harness is coming out of her back. Thus, as part of its overhaul of the stereotype of the superhuman Soviet spy, *Salt* draws on Jolie's star brand as "the ultimate female action hero," which ultimately lends plausibility to the role and physical actions that seem to defy the laws of physics.

As an action hero, she is a borderline superhero and it is one of the film's innovations that Salt's superhero factor lends support to the stereotype of Russians and communists as superhuman, thus bolstering the film's generic verisimilitude as an action *and* a Cold War thriller. At one point we see her descend an elevator shaft by jumping from wall to wall almost as if flying. When that's not fast enough, she inserts herself into a shallow vaulting in one of the shaft walls and slides down using her hands and feet to prevent a free fall. She jumps from a bridge onto the top of a moving truck, then onto another moving truck, steers a police vehicle into a nosedive from an overpass, and then quietly walks away, seemingly unperturbed. A look of icy and calculating indifference permanently stamped on her face, she is seemingly always in control.

Another way Noyce's direction together with Jolie's interpretation incorporate the stereotype of Russians as supernaturally strong into the character of the action hero is through Salt's styling, which is intended to evoke a "mean" look (*The Ultimate Female Action Hero*). On the day of the assassination of the Russian president, the opening sequence of establishing shots in front of the church finds her blended into the crowd of onlookers. The camera tracks through the crowd, pushes in from behind her, and describes a parallax shot to find her expressionless face, partially concealed by her now unbraided, newly-dyed-black hair. The shot invariably announces the resurfacing of a deeper darkness and is intended to produce a chilling apprehension about who she really is and what she is about to do next. The shot's parallax effect serves as a slow reveal that ramps up the tension and cues the viewer that Salt could very well be the communist spy she has been accused of being.

As *The Ultimate Female Action Hero* featurette reveals, Noyce and Jolie intentionally conveyed Salt's meanness through her fighting style. As Jolie reports: "It's not as much that your

kick can go this high. Your kick is low and it breaks somebody's leg. There is nothing flashy and there's nothing pretty about it." Her comments are literal – in the film she is seen performing low kicks that break legs. Furthermore, in terms of style techniques, Jolie and Second Unit Director/Stunt Coordinator Simon Crane comment that they first drew on Muay Thai – a Thai boxing styles known for dynamic use of all four limbs, which Jolie describes as "long and beautiful." Crane explains that they "then hardened it up with Krav Maga" – an Israeli military self-defense system used by Israeli security forces. He further elaborates that "[Jolie] wanted a certain style – a more real action, rather than, say, some of the *Mission: Impossibles* or the old type of James Bond films." The "hardening" of Jolie's fighting style is crucial in filtering the figure of the traditionally Western action hero through the Cold War stereotype of Russians as mean, evil, brutal, and exceptionally strong. The stereotype is thus resurrected and rendered functional through the contemporary action/thriller genre, lending plausibility to Salt's stunts when they verge on defying the laws of physics but also renewing the terms of Russian Otherness.

While the construction of Salt clearly draws on stereotypes of Russian otherness, however, her character is ambivalent and that ambivalence is a central narrative element that propels the plot forward. A blond Salt gives way to a dark-haired Salt captured in camera angles that suggest that her "true" identity remains a mystery. During an interview with KCRW's *The Treatment*, Noyce explains that one of the main questions the script posed for him was about the authenticity of identity, namely: can Salt be claimed to be Russian given that she has spent the majority of her adult life embedded as a sleeper agent in the U.S.? The film's romantic subplot would suggest Noyce believes the answer to that question to be no. But film's romantic subplot also reveals how successfully Salt has embedded herself into the structure and logics of

neoliberalism. A notable sequence shortly before Orlov (Daniel Olbrychski) walks in, shows her at her job, wearing a grey business casual suit, her blond hair neatly braided. It is close to the end of the workday and she is spending the final minutes behind her desk watching online tutorials on how to fold dinner table napkins and practicing on one in front of her. When accosted, she explains that it is her and Mike's wedding anniversary and she wants it to be perfect. The setting of the scene is corporate – a CIA headquarter, disguised as a petroleum corporation. Thus, before Salt's hidden identity is revealed she is presented as fluent in the codes of heterosexual, white, female neoliberal subjectivity as expressed through costuming, hair styling, setting (and her corporate rank) and the action itself – multitasking and self-optimizing, learning the intricacies of high dining. This identity is later complicated by her Russian identity and the question of which is the authentic one.

This representation of Salt is markedly different from the depiction of the FSB and its members. The representative structure here is reminiscent to what Rogin called "splitting and mirroring." The FSB is the Russian counterpart of the CIA, which is an arm of the Russian state. It succeeded the more popularly known KGB after the collapse of the Soviet Union. *Salt* traces a continuity between the two agencies through the film's main villain – Orlov, whose mission is unchanged by the momentous events of 1989-1991 – and his henchmen. The mission itself – to replace American citizens with Soviet "doubles" who are actually highly trained sleeper agents, fully capable of blending into the American fabric and performing "Americanness" until Day X when they are triggered and called to carry out their duty – "destroy America." The KGB's plan is thus structured on the central plot device from *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (dir. Don Siegel, 1956), which has been read as a metaphor for communism converting "ordinary" Americans into lifeless automatons emptied of their identify and individuality. The replacement in this case,

however, is presented in literal terms and thrives on contemporary anxieties about displacement by a foreign, illiberal, and monocultural Other.

Orlov and his henchmen are represented as members of a monocultural alien force that threatens to replace America's cultural diversity with its monoculturalism. This is evidenced in the sequence that takes place on a barge on the Hudson river. In what is intended as a test of Salt's loyalties she is led to her husband Mike (August Diehl) whom Orlov's men had previously captured. As soon as the two of them make eye contact, Mike is killed at point-blank range. His executioner and the rest of Orlov's henchmen then point their guns at Salt, anticipating her reaction. She passes the test. Her face remains expressionless even as a close-up calls attention to her eyes, glinting as if on the verge of tears. Taking that as evidence that their sister has rejoined them, the men lower their weapons and greet her. The camera pans around her revealing white men, styled, lit, and costumed to look the same – they all have short dark hair, no facial hair, are seemingly dirty, and wear black jackets. The editing cuts to a flashback sequence of Salt's memory of the men as children recruited to be sleeper agents. The representational codes of the flashback sequence match the depiction of their adult selves – they all have the same hair style, they are wearing white-and-green striped shirts, they are roughly the same age, and they are all white. The fear of Russia as a monocultural foreign force replacing U.S. cultural diversity and freedom is rekindled as the agents drink vodka and cheer to what they believe to be the impending success of their mission to destroy America. Communist or socialist ideology is never mentioned or suggested. Instead, the sleeper agents and their master-spy seem to be driven by nationalist extremism and hatred for America. Fear of a totalizing and homogenizing Soviet Union is thus reinscribed onto the new Russia as fear of a monocultural, Orientalized, illiberal Other that would come to replace America's multicultural fabric.

The film thus creates a clear representational break between Salt and Ted Winter (Liev Schreiber) on one end and Orlov and his henchmen on the other. Both Salt and Ted are CIA operatives posing as corporate executives, successfully blended into the U.S. National Security apparatus and performing the codes of neoliberal multiculturalism. In contrast to them Orlov and his men are represented as monocultural members of a dying state. Orlov himself emphatically claims that "Russia is dying" during his interrogation at the CIA before revealing that he too is dying of cancer. This differential representational schema is legible according to Melamed's (2006, 2011) concept of multicultural neoliberalism with Salt and Ted embedded in a Western neoliberal core as accomplished neoliberal multicultural subjects and thus full-fledged beneficiaries of the wealth, mobility, and political power it bestows. Their workplace is structured according to the codes of neoliberal multiculturalism with Chiwetel Ejiofor's Peobody assigned to oversee their activities and act as a check on their power. In contrast to them, Orlov and his men are "handicapped by their own 'monoculturalism,'" sickly, "…backward, weak and irrational" – codes of racialized stigma within a neoliberal multicultural framework. The contrast is expressed visually as well. In the first scene, in which Salt and Orlov face each other, sitting at the opposite ends of an interrogation table, Jolie is lit in a three-point system, which eliminates shadows and accentuates her Hollywood glamor and vitality. The light on Orlov casts shadows under his eyes and across his face that emphasize his gauntness and the specter of death hanging over him. The contrast is underscored by the casting as well with Jolie and Schreiber – two top American Hollywood actors – playing the two Russian spies as neoliberal multicultural subjects and Polish actor Daniel Olbrychski playing Orlov.

Released in 2010 in the midst of a global War on Terror beamed in American living rooms through a 24/7 news cycle, *Salt* projects anxieties about contemporary Islamic terrorism

onto the film's Russian villains. This is an aspect not only of the film text but also of paratextual elements. During the same KCRW interview, Noyce revealed that one of the reasons the figure of the spy has occupied his fascination and his filmography accordingly is that his father was a spy for Z Special Force (an Australian equivalent of OSS) and entertained him with "stories of sabotage, of camouflage, of subterfuge." As Noyce explains, "[My dad] always said to me, 'The greatest weapon in the world is not any military weapon. The human being is the greatest weapon.'" While the comment is clearly intended about the figure of the spy more broadly, in *Salt*, the idea of "the human being as a weapon" assumes a specific significance when Evelyn Salt, disguised as a male NATO officer enters the White House with Shnaider (Corey Stall) and minutes later Shnaider goes on a shooting spree that ends with the detonation of an explosive device that had been implanted inside his body. Thus, by projecting acts of violence that in the 21st century have been predominantly associated with Islamic terrorism onto Russian bodies, *Salt* recodes the Cold War racialization of communism into the racialization of the contemporary Russian state as illiberal, monocultural, and seized by fanatics, thereby naturalizing failure of neoliberal reforms in Russia to produce a Western-style democracy.

Released a year after *Salt*, *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* similarly reconfigures the stereotype of the communist villain to articulate it in terms of Russia's cultural otherness and imaginaries of Eastern religiosity and geographies. In this case, however, conforming to general characteristics of the indie genre to convey meaning through understated detail and to emphasize the expressive qualities of style and aesthetics, the recoding is more subtly executed. The film is an adaptation of John le Carré's 1974 spy novel by the same title, which was first adapted in 1979 as a BBC television miniseries. Le Carré would later recall about the popularity of the series that "we emptied the National Theater." According to him, it was made

> "in a curious way, as a love story to a fading British establishment. Even the nastiest characters were in some way huggable. Everybody loved that; it was a very English document […] When you come to make this movie [in 2011], it isn't there anymore. The ethic and affections have all shifted. This has to be a much tougher thing, with a great deal less sentiment."

But shifts in ethics and affections aside, the 2011 adaptation is still a nostalgic text for a fading British empire and, arguably, a fading West that "has given up far too many freedoms to be free." Its release in 2011 – 32 years after the British miniseries – conforms to what has been called the "30-year nostalgia cycle" in popular culture (Ellis, 2017). As a period film that aims to evoke the look and feel of a certain vision of the 70s, *Tinker* could easily be categorized as an example of reflective nostalgia. It brings to the screen a distinct and unified vision of the 70s, conveyed through fashion styles, consumer goods (vehicles, briefcases, trench coats) and analog technology (rotary phones, telegraphs, surveillance devices). The mise-en-scene is dominated by brown, green, beige, rust red, and gray – all color graded to give them a musty, stuffy, and smoky look and feel. It is what Boym (2001) calls "[lingering] on ruins, the patina of time and history, the dreams of another place and another time" (p. 41). Thus, the style itself is productive of melancholy and nostalgia for a fading British empire, even as it aims to present a more rigorous critique of the West than its miniseries predecessor.

Herein lie some of the film's deeper contradictions. It is, as le Carré notes, clearly intended to present a more contemporary rebuke of the West by acknowledging the political and ethical changes that have transpired and sacrifices that have been made in the name of fighting phantom, alien Others. But while ostensibly keeping its aim on the UK and the U.S., the film

updates its liberal critique of the West by projecting the threat of 21st century terrorism onto the communist Other of le Carré's original novel.

Looking at the film as text, references to communism or communist ideology are reduced to minimum (two mentions in a film that runs 120 minutes). The Russians are rarely represented on screen. Only three of them – Ployakov, Boris, and Boris' wife Irina– feature as distinct characters. Polyakov is in two brief scenes and Boris and Irina are killed. While they are rarely seen, however, the film includes graphic evidence of their presence. Tufty Thesinger (Philip Martin Brown), the Circus' Istanbul host, is shown with his throat slit and Boris is in a bathtub filled with his own blood and entrails. The audience's sympathies are encouraged only towards Irina (Svetlana Khodchenkova). She is the romantic interest of Ricki Tarr (Tom Hardy) – one of the foot soldiers of British Intelligence. Ricki's romantic attachment to Irina, however, ultimately serves to contrast the nobility and chivalry of the West against the savagery and brutality of Russians. In the sequence, in which she is introduced she discovers Boris cheating on her. The scene is shot from the perspective of Ricki Tarr who is surveilling them from across the street and enfolds in long shots. As Irina presumably confronts Boris about his affair, he beats her and violently throws her body against the window, underscoring his cruelty towards her. Compared to Boris, Ricki is caring and romantic and while he is interested in what information she has to trade, the film insists that his affection for her is sincerely felt. Ricki Tarr's character arc for the rest of the film is motivated by a desire to fulfil his promise towards Irina and help her defect from Russia. In a seedy underworld of turncoats, and spies, in which (in Control's (John Hurt) words): "Nothing in genuine anymore," Ricki Tarr stands out as a man with "authentic" feelings and loyalties. Sympathies towards Irina are used again as an indictment on the brutality of

Russians when she is shot execution-style by Karla in front of Jim Prideaux (Mark Strong) as a way to send a message to Alleline.

These three graphic murders, which stand out as the most cruel depictions of violence in the film are thus circumscribed to geographies associated with a nebulous notion of the East. More the point – the murders of Boris and Tufty, which are exceptional in their brutality as they involve manual dismemberment of the body – occur in Istanbul, a city exoticized as "Oriental" in the Western imagination. Thus, Turkish music is playing on the radio in the scene where Ricki discovers Tufty's body, anchoring the brutality of the violence to its location in Istanbul. Similarly, a few shots later when Irina moves through her apartment and finally finds Boris's disemboweled body in the bathtub, a soft dramatic score gives way to a distant Muslim prayer call as she enters the bathroom and makes the discovery. As the reaction shot zooms in on her, it reveals a Turkish flag hanging from a building across the street, seen through the window behind her. It could be speculated that from the filmmakers' perspective, the Muslim prayer call in that scene was included to demarcate the time of the day. A previous flashback to the Istanbul office is overlaid with the voiceover of Ricki telling Smiley that he received the telegram from the Circus at around 3:30 am that morning – the time of the Imsak call to prayer. The scene's voiceover narration is layered with Muslim prayer chants when the sound of the telegraph comes in. When the chant is heard again a few shots later, it is for the afternoon prayer thus denoting the time of the day, bracketing the timespan of the two murders, and emphasizing the swiftness of the Russian response. This information conveyed stylistically is crucial evidence of the short feedback loop between the Circus and Karla – the Russian spymaster and the film's arch-villain, further corroborating that there is an active double-agent at the top of the Circus. But apart from time, the prayer chants also emphasize location, binding graphic violence to the geographies and

imaginaries of the East. Aesthetically, the violence, perpetrated with knives or other sharp blades, is punctuated on the screen: after he discovers Tufty's body, Ricki runs to the nearest phone in what looks like a kitchen where chefs are processing meat. As he picks up the phone, the chef behind him raises an oversized cleaver over his head and drops it into the meat in front of him, producing a hacking sound that startles Ricki. The phone rings in the next shot inside Irina's apartment and she shortly discovers Boris' butchered body under the sound of the afternoon call to prayer. The brutality is not merely communist, it is situated in the larger cluster of associations with a mythical, orientalized East.

The murder of Irina, executed on screen, similarly takes place on the geography of the East and is rendered in graphic detail and with exceptional cruelty. The film elides specifying the precise location. Prideaux only discloses that after he was shot in Hungary, "[t]hey drove [him] to some military hospital […] I could tell by the stars we were heading east." The flashback sequence shows Prideaux tortured with sleep deprivation and loud screaming before being interrogated by Karla. Conforming to the film's vision to not show Karla's face, the sequence captures only part of his body as he enters the interrogation room. He is mostly a phantom presence, onto which the West, and Smiley in particular, projects its fears. The film is clearly aware of the psychological mechanisms of Cold War projection as Smiley himself concedes that when he was appealing to Karla's affection for his wife, he was effectively telling him more about himself and his own relationship to his wife Ann. In that same scene, however, in which he reenacts his encounter with Karla for his assistant Peter (Benedict Cumberbatch), imagining Karla sitting in the empty chair in front of him, he describes him as a "fanatic" who would rather return to a certain death in Russia than defect to the West. Importantly, Karla's fanaticism is not concretely articulated in terms of fidelity to communist ideology – he is never revealed through

speech and he never spoke to Smiley when the latter was trying to persuade him to defect. His fanaticism, according to Smiley, expresses itself in his willingness to die for an ideological cause whose contours the film does not clearly flesh out. In a similar vein, Prideaux describes Karla as "[looking] like a priest," further inflecting Karla's fanaticism in the direction of religiosity rather than the concrete political goals of communist ideology. The idiom of communist otherness is thus subtly rearticulated as the film projects onto it elements of religious otherness and fanaticism to bolster its contemporary resonance and relevance as a liberal critique of a West mired in an ideological and military conflict against Islamic radicalism.

Tinker similarly to *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1965) – le Carré's earlier Cold War novel, which was adapted into a film during the height of the Cold War – derives its suspense from a "who is playing whom?" plot device, in which the figure of the spy is a source of ambivalence and anxiety about the possibility of maintaining boundaries between self and other. Haydon (Colin Firth) – the ultimate mole – is not only a Russian spy, he is also bisexual and has had a sexual relationship with Jim Prideaux, Ann Smiley (George's wife) and others. He is, in a way, "dual" both in his sexual orientation and his ideological orientation, and establishing the authenticity – or in the vernacular of the film, "genuineness" – of his loyalty is not only impossible but also irrelevant in a world, in which the boundaries between public and private selves were dissolving. By his own account, Haydon *chose* communism because the West had become so ugly. He is a British citizen who had been born in Britain and lived his life as a Western subject before he became a communist spy. Even after he is finally revealed as the eponymous spy, his character remains a complex individual – worrying about his intimate partners or missing cricket in Moscow – unfiltered through the register of communist stereotypes which are, however, reserved for his Russian counterparts. In this clearly differentiated

construction of the communist villain, the film underscores that communist demonology does not merely arise from enmity towards communism as an ideology but is deeply entangled with ethnic and cultural difference. As the film acknowledges and explores the complexities of the identity of its British communist spy, it constructs the image of the Russian other as one-dimensional, fanatical, and unambiguously evil – fixed in their cruelty and barbarity – and grafts onto the epistemology of Soviet demonology discursive elements from the war on terrorism.

Haydon is ultimately killed by Prideaux in the film's final emotional high point. But Prideaux's motivation remains complicated and inevitably personal rather than strictly a form of punishment for Haydon's betrayal of country or political cause. As the scene is set up, the two of them exchange wistful glances and as Prideaux takes aim, Haydon remains fixed in his place, thus presumably becoming his willing victim. A close-up on Prideaux shows a tear running down his face, underscoring the personal character of the killing.

In contrast to *Tinker*, which situates the world of espionage within a coherent 70s aesthetic evocative of nostalgia as melancholic longing, David Leitch's *Atomic Blonde* (2017) is steeped in atemporal nostalgia for the popular culture for the 80s that does not aspire towards strict period specificity. The film is adapted from Antony Johnson's graphic novel *The Coldest City* about an MI6 agent sent to Berlin in 1989 to find a list of Cold War spies that is also pursued by the KGB and French intelligence. Similarly to *Salt*, *Atomic Blonde* is a star vehicle for Charlize Theron who plays a lethal spy but in this case, her point of departure is the CIA. The film has been described by critics as having the characteristics of a le Carré's novel in that the source of tension is the question "who is playing whom?" as agents are doubly – an in this case triply – coded. Theron's Lorraine Broughton is introduced as an MI6 agent who is then revealed to be the mysterious Satchel double-agent – playing the KGB, and ultimately a CIA agent who

has been playing both the KGB and MI6. The story takes place mainly in the seedy underworld of intelligence and counterintelligence with the main characters aligned with the clandestine services of the UK, West Germany, East Germany, France, and/or the Soviet Union. It is by and large a nostalgia text – an example of both mediated nostalgia and media nostalgia for the 80s. Virtually every shot is bathed in bright neon colors and neon light. In that, it evokes not only a sense of 80s-ness but also of 80s postmodern films like *Blade Runner* whose aesthetic heavily features neon lights. Lorraine's wardrobe is pointedly elegant, sharply styled, and upscale. It is more reminiscent of the conspicuous consumption of James Bond than of Evelyn Salt who was styled to be "not flashy." The pleasures of 80s nostalgia are sealed with a soundtrack featuring 80s glam rock and synth pop like David Bowie, *Depeche Mode*, *Nena* ("99 Luftballoons"), and *The Clash*. Aesthetically, the film acknowledges its source material through animated stencil effects that spray paint temporal markers on the screen, hyperreal blood spatter on the camera lens (i.e. when Bremovych (Roland Møller) is shot), and extremely canted camera angles that are then rotated to a level position.

While some scholarship on nostalgia has identified it as a by-and-large regressive and conservative force, *Atomic Blonde* seems to be reflexive in its use of nostalgia towards ostensibly liberal ends. This is, perhaps, clearest in the choice to set the fall of the Berlin wall as the film's backdrop. The adaptation of *The Coldest City* was announced in May 2015 as the race for the 2016 Presidential Election was gathering momentum and so was conservative rhetoric about the construction of a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico. The nostalgic recollection of the failure of a previous notorious wall to stem the flow of migration thus gains a particular politically liberal resonance upon the film's release in July 2017. Indeed, the film is intended for a predominantly liberal Western audience. This is evidenced not only from the temporal

background of the fall of the Berlin wall but also from the construction of the film's protagonist – Lorraine Broughton. She is clearly intended as a feminist action hero and in that her casting draws on Theron's star brand as an action powerhouse and especially – her previous work in George Miller's *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) – a feminist action thriller. She is controlled, fearless, self-reliant, exceptionally skilled, and all-around capable. She is fully independent from men, including sexually. She has a romantic affair with an inexperienced French intelligence operative – Delphine Lasalle (Sofia Boutella), which the film suggests is the only time Lorraine is "real" and truthful. Her killing of Percival (James McCavoy) after he kills Delphine is thus not only an act of self-preservation (Percival has the list and knows that she is Satchel) but also, and importantly, a feminist revenge. The film's eighties nostalgia is thus overlaid with progressive themes and appears to be deployed towards liberal ends.

Similar to *Salt*, *Tinker*, and *Bridge of Spies*, *Atomic Blonde* invests its main protagonists with dimensionality and ambivalence stemming from the tension between private selves and public masks that the figure of the spy mediates. Their ambivalence is, in part, an aspect of the mediation of self in a postmodern world and the contradictory demands advanced capitalism places on the individual. The Russians, however, do not seem to conform to that logic. They are unambiguously villainous: they do not seem to be managing contradictions between their publicly held images and private selves or to register that contradictions of that type exist. They are described as "hatchet men" and visually depicted as such –big, sturdy, and seemingly impervious to pain (Lorraine stabs one of Bremovych's "hatchet men" with a set of keys in the face and he does not seem to register the event, unceremoniously pulling the key out of his cheekbone shortly thereafter). In his introductory sequence, Bremovych – their top KGB operative – is shown brutally beating to death an East Berlin youth with a skateboard in front of

his friends over reportedly "partying last night." Notable in the scene's mise-en-scene is that the Berlin youth who are all set on their knees scene-left are all represented as different – they have different hair color, hair styles, clothing, some are wearing make-up and all of them appear to be part of the East German punk scene. They are framed through panning shots that accentuate their difference with the first pan starting from a medium close-up of a green mohawk. In contrast, Bremovych and his men, set against them scene-right are styled in black leather jackets or trenches, black pants, and standing by black cars. They all have dark facial hair and one appears to be bleached, seemingly to keep the visual monotony of their hair and styling from being complete. As a Hollywood actor, Roland Møller has a history of portraying brutal hatchet men on screen since his 2010 debut in the prison drama *R*. He and his Russian entourage are an uncomplicated evil. The discourse of primitivism is articulated not only visually but also through character dialogue. Bremovych hardly speaks throughout the film and at the end when she finally kills him, Lorraine instructs him to "get this into your thick, primitive skull…" before apprising him that she had been using him all along.

The representation of Russian villains is thus legible not only through the well-established tropes of demonization and Otherness but also through the discourse of neoliberal multiculturalism (Melamed, 2006). Specifically, what renders them legible as racialized subjects of a global neoliberal multiculturalism is that as the film's communist villains they are not primarily constructed through their communist political ideology and/or that ideology's opposition to the West but through culture. The scene that introduces Bremovych is exemplary in that his and his entourage's communist allegiances are articulated through their punishment of the Berlin youth for partying. Before he beats up one of the boys with a skateboard, Bremovych commands him to dance. The boy complies and drops on the ground in an attempt at a break

dance move – a style associated with the West and originating with African American youth in the 70s. His rejection of Western popular culture is further punctuated through a dramatic close-up of the cassette tape player on the ground as Bremovych walks up to it and stomps it with a vengeance, breaking it into pieces in the foreground, while the boy's beaten body is framed in soft focus in the shot's background. Superseding the explicitly political terms of the Cold War, Bremovych and his posse are thus defined through their contempt for pop culture – the hairstyles, the clothes, the music (Nena's "99 Luftballoons"), the break dance, the consumer products (a cassette tape player, a skateboard). Combining that with a wardrobe and styling that represents them as hardly distinguishable from each other renders them legible as "monocultural," illiberal, and intolerant within Melamed's framework of neoliberal multiculturalism. This is particularly relevant in light of the fact that after the official end of the Cold War, Russia was particularly hit by the waves of neoliberal reforms administered by institutions of the West. In a way, Russia as the target of the policies of the Washington Consensus found itself among neoliberalism's dispossessed even as a new business elite congealed around Moscow. As Melamed would argue, neoliberal multiculturalism naturalizes this dispossession by devaluing its subjects as monocultural, backward, illiberal – "unfit for global citizenship because they lack the proper neoliberal subjectivity." Undoubtedly, communist ideology opposed the import of economic and cultural products from the West. But largely unmoored from the communist political ideology (except for the occasional "comrade") that motivated that opposition and in combination with their visual styling, they emerge as poster boys of monoculturalism and illiberalism – two of the main operating factors of racialization within multicultural neoliberalism.

The significance of Melamed's multicultural neoliberal framework for understanding the relevance of Russian villainy in *Atomic Blonde* is further underscored by the representation of Lorraine. She is similarly rendered in neoliberal terms but as its beneficiary. A power-dresser, she is outfitted in 80s upscale fashion brands. The film's wardrobe has been the source of much media attention with *The Hollywood Reporter* claiming that "[t]he actress plays a top-level spy who kicks ass in vintage Dior and custom John Galliano" (Chan, 2017) and *The Telegraph* reporting that:

> "[t]he film's cold, forbidding Eastern Bloc setting contrasts sexily with Theron's super-slick 1980s clothing, which includes a shiny white John Galliano trenchcoat, high-waisted Isabel Marant trousers, a Balmain jumpsuit and a pair of red Dior stiletto heels that double as an impromptu weapon" (Hufton, 2017).

The "vintageness" of the wardrobe and the set is also a source of its contemporary feel. Rather than being period-specific, Loraine's costumes and accessories could plausibly be items from a vintage collection released in the 2010s. Her wardrobe is where the atemporality of the film's nostalgia is clearly expressed. This is evidenced from an interview with the film's costume designer Cindy Evans who explains:

> "I'm not sure that was a conscious choice on my part ... with Lorraine in particular, I tried to ground her style in a sartorial timelessness, all the while adding in subtleties that evoked the '80s." (Soo Hoo, 2017)

Another example of the temporal indeterminacy of "vintage" are the headphones she wears on her flight to Berlin. A metallic model of AKG (an Austrian company that was acquired by the U.S. Harman Internarial Industries in 1994), they are legible as a signifier of vintageness that doubles as an 80s consumer product. As she pours herself a Solichnaya on the rocks and the

camera zooms out to reveal the passengers around her dressed in business casual attire and reading newspapers, she is situated within the codes of "wealth, mobility, and political power of neoliberalism's beneficiaries," which are naturalized as "the just deserts of 'multicultural world citizens.'" Reflective nostalgia for the 80s in this case serves to guide viewer identification with the protagonist of neoliberal multiculturalism who metes out revenge against the destroyer of popular culture in the film's penultimate scene.

The momentum leading up to Lorraine's revenge again Bremovych is built up against the backdrop of escalating tensions in Berlin before the fall of the wall. The film telegraphs that history through diegetic voiceovers emanating from radios and TV sets variously positioned within the mise-en-scene. According to that narrative, West Berliners took sledgehammers to the wall and:

> "[b]ehind it, the East German soldiers tried to stop the tide. Water cannons were brought out. But the West Berliners were determined. One West Berliner sprayed champagne back. […] Even the East Germans seem exhilarated…"

It is a revisionist narrative that reimagines the events of November 1989 when according to the official history "the government of East Germany ordered the opening of the wall" (Kagan, Ozment, & Turner, 2004, p. 1069). Historians are largely in agreement that the fall of the Berlin wall and of communist governments across Eastern Europe was largely the result of citizens of Eastern European countries demonstrating peacefully and building up the pressure on an already economically and politically gridlocked Soviet Union (Kagan, Ozment, & Turner, 2004). The narrative the film constructs, however, evokes the discourse of a liberal Western savior of Eastern others, oppressed by illiberal government regimes, of which they are helpless and passive victims. It is coherent with contemporary discourses that authorize Western

intervention into sovereign non-Western nation states in order to save their citizens from the tyranny of their government. Within the logic of neoliberal multiculturalism, the terms the film presents of the fall of the wall function to solidify Western multicultural neoliberal subjectivity, according to which its beneficiaries "learn to do good, to feed the poor, to uplift women, and to presume responsibility for near and distant others, they learn to play their parts in the civilizing/disqualifying regimes that target populations disconnected from the circuits of neoliberal wealth and value" (p. 45).

While stylistically *Atomic Blonde* is marked by atemporal nostalgia with elements of "80-iesness," Spielberg's historical drama *Bridge of Spies* evokes nostalgia that is strictly temporally situated. In contrast to *Salt*, *Tinker*, and *Atomic Blonde*, *Bridge of Spies* is an example of what Boym calls "restorative nostalgia" – the type that seeks to resuscitate the past and seamlessly extend it into the present. This is particularly relevant to the representation of the three Russian relatives of the film's central spy – Rudolph Abel (Mark Rylance) – whom James Donovan (Tom Hanks) meets at the Soviet Embassy in Berlin. They are constructed according to the communist stereotypes of the Cold War era – clumsy, phony, and deceitful. In a way, *Ninotchka*'s Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski who became Peripetchikoff, Borodenko, and Fritz in *One, Two, Three* are Lydia Abel, Helen Abel, and Cousin Drews in *Bridge of Spies*. The nod to Wilder's early Cold War comedy is repeated when on the way to a phone booth Donovan walks by a theater that's playing *One, Two, Three*. In that sense, communist stereotypes in a restorative nostalgia film are treated as "period detail" reproduced with close adherence to the codes of the stereotype of that era so as to evoke an "authentic" vision of the 60s.

Bridge of Spies ostensibly concedes that the U.S. is a flawed democracy. Both private citizens and public officials – including those who are part of the legal infrastructure – are

cynical about the very liberties and institutions that are at the heart of American exceptionalism. This is revealed through Donovan's encounters with his partners in his law firm, his interaction with the judge ruling over Abel's case, and CIA Agent Hoffman (Scott Shepherd) who refers to Donovan's insistence on his attorney-client privilege as "legal gamesmanship." Notable in Donovan's meeting with Hoffman is that the latter is set against a background filled with blue light – a color overwhelmingly reserved for the depiction of East Berlin. Hoffman asks Donovan to violate attorney-client privilege in the name of national security. The film thus shows a remarkable savviness not only of the role of institutions of the national security state after World War II but also of the U.S.'s deployment of a carefully crafted image of American democracy as a weapon in the pursuit of Cold War objectives internationally. The problem, as posited by Spielberg is that that image is not held in earnest by American officials. Ideals such as human rights and the right to a fair trial in a court of law are a public spectacle staged for a global audience in an effort to win an ideological war and secure U.S. hegemony abroad. That U.S. officials are consistently and systematically crafting a polished image of U.S. democracy is evident through shots of Judge Bryers (Dakin Matthews) – the main executor of American justice – repeatedly fixing his image in mirrors, which the film presents as metaphors for the public's perception. In a scene at Bryers' home, for example, where Donovan appeals to his investment in the national interest to argue for sparing Abel's life, Bryers is moving between three separate mirrors as he fixes his bow tie. Notably, Bryers has adjudicated Abel's case before it has even begun and views the court proceedings as a public spectacle, necessary for upholding an image of U.S. democracy that can then be leveraged in the Cold War. The film thus invariably acknowledges that to a significant extent discourse about American democracy in the mid-20th century was coarticulated with Cold War logics that underwrote it.

While acknowledging early on that American democracy is flawed, the film nevertheless aims to recapture or nostalgically restore a vision of American democracy as defined against the Russian "slave state." One of the ways, in which that is conveyed visually is through the representation of torture. The plot makes a point to show that while captured American pilot Francis Gary Powers (Austin Stowell) is tortured in a dingy prison in Russia, subjected to sleep deprivation techniques as the Soviets attempt to extract information from him about the plane he was flying, Abel is not subjected to torture while in American custody. Powers' torture scene abruptly cuts to Abel in a U.S. prison being politely awakened by a prison guard who refers to him as "sir." This is thus a vision of the U.S. before the War on Terror and Guantanamo Bay whereby flaws notwithstanding, the U.S. draws the line at torture, basic human rights, and the sanctity of human life. It is a nostalgically framed vision recaptured in relation to the Soviet enemy: though U.S. democracy is not perfect, it is nevertheless better than the alternative because it allows righteous, incorruptible, private individuals like Donovan to emerge.

Herein, however, lies another one of the film's contradictions – that even if Donovan is loyal and ostensibly incorruptible, he is naïve. In his conversation with Hoffman Donovan argues that although the two of them have ethnically different backgrounds – Donovan is Irish and Hoffman is German – what makes them both American is "the rule book;" they are both equal before the law in a country of laws. The implication is a deeply multicultural one: that while ethnically heterogeneous, the essence of America – its exception – is that all are equal before the law. Yet in 1957, seven years before the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, "the rule book" did not apply equally to all Americans. Donovan is oblivious to the clear contradictions that the historical denial of civil rights to African Americans poses his vision of a moral and just U.S. democracy and so is the film itself. It presents ethnic difference as assimilable but frames it

strictly within a Western European context. This logic can be seen to inform the film's representation of communists. Rudolf Abel, a British citizen of German and Russian descent who was born and grew up in the UK, is humanized as incorruptible, honorable (i.e. "standing man"), and loyal to his country; a Western subject constructed with attendant notions of individuality that Western subjectivity automatically bestows. Donovan and Abel form a bond of solidarity and understanding that underscores their kinship rather than differences. Communists east of the Berlin wall, on the other hand are constructed according to established stereotypes of fundamental, Orientalized otherness that cannot be assimilated. The film's representational split is reinforced by the casting as well with British actor Mark Rylance representing Abel, Russian actor Michael Gor playing Ivan Schischkin, German actors Petra-Maria Cammin and Michael Schenk playing Helen Abel and Cousin Drews respectively and Russian-British actress Luce Dreznin as Lydia Abel. Thus, while the film inadvertently hints that the ideological difference that communism presented was deeply entangled with ethnic and cultural difference and historical splits between East and West, the idiom of difference itself – the code of the communist stereotype – adheres closely to its Cold War articulation. That adherence is an aspect of the film's restorative nostalgia for the 60s and imagined period authenticity.

To return to the question, with which this chapter started – what accounts for the persistence of Russian demonology on the big screen? – the present chapter suggests that the recent resurgence of the U.S.'s Cold War villain is synchronous with a broader wave of cultural nostalgia for the "American century" when U.S. hegemony was measured and represented largely in the context of its competition with the Soviet Union for global dominance. As U.S. hegemony in the 21st century has begun to fray as a result of multiple factors, including the rise of China as a global economic power and human rights violations in the global War on Terror,

Russian demonology is resuscitated in nostalgic Cold War spy thriller fantasies of recapturing U.S. and Western global hegemony. This is evidenced across all four films discussed in this chapter, in which a more or less flawed version of Western-style democracy is reestablished at the end. Crucially, however, Russian demonology is not only reproduced but also reconfigured. While *Bridge of Spies* recaptures a "flawed but still better than the alternative" vision of U.S. democracy against standard communist stereotypes of the Cold War era, *Salt*, *Tinker*, and *Atomic Blonde* reconfigure communist stereotypes into racialization within the logics of a globalized neoliberal multicultural framework. Represented as monocultural, Russians are "vulnerable to neoliberal multiculturalism's racializing discipline." This is critical since, as Melamed would warn us, the global framework that racializes Russians as Other "is also the framework that denies – and renders unspeakable – the existence of racism altogether" (Lane, 2016). As this chapter has argued, Cold War spy thrillers are critical sites where these complex contemporary racializations are produced.

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CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

To return to a point emphasized in a previous chapter, stereotypes of Russians in visual media have become ossified and formed something akin to a structure. As their recent resurgence in television shows like *Stranger Things* (2016 --) and *Chernobyl* (2019) demonstrates, they continue to be exploitable in the contemporary media landscape. Both in the 80s and in the contemporary moment the resurgence of the Russian stereotype was an aspect of a broader nostalgia cycle in culture and in the media. As this dissertation contends, however, an element of nostalgia and memory of a "better" past was an aspect of the filmic representation of communism as far back as the 1950s. As Belton (2018) points out, the film noir genre of the 50s

> "reflects a transitional stage in American ideology as American identity shifted from nineteenth-century, preindustrial, agrarian prototypes to twentieth-century models that acknowledged the nation's transformation into a mass consumer society and an industrialized corporate state" (p. 224).

This tug of the pre-industrial past is reflected in the propaganda films reviewed in the first chapter of this dissertation. The imperative to remember in that set of films is staged vis-à-vis the communist threat, yet it belies deeper cultural shifts and ruptures in the continuity of American identity that memory and nostalgia are summoned to mend. Fred Davis' discussion on the social and psychological functions of nostalgia is particularly relevant here. To that effect, in the 50s, 80s, and in the contemporary moment, representations of the Russian other serve as a catalyst of nostalgic remembrance that is part of a larger shift of American identity.

Here it should also be mentioned that predominantly, on-screen representations blur the lines between Russian, Soviet, and communist and use them synonymously. This is particularly

evident in *Salt*, which posits that the KGB of what was the Soviet Union is now part of the new Russian state. "Soviet" thus bleeds into "Russian" suggesting that little has changed in the transition from the old to the new regime. While distinct political changes have taken place in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union (as detailed in the chapter on Cold War cinema of the last decade), representations like those in *Salt* focus on the sameness and continuity. To be fair, this interchangeability exists in media more broadly. A *The Guardian* article (Hoad, 2018) headlined "Back from the red – return of the Russian baddie" details communist villains from *The Manchurian Candidate* to *Rocky IV* to *The Red Sparrow* (2018). Similarly, Jeffires (2017) asks: "Will the cliché of the 'Russian baddie' ever leave our screens?" "Russian" is thus a catch-all term for Soviets, communists, and Russians with little in the way of drawing distinctions between the three. *The Red Sparrow*, specifically, is another example of the emphasis on sameness. As Hoad points out, "the film actually takes place in the 2010s, not that you'd know it from the moody Gorky park meets."

One of the functions of this emphasis is that it makes the Soviet stereotype more readily available for continued exploitation. As suggested earlier, in cinema and in popular media more broadly, Cold War cultural production forms a vast database of knowledges about the Soviet other, within which the communist features prominently as a villain, a "Russian baddie." That database is firmly embedded in popular memory from where it can be activated quickly and efficiently. Hunt's (2016) comment speaks to that very point: "Need to communicate evil in five seconds? Have an intimidating guy with a cigarette step out of the shadows and say, "*Da*." Your work is done." There is thus of running thread of nostalgia for the Russian villain. One of the reasons the Soviets were so compelling is because no other American enemy (and especially – an enemy country) prompted such fear of total annihilation. … refers to this fear as "species

thinking" – the biopolitical fear of the annihilation of the entire human species in an all-out nuclear war. This was a fear that itself was exploited in "atomic bomb cinema" (Shapiro, 2002) that continued to the be a Cold War staple through the 80s. The mushroom cloud was an indelible visual in the "atomic bomb cinema" iconography and uniquely activated "species thinking" and the fear of total destruction of human life on Earth. The fact that in reality the Soviet Union and the United States were bipolar foes with nuclear capabilities who in the early decades of the Cold War came close to deploying them gave heft to those fantasies. The political reality was a unique echo chamber for the horrific fantasies of "species thinking."

The atomic imagination invariably helped the Soviet Union carve out a unique spot in the pantheon of U.S. cinematic villains and partially contributed to its enduring exploitability. As recent popular culture writing suggests: in popular culture and in popular cinema the Cold War never came to an end. Representations of Russians as villains continued even during the 1990s when U.S.-Russia relations were amicable and the new Russian state was taking steps towards the adopting the Western model of liberal democracy. The stereotype of the Russian villain continued to be exploited because it remained and remains lucrative. This becomes particularly evident when one considers events surrounding the production of the 2012 *Red Dawn* remake. The screenplay originally cast China as the villain, replacing the Soviets of its 1984 predecessor. The studio, however, decided to replace China with North Korea, likely to avoid alienating the Chinese market (Fisher, 2012), which has in recent decades become critical for the financial success of big budget Hollywood productions. China's market power has only grown since 2012. According to the MPAA's 2018 *Theme Report*, China was the top International box office market for that year. Russia came in tenth after Australia and Mexico. Thus, by itself the Russian

market is, arguably, not powerful enough to effect a reevaluation of representational strategies comparable to that of the *Red Dawn* remake.

These factors contribute to the stability and endurance of the stereotype of the Russian other. As this dissertation has argued, however, this stereotype serves larger ideological purposes of securing U.S. global hegemony in what has for decades been a unipolar world order. The Russian other is not only a foil, against which U.S. exceptionalism can be repeatedly recaptured, it is an aspect of nostalgia cycles concurrent with periods of transition – of rupture and continuity – of American identity. It is a deeply embedded motif of American popular culture, including (and perhaps most of all), cinema. Furthermore, the stereotype functions towards the integration of Russia within global multicultural neoliberalism.

The obvious question that emerges at the end of this project is: do the institutions of American cinema – starting with Hollywood – carry an ethical responsibility to present more nuanced, humanizing, and complicated representations of the Russian other? Is the general consensus that these stereotypes are not harmful enough to merit a reevaluation? That invariably begs the question: harmful to whom? Notably missing from this conversation are contemporary Russians themselves. As Morozov (2015) argues, the population of Russia beyond a Moscow neoliberal elite is largely "subaltern" – they are hardly ever heard from. What type of evidence would have to be adduced to demonstrate that the relentless deployment of that stereotype matters?

These questions are further complicated by the fact that historical thinking about the Russian other has been dominated by geopolitical and strategic considerations. The running theme has been and continues to be how to bring Russia under U.S. global political dominance. For its part, Russia has resisted. This is undoubtedly an anecdotal summation of U.S. – Russia

tensions, which are complicated and multilayered, but the point is: within a context entrenched with geopolitical and strategic concerns and modes of thinking, where the power of the U.S. state is unleashed with maximum force, what does an ethical representation of the Russian other mean and how do we begin to work towards that goal? This dissertation hopes to contribute towards the reconsideration of these questions and how cinematic representations are deeply implicated in them. Undoubtedly, the questions posed in this conclusion are larger and addressing them will require continued intellectual and critical work by a broader community of scholars; work that can hopefully ultimately bring about more nuanced, complicated, and ethical representations of the Russian other.

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