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**The Imaginative Labor of Psychological Warfare: Paul M. A. Linebarger and  
Cordwainer Smith**

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**Introduction**

What was the relationship between imaginative labor and agency work in the mid-twentieth century United States?<sup>1</sup> In this article I approach the question through a case study of Paul M. A. Linebarger, a pioneer in the development of the theory and practice of psychological warfare in the 1940s and 50s. In the CIA training manual that Linebarger wrote in 1950, *The Handbook of Black*, we find the concept of “imaginative sharing,” which, I argue, helps us to understand the overlapping and mutually constitutive terrains of cultural and agency work in the period. In what follows, I read Linebarger’s work, such as *The Handbook of Black* and his 1948 book *Psychological Warfare* alongside the science fiction of the mid-century author Cordwainer Smith, in order to show how the concept of imaginative sharing was understood and deployed across the world of psychological warfare *and* literary production. I conclude

by examining how imaginative sharing was instrumentalized in the writing of both Linebarger and Smith as a tool for the remote maintenance of imperial power.

We must begin, however, with the extraordinary fact that Paul Linebarger and Cordwainer Smith are one and the same person, an understudied polymath who straddled the worlds of national security and genre fiction by using a pseudonym. While historians of intelligence and psychological warfare have paid Linebarger some fleeting attention, and a few scholars of science fiction have explored his literary work, the rich interrelation between the two has not been given the sustained attention it deserves. Since neither Linebarger nor Smith is widely known, an introductory biographical sketch is needed.

Linebarger was born in Milwaukee in 1913, but spent much of his childhood abroad following his family, most notably in China, where his father served as a legal and political advisor to the Chinese Nationalist Government.<sup>2</sup> He studied at the University of Nanking, at George Washington University and the University of Chicago, eventually completing a PhD in Asiatic Studies at Johns Hopkins in 1936. Linebarger joined the US infantry during World War Two but became closely involved as a Far Eastern specialist in the setting up of OWI, and sat on the Operations and Intelligence Planning Board. At the end of the war, Linebarger remained in close contact with his military and security networks, publishing the first book explicitly devoted to psychological warfare in 1948. He continued to serve as a specialist consultant on psychological warfare and covert operations for much of the remainder of his life. He was employed by the CIA until 1962, providing training and handbooks as well as policy advice on China and the Far East. He also built an academic career as a professor of political science at Duke University and then, from 1946, as a Professor of Asiatic Studies in the Institute for Advanced International Studies at his *alma mater* Johns Hopkins. After his death in 1967 at the age of 54, Linebarger was described by the senior CIA operative Miles Copeland as “perhaps the leading operative of ‘black’ and ‘grey’ propaganda in the Western

world,” but he remains a peripheral figure in contemporary histories dealing with these topics.<sup>3</sup>

Linebarger occupies a comparably peripheral position in the history of US science fiction under the name Cordwainer Smith. He is sometimes included in surveys of the “golden age” of the 1940s and 50s, but rarely seen as a major figure alongside his better-known contemporaries, such as Robert Heinlein and Isaac Asimov.<sup>4</sup> He began writing fiction while still a schoolboy, inspired by his reading of weird and adventure pulps in the 1920s, where he discovered the stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs and H. G. Wells alongside reprints of nineteenth-century adventure and detective fiction by Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne. He majored in English literature at George Washington University and spent a term reading medieval English at Oxford University in the UK, all the while making sporadic attempts to get his fiction published in pulp venues like *Amazing Stories*. In the immediate post-war years, under the name Carmichael Smith, he published two psychological novels and one spy thriller with the respectable New York publishers Duell, Sloan and Pearce. His science fiction breakthrough, however, came in 1950, when his story “Scanners Live in Vain” was printed in the little-known magazine *Fantasy Book*, before being noticed and anthologized by the great Golden Age editor and author Frederik Pohl. Following this recognition, Smith went on to publish another twenty-seven stories and one novel during the 1950s and 60s, mostly conforming to the pattern of a future history. These were set in a fictional universe he dubbed “The Instrumentality of Mankind,” named for the ruling cabal which presided over it (about which more later). Despite being lauded by many of his contemporaries in science fiction author circles, his literary difficulty, his conservative politics, and increasingly overt Christian commitments meant that his work found fewer new readers among the “New Wave” of science fiction in the late 1960s and 70s. His influence can be detected among

many of the next generation, however, most notably in the work of Ursula Le Guin, who cited his work as one of her own chief inspirations.<sup>5</sup>

“Imaginative sharing” appears as a key concept in Linebarger’s theorization of black ops, but in the form of telepathy it also underpins the functioning of the universe he created as Cordwainer Smith. I show how, in *The Handbook of Black*, it designates an aspect of the operative’s labor, an activity by which an individual can imaginatively “enter” the mind of another in a way analogous to that by which the reader of a novel can access the psychology of certain characters. Imaginative sharing, in this case, mobilized feelings of friendship and kindness in order to achieve the end of destroying one’s enemy. In the following section, I show how Smith’s science fiction conceptualized imaginative sharing as carrying a utopian charge which was nonetheless overshadowed by its deployment in the service of domination and coercion. Finally, in considering Linebarger’s developing political thought in his notebooks and diaries, I suggest how the science fiction gestures towards the function of imaginative sharing only hinted at in his agency writing: its authoritarian use as a means to achieve governmental control through anti-democratic means, and thus as an instrument of the US imperial project after World War Two.

### **National Security, Imagination and the Realm of Culture**

Before examining imaginative sharing in Linebarger and Smith, it is necessary to establish how this concept relates to the existing scholarship on cultural work and the US intelligence agencies during and after World War Two. We begin with two established historical facts. When new national security agencies such as the Office for War Information and the Office of Strategic Services were set up shortly after the United States entered World War Two, they recruited significant numbers of staff who had developed, or were in the process of

developing, professional lives in the artistic and cultural spheres: those who produced or studied culture in the specialized sense of literature and the arts.<sup>6</sup> Members of OWI and OSS included novelists and poets, journalists, playwrights, painters, photographers and filmmakers, advertising creatives and scholars of literature and the arts.<sup>7</sup> They included some major figures from the 1930s cultural field, from the poet Archibald MacLeish, who helped to set up OSS, to the playwright Robert E. Sherwood, who went from speechwriting for Franklin Delano Roosevelt to directing the Overseas Branch of OWI.<sup>8</sup> More numerous were those younger recruits who went on to prominent careers in cultural work after the end of World War Two. This group exhibits an extraordinary breadth of activity and achievement: a brief indicative list would include Charles Olson, Gordon Parks, Ernestine Evans, Richard Ellmann, Saul Steinberg, Jane Jacobs, and Wilbur Shramm, founder of the Iowa Writers' Workshop as well as a pioneer of modern mass communications theory.<sup>9</sup> Linebarger thus fits a clear pattern of US intelligence recruiting from among cultural workers.

The second fact is that the World War Two agencies, and then, after 1947, the newly-formed CIA, devoted considerable resources to the covert creation, promotion and distribution of cultural products in order to advance US interests on the global stage. This process led to what scholars now describe as “the cultural Cold War,” in which paintings, poems, novels and criticism were conceived by government agencies as ideological instruments capable of bringing about desired ends in the service of imperial power, particularly the association of the United States with a new concept of freedom based on individual autonomy, of which artistic activities were a powerful exemplar.<sup>10</sup> There is no evidence to date that Linebarger's work as a science fiction writer was directly sponsored by the CIA as part of its various programs of cultural public diplomacy. His correspondence, however, does suggest that he accepted the central premise of the cultural Cold War, that cultural production was a legitimate and effective means of cultural diplomacy, fulfilling a

propaganda function in transmitting US cultural values. When, in 1957, his fiction editor Herbert Gold wanted to extend the circulation of *Galaxy* magazine to the Middle East, he requested Linebarger to write him a letter he could use to help facilitate an export license. Linebarger readily agreed, writing enthusiastically of “the unique role which high-quality science fiction performs in reaching audiences who are impervious to the ordinary blandishments of American mass communication, whether private like *Time* or public like USIA publications. Science fiction is, to many limited but very sensitive and very valuable audiences, like a penetrating oil – it reaches where no other medium can reach.”<sup>11</sup>

We know, then, that the new national security apparatus was led and staffed to a significant degree by cultural workers, and that the deployment of cultural products was understood to be an important component in their strategies. What concepts do we need, however, to transform these empirical observations into a theory of the agencies’ cultural work? To date, much of the scholarship directed at this question has taken the instrumentalization of culture at face value. In devoting its energies to the documenting of the cultural Cold War, it has internalized its logic, detailing the many ways artworks were used by state agencies, but without closely considering the artworks themselves. Thanks to this scholarship, we have a detailed sense of the labor of cultural diplomacy and the institutions which carried it out, but a much less developed understanding of how particular artists or artworks navigated the tensions between aesthetics and ideology in the Cold War.<sup>12</sup> We know much about how Cold Warriors used particular writers and artists to advance perceived national interests, but lack accounts of how (if at all) we should interpret those artworks differently in the light of their instrumentalization.

Some of the most compelling work in Cold War cultural and literary studies in recent years has devoted itself to thinking about the agencies themselves as self-consciously crafting and curating their own public image through various representational means.<sup>13</sup> Timothy

Melley's discussion of the "covert sphere" that emerged from agency work in the later part of the twentieth century stands out as a particularly important intervention in this regard.<sup>14</sup>

Melley shows how covert state operations contributed to a breaking down of once-reified distinctions between empirical facts and imaginative fictions, with wide-reaching significance for our understanding of postmodernity. Here, in distinction from more empirically-minded archival scholarship on the cultural Cold war, we find a dialectical approach to the traditional opposition in mid-century liberal thinking between the operation of the individual creative imagination on the one hand and the practical, technocratic labor of agency work on the other. For Melley, agency work during the Cold War and its aftermath became increasingly fictional in its attenuating relationship to truth, albeit with alarming real-world effects.

Rather than understanding the labor of cultural work to be subordinate to the dominant category of agency work, as in the cultural Cold War model, I suggest in this article that we need new concepts by which we can reveal these categories to share a common identity in the exercise of the imagination.<sup>15</sup> Their separation to some extent reflects a disciplinary division of labor in the academy going back to the professionalization and specialization of higher education after World War Two, which has tended to hive off investigations of creativity and imaginative representation as a branch of knowledge with its own distinct methods incommensurate with political theory and sociology, one more suited to English professors and philosophers of aesthetics than to the social and political sciences.

Against the grain of these developments, as early as 1944 the sociologist C. Wright Mills was already thinking about the ways various conventionally distinct forms of intellectual labor could be grouped together as sharing certain characteristics and social functions in the United States.<sup>16</sup> He began to describe the activities of writing and screenwriting, visual design, advertising, teaching, politics, public relations, broadcasting and journalism as "cultural work," by virtue of their functions in producing and reproducing the



ideology of the ruling class. He coined the term *cultural apparatus* to designate the system by which cultural work—including but not limited to imaginative labor—was sponsored, determined, and distributed by powerful state and para-state institutions in the service of a capitalist economy and a nationalist state on permanent war footing.<sup>17</sup> The cultural apparatus provided the lens through which Americans understood themselves and the world, and reported on what they saw. Wright's work effectively described for us the dynamics of the cultural Cold War before the fact, but without the necessity for the secret CIA instrumentalization of culture, and the melodramas of the covert sphere. Cultural work was already deeply enmeshed in the workings of the state, in ways that were apparent to anyone who cared to look.

The breadth of Mills' concept of the cultural apparatus is both its strength and its weakness. It has the benefit of providing a way for us to grasp and map the interconnection of different kinds of intellectual labor in the midcentury United States, but the cultural apparatus is also a baggy concept. In encompassing such a broad range of intellectual work, it does not alone afford us the precision we need in order to theorize the relationship between imaginative activities and agency work that took place during and after World War Two. For this task, we can look to the historical archive itself, and discover there not only accounts of the instrumentalization of culture, but also discussions of the imaginative nature of much agency work, taking place among those responsible for it. In the work of Linebarger we find one of the concepts we need: *imaginative sharing*.

To be clear, my argument here is not simply that Linebarger drew on the knowledge and experience he gained from the security apparatus when he wrote fiction, though it seems likely that to some extent he did. In this regard he was not exceptional, as the examples of Graham Greene, John Le Carré, Ian Fleming in the British context suggest. Rather, my claim is that Linebarger's idiosyncratic career as writer of fiction, academic political theorist and

agency man reveals something new about the way imaginative labor was theorized and practised across these spheres, allowing us to make better sense of the evidently critical role played by cultural workers in the midcentury security apparatus. By reading the various aspects of his thinking comparatively, we stand to see the divisions between Linebarger's various professional lives fall away, and realize the way they complimented one another because of their shared core activity in conceiving the process of human imagining not only as a free activity associated with human leisure and flourishing, but also as a means for achieving particular ends—in this case the power to control and coerce without resort to violence. At stake here are the methodological foundations of a properly interdisciplinary Cold War studies, one which can use the archival records of the Cold War to produce new theories and frameworks capable of advancing our understanding of its history.

### **Imaginative Sharing**

The concept of imaginative sharing appears in a document Linebarger wrote for the CIA in 1950, a training manual for new operatives called *The Handbook of Black* which, unlike his *Psychological Warfare*, was for internal use only. “Black” here refers to black ops, the practice of creating and distributing information under conditions of deception, in which the information is knowingly false and/or its origin is falsified. *The Handbook of Black* belongs to a particular moment in the early development of the CIA after its founding in 1947, when George Kenan successfully made the case to President Truman that psychological warfare and covert operations should constitute a major part of the new organization's activities. In the years to 1951, the CIA's covert operations section grew by 2,000 percent.<sup>18</sup>

Much of *The Handbook of Black* is concerned with the relationship between ethics and imagination. Linebarger is clear that black ops require operatives to suspend the ethical

norms that govern behavior in everyday life and conventional war. Black ops, he explains, aims to create a nightmare world, operating “at the fringes of war, in the gutters and sewers, as it were.”<sup>19</sup> The paradox he identifies as the greatest challenge for black operators is that to be successful they must deceive and harm one’s enemy on the one hand, while simultaneously participating in their interior lives on the other. This participation is conducted through the work of the imagination. This kind of work, he says, “requires a special kind of personality and a special kind of talent”. “To get at them,” he writes, “he must move over with them. He must share their kind of hopes, their kinds of ambitions, their resentments, fears, superstitions. If he does not know the language or the country at first hand, he must at least be able to open his heart and his mind to an imaginative sharing of their kind of experience.”<sup>20</sup> Imaginative sharing, in the way Linebarger uses it here, resembles a process that modern philosophers call *simulation*, in which an individual “places” herself in the mind of another in order to predict the target’s future actions.<sup>21</sup> Yet, the concept also suggests a distinctively literary style of thinking, which, as we will see, was a consistent feature of Linebarger’s work across academic, security and fiction-writing spheres throughout his career. As such, the concept’s rich history in literary and philosophical studies requires some attention in order to help us to understand its importance. Passages like this one, from *The Handbook of Black*, can be profitably read using knowledge and methods more familiar from those disciplines than from intelligence studies.

In the passage, Linebarger evokes a standard trope in the history of detective fiction established by Edgar Allan Poe, whereby the detective must in some sense imitate the mental processes of the criminal in order to solve the crime. Linebarger had read Poe assiduously as a student, recording in his diaries that he sought out James A. Harrison’s standard biography, *Life of Edgar Allen Poe*, as supplementary reading while studying at George Washington University in 1929.<sup>22</sup> Poe’s “The Purloined Letter” (1844), the third and final of his tales

featuring the detective August Dupin, offers a clear and influential discussion of simulation as a process that can be instrumentalized in order for an individual to gain an advantage over an adversary, just as Linebarger suggests in *The Handbook of Black*. Dupin identifies with his opponent, the Prefect, in order to place himself in the Prefect's mind and thus discover the location of the hidden letter. Yet the difference between the ways Poe and Linebarger handle the process of identification helps to clarify what is particular to Linebarger. What distinguishes his version of this trope is his emphasis on the affective dimensions of the process, and on the common humanity held by both operative and enemy. Dupin's identification with the Prefect in "The Purloined Letter," by contrast, is purely mechanical. Dupin models this process of simulation on that of an eight-year-old schoolboy he once observed winning marbles from his peers by guessing which hand they concealed them in:

Upon inquiring of the boy by what means he effected the *thorough* identification in which his success consisted, I received answer as follows: 'When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression.'<sup>23</sup>

Strikingly, the model of simulation sketched in Poe's story seems to offer no place for the imagination at all. Due to the automatic correspondence between facial expression and thought, the boy has only to *observe* the thoughts attributed to his opponent as they arise in his own mind. Linebarger's imaginative sharing, however, like most philosophical accounts of simulation, is premised on the recreation of the target's mind using the imagination. In distinction from Poe's emotionally distant version of simulation, Linebarger's imaginative

sharing is, in his own words, “not accomplished by cold intelligence; it is accomplished better by the use of your whole personality, by the human you, working with the American you.”<sup>24</sup>

Linebarger’s theory, then, requires a combination of imagination and feeling. “The tiniest degree of real kindness towards your enemy may very well catalyze your own understanding of psychological warfare. It is part of the paradox of this unusual kind of struggle that the friendlier you feel toward the enemy, the more readily you can destroy him.”<sup>25</sup> I want to concentrate on the paradox Linebarger identifies here, which demands of black operatives in the Cold War an imaginative labor of self-alienation, whereby those attributes of the self that are understood to define the human are mobilized precisely in order to destroy people identified as fellow humans by virtue of sharing those very attributes. The emotions conjured by the power of the imagination—a terrain traditionally conceived in philosophical thought as lying outside the bounds of instrumental reason—is now conceived as a means by which to achieve ends determined by the state.<sup>26</sup>

Linebarger’s emphasis on kindness, friendliness and the heart opens onto a long tradition of thinking about imagination that seeks to theorize its relation to empathy, morality, and feeling, going back as far as Adam Smith and David Hume.<sup>27</sup> For these moral sentimentalists, the capacity for empathic feeling was precisely what distinguished humans as social animals, and what gave humans the capacity for moral judgements. Linebarger, with his wide university education in philosophy, literature and political theory, was likely to have known Smith and Hume well. His model of imaginative sharing cleaves close to Smith’s idea of “fellow feeling.” Smith describes the process we now recognize as simulation, in which we use the imagination to form conceptions of another’s thoughts and feelings by “representing to us what would be our own, if we were in his case.”<sup>28</sup> He describes how we “enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree is not

altogether unlike them.”<sup>29</sup> Only in undertaking this process can individuals make effective moral judgments, by noting the relationship between the real situation and the real response, then measuring it against what they believe they would have done themselves.

Although this emphasis on the role of imagination in facilitating (or even constituting) moral judgments became less popular among philosophers after the succeeding interventions of Kant and his insistence of the primacy of reason in morality, it was later taken up by the American pragmatists John Dewey, and there are in the early-twenty-first century a number of philosophers who maintain that morality requires the exercise of imagination.<sup>30</sup> Linebarger’s evocation of imaginative sharing, then, crystalizes a tension in the history of thought on empathy and imagination. It asks operatives in 1950 to follow Dupin’s example by contextually simulating the target’s mental processes so they might outwit and defeat them, but it also recognizes that such simulations become all the more effective if operatives first use their imaginations to cultivate feelings of kindness and friendliness for their targets. It asks them to summon the capacity for moral judgments made on the basis of shared human experience, only to disregard them in acts of betrayal and duplicity.

Imaginative sharing is such an important concept for our investigation into the cultural work of covert operations because it is richly interwoven with the history of thought about the empathic function of narrative fictions. Put simply, the experience of following and reflecting upon narrative fictions has always been understood by a significant number of people—rightly or wrongly—as a privileged means of exercising and refining the same imaginative capacities that Smith understood to lie at the heart of our social and moral lives.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, Smith cites romance and tragedy as being capable of eliciting the same kind of response to suffering as real-life situations, by allowing us to “chang[e] places in fancy with the sufferer.”<sup>32</sup> Defences of the novel in the discourse of nineteenth-century British literary

culture often had recourse to similar claims. In a famous statement she made in a letter to Charles Bray, George Eliot claimed that “the only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings, is that those who read them should be better able to imagine and to feel the pains and joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures.”<sup>33</sup> This tradition of thought on literature and the moral imagination finds its apotheosis in the late-twentieth century in the work of liberal moral philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum and Richard Rorty, who rehearse Eliot’s ideas in strikingly similar terms.<sup>34</sup>

The dominant trends in mid-twentieth-century US literary criticism, however, were less directly focused on the affective qualities of imaginative sharing than on how it requires its participants to develop a capacity to navigate complexity. In this context, the emphasis shifts away from sentiment towards a more dispassionate use of the imagination to hold and evaluate several contradictory thought patterns simultaneously.<sup>35</sup> We can look here to the context in which Linebarger discusses imaginative sharing in *The Handbook of Black*. He asks his operatives to imagine being a Russian looking back at the Cold War from a point in the future where psychological warfare has “destroyed the politburo which had such a stranglehold on your life and your hopes. The Americans who played tricks on you were—like characters in a Dostoievski novel—compounded like all the rest of us, good and bad.”<sup>36</sup>

Linebarger’s decision to evoke Dostoevsky here is significant. Dostoevsky is not just a convenient Russian novelist with whom to conjure the American imagination of a Russian mind, though he is of course that. More importantly, Dostoevsky served as an exemplar of the complex moral imagination made possible by the novel tradition, with its ability to grasp human character as internally various and contradictory, and as a counterexample by which to highlight the supposedly reductive moral vacuity of Soviet realism. In *The Liberal*

*Imagination*, published in the same year as *The Handbook of Black*, one of the nation's most prominent literary critics, Lionel Trilling, called this quality "the idea of the mind as a divisible thing," and found it exemplified in "Dostoevsky's brilliant instances of ambivalent feeling."<sup>37</sup> Philip Rahv, another of the most influential critics of the period, argued for the contemporary relevance of Dostoevsky, noting the way his work emphasized the "complex and conflicting motivation" of his characters.<sup>38</sup> "In the sphere of imaginative creation," Rahv noted, Dostoevsky "discovered inversions and dissociations in human feeling and consciousness which to this day literature has but imperfectly assimilated."<sup>39</sup> When Linebarger asks his CIA trainees to undertake this complex, self-reflexive imaginative process—to simulate how Russians might imagine them, as compounded individuals full of vexed, contradictory feelings and motivations—he is asking them *to think like novelists*. Linebarger, after all, was himself a writer of fiction. In the next section, we see how ideas of imaginative sharing were extended and explored in his science fiction tales.

### **Cordwainer Smith, Mindreading and the Psi Boom**

Paul Linebarger's discussion of imaginative sharing in his CIA training manuals offers us an insight into the way he brought literary thinking to bear upon the practice of covert operations. In turning to his fiction as Cordwainer Smith, however, we discover that he used short stories, and the genre conventions of science fiction in particular, as ways of exploring the valences of imaginative sharing as technology. He did this by his extensive deployment of telepathic mind-reading as theme and formal device in his work. Telepathy in Cordwainer Smith serves as an analogue for imaginative sharing insofar as it literalizes the promise made by moral sentimentalism: that simulation can "place" us in the minds of others. In tracing some of its principles in his fictional universe we will discover, however, that such



placing, in addition to carrying the potential for facilitating deeper forms of human (and non-human) attachment, also brings with it opportunities for the exercise of domination and coercion. In one of very few twenty-first century critical assessments of Cordwainer Smith's fiction, Carol McGuirk argues that his stories, with their emphasis on dissent and individualism, transcend the narrow ideological constraints of his Cold War agency work.<sup>40</sup> In what follows, however, we will see that they are very much of a piece; that the contradictions we identified in *The Handbook of Black*, over the instrumentalization of imaginative sharing, are rehearsed in fictional form in the tales.

Smith's interest in telepathy forms part of the "Psi-boom" identified by historians of science fiction in the 1940s and 50s.<sup>41</sup> "Psi" refers to psionics, the application of engineering principles to parapsychological abilities (sometimes described as ESP, or extra-sensory perception), which included remote viewing, clairvoyance, precognition, psychokinesis and telepathy. Such was the dominance of Psi that it came second only to space-travel among the most frequently explored themes in the genre in the period. Telepathy was by far the most common aspect of Psi to be represented, developing into a "narrative tsunami" by mid-century.<sup>42</sup> Neither was the exploration of Psi in literature limited to pure science fiction. In 1945, Linebarger wrote to Farrar and Reinhart to congratulate them on the publication of *Night Has a Thousand Eyes*, a mystery story by George Hopley (a pseudonyms of Cornell Woolrich) about a clairvoyant using Psi powers to predict a violent death.

Even in this brief example, we can begin to see how Linebarger, against the grain of contemporary science fiction writers, tended to conceive of Psi powers as open to instrumentalization, and as a means of coercion, rather than as an exclusively humanizing activity promoting the good in its own right as for example in Theodore Sturgeon's *More than Human* (1953).<sup>43</sup> In this regard, his ideas about Psi coincided with the wide public interest in "brainwashing" popularized in the 1950s by his former colleague, the OSS

operative Edward Hunter, with whom he had served in China during the World War Two.<sup>44</sup> Brainwashing also aimed at achieving coercive psychological control over one's enemies, but Linebarger's literary interest in this goal predated Hunter's popularization of the term and even World War Two itself. In 1936 he had planned his own noir detective story entitled "If You Don't Let Me Kill You," which encapsulated this tendency.<sup>45</sup> In it, a psychopath "possessed of immense psychological power" wishes to kill his partner without touching her, proclaiming "If you won't let me kill you, I'll make you kill yourself." This story outline contains the germs of the foundational conviction underpinning his work in black ops: in situations of conflict, it is always better to maneuver your enemy into destroying themselves using the power of imagination than to use material violence. It was part of the same pattern that can be seen in *The Handbook of Black*, where the psychological violence of black ops is justified as being preferable to the alternative: military—and possibly nuclear—warfare. War, Linebarger noted in *Psychological Warfare*, "may be considered to be, among other things, a violent form of persuasion." Propaganda, however, is "organized persuasion by non-violent means."<sup>46</sup>

Linebarger's deep engagement with Psi themes in his science fiction was noted by Horace Gold at *Galaxy* magazine, who wrote to him in 1955 after Linebarger submitted the story "The Colonel Came Back from the Nothing-At-All": "I honestly wish you could dump all aspects of Psi, at least until it has a chance to grow fresh again."<sup>47</sup> As it transpired, Linebarger was only just getting going. The story he had sent was about a test pilot for space travel who returns unexpectedly to Earth at some point in the distant future, and is discovered lying in New York's Central Park unable to speak, and fixed in a horizontal running position. In order to find out what has happened to him, a group including the story's narrator, a doctor, decide to wear "pinlighters' helmets, crude things, mechanical correctives to natural telepathy, devices to throw the synapses of one mind into another so that all five of us could

think the same thoughts.”<sup>48</sup> These give wearers access not only to the thoughts of the others, but also to the qualities and characteristics of their minds themselves. One is “clean and simple as washed linen,” while another is “bright, smelly, alive, vivid moving.”<sup>49</sup> In the mind of the test-pilot they discover “something terrible. It was raw pleasure.”<sup>50</sup> The group are able to share the mystical experience had by the space traveler, an experience of ultimate non-human power associated with deep space, what Linebarger in his fiction called “the Nothing-at-All.” The test-pilot’s ability to share through telepathy that which is beyond the power of language to represent, an experience of the sublime “beyond the limits of human imagination,” cures him of his condition and allows him to resume life on earth.<sup>51</sup> Horace Gold, who was more attuned to fiction dealing with “hard science,” described this resolution as “metaphysical guff” and rejected the story.<sup>52</sup> Its interest for us, however, lies not only in the way it exemplifies Psi content in science fiction, but more particularly in the way it inaugurates Linebarger’s science-fiction treatment of telepathy as simultaneously a source of shared aesthetic pleasure and an instrument of domination.

“The Colonel Who Came Back from the Nothing-At-All,” remained unpublished in Linebarger’s lifetime, but it is in several senses the archetypal Cordwainer Smith story. He adapted its plot into several more successful stories in the 1960s, and in a broader sense its treatment of telepathy as a form of imaginative sharing resonates throughout the “Instrumentality of Mankind” cycle. In these stories, telepathy is consistently evoked as the potentially redemptive component inherent within the otherwise coercive and controlling powers of Psi. The dual valence of Psi technologies is evident in “The Colonel,” when the doctor evokes the counterpoint to the shared mystical experience of the telepaths in the regime of discipline that he is responsible for administering as part of his professional role:

As a doctor I had been required to see the wickedest of men kill themselves under the law. It was a simple thing we did. We put a thin wire into the pleasure center of the

brain. The bad man then put his head near an electric field of the right phase and voltage. It was simple enough. He died of pleasure in a few hours.<sup>53</sup>

Here, the ruling class in Cordwainer Smith's fictional universe maintains the power to penetrate the mind in order to control its functions and ultimately to cause death. If we turn now to another of Linebarger's stories, "No, No, Not Rogov!" (1959), we find a more detailed version of this dualism in telepathy and Psi technologies, which explicitly pits their military and coercive uses against their aesthetic and creative potentialities.

"No, No, Not Rogov!" is an origin story for Linebarger's science fiction universe, set in the present or near future of the Soviet Union, shortly after Stalin's death.<sup>54</sup> As such, it shows how the telepathic technologies that become ubiquitous in the distant futures of his fictional universe emerge directly from the Cold War. In 1953, Allen Dulles had claimed that psychological warfare represented "the major weapon in this period" for the Soviet Union, and had argued successfully for massive investment in the CIA's own research programs in this area.<sup>55</sup> The premise of "No, No, Not Rogov!" is that he was right to worry. The story describes a series of attempts by the Soviet Ministry of State Security to develop technologies that would replicate the effects of successful imaginative simulation: to "duplicate the electrical functions of the mind without the use of animal material," thereby creating a receiver "capable of tuning in the thoughts of a human mind."<sup>56</sup> This receiver, the ministry hopes, might in turn be transformed into a transmitter "to send out stunning forces which would paralyze or kill the process of thought."<sup>57</sup> The final aim of the project is to "confuse human thought over great distances, to select human targets to be confused, and to maintain an electronic jamming system which would jam straight into the human mind without the requirement of tubes or receivers."<sup>58</sup> This last aim serves as a remarkably accurate description of the aims of black ops as given by Linebarger in *Psychological Warfare* and *The Handbook of Black*, where the production of confusion in enemy minds is repeatedly emphasized.

In effect, the story takes the contemporary historical reality of discourse about psychological warfare in the Cold War of the 1950s and imagines how it might be put into practice if the wildest fantasies of military-scientific research programs were realized. Rogov is the Soviet Union's most talented scientist and is assigned to this project. He makes progress, managing to build a machine capable of bringing on "mass hallucinations and a wave of suicides in a neighboring village."<sup>59</sup> Eventually, he creates a machine which "will bring the eyes and ears of a single mind directly into mine" by means of a needle inserted into the observer's brain.<sup>60</sup> Rogov tries out his own machine and is sent insane by the results, because the unforeseen effect of the machine is to collapse both time *and* space. This allows him to enter the mind of someone watching a dance festival in the year 13,582, providing him with an unprecedented aesthetic experience that transcends the instrumental purpose of the machine:

His twentieth-century mind could not hold the imagery and the impact of the music and the dance.

But the needle was there and the needle transmitted more into his mind than his mind could stand.

The synapses of his brain flicked like switches. The future flooded into him.<sup>61</sup>

In this way, the representation of telepathy in "Rogov" rehearses the duality of Psi technologies in "The Colonel": simultaneously an instrument of domination for ruling powers, and a means by which to access and share "ecstasies and terrors beyond human understanding."<sup>62</sup>

The tension between these two functions becomes the philosophical focus for "Rogov," and crystalizes around the problem of instrumentality. The dance, we are told, is called "The Glory and Affirmation of Man," and "*the dance was an end in itself*," "a

superlative art . . . a dream beyond the limits of systems.”<sup>63</sup> The art of the dance in the story carries its own value as an expression of the free play of the mind enabled by an extension of the imagination to and beyond its conventional limits. It belongs to humankind as a species. Rogov’s particular mind, by contrast, belongs to the state and its value is understood only in those terms: “His brain was a weapon, a weapon for the Soviet power.”<sup>64</sup> “Rogov is not just a man,” explains a representative of the ministry, “he is a Soviet project.”<sup>65</sup> In the Cold War scenario, the mind, however brilliant, is understood within the context of the state apparatus simply as a means to dominate and coerce. The story ends in stalemate, Rogov unable to return from his telepathic experience of the aesthetic sublime and the Soviet authorities unable to progress with their research. In this way, “Rogov” does not so much lend itself to propaganda purposes as it does provide its own commentary on the contradiction residing in agency thinking about culture in the Cold War, recognizing as it does the intractably non-instrumental values of art and imagination in the Cold War in tension with their use-value as instrumentalities of war.

### **Ideocracy, Imperialism and the Instrumentality of Mankind**

As we have seen, the idea of imaginative sharing animates a tension in Linebarger’s thinking concerning instrumentalism and instrumentality: imaginative sharing enables essentially positive, humanizing experiences of aesthetic pleasure, fellow feeling and the mystical sublime. Yet it is also a means to an end, a powerful tool of coercive control and psychological domination deployed in the service of empire. In this final section, it remains to expand further on Linebarger’s thinking on instrumentality, showing how the ideas about imaginative labor that we have examined relate to the development of his wider political thought about governmentality in the context of US imperial power.

Instrumentality is an unusual term that Linebarger used frequently in his science fiction and his non-fiction on psychological warfare. In *Psychological Warfare*, he uses it most often to refer to government institutions that operationalize certain activities by directing them towards particular ends. Agencies such as the CIA are instrumentalities of the state. He also uses it in the more general sense to designate the concrete means by which abstract human activities have an impact on the world. Thus media, for example, are the instrumentalities of propaganda. In a similar way, in *The Handbook of Black* psychiatric warfare and black ops are described as “instrumentalities of war.”<sup>66</sup>

In his fiction, Linebarger’s use of the term *instrumentality* retains its associations with the organization of institutions as well as the emphasis on subordinating means to ends. “The Instrumentality of Mankind” is a quasi-governmental institution with its own codified practices and protocols. It appears regularly throughout his science fiction as a unifying presence which helps to establish both the rules by which inhabitants of his worlds should live and the laws which give the Cordwainer Smith universe coherence and legibility. The most sustained explanation of The Instrumentality is found in “Drunkboat” (1963), a story based on Arthur Rimbaud’s symbolist poem “Bateau ivre” (1871), and another deriving its narrative premise from “The Colonel Came Back from the Nothing-at-All.” The Instrumentality is described as:

a self-perpetuating body of men with enormous powers and a strict code. Each was a plenum of the low, the middle, and the high justice. Each could do anything he found necessary or proper to maintain the Instrumentality and to keep peace between the worlds. . . This was the only business of the Instrumentality. The Instrumentality had the perpetual slogan: ‘Watch, but do not govern; stop war, but do not wage it; protect, but do not control; and first, survive!’<sup>67</sup>

Seen from this perspective, Linebarger's use of the language of instrumentality in his fiction, if not in his agency work, indicates an interest in identifying and exploring the limits of what contemporaneous philosophers in the 1940s and 50s were calling "instrumental reason," that is the reduction of reason "to industrial processes": the regulation of the relationship between means and ends at the cost of wider moral, ethical or spiritual insight. His description of the fictional institution of "The Instrumentality of Mankind" seems a particularly clear example of this kind of reason in practice. The passage also shows how Linebarger's Instrumentality resembles a certain view of the CIA that was becoming increasingly visible in the early 1960s, when public perceptions of it grew correspondingly more critical, especially after the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961.<sup>68</sup> On this view, the organization enjoyed unlimited power, unaccountability, and the capacity to use whatever means it sees as necessary in order to pursue its own self-determined ends. According to its critics, however, these qualities made the CIA a threat to democracy. While the Instrumentality understands itself to be committed to a seemingly altruistic aim, to "keep peace between the worlds," its ultimate objective is simply the reproduction of its own power. Its means, too, are remarkably similar to those of the national security apparatus: a combination of the threat of weapons of mass destruction on the one hand and psychological control achieved through black ops on the other.

The plot of "Drunkboat," like several other stories in the cycle, makes clear that, even if The Instrumentality's official self-conception is one of peaceful non-intervention ("watch, but do not govern; stop war but do not wage it"), its activities in the world are pervasive, secret and duplicitous. When its interests are threatened, it deploys technologies of violence without compunction (in the 1960 story "Golden Was the Ship – Oh! Oh! Oh!" it kills seventeen million people with chemical and biological weapons in a secret war against a rebel planet). In this case, the story is premised on a Lord of the Instrumentality, Lord Crudelta, deceiving Rambo, a pilot, into risking his life by testing a new form of space travel.



He achieves his by a process of deceptive empathic simulation like those described in *The Handbook of Black*: Lord Crudelta “places” himself in Rambo’s mind in order to be able to project his response to his wife’s life being threatened. He then creates the fiction that Rambo’s wife is on the point of death in order to bring about the desired response. As he explains when asked about the reason for his lies, he replies: “To induce rage in Rambo and to give him an overriding reason for wanting to come to earth faster than any man has come before.”<sup>69</sup>

The Instrumentality, like the CIA, finds the main source of its power in its vast and largely unseen imaginative command over others’ minds and their communications with one another. The narrator of “Drunkboat” describes this command as “an overriding power reinforced by robotic telepathy and the incomparable communications net, both open and secret, reinforced by thousands of years in trickery, defeat, secrecy, victory and sheer experience, which the Instrumentality had perfected since it emerged from the Ancient Wars.”<sup>70</sup> This “overriding power” of the Instrumentality was achieved “most often by cutting in on other people’s social and mechanical controls and doing their will, only to drop the controls as suddenly as they had taken them.”<sup>71</sup> Such passages indicate that the Instrumentality takes on an allegorical function in enabling the projection of Linebarger’s vision of the CIA and national security apparatus into a distant future where its power and influence continues to grow unchecked, along with the efficacy of its technological innovations, to the point where its dominance cannot be seriously challenged and it rules in perpetuity. It is striking that Linebarger had mandated such a use of science (or “futuristic”) fiction in *Psychological Warfare* a few years earlier, where he noted that “short of turning to the field of futuristic fiction, it is impossible to provide discussions of situations which have not been known in the American army.”<sup>72</sup> Few if any of his readers knew that he was writing just such “futuristic fiction” as Cordwainer Smith, and using that fiction to explore the social

potentialities of psychological warfare and black ops, as well as to discuss their ethical complexities in provisional and far-reaching ways unavailable to training manuals or academic studies.

As a student in the late 1920s, Linebarger had served as chair of the Liberals Club at Johns Hopkins.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, his notebooks from his time as an Assistant Professor at Duke in 1939 and 1940, in which he sketched out the developing contours of his political philosophy under the title “Notes and Opinions,” suggest a different lineage for his ideas on government, democracy and control, one which indicates more authoritarian groundings. In May 1940, he considered the political question of “Control” and speculated on the importance of a class of “ideocrats” or “inciters” who would maintain it.<sup>74</sup> Control, he defined in terms with clear resonance with the later definitions of the Instrumentality, as “the conscious manipulations of one human will by another will.”<sup>75</sup> Control could be asserted purely by force, but in more advanced societies it tended to be combined with ideological means through religion, the law and the family. In the most advanced forms of government, “the force element disappears almost altogether and the inciters (ideocrats) operate across time.”<sup>76</sup> “In the purest forms of ideological control,” he went on, “the individual willing element is that of persons dead or remote from the practical consequences of the control exercised.”<sup>77</sup> These ideas clearly resonate with Linebarger’s later rationale for psychological warfare, that it achieved the goal of warfare more efficiently than military force, by obviating the need for violence.

Linebarger’s 1940 note, “On Control,” combines his interest in techniques of psychological control with his academic expertise in political theory. His use of the particular and unusual term “ideocrat” suggests that he was engaging with the work of a group of Russian émigré thinkers in the 1920s and 30s called the Eurasianists.<sup>78</sup> Members of this group were among the first thinkers in the twentieth century to retrieve the term *ideocracy*

from nineteenth-century German political theory, and to apply it in relation to the Bolshevik and Fascist regimes in the Soviet Union, Italy and Germany. For the Eurasianists, ideocracy represented the future of government, and the completion of the impulses found in these regimes towards the total control of all aspects of human life by the state. Ideocracy was rule by an intellectual elite who claimed ownership of an incontestable doctrine, and enforced rule by a combination of force and mass propaganda. In Linebarger's vision of the future, he gives ideocracy his own distinctive twist by removing the need for either material violence or ideological conviction, hollowing out government to the extent that it becomes a mere simulacrum of democracy, animated by the ideocrats. Here, we discover the outlines of his conception of future governmentality in which the imaginative labor of intellectual workers distant from the people became responsible for maintaining the power structures underpinning human life, and, in his words, "ideocratic effectiveness reduces political government to a position of minimal consequence . . . although the state itself might be pro forma democratic."<sup>79</sup> This note articulates a version of democratic instrumentalism, whereby democratic processes are hollowed out or bypassed in favor of more inefficient means to achieve the desired ends of government. It also, however, rehearses the vision of the US national security apparatus that David Wise and Thomas B. Ross would influentially identify and criticize in 1964 as the unaccountable, "invisible government" usurping the power of the officially elected one.<sup>80</sup>

Linebarger's 1940 note effectively plots the strategic course for American empire after World War Two, as well as for the guiding principles for *The Instrumentality of Mankind* in his fiction as Cordwainer Smith. To put this another way: the *Instrumentality of Mankind* was always for Linebarger in some sense the instrumentality of US imperialism. In both the historical world he inhabited and the fictional universe he created, this instrumentality entailed the organized deployment of imaginative labor in the service of a

fantasy of remote and disinterested self-perpetuation, with an ideocratic elite assuming reluctant custodianship for an imperfect humankind. In a 1939 notebook entry, Linebarger wrote hubristically of “the ultimate future of government,” which he saw as “an agency of self-perpetuation, a system for the creation of majesty,” in which individual states are reduced to a bureaucratic service function “on a world-wide scale, somewhat like the postal system.”<sup>81</sup> This was for him an attractive fantasy, but the reality of US empire-building was, of course, far from majestic. The CIA-orchestrated coup in Guatemala in 1954 was backed by a program of black propaganda that drew heavily and explicitly on Linebarger’s *Psychological Warfare*.<sup>82</sup> The coup precipitated a four-decade civil war that killed hundreds of thousands, 200,000 of them “disappeared” by the US-backed government, using tactics taught them by the same operatives that had read *The Handbook of Black* in Linebarger’s classroom. It was a clear example of how the use of violent force and the use of psychological coercion—which Linebarger pitted against one another when justifying the latter—worked hand in hand in the practice of US imperialism. Rather than obviating the need for violence and terror, the ideocrats had produced the conditions for it to flourish. Latin America thus became, in the words of the historian Greg Grandin, “empire’s workshop,” a space where the US might test and refine their strategies with minimal consequence for domestic affairs.<sup>83</sup> During the remainder of Linebarger’s life, it remained possible to entertain such political fantasies of ideocratic remote governance, if one regarded the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion as an anomaly. Had he lived long enough to see the full scale of US military intervention in Vietnam and its failures, alongside the decline in funding and prestige suffered by the CIA in the 1970s, those illusions would surely have been dispelled. Linebarger’s vision of elite imaginative labor ensuring the survival of a disinterested global US empire belonged, ultimately, to a relatively narrow historical window stretching from

World War Two to the mid-1960s. For some, this was the “Golden Age” of the CIA, but it would be more accurate to describe it as the United States’ short-lived, high-imperial era.<sup>84</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The case study of Paul Linebarger and his fiction as Cordwainer Smith gives us *imaginative sharing*, one of the concepts we need to see agency work and creative cultural production as overlapping practices at midcentury. Imaginative sharing allows us to see how imaginative labor was instrumentalized during the Cold War as a means by which agents of the United States could “place” themselves in the minds of their enemies in order to coerce and control them. In this way, imaginative sharing took ideas from philosophy and literature, where they were understood to hold non-instrumental moral and aesthetic value, and deployed them in the service of state power and empire building.

Though Linebarger’s ideas about coercion and control using imaginative simulation are present in his non-fictional writings, it is only when we examine them alongside his science fiction as Cordwainer Smith that we can fully grasp the integral importance of literary styles of imagining and thinking in all his work. Smith’s science fiction emerges from this analysis as its own means to an end, a terrain upon which he—and contemporary scholars of the Cold War—can place the instrumental logic of the Cold War security apparatus in a larger ethical and political context, and thereby to achieve a greater understanding of its origins and contradictions.

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term *agency work* to refer to the broad range of overlapping activities undertaken within the national security apparatus as it developed in the twenty years after World War Two, including intelligence gathering, the production and distribution of propaganda, psychological warfare and covert operations.

<sup>2</sup> Biographical information on Linebarger is taken from the following sources: “Biographical Note,” Paul Myron Anthony Linebarger Papers, Box no. 1, Folder no. 1, Hoover Institution Library and Archives; “Biographical Sketch,” Linebarger Papers, Box no. 2, Folder no. 1; Alan C. Elms, “The Creation of Cordwainer Smith,” *Science Fiction Studies* 11 (1984): 264–83.

<sup>3</sup> Miles Copeland, *The Game of Nations: The Amoral of Power Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), 100.

<sup>4</sup> Elms, Hellekson and McGuirk offer the three most comprehensive overviews of Smith’s life and work to date. Unless otherwise indicated, biographical data comes from them. Elms, “Creation”; Karen L. Hellekson, *The Science Fiction of Cordwainer Smith* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001); Carol McGuirk, “The Rediscovery of Cordwainer Smith,” *Science Fiction Studies* 28 (2001): 161–99.

<sup>5</sup> Ursula Le Guin, “Thinking About Cordwainer Smith,” in *The Wave in the Mind: Talks and Essays on the Writer, the Reader, and the Imagination* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2012), 57–69.

<sup>6</sup> In using this more specialized meaning of *culture*, the present article is distinguished from (though related to) recent scholarship on the “cultural turn” in Intelligence Studies, which has tended to mobilize the term in the broader sense of “shared value systems.” Charlotte

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Yelamos, Michael S. Goodman, and Mark Stout, “Intelligence and Culture: An Introduction,” *Intelligence and National Security* 37, no. 4 (2022): 476. On the different meanings of culture in relation to intelligence studies, see Simon Willmetts, “The Cultural Turn in Intelligence Studies,” *Intelligence and National Security* 34, no. 6 (2019): 800–817.

<sup>7</sup> Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America’s Crusade Against Nazi Germany* (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 1996); Alan M. Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda: Office of War Information, 1942-45* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978). Much of the most detailed scholarship on these figures has concentrated on film and film-makers. Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (London: Barbara Ward & Associates, 1988); Simon Willmetts, *In Secrecy’s Shadow: The OSS and CIA in Hollywood Cinema 1941-1979* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Barry M. Katz, *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services 1942-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

<sup>9</sup> Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*; Dan C. Pinck, *Stalking the History of the OSS: An OSS Bibliography* (Boston, MA: The OSS/Donovan Press, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* (Columbia University Press, 2015); Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (The New Press, 2013); Scott Lucas, *Freedom’s War: The US Crusade Against the Soviet Union 1945-1956* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 99–122.

<sup>11</sup> Paul M. A. Linebarger, letter to Horace Gold, 9 October 1957, Linebarger Papers, Box no. 4, Folder no. 3.

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<sup>12</sup> A notable exceptions to this trend is Andrew Friedman, *Covert Capital: Landscapes of Denial and the Making of U.S. Empire in the Suburbs of Northern Virginia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> Willmetts, “The Cultural Turn in Intelligence Studies,” 808–9; David Shamus McCarthy, *Selling the CIA: Public Relations and the Culture of Secrecy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> Timothy Melley, *The Covert Sphere: Secrecy, Fiction, and the National Security State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> I follow Mark Johnson’s definition of imagination as “creative, reflective activity”: “a process is imaginative insofar as it involves ordering or structuring representations in a new manner.” Mark Johnson, “Imagination and Moral Judgement,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46, no. 2 (1985): 278.

<sup>16</sup> C. Wright Mills, “The Social Role of the Intellectual,” in *Power, Politics, and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills*, ed. Irving Louis Horowitz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 292–304.

<sup>17</sup> C. Wright Mills, “The Cultural Apparatus,” in *Power, Politics, and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills*, ed. Irving Louis Horowitz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 405–22.

<sup>18</sup> Melley, *Covert Sphere*, 3–4.

<sup>19</sup> Paul M. A. Linebarger, *The Handbook of Black*, Linebarger Papers, Box no. 11, Folder no. 12, 19.

<sup>20</sup> Linebarger, *Handbook*, 21.

<sup>21</sup> For a summary and survey of simulation theory, see Shannon Spaulding, “Simulation Theory,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Imagination*, ed. Amy Kind (London: Routledge, 2016), 262–73.



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<sup>22</sup> Paul M. A. Linebarger, 1929 datebook, Linebarger Papers, Box no. 1, Folder no. 4, 24.

<sup>23</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *Poetry and Tales* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 689.

<sup>24</sup> Linebarger, *Handbook*, 37.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>26</sup> For Max Horkheimer, instrumental reason is “an intellectual faculty of co-ordination, the efficiency of which can be increased by methodical use and by the removal of any non-intellectual factors, such as conscious or not-conscious emotion.” Max Horkheimer, *The Eclipse of Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 9.

<sup>27</sup> Karsten R. Stueber, “Empathy and the Imagination,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Imagination*, ed. Amy Kind (London: Routledge, 2016), 368–79.

<sup>28</sup> Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Sixth edition (London, 1790), 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Mark Johnson, *Morality for Humans: Ethical Understanding from the Perspective of Cognitive Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Martin L. Hoffmann, *Empathy and Moral Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Steven Fesmire, *John Dewey and Moral Imagination: Pragmatism in Ethics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> For a survey of this history, see Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37–64.

<sup>32</sup> Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 4.

<sup>33</sup> George Eliot, letter to Charles Bray, 5 July 1859, *George Eliot Archive*, ed. Beverley Park Rilett, <https://georgeeliotarchive.org/items/show/973>

<sup>34</sup> Martha Nussbaum, “Exactly and Responsibly: A Defense of Ethical Criticism,” *Philosophy and Literature* 22 (January 1, 1998): 343–65; Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

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<sup>35</sup> The conception of covert operations in terms of literary complexity and contradiction recalls the career of James Jesus Angleton, whose education in the New Criticism has been argued to have influenced his approach to counterintelligence. John Kimsey, “The Ends of a State”: James Angleton, Counterintelligence and the New Criticism,” *The Space Between: Literature and Culture 1914-1945* 13, no. 17, accessed July 28, 2022,

[https://scalar.usc.edu/works/the-space-between-literature-and-culture-1914-1945/vol13\\_2017\\_kimsey](https://scalar.usc.edu/works/the-space-between-literature-and-culture-1914-1945/vol13_2017_kimsey).

<sup>36</sup> Linebarger, *Handbook*, 37.

<sup>37</sup> Lionel Trilling, “Freud and Literature,” in *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2008), 38.

<sup>38</sup> Philip Rahv, “Dostoevski and Politics: Notes on the Possessed,” in *The Partisan Reader: Ten Years of Partisan Review, 1934-1944*, ed. William Phillips and Philip Rahv (New York: Dial Press, 1946), 327.

<sup>39</sup> Rahv, 335.

<sup>40</sup> McGuirk, “Rediscovery,” 134–38.

<sup>41</sup> Damien Broderick, *Pscience Fiction: The Paranormal in Science Fiction Literature* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2018); Peter M. Lowentrout, “‘Psi’Fi: The Domestication of ‘Psi’ in Science Fiction,” *Extrapolation* 30, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 388–400; Susan Stratton, “Psi and Technology in Science Fiction,” *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 9, no. 4 (36) (1998): 324–35.

<sup>42</sup> Broderick, *Pscience Fiction*, 4; Peter Nicholls and Brian M Stableford, “Psi Powers,” in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, ed. John Clute and Peter Nicholls (London: Orbit, 1999), 972.

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<sup>43</sup> Stratton observes that the main thrust of Psi treatments during the Psi boom is towards positive forms of sociality, of “being one with others,” rather than towards forms of domination. Stratton, “Psi and Technology,” 325.

<sup>44</sup> Matthew Dunne, *A Cold War State of Mind: Brainwashing and Postwar American Society* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).

<sup>45</sup> Paul M. A. Linebarger, Notebook entry 8 February 1936, Linebarger Papers, Box no. 10, Folder no. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Paul M. A. Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare* (Landisville, PA: Coachwhip Publications, 2010), 43.

<sup>47</sup> Horace Gold, letter to Paul M. A. Linebarger, 4 November 1955, Linebarger Papers, Box no. 3, Folder no. 19.

<sup>48</sup> Cordwainer Smith, *The Rediscovery of Man: The Complete Short Science Fiction of Cordwainer Smith*, ed. James A. Mann (Framingham, MA: NEFSA Press, 1993), 177.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>52</sup> Horace Gold, letter to Paul M. A. Linebarger, 4 November 1955, Linebarger Papers, Box no. 3, Folder no. 19.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, *Rediscovery*, 177.

<sup>54</sup> “No, No, Not Rogov!” was composed between the death of Lavrentiy Beria on 23 December 1953 (an event alluded to in the story), and 17 November 1955, when the editors of the *Saturday Evening Post* sent Linebarger a note rejecting it. It was eventually published in the science-fiction magazine *If* in February 1959.

<sup>55</sup> Melley, *Covert Sphere*, 4.

<sup>56</sup> Smith, *Rediscovery*, 24.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 34, 19. The italics are Smith's.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>66</sup> Linebarger, *Handbook*, 5.

<sup>67</sup> Smith, *Rediscovery*, 353.

<sup>68</sup> The decline in prestige suffered by the CIA in this period is described in Rhodri Jeffries-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, third edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 118–38. Influential books criticizing the CIA in this period include Andrew Tully, *Central Intelligence Agency: The Inside Story* (1962); Paul W. Blackstone, *The Strategy of Subversion: Manipulating the Politics of Other Nations* (1964); David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, *The Invisible Government* (1964).

<sup>69</sup> Smith, *Rediscovery*, 359.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 353.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare*, 298.

<sup>73</sup> Paul M. A. Linebarger, Date book entry dated 20 November 1929, Linebarger Papers, Box no. 1, Folder no. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Paul M. A. Linebarger, "Control," Notebook entry dated 8 May 1940, Linebarger Papers, Box no. 10, Folder no. 2.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.; Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (London: Verso Books, 2014).

<sup>77</sup> Linebarger, “Control.”

<sup>78</sup> For a discussion of the concept and its history, including the Eurasianists, see Uwe Backes, “‘Ideocracy’: A Sketch of a History of a Concept,” in *Ideocracies in Comparison: Legitimation – Cooptation – Repression*, ed. Steffen Kailitz and Uwe Backes (New York: Routledge, 2015), 13–39.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, *The Invisible Government* (New York: Random House, 1964).

<sup>81</sup> Paul M. A. Linebarger, “On the Ultimate Form of Government,” Notebook entry dated 14 January 1939, Linebarger Papers, Box no. 10, Folder no. 2.

<sup>82</sup> Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA’s Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala 1952-1954*, second edition (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 40; Greg Grandin, *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America’s Long Cold War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 85.

<sup>83</sup> Greg Grandin, *Empire’s Workshop* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006).

<sup>84</sup> For Jeffreys-Jones, the CIA’s “golden age” lasted from Eisenhower’s inauguration in 1953 to the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, 82.