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Cultural Détente: John le Carré from the Cold to the Thaw

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Abstract

British spy fiction author John le Carré inspired Cultural Détente, a movement in American popular culture which banished the simplicities of the 1950's and replaced it with a relaxation of tensions from 1960-1965. Cultural Détente manifested from within Western liberal, democratic society after the strict conformities of the 1950s. After the dissipation of McCarthyism and the anti-Communist crusaders, the public was ready to embrace a 'thaw' in tensions. Even with all of the evidence already in place, there has yet to be any historical evaluation of a 1960s Cultural Détente that anticipated and made possible the détente of Richard Nixon. It was an attitude, a break from accepting the political and social status quo from the early Cold War; in which the Soviets had been the monolithic, evil, powerful and threatening menace. People began to question the reflexive anti-communism of the period. Not quite the New Left and Counterculture movements of the mid to late-1960s, Cultural Détente bridged the gap between the initial-1950s conservative policies to the liberal and radical reforms in the mid-1960s. John le Carré was an artistic leader of Cultural Détente, using the popular spy fiction medium to critique the contemporary state of the Cold War and the methods, tactics, and attitudes of the West. He saw great hypocrisy in the Western governments' political assertions, especially the extended power of the United States. Expanding power meant excesses of power, which led to a deep mistrust of governing authorities. Becoming anti-Establishment, a hallmark of Cultural Détente, le Carré and a vast range of Western citizens no longer trusted that the 'Establishment' held society's best interest in mind. Whereas the 1950s message had been that the government and its institutions were there to uphold and protect Western values and virtues, by 1960 it no longer held much weight among some creative artists, who found a ready audience in the middle brow public. The

anti-Establishment view quickly spread through the private sphere, bringing momentum to Cultural Détente and critiques like John le Carré's.

Introduction

In July, 2002 the International Spy Museum in Washington D.C. opened its doors to the public, providing a behind-the-scenes look at the history of spying, espionage, and clandestine tradecraft. Exhibits, collections, photographs, and memorabilia afford an interactive experience with the esoteric world of intelligence. The museum features modern espionage tactics used in the elusive and shadowy Cold War. From technological gadgets to details over high-profile spy cases in the West, the museum chronicles the influence of espionage on Cold War popular culture. Spies were deemed the front line soldiers in the unconventional, ideological war between democracy and communism. Intelligence services in the West, especially in the US, vastly expanded during the conflict, as the power of information became a key component in avoiding a nuclear war and the “hot” front of the Cold War. Intelligence agents on both sides of the Iron Curtain gathered secret information, conducted covert operations, recruited spies, and pursued counterintelligence through the underground networks moving between the East and West. Espionage became synonymous with the Cold War, influencing and shaping 20th Century popular culture. The spy fiction genre grew to become one of the most popular genres of the period, leading to a myriad of novels, major motion pictures and television programs that enjoyed great success among the viewing audience. Additionally, the intelligence methods utilized at the time enabled espionage to expand into the computerized information age of the 21st century. The International Spy Museum has become one of the most visited attractions in the capital city, bringing entertainment and historical knowledge to new audiences long after the U.S. - Soviet confrontation has ended.

Despite its influence, espionage was just one facet of the extremely complex global war. Over the last six decades, historians have analyzed virtually every aspect of the East-West conflict. They have provided extensive analyses over the political, economic, social, cultural, and ideological impacts of the clash between capitalism and Communism.

The historical contributions to the Cold War are diverse and extensive. Most historians follow one of three main views. The orthodox view, originating in the early Cold War, held that it was the aggression and expansionist tendencies of the Soviet Union that led to the U.S.-Soviet conflict. Early historical scholarship, including George F. Kennan, subscribed to the traditional view. Historian John Lewis Gaddis continues to use the orthodox view in his works *The Cold War: A New History* (2005) and *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (1997). The second view took the opposing stance, asserting that it was the United States who was responsible for starting the Cold War by surrounding the Soviet Union through occupation forces and military bases in Europe and Asia, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Historians like Melvyn Bragg have provided research for the revisionist viewpoint. The third view, and most modern, places equal blame on both superpowers. Typically those historians who fall under this view analyze sub-branches of the Cold War such as politics, economics, ideology, or culture. The following research revolves around the history of Cold War popular culture; thus a brief mention of cultural historians should be made. Cold War cultural historians often further analyze subcategories impacting popular culture such as representations of the atomic bomb, foreign policy, artistic movements, espionage, religion, or gender. The avenues of

exploration become widespread, with an immense array of historical analyses. Sometimes a combination of these subcategories helps to provide both width and depth to their historical arguments. Historians Stephen J. Whitfield, Lisle Rose, Robert Ellwood, and Martin Halliwell all examine 1950s American popular culture in their research and writings. Whitfield provides an in-depth analysis over the politicization of culture in the early 1950s to the dissent and eventual thaw as “a substitute for victory.”¹ Lisle Rose and Robert Ellwood both focus on 1950 as the critical year; as Rose examines the effects on ‘Main Street,’ while Ellwood points to the ‘crossroad of American religious life.’² In *The Cold War Comes to Main Street: America in 1950*, Rose describes the year as being the watershed moment of the Cold War.³ It combined two lenses through which we can understand the remainder of the conflict. First, was that the decade began with high hopes and economic prosperity in a post-World War II world. However, that hope quickly gave way to a “profound, embittered malaise” that continued to define culture through the remainder of the Cold War.⁴ Halliwell contrasts his argument from Whitfield, Ellwood, and Rose by examining a broader view of popular culture. In *American Culture in the 1950s*, he examines and looks beyond “the ‘cold war culture’ label.”⁵ Halliwell argues that he does not simply box 1950s thinking into the same habitual patterns of most cultural historians.⁶ Instead he explores the “historical, ideological, and aesthetic contours of the decade.”⁷ Both Margot A. Henriksen and Paul Boyer observe the revolutionary impact of

¹ Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991).

² Lisle A. Rose, *The Cold War Comes to Main Street: America in 1950*. (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999). Robert S. Ellwood, *1950: Crossroads of American Religious Life* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).

³ Rose, *The Cold War Comes to Main Street: America in 1950*, 1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Martin Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 5.

⁶ Martin Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s*, p. 5.

⁷ Ibid.

the nuclear bomb in shaping atomic culture. In Boyer's, *By the Bomb's Early Light* and Henriksen's, *Dr. Strangelove's America* they both use the atomic bomb as a lens through which to view a fluid and changing culture.⁸ Henriksen juxtaposes the bomb with the revolutionary generation of the 1960s that began reforms from earlier Cold War policies. Additionally, historian Thomas Doherty interprets American popular culture through the rise of television in his book, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture*.⁹ He explores the rise of the new medium as a "featured player in the action" and the ultimate influence it had on shaping new generations. The amount of historical scholarship is quite inspiring with broad reaches towards subjects such as the Hollywood Blacklists, Senator McCarthy, the Rosenbergs, the FBI, and the CIA.

Without question the critical studies of John le Carré conducted by Tony Barley, Eric Homberger, and Peter Lewis have been invaluable over the course of this research. They provided critical insights into le Carré's central arguments, as well as basic concepts in each of his spy fiction narratives. However, they have not placed le Carré historically. Overall, these historians deliver unique, key insights into the political, ideological, and social impacts of the 1950s and 1960s Cold War.¹⁰ An extensive framework has been established from which new analyses can derive inspiration, bearing in mind the crucial work that has come before them.

⁸ Paul S. Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon, 1985). Margot A. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1997).

⁹ Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

¹⁰ Other notable historians include: Stefan Kanfer, Eric. F. Goldman, Thomas C. Reeves, David M. Oshinsky, Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, and Robert Vaughn.

Indispensable to this project is the Cold War spy fiction novels of British author John le Carré. Furthermore, the numerous interviews he offered throughout his career have facilitated a broader understanding of the man behind the novels. Le Carré was not an author of historical fiction; yet his spy narratives retain all of the angst, emotion, and turmoil that legitimately plagued Western culture during the East-West conflict. Le Carré, this work will argue, inspired Cultural Détente, a movement in popular culture which banished the simplistic and replaced it with a relaxation of tensions from 1960-1965. Cultural Détente manifested from within Western liberal, democratic society after the strict conformities of the 1950s. The politicization of culture prevented dissent from American anti-communism, leaving the public profoundly jaded. After the dissipation of McCarthyism and the anti-Communist crusaders, along with the revelations concerning, Iran, Guatemala, the Bay of Pigs, and other crises, the public was ready to embrace a ‘thaw’ in tensions. Even with all of the evidence already in place, there has yet to be any historical evaluation of a 1960s Cultural Détente that anticipated and made possible the détente of Richard Nixon. It was an attitude, a break from accepting the political and social status quo from the early Cold War; in which the Soviets had been the monolithic, evil, powerful and threatening menace. During this period, the Western government and military claimed the ideas of promoting freedom and democracy; along with not violating the rights of people at home or abroad. However, by the end of the decade citizens were losing that trust and beginning to question the governments’ true motives. Thus, Cultural Détente began to take shape. People questioned the reflexive anti-communism of the 1950s. Not quite the New Left and Counterculture movements of the mid to late-1960s, Cultural Détente bridged the gap between the initial-1950s conservative policies to the

liberal and radical reforms in the mid-1960s. John le Carré was an artistic leader of Cultural Détente, using the popular spy fiction medium to critique the contemporary state of the Cold War and the methods, tactics, and attitudes of the West. He saw great hypocrisy in the Western governments' political assertions, especially the extended power of the United States. Expanding power meant excesses of power, which led to a deep mistrust of governing authorities. Becoming anti-Establishment, a hallmark of Cultural Détente, le Carré and a vast range of Western citizens no longer trusted that the 'Establishment' held society's best interest in mind. Whereas the 1950s message had been that the government and its institutions were there to uphold and protect Western values and virtues, by 1960 it no longer held much weight among some creative artists, who found a ready audience in the middle brow public. Additionally, the military was an extension of that protection, fighting to defend democracy against the evils of Communism. However, after the Korean War and the proliferation of atomic weapons, people began to see that the military was just an extension of the governing powers, upholding 'principles' defined by the Establishment. American men were sent into a war that no one could really comprehend. North Korea was not the Soviet Union and though it was fighting against Communists it appeared as though it was a just a strategic geo-political move. Consequently, trust in the government and military began to wane in both the United States and Great Britain. For Great Britain, the Suez Canal Campaign had been a moment of military disaster, and again, a geo-political failure. The anti-Establishment view quickly spread through the private sphere, bringing momentum to Cultural Détente and critiques like John le Carré's.

Another critical factor for le Carré and Cultural Détente was that the West, especially America, made lofty claims about protecting the individual above the collective; yet in principle was practicing something else. The interferences in other regions in order to expand influence often caused significant turmoil and innocent lives. A few examples of these intrusions were helping to overthrow legally elected governments in Iran and Guatemala, ignoring the Polish and Hungarian “rebels,” and brazenly overflying the Soviet Union with intelligence aircraft. At least the Soviet Union acted in accordance to their ideology---they could place the collective above the individual because it *justified* the means to an end. They made no pretensions about protecting individuals for the sake of Marxist-Leninism. The collective was always more important than the individual and they stood behind those principles in practice. By 1960, the West did not have any real *justifications* behind their actions, because in principle they were proving something different. Thus, the hypocrisy of democratic moralities became a veil that was easily stripped away. These critiques, along with many others, are the defining attributes of the Cultural Détente attitudes developing from 1960-1965. Western Society and culture was already embracing a ‘thaw’ from tensions long before politicians even began to think about it. By the time political Détente came about in the 1970s, Western society had already moved on from the fear and anger towards the Soviet Communists to questioning their own governments and institutions. After the death of Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev never appeared as ominous or daunting to Western citizens; the real threat had been long gone. With all of this in mind, the intentions of my analysis here is to utilize John le Carré’s spy fiction narratives as a means to understand the roots of Cultural Détente. In the larger context of the Cold War

this research will place the cultural 'thaw' in juxtaposition to the 1950s and 1960s American political and cultural landscapes. This is an original, new concept that builds upon the existing historical framework of American Cold War popular culture.

Chapter 1

American culture during the 1950s was influenced by the 'Red Scare,' the U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms race, and the growth of espionage. By 1950, the post-World War II peace subsided as the United States went to war against North Korea. Although not a direct military engagement against the Soviet Union, the Korean War was the first official military conflict between democracy and Communism. It brought the larger context of the Cold War to the forefront of society, making it difficult to deny that it was now a dominant concern.¹¹ At the same time, the development of thermonuclear weapons progressed forward with both the United States and Soviet Union in possession of weapons of mass destruction. The few lines of defense would be the idea of deterrence and the intelligence information collected by the clandestine world of espionage. As the nuclear arms race expanded between the two superpowers, so too did intelligence agencies and bureaucracies. Spies became the new Cold Warriors in the unconventional and ideological war. Once Soviet spies were uncovered in the West, the public began to fear a Communist infiltration at home. The idea of a Communist threat both within and without quickly spread, shaping and influencing political and social policies throughout the 1950s.

Politics enmeshed in popular culture causing significant turmoil over civil liberties and freedom of expression. The added intensity over the escalation of expansion in nuclear arsenals only deepened the public's anxiety about the nature of the Cold War. Worse still, was the shared exposure of high profile spies that had worked within the West delivering nuclear secrets to the 'evil' Soviet Union. The United States'

¹¹Rose, *The Cold War Comes to Main Street: America in 1950*, 2-3.

government and its institutions invested in propaganda in order to sway citizens' opinions to the 'righteous' American cause. This came in the form of circulating pamphlets, duck and cover drills, and even through film and television. The arts became heavily scrutinized by the Motion Picture Association of America, HUAC, and the Hollywood Blacklist for Communist sympathies or pro-Communist leanings. Suspected Communists were persecuted and often unemployed. The anti-Communist hysteria was initiated by reactionaries and alarmists. With the U.S. governments' policy of 'containment' in place by the late-1940s; containment was intended to stop the spread of communism around the world. Recommended by Soviet expert, George F. Kennan, containment became the official foreign policy of the United States towards the Soviet Union. In a way, containment was also sanctioned on the home front, as Communists, 'subversives,' and 'fellow travelers,' became suspect to harsh investigation by anti-Communist reactionaries. It seems a bit ironic that the ironclad Communist rule of Stalin purged millions of 'class enemies' by death or the Gulags because they did not conform to his idea of a pure Marxist-Leninist society. Yet, in the free United States citizens that did not conform were outcast and subjected to intense scrutiny by investigative bodies. Though they were not purged or sentenced to death labor camps, many lost their jobs and were shunned by society. The 'Red Scare' lasted throughout the 1950s decade, as public awareness grew over the specter of Communism throughout the world. Just a few short years prior to containment, the Soviet Union had been the United States ally in World War II. This was a stunning reversal in ideology and altered the dynamic in popular culture. The United States' reaction was unique, as anti-Communism created a binary culture, or culture of paranoia. The dawn of the Cold War, a nuclear age, Stalin's

ambitions, and Cold Warrior spies would all have a profound impact upon American popular culture.

When the United States used atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, they did so with the belief that the bombs would bring an end to a war that had the potential of costing more lives. Only the United States, Great Britain, and Canada were aware of the secret Manhattan Project, leaving their Soviet ally out of the clandestine operation altogether. This would have grave consequences in the years to come, but as we know, the Soviets had learned the atomic secrets despite the guarded scientific testings' by the Western allies. Stalin was aware of the existence of the Manhattan Project even before President Harry S. Truman.¹² From 1945-1949 the Americans' held the nuclear monopoly, possessing the most cutting-edge form of total preventative warfare. Yet, the United States could not use such weapons unilaterally during relative peace time. This practically negated their supremacy of holding the nuclear monopoly in the first place. The United States *appeared* to have to the upper-hand in the Cold War by way of their atomic bombs, but Stalin knew they could, nor would use them if at all possible. A democratic society would not stand behind such methods of warfare, nor a first-strike scenario; a fact that Stalin knew very well. By 1949, the West presumed they were winning the global war against Communism due to the nuclear monopoly, the Truman Doctrine, and the Marshall Plan. Additional factors reinforced this belief when Stalin was forced to remove his forces from Iran (a strategic oil region in the Middle East). Furthermore, from 1948-1949 Stalin's Berlin Blockade had failed in spectacular fashion

¹² John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Stalin achieved this feat through the cultivation of the Soviet spy networks he had established in the West.

as the West was more efficacious with their airlift initiatives. They were able to provide supplies and provisions on a regular basis, thus nulling Stalin's blockade in the first place. However, by the summer of 1949 it became clear why Stalin had not protested these events with more force. Stalin announced the first successful Soviet atomic bomb in August 1949, via a radio address. For years Soviet scientists had been working on their own atomic bomb in secret. This trumped Iran or the Berlin Blockade; for now both superpowers possessed weapons of mass destruction. Once President Truman broke the news to the American public, fears mounted over Stalin having control of nuclear weapons of his own. First, America no longer held the atomic monopoly; the only other option now would be a preventative first strike, which was out of the question (although the Eisenhower Administration did consider this stance for a time). The idea of the atomic bomb acting as deterrence no longer held as much weight now that the Soviet's controlled the same weapons. Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) became the new formula of deterrence, with the idea being that both superpowers would be equally destroyed in the event of a nuclear war. Fears escalated over whether the Cold War would turn into a hot war, except this time with weapons of catastrophic consequences. Stalin's acquisition of the atomic bomb only added to the anti-Communist sentiments proliferating at home.

Secondly, no one knew for certain how many atomic bombs Stalin had in his nuclear arsenal or if he was willing to use them in a first strike against the United States. Stalin was unpredictable, and worse, brutal in his rule. If he had been willing to slaughter millions in his Purges and Gulags, then would it be that difficult for him to decimate an American city? The lives of his own citizens mattered very little in the name of Marxist-

Leninism and Western lives were far more expendable with their democratic values. Fears of Stalin using the Soviets' new weapon were widespread, adding fuel to the 'Red Scare' and paranoia in the United States. Yet Stalin was cautious when it came to the atomic bomb. He was not about to use the only weapons he had without knowing more information about United States strengths and capabilities. In fact, he would turn around and use his own atomic capabilities as deterrence against the U.S. *because* his regime was not a democratic society. This point had baffled him, as he alone could make any decision necessary for the Soviet Union. If Stalin wanted to use the atomic bomb, he could, without anyone capable of stopping him. The point was that he alone controlled the fate of the Soviet Union, while Truman had to answer to Congress, the military, and the American citizens. Stalin saw this as a severe handicap for the United States. It also became clear in the West that Stalin had used espionage to steal atomic secrets while in an alliance during World War II. He had spied on the countries he was in cooperation with, which made his betrayal much more difficult to grasp. It is hardly a secret that both the United States and Soviet Union were cautiously suspicious of one another during their wartime alliance.¹³ Each placed their differences aside in order to end Nazi fascism across Europe. The tension these two countries felt towards one another was highly evident during the war summits in Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam. The mistrust ran deep and the two superpowers struggled to agree on post-war divisions of Europe. In turn, this led to the 'spheres of influence' that demarcated geo-political boundaries during the Cold War. Soviet espionage was not limited to stealing atomic secrets. It became evident in key developments like the Alger Hiss case, Elizabeth Bentley, Whittaker Chambers, and

¹³Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

even the Hollywood Ten. Stalin's acts of espionage against the United States was a contributing factor to the prevailing suspicions in the West, as anyone could be acting as a Soviet spy. The American public had no cultural experience with spying and sabotage, which led to further fascination surrounding the use of espionage in the East-West conflict.

Equally concerning was that the Communist ideology appeared to be triumphing in places like Asia, Eastern Europe, and the 'third world.' In 1949, after a protracted Civil War, China's Communist leader Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China (PRC) with Communism as their official ideology. It was unclear to the West whether China and the Soviet Union were allies in a global Communist effort. The 'loss' of China to Communism was a substantial setback to democratic efforts in developing nations around the world.¹⁴ The sheer magnitude of Soviet and Chinese populations made Communism more prominent than democracy, which raised alarm among the Western allies. China would be capable of influencing all of Southeast Asia, officially throwing support to North Korea during the Korean War with the United States. Even though it was not immediately clear to Western leaders what role China played in the Soviet's push for global supremacy, Mao was showing signs that he would lead China the way *he desired*. Stalin and Mao's relations were tenuous and based only on Marxist-Leninist principles; however that was not evident to the West at the time.¹⁵ What mattered was that Communism was growing and now enveloped Eastern Europe and Asia. The 'spheres of influence' had forced Eastern Europe to fall under the dictatorship of Stalin,

¹⁴ John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁵ Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*.

with nations east of Poland all becoming a part of the U.S.S.R. The United States and Soviet Union would compete for influence in the third world, where emerging nationalism was taking root. The competition brought intrusions by the superpowers into the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. The United States formulated the ‘domino theory,’ in that if one nation fell to Communism nearby neighbors would soon follow. They exercised their power through politics and economics in order to sway nations towards the side of democracy. Likewise, the Soviet Union was practicing the same methodologies in order to spread Communism across the globe. The rivalry between democracy and Communism continued to have an insidious influence over the state of the world for the next four decades.

Furthermore, by 1949 the United States and Soviet Union embarked upon a nuclear arms race that would last throughout the Cold War. On the loss of the nuclear monopoly, historian Paul Boyer stated it, “accelerated the shift towards viewing the bomb not as a terrible scourge to be eliminated as quickly as possible, but as a winning weapon to be stockpiled with the utmost urgency.”¹⁶ Stalin’s victory with the Soviet atomic bomb was not to last long.

In 1952, the United States government, military, Defense Department, and Atomic Energy Commission successfully detonated the far more destructive hydrogen bomb, or super bomb, on the Eniwetok atoll in the Marshall Islands. This acceleration of advancing thermonuclear weapons was approximated to be one thousand times more

¹⁶Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*.

powerful than the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in 1945.¹⁷ The test, part of Operation Ivy was codenamed ‘Mike’ and occurred on November 1, 1952 on the smaller island Elugelab.¹⁸ The blast was three miles wide, reaching 120,000 feet with a mushroom cloud that spread across 100 miles.¹⁹ The island was completely obliterated, leaving behind a crater that was 6,240 feet across and 164 feet deep.²⁰ The hydrogen bomb proved far more formidable than any previous weapons. When citizens learned of the magnitude of destruction the H-bomb could bring, it severely altered the dynamic of living in a nuclear age. Just a year later the Soviets began testing their own hydrogen bombs, once again leveling the playing field between the U.S. and Soviet nuclear arms race. As the nuclear race intensified between the two superpowers, the anti-Communist crusade in America reached an unprecedented level. The impact of the arms race cannot be understated, for it had a powerful impact on influencing and shaping American popular culture during the 1950s.

Espionage became another avenue of interest, especially during the 1950s. With the use of espionage on the rise, politicians began looking internally for anyone who might be a Communist, or sympathetic to the Communist cause. As high profile spy cases, such as Alger Hiss, Klaus Fuchs, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg came to light, both the public and private sphere began to fear that anyone could be acting as a Soviet spy. Furthermore, the fact that Stalin had achieved his atomic weapons through stolen intelligence only fueled the desire to eradicate Communism from American soil. The

¹⁷ Joanne Lamm, “The Island is Missing!” *U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center*. October, 28 2010. (Accessed 10 December, 2015). www.m.army.m.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

anti-Communist crusaders could now utilize the Soviet spies as evidence to sway public opinion towards their 'righteous' cause.²¹ Alger Hiss had worked for the United States government in the State Department. He was implicated by former Communist Party member Whittaker Chambers. Although Hiss denied his involvement with the Soviets, and the statute of limitations had expired for further repercussions, Hiss was still convicted of perjury in 1953 and served in prison for three years.²² Hiss was tried by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), originally established to combat Nazism. By the 1950s, HUAC became a driving force in the anti-Communist crusade.

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were implicated by Ethel's brother, David Greenglass, and were brought to trial in 1953. Greenglass plead down, receiving a fifteen year sentence in prison for being a courier to Julius at Los Alamos where the atomic bomb was created. Greenglass' sentence appeared extreme, but it was nothing compared to Julius and Ethel's fate. Both Rosenbergs refused to plead guilty and were sentenced to death for conspiracy to commit espionage. The resulting sentences were shocking indeed and harsh considering the amount of evidence.²³ However, the spy trials were just another symptom of how desperate the 'Red Scare' stigma had become during the early 1950s. If the Rosenbergs were able to appear as average citizens, but were truly Soviet moles, than whom else could be covertly operating for the Soviet Union? How deep had the Communists penetrated the United States? These were just some of the questions that politicians and anti-Communist activists confronted during the 'Red Scare' period.

²¹ Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev, *The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America--the Stalin Era*, (New York: Random House, 1999).

²² G. Edward White, *Alger Hiss's Looking-Glass Wars: The Covert Life of a Soviet Spy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²³ Lori Clune, *Executing the Rosenbergs: Death and Diplomacy in a Cold War World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Equally alarming, regular citizens of the Communist Party in America became a serious threat because of their 'allegiance' to Marxist-Leninist doctrine; although there was never substantial proof that any of them posed a real threat in the first place. Even if they were not a Soviet spy they were perceived as undesirable persons, which became a dangerous slope between the public and private sphere. Anti-Communist advocates (many conservative politicians) wanted to protect the purity of American principles and values. They beheld Communism as the most imminent threat to American security, both foreign and domestic. The slippery slope between public and private spheres led to interferences by HUAC, the FBI, and most importantly, the trials of Senator Joseph McCarthy. These impediments resulted in stripping many American's of their First Amendment rights and freedoms. America, by the early 1950s, in some way had come to resemble the very society it openly opposed.²⁴

Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy [R-WI] spearheaded the Communist trials of government officials, businessmen, Hollywood celebrities, teachers, unionists, and even the United States military. McCarthyism became a term for the 1950s trials that were synonymous with the anti-Communist crusade, even gaining ill repute as the witch-hunt campaign. McCarthy went after any left-leaning citizens, or anyone suspected of Communism or Communist sympathy. McCarthyism became so ubiquitous; it was as if the Senator was running his own totalitarian regime.²⁵ The cost of the trials meant being blacklisted; or possibly even unemployment.²⁶ The trials marginalized the civil rights of citizens, combining the public and private spheres in the politicization of popular

²⁴ Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s*.

²⁵ Victor S. Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: Open Road, 2013).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

culture.²⁷ Historian Stephen J. Whitfield stated, “But when such a standard becomes pervasive and intensive, and so potent in its effects that countless careers are ruined and the public cannot make its own choices in the marketplace of ideas, then the United States has come to resemble, rather uncomfortably, the sort of society to which it wishes to be contrasted with.”²⁸ McCarthyism began to call into question the patriotism of those it was seeking to condemn. In a sense, McCarthy and his adherents based their reason and logic upon their own authority and not the will of the people. They searched for convictions based upon their own concepts of American principles and values.²⁹

Whitfield also stated:

...anti-Communism was so intensified on American soil...With the source of evil so elusive and so immune to risk-free retaliation, American culture was politicized. The values and perceptions, the forms of expression, the symbolic patterns, the beliefs and myths that enabled Americans to make sense of reality---these constituents of culture were contaminated by an unseemly political interest in their roots and consequences.³⁰

Senator Joseph McCarthy died in 1957 and eventually his Communist ‘witch hunt’ came to an end. However, much of the damage was already done---he had brought definition to the anti-Communist cause with his tactics of repression---politicizing popular culture in a way unlike any previous decade.

As popular forms of entertainment, film and television soon began to reflect the themes of anti-Communism. This was not all together due to a rallying cry against the ‘red’ menace; nor was majority of citizens following along with the hysteria and paranoia that pervaded culture. HUAC and other committees, including the FBI, sought to

²⁷ Navasky, *Naming Names*.

²⁸ Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*.

²⁹ Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

suppress subversive art if it did not conform to American ‘decency’ and morals.³¹ This affected numerous major motion pictures and television programs released during the 1950s. A wide variety of films released in this period reflected the themes of anti-Communism, subversion, espionage, and trust in the government as society’s faithful defenders. American filmmakers used the Cold War as a backdrop, sometimes through alien invasions, spying, or nuclear warnings. During this period, themes of ‘good’ versus ‘evil’ equated to the Americans versus the Communists. It was black and white, with no grey expanses in the middle. Cinema and television became unconsciously tools of propaganda used in the anti-Communist movement during the 1950s. Through influence, these mediums of entertainment could reinforce American values while subliminally warning of the dangers in Communist ideology. During the early years of the Cold War, the production of nearly seventy films had explicit anti-Communist themes.³² While majority of American’s simply carried on with their daily lives---not necessarily caught up in the ‘red’ hysteria--- the sheer volume of propaganda thrust into their faces speaks considerably for the political agenda within popular culture.

Some of the films produced during this period were intended to sway public opinion; to reinforce American core values. The conservative climate and the suppression of left-leaning ideologies became reflected in forms of entertainment as a means to gather support and expel the anti-Communist threat. Although most early Cold War films were not wildly popular; the goal was to *influence* peoples’ social beliefs and values. The resulting effect was conformity to the status quo. HUAC and the FBI both became

³¹ Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*.

³² Anthony Shaw and Denise Youngblood. *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2010), Pp. 20-21.

involved in censoring Hollywood films to ensure the proper message was being conveyed.³³ The ‘Red Scare’ was already rampant, thus projecting themes of a Communist infiltration could only bolster further support for the cause. Sometimes the Communist themes were hidden beneath symbolic layers; other times they were a direct reference to the conflict through fictional backdrops. A recurring theme was to pit the United States against the Soviet Union, thus creating the image of one side as ‘good,’ while the other as ‘evil.’ Filmmakers were not alone in using American cinema as a battleground of the Cold War. It should be noted that some filmmakers had no other choice or they faced the repercussions of McCarthyism, HUAC, or the FBI.³⁴ Several conservative groups such as the United States Catholic Legion of Decency and the Production Code Administration became involved to ensure proper anti-Communist themes were present in American films. During the 1950s, HUAC and the Motion Picture Association of America became notorious for its Hollywood ‘Blacklist.’ This list consisted of screenwriters, producers, directors, actors, and actresses. Anyone associated with the production of a film that was suspected as Communists or sympathizers were included on the infamous blacklist. Many found themselves subject to the McCarthy trials and countless careers were ruined simply because of ‘suspicion.’ The blacklist and trials tarnished reputations, further impeding American civil liberties.³⁵ The Communist paranoia had reached a fever-pitch and undoubtedly contaminated what films were made; it is impossible to know for certain what films Americans’ missed out on due to the indirect suppression of the arts.

³³ Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 127.

³⁴ Ibid. 127.

³⁵ Reynold Humphries, *Hollywood’s Blacklists: A Political and Cultural History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

The Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of Ideals invited HUAC into Hollywood in 1947.³⁶ The organization took on the prototypical stance of fighting the spread of Communism in America. They asserted that “coexistence is a myth and neutrality is impossible...anyone who is not FIGHTING Communism is HELPING Communism.”³⁷ Fifteen hundred members including John Wayne, Gary Cooper, Walt Disney, and Cecil B. De Mille (among many other noteworthy names) were a part of the Motion Picture Alliance.³⁸ The overzealous patriotism that seized anti-Communist Hollywood filmmakers and stars contributed to the volumes of movies made that reinforced American idealism and conformity. When it came to censoring motion pictures during the early-1950s, “HUAC...sensed a marvelous opportunity for publicity and accepted the alliance’s invitation to expose cinematic Communism.”³⁹ But in the early years of such oppression on Hollywood not everyone was on board with HUAC’s agenda. Whitfield stated, “A Gallup poll showed that 36 percent of Americans queried were against the film industry investigations, and 37 percent were for them.”⁴⁰ Yet, it was also clear that Hollywood had become the new battleground of the Cold War. It was a way to assert American ideology, while trying to utilize a popular medium to express it. Despite HUAC and the Major Motion Picture Alliance’s efforts to find devious Communist content in American films, even supporters of their cause held serious misgivings. Surprisingly, Ronald Reagan, the future President that helped end the Cold War in the 1980s stated to HUAC, “I do not believe the Communists have ever at any

³⁶Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 128.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid, 129.

time been able to use the motion picture screen as a sounding board for their philosophy or their ideology.”⁴¹

Ayn Rand took a completely different stance than Reagan over how Communism was affecting Hollywood. She published a pamphlet entitled *Screen Guide for Americans* in 1950, lending advice over cinematic development. She stated, “[t]he purpose of the Communists in Hollywood is *not* the production of political movies openly advocating Communism. Their purpose is *to corrupt our moral premises by corrupting non-political movies...making people absorb the basic principles of Collectivism by indirection and implication.*”⁴² Clearly there were some people who took the Communist threat a bit too sincerely. There was never any solid evidence proving that there was a real attempt at an orchestrated Communist infiltration in film, television, or even among society. Regardless of who was for or against the interferences with the production of films, it was clearly evident that the politicization of culture would have an enduring impact on Hollywood in the 1950s.

In the late-1940s several films were released with anti-Communist political implications. Examples are *The Iron Curtain* in 1948; *The Red Menace* in 1949; and the *Red Danube* in 1949.⁴³ According to Whitfield, “The election year of 1952 was the peak, when twelve explicitly anti-Communist films were produced.”⁴⁴ *I Was A Communist for the FBI* “promotes distrust of the Bill of Rights, suggesting that a desire to strengthen it emanates from the Kremlin, which is campaigning to torpedo the authority of HUAC.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ Garry Wills, *Reagan's America: Innocents at Home* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1987).

⁴² Barbara Branden, *The Passion of Ayn Rand* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986).

⁴³ Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 130.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 133.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 134.

One can hardly deny the irony such films presented; yet these overt films were still considered box office bombs. Citizens were not keen on having such blatant ideological messages thrust into their faces in the form of entertainment. The most ardent film released was *My Son John* in 1953. Whitfield also stated, “The film that most feverishly reflected the political traumas of the Cold War was *My Son John* (1952). Indeed, if it did not exist, students of Red Scare movies would have been compelled to invent it.”⁴⁶ The plot of the film revolves around a Catholic family who suspects their son as a Communist spy. John, the spy, lies to his family, swears by his religion, and is ultimately discovered, facing an FBI interrogation. He returns to his life as a spy, but finally decides he is going to give a full confession. In the end he is killed by Communist agents before he was able to give his confession. On the so-called achievement of the film (which is not a feat to celebrate), Whitfield added, “Since the movies of the era were not permitted to locate the motivations for turning towards Communism in economic or social conditions, since themes of class and race, injustice, and impoverishment contradicted the complacent ideology of the 1950s, *My Son John* pursued the logical consequences of the only dramatically plausible alternative.”⁴⁷ The film sought to explore how Communism could disintegrate the American family and its values. Any overt means of *why* one would turn to Communism was not permitted at the time; that was part of the censorship process. Regardless, the movie was pivotal as a study case in the early-1950s anti-Communist crusade.

Other films began to reflect the Communist threat through symbolism. For instance, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) was about giant alien seed pods in a

⁴⁶Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 136.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 136.

California town that were slowly replacing people in society. Obviously not an overt or political film about a Communist takeover, the main concept was human susceptibility to brainwashing. And was not Communist ideology considered brainwashing? The film intended to scare audiences and was quite successful at the time, becoming a cult classic movie. Of course the plot is outrageous with aliens overtaking an entire town while citizens slept safely in their beds at night, but it worked in its subliminal messages of a mass takeover; one that in reality could be Communism (according to HUAC and other conservative groups). The progression of films during the 1950s and the involvement of committees' and institutions in the production and censoring process prove that the Cold War had made an impact on American popular culture. From films with political agendas to films that were absolutely fantastical, the 1950s was consumed by the 'red' specter. The politicization of culture was also a means to maintain the status quo, to keep with convention and conformity. Trusting the government, along with its institutions and bureaucracies was a way to prevent dissent from the 'idealistic' and 'self-sacrificing' front that had been established by governing authorities. It was not just about preventing the spread of Communism; it was to maintain the persona of Americanism in the face of adversity. The problem was that these ideals were based on the government's idea of the 'proper' way, with little deviation from that status. Citizens were taught not to worry, by way of influence, because the government and military were designed to protect the people; if not altogether 'fix' any elements that appeared broken. These pre-Cultural Détente attitudes were conditioned by applying lessons of the past---that the government and its institutions were a trustworthy cause. By the end of the decade the anti-Communist fever began to fade. Moviegoers and readers began to draw into question the

conformity that had been so strictly projected upon them throughout the 1950's. The relationship between citizen and state became strained, as citizens searched for new identities in the 1960s and violations by the West, or their own ideals, became better known.

Chapter 2

David John Moore Cornwell, better known as John le Carré, became the pre-eminent spy fiction author of the 20th century. In many respects le Carré was a traditionalist, paying homage to such authors as Graham Greene and Joseph Conrad. However, le Carré used the moral and ethical dilemmas of Western involvement in the Cold War as the foundation for his narratives of intrigue; making his novels essential exposés of current events. He broke from early-Cold War conformities by developing critiques outside of the status quo. By the 1960s, le Carré saw very little distinction between Eastern and Western objectives in the war. Defending liberal democracy brought the same means to an end; with individuals exploited in the name of advancing progress. Not only did these bold ideas increase his popularity among audiences, they also paved the way for le Carré to become the leading voice for Cultural Détente. As we know, détente was used as a means of relieving geo-political tensions between the United States and Soviet Union during the 1970s; yet by the beginning of the 1960s, attitudes began to shift towards the U.S. (Western) government due to its cynicism, hypocrisy and short-sightedness.⁴⁸ The strict anti-Communism of the 1950s and the pressures to conform to

⁴⁸ These attitudes that reflected the cynicism and hypocrisy of the U.S. government stemmed from President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' 'rollbacks;' the duplicity involved in the pretense of supporting the Hungarian Revolution, but not actually carrying out any form of aid or intervention. Additionally, Americans were well aware of the 1953 Iranian coup d'état, when the United States and Great Britain assisted in the overthrow of Mohammad Mosaddegh with the strengthening of the monarchial rule of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. The operation was an exploitation of Iran's oil through the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. United States involvement only bolstered the support of British imperialism. The United States used methods of coercion, pressure, even bribery. In 1954 the United States was also involved in the Guatemalan coup d'état with President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles advocating the CIA operation that would depose the democratically elected President Jacobo Arbenz. The CIA and U.S. government backed the installation of the military dictatorship of Carlos Castillo Armas. The coup was completely orchestrated by the United States due to the governments' stance on stricter measures against Communism in Latin America. The coup became harshly criticized and affected U.S.-Latin American relations throughout the Cold War. Such events created an ethos of distrust; an attitude that grew to become more pronounced in Cultural Détente and the late-1960s.

American idealisms left the public feeling profoundly jaded. It also signified that the Western public was beginning to embrace a relaxation of tensions long before a political one was even on the horizon. In anticipating, or foretelling the atmosphere of change, John le Carré wrote what he knew best. He knew the genre was more popular in mainstream culture than ever before. What made his narratives of intrigue a thought-provoking historical lens through which to view 1960-1965 popular culture was his commitment to writing authentic and realistic spy fiction stories. He had a clear vision of the failures in Western democracies. Their virtues were to uphold and protect the moral and ethical principles of freedom and liberty. Le Carré regarded this as the great paradox of the Cold War. Often, he did not perceive much difference between Eastern and Western methods in espionage; where the excesses of governments, bureaucracies, and institutions were willing to use any means to an end. Inevitably this would impact popular culture and transform the way citizens reacted to the East-West conflict. With this in mind, John le Carré began his highly successful career, while utilizing his artistic medium as a means to express alternative views of the Cold War and the relationship of citizen to state in the West.

Cold War policies, like the 'rollback' of the 1950s began to dissipate by the end of the decade. The McCarthy trials had turned into a spectacle and crusade, consistently losing credibility while staining the perception of an American Communist threat. The over-embellished fears of a Communist infiltration also seemed far too implausible for serious consideration. Even the threat of a nuclear war began to dissipate, especially after the death of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin in 1953. The Americans and Soviets were still deeply enmeshed in the nuclear arms race; but the new Soviet Premier, Nikita

Khrushchev appeared far less menacing than the brutality of Stalin's regime. However, the United States and the Soviets nevertheless persisted in the game for global predominance. Intelligence gathering through espionage or 'spying' continued to thrive in both the East and West. The more spies became exposed to the public, the more fascinated the public became with the esoteric and clandestine world. One of the only means to satisfy their piqued curiosity was through spy fiction narratives. By 1960, the Cold War was far from simmering down. Many events and scandals that occurred in the 1960s only increased tensions between the United States and Soviet Union. What was changing was *how* the public began reacting to such events and how they began to *understand* them.

John le Carré recognized the significance of the moment, as he was also a political author as well. He thinly veiled his political analyses throughout his narratives of intrigue. Tony Barley stated, "while on an altogether different plane; there is le Carré the political novelist, dramatizer and analyst of opponent positions, commentator on the practices of the Cold War, and historian of diverse crises..."⁴⁹ He is considered a moral satirist, a man of conscience, a knowing insider, an ironist, and a myth-maker.⁵⁰ He wrote about ideologies, cynicism, Eastern and Western methodologies, and relied heavily upon symbolism and imagery. His most acclaimed attribute was his commitment to realism; for this characteristic is what set him apart from fellow British and American espionage authors. Le Carré's attributes as a writer made him a strong leader in analyzing the Western 'thaw' because he was able to both internalize and externalize the predominant issues that plagued governments, bureaucracies, and even intelligence communities. He

⁴⁹ Barley, *Taking Sides: The Fiction of John Le Carré*, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

analyzed the psychological; the harsh paradoxes of the Cold War. During a 1977 interview with *Time*, le Carré stated, “I brought back, but did not invent, the realistic spy story.”⁵¹ This statement is interesting because it demonstrates a conscious choice to write novels that appeared so real, they could easily leave readers pondering over how much truth was revealed about intelligence, governments, and the Cold War. There remains little doubt that le Carré was in the right place at the right time, serving up tales of intrigue that struck a nerve and negated the earlier Manichean narratives in Cold War popular culture. He achieved this feat by critiquing the cynicism and hypocrisy of over-protected Western governments that relied upon methods of influence in order to maintain liberal democracy.

Classified as detective fiction, Le Carré published his first two novels, *Call For the Dead* in 1961 and *A Murder of Quality* in 1962. Nonetheless, both novels employ some use of espionage. Already in these two narratives, le Carré highlights what would become his analysis: the cynicism, careerism, and impotence in Western governments, bureaucracies, and institutions. Both of le Carré’s works introduce his most famous protagonist George Smiley. Smiley further appeared in many of le Carré’s Cold War novels, both working sometimes for British Intelligence and sometimes completely on his own. As a character Smiley makes for an interesting case study over how le Carré sought to express ‘realistic’ spies. It is important to note that le Carré had worked for the British Intelligence Services from the 1950s-1960s. He officially retired from MI6 in 1964 in order to focus on his writing career. This provides a basis for his commitment to realism, while also giving him credible experience in the world of intelligence. Unlike many other

⁵¹ Stefan Kanfer and Dean Fischer, “The Spy Who Came in From the Gold,” *Time* (October 3, 1977), 48-53. Accessed January 20, 2016.

literary spies, most arguably Ian Fleming's 'James Bond,' le Carré's George Smiley was almost an anti-heroic figure. His methods relied upon intuition, pragmatism, and the power of deduction. In this regard, Smiley became relatable to the reading audience.

While Ian Fleming's tales grew more fantastical and outrageous, le Carré's Smiley was always practiced and methodical. Smiley, as in all of le Carré's characters, is not the ultimate focus of this historical interpretation of le Carré's significance. Instead, Smiley and others are analyzed as a conduit of le Carré's creative and intellectual process.

Through his characters experiences he was able to critique the moral and ethical dilemmas caused by the Cold War. Le Carré looked not only to the East and Communists as the enemies of Western governments. In fact, he used varying scenarios with a multitude of characters for the primary purpose of reinventing the very definition of 'enemies.' Le Carré possessed all of the right attributes as a leader in Cultural Détente. Clearly the prominence of his message was well regarded by society because it brought to light the predicaments of Western practices in the Cold War. He disregarded the governments' supercilious claims of upholding the virtues of democracy, when the lessons of the 1950s revealed a much different picture. The Iranian coup d'état; the Guatemalan coup d'état; the Hungarian Revolution; the Suez Crisis and the oppression of the private sphere through censorship all clearly demonstrated that the governing powers claimed one thing while implementing another. For le Carré, these actions, coupled with severe mistrust, were essential to his critiques developed in his spy fiction narratives.

By the time le Carré published his first two spy narratives the Cold War had become quite active. In the background always stood the clash of democracy and Communism, along with the nuclear arms race; but a series of global crises from the late-

1950s to the mid-1960s intensified the East-West conflict. The fall of 1956 brought tensions into the Middle East and Hungary. In late October, Great Britain, Israel, and France invaded the Suez Canal in Egypt in a disastrous effort to regain Western control over the region. For Great Britain, the Suez campaign was backward-looking by imposing World War II methods in the contemporary war. The result was a humiliating failure for the fading Empire, with increased anxiety over the severe reproach from the United States, United Nations, and Soviet Union. The purpose of the campaign was to remove Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's power; however Western efforts only increased his hold over the strategic region.⁵²

Around the exact same time as the Suez Crisis, tempers began to flare in Hungary as student movements cried out for a revolution against the Soviet Union. They gathered enough momentum, even encouragement from the West and an uprising ensued between the Hungarian revolutionaries and the Hungarian's People Republic (backed by the Soviet Union). The United States, Great Britain, and France encouraged the uprising in the hope that Eastern European countries would break free from the Eastern bloc and Warsaw Pact. Yet, no intervention was conducted due to the cynicism of the West, along with the greater threat of a direct U.S.-Soviet war. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had spoken about the "rollback" and it certainly encouraged many Hungarians to believe that the United States would provide assistance in some form, even though many did not consider it would be through military intervention.⁵³ However, despite Dulles and

⁵² Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁵³ Jordan Rogers, "The Hungarian Revolution of 1956." Chris Sibilla, *A Moment in U.S. Diplomatic History*, (15 October, 2013). www.adst.org. Accessed on 7 March, 2016.

Eisenhower's claims, the risk of nuclear war amplified the situation and prevented either superpower from overstepping certain geo-political boundaries. The uprising was crushed by the Soviets, leaving an estimated 3,000 casualties and 13,000 wounded, along with refugees and ex-Communists. The Hungarian Revolution is significant because it demonstrated that even citizens in the East were attempting to alter current circumstances. Student movements in the United States, Great Britain, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union all instigated reformist approaches to contemporary day problems. In the Soviet Union, Khrushchev's 'Thaw' and campaign of 'peaceful coexistence' with the West promulgated de-Stalinization and the rise of dissent against the strict policies of the socialist system. In the United States and Great Britain, reformists took on anti-government sentiments, unwilling to blindly follow the governments' protocols without question. Citizens necessitated reform through civil liberties: African-American equality, female rights, and changes from previous Conservative politics. In Great Britain, equivalent attitudes were mounting amid an analogous, innovative Cold War generation. During periods of economic crisis and high unemployment the British government used Cold War propaganda to divert average citizens from the real internal problems.⁵⁴ Domestic turmoil was mounting in the United States and Soviet Union at the same time; here, too, politicians commonly used propaganda as a political tool for diversion. If the Hungarian Revolution proved anything it was that there was a growing power within student and intellectual movements that incited change where necessary.

Rogers was an Economic and Political Officer at the Budapest Legation during the Hungarian Revolution. During this interview he spoke openly about the revolution and the effect Dulles' rollback had upon the impressions of the Hungarian people.

⁵⁴Barley, *Taking Sides: The Fiction of John le Carré*, p. 34.

The beginning of the 1960s also brought new crises to the Cold War. In 1961, the Soviet Union began construction on the Berlin Wall, which would divide East and West Germany (and Europe) for the next twenty-eight years. Also in 1961, the United States launched the covert operation against Cuba in the Bay of Pigs Invasion. The intent was to overthrow Fidel Castro's pro-Communist regime; however the invasion failed spectacularly in a humiliating defeat. The pinnacle moment of the Cold War came in 1962 when the United States and Soviet Union became gridlocked in the Cuban Missile Crisis. For thirteen days the two superpowers came to the closest either side had ever been in a nuclear faceoff. After the Bay of Pigs, President Kennedy refused to back down or show any weakness towards the Soviets. He called for a naval blockade near Cuba that would force Soviet ships to stop from passing without repercussions. In the end, President Kennedy called Premier Khrushchev's nuclear brinkmanship, preventing a global disaster. Although the two superpowers continued to fight the Cold War, the most imminent threat seemed to have been averted. These series of crises are critical in understanding *how* and *why* the public's perception of the war began to evolve. The years of accepting political interferences within popular culture, as it had been during the 1950s, were now suspect to a plague of questions and doubts.⁵⁵

Le Carré's perception of the transformations taking shape in popular culture was exhibited through his characters and plotlines. Le Carré stated, "I had to choose the world of spies because it illustrates what I had to say: the solitude of the designated victim."⁵⁶ The world of intelligence during the Cold War was a hotbed of activity, thus giving the

⁵⁵ Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*.

⁵⁶ John le Carré, "John le Carré: The Writer, like the Spy, Is an Illusionist." Interview with Vera Volmane. *Les Nouvelles Litteraries* (23 September 1965), p. 3. Translated by Cristy S. Vogel.

author the perfect outlet for his messages. For him, the clandestine world was not a glamorous one; real spies were filled with conflict over moral obligations and duty; over dealing with an ever-expanding world of confused ideologies. During an interview with Michael Dean in 1974 he stated, "...I wrote about the things that I knew of, the tensions in Berlin which I witnessed: institutional behavior, British nostalgia for power, perhaps, and I imported from my experience of the Foreign Service a great deal of the way paper is moved around and the dinginess of decisions, sometimes."⁵⁷ Part of le Carré's creative process was to draw upon a myriad of characters and plotlines in order to critique political, social, and ideological Cold War issues. Wrapped in the world of intelligence, he was capable of highlighting these changes by grounding them in reality. Author Peter Lewis wrote, "One of le Carré's points is that in the real world, unlike that of fictional romance, inconspicuous, drab, cautious nobodies make vastly superior spies to swashbuckling adventurers, who would not last long. Spying is, after all, a lonely, undramatic, unexciting, routine job for the most part, best left to the unassuming and self-effacing."⁵⁸ The point is that spying was not always a righteous cause; it could also be lonely and isolating and this was part of the harsh Cold War reality.

What appears to be unattractive in fictional spy stories actually turned out to be a huge success because the plights and conditions were relatable. Le Carré's spy 'heroes' were not exempt from the pitiable state of the Cold War. Thus, his messages became more important in context to a cultural 'thaw.' Le Carré's use of his artistic medium (1961-1964) opened up channels for broader discussions about the costs of the Cold War.

⁵⁷ John le Carré, "John le Carré : The Writer Who Came in From the Cold," Interview by Michael Dean. *The Listener*, 92 (5 September, 1974), p. 306-7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Soon, other artists, activists, and average citizens of all varieties developed new interpretations of East and West relations. By the late-1960s the New Left and Counterculture Movements called for political and social reforms. In the span of one decade, the United States moved from strict censorship and McCarthyism to a complete reversal of such policies. Cultural Détente bridged the gap between the anti-Communist phobia in the 1950s to the rise of the New Left and Counterculture in the 1960s. There is ample evidence for the ‘thaw’ in popular culture and John le Carré was one creative leader that helped facilitate this change.

Many of the thematic devices le Carré used opened up avenues of further exploration. For example, in his first novel *Call For the Dead*, his ‘enemy’ comes as a stunning revelation.⁵⁹ Revolved around the death of a Foreign Office Civil Servant, Samuel Fennan, George Smiley is set with the task of uncovering who is the actual murderer. Smiley eventually uncovers the secretive life of Fennan’s wife Elsa. Elsa was a secretive Communist controlled by an East German spy named Mundt. She framed her husband and ultimately sacrificed him for the sake of her ideology.⁶⁰ While the story appears the standard stuff of detective and spy fiction, its greatness lies within the layers of meaning. Considering that alien invasions and mindless brainwashing had been

⁵⁹ John le Carré, *Call For the Dead*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), Kindle.

⁶⁰ One of John le Carré’s weaknesses as an author was the subordination of women in his novels. He rarely dealt with femininity or romanticism, being vague on the issues at best. The women introduced in his novels generally fell into two categories. First, was the naïve and innocent such as: Liz Gold (*The Spy*); Irina (*Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*); and Katarina (*Smiley’s People*). They are each posed as childish and naïve to the larger conflicts occurring around them. In juxtaposition are maternal characters like Connie Sachs (*TTSS*) who are sentimental about the nostalgic days gone past. Le Carré could have further developed his female characters instead of boxing them into the mold of ‘naïve’ or ‘sentimental.’ Also notable was that the ‘naïve and sentimental’ were attributes applied to his male characters as well. Where he failed to provide relationships between men and women, he compensated for relationships between characters like: Smiley and Guillam; or Jim Prideaux and the schoolboy ‘Roach.’ Le Carré would also write the novel, *The Naïve and Sentimental Lover*, which he dedicated to his close friends, the Kennaways. Naïve and sentimental would become recurring themes in many of his novels.

popular means to express a Communist takeover, le Carré's rendition took on a more intimate, yet frightful undertone. The fact that a wife would be willing to betray, frame, and sacrifice her own husband for the sake of ideology seemed both plausible and realistic in the complex clash of ideologies. In this way, le Carré was casting off traditional notions of 'good' and 'evil;' which was exactly the problem in rationalizing the Cold War. The 'us' versus 'them' mentality was changing and expanding. The traditional means of justifications were becoming more complicated as the war moved on. Le Carré was making a point that holding onto traditionalist thinking was becoming obsolete.

Le Carré was also highly critical of the politics involved in the Cold War. Political elements run throughout all four of his early novels; whether in the form of bureaucratic power, expansive institutions, divided class systems, British-American relations, and even the substructures of intelligence communities themselves. He drew criticism upon the British elite-school systems (as is the main focus in *A Murder of Quality*), the 'Circus' (his fictional Intelligence Agency), East and West relations, and the substructures of intelligence communities. Most importantly le Carré critiqued the 'Establishment;' the expansive governing bodies that exercised influence over average peoples' daily lives. Across years of interviews with John le Carré he often mentioned these issues as deep concern for him, both as an artist and a citizen. As expected, most authors write from experiences and often reflect their own worldviews within their narratives. Le Carré is no exception here and has been quite vocal in his opinions. A distinction of Cultural Détente was the increasing mistrust of Western governments and its institutions. The term 'the Establishment,' a slang term for government, was first used

in the public domain by a Henry Fairlie article in *The Spectator* in 1955.⁶¹ Author Tony Barley stated that the term, “quickly came to denote the unofficial, conspiratorial power-elite which exercised insidious social influence.”⁶² In regards to le Carré and the ‘Establishment,’ Barley further stated, “It is a notion that has remained with le Carré throughout his career. The Establishment, for him, symbolizes the state not the nation; it pretends to act in the interests of all but is acutely accountable to no one below and really serves itself.”⁶³ Anti-Establishment feelings soon spread in student movements and intellectual circles across the globe. Many, including le Carré, began to take on the anti-Establishment attitude; that the powerful elite did not serve the best interests of the people, but rather its own agenda. The term was not limited in reference to strictly anti-government sentiments; it was also applicable towards any power, bureaucracy, or institution that maintained considerable influence upon society. Le Carré generally applied the term in the same capacity. During a 1974 interview with Robert D. Deindorfer, le Carré was asked if his “view of the world was as sour as it sounds.”⁶⁴ Taking into consideration le Carré’s opinions on being anti-Establishment, in addition to his views of Western government excesses and extremes, he responded, “I think it’s fairly bleak. We consistently create institutions which are much worse than the sum of our parts.”⁶⁵ Given that le Carré was not alone, we begin to understand how the growth of these attitudes contributed to Cultural Détente. The anti-Establishment and severe mistrust of the government and its institutions grew in both Great Britain and the United

⁶¹ Henry Fairlie, *The Spectator*. (September 22, 1955), p.5

⁶² Barley, *Taking Sides: The Fiction of John Le Carré*, p. 34.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ John le Carré “A Conversation with John le Carré.” Interview with Robert G. Deindorfer. *Book-of-the-Month Club News*, (June 1974), p.4.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p.4.

States. An example of where this disdain was most evident among Americans was within the great dissent over the war in Vietnam. The public did not see why the government---designed to protect American values and citizens---was sending their boys and men into a foreign jungle to fight and die. The result was the burning of draft cards, draft dodgers, and massive protests. The Vietnam War is but one example of how different public opinion became within a small period of time.

Le Carré felt strongly about the paradoxes of the Cold War and openly spoke about the problems facing Western culture and politics. These issues were far too important to ignore, as he integrated them into majority of his narratives of intrigue. Reading his work in the post-Cold War era serves as a form of historical inquiry. By utilizing the war as his landscape and including the political, social, and ethical dilemmas of the time, his spy fiction appears as historical time capsules. Understandably le Carré grasped how significant these dilemmas would have in the context of the Cold War. Their enduring memory would help to reemphasize the crises that faced a Cold War culture for a future generation of readers. During a 1966 interview with Leigh Crutchley, le Carré spoke boldly about the present problems facing an advancing global world. He stated:

We have always argued that in the West we may be amorphous, we may be vague may contain a great variety of beliefs, but one thing we have in common in a non-communist world is to be the belief that the individual is worth more than the idea: that whatever we believe in, we will defend to the death the individual's right to dissent; and yet in the Cold War, and particularly the spy world which is after all the battlefield of the Cold War, we are doing something *in fact* which I believe we are already doing *in principle* elsewhere---that is to say, we are sacrificing the individual in our battle against the collective. This is the supreme paradox. I want people when they open my book to begin reading and feel "God, this could be me!" When they are reading this other type of heroic book, I think they are saying "Oh, gosh, I wish this was me," and that is a sharp

difference. Both may be, in long-haired terms, pop art, but I believe that mine at the moment has more application to our dilemma than the other.⁶⁶

Le Carré gives a powerful and symbolic message concerning the Western predicament in the war and how the issues became projected upon mainstream popular culture. First, he criticized Western methods of warfare, claiming that they were not different from their Eastern ‘enemies.’ Secondly, he rightly asserted that the world of espionage was the frontlines of battle and that was where individuals were easily disposable in the name of sacrifice to the greater good. Third, he acknowledges that his version of the Western dilemma was more applicable than others because he was willing to challenge the status quo. This was a very important distinction in le Carré’s work versus other spy fiction authors like Ian Fleming. What became unique to his situation as a popular spy fiction author was that his reading audience was likewise ready to embrace new interpretations on the war. Films, television, and literature quickly began to satirize, critique, and condemn earlier U.S. and British policies.

Le Carré mirrored these attitudes in his own personal mistrust of the Establishment, even sometimes satirizing elements of the conflict. Barley stated, “Ostensibly society’s defender, the Establishment in fact defends itself. Undeniably, the image of the self-serving, self-deluding, factional, uncontrollable Authority exposes something of a contradiction in the concept of a free, British (Western) democracy and objectively represents a *partially* valid picture of that democracy’s actual structure. But what are its ideological functions?”⁶⁷ These questions plagued Cold War popular culture and correlated with the growing disdain of hardline government policies. In 1963, the

⁶⁶ John, le Carré. “The Fictional World of Espionage,” Interview with Leigh Crutchley. *The Listener*, (14 April 1966), p.8.

⁶⁷ Barley, *Taking Sides: The Fiction of John le Carré*, p.34.

same year as the publication of le Carré's breakout hit, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, the United States and Soviet Union signed the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. In effect on October 10, 1963, the Treaty signified momentous change that had been advocated for by politicians, activists, and average citizens. The Treaty limited above ground nuclear testings' in both the United States and Soviet Union. It marked a turning point in the nuclear arms race, although it did not diminish it. What it does signify was that American's were no longer willing to submit to government policies without having a voice. During the 1950s, nuclear fallout shelters were promoted, duck and cover drills were practiced, and pamphlets with instructions in the event of a nuclear war were widely distributed among the public. There was a tremendous amount of nuclear propaganda aimed at capturing American minds. Yet the costs of nuclear fallout from testing sites were hardly ever questioned. As the Cold War escalated and the U.S. continued to expand its nuclear arsenal, the public grew more suspicious about accepting government nuclear policies. Transformation was inevitable, especially with so many citizens now outright demanding it. The Test Ban Treaty was a catalyst of that change; one that would continue to propagate and extend throughout the 1960s. The Treaty was also a substantial moment for Cultural Détente. It proves that inspired change within Cold War politics was germinating from expressions in popular culture. Change was moving from the bottom up, pushing for the 'thaw' from earlier policies.

Le Carré seized these changes and took the world by storm with his third novel, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* in 1963.⁶⁸ Cold War spying was not about fantastical enemies, technological gadgetry, fast cars, and women. Instead, it was the

⁶⁸ John le Carré, *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold* (New York: Penguin Books. 2012), Kindle.

private nature of lonely spies subjected to the realities of paper pushing bureaucracies. *The Spy*---as will be shortened for brevity's sake---took on a brand new outlook over the intelligence world in the Cold War. As was his style, le Carré employed groundbreaking themes that opened up new dialogue over the nature of the clandestine communities. He did not merely attribute Communism as the only 'bad' or 'evil' that existed in the fight between the East and West. He presented a Western spy who was in conflict with himself, his intelligence community, and the moral and ethical principles of Eastern and Western methods of fighting the Cold War. Le Carré suggested that oftentimes these methods were not very different from one another. The Western world, led by the powerful United States, sought to provide liberty and freedom for all. The foundations of Western values, as opposed to Communist ideals in socialism, were to never forsake the individual above the collective. Every life is worth defending in the name of democracy and freedom. Communism was the polar opposite to democratic ideals and values. The individual could be sacrificed in the name of the collective good. In order to achieve the socialist utopia all means to an end would be pursued if it served the higher purpose of progress. This was how Stalin justified the murders of hundreds of thousands during the Purges; finding a means to dispose of the anti-bourgeoisie or anyone who appeared counter-revolutionary within the Eastern bloc. The advancement of socialism was the top priority for the U.S.S.R.⁶⁹ Therefore, in the Cold War, one side sought to protect the individual, while the other could cast one aside for the greater good of the whole. In theory this was how the two superpowers were differentiated in the complex ideological war. However, by the early 1960s le Carré recognized that this was a mere façade of the

⁶⁹ The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This included all nations that were absorbed into the Eastern bloc; from the Soviet Union in the East, stretching as far as Poland and East Germany in the West.

truth. Reality was more obscure and blurred the lines of moral and ethical ‘right’ and ‘wrong.’ The Western world was far from stainless in their implementations of protecting liberal democracy across the world. During a 1974 interview le Carré spoke about his beliefs over intelligence and the current state of the Cold War. “One tragedy of our present age is that we have been forced into a position where we have to adopt the methods of our aggressors. There seems no way around this. But it does raise the question of how long we can go on defending ourselves by these methods and remain a society worth defending.”⁷⁰ He asserted that Western governments were attempting to bring about global change through democracy, but the avenues of progress had become obscured in a “world of confused ideologies.”⁷¹ What appeared just and righteous had become subject to opinion based upon point of view. The West searched for “our identity in history and the justification of power.”⁷² For le Carré these were issues that both citizens and governments had to come to terms with, stepping out from denial.

By the 1960s it was apparent that both sides of the war had their own internal demons to fight. It was vital to raise questions, to consider how tainted the objectives of the war had become after nearly seventeen years of conflict. Raising questions and doubt was the centerpiece of le Carré’s novels, especially *The Spy*. When speaking about his creation of his spy in the breakout novel, he stated:

I tried to...remake a figure who was involved in the dilemma of our time: that we cannot continue with the war epic...Now we’ve got the big bomb... We have not got an identifiable enemy; we have an ideology instead with which we must come to terms, and it seemed to me that the institutions we create to combat the ideology to fight the Cold

⁷⁰ le Carré, “A Conversation with John le Carré.” p. 4.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

War, are getting so big that the individual himself is losing his identity in our society, just as he is in eastern society.⁷³

The duration of any war takes a toll upon all citizens; but this war was unseen and continually disrupted political, economic, and social progress across the globe. It was only right to question the legitimacy of such a war, as the objectives in winning were far too obscured by the 1960s. Demands for revising or adapting to the contemporary conditions of the Cold War only persisted and gained further momentum amidst society. The intelligence community was no exception to the scrutiny of criticism, especially after events such as the Bay of Pigs Invasion. Intelligence Services, such as the CIA, MI6, Mossad, or the KGB fought through the underground channels far from the public eye. Yet, their clandestine missions were vastly tainted by the political inadequacies of the era. Le Carré also stated, “I think the standard charter for an intelligence service is to achieve by underhand means what a government is attempting to achieve by overt means.”⁷⁴ He also acknowledged that this posed a great dilemma. “The trouble is that so few governments know exactly what they want to achieve. And so only rarely can intelligence services determine and then pursue its own targets.”⁷⁵ The clandestine domain was tasked with carrying out the ‘dirty work’ of political objectives, but this raised more problems than could actually be resolved. Referring back to the Bay of Pigs Invasion, the United States government wanted to remove Fidel Castro from power after he overthrew the U.S. allied government of Fulgencio Batista during the 1950s. When political attempts to solve the issue failed, such as U.S. support of Cuban counter-revolutionaries and economic sanctions against Castro’s regime, the U.S. government

⁷³Le Carré, “The Fictional World of Espionage.” p. 548-9.

⁷⁴Le Carré. “A Conversation with John le Carré.” p. 4.

⁷⁵Ibid.

funded a paramilitary brigade designed by the CIA to invade Cuba and crush Castro's regime. Once the invasion failed, the public gained firsthand knowledge over how intelligence was highly influenced by politics and the United States government. It was indeed dirty work, a last resort effort because the U.S. government could not prevent Castro from assuming control of Cuba. The Bay of Pigs Invasion is a perfect example of le Carré's statement about intelligence trying to achieve through underhanded means what the governments could not accomplish through sheer political action. Ultimately the game of chase, quest, and interrogation was not a simple feat between two global superpowers. Political and economic factors played a major role in intelligence. Although espionage activity became synonymous with the Cold War, it was all too often slow paced, lacking the glamour that most assumed it entailed. The price was paid by those anti-Castro Cubans left to rot in Castro's jails.

Moving back to le Carré's *The Spy*, the novel was a poignant revelation about the state of intelligence, politics, institutions, and East-West methods in fighting the Cold War. The narrative served as the perfect platform for le Carré to divulge his opinions and it echoed the issues the correlated with Cultural Détente. The main protagonist and spy, Alec Leamas, discovers through his last mission that both the East and West adopt equally inhumane methods of conducting secretive warfare. *The Spy* was the first narrative of intrigue written by a Western author that openly criticized and drew attention to Western tactics. This was a monumental departure from the pro-Imperial tales of James Bond and provided a much bleaker, yet realistic outlook on Intelligence Services and operations. The novel became an international bestseller and was made into a major motion picture in 1965. Directed by Martin Ritt, a well-known lefty progressive, Leamas

was portrayed by celebrated actor Richard Burton.⁷⁶ The film received positive reviews and pulled in \$7,600,000 in the box office. For 1965, that was an impressive haul. It was also nominated for Academy Awards, BAFTA awards, and Golden Globes, among many other film honors. Several of those nominated in association with the film won awards, including a BAFTA award for Best British Film in 1966, which propels popularity among viewing audiences. There was no denying that the public revered the novel; according to Tony Barley the novel was reprinted twelve times in six months and sold approximately twenty million copies in ten years.⁷⁷ Stephen J. Whitfield stated that the novel sold two hundred and thirty thousand copies in the United States alone in 1964.⁷⁸ He professed, “It became the first thriller ever to outsell all other works of fiction.”⁷⁹ Additionally, over the next year, two million copies were sold in the U.S.⁸⁰ Barley proclaimed that the triumph of the novel was “due to a recognition that it did not simply reproduce the standard generic and political orthodoxies.”⁸¹ The novel “consciously” and “persistently challenges the ideological assumptions.”⁸² It was clear that le Carré was outwardly stating exactly what the public had been thinking; that the war was in confused disarray; that governments needed to adapt to the changes taking root within popular culture; most importantly, that the definition of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ needed revising. These were all hallmarks of Cultural Détente and le Carré proved to be a part of that movement with his bold critiques in *The Spy*. Reviewer Robert M. Adams wrote, “The book is an intricate

⁷⁶ Martin Ritt was a well-known Lefty Progressive and was even associated with the Hollywood Ten. He was also blacklisted during the McCarthy era.

⁷⁷ Barley, *Taking Sides: The Fiction of John le Carré*, p. 31

⁷⁸ Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, p. 207.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Barley, p. 31.

⁸² Ibid.

and moving study, among other things, of history and men as its active and passive agents...le Carré has given more thought to the problem of ends and means than our usual cheap formularies provide.”⁸³ This review was a remarkable achievement for le Carré because his work was now being recognized in high-brow intellectual circles.⁸⁴ Clearly his critiques struck upon a nerve. *The Spy* may have propelled le Carré’s fame as an artist, but it also provided him with a vital platform from which to raise important and sensitive questions.

The Spy is unpropitious and dark; full of cynicism, doubt, and bitter betrayals. For having been published in 1963, the novel assuredly came out amidst Cold War emotions running high. The American U-2 incident in 1960; the Bay of Pigs and Berlin Wall in 1961; and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 were all in recent memory of an alert public. Just two months after the release of the novel the world was shocked by the assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy. Furthermore, by 1963 American involvement in the Vietnam War had escalated, leading to a protracted war that would last until 1975. With all of these events in mind, *The Spy* was not intended as a light-hearted novel that would purely entertain; nor did it reveal any real hope. In actuality, the book functioned more as a means to cast doubt over the East-West conflict, ending on a note of “unaccustomed bitterness.”⁸⁵

⁸³ Robert M. Adams, “Couldn’t Put it Down,” *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 2, Number 2. (March 5, 1964). Accessed March 8, 2016.

⁸⁴ John le Carré’s spy fiction narratives were intended for middle-brow culture. Receiving positive reviews by the *New York Review of Books* meant that his spy fiction was being taken quite seriously, as the magazine was considered high-brow. This proves that his work was not only intellectual, especially for being spy fiction, but that it was applicable to an array of audiences.

⁸⁵ Adams, “Couldn’t Put it Down,” Accessed March 8, 2016.

Alec Leamas is ordered by ‘Control’---the head of Le Carré’s British Intelligence Agency ‘the Circus’---to “stay out in the cold a little while longer.”⁸⁶ Leamas believes this last mission from Control is to bring down the powerful East German operative Mundt, an evil Communist whom is murderous and callous.⁸⁷ Leamas describes Control as possessing “affected detachment...donnish conceits...same apoplectic adherence to a code of behavior...same banality.”⁸⁸ This is an important point for le Carré, as he was trying to establish the ethos of Control as the functioning head of British Intelligence. This one man literally held the ‘control’ over many lives, a fact le Carré does not want to diminish. Control tells Leamas that his mission is to penetrate the East by posing as a turncoat in order to bring down Mundt. Le Carré makes the conversation between Control and Leamas interesting by revealing Control’s true sentiments in justifying his actions. Control states, “Thus we do disagreeable things, but we are *defensive*. That, I think, is still fair.”⁸⁹ Le Carré brands Control as indifferent to the cruelties involved in fighting in such a war; the West was not supposed to be indifferent. Claiming ‘defense’ only serves as a justification for such actions, not a universal truth. Control further states, “We do disagreeable things so that ordinary people here and elsewhere can sleep safely in their beds at night...And in weighing up the moralities, we rather go in for the dishonest comparisons; after all, you can’t compare the ideals of one side with the methods of the other, can you now?”⁹⁰ Control’s assessment of justifying actions reminds the reader that ideals, morality, and ethics are easily blurred depending upon the lens through which one views the war. He acknowledges that the West does ‘disagreeable things’ with the

⁸⁶ le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, p. 15.

⁸⁷ Mundt is the same East German Operative that is introduced in le Carré’s first book *Call for the Dead*.

⁸⁸ le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, p 13.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p 15.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

presumption that it provides peace to those it protects. He also states, "...our methods---ours and those of the opposition---have become much the same. I mean you can't be less ruthless than the opposition simply because your government's policy is benevolent, can you now?" This was a forced recognition of the dilemmas facing the contemporary Cold War; an artistic choice that made le Carré's literature stand apart from others. These dilemmas raised more questions than they answered. What of those forced to live in the Eastern bloc? Does their ideology condemn them simply because it was disagreeable to Western values? Does it truly have any real justification in respect to the universal ideals of humanity? These are some of the questions le Carré asks the readers, especially by introducing such an outlook so early on in the novel.

Leamas' mission is filled with angst, despair, and duplicities. He must make his 'enemies' believe he is no longer attached to the West, seeking refuge by defecting to the East. This form of narrative gives the impression of a straight-forward spy fiction novel, but le Carré complicates the plot once Leamas becomes entangled with Communist's Liz Gold and Fiedler. Both Communists are quite different in practice from one another, yet possess similar qualities in their perceptions of philosophies. Leamas falls in love with Liz, for she is innocent and naïve in her beliefs. Fiedler is an East German spy, but is firmly grounded in the contradictions posed by competing ideologies. Fiedler is actually an honest and good man, while Mundt is the true evil that the West should eliminate. When Fiedler asks Leamas about his "philosophy," he was seeking to understand what *motivates* the West.⁹¹ "What makes them do it...if they do not know what they want, how

⁹¹ le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, p. 123.

can they be so certain they are right?”⁹² This was a poignant question, one that strikes the reader due to its nature of infallibility. How was the West so sure that their cause was the *righteous* one in the complex world? Who ultimately stands in judgement and can provide an adequate answer? The layers of meaning that le Carré evoked were critical to the mindset behind Cultural Détente attitudes. When Fiedler provides reasoning and justification for Communist methods, he did so with conviction. He stated, “. . . a movement which protects itself against counter-revolution can hardly stop at the exploitation---or the elimination. . . of a few individuals. It is all one, we have never pretended to be wholly just in the process of rationalistic society.”⁹³ Thus, Fiedler refuses to diminish Eastern methods and challenges Leamas by pointing out that Western hatred is not justified through its actions. At least in the East it was “expedient that one man should die for the benefit of many.”⁹⁴ Communism did not claim to be righteous, it claimed to be progress. In the East, their methods and actions justify and “weigh the balance,” while in the West (based upon Christianity) “Christians may not draw the balance.”⁹⁵ So, what exactly was the motivation for the West to continue in fighting the Cold War? That was the vital question le Carré presented, pointing out that although the West made lofty claims about protecting democratic ideals, in practice they exploited individuals (and ideals) in order to achieve means to an end.

Le Carré obscures the reality of Leamas’ true mission, even unto Leamas himself. He is actually a pawn being used by Control in a much larger scheme to save the evil Mundt and sacrifice the honest Fiedler and Liz. This mission costs innocent lives, such as

⁹² le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, p. 123.

⁹³ Ibid. p. 123-124.

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 124.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p 15.

Leamas' lover Liz Gold. Leamas is even expendable to Control since he was sent without any knowledge of what was truly happening to him. Again, le Carré openly and daringly forced the readers to see that Western methods of conducting the war did not differ much from that of the East. In fact, Control's plot was far more devious and utilized human beings in order to serve a higher political purpose. The West was supposed to defend innocent lives, not condemn them through ulterior motives and actions. Le Carré pronounces a profound truth in *The Spy*---that what you see was not always the truth. Sometimes the truth was ugly and costly. The Cold War was full of hideous truths, whether political, social, or ideologically motivated. He proved that there was a *reason* to question the legitimacy of the war. He brought about the notion that definable 'enemies' were intangible, not as easily distinguished as 'Communists' or 'Democrats.' The Cold War was fluid, ever-changing, and rapidly evolving from prior impracticalities; a notion that remained with the author throughout his career.

Le Carré felt certain that *The Spy* remained a neutral interpretation of intelligence and politics in the Cold War. He argued that his treatment of the East was equivalent to that of the West, bringing balance to both sides of the conflict. He was so sure of his novel that he sent copies of it to publication houses and to critics in the Eastern bloc. No Western author had attempted this before, as there was strict censorship and a ban on anti-Communist material throughout the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, *The Spy* was reviewed in Moscow by the Soviet critic V. Voinov in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta*.⁹⁶ Le Carré was not only surprised, as he had not expected anyone in the Eastern bloc to

⁹⁶ V. Voinov, "John le Carré: Spy Tamer," *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (October 16, 1965).

actually read his work, but he “took considerable offence” over Voinov’s review.⁹⁷ Voinov praised the novel’s “originality” but stated that it was a “hostile evaluation of the author’s political assumptions.”⁹⁸ Le Carré was trying to illuminate the disparity between the means and ends in both the East and West; He was appealing to the Western conscience and the democratic “evaluation of the individual’s place in society.”⁹⁹ His primary purpose of the novel was to “remove espionage from the sterile arguments of the cold war and concentrate the reader’s eye on the cost to the West, in moral terms, of fighting the legitimized weapons of Communism.”¹⁰⁰ This was why he felt that Voinov’s review was unfair in its judgement of the political and moral discrepancies about Western hypocrisy. Voinov accused le Carré of elevating spies to the “rank of the true hero of our age.”¹⁰¹ Additionally, he claimed Voinov accused him of assuming “the role of impartial observer while my real function is to ‘fan the flames of the cold war.’”¹⁰² Le Carré responded to Voinov’s criticisms in his ‘Open Letter,’ entitled “To Russia, with Greetings.”¹⁰³ He sent the letter via the *Encounter*, making note that his primary objection with Voinov’s review was that he was accused as both a pro-Imperialist and “an apologist of the cold war.”¹⁰⁴ Between sending his novel to the East, Voinov’s review, and le Carré’s ‘Open Letter’ in return, le Carré proved that he was much more than a spy fiction author. He was passionate about the contemporary state of the Cold War and the demands it placed upon citizens of the West. The public should be aware of

⁹⁷ Barley, *Taking Sides: The Fiction of John le Carré*, p.27.

⁹⁸ Voinov, “John le Carré: Spy Tamer.”

⁹⁹ John le Carré, “To Russia, with Greetings: an Open Letter to the Moscow *Literary Gazette*” *Encounter*, 26 (1966), p. 3-6.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Voinov, “John le Carré: Spy Tamer.”

¹⁰² le Carré, “To Russia, with Greetings: an Open Letter to the Moscow *Literary Gazette*” p. 3-6.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

the discrepancies between what Western governments *say* versus *how* they actually conducted the means of warfare. Stephen J. Whitfield argued, “The culture of the Cold War decomposed when the moral distinction between East and West lost a bit of its sharpness, when American self-righteousness could be more readily punctured, when the activities of the two superpowers assumed greater symmetry.”¹⁰⁵ This was exactly le Carré’s message and theme in *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, and once again, was a principal factor in how he shaped the birth of the Cultural Détente.

The Spy and le Carré both received phenomenal reviews. TIME magazine has named the novel as one of the “All-TIME 100 Novels” since its foundation in 1923, with critic Lev Grossman calling it “a sad, sympathetic portrait of a man who has lived by lies and subterfuge.”¹⁰⁶ In 1964, New York Times critic Anthony Boucher called it “a substantial and penetrating novel of our times.”¹⁰⁷ Robert M. Adams added, “it’s a cold world, not just for spies but for humanity.”¹⁰⁸ Even in the years after the Cold War, *The Spy* has continued to garner critical acclaim. Louis Menad stated, “le Carré transformed the genre,” while *The Spy*’s “genius was to conceive of the Wall not as separating the destinies of East and West but as yoking them together.”¹⁰⁹ Clearly le Carré had found a critique that not only fit his literary style, but also served as a platform for his personal

¹⁰⁵ Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, p. 205.

¹⁰⁶ Lev Grossman, “All-TIME 100 Novels,” *TIME*, (January 8, 2010). Accessed March 9, 2016.

¹⁰⁷ Anthony Boucher, “Temptations of a Man Isolated in Deceit,” *The New York Times*, (January 12, 1964). Accessed March 8, 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Adams, “Couldn’t Put it Down,” Accessed March 8, 2016.

¹⁰⁹ Louis Menad, “Under Western Eyes,” *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 2. No. 7. (April 20, 1995) Accessed March 8, 2016.

opinions on the Cold War. *The Spy* continues to make numerous lists as one of the essential novels of the 20th Century.¹¹⁰

Le Carré broke new ground with *The Spy*, tapping into an awareness that was beginning to evolve. He would continue with his critiques in his fourth novel *The Looking-Glass War*, published in 1965.¹¹¹ *TLGW* further extrapolated the complex themes involved in the Cold War epic. Even for the 1960s, the average middle-aged adult held an enduring memory of World War II. The impact of the war was still felt in the political, economic, and social reconstruction of a war-torn Europe. The catastrophic event altered geographic borders, cultural assimilations of groups, and more profoundly led to the dawn of the nuclear age. It would be naïve to believe that the impact of World War II had lost its strength by the 1960s. Thus, le Carré drew upon those memories in the invention his characters in *TLGW*. In reality, as in his fiction, numerous secret agents working in intelligence had experienced the war through military service or as intelligence officers. Plugging into that emotional consciousness was a strategic move on behalf of le Carré. George Smiley and Alec Leamas, along with majority of his characters in *TLGW* such as Leclerc, Adrian Haldane, and Fred Leiser had all come from a World War II background in their formative years. This was a poignant detail, which provided historical context for the characters and their collective experiences. *TLGW* would build upon their nostalgia for a war that made sense in its moral and ethical principles.

Le Carré believed that his reading audience did not altogether understand his overall message he was seeking to impart in *The Spy*. He mentioned this is his

¹¹⁰ Grossman, "All-TIME 100 Novels," Accessed March 9, 2016.

¹¹¹ *The Looking-Glass War* will be further noted as *TLGW*.

Introduction to *TLGW*, further illuminating exactly what his intentions were and would be in his fourth novel. He wanted to make his points perfectly clear so that any confusion would be eliminated. He stated, “So this time...I’ll tell it the hard way. This time, cost what it will, I’ll describe a Secret Service that is really not very good at all; that is eking out its wartime glory; that is feeding itself on Little England fantasies; is isolated, directionless, overprotected and destined ultimately to destroy itself.”¹¹² As le Carré viewed it, and as he wrote about in *TLGW*, the intelligence community itself served as a perfect example of the competition among bureaucratic rivalries; power that had become too expansive; class-driven consequences; and the growing reliance upon the United States for guidance in a complex war.¹¹³ Le Carré was also attentive to the British sensitivity in becoming a second-rate power behind the United States. The loss of its glorious Empire dwindled as its former colonies began to break free from the control of England. Decolonization had a profound social impact upon the world, forging new cultural identities and geo-political boundaries. This came as a great loss for Great Britain, but it was absurd that the government continued to believe that possessing colonies around the world was a legitimate feat in the 20th Century. Progress meant change and le Carré was a firm believer in moving past the Imperial rule of Great Britain. The loss of the British Empire was also another aspect of how influential the Cultural Détente movement had become by the 1960s. Citizens in British colonies advocated for their own autonomy, which meant that the movement was not isolated to just the United States and Great Britain.

¹¹² John le Carré, *The Looking-Glass War*, Introduction, (New York: Penguin Books, 2012). Kindle.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Le Carré often described the American ‘Cousins’ as being arrogant, cynical, and calculating in his novels. Once again, art often reflects the artists’ true frame of mind as it is projected throughout his work. With Great Britain following the lead of the United States in the Cold War era, the American’s dominated Western politics, economics, and ideologies. There is no doubt that many, like le Carré, held bitterness in their attitudes towards the United States. For him it was not so much the loss of global prominence, but the amassed control and influence the American’s had upon the global world. The U.S. government used their status to force concepts that complied with their standards or democratic ideals. Examples of this would be American involvement in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, places that did not need intervention at the behest of the United States. Ho Chi Minh, the revolutionary leader of the Communist party in Vietnam, sought freedom from French rule in French-Indochina. He even cited the American Declaration of Independence as a means to convey the freedom of choice in establishing a new Communist Vietnam nation. The American’s, as they had in Korea, intervened through military force in order to stop the spread of Communism (as part of their ‘domino theory’). Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese revolutionaries should have been justified through their universal freedoms; the problem was that their definition of freedom did not correlate to the United States’ vision of global democracy. These wars are an unadulterated example of the how the American’s wielded their dominance and influence without regards to the moral and ethical universal beliefs that every citizen of the world is entitled to hold.

Despite le Carré’s depictions of the American’s in his novels he was still able to capture a wide audience in the United States. As was proved by his successful sales in the

country, his growing popularity made him the spy author to read. Perhaps the reason he found success in the United States was because his messages resonated with his reading audience. Not only did they want to hear what he had to say---along with sheer entertainment---they also accepted the challenges he posed in viewing the present-day issues of the Cold War. Le Carré made his intentions with *TLGW* clear in his Introduction as a means to rectify any sort of confusion that readers and critics might have about the sensitive material he was attempting to tackle. In his fourth novel he presented an intelligence outfit, separate from his British ‘Circus,’ with members who were either lost in the nostalgia of the glory days of war or were too naïve to grasp the depth of their own deteriorating condition. During a 1965 interview about *TLGW*’s characters le Carré stated, “The men of whom I speak are already condemned: they are finished, worn-out; their emotional experiences were dulled during the war. They are the last of a lost generation... The material I have chosen extrapolates the theme of espionage. I attempted to illustrate the paradox of war. It sacrifices the individual in the battle against the collectivity, which is absurd.”¹¹⁴ The title of his novel is symbolic of Lewis Carroll’s 1871 children’s novel, *Through the Looking-Glass*. Just as Alice climbed through the mirror into a fantastical world, so too were le Carré’s characters Leclerc, Haldane, Avery, and Leiser subjected to the realities behind the mirror. In his Introduction he also stated:

Such an outfit, if I got it right, would speak not only for the British Intelligence community of the ‘sixties...it would presume to speak also for Little England itself, the England of the Suez campaign...In a word, I would use the spy story to tell a *roman noir* in which the British Intelligence Service would be portrayed as a political somnambulant,

¹¹⁴John le Carré, “John le Carré : The Writer, like the Spy, Is an Illusionist,” Interview with Vera Volmane. *Les Nouvelles Litteraries* (23 September, 1965), p. 3. Translated by Cristy S. Vogel.

tapping about in the after-lunch haze of victory, uncertain anymore whether it is fighting the Russians or the Germans, but fighting anyway, because not to fight is to wake up.¹¹⁵

Le Carré, as was his usual style, was not to waste a minute on critiquing Western involvement in the Cold War. This statement in his interview really illuminates how paradoxical the war had become and it was no longer measuring up to the earlier reasons of fighting the war in the first place. As a citizen, first and foremost, le Carré along with others, no longer found the political reasons legitimate in carrying on. This, again, was a watermark in Cultural Détente.

TLGW was about a small intelligence outfit--- “the Department”--- which believed Soviet missiles were being placed near the West German border; subsequently based on outdated modes of intelligence evidence and a series of blunders, the Department viewed this as a means to become active in the world of Cold War espionage. Operating outside of the Circus, the Department was comprised of men whom longed for the glory days of World War II intelligence; yet their capabilities were limited and archaic. Leclerc, the head of the Department is by far the most nostalgic character in the novel. He is old-fashioned, insufficiently equipped, and holds aspirations that are far beyond his reach. Their headquarters are located in a rundown house, full of outdated equipment that serves no functional purpose. It is with humility that Leclerc must go to Control at the Circus in order to gain approval and a bit of help with the mission he is trying to put into place. Despite all of their efforts over the course of the novel, Leclerc, Haldane, and Avery come to the bitter realization that they have sent Fred Leiser, their spy, into the East without any hope of saving him. They never inform Leiser that their department is small, not united with the Circus, and that he is truly the *only* spy they have

¹¹⁵ le Carré, *The Looking-Glass War*, Introduction

active in the field. Of course Control and Smiley both knew that this would be the outcome from the very onset, they even abetted it but did nothing to prevent this tragic demise. Control allocated non-functional equipment to Leclerc, thus giving him the illusion that he was operating a well-coordinated mission. As le Carré had mentioned, this novel was very much about competing rivalries and class distinctions, along with inflated power. Once again, le Carré demonstrates how the individual can be easily sacrificed for the collective and his paradox of war become vivid through the plights of his characters. The Cold War was becoming more chaotic and convoluted as time passed by. Even discerning the real 'enemies' was no longer an effective tool in combating the Cold War. In intelligence spies are easily deceived, even by their own fellow countrymen. Le Carré demonstrated this through Control's actions, making him and Smiley a bit of the 'enemy' in this tragic tale. Just a year prior to the publication of *TLGW*, this happened when the well-respected British spy Kim Philby defected to the Soviet Union. Philby's betrayal shook the intelligence community to its core and proved that le Carré's narratives could bear some truths.

Kim Philby was part of the 'Cambridge Five' and was the suspected 'third man' after Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean's defection in 1951. The fourth identified member of this conspiracy group was Anthony Blunt, who confessed his association as a double agent in 1964. Unlike the other three, Blunt was granted immunity for confessing and his secret life as a spy was not released until 1979. The treachery of these British double agents, especially Kim Philby who had once been the senior SIS liaison officer in Washington, had a profound impact on British Intelligence. Since Philby was in such a high-ranking position in MI6 (along with other high profile positions), he caused massive

damage for the West by leaking so much important information to his Soviet controllers. There is no way of knowing exactly how much harm came by way of Philby's actions, but it was a shocking betrayal considering how long he served in MI6. In order for Philby to get away with his double life for so long, at some point the British Intelligence Agency had to be negligent in their regards to Philby. He was the source of suspicion back when Burgess and Maclean defected and MI5 director Dick White even had severe opinions over Philby.¹¹⁶ Even the American's, principally the CIA's James Jesus Angleton, was taken by Philby's charms.¹¹⁷ Le Carré provided an introduction to a book on Kim Philby, in which he stated:

...I am uncomfortably conscious of the "we": Philby's is one of those cases which force us to define our own place in society. If the secret services were negligent in controlling Philby, so Parliament and we ourselves, society at large, were equally negligent in controlling our own secret services. It was *our* politicians' who fronted for them, *our* editors who suppressed for them, *our* dons who informed for them, recruited for them; *our* Prime Minister who protected them.¹¹⁸

In just a few brief sentences, le Carré called into question every aspect of responsibility by governments, institutions, *and* society. He made it plain that it was the failures of those institutions which allowed for Philby to act in the way he did. Le Carré made a bold political and social statement, standing up for the growing dissent within a culture that had been suppressed by cover-ups and lies. Philby, like each events that carried on, proved that le Carré was correct in his assessment of the Cold War. In its contemporary state, citizens would not continue to support this war epic. There has also been ample proof linking le Carré to the Cultural Détente movement. As the thaw began to subside,

¹¹⁶ Ben Macintyre, *A Spy Among Friends: Kim Philby and the Great Betrayal*, Introduction by John le Carré, (New York: Crown Publishers, 2014).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Page B., Leitch D., and Knightley P. *Philby: The Spy Who Betrayed A Generation*. Introduction by John le Carré. (Andre Deutsch, 1968).

the activists and reformists came out in droves for the New Left and Countercultures movements that began in the mid-1960s. It is vital to note that Cultural Détente was a stepping-stone for the public in order to firmly enact political and social reforms. Other artists were soon to follow in the footsteps of John le Carré. However, no one had embraced these critiques as quite early or as forcefully as he did. He made his spy fiction narratives much more than pieces of fictional entertainment; he made them vessels of a larger mission to engage the public in a brand new dialogue about the costs of Western involvement in a obscured battle of ideologies. For this, the author is inextricably entwined with Cultural Détente and the progress the movement had upon mainstream popular culture.

Chapter 3

By the early 1960s the cultural and political landscape of America was beginning to evolve away from Cold War assumptions that shaped the popular culture of the 1950s. The presidential election of 1960 brought the young Democrat, John F. Kennedy into the Oval Office. Kennedy beat out incumbent Republican Vice-President Richard Nixon; which signaled that the American public was ready for change and perhaps a new direction in foreign policy. During President Kennedy's short time in office, he faced numerous foreign and domestic issues, many of which derived from the Cold War. While the previous chapter detailed the early-1960s Cold War crises that Kennedy had to face, some of his other policies served to challenge the status quo in the foreign and domestic spheres.¹¹⁹ Politics undeniably shapes popular culture, as policies and legislation can either advocate or negate social causes and advancements. This was quite important in analyzing the decade that would become defined by its radical transformations. Additionally, the policies of Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, also proved essential in understanding how 1960s popular culture was expressed in political and social beliefs.¹²⁰ Kennedy was a cold warrior, but Stalin was long dead and the Soviet Union had already proclaimed "peaceful coexistence". The Soviets no longer posed a

¹¹⁹ Along with the Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Partial Test Ban Treaty, President Kennedy was presented with other Cold War challenges. He also enacted social reforms that would advance progress in the civil rights movements. In addition to civil rights, he supported racial integration and intended to propose legislation on the issue. He established the Peace Corps, which provided education, healthcare, and farming to underdeveloped nations. He also created his domestic policy, the New Frontier, which aimed at providing federal funding for education, medical care, and economic aid to rural areas. He further established the Alliance of Progress in Latin America in order to assert human rights and prevent the further spread of Communism. He advocated for the rising nationalism in Africa, thus supporting these new nations in the hope they would become democracies.

¹²⁰ President Lyndon B. Johnson became known for his policies such as the Great Society, which aimed at upholding civil rights, medical care, education, urban and rural developments, public services, and the War on Poverty. Johnson also advocated for civil rights and upheld the ban on racial discrimination. Unfortunately, massive riots consumed the period, coupled with Johnson's escalation of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, resulting in a drastic decline of public opinion.

threat as they once had. American popular culture could no longer continue in its simplistic depiction of Communists and Communism. Leaders of Cultural Détente like authors and artists, most notably John le Carré, anticipated a shift in relations. By the early-1960s it became clear that society was ready to embrace a relaxation of tensions. Although politics was a tremendous influence on the American culture of the Cold War, this research will show that American culture shaped and influenced politics.

The 1960s were a decade of change and social progress. Reform groups and activists began to demand civil liberties for African-Americans, women, and gay rights. The ideal of the 1950s 'nuclear family' was challenged by blended families and divorce. College campuses became the grassroots for student movements across the country. The public demand for the relaxation of tensions became evident in the art produced; the reformist attitudes; the gathering of intellectual circles committed to enacting progress; and the widespread protests of the era.

It must be noted that there were a few select examples of satires, parodies, and black comedy during the late-1950s and early-1960s. The most significant was MAD magazine's publication of *Spy vs. Spy* in 1961. It is also poignant that this was the same year as le Carré's publication of *Call For the Dead*, so *Spy vs. Spy* hardly diminished the importance of le Carré's work. The concept of this cartoon was that of two agents involved in constant espionage tactics. One spy was white, while the other was solid black. This held no meaning over who was 'good' or 'evil,' as they equally engage one another. They look identical except for their color differences and they constantly antagonize one another, waring among them until a victor emerges. In each publication a different spy would win, set metaphorically against the Cold War backdrop with the fight

between the United States and Soviet Union. Their silly antics and use of booby traps are the means to which a spy emerges victorious. The point was that neither side in the Cold War was actually winning; they were constantly antagonizing one another as the years progressed. It was a pointless, wasteful, cynical “game” that outsiders should reject. In context to Cultural Détente, *Spy vs. Spy* had very little immediate impact on the movement. It did demonstrate out of the box thinking, but its target audiences were juvenile: children, teenagers, and young adults. Most of these missed the serious message about the Cold War. Le Carré’s audience derived from middle-brow readers. His novels were far more versatile than the simplicities of *Spy vs. Spy*. However, these children of 1961 would soon become the rebellious and questioning youth of the “Sixties” due in no small part due to the influence of Mad Magazine and *Spy vs. Spy*.

For Cultural Détente, art mediums served as platforms from which to critique the Cold War; breaking from the suppression of art in the 1950s. Several artists during the early-1960s were creating films, literature, and television programs that in some capacity condemned the Cold War. They highlighted the fact that more was to be feared from their own government than the external “enemy.” As mentioned in the previous chapter, le Carré was the first to provide a wide ranging condemnation of Western methods in fighting the war and his critiques were well heeded by society.¹²¹ Other artists at the time produced discernable critiques, if not all out warnings; but they usually consisted of limited arguments. This in no way diminishes their contributions to Cultural Détente; in fact it further supported the radical ideologies sweeping through society.

¹²¹ As mentioned, le Carré’s spy fiction novels were aimed at middle-brow culture. It was with great enthusiasm that his novels would be taken seriously by high-brow circles, such as *The New York Review of Books*. Those that enjoyed Mad Magazine as children would eventually become the revolutionary reformists of the late-1960s. It is not implausible to suggest that they, too, became Le Carré’s audience.

The Manchurian Candidate was a novel written by Richard Condon in 1959. By 1962, director John Frankenheimer adapted the novel into a major motion picture. *The Manchurian Candidate* is a satirical, political thriller filled with irony and dark thematic devices that extrapolates 1960s Cold War issues. The film (and novel) was as much about the enemy within as it the enemy without. The primary focus is about a Communist infiltration through the brainwashing of a Korean War Staff Sergeant Raymond Shaw. The idea of a Communist infiltration corroborated early Cold War sentiments; however the story takes multiple twists in order to provide a psychologically complex thriller. Shaw had been brainwashed by the Chinese and the Soviets, but all memories of this are erased. He returns home to his mother, Mrs. Iselin, and stepfather, Senator Iselin, a staunch right-wing political family. References to McCarthyism are not lost upon the audience, as it is made clear through the actions and comments of Senator Iselin. Historian Margot A. Henriksen stated, “At the urging and direction of his ambitious wife, Senator Iselin made his name and his political career on the issue of anticommunism, using the method of witch-hunting.”¹²² Additionally she added, “...the brutal and inane anticommunism of Senator Iselin is presented as more corrosive than any form of communism.”¹²³ Despite his ambitions, Senator Iselin was an opportunist, careerist, and is ultimately despised by his stepson Raymond Shaw. As the plot unfolds, Raymond Shaw is being controlled and triggered by the Queen of Diamonds. It is revealed that Mrs. Iselin is the Communist agent whom controls her son’s triggers; all the while pretending to be an avowed American patriot. Henriksen also stated, “...the irony that Iselin is in fact in the hands of a communist contributes to the film’s black humor, as does Iselin’s

¹²²Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, p. 265

¹²³ Ibid.

anticommunist buffoonery.”¹²⁴ In this capacity, the plot becomes convoluted. The idea was to present an all-American family that was fighting the enemy within; yet each member equally contributed to the bigger threat (whether intentional or not). Mrs. Iselin has plans to trigger her son in order to secure the presidency under Communist influence. However, Shaw’s friend, Major Ben Marco, helps to uncover Shaw’s brainwashing. He attempts to recondition Shaw, removing the power of the Queen of Diamonds. The end of the film (and novel) is bleak at best. During a political convention Mrs. Iselin tries to trigger her son to assassinate Iselin’s rival. Instead, in a Freudian twist, Shaw murders his mother and stepfather and then commits suicide. He is ultimately deemed as a hero for his efforts. For all of its suspense, black comedy, and political thematic devices, *The Manchurian Candidate* served as a good example of Cold War entertainment that came with a broad and powerful message. What the film did achieve was it “collapsed all distinctions between anticommunism and communism: both systems emerged as examples of political repression.”¹²⁵ The overall impact of the film/novel was to further bolster support for the reactive opposition to early Cold War thinking. It found positive responses from both book and movie critics. It brought in a domestic box office haul of \$7.7 million dollars, with Angela Lansbury (Mrs. Iselin) winning the Academy Award and Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actress. Awards bring more buzz for films, pulling in larger audiences and money; proof that the message is accepted and supported by the movie going public. Movie critic Roger Ebert gave the film four stars, calling it a “great film.”¹²⁶ He stated that it was “inventive and frisky,” taking “enormous chances

¹²⁴ Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, p. 265

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Roger Ebert, “The Manchurian Candidate: Great Movies,” (December 7, 2003), www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-the-manchurian-candidate-1962 Accessed 12 February, 2016.

with the audience and plays not like a ‘classic’ but as a work alive and smart.” In 1994, the film was added to the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress for preservation for being “culturally, historically, and aesthetically significant.”¹²⁷ In relation to Cultural Detente, *The Manchurian Candidate*’s psychological impact helped to reinforce ideas of mistrust. Issues with political authorities and ‘enemies’ pervades the story, further extrapolating themes that correlated with the thaw.¹²⁸

If there was a breakout year for Cold War films, it was in 1964. Three powerful films were released, including *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Bomb*; *Fail-Safe*; and *Seven Days in May*. Each of these three films held strong messages about the thermonuclear age. Through satire, parody, black comedy, and psychological thrillers, these films contributed to the growing disdain and mistrust in Western governments and their nuclear policies. With such similar themes, albeit through different approaches, the authors and directors of these films/novels had a clear critique about the contemporary Cold War. As with le Carré’s spy fiction novels and films, these films serve as historical time capsules, preserving the fears, anxiety, and momentum that propelled reforms in Cold War popular culture.

The most controversial film in 1964 was *Dr. Strangelove*. Directed by Stanley Kubrick, the film used black comedy, parody, and satire to unveil a formidable nuclear threat. Henriksen stated about the film, that it “in itself helped to reinvigorate a dynamic

¹²⁷ “The Manchurian Candidate, One of 25 Films Added to National Registry,” *The New York Times*, (1994).

¹²⁸ *The Manchurian Candidate* employed similar themes as John le Carré. Le Carré expressed mistrust, political dissent, and undefinable enemies through espionage; but Richard Condon did so through brainwashing. In any case, Condon’s novel further supports the changing dynamic in Western culture.

tension in America between the forces of cultural dissent and the forces of political and technological status quo.”¹²⁹ Not everyone found humor or entertainment in Kubrick’s film. Reviewer George W. Linden felt “deep ambivalence” and further described the horrified reactions of fellow audience viewers at the time.¹³⁰ The main plot of the film revolves around three locations: the ‘War Room,’ an Air Force Base, and a B-52 bomber. The crazed General Jack D. Ripper (at the Air Base) has commanded the B-52 bombers to launch a nuclear strike against Soviet Russia. Ripper is the only person in possession of the three digit code that could recall the bombers and end the strike; yet he refuses to give it up and then commits “suicide.” Here is where Kubrick parodies humorous elements; the name of his crazy General was symbolic of the 19th Century serial killer ‘Jack the Ripper.’ Even Dr. Strangelove’s name was symbolic of the ‘strange’ acceptance of living in a nuclear age. After the bombers are sent on their mission the story moves to the ‘War Room’ where the U.S. President, Joint Chiefs of Staff, RAF advisers, Soviet Ambassador, and Dr. Strangelove all convene over how to stop the B-52’s. Kubrick pokes fun at the Washington-Moscow ‘Hotline,’ as the President and Soviet Premier attempt to negotiate. The Premier tells the President that if the Soviets are attacked, a series of Doomsday Devices will detonate radioactive material around the world, causing a nuclear holocaust. Through blunders, mishaps, and a fight, the code is finally recovered and the bombers are stopped--- all but one. This B-52 bomber is led by Major T. J. ‘King’ Kong and in a final act he straddles a nuclear bomb as it is released upon its target. The Doomsday Devices are triggered and Dr. Strangelove suggests repopulating the earth through underground mine shafts. In the finale a series of nuclear explosions are

¹²⁹Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, p.17.

¹³⁰ George W. Linden, “Dr. Strangelove” *Nuclear War Films*, ed. Jack G. Shaheen (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), p. 65-67.

displayed across the screen accompanied by the popular WW II song “We’ll Meet Again.” The main point in the film was to provide a true condemnation of the U.S. nuclear policies. That an ‘accident’ could bring about World War III on a much more devastating level was not lost upon viewers. Additionally, that someone other than the U.S. president could bring about nuclear destruction was something to worry about; nothing is ever fool-proof. These were viable questions in 1964 and the public had a right to feel strong resentments towards the U.S. nuclear system. Henriksen stated, “the ultimate irrationality of living with the bomb dictated temper of the film, thereby challenging the cherished seriousness and rationality of America’s nuclear ethos and establishment.”¹³¹ Both Stanley Kubrick and his film remain resolute in sending a warning to the audience. They needed to question the ethics of the nuclear arms race; and they should question the governing powers over their responsibility to society as representatives of the people. *Dr. Strangelove* made this message completely clear. *Dr. Strangelove* moved in the same direction as John le Carré. No longer was the army coming to save the day; the Air Force, or at least the rogue Gen. Ripper, destroyed the day and every day thereafter. *Dr. Strangelove*’s eccentricities were possible because of Cultural Détente. By questioning the nuclear establishment and the infallibility of man, Kubrick was illuminating the growing discord between citizen and state. Even though his film used dark humor his message was entirely clear. We had created a device that was capable of mass destruction. It was only natural that there would be a psychological impact and insecurities. Like le Carré, Kubrick highlighted mistrust, rogue power, and minimal accountability.

¹³¹Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, p. 318.

Fail-Safe was also released in 1964, directed by Sidney Lumet and based on the 1962 novel of the same name, written by Eugene Burdick and Harvey Wheeler. Much like *Dr. Strangelove*, *Fail-Safe* was based on a nuclear crisis that went severely wrong. The plot revolves around an accidental thermonuclear first-strike by U.S. bombers in a mishap mission to Moscow. Betrayed by technology gone wrong, in short, the film evoked the fearful realities of living in an advanced nuclear age; where one mistake could decimate millions of lives. With U.S. bombers proceeding to aerial ‘fail-safe’ points due to an unidentified flying object, a technical error occurs signaling the bombers to commence their attack on Moscow. Once again, through blunders and mishaps by both the U.S. and Soviets (who have scrambled and jammed the bombers radio signals), the impending first nuclear strike becomes a reality. The U.S. President and Soviet Chairman begin negotiations, but the Soviets ensure a counterattack if Moscow is bombed. In the dismal end, the U.S. President gives up New York City after Moscow is bombed, commanding the nuclear destruction of one of America’s largest cities. This was the sacrifice and cost of the ‘accidental’ strike. *Fail-Safe* is a dark thriller that played upon the psychological elements of thermonuclear scientific progress and the fallibility of man to such tremendous power. Again, this film raised moral and ethical questions about the government’s power to enact such laws. It is certainly arguable that American society had the natural rights to demand reform, especially nuclear reforms. The growth of anti-nuclear positions became a strong driving force in popular culture and the American thaw. Henriksen stated that *Fail-Safe*, “...was an effective critical account of America’s nuclear bureaucracy and its profession of technological control and infallibility.”¹³²

Referring back to le Carré’s critiques about the over-expansion of Western bureaucracies

¹³² Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, p. 331.

and their power, Henriksen's quote certainly lines up with the political and social conflicts of the period. In the preface to the *Fail-Safe* novel, authors Burdick and Wheeler stated their intentions in writing such a bleak novel. They stated, "For there is substantial agreement among experts that an accidental war is possible and that its probability increases with the increasing complexity of the man-machine components which make up our defense system."¹³³ Taking these comments in context to the time of the novel's publication, it clearly displayed a critical argument for the serious and threatening U.S. nuclear status quo.

Seven Days in May was directed by John Frankenheimer (the same director of *The Manchurian Candidate*) and was released in early 1964. The film was based upon the novel of the same name, written by Fletcher Knebel and Charles W. Bailey II. Once again, like the other two films, *Seven Days in May* held strong criticisms of the nuclear arms race and American popular culture. This was by all accounts a political thriller that provided the extra psychological twists to make the message more ominous and grave. Director John Frankenheimer revealed that President Kennedy loved *The Manchurian Candidate* so much that he helped with the production of *Seven Days of May* by moving out of the White House for nearly a week so that the director could actually film scenes there.¹³⁴ The main plot revolves around a military-political coup d'état of the United States government led by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and a sector of the military called ECOMCON---Emergency COMMunications CONtrol. This takeover came as a result of the severe disapproval of a nuclear disarmament treaty signed with the Soviet Union

¹³³ Eugene Burdick and John Harvey Wheeler Jr, Preface, *Fail-Safe* (New York: Rosetta Books, 1962), p. 7-8. Kindle.

¹³⁴ John Frankenheimer, quoted in Edward Guthmann, "Assassination Movie Predicted History," *San Francisco Chronicle-Examiner*, (17 February 1986), "Datebook," p. 23.

(taking place in the 1970s). Those that are a part of the coup d'état are seeking to seize control of the entire country's telephone, radio, and televisions over a seven day period. Henriksen stated about Kennedy's cooperation with the film, that it "indicated that at least one major figure in America's establishment did not object to the critical portrait of atomic age America presented in the film."¹³⁵ Citizens in the film are torn into two opposing groups: one side agrees whole-heartedly with the treaty, while the other side believes that the Soviets cannot be trusted. President Lyman Jordan fully asserts that without the disarmament treaty, one day a nuclear war will come, turning the Cold War into a hot war. President Jordan's greatest opposition is General James Scott, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and leader of the coup. His secret society of politicians and military personnel rallies to overthrow Jordan and his entire cabinet. Unfortunately for General Scott, his aide Colonel Casey becomes quite suspicious and reveals Scott's plans to President Jordan. The very existence of the free world is at stake with Scott's planned coup and eventually enough evidence is gathered to expose Scott to the American public. President Jordan wins out in the end and actually holds no blame against Scott.

He asserts:

He's not the enemy. Scott, the Joint Chiefs, even the very emotional, very illogical lunatic fringe: they're not the enemy. The enemy's an age - a nuclear age. It happens to have killed man's faith in his ability to influence what happens to him. And out of this comes a sickness, and out of sickness a frustration, a feeling of impotence, helplessness, weakness.¹³⁶

Just like the films already presented in this chapter, *Seven Days in May* was wrapped around the madness of the nuclear system; enemies within and without; power

¹³⁵ Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, p. 337.

¹³⁶ Jordan Lyman, *Seven Days in May*. Directed by John Frankenheimer. (Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 1964).

in the hands of opportunists; and an indictment of the impact all these themes had upon American values and popular culture. Henriksen further stated, “*Dr. Strangelove, Fail-Safe* and *Seven Days in May* all presented dark images of atomic America in the mid-sixties and all three films contributed to the cultural understanding of the bomb’s central role in shaping and damaging American society and culture.”¹³⁷ The Cold War by the mid-1960s looked nothing like it had just ten years prior. American’s were faced with coming to terms over what it was like to live in a country that held such tremendous power with its thermonuclear system. American’s held a lack of confidence in the government and its institutions due to “corruption, insanity, arrogance, and inhumanity.”¹³⁸ Science and technology had produced the ultimate death machine and it was in the hands of power that could be corrosive, and most importantly, imperfect and fallible. All three of these films in 1964 in some capacity extrapolated those very themes and showed the threat posed by them to American values and freedom.

In 1965, John le Carré’s spy fiction novel, *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold*, based on his 1963 novel was released as a major motion picture. The film was directed by Martin Ritt who had been blacklisted for his left-leaning political views. *The Spy* film was made in black and white to capture the essence of the dark, bleak, isolated, and alienated life of a spy; along with the harsh reality of East and West Germany. The film made very few departures from le Carré’s narrative; despite that it attempted to capture all of his messages in only 112 minutes. Oskar Werner, who portrayed Fiedler in the film, won the 1966 Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actor. Also mentioned in Chapter 2, the film received many other notable award nominations and wins in 1966.

¹³⁷ Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, p. 338.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

The Spy, like the book, was a departure from the films that were analyzed just a year prior in 1964, which all held strong nuclear warnings. What distinguished *The Spy* was that it revolved around the clandestine world, a very popular subject in Cold War popular culture. Additionally, *The Spy* was so different from the James Bond movies that had been made into films during the 1960s. With *The Spy* film, le Carré's broad warnings and critiques were displayed on the big screen for the first time, completely in opposition to the pro-Imperialist Bond films. Overall, *The Spy* has withstood the test of time as a unique historical lens into 1960s espionage and popular culture.¹³⁹

The Spy expressed le Carré's critiques by showing that Western governments, institutions, and bureaucracies had adopted similar methods as their 'enemies.' Control used Leamas as a pawn and disregarded innocent lives such as Fiedler and Liz Gold. By actually saving the evil Mundt, Control proves that he was willing to do disagreeable things in order to achieve means to an end. The honesty of Fiedler, and the naivety of Liz, are perfect juxtapositions to the costs paid by the West in fighting this war epic. For those that did not read the novel and only saw the film, Leamas and Liz's death at the Berlin Wall was indeed a shocking betrayal. It extrapolated le Carré's critiques, making them impossible to ignore. The failures of the West in upholding the principles of democracy are riddled throughout the film, making his critiques clear to audiences. Additionally, *The Spy* was at the opposite end of the spectrum from the pro-Imperialist James Bond films.

¹³⁹ Additionally, eleven of le Carré's spy fiction books were made into major motion pictures. Further, five of his narratives of intrigue have been made into television series, with the most recent, *The Night Manager* due out in late-April 2016. With twenty-three spy fiction novels under his belt, along with film, television, and radio program adaptations it is pretty clear how and why Le Carré was able to make an impact as a leading artist of Cold War espionage fiction and the Cultural Détente movement in the early-1960s.

Instead of highlighting the supposed ‘glamour’ of the intelligence community, *The Spy* highlighted the negativity and discord that came from the real-world of the Cold War.

One cannot review Cold War films of the 1960s without including the six James Bond films produced throughout the decade. In sharp contrast to le Carré’s narratives of intrigue based on realistic portrayals of British agents operating against the backdrop of the Cold War, Ian Fleming’s works became increasingly ridiculous and over the top in terms of Cold War spying. The majority of the Bond films made during the 1960s, which were adapted from his novels, had very little to do with the actual Cold War. His early novels during the 1950s (seven in total) did pit MI6 agent James Bond ‘007’ against the massive Soviet counterintelligence organization SMERSH (which meant Special Methods of Spy Detection). Due to publication rights and legal battles between production companies and directors, the sequence in which the books were developed into major motion pictures were out of order from Fleming’s publications, beginning in 1953 with *Casino Royale*. The first Bond novel to actually become adapted into a film was Fleming’s sixth book, *Dr. No* (1958). *Dr. No* was released on film in 1962, followed by *From Russia With Love* (1963); *Goldfinger* (1964); *Thunderball* (1965); *You Only Live Twice* (1967); and *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* (1969). Once again, these films were released completely out of order from Fleming’s novel series. This caused the focus of majority of these 1960s films to revolve around the criminal, terrorist global organization SPECTRE (Fleming’s fictional master adversary). SPECTRE replaced SMERSH as the main enemy for James Bond. Although SPECTRE appeared apolitical, it actually had strong ties to Nazi Fascists instead of the Communist Soviets. Clearly for Fleming, the Soviet Union and Communism were no longer the height of evil. Instead he

revived World War II era ideas and attitudes, trying to make them applicable to the contemporary Cold War. By reinstating these methods, Fleming was harkening back to Great Britain's glory days in the war; a time where enemies were easily discernable.

In all of these films, James Bond is ordered by MI6 to investigate absurd and farcical supervillains and terrorist masterminds, most notably the head of SPECTRE, Ernst Blofeld. Bond is constantly captured on island 'liars,' and is seduced by women with names that are equally strange and outrageous. He aligns with the 'mafia' and 'ninjas'; he searches for ludicrous weapons like an atomic-powered radio beam, a Lektor cryptographic device, self-destruction systems, and bacteriological warfare agents, which all somehow come into the hands of these supervillains whom have zero ties to any nation. He fights the private armies of his villains, one of which breaks into Fort Knox (which is absurd). He is never able to actually kill Blofeld, who recently made another appearance in the 2015 Bond film *Spectre*. Another imperative point about Fleming's characters was that they were not only ridiculous at times, but some actually crossed racial ethical boundaries. Fleming used stereotypes with his supervillains and some of Bond's allies. His choice of names, like the women in the films/novels, can be construed as offensive and his stereotyping outweighed any form of quality in the development of his characters traits. These 1960s films were just a few of the twenty-six James Bond films made over the last fifty years. The series was continued by other artists after the death of Ian Fleming in 1964. The James Bond franchise was a popular form of entertainment and continues to thrive even today. However, as a critique over the Cold War at the time, the James Bond series held very little serious considerations. Clearly they were opposed to le Carré's complex and inimitable contributions to Cold War

spying and espionage, and more importantly to the Cultural Détente movement from 1960-1965.

The final film to be included in this analysis of 1960s American Cold War films is the comedy *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming!*¹⁴⁰ Directed by Norman Jewison, the film was based on *The Off-Islanders* by Nathaniel Benchley and released in theatres in 1966. The theatrical film poster even made clear that this film was absolutely different from any previous Cold War film released. It stated, “It’s a Plot!...to make the world die laughing!!” by cartoonist Jack Davis, a Mad Magazine artist.¹⁴¹ *The Russians* was a humorous spoof about a misinterpreted Russian invasion on a small town off the coast of New England. When a Russian submarine accidentally becomes stranded on a sandbar near the coast, nine Russians head to the local town and wreaks complete havoc. The locals believed they were being attacked by the Russians, not realizing it was a just a great mishap. Humorous misfortunes continued to plague both the Russians and townspeople, as they decide to take up arms against their ‘invaders.’ Multiple blunders created a laughable scenario between American and Russian relations. In the end, two young boys threaten to jump from the church tower and the nine Russians and local townspeople unite in saving them. The Russians are finally able to free their submarine and the locals wish them goodbye and good well luck. *The Russians* proved that American’s could find humor in the dark reality of the Cold War just a decade after the McCarthy crusades and vigilant anti-Communism sweeping Hollywood. It was a stunning reversal from the serious films about the Cold War. *The Russians* parodied,

¹⁴⁰ Heretofore the film will be abbreviated as *The Russians* for brevity purposes.

¹⁴¹ Jack Davis, “The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming!” Theatrical Poster (Los Angeles, 1966). www.imdb.com

mocked, and poked fun of the entire conflict, providing comedic relief towards built-up tensions. It also signified that culture was vastly changing by the mid-1960s; embracing new concepts that were not entirely bleak and gloomy. The “Russians,” not communists, were not to be feared but helped. The silliness of some Americans was juxtaposed with the humanity and maturity of the Russian sub captain (Alan Arkin). This highlighted the over exaggeration of anti-communist paranoia, making it laughable that such paranoias had been rampant in the first place.

The films that have been highlighted here all correlate to the American (Western) thaw. These artists, like John le Carré, were providing new interpretations over the East-West conflict. Through brainwashing, espionage, nuclear crises, and mistrust each of these films made bold comments about the 1960s political and social landscapes. It is evident in these films that a deep mistrust had formulated between the public and private sphere. Through Cultural Détente, these artists were able to provide opposing commentaries, challenging the conformities of the past.

During the 1950s, television became the modern technology that brought news and entertainment into American living rooms every night. The possibilities with television programs were endless, becoming one of the most influential artistic mediums that swayed mass public opinion.¹⁴² As we know, television has become a tremendous part of mainstream popular culture and revolutionized American’s access to the latest news and alternative forms of entertainment. The impact of television on Cold War culture cannot be understated. During the 1950s, television programs aligned with the

¹⁴²Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture*.

traditional American 'nuclear family' idealisms. By the 1960s, television shows were breaking new boundaries and speaking for a generation that had cast off the traditional restraints of the prior decade. Margot A. Henriksen stated, "...television in the early and mid-sixties likewise illustrated America's break from any certain rules of life and behavior."¹⁴³ This new medium, along with many films in the 1960s, finally began to explore other 'ways' to be an American, as opposed to the conformity that had shaped early Cold War culture.¹⁴⁴ While there was a myriad of programs that shaped Cold War popular culture, this analysis will examine a few series that extrapolated the themes of espionage in context to the Cold War. The popularity of spy related programs correlated to the popularity of espionage films on the big screen. This demonstrated just how widespread and in demand the clandestine business had become in mainstream culture, immediately on the heels of Cultural Détente.

During the 1950s, spy-themed programs and films served as artifacts of the McCarthy era and the Red Scare. Instead of analyzing the broader issues involved with spying, or even the Cold War, they conformed to the patriotic call of American idealism. In 1951, director Gordon Douglas released *I Was A Communist For the FBI*, which was based on the *Saturday Evening Post* articles of Matt Cvetic. Cvetic's experience as an undercover Communist working for the FBI was also made into a book and radio series. For nine years he had infiltrated the American Communist Party and reported their activities to the bureau. The Communists in the film (and book/radio) were portrayed as cynical, racist, and opportunists for the Soviet Union. They were never considered 'American' because of their allegiance to the Communist Party. This was an unfair

¹⁴³Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, p. 294.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

stereotype, as it only conformed to the political agenda of the time. *The New York Times* critic, Bosley Crowther condemned the meaning of the film. He stated, “In glibly detailing how the Communists foment racial hate and labor unrest in this country...and that most people who embrace liberal causes, such as the Scottsboro trial defense, are Communist dupes...it plays a bit recklessly with fire.”¹⁴⁵ The film further represents the politicization of culture with such blatant propaganda.

I Led Three Lives was an American drama series that ran from 1953-1956. The series was a companion to *I Was A Communist For the FBI*, dealing with almost the exact same subject matter. The series was based on the three lives of Herbert Philbrick: a Boston advertising executive; a secret Communist Party member; and the deeper secret as an informant for the FBI. The series was made with the approval of the FBI, gathering further support for the anti-Communist agenda initiated by McCarthyism, HUAC, the FBI, and the Red Scare. The episodes of the series were not based on true events and unfortunately grew completely outlandish. One episode was based on a Communist plot to convert vacuum cleaners into bomb launchers. At this point the series had just become laughable and completely implausible. Any chance to provide serious commentary was overshadowed. The intent was to paint an evil portrait of the motives behind the American Communist Party; in that they were subservient to the Soviet Union. Clearly by the time of Cultural Détente, these outrageous strategies in reaching a mass audience were no longer effective. By the end of the 1950s, both artists and citizens were looking for new interpretations on the East-West conflict.

¹⁴⁵ Bosley Crowther, “I Was A Communist For the FBI,” *The New York Times*, Film Review, (May 3, 1951) Accessed March 8, 2016.

By the mid-1960s, most major television networks were producing a program about espionage, if not multiple. This included the Big Three, ABC; NBC; and CBS which between them released *I Spy*, *Get Smart*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, and *The Avengers*. The British also put out their own versions of spy series, most notably, *The Prisoner* a seventeen-episode series that ran from 1967-1968. Between films and television programming, the esoteric and private world of secret agents took over the landscape of popular entertainment.

The first groundbreaking spy television series was *I Spy*, which ran from 1965-1968 on the NBC network. Created by David Friedkin and Morton Fine, the series was pioneering in that it utilized international locations in order to film realistic and authentic backdrops. It was also one of the first television programs to place an African-American (Bill Cosby) in a leading actor role. This was a daring, yet contemporary maneuver considering the political and social struggle for civil rights during the 1960s. It revealed social progress into a future where the average 'white' male or female did not need to always play the lead roles. The series coalesced with the break from the conformities of the 1950s, moving with the cultural advancements that transformed a new Cold War generation. Networks and creators knew the American public was decidedly influenced by the role espionage played in the Cold War and used the subject for entertainment and profit values. *I Spy* was not only unique for its locations and choices of actors; it approached the covert underground world through mostly serious themed episodes; sometimes using humor to lighten situations. The series combined actors Richard Culp and Bill Cosby to portray the secret agent tennis team: international tennis pro Kelly Robinson and his trainer Alexander 'Scotty' Scott. The episodes revolved around the duo

conducting covert operations against their enemies, sometimes touching upon the very realistic side of Cold War espionage. In that capacity, it was unlike most of the other spy-themed television programs at the time.¹⁴⁶

Another hilarious spy-themed program, *Get Smart*, aired in 1965 backed by the creative minds of famous funnyman Mel Brooks and partner Buck Henry. *Get Smart* was a satire, parody, and spoof of the clandestine world and covert operations by secret agents. The series premiered on the NBC network (1965-1969), before it moved to CBS (1969-1970). *Get Smart* used every cliché possible to bring humor and dynamism to the secret realm of espionage, especially by making jests towards the James Bond series. The premise revolved around the ever-awkward secret agent Maxwell Smart, or Agent 86, and his partner Agent 99. Both agents worked for a United States intelligence agency called 'CONTROL,' with its functionary head simply called 'chief.' The two agents are constantly chasing down enemies, despite the fact that Agent Smart tries too hard to play by the rules and remains pretty inept as an effective spy. His nature and the situations it constantly puts the duo into provide very humorous scenarios, making it quite the fun comedy.¹⁴⁷ Creator Mel Brooks has been known for his quirky personality and he brought those quirks to the secret world of espionage. The general threat came from the evil organization KAOS, with plans to take over the world; Smart and Agent 99 are always engaged in battles with KAOS and ultimately always win. Even the names of the two organizations 'KAOS' and 'CONTROL' was an amusing poke at the contemporary state

¹⁴⁶ *I Spy* ran for three seasons with a 1994 reunion episode with Richard Culp and Bill Cosby. Additionally, the series inspired the 2008 film *I Spy*, starring comedians Eddie Murphy and Owen Wilson.

of the world in the 1960s. It is pretty clear the creators took liberty with their jests, which also made the series stand apart from other spy-related television programs at the time. Of his inspiration for the series Mel Brooks stated, “I was sick of looking at all those sensible situation comedies. They were such distortions of life...No one had ever done a show about an idiot before. I decided to be the first.”¹⁴⁸ Obviously the satirical elements can even be found in the title ‘*Get Smart*,’ as Agent Smart is anything but an intelligent and witty spy. He was goofy and off-kilter, romantically inept where the humor often came at his expense; however the entire premise of the series showed that the public could laugh at serious times and draw humor despite living in a period of intense political and social turmoil.

The series also spoofed the use of technological gadgetry, which most associated with the nature of espionage during the war. Instead of trying to create realistic spy gadgets for the secret agents, of course *Get Smart* got hilariously creative. One of the most recognizable gadgets from the show was Agent Smart’s ‘shoe phone.’ He had to remove his shoe and utilize it as an actual secret telephone line, with other telephones hidden in all sorts of oddball objects. This created quite laughable situations and posed scenarios that would never have been possible in real world Cold War spying. The aim was not realism and gave a nice break from more serious subjects; yet it provided tremendous entertainment, played to the public’s love of espionage, and was effective in breaking from the mold of typical comedic series during the 1960s. Perhaps the most notable gadget used in the series was the recurring ‘cone of silence.’ The contraption was used at the insistence of Agent Smart in order to keep his conversations private with the

¹⁴⁸ Mel Brooks, “Smart Money,” *Time* (October 15 1968). Accessed January 10, 2016.

chief. It looked like two plastic bubbles formed around the figures while they tried to keep their conversations ‘quiet.’ The great joke and irony of the cone of silence was that it actually worked opposite to the intended-effects. Instead of prohibiting anyone outside from hearing, it prevented the two inside from ever hearing one another. People on the outside could quite easily hear exactly what was being said inside the cone. Again, such a contraption was absolutely ludicrous in the real world, but it made for excellent entertainment and became iconic for the series. It was also a jab at official government secrecy when the enemy knew the score but Americans were kept in the dark, or silence of national security.

Get Smart also spoofed the James Bond series by playing upon the use of fast cars with technological gadgets and weapon capabilities. The series featured an incredible list of guest stars and was nominated for multiple Emmy Awards, including Outstanding Comedy Series in 1968 and 1969.¹⁴⁹ Long after the debut of the spy series in 1965, *Get Smart* was able to provide laughs and became a part of Cold War popular culture. It was one of the longest running spy series on any network and was well-known for catchphrases, funny gadgets, and comedic relief during a forceful period of change. Its success further suggested that the public no longer wanted entertainment that came with an agenda. They enjoyed the humor employed in the series, finding the lighter side to the Cold War conflict. It also questioned the efficacy of American spies and spy agencies, albeit in a humorous way.

¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, the series inspired four major motion pictures, including *The Nude Bomb* (1980); *Get Smart, Again!* (1989); and the 2008 reboot *Get Smart*, starring comedian Steve Carré II and Anne Hathaway. The final film was a spin-off, “*Get Smart’s*” *Bruce and Lloyd: Out of Control* (2008). In 1995, *Get Smart* was revived as a short-lived television series on the FOX network.

In 1966, the CBS network aired its own spy themed series, *Mission: Impossible* (*MI*). The series was created by Bruce Gellar and ran from 1966-1973. Not to confuse the television series with the highly successful film franchise (which was based on the series); the television program revolved around a team of secret agents called the Impossible Missions Force (IMF). The plot was typical of most spy stories at the time, in that it followed the covert operations of the IMF agents who fought against evil organizations and rogue despots. Initially the leader of IMF was the character Dan Briggs; however by the second season the new head was replaced by the character Jim Phelps. *MI* really did not use the Cold War as its ultimate backdrop; there was never an actual government association either. Yet, the series did rely on the conventions of Cold War spying in order to provide context for its secret agents and their impossible missions. A few enemies named over the course of the years were the ‘European People’s Republic’ and the ‘Eastern European Republic.’ Though not a direct reference to the U.S.-Soviet conflict, it did reference the East-West struggle. One of the most iconic legacies from the series was its theme song, which has been used in a variety of other films and television commercials. The format of each episode followed the exact same sequence: the opening, a tape scene, a dossier scene, an apartment, and then a plan for the mission. The agents (also “integrated” racially and by gender) travelled across the globe, much like the James Bond series. The standard chase, quest, fast cars, and gadgets were all used in the series and the films.¹⁵⁰ Although the series was not necessarily about the

¹⁵⁰ *Mission: Impossible* became an extremely popular film franchise, starring Hollywood celebrity Tom Cruise. Five major motion pictures with Cruise have been made from 1996-2015. The series also inspired a novel series and multiple video games, where the players get to act as a secret agent on an impossible mission to save the world.

Cold War, it capitalized on the popular culture phenomenon of Cold War espionage during the 1960s.

The films and television programs that grew out of the American (Western) thaw all utilized new approaches in critiquing the political and social issues in the Cold War. The era of censorship was now past and these artists were not willing to conform to earlier ideals of 'Americanism' or the 'nuclear family.' They embraced the reforms of the times and portrayed issues like mistrust, skepticism, and human fallibility. Themes like espionage and the nuclear bomb became popular lenses through which to view the Western predicament. Artists produced films and series that would not only bring in high ratings, but would provide messages that resonated with an evolving society. Fearing a Communist infiltration through the Party or spying was not nearly as scary as human infallibility, the nuclear bomb, and worse, mistrust of their own government. There had even been no great Communist conspiracy, as had once been projected through propaganda. Looking at *I Led Three Lives* in juxtaposition to *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold* or *Dr. Strangelove*, it is apparent that popular culture had undergone profound changes. That change was mediated through Cultural Détente and would lead the public towards the revolutionary reforms of the New Left and Counterculture movements.

The British were well-known for producing some of the greatest spy fiction stories during the 20th Century. Joseph Conrad, John Buchan, Eric Ambler, Graham Greene, Ian Fleming, and of course John le Carré were just a few of the myriad of successful British espionage authors. When it came to producing a television series during the 1960s, the United States would not be the only country to do it. *The Prisoner* was a seventeen episode series created by Patrick McGoochan and George Markstein,

running from 1967-1968. *The Prisoner* was far different from any other spy themed television show at the time. It combined spy fiction, science fiction, thriller action, and psychological twists in order to deliver a gallant critique over the contemporary state of the Cold War. *The Prisoner* began a popular culture marvel and made a lasting impression upon society even long after it aired on television. As the title suggests, the series revolved around one man who was taken prisoner inside a remote island village. A nightmare world, it appears to be the culmination of le Carré's greatest fears of the West in the Cold War. After quitting his espionage job, the man wakes up one day to find that he has been captured and must now live inside this strange village where everyone remains nameless. Instead of names, each person was assigned a number, with the main character taking on the name as Number Six. He struggled against being captured inside the village, even rejecting his new name. His foe throughout the series was a man named Number Two. The intent of Number Two was to put Number Six through a selection of methods in order to extract any information he may possess about his former job and life. It is never revealed which 'side' Number Two was working for, but Number Six consistently refused to give up any information he retained, regardless of the method used against him. Number Two tried mind control, hallucinogens, identity theft, and brainwashing in the attempt to force Number Six to reveal everything he knew. Despite the efforts of his foe, Number Six always fought against these techniques and formulated plans of his own. The problem with the village was that no one could escape and it was impossible to tell who sided (or worked) for the East, and who sided with the West. The people trapped their just lived average daily lives with the enemies disguised among them. Number Six never does escape the village; but his plan did have an impact on

influencing and disrupting the daily functions of the village. In the broader terms of the Cold War, *The Prisoner* relied on symbolism to describe the contemporary issues society faced in the East-West conflict. More serious than the American spy-themed television programs, *The Prisoner* did not shy away from the larger themes, like the individual against the collective. This was relayed through how Number Six stood in contrast from the rest of the villagers. The village itself was essentially a small commune and the techniques of extracting information appeared realistic and a bit chilling. Like John le Carré's narratives of intrigue, *The Prisoner* did not rely on flashy spy clichés. Instead, it was intense and quite psychological, a factor that truly did translate in real world espionage.¹⁵¹ On the lasting influence of the series on popular culture, Steve Rose of *The Guardian* wrote, "It's the Citizen Kane of British TV---a programme that changed the landscape."¹⁵² Overall, the television series had a lasting impact that became referenced in movies, novels, comic books, and even other television shows. It opened the doors for further experimentation with mind-altering thrillers, leaving a psychological impression upon 1960s popular culture.

The variety of films and television series that have been analyzed over the course of this chapter were all made possible by the contributions of Cultural Détente. Movies and television shows in the 1950s followed the prototypical standards of the American 'nuclear family,' with an example like *Leave it to Beaver*. With the waning of those values at the end of the decade came the bright new possibilities of exploring political and social progress through different artistic mediums. The modern family dynamic was

¹⁵¹ In 2009, the AMC network unveiled a remake of the series that consisted of six episodes. *The Prisoner* also inspired a spin-off theatrical play, documentaries, and radio shows.

¹⁵² Steve Rose, "Be Seeing You: Remembering Patrick McGoohan," *The Guardian* (14 January, 2009). Accessed March 8, 2016.

evolving away from the mold of the nuclear family. The public was becoming more involved in effecting transformations through reforms. An innovative generation arose, inspiring new legacies for the 1960s decade. These movements and reforms signaled the ever present thaw from Cold War antagonisms.

John le Carré would lead the ‘thaw’ through his critiques about Western involvement in the Cold War. His significance should not be minimized; for he was the first to put all the pieces of Cultural Détente together. He formulated a critique that was not just relevant to British society, but to Americans as well. His critiques came at the right time, opening up the path for other artists. His insights, along with the artists that followed, ushered in a new period for Cold War popular culture. Through satire, parody, and allegory, the artists behind these creative projects proved that inspired lessons could be retained through simple forms of mass entertainment.

Conclusion

The deceptions of British double agent Kim Philby have played an integral role in John le Carré's personal life. Although le Carré has maintained that he retired from the British Intelligence Services to focus on his writing career, it was Kim Philby who officially 'outed' the author when he defected to the Soviet Union. Of course le Carré was not the only one exposed at the time, but it does seem peculiar that Philby's exposure and his retirement came around the exact same time. We will probably never know the full truth in this private circumstance, but we do know that le Carré possesses strong feelings against the treachery committed by Kim Philby. Despite the criticisms le Carré offered about the West, he did consider the democratic system as being the lesser of the two evils in the Cold War conflict. He understood that he was allowed to propose opposing views because it was a free society, even if he disliked the cynicism and arrogance of the politicians and leaders in the West. Le Carré spent ample time carefully crafting his arguments, but issues like Kim Philby seemed to cross a moral line. Philby was everything that le Carré opposed; he was part of the British elite with a proper education and connections that made him a part of the Establishment. Philby was so well-regarded in the British Intelligence Services that it was inconceivable that an Establishment man could pull off such a grand heist for so long. As mentioned before, le Carré blamed not just Kim Philby, but the entire system for turning their heads and allowing Philby the freedom to act as he did. In many ways Philby embodied exactly what le Carré believed was the greatest downfall in British Intelligence and the Establishment. Le Carré would contribute multiple introductions to books about Kim Philby, making his sentiments on the subject perfectly clear. In his novel *Tinker, Tailor,*

Soldier, Spy (1974) le Carré's mole, Bill Haydon, has the exact same persona as the notorious Soviet spy. Philby also held strong feelings about le Carré, especially upon reading *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* in 1963. Maybe it all hit too close to home for the secret life he was living at the time, regardless he told his wife:

The Spy is very disappointing. It was a relief to read a somewhat sophisticated spy-story after all that James Bond idiocy, and there are some well-thought out passages. But the whole plot from beginning to end is basically implausible, and the implausibility keeps obtruding itself --- at any rate, to anyone who has any real knowledge of the business!¹⁵³

It is quite interesting that a man such as Philby was critiquing the measure of plausibility by 1963. As we know, he defected the very next year, leaving every head shaking about just what was plausible in the private world of Cold War espionage.

John le Carré was the first to anticipate Cultural Détente attitudes, making his work essential expositions over the contemporary state of the Cold War. He used his spy fiction narratives not only as a means for entertainment, but as a platform to denounce Western methods in fighting the war. By the 1960s, the moral and ethical principles of the Western cause was not only predominant, it was problematic. The conformities of the 1950s had weighed upon the public's consciousness. In attempting to contain the Communist threat, the governing powers pushed their own agenda upon popular culture. For a society based on liberties and freedom, the governing authorities were acting in a way that negated those choices in the first place. The anti-Communist reactionaries made certain that extensive propaganda circulated in order to influence public perceptions of the threat. These strategies became pervasive, disregarding civil liberties and personal autonomy. Films, television, and literature acted as a means of influence, persuading

¹⁵³ Eleanor Philby, *Kim Philby: The Spy I Loved*. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968).

American's of the West's righteous cause. Through forms of censorship, these mediums often reflected the political ideals of anti-Communism and dangers within. The problem was that by restricting freedoms of expression, the public would eventually become weary of political involvement in social identities. After the death of Josef Stalin, citizens no longer feared the Soviet threat as they once had. What they were beginning to fear was their own governments. McCarthyism, the blacklists, and the conservative propaganda showed that any form of dissent could be subjected to further consequences. For much of the public, these activities were in fact un-American, creating a severe mistrust between citizen and state.

By the end of the 1950s the rise of Cultural Détente signified that society was no longer willing to accept political interferences without major reforms. As stated, le Carré foresaw these attitudes because he held the same sentiments, if not a bit more due to his background inside the 'Establishment'. He saw the broad picture: inflated powers with confused ideologies; cynicism; betrayal; careerism; and self-serving elite. He understood that his spy fiction narratives could not only amuse the public, but they could open up new questions about the current costs of fighting in this war epic. During the early Cold War governing powers limited the option of alternative viewpoints by enforcing the status quo. But by the 1960s, alternative positions could no longer be denied. Tony Barley stated, "liberalism's instability constantly and implicitly demands of its adherents that they confront the issue of taking sides---whenever, that is, coherent alternative positions intrude upon their perception of things."¹⁵⁴ As John le Carré foresaw, Cultural Détente became the *way* citizens were finally able to express those alternative positions.

¹⁵⁴Barley, *Taking Sides: The Fiction of John le Carré*, p. 167.

Trust in the government, the military, and the conservative policies that had politicized culture for the last decade could no longer sustain an evolving society. The public necessitated a thaw in tensions, whether at home or abroad. Le Carré judged these alternatives and became a “commentator who is persuasive enough to direct mass opinion.”¹⁵⁵ He saw the same banalities in both Great Britain and the United States. He knew the decline of England as an Imperial power had caused a crisis of identity---a fact that trickled down into institutions, bureaucracies, education, intelligence, and ultimately society. The United States was in no better condition; for their arrogance and cynicism obscured the lines of their avowed moral distinctions. By enacting censorship, the American’s were no different from their Soviet counterparts---and the comparisons do not end there. By allowing the Communist threat to consume objectivity, the Western powers neglected principles of democracy and became coercive in their attempts to win the global war. It was inevitable that society would eventually break from the conventions of the status quo. From the bottom up, citizens would facilitate change through Cultural Détente.

Le Carré’s critiques helped to bring awareness, opening up alternative positions and holding up a “kind of mirror” towards Western involvement in the Cold War.¹⁵⁶ He knew that his assessments of conditions were exactly what the public had been looking for in the current state of confused ideologies. He stated, “I think that I filled a gap” and that “I lived at the right time and wrote at the right moment.”¹⁵⁷ It is interesting that le Carré saw himself as bridging a gap precisely at the same time when Cultural Détente

¹⁵⁵ Barley, *Taking Sides: The Fiction of John le Carré*, 168.

¹⁵⁶ le Carré, “The Fictional World of Espionage,” 548-9.

¹⁵⁷ John le Carré, “Violent Image,” Interview with Alan Watson, *Sunday Times* (London, 30 March, 1969), 55-57.

attitudes were proliferating in the West. Prior to his work, Ian Fleming had dominated the spy fiction genre. But Fleming only served up tales that further conformed to the status quo, failing to offer any serious comment about the Cold War.¹⁵⁸ Le Carré knew that readers had tired of the generic spy fiction formula; his novels would provide thoughtful commentaries that deviated from this course. When it came to those commentaries, he believed that keeping with the truth was what truly resonated with the public. He stated, “I believe that most of us live in doubt and that is what animated the people who read my book, they felt ‘Well gosh, this is organised chaos, there is no solution.’”¹⁵⁹ Le Carré was not only speaking about the fictional situations posed in his novels. He was commenting about the entire status of the Cold War, knowing that the public was ready to embrace a change. As he mentioned, there was no solution, nor did he profess to have the answers to the myriad of problems. What he did offer was the recognition that the old methods of conducting warfare were no longer applicable by the 1960s.

The elusive and ideological nature of the Cold War meant that the ‘enemy’ was not so easily discernable. Kim Philby had been the enemy, but was able to hide within the Establishment because he epitomized old world attributes. The predictabilities of the past had provided him the perfect front. As implausible as his betrayal was, it further proved that the West was in need of serious revisions. Naturally le Carré was quite conscious of the growing dissent, knowing that his spy narratives found a broad audience due to the nature of his critiques. During an interview about his books he stated:

¹⁵⁸ le Carré, “Violent Image,” 55-57.

¹⁵⁹ John le Carré. “The Things a Spy Can Do,” Interview with Melvyn Bragg, *The Listener*, (20 January 1976), p. 90.

There are a lot of people who believe that their own doubts are subordinate to the national need...I do believe these doubts are very much found...particularly in the States. I think it did exactly catch a mood where values are dissolving so fast that we just want to stop the film running and look at one frame...Ever since the hot war turned into the Cold War and the Cold War turned into détente, we've gone through a succession of lunatic ideological reversals: people who were bombing Berlin in 1945 were running the airlift in 1948 and its gone back and forth ever since.¹⁶⁰

He acknowledged that the values of democracy were disappearing because Western powers had lost sight of their true purpose. Le Carré was not a political author; but rather an author for whom “meaningful experience and moral life are not disengaged from politics.”¹⁶¹ It was unfeasible to write about the Cold War without demonstrating the value in conflict. His plots and characters would not follow spy fiction formulas of the past; instead he would use them as a means to expose the predicaments of the time. Le Carré felt that spy fiction served as the perfect outlet for his broader messages. Spies were the infantrymen in the unconventional Cold War struggle. They combined the “thoughts with deeds” that politicians were unable to do through public avenues.¹⁶² He also stated, “At the moment, when we have no ideology, and our politics are in shambles, I find it a convenient microcosm, to shuffle around in a secret world and make that expressive of the overt world.”¹⁶³ Not only was his spy fiction entertaining, it served a higher purpose in expressing Cultural Détente attitudes.

John le Carré and other artists in the 1960s broke from the conventions of the past by using their mediums to critique, satirize, and parody the Cold War. Through espionage, the atomic bomb, doomsday devices, or silly antics, these artists provided new insights over the global crisis. Film, television, and literature often reflects popular trends

¹⁶⁰ le Carré, “The Things a Spy Can Do,” p. 90.

¹⁶¹ Eric Homberger, “John le Carré,” (New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 14.

¹⁶² le Carré . “The Things a Spy Can Do,” p. 90

¹⁶³ Ibid.

in mainstream culture. Through influence they can shape public perception and gather support. Certainly le Carré's readers felt they had a better idea of Intelligence Services from reading his novels, even if they were based on fiction. Yet, they still influenced how people perceived the esoteric world. Art is also affected by cultural demands. The anti-Communist films of the 'fifties' fell deaf because there was a lack of interest among audiences. They simply did not want political propaganda as a means of entertainment; not to mention its blatant agenda. By the time Cultural Détente attitudes mounted, artists understood public interests; for they held the exact same attitudes. By utilizing Cold War themes with new interpretations, these mediums could both shape and influence the public at the same time.

Cultural Détente opened the doors for change in the East-West conflict. The methods of the past were no longer feasible for contemporary times. Society was embracing revolutionary reforms that would transform Cold War popular culture. Blind trust in governing powers as the defenders of liberal democracy no longer fit the needs of its adherents. With any protracted war society eventually grows weary; but it was the oppressive tactics of their own governing authorities that led society towards the thaw. Freedom of expression and alternative views finally allowed popular culture to move beyond politics and embrace the relaxation of Cold War tensions.

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