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# Representation and Recoding: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Cold War Cultures

“When the legend becomes fact, print the legend.”<sup>1</sup>

The most prestigious prize in the early years of the Cold War was the West European left. Socialists, communists and the Soviet Union had suffered tremendously under Nazi occupation, repression and genocide. The communist left in France, Belgium and Italy looked favorably to the Soviet Union. In the unfolding political antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union both sides were fighting to win over this group. Would the West European left turn to their ideological neighbors on the left and their interpretation of history and society or would they follow the American example of a modern liberal consumer society, of consensus capitalism and a modern welfare state? Whoever succeeded in this competition for loyalty would be able to determine politics in Western Europe for a long time.<sup>2</sup>

Culture and cultural patterns were crucial in generating loyalty to one system or another. The Cold War was a cultural as much as a military conflict, whose “full arsenal” included literature, cinema, music, and art, and whose foot soldiers were “ballerinas, violinists, poets, actors, playwrights, painters, composers, comedians, and chess players.”<sup>3</sup> Movies were essential for the entertainment of the middle and the underclasses, particularly for the young. The Lorraine Communist youth watched movies showcasing comrade Joseph Stalin, but also

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1 Maxwell Scott, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, Carleton Young, (John Ford; 1962; Hollywood, California: Paramount Pictures).

2 See Julia Angster, “Konsenskapitalismus und Sozialdemokratie: die Westernisierung von SPD und DGB” (Zugl. Tübingen, University, Diss., 2000, Oldenbourg, 2003); Abraham Boxhoorn, *The Cold War and the rift in the governments of national unity. Belgium, France, and Italy in the spring of 1947, a comparison*, Amsterdamse historische reeks (Amsterdam: Historisch Seminarium van de Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1993); Alessandro Brogi, *Confronting America. The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy* (Chapel Hill: Univ of North Carolina Press, 2011).

3 David Caute, *The dancer defects. The struggle for cultural supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford [u.a.]: Oxford University Press, 2005).

icons of the Hollywood entertainment industry like Humphrey Bogart.<sup>4</sup> The Lorraine miner's youth followed culturally not one consistent model, but rather two opposing models, those of comrade Stalin and of Humphrey Bogart's coolness.

This paradox leads to some general observations: First, the social and political background did not determine the cultural role models that young communist workers followed in a free society. The concept of culture is not identical with political attitudes. Stalin himself loved Hollywood movies, especially Western. Seen from the vantage point of cultural history, the readers and the viewers did not have one cultural imaginary but several. Culture and politics are not related directly, but rather in indirect and subtle ways of coding and displacement. There are limits to the impact of the Cold War political antagonism on culture. They seem to follow different logics and can only partly and temporarily be identified. Clearly there are limits to the cultural representation of the Cold War. Consequently, the cultural history of the Cold War does not simply have the task to explain success and failure in the political-cultural enterprise of seducing certain social groups into political loyalty. It rather deals – at least in the 1950s and 1960s – with hybridity and ambiguity of conflicting preferences. Historical actors did not neatly fit into the bipolar schemes of the Cold War. They could oppose the United States in Vietnam and embrace Hollywood movies and music from New York. One could adore Stalin and Bogart. Cold War culture was not a container of cultural attitudes and political preferences, which were being constantly synchronized by Cold War cultural institutions. Therefore, Cold War culture varied also from country to country. It meant something different for Germans, French and Britains. Accordingly, we can speak of many Cold War cultures in plural. “The Cold War,” “la guerre froide” and “Kalter Krieg” is not the same, but denote different Cold War cultures.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, Cold War culture cannot be found alone in those cultural artifacts that represent the Cold War, but also in entertainment culture or in children's films. We can find Cold War culture and places where we wouldn't expect them to be. The film version of Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim* from 1950 involved a clear Cold War ideology by propagating the narrative of the British Empire as the advance of “civilization” against the leftist de-colonizers.<sup>6</sup> The Cold War was in

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<sup>4</sup> See Fabrice Montebello, “Joseph Staline et Humphrey Bogart: l'hommage des ouvriers. Essai sur la construction sociale de la figure du ‘heros’ en milieu ouvrier,” *Politix* 24 (1993).

<sup>5</sup> Annette Vowinckel, Marcus M. Payk, and Thomas Lindenberger, *Cold War Cultures. Perspectives on Eastern and Western Societies* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Ian Wojcik-Andrews and Jerry Phillips, “Telling Tales to Children: The Pedagogy of Empire in MGM's *Kim* and Disney's *Aladdin*,” *The Lion and the Unicorn* 20, no. 1 (1996).

this literary-political tradition seen as a new chapter in an old story, i.e. the “Great Game,” the conflict between Britain and Russia in Central Asia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The imagery of the British Empire inspired Cold War culture to such an extent that some even referred to the Cold War as “Great Game II.”

Thirdly, there is a social dimension to this, since genres like children’s books or movies attracted different audiences than political speeches. We look at least at two dynamics. Lowbrow was brought into the fold by Cold War mass culture such as movies, lowbrow literature or mass print culture. But that didn’t mean that the more aspirational middlebrow classes were lost. Cold War culture came in different codes, styles and formats. Building on prewar experiences middlebrow institutions such as book clubs (Saturday Review of Literature, Book of the Month Club) and new magazine formats as *Life* and the *New Yorker* conveyed a sense of Western culture ex- or implicitly set against communism. Cold War culture thereby fed into the pursuit of greater cultural prestige through products and memberships within the middle classes.<sup>7</sup> Narratives of the West and the East, of freedom and egalitarianism were not restricted to high culture but also part of low- and middlebrow culture.<sup>8</sup>

A plethora of topics in the cultural Cold War has been studied, ranging from the arts and cultural institutions to gender aspects, vacation patterns and the postwar polio crisis.<sup>9</sup> Whoever refers to the fine arts, to highbrow or lowbrow culture, to intellectual history or political semantics, to iconography or gender roles in the context of Cold War culture uses dissimilar concepts of culture. The analytical approach and the questions in these cases are different, sometimes even incompatible. A cultural history of the Cold War that is focusing on the arts, literature, music, sculpture, painting etc. is obviously looking at a different Cold War from the studies that employ a concept of culture centered around institutions like publishing houses, universities or museums, worldviews, intellectual paradigms or aesthetic styles. What an exhibition in London has called the “con-scription of the arts”<sup>10</sup> focuses on a Cold War that is different from an intellectual

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<sup>7</sup> Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War modernists: art, literature, and American cultural diplomacy, 1946–1959* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Sabina Mihelj, “Negotiating cold war culture at the crossroads of east and west: uplifting the working people, entertaining the masses, cultivating the nation,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, no. 3: 509–31.

<sup>9</sup> See Simon Willmetts, “Quiet Americans: The CIA and Early Cold War Hollywood Cinema,” *Journal of American Studies* 47, no. 1 (2013); Christopher Endy, *Cold War holidays. American tourism in France, The new Cold War history* (Chapel Hill, NC [u.a.]: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Muriel Blaive, “Utopian Visions: The ‘Cold War’ and its Political Aesthetics,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 5 (2008).

history of Herman Kahn and the RAND Corporation.<sup>11</sup> Others have found the cultural Cold War in science fiction, in Western movies and the changing role of cowboys.<sup>12</sup> Nearly every topic of cultural analysis has been used to narrate a cultural history of the Cold War. These studies give a sense of many different Cold Wars.

Cold War culture in the 1950s shared one characteristic: modernism. The Cold War was a conflict between different concepts of modernity, not only varying to block affinity, but to many of the variables. Cold War modernism is a concept first applied in the arts. It encompassed expressionism and abstract art, jazz, new ways of designing as well as architecture. But the point for Cold War culture was, that modernism always had political implications. Here lies the problem which this article wants to address. In the interwar years, modernist culture as well as artists had aligned themselves with the political left in rejecting tradition and bourgeois society. That had become especially clear in the Spanish campaign in the late 1930s. When modernism was to be a common denominator for a Western zone it had to be recoded and made compatible with a democratic, capitalist bourgeois system. Recoding modernism in the 1950s did not simply mean better distribution to fit new audiences. It also meant giving new meaning to modernism and modernity. That was of particular importance for Germany, Austria and Italy, the countries on the losing side in 1945. Modernism stood politically for the enemy in Nazi Germany as well as in Mussolini's Italy. Aesthetically Nazi industrial (not public!) architecture used modernism just the same way as Western societies.<sup>13</sup> Whereas both societies voluntarily embraced democracy, getting rid of one's cultural past was another matter. But bringing Germany, Austria and Italy into the Western fold essentially meant introducing a cultural style to these societies that stood for everything they had abhorred 20 years earlier. The problem was the link between democracy and modernism.

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**11** See Bernd Greiner, "Macht und Geist im Kalten Krieg. Bilanz und Ausblick," in: id. et al. eds, *Macht und Geist im Kalten Krieg*, Hamburg 2011, 7–27.

**12** See David Seed, *American science fiction and the Cold War: literature and film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); Andrea Weiss, "Cold War Femme: Lesbianism, National Identity, and Hollywood Cinema," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 3 (2012); Stanley Corkin, "Cowboys and Free Markets: Post-World War II Westerns and U.S. Hegemony," *Cinema Journal* 39, no. 3 (2000); Nicholas J. Cull, "British Cinema and the Cold War: The State, Propaganda and Consensus," *Cold War History* 3, no. 1 (2002); Jacqueline Foertsch, *Enemies within: the Cold War and the AIDS crisis in literature, film, and culture* (Urbana [u.a.]: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

**13** David Gartman, *From autos to architecture fordism and architectural aesthetics in the twentieth century* (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009), 132–35.

In the following remarks I try to sketch out a meta-perspective on Cold War culture. The central thesis of the following paragraphs is that the research on the Cold War heavily depends on the notion of culture it employs. From both notions of culture follow different perspectives on Cold War culture:

- Culture was about representation. Culture can be seen as being informed and to a certain degree steered by the Cold War, its antagonisms, its abundant quest for loyalty among different social groups. Culture in this sense is a way to foster loyalty, to make claims and to counter others.
- Culture was about producing new meanings of the Cold War instead of repeating and distributing preexisting ones. Culture refers to looking onto the Cold War, recoding its meaning and engaging in critique, parody and satire. Its dominant modes were distancing and reflexivity.

Cold War culture was both. It got a Cold War message out and it was self-reflexive in that it reflected on the Cold War and recoded its meaning in new ways. The coexistence of representation and recoding denote a time around 1960, where it was unclear whether literature, painting, music, and academic life would keep distributing Cold War messages or whether they would reflect on the Cold War in new ways. The following paragraphs are particularly interested in these years between 1955 and 1968 and their ambiguity in Cold War culture.

This distinction between representation and recoding is meant heuristically to look into the various functions of Cold War culture. In the topics under investigation these two notions are in many cases both present and at work. Culture was representing something else and at the same time recoding the Cold War. This is obvious in the notion of the Cold War itself, which not only represented a political antagonism between the US and the USSR but also recoded a few years after the end of World War II the hitherto dominating dichotomy of “fascism versus anti-fascism” into a new antagonism. At the center of Cold War culture stood memory, i.e. recoding the memory of the shared war against Nazi-Germany. Intellectual tools like totalitarianism reframed the discontinuity of the Cold War to World War II as continuity. There were others, most prominently modernism.

One caveat on Cold War culture must be made in advance. “Cold War” and “Cold War culture” are terms that are used in the sources mostly in the Western hemisphere. The common man in Eastern Europe rather described the era between 1947 and 1991 as “life under communism.”<sup>14</sup> A cultural history should be aware of this structuring difference. “Culture” as well as “Cold War” are analytical con-

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<sup>14</sup> Blaive, 320; Muriel Blaive and Berthold Molden, *Grenzfälle österreichische und tschechische Erfahrungen am eisernen Vorhang* (Weitra: Verl. Bibliothek der Provinz, 2009).

cepts applied by historians, not expressions that are evident in the sources. The Cold War is no longer simply an *explanans*, but rather an *explanandum*, a concept that has to be made visible and reconstructed.

The Cold War itself was a metaphor and makes sense only in a certain vocabulary and perspective.<sup>15</sup> The effort to embed the Cold War in cultural history may be expressed by the term “Cold War culture.”<sup>16</sup> Culture refers then to the patterns and worldviews that gave meaning to the term “Cold War” and made it possible. Since the patterns came from different national, social, political and religious backgrounds, there were many “Cold War cultures.”<sup>17</sup>

## 1 Cold War Culture as Representation

The best-known form of the cultural Cold War is the representation of the political conflict in the arts. The notion of culture clearly implies representation. On the theoretical side it is just unclear what is being represented.<sup>18</sup> On the political side of Cold War culture we encounter many uses of culture to represent the Cold War antagonism from one side or the other. Cold War politics made use of culture to seek loyalty in Western societies, and to counter the claims of the other side. Culture was to represent something political, it had to transmit essentially political claims about the US, the West, Western society and Western culture. Within this Cold War usage of culture, we are dealing with at least two dimensions of culture: cultural practices and artifacts on the one hand and a political notion of what culture means on the other hand. This meaning of culture is administered by Cold War politics and only by them. The problem arises, that cultural practices run into a contradiction when they are not allowed to produce their own meaning.

An example in place is the *Congress for Cultural Freedom* trying “to nudge the intelligentsia of Western Europe away from its lingering fascination with Marxism and Communism towards a view more accommodating to ‘the American way.’” The CCF had offices in 35 countries, employed dozens of personnel, published

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<sup>15</sup> Anders Stephanson, “Fourteen notes on the very concept of the Cold War,” *H-Diplo Essays* (2007).

<sup>16</sup> This differs from the use of the term “Cold War culture” in: Gordon Johnston, “Revisiting the cultural Cold War,” *Social History* 35, no. 3 (2010).

<sup>17</sup> As Annette Vowinckel’s book rightly emphasizes. Vowinckel, Payk, and Lindenberger.

<sup>18</sup> Stuart Hall and Open University, *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*, Culture, media, and identities (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997).

over twenty prestigious magazines, held art exhibitions, owned a news and features service, organized high-profile international conferences, and rewarded musicians and artists with prizes and public performances.<sup>19</sup> The left liberal members were of particular importance for the US, since the political left was to be gained for the cause of Western liberal democracy. Among the initial founding members were such luminaries of the literary world as François Bondy, Irving Brown, James Burnham, Sidney Hook, Michael Josselson, Arthur Koestler, Melvin Lasky, Nicolas Nabokov and Ignazio Silone. They all shared a leftist, in the case of Koestler and Silone even communist history. They all had distanced themselves from communism. Their strategic aim was to win the hearts and minds of their former peers. The meeting in Andlau near Strasbourg in September 1951 sought to counter communist claims in the intellectual field:

1. How do we reach the mind of the communist intellectual?
2. The Diamat (Dialectical Materialism) is a persistent challenge of the free world. What are the ways and means to respond to this challenge and what common anti-Diamat action can be devised for the intellectuals of the free world?<sup>20</sup>

The CIA financed periodicals of the CCF, which were designed to disseminate liberal values among the leftist intelligentsia. Among the journals were the German “*Der Monat*,” edited by Melvin Lasky, the French periodical “*Preuves*,” the Italian Journal “*Tempo presente*” and the British magazine *Encounter*. When the military-intellectual collaboration became publicly known in 1967, it met sharp criticism. The Ford Foundation took over the financial responsibilities from the CIA, but the public impact of the CCF declined from then on.<sup>21</sup>

Another way to win over the intellectuals was academic research of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. U.S. institutions were crucial in developing Centers

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**19** Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who paid the piper? The CIA and the cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 1999); Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive? Der Kongress für Kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen*, Ordnungssysteme (München: Oldenbourg, 1998).

**20** Giles Scott-Smith, “The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the end of ideology and the 1955 Milan Conference: ‘defining parameters of discourse’,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 37, no. 3 (2002): 438.

**21** See Christopher Lasch, *The agony of the American left*, 1. Vintage Books ed ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 64–111; Elena Aronova, “The Congress for Cultural Freedom, Minerva, and the Quest for Instituting “Science Studies” in the Age of Cold War,” *Minerva* 50 (2012); Peter Coleman, *The liberal conspiracy. The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the struggle for the mind of postwar Europe* (New York [u.a.]: Free Press [u.a.], 1989); G. Scott-Smith, “A radical Democratic political offensive”: Melvin J. Lasky, *Der Monat* and the Congress for Cultural Freedom,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 2 (2000).

for Eastern European Studies, Ukrainian and Russian Centers, that were founded e.g. at Harvard University (1948), the Free University in West-Berlin (Osteuropa-Institut, 1951), in Amsterdam (Russland Instituut, 1948) or at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland (1957). Academic research went hand in hand with the distribution and dissemination of anticommunist politics. US institutions like the Ford Foundation or the Rockefeller Foundation relied on highly motivated actors like the Jesuit Gustav Wetter S.J, or the Dominican Professor of Philosophy Joseph Maria Bocheński, who not only founded the *Osteuropa-Institut* in 1957 in Fribourg, but also the periodical *Studies in Soviet Thought* and the book series *Sovietica*.<sup>22</sup>

The CCF as well as these centers and institutes represented the Cold War conflict as between freedom and repression. The 1953 conference of the CCF in Hamburg was on “Science and Freedom.” In his opening remarks the social democratic mayor of Hamburg Max Brauer made it clear that science could only blossom in freedom, not under state authority. The Milan conference in 1955 similarly focused on “The Future of Freedom.”<sup>23</sup>

For others the anticommunist message of freedom required depoliticization and the end of the age of ideologies. The historian H. Stuart Hughes argued in 1951 for “the end of political ideology,” brought about by the threat of communism:

In such a situation the ideological differences, the issues dividing capitalist and partly socialist states – that now characterize the Western coalition – may cease to be of much practical importance. Pressed by the same necessities, these states will doubtless begin to resemble each other.

Stuart wanted the old political divisions to be forgotten in the interest of defending basic freedoms.<sup>24</sup> But instead of depoliticizing the conflict, “the end of ideology” (Daniel Bell) reinforced the dominant Cold War polarities.<sup>25</sup>

The quest for cultural hegemony in the Cold War addressed primarily literary circles, since in the 1950s literature was still viewed as the leading art genre in Central Europe. One characteristic of Cold War culture in the 1950s was that it

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<sup>22</sup> See The Rockefeller Foundation Annual Report 1957, New York 1957, 235; Josef Maria Bocheński, *Die kommunistische Ideologie und die Würde, Freiheit und Gleichheit der Menschen im Sinne des Grundgesetzes für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 23.5.1949* (Freiburg 1954).

<sup>23</sup> See Scott-Smith, “A Radical Democratic Political Offensive,” 438.

<sup>24</sup> H. Stuart Hughes, “The End of Political Ideology”, *Measure*, 2 (Spring 1951): 153–4, 156.

<sup>25</sup> See Thomas H. Schaub, *American fiction in the Cold War*, History of American thought and culture (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 23; Daniel Bell, *The end of ideology. On the exhaustion of political ideas in the fifties* (Glencoe/Ill.: Free Press, 1960).



was largely set in the world of print culture. The war of ideas was fought out in the Gutenberg galaxy. This is why the material side of print culture, new editions in paperback, book clubs for the distribution of books and in Eastern Europe the allotment of paper quotas for publishing houses played such an important role. Print was the prime medium of propaganda and of dissent on both sides in the Cold War. The Reader's Digest made high quality literature of cultural and political content available to middle class consumers. For its editor David Reed Reader's Digest was one of the "three great international institutions," together with the Catholic Church and the Communist Party. The Cold War saw the "mightiest outpouring of mass market books of every kind." Whereas books had been sold in bookstores, paperbacks were on sale also in drug stores and newspaper dealers. The anti-Communist print culture of the 1950s in the United States relied heavily on networks; on small publishers offering quantity discounts often leading to prices of 20 cents per book. Reading groups, educational organizations, and periodicals provided the political guidance for their mass audience. Many of these books did not even rely on bookstores or drugstores but rather on mail-order catalogs. In addition, leading conservative anti-Communist authors provided their audience with comprehensive reading lists. Because of the impact of print culture, the anti-Communist movement survived the demise of Sen. Joseph McCarthy.

The political culture of Communism as well as of the Soviet Union also relied on print culture. Nikita Khrushchev and his allies ensured that the entry in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* on Lavrentiy Beria, a rival in the quest for power after Stalin's death in 1953, was replaced by a larger entry on the "Bering Sea" using a "small knife or razor blade." Print culture could produce both, loyalty and dissent, in the United States as well as abroad. The leftist students critique of United States politics rested entirely on the righteousness of print. The students believed in the transformative and democratic power of print. "Once a person had read the truth, that person would naturally become an active democratic citizen with the power to resist the injustice and intolerance of life the United States."<sup>26</sup>

The political orientation of leftist writers was of particular importance, since they were often aligned with political parties, in France with the communist party PCF. Intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, René Char and André Breton were members of the communist party and consequently declined to take part in the CCF International Conference in Paris 1952, whereas W. H.

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<sup>26</sup> Greg Barnhisel and Catherine Turner, *Pressing the fight print, propaganda, and the Cold War*, Studies in print culture and the history of the book (Amherst, Mass. [u.a.]: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 4, 10, 12, 19.

Auden, Czesław Miłosz, Ignazio Silone, André Malraux and William Faulkner did. For the members of the PCF among the French literary elite the Hungarian uprising in 1956 was a caesura. Many of them left the party. Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956 further demotivated the communist intellectuals. Among those intellectuals leaving the PCF were François Furet, Albert Camus and many others later turning more and more liberal. German writers responded to the uprisings in 1953 and 1956 differently. Besides their vehement protest against the Russian troops, members of the "Group 47" – never in tune with Marxism – were more concerned with national unification and the Nazi crimes.<sup>27</sup>

Besides print culture visual culture with popular movies was on the rise. Films played a crucial role in the cultural Cold War, because they reached a broader audience.<sup>28</sup> Movies took up contemporary issues like the suppression of the Hungarian Catholic Church after February 1949, when Cardinal Mindszenty was sentenced in a show trial to lifelong prison.<sup>29</sup> At least three Cold War movies told his story: *Guilty of Treason* (Felix Feist 1950), *The Prisoner* (Peter Glenville 1955) starring Alec Guinness and in 1966 *Mission: Impossible*.<sup>30</sup> They all portrayed Cardinal Mindszenty through the cultural trope of a martyr. The movies appealed emotionally to an American and Western audience while denouncing the Soviet atheist policies and the suppression of the church. Thereby older Catholic anti-communism was enlisted for the US, not a natural ally of the Catholic Church.<sup>31</sup>

The movies on Mindszenty represented the enemy as something abstract: the communist system, atheism and dictatorship. The plot represented a bipolar

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**27** See Anita Krätzer, *Das Amerikabild im Prosawerk von Max Frisch. Studien zum Amerikabild in der neueren deutschen Literatur. Max Frisch – Uwe Johnson – Hans Magnus Enzensberger und das "Kursbuch"* (Bern, Frankfurt: University of Michigan, 1982).

**28** See Tony Shaw, *British cinema and the Cold War. The state, propaganda and consensus* (London: Tauris, 2001); *Hollywood's cold war* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); David W. Ellwood, Rob Kroes, and Gian Piero Brunetta, *Hollywood in Europe: experiences of a cultural hegemony*, European contributions to American studies (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994).

**29** See Tony Shaw, "Martyrs, Miracles, and Martians: Religion and Cold War Cinematic Propaganda in the 1950s," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 2 (2002).

**30** The Soviet-made "*Conspiracy of the Doomed*" (Michail Kalatozov 1950) also referred to Mindszenty's story. See *ibid.*, 15.

**31** See *ibid.*, 14–19; for cold war movies cf. Thomas Patrick Doherty, *Cold War, cool medium: television, McCarthyism, and American culture*, Film and culture (New York, N.Y. [u.a.]: Columbia University Press, 2003); Ronnie D. Lipschutz, *Cold War fantasies: film, fiction, and foreign policy* (Lanham, Md. [u.a.]: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Seed; John Pollard, "The Vatican, Italy and the Cold War," in *Religion and the Cold War*, ed. Dianne Kirby (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 109.

structure of the conflict, with morality standing against immorality, Christian values against atheism. The message was clear: A devout Catholic could single-handedly resist Communist dictatorship and brainwashing. The particular evil quality of the enemy was essential. The communist interrogator did not resort to torture, but rather to psychological means when he tried to break the Cardinal's will. The political message suggested that totalitarian systems like the Third Reich and the Soviet Union all resorted to "robot like enslavement."<sup>32</sup>

Films were used to intervene politically in the Italian elections of April 1948. Immediately before the ballot, the movie *Ninotchka* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1939), an anti-Communist comedy about the Soviet communist nomenclatura starring Greta Garbo, was released in Italy to counter the slim lead of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in the polls.<sup>33</sup> For the communist side winning the national elections was a lesson to be learned from fascism, the Second World War and the *resistenza*. Their learning the lesson of fascism and World War II primarily involved the intellectuals. The liberal-conservative parties drew another consequence from former dictatorships. That lesson was – in their idiom – to resist Soviet dictatorship and to affirm the values of liberal democracy. The PCI tried to win over the intellectuals; the Hollywood movie went for the common man. The PCI finally lost the elections.

The link between culture and politics seems particularly obvious in cultural diplomacy. It is an endeavor to "manage the international environment through making (one's) cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmissions abroad."<sup>34</sup> Examples came from the US and the USSR. The Bolshoi Theatre was sent as a cultural envoy to the West, repeating its tours many times in the 1950s and 1960s. The company's shows drew the masses and were a guaranteed success. Also, classical musicians and sportsmen represented the Soviet Union abroad. Countless initiatives showed the public diplomacy of the USSR.<sup>35</sup> Historical research on the cultural Cold War has come up with many examples for the "conscriptio[n] of the arts" in the service of one side or the other.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Shaw, "Martyrs, Miracles, and Martians: Religion and Cold War Cinematic Propaganda in the 1950s," 17.

<sup>33</sup> See Brogi.

<sup>34</sup> Jessica Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried, "The model of cultural diplomacy. Power, distance, and the promise of civil society," in *Searching for a cultural diplomacy*, ed. Jessica Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried (New York [u.a.]: Berghahn Books, 2010), 14.

<sup>35</sup> See Tobias Rupprecht, "Socialist high modernity and global stagnation: a shared history of Brazil and the Soviet Union during the Cold War," *Journal of Global History* 6, no. 3 (2011): 519.

<sup>36</sup> Claire F. Fox, *Making Art Panamerican cultural policy and the Cold War* (Minneapolis, Minn.:

Was culture just an extension of politics in the Cold War or were its dissimilarities from politics more important than its similarities? Frances Stonor Saunders and Scott Lucas argue that cultural involvement in Cold War issues was more or less directed by political interests.<sup>37</sup> Contemporaries like the American writer Paul Goodman observed similarly:

The current disease is to make Cold War capital out of everything, no matter what. We cannot dedicate a building of Frank Lloyd Wright's in New York without our Ambassador to the United Nations pointing out that such an architect could not have flourished in Russia.<sup>38</sup>

Nearly everything in the cultural world has been explained via the influence of the Cold War, including dance, college football or the post war polio crisis, read as a manifestation of the body politic's own affliction.<sup>39</sup> This brings up the question, whether there was a cultural sphere in the 1950s and 60s that was independent from the Cold War. Not everything can be attributed to the influence of the Cold War. David Cauter has taken issue with the "constant determination to find a Cold War 'smoking gun' behind all cultural activity. ... At a certain point 'culture' collapses under the weight of investigation into merely another term for 'propaganda'."<sup>40</sup> Others like Jessica Gienow-Hecht admit political machinations, but argue nevertheless for a (semi-)autonomous sphere of culture.<sup>41</sup>

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University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Sarah Davies, "The Soft Power of Anglia: British Cold War Cultural Diplomacy in the USSR," *Contemporary British History* 27, no. 3 (2013); Yale Richmond, *Practicing public diplomacy: a Cold War odyssey*, vol. 5 (Berghahn Books, 2008); Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, "'How Good Are We?' Culture and the Cold War," *Intelligence & National Security* 18, no. 2 (2003); Naima Prevots, *Dance for export: cultural diplomacy and the Cold War*, Studies in dance history (Hanover, NH [u.a.]: University Press of New England [u.a.], 1998).

<sup>37</sup> See Saunders; Scott Lucas, *Freedom's war. The American crusade against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbendam, *The cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945 – 1960*, Cass series Studies in intelligence (London [u.a.]: Cass, 2003), 4.

<sup>38</sup> Barnhisel, 25.

<sup>39</sup> Christina Ezrahi, "Dance as a Lens on American Cold War Culture," (2015); Benjamin Phillips, "College Football and American Culture in the Cold War Era," (Malden, USA2010); Foertsch; "'A Battle of Silence': Women's Magazines and the Polio Crisis in Post-war UK and USA," in *American Cold war culture*, ed. Douglas Field (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005).

<sup>40</sup> Scott-Smith and Krabbendam, 4.

<sup>41</sup> It constituted "the transmission of ideas, dreams, mores, traditions, and beliefs from one generation to the next, from one continent to another, one group of people to another in the form of schools, galleries, orchestra halls, shopping centers, department stores and information centers." Jessica Gienow-Hecht, "Culture and the Cold War in Europe," in *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Odd Arne Westad Melvyn P. Leffler (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010), 398–99.

Indeed, Cold War culture did not invent its genres and formats, nor did it govern all aspects of cultural life. The cultural Cold War produced a lot, but hardly anything new. The genres of the cultural Cold War were established in the inter-war years with science fiction in place already in the 1920s. The media of the cultural Cold War including TV were technological innovations predating World War II. Anti-communism predated the Cold War so that the Cold War can be seen as one chapter of the history of the East-West antagonism since 1917.<sup>42</sup> Besides Cold War culture existed cultural, even countercultural movements as the youth movement or the student movement, the women's and ecological movements, that were largely independent of the Cold War. Not everything was part of the cultural Cold War. Cold War culture was in many ways part of bigger stories.

## 2 Cold War Modernities

Cold War culture tapped into broader and into older themes, most prominently into modernism and modernity. The Cold War has been explained more generally as a conflict between conflicting models of modernity. Modernism played a major role in the Soviet Union as well as in the West between the wars.<sup>43</sup> Its ubiquitous role was such that modernism and modernity served themselves as a meta-frame for capitalism and communism. Both claimed to be the better, if not the only way to modernity. Whereas in the 1920s and the 1930s modernism took on a rather leftist outlook, rejecting traditional and bourgeois society. Modernism was strong in the US as well as in the USSR. Modernity and modernism were older than the Cold War, they preceded and outlived it. Still: “the Cold War became the apotheosis of 20<sup>th</sup> century modernity, visually as well as socially.”<sup>44</sup>

The autonomy of the arts stood at the center of the 1950s modernism. It was spelled out theoretically in aesthetical polemics and practically in the fine arts. In the theoretical debate art was seen as the opposite of politics. “Art is not political” was used in an anti-communist way to counter uses of art as propaganda: Art is not propaganda. Modernist aesthetics distanced itself from propaganda as it was observed in mass culture. Modernism should be high art. High art was serious

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<sup>42</sup> Jost Dülffer, *Europa im Ost-West-Konflikt 1945–1991* (München: Oldenbourg, 2004).

<sup>43</sup> Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and catastrophe: the passing of mass utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000).

<sup>44</sup> Odd Arne Westad, “The Cold War and the international history of the twentieth century,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Odd Arne Westad Melvyn P. Leffler (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010), 10, 17.

and no propaganda at all, went the claim. This argument against propaganda ran against communist propaganda. Since communist politics was seen as pervading every aspect of society and culture, resisting communism meant resisting politics. Being anti-propaganda, anti-mass culture and apolitical or even anti-political went hand in hand. Politics was perceived as a threat to art. Anti-communist aesthetic ideology in the 1950s insisted, that freedom implied autonomy of the arts, a point the New Critics and New York intellectuals were making over and over. The social function of the arts was seen in their relative autonomy in relation to politics. Literature as all other fine arts was beyond politics, “but by moving beyond politics it fulfilled an essentially political task.” This asserted the political impact of apoliticality.<sup>45</sup>

What modernism was in the realm of culture, modernity was in the political Cold War. The Cold War has been described as a conflict between opposing concepts of modernity, that of liberal capitalism and that of socialism. This is the basic line of Odd Arne Westad’s and Melvyn Leffler’s three volume “Cambridge History of the Cold War”. The Cold War was essentially a “conflict between the two versions of western modernity that socialism and liberal capitalism seemed to offer.” The intensity of the Cold War “was created by each side’s conviction that they represented the last, best hope for the rescue of a rational, transcending modernity from the horrors of war and nationalist conflict.” Both camps shared a rational vision of society, opposed to violence, nationalism, and war. That both stood for conflicting versions of the same modernist paradigm was made patently clear in the Third World. From the perspective of the new African states the Cold War was a

conflict between the two versions of Western modernity that socialism and liberal capitalism seemed to offer. The globalization of the Cold War that these struggles led to both intensified the superpower conflict through international interventions and increased the cost of the competition, while destroying many of the societies in which the battles were carried out.<sup>46</sup>

What then was Cold War modernism? It was a contested cultural term shared by both sides.<sup>47</sup> “It is commonplace for the cultural Cold War to be viewed as an aesthetic combat zone between realism and modernism: differing rationales for the

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<sup>45</sup> Roland Végső, *The naked communist. Cold War modernism and the politics of popular culture* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013), 95.

<sup>46</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War Volume 1: Origins, 1945–1962* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 10.

<sup>47</sup> For modernization utopias within the Soviet Union cf. Buck-Morss.

production, consumption and judgment of art, music, literature and so forth.”<sup>48</sup> But Cold War modernism could be found in the East as well as in the West, since both shared “early cinema, urban architecture, mass leaders, media manipulation, the mass-utopian myth of industrial ‘modernization’ itself.”<sup>49</sup> Already in the interwar years the science fiction genre had favored the demonization of the enemy. “In the 1920s, the contrast of ‘communist heaven’ and ‘capitalist hell’ was a generic theme in Soviet science fiction, projecting onto the ‘other’ all of the negative aspects of industrial society.” After the Second World War, US TV series on ‘alien invaders’ inscribed the fear of Communism into science fiction fantasies.<sup>50</sup> More broadly, modernism linked various fields together, that had formerly been seen as disconnected. It was a powerful tool to see architecture, politics, the military and city planning, defense needs and the mobilization of the labor resources through one lense. “Seen through this historical prism, the great Cold War enemies, while having been truly dangerous to each other, appear as in fact close relatives.”<sup>51</sup>

The two sides shared central aspects of Cold War modernism. “Both the United States and the Soviet Union placed education at the center of their social systems in a way never before seen among great powers.”<sup>52</sup> Education was no longer a privilege for the cultural and political elite, but a characteristic of the broader society. The United States as well as the Soviet Union educated young students from Third World countries and from their allies in Europe. “Against the traditions of privilege, heritage, family and locality, both Soviets and Americans offered a modern and revolutionary alternative.” For Americans this meant the “globalization of the United States immigrant perspective, in which people could choose the communities to which they wished to belong,” for the Soviets it meant the universalization of the “Bolshevik’s hatred for ‘old Russia’, considered backward and underdeveloped.”<sup>53</sup> The ideological focus on anti-privilege, modernity and innovation also facilitated the advancement of new social elites in East and West. “It made it easier for individuals to willingly seek inclusion. ... Entry into the elites was probably more open in social terms in these two countries than in most others” including their allies, particularly Britain and France.<sup>54</sup> Both sides

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48 Johnston, 291.

49 Buck-Morss, 235.

50 See John Cheng, *Astounding wonder. Imagining science and science fiction in interwar America*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

51 Buck-Morss.

52 *Ibid.*, 13.

53 *Ibid.*, 14.

54 *Ibid.*, 15.

were convinced that their vision of a modern and rational society would be successful. The future was surely theirs. The world would unavoidably move “in the direction of the aims they themselves had set.”<sup>55</sup>

Modernism was one of the most prominent topics in the cultural politics within the Soviet sphere, being outlawed in 1948 as an outgrowth of Western politics and capitalist influence. Contrary to the official condemnation of formalism as bourgeois class aesthetics, modernism survived for instance in the GDR as a way to express social inclusion and egalitarianism. Modern design was popular in West as well as in East Germany. “Modern design was considered to be able to wipe out the national Socialist legacy which was regarded as either the apex of capitalism (East) or the combination of all reprehensible characteristics of Wilhelmine culture (West).”<sup>56</sup> Particularly the turn of the century furniture was now ridiculed as “Gelsenkirchener Barock.”<sup>57</sup> Journals, discourses and practices in East and West Germany embraced instead a modern, Scandinavian style, since it was considered inclusive and egalitarian. Such modern design helped to communicate a new cultural identity after Nazi dictatorship.

In the art world many shared the strong belief, “that art should be autonomous from the practice of daily life, not subject to evaluation of social or political criteria.”<sup>58</sup> This detachment from everyday life was aesthetically brought to the fore by formal elements of modernist art, particularly its techniques of representation. “Modernism was a set of formal techniques and attitudes unique to each art form but sharing some important commonalities across genres: allusiveness, abstraction, fragmentation and indirectness, the sense of being belated within a cultural tradition, the subsumption of emotion under formal technique, the retreat of the personality of the artist into the background behind different ‘masks’ or narrative voices, and, above all, high seriousness.”<sup>59</sup> That high seriousness was expressed in formal art language, shying away from realism as well as from tradition.

Interwar modernism with its sympathies for the left had met fierce criticism from the political establishment in Europe. Politics in the United States as well as in Europe harbored well into the 1950s skepticism if not outright hostility toward

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>56</sup> See Natalie Scholz and Milena Veenis, “Cold War Modernism and Post-War German Homes. An East-West Comparison,” in *Divided dreamworlds? The cultural cold war in East and West*, ed. Joes Segal and Peter Romijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2008), 160.

<sup>57</sup> See ‘Weg von Tante Frieda’, *Der Spiegel*, 26 September 1951, 32–33, quoted in: Scholz, *Cold War Modernism and Post-War German Homes*, 164.

<sup>58</sup> Barnhisel, 3.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.



modernist art. Besides its aesthetical traditionalism the political establishment saw modernists as unreliable precisely because they insisted on their autonomy. Proponents of this argument often pointed to the modernists' alignment with the republican and communist left in the Spanish civil war 1936–39. The communist air about modernism stemmed from that period and was signified by Picasso and his alignment with the Communist Party. When modernist artists like Picasso and others joined the Communist Party in 1945 this was seen as proof for the profound communist affiliations of modernist art.

Suspensions about the modernist art were widespread and reached beyond McCarthy's campaign against supposed communists in Hollywood and the art world. When in 1947 President Harry Truman looked at Yasuo Kuniyoshi's painting *Circus girl resting*, a part of the touring exhibition *Advancing American Art* organized by the U.S. State Department, he remarked: "If this is art, I'm a Hottentot." In a letter to Assistant Secretary of State William Benton of 2 April 1947 he referred to the exhibition as "the vaporings of half-naked lazy people." He saw himself in complete accordance with the American people at large:

There are a great many American artists who still believe that the ability to make things look as they are is the first requirement of a great artist. They do not belong to the so-called modern school. There is no art at all in connection with the modernists, in my opinion.<sup>60</sup>

Two days after this letter, Secretary of State George Marshall ordered that the exhibition now in Czechoslovakia and Haiti stay in place and do not move on as Ambassador of US culture. Three weeks later, the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (OIC) funds for 1948 were eliminated. The OIC had organized the exhibition.<sup>61</sup> Marshall was deeply skeptical about spending "taxpayers' money on modern art."<sup>62</sup> The examples for anti-modernist resentment in the 1950s are legion. Harry Truman would have welcome Soviet realism after 1948 aesthetically, had he not been US President. Why then could modernism overcome the anti-modernist opposition (even in the White House)?

Convincing the public of modernism meant aligning modernism in some way with the United States. If modernism was to be brought into the Western cultural Cold War its more revolutionary political associations from the interwar years had to be replaced by "a celebration of the virtues of freedom and the assertion

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<sup>60</sup> Quoted in: New York Times, January 20 1986.

<sup>61</sup> Michael L. Krenn, *Fall-out shelters for the human spirit: American art and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

<sup>62</sup> Greg Barnhisel, "Perspectives USA and the cultural cold war: Modernism in service of the state," *Modernism-Modernity* 14, no. 4 (2007): 735.

that the individual is sovereign.”<sup>63</sup> To align modernism to freedom would then mean reframing its political alliances. Modernism should serve as an argument about freedom as a characteristic of the US. In 1952 Alfred H. Barr Jr., New York’s Museum of Modern Art’s first president (1929–1944), had claimed in a *New York Times* article that realism was the preferred style of totalitarians, while abstract art symbolized political freedom.<sup>64</sup>

The more difficult task was to reconcile the autonomy of the arts with US mass culture. When Alfred Barr from the MoMA pointed to the proof of modernism for a free society that was easily countered by Soviet politics pointing to the self-declared aloofness and elitism of abstract expressionism. Modernism indeed shied away from any content as well as from the masses and embraced formalism. Reconciling modernism’s quest for autonomy with conservative politics while at the same time reconciling it with mass culture proved to be the Achilles heel of the cultural Cold War. The tension between elitism and mass culture was tolerable only as long as the modernist autonomy of the arts was an argument against socialist realism in the 1950s. In the decade of détente that could no longer be sustained. The 1960s saw a loosening of the cultural antagonism between modernism and realism. The relationship between modernism and mass culture was finally redefined. The 1960s and the 70s saw several attempts to reconcile modernism with mass culture in pop art (Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Tom Wesselmann), documentary literature and interior design on a mass basis. Artists increasingly drew on popular and mass cultural forms and genres and overlaid them with modernist and avant-gardist strategies. Still viewed skeptically by conservative cultural critics as non-art, supermarket-art, Kitsch-art, or as a coca-colonization of Western Europe, it was a huge success, which led others to expect that this was finally bridging the gap between high-brow and low-brow forms of art, between modernism and the marketplace. After the high spirited modernism of the 1950s countered the communist claim, that the US had no high culture, the 1960s modernism answered to the claim, that modernism was too much high-brow, elitist and implicitly denied the masses access to art.

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**63** *Cold War modernists: art, literature, and American cultural diplomacy, 1946–1959*, 3.

**64** Russell H Bartley, “The Piper Played to Us All: Orchestrating the Cultural Cold War in the USA, Europe, and Latin America,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* (2001): 580; Eva Cockroft, “Abstract Expressionism: weapon of the Cold War, Artforum, June 1974,” in *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* ed. Eva Cockroft and Serge Guilbaut (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983).

While modernism had accused socialist realism of performing kitsch in the early 1950s, it was now modernism to take the same blame from conservative cultural critics. Reconciling modernism with mass culture, meant that

it was possible to imagine that art could be found as much in the arrangement of merchandise in a department store window, in the graphics of a magazine advertisement, in the silhouette of the women's dress, or in a streamlined kitchen appliance as in the paintings hanging in a museum. Suddenly the curators of exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art appeared to think that when it came to his stylistic ingenuity, there was not much difference between the Kandinsky canvas and a Kalvinator refrigerator.<sup>65</sup>

The clash between modernism and realism was fought differently in every country. Modernism lost the connotation of rebellion. Beginning in the 1940s and more broadly in the 1950s it became part of the American cultural establishment. In Europe that came later. One reason for this shift was the influence of Americanization in Europe, increasing after 1945 when Germany, Austria and Italy embraced US culture. The postwar economic boom and the rise of the welfare state in the 1950s reduced resentments against American consumer society. "Consensus capitalism" or "consensus liberalism" became a notion that even the Social democratic left could agree on. It integrated unions as well as socialist parties into Western political systems, from which they had been excluded by liberal elites in the interwar years. Even politicians like Willy Brandt adopted the cultural style of Kennedy with home stories and a public role of his wife.<sup>66</sup>

Still, modernism was not evenly distributed, was not the dominant art everywhere. Modernism reached the status of established art in the various European countries and the US at different times. In the United States that was already the case in the 1940s. In France with its culture of surrealism in the 1930s the culmination point of modernism was in the late 1940s. The latecomers were Britain and Germany, where only after protracted domestic cultural wars modernism was allowed into the cultural pantheon. In Britain, individualist modernism not only ran against lasting Victorian traditions of art and style, but also against imperial memories. Adopting modernism here was felt by many as losing the empire to the US again – and this time forever.

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<sup>65</sup> Richard H. Pells, *Modernist America art, music, movies, and the globalization of American culture* (New Haven [u.a.]: Yale University Press, 2011), 85–98, 85; Andreas Huyssen, *After the great divide. Modernism, mass culture, postmodernism*, Language, discourse, society (Basingstoke u.a.: Macmillan, 1988), 197.

<sup>66</sup> See Daniela Münkler, "Als 'deutscher Kennedy' zum Sieg?" Willy Brandt, die USA und die Medien," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 1, no. 2 (2004).

The arrival of modernism in official Western Germany establishment was signified by architecture. Chancellor Ludwig Erhard embraced Cold War modernism in the construction of the new chancellery in Bonn which embodied the Mies-van-der-Rohe style.<sup>67</sup> Architectural modernism became identified with democracy because of such characteristics as “newness, openness, abstraction, ambiguity, and technological innovation.”<sup>68</sup>

Modernism was a decidedly Western aesthetic style of fine arts, design and urban planning after all. The Eastern European governments launched a “disinfection campaign” against American culture and influence, focusing on Jazz music, Hollywood films and on architecture. “Cosmopolitan” served as a code word for America, whereas “democratic” was a synonym for countries under communist rule. In 1954 the East German Guide for Architects made clear that architecture was divided between the “forces of reaction,” embodied by the CIAM (Congrès international d’architecture moderne), and the democratic forces led by the Soviet Union:

As in other capitalist countries, building is predominantly formalist and subordinated to the cosmopolitan ideology of American imperialism. This is why buildings look alike whatever their location, where they are in West Germany, Italy, France, or America. The housing, banks, administration buildings, hotels, and stores in the form of shapeless boxes are an expression of the profit hunger of monopoly capitalism under American dominance. The obliteration of all national character continues relentlessly. This is evident as well in the destruction of valuable historical complexes. Thus architecture is replaced by mere construction.<sup>69</sup>

The Soviets tried to counter modernism by emphasizing traditional high culture: Russian and Soviet history stood for classical culture, whereas American society merely offered materialism and popular culture, ran the argument. Only high culture embodies common humanistic values, whereas the American cosmopolitan formalism catered to individualism, the enemy of socialist democracy. Indeed, one of the key goals of communist cultural policies was to make high

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<sup>67</sup> Burkhard Körner, “Der Kanzlerbungalow von Sep Ruf in Bonn,” *Bonner Geschichtsblätter* 49/50 (2001).

<sup>68</sup> Jane C. Loeffler, *The architecture of diplomacy. Building America’s embassies*, rev. 2. ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural, 2011), 7, 8.

<sup>69</sup> Edwin Collein, *Handbuch für Architekten* (Berlin: Verl. Technik, 1954). quoted in: Anders Åman, *Architecture and ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin era: an aspect of Cold War history* (New York, Cambridge, Mass.: Architectural History Foundation, MIT Press, 1992), 251; David Crowley, “Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,” in *Cold war modern design 1945 – 1970*, ed. David Crowley and Jane Pavitt (London: V&A Publishing, 2008), 45.

culture accessible to the masses. After their defeat of Nazi Germany, the Soviet cultural commissars saw themselves as the only remaining standard bearers of high culture.<sup>70</sup> In East Berlin the cultural commissars distinguished between the anti-Semitic and nationalist roots of Nazism and the legacy of Weimar or Viennese classicism, which they promoted from the beginning. Several cultural organizations, including VOKS, showed the Soviets interest in German high culture.<sup>71</sup>

“Winning the minds of men” referred particularly to West Germany.<sup>72</sup> Referring to high culture in many cases meant invoking the three “B”s: Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, as well as Schiller and Goethe, Kant and Hegel and others. Gaining the loyalty of the Western Germans looked promising to the Soviets, since they could rely on a long tradition of German anti-Americanism.<sup>73</sup> The Soviet approach wasn’t completely implausible since high culture served as one of the few sources for German identity, supposedly left untainted by the Nazis and by anti-Semitism. Adopting a democratic system while clinging to the valued classicism around 1800 posed a problem in the 1950s since Westernization also involved a controversial Americanization of cultural styles. If the adoption of Western democratic values meant a reevaluation of Germany’s cultural past, West Germans remained skeptical. They “clearly feared the adoption of democratic values at the expense of their cultural heritage.”<sup>74</sup>

The American government understood the need to appear as culturally attractive to high-brow Europeans. President Truman had already demanded of US cultural diplomacy to present a “full and fair picture” of American life to Europe and to the Third World.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, Eisenhower feared that Europeans might see Americans as “a race of materialists. ... Spiritual and intellectual values are deemed to be almost nonexistent in our country.”<sup>76</sup> In a series of exhibitions that went on tour, private US institutions promoted domestic design as a charac-

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**70** See Gienow-Hecht, 403.

**71** See Bernd Bonwetsch, *Sowjetische Politik in der SBZ, 1945 – 1949 Dokumente zur Tätigkeit der Propagandaverwaltung (Informationsverwaltung) der SMAD unter Sergej Tjul'panov*, Archiv für Sozialgeschichte Beiheft (Bonn: Dietz, 1998); Dagmar Buchbinder, “Kunst-Administration nach sowjetischem Vorbild: Die Staatliche Kommission für Kunstangelegenheiten,” in *Die DDR – Analysen eines aufgegebenen Staates*, ed. Heiner Timmermann (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001).

**72** Gienow-Hecht and Donfried, 15.

**73** See Jessica Gienow-Hecht, “Trumpeting down the walls of Jericho: The politics of art, music and emotion in German-American relations, 1870–1920,” *Journal of social history* 36, no. 3 (2003). The New York Philharmonic did not hire a single long-term non-German conductor until 1906.

**74** *Ibid.*, 404.

**75** Gienow-Hecht and Donfried, 15.

**76** Quoted in Barnhisel, “Perspectives USA and the cultural cold war: Modernism in service of the state,” 734.

teristic of the American way of life. “Design was not a marginal aspect of the Cold War but central – both materially and theoretically – to the competition over the future.”<sup>77</sup> Between 1951 and 1955 the MoMA curated several exhibitions such as the “American Home 1953” dedicated to displaying design in US households, co-produced with a number of government agencies, most notably the State Department, the Mutual Security Agency and the United States Information Agency (USIA). The MoMA thereby assumed an unofficial role in the Foreign Service.<sup>78</sup>

Another cultural battleground was France. In 1955 the MoMA sent the exhibition “50 years of American Art” to Paris, later to Zurich, Barcelona, Frankfurt, London, The Hague, Vienna and Belgrade. It was designed to counter anxieties about American cultural homogenization and imperialism. Indeed, French intellectuals on the left and the right saw American consumerism and mass culture as threats to French culture. The exhibition formed part of a “Salute to France,” an arts festival organized by the United States Information Service (USIS) to pay tribute to French civilization.<sup>79</sup> American art was presented for instance through designer chairs by Charles Eames, Henry Bertoin and Eero Saarinen. The exhibit “50 years of American art” focused on interior design household appliances and living rooms. The MoMA also featured expressionist paintings in a 1956 exhibition on “Modern Art in the United States,” which included 12 painters such as Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko. It could be seen in eight European cities, among them Vienna and Belgrade.<sup>80</sup>

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77 David Crowley and Jane Pavitt, *Cold War modern: design 1945–1970* (London: V&A Pub., 2008), 14; Elizabeth Armstrong, *Birth of the cool: California art, design, and culture at midcentury*, ed. Michael Boyd, et al., California art, design, and culture at midcentury (Newport Beach, Munich, New York: Orange County Museum of Art Prestel Art, 2007); Robert H. Haddow, *Pavilions of plenty. Exhibiting American culture abroad in the 1950s* (Washington [u.a.]: Smithsonian Inst. Press, 1997).

78 See Helen M. Franc, “The Early Years of the International Program and Council,” in *The Museum of Modern Art at Midcentury: At Home and Abroad*, ed. John Elderfield, vol. 4 of Studies in Modern Art (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), 112–114. This aspect has been particularly well researched. Cf. Alessandro Brogi, “A question of balance: How France and the United States created Cold War Europe,” *International History Review* 30, no. 2 (2008); Giles Scott-Smith, *Networks of empire. The US State Department’s Foreign Leader Program in the Netherlands, France, and Britain 1950 – 70*, European Policy (Bruxelles [u.a.]: Lang, 2008); Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American way. U.S. propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Martina Topić and Siniša Rodin, *Cultural diplomacy and cultural imperialism European perspective(s)* (Frankfurt am Main [u.a.]: Lang, 2012).

79 See Gay McDonald, “Selling the American Dream: MoMA, Industrial Design and Postwar France,” in *Journal of Design History* 17 (2004), 397–412.

80 See Gerard Holden, *International relations during and after the cold war. A comparative approach to intellectual history and culture*, Sonderveröffentlichung des FKKS (Mannheim: FKKS,

The connection between culture and politics was even more obvious in the rise of Jazz as musical expression of America's commitment to 'freedom.'<sup>81</sup> Unlike abstract expressionist painting Jazz served as a reminder of the mass cultural roots of American Cold War modernism. Jazz critics like John Wilson (New York Times) and Marshall Stearns saw Jazz as an original product of American modernism. They were quick to point out that its roots did not lay in Wall Street, but in a segregated South, and that Jazz was an artistic expression of underclass African-American culture.

In 1958, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles sent musicians like Dave Brubeck to Poland for 12 concerts, and then to Turkey, to Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Ceylon and finally to Iran and Iraq. Dizzy Gillespie went to Greece, Louis Armstrong to Africa. Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Benny Goodman and Miles Davis also participated in this endeavor in Jazz diplomacy. Dave Brubeck's wife wrote an ironic song for Louis Armstrong:

The State Department has discovered jazz  
It reaches folks like nothing ever has.  
When our neighbors called us vermin,  
We sent out Woody Herman.  
That's what they call cultural exchange.<sup>82</sup>

Jazz diplomacy was pretty successful by the standards of cultural diplomacy. One of the most popular Soviet orchestra leaders Leonid Osipovich Utyosov praised US Jazz in 1961 in an article for the *Sovietskaya Kultura* and countered thereby the communist wholesale critique of culture in the US. For him prohibiting Jazz as "a forbidden fruit" of capitalism was "dangerous and interfered with the education of youth in musical taste." Jazz was not a "Western imperialist weapon to sabotage the morals of young people." Quite to the contrary: Jazz transcended the contamination of the market:

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1998); Richard Alan Schwartz, *Cold War culture: media and the arts, 1945 – 1990*, Cold War America (New York, NY: Facts on File, 1998); Serge Guilbaut, *How New York stole the idea of modern art. Abstract expressionism, freedom, and the Cold War*, Paperback ed. (Chicago [u.a.]: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Manfred J. Holler and Barbara Klose-Ullmann, "Abstract expressionism as a weapon of the Cold War," in *Culture and External Relations: Europe and Beyond*, ed. Jozef Batora and Monika Mokre (Farnham [u.a.]: Ashgate, 2011); Belmonte.

<sup>81</sup> For Cold War and Music cf. Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War diplomacy* (University of California Press, 2015); Paul Devlin, "Jazz Autobiography and the Cold War," *Popular Music and Society* 38, no. 2 (2015); Shellie M Clark, "Soothing the Savage Beast: Music in the Cultural Cold War, 1945–1991," (2015).

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in *The American Interest*, Spring 2006.

We need Jazz. ... Good Jazz is art. ... I must say that Jazz is not a synonym for imperialism and that the saxophone was not born of colonialism. (It had its roots) “not in the bankers’ safes but in the poor Negro quarters.”<sup>83</sup>

Why did abstract art, Jazz, and expressionism, play such an important role as exponents of modernism in the cultural Cold War?<sup>84</sup> First, private and public institutions in the United States tried to prove thereby that the allegation, that the US had only low culture, was wrong. In the early 1950s a serious artist was a modernist. He shied away from the masses, from mass taste and avoided simplistic realist representations and mistrusted political messages. Instead he investigated the psychological complexities of an individual subject. The serious modernist artist did just that according to officials in the US cultural diplomacy circles. According to Arthur Schlesinger abstract art was proof of individualism as well as freedom. Both would find their place in US art, whereas according to the Soviet model freedom and individualism had no place in art. Soviet culture sought – according to Schlesinger – to undermine the individual, thinking, acting subject. Direct political control of the arts “either throttles the serious artist or makes him slick and false.”<sup>85</sup> The apolitical nature of expressionist art could be seen as proof for the freedom of cultural production. “Its very apoliticality made ‘modernism’ ... a key component in an argument about the cultural superiority of the West.”<sup>86</sup> Finally, modern art, particularly expressionist art, was attractive to

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**83** Quoted in Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press, 2004). Cf. Stephen A. Crist, “Jazz as Democracy? Dave Brubeck and Cold War Politics,” *The Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 2 (2009); Lisa E. Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (Jackson, MS, USA: University Press of Mississippi, 2009); Keith Hatschek, “The impact of American jazz diplomacy in Poland during the cold war era,” 4, no. 3 (2010); Mark Carroll, *Music and ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge [u.a.]: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Von Eschen. On Aaron Copland see Emily Abrams Ansari, “Aaron Copland and the Politics of Cultural Diplomacy,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 5, no. 3 (2011).

**84** See Barnhisel, “Perspectives USA and the cultural cold war: Modernism in service of the state.”; Mathews Jane de Hart, “Art and Politics in Cold War America,” *The American Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (1976).

**85** Barnhisel, *Cold War modernists: art, literature, and American cultural diplomacy, 1946–1959*; Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The vital center the politics of freedom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1949).

**86** See Justyna Wierzychowska, *The absolute and the cold war: Discourses of Abstract Expressionism* (Peter Lang. Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2011); Végső; Barnhisel, “Perspectives USA and the cultural cold war: Modernism in service of the state,” 733–34.



left liberals, since its aesthetic style conveyed at once a modernist utopia and a distance from the past.<sup>87</sup>

## Aesthetic modernism and political modernization

Modernism made claims about art in the age of the Cold War that was largely dominated by claims about modernity and modernization. The relation between modernism and modernization has therefore been a hotly debated issue in Cold War historiography. Were modernism and modernization opposites or could they be reconciled. Anticommunist liberalism as well as cultural critics wanted modernism to be the aesthetic expression of modernization, but modernism was itself in many cases a critique of modernization. This resulted more broadly in a modernist politics of anti-modernization, or even, in Jeffrey Herf's terms, "reactionary modernism." This ran into considerable resistance. Many anticommunists kept pointing to the critical stance of modernism toward modernization. They saw modernism neither as an ideological expression nor as a valid critique of modernization. Art should formulate ethically correct forms of modernization and certainly no scathing criticisms of it, ran the argument of anti-modernist modernization. Modernism could not easily be reconciled with the politics of modernization. Still they had to be related in some way, since "anti-Communist liberalism emerged at the meeting point of aesthetic modernism and political modernization."<sup>88</sup>

The Harvard historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. tried to bridge the gap between modernism and modernity in one of the Cold War liberalism's most influential bestsellers. In 1949 he published *The Vital Center*, arguing that the Cold War antagonism was a "tension inherent in the very logic of modernity." Modernity was an "age of anxiety," since the industrial modernization failed to produce adequate forms of social organizations. Modernity had not been able to protect the individual from anxiety. He saw modern art or modernism as an authentic expression of that anxiety caused by modern freedom. For Schlesinger modernism was no critique of modernization, but rather the fullest expression of freedom whose material conditions were produced by modernization.<sup>89</sup>

Also: Modernization and modernism were no strict opposites, since modernization went along with its own version of modernism. Albert Wohlstetter, a defense intellectual, and Edward Shils, a Chicago sociologist, are good examples.

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<sup>87</sup> See Cockroft.

<sup>88</sup> Végső, 176.

<sup>89</sup> Schlesinger.

Wohlstetters relationship with the art historian Meyer Schapiro witnessed their shared interest in modernism and modernity. This could be called the modernism of modernization. According to Nils Gilman it came in at least three flavors:

a technocosmopolitan flavor, which argued that modernity must be built on the foundations of tradition; a revolutionary flavor, which argued that modernization required a radical rupture with tradition; and an authoritarian flavor, which argued that this radical rupture could take place only through the force of a centralizing and omniscient state.

That also worked in the other direction. Modernist art had its own idea about the social and the political future. As Nils Gilman pointed out:

Modernism was not just an aesthetic phenomenon but also a form of social and political practice in which history, society, economy, culture, and nature itself were all to be the object of technical transformation. Modernism was a polysemous code word for all that was good and desirable.<sup>90</sup>

Modernization theory and modernism shared two characteristics: both were essentially elitist and both were resolutely anti-populist. Both even shared a sense of authoritarianism.

Modernization theory stood at the center of the evolving Cold War social sciences. The social sciences as systems of knowledge claimed to understand successfully the other side. Western “defense intellectuals” like Frederick Osborn used social scientific approaches to analyze Communism, make capitalism compatible with the welfare state and to portray Modernism as the aesthetic consequence of that approach.<sup>91</sup> The social sciences seemed to hold “the key to understand the mysterious world behind the iron curtain.”<sup>92</sup> Just as physics had shaped World War II, social science could shape the postwar period.<sup>93</sup>

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**90** Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the future. Modernization theory in Cold War America*, New studies in American intellectual and cultural history (Baltimore [u.a.]: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 7–9.

**91** Wierzychowska; Pamela M. Lee, “Aesthetic Strategist: Albert Wohlstetter, the Cold War, and a Theory of Mid-Century Modernism,” *October*, no. 138 (2011).

**92** Lynne Viola, “The Cold War within the Cold War,” *Kritika-Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 3 (2011): 684.

**93** David Engerman, “The Rise and Fall of Wartime Social Science: Harvard’s Refugee Interview Project, 1950–54,” in *Cold war social science*, ed. Mark Solovey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). Cf. Lawrence Freedman, “Social Science and the Cold War,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38. (2015); Mark Solovey, *Shaky foundations the politics-patronage-social science nexus in Cold War America* (New Brunswick, NJ [u.a.]: Rutgers University Press, 2013).

Claiming expert knowledge, social scientists advised political actors on how to deal with the challenges of a postwar world. Their influence peaked in the 1950s and early 1960s. Herman Kahn, director of the RAND Corporation, saw himself as a new Clausewitz in the era of nuclear war. As leading defense intellectual he published a treatise under the title “On Thermonuclear War” in 1959.<sup>94</sup> Just like Daniel Bell, Albert Wohlstetter came from the far left and embodied personally the inclusion of social science into respectable Cold War culture. Their compelling argument that secured them hegemony in the scientific discourse was modernization. Securing the best way to modernize society was tantamount to winning the Cold War. The modernization paradigm became so prominent, that after the “Sputnik Shock” of 1957 the perceived incompatibility of political, economic and social systems was overshadowed more and more by the shared utopia of technical and industrial modernization. The Cold War was thereby partly depoliticized or better de-systemized. This did not mean, that the war was less dangerous and brutal – quite to the contrary. Though the military confrontation moved to proxy wars in the Third World, the convergence theory shared by both sides claimed that the industrial-technical maximum would be the social and political optimum. Modernization theory moved both sides from confrontation to competition.

At the turn from the 1950s to the 1960s modernism lost its grip on Cold War culture. New forms arrived that were more prone to popular and mass culture. A new “erotics of the art” (Susan Sontag) replaced the formalism and high seriousness of modernism. The youth culture put other cultural dichotomies center stage than that of modernism versus realism. Why did the Cold War modernist project end in the US with the Eisenhower era and beyond the US around 1960?

First, the occupation with Europe’s moderate left and its loyalty faded away. Modernism and consensus capitalism had succeeded as role models. The threat of a communist takeover of Western Europe was gone after the Hungarian uprising in 1956 and its appalling impact on Western leftist intellectuals. Modernism had been successful and was part of the establishment. A new generation trying to find new answers did not see modernism on the side of the solution but rather on the side of the problem. Modernism seemed to convey a sense of order, coherence and control and to evade the immediate experience that art was supposed to capture.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> See Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960). On Kahn see Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi, *The worlds of Herman Kahn. The intuitive science of thermonuclear war* (Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.]: Harvard University Press, 2005); Janet Farrell Brodie, “Learning Secrecy in the Early Cold War: The RAND Corporation,” *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 4 (2011).

<sup>95</sup> Barnhisel, *Cold War modernists: art, literature, and American cultural diplomacy, 1946–1959*; Lynn Keller, *Re-making it new contemporary American poetry and the modernist tradition*, Cambridge studies in American literature and culture (Cambridge [u.a.]: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Secondly unidirectional informational programs gave way to cultural exchange programs. Modernism's high seriousness and aloofness was understood as part of that essentially educational and non-communicative culture, the youth culture as well as the students wanted to distance themselves from. Already the Eisenhower administration, but then particularly the Kennedy administration intensified and broadened these exchange programs. Finally culture itself changed. Cold War modernism had been essentially a print phenomenon. The audience had engaged with modernism in forms of print: posters, magazines, manifestoes, small-press books, broadsides, advertisements, gallery flyers, catalogs and programs for musical and theater performances. Even modernist painting was essentially two-dimensional. "Much of modernism in the visual and literary arts concerned itself with the problems of capturing dynamic motion in a static medium."<sup>96</sup> By the 1960s visual culture gained importance and with it TV. Movies had been central to culture all along, but the television brought a new quality to visual culture and to where people could get their information and their world views from. TV ownership in the US went up from 9 % in 1950 to almost 90 % in 1960. Already contemporaries saw that the rise of visual culture would not only alter the audiences but also the notion of culture itself. George F. Kennan voiced these concerns in West Berlin in 1961: Mass culture with a centralized influence of the new visual media could lead to a society under complete control, where nobody had any desire for more sophisticated forms of culture. An age illuminated by TV screens would in fact be a dark age, he told the audience.<sup>97</sup>

The rise of visual Cold War culture had a lasting impact on the notion of culture as well as on the Cold War. It changed the dynamics between culture and the Cold War that had been established in a print culture. Until the advent of the electronic age visual culture didn't change the communication at work in Cold War culture. What had formerly been distributed uni-directionally by print was now distributed by visual media. The Cold War on TV did not allow for any form of comment. Visuality allowed for more immediate emotional contact. This contact bridged social, cultural, as well as linguistic divides. Images, TV, and movies played a crucial role in the imaginative and affective construction of the Cold War, a conflict, that in the US and Western Europe at least, lacked material reality.

What visual culture did change in the cultural Cold War was the personal and emotional immersion of the audience as well as the range and accessibility

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<sup>96</sup> Barnhisel, *Cold War modernists: art, literature, and American cultural diplomacy, 1946–1959*, 257.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

of information. That did not only hold true for warfare as with the often cited Vietnam war, which was the first war on TV. It included new formats and genres that displaced the Cold War in Western or later in science fiction and began to exhibit new characters and plots.

Visualizing the Cold War enemy took on many forms. Mapping the blocks was common throughout the 1950s. It was probably the most common visual feature of the Cold War. Cold War maps offered a visual construction of the Soviet Union.<sup>98</sup> The 1951 version of the National Geographic Society's "World Map" had the US at the center. It used the Van der Grinten projection that made neighboring countries Canada and the USSR larger than they were. The projection was used between 1922 and 1988. The US was surrounded by a USSR in Eurasia and a USSR in Siberia, a dominant presence that called quite visually for resistance if not containment. The map presented a political message packaged as a self-evident map. As the editors explain, the US is in the center, "since it is the source of so much of the leadership and aid, so many of the men, machines, and raw materials needed for the preservation of freedom in older lands." The connection between space, nationhood and citizenship spelled out a clear Cold War message. The National Geographic Society's maps – just as this World map – were the basis for maps used by newspapers and TV. As the centerpiece of public cartography it visualized the Cold War for generations.<sup>99</sup>

### 3 Cold War culture as recoding

Culture means more than the extension of politics. The representational link between culture and politics can be replaced by a relational link.<sup>100</sup> Wars and conflicts do not only use culture for non-cultural ends. Culture is rather a way to produce meaning of wars and conflicts itself. Conflicts themselves are culturally constructed, framed and reframed. What are commonly referred to as the "Eastern and the Western blocs" did not just employ cultural means to political ends; they were themselves profoundly shaped by the repertoire of cultural forms which governed the antagonism of the Cold War. Methodologically it is therefore useful to go beyond a conception of representation and to focus on culture as

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<sup>98</sup> Timothy Barney, *Mapping the Cold War: cartography and the framing of America's international power* (University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 99; Jeremy Black, *Maps and Politics* (London, GBR: Reaktion Books, 2000), 31.

<sup>100</sup> See Stuart Hall, "The work of Representation," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 15–64.

re-imagination and re-coding. Cold War culture not only narrated or visualized political threats and the Cold War antagonism, but it eventually became a platform for criticism and re-imagination of the Cold War itself.

Modernism and modernity had modified the Cold War binary code of “West versus East” or “US versus USSR” into “modern versus traditional” or “progress versus tradition/reactionary.” Again – as with the political binary codes – both sides could use them and link modernity to their own system. That reframed the Cold War dichotomy and allowed for partial consensus and coexistence. Deadly conflict was reframed as competition.

Giving new meaning to Cold War culture therefore meant not only opposing the political dichotomy “US – USSR” but also the dichotomy “modern – traditional.” Historically this reframing can be traced in cultural texts, images, movies and artefacts, that distance themselves from politics and modernism and reframe the Cold War. From a moral or religious standpoint one could argue for the inherent immorality of the Cold War. From a more disillusioned or even nihilist background, pursuing a Cold War seemed anyway useless and self-gratulatory. As literary styles irony, parody and satire were at hand for plotting the Cold War. Spy novels and science fiction read the Cold War culture psychologically through anxieties<sup>101</sup> and literary introspections into the twisted self and looked at its antagonisms and schisms.<sup>102</sup>

## Re-coding I: The spy novel

The Cold War’s international and global threats were reenacted and recoded in literature.<sup>103</sup> The most prominent literary topics dealing with the Cold War critically

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**101** Eva Horn, *Der geheime Krieg. Verrat, Spionage und moderne Fiktion* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2007); Jessica Wang, *American science in an age of anxiety. Scientists, anticommunism, and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC [u.a.]: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). Cf. Daniel Cordle, “Beyond the apocalypse of closure: nuclear anxiety in the postmodern literature of the United states,” in *Cold war literature: writing the global conflict*, ed. Andrew Hammond (New York: Routledge, 2006).

**102** See Ron Theodore Robin, *The making of the Cold War enemy: culture and politics in the military-intellectual complex* (Princeton, NJ [u.a.]: Princeton University Press, 2001); Tom Engelhardt, *The end of victory culture. Cold war America and the disillusioning of a generation* (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1995).

**103** See Marcus M. Payk, “Die Angst der Agenten. Der Kalte Krieg in der westdeutschen TV-Serie “John Klings Abenteuer,” in *Angst im Kalten Krieg*, ed. Bernd Greiner, Christian Th. Müller, and Dierk Walter (Hamburg: HIS Verlag, 2009); “Globale Sicherheit und ironische Selbstkontrolle die James-Bond-Filme der 1960er Jahre,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 7 (2010); Michael Kackman,

were ‘destruction’ and ‘treason’, as laid out in abundant espionage novels.<sup>104</sup> A particularly well known example of the literary critique of the Cold War is John le Carré’s (non de plume for David Cornwell) *The Spy who Came in from the Cold*, first published in 1963 right after the Cuban Missile Crisis. Le Carré’s protagonists in Britain and in East Germany are literally of the same kind. The tragic ending of this prize winning novel leaves no space for great heroes and bad villains, rather for an “ambiguous moralism.”<sup>105</sup> The individual is “to seek his skeptical balance between ethical and political requirements through flexibility and reason, and learn to live with ambiguity.”<sup>106</sup> The same can be said of Le Carré’s later spy novels evolving around Smiley as the central character. Neither Graham Greene nor Ian McEwan followed a representational and moralizing view of the Cold War in their novels.<sup>107</sup>

The Cold War spy novel mostly did not reduplicate political narratives. It imagined the Cold War in ambiguous forms. That is even true of the James Bond saga. Whereas Ian Fleming’s print novels from the 1950s employed a bipolar view of West and East, the James Bond movies, starting with *Dr. No* in 1962, not only had a Soviet counterintelligence organization SMERSH (acronym for Russian: Специальные Методы Разоблачения Шпионов = Special Methods of Spy Detection), but also an international syndicate of criminals under the acronym SPECTRE (acronym for SPecial Executive for Counter-intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge and Extortion). The Bond saga transfigured the Cold War into a plot with three antagonists: Bond, the Soviet Union and – the longer the more – global criminals – often with a Nazi background.<sup>108</sup>

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*Citizen spy: television, espionage, and Cold War culture*, Commerce and mass culture series (Minneapolis, Minn. [u.a.]: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

**104** See Edward P. Comentale, Stephen Watt, and Skip Willman, *Ian Fleming & James Bond. The cultural politics of 007* (Bloomington, Ind. [u.a.]: Indiana University Press, 2005); James Chapman, *Licence to thrill. A cultural history of the James Bond films*, 2. ed., Cinema and society series (London [u.a.]: Tauris, 2007); Andrew Hammond, *Cold War literature. Writing the global conflict*, Routledge studies in twentieth-century literature 3 (London [u.a.]: Routledge, 2005); Adam Piette, *The literary Cold War: 1945 to Vietnam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); Nicholas J Cull, “Reading, Viewing and Tuning into the Cold War,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume II: Crises and Détente*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

**105** Myron J. Aronoff, *The spy novels of John Le Carré. Balancing ethics and politics* (Basingstoke [u.a.]: Macmillan, 1999).

**106** R. L. Garthoff, “The spy novels of John LeCarre: Balancing ethics and politics,” *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 1 (2000): 150.

**107** See Brian Diemert, “The Anti-American: Graham Greene and the Cold War in the 1950s,” in *Cold War Literature. Writing the Global Conflict*, ed. Andrew Hammond (London: Routledge, 2006), 212–225.

**108** Chapman; Comentale, Watt, and Willman.

Spy novels were popular well beyond Britain. In contrast, espionage as shown in Jean Bruce's popular French *OSS 117* novels – sold in more than 24 million copies – has to be seen against the background of the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF). *OSS 117* explicitly contested the model of Cold War modernity represented by the US. Instead it had a certain French modernity. At its center were elements of aristocratic tradition and of hypermodernity.<sup>109</sup>

French spy novels were obsessed with delivering a French version of Cold War modernity. The popular French spy novels *OSS 117* for instance played with the figure of an Anglo-American agent, but set center stage a vision of a French modernity different from the US model. Hubert Bonnisseur de la Bath not only handled his technical equipment with ease but was also of noble descent, thereby clearly distinguished from his American rivals.<sup>110</sup> But with de Gaulle's comeback in 1958, France's cultural dependence on Anglo-Saxon models ended due to a desire to reassert France's position in the world. French Cold War modernity had a quite positive relationship to tradition. It valued social cohesion more than the market model. The French spy novel represented a third way between the bloc modernities of the East and West.

## Re-coding II: Science fiction dystopias

Dystopias of all kinds were on the rise in the 1960s, containing displaced imaginations of Cold War fears, anxieties, paranoia and hopes. "One of the most striking aspects of literature written during the Cold War is the prevalence of dystopian and/or anti-utopian works."<sup>111</sup> They referred to politics in at least two ways. Dystopias satirized both society as it existed and the utopian aspiration to transform it.<sup>112</sup> According to Keith Booker, dystopian societies in science fiction novels

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**109** Paul Bleton, *La cristallisation de l'ombre. Les origines oubliées du roman d'espionnage sous la IIIe République*, Médiatextes (Limoges: Pulim, 2011); "Metamorphosis of the popular novel," *Quinzaine Littéraire*, no. 974 (2008).

**110** *Les anges de Machiavel. Essai sur le roman d'espionnage: froide fin et funestes moyens, les espions de papier dans la paralittérature française, du Rideau de fer à la chute du Mur*, Collection "Études paralittéraires" (Québec: Nuit Blanche, 1994); *Western, France: la place de l'Ouest dans l'imaginaire français* (Paris: Belles Lettres [u.a.], 2002); "Reheating the planet for spies in from the cold?," *Quinzaine Littéraire*, no. 974 (2008); "Metamorphosis of the popular novel."

**111** Derek Maus, "Series and systems: Russian and American dystopian satires of the Cold War," *Critical Survey* 17, no. 1 (2005): 72.

**112** Chris Ferns, *Narrating utopia. Ideology, gender, form in utopian literature*, Liverpool science fiction texts and studies (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).



were “generally more or less thinly veiled re-figurations of a situation that already exists in reality.”<sup>113</sup> Their themes infection, invasion by stealth, and subversion were all related to Cold War anxieties and paranoia. They grew stronger after America’s Vietnam debacle. Economically, science fiction became the dominant genre at the box office replacing the Western. The genre played on the fear that America’s capacity would not suffice to resist invasion by communist enemies and that the country would not be able to maintain its way of life in a post-apocalyptic world. Lesser-known authors like Frederick Pohl, Poul Anderson and Philip Wylie contributed to this genre of Cold War science fiction as much as the better-known Isaac Asimov, Ursula K. LeGuin, Ray Bradbury and Harlan Ellison.

In an influential essay in 1965, Susan Sontag pointed to certain aesthetic characteristics of Cold War science fiction:

Science fiction films are not about science. They are about disaster, which is one of the oldest subjects of art.

She went on:

The science fiction film ... is concerned with the aesthetics of destruction, with the peculiar beauties to be found in wreaking havoc, making a mess. And it is in the imagery of destruction that the core of a good science fiction film lies.<sup>114</sup>

Cold War science fiction exploited an aesthetic attraction of destruction, which refers not to the death of the individual but to “collective incineration and extinction.” The aesthetic of mass destruction points not to scientific, or even political utopias, but to inadequate responses to disaster, war, the Holocaust and nuclear annihilation. Susan Sontag relates the Cold War aesthetics to a more general 20<sup>th</sup> century experience of catastrophes. Science-fiction novels and films reveal human limitations in responding to “the most profound dilemmas of the contemporary situation.” The need to cope with these extreme experiences leads to a desire to neutralize and even beautify terror and anxiety.<sup>115</sup>

Science fiction novels and films interrogated key metaphors, the perception of the Cold War in the US, but also in the USSR was structured around. Such metaphors were “dangerous predator,” “paranoia,” “infiltration,” “arms race,”

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**113** Marvin Keith Booker, *The dystopian impulse in modern literature: fiction as social criticism*, 1. publ. ed., Contributions to the study of science fiction and fantasy (Westport, Conn. u. a.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 15.

**114** Susan Sontag, “The imagination of disaster,” *Commentary* 40, no. 4 (1965): 44.

**115** *Ibid.*, 48.

“iron curtain” and others. Bernard Wolfe’s *Limbo* (1952) recoded “arms race” as a race between prosthetics or artificial limbs, undermining confidence in scientific progress, since those prosthetic limbs keep rebounding on their wearers.<sup>116</sup> Nick Boddie transforms the “Iron Curtain” metaphor into an “atomic curtain” in his 1956 novel which describes post-Holocaust America, not the Soviet Bloc.<sup>117</sup> In the same way the 1954 film *Them!* uses the metaphor of ants-as-monsters and ants-as-people to depict the Soviet society.<sup>118</sup>

American as well as Soviet literary dystopias went against the simple bipolar utopian sentiment. Their authors didn’t support either side in its ideological struggle. They rather wanted to invalidate the conflicts overarching logical context. Gary Saul Morson distinguishes ‘serial dystopias’ from ‘systemic dystopias’. “In the former a society is caught in the loop of equally undesirable revolutions and restorations; in the latter all parties in a given ideological struggle are presented as dystopian, thereby undermining any claim of moral superiority therein.”<sup>119</sup> Both kinds of dystopias were applied to the Cold War.

Science fiction in the East increasingly diverged from official prescriptions and engaged in a critique of the regime and – as systemic dystopia – in questioning the Cold War itself and its assumption about a better future. The most important writers were the Strugatsky brothers in the Soviet Union and Stanislaw Lem in Poland. Science-fiction found its “main readership in a key group of the communist society: young, urban male members of the technical intelligentsia and skilled workers, fostered by the system, but with a keen sense of belonging to a global scientific community.”<sup>120</sup> Science fiction therefore was a social vision of the future with a potential to uproot its audience from the national and ideological settings they came from. For Soviet writers the dystopian character of the Soviet Union, as an inverted, not simply a failed utopia, had been made evident by nearly three decades of Stalinism. As a consequence, scientocracy – as narrated in science fiction novels – became a coded critique of contemporary party bureaucracy. Others like Stanislaw Lem went even further. He used his science fiction novels to contribute to a general cognitive theory of knowledge beyond Cold War cognitive models (*Solaris*, 1961). Vladimir Voinovich introduced a critique of the linguistic control by the communist party

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**116** David Seed, “Deconstructing the Body Politic in Bernard Wolfe’s ‘Limbo’,” *Science Fiction Studies* (1997).

**117** *American science fiction and the Cold War: literature and film*, 2.

**118** *Ibid.*

**119** Maus, 73.

**120** Patrick Major, “Future Perfect? Communist Science Fiction in the Cold War,” *Cold War History* 4, no. 1 (2003): 73, 74.

into his novel *Moscow 2042* (1986). The toilet mutates to “natfunctbur,” short for “Bureau of natural functions.”<sup>121</sup>

On the US side the same held true for the science fiction critique of the “American dream.” Particularly the 1960s and early 70s saw a massive disillusionment with an overly idealized national self-conception, that “form(ed) the core of international relations schemata such as the Cold War schema.”<sup>122</sup> The linguistic expression of this self-image was the “nukespeak,” mirroring Cold War language of the nuclear arms race,

the language of the nuclear mindset – the world view, or system of beliefs – of nuclear developers. ... (This) mindset acts like a filter sorting information and perceptions, allowing it to be processed and some to be ignored, consciously or unconsciously. Nukespeak encodes the beliefs and assumptions of the nuclear mindset; the language and the mindsets continuously reinforce each other.<sup>123</sup>

Nukespeak was in the beginning a social vision of a better future with “euphoric visions of nuclear technologies” such as X-rays or radium. That changed when the war in Vietnam and the practices of the Nixon administration motivated young writers to use Science fiction for other purposes than to celebrate American progress.

### Re-coding III: Postmodernism

Already Cold War dystopias like Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22* (1961) deflated such idealistic self-images. The irrationality of 1960s America was mirrored in multiple unpredictable reactions to almost every action in *Catch-22* that render the cause-and-effect logic largely meaningless.<sup>124</sup> Displacing the Cold War of the early 1960s in a World war II setting, he reversed the values and assumptions of warfare: heroes desert, the rules of military conduct are corrupt, the purpose of war is irrational, the game is fixed. In 1961, Joseph Heller was one of the first writers to identify the irrationality of the Cold War based on the insane logic of militarism in the nuclear age.<sup>125</sup> In Heller’s *Catch 22* “the enemy is anybody who’s going to get you killed, no

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**121** Maus, 78.

**122** Matthew S. Hirshberg, *Perpetuating patriotic perceptions. The cognitive function of the Cold War* (Westport, Conn. [u.a.]: Praeger, 1993), 17.

**123** Stephen Hilgartner, Richard C. Bell, and Rory O’Connor, *Nukespeak. Nuclear language, visions, and mindset* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1982).

**124** Maus, 81.

**125** Peter J. Kuznick, *Rethinking cold war culture* (Washington, DC [u.a.]: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

matter which side he is on. ... It doesn't make a damned bit of difference who wins the war to someone who's dead." Two years later Heller's example was followed by John Le Carré's *The Spy who Came in from the Cold*. 12 years later Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) is also set shortly before and after the end of World War II, mirroring 1970s anxieties about war and total destruction. It takes Heller's point about the irrationality of war even further into philosophical nominalism and asks, "whether meaningful events are directed by a supremely competent mailman – a symbolic order or a 'Them' – or whether they are merely made meaningful by a discourse." The context of the Cold War was immediately at hand, when he "provides a cogent tableau of the myths of individual action and of collective action, both visibly dissolving in the face of public events." Taken together Pynchon recoded Cold War conspiracies as a discourse creating its own reality.<sup>126</sup> This resonated with the broader public since the Cold War was the high noon of conspiracies, real and imagined. The quest to "know your enemy" (David Engerman) knew hardly any limitation.<sup>127</sup> The enemy was to be found in places, where one would not expect him: he was the "enemy from within." The McCarthy era gave an example of how that worked politically. The Cold War figuration was displaced historically, spatially, socially and in other ways. Its aesthetic displacement allowed for new modes of imagination, conflating dominant political and subversive ideological positions. Popular culture imagining the Cold War relocated the political conflict into rituals of everyday life, most notably modern mass entertainment, serving ideological purposes.

Literature addressed Cold War anxieties collectively as well as individually, rendering accounts not only of the red menace but also of the "yellow peril," the US image of Communist East Asia. Richard Condon's novel *The Manchurian Candidate* of 1959 manifests the "Cold War orientalism" feeding into older stereotypes of Chinese immigration.<sup>128</sup> Fears of communist brainwashing fed suspicion, paranoia and anxiety typical of the Cold War era.<sup>129</sup> Cold War literature positioned itself against the backdrop of "containment culture" (Alan Nadel). The containment policies of the 1950s made the personal political.<sup>130</sup> It made the political

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**126** Timothy Melley, *Empire of conspiracy the culture of paranoia in postwar America* (Ithaca, NY [u.a.]: Cornell University Press, 2000).

**127** Tiago Mata, "The enemy within. Academic freedom in 1960s and 1970s American social sciences," in *The unsocial social science?* (Durham, NC [u.a.]: Duke University Press, 2010).

**128** Christina Klein, *Cold War orientalism. Asia in the middlebrow imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley, Calif. [u.a.]: University of California Press, 2003).

**129** Hammond.

**130** Robin; Alan Nadel, *Containment culture: American narrative, postmodernism, and the atomic age* (Durham, NC [u.a.]: Duke University Press, 1995).

Cold War narrative relevant in every aspect of life. Containment became domestic containment. “More than merely a metaphor for the Cold War on the home front, containment aptly describe[d] the way in which public policy, personal behavior, and even political values were focused on the home.”<sup>131</sup> The historian Elaine Tyler May analyzed the *Kelly Longitudinal Study* with its interviews of 600 middle class men and women, forming their families in the 1950s, and pointed out, that “domestic containment” and Kennan-inspired political containment of communism were two sides of the same coin. The “homeward bound” Cold War culture saw women creating a secure “psychological fortress” in the apolitical, affluent, middle class suburban home containing all sorts of dangerous social forces like “women’s sexuality, homosexuality, labor unions, and civil rights activism.” They were all seen as disrupting American domestic security.<sup>132</sup>

Postmodernism tried to replace the binary language of “containment culture” (Alan Nadel) in its modernist disguise by “polysystemic mappings.” Some critics interpreted the rise of American postmodernism as “a theoretical and artistic movement that called into question the containment paradigm itself.” They claimed that by “challenging the dichotomous imagination of the Cold War, postmodernism proposed polysystemic cartographies that mediated among differentiated subjects and cultures according to the extravagant geography of ‘zigging and zagging (sides), going ahead and doubling back, making loops inside loops.’”<sup>133</sup>

John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Richard Brautigan, Robert Coover, Ursula K. LeGuin, Thomas Pynchon, Ishmael Reed and Kurt Vonnegut used the satirical mode in their critique of the binary coding of Cold War culture.<sup>134</sup> Their “critifictional discourse” not only went against all ideological dichotomies, but also against the established form of the novel. It attacked outright “the vehicle that expressed and represented that reality: discursive language and the traditional

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**131** Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward bound. American families in the Cold War era*, Fully rev. and updated 20th anniversary ed ed. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008).

**132** Barnhisel and Turner; May.

**133** Marcel Cornis-Pope, “Postmodernism’s Polytopic Imagination. Unwriting/rewriting the Cold War Narratives of Polarization,” in *Narrative Innovation and cultural rewriting in the Cold War and after*, ed. Marcel Cornis-Pope (London: Palgrave, 2001), 3; Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997), 586.

**134** After 1968 more writers emerged: Walter Abish, Raymond Federman, Kenneth Gangemi, Madeline Gins, Steve Katz, Clarence Major, Gilbert Sorrentino, and Ronald Sukenick. They rejected all “mimetic realism and mimetic pretension” and went against the “silent agreement with the official discourse of the state” altogether. Raymond Federman, *Critifiction: postmodern essays*, SUNY series in postmodern culture (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

form of the novel.”<sup>135</sup> The critique of contents went hand in hand with a critique of form. The innovation of narrative strategies was not confined to the West or to the United States. Eastern writers also employed the postmodern narrative strategy to attack the foundations of the Communist hyperreality, while writing from the margins of society.<sup>136</sup> It is here that Hayden White’s argument on the “content of form” applies most beyond historiography, since the formalism and transfiguration of the form of the novel went hand in hand with a critique of Cold War dichotomies in the West as well as of communism’s ever more futile insistence on its hyperrealism. This formalism had content that undermined the credibility of the Cold War.<sup>137</sup>

“During the Cold War Utopia came to designate the program (...) which betrayed a will to uniformity and the ideal purity of a perfect system, that has to be imposed by force on its imperfect and reluctant subjects.”<sup>138</sup> Instead irony was “the quintessential expression of late modernism and of the ideology of the modern as that was developed during the Cold War (whose traces and impasses it bears like a stigmata).”<sup>139</sup> Late Postmodernists like Frederic Jameson disrupted the bipolar thinking that had characterized Cold War culture. The impact of this development was obvious even within the narrative strategies. Postmodernism and de-storification took over from literary modernism.<sup>140</sup> Andrew Hammond points to four literary strategies in Cold War literature: narrative instability, ontological uncertainty, scathing self-reflexivity and suspicion of all forms of meta-narrative and historiography.<sup>141</sup>

There is another ring to the notion of uncertainty, that lay at the center of Cold War culture. Cold War actors were obsessed with uncertainty and chance from the early days of the nuclear age on. Uncertainty and chance could have disastrous consequences taking decision-making away from politics. This again collided with the scientific world view of communism, but also of Western modernization theory. “Stalinist objectivity” saw no room for chance in history. All

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**135** *Ibid.*, 23, 32.

**136** Cornis-Pope, 4.

**137** Hayden White, *The content of the form narrative discourse and historical representation* (Baltimore, Md [u.a.]: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

**138** Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the future. The desire called utopia and other science fictions* (London [u.a.]: Verso, 2005).

**139** *Ibid.*, 179.

**140** Marcel Cornis-Pope, “National literatures and diasporas: towards a polycentric concept of culture,” *World Literature Studies* 2, no. 1 (2010); M. Cornis-Pope, “Reading cultures: The construction of readers in the twentieth century,” *College Literature* 26, no. 2 (1999).

**141** Hammond.

political and economic changes occurred according to historical destiny. Jerzy Kosinski, a US writer of Polish descent and winner of the National Book Award, engaged with the motto “There is no chance, comrade!” in “The future is ours, comrade!” (1960). He associated ‘chance’ with American freedom and the denial of chance with Soviet totalitarianism, resonating the ideology of the Ford Foundation and the US establishment. The concept of chance circulated in Cold War literary culture, not only in the cultural Cold Wars of the 1950s.

Think tanks like the RAND Corporation tried to tame uncertainty by using game theory. Based on game theory and refined mathematical models Hermann Kahn came to the conclusion that 2 million dead in the US meant two years of economic recovery whereas 160 million dead resulted in a 10-year recovery period. The Cold War obsession with chance started on the front pages of the *New York Times*, game theory was first discussed in the comics section of *The New Republic*.<sup>142</sup> The shift from modernism to late modernism around 1960 goes along with a shift in looking at chance and uncertainty: where game theory could provide some certainty and validity in dealing with uncertainty, authors like Thomas Pynchon and Vladimir Nabokov use chance as tracers for the fault lines of Cold War culture. Thomas Pynchon's *V.* (1963) and Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale fire* (1962) gave it another twist, foregrounding the critique controlling cultural formations in the US. Pynchon and Nabokov dealt with chance and design, Pynchon in a critique of what he saw as the “tyranny of capitalist aesthetics,” Nabokov exposing the homophobic narrative of postwar US culture.<sup>143</sup>

Both authors can be seen paradigmatically as examples for the rise of self-reflexivity in Cold War literature. Both turned on the literary conventions of the high modernism. Robert Genter has labeled this “late modernism.” Marcel Cornis-Pope prefers to label it “early postmodernism.”<sup>144</sup> These scholars observe a kind of cultural sea change in the early 1960s from high modernism to late modernism: in painting from Jackson Pollock to Andy Warhol, in literature from Jack Kerouac to Thomas Pynchon, and in literary criticism from Allen Tate to Paul de Man. The latter ones all shied away from what was evident to the former authors or painters. Robert Genter defines late modernism as follows:

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**142** Steven Belletto, *No accident, comrade chance and design in Cold War American narratives* (Oxford [u.a.]: Oxford University Press, 2012).

**143** Joseph Kosinski and Irving R. Levine, *The future is ours comrade conversations with the russians* (London: The Bodley Head, 1960); Belletto; Thomas Pynchon, *V. a novel*, 4. impr ed. (Philadelphia u.a.: Lippincott, 1963); Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov, *Pale fire a novel*, 1. impr ed. (New York: Putnam, 1962).

**144** Marcel Cornis-Pope, *Narrative innovation and cultural rewriting in the Cold War and after* (New York, NY [u.a.]: Palgrave, 2001).

Unwilling to abandon the literary and cultural revolution begun in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by their modernist predecessors, whose original goal was to explore new forms of consciousness and unearth new forms of perception in the hopes of transforming the world at large, late modernists argued not only that the nature of the aesthetic form needed to be rethought in an age of mass media but that the general assumptions about the nature of subjectivity needed to be updated. They reformulated aesthetics as a mode of symbolic action – a deliberate attempt to use the aesthetic form to challenge the choice of lens through which individuals made sense of the world around them and to persuade them that the visions offered by the artist were not merely more poetic but possibly more liberating.<sup>145</sup>

At the center of this shift away from modernist to “late modernist” Cold War culture stood self-reflexivity, which was expressed through new literary techniques, the cracking open of traditional plot structures, exposing open ends and in general a higher awareness of the process of literary production and of the author. Thomas Pynchon stood for the “scathing self-reflexivity,” that went along with the search for the nature of subjectivity. He, John Barth, John Hawkes and others wrote about the end of the subject with depthless and empty characters rejecting the heroism of high modernity. In cultural analysis authors like Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man and Roland Barthes went against the notions of the author and the text as the grounds for meaning. Its Cold War context was shining through in what they distanced themselves from: the high modernist belief in the autonomy of the arts as proof for a free society.<sup>146</sup>

## Re-coding IV: Movies

Recoding the Cold War in popular movies was largely achieved through aesthetic displacements. While some movies directly reenacted the conflict between ‘capitalists’ and ‘communists’ on the screen, others displaced the conflict to other settings.<sup>147</sup> The cinematic displacement into a family setting was particularly thrilling. It evolved around the generational conflict of the “nuclear family” that emerged out of the civil rights movement.<sup>148</sup> As a result Cold War visual

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**145** Robert Genter, *Late modernism: Art, culture, and politics in Cold War America*, The arts and intellectual life in modern America (Philadelphia, Pa. [u.a.]: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 4.

**146** *Ibid.*, 316.

**147** Tony Shaw and Denise J. Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War: the American and Soviet struggle for hearts and minds* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010).

**148** Frank Costigliola, “The Nuclear Family: Tropes of Gender and Pathology in the Western Alliance,” *Diplomatic History* 21, no. 2 (1997).



culture transformed the conflict between “them versus us” into “we versus us,” opening up internal differences regarding class, gender, and race. Movies could and did internalize the Cold War from a political conflict into a psychological drama.

Displacement of the Cold War in film often took on the form of Western and cowboy movies. The height of the early Cold War was the peak of Western movies. “The Western was *the* genre of the period after World War II.” In the 1930s their strong moral message had reassured a depression ridden American audience. After 1945 Western movies portrayed US resistance against USSR aggression in historical disguise. John Ford’s *Cavalry Trilogy* (*Fort Apache* 1948; *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* 1949; *Rio Grande* 1950) was especially famous for visualizing the fear of external enemies, celebrating traditional American values and glorifying the military. Films like *The Searchers* (John Ford 1956), *Shane* (George Stevens, 1953), *The Alamo* (John Wayne, 1960 version), and particularly *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (John Ford 1962) connected frontier morality with the Cold War.<sup>149</sup> The frontier Western heralded the individual citizen, that could stand above the law when defending his family, city or – by extension – his country. They emphatically dramatized freedom by showing “a hero who must disobey commands in order to save the command *structure*.”<sup>150</sup> The moral impulse of John Ford’s film was clear: the hero had to act alone to preserve the social order. The Hollywood Western provided a mythic landscape and a compelling narrative of American power during the Cold War. It reinscribed “the time-honored myth of heroic frontier individualism into the demands of uniting to defeat a common enemy, and thereby both proving and effectuating the nation’s moral right to victory.”<sup>151</sup>

The Western lost its prominent position in Cold War culture in the 1960s and was replaced by SciFi movies of the “Star Trek” and “Star Wars” type. The movie organizing metaphor of life on the frontier with all its enemies was kept and displaced into space. Producer Gene Roddenberry referred to Star Trek as a “wagon trek to the stars” and to its actors as “pioneers of the space age.” The opening line of the first series ran “Space, the final frontier.”<sup>152</sup> As Steven Belletto

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**149** Corkin; Richard Aquila, *The sagebrush trail: western movies and twentieth-century America*, The modern American West (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015).

**150** Peter Baker, “Directions in left theory – cinema in the wake of the cold war,” *Minnesota Review*, no. 41–42 (1994).

**151** Arthur F. Redding, *Turncoats, traitors, and fellow travelers: culture and politics of the early Cold War*, 1. print. ed. (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 134.

**152** Susanne M. Maier, “Star Trek und das unentdeckte Land am Rande des Universums. Ein amerikanischer Mythos,” in *Sinnwelt Film. Beiträge zur interdisziplinären Filmanalyse*, ed. Wilhelm Hofmann (Baden-Baden: 1996).

put it: “The Western goes galactic.” The first *Star Wars* (*IV*) film came out in 1977. It transferred tropes and conventions of Western movies to another galaxy and tried to re-contextualize the US Cold War ethos. After Vietnam and – to a lesser degree – Watergate the object-specific meaning of “East versus West” had lost its meaning. The small planet earth was put in a multi-galactic perspective. Whereas the Western was a historical and legitimating myth, the *Star Wars* films presented the possibility of heroism, love, and success only, when all earthly social, historical and even natural realities are set aside.<sup>153</sup>

Another displacement in Cold War films were historical epics, most prominently in the 1950s, reenacting the Cold War antagonism of freedom versus dictatorship in biblical times and moralizing it at the same time. These moralizing historical displacements were a common feature of Cold War cinema. Historical epics as Cecil B. DeMille’s *Ten Commandments* (1956), Stanley Kubrick’s *Spartacus* (1960) or Anthony Mann’s *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964) served as historical illustrations of a contemporary conflict. The Jewish emancipation from the tyrannical Pharaoh bore a direct resemblance to the US fight against Soviet atheism. The extremely conservative director Cecil B. DeMille, whose taste for biblical drama and proportions earned him the nickname “Apostle to Millionaires,” articulated the film’s message:

The theme of this picture is whether men ought to be ruled by God’s law or whether they are to be ruled by the whims of a dictator like Ramses. Are men the property of the state or are they free souls under God? This same battle continues throughout the world today. Our intention was not to create a story but to be worthy of the divinely inspired story created three thousand years ago: the five books of Moses.<sup>154</sup>

## Re-coding V: Internalizing the Cold War

Another mode of displacement was the tendency to internalize the Cold War conflict into the society, the individual or gender roles. Political scientist Michael Rogin read its polarization as the third demonology of US society after slavery and socialism. These challenges were seen as subversions and answered by the

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<sup>153</sup> Steven Belletto and Daniel Grausam, *American literature and culture in an age of cold war. A critical reassessment*, New American Canon (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012), 191; Will Wright, “The Empire bites the dust,” *Social Text* (1982).

<sup>154</sup> Alan Nadel, “God’s Law and the Wide Screen: The Ten Commandments as Cold War ‘Epic’,” *PMLA* 108, no. 3 (1993): 417.

US establishment with “counter subversions.”<sup>155</sup> From the 1950s on invisible internal Soviet agents replaced the alien or African-American underclass as the target of Cold War counter subversion. It was the invisibility of its influence that distinguished the Communist Party from other legitimate opposition groups of the past. Rogin sees the most important impact of Cold War movies in the fact that it made visible three threatening changes:

The first development was the rise of the national security state, which counteracted Soviet influence by imitating Soviet surveillance. The second ... arose from the simultaneous glorification and fear of maternal influence within the family. The third was the emergence of a mass society which seemed to homogenize all difference that makes subversives difficult to spot.<sup>156</sup>

Visual culture made two divisions visible that were constitutive for Cold War demonology: the distinctions between the free man and the state on the one hand and the free state and the slave state on the other. According to Rogin’s interpretation of Cold War cinema, the first division was visually imagined by the second division: the division between the free man and the state was made visible through the division between the free and the slave state. Beyond both divisions lay the emotionally even stronger division between motherhood and communism, charging the domestic Cold War culture with gender roles.

The internalization of the Cold War threat was particularly evident when it came to the motives of the safety of the homeland and the security of the family. Most prominent are Alfred Hitchcock’s comments on Cold War culture in *The Birds* (1963). Birds stood here for symbols of nuclear bombs and unprovoked attacks, mirroring a deep Cold War fear. Cinematic displacement showed communism as a threat to home and hearth, to the family as the psychological fortress, from which American citizens could defend their country. A particular threat to the family was also at stake in the newly established theme of the alien invasion that fed into paranoia. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* by Siegel and Kaufman from 1956 is an example in place. John Frankenheimer’s *Manchurian Candidate* (1962) addresses the motif of the ultimate “enemy from within,” which is brainwashed and lives next door.<sup>157</sup> The “enemy from within” was represented in this genre

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<sup>155</sup> Michael Rogin, “Kiss Me Deadly: Communism, Motherhood, and Cold War Movies,” *Representations*, no. 6 (1984).

<sup>156</sup> Gilles Colpart, “America and the Soviet Union – The Cold war of cinema,” *Revue du cinema*, no. 450 (1989): 3.

<sup>157</sup> The “*Manchurian Candidate*” is particularly well researched. Cf. inter alia: S. L. Carruthers, “The ‘Manchurian Candidate’ (1962) and the Cold War brainwashing scare,” *Historical Journal of Film Radio and Television* 18, no. 1 (1998); Gongzhao Li, “The Manchurian Candidate and brain-

as a force within the human psyche. The spreading fear of enemies from within catered to what Richard Hofstadter addressed as *The paranoid style in American politics* (1964).<sup>158</sup> This paranoia assumed that the enemy was already within the country, the family or even the individual psyche. It is this paranoia that led novelist and literary theorist Samuel Delany to suggest in his novel *Nevèrjòn* (1979) that the only hero left in Western civilization must always be a spy.<sup>159</sup> Accordingly the political witch-hunt of “containment culture” and the search for the enemies within aimed ultimately at the collapse of the public and private sphere.

## Re-coding VI: Social sciences

From early on in the Cold War the social sciences engaged in the analysis of its actors and its very nature. That wasn't done for scholarly purposes, but rather to serve the political needs of the US administration. The social sciences provided important weapons in and paradigms for the understanding of the supposed enemy. Rather than being purely academic and scholarly objective, the social sciences of the early Cold War recoded the political antagonism in a scholarly fashion. Modernization theory provided a language to discern the Western societies as modern societies and distinguish them from all other societies as well as to win over the recently decolonized states in Africa and Asia. What modernism was for the arts modernization theory was for the social sciences. This aspect has been studied intensively.<sup>160</sup> The key point then was, that the social sciences and even modernization theory took on a new function, when the social sciences stepped out of the role they were supposed to play and recoded the Cold War from new perspectives.

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washing: From Cold War paranoia to anti-terrorist paranoia,” *Foreign Literature Studies* 29, no. 4 (2007); Jean Brugelle, “OSS 117,” *Quinzaine Litteraire*, no. 974 (2008); Kirshner Jonathan, “Subverting the Cold War in the 1960s: Dr. Strangelove, The Manchurian Candidate, and The Planet of the Apes,” *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 31, no. 2 (2001); Perucci Tony, “The Red Mask of Sanity: Paul Robeson, HUAC, and the Sound of Cold War Performance,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 53, no. 4 (2009).

**158** Richard Hofstadter, *The paranoid style in American politics and other essays*, [1st ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1965).

**159** John Nelson, *The American Political Science Review* 95, no. 1 (2001): 250; Melley.

**160** Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as ideology. American social science and “nation building” in the Kennedy era*, New Cold War history (Chapel Hill, NC [u.a.]: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Sebastian Conrad, “‘The Colonial Ties are Liquidated’: Modernization Theory, Post-War Japan and the Global Cold War,” *Past & Present*, no. 216 (2012).

Cold War Sovietology had the function to help “know your enemy.” Dressed up in academic language and university institutions it was serving both “Mars and Minerva.” It became a national endeavor to analyze almost every aspect of Soviet life and present it in a Cold War manner to the American public. In the beginnings Soviet Studies were funded by government institutions and major private foundations so as to present scholarly evidence of a homogeneous Soviet threat to the US. One example was the “Harvard refugees interview project” referred to as “Russian interview project” (RIP) and paid for by the United States Air Force with one million dollars. At the initiative of Frederick Osborn this program was designed to figure out what made the new adversary tick. Members of the Truman administration felt that they did not understand their Russian counterparts. Behavioral sciences should solve the riddle.<sup>161</sup> The investigation team interviewed Russian displaced persons in Germany to find out whether the Soviet Union was stable or likely to break down. The US Air Force wanted a “working model of the Soviet social system” and proof of the aggressiveness of a fragile system without inner support.

The findings of the researchers Joseph Berliner and Clyde Kluckhohn refuted their funder’s view of the Soviet Union. “In most respects Soviet society reflected the characteristics of a class society of the Western industrial kind.”<sup>162</sup> The RIP did not prove that the Russian society was of socialist nature. Contrary to its loud ideological proclamations of a complete lack of historical precedents, the RIP saw Russian society as a stable industrial society, in many ways not so different from the US. Kluckhohn’s team insisted that the USSR wasn’t on the brink of collapse and had wide if not deep support from its citizens. US Forces wouldn’t be greeted as liberators.<sup>163</sup> Merle Fainsod’s analysis of the Smolensk archive delivered another blow to common convictions of the inner fragility of totalitarian party rule by a small elite of party rulers in the Kremlin. His findings contradicted the Soviet stereotypes in the US almost in every aspect.<sup>164</sup>

The rise of a generation of post-behaviorist social science scholars in the 1960s introduced new perspectives and made Cold War social sciences more reflective on the Cold War. The center of the research agenda shifted from explor-

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**161** An equivalent of 9 million \$ in 2009.

**162** Tony Shaw, “Cinema, Television and the Cold War Introduction,” *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 10, no. 1 (2013): 369; Joseph M. Bochenski, *Soviet Russian dialectical materialism (Diamat)* (Dordrecht, Holland,: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1963), X.

**163** David C. Engerman, “Social Science in the Cold War,” *Isis* 101, no. 2 (2010): 399.

**164** James R. Arnold and Roberta Wiener, *Cold War. The essential reference guide* (Santa Barbara, Calif. [u.a.]: ABC-CLIO, 2012); A. L. Adamishin and Richard Schifter, *Human rights, perestroika, and the end of the cold war* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2009).

ing the stability, homogeneity and identity of a given society to analyzing social inequality, reproduction of social groups and access to political communication. Cold War social science transformed into social science of the Cold War, looking at the antagonism with its tools and concepts and not taking its methodology from a bipolar ideology.

Soviet studies benefited academic life as much if not more than national security. During the 1960s their belief in academic independence and neutrality while simultaneously being funded by the government was undermined. New cohorts of experts arrived and the division between the totalitarian and the revisionist approaches grew ever deeper. Soviet studies outgrew the know-your-enemy approach, gradually evolving into the study of Russia as an important world culture.<sup>165</sup> Instead of providing proof for a central control of the Soviet bloc, the new research made differences and distinctions visible within Russian society and politics. Since the 1960s it served less and less to buttress political claims against the enemy. Social scientists replaced anti-Communists in the Russian Centers. Sovietology's political lustre dimmed, when less partisan researchers began to make the heterogeneity of Soviet-style societies visible.<sup>166</sup>

Social science's role in the Cold War was ambivalent. First social scientists heralded modernization and economic development as key paradigms, but later they shied away from such grand narratives. They began to repudiate the teleologies underlying modernization and the dichotomy of "modern versus premodern/traditional." Instead plural, hybrid, and non-teleological approaches were favored. The competition of blueprints led to the emergence of a model of "multiple modernities." Social scientists did not simply defend Western democracy and market capitalism, they tried to transform it. Indeed, the Cold War gradually became an era of capitalist and communist self-reform.<sup>167</sup>

What was the impact of this recoding of the Cold War? Cold War culture became self-reflexive, it reflected on itself and provided models to put the Cold War into perspective. Once self-reflexivity – particularly in the social sciences – was a cognitive pattern, bipolar schemes of the Cold War could not be upheld. When in 1979/80 the political antagonism between East and West sharpened again, political actors could not count on the support of the arts and of culture in general.

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**165** Elena Osokina, "Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts," *Slavic Review* 70, no. 1 (2011): 207.

**166** Shaw, "Cinema, Television and the Cold War Introduction.," Engerman.

**167** Howard Brick, "Optimism of the Mind: Imagining Postindustrial Society in the 1960s and 1970s," *American Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (1992); *Transcending capitalism. Visions of a new society in modern American thought* (Ithaca [u.a.]: Cornell University Press, 2006).

## 4 Conclusion

Different concepts of culture reveal different Cold War cultures. The most common notion of culture refers to practices of representation. From this perspective Cold War culture was about various ways of representing the actors, the enemies and the conflict. These representations focused on competing forms of modernism in the East and the West. Representing Modernism in one way or the other was therefore a central feature of the cultural Cold War. A second concept of culture tries to make visible the production of meaning, the re-coding and re-imagining of the Cold War. In this view, Cold War culture wasn't a function of the conflict, but rather a field where its meaning was negotiated. These meanings changed over time. The most profound changes were the internalization of the Cold War and the reflexivity with which scientists came to look at the antagonism. These changes occurred mostly after the Cuban Missile Crisis offered a spectre of worldwide self-destruction. The Cold War turned into an object of cultural criticism. The Cold War cultures were never merely straightforward projections, simple or plain reproductions of Western or Eastern ideology. Over time, they entailed displacements, irony, hybridization and tragedy on both sides.<sup>168</sup> Due to such practices of hybridization, bipolar imaginaries such as "East" and "West" or "center and periphery" became blurred.<sup>169</sup> Sharpening them again ran against considerable resistance after 1979.

What did the Cold War produce culturally? What was its lasting impact? The Cold War's influence on Europe was more qualitative than quantitative. "It shaped existing disputes and older developments more than it inspired new trends."<sup>170</sup> The creative potential after 1945 came mostly from actors and movements that were only indirectly related to the Cold War, for instance the student rebellion in the 1960s or the new ideological debates after the end of the postwar boom in 1973. The end of the postwar growth produced more new ideas than the preceding Cold War confrontation. That becomes even clearer if one compares the cultural production of the interwar years with the Cold War, a period of relative peace and stability in Western Europe. Classical modernity reached its apogee in the 1920s and 30s, while postmodernism triumphed in the 1980s. The cultural Cold War

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**168** See Elisabeth Bronfen and Anne Emmert, *Hybride Kulturen. Beiträge zur anglo-amerikanischen Multikulturalismusdebatte*, Stauffenburg discussion (Tübingen: Stauffenburg-Verl., 1997).

**169** Vittoria Borsò & Christiane Liermann & Patrick Merziger, "Transfigurationen des Politischen. Von Propaganda-Studien zu Interaktionsmodellen der Medienkommunikation – eine Einleitung," in *Die Macht des Populären. Politik und populäre Kultur im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Vittoria Borsò & Christiane Liermann & Patrick Merziger (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2010), 20f.

**170** Gienow-Hecht, 398f.

in many ways drew on older models and ideas. It hardly overcame them. It used them in new ways, assembled them in new assemblages or – to borrow a term from Claude Lévi-Strauss – Cold War bricolages.

George Orwell once remarked that the Cold War did generate a vocabulary of its own. The *lingua belli frigidi* knew mostly negative terms that stemmed from its bipolar logic. This vocabulary contained invectives like “‘lackeys’, ‘pinkos’, and ‘running dogs’, ‘fellow-travellers’, ‘cliques’ and ‘deviationists’, ‘card-carrying’, ‘paper tigers’, ‘henchmen’, ‘stooges’ and ‘revanchists’”. Other terms denoted states or cities: ‘Formosa’, ‘Red China’, ‘Beijing’, ‘Pankow’, ‘Leningrad’ or ‘Karl-Marx-Stadt’, now Chemnitz. The Cold War semantics comprised “central committees” and ‘Five Year Plans’ as well as ‘Kremlinology’. Historical metaphors were held in especially high esteem. Brezhnev and other party leaders often used the phrase “History teaches us.” Lenin knew history on his side, when he, “the thinking guillotine,” quoted the Latin verse: *volentem ducunt, fata nolentem trahunt*. In October 1989 Mikhail Gorbachev made that the same point by warning that “latecomers will be punished by life.”<sup>171</sup>

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171 Fred Halliday, “‘High and just proceedings’: Notes towards an anthology of the Cold War,” *Millennium-Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 3 (2001).