Stuck Watching the Skies: What Alien Invasion Films can tell us about Challenges to
Hegemonic Authority

by

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

This project analyzes two sets of alien invasion films to understand lay opinions on hegemonic authority. It defines hegemonic authority along two major lines: neo-Gramscian hegemony and hegemonic stability theory. The project uses alien invasion films to study challenges to hegemonic authority because of the unique and confrontational narrative alien invasion films typically possess. Through a comparative process, the project concludes that alien invasion films reveal paradoxical relationships of power, where the hegemon encourages aggressive pre-emptive policies against its challengers but at the same time depends upon these challengers to maintain its power. It argues that despite arguments of growing globalism and cosmopolitanism in the world, the liberal hegemon remains clearly divided among notions of Us versus Them.

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Chapter 1

What can alien invasion films tell us about how a hegemon and its society reacts to outsiders, especially ones they believe are challengers to their authority? Through analyzing alien invasion films, this project studies how insider-outsider dynamics are portrayed as well as how dominant societies and states conceive of challenges to their power. When we refer to 'alien invasion,' we mean aliens extraterrestrials, not immigrants.[1]

The project is a complement to ongoing work in the use of fiction as mimetic and representative tools for complex politics. The benefit in studying the alien invasion genre versus a single or small set of alien invasion films is whether a specific scenario can replicate policy responses. Our concern is not with what a piece of film says about politics, but rather how a constructed scenario can support or contest ongoing explanations and expectations about power.

This project is split into 6 chapters. The first outlines the structure of the project and how the framework for research will be conducted. We make an argument about why studying fiction aids in understanding real life processes of power. We also outline why the alien invasion genre is the optimal choice for the question of hegemony.

The second chapter is a brief history of the alien invasion genre starting from 1897, a brief overview of its financial trajectory, a broad understanding of its treatment in the field of cinema, and an overview of the merits of understanding the history of a particular subgenre of fiction.

The third chapter looks at the treatment of popular fiction in political science. By examining the literature, we can see methods used by political scientists and non-political scientists. In turn we can come to a clearer understanding of what sort of role political science plays in interpreting and utilizing popular fiction (and culture) to support or contest contemporary theory. Through a better understanding of this role, we can modify these methodologies to suit our research question.

The fourth chapter examines insider versus outsider relationships in the context of a hegemon as a dominant society. When we consider hegemony in chapter 4, our focus is on the

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[1] Ronnie Lipschutz in *Aliens, Alien Nations, and Alienation in American Political Economy and Popular Culture* provides a three-pronged definition of alien, of which incorporates both fictional aliens and aliens in the context of immigrants. During the course of our research a considerable number of misleading contexts and uses of the term 'alien' by scholars hampered our research. It is appropriate to strictly separate the concept of fictional aliens from aliens as immigrants or aliens as invasive biology.

hegemon as a creator of governing or overpowering cultural forces that determine group behavior. In the context of a neo-Gramscian perspective of hegemony, chapter 4 considers how alien invasion films can tell us more about conceptions of the Self and Other.

The fifth chapter looks at hegemony in the context of hegemonic stability theory. The unit of analysis in this chapter is the state, and in what ways alien invasions reflect fears about transition, deterioration, and challenge. Ultimately, we argue that alien invasion films encourage hegemonic mistrust. Additionally, alien invasion films imply that, paradoxically, hegemonic challenges are central to maintaining hegemonic authority. Hegemonic fixation in alien invasion fiction provides insight into lay understanding of dominant states and cultures, as well as hegemonic dependency on threats. Lastly, analysis of alien invasion films for the study of hegemony shows that popular films can be used as indicators of difficult to measure societal sentiments. Because they seem to support certain ideas, we can theoretically apply fiction as an informal indicator of nebulous societal and state conditions.

The sixth chapter addresses differences between the United States and other major state producers of alien invasion fiction. Chapter 6 closes the project with an overarching understanding of the final results of the research.

Why is Fiction Important?

The heart of this research is the premise that fictional reactions to crises can reveal lay presumptions about power. On the surface, the alien invasion genre is nothing new, and the messages underlying it may not be novel. Likewise, there is no guarantee that the genre is itself politically aware, so extracting meaning is limited by the reader's own interpretation. However, there are three common arguments supporting the usefulness of studying fiction: it reflects social woes, financial markets are generators of ideas, and it is a reconstruction of specific world values under certain conditions.

Fiction as Reflecting Social Woes

Societal concerns manifest through fictionalized horror. The alien invasion genre provides a window into the concerns of both individuals and societies because it borrows mechanics, tropes, and clichés from the horror genre, a genre fixated with employing underlying societal

fears to evoke emotion. As a subset of the monster movie genre,[2] alien invasion fiction borrows many mechanics to excite, disorient, and communicate.

Historically, the appeal of the horror genre (and the monster movie in particular) came from "the thrill of fright, the awe of the horrific, the experience of the dark and the forbidden side of human behavior that lures people into the dark mouth of the theater to be spooked."[3] By extension, because alien invasion films use several methods common in horror movies, we can assume alien invasion films may seek to emulate these same social concerns. In short, they reflect anxieties dependent on a macabre mix of realism and abstract fears.[4]

Furthermore, the alien invasion genre borrows two notable characteristics from the horror movie genre: the existence of an 'Other' residing beyond the edges of society, with an indecipherable set of goals which could spell doom for the protagonists and a mix of repulsive and attractive physical attributes that evoke both rejection and acceptance from audiences.[5] At their roots, aliens are monsters from space.

While the recent alien invasion genre seems far from terrifying (with feel-good films such as *Lilo and Stitch*, *K-Pax*, and *Paul*), such films have roots in the calamitous worries that plagued the United States at the beginning of the Cold War.[6] Movies such as *They Came from Outer Space* (1953) and *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) encapsulated the fear associated with the intense and uncertain conditions present at the beginning of the atomic age. The fears of an invasion can represent concerns dormant in society.

In this context the existence (or potential existence) of unidentified flying objects should capture the imagination of both enraptured, movie-going audiences and policymakers. For moviegoers, the unidentified are mirrors into societal fears. For policymakers, they allow theoretical instances of conflict in an international perspective. For instance, in *Harry Potter and International Relations,* Patricia Goff references Lynn Hirschberg, who notes that "countries can no longer be demonized."[7] For the policymaker, the alien invader is a substitution for the

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[2] Patrick Luciano, *Them or Us* (Indiana University Press): 2.

[3] Fischoff et al., "The Psychological Appeal of Movie Monsters," *Journal of Media Psychology* 10 (2005): 3.

[4] Anne Billson, "Crash and Squirm," *The Guardian*, Friday 31, 2008, accessed January 10, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2008/oct/31/horror?INTCMP=SRCH.

[5] Fischoff et al. 3, 11.

[6] Erik Lundegaard, "Keep Watching the Skies!", originally published MSNBC.com July 2007, accessed January 10, 2013.

[7] Daniel H. Nexon and Iver B. Neumann, *Harry Potter and International Relations* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers): 30.

Russians, the Chinese, or the Germans of yesteryear in politicized fiction. Ousting another state as an enemy may not be the most effective means, but a fictional threat serves an indicator to a slew of likelihoods in society. To the policymaker, whether these films are widely supported or admonished, hugely popular or unloved, the rules of their success can reveal the rules for societal trust. The usefulness in alien invasion fiction is in its ability to mimic catastrophe and uncertainty while maintaining a global audience, allowing cultural comparisons in empathy and resonance with the fiction. In *Aliens in America,* Jodi Dean argues that mistrust and conspiracy run through the genre because of a US history based on 'undecidables' and 'thirds.'[8] Dean borrows this concept of undecidables and thirds from Zygmunt Bauman, where Bauman defines a group between 'Them' and 'Us': the intermediates, the strangers. With cloaked intentions, the undecidables and the thirds in Dean's argument "already disrupt the fiction that we can tell friends from enemies, that there is some discernible difference that can be used to tell the one from the others."[9] Though debating existence of extraterrestrials, first contact, and an invasion may not warrant high priority for governments, the fictional portrayal of how humans would react to alien invasions does reveal some telling concerns about how groups consider risk in the face of a considerable unknown unknown. Additionally, the treatment of these strangers in these movies can provide information as to what people believe to be signals of benign or malevolent intent from unknown groups.

Furthermore, studying alien invasions in popular films is important because our understanding of modern sovereignty is anthropocentric in nature.[10] In understanding how we deal with an object foreign to the foundations of state power, we can learn something about our foundations in turn. As Wendt and Duvall state, "anything that challenged anthropocentric sovereignty, it seems, would challenge the foundations of modern rule."[11] The alien invasion genre thereby acts as a manifest concern with the disintegration of sovereignty.

Though alien invasion movies have evolved beyond their monster movie roots from the Golden Age of the 60s, the 'monster metaphor' and the flurry of efforts to address, combat, and control death remain.[12] Becoming enamored with watching the skies is being enamored with the unknown. At the same time, these works can also reflect disassociations with reality, shifting

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[8] Jodi Dean, *Aliens in America: Conspiracy Cultures from Outerspace to Cyberspace* (Cornell University Press): 17.
[9] Ibid. pg. 17.
[10] Alexander Wendt and Raymond Duvall, "Sovereignty and the UFO," *Political Theory* 36 (2008): 609.
[11] Ibid. pg. 609.
[12] Luciano 5.

perceptions of politics, distrust, and skepticism.[13] Therefore, we can consider the study of alien invasions to be important because they are manifestations of societal fears, paranoia, and uncertainty.

Money, Power, and Symbols

Studying alien invasion is also important because of the influence of money, power, and symbols it generates. The wealth of the corporations that invest considerable amounts of money into these projects makes them powerful. The subgenre is intensely lucrative. Lobbying, contesting, and supporting parties or movements can have a profound effect on the political landscape. If we consider wealth as an indicator of power,[14] then producers, directors, and publishers can be considered powerful. Actors can become activists, corporations can apply hermeneutics to market and shape brands, and those that become wealthy can be considered as valuable to society.[15] However, claiming that the alien invasion genre is powerful because it is lucrative is overly simplistic. Just because the genre has some high-grossing titles does not make it innately powerful.

Moreover, the industry itself cannot be wealthy as a complete whole: people within the alien invasion films are wealthy, and their values are imposed upon parts of society. They can lobby and support political organizations, become ambassadors, and fund groups, both public and private.

What is important is the industry's ability to generate and disseminate symbols. The appeal of entertainment and literature is its accessibility. The sheer variety of beliefs creators can express to a wide audience links the overarching conscious with symbols of a societal Id.[16] The evocative power of words, images, and beliefs in creative media resonates with people: Niall Ferguson's *The Next War of the World,* for example, evokes images of Martian-caused

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[13] Stein Atara, "Review," *H-Net*, March, 1999, http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=2891.
[14] William G. Domhoff, "Wealth, Income, and Power," *Who Rules America?*
http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/wealth.html.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Though the Freudian Id may not be an exact description of what conjured images are meant to reflect, the concept of the Id as instinctual, primal fears are a close representation. When referring to the 'societal Id', we assume the basic survivalist needs that permeate societies.

devastation to excite his readers.[17] By using specific phrases, Ferguson can evoke certain images, drawing interest and discussion to a specific perspective or idea.

The strength of a symbol is its potential association. To many, zombies are a metaphor for a Marxist analysis of the role of the consumer in a fetishized market.[18] By understanding what a symbol means to people, we can form a general idea of how specific ideas may resonate with them. For example, consider how the National Geographic Channel polled over a thousand Americans on which (then) presidential candidate would be more capable of fending off an alien invasion.[19] If people believed aliens represented catastrophic failure (or enjoyed, or were fascinated with, aliens because of their tendency to cause destruction), and more people believed Obama was a better candidate for thwarting an alien invasion, then the value of that image is that people believe Obama was better equipped to prevent catastrophe. Popular culture is easily accessible and identifiable. Words, images, and symbols are loaded with meanings that large groups of people can understand. Media and entertainment, in turn, manufacture these words, images, and symbols. Analyzing pop culture is crucial for understanding precisely how these concepts resonate and influence large groups of people.

Mimesis

Prioritization of meaning garnered through the abstraction and representation of real world events can be seen by artistic duplication. In fiction, certain aspects of the real are retained, while others are not. Knowing where, why, and under what circumstances the fiction makes the transition from the real to the unreal can tell us about priorities and expectations in society. What must be changed or remain the same for a specific story can tell us about what we believe to be important or unimportant within specific circumstance. Likewise, though human actions may not

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[17] Niall Ferguson, "The Next War of the World," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2006, last accessed January 15, 2013, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/61916/niall-ferguson/the-next-war-of-the-world.

[18] Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, "Alien-Nation: Zombies, Immigrants, and Millennial," *Codesria Bulletin*, http://faculty.history.wisc.edu/bernault/magical/comaroff%20text.pdf. Literature on zombies often cites George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, a critique of consumerist behaviour in capitalism. Zombification is often treated as dramatized commodification. Though alternative interpretations of zombies may or may not be 'wrong' (a subject outside of the scope of this paper), most often the meaning behind the implied use of zombies is respect to capitalism, usually framed as Marxist critique. *Varieties of Zombieism: Approaching Comparative Political Economy through 28 Days Later and Wild Zero*, and *Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx* are two such examples.

[19] Patrick Kevin Day, "Poll gives Obama edge over Romney on alien invasion," *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 2013, http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jun/27/entertainment/la-et-st-obama-alien-invasion-20120627.

be wholly understood, imagery and symbols can reveal experiences.[20] For example, while people can empathize and understand the pain and suffering associated with 9/11, when it is portrayed in cinema can we see the destruction first-hand. Though news outlets can provide such perspectives, they may also be limited in programming and information. For instance, the evocation behind hearing that Osama Bin Laden is dead versus watching a dramatized capture (such as *Zero Dark Thirty*) can elicit different feelings on the matter and provide different perspectives on what sort of role the event played in a greater societal tapestry. Movies such as *Hotel Rwanda* or *Schindler's List*, for instance, may also be useful windows into areas of limited lay perspective. Though most Americans may not have direct exposure to something like genocide, they can insert themselves into such harrowing scenarios through narrative. These are mimetic constructs that retain some aspects while discarding others for the purpose of generating a specific feeling.

In a similar sense, the alien invasion genre is a mimetic field rooted in natural danger. As a specific subfield of the sci-fi genre, alien invasions are rooted in plotting rather than characterization.[21] Because of the nature of first contact between two complex groups with varying self-conceptions of dominion, the default scenario is a contest for power. In addition to the emphasis on plotting rather than characterization, the alien invasion subgenre is more likely to mimic the processes and power structures associated with catastrophe, new contact, isolation, segregation, and hegemony.

Furthermore, popular culture (and alien invasions in particular) "mirrors 'attitudes, trends, and changes in society (social preoccupations).'"[22] This mirror reveals presumptions about groups, individuals, and corporations. Are the militaries in these movies successful? If not, why? If so, why? What is the goal of the villain, and what drives or stops them? In a world where demonization of countries and groups must be handled with care (and in most cases, not at all), mimesis through entertainment is a means of rendering judgment upon a given subject.

Iver B. Neumann and Daniel H. Nexon refer to this mimicry as first and second order representation. The subject of mimesis is an amalgamation of these two orders. First-order

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[20] Warren Bourgeois, "Verstehen in the Social Sciences," *Journal for General Philosophy of Science* 7 (1976): 27.
[21] Luciano 14.
[22] Jutta Weldes, *To Seek Out New Worlds* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan): 11.

representation is concerned with directly representing political events.[23] "Popular entertainment," they argue, "usually takes the form of second-order representations, in that its narratives re-present elements of social and political life through a layer of fictional representation."[24] The alien invasion genre, often acting as an interpretation of 'how would a state react?', is a first-order representation of crises. At the same time, because of fictionalized enemies, the accentuated characteristics of the fictional 'other' define underlying fears and concerns within societies. Understanding these accentuations tells us about priorities of images in constructing benign or malevolent intentions.

Why Aliens?

There are several reasons for studying alien invaders. First, alien invaders are the largest groups in the monster movie genre in terms of narrative scale. Whereas many horror movies focus on the individual, the alien invaders exemplify both state and individual fears.

Second, alien invasions have their roots in real-life invasions. Of all the fears of society, the alien invasion movie is the most literal, and therefore less susceptible to overly creative mimetic license.

Third, the alien invasion genre is fixated with security. Whereas zombie movies happen after state breakdown, the alien invasion genre is concerned with not only the survival of the people within a state, but also maintaining the state's institutions, organization, and power. States act as both referent objects and securitizing actors in many alien invasion films. Alien invasion fiction is a useful subgenre to study because it guesses at what society believes to be the minimum requirements for survival.

Fourth, aliens vary in form, size, intellect, and technology. Their societies also tend to be structured differently from those of the humans they meet. Compared to other monsters such as vampires, or fellow apocalypse-bringers such as zombies (who do not form stable counter societies in most cases), the alien invader is usually a citizen of some extraterrestrial state-like organization, a representative of that organization, or consists of that organization. In turn, these relationships form a cohesive society that not only provide information on how we assume the Other, but also sheds light on what we believe to be the societal Self.

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[23] Daniel H. Nexon and Iver B. Neumann, *Harry Potter and International Relations,* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.): 7.
[24] Ibid.

In Conclusion

To summarize, alien invasion films are useful tools for understanding how a hegemon conceives of challenges to its authority because of the subject matter associated with such films. Because the state and society are more central to its narratives than those of any other monster subgenre, alien invasion fiction is the best subgenre for analyzing state unknowns. Additionally, alien invaders underline social woes and fears, are mimetic tools for recreating perceived mechanics of politics, and are lucrative modes of communication through their box office strength, warranting their usefulness as subjects of analysis.

Chapter 2

Basic Background of the Alien Invasion Subgenre

There are two origin points for the alien invasion genre. The first is HG Wells' 1897-1898 publication *The War of the Worlds*, in which London is destroyed in an invasion by Martians, intent on imposing foreign dominion on the world's standing superpower. Though *The War of the Worlds* is seen as the foundation for the tropes that define future iterations of alien invasion (global catastrophe by another civilization, neutered hegemon, complete chaos and pending annihilation, resilience), the book never gained significant traction until the 1950s.[25]

Though alien fiction existed in serials and movies such as 1902s' *A Trip to the Moon* and 1936s' *Flash Gordon,* the genre exploded with *the Day the Earth Stood Still* in 1951. Initially a product of the monster movie genre, the alien invasion genre separated itself by focusing on overarching narrative and a scientifically and technologically advanced enemy.[26] The proliferation of alien invasion titles during the late 1950s to mid-1960s seems hardly a mystery. Movies such as *The Thing from Another World* in 1951 and *It Came from Outer Space* in 1953 were evocative of the Red Scare, mirroring the paranoia of an organized 'Other' that sought to threaten the American Self.[27] However, just as much as these movies mirrored the fear and uncertainty of Communism plaguing Americans, the alien invasion genre was also critical of those attitudes. For example, though *It Came from Outer Space* encapsulated the fear and distrust of others, the overall message was that they might not necessarily have malevolent intentions. Therefore, alien invasion films are useful as an analytical and critical reflection of societal sentiments during this period of time.

As the alien invasion genre moved out of the 50s and into the 60s, the wellspring of paranoia-fueled alien invasion movies dried up.[28] The 1960s was an era of considerable nuclear concern, and although alien invasion movies in America never seemed to sufficiently embody that fear, another country's did: Japan.

In an era of accumulating nuclear weaponry and where a global thermonuclear war was a very real prospect, the only country to have experienced a nuclear attack firsthand also

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[25] Ryan Lambie. "A brief history of the alien invasion movie", *Den of Geek!* November 2, 2010, last accessed January 13 2013, http://www.denofgeek.com/movies/alien/16578/a-brief-history-of-the-alien-invasion-movie.
[26] Luciano 15.
[27] "Keep Watching the Skies! A short history of alien invasion movies."
[28] Ibid.

experienced its own sci-fi Golden Age. However, instead of paranoia and concern of 'the other' indicative of America during the 1950s Red Scare, Japanese alien invasion movies during the 1960s were monster-based movies showing the fear and catastrophic chaos associated with nuclear weapons. Movies such as *Ghidorah, the Three-Head Monster* in 1964 and *Invasion of the Astro-Monster* in 1965 were concerns about radiation and destruction from nuclear detonation. This wave continued into the mid-1970s, whereupon Hollywood began to produce more alien invasion movies.

In the late 1970s and early 80s, the alien invasion genre moved from paranoia, fear, and destruction to aliens as humanoid beings of varying concerns, many of them benign. Films such as *The Man Who Fell to Earth* in 1976, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* in 1977, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* in 1982, and *Batteries Not Included* in 1987 emerged, showing extraterrestrials are ultimately trustworthy and benevolent. Though having a 'trickle' from the previous Japanese influence of monster-based alien invasion flicks, and peppered with infrequent, but notable sci-fi terrors such as 1978's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and 1982's *The Thing* (both of which are remakes of earlier films), this era of alien invasion films and film was focused on aliens as what Erik Lundegaard considered 'lost children.'[29] Here, the aliens were harmless and acted in small, non-threatening groups or alone.

Lundegaard implies this development was a result of US-Soviet détente, and as relations began to cool and the fear of nuclear warfare slowly dissipated into the early 80s the films reflected these trends.[30] The genre eventually became focused on a partly post-structuralist, reflective nature: who are we, where did we come from, and what are we doing became thematic questions for the genre instead of what should we fear. Likewise, there was a gradual shift towards American universalism in these films. Whereas the 1950s films conceived of American authorities as a powerful nation among other powerful nations and the United Nations was frequently cited as a legitimate governing actor, the films in the late 70s and early 80s began to frame alien invasions in a US-only perspective. For instance, in *They Live*, even though the aliens are implied to have controlled a global command (implied by their control signal which claims to have affected the globe), the events of the rebellion only show what is happening in the United States. Even foreign films, such as Luigi Cozzi's *Contamination* in 1980, frame

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[29] "Keep Watching the Skies! A short history of alien invasion movies."
[30] Ibid.

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American landmarks and cities such as vast farmsteads and New York City as spots for extra-terrestrial arrival.

By the 1990s, the alien invasion genre seemed to dwindle until *Independence Day's* box office success in 1996.[31] In the same year, Tim Burton's 1996 *Mars Attacks!* spoofs the common tropes in the alien invasion films, and in 1997 Barry Sonnenfeld's *Men in Black* provides a comical perspective on the alien invasion subgenre by designating Earth as a refugee zone with the aliens bearing very human personalities. Whereas earlier incarnations frequently looked at or mimicked societal concerns or topical issues in the world at the moment, the mid to late 1990s seemed more based on what made money. There was no noticeable consistency in the themes of the 90s alien invasion movies, save for small pockets of curiosity and discover which built upon tropes that were solidified in the 80s.

However, in the mid-2000s (frequently considered the post 9/11 era of alien invasion movies),[32] the genre made another dramatic turn. Penetration of human airspace, livelihood, and well being by a hostile 'other' became the dominant theme. Though *Independence Day* clinched a successful invasion market in 1996, it never paved a way for a market based around alien invasions as a hostile force. By the mid-2000s, Spielberg's *War of the Worlds* in 2005, *Slither* in 2006, *Transformers* in 2007, and *Skyline* in 2010 all portrayed the alien invaders as civilization-based entities, coming as nations rather than groups intent on widespread devastation.

Having a brief history of the alien invasion genre is crucial to understanding what (if any) role this genre has regarding understanding treatment of outsider challenges (whether real or perceived). The genre is not entirely unique to America, but a considerable amount of the fictions is focused on the United States. Furthermore, history reveals that the reputation of the alien invasion genre shifts dramatically - each decade heralds new and different meanings for the genre, with some more popular than the last. This is important for two reasons.

First, this reveals that some periods are more active than others, and the growth of the alien invasion genre is not linear. It rises and drops over time, and understanding the frequency can provide us with a clearer understanding of societal values during that time period. Why are we now experiencing a resurgence almost as popular as the 50s and 60s? Is it because of similar values, or are we perceiving similar threats? If so, then do the rereleased films in the genre

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[31] "Independence Day," *Box Office Mojo,* http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=independenceday.htm, last accessed January 13, 2013.
[32] "Keep Watching the Skies! A short history of alien invasion movies."

suggest we are more concerned about frequent and constant challenges to hegemony? Are cinematic rereleases merely a product of natural Hollywood cyclicality with no meaning at all?

Second, just as identity is formed by the sum of information, the genre changes and morphs by the sum of information preceding it. Looking back at the alien invasion genre, different reasons reveal different priorities, and the identities of the aliens over time, the constraints of states, and the role all involved actors play in the films shift based upon events in time. Historical context reveals to us that Klaatu had different reasons for the same motives in 1953 and 2008, reflecting changing priorities. Had we simply taken most recent films, there would be almost little to no accounting for how much or whether there was a shift at all. Hence, the genre's history is relevant because it demonstrates that it does respond and change, and the concern of this project is what that change means and how we respond to it.

Box Office Earnings and Relevance

We are on the cusp of a revival of the alien invasion genre. 2007's *Transformers* grossed $319 million in the US and $708 million worldwide, with an opening weekend of $70 million. The second movie, *Dark of the Moon*, was the second highest grossing film in theaters in 2011.[33] This is in comparison to *Independence Day*, an oft-cited revival piece of the invasion trope, which in comparison grossed $50 million in the opening weekend, $306 million in the US, and $817 million worldwide.[34] Of the top 10 grossing films in the US box office, alien invasion films secured at least 2 spots.[35] In 2012, *The Avengers* netted Walt Disney nearly 40 percent of its annual gross[36] while in 2011, *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* accounted for 18 percent of annual gross.[37] For cinema, the alien invasion movie is a lucrative genre.

In the news, the alien invasion genre captures the imaginative, the concerned, and the conspiratorial. Tabloids in the wake of the Mars Curiosity mission suggest Mars missions to

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[33] "Domestic Theatrical Market Summary for 2011," last accessed July 4, 2013, http://www.the-numbers.com/market/2011/summary.

[34] "Keep Watching the Skies! A short history of alien invasion movies."; "Alien Invasion – Box Office Inquiry," *The Numbers*, http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/series/AlienInvasion.php.

[35] "All Time Box Office Domestic Results," *Box Office Mojo,* http://boxofficemojo.com/alltime/domestic.htm.

[36] "The Numbers – Movie Market Summary for Year 2012," *The Numbers*, http://www.the-numbers.com/market/2012/summary.

[37] "The Numbers – Movie Market Summary for Year 2011," *The Numbers,* http://www.the-numbers.com/market/2011/summary.

have found alien life.[38] Logger Travis Walton came to fame in 1975 after he was allegedly abducted by UFOs, leading to the movie *Fire in the Sky* in 1993. In an article discussing the advances of DARPA, Cara Parks and Joshua Keating choose to frame military developments along the lines of how we can prepare against alien invaders.[39] The role of these invaders is a substitute for the unknown and the uncertain, crafted by each individual's perception of the Other. In terms of their analytical usefulness, aliens are subjects with practices and conduct foreign to humans. In turn, the media reflects that image by fixating on such otherworldly conduct.

Likewise, the alien invasion genre captures the widespread conspiratorial uncertainties embodied in what Jodi Dean considers American society. She cites Phil Cousineau's *UFOs: A Manual for the Millennium*, who notes that "for every fundamentalist Christian there are five UFO believers; UFO believers outnumber Roman Catholics by a ratio of better than two to one; UFO believers outnumber the voters who placed Reagan, Bush, and Clinton in office; there are three adult Americans who believe that UFOs are real for every two skeptics."[40] Indeed, the alien invasion genre - specifically the UFO subgenre - has always been a moniker for secrecy. Patrick McCray's detailing of spotting artificial satellites was dubbed *Keep Watching the Skies: Operation Moonwatch*, and Ian Mulgrew's Vancouver Sun conspiratorial editorial on the US government's involvement in 9/11 was titled *The truth is out there...right?*, a reference to opening of Chris Carter's *X-Files* television series.[41]

In short, the alien invasion genre is about the uncertain, the imaginative, and the complex Other. Even more important is that the alien invader is a substitute for a black box civilization in an age where we must be sensitive to the portrayal of civilizations we do not understand. We assume these aliens have different types of societies, vary in technological capacity, and have intricate political systems of their own. Because we create these fictional invaders, we can apply our own value judgments on what makes them good or evil, trustworthy or untrustworthy. Doing

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[38] Kate Allen, "Mysterious Mars rover discovery draws alien hype, critical backlash," *The Star*, November 23, 2012, last accessed January 1, 2013, http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/1292397--mysterious-mars-rover-discovery-draws-alien-hype-critical-backlash.

[39] Cara Parks and Joshua E. Keating, "Battleship Earth," *Foreign Policy*, May 30, 2012, last accessed January 12, 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/05/31/battleship_earth?page=0,0.

[40] Dean 10.

[41] Patrick McCray, "Keep Watching the Skies!: The Story of Operation Moonwatch and the Dawn of the Space Age," *Princeton University Press*, last modified January 7, 2013, last accessed July 4, 2013, http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8645.html; Ian Mulgrew, "The truth is out there…right?," last modified February 26, 2002, last accessed July 4, 2013, http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/MUL202A.html.

so reveals our own uncertainties without needing to offend. Additionally, though the tropes, clichés, and motifs associated with alien invaders invite skepticism of those who claim to have had contact with them, these are signs of social beliefs wrapped in metaphors.

In Conclusion

To summarize, alien invasion films had its formal origins in 1897-98 with Wells' *The War of the Worlds*. However the origins of the alien invasion genre did not begin in the United States, and had an extensive background in other societies, notably Japan. The emergence of global multiple alien invasion 'scenes' suggests changes based upon cultural values, but ultimately the alien invasion subgenre carries central similarities between cultures and time periods. Aliens are black boxes. Aliens are unpredictable. Aliens are not us. Anyone who dabbles in aliens should be met with skepticism.

Chapter 3

Popular Films and Political Science

While the central question of this paper is concerned with how the alien invasion genre might reflect societal sentiments of hegemony and outsider behavior, a question associated with this is 'how do we know that?' This question is crucial to the case selection and methodological research model developed in this chapter. Additionally, the question of epistemological 'validity' (within a case and between cases) is a central concern to our study of pop culture politics.

The goals of this chapter are twofold. One, we want to understand what has been said, what is being said, and why these things are being said in the field of popular culture and political science. Two, we aim to construct a research model that can span both issues of time and case numbers. Central to understanding meaning in *fiction* rather than a piece of fiction is comparative studies. Because of varying levels of complexity associated with allegory and meaning, comparison between multiple cases for alien invasion films can provide a clearer image of hegemonic challenge.

Limits of the Words Validity and Relevancy

Poststructural analysis's dependency on intertextuality makes claims of objective validity moot because there are no objectively right or wrong forms of interpretation. Mark Salter argues that "our analyses must reflect our belief that we cannot identify any single unifying principle in social and political life."[42] We cannot say interpretation X is right whereas interpretation Y is wrong because the meaning of a text is infused with both the author's meaning as well as the interpretation of its consumers. For the sake of the research project, any claim of validity does not mean that findings are perfectly replicable. When a claim of an analysis is deemed 'valid,' we are not referring to validity as considering that analysis the objectively 'right' interpretation, but being the most apt interpretation.

Instead, the use of the word validity (and valid) suggests the likelihood of connectivity of an analysis of a piece of work to the context defined by the question. For example, if Movie X has Trope X and we argue that relationship to be an indicator of states assuming hostile behavior in an unknown-unknown problem, this result does not mean that alternative explanations for that

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[42] Mark Salter and Can Mutlu. *Research Methods in Critical Security Studies* (London: Routledge): 2.

relationship are invalidated. Alternative meanings can exist, but in the context of the question being asked, the likelihood of that trope being most representative of that concern is our underlying claim.

The same can be said for relevancy. When discussing relevancy, we are assuming relevance in the context of the question. This is the same for between-case relevancy and whether certain cases can tell more or less about the research question. Our research does not assume that alternative tropes and meanings are inferior, but may not as effectively fit the subject matter in the context of the question. For instance, because the question is about hegemony, our claim is not to assume that all other tropes are invalid, but rather to argue that counter-tropes embody a different meaning that are likely to reveal little connected to the research question. Alien invasion fiction may employ more messages than lessons on hegemony: they may employ messages on religion, transhumanism, and posthumanism. For example, human harvesting in alien invasion fiction may be interpreted for more than hegemony. However, what this act means for the question of hegemony is what concerns our research. These alternative tropes or cases can be read into with a similar meaning, but because there is no way to sufficiently demarcate right versus wrong analysis, we must attempt to reach for as close as possible in terms of meaning.

Case Selection and Arbitrary Selection by Relativity

The literature on popular fiction and politics seems underdeveloped. Currently, two things qualify as validation of what makes a work a piece of popular fiction and politics. One, the person involved in that field is a political scientist making an overarching, inductive, and interpretive statement on a piece of popular culture. For example, in *Theories of International Politics and Zombies,* Daniel Drezner argues for the use of zombies as teaching tools to embody policymaking rationale for state behavior in specific contexts for the purpose of introducing laypersons to International Relations theory.

Drezner argues for the analytical usefulness of zombies based upon their increasing prominence in pop culture.[43] "Some cultural commentators," Drezner notes, "argue that the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks are a primary cause for renewed interest in the living dead, and the numbers appear to back up this assertion."[44] He also argues that "the subsequent anthrax

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[43] Daniel Drezner, *Theories of International Politics and Zombies* (Princeton University Press): 2.
[44] Ibid. pg. 4.

attacks in the autumn of 2001 raised fears about bioterrorism and biosecurity."[45] In other words, a piece of popular fiction bears relevancy to political science because an authority that can make such claims supported by suppositional relations adopts such fiction.

Drezner's book, like much of the literature on politics and popular culture (and films specifically), depends on a small number of case studies. Each case's inclusion is justified in shallow terms. This ad-hoc model is not unique to *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*. Daniel H. Nexon and Iver B. Neumann's *Harry Potter and International Relations* argues for the importance of Harry Potter because of its global command, its single franchise status, and its familiarity with people on a societal level.[46] These reasons are not exclusive to Harry Potter. Super Mario Bros, for example, fulfills all of those components, and so far there is no considerable research on that series. The importance of a franchise based upon its global command and its lucrative position in popular culture means that such a work must contend with questions of comparable influence. How can we account for whether such a piece of fiction is an appropriate piece for the sake of the research question? Attempts to address this question in the literature are scant.

Instead, the choice of cases of popular fiction is arbitrary. The validity of chosen cases relative to other cases is rarely addressed, if at all. Like Drezner, Nexon and Neumann in *Harry Potter and International Relations* argue that "scholars influenced by constructivism and post-structuralism now recognize that any attempt to understand influence of cultural forces - such as ideas, identities, language, discourses, and symbols - requires moving beyond the statements of political elites and inquiring into the broader culture that shapes political processes."[47] From there, they outline a series of integrative and reflective patterns, signs, and processes in an attempt to legitimize popular fiction as academic endeavors.

Though Nexon and Neumann's account is impressive, none of this compellingly argues for Harry Potter as a case selection. Much of their argument for analytical validity can be applied to popular culture in general, and therefore a major concern regarding the relevancy of cases is the inductive approach justified by what seems to be an appeal to authority.

Jutta Weldes fails to address similar problems. In *To Seek Out New Worlds,* Jutta Weldes prefaces her work with a set of reasons aiming to legitimize science fiction as a case study. She

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Neumann and Nexon 2.
[47] Ibid. pg. 6.

argues that understanding culture as a process or a series of practices is important[48] and then narrows down her analysis to science fiction. Though popular culture forms and evaluates "extant power relations,"[49] she argues "[science fiction specifically] offers an exceptionally useful focus for analysis because it concerns itself quite self-consciously with political issues; it directly addresses issues like technological and social change, confronting contemporary verities with possible alternatives."[50] In short, she implies that meanings exist in popular fiction, but specific meanings exist in specific fictions; Drezner does the same thing by arguing for the legitimacy of zombies: "many current security concerns, however, center on nontraditional threats. A growing concern in world politics is the draining of power from purposive actors to the forces of entropy."[51] He claims that "zombies are the perfect twenty-first-century threat: they are not well understood by serious analysts, they possess protean capabilities, and the challenge they pose to states is very, very grave."[52]

Initially, both Drezner's and Weldes' arguments for their genre selection seem sound. Likewise, they are more specific than Nexon and Neumann, by arguing based on their respective genre's mechanics and not just because of its position in popular culture. We employ a similar argument for the importance of alien invasion fiction. We are not contesting the importance of zombies or science fiction. Our concern is that Drezner and Weldes both lack reasoning as to why specific cases are chosen as well as failing to address inconsistencies in the choices. Where our work differs is the means of determining which cases. Drezner selects generally familiar works, noting familiarity with examples such as *Ugly Americans* to support his general arguments, but then goes on to use cases such as *World War Z* without relative consistency. Though he provides a reason for choosing zombies, he fails to provide a rationale for his case selection.

Weldes has the same problem. Though she argues for the importance of studying science fiction, *To Seek Out New Worlds* is an anthology lacking case validation for each specific chapter. Though there are some attempts - for examples, Ronnie Lipschutz's chapter *Aliens, Alien Nations, and Alienation in American Political Economy and Popular Culture*[53] in Weldes'

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[48] Weldes 6.
[49] Ibid. pg. 7.
[50] Ibid. pg. 10.
[51] Drezner 18.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Weldes 83.

volume attempts to provide a pareto efficient case selection - this practice is inconsistent. Lipschutz's rationale is rare, and one of the few chapters in *To Seek Out New Worlds* that attempts to rationalize choice compared to other works.

In short, there is no overarching model for understanding the validity in case selection in the current literature. This lack of a rubric of case-question connection implies a lack of analytical discipline. A rationale for cases in a selection is needed. The literature is littered with research adopting 'just insert popular fiction here' methods, where a piece of work seems novel because it happens to tie into *Battlestar Galactica* or *Harry Potter*. Overall, political scientists choose to tiptoe into cinematic and literary cases that have been analyzed by other disciplines without providing the due review of their research methods. It seems arguments for the choice of cases in the literature depends on the premise that fiction X's analysis is valid just because it can be tied to a specific subject in political science.

Why is this is the standard? One reason may be the proliferation of poststructuralist research due to its epistemological strength in ascertaining meaning from dialogue. Lene Hansen defends poststructuralist research methods in political science, arguing that "even with a narrow definition of 'real world relevance,' poststructuralist analysis has a research program that speaks directly to the conduct of foreign policy."[54] Hansen also states "the meaning of a text is never fully given by the text itself but is always a product of other readings and interpretations."[55] This can be problematic because of the myriad of interpretations that could arise. Since producers and consumers of fiction can find wildly different meanings, can this also imply that the case selection for popular fiction is inherently arbitrary?

There seems to be relatively little consideration of a piece of fiction's tropes, clichés, and motifs and how a pre-existing theory can change interpretations of fiction. Much of the literature does not consider whether fiction is a useful tool at all. Instead, much of the consideration is devoted to justifying the choice of a certain fiction.

Additionally, the popular culture literature does not have a strong foundation for differentiating metaphoric examples between different strands of thought. How to figure out a character encapsulates realist versus liberal behavior is never addressed beyond real world examples. However, real world evidence supporting a specific perspective does not address

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[54] Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice* (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group): 5.
[55] Ibid. pg. 55.

alternative interpretations in fiction. Furthermore, if the context and time of publication of a piece of work suggests one thing, but real world examples provided in another context and timeframe suggest the same thing, should that be considered strong evidence? How can we account for good versus bad analysis? The analysis of fiction thus far lends a cosmetic purpose, with real world examples much more compelling pieces of evidence of sentiments and reflections than the fictional works they were meant to support.

The Role Political Science Plays

The second means of validation is that a piece of work analyses some facet or form of power. One often-used argument is that fiction evaluates political structures or power and therefore it is valid. The 'pop culture plus politics' subfield outside of political science is vast. Math and physics professor Kevin Durand and Mary Leigh of the University of Arkansas compiled an anthology of essays on Batman entitled *Riddle Me This, Batman! Essays on the Universe of the Dark Knight* (philosophy and literature), in which some essays address issues of power and power structures in government.[56] Curtis Marez considers connections between the alien abductions and imperialism in *Aliens and Indians: Science fiction, Prophetic Photography and Near-Future Visions*.[57] A nearly infinite number of popular culture bloggers from the writers of the New York Times[58] to Erik Lundegaard[59] have provided their own analyses on the subject due to its accessibility. In other words, while the literature has scholars in political science looking into the connection between popular fiction and politics, another part of the literature comes from scholars from other fields.

What do political scientists bring to the already extensive literature of popular fiction and politics? What can political science be doing as well as or better than sociology, film studies, philosophy, and literature? If we look at the cases of *Recalling the Self: Personal Identity in Total Recall* and *Technology and Ethics in The Day the Earth Stood Still* by Shai Biderman and

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[56] The article in question is Sudipto Sanyal's *Introducing a Little Anarchy: The Dark Knight and Power Structures on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, pg. 70, a single article.
[57] Curtis Marez, "Aliens and Indians: Science fiction, Prophetic Photography and Near-Future Visions," *Journal of Visual Culture* 3 (2004):
[58] "Batman and the War on Terror," *NYTimes*, July 21, 2008, last accessed February 20, 2013, http://theboard.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/07/21/batman-and-the-war-on-terror/.
[59] "Keep Watching the Skies! A short history of alien invasion movies."

Aeon Skoble (film studies and philosophy), we see similar methodology to Lipschutz, Buus, and Weldes.[60]

So before even proceeding with any form of methodological outline or analysis, the inclusion of other fields calls into question the role of political science. Does the inclusion of scholars in political science change anything? Most importantly, does this affect or influence how our project's research model is constructed?

Regarding the target audiences of popular culture, we can argue that political scientists are crucial because Hollywood, Bollywood, Nollywood, Toei, or any places where facets and symbols of popular fiction can be created and disseminated are increasingly reactive to politics. Power, its structures, and politics are the realm of political scientists and validate the involvement of political scientists in analyzing popular fiction.

Likewise, politics is influenced by and depends on popular culture (and fiction). John Street says that "political thoughts and actions cannot be treated as somehow separate or discrete from popular culture."[61] Likewise, popular culture depends on an innate understanding of existing power structures that can censor, ignore, or promulgate specific messages.[62] Furthermore, issues of Hollywood not only reflect issues between groups within a state, but also between states. For instance, Thomas Erdbrink headlines the Tehran conference denouncing Argo as "Stung by 'Argo', Iran Backs Conference Denouncing 'Hollywoodism,'"[63] or Sacha Baron Cohen's scathing and indirect criticism of American foreign policy at the end of The Dictator.[64] Popular culture is becoming more aware of politics, and politics is becoming more aware of popular culture.[65] By extension, political science is a valuable addition to the analysis of popular culture.

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[60] Steven M. Sanders, *The Philosophy of Science fiction Film* (The University Press of Kentucky): 91; Stephanie Buus, "Hell on Earth: Threats, Citizens and the State from Buffy to Beck," *Cooperation and Conflict* 44 (2009): 400-419; Weldes, *To Seek Out New Worlds*; Christina Rowley and Jutta Weldes, "The evolution of international security studies and the everyday: Suggestions from the Buffyverse," *Security Dialogue* 43 (2012): 513-530.
[61] Leah A. Murray, *Politics and Popular Culture* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing): 5.
[62] Ibid. pg. 13.
[63] Joshua E. Keating, "Does Hollywood Have a Foreign Policy?", *February 22, 2013,* last accessed February 22, 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/02/22/does_hollywood_have_a_foreign_policy_oscars_argo.
[64] Joshua E. Keating, "Is *The Dictator* Racist?", *May 17, 2012,* last accessed February 22, 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/05/17/is_the_dictator_racist?.
[65] John Street, *Politics and Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press): 97.

Comparing Methodology between Political Science and other Humanities fields

The next question concerns political science's methodology when looking at popular fiction. Distinguishing between studies of popular culture by political scientists, philosophers, sociologists, and visual communications specialists, as well as the contributions of each specific field, allows us to isolate the instrumental value in popular fiction and politics.

Discerning each field's research model(s) can thereby allow us to understand their distinct advantages and weaknesses. Understanding what is or is not a piece of work by someone in political science regarding popular culture allows us to focus on a component of the literature. What matters is not whether scholars are political scientists or not, but whether there is something unique about how political science treats fiction based upon what we see from the literature. For that reason, when we are considering challenges in interpreting messages in the literature and how it can be reconfigured in our research model, we are talking in the context of the literature in political science.

First, the political science literature on popular fiction is intent on using its own theories. Analysis of popular fiction in political science often applies an existing understanding of hegemony, International Relations theories, and political economy. In the case of philosophy,[66] analysis of popular culture regarding power, hegemony, and structure may or may not use theories already present in political science. In cases tied to power structures and anarchy, such as Sudipto Sanyal's *Introducing a Little Anarchy: The Dark Knight and Power Structures on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, analysis of power structures rarely moves outside the Foucauldian understanding of power.[67] In a comparison of cases of power contestation in Alexander Wendt's *Sovereignty and the UFOs*, the power structure is conceived as anthropocentric authority,[68] and response is viewed as securitization.[69] Though both deal with slightly different threats, both frame the state's power as a referent object to threats it has difficulty conceiving. Furthermore, each uses a different theory to draw conclusions about how

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[66] We used the anthology *The Philosophy of Science Fiction* and *Riddle Me This, Batman!* to figure out whether and how often the term of concept hegemony, IR theory, or anything reflective of political science based upon our personal knowledge is explicitly used. These two were used because both were compiled by scholars that do not seem to have a considerable background in Political Science, and therefore the anthological selection within these books is less likely to reflect political science on a whole. Whether these anthologies used any ontological or epistemological concept in political science, theoretically, would give us an understanding of whether political scientists use them more often in the first place.

[67] Kevin Durand and Mary K. Leigh, "Riddle Me This, Batman! Essays on the Universe of the Dark Knight, 70.

[68] Wendt and Duvall 609.

[69] Ibid. pg. 611.

popular fiction can reflect or mirror something else. In short, different fields employ different methods on similar questions.

Second, a majority of work in popular fiction and politics by political scientists tend to be rooted empirically. Drezner frequently relates to the United States in his book *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*, Dean uses the space race as an example of longing in *Aliens in America*,[70] and McNally refers to the 2008 financial crisis to emphasize his dialectical approach on body horrors in *Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism*.[71] When individuals use political science methods, we see more empirical connection. In comparison, when we look at *The Monster Show* by David Skal, a historian, or *Technology and Ethics in The Day the Earth Stood Still* by Aeon Skoble, a philosopher, the analysis is much more internal. A piece of popular culture analysis by a political scientist is more likely to depend on empirical evidence to substantiate its claims. This brings us to a major question: why is this distinction relevant to the project, and why should we differentiate between the epistemological and methodological construction of works about popular fiction and politics by political scientists and others? Is such a distinction necessary?

The literature suggests that political scientists tend not to extensively review methods for studying popular culture from other fields. Likewise, because this is a study on power on the level of societies and states, political science's familiarity with state power (compared to conflict theory in sociology, for example) will be more likely to accurately determine expectations and beliefs in popular culture on group and state levels. Furthermore, rooting fictional expectations and behavior in real world examples strengthens the claims of these analyses. Having real world examples can strengthen conclusions we draw from the fiction.

A corollary in the literature is the lack of internal analytical relevancy. How can we understand whether one scene is more relevant to the study than the other? Are gradations of relevancy possible in a specific case study? Political science seems to have yet to formulate a consistent research model addressing this concern. For example, David McNally's *Monsters of the Market*, a historical materialist account of monster metaphors accounting for global capitalism, introduces with a lengthy historical backdrop on anatomy fixation. In comparison,

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[70] Dean 71-72.
[71] David McNally, *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books), 1. McNally's book begins with the words, "We live in an age of monsters", before going on to talk about vampire funds.

Daniel Drezner's *Theories of International Politics and Zombies* has no significant historical backdrop for zombies or IR theories. Weldes and Neumann both constructed anthologies, and the methods change based upon the essay. The methodology is a melting pot. Political science borrows its methodology from a variety of other fields, notably sociology, history, and philosophy. Therefore, if we are borrowing from other fields, we would need to figure out what part of this project makes it a project of political science, but more importantly, whether a methodological framework can be constructed.

I argue that the answer lies in a consistent and comparative use of symbolism. To minimize problems of relative relevancy, we can compare differences and similarities between pieces of fiction. Like to address internal relevancy, a comparison of fiction-specific components can lead us in a general direction to a clearer symbolic meaning. Knowing that meaning can lead to clearer and more confident connections with the pre-existing understanding of hegemony.

General Concerns and Symbolism

When we look at symbols and meaning, we notice that current theories are underlined by competing expectations and understanding of logical behavior in a state of imperfect information. How a neorealist or neoliberal conceives of rational behavior in the Prisoner's Dilemma changes depending on their own understanding of rational behavior. However, when we work with fiction, gradations of logical and rational behavior are up to the whims of the creator. Because we are working with a fictional construction of human behavior, game theory can be subverted or results can change, as we see in prisoner's dilemma in *Survivor*.[72] When we use empirical evidence to bolster analysis of fiction, we have no way of knowing whether it is highly reflective or influential.

Meanings in fiction vary based upon the drawer of that meaning. For example, the film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* from 1956 is often considered an allegory for the Cold War.[73] However, someone may argue *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is a "protest against pressures of political and social conformity."[74] Others may argue *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is not about conformity or the Cold War, but rather personal paranoia externalized through its story telling

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[72] Mark Salter's *Teaching Prisoners' Dilemma Strategies in Survivor: Reality Television in the IR Classroom* is an example where popular culture is used as a teaching tool.
[73] Sanders 59.
[74] Ibid.

mechanics.[75] The problem is that none of these can be objectively invalidated because they all depend upon what the scholar perceives to be relevant, and that formation of perception and relevancy can be difficult to gauge.

If a piece of fiction has different meanings based upon the context of its analyzer, then the question is not about which analysis is 'right' in any objective sense, but rather which is more likely to be relevant to the question at hand. Therefore, how can we determine what to look for and how to control for meaning in the context of the end question when a piece of work may not even be about that end question? Foucault encapsulates this problem by noting that "to pose the problem in terms of the State means to continue posing it in terms of sovereign and sovereignty, that is to say in terms of law."[76] By honing in a specific question, we limit ourselves to knowledge with a specific bias. We are looking for something, and any notion of 'validity' of our analysis is tied to relevancy to the end question. Therefore, our analysis must be somehow relevant to the question.

But how can we construct levels of relevance? How can we determine whether our analysis is relevant to the question at all? Recalling the various conclusions about *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, we can come to wildly different conclusions based upon how we prioritize symbols and meaning. If we make several competing claims about a piece of fiction, which one most appropriately fits into the question of hegemony?

We cannot come to an objective understanding of the value of a piece of fiction when we relate it to an idea or a subject (such as alien invasion fiction to hegemony), but we can limit arbitrariness. One of the most important parts of this is a cautious approach to symbolism, where we can depend upon how symbolism can or cannot reflect a piece of work, and for the purposes of this project, define our terms. Andrea Comiskey in *The Hero We Read: The Dark Knight, Popular Allegoresis, and Blockbuster Ideology* warns us that "with enough semantic wrangling, allegorical readings, however weak, *can* be mapped onto almost any text."[77] We must minimize the weakness of our allegorical mapping through careful interpretation of symbolism.

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[75] Ibid. pg. 67.
[76] Colin Gordon, *Michel Foucault – Power Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings* (New York: Vintage Books).
[77] Durand and Leigh 125.

So what is an example of cautious use of symbolism? Comiskey used Sayre's model of allegoresis (the act of reading a piece of work as having some deeper meaning)[78] to account for the zeitgeist of a piece of work. Knowing that our work bears allegoresis is the beginning to establishing some relevancy to the question.

War of the Worlds (2005) is a useful example because Spielberg considers the movie a direct reference to 9/11.[79] This is the meaning constructed by the maker of the text. Whether we agree or not with Spielberg's assessment tells us something about the connection of meaning and images. If a reader does not believe that a piece of fiction tells us something about 9/11, then that means certain images may not be as powerful as we believe. If Spielberg never mentioned the movie as a reference to 9/11, then we may come to that conclusion if only by the merit of its internal components. The movie may remind us of 9/11, regardless of intent. That would mean the fiction reveals something about societal sentiments irrespective of the creator's intentions. The components of the fiction thereby strongly resonate with the sentiments of a group.

Because of this, the context of our analysis requires multiple films, not just one. We are influenced by our idea or hegemony and identity and challenge, and that changes our analysis as an interpreter of text. In turn, we look for specific ideas and concepts, and the only thing we can do is to be upfront about our context. If we are to partake in allegoresis, then we must remember that some stories may have different allegories or very weak ones. Likewise, we must also be mindful of the timeframe these stories are written in as well as the timeframe from which we are analyzing them. We must also remember that because of varying contexts (both in the created text and the interpreter of the text), messages across different interpreters and creators may vary. What the creator intends may not resonate with us, and what we may find in the text may not be the intention of the creator. We cannot eliminate contexts to create an "uninfluenced text," but we can be upfront about what our major contexts are. For this reason, we will be defining identity and hegemony for the following chapters, as well as considering the timeframe of publication for each individual film.

Therefore, we cannot say that certain messages are invalid. However, at the same time, we must also consider contexts by comparing multiple cases. Knowing when we are making an

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[78] Sayre Greenfield, *The Ends of Allegory* (University of Delaware Press): 1998, 53; Berek, Peter. "Interpretation, Allegory, and Allegoresis," *College English* 40 (1978): 118.

[79] "Steven Spielberg Reveals Darker Film-making Following 9/11 Events," *Huff Post Entertainment*, November 1, 2012, last accessed February 23, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/01/11/steven-spielberg-war-horse-dark-films-9-11_n_1198551.html.

observation because of the creator's intent or whether it is our own interpretation can thereby tell us persistent images, themes, and ideas in the fiction that can reveal more information on the question of challenges to hegemonic authority. That can only be supported or contested by considering cases within the same genre.

Summary

In short, there are few comparative studies in the literature. First, there is very little discussion between works of popular fiction and politics. Though there are cases where scholars will reference other scholars - such as Alexander Wendt and Raymond Duvall in *Sovereignty and the UFO* referencing Jodi Dean's *Aliens in America,* Daniel Drezner referencing Alexander Wendt and Raymond Duvall, and Mark Salter referencing Cynthia Weber – evaluation of each others' work is rare. Most scholars with written work on popular fiction and politics rarely contest the context, methodology, and epistemological claims in each other's work.

Likewise, there is little cross-comparison of meaning through context and other internal components. Meaning is extracted from symbols and behavior without considering whether the interpreter or the text is constructing that sort of meaning. In the literature, symbols are constructed and utilized for convenience. The purpose of these symbols is primarily to support the analytical framework of the overarching meaning behind each individual's work without explaining why these symbols are used. Therefore, this project aims to define clear usage of symbolism to prevent problems associated with multi-directional meaning.

Second, the literature tends not to provide definitions for genres when working with multiple cases. Without a definition, we cannot differentiate between genres. Weldes' *To Seek Out New Worlds,* for example, never provides a clear definition of the science fiction genre. Though she mentions that defining science fiction with precision is difficult,[80] she nevertheless lists estrangement through the nova (informal indicators) of technology, advanced medicines, and hyper-drives as characteristics of the genre.[81] None of these components are unique to science fiction, so the usefulness of nova is limited. The *Star Wars* series, for example, fulfills Weldes' definition of science fiction, but its genre is highly contested.[82] Therefore, when

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[80] Weldes 9.
[81] Ibid., pg. 9.
[82] Annalee Newitz, "10 works of science fiction that are really fantasy," *io9*, May 9, 2011, last accessed February 23, 2013, http://io9.com/5799837/10-works-of-science-films-that-are-really-fantasy.

selecting a case to support a genre-wide claim, we must that the case encapsulates 'alien invasion.'

This summary of the literature, its inherent strengths and weaknesses, and problems associated with the use of symbolism and differing allegoresis allows us to identify problems facing poststructuralist research in popular fiction. This also allows us to create a list of requirements that, if we are to deal with the issue of relevancy, must be addressed:

- Provide a clear, precise definition of the alien invasion genre
- Consider the context and timeline of a piece of work's publication
- Understand and acknowledge what kind of instrumental value other disciplines have when they deal with popular culture
- Determine which real world examples are appropriate to support or qualify an argument
- Discern the difference between meaning associated with a genre versus meaning associated with a piece of work

Defining Alien Invasions

Our research model seeks to address the problems associated with poststructuralist treatment of popular fiction in political science through an emphasis on motif and case comparison. Instead of using individual cases, our research defines a working set of cases and analyses differences and similarities. The end goal is to reach an understanding of the mapping of meaning between and within cases. However, first we must define the genre. Weldes' use of nova[83] to define science fiction can cause problems when we are defining alien invasions.

Alien invasion films uses some unique motifs, images, and clichés, but whether those solely make up the definition of the alien invasion genre is questionable - this is not different from Weldes' use of nova in science fiction.[84] In comparison, Drezner defines a zombie by three characteristics: desiring human flesh, cannot be killed except through the brain, and transmission

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[83] Weldes 9. Weldes uses the term novum, meaning "new" or "new thing", to detach from the mundane world. In this case, associations with nova in a piece of films signals to the reader which genre that piece of films belongs. Similar to micro-metonymy, she notes that nova such as spaceships, cyborgs, and hyper-drives tell readers they are reading science fiction.
[84] Ibid.

through biting.[85] McNally in *Monsters of the Market* never provides a clear definition or criteria of which monsters he looks at, or what constitutes a monster at all. Among them are zombies,[86] Frankenstein,[87] and vampires.[88] Instead, many of his monsters have a Faustian undercurrent, suggesting a 'deal with the devil' and 'moving outside of human boundaries' theme.

On the other hand, Ronnie Lipschutz defines aliens as three things: a creature, regardless of its terrestrial origins, which "confounds 'normalcy,'" individuals non-native to a country, and "unbridgeable cultural difference."[89] Alexander Wendt and Raymond Duvall define UFOs as unidentified flying objects and a challenge to "anthropocentric metaphysics."[90] Compared to Drezner and McNally, who provide a definition based upon the fiction, Lipschutz, Wendt and Duvall begin with a definition and then select their case studies. This presents a problem: having a larger definition understood by induction brings up the question of case selection and whether analyzing based upon an inductive definition is inherently biased to a single set. If we define a genre by a set of characteristics based upon what is found in the fiction, as Weldes, McNally, and Drezner each do, then that definition naturally outlines a set of qualities conducive and resonant to those cases.

In comparison, if we use a definition based upon some sort of pre-existing understanding or a literal interpretation, then we are left with the question of 'whose definition?' and our answer may be no more effective for research than a dictionary definition. Any definition can leave us with cases that fall just outside of perceived 'included cases.' However, a precise definition (such as Lipschutz's definition of aliens) can tell us exactly what we need to know.

In addition to the problem of subgenre definition, another problem is genre bleeding. If a piece of work fulfills the conditions for multiple genres, then how can we know which genre is contains the message? If we assume that groups and genres having meanings implicit in their designation because of monster performativity (such as Drezner's zombies being mindless or McNally's vampires draining human life force), then how can we determine which piece of work belongs to which genre? Can we define boundaries to elicit a clearer image? Could we say

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[85] Drezner 22.
[86] McNally 1.
[87] Ibid. pg. 109.
[88] Ibid. pg. 133.
[89] Weldes 80.
[90] Wendt and Duvall 609.

"Genre X or Monster X is associated with this meaning" if it can also apply to another? Which is likely more apt?

Though such filtration may limit our case selection, distinguishing the alien invasion genre from a larger genre such as science fiction is crucial. However, we should not be arguing that the alien invasion subgenre can be perfectly and wholly decoupled from the science fiction genre. Instead, this decision is for the sake of research: if we are to ascertain what sort of message (if any message exists) is implicit in the alien invasion subgenre, then we need to confidently argue that the alien invasion genre is making this claim. At the moment there is no clear definition for the alien invasion genre that suits a clear, objective analysis.

However, we can approach semi-autonomy in our definition. Alien invasion movies are a form of science fiction and they borrow tropes from that genre. However, alien invasion films are easier to construct mimetically because they tend not to guess the future.[91] A major component of the alien invasion genre compared to science fiction is that an event happens in the current day, rather than the future or the past.

According to Taylor Marvin of *Smoke and Stir*, an alien invader - whether benign or malevolent - has some sort of agenda or intent.[92] The existence of intent insinuates some measure of sentient behavior to varying degrees. This ties into Lipschutz's claim that aliens confound normalcy, separating them from cosmic disasters in science fiction, such as *The Day After Tomorrow, Deep Impact,* and *Melancholia*.

An alien invader usually disrupts a human invention. Whether this is electricity (*War of the Worlds, Close Encounters of the Third Kind*) or the military (*The Day the Earth Stood Still*), a human invention is usually compromised, leading to distrust and uncertainty.

Alien arrival is rooted in natural physical laws, whether fictional or real.[93] Whether it is actually potentially feasible through highly advanced technology,[94] or its implausibility is explained away by technobabble, an invasion is where contact was possible through science within the films. Anything supernatural invalidates the invasion. Likewise, defeating these aliens will be contingent on some sort of internal natural law, most likely through biological or

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[91] Taylor Marvin, "Brainstorming a Plausible Alien Invasion," *January 2, 2013*, last accessed February 24, 2013, http://smokeandstir.org/2013/01/02/brainstorming-a-plausible-alien-invasion/.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Luciano 14-15.
[94] "What would happen if…?", *National Geographic Channel*, last accessed February 24, 2013, http://natgeotv.com/uk/alien-invasion/what-would-happen-if.

mechanical disruption. In most instances, aliens can be destroyed through the same means as humans. They are simply more advanced or hardier than we are.

Together, we have a functioning definition for the alien invasion genre that sufficiently separates it from science fiction. For the sake of the project, the alien invasion genre is defined by the arrival of an extraterrestrial being, benign or malevolent, through technologically or biologically explainable means within the natural laws of the fiction. The use of the alien's technology is either employable or reversible by humankind, and if the strength is biological, then the alien is receptive and resistant to problems similar to terrestrial infections and invader species. The alien invader is not necessarily from a large group, but is in most cases a reaction or a part of some complex entity, usually another state.

Passive Alien Invasion Films

Currently, we are assuming that a specific subgenre carries certain meanings because of the structure of the subgenre. Certain narratives can pigeonhole meaning in certain directions. Our research is focused on ascertaining that meaning based on that certain condition. One potential concern is with multi-genre films. One earlier case selected was 2012's *The Avengers*. *The Avengers* fulfilled almost every component for the alien invasion fiction, and even more importantly, it was a very lucrative and highly successful film that showed a fictionalized United States government. However, one of the problems with *The Avengers* was that *The Avengers'* selling point, despite its alien invasion plot, are the superheroes that make up its protagonists.

The same can be said about movies such as *Paul*, *K-Pax*, and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Every single one exhibits similar alien invasion tropes as we see in the earlier cases, but all of them use the aliens as a backdrop or a MacGuffin[95] to establish a larger, different narrative. Therefore, one of the challenges associated with case selection is the lack of a comprehensive definition of what we refer to as 'active' versus 'passive' alien invasion fiction. Passive invasion fiction is where the alien nature or object is a MacGuffin. Active invasion fiction is where the alien nature or object plays an integral role to the plot or development of the character. The role

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[95] A MacGuffin is an object, character, or plot device that initially seems important or gives a character a sense of importance, but ultimately has no noticeable relevancy on the narrative. A MacGuffin's purpose is to establish a driving goal for a character or a set of characters, but is ultimately unimportant in the grand sense of the narrative. The glowing suitcase in *Pulp Films,* Fyodor's wealth in *The Brothers Karamazov*, and Unobtanium in *Avatar* are famous examples of MacGuffins.

of the alien itself and simply its existence within a piece of fiction should not legitimize that piece as analytically useful for understanding alien invasions.

I argue that the existence of having an extraterrestrial does not necessitate a piece of fiction as being entirely part of that subgenre. Though such fiction may have parts of what we have defined as alien invasion fiction, one difference is that a noticeable difference in behavior or plot because of their 'alienness' is what legitimizes a piece of fiction as primarily alien invasion fiction. Whether this is Lilo's genetically destructive behavior that serves as an obstacle to his rehabilitation and the pursuit of interstellar captors in *Lilo and Stitch* or the tripods' ability to resist most kinetic damage in *War of the Worlds*, the cases in our case selection are chosen because their alien qualities mattered. For a movie such as *The Avengers*, different qualities are emphasized, and those qualities do not have as much bearing on alien invasion fiction.

Therefore, attempts to garner meaning from 'passive' alien invasion films must account for a wide variety of other mechanics. For that reason, we chose only 'active' alien invasion films, where the alienness of an extraterrestrial allows us to more clearly understand the role an alien plays in the research question. Otherwise, movies such as *The Avengers* would be very important titles to consider because of its successfulness and similarities. Had we analyzed *The Avengers*, we would be hard pressed to say whether these claims can be applicable to alien invasion films or whether this is something that belongs to comic book movies. Choosing only active invasion films, where the alien invader is the central point of difference in the movie, allows us to more confidently and clearly states the relationship between alien invasion fiction and the message it would generate for questions of challenges to hegemonic authority.

Methodology - Epistemological Challenges and Issues

There are two major problems that have to be addressed by using this inductive method to determine a definition. The first problem is circularity. Even if we form a stringent, specific definition for the alien invasion genre determined by our observation of that genre, then the most appropriate cases are the cases used for our definition. This would be a problem if the work of fiction were not indicative of the genre.

However, we argue this problem can be avoided by looking at a collection of lists from IMDB[96] and a Metacritic list, chosen with the criteria based upon Marvin and ours' definition.[97] The definition based on the cases is determined by already existing films on a crowd-based scale because a working academic definition of alien invasion does not exist. This is an ongoing cross comparison of lists by crowd-based websites that catalogue information, providing an image of what the layperson believes qualifies as alien invasion films. Because our project is about reflection, then the average person's conception of the alien invasion should determine the case selection, which thereby determines the definition. As a result, if we are to gauge popularity, we must use widely known sites that depend on popular opinion to create rankings. This cross-aggregation of popular lists determines our cases for analysis.

Additionally, we use a scale to verify that the technological level of the protagonist's state is as close to that of real life on the release date. We depend upon an asymptotic scale that considers the relevancy of a piece of film as it approaches 1, with 1 being completely accurate as of the release date. Because science fiction employs futurology and social-plus-technological change,[98] establishing a clear limit on technological advancement is required to separate alien invasions from science fiction. If we limit the cases to stories only occur in the present day as of the story's creation, we have the best possible understanding of how that accounts or reflects society. If we used stories in which humanity's level of technology varies from that of the contemporary time period, then the extent to which those stories reflect perceptions of reality will have to be accounted for accordingly.

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[96] "All-Time USA Box Office," *IMDb,* last accessed February 26, 2013, http://www.imdb.com/boxoffice/alltimegross.
[97] "Sci-Fi Movies," *metacritic*, last accessed February 26, 2013, http://www.metacritic.com/browse/movies/genre/metascore/sci-fi?view=condensed.
[98] "Futurology: The rights and wrongs of science fiction," *The Economist,* June 8, 2006, last accessed February 21, 2013, http://www.economist.com/node/7040304.

Comparing Technology in Fiction (Figure 1)

A bar chart titled "Comparing Technology in Fiction (Figure 1)" with a y-axis ranging from 1900 to 2040 in increments of 20. The x-axis shows three films: The Iron Giant, Pacific Rim, and Independence Day. Each film has two bars: "Depicted Decade" (blue) and "Released Decade" (red). The Iron Giant shows a depicted decade around 1950 and released decade around 1990. Pacific Rim shows a depicted decade around 2030 and released decade around 2010. Independence Day shows both depicted and released decades around 1990.

Independence Day, for example, with a release date of 1996 and a narrative date of 1996, has a value of 0.99. In comparison, *The Iron Giant*, while influential, is more difficult to gauge as an alien invasion film because it has a value of 0.57,[99] making it a less than appropriate case for study. This scale provides us an objective as possible scale for understanding which movies are most likely genre-relevant. This reduces the magnitude of the inductive definition problem. Figure 1 shows a comparison between three different timelines: depiction older eras, depiction of the current day era, and depiction of the future. The depicted decade must be equal to the released decade to be a valid case for analysis. Analysis of a film such as *Pacific Rim* would yield limited results because *Pacific Rim* assumes a specific future trajectory of society and politics. On the other hand, a movie such as *Iron Giant* makes assumptions about historical values to tell its narrative. Only when the mimesis of society is as close to perfect can we figure out what the alien invasion fiction actually says. Therefore, all cases perfectly align, as we see in *Independence Day*.

However, a potential problem that must be considered is imperfect separation from science fiction. There are two dimensions to consider. First, one argument against this project may be that separating meaning from alien invasion fiction versus science fiction may be too difficult.

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[99] "The Iron Giant," *Rotten Tomatoes*, http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/iron_giant/. The time of *The Iron Giant*'s narrative is 1957, while its release date is 1999, making is a .57 value.

After all, because alien invasion fiction is a subgenre of science fiction, how do we know exactly where and when alien invasion fiction suggests a certain meaning and not science fiction? The use the technological scale for case selection allows us to filter out futurology, thereby maximizing the likelihood that the conclusions we draw across cases more accurately reflect alien invasion fiction.

A critic may argue that our use of the groundside scale limitation stunts our available case selection. We argue that the groundside scale is necessary because it limits the futurist predictions exhibited by science fiction writers that could dilute the direction of the research question. Science fiction can be (crudely) separated from alien invasion fiction for the purposes of research by establishing important alien invasion fiction as happening in a timeframe similar to a piece of fiction's time of publication. In comparison, science fiction forays into futurist ideals. By accounting for that futurism in science fiction, we can make appropriate general claims about alien invasion fiction.

Part of the imperfect separation draws from contested understanding of technological relevance. *The War Against the Chtorr*, for instance, is highly aware of the politics of its time (1982-1983) and makes predictions for continued US dominance well into the 21st century. The series of novels tells about an alien invader through the introduction of extrabiology, and how the United States is the primary actor in combatting these invaders. *The War Against the Chtorr* fulfills every requirement of the description for alien invasion fiction, and would have been a highly appropriate for understanding how a hegemon deals with a challenge that is a perfect manifestation of a black box challenger. However, because David Gerrold's series is set after the time of publication, he makes predictions about global technological and societal changes. In turn, this affects how the United States behaves and dilutes any sort of analytical meaning that can be garnered for understanding today's hegemony. We are not saying works of science fiction that are also pieces of alien invasion fiction such as *Halo*, *The War Against the Chtorr*, and *Starship Troopers* are invalid, but for the sake of the research question, they conjure up questions of futurist geopolitical and sociopolitical presumptions that must be accounted for before we could have begun analysis of what the fiction says.

Addressing Reverse Regression

Some subgenres contain other nested subgenres. Because of this, we have to consider the problem of reverse regression, where the meaning of the fiction may be a product of a smaller subset of alien invasion fiction. The alien invasion genre is a subgenre of science fiction, and ufology is an even narrower subgenre of the alien invasion genre. Ufology can be distinguished from the alien invasion genre by its focus on unidentified flying objects. We must consider whether the conclusions we draw from the alien invasion fiction may be conclusions about ufology.

Therefore, this regression could be an even larger problem - just as we must account for whether the alien invasion genre is a part of the sci-fi genre for the sake of analysis, how we can be certain that what we are seeing in the alien invasion genre is part of the alien invasion genre, and not specifically a product of ufology within it? Why are we not studying UFOs, for instance, if any fact that falls under the analytical conditions of the research model to be true?

Just like the science fiction genre, we can account for this problem by properly defining the alien invasion genre relative to ufology. Whereas the alien invasion genre is the penetration of human airspace by extraterrestrial and technological means, the UFO genre fulfills these conditions, but is treated with realistic skepticism.[100] Whereas alien invasions are treated as works of fiction, ufology is treated as real, albeit dubiously so.[101] "The spaceship enthusiasts," James Oberg argues, "have turned from a fascinated flirtation with hypnosis-extracted reports of UFO kidnappings to now no longer disreputable search for the Holy Grail of UFOdom, the 'secret stashed crashed saucer' which, together with the pickled bodies of its dead alien crew, is being squirreled away somewhere by [the US government]."[102] Ufology is a mix of iconic portrayals, imagined effects, and questionable research depending on politicized arguments about the burden of proof.[103] The challenges facing ufologists are not the same challenges facing fans of alien invasion films.

For instance, James Oberg recalls the New Hampshire abduction story, reported by Betty and Barney Hill:

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[100] James E. Oberg, *UFOs & Outer Space Mysteries* (Norfolk: Donning Publishers): 2.
[101] Ibid. pg. 3.
[102] Ibid. pg. 3.
[103] Ibid. pg 4.

Basically, a couple on a dark lonely road is frightened by a UFO in the distance, but return home unharmed. It is hours later than it seemed, so they must have lost track of time. Persistent nightmares prompt the husband and wife to seek psychiatric help, and under hypnosis a doctor elicits a startling tale of abduction and examination, a story identical in details in independent testimony by both parties. (Oberg 31)

However, Oberg mentions that the causes were likely fear-induced fantasies fueled by stories from Betty Hill's sisters and pulp science fiction monthlies.[104] In comparison, though we can find examples of alien invasion fiction seeping into politics - such as when Russian prime minister referenced *Men in Black* as a joke on Russian television[105] - some of the fiction is used as metonymy, such as 'Battleship Earth'[106] or 'The Next War of the World'.[107] Therefore, though we can borrow meaning from ufology and build upon the considerable research done, our focus is strictly limited to fiction.

While we can classify the alien invasion genre as being different from science fiction, we cannot subtract the *fiction* of ufology from the alien invasion genre. As a result, ufology fiction is a part of the alien invasion genre because its tropes and motifs can be interchangeable, but the alien invasion genre can separate itself from the science fiction genre because some tropes and motifs are not.

The problem of genre meaning associated with regression is solved by our understanding of where the fiction of UFO studies ends and ufology begins. An analyst would be prudent to simply merge UFO fiction into the alien invader genre. This is because the definition of the alien invasion genre does not exclude UFO fiction.

In summary, we address two problems. The problem of potential circularity, where a definition to construct a case selection is in turn determined by that same case selection, is addressed by considering that the initial case selection to determine the definition for the working case selection was not arbitrary, but rather crowd-sourced. Second, we concede that a genre within a genre can be inseparable, and therefore difficult to analyse, but only in the context of fiction. Though ufology is treated differently than alien invasions, this is in the context of its legacy in the real world. For fiction, separation is likely impossible, but such distinctions are

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[104] Ibid. pg. 32.
[105] Timothy Heritage and Gabriela Baczynska, "Russian PM talks Father Christmas, aliens and jerks," *Reuters*, December 7, 2012, last accessed February 26, 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/07/us-russia-medvedev-idUSBRE8B616L20121207.
[106] Parks and Keating, "Battleship Earth."
[107] Ferguson, "The Next War of the World."

unnecessary. Unlike science fiction and alien invasions, there is no divide by conditions of the film's narrative. However, we argue this question is only relevant if we are looking at a difference between ufology and alien invasions in films, and that there is nothing wrong in treating ufology films and alien invasion films as the same genre.

Structure for Chapters 4 and 5

Chapters 4 and 5 will use specific cases that accurately reflect the type of hegemony per chapter. Each case is carefully chosen based upon crowd-based aggregation of what individuals consider to be important in this genre. By doing so, we can find a general 'sentiment' of what is popular, resonant, important, 'classic,' and 'modern'. Likewise, all cases are by our definition alien invasion films, and producers, directors, or fans support this claim.

Chapter 4 and 5 will begin by defining identity and hegemony, respectively. The definitions will give us a basic idea of what to look for in the films. Likewise, those definitions allow us to make sense of what an answer to our research question may be. By looking at popular cases, we can find long-held presumptions by laymen about the nature of power in the context of the hegemon.

All works will be accounted for in a formalistic context. We will depend on imagery and narrative as starting points for analysis. We will study the films mostly separate from historical events. For instance, though the film *The War of the Worlds* in the 1950s screened during the Cold War, we will study the film primarily for what it says, not the politics in its timeframe. Though history can provide some insight into the value of these works, we are making claims about what the fiction says, not whether it supports or contests the ideas of its time. However, if comparisons between similar cases exist (such as multiple iterations *The War of the Worlds*), then we will use those comparisons to see formalist changes and potential reasons as to why. By doing so, we can find changes (or lack thereof) in societal resonance over time.

Comparison is also central to our study. Any analysis for one piece of fiction must be supported by or contrasted with another. Doing so lets us figure out whether an action, image, motif, or narrative is worth considering. Analyzing a single case can lead to too many divergent meanings at the expense of a clearer understanding of how they relate to our question.

For instance, if we take *Signs* in 2002, directed by M. Night Shyalaman, we see that by itself the movie has several meanings. *Signs* is a movie with inconsistent thematic imagery. It

employs crop circles,[108] tinfoil hats,[109] and lights in sky,[110] culminating in an invasion parable to reinforce family cohesion. It would seem *Signs* is very clearly an alien invasion film, and should therefore be considered a case of study. However, the problem associated here is that *Signs* employs alien invasion imagery alongside Abrahamic imagery, such as Graham Hess's crisis of faith, the deterministic role of tragedy, and the references to ancient techniques in the Middle East.[111] Some critics, such as Roger Ebert, are hush about the nature of the aliens,[112] whereas others such as Carlo Cavagna suggest that "the ending is even more satisfying if you regard the aliens not necessarily as extraterrestrial life, but as demons, and the whole film as a biblical tale."[113]

In short, *Signs'* imagery and theme exists inside and outside of the alien invasion genre. This fluctuation is why comparisons between movies within the same genre are crucial. The plurality of messages in *Signs* shows that the usefulness of single case analysis for fiction is only helpful for that piece of fiction. Unless that fiction is a seminal work (something that arguably does not exist in this subgenre), the strength of our analysis does not extend beyond that work. We cannot make a claim about what a genre says from one piece of work. We need to compare similar and different pieces that fall under the criteria for valid cases as specified by our definition and crowd-sourced method.

The case of *Signs* also tells us about varying symbols within a film. We need to know whether these same mechanics exist in other movies, or whether it is unique to *Signs* and therefore not a helpful point of analysis. Had we compared *Signs* to another invasion movie, such as *The Fourth Kind*, *Lilo and Stitch*, and *Super 8*, we would not find as many religious themes. By comparing movies, we can know that *Signs* does have other messages, but those other messages are not relevant to our research. In comparison, had we used *Signs* by itself to make a

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[108] Hillary Mayell, "Crop Circles: Artworks or Alien Signs?" *National Geographic*, August 2, 2002, last accessed March 1, 2013, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2002/08/0801_020801_cropcircles.html.

[109] Ron Scheffler, "Tinfoil Hats, Anal Probes Land at Alien Abduction Fest," *Wired*, March 22, 2008, last accessed March 1, 2013, http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/multimedia/2008/03/gallery_alien.

[110] A constant motif, made recently famous by *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and more recently, the documentary *The Phoenix Lights.*

[111] David Edelstein, "The Corn is Flat," *Slate*, Updated August 2, 2002, last accessed March 1, 2013, http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/movies/2002/08/the_corn_is_flat.html.

[112] Roger Ebert, "Signs," *Roger Ebert*, August 2, 2002, last accessed March 1, 2013, http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20020802/REVIEWS/208020305/1023.

[113] Carlo Cavagna, "Signs," *AboutFilm.com,* August 2002, last accessed March 1, 2013, http://www.aboutfilm.com/movies/s/signs.htm.

claim about alien invasion fiction, we would have potentially misrepresented genre because of that single case.

The associational problem with *Signs* can be extended to a variety of movies in other genres - Drezner's failure to consider the differences between *World War Z* and *Ugly Americans* in his chapter on constructivism, as we have argued earlier, suggests arbitrary designation on usage of examples. Likewise, though Rowley and Weldes argue for the usefulness in studying *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* because "the basic premises, plotlines and narrative arcs of the shows all focus on characters' identities, insecurities and attempts to produce security,"[114] this does not mean that a powerful message in fiction is the work's *most resonant and applicable* message, nor does this claim invalidate potentially more viable cases of study. Just as how we could pluck out *Signs* and argue for its relevancy in the alien invasion genre, we could just as easily argue that *Signs* is an anomaly, its messages reflective because it depends on other messages.

In short, *Signs* is an example of a single case with many messages. It shows that if we are to address intertextuality to make confident claims about what a piece of fiction is saying, then we must compare the message between like cases. The case of *Signs* is a constant reminder of meaning within fiction on a real world issue and how we can conjure meaning without considering conceptions of optimal analysis. Because we are working with reflection and there is little 'real' empirical evidence to legitimize these claims (we can only make tenuous, reasoned connections), we have to be precise and careful about the films we are using. The lack of a stringent set of conditions, though limiting, prevents issues such as *Signs*'s analysis, where opinion and validity of its meaning can change wildly depending on how you interpret it.

In Conclusion

The treatment of fiction in the study of political science and popular culture is inconsistent. One of the central concerns is case selection: much of the research on a set of fiction in the political science literature is either far too short to address the case selection (*To Seek Out New Worlds* and *Battlestar Galactica and International Relations*) or does not define a clear case selection (*Theories of International Politics and Zombies*). Other research provides justification for its case selection, but only with simplistic reasoning (*Harry Potter and International*

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[114] Rowley and Weldes 514.

Relations and *Monsters of the Market*). We argue that the literature in political science and popular fiction must clarify the specific choices and consider whether these cases are the most relevant cases for the questions they are asking.

Because we are practitioners of allegoresis, we must always consider the context. By defining our definition of hegemony and identity at the beginning of chapters 4 and 5, we establish the most influential contexts. To minimize variance in meaning in the text, we will use a variety of films to compare messages.

Chapter 4

This chapter is concerned with the construction of identity, the primary actors in a debate about identity, societies contending with perceptions of their own identity, the identity of potential and confirmed enemies, and the identity of inbetweeners and undecideables. This chapter uses the alien invasion genre to make an argument that when dominant societies meet invaders, those societies are predisposed to mistrust them and local communities are inclined to take it upon themselves to address any issues that could arise from newcomers.

First, we provide a cursory overview of the concept and definition of hegemony used in the context of this chapter and chapter 5. Considering the differences in hegemony portrayed and being utilized in analysis of popular films, we use a neo-Gramscian view of hegemony for this chapter, whereas in chapter 5 we will depend more on hegemonic stability theory.

Second we will examine identity and hegemony. Identity helps us form an understanding on how Us versus Them relationships are represented in alien invasion films. We use Social Identity Theory as a framework for understanding the role of the alien invader and how its inherent unnaturalness cements individuals' pre-existing conceptions of their role in society. We also look at neo-Gramscian hegemony. Because we are focusing on society, we conceive of the dominant force as a cultural one. Neo-Gramscian hegemony tells us about what sort of pressures the dominant society can impose upon the invader, as well as what sort of options seem to be available for a newcomer.

We summarize chapter 4 by making four major observations. First, the easiest way to mitigate empathy is to minimize anthropomorphism of a newcomer. Second, newcomers and their communities are treated with distrust by humans. Third, they *should* be treated with distrust until they have earned our trust. Fourth, local forces are untrusting of national forces.

What do We Mean by Hegemony?

Our question is "what does the alien invasion films tell us about how a hegemon and its society responds to challenges to its hegemonic authority?" Understanding who or what the hegemon is, what counts as hegemonic authority, and where this sort of authority originates will establish a clearer direction for our research.

Furthermore, usage of the term 'hegemony' within a specific context also allows us to make claims based upon the case selection with clarity and transparency. A powerful counterargument against our analysis is that conceptions of hegemony vary. Indeed, a malformed, vague, or nonexistent definition of hegemony would be a massive problem for our research. Therefore, defining what we mean by hegemony and hegemon within the context of the chapter is crucial.

However, one limitation of defining hegemony is that very specific conditions can stifle analysis from the case selection. Just as how concepts of nova are established in a work such as science fiction, we may also argue the term 'hegemony' carries nova of its own. 'Hegemony,' although it must be defined in some measure for the sake of the research, is still a broad term.

In *Constructing Global Enemies,* Eva Herschinger notes that in international relations, "hegemony is defined as the dominance or supremacy of an individual or collective actor relying on different types of resources (military, economy, political or cultural) and their combination."[115] Herschinger then notes that the definition of hegemony is "imprecise."[116] Likewise, Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton suggest that the concept of hegemony is split into two main categories: single-actor dominance as espoused in traditional IR theory and the cultural command first suggested by Robert Cox.[117] Herschinger makes the same claim, noting that "two approaches offer explicit conceptualization of hegemony in IR: the theory of hegemonic stability and the neo-Gramscian school of thought."[118] These two definitions of hegemony raise two questions regarding the paper's usage of hegemony: "which is the most appropriate definition for the chapter?" and "how do we know?"

In chapter 4, we use a neo-Gramscian definition, because it is the most appropriate for understanding societal relations. The neo-Gramscian understanding of hegemony questions the origins and undercurrents of institutions and social and power relations, as well as considering whether these institutions and relations are in the process of changing.[119] Furthermore, Herschinger states that Cox "defined hegemony as a structure of values and meanings about the

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[115] Eva Herschinger, *Constructing Global Enemies* (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group): 17.
[116] Ibid. 17.
[117] Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton, "A critical theory route to hegemony, world order and historical change: neo-Gramscian perspectives in International Relations," *Capital & Class* 28 (2004): 86.
[118] Herschinger 17.
[119] Ibid.

nature of the order that pervades the system of states and non-state entities."*120* Herschinger concludes on the instrumental value of a neo-Gramscian perspective by arguing that "the merit of the neo-Gramscian approach lies in broadening the concept of hegemony beyond the description of a single country as hegemon as argued by the theory of hegemonic stability."*121* Indeed, Peter Katzenstein in *The Culture of National Security* argues that, "security interests are defined by actors who respond to cultural factors."*122* In an article on critical analyses of the World's Bank agency, Sadik Ünay encapsulates the defining components of neo-Gramscian hegemony. He says that hegemony requires more than simply leadership, but also a dominant social, economic, and political structure.[123] Whereas international organizations fulfill the role of presenting norms through which the hegemon maintains its dominance, the same dynamic can be applied to communities.[124] Therefore, when we consider alien invasion films and hegemony in chapter 4 and chapter 5, we are considering the institutional and normative power of dominant communities that make up society. How these institutions and norms break down or remain in the face of an arrival of a being that is not beholden to them can tell us about how society's rules for maintaining dominance. Because this chapter is focused upon societies within a state, having a neo-Gramscian understanding of hegemony is more useful than considering the hegemon as just a state.

Furthermore, in this chapter, adopting a neo-Gramscian understanding of hegemony is more appropriate than hegemonic stability theory because of the central protagonists in alien invasion films. Instead of states as the primary actor, the protagonists are people with formed identities. Had the state been a central actor in the question of identity (which we will address in Chapter 5), then there would be more information on hegemonic stability theory as well. In short, neo-Gramscian hegemony is the understanding of hegemony we are using in this chapter, because societies are central units in the production of dominant cultural values that manifest conceptions of one collective in contrast to another. Hegemonic stability theory is of limited use to our analysis.

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[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid. pg. 18.

[122] Peter Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press): 2.

[123] Sadik Ünay, "Hegemony, Aid, and Power: A Neo-Gramscian Analysis of the World Bank," *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies* 2 (2010): 42.

[124] Ibid.

Of course, this does not mean that Chapter 5 includes only the alternative understanding of hegemony. We will consider a neo-Gramscian perspective as well as hegemonic stability theory in the next chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, neo-Gramscianism is the more important dimension, with little to no mention of hegemonic stability theory because the state is not the main actor in the case selection for chapter 4 or the question at hand.

Through adopting the idea of hegemony as a network of cultural forces, we can consider the role people and groups play in alien invasion films. If we focused entirely on states, we would have to consider the metaphoric connections between states and the societies within a state.[125]

Forming Identity

In addition to hegemony, we need to establish what we mean by identity. This is important because our understanding of identity reveals what unit of analysis we are using. Where identity is created, how it is created, and what changes it determine what we look for in our analysis. Analysis of the alien invasion film cannot proceed, especially in the context of society's responses to challenges to hegemonic authority, without defining who is within that society, how they are portrayed, who wields considerable power within that society, and how that society deals with uncertainties and enemies. Therefore, the purpose of the summary of identity is not only to describe the project's understanding of identity and SIT, but also to establish the role these understandings play in our analysis.

By looking at how identity is formed between groups, but also within groups, we know to be considerate of the role that the protagonist and other humans play in that fiction. By looking at how identity is solidified when conceived relative to another group, we can consider how protagonists percieve their humanness in the face of nonhumans.

As with hegemony, we provide a brief, general overview of the research project's conception of identity. Having an understanding of identity is useful for figuring out the constituents of a neo-Gramscian hegemony. Who controls these institutions and norms, why do they structure these institutions and norms the way they are? These questions speak to how communities treat each other in a greater society.

Providing a general definition of identity in a sentence or two is difficult. However, one important component is determining whose identity is to be defined. Not only is identity dependent upon the relationship associated with various actors, but also what kind of actors they are. For instance, though we may argue that identity is intersubjective[126] or that identity is dependent upon one specific determinant,[127] this tends to be within the context of a state.

Chapter 4 is concerned with how communities conceptualize challenges to their hegemonic authority.

Dave Brannan and Anders Strindberg use Social Identity Theory (SIT), arguing for its "efficacy as a framework for understanding individual and group dynamics."[128] Of course, we should be careful to not decouple different conceptions of identity from the group versus the nation versus the state. The essays in Peter Katzenstein's *The Culture of National Security* use identity "as a shorthand label for varying constructions of nations and statehood,"[129] recalling Eva Herschinger's definition of identity as "relational entities."[130] According to Herschinger, understanding national identity is an important prerequisite to understanding identity in general, especially how it is formed.[131] Ultimately, we should be mindful of the subject being analyzed and the roles they play, not only between them and outsiders, but also between others within the group.

For that reason, SIT works as a foundation for framing our understanding of identity. Recalling Brannan and Strindberg, SIT is concerned with social identity as "'part of an individual's self-concept,' derived from 'his or her knowledge of membership of a social group (or groups),' including the 'value and emotional significance' the member gets from his or her membership to the group."[132] Brannan and Strindberg's definition of SIT, though it provides a useful foundation upon which to further consider the question of identity, is sparse. Several additional questions emerge: how do we identify identity, how is identity formed, and is there a chance of a lack of identity? SIT is concerned with the formation of identity through what

[126] Karl K. Schonberg, *Constructing 21st Century U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan): 9.
[127] Ibid. pg. 9. Schonberg, in this is case, is referring to identity along realist terms, arguing that "[in realism,] states have only one fundamental identity."
[128] David Brannan and Anders Strindberg, "What is Social Identity Theory?" *Center for Homeland Defense and Security,* last accessed April 2, 2013, https://www.chds.us/coursefiles/DA3210/lectures/threat_sit_stryln_mod02/script.pdf.
[129] Katzenstein 7.
[130] Herschinger 7.
[131] Ibid, pg. 7.
[132] Brannan and Strindberg, "What is Social Identity Theory?".

Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg consider "self-conception as group member,"[133] but there are several additional things that we should consider.

For instance, we must be aware of the process upon which an individual self-conceptualizes. What underpins and makes an identity, and through what process is this accomplished? Jan Stets and Peter Burke note that "the self is reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify, or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications."[134] In many cases the 'Other' is the central category.[135] Stets and Burke furthermore note that the central component of an identity is "the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role" and the subsequent investment within that role and its duties.[136] In other words, the formation of an identity is determined by construction of sameness and similarity, done through adopting a role within a group. Understanding one's role within the group, however, requires understanding duties relative to other members of the group.

In the context of alien invasion films, the core of SIT can be ascertained by the master status the protagonist[137] and the survivors display. Likewise, one's identity forms in the face of adversity and adversary, and the formation of Self in the face of an Other is something we must consider when analyzing film. The role of the protagonist at the beginning of alien invasion film varies quite a large amount, ranging from a drifter (*They Live*), to a mother (*The Day the Earth Stood Still*), to a drunkard (*Independence Day*), and so on. The protagonist's transition from another person in society to someone central in dealing with the Other can tell us more about what sort of qualities and roles are valuable when cultures collide, but also what society deems to be dominant cultural values.

This brings us to the second component of identity that must be considered: identity requires conceptualization in relation to another, both within a group and between groups. Blake Ashforth and Fred Mael note that SIT consists of two major components: personal identity and

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[133] Dominic Abrams and Michael A Hogg, *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf): pg. 2.

[134] Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63 (2000): 224.

[135] Ibid. pg. 225.

[136] Ibid. pg. 225.

[137] The primary label of a person, the master status is the dominant position a person embodies. Whereas a person can embody a variety of roles (a person can be a mother, doctor, a woman, and a blood donor), the master status is the role most visible in society. For instance, said person's master status is likely a doctor if most people know her as Dr. Smith. In invasion fiction, the master status of the person insinuates where audiences are expected to empathize or find heroism in the face of challenge.

social identification.[138] Social identification, they argue, is "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate."[139] Self-conceptualization depends on one's role in relation not only to an outsider, but also to others within their own group. Indeed, Ashforth and Mael note that "awareness of [an] out-group reinforces awareness of one's in-group," strengthening homogeneity of the in-group.[140] Therefore, not only is one's social identity not just defined by the outsiders, but also his or herself relative to other members of the group.

Recalling Jodi Dean's *Aliens in America*, part of the challenge associated with UFO abductees is the lack of seriousness given to their claims. Similar sentiments underlie alien invasion films, especially those that take place on a group or town scale. In many instances, the film establishes that the protagonist or someone close to the protagonist is untrustworthy, or is not influential in the community. The lack of credence indicates that we should consider the role of the individual, especially the protagonist, should they be the first person to see or claim to see the alien invader. Such societal treatment does imply that they may be peripheral to the hegemonic society. However, the protagonist almost always embodies some core characteristic that never fully disengages them from the hegemonic society. For instance, Russell Case from *Independence Day* is scorned and mocked for his belief in aliens, but he is never treated as a complete pariah.

The third and final point regarding identity is the idea of gradations of identity. Though this does not seem to be a direct component of SIT, Alexander Wendt mentions that social identities, when dealing with identification of "the fate of the other,"[141] we are considering it on a continuum. According to Wendt, identification is not simply a conception of "us" and "them,", but rather of shifting boundaries of connectedness. Wendt notes that "if we treat identities and interests as always in process during interaction, then we can see how an evolution of cooperation might lead to an evolution of community."[142] What this means is that not only does identity consist of more than "Us" and "Them," but also that identity is constantly changing through time and space.

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[138] Blake Ashforth and Fred Mael, "Social Identity Theory and the Organization," *The Academy of Management Review* 14 (1989): 21.
[139] Ibid, pg. 21.
[140] Ibid. pg. 25.
[141] Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *The American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 386.
[142] Ibid. pg. 390.

A gradation of identity is an especially important concept for the alien invasion film because we are working with a linear narrative. While we may have difficulty charting how identity changes in an ongoing crisis, in a piece of film where the question of identity is constantly in question we find that conceptualization of the Self and Other is transient but chartable. This gives us a helpful time frame within which to study the transformation of identities and the role of each individual within a group. Furthermore, this can also tell us about specific conditions upon which we expect roles within a group to change, how groups change, and how these can affect the "Us" versus "Them" dilemma. Because we are considering hegemony as a primarily cultural force, the protagonists both subject to this cultural force and modify it. The arc of protagonists' change in identity can tell us about what sort of values are required to succeed in the face of challenge, whether the definition of success is integration, annihilation, or cooperation with the Other. The characters act as manifestations of specific ideas and groups. When a character changes in the face of adversity, it implies that the hegemon must act in a certain way as well if it wishes to accomplish similar goals.

The Hegemon as a State

In addition to neo-Gramscian hegemony, we are using the second form of hegemony Herschinger references in *Constructing Global Enemies*: hegemonic stability theory.[143] When we consider the role of the hegemon in chapter 5, we must look beyond the dominant, imperial cultural values and nodes that govern and command institutions. Whereas this considers hegemony as one cultural force considering another cultural force as a potential threat, chapter 5 must also consider hegemonic stability theory as a part of hegemonic authority in addition to neo-Gramscian hegemony.

Neo-Gramscian hegemony is still an important part of our understanding of hegemony, even when we shift from society to the state. For instance, Jorge Hernàndez Martínez and Mariana Ortegas Breña use the concept of a "political culture" consist of a "synthesis of trends, conventions, and relatively stable values"[144] which in turn create the foundation for what they call the "political system."[145] In other words, the transition from society to state is a gradation,

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[143] Herschinger 17.
[144]Jorge Hernández Martínez and Mariana Ortega Breña, "U.S. Political Culture and Hegemony," *Latin American Perspectives* 34 (2007): 47.
[145] Ibid.

and we cannot with any sort of clarity divorce government from society. But at the same time, there is a visible internal-external espousal of policy. Martínez and Breña use the example of George W. Bush's administration in response to 9/11, noting that changes to the United States' international behavior was not possible without an effect on its internal behavior. They argue that in the case of terrorism, even though the threat was external, this fostered "domestic violence and intolerance that mark [US] society's political culture",[146] something they warn went by unaware by administration.

On the flip side, Martínez and Breña also note that the administration framed the security of the country "as a fortress under siege that must protect itself against anti-American feelings."[147] This example gets at a central concern in chapter 5 that does not exist in this chapter: neo-Gramscian hegemony is not simply a cultural form or norm that we can pick apart, but also a key ingredient for the construction of policy for the state and vice versa. Domestic identity underpins most international identity, but at the same time these domestic cultural forces are influenced by state policy.[148] Therefore, for chapter 5, we must be mindful of the connection between neo-Gramscian hegemony and hegemonic stability theory, the former that is tied to the latter through integration and reproduction.

Additionally, we must note that cultural norms and values create policy that generate and recreate more norms. Therefore, when we are making a claim that if an alien attack is treated with mistrust, we cannot just argue this is a response from the administration. We must also consider the source of such distrust, and whether that distrust is evidently portrayed in the movie. This is, of course, entirely hypothetical. Whether this observation is true or not is not the main point of this section. The main point is that to understand how a state conceives of threats to its hegemonic authority we cannot simply look at the state. Though the state is a central piece, we must also be mindful of the differences and similarities that exist between the state and the groups within it.

Therefore, the role of neo-Gramscianism in this chapter serves two purposes. One, we are constantly reminded of the state apparatus versus the bearers and recipients of that apparatus. Do people in alien invasion films agree with the state's actions, and if so, under what conditions? Likewise, the role of neo-Gramscianism also can tell us about the cultural identity that the state

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[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid. pg. 48.
[148] Katzenstein 53.

itself utilizes. Does the United States argue for its characteristics to be universal, implying that alternative worldviews are alien? These questions are important considerations and flag specific parts of the films for further analysis.

In addition to neo-gramscian hegemony, the other form of hegemony Herschinger mentions is hegemonic stability theory. Eric Léonard describes hegemonic stability theory where "regime formation, effectiveness, and resiliency are predicated on the presence and willful action of a hegemon."[149] According to HST, the role of the hegemon is a leader that creates a stable international environment for the purpose of minimizing free riding and maximizing utilization of public goods.[150] Additionally, economist Charles Kindleberger argued for the role of the hegemon as a leader that does not necessarily require or depend upon force or pressure.[151] The international order incentivizes smaller states to follow larger states, with the role of the largest state bearing a willing capacity to ensure a stable international ecosystem.

The willingness and necessity of presence for a hegemon in constructing a stable international system with minimal free-riding is an important type of hegemony to consider. Because alien invasions in fiction usually threatens humanity in general, the framing of the victim through the hegemon's eyes may suggest that society needs a willing and capable hegemon. Constant portrayal of the United States in alien invasion films may be telling us more about the nexus of power than we believe. Destroying the hegemon, in other words, can be the same thing as destroying the world, as the international system depends upon the hegemon to such an extent.

The hegemon's central role suggests that any problems with the hegemon's ideals can lead to problems to the rest of the world. John Ikenberry in *Liberal Leviathan* looks at the hegemon's resilience through the strength of its order. He argues that "institutions for joint or concerted leadership span the liberal hegemonic landscape. These features of the American-led order do not eliminate hierarchy or the exercise of power, but they mute the imperial form of hierarchy and infuse it with liberal characteristics."[152] This implies a melding of hegemonic stability theory and neo-Gramscian hegemony. On the one hand, we have the central role of the hegemonic, and

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[149] Eric Léonard, *The Onset of Global Governance: International Relations Theory and the International Criminal Court* (Ashgate Publishing): 112.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Charles Kindleberger, "Hierarchy versus Inertial Cooperation," *International Organization* 40 (1986): 841-842.
[152] John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton University Press): 26.

symbolic as well as functional leadership roles it plays in ensuring global order and minimizing free riding. An attack on the hegemon is an attack on the international order, at very least because the international order requires the existence of the hegemon. On the other hand, the hegemon in turn can co-opt other states into its soft power apparatus by espousing friendly beliefs and ideals (such as rights and freedoms) to be in the interest of other states. Here we have the same neo-Gramscian sense of hegemony, but expanded over states rather than simply societies.

Under this hybrid understanding of hegemony, an alien invasion may be literal. The pressure caused by a counter-civilization may arguably be portrayed as catastrophic, undermining the interests of the hegemon and as a result the interests of global stability. Of course, this can only exist if such an alien invasion reveals jarring and different behavior from the humans. Hybridized hegemony in chapter 5 means that the hegemon is a critical actor, and that its fall would mean the fall of the planet for both cultural and civilizational reasons. This fixation with the hegemony's wellbeing within the hegemon and its society suggests a paradoxical relationship, where the success of the hegemon depends upon finding challengers to its power.

Furthermore, knowing where the hegemon stands compared to the rest of the world and how the hegemon maintains its dominant position can provide us with clues on how to proceed when analyzing alien invasion film. We know to ask how often the hegemon is shown to be the only actor that matters – for instance, is there ever a claim by anyone that if the United States falls, then the rest of the world falls? Likewise, is the war cry for resistance the same ones the United States may espouse in the face of terrorism or war? Are the ideologies of the aliens entirely incongruent with the United States' civilizational beliefs? These questions not only tell us about where the hegemon stands in the international order, but how the hegemon maintains or create further avenues for long-term power. We can test whether this is a central concern in the populace through looking at alien invasion films.

The Alien Invader in Society

First, we have defined hegemony from a neo-Gramscian perspective. Therefore, when we consider what alien invasion films tell us about challenges to society within a hegemon and hegemonic authority, then the question of 'hegemonic authority' is the cultural collision that

occurs between the existing settled culture and the institutions and practices that this culture has erected versus another.

Second, we have defined identity in the context of the research question. In this case, identity depends on our understanding of SIT, which in turn tells us about how we construct roles, status, and group behavior. When we refer to 'Group X's identity,' we are referring to Group X's similarities to *and* differences from any other group within that piece of fiction. Likewise, we also note gradations of identity, ranging from friends to strangers to known enemies. An important thing to know is which group is considered an enemy, and what tools the fiction uses to tell us that.

Third, based upon our definition of alien invader and our understanding of SIT and neo-Gramscian hegemony, we know to look at the aliens themselves as well as their methods of arrival. SIT tells us to consider the roles and identifying characteristics of the humans both at the beginning and at the end of the story. Neo-Gramscianism tells us to consider the values of the aliens as opposed to those of humans, whether those values conflict, and how humans respond to differences in behavior both among themselves and to the aliens. Likewise, we also know that how established institutional authorities (policemen, the government) deal with organic, formalistic authority (the protagonist, the survival group's leader) tells us about what we expect of institutional authority in real life.

This knowledge leads us to the final case selection for chapter 4 analysis:

- The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951)
- The Day the Earth Stood Still (2008)
- V
- Lilo and Stitch
- Monsters
- Slither
- Super 8
- Men in Black
- E.T., the Extra Terrestrial
- District 9
- X-Files
- It Came from Outer Space
- Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978)
- Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
- The Thing
- They Live
- Village of the Damned (1995)

Chapter 4 and 5 use different cases because our understanding of hegemony changes. In chapter 4, our concern is with society; therefore we are looking at conflict where society is the stage for invasion. In chapter 5, because we are analyzing the state, we are using cases that have a greater focus on the state's actions. Using the same cases would mean that either chapter 4 or chapter 5 must make uncertain allegorical connections between society and the state.

Because chapter 4 is about society, we are looking at groups and individuals. They constitute society. States are often featured, but they are not the central unit of analysis in these cases because this chapter is not considering the wielders of hegemony to be states. In chapter 5, we adopt a more comprehensive understanding of hegemony and identity. In that chapter, society and state blend together. Therefore, the cases reflect that by showing both states and societies.

From studying alien invasion films, we come across three central lessons on hegemonic challenge. First, we learn that broad humanness matters, both on varying levels of anthropocentric and anthropomorphic qualities. Second, a perceived decoupling of responsibility between society and the state exists. Third, regardless of any cosmopolitan beliefs, the lack of information during first contact encourages immense distrust.

Humanness Matters

Bipedalism contributes to a benign image. In almost all of the cases where the alien is portrayed as benign (*It Came from Outer Space, The Day the Earth Stood Still* [both], *E.T., the Extra Terrestrial,* and *District 9*), they are bipedal. In the case where the alien is not bipedal, benign intent is not the norm. In this instance, bipedalism is not a literal contribution to a benign image, but rather that it is indicative of humanness.

In the case of an alien invader with malevolent intentions, they can take various forms. For instance, the alien 'Cooper' in *Super 8* is more akin to an arachnid than a human, and feeds on humans. In *The Thing*, the Creature does not take a specific form, but rather adopts that of its host. In *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, the pods resemble seeds.

This may be a tool for the Self to dehumanize a confirmed malevolent Other. The use of dehumanizing an Other is useful for the sake of ensuring that combating and eliminating a threat is possible on an individual scale. Since a malevolent alien does not need to be bipedal, there may be an anthropocentric dimension to this choice. Indeed, considering that one of the

conditions for killing human beings en masse seem to be the dehumanization of the Other,[153] choosing to omit the most basic fundamentals of anthropomorphism - the bipedal, human form - suggests that we as humans are sympathetic toward humanness. The application of anthropomorphism seems to be a central requirement in establishing the humanity of any sort of Other.

Nowhere is this more noticeable than in the cases of *District 9* and *Lilo and Stitch*, where the growing humanness of the aliens over the course of the films depend on the continued portrayal of this Other species as humanlike as possible. In the case of *District 9*, the aliens (referred to as 'prawns' by the humans) are already bipedal, but disheveled and unclothed. Their form of reproduction through an organic, spore-like hive colony is revealed only once in the movie when the protagonist Wikus van de Merwe orders troops to destroy it, giving an underdeveloped alien fetus to one of the on-site troops as a trophy. However, as Wilkus physically changes, the children of the prawn are displayed in a mammalian fashion: they are smaller versions of their parent, as in the case of Christopher Johnson's (one of the prawns) son.

In the case of *Lilo and Stitch*, the alien Stitch blends in by retracting his extra limbs into his abdomen. He is initially portrayed as a dog, and during those scenes he is violent and destructive. However, over the course of the movie, Stitch adopts more and more human traits, such as family attachments, an ability to talk, and bipedalism. He moves beyond being considered a 'dog' by Lilo, to a family member and friend.

The design of the alien invader gives clues on how an individual conceives of the Other. In this scenario, the alien invader serves as a means of understanding how the individual forms differing conceptions of Self versus the Other. Bipedalism in alien invaders suggests that on an individual level, sapience is tied to physical anthropomorphism. There are, however, exceptions. Gentle and benign aliens can still exist in the alien invasion films and not take human form. However, this is not the norm.

In *Monsters*, the alien invaders are portrayed as benign, gentle giants, with the ending revealing their sophisticated means of communication through sounds and lights. Furthermore, the form of these aliens does not resemble that of humans - they are a cross between insects and

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[153] Sebastian Junger, "We're all guilty of dehumanizing the enemy," *The Washington Post*, January 13, 2012, last accessed April 7, 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-01-13/opinions/35441362_1_dead-taliban-fighters-war-crime-soldiers; John Hagan and Wenona Rymond-Richmond, "The Collective Dynamics of Racial Discrimination and Genocidal Victimization in Darfur," *American Sociological Review* 73 (2008): 876.

squids, and tower over human structures because of their gargantuan size. At first glance, this would be a reasonable counterpoint to the observation thus far. After all, if such a non-humanoid can be portrayed as benign, then what restricts other movies from doing so? Such movies exist, but they are rare. Furthermore, in the case of *Monsters*, portrayal of non-humanoids as benign is not accomplished with the rejection of anthropocentric values. Humanoid proportions and bipedalism in the alien invasion films still seem very much important. In *Monsters*, the aliens are portrayed more akin to gentle giants without sapience - more akin to whales with no noticeable state or complex society.

However, we cannot simply say that looking like a human validates one as trustworthy. Visual recognition seems to be more complex. In *Village of the Damned*, even though the children are bipedal and look exactly like humans, they are treated with distrust because their hair and eye colours are different from that of the townsfolk. Likewise, in both versions of *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, a central premise is that Klaatu is humanoid, comes unarmed, and gets shot. In both *Village of the Damned* and *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, simply looking human does not guarantee immediate trust. In the former case, the distrust the townsfolk was vindicated when the children begin to turn against the town, whereas in the latter case, the alien calls off the destruction of humankind regardless of not having gained their trust. But regardless of their intents, one similarity between both cases is that they never earned the trust of most humans they interacted with.

The reason might be that even though the children in *Village of the Damned* seem human, they are so starkly different from the townsfolk that their unnaturalness extends beyond basic physicality. In this context, because of the silver hair and eyes of the children of Midwich, they are seen as unnatural in a homogenous hamlet. In comparison, Klaatu in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (in both versions) exhibits curious, but ultimately human-like characteristics. Nothing makes him stand out from the humans. Much of the movie revolve around the government trying to find Klaatu. In this sense, Klaatu may have integrated into society so well that his decision to stop his robotic companion (who was assaulting the city) was his own choice to decouple himself from the humans.

Therefore, the choice of design to depict benign invaders as more human-like suggests that we see human proportions as important. Markers of individual humanness are downplayed with the arrival of the Other. The Other is not portrayed as a single individual, but as a member of

another species or group. This anthropomorphism seems to underpin the foundation of a society's concept of 'self.' When the aliens are portrayed as physically non-human, we are more willing to distrust them. These non-human facets are visual cues that seem to be exaggerations of pre-existing physical markers that establish the Other.

Of course, malevolence can also take human form, as the cases of *V* and *Village of the Damned* suggest. In this case, we learn that basic anthropomorphic qualities may not always be the case. Here, distrust stems from the lack of what the Self considers to be human, rather than an objective sense of anthropomorphic physicality. In *Village of the Damned*, the children of Midwich are phenotypically human, but they lack the ability to blend into the general society that exists.

The focus on gradations of anthropomorphism suggests that society depends on a group-wide 'uncanny valley' to reinforce separation between them and others. The uncanny valley was a term coined by roboticist Masahiro Mori, who argues that as constructs become more humanlike in their appearance and behavior, people become less receptive and trusting.[154] Alien invasion films suggest that visual distrust inhabits two distinct spaces. The first is where the other is visibly non-anthropomorphic, and such anthropomorphism plays a basic foundational role in eliciting trust. Absence of that quality creates distrust.

The second is much more subtle. Having foundations of anthromorphic characteristics (such as humanoid proportions and behavior) while at the same time eliciting distrust because of a minor but salient difference. Here, the Other looks human, but is not registered as human. They are avatars for something else, or grouped in with something else. This second form suggests that dehumanization can be much more subtle, and not simply then absence of notable human characteristics.

A real-life example of the former is the slogan of the hutu extremists leading up to the Rwanda genocide. The chant, which stated "cut down the tall trees"[155] (referring to the Tutsis), removed the human label from the Tutsis. A similar example is The Swiss People's Party using such differences in their posters. Under the words 'for more security,' the poster portrayed a

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[154] Shawn A. Steckenfinger and Asif A. Ghazanfar, "Monkey visual behavior falls into the uncanny valley," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 106 (2009): 18362.
[155] Andrew Harding, "Rwanda tries to heal its wounds," *BBC News*, last modified August 30, 2003, last accessed July 7, 2013, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/3191489.stm.

group of white sheep kicking out a group of black sheep.[156] They did not explicitly espouse the removal of people, but of sheep. Similar to how emphasis of anthropomorphic qualities is a foundational but not guaranteed requirement for constructing trustworthiness in a collective Other, we see that heterogeneity fosters distrust.

An example of the latter is the power of racialized words in eliminating the humanness of the Others. Instead of eliminating clear anthropocentric proportions, some are exaggerated or their qualities superseded by race or political labels. These labels dehumanize the Other. Gregory Hooks and Clayton Mosher argue that torture at Abu Ghraib and the Invasion of Iraq on a micro-level was possible because the people were not labeled as people.[157] Instead, they were labeled as enemy combatants, with much of the dehumanization occurring along racial lines.[158]

The cases of *Village of the Damned* and *V* reveal another side to the role anthropomorphism plays in violence between the Self and the Other. Alien invasion films tell us that basic human qualities are important for establishing basic trust (or pretending to be human). It also tells us that even if such human qualities exist, trust can be undermined if some minute characteristics do not conform to the collective Self. Even if someone is clearly human, if the dominant society conceives of the Other using non-human identifiers (such as race, politics, etc.), then the Other risks dehumanization. This means that as an outsider, becoming trusted by the community requires establishing their own humanness. However, this social uncanny valley also means that maintaining trust is onus of the distrusted.

Compared to real-life studies, fiction heavily mitigates the role of global brotherhood. Over time, alien invasion films adhere to the same basic rules on dehumanization. This 'consistency of dehumanization' suggests that regardless of increased globalization and interconnectedness, the rules for marginalizing such global brotherhood remains the same. Here, fiction acts as a contestation to cosmopolitan arguments such as Kwame Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, claiming that advances in human connectedness, the rules for removing such humanness remains the same. Alien invasion films tell us that what matters is not how much or how well we are connected to our fellow man, but how much 'humanity' we glean from that connection.

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[156]Imogen Foulkes, "Swiss Row over black Black Sheep Poster," *BBC News Channel,* last accessed June 7, 2013, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6980766.stm.
[157] Gregory Hooks and Clayton Mosher, "Outrages against Personal Dignity: Rationalizing Abuse and Torture in the War on Terror," *Social Forces* 83 (2005): 1639.
[158] Ibid.

Society and the state do not get along

The role and arc of the protagonist tells us about the expected arc to heroism. The sort of sacrifices the protagonist makes, to whom, and for what reasons tell us about what society expects to keep and lose when a challenge to its hegemony arises. In most cases, the protagonists are adults. One common character trait in this type of films is the distrust these characters have for other characters, especially those in positions of state authority. Unless the protagonist is a policeman (as in the case of *Slither*), then the role of the police is to discourage or scorn the existence of an alien invader (*It Came from Outer Space*), to act as an obstacle to acquiring 'the truth' (*The Midwich Cuckoos*), or to argue that aliens do not exist at all (*E.T., the Extra Terrestrial, District 9*). This means that the protagonist is exposed to visible local authority through limited means, and in most cases local authorities are portrayed as either antagonistic or incompetent.

In other words, the relationship between the individual in alien invasion films is rooted deeply in the relationship between society and the state. In the case of *E.T., the Extra Terrestrial*, the first agents on the scene are Federal ones, not municipal. Likewise, in *District 9*, the ones tasked with moving the prawns from one district to another are not local police forces, but a private military arm of a large corporation employed by the United Nations. *They Live* completely dismantles the authoritative legitimacy of the power of the police, establishing most of the policemen as either undercover aliens or cogs in a large machine. Most often the police in alien invasion films are not portrayed as competent or trustworthy.

Therefore, we see a special relationship in society: people on a local level do not deal with the government on a regular basis, regardless of their profession, but rather are briefly exposed to or employed by the government. The government is ultimately an organization that exists 'elsewhere.' Sometimes the protagonist is a member of an organization or has a set of skills (such as Nada in *They Live,* a drifter, or Professor Helen Benson from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*). Other times they are suddenly thrust into a relationship with federal agents - Will Smith's character in *Men in Black*, for instance, is recruited from a pool of airmen, pilots, and marines, all members of the federal apparatus (while he is a member of a local one, the LAPD). But in both cases, politicking, bureaucracy, and any reference to the overarching institutional structure in the state is never shown as a central part of the story.

We may be seeing a special relationship between the society within a state and the state itself. When we are considering hegemonic authority as cultural forces, images, and structural pressures from people upon people, then we may witness an undercurrent of individualism on the local level, establishing the problem of the alien invaders as 'local problems,' something that the state should not be involved in. Likewise, when we consider conceptions of the Other, we not only have to consider that Us may not include those at an institutional and geographic distance; the federal government and its agents in these films are treated as unresponsive, callous, or 'alien' themselves. In other words, Us versus Them, Self versus Other, is multidirectional.

Additionally, when troubles arise, they must be dealt with on a local level first, especially when perceived Others enter the spaces claimed by 'Us.' But this is beyond saying 'the federal government should butt out of our business' - the lack of effective and empathetic police forces in the alien invasion films suggest that defense against destruction comes from the townspeople, not the police force. Society expects governance to be bottom up. Based upon the trust-in-ourselves sentiment that runs through most of the cases, this raises the question of who or what the generator of these values is. The emphasis on the townsfolk and the diminished reach of federal influence suggests that regardless of what the hegemon is, film tells us that individuals consider themselves and their communities to be the creator of their common sense values, ignoring reflexivity that may exist between federal and local organizations. In the face of an arrival of the Other, the federal government is considered something undependable.

We may argue that the Men in Black in *Men in Black* are federal agents, and therefore an example of federal support. The role of the government is still contestable. First, the organization considers itself separate from the government. Though MiB bears government origins, after initial success and a wave of alien arrivals the organization became global and decoupled from the federal government apparatus. Second, Agent J (Will Smith's character) is identified in contrast to the other candidates, all of whom are government personnel (mainly the military). His promotion insinuates that the 'best of the best' of the federal government is inferior to local authorities.

In only one case (*The X-Files*) are the federal agents portrayed as being empathetic and (debatably) effective. However, they are treated as pariahs within the Bureau of Federal Investigation. They are the exception instead of the norm, and are more similar to the townsfolk they observe on a regular basis than to their own organization.

However, just looking at a state versus society relationship fails to provide a clear image of hegemony. Recalling Herschinger from earlier, hegemony is about dominance using the ideas and tools at hand. The alien invasion films suggest that there is hardly a clear dialogue of dominance and subversion at hand; instead, the conception of Them versus Us is about defense, and any sort of hegemony is fractured between a variety of actors on different levels (local, state, and federal levels) that may not see eye-to-eye or cannot be contacted.

This leads to the corollary question, "should we be looking for some sort of cultural and social force that can dominate, or one that is dominant?" The former is very different from the latter, and we argue the latter is much easier to answer. There are instances of the former culture, such as the treatment of the prawns by the humans in *District 9*, as the prawns become engrossed in the market and sell their arms for food. This is a clear case of neo-Gramscian hegemony, manifested through the marketplace. The prawns have adopted human clothing, become involved in prostitution and arms trafficking, and depend on human-made food. They are familiar with human organizations, policies, and institutions, and even though they retain their languages, their behavior closely resembles fictionalized vagrants more than invaders.

Alien invasion fiction suggests that we conflate a dominant cultural force with a dominating cultural force. In *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (both versions in the list), the visitor Klaatu represents the more powerful civilization. Though Klaatu is clearly shown to be the more powerful agent, the rationale for humanity's caution is predicated on human logic. In *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, Secretary of Defense Regina Jackson references Christopher and the Incans, arguing that the weaker civilization is wiped out. This argument is her rationale to distrust Klaatu's need to speak to world leaders. In short, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* suggests that being powerful and being a hegemon may not always be aligned. Though historical cases of the hegemon has shown a willingness to exercise power, sometimes the most powerful actor is hesitant, deferring to potentially counterintuitive policy choices.

Alien invasion fiction suggests that the perceived disconnect between the state and society may also reveal a disconnect between neo-Gramscian hegemony and power. Constant reminders of human interaction and human history as an indicator for behavior in the face of a more powerful agent suggest that the dominant versus the dominating actor is not always the same. In the context of societal distrust of the federal government, this means that the federal government may be either unwilling or incapable of noticing moments where it can exert its power. In other

words, regardless of whether the society and the state are separate, what is important to note is that the state may be undermining its own neo-Gramscian hegemonic ability. The arrival of a powerful actor that chooses not to exercise its power suggests that neo-Gramscian hegemony can exist outside of the most powerful actor. When considered alongside HST's prerequisite for a powerful, willing, and active state, this sort of hegemonic aloofness suggests that multiple hegemons can exist within the same territory within different dimensions of power.

Distrust is the Natural Response to First Contact

In the wake of first contact, distrust is prudent. In alien invasion films, distrust is portrayed as valuable for survival. Distrust is the theme of *The Thing*, a movie that thrives on uncertainty, unreliable narration, vague clues, and trickery through both writing and visuals. In *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Slither*, and *It Came from Outer Space*, distrust is one of the requirements for survival. However, nowhere is this more embodied than in *V,* where the main character is one of the very few distrusful characters from the beginning of the show. Her son, Tyler, seems to be a tragic foil to her character, as he not only trusts the Visitors), but also falls in love with one. However, shortly after mating (arguably a strong act of trust), Tyler is killed. In *Slither*, very few of the townsfolk suspect Grant (who was infected at the beginning of the movie and is carrying out attacks under influence from the worms) is behind the attacks on the townspeople, but his wife Starla is one of the first to catch his odd behavior and also one of the few survivors.

Such distrust is not consistent. In *Lilo and Stitch*, Stitch's adoption could not have been possible had it not been for Lilo's belief that Stitch is a dog. In *Men in Black*, Agent J during the shooting range test hits only one target amidst a sea of aliens, and that was the human girl. In *It Came from Outer Space*, the aliens turn out to be interested in repairing their spaceship and getting off of Earth. In those cases, distrust is different, but still remains an integral part of the story. Furthermore, distrust is not entirely invalidated, but the onus of eliminating such distrust is never on the one who distrusts the other.

For example, Stitch is the one that eventually adopts and internally formalizes human custom. His construction of his Self as a family member (even going so far as to literally say 'this is my family') is his character arc. Lilo did not change her pre-existing notions and sentiments about Stitch. In *Men in Black*, Agent J's choice to shoot the girl was because of his distrust of the girl, saying that "a little white girl at night in the middle of the Hood, she's about

to start something." Agent J does not form his distrust along physical, visual lines, but rather along socioeconomic ones. In *It Came from Outer Space*, the protagonist John Putnam's distrust of the aliens allows him to uncover their plans and realize that they are benevolent. In other words, distrust is a privilege of the entrenched. But knowing how this distrust can be translated into a tool of domination is a difficult question to answer. All we can say is that when looking at alien invasion films, we learn that as a member of an already established Us, that member is the one that commands the perceived legitimacy to be distrusting of the Others.

This 'privilege of distrust' that seems to crop up often in alien invasion films in our study of neo-Gramscian hegemony bears out somewhat in real life, especially when we look at the treatment of radical Others by a highly dominant Self. Penny Edgell, Joseph Gerteis, and Douglas Hartmann, for instance, study "the degree to which atheists represent a symbolic 'other' against which some Americans define themselves as good people and worthy citizens."[159] In terms of public and private acceptance, atheists were ranked the least accepted group in 2003.[160] Even more notably is the phrasing of the question: *This Group Does Not At All Agree with My Vision of American Society* and *I would Disapprove if My Child Wanted to Marry a Member of This Group*. Atheists ranked highest among both at 39.6 and 47.6 percent, respectively.[161] Edgell et al suggest that one of the reasons for this is the United States' history of depending on religion as a foundation for moral solidarity.[162] In other words, rather than the religious Us considering whether the atheist Other has such moral foundations, the onus to dispel this distrust is left up to the atheists. Other religious groups are assumed to be party to moral solidarity. When considering the 'the privilege of distrust,' the case of the atheist Other in America is evocative of the cases of *It Came from Outer Space* and *Lilo and Stitch*. The dominant cultural forces have no need to prove their benign disposition - the Others must prove it themselves, because of their Otherness.

Therefore, to recall the question of 'what do the alien invasion films tell us about how society within a state conceives of challenges to its hegemonic authority,' we find a lesson on distrust and the role of dispelling distrust. The entrenched society, even if they may or may not be utilizing its position to dominate, still has 'the privilege of distrust.' Ultimately, for the Other

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[159] Penny Edgell, Joseph Gerteis and Douglas Hartmann, "Atheists As 'Other': Moral Boundaries and Cultural Membership in American Society," *American Sociological Review* 71 (2006): 214.
[160] Ibid. pg. 218.
[161] Ibid. pg. 218.
[162] Ibid. pg. 218.

to effectively integrate with the dominant Self, that distrust must be dispelled. However, the films suggest that the society within a state has no compelling obligation to question that distrust. Instead, integration of the Other requires the Other to dispel it.

In Conclusion

Based upon our analysis, we learn that when two communities come in contact, the immediate response is distrust. For the society that imposes the dominant cultural forces within a given territory, an act of distrust may be followed by a dehumanization of the Other. In turn, the Other community must 'infiltrate' the entrenched community for any chance at integration. Power and authority, at the beginning, are not shared.

What is even more notable is that the expectation of society is that such a challenge – the arrival of the Other to combat the pre-existing Self – is best addressed only by society on a local level. Regardless of the government's role, when local forces are the main actors in a Self versus Other relationship, they are independent of the larger state apparatus. In fact, not only is distrust of the Other a natural and encouraged reaction, but distrust of the state's efficacy in addressing such issues is also natural and encouraged.

This suggests a fortress society, in which the individual in a hegemonic society is the most fundamental unit in the perpetuation of dominant and pre-existing cultural values. In turn, when a challenge arises, the individual – as a functioning member of the group label he or she applies to him or herself – must be cautious and distrustful of the arrival of Others. Even more notable is that in the position where ambiguous 'thirds' exist, the correct response to addressing these thirds is defining them as things not to be trusted. To be trusting of another is considered naïve, and tolerating the existence of thirds is only possible if such thirds openly integrate into the dominant culture. To rectify the issue of distrust is not the responsibility of the dominant community or cultural group, but rather the arriving group. In other words, alien invasion films tell us that an organized Other must work extra hard to gain the trust of the already established Self.

The lesson gleaned from invasion fiction is threefold. First, some people may endorse a cosmopolitan worldview, but ultimately the mechanics for dehumanization remain the same. Fiction serves as a useful updater on the rules of societal marginalization; real life cases would

have to account for a variety of sociological and psychological developments. Invasion fiction, however, clearly states that the rules for enforcing marginalization are ultimately unchanged.

Second, invasion fiction suggests that our conception of neo-Gramscian hegemony may be different from a powerful actor. Alien invasion fiction challenges the role of one form of hegemony (the state as the leader) versus another form of hegemony (the generator of common sensed) as potentially existing at the same time, but also being different. Alien invasion fiction implies that a neo-Gramscian hegemon may not always be an HST hegemon. A dual-hegemony in fiction suggests that somewhere a similar relationship exists; somebody or something is not the dominant group, but still generates 'common sense' at the expense of a militarily, financially, or politically dominant entity.

Third, analysis of the invasion fiction suggests a far more asymmetrical relationship between the Self versus the Other than real life cases may imply. Most notably is the privilege of distrust, where in fiction distrust is almost always rewarded and rarely punished. The corollary of that privilege provides a moral dimension to the hegemon, suggesting that acts that stem from such distrust (Japanese Internment Camps, for instance) is natural and encouraged behavior.

Chapter 5

Overview and Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the hegemon as a large, singular actor. Rather than consider the hegemon as a collective as we have in chapter 4, this chapter aims to answer the question "what do alien invasion films tell us about how the hegemon conceive of challenges to its hegemonic authority?" by changing the definition of 'hegemon'. Instead of looking at the society within a state, borrows and expands upon SIT, HST, and neo-Gramscian hegemony from chapter 4 to come to conclusions about the state.

The Hegemon as a State

Chapter 5 analyses these films and shows:

- Independence Day
- War of the Worlds (2005)
- Falling Skies
- Battle: Los Angeles
- Mars Attacks!
- Transformers
- Transformers: Dark of the Moon
- Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen
- War of the Worlds (1953)
- Close Encounters of the Third Kind
- Battleship

This list is compiled through the cross-comparison of popular movies and films from chapter 3. The process is similar to chapter 4. However, because this chapter looks at the state, we choose only cases where the state is a visible actor in the face of an alien invasion. Blatant government, its collapse, or attempts at its resuscitation are the qualities we looked for when creating this list.

The Hegemon Represents the World

Based upon our understanding of hegemony, the United States takes the limelight. For instance, in movies such as *Battle: Los Angeles* and in the *Transformers* series, the primary actors in both films are part of the American government. In *Battle: Los Angeles*, the film is

structured as a tale regarding the US Marines, despite the opening voiceover of "The world is at war." Only at the end are other states mentioned. Likewise, in *Transformers*, the Autobots are given an ultimatum by the United States government to abide by the demands of the Department of Defense, or else the Autobots cannot do business on Earth. Optimus Prime, the leader, refuses such a condition without raising the question as to what other states would do.

What we see here is a centrality of the United States in at least assuming a global position as the engine of international organization. One may argue that the United States is not the representative of the global order – scholars such as Arvind Subramanian would argue that a rising power such as China would be a sufficient challenge to the United States' power.[163] If we look at the power of the hegemon through a soft power dimension, one may argue that if we conceive of power as zero-sum, then greater resilience and autonomy would imply a loss of power.[164] In alien invasion films, the United States tends to be portrayed as the bearer of innovative resistance: the method on how to destroy and kill is usually an American or figured out in America. This suggests that perhaps the United States does not consider itself as an almighty or complete hyperpower, but instead subscribes to an understanding of its position as a global leader, similar to Kindleberger's conception of a hegemon.

Indeed, the need to act on part of the United States government or its citizens suggest that the sooner the United States adopts such innovative measures to combatting challenges to its hegemonic authority, the sooner the international order follows suite. In *War of the Worlds*, secondary character Harvey Ogilvy mentions to Tom Cruise's character Ray Ferrier that "somehow they killed a few of these things in Osaka. That's what I heard. You telling me the Japanese can figure it out but we can't?" Though short and brief, when pieced together with the narrative of Spielberg's *War of the Worlds*, suggests the centrality of US leadership in the world. Though the Japanese had defeated at least one tripod already, the movie does not reach its denouement until we witness the destruction of one of the tripods by Ferrier later in the film.

This sort of "it is never over until America deems it is over" behavior in alien invasion films may be a reflection of the unipolar order that keeps America at the top. Ikenberry argues that within a hegemonic order, though there is hierarchy, "weaker and secondary states are formally sovereign and the extent and mechanisms of domination can be looser and less

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[163] Arvind Subramanian, "Eclipse: Living in the Shadow of China's Economic Dominance," Peterson Institute for International Economics (2011): 39.
[164] Ibid.

formal."[165] Ferrier's witness of American soldiers defeating a tripod, despite rumors of Japanese success at Osaka, underpin the centrality of American expectations of their own power: the world has not yet succeeded until the methods proven to be successful are adopted by the Americans. American resistance as a symbol of global resistance against the alien invader suggests a representative nexus on part of Washington, regardless of what other states have attempted. This sort of "dissemination of protocol" by the hegemon is echoed in other films, where *Independence Day*, *Mars Attacks!*, and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* reveal the Americans are leaders in the face of invasion. Even in peaceful alien 'invasions' such as *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, the protagonist is an American and the people that go to the mothership are implied to be American, despite the wide array of states present. What this means for the research question is that the hegemon may have a fixation with maintaining its own power through incessant leadership. America-first leadership suggests that in a situation where its authority is challenged, even if an ally comes to America's aid, ultimately the decision to act depends on America first.

This is not too far-fetched. Though not an explicit challenge, if we look at the case in Libya versus NATO in 2011, we can see the centrality of US involvement in the campaign. "Even as Washington put a European mask of command on the operation," notes Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt, "the United States remained the backbone for any NATO offensive."[166] Ivo Daalder and James Stavridis echo Shanker and Schmitt's claims. They claim that while the majority of operations in Libya were non-US NATO,[167] noting that the United States played a leading role. This may be because of the same reason why the United States seems to be fixated with showing its exceptionalism in alien invasion films: power resources. Ikenberry notes that "unipolarity is a distinctive distribution of power that the world has not seen until recently. It is an international system in which material capabilities are highly concentrated."[168] The United States commands a unique global position where its incentives are to coerce states to consent to agreements to maximize the effectiveness of public goods, but also to prudently take advantage of its position.

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[165] John Ikenberry, "Liberalism and Empire: Logics of Order in the American Unipolar Age," *Review of International Studies* 30 (2004): 615-616.

[166] Thom Shanker, and Eric Schmitt, "Seeing Limits to 'New' Kind of War in Libya," *The NY Times*, last accessed May 18, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/22/world/africa/nato-war-in-libya-shows-united-states-was-vital-to-toppling-qaddafi.html?_r=0.

[167] Ivo H. Daalder and James G. Stavridis, "NATO's Success in Libya," *The NY Times*, last accessed July 19, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/31/opinion/31iht-eddaalder31.html.

[168] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, 154.

Alien invasions underline a considerable threat to such public goods provisions as well as the United States' ability to take advantage of its global command.

NATO's activity in Libya during 2010-2011 is very similar to what invasion films tell us about how the hegemon perceives itself. Whether the United States played a leading role in Libya is not what matters. What matters is that the United States believes it does, just as how alien invasion films thrust the United States into a leadership position without care of the hegemon's actual role. The perceived role supersedes the actual role. The world that acts independently of the hegemon's direct control is painted as inactive and dependent on the hegemon's resources. Major changes or events are dependent not based upon what the hegemon can or cannot do, but what it believes it can or cannot do.

In short, when we consider the role of hegemonic leadership in alien invasion films, we see that hegemonic leadership is a necessary, crucial element in the face of challenge. The alternative, as suggested by state-based invasions, is that in the face of deterioration of the provision of public goods and the drive to command a unipolar order the only result from inaction by the hegemon is destruction of its international order. In other words, an *active* hegemon is crucial. In alien invasion films, we expect the hegemon to make decisions, adopt and disseminate operations and priorities, and delegate in the hierarchy of states. A challenge to its hegemonic authority *must* be addressed by the hegemon. Failing to do so puts the order at risk, suggesting an emphasis on relative gains.

The Hegemon's Beliefs are the 'Correct Ones'

There is no known democratic process revealed in any of the alien invader films. In *Battle: Los Angeles*, the aliens are governed through a caste system and run by a military oligarchy. In *Independence Day*, the aliens are nomadic, with no known government revealed. In *X-Com: Enemy Unknown*, the aliens are byproducts of a more powerful hivemind group located elsewhere and enslaved to fight. In *Transformers*, the villains are a hostile group of aliens that function as a small autocratic squad. None of the alien invaders are revealed as having any semblance of a democracy, and none of them display any sort of concept of rights. Likewise, such invaders tend to not differentiate between civilians and fighters.

The 'total war' approach by the alien invaders underline a very crucial component of our current hegemonic order in a national, neo-Gramscian perspective: the concept of rights and the

treatment of civilians suggests that the liberal order is not the same thing as a global order. However, at the same time alien invasion films conflate liberal values with global values. Therefore, alien invasion films suggests that concepts such as cosmopolitanism have an innately universal dimension to them when that may not be the case. In fact, in alien invasion films, we see the harvesting of civilians (*War of the Worlds*), the annihilation of large civilian centers (*Independence Day*) and a need to enact Scorched Earth policy (*Battle: Los Angeles*). Optimus Prime in the *Transformers* series regularly legitimizes his actions by arguing that he believes in freedom and believes in the heart of mankind, suggesting highly liberal values as the superior values. In comparison, the invaders are demoted to fighting for resources, space, and generic nefarious purposes, not ideals.

Therefore, alien invasion films suggest two things: one, cultural differences are insufficient indicators of operational differences. We are almost never told why the aliens do what they do: in rare cases such as the Martians in *War of the Worlds* (where the narrator suggests that they invaded because they are envious of our resources), such motivations are tempered by the sheer monstrousness of their actions. The lesson is that whatever the motivations of these alien invaders, their accomplishment is only possible in the face of our annihilation.

Therefore, what we can guess is that when an enemy commits an act incongruent with the rules of the order established by the hegemon, regardless of their purposes, they are immediately considered in the wrong. This suggests that cultural relativism in policy is not a sufficient reason for the behavior of states when the behaviors of those states are incongruent with the hegemon's wishes.

Second, there is a lack of distinction between universal human values and liberal human values. This is especially notable in the context of the hegemon as peddler of such liberal human values. The atrocious treatment of civilians by these alien invaders, which in turn warrant their annihilation, suggest that there is no dichotomous distinction between hegemonic and non-hegemonic human values. The hegemon's values *are* global values. As a result, when one's freedom and value as human being is at stake in these movies, they have gravity and reason to fight or flight.

Nowhere is this more notable in *Battleship*, where the aliens abide by broadly similar code of conducts to that the United States and the liberal order it espouses. The aliens in *Battleship* do not target combatants and ignore civilians, and their primary purpose is seen as to wait and

communicate with their homeworld, not for the sake of acquiring resources or destabilizing human civilization. As such, there is a lack of gravity, which has been noted in critical reception to the film.[169] What this means is that if the challenger to such hegemonic authority applies the same principles in contestation as the hegemon, does that necessarily mean this is a legitimate challenge to the hegemon's power? Does the hegemon register transitional challenge at all? Ikenberry argues that "liberal-oriented hierarchy is international order in which the dominant state builds and operates within more or less agreed-upon rules and institutions."[170] The United States is powerful because challenging it through its own rules does not necessarily change the way it continues to command global power resources. The same thing is visible in *Battleship*: the behavior of the aliens are not too far from the behavior of the United States military and its doctrinal ideals, and thus does not resonate with its audience as an immense threat. As a result, the characters lack gravity upon which their own security is questioned.

Alien invasion fiction writes rudimentary rules on threat recognition. In the context of real-world struggles for dominance, invasion fiction implies that for a challenger such as China, becoming a hegemon is much more difficult than remaining one. For a rising power, the hegemon is situated in a comfortable position where it does not need to significantly change its position: the hegemon's institutions enforce its position. For a rising power, an additional obstacle to being able to materially challenge the hegemon's position is also to overcome or dismantle the hegemon's order. If the rising power co-opts into the hegemon's order, then the hegemon has no considerable incentive to register the rising power as a legitimate threat. Additionally, even if the hegemon displays any semblance of concern, alien invasion fiction suggests that the hegemon is not under any considerable security threat; adopting another state's institutions simply leads to subservience. However, if the rising power seeks to overcome the hegemon, then both material and institutional upheavals are necessary.

All Challenges are Wake-Up Calls

The last piece of analysis to consider is the direction and reversibility of change. Alien invasion films suggests a disestablishment of a virginal knowledge of dominance, embedded through a global "we are not alone" sentiment. In *Mars Attacks*, attempts at diplomacy with the

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[169] Adam Litovitz, "Battleship: An in-name-only adaptation," *The Globe and Mail*, last accessed May 18, 2013, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/battleship-an-in-name-only-adaptation/article4184720/.
[170] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, 76.

Martians are met with enemy fire. In *Independence Day*, rooftop greeters were incinerated by the invaders. In alien invasion films, pre-emptive strikes tend to be rewarded. Delays and curiosity are punished. In *Battleship*, the survivors and instigators are given medals and award ceremonies despite being the humans being instigators in the Pacific. In *War of the Worlds*, curious civilians are incinerated by the Martians without a chance for dialogue. In *Falling Skies*, the aliens destroy capital cities and military bases without entertaining diplomacy, despite voiceovers suggesting that the humans were more curious than frightened.

Alien invasion films suggest that the hegemon is perceived as dormant or inactive, and that consequences of inaction are irreversible. Alien invasion films may be a wakeup call, a societal form of shock therapy to electrify the hegemon into acknowledging that threats to its hegemonic authority exists, and these threats are not self-fixing.

Samuel Huntington argues that "the world is becoming more modern and less Western."[171] While Ikenberry may argue for the resilience of the hegemon's order and its ability to utilize soft power against potential threats, alien invasion films suggest that such an assumption may lead to disastrous consequences. A potential threat – one that works outside of the understanding of the hegemon's authority – seems to require swift and decisive military or economic action to prevent damage. According to alien invasion films, an unaddressed challenger is a *de facto* future threat. Unipolarity is assumed as the pareto optimal condition of international order. Nowhere is this more evident than in *Mars Attacks!*, where constant attempts by the United States government to diplomatically appeal to the Martian ambassadors are met with gunfire. Eventually, the United States learned a valuable lesson in the wake of the failed meetings: potential threats cannot be ignored.

This leads to the irreversibility of the hegemon's actions. The existence of a threat to its hegemonic authority bears the risk of destruction. In comparison, acting upon the presumption of a threat seems to escalate. In *Battleship*, the aliens returned the United States navy fired fire after a warning shot. The role of the hegemon is in many ways, permanent, establishing itself as a unique and pivotal actor in the direction of international order. The hegemon cannot sit around while threats accumulate, but it must in turn be prudent in how it deals with these threats.

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[171] Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order,* Simon & Schuster Paperbacks (1996): 78.

The inevitability of challenge suggests change cannot be averted. The hegemon's authority exists within a certain timeframe. In the face of a challenge of such authority, the order is jeopardized if nothing is done. Ultimately, the hegemon must take an active role in absorbing the challenger into a favorable order or eliminate such a challenger. Complacency on part of the hegemon suggests an inevitable destruction of its hierarchy and authority.

The warning of a deteriorating unipolar system as exemplified in *Mars Attacks!* can be seen in later years in the Bush administration's response to 9/11. Here, the United States quickly divided the world into two camps: civilization and barbarism.[172] Schonberg further notes that in the wake of 9/11, the United States believed the prudent action was to spread Wilsonian ideals to establish a more secure global order.[173] Even more telling of a push for hegemonic proactive policy is when Bush Jr. would refer to the terrorist threat as a cancer,[174] eventually noting in an address to both houses of Congress by proclaiming to the world "Either you are with us or your are with the terrorists."[175] Alien invasion films seem to support this sentiment, arguing that diplomacy is not an effective policy in the face of a potential threat. In other words, there is no middle ground.

In the recent case of North Korea versus the United States on nuclear threats, a similar, though much more subdued response to threats to the United States' hegemonic authority exists. North Korea embodies many of the challenges against the hegemon. Similar to the alien invaders that exist in these films, North Korea is for the most part a black box.[176] In the case of North Korea, in the face of a challenge and uncertainty, the position of the Pentagon is "assume the worst case."[177] At the same time, the involvement of China, South Korea, and the attempt to establish multilateral talks regarding nuclear threats suggests that even if alien invasion films argue for the importance of unipolarity, which may not be the case in reality.[178]

In short, alien invasion films suggest a societal fixation with dominance. One, the hegemon is a central figure for leadership in its order. The hegemon cannot simply rely upon the order it

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[172] Schonberg 75.
[173] Ibid. pg. 79.
[174] Ibid. pg. 115.
[175] Ibid. pg. 117.
[176] "Defense chief Chuck Hagel: North Korea 'skating very close to a dangerous line'," *CBS News*, last accessed June 1, 2013, http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57578934/defense-chief-chuck-hagel-north-korea-skating-very-close-to-a-dangerous-line/.
[177] Ibid.
[178] "In Focus: North Korea's Nuclear Threats," *The New York Times*, last accessed June 1, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/04/12/world/asia/north-korea-questions.html.

creates to buffer against challengers to its authority: pareto optimality in buffering against potential threats only work when the hegemon takes an active leadership role in combatting or addressing such threats. Second, the hegemon – mainly in the context of the United States – has difficulties in separating hard versus soft parts of its power. Cultural espousals are treated as universal ones, and the response of a challenger as non-liberal is portrayed as inhuman. As a result, cultural relativist arguments may not be as compelling of an argument in the face of overwhelming hegemonic authority, as one may believe. Third, the hegemon cannot be content to sit around. Maintaining its power requires an active hegemon, if only because of the risk associated with allowing a challenger to coalesce more power. Alien invasion films suggest that complacency and confidence in a hegemon's power in the wake of a growing counterpart would spell inevitable doom for the hegemon. As a result, the proper thing to do is to assimilate or eliminate all potential threats.

Hegemony is About Distrust

What do alien invasion films tell us about how the hegemon and society within a hegemon conceive of threats to its hegemonic authority? First, we learn that ambiguous 'humanness' still matters. Threats to neo-Gramscian conceptions of hegemony depend upon degrees of anthropocentric characteristics to infuse likeness. At the basics, if humans must treat others as humans, then they must look like humans. While this may seem rudimentary, this suggests that the dehumanization of others through their symbols, recollection of actions, and caricatures are powerful tools of destabilizing threats to the dominant society.

Second, such threats are only prevalent because the relationship between the dominant society and the Other is in conflict by default. The alien form may not always be malevolent, but the alien form is almost always unnatural to the point where distrust is a natural and prudent decision on part of any member of the 'Us' group. Members of the dominant society *expect* conflict to emerge because distrust and uncertainty is portrayed as the rational undertaking. In a case such as *It Came from Outer Space*, where the distrust was not necessarily warranted, but was never punished.

What about the hegemon as a state? Three major lessons come to mind. First, the hegemon is the undisputed engine of change and the propeller of operational innovation in the international order. Even if other members of the order act, only when the hegemon itself

assumes its leadership position does the international system follow. This is an immensely important expectation on part of the films because the role of the hegemon as a leader assumes that other actors are either unwilling or incapable of leading.

Second, alien invasion films tell us that we have difficulties understanding the differences between soft[179] and hard power.[180] The hegemon projects what it deems are universal values upon the rest of the world. Whether this is the case or not what matters – what is important that the hegemon believes it is. Furthermore, the hegemon does not have a means of distinguishing humanness from its own values. In a case where the other powers have values that are outside of the hegemon's ability to understand or integrate, they are labeled as outside of the universal humanness the hegemon espouses. These are not simply "other" cultures in alien invasion films, fighting over scarce resources for their own means – they are *inhuman*.

Third, the hegemon is encouraged to take an active role in minimizing and combatting threats to its hegemonic authority. When a threat emerges, alien invasion films claim that such a threat cannot be reasoned with, as we see in *Mars Attacks!* Instead, the threat must be integrated or annihilated. Allowing a challenge to its hegemonic authority enables that challenger to become a destroyer of the hegemon's order.

One lesson that is missing is the third observation we noted in chapter 4 regarding authority. We mentioned that local problems are meant to be addressed locally, suggesting a lack of faith or a disconnect between Washington and the citizens of the United States. In the context of the United States as a hegemon, this local-first approach to challengers of any sort of hegemony suggests a disconnect between a cultural hegemon and a state hegemon. Identity may be determined between both local and national organizations within a state. Likewise, in a hegemon, the neo-Gramscian conception of hegemony reveals a continuity as the pushing of universal values to delegitimize non-liberal values are similar to local conceptions of the Self versus the Other.

Crucial to note is that local forces do not trust or seem to put stock into national forces to be the creator of such identity. Alien invasion films suggest a duality, where national forces do influence local forces, but local forces ultimately are encouraged to depend upon their own resources, wits, and capabilities to conceive and construct their own versions of the Self.

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[179] Exercising power through coercive means.
[180] Exercising power through military or economic means.

Another observation is that despite a framework of consent and integration, the hegemon ultimately seems to distrust others. Local forces do not trust national forces. The dominant social forces do not trust others. The state does not trust allies to take leadership. The hegemon does not trust the resilience of its own order. In a blog post in 2012, bloggers Inesi and Galinsky claim that "the powerful generate cynical attributions for others' kind deeds and fail to reciprocate with actions that display their own vulnerability, thereby stunting the possibility for a trusting relationship to develop."[181] The same sort of expectation emerges from an analysis of the alien invasion films. The hegemon is encouraged to distrust others, regardless of how much trust and consent it depends upon within its order. Alien invasion films tell us that, no matter how much or how often we may employ or depend upon unity and trust, any differences that emerge between civilizations must be countered with intense scrutiny and distrust. The byproduct of trusting unknowns is inevitable conflict. In a way, despite the promulgation of alternative schools of IR theory, the alien invasion films suggests that society and the state is stuck in a semi-neorealist vortex, where distrust is the primary currency.

In short, distrust is central to how the hegemon keeps and attains power. Distrust is natural, rational, and encouraged; power is zero-sum; cooperation and unity are secondary to ascertaining the nature of challengers to a hegemon's authority. In the meantime, the hegemon must be active and willing to combat the challenger, and anything with a set of values and priorities that are discordant with the hegemon's values are a *de facto* challenger. Additionally, this is not simply a state prerogative: local forces are encouraged to distrust others, and the emergence of differing values in other cultures is immediately considered as threats to the dominant culture. Alien invasion films tell us that heterogeneity destabilizes cultural security.

Alien invasion films tell us that the films can act as indicators of amorphous amounts of distrust within the hegemon's society. Lipschutz briefly considers this relationship, noting that "fears of aliens, whether terrestrial or not, appear to peak during times of social uncertainty, when the erosion of previously existing hierarchies, class relations, and structures of authority raise troubling questions of security, identity, and stability."[182] Alien invasion films seem to support that claim, but comparative analysis between films suggests the centrality of distrust in ensuring the hegemon remains in power. Even more notable is the way such distrust is manifest;

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[181] Ena M. Inesi and Adam D. Galinsky, "Five Reasons Why It's Lonely at the Top," *Wall Street Journal,* last accessed May 19, 2013, http://blogs.wsj.com/source/2012/03/25/five-reasons-why-its-lonely-at-the-top/.
[182] Weldes, *To Seek Out New Worlds*, 85.

alien invasion films suggest that the hegemon is fixated with a semi-sadomasochistic relationship with challengers and allies.

Alien invasion films tells us that power for the hegemon is unique in that the hegemon depends upon challenges to maintain its power. Constant challenges to power are a natural and preferred product because of incessant distrust between and within the hegemon. The espousal of pre-emptive distrust in alien invasion films suggests that challengers to hegemonic authority are subconsciously welcomed because the byproduct of an invasion is global unification. The hegemon – manifest as common sense, as societal values, and as the leading state – depends upon challengers. Without a challenger, the hegemon seeks out threats. Sometimes these threats are within itself, seen in the animosity between state versus local authorities. Ultimately, the lay understanding of hegemony is realist, and there is no shift in any other direction. At the heart of a zero-sum relationship of power is distrust, which both challenges and fuels hegemonic authority.

In Conclusion

So what do alien invasions tell us about challenges to hegemonic authority? There is far more 'should' than 'would'. Though in some cases a hegemon may be trusting or choose to trust another – whether this is the alien force attempting to integrate and enter a community or an entire civilization from beyond the stars – the end result seems more often than not the Hegemon should not have trusted the Others. This applies to both the state and the society within a state, as the moral frequently ends up being that safety is only there when the challenger is not a black box.

We also find potential conditions on the nature of such distrust: visible humanness through an emphasis on anthropocentric physicality, the divorced relationship of society and the state, the naturalness of distrust, the substitution of communitarian values for cosmopolitan ones, the 'hegemon-centric' self-conception of the hegemon itself, and irreversible and permanence of challenges. Each one, in their own way, suggests a fundamental relationship between the hegemon (whether as the leader state or as a dominant community) and any challengers: first contact should be met with extreme scrutiny. Even more so, trusting any sort of challenger is not a rational decision. Furthermore, such a challenge is inherently zero-sum, and cooperation simply masks any sort of malevolence the challenger has for the hegemon in the first place.

By studying alien invasion films and applying it to our understanding of neo-Gramscian hegemony and hegemonic stability theory, we conclude that the dominant power is (according to fiction) right in keeping its power. Anything that seeks or even is perceived by the hegemon to seeking to challenge the hegemon's power is ultimately responsible for the hegemon's actions because the hegemon has a duty to impose its dominance upon potential challengers, otherwise the hegemon risks annihilation.

Alien invasion films suggest a highly neoconservative and alarmist perspective on hegemony. It encourages preemptive strikes, both material and immaterial. It espouses immense asymmetrical dimensions in terms of capability that we must question its accuracy. However, despite its highly dramatized rendition of hegemonic challenges, alien invasion fiction does reveal a perverse relationship between a hegemon and the order it spawns. Alien invasion fiction suggests that the hegemon should exercise such leadership, or else it would risk being destroyed. It also espouses that any challengers that come about in any form must be challenged and defeated. At the same time, alien invasion fiction espouses the resilience of a hegemon's order, arguing that nothing less of reconstruction of its order would suffice for overthrowing a hegemon. If we consider these lessons in the context of the United States, then we find that the lay perceive world in a highly neoconservative light, with little faith in diplomacy. Soft power is subservient to hard power. China will never become a threat unless they deal with the United State's credit system. Institutional innovation and world war are the only ways to overthrow the current hegemon. The United States can be a leading state, but at the same time (paradoxically) behooved to a generator of 'common sense'. For the policymaker, alien invasion fiction supports drone strikes, an ongoing war in Afghanistan, and increasing bullish markets to counter the renminbi. Peace, ironically, is counterintuitive to stability.

Chapter 6

This chapter makes overarching, summarizing, and final conclusions on the role that alien invasion fiction plays in Political Science. Furthermore, the chapter notes of the analytical usefulness in studying fiction in two ways. It argues for the relevancy of fiction as a tool for understanding laymen perceptions on a large scale. Second, fiction provides a useful set of parameters upon which thought experiments can occur. This section also considers the role of films in general, and predicts the direction of film as tool of analysis in political science.

In addition, chapter 6 evaluates the affective role my methodology and literature review can play in future cases where fiction and political science come together. Chapter 6 considers the purpose of future literature reviews as well as provides leading questions on future methodology.

The second section of Chapter 6 elaborates on the central challenge associated with the task of discerning between liberal hegemony and systemic hegemony. It briefly considers the role and behavior of groups in foreign Alien invasion films, notably India and Japan. This section concludes that our observations are likely those of liberal hegemony. We hypothesize that the lessons regarding societal and state behavior in the face of challengers only apply in a global sense in a very limited fashion. Preliminary and limited analysis of the role of the alien as an Other in India and Japan suggest that the project's observations pertain to a liberal hegemony. Finally, we conclude on the relevance of these differences primarily in the context of talks for a rising China, before ending on further research questions that could be addressed in future works of political science, popular culture, and fiction.

The Value of Alien Invasion Fiction

In chapter 1 we mentioned that the alien invasion subgenre is a useful tool for analysis because of the way its narrative constructs challenge. Aliens are citizens of another organized collective, have massive communication barriers, and whose arrival or ascension to power are sudden. Because they puncture a closed Earth system and are the least metaphorical of all monster movies, aliens are useful in determining large group and state behavior. What the government does in the wake of an alien invasion is less likely to be interpreted with heavy

allegory, and therefore we can focus on what it is the government is doing instead of what its actions represent.

After going through Chapters 4 and 5, we affirm the importance in studying alien invasion fiction. It espouses that leadership is bottom-up, with a wide variety of characters from different socioeconomic backgrounds empowered through circumstance against a collective Other. Alien invasion fiction also suggests that there is a notable difference between espoused relationships and real relationships of power. The fiction's tendency to reward acts of mistrust in the face of newcomers seems to be an indirect contestation against globalism (and cosmopolitanism in particular).

In Chapter 5, alien invasion fiction is important because it functions as a highly complex thought experiment for and by laymen. The usefulness of alien invasion fiction in understanding the behavior of the hegemon is that it attempts to replicate an otherwise rare event: the collapse of the hegemon. Historically, such examples are rare. Fiction – and more specifically, alien invasion fiction – allows scholars to theorize not only why certain policies, actors, or personnel act the way they do in certain situations, but also tells us why audiences may empathize or support a specific policy.

Overall, based on our analysis, alien invasion fiction suggests very specific things about how scholars may conceive of power. Alien invasion fiction implies that regardless of how much global brotherhood is espoused, the prudent and safe measure against the Other is intense communitarianism. Alien invasion fiction suggests that society believes in power more as zero-sum instead of positive gains. Finally, alien invasion fiction acts as a thought experiment for the purpose of understanding important actors, policies, and theories. The conception of alien invasion fiction as a thought experiment is even more important when considering that its topic matter – a potential collapse of the hegemon – has been historically rare, and could be beholden to differences.

The Role of Film in Future Analysis

The importance of alien invasion fiction accentuates the importance of film as a means of studying and analyzing world politics. At their simplest, films are mimetic tools that lend importance to certain facets of societies. The recurrence of key actors (the government, the military, the family man, etc.) within films act as indicators to an institutional blueprint. The

heavy fixation on the role of the military in alien invasion films, for example, stress the pivotal role that the military plays in everyday security, regardless of scholarly evaluation.

At the same time, films can actorize and simplify complex systems, agencies, and networks. Through simplification of potentially complex relationships, films can tell us about the cues that society as a whole depends upon when interacting and studying something as complex as politics. Scholars of world politics may be able to conceive of all these complex relationships, but the vast majority of society may not. Films are useful tools for digesting complex relationships. Where films succeed or fail in its narrative can tell scholars about what sort of divides exist between scholars and laymen.

Ultimately, film remains an important tool for studying popular culture. Even in the growth of video games and interactive mediums, and even when considering the equally powerful role of fiction books, film carries critical visual narrative elements. Its inherent linearity acts as a Rube Goldberg of theories, social sentiments, and paradigms, moving from one set of conflicts to another to achieve a desired outcome. Though relatively nascent (compared to other social sciences), film analysis seems to be commanding a growing presence in political science. In the future of political science, we are likely to see more films become useful tools for gauging societal resonance, understanding minimal requirements for complex cause-and-effect, and in extracting laymen perceptions of important actors.

The Role of Methodology

Stuck Watching the Skies' methodology may be criticized as rudimentary, shallow, and simplistic. Compared to the works of scholars, such as McNally's in-depth historical chartering of the vampire in *Monsters of the Market*, or in Kiersey and Neumann's *Battlestar Galactica and International Relations*, *Stuck Watching the Skies* may be criticized for only analyzing surface-level behavior. Additionally, because of the multidimensional and multidirectional nature of poststructural research, our analysis may be viewed as limited.

This project is not meant to be a definitive work of methodology for popular culture and political science. Instead, this project is meant to propose a different way of understanding fiction in the context of world politics. Ultimately, because of the fictional element, we concede that our analysis is making some sort of metaphorical connection. However, how much metaphor we depend upon to make our claims can be controlled through a careful understanding of our

research question. At its heart, our project is built upon the foundational notion that we are making an allegorical claim.

But beyond that allegorical claim, our project differs. This difference is not for the sake of difference, but rather for the sake of opening discussion on how a marriage between real world theories and fictional examples or behavior can be strengthened through more careful analysis. The inductive approach evident by the comparison of cases and the literal and bottom-up observation of actors in the films are answers to ongoing issues in the literature.

This project's methodology is not so much an attempt to create a new means of understanding fictional texts for the sake of being new, but rather to address a larger issue: cross-examination in the political science and popular culture literature is scant and not the norm. Through modifications to the research design based upon the question, we can bring issues of case selection and internal analysis back to the forefront of political science and popular culture. Therefore, a response to criticisms that this project's analysis may be scant or shallow would be that the methodology attempts to introduce a new way of considering the role of fiction. This new way is not necessarily meant to replace pre-existing practices, but to build upon them by addressing pre-existing problems in the literature. The methodology in this project is not meant to consider all potential interpretations of fiction, but rather how one interpretation can be garnered from one set of practices in the methodology. In return, a change in methodology can lead to future questions of precisely how should fictional texts be analysed in the context of world politics.

Liberal or Global Hegemony?

Regardless of our ending thoughts on the role of alien invasion fiction, on film, and on our methodology, there is still one challenge that must be addressed. Unfortunately, this challenge is beyond the scope of the research. Instead, we will summarize this issue.

We must also acknowledge that our cases are widely American. Most of the cases, and almost all of the films, are made in the United States, many of them by Hollywood. Therefore, with a vast core-periphery of films prevalent in the case selection, how do we know these messages are something that exists in the hegemon's cultural sphere? One could argue that there are other messages in the movies of other cultures, and that our observations are only in the

context of an American hegemony. Looking at comparative cases between countries, we may be making claims about liberal hegemony, not a global one.

We are claiming these challenges likely pertain to a liberal hegemony because the origins of challenges to hegemonic authority in alien invasion films are firmly British, emerging from *The War of the Worlds* in 1897-98. The United States makes the vast majority of its alien invasion films, but that is arguably because of the extensive distrust interwoven during its post World War 2 ascension into superpower status. The message is arguably applicable to any hegemon, not just the United States. Rather, the United States is the current Hegemon, and emphasis on the United States is simply because a disproportionately high count of alien invasion films comes from the United States.

However, if we move outside of Great Britain and the United States, we see some stark differences. For Japan, the alien invader is much more passive. TV Shows and films such as *Monster Zero* and *Haiyoru Nyaruko-san!* focus less on alien-ness and more on using the alien invader as a MacGuffin upon which the story can progress. In India, alien films are also passive: films such as *Joker* and *Koi…Mil Gaya* treat aliens not as hostile invaders, but rather as curiosities and plot devices upon which internal characterization can proceed. Few cases outside of the United States portrayed the state as a central actor when hegemony was challenged. The (debatably) Russian-American film *The Darkest Hour* does begin as most American and British alien invasion films do, but it downplays the centrality of the hegemon, focuses more on globalism, and there is little to no disconnect between society and the state.

In short, the clash of civilizations occurs more frequently between liberal countries. Britain and the United States share similar sentiments on the emergence of visible Others, whereas India and Japan seem to approach the concept of alien-ness with more open arms. The comparison between multiple states suggests that hegemony in the project – as we know it and as we have analyzed – may in fact be a liberal hegemony. Though films of foreign states being leaders in the wake of an alien invasion are rare, when comparing between the United States, India, Japan, and Britain we see that there are minute differences in how the aliens are treated and the roles they play.

What the connection may mean is that if Britain produced more alien invasion fiction similar to *The War of the Worlds*, then there is very much a possibility that liberal hegemony may behave much more aggressively in real life than in theory. Given the fixation on personal

security in the face of an unknown, alien invasion fiction suggests that liberal hegemons may espouse positive sum gains but develop policies on a zero sum presumption. For a liberal hegemon, trust in an international order and soft power would be shallow and surface-only, covering a strong fixation with military might and economic dominance.

This potential problem underlines something very important: our observations for hegemony are unlikely to be applied on global and systemic basic. Instead, we are likely observing liberal hegemony. Our brief look into India and Japan suggest that with further analysis and cross country study of alien invasion films, we may find hegemony manifesting in different as well as having different rules of conduct in terms of how it treats challengers to its authority.

With more resources, we hypothesize that we may find similar observations in other countries, but not so similar that we can make a claim that hegemony is universal. Instead, with further research, the ancillary question to our original project would be "Is hegemony highly influenced by culture?" In the cases of India and Japan, the starkly different roles that the alien – and by extension, the Other – plays in these films suggest that challenges would have different thresholds for Self to consider. Signs and behavior that could lead to friction may be different between states. Additionally, with access to Soviet invasion films (if a considerable number exists), we would be able to extract a clearer image of the nature of hegemony.

Though there may be debates as to whether India or Japan would become global hegemons, the notion that the rules of hegemony being determined on a cultural basis may have grave implications in debates about a rising China. The project does not suggest that China will or will not rise, but rather the nature of the rules it adopts or creates should it rise may be different to those of a liberal hegemon. Though scholars such as Ikenberry may argue that even if China rises to hegemonic status, it may simply replicate the United States' rules, our observations suggest otherwise. With more resources, we could find a clearer image of how hegemony is constructed and conceived in other countries to determine how much liberal values influence hegemony. Doing so can tell us a bit more about how to tackle questions of future hegemons, the orders they build, and what sort of challenges they may conceive.

However, these are all questions that must be answered in another project. Limitations in resources kept the central question to our current liberal hegemony. Ultimately, we must concede that our observations, based upon what little analysis we have on India and Japan, are likely only

applicable to a liberal hegemon. Our observations are confined to the actions of the liberal hegemon. What sort of challenges that will emerge if the hegemon change is up to future researchers. However, what alien invasion films from other countries tell us about challenges to hegemonic authority is that these challenges will change, in some way or another.

In Conclusion

In conclusion, the central message of "distrust is natural and justified" underlines an anarchic system in International Relations that extends to the stars. From local to governmental actors, we see that through the unknown unknown in films, a wellspring of distrust emerges regardless of the country. When we look at the neo-Gramscian conception of hegemony, we find that the distrust of others is manifest through an emphasis on visual differentiation and notable inhumanness. When we look at hegemonic stability theory, we notice that the only hegemon of that definition – the United States – exhibits the same general distrust through both a justification of hawkish policy via a binary conception of consequence, and through calculus of consequence by enemy malevolence.

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