Chapter 1: British science fiction television in the consensus era: authority and paternalism

The political and economic tensions of 'consensus-era Britain', beginning at the end of the second world war and ending in 1979 with Thatcher's election, reached a crisis point in the 1970s. This era saw a focus on state ownership of assets and a governmental commitment to social welfare, housing, education, employment, labour unions and public health, but fell apart under its own weight. It reached its final disaster in 1979 when the Callaghan-led Labour government, in an attempt to control inflation, imposed sanctions on trade unions, resulting in strikes. These strikes caused blackouts in what was the coldest winter in 16 years, the so-called 'Winter of Discontent'. This crisis strengthened the Thatcher-led Tory party in the year that they won the general election and began to point to the alternative of a market-led economy.

This chapter focuses on the content of some of the science fiction series produced in the last decade of the 'consensus' era, situated in their cultural and political context. An analysis of these series allows a counterpoint to the way the themes are explored, and subverted, in the Thatcher era. Through analysis of the emerging themes of these series, it will become apparent how the later series in the Thatcher era represent a strong departure from the series that preceded them, despite exhibiting some similar themes and generic traditions. It is the work of this chapter to highlight these themes: where they differ, and where they prefigure elements of the later series. To that end, I have selected the series that most clearly function as the forerunners of Thatcher-era series, exhibiting in nascent form many of the themes either amplified or indeed reversed in the Thatcher era. Though they are not intended to represent *all* the science fiction television that was produced in the era, they carry stylistic traits and themes that are indicative of the majority.

With the exception of the *Quatermass* serials (1953-1979, 2005) sketched out here because of their seminal place in British science fiction televisual history and their influence on later series, the chapter is limited to selected science fiction television series that were produced in the 1970s and intended for a wide audience. In these 1970s series people work together in groups, and the individual is not so prominent. The social-democratic society's hierarchical order is largely upheld. The class system is somewhat stratified, and this gives rise to the mythical 'hero figure' of the day. Within these fictional narratives the scientist, the military leader, the 'alpha-male', all operate according to a moral duty. That duty is based in what Hutchings calls a 'Churchillian stoicism,' which demands 'that relentless sacrifice is required in the conflict with the aliens' (2011: 95). This also draws influence from the American Western, which will be discussed. The alpha-male and the military are at times in conflict, but they are nonetheless all 'heroes' in these narratives because of their shared devotion to duty.

Forster considers that the scientist is a 'mythologised figure' (2009: 77) in this era. His moral allegiance is to reason and rationality. The military leader too has fidelity to his crew or the units under his command, and ultimately to his country (or, in the case of *UFO*, his planet). They are all middle-class white men with authority. This man uses technology and rational thinking as his primary means of solving problems. He exhibits a moral attitude of duty to a political and civic system, whether governmental or military. He is almost always a traditional heroic figure: courageous, stoic, strong and intelligent. If necessary, he is prepared to sacrifice himself. Where there is moral deviation (taking the form of sacrificing someone else) it is an aberration, an exception to prove the rule, and it is executed only in the service of duty. All subordinates to this man place their faith and trust in him. This quite different set of ideas at play in these pre-Thatcher series work to naturalise certain ideological positions – the patriarchal system, the prevalence of rational thought over 'superstition', the

waning of religious faith, the structure of authority, and the necessity of moderation and self-control. Later we will see more clearly the stark differences between them and the concerns of the Thatcher-era series.

Some writers have claimed an anxiety and discontent in the 1970s series, attributable to the very real political turmoil in the era. Forster writes that there is a 'mistrust of authority' in these series, which 'is keenly pertinent to the feeling of Britain in the 1970s' (2009: 82). Hutchings believes this era is 'characterised by economic troubles and political and social unrest' (2011: 87). Equally, Vohlidka claims, in a discussion of 1970s *Doctor Who*, that 'Britain was in a state of social turmoil: tensions over Northern Ireland, economic recession and immigration resulted in a more jaded society' (2013: 119). It is of course true that there was an erosion of trust in governmental authority in 1970s British society dating back to the Suez crisis in 1956 and the Profumo affair in the 1960s, and the series do exhibit anxiety around issues like immigration, race, the environment, and other politically-charged issues. But the challenges to political certainties, if they are that, seldom work as a challenge to the moral authority naturalised in the series, or to the *institution* of British democracy, at least in the abstract. Bureaucrats may be insufferable, government representatives tedious and unimaginative, but nonetheless the *idea* of British democracy is not subject to serious debate or dispute: its merits are considered self-evident. This all breaks down in the Thatcher era, where governmental authority, morality and faith are unshackled from their comfortable certainties, mainly by way of a deep cynicism and lack of trust in leaders. In the Thatcher era, authority is loathed, challenged, and threatened.

While it is true that these series grapple with forms of social and political discontent, I will argue that the 1970s series selected for this chapter take as almost axiomatic this version of the traditional male hero authority figure with all the associated attributes discussed, and many assumptions – about the role of women, the military, technological progress – are

naturalised within that. The 1970s series may display stylistic differences between series and between networks, but their attitude to patriarchal values is very similar. Drawing many of their themes from science fiction novels – the BBC series borrow liberally from the work of H G Wells, also drawing from John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* (1951), and Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* (1953) – they construct attributes of a certain British character: stoic, scientific, duty-bound, but with an occasional hint of the kind of Realpolitik and duplicitous behaviour that would be emphasised in the Thatcher era. Despite ITV and the BBC's somewhat competing agendas, the values of the paternalistic consensus era permeate across both networks. Arguably, the discontent with authority should've been more prominent on ITV because it contained 'Americanised' elements theoretically more associated with disaffected youth, but in practice it often endorsed officially sanctioned structures of authority more stridently than the BBC. The traditional pillars of the British establishment are either treated uncritically, or are outwardly celebrated.

ITV: hybridity and Americanisation

The idea of 'Americanisation' was emerging as a discourse in the 1950s, when the growing affluence of Britons brought about a growth in consumerism, and this carried with it an interest in popular culture and, more specifically, American popular culture. According to Fiske, this culture was taken up by the working-class youth who

> found in its flashy streamlining a way to articulate their new class confidence and consciousness. Such symbolisations of their identity were simply not available in 'British' culture which appeared to offer two equally unacceptable sets of alternatives – the one a romanticised cloth-cap image of an 'authentic' traditional working-class culture, the other a restrained, tasteful, BBC-produced inflection of popular culture. (qtd. in Johnston, 143)

Fiske goes on to comment how the commodities that American culture produced were seen as scandalous to the British establishment. This establishment dislike of American culture reflected a more general fear of Americanisation: American cultural imports were typically seen as 'vulgar'. This 'mass culture' of consumerism came to a head in some aspects of ITV, the 'independent' network begun in 1955. Series like *Danger Man* (ITV 1960-68) and *The Saint* (ITV 1962-69) were made to exploit American styles of storytelling overlaid with a British sensibility.

The word 'Americanisation' then, applies to a set of cultural values: a 'crude' nationalism, a certain superficiality, and advertising mass market products designed to appeal to the 'lowest common denominator'. As Bignell writes, 'America stood for commerce, and thus not only vigour, entrepreneurialism and progress, but also venality, greed and exploitation' (2005: 62). Loss of cultural specificity was also of great concern for the British establishment, and the arrival of ITV signaled fears of a more fractured society (Turnock, 2007: 50), though Raymond Williams, a pioneer in television studies, claimed that British society was never as monolithic as the elites depicted it. Rodman notes of Williams that 'a truly democratic society cannot be built around the elitist assumption that "the masses" possess nothing more than a watered-down version of "real" culture' (2010: 154). Nonetheless, behind this notion of fragmentation was an establishment fear that society would lose its values. There was a great deal of paternalism in these fears, where the establishment saw the BBC as 'the elder statesman, and "true" advocate of public service broadcasting' (Johnson and Turnock, 2005: 2), whereas ITV was 'less of a "Cinderella" institution and more of an "ugly sister"' (Johnson and Turnock, 2005: 2). This became apparent in the eventual differences in programming between the BBC and ITV, though it was not clear from the start.

All of these concerns, about the vulgarities and 'Americanisms' brought with the advent of advertising, and the 'lowered tone' of ITV programmes, came to a head in the person of Lew Grade. Grade was a symbol of the perceived threat, but also managed, if not to reconcile these two positions of free-market enterprise and public service, at least to complicate the whole process. Bignell comments:

> the adventure series associated with Grade were uncertainly poised in the perceptions of contemporaneous commentators as both high and low quality, as both British and American in character, so Grade's own role could be mobilised in conflicting and ambiguous ways. (2005: 60)

Grade was an impresario and show-business mogul. Originally from Ukraine, he came to Britain as a boy. Grade's company, the Incorporated Television Company (ITC), successfully made various television series under ITV, including those created by Gerry and Sylvia Anderson, most famously *Thunderbirds* (1965-66). Grade's operating methods were much more entrepreneurial in nature than anything previously witnessed in British public service broadcasting, and this led to a hybridisation of British and American styles and values, both on-screen and off – Grade frequently made deals with American networks in order to broadcast the series his company made on American stations. He also encouraged co-productions between America and Britain, as well as for American productions to be made in Britain, such as *The Muppet Show* (1976-81). In a way, Grade's forays into the marketplace exemplified everything that the British establishment feared about Americanisation. Bignell explains, '[America] stood for modernity, youth and opportunity, but also disrespect for tradition, loss of national specificity and cultural colonisation' (2005: 62). This all worked as a direct threat to the establishment's British identity.

Not all cultural specificity is lost, however. *UFO* (1970), for instance, is still grounded in a recognisably 1960s-1970s London (despite being set in 1980). In a sense, these

series are an answer to what later became the paradoxical approach of the Thatcher regime: how to retain 'British values' whilst at the same time exploiting the demands of the marketplace. But it is also important to mention that these series were not popular: *UFO* only lasted one season, while *Space: 1999* only made it to a second season after an extensive image overhaul. Some semblance of that British sense of culture can also be seen in these programmes – the 1970s aesthetic of *UFO*; the emphasis on characterisation and dialogue over action (though this changed in the second season of *Space: 1999*) – yet both are also generic and Americanised action-adventure programmes.

Within this framework, these series are carefully tailored to appeal to Americans and American values, and therefore the effect is that they become neither culturally specific nor completely generic, but somewhere in between. Turnock argues:

> these genres were appropriated, reinterpreted and synthesised with cultural elements drawn from Britain and continental Europe. The end product was something that looked very British, yet there is an explicit connection with consumer culture here (2007: 156-157).

As Telotte noted, these series display a heavy reliance on technology, and mythologise it in various ways. Woodhead writes that in the consensus era, especially the 1960s, 'the Church ceased to offer a credible cultural and moral framework' (2014: sec 1, para 19). This faith in technology, stemming from an enlightenment faith in reason and science, came to replace religious faith as a dominant social discourse. The myth of forward-looking modernity and technology had been on the rise starting around the 1960s. Cornea notes, 'the 1960s was a time when science fiction and science fact became remarkably intertwined, sometimes blurred, particularly within the context of an American national preoccupation with the story of the Space Race' (2007: 79). In this era people were facing up to the implications of technology – the moon landings, jet technology in the development of

the Concorde in Britain and France, and architecture, where high-rise buildings were becoming a feature in the landscape (explored by J G Ballard in his 1975 novel *High-Rise*, later considered by O'Day as an influence on the *Doctor Who* story, 'Paradise Towers', which will be discussed in chapter 4). Soon after, the impact of computer technology became prominent. By the 1970s, when Britain was facing economic and social troubles, faith in technology began to wane, but not to ebb away completely. There are times when technology is broadly mistrusted, or it leads to moral dilemmas, but the series are nonetheless driven by the teleology of technological development. By contrast, the Thatcher-era series present a kind of technological inertia which Fisher, when writing of *Sapphire & Steel*, characterises as 'the slow cancellation of the future' (2013: 3), wherein time collapses on itself, and it seems there is no way forward, and nothing recognisable about 'now' to place it in a definite present. Some form of that inertia is apparent in all three of the major series studied, but absent here.

The series

The two Grade-produced ITC series discussed here: *UFO* (1970) and *Space: 1999* (1975-77), were both created and developed by Gerry and Sylvia Anderson, who are most associated with marionette series – most notably *Thunderbirds* (1964-66). Bould claims, 'Gerry Anderson's science fiction series consistently depict a utopian future benefiting from world government, high technology, ethnic diversity, and a generally positive sense of Americanisation' (2008: 219). This is very similar in tone to the utopian values of *Star Trek* (1966-69), and indeed the producer Fred Freiberger, who worked on the last season of *Star Trek*, was called upon to oversee the second season of *Space: 1999*. Despite this utopianism, Osgerby claims that the ITC productions were 'characterised by a sense of unease and insecurity … the productions of the late Sixties and Seventies dramatised at a symbolic level

the wider sense of crisis and the collapse of social and political certainties' (2000: 135). However, if this is true it is far less apparent than in the BBC series. These ITC series display a commercial American sensibility, driven more by the action/adventure genre, favouring entertainment over social commentary, even if they do engage in small measure with social problems such as nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear war, xenophobia, and racism.

UFO (1970), created by Gerry and Sylvia Anderson, is a flashy, stylistically bold series, concealing some of its darker undertones. The title sequence boldly signals that this is going to be a series that foregrounds action, adventure and sex appeal. The music is fast and upbeat, and the barrage of images fly at the viewer in a series of quick-cuts. They depict the bright, psychedelic colours of the moonbase – the women with purple hair and body-hugging silver outfits seemingly made of tinsel – and the high-energy sequences of military vehicles – submarines, rockets, tanks – flying, shooting lasers, and exploding. *UFO* announces itself as an Americanised product, designed for a youth market. Its upbeat title sequence matches its optimistic vision of a technological future. This future is anchored in a 1960s/70s milieu which Cook connects with the hippy movement of the era, promising a 'positive future of idealism, enlightenment and an altogether more rational, empirical attitude towards dealing with the problems besetting the planet' (2006: 94).

The series is about a secret organisation called SHADO whose job is to detect *UFO*s and shield the general public from knowledge of their existence. At the helm of SHADO is Commander Ed Straker. Straker is burdened by emotional trauma: his marriage has broken up, and his personal life is in tatters. Yet through it all he displays the highest commitment to duty, even when it forces him to make personally devastating decisions. Straker's decisions occasionally edge towards the morally compromised, but they are always based on duty, and not the kind of cynical amorality expressed in the characters of the Thatcher-era series. Straker is not a 'hero' in any conventional sense, but his motives are not ambiguous, nor are

they selfish, as compared to later characters such as Avon from *Blake's 7*, or (in a sense) the Seventh Doctor. Rather, Straker is a kind of 'hard boiled' film noir detective: a character whose home life is a disaster, meaning that work is his only home, to which he is entirely devoted. In the episode 'A Question of Priorities', Alec Freeman (the Colonel of SHADO and Straker's second-in-command) suggests to Straker that he goes home. Straker replies, 'What home?' Straker is an anti-hero, but one who is stridently devoted to his duty.

In the same episode, Straker must face a near-impossible moral dilemma. His son has been hit by a car and requires immediate medical attention. His only hope is a drug that can be imported from America. Straker directs one of SHADO's planes to retrieve the drug and bring it to England. But in a sub-plot, a *UFO* has appeared in Ireland. In order to quickly send someone there, Freeman diverts the plane that Straker ordered to be sent with the drug for his son. When Freeman explains this, Straker says nothing. Consequently, his son dies. This is a particularly knotted moral dilemma for a character from a generic science fiction television series to face. His decision reflects a kind of civic virtue in which he places public over private interests, and could be seen as roughly utilitarian, using Bentham's 'fundamental axiom', that 'it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong' (Burns, 2005: 47). Straker serves as an interesting prototype for the kinds of anti-heroes that emerge in the Thatcher-era series, in which we see this dilemma played out on a larger scale. In *Blake's 7*, Blake must make the decision to destroy Star One, the mainframe computer that is the source of power for his enemy, the corrupt Federation, at the cost of the lives of millions of (presumably innocent) people who rely on it. In *Sapphire & Steel*, the protagonists (usually Steel) often make the choice to sacrifice someone for the good of others. In *Doctor Who* the Seventh Doctor uses his own companion, Ace, as a kind of sacrifice – not allowing her to die, but to be emotionally broken down – in the service of what he considers the 'greater good'. The difference, however, is that the characters in these

Thatcher-era series are usually either anti-authority (as in the case of *Blake's 7* and *Doctor Who*) or simply independent of authority (as in *Sapphire & Steel*), and indeed these characters are edging closer to a Machiavellian mindset, positioning them as authoritarian in themselves, which intensifies as each series goes on. Straker's actions, while in some ways a forerunner of these Thatcher-era characters, are consistent with an essentially morally straightforward character, and they come at great personal cost. In all his dealings, Straker emphasises Hutchings' 'Churchillian stoicism' (2011: 95). This contrasts with the more arbitrary moral decisions of Avon in *Blake's 7*, or the detached and even glib moral decisions of the Sixth and Seventh Doctors in *Doctor Who*, when dealing with similar situations.

Within *UFO*'s conservative structure, showcasing a military hierarchy, some 'darker' and more politically provocative themes are occasionally explored. These include domestic issues like drug use and marriage breakdown; and political issues such as racism and xenophobia. Forster comments on these pre-Thatcher series that, 'What it meant to be British became … contested through anxieties over immigration and nationhood' (2009: 75-76). There are vague parallels to xenophobia in the aliens that invade, but there is little beyond these very loose (and generic) metaphors with which to engage. Outside of this, *UFO* may highlight 'social unrest', but it does little to critique the naturalised patriarchal system.

UFO was broadcast two years after Conservative politician Enoch Powell's notorious and incendiary 'Rivers of Blood' speech, in which he warned against black immigration, claiming, 'In this country in fifteen or twenty years' time the black man will have the whip hand over the white man' (2007: para. 6). Hall et al. discuss the emergence of subcultures since the 1950s, and the way they created 'moral panics'. This led to the construction of 'folk devils' (Procter, 2004: 76) – those the media and politicians tend to vilify. In the 1970s, because of ethnic violence, these folk devils became black Britons, most of whom were immigrants or children of immigrants – many from the 'Windrush' generation, with all its

attendant injustices. Seemingly as a response to Powell's sentiments, and the general unrest over immigration, the episode 'Computer Affair' has Doctor Shroeder carrying out a series of tests on the black Lieutenant Bradley. He says to Bradley, 'I've no liking for you blacks … you ever heard that or something similar on moonbase?' Bradley replies that he has never heard anything like it, and assumes the doctor must not mean what he says, which indeed he doesn't – it was merely a psychological test to ensure that the moonbase is harmonious. This (albeit slight) discussion of racial tolerance hints at a 'wiser world' (Suvin, 1979: 36) than aspects of Britain of the time, but there are very few examples of similar political impact.

Whereas there is a sense of inertia in the Thatcher-era series, there is an optimistic, somewhat utopian, sense of teleological forward motion in *UFO*. Cook considers the series an expression of 'the imminent technological utopia to come' (2009: 87). Technology is not always trusted in *UFO*, but it is always relied upon, and there is a general sense of 'loving attention to technology and organisational efficiency' (Hutchings, 2011: 86). Sometimes this is questioned within the series. In 'Computer Affair', a group of pilots are subjected to psychological tests, from which a computer determines their fitness for work. The computer (and the philosophy behind it) is criticised in this episode, firstly by Freeman, who disapprovingly tells Straker, 'You make all your decisions based on cold logic – computer predictions'. Later, at a restaurant with a colleague, Lieutenant Bradley says, 'I wonder what it'll be like in twenty years' time. Will the computers take over completely? … We build them, programme them, and they tell us what we're going to think before we know it ourselves'. However, this suspicion of technology is minor, and the series generally aligns its faith with technological progress.

But in other ways, notably feminism, the series is regressive, or at least ambiguous, about women's roles. Cook comments:

If, on one level, the series depicts a future world of gender equality, where women work alongside men in positions of authority, it is nevertheless frequently the commander's physical attributes that the show chooses to foreground … Hence, while this is a depicted future of greater freedom and equality between the sexes, it is also a veritable sexual playground … ultimately a late-1960s male liberatory fantasy. (2009: 105-106)

The women on the moonbase, while entrusted with positions of responsibility, are also clearly positioned to titillate male viewers, with their figure-hugging outfits, and shots of them changing clothes. They work alongside men in authoritative positions as Cook asserts, but it is only in the most limited way. Straker's (and to a lesser extent Freeman's) authority is absolute. Alec Freeman, at least in the first episode, plays the role of the lothario, making comments to women that would now be considered grounds for sexual harassment.

Space: 1999 (1975-77) was also created by Gerry and Sylvia Anderson and intended as a kind of loose sequel to *UFO*. For the series, Grade insisted on recruiting two American actors: Martin Landau and his then-wife, Barbara Bain. This, and other creative choices, resulted in a hybridised product that was even more aggressively designed to appeal to the American market, and therefore lost something of its more regional 'British' flavour. The series takes as its premise a scientifically impossible situation: a nuclear blast has detached the moon from its orbit, resulting in the crew of the moonbase floating unmoored around the galaxy. The title sequence here too is action-heavy. In fact the title sequence attempts to accomplish three goals at once: in sombre, almost reverent music and imagery it introduces its main actors. It then transitions to a faster, more upbeat selection of clips from the forthcoming episode, with the screen card 'this episode' flashing. It then transitions (through some slower credits) to exposition, telling the story in images of the initial event – the nuclear blast that detached the moon. The sequence is designed to whet the viewer's appetite for the

episode to come – something American series often did by way of episode previews at the beginning.

The commander of the base, John Koenig, presides over the crew with all the expected qualities associated with a consensus-era hero: courage, selflessness, strength, and rationality. Straker and Koenig are different types of leaders: where Straker is somewhat morally conflicted, Koenig is more traditionally heroic ('Koenig' is of course German for 'King', which implies the kind of unquestioned, regal authority to be found in his character, and a connection to the British preoccupation with royalty, which we will see in the *Survivors* section). Koenig exhibits qualities of selflessness, courage, modesty and little in the way of character flaws to weigh him down. But Koenig and Straker are both united in their fidelity to duty. Their definitions of morality and authority are similarly constructed and based on both spoken and unspoken rules, set around the authority of the man in charge who represents a military authority. The rules appear self-evident to all involved.

According to some of its writers, *Space: 1999* was largely designed to avoid politics. Johnny Byrne, one of the series' most prominent contributors, comments that his vision for the series was as a show 'about belief, not issues or politics. People are so tired of politics, and they want to believe, to have their imagination stimulated' (qtd. in Muir, 2012: par. 1). Of course, to be apolitical is not possible. As Shaun Ley reminds us in a documentary about *Doctor Who*: 'to a greater or lesser extent all fiction is political ... consciously or unconsciously, politics permeates everything we do and everything we see' (*When Worlds Collide—Doctor Who and Politics*). Indeed, there is a political structure all throughout *Space: 1999*, rendered invisible because of its alignment with the status-quo: a militaristic, hierarchical structure with a middle-class white man at the helm. However, the series has far less to say about contemporary political situations, perhaps partly because it is divorced from contemporary Earth affairs. If there is any subtext that connects with 1970s' fears of

immigration or xenophobia, it is in the premise. As a reversal of *UFO*'s alien invaders (possibly as metaphors for immigrants), in *Space: 1999* the protagonists of the series are themselves 'refugees', floating around space without a home.

Space: 1999* has a more complicated relationship with technology, but just as much 'forward thinking'. Although it is just as enamoured of organisational efficiency and the technology of the base, and of rockets and weapons, it replaces some of that faith in technology with a more ethereal outlook. Just as Cooke connects *UFO* with the 1960s 'flower power' generation, *Space 1999* capitalises on the 1970s generation's eschewing of traditional faith and embracing the revival of interest in the occult. Channeling the fascination with the occultist Alister Crowley as well as the rise of Wicca, explored by 1970s bands Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and others, *Space, 1999* explores esoteric themes. Throughout the series (at least Season 1), it seems there is some form of supernatural force guiding the crew. The frequent appearance of metaphysical situations, such as near-deities, ghosts, and mysterious forces, offsets the scientific rationalism expressed by the characters of Professor Bergman (the science advisor) and Dr Helena Russell (the medical officer). In the episode 'Collision Course', a mysterious entity appears to Koenig informing him that, while it appears the moonbase is about to collide with a huge planet, he must do nothing and allow it to run its course. Most of the crew are strongly opposed to this course of action and desperately eager to bomb the planet with nuclear weapons. Ironically, only Professor Bergman is on Koenig's side: he expresses a belief that sometimes faith is more important than rationality: an unusual position for a scientist to take, and one that suggests the biases of the writers. Finally, faith wins: the crew do nothing and the planet disappears. If indeed this scenario is mystical, then the mystical structure is benign: a positive force guiding them to a kind of enlightenment, still resonant with the theme of faith in progress, whether technological or otherwise.

The second season of *Space: 1999* was completely different from the first. Producers were unhappy with its lacklustre reception, and hired the American producer Fred Freiberger, who had overseen the last season of the original *Star Trek* (1966-69). This resulted in a series far more focused on action-adventure than the more introspective elements of the first season. The device of the supernatural force was jettisoned, as were several members of the cast, while a Spock-like shapeshifting alien, Maya, was introduced. A romance blossomed between Koenig and Helena. This moved the series much closer to an unambiguously American product, but even this didn't manage to save the series.

Space: 1999 is marginally less sexually exploitative than its predecessor. Koenig's eventual lover, Doctor Helena Russell, is a scientist with sometimes more rationality than her partner. Ogland writes:

> While it is not uncommon to have the male represent the rational and the females the emotional aspects of being human, *Space: 1999* sometimes manages to turn the tables quite nicely, giving John Koenig absurd lines and directives while Helena Russell is calm, rational and controlled. (2014: 240)

However, these minor variations are not enough to unshackle either of the series from their basic generic conventions: action-adventure science fiction series with a tendency to mythologise a conservative social and political structure with the strong, stoic white man at the helm.

BBC: liberal neutrality

The BBC, by contrast to Grade's ITC productions, treated science fiction in an ambivalent manner from its earliest transmissions: for a long time, the corporation refused to even use the term, preferring labels like 'scientific romance', or 'Wellsian fantasies', for fear of associating itself with American popular culture (see Johnston, 2009: 110). To some extent

this is the result of perceptions around the quality of the product: the genre has been seen in the past as culturally inferior to other genres, and this is in part because the term is an American invention and carries with it all of the discussed 'vulgar' connotations. This again is indicative of the establishment's dislike of American cultural values. Yet this establishment dislike fuelled the cultural currency of the genre amongst those who felt disaffected by the elite.

Science fiction, at least in its early years, appealed partly to the class concerns of people who did not feel culturally connected to the ruling class. The BBC clearly felt uneasy with the genre for these reasons and, as Johnston comments, 'to the cultural arbiters of taste, for the BBC to produce genre science fiction, and to label it as such, would be an admission that the television service was, at least in part, middlebrow' (2009: 115). 'Middlebrow', of course, was merely the opinion of these 'cultural arbiters', and reflected a supercilious attitude towards this American cultural product. British science fiction television pushed in two different directions in the period from the 1950s to the 1970s: the more commercially-driven, Americanised model that the previous section outlines, most commonly associated with ITV, and the 'Anglicised' product pioneered by Nigel Kneale and from which others borrowed. The latter was usually showcased on the BBC.

As mentioned in the introduction, the BBC was often accused by conservative authorities as being too 'left-wing'. Lord Chalfont referred to the corporation as, 'a nest of Communists, militants and left-wing agitators of all persuasions' (qtd. in Cockerel, 348), while Denis Thatcher, husband to Margaret, later memorably accused the entire corporation of being 'Trotskyists' (qtd. in Seaton, 6). The BBC's official policy was (and is) one of political neutrality, but there were certainly writers of a left-wing persuasion working for the corporation, and they became prominent in the 1960s, the so-called 'golden age' of television drama, which was mostly a BBC phenomenon. Indeed, this political stance amongst young

writers and thinkers was so prevalent that Caughie, in his discussion on television in the 1950s and 60s, notes, 'politics was part of being an intellectual [and] being an intellectual meant being left-wing' (2000: 61). Some of these writers went on to write for the series of the 1970s and 80s including, as we will soon see, Malcolm Hulke, a prolific contributor to *Doctor Who*. This leant the series a certain socially progressive style, but not necessarily a wholly subversive attitude.

The BBC series of this era operate according to different, but in some ways similar, sets of values and assumptions to the ITV series mentioned above (some of the writers, such as Terrance Dicks, Johnny Byrne and Terry Nation, wrote for both channels). The series are also enthusiastic about the implications of technology. More liberal in their political outlook, these series are nonetheless mostly reflective of the same social structures, thereby tacitly endorsing them, and sometimes even their liberalism is ambiguous, as will be discussed. Where there is minor difference, by and large these series are less interested in the American market. As such they explore a more arguably 'British' sense of story – a focus on dialogue and characterisation over action/adventure – even if both channels present militaristic hierarchies and a collectivist mentality.

The more important differences are in their social engagement, despite the presence of conservative attitudes. The various iterations of *Quatermass* (1953-1979, 2005, though the 2005 remake is not discussed), *Doctor Who* (1963-1989 – the continuation series that began in 2005 is not discussed), are more concerned with political causes, and this is one clear point of departure from the ITV series. Environmentalism, colonialism, animal rights, nationalism and multiculturalism are tackled in *Doctor Who* of the 1970s, and in each case the Doctor displays a more progressive attitude than those around him. There is more of a dialogue about the growing threat of nuclear war, and the series are still clearly affected by the lingering memory of the Second World War. There are also references to racism and xenophobia

which, with some exceptions, are treated with a more direct approach than the ITV series. With these differences in mind, there are also strong similarities in the area of collectivism (with militaristic structures), authority, morality, and the attitude to duty; and in the case of *Survivors* (1975-1977), landing on a conservative attitude of monarchy and a return to a conservative fantasy of Britain, mitigated by dissenting attitudes.

These series all display a similar attitude to authority as the ITV series: a deference to the white, middle-class man in charge. But these series delve a little deeper in presenting a generally unquestioning acceptance of British democracy. The characters display moral dilemmas, but, like the ITC series, their morality is always tethered to duty. Even when characters appear to be anti-authority, like the Doctor in *Doctor Who*, or his forerunner Professor Quatermass, there is still an ideological assumption happening: the unquestioned authority always rests with the middle-aged, middle-class white male: the mythical hero-figure. Ultimately, the character himself is the authority. Foster's contention that the scientist was mythologised in this era is borne out, but I would argue that the middle-aged white man is himself mythologised, whether a scientist or not (though he often is), and is at the centre of all social hierarchical structures. He is always trusted and deferred to, and his opinion is almost always correct.

The series

Nigel Kneale is often credited with re-imagining science fiction as a genre with specifically British appeal. He achieved this partly by rejecting the American version of what the genre had become. The early *Quatermass* serials: *The Quatermass Experiment* (BBC: 1953), *Quatermass II* (BBC: 1955), *Quatermass and the Pit* (BBC: 1958-59), were the first British science fiction series to be written directly for television (the final, *Quatermass*, appeared on ITV in 1979). They are also the first to be called 'science fiction' on British television, for the

first time reflecting a British sensibility in original science fiction television. Indeed, it seems that Kneale wrote them to directly challenge American science fiction:

> *The Quatermass Experiment* was supposed to be something of a critique of science fiction of the time, those terrible American films that were full of flag-waving and dreadful, crude dialogue and exhibited a singular lack of imagination and a total lack of interest in the characters. (qtd. in Petley, 1989: 91)

The *Quatermass* serials are rooted in the collective. Hutchings notes, 'The *Quatermass* stories have a tendency to view individuals as existing primarily within and in relation to groups, institutions and collectives' (2009: 341). The serials always present people in various positions of authority – military, scientific, medical – working together to achieve the end result, with no individual particularly highlighted. The exception, of course, is Quatermass himself, but Quatermass has no personal relationships (as Hutchings notes, the much later *Quatermass* in 1979 reveals that he has a granddaughter, but this is the one exception). He is a distant and remote figure. Like Sherlock Holmes, from whom some of the inspiration is no doubt drawn, he is a purely rational character, without interest in personal connections: he is only really defined by his role within the group, as a rocket scientist working with other scientists and technicians.

The Quatermass serials engage with concerns about the environment, and questions of race, xenophobia, and nuclear anxiety. They plug into Cold War paranoia, with the first serial, *The Quatermass Experiment*, about a manned rocket that was sent out into space containing three astronauts. The rocket lingers in space too long before finally returning, but with only one crew member. Over the course of the serial, this crew member mutates into an alien monster, which possessed the crew whilst in space. Kneale comments:

> At that time, I think everyone was worried to bits about what might happen. They knew that very shortly before, the Russians had acquired the H-bomb … at the same

time, both the Russians and Americans were working on outer space … [they had] stolen a lot of old German V2s and kitted them out as space rockets, and so the knowledge that this stuff exists and could drop on you was behind everything. (*Time Shift*)

The 1970 *Doctor Who* story, 'The Ambassadors of Death' borrows from this story, with some of the same concerns carried over.

Despite these apocalyptic concerns, the *Quatermass* serials still exist in a world vastly different from the world of Thatcherism. The serials are anchored in a postwar context, with memories of the still-recent World War II at the forefront (see Hutchings, 2011). Bould comments about a World War II that is 'already deeply mythologised', which casts a shadow over the serial: 'Enlisted men and non-commissioned officers symbolise some fundamental British decency that prompted the nation to stand firm against Hitler, while the blitz is invoked as a symbol of indomitable national unity' (2008: 212). This sentiment is starkly different to Thatcher's more individualistic and fragmented society, despite Thatcher's own insistence on rejuvenating imperial and military mythology for her 'new Britain'.

The *Quatermass* serials, even the much later final instalment, *Quatermass* (1979), are anchored in consensus-era Britain, and various assumptions about Britain and its place in the world are active in the subtext. One way this manifested was in concerns over xenophobia and ethnic cleansing. In this era, groups like Oswald Mosley's Union Movement circulated messages about racial purity. Bould comments that at the time Kneale was writing *Quatermass and the Pit*, 'immigration into Britain from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean increased, and as Kneale was preparing his script, mobs of white Britons attacked black communities in Nottingham and London' (2008: 212). Although all the *Quatermass* serials are about some form of alien invasion, which could be taken as a metaphor for xenophobia, Kneale mitigates against this reading and deploys Quatermass, in *Quatermass*

and the Pit, to call for tolerance. In the serial, a mysterious object is found in London, which resembles a spaceship. Quatermass investigates, and discovers the remnants of Martians: insect-like creatures who came to Earth aeons ago and took humankind's ancestors to Mars where they performed genetic experiments on them and (in another science fiction echo of the Prometheus myth and a nod to *Childhood's End*) raised their intelligence and set them on the evolutionary path that lead to homo-sapiens. The Martians had all but died out because of a racial purge. Toward the end of the serial, Quatermass delivers an impassioned speech, which connects with the fear of racial hostilities in Britain becoming cataclysmic:

> Every war crisis, witch hunt, race riot, purge, is a reminder and a warning—we are the Martians. If we cannot control the inheritance within us, this will be their second dead planet. (*Quatermass and the Pit*)

This is Kneale's clear anti-racist comment, highlighting our tendency to destroy ourselves through arbitrary exercise of prejudice and hostility. This played against the backdrop of the then-recent Windrush generation and other immigrations from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, but in reality the governmental attitude to race in the UK did not soften, but rather intensified in the Thatcher era. This will be discussed in later chapters.

In the *Quatermass* serials, several themes are raised that are broadened and amplified in later science fiction series of the 1960s and '70s. But the serials also display the primacy and authority of the patriarchal hero figure at the centre, a theme that would recur throughout generic science fiction series and serials in the consensus era. Quatermass is a professor, a rocket scientist, and a subscriber to the principles of logic and reason. He uses technology wherever he can, even if it sometimes causes him problems. The series subscribes to the enlightenment myth of rationality and reason as the path to truth. There is always a cognitive explanation for phenomena, even that which appears to be 'supernatural', as can be seen in *Quatermass and the Pit*, where images of the devil are explained as images implanted into

pre-evolved humans by an alien race (a storyline later recycled for the *Doctor Who* serial 'The Daemons', discussed below). There is always a technological element that is used to explain the more apparently irrational claims.

     Doctor Who (1963-89) was (and is, in its latest form) an ever-evolving series with many different writers and producers, and indeed different actors playing the Doctor. In many ways the series is innovative, from its title sequence design – the once-cutting edge 'howlaround' sequences – to the many politically progressive messages. The Doctor is a member of the Time Lords: an alien race from the planet Gallifrey that has the ability to 'regenerate'. As a means of cheating death, a Time Lord can shed a dying body and morph into a new one. This device has allowed several different actors to play the part and allowed the series to remain fresh. In factual writing about the series, the versions of the Doctor are traditionally named for the order of actors who played the part. So William Hartnell, the first actor to play the Doctor, is usually called the First Doctor, Patrick Troughton the Second Doctor, and so on. The internal mythology of the revived series – revealing there were many Doctors before the Hartnell version – renders this numbering problematic, but it will be retained for this book. Because the series is so well-documented, with countless academic and popular articles and books written about it, the following does not attempt to fully discuss its cultural impact in a thorough and meaningful way. The 1980s incarnation of the series will of course be subject to an intensive treatment in Chapter 4, which assesses the changes it underwent in the Thatcher era, but in this chapter I merely want to briefly sketch out some elements of *Doctor Who* in the 1970s, carrying its own consensus-era political undertones, to discuss points where the series feeds into numerous debates in the 1970s around socially-progressive issues, as well discourses of scientific superiority, technology and the authority of the middle-aged, middle-class white man. The series of the 1970s presents an admirable political liberalism, but most of the time a brief overview will confirm that the Doctor is

another consensus-era hero with consistent credentials, and indeed sometimes even his 'liberalism' is called into question.

Because the series has hosted various writers and producers, the political messages of the series pull in different directions, but the primacy of Britain's 'superior democratic values' is usually apparent and seldom challenged, despite tensions between the military, the Doctor and the (usually unseen) government, present in terms of ideological positions expressed in the series. Moreover, the authority of the Doctor always takes centre stage. Vohlidka writes of *Doctor Who* in the 1970s that:

> the series reflected much of the tumultuousness of the time, with the Doctor serving as a beacon of calm, proper behaviour. He was first and foremost a British hero, the type many British people were waiting for to restore faith in the government and deal with the myriad of problems facing the country. (2013: 119)

The Doctor is the mythologised 'authority figure': he is a scientist, positioning him as a generic descendent to Professor Quatermass. His role requires him to deflect anxieties of the time, and as such his status and opinions must be superior to anyone else's and cannot be significantly challenged by his colleagues or friends unless there is an opportunity to re-establish his superiority. Indeed, the makers of *Doctor Who* decided that the Doctor's first companion of the 1970s, Liz Shaw, herself a scientist, was too closely aligned to the Doctor's own talents and therefore a threat to his authority. She was duly replaced with Jo Grant, a young, naive and impressionable woman who always defers to the Doctor. The companions for the rest of the 1970s followed along similar lines. Exceptions were Harry Sullivan, a doctor with UNIT (discussed shortly), who accompanies the Fourth Doctor for a short time. Harry is intelligent but naïve, and somewhat more conventional than the Doctor. The other exception is Romana, another (female) Time Lord, who is said within the series to be

intellectually superior to the Fourth Doctor in an academic sense, but not as resourceful or capable of spontaneous thought.

The series in this era never directly challenges governmental authority. As Ley comments, 'The idea that *Doctor Who* has ever breached the BBC's strict impartiality rules and preached to the viewer along party political lines is the study of fantasy. What isn't fantasy is that *Doctor Who* is fundamentally political' (*When Worlds Collide—Doctor Who and Politics*). In the 1970s incarnation of *Doctor Who*, the Doctor (played by 'Third Doctor' Jon Pertwee from 1970-74, and 'Fourth Doctor' Tom Baker from 1974-81) is usually on the side of passive resistance and humanism against bureaucracy. This is expressed in the face of the military and boorish government officials, but does not indicate a disquiet about the institution of government itself. In 'Inferno' (1970), the outcome of World War II is reimagined when the Doctor is accidentally thrust into an alternative universe version of Britain – darker and clearly Fascistic, designed to contrast starkly with 'our' Britain. As Bould comments of that story, 'it is implied that, whatever its faults, British democracy is still the best available system of government' (2008: 216). This sentiment is gently restated in many Third Doctor stories, as the Doctor is often pitted against bureaucrats and officials, but as Bould points out, 'the basic tenets of democracy or the ruling power were never questioned. The series never really strays from the BBC's agenda of liberal neutrality' (2008: 215). Indeed, Wright claims that this makes the Doctor 'an extension of the programming policy' (2012: 129). *Doctor Who* in the 1970s, then, presents a mythologisation of British consensus-era democracy, with stock standard characters – the bureaucrat, the military leader, the damsel in distress, the scientist (and the 'mad scientist' in the form of the Doctor's nemesis The Master) – as essential types around whom moral stories can play out.

Like his generic ancestor Professor Quatermass, the Doctor abhors militarism and the use of weaponry, but he nonetheless works in a collegial manner with the military. From the

1968 serial 'The Web of Fear' onwards, he forms an uneasy allegiance, and later friendship, with Alastair Lethbridge-Stewart, the Brigadier of an organisation called UNIT (United Nations Intelligence Taskforce). Lethbridge-Stewart is every bit the military man – his constant order of 'five rounds, rapid!' became a catchphrase for the character (and the title of Brigadier actor Nicholas Courtney's autobiography) – but the always-delicate friendship between Lethbridge-Stewart and various incarnations of the Doctor, which reaches (albeit stoic English) affection in later years, serves to reinforce the differences between them. Although they respect, even admire each other, their philosophies are diametrically opposed. Military tactics cut against the Doctor's pacifist tendencies, and the Doctor's solution always proves better, or at least more progressive. However, if there is an opportunity for the series to fly in the face of authority in the form of the military, it is softened by the friendship and collaboration between the Doctor and the Brigadier. *Doctor Who* can therefore operate on both sides of this ideological fence: a position of pacifism and a collaboration with the military, neither of which denies the Doctor his unchallenged moral authority. As 'scientific advisor' with UNIT, the Third Doctor becomes absorbed in the collective, though sometimes the Doctor must be reminded of this. In 'Terror of the Autons' (1971) the Brigadier says to the Doctor, 'I'm aware for your preference for acting as a one-man band, but this does happen to be a UNIT operation.' The Pertwee-era stories (and some of Baker's stories too) usually portray the Doctor and UNIT working together, succeeding where an individual working alone could not.

The Third Doctor also makes rational thinking a central weapon in his arsenal, and an antidote to magic or superstition. 'The Daemons' (1971), a serial that owes most of its storyline to *Quatermass and the Pit* (which in turn draws from *Childhood's End*) and some of its tone to Hammer horror films, finds the apparent Daemon Azal 'resurrected' in a small English village, stirring superstitious beliefs about witchcraft. The Doctor soon discovers that

the Daemons are an alien race that came to Earth long ago and influenced early humans' conceptions of supernatural devils. As with most Pertwee and Baker serials, the cognitive approach to solving problems is privileged, aligning the Doctor with other scientifically inclined heroes of the consensus era.

The Pertwee-era serials of *Doctor Who* present a progressive attitude to issues around controversial topics of the era: multiculturalism, environmentalism, nationalism, animal rights and colonialism. In two serials from the 1970s: the oddly titled 'Doctor Who and the Silurians' (1970) and 'The Sea Devils' (1971) (both written by Malcolm Hulke, an outspoken member of the Communist Party of Great Britain), a long-hibernated reptilian-humanoid species is awoken, which once ruled the earth. The creatures had gone into hibernation deep in the bowels of the earth ('Doctor Who and the Silurians') or in the ocean ('The Sea Devils'). The action of both stories occurs when the creatures (or a small cell of them) are awoken. In both cases, the Doctor attempts to negotiate a way in which the two species can coexist, but ultimately fails because the military effectively beat him to a conclusion and use weapons to destroy the species. The Doctor is horrified by this genocide, and the viewer is impelled to feel the same way. When learning of the genocide against the Silurians, the Doctor turns to his companion, Liz:

> DOCTOR: The Brigadier. He's blown up the Silurian base!
>
> LIZ: He must have had orders from the Ministry.
>
> DOCTOR: And you knew?
>
> LIZ: No! The government were frightened. They just couldn't take the risk.
>
> DOCTOR: But that's murder! They were intelligent alien beings. A whole race of
>
> them. And he's just wiped them out!

The message from the military and government is that the planet cannot be subjected to mixing with immigrant populations; the conservative order must be maintained, despite the

wishes of the Doctor. The message of the series (conveyed by the Doctor) is the more progressive one, that in spite of its challenges, multiculturalism is an ideal to work towards. Working for UNIT, yet detached from its ideologies of military force and conservative values, the Doctor stands firm in his 'rebel' status, while at the same time he himself is mythologised as a patriarchal authority figure.

Other themes receive a progressive, even left-wing treatment. To take a few examples, in 'Colony in Space' (1971), another serial scripted by Hulke, the Doctor lands on a planet colonised by humans, who have oppressed the native species of sentient humanoids. The serial critiques the effects of colonialism and exploitation of resources through the mining company there and its destruction of the environment. 'The Green Death' (1973) concerns a corrupt corporation pumping toxic waste into the local environment. In 'Carnival of Monsters' (1973) the Doctor and Jo land inside a Miniscope – a device which shrinks everything, including humans, to tiny proportions and holds them inside it for the entertainment of an audience. The Doctor condemns this action and links it to zoos and other forms of animal mistreatment, telling Vorg, the owner, 'The collection of the simplest animal lifeforms is a dubious enough pursuit in itself, sir, but the collection of civilised intelligent beings is a positive crime!' Finally in 'Invasion of the Dinosaurs' (1974), yet another Hulke-scripted contribution, an environmental group tries to reverse time to the point where humans never existed so that the planet can be free of the harmful practices of its dominant species. When the Doctor uncovers their plan he says, 'Look, I understand your ideals. In many ways I sympathise with them. But this is not the way to go about it.' The Doctor, at least in principle, is generally on the side of 'progressive' causes.

James Chapman considers the above serial a 'satire of bureaucracy and petty officialdom' (qtd in O'Day) because of the rigid nature of the authorities. There is indeed much in Pertwee-era *Doctor Who* to criticise bureaucracy. 'The Claws of Axos' (1971) also

presents one of the many run-ins between the Doctor and a representative of bureaucracy. In that serial the Doctor expresses frustration at the civil servant Chinn, the 'Head of the Committee of Enquiry.' Chinn accosts the Brigadier because the Doctor is not a British citizen.

> CHINN: (*to Brigadier*) … who is he and where does he come from?
>
> DOCTOR: (*to Chinn*) … your petty obsessions! England for the English! Good
>
> > heavens, man!
>
> CHINN: I have a duty to my country!
>
> DOCTOR: Not to the world?

This frustration with bureaucracy standing in the way of action is a constant refrain in *Doctor Who* of the 1970s, and echoes a wider frustration in British society. Indeed, one of the reasons Thatcher was elected in 1979 was because of her own dislike of bureaucrats and her promise to take stronger and more decisive action. Thatcher claimed that civil servants were 'complacent, inert, pedantic and incapable of appreciating the need to devise or implement radical solutions to Britain's dire problems' (qtd. in Wright, 207). We will see in Chapter 3 that Sapphire and Steel play off against bureaucratic figures. Yet it also becomes apparent that neoliberalism has not delivered us from pointless bureaucracy, but rather reframed its boundaries and in many cases intensified it – a point expanded on in Chapter 4.

> The Doctor's liberal humanism is often commented upon. Wright for instance, claims:
>
> > As a liberal, the BBC Doctor occupied neutral political ground from where he
> >
> > criticised socially, morally, and aesthetically, the mores of his contemporary audience.
> >
> > His neutrality and critical role reflected the BBC's self-professed political and social
> >
> > agenda, which made him an extension of the programming policy. (2009: 129)

The Doctor's positions are not always politically neutral, however, especially with scripts by left-wing writers. However, despite his liberalism, which is in evidence in his progressive

attitude, the 1970s Doctor is nonetheless a paternalistic figure with generally patriarchal values and behaviours. He is something of a chauvinist, and is most certainly a patriarchal authority hero-figure throughout with an imperial attitude. Britton and Barker comment, 'Jon Pertwee played the Doctor as an implacable ultra-English hero in the Bulldog Drummond mould' (2003: 147). Pertwee had himself served in the Second World War, and was rumoured to have been involved in Intelligence missions, and he brought the attitude of masculine swagger and stoicism to the role.

The Doctor has a slightly more complicated relationship to technology than other 'heroes' in 1970s television. Much like his consensus-era peers, the Doctor is generally in favour of technology – especially the Third Doctor, who is obsessed with his cars and other gadgets – but he is nonetheless weary of any technology that places itself above human endeavour. This has been the show's position since the advent of the Cybermen in 1966. The cold, ruthless Cybermen operate purely on logic, without emotion. The consistent message of the series is that the 'human factor' – the irrationality, creativity and emotional depth of humans – is vastly preferable to the cold logic of machines. The 1970s were an area of great technological development, and inherent in that development is anxiety. The anxiety of computers growing to dominate humanity also played out in *UFO*, as discussed. In 'The Green Death' the Doctor confronts BOSS, a supercomputer intent on world domination. The Doctor is insistent that this 'mere machine' does not have the capacity to do real harm, and claims, 'The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We are more than machines,' pitting the consensus-era trope of collaboration and collectivism of human minds against the machine. BOSS reveals it has linked itself to a human mind and found that, 'the secret of human creativity is inefficiency. The human brain is a very poor computer indeed. It makes illogical guesses which turn out to be more logical than logic itself.' This (back-handed) endorsement of human irrationality is a constant refrain in *Doctor Who* – in the 1988 serial

'Remembrance of the Daleks', a Dalek 'battle computer' attempts to connect itself to the mind of a human child. The Seventh Doctor explains, 'The Daleks' major drawback is their dependency on rationality and logic. The solution? Get a human, preferably young, imaginative; plug the child into the system, and their ingenuity and creativity are enslaved to the battle computer.' He calls this process 'obscene'. Of course there can be little argument against the notion that enslaving a human child's mind to a computer is obscene, but it seems that the general treatment of 'AI' technology is cautious and even conservative, and the 'human factor' is always favoured over the artificial mind.

There is a disturbing undercurrent of imperialism in the Fourth Doctor's era. The serial 'Genesis of the Daleks' (1975) sees the Time Lords enlist the Doctor as a kind of undercover operative to go back in time and destroy the Daleks at the moment they are created. Bould discusses how this serial, evocative of World War II, draws on the myth of British imperialism, with the Daleks and their fictional creator Davros as Nazis and the Doctor and the Thals as the opposing army, the victorious forces of the British empire. This comes at the cost of disavowing 'Britain's ongoing history of colonial violence, oppression and expropriation' (Bould, 2009:216- 218). 'The Talons of Weng-Chiang' (1977) portrays a white actor playing a racially-stereotyped Chinese character. The Doctor of this era refers to his companion Leela as a 'savage' because she comes from a 'primitive' tribe. More problematically, the series has a certain ethnocentric bias built into its structure. The Doctor himself (in the classic series) is always a white man, and nearly always exhibits various traits of Victorian and Edwardian English society. Loza comments that, 'although the Doctor is ostensibly an alien, he behaves like a quintessentially British dandy; he adores tea, the European aristocracy, and fashion' (2017: 17). Charles comments that the Doctor's costumes 'visually recall the period of the height of British imperial power' (2007: 17). Even his much-touted liberal-humanism can be seen as part of the problem. As Clark comments, the Doctor

epitomises 'triumphant Western humanism, with all its arrogance, self-proclaimed superiority and blindness' (2013: par. 19). That is not to deny the series its progressive attitudes by 1970s standards, but simply to provide some perspective, and to point out that the character of the Doctor is sometimes able to behave in contradictory ways: both as a progressive 'liberal' and as an establishment figure.

There is no sense of challenging traditional authority in *Moonbase 3* (1973). This dated series, which was cancelled after only one season, was created by Terrance Dicks and Barry Letts, two of the brains behind *Doctor Who* of the 1970s. It depicts a future where various superpowers have set up bases on the moon, promoting, at least in principle, a message of co-operation between nations. The United States has Moonbase 1, the Russians have 2, China has 4 and Brazil has 5, with Moonbase 3 for the British. This series presents a world of government departments and budgetary cutbacks. The sets are familiar, forming a similar aesthetic to many *Doctor Who* episodes of the era – white or silver surfaces, functional equipment and metallic walls, sometimes with TARDIS-like imprints on them, but also resembling in many ways an Antarctic base. There is not, however, enough in the general tone to rescue the moonbase from its similarities to a departmental office of the 1970s, with bureaucrats here replaced by engineers and scientists who often behave like civil servants. Though it may be intended to depict the future, its aesthetic recognisably anchors it in the 1970s, but it's a drab, austere 1970s when compared to the hallucinatory moonbase of *UFO*. Instead of psychedelic colours and revealing costumes, everyone here is clad in variations on beige. Most people wear simple, austere clothing, and it is not until episode five that we meet the Russians, whose outfits (perhaps ironically) display more colour.

The crew of the moonbase are bound together by something approaching loyalty and respect. There are interpersonal conflicts, but they are generally resolved by appeals to

decency. However, this is not enough to elevate the generally austere atmosphere of the series. Wright claims:

> *Moonbase 3*'s appeal to realism resulted in a disquieting sense of claustrophobia and isolation that undermined the optimism of its premise and captured the general mood of insularity felt (and often desired) in Britain during the early 1970s. (2005: 297)

The series once again valourises the scientist, investing him with authority and absolute trust. The antithesis (or nemesis) of the scientist is not a corrupt or incompetent government, but, as in other 1970s programmes, the bureaucrat. Bureaucracy and its frustrations became a favourite subject of Dicks and Letts, as it was for Nigel Kneale. In the first episode, the Director of Moonbase 3 says to his subordinate, 'You know why I've been sent for, don't you? Just another session with the bureaucrats of the space commission about the housekeeping.' He discusses the double-bind: 'I can't produce the results because they won't give me the money, and they won't give me the money because I can't produce the results.' On the way to Earth, his pilot succumbs to a form of psychological strain associated with space, and deliberately sabotages the ship, resulting in its destruction.

There is now a need for a new Director. The Director-General of the European space programme offers David Caulder:

> A very unusual man: scientist, academic, administrator all in one. David Caulder was Lecturer in Theoretical Physics at Oxford when the troubles broke out … a combination of student militancy and reactionary administrators brought the place to a standstill.

This recalls the 1968 student riots which would've been recent at the time. Those riots, left-wing in nature and generally anti-capitalist, broke out on university campuses in France (known as the May 68 protests) and spread to other parts of Europe. The protests were calling for, amongst other things, a greater autonomy for the individual and less state interference.

As Chapter 6 will discuss more fully, these wishes would soon be 'granted' by the Thatcher government, but in a way that completely reformulated the terminology. Caulder would have been seen as an ideal 'British chap' for the moment, because, as the Director explains, he is 'what you might call a "militant liberal", passionately committed to the middle of the road.' A 'militant liberal' or passionate centrist is almost an emblem of the BBC's 'liberal neutrality' stance: one whose good sense and general morality and fairness can calm any situation. There are times, however, when Caulder is called on to exercise more than mere diplomacy, as in episode 5 when one of the team, Tom Hill, ends up in an accident inside a shuttle. Caulder enlists the help of the Russians against advice from the Director-General and his second-in-command, Michel. In an argument with Michel, he asks, 'What are you really worried about, Michel? Tom's life or balancing the books?' This moral determination looks set to deprive Caulder of his job – he is ordered to step down and allow Michel to take over. Caulder is not troubled by this, as he places loyalty before career.

Terry Nation (creator of the Daleks) wanted to explore the politics of a group stripped of all governmental authority. His series, *Survivors* (1975-77), is about a deadly viral outbreak that decimates the planet (quite literally, as 90% of people seem to have been wiped out) and leaves it devoid of governing structures. The series explores what happens when authority is taken away, and the vacuum is filled by individuals with authoritarian tendencies. It is therefore beginning to explore the neoliberal mindset, restructured with authoritarian tendencies in the Tory party. However, for *Survivors* the answer (by and large) lies in re-instituting traditional structures of authority, even if this becomes ambiguous by the end. In this series the familiar trope of the collapse of civilisation is explored, raising questions about the formation and maintenance of authority. How do the survivors build a just society? How do people discover ways to organise themselves without a central governmental structure? Who has the right to operate as an authority? Is an authority, perhaps even a brutal authority,

necessary to keep the peace, and preferable to the alternative of anarchy or authoritarianism? These questions were revisited in *The Tripods* (1984-85) and, to a greater extent, *Knights of God* (1987), both covered in the last two chapters.

      Survivors is particularly notable in its sense of complacency towards the established authority that existed before the event – in Britain of the time, this was the Callaghan Labour Government. There is no suggestion in the series that it is the same government, but it most likely operates according to the same principles. The government that has been destroyed in the series is never questioned or criticised, and there seems genuine fear for what will come in the wake of its loss. Sawyer sees *Survivors* as a very middle-class survival story, being 'apolitical as only the English middle-class can be' (2006: 139). This also accords with its closest influence, John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* (1951), which occupies a similarly middle-class milieu (the 1981 television adaptation will be discussed in chapter 5). Built into both stories are similar 'mythical' assumptions – that middle-class, generally middle-aged, white men, are the natural carriers of command, and that the post-war British system of governance is by-and-large the best system available. As the series continues, it becomes apparent that the stability and basic good sense of the English system is considered sacrosanct (as we will discover, the system for the whole of Britain is a different question). If the system is gone, as in *Survivors*, the stability of the idea remains, or must be forced to remain. The logic of the system posits that authority is required in order for peace (and often a liberal attitude) to flourish. 'Benign' hierarchies are required.

      The series begins with the protagonist Anna, whose husband has died in the outbreak. She is searching for her son, who was at school at the time. Early on in the series she meets Arthur Wormley, who introduces himself as the 'National Union President'. Anna recognises him as such from the media. Sawyer sees this character as reflective of

> … a sense of apocalyptic unease throughout the political spectrum caused by events
> such as the IRA mainland bombing campaign, as well as the 1973 'oil crisis' and the
> 1974 miners' strike, which lead to a three-day working week, power cuts and rumours
> of military coups and private armies. There may well be echoes of the general Middle
> England distrust of union activists, especially Northern ones, in the character of Arthur
> Wormley … the sinister trade union president … (2006: 135)

However, if Wormley is meant to represent a certain distrust, it seems nonetheless that the question of authority as it stood before the event is never seriously challenged. Anna asks Wormley if there is any authority now, and Wormley replies 'Not as such. Not yet. But there will be.' Wormley then outlines his 'vision' for a central governmental control with himself as its authoritative centre (echoing the sinister Torrence in *The Day of the Triffids*, which will be discussed in chapter 5). It would start small, and ultimately grow. Anna asks:

> ANNA: That's how the old feudal barons operated, isn't it?
>
> WORMLEY: Perhaps, but it's the way that ultimately led to the finest democratic
> system in the world.

This position is not challenged, which suggests that Anna implicitly agrees with Wormley's assertion. Sawyer maintains that, 'Both [Anna and Wormley] represent power, but the power of the pre-plague world, which has little relevance to the new environment' (2006: 141). However, this new environment will be built in accordance with the original, and Anna and Wormley at no point deny the efficacy or 'properness' of the power that has been destroyed. There is never any indication that they want to radically alter the power structures. There is never a hint of wanting to reshape the world, but rather return it to what it was: 'the finest democratic system in the world.' Wormley wants to instill power ruthlessly and assumes 'the "right" of the last vestiges of nationalism' (Sawyer, 2006: 141). His method is contentious, but his sentiment is apparently beyond reproach.

Later, Wormley has a man shot for defending his land, and we learn that Wormley's associates are more or less thugs or vigilantes who have taken it upon themselves to install 'martial law' by some form of authority that existed before the event. When Anna has found some other survivors and they have formed a group, they go to an abandoned convenience store for supplies. Wormley's associates are there, and accuse Anna and her friends of looting, which leads to a stand-off, with Anna and her friends managing to take the supplies they need. Afterwards, as Anna and her friends are driving away from the incident, a discussion ensues:

> JENNY: Do you think they really do have any authority?
>
> ANNA: Yes, that's what's been bothering me. Perhaps we were in the wrong?
>
> GREG: Oh, come on, they're no better than a criminal gang! They just grabbed the chance to take over everything.
>
> ANNA: They do have some sort of organisation. I mean, we may not like what they're doing or what they are, but at least they've got some sort of order, and God knows we need it.
>
> JENNY: Are you saying we should join up with them?
>
> ANNA: No … oh, I don't know.

Anna's indecision implies that any authority and 'order' is better than none. Wormley is clearly a villain, but the group largely agrees with his sentiments about British democracy. Later the group forms a kind of commune that is much more democratic than Wormley's assortment of thugs.

Survivors also extols the virtues of technology. At the school where her son boarded, Anna has a discussion with Bronson, one of her son's teachers, who tells her:

> What is important is learning again – things we've never even needed to consider before … a book will tell you how electricity is generated, but could you do it? Right

from the very beginning: find the metal in the earth, dig it up, and turn it into wire? Could you make and cast glass for a light bulb? You'll need to know every part of every process.

As already stated (and echoed by Sawyer and others) the series borrows liberally from *The Day of the Triffids*, and these ruminations are very similar to Coker in the novel:

This is a pause – just a heaven-sent pause – while we get over the first shock and start to collect ourselves, but it's no more than a pause. Later we'll have to plough; still later we'll have to learn how to make plough-shares; later than that we'll have to learn how to smelt the iron to make the shares. What we are on now is a road that will take us back and back and back until we can – if we can – make good all that we wear out. Not until then shall we be able to stop ourselves on the trail that's leading down to savagery. But once we can do that, then maybe we'll begin to crawl slowly up again. (2016: 203)

Nation himself seems to have been grappling with these questions. In an interview he said, 'I didn't know how to preserve food. I didn't know how to make anything and I suddenly realised that I and my whole generation were virtual victims of a tremendous industry' (qtd. in Sawyer, 136). Much of the rest of the series depicts a return to an agrarian system. The characters realise that technology, paired with authority, constitutes a large part of the reason why people are civilised. *Survivors* takes the sudden lack of technology as a central anxiety that propels the series forward.

Greg, a character Anna meets early on, eventually becomes the leader of the group and dictates most of their decisions, though they usually take a vote on important matters. At this point, the roles of all the members are reasonably clear, and the morality of the series grounds itself firmly in a traditional framework. The characters in *Survivors* conform to a traditional group dynamic comprised of essential types, with the powerful alpha-male hero at

the head, and many types contained therein: the scoundrel or trickster, the grandmother, the simpleton, the damsel, and others. Abby is a resourceful woman with a British reserve and resolve. Greg, closest to the hero figure, is self-sacrificing, strong, resilient and decisive (he was an engineer, which is a suitably science-based pursuit). Tom is the 'trickster' of the group: cowardly, self-serving and villainous. This arrangement and group dynamic is, ironically, not completely at odds with Thatcher's stated views. Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite writes, 'Thatcherites … conceived of human nature as self-interested, but not entirely individualistic, for people were embedded in families and communities' (2012: 512). These families and communities would help each other out, and once they had looked after their community, they could look more broadly to the needs of society. It feeds into Thatcher's firm belief in Victorian values, which she called into being many times. There was of course a contradiction at the heart of Thatcher's 'social order': the neoliberal economic system which pulled in the other direction and encouraged selfish and Machiavellian behaviour, but the characters in this series have not yet experienced that system.

However, this 'natural order' as presented in *Survivors* is itself estranging, offering us an England that is both familiar and unfamiliar – in its aesthetic it resembles many rural British series of the era, with agrarian scenes. It depicts people conforming to some of the expectations of ordinary civilised behaviour, but without a central government. The interplay of the two allows for a certain 'cognitive estrangement', leading to a reflection on the part of the viewer. It compels us to contemplate the role of governmental democracy and authority, by depicting its absence. The series could be said to be pessimistic, to the extent that it portrays a world where civilisation is a weak and pallid edifice: precarious and fragile. If the series is suggesting that democracy is a thin membrane, vulnerable to the influence of despotic figures like Wormley and others, it also extols the virtues of the inherent authority

and structure of this democracy through the paternalistic figure of Greg, and the democratic manner in which the commune operates.

Some of the themes that later occupy a central role in the Thatcher-era series are explored within *Survivors*, suggesting a move into darker territory. In 'Law and Order' Greg must take the agonising role of executioner, killing a member of the commune who sexually assaulted one of the others. When it is later shown that it was a case of mistaken identity, Greg and others in the know vow to keep the secret for fear of the commune descending into chaos. Greg is not averse to killing, and later (in 'Something of Value') shoots another man who threatened the commune. This aligns him, to an extent, with Straker in *UFO*, in the latter's decision about his son's survival, and points to a more morally conflicted universe; but these decisions are utilitarian – taken for what Greg considers to be the moral good of the community, mitigating against the fear of chaos or some form of anarchy, which conservative authority cannot tolerate – and Greg is a largely conservative character. In the season 2 episode 'By Bread Alone' he is uneasy even about the introduction of religious instruction in the commune, lest it weaken his own authority. Channeling the Grand Inquisitor from Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, he says, 'A lot of people want authority. They're not interested in working it out for themselves, they want to be told, freed from responsibility.' Like the other characters discussed in this chapter who face moral dilemmas, Greg's primary concern is what he sees as his duty. Wright (2009), when writing of *Sapphire & Steel*, suggests that this sacrificial attitude is a conservative one, and considers *Sapphire & Steel* to be exemplary. *Survivors* is exploring these themes in nascent form, but they are taken much further in the Thatcher-era series. Similar moral decisions made by Steel in *Sapphire & Steel* are taken dispassionately, without any scruples, and at no personal cost. The Sixth and Seventh Doctors in *Doctor Who* demonstrate a much more cutthroat and Machiavellian

attitude to similar situations, and Avon in *Blake's 7* cares little for the moral consequences of his actions.

Greg's final episode emphasises the connection between sacrifice and love, and places us in the territory of the Western, overlaid with the familiar 'Churchillian stoicism' of consensus-era characters. In the episode 'The Last Laugh', third from the finale, Greg is stabbed by a group of bandits working for a duplicitous character. They dump his body in a stream, but he is still alive. He makes it to another small settlement where he finds a man dying of what he believes to be smallpox. Greg succumbs to the infection. He returns to his commune, where the same bandits are holding his group hostage, and expresses the desire to join them, even going so far as to shoot one of his own people. To convince them all that he has betrayed them he must harm his own people and badmouth his wife and children. It's all a ruse, of course, and his real intention is to infect the bandits and thus kill them all. This act of self-sacrifice is particularly wrenching emotionally because there is no chance of reconciliation between Greg and his family. Brown considers narratives that involve the collision of love, vengeance and sacrifice to be derivative of the Western genre. She writes, 'The narrative code of the Old West allows vengeance … only if it is motivated by love' (91). The cowboy is then beyond redemption and must sacrifice himself for the sake of those he loves. Brown explains,

> the strong, virile tragic protagonist accepts full responsibility for his acts,
> acknowledges who he has become in full consciousness of his evil, accepts his doom
> stoically, and sacrifices himself in order to restore peace to society (98)

Greg's final moments are acts of vengeance, but it is vengeance that is driven by his desire to protect his family and community.

The idea of the old cowboy's death making way for the new civilisation is a theme embedded in many Westerns (Brown, 2017: 80), and plays out to some extent in *Survivors*.

Greg is not a cowboy in the sense of being outside civilisation – rather he is the primary shaper of the new civilisation; he is on 'the inside' socially. But he also embodies the heroic, mythic figure of the saviour. To that end the series also draws influence from the eschatological texts of the Norse *Ragnarok*, and the Christian Book of *Revelation*. The eschatology in *Survivors* is grounded in sacrifice, and a 'transfiguration' to come, aligning Greg's sacrifice in a nebulous way to that of a Christ-like figure (see Brown, 91). The eschatological texts are revisited in the Thatcher-era series, but when the protagonists of *Blake's 7* (which itself shares commonalities with the Western) and *Sapphire & Steel* are sacrificed, it is against their will. When those characters make their own sacrifices, they are based on cold, Realpolitik decisions, with no consideration of love. Indeed there is little or no love or personal connection between characters in the major Thatcher-era series. This illustrates to some extent how far British science fiction television has travelled since the 1970s consensus era.

Despite the connotations of the American Western, *Survivors* plays out, in the end, as a largely conservative celebration of British (or English) authority. Despite (or perhaps because of) Greg's death, the remains of his group see him as a figurehead. Agnes, whom Greg met earlier when she landed from Norway in a hot-air balloon, has decided that he is to be named King, and has raised a Union Jack with his initials on it. The idea that a king is needed is lightly disputed by others, but not substantially. In the penultimate episode ('Long Live the King') Agnes repeats what Greg told her, that, 'You can't have freedom without authority' (Thatcher would later say in a speech to the European Foundation, 'You cannot have freedom without the rule of law'). She also holds that a currency is necessary and needs Greg (and quantities of petrol) to back it up because, 'That's all a currency needs: to be honoured by someone who symbolises the nation itself. ... [we need to] show people a central authority exists.' Survivors perhaps shows most clearly the value of symbolism. Symbols –

like the Union Jack, money, the idea of a monarch – can unify people, naturalise (and therefore mythologise) social relations, and disguise the arbitrary nature of the concept of authority. Later, Charles says, 'Nobody need be king,' but as Sawyer discusses, this point is not sufficiently unpacked. This idea of a return to a more traditional Britain, with the hallmarks of the establishment – the monarchy, the military (Agnes is dressed in military uniform) and presumably the church and aristocracy as our only saviour, becomes a nostalgic dream, and an obviously conservative English one, strangely championed by the Norwegian Agnes. There is logic to this – one of the ways in which authoritarianism can take hold is through the lack of a centralised, regulated authority – something that will be explored in later chapters. But the form of authority that this series champions is not revolutionary or progressive, but largely traditional. Survivors, like the later (and far more conservative) *Knights of God* (discussed in chapter 6), posits that the answer to combatting authoritarianism is not to be found in radical reform or even a re-examination of social relations, but an appeal to, even a loving reinstatement of, the benign authority of the past and all its attendant symbolism. Though Nation was reportedly unhappy with the direction *Survivors* finally took (Sawyer, 2006: 138), the seeds for its denouement were already present in the beginning, with Wormley's uncontested speech (written by Nation) about authority and leadership.

Although Greg's authority is not contested in England, things change when the characters travel, in the final episode ('Power'), to Scotland. When they arrive in Scotland, Charles and Jenny meet with McAlister, apparently the local Laird. Their first encounter with him is tense. When asked about how things are in England, Charles answers:

CHARLES: Well it's not so bad now – we've even got a sort of government established.

McALISTER: That's an extraordinary thing to be wanting again isn't it?

It seems, as the episode continues, that people in Scotland are managing quite happily without a centralised authority and seem unconcerned to implement one. It seems the authority McAlister carries as a Laird is something like communitarian, and is enough to dissuade anyone from looting or being otherwise antisocial.

The plotline casts a strange, even comedic light on the series up to this point. It seems that the preoccupation with governmental (and other forms of symbolic) authority is an exclusively English concern. The Scots have never required it, and don't welcome its return (in part, it is implied, because English authority may oppress Scotland). This suggests that all the antisocial behaviour and attempts to remedy it have simply been an English problem, despite Scotland apparently having a much larger surviving population. Towards the end of the episode McAlister says, 'You may have a government in England, but here in Scotland we protect our own!' Charles tells him, 'Good God, man, there are few enough of us surviving without bringing nationalism into it!' This is uttered without any sense of irony, despite the fact that nationalism has been something of an obsession in England for much of the series, at least in terms of the implementation of recognisably English symbols of soft power.

This final episode is ambiguous in itself but tends to side with localised authority over governmental. The Laird is the white man in a position of power, who is largely trusted in his area, but even if that were not the case the episode can't on its own provide enough of a counterpoint to the prevailing message from British science fiction of the era, which largely reveals a conservative bias, at least in terms of the privileging of authority and order, usually in the form of a white, middle-aged man with an attitude of contentment with the government of the day. These series present a collective mentality, and a deference to political authority (or a qualified acceptance of it). Quatermass often finds himself coming up against bureaucracy, as does the Doctor in *Doctor Who*, but their indignation at the incompetence of

those in governmental positions does not indicate a disquiet with the government itself, nor does it compare with the later series where there is outright hatred and dread for the powers that be. Equally, the characters in *Survivors* are sometimes pitted against those who wish to install authority, but it is never authority itself, or an overarching power, that they dread; rather it is those who take power on for themselves, without any sense of a democratic process. This contrasts with the Thatcher-era series that privilege the individual, largely oppose political authority, and present morally-compromised characters.

Where the themes of these series sail close to those of the Thatcher era, such as the morally-compromised situations in *UFO* and *Survivors*, it is always an anomaly: an exceptionally difficult situation, which is resolved at great expense to the protagonist, and always in the service of a perceived moral duty towards the group. Overall these series are not as concerned with any of the prevalent issues in the series from the Thatcher era: Machiavellian behavior in protagonists, the questioning (even hatred) of authority leading to authoritarianism, the breakdown of civilisation, which leads to dystopia, or pessimistic renderings of human behaviour. These themes begin to emerge in some series of the 1970s, but they are mitigated against by an imposition of conservative order, even to the point of installing a new king.

Paternalism does not completely disappear in the Thatcher era of course, but in the major science fiction television of Thatcher's era there is an anxiety and ambiguity at the heart of the paternal figure. The male 'leader' is never again fully trusted, and never displays the same sense of duty, except to his own version of what is worth fighting for, and that is often highly ambiguous. He very seldom, if ever, displays a straightforward duty to an organisation, government or place. Where there is sacrifice, it's more often of others than himself. Motivations become murky, as the male protagonists in these series of the Thatcher era keep secrets, and even use their friends and companions as pawns. By contrast to this

chapter, the major Thatcher-era science fiction series studied in this book represent the death of the traditional, mythical male hero, and give rise to a far less sure-footed male 'hero', who has suddenly recognised the oppressive nature of the authority that faces him, and has no self-evident means to contend with it. The male 'hero' in the Thatcher era has become aware of a pernicious ideology: authoritarianism. Ideology no longer contains self-evident 'truths', but a series of unpalatable ideas.

This change could be framed in what Hall called Thatcher's 'authoritarian populism' (1988: 28), weaving together social conservatism with popular anxieties. Thatcherism is at once an expression of the leader proclaiming from on-high, and a populist: a politician of 'the people'. She would often achieve this double-act by appealing to common-sense values of the people to push through authoritarian policies. Procter comments that

> when Thatcherism took a tough, authoritarian stance on homosexuality following the
> AIDS epidemic of the late 1980s, it did so through a populist appeal to traditional
> family values. (2004: 101)

In each instance she couched her authoritarian goals in 'populist' rhetoric. Similarly, when she wanted to strengthen the authority of the police she did so by appealing to the people's sense of safety. Even her emphatic championing of neoliberalism was framed in terms of 'freedom'.

Thatcher's mobilisation of the police and military in events was for many the final unmasking of oppressive authority: the 'false consciousness' of a naturalised authority was stripped away, and authority was laid bare as the draconian force that it had become. This is demonstrable in events like the miners' strikes in the 1980s and the Poll Tax Riots in 1990, some of which find creative analogues in the series. Despite superficial objections to particular political actors, the man in charge in these pre-Thatcher series believes in democracy as an ideal, expressed through duty and paternalistic values. If there is discontent

expressed in the science fiction television consensus era, at least in the 1970s, it may be against petty bureaucracy, and very occasionally governmental authority, but almost never against the authority of the man in charge.

Added to this, and eventually rising to the level of domination, is neoliberalism. Not all the series that follow grapple with it directly, but all contend with its new logic. The governing logic of late capitalism is that of a paradigm shift in society that affected all sectors. The individual is prized – his struggles are more important than those of the group. Democracy takes a back seat to the machinations of the individual or the power of large corporations. Contrarily the individual can behave in duplicitous ways, as he realises that authority is either corrupt, arbitrary, or virtually nonexistent, and he has seen a 'gap in the market' to exploit the system and behave in any manner he decides is acceptable, often settling on a Machiavellian method.

The next chapter, a substantive analysis of *Blake's 7* and its relationship to Thatcherism and neoliberalism, will reveal the drastic change of the content of science fiction television series under Thatcherism. *Blake's 7* began in 1978, a year before Thatcher was elected. The first season is more redolent of the consensus-era themes, but even so, a new mentality is breaking through, one that favours individualism and even selfishness. After that I will devote a chapter each to *Sapphire & Steel* and *Doctor Who* of the Thatcher era, and then finally the last two chapters will discuss the shorter and less successful series of the era. In each case a tonal shift has occurred: authority has broken down to some extent, to be replaced with a cynical, amoral attitude. These series question what is left of the freedoms that Thatcher elevated to the mythic level and ask, how much of this newfound 'freedom' is an illusion? The series will also examine the many ways authority, and its more deleterious cousin authoritarianism, manifest in this era.