

# Introduction

At the conclusion of John le Carré's novel *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (1974), the charismatic traitor at the heart of British intelligence articulates one of the key themes of le Carré's work, declaring his belief that 'secret services were the only real measure of a nation's political health, the only real expression of its subconscious'.<sup>1</sup> When five years later the novel was adapted for television by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), this metaphor would acquire an additional layer. Asked by director John Irvin how the interior spaces of the intelligence service should be depicted on-screen, le Carré was said to have replied that 'the dusty offices, the corridors, the elderly office furniture and even the anxiously cranking lifts of MI5 felt like, looked like and had some of the same kinds of people – as the BBC.'<sup>2</sup>

In fact, this point of comparison was neither unique nor historically specific. Twenty-three years later writer David Wolstencroft was devising the format for a new original BBC spy series which depicted the activities of a counter-terror section within the British Security Service (MI5). In a later *Radio Times* interview he admitted to the impossibility of gaining access to the real MI5 as part of his research for *Spooks* (BBC 1, 2002–11), but noted that 'having been in the BBC quite a lot, I wondered whether it wasn't quite a good model.'<sup>3</sup> Yet the BBC of the 2000s that Wolstencroft used as his inspiration was a very different place to that described by le Carré in the late 1970s. So too, for that matter, was the intelligence world that both programmes presented as their subject.

Although both anecdotes are clearly presented with a degree of humour, this comparison is more revealing than it might first appear.

In the very broadest sense the worlds of intelligence and public service broadcasting are both part of the UK's utility infrastructure, a key part of their function being to gather information and ideas from the nation and from overseas. Both, however, deploy this information for almost entirely opposing purposes. The intelligence services are tasked with supplying intelligence to their customers in other parts of the state apparatus, an interaction most commonly without a public dimension. Indeed, throughout most of the period covered by this book, they were officially unavowed by the British government, operating without statute or external regulation until the end of the Cold War, although by then their existence had long been an open secret.

The BBC, by contrast, is fundamentally oriented towards the dissemination of information and ideas to an external public, having been established under its founding Director-General John Reith with a remit to create a responsible, informed and educated citizenry. As Paddy Scannell writes, the arrival of British broadcasting in its original public service model brought into being 'a culture in common to whole populations and a shared public life of a quite new kind'.<sup>4</sup> In providing an unprecedentedly equal access to the wide spectrum of public life, it fundamentally enhanced British democracy. A view that *this* public institution was (or should be) a social microcosm of the entire country was therefore not merely a literary device or matter for interpretation but in fact a central tenet of its mission and self-identity.

This book provides a history of the spy genre in British television drama, alongside its cousin the conspiracy genre which also often focuses upon the world of intelligence but typically from an external and more critical perspective. The analysis is framed by the notion that the on-screen depiction of intelligence services in such programmes can be interpreted, to varying extents, as providing metaphors for the broadcasting institutions that create them. As such, it provides parallel and intersecting case studies through which it is possible to trace the changing roles of such large public institutions in British politics and society over the latter half of the twentieth century.

The history of intelligence in Britain is arguably irreducible from its representation in popular media. The earliest generation of spy novels by authors such as William le Queux and E. Phillips Oppenheim grew out of paranoia about national security and

imperial resilience in the run-up to the First World War, and had stoked popular paranoia about German espionage to such an extent that they helped to inspire the creation of the Secret Service Bureau, the foundational organisation of British intelligence.<sup>5</sup> Later administrative changes brought about by the First World War saw the development of two major sections specialising in *humint* (human intelligence) that would endure through the twentieth century and beyond. The Security Service (MI5), responsible to the Home Office, was charged with domestic counter-espionage intelligence with a remit to cover only British territory, whilst the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, or more popularly MI6), responsible to the Foreign Office, was charged with supplying the British government with intelligence from overseas.

The spy thriller would also develop during the war in the hands of writers such as John Buchan, forging one of the most ostensibly political of popular genres, described by Michael Denning as providing ‘cover stories’ which translated ‘the political and cultural transformations of the twentieth century into the intrigues of a shadow world of secret agents’.<sup>6</sup> Although the fictional genre’s relationship to real intelligence activity would often be subject to criticism over the years, it nonetheless provides a point of interest to intelligence scholars through, as Wesley K. Wark writes, providing ‘a guide not to how things are, but to how things are perceived to happen’.<sup>7</sup>

The following decade saw the emergence of the BBC, initially as a radio broadcaster. Despite it originating during peacetime, the early interwar period was still a time when the government continued to accept an interventionist role. Thus, influenced by the massive centralisation of resources in the First World War, the BBC was established as a public corporation, its Royal Charter enshrining political independence from the government and a duty to political balance, founded as Jean Seaton writes ‘on a rejection of politics’.<sup>8</sup> A limited television service commenced in 1936; however, it was the role of its radio broadcasts during the Second World War, by which time 75% of the British population possessed a radio set, which cemented the BBC’s position in the national psyche.

Intelligence and broadcasting would both expand in the post-war period. Richard J. Aldrich describes how ‘a revolution in the nature of secret service, especially intelligence-collection, beginning with the outbreak of the Second World War, accelerated over the next

half-century. The end result was intelligence and security organisations on an unimaginable scale.<sup>9</sup> This came in response to the onset of the Cold War against Soviet Communism, a state of prolonged geopolitical tension which dominated the latter half of the twentieth century in which, as Peter Hennessy writes, ‘intelligence was the surrogate for hot war’.<sup>10</sup> In parallel, television rapidly established itself as the mass medium of choice for the increasingly affluent post-war society. In 1955 the BBC gained a commercial rival in Independent Television (ITV), funded according to the advertising model established in American television, yet still enshrined with a public service remit enforced through regulation to address fears of trivialisation. This established a duopoly which would endure for the next 27 years.

The 1950s also saw a popular re-emergence of the spy novel. At the forefront of this was a series of novels by Ian Fleming featuring the glamorous super-spy James Bond, beginning with *Casino Royale* (1953). Responding to the mass professionalisation of society in the Second World War, these reworked the protagonist from the gentlemanly amateur of early twentieth-century spy thrillers to a licensed professional agent, and therefore stand as a crucial moment at which the secret state emerged as a popular topic for fiction. The Bond novels initially only achieved modest sales in their original hardback editions; however, they were dramatically propelled to huge commercial success with the publication of paperback editions by Pan later in the decade. Like the television medium, they can therefore be situated with the emergence of the post-war mass culture, as affordable popular media circulated more readily amongst middle- and working-class audiences. With Bond demonstrating an ostentatiously consumerist streak (albeit countered by a reassuring conservatism in attitudes to empire, patriotism, race and gender), both Bond himself and the secret agent more broadly became heroes for the affluent society.<sup>11</sup> Whilst this may, in many regards, seem a peculiar response to the paranoid landscape of the nuclear stand-off, ultimately this was simply a reworking of the spy thriller’s established strategy of, as Michael Denning describes, using the spy to link ‘the actions of an individual – often an “ordinary person” – and the world historical fate of nations and empires’. Through this, ‘the secret *agent* returns human *agency* to a world which seems less and less the product of human action.’<sup>12</sup> This was the fantasy at the heart of the genre’s most heroic incarnations.

As the popularity of Bond grew, on several occasions Fleming entered into negotiations with US networks for a television series based on Bond or similar characters, evidently recognising the potential of the television medium (and particularly the commercial television series) for such heroic spy narratives.<sup>13</sup> However, it would be Britain's ITV who would pioneer the television spy series from the turn of the 1960s, having already given US-style action-adventure series a British twist in the form of costume swashbucklers such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (ITV, 1955–59). Thus the commercial broadcaster traded off the genre's strongly British roots with a myriad of espionage-themed action series over the new decade. These were a key part of the new populist strain that ITV brought to British television, and many would achieve international popularity including sales to US networks. Some harkened back to the gentleman amateur tradition, particularly those derived from pre-war literary sources including *The Saint* (ITV, 1962–69) and *The Baron* (ITV, 1965–66), whilst others including *Danger Man* (ITV, 1960–68) and *The Avengers* (ITV, 1961–69) featured professional agents closer to the Fleming tradition. Indeed, it is the somewhat ambivalent relationship that these programmes have with professional espionage that leads James Chapman instead to argue for the alternative term 'adventure series' in order to prioritise the central 'emphasis on action and suspense'.<sup>14</sup>

Despite being one of the best-known incarnations of the spy genre on British television, it may disappoint some readers that this book gives only passing attention to these 1960s adventure series. This is partly due to their highly exceptional status within British broadcasting history, produced more according to the institutional model of American television, as briefly explored in Chapter 1. It is also due to the fact that these have already been analysed by an extensive body of literature, most notably Chapman's expansive study of the cycle, *Saints and Avengers: British Adventure Series of the 1960s*, as well as Toby Miller's short monograph on *The Avengers* and key chapters of David Buxton's *From The Avengers to Miami Vice* and Miller's *Spyscreen: Espionage on Film and TV from the 1930s to the 1960s*.<sup>15</sup> Such studies typically consider the programmes in question as products of the popular culture and social changes of the 1960s, although Buxton further situates them within the broader development of action-adventure series on either side of the Atlantic.

This book, by contrast, provides a full diachronic account of the spy and conspiracy genres across British television from the 1960s to the 2000s. In exploring the long-term evolution of a genre, it mirrors analyses of the evolution of the spy novel by writers such as Denning, John G. Cawelti, Bruce A. Rosenberg and Allan Hepburn,<sup>16</sup> as well as studies of the development of the James Bond phenomenon across different media by scholars such as Chapman, Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott.<sup>17</sup> It is also designed to complement more general diachronic histories of British television drama, most notably Lez Cooke's expansive account,<sup>18</sup> using this generic case study to providing a fresh perspective on the institutional and aesthetic development of the medium over a period of five decades.

The omission of the adventure series is also partly due to the comparatively minimal narrative focus given to the world of the secret state, with even those series featuring professional agents giving comparatively little attention to the intelligence agencies who license their missions. Instead, this book primarily focuses on programmes which examine the secret state itself as a site of drama and intrigue, a counter-movement which would begin to emerge by the end of the 1960s. Indeed, even as the adventure series, along with the successful James Bond film series (beginning with *Dr. No*, Terence Young, 1962), emphasised the spy as a hero of consumerism and modernity, their real-life counterparts were experiencing a substantial image problem. For intelligence services on both sides of the Atlantic, high-profile scandals such as the US Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) sponsorship of the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, and the UK's Profumo Affair in 1963, marked the onset of what Aldrich terms the 'era of exposure', as 'public curiosity about secret service matters grew exponentially and the previous readiness by newspapers to practise deliberate self-censorship was being swept aside by a new conviction that these were matters of public interest.'<sup>19</sup>

Fascination with the CIA particularly tended to centre on the issue of covert action or 'special operations', by which the agency sought not merely to gather intelligence but to alter world events through the 'hidden hand'. Whilst the potential of the spy to exercise agency over large-scale historical forces lay at the root of the *fictional* spy thriller's appeal, for many observers in the real-world context of the 'era of exposure' such interventions seemed less a sign of heroic individual agency and more the sinister machinations

of secretive and unaccountable bureaucracies. Subsequently, the early 1970s saw the emergence of a new Hollywood genre which reworked the conventions of the spy story to show a more paranoid view of intelligence. The conspiracy thriller, as Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner write, reversed 'the polarities of earlier political thrillers, which generally affirmed American institutions, by suggesting that the source of evil was those very institutions'.<sup>20</sup>

This was also a period which saw the power of broadcasting to intervene on matters of public perception and opinion come into question. In a 1959 collection of polemics against the entrenched British power elite, journalist Henry Fairlie argued that the BBC 'has done more than any other body to buttress the most conservative institutions in the country, to create and perpetuate reverence for the orders, the privileges and the mysteries of a conservative society'.<sup>21</sup> Yet in the 1960s a contrasting line of criticism centred on a tradition of 'progressive realism' developed within the BBC's most prestigious drama strand, *The Wednesday Play* (BBC 1, 1965–70), and associated with figures such as producer Tony Garnett and director Ken Loach. Plays such as *Cathy Come Home* (BBC 1, 1966) and *The Big Flame* (BBC 1, 1969) were self-consciously 'radical' productions, seeking to focus on the marginalised, expose social injustice, and critique the *status quo*. Their existence was often championed as a testimony to the BBC's political independence and support for challenging and original art, yet conservative critics argued that *The Wednesday Play* had been colonised by the political left. Yet conversely, on the inside the BBC had been regularly consulting MI5 over its internal vetting since 1933 in order to prevent potential communist infiltration, a practice which over time came to serve a parallel function as a shield from government accusations of left-wing bias.<sup>22</sup>

A parallel can therefore be drawn between the intelligence's 'era of exposure' and controversy surrounding the BBC's radical currents, both arising over the 1960s and 1970s. Both centred on the potential for these institutions to exceed their ostensibly apolitical gathering and dissemination of information and instead more actively influence events, whether according to the partisan agenda of the government of the day or the unaccountable internal political culture of the institution itself. This book considers how both of these concerns came to intersect with the British television spy series and its later offshoot, the conspiracy drama, examining how

they adapted generic conventions of action and suspense in order to engage with the revelations, rumours and suspicions surrounding the increasingly 'known' (but no less secretive) intelligence world, whilst deploying aesthetic innovations and sometimes radical politics from the progressive realist tradition.

John Corner identifies several different aspects of television which might receive differing levels of emphasis in a historical study, and this book aims to explore numerous points of intersection between them. As a study centring on a popular dramatic genre, much of its analysis is focused on the aspect that Corner terms '*television as representation and form*, an aesthetic framing drawing on the vocabularies of arts criticism'.<sup>23</sup> This is accomplished through the close analysis of a number of key case study texts, with one or two programmes considered in-depth in each chapter. This book does not aim to provide a comprehensive account of every single espionage-related drama produced for British television. Studies which have sought to do this, such as Wesley Britton's *Spy Television*, which provides a comprehensive overview of Anglophone television spy dramas (albeit from a largely American perspective), encounter the problem that the amount of relevant material is so extensive that they are unable to provide a satisfying depth of analysis.<sup>24</sup> Although the case study approach is necessarily selective and poses problems of unrepresentativeness, I have aimed to address this by focusing on the programmes in question not as 'typical' but instead as crucial historical turning points, an approach suggested by Jason Mittell as a potential means of negotiating specificity and generality in genre studies.<sup>25</sup> As such, programmes are analysed as moments of *intervention* in the history of television drama and its representations, building and innovating upon prior works in areas such as narrative form, themes and aesthetics, and demonstrably influencing subsequent texts. Indeed, with several of the long-running programmes covered, my analysis deliberately focuses not on the entire run but on a shorter period in which the programme's generic or cultural intervention was at its most potent or interesting.

Analysis of the spy thriller has historically tended to operate around the basic opposition between 'romance' (as typically epitomised by Fleming) and 'realism' (as typically epitomised by le Carré). Whilst the 1960s adventure series generally correspond to the former category, the spy dramas considered in this book more often fall into the latter. Yet Denning advocates deemphasising



question of ‘realism’, arguing that ‘those distinctions are rooted less in any fidelity to the “real” than in divergent attitudes to games, to established codes, to ethical structures, and to work and leisure.’ Rather than rejecting the ‘realist’ descriptor entirely, I will instead trace how the devices used to suggest the real have shifted over time. I adopt Denning’s argument that ‘realist’ spy fiction from the 1960s can generally be productively characterised instead as ‘existential thrillers which play on a dialectic of good and evil overdetermined by moral dilemmas, by moves from innocence to experience, and by identity crises’.<sup>26</sup> However, in response to the increasing public visibility of the intelligence services, I argue that later ‘realist’ spy dramas on television have been characterised by a partial drift away from the existential tone and towards evoking authenticity through a new emphasis on documentary detail and procedure.

On British television, this intersects with a contrasting set of medium-specific debates over ‘realism’ where it has often evoked the aforementioned progressive realist tradition. Yet television’s ‘realism’ is also far from stable, John Caughie arguing that it ‘has been an extremely broad church, able to change colour to blend with its background, seldom binding itself with a programmatic manifesto, happy to transform to the new currents it encounters on its way – naturalism, surrealism, the Absurd, Brecht – and equally happy to be transformed by them’.<sup>27</sup> This book will also explore how changing conventions of ‘realism’ in British television have crossed with the concerns of ‘realist’ spy fiction, most notably through a thematic interest in class politics and the deployment of a 16mm film documentary aesthetic.

My aesthetic analysis is enhanced by an exploration of ‘*television as making*’, by which I make use of a diverse and rich array of archival and interview material to explore the specific production of individual programmes. This provides a microcosmic portrait of the broader aspect of ‘*television as institution*’, whereby I situate such programming within the cultures of their broadcasters and production companies, structuring the organisation of the chapters around this.<sup>28</sup> The first two chapters are primarily focused on espionage-themed programmes produced by regional franchise-holders for ITV in the late 1960s and 1970s, as with ITV being by far the most prolific broadcaster of spy series during this period it is important to consider this commercial television context in order to explore how

many standard generic conventions were innovated and popularised. This provides crucial context for understanding the BBC more fully in later chapters, as it increasingly adopted populist genre strategies previously associated more with ITV. Chapter 5 also examines the arrival of Channel 4, Britain's third and final broadcaster to be enshrined with a public service remit. This pioneered a new, decentralised model of publisher-broadcaster, and Chapter 6 will explore how this impacted upon the BBC. This will enable a wider exploration of how what began as one of the most commercial genres on British television increasingly became embraced by the BBC with dramas as varied as *Tinker Tailor* and *Spooks* as the corporation struggled to maintain an appropriate balance in its programming between 'popular', 'serious' and 'quality' in the competitive multi-channel age against the decline of public service values in British culture and the growing importance of the international television market.

Finally, I consider the issue of '*television as a sociocultural phenomenon*, deeply interconnected with high politics, with the shifting circumstances of the public sphere and civil society, with popular culture and with the changing character of the home and of domestic values'.<sup>29</sup> This account is particularly concerned with the unusually wide social reach of television by comparison to other media, possessing the same national scope as the typical narratives of spy dramas. So whilst Wark discusses the appeal of spy fiction to 'its market niche and loyal readership',<sup>30</sup> this book explores instead how broadcasting enabled the television spy genre to frequently reach far *beyond* the niche audience of the spy novel and connect with a more *general* public, particularly during the years when British television consisted of a very limited number of channels. On a single night's network transmission, television spy dramas could often reach a larger audience than more culturally-respected spy novels could achieve in years of book sales. These dramas of *national* security are therefore, more than anywhere else, addressed *to the nation* in the form of broadcasting's general public.

It should be noted that although there is a vein running throughout the book concerning intersections between UK and US dramas in terms of production, aesthetics and institutions, this is not a central focus of the book, nor are the relations between spy films and television dramas. Furthermore, whilst the main case study

analyses of Chapters 3 and 5, *Tinker Tailor* and *A Very British Coup* respectively, are both novel adaptations, and although some consideration is given to their relationship with the source material, again adaptation is not the primary focus.

Chapter 1 analyses *Callan* (ITV, 1967–72), an early attempt to rework the literary existential spy thriller into an ongoing television series. This converged the genre with another area in which ITV had specialised, that of class, with protagonist David Callan (Edward Woodward) positioned as a lower-middle-class assassin coerced into doing the dirty work of an elite Establishment. I examine how it overcame the limitations of its predominantly studio-based production, using the expressive close-up to generate a more psychological drama. I also explore how, freed from the standardisation required for the international television market during this period, it pioneered techniques of serialised television which would later become standard in ‘quality’ television on the global market. Finally, I chart how, against the economic downturn at the end of the 1960s, the cynical, pessimistic tone of *Callan* matched the times and enabled it to become a significant popular success in its home country, where audiences became keenly invested in the fate of its anti-hero protagonist.

Chapter 2 considers two ITV series from the 1970s which asserted new claims to ‘realism’, through their focus on real, specifically identified intelligence sections within the state apparatus. Firstly, I look at *Special Branch* (ITV, 1969–74), which focused on the titular section of the Metropolitan Police. Although not one of the primary intelligence agencies, I argue that this was a means by which television drama sought to explore concerns surrounding national security at a time when little information about MI5 was publically available. In particular, I examine its innovative use of extensive 16mm filming on location on its 1973–74 series, drawing substantially from recent developments in progressive realist drama, which enabled it to site new anxieties surrounding the rise of terrorist violence within a vivid social context. Secondly, I look at *The Sandbaggers* (ITV, 1978–80) which focused on a fictional Special Operations section within SIS. As a studio-based drama, I examine how it instead sited its ‘realism’ in a complex portrayal of intelligence bureaucracy, focusing strongly on conflicts and rivalries in Whitehall in counterpoint to dangerous missions into Cold War landscapes.

Chapter 3 examines the 1979 dramatisation of *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, positioning this as an early instance of spy drama on the BBC surpassing ITV's work. This was in fact produced within the classic serial strand, a long-standing public service tradition that was increasingly serving a double function as British television's most profitable export. I examine how *Tinker Tailor* utilised the classic serial's long-form serial narrative to present a self-consciously challenging, complex text, yet was able to appeal to a mass audience through striking a careful balance between the underlying simplicity of its whodunit narrative and the pleasures of incomprehensibility. I also explore how *Tinker Tailor* further built upon trends for increased location filming to set le Carré's world against evocative landscapes and architecture, using these spaces to vividly chart the journey of protagonist George Smiley (Alec Guinness) into an institutional 'heart of darkness' as he searches for the traitor.

Chapter 4 explores the emergence of the British television conspiracy drama during the 1980s, from a new trend towards original 'authored' drama serials, arguing that this form provided an effective vehicle for subversive genre deconstructionist narratives. Firstly, I look at Ron Hutchinson's *Bird of Prey* (BBC 1, 1982), an innovative techno-thriller which examined the rise of the computer and the free market economy, and its sequel, *Bird of Prey 2* (BBC 1, 1984), which expanded this with new graphic design techniques to dramatise computer and surveillance themes. I then examine a more prestigious serial, Troy Kennedy Martin's *Edge of Darkness* (BBC 2, 1985), which mounted a sombre allegory of the nuclear state, situating both the on-screen narrative and production circumstances against the transformative politics of Margaret Thatcher's government. Andrew Gamble characterises the political philosophy of this administration in terms of 'a fierce commitment to the ideal of a more limited government and freer markets, and a readiness to use the powers of the state to confront those groups that resisted'.<sup>31</sup> Whilst the ideology of the free market economy placed the BBC in jeopardy, the fierce adherence to state secrecy provided much material for paranoid thrillers. Yet I also explore how the production of a 'controversial' state-of-the-nation drama as prestige piece was part of a bold strategy by which the BBC aimed to prove the continuing worth of public service broadcasting.

Chapter 5 examines *A Very British Coup* (Channel 4, 1988), a conspiracy serial produced by the independent company Skreba

Films and transmitted by the UK's new publisher-broadcaster Channel 4. Depicting a socialist Labour Prime Minister becoming the victim of a plot running across the Establishment, this was a far more overtly radical drama than concurrent BBC serials, which I argue was a result of the leftist culture of its production and the decentralised model of Channel 4. I explore how it pushed aesthetic experimentation with 16mm to new extremes, creating a fragmented paranoid visual style emphasising mediation and surveillance in public life in a manner that would prove highly influential. Finally, I focus on the conclusion, when the drama self-reflexively sites its hope for overturning conspiracy in using the television medium to restore a utopian notion of a unified culture defined by common goals. I juxtapose this with the reality of the 1990 Broadcasting Act which remodelled British television into an ever more fragmented landscape of atomised consumers.

Chapter 6 analyses *Spooks* (BBC 1, 2001–11) as a product of both the ascendant 'super-indie' culture in the deregulated age and attempts to make BBC 1 more competitive in the new multi-channel environment. I explore how it drew upon the increasingly visible world of post-Cold War intelligence, presenting MI5 in the workplace family terms of the precinct drama. I also consider how it simultaneously developed a glamorous, stylish identity to compete with the highest-end US television, whilst also demonstrating public service seriousness in its willingness to take on big topical and often controversial issues. Production of its first series coincided with the onset of the 'war on terror', a new narrative of geopolitical tension which restored the intelligence services to the forefront of the popular consciousness and provided a new element of credibility that *Spooks* would increasingly seize upon. Through this complex balance, I explore how it was successful in appealing to a broad audience, contributing to the wider BBC 1 renaissance and helping to renew the potential for a public service broadcaster to reach a wide general public.

Corner suggests that the aspects of television historiography discussed above 'give television quite a distinctive character as being about artefacts, people, practices and institutions, and concerning both "internal" issues (about matters of development and relationship inside "television") and "external" matters too (important questions about how "television" relates to larger social and cultural questions)'.<sup>32</sup> A similar characterisation could be made for

intelligence history, also with a sharp divide between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ issues. What is at stake is therefore questions of representation, in the case of intelligence agencies relating to how they are depicted on-screen, and for broadcasting institutions providing a way to examine how they have sought to represent *themselves*. Georgina Born describes how ‘drama output is critical for the popularity of the BBC as well as for its cultural aspirations’ as in an increasingly hostile climate it ‘frequently bears the burden of justifying the British system of public service broadcasting as a whole’.<sup>33</sup> The following account of television drama’s changing representation of intelligence institutions provides a compelling opportunity to examine not just ‘how things are perceived to happen’ in intelligence but also how broadcasting institutions have conceived their own role within society.

### Notes

- 1 John le Carré, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (London: Pan Books, 1975 [1974]), p. 306.
- 2 Jean Seaton, *‘Pinkoes and Traitors’: The BBC and the Nation, 1974–1987* (London: Profile Books, 2015), pp. 402–403.
- 3 David Wolstencroft; quoted in Jeff Dawson, ‘The Spies have it’, *Radio Times* (31 May – 6 June 2003), p. 19.
- 4 Paddy Scannell, ‘Public Service Broadcasting and Modern Public Life’, *Media, Culture and Society* 11:2 (April 1989), p. 138.
- 5 Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (London: Penguin, 2010; updated ed.), pp. 3–28.
- 6 Michael Denning, *Cover Stories: Narrative and Ideology in the British Spy Thriller* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 2.
- 7 Wesley K. Wark, ‘Introduction: Fictions of History’, *Intelligence and National Security* 5:4 (1990), p. 13.
- 8 Jean Seaton, ‘Reith and the Denial of Politics’; in James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility: The Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain* (London: New York: Routledge, 2010; 7th ed.), p. 107.
- 9 Richard J. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America, and Cold War Secret Intelligence* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2002), p. 637.
- 10 Peter Hennessy, *The Secret State: Preparing for the Worst 1945–2010* (London: Penguin, 2010; 2nd ed.), p. 2.
- 11 Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott, *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1987), pp. 22–29.

- 12 Denning, *Cover Stories*, p. 14.
- 13 James Chapman, *Licence to Thrill: A Cultural History of the James Bond Films* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), pp. 44–45.
- 14 James Chapman, *Saints and Avengers: British Adventure Series of the 1960s* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p. 13.
- 15 David Buxton, *From The Avengers to Miami Vice: Form and Ideology in Television Series* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 72–119; Chapman, *Saints and Avengers*; Toby Miller, *The Avengers* (London: BFI, 1997); and Toby Miller, *Spyscreen: Espionage on Film and TV from the 1930s to the 1960s* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 88–121.
- 16 John G. Cawelti and Bruce A. Rosenberg, *The Spy Story* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Denning, *Cover Stories*; and Allan Hepburn, *Intrigue: Espionage and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
- 17 Bennett and Woollacott, *Bond and Beyond*; and Chapman, *Licence to Thrill*.
- 18 Lez Cooke, *British Television Drama: A History* (London: BFI Publishing, 2003).
- 19 Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, pp. 607–608.
- 20 Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 95.
- 21 Henry Fairlie, 'The BBC'; in Hugh Thomas (ed.), *The Establishment: A Symposium* (London: Blond, 1959), p. 191.
- 22 Seaton, 'Pinkoes and Traitors', pp. 291–299.
- 23 John Corner, 'Finding Data, Reading Patterns, Telling Stories: Issues in the Historiography of Television', *Media, Culture & Society* 25:2 (March 2003), p. 275.
- 24 Wesley Britton, *Spy Television* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004).
- 25 Jason Mittell, *Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture* (New York; London: Routledge, 2004), p. 24.
- 26 Denning, *Cover Stories*, pp. 34–36.
- 27 John Caughie, *Television Drama: Realism, Modernism and British Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 69.
- 28 Corner, 'Issues in the Historiography of Television', pp. 275–276.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Wark, 'Fictions of History', p. 8.
- 31 Andrew Gamble, *The Free Economy and the Strong State: The Politics of Thatcherism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994; 2nd ed.), p. 7.
- 32 Corner, 'Issues in the Historiography of Television', p. 276.
- 33 Georgina Born, *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC* (London: Vintage, 2005), p. 15.