

What Does it Matter to Ya?: James Bond's Masculinity and Cold War Britain

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In November of 1956, in the wake of a humiliating defeat in the battle for the Suez Canal, Prime Minister Anthony Eden and his wife Clarissa wanted to escape the “perpetual state of tension”¹ mounting in Britain as a result of the conflict. Ian Fleming’s wife Ann offered the couple’s Jamaican estate, Goldeneye, to the Edens as a token of good faith. The Flemings, especially Ian, fancied themselves high society types who relished the connections and prestige that came from the company of aristocrats like the Edens. Over the course of the Cold War, the old values the Edens and the Flemings represented were rapidly giving way to a much more socially liberal British society. The British Empire was gradually decimated, taking with it British military might and prestige with the rise of the new superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Anthony Eden would be the last of the old aristocratic leaders of Britain. With his unceremonious fall, Britons yearned for a champion of old values that simultaneously embraced new values. Fleming served as a vital link between the old and the new Britain. A member of the old aristocracy himself, Fleming recognized the changes that would come about as a result of modernization and created a hero that would reflect the fast pace of Britain’s changing social landscape. This hero’s name? Bond, James Bond.

Fleming’s literary creation James Bond embodied the constant fluctuation of British society during the Cold War. A secret agent codenamed 007, Bond was as much a eulogy to the old guard as he was a celebration of newfound hedonism. He was a fantasy, “no frustrated, fumbling Englishman, but cool and self-confident in everything from cocktails and blackjack, to seduction and murder.”² Bond’s steely emotion and binding adherence to duty and patriotism were traits that British men

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could aspire to and live through. Even in his cinematic iterations, Bond's strong, physical presence on screen was always tied to queen and country. James Bond's masculinity is as much a personality trait as it is a yearning by the nation he serves and represents. In both his literary and cinematic forms, he becomes at once a symbol of the past and present values of Great Britain as a result of Cold War social movements.

James Bond's value as a symbol of Cold War Britain will be explored through a variety of ways, including an examination of the life experiences of his creator Ian Fleming. Bond's literary portrayal would serve as a reflection of Britain's place in the world in the aftermath of World War II. In the 1960s, Sean Connery's cinematic depiction of the superspy would lead to Bond becoming an international sex symbol and the commercialization of the "Bond lifestyle." Roger Moore's take on the character, that of sophistication and a wry sense of humor, as well as the exaggerated special effects and situations rampant in his Bond films, proved a stark contrast to the austerity and discord inherent in 1970's Britain. By the 1980s, Timothy Dalton proved a cold, calculating Bond that was not dissimilar from Margaret Thatcher's image as the "Iron Lady." The research conducted for this article consists of the 15 James Bond stories written by Fleming from 1953 to his death in 1964 as well as the 16 James Bond films in the MGM/EON canon. Bond scholarship has examined the character from schools of thought as diverse as feminism ("The Coldest Weapon of All: The Bond Girl Villain in James Bond Films"), philosophy (*Questions Are Forever: James Bond and Philosophy*), and religion (*The Devil with James Bond!*). However, Bond has never been placed squarely in a historical context. This article seeks to assert James Bond's place as an integral element of British Cold War history. Bond's portrayal of the masculine ideal can be seen to mirror British historical movements from his creation in 1953 to 1989, which marked the fall of the Berlin Wall and, for this analysis, the end of the Cold War.

I. "Rather painful splits of one's life"³: Ian Fleming and Bond's Creation

To realize how James Bond's masculinity was formed, one must first examine his creator, Ian Fleming. Many elements of Bond's characterization were inherent in Fleming's personality. Fleming was born into an influential and aristocratic family that boasted financial, military, and academic clout. His grandfather, Robert, founded Robert Fleming and Co., one of the largest merchant banks in the world. His father, Valentine, was a PM⁴ and a Major in the British army, who was

killed during active duty during World War I and posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Order.⁵ His older brother Peter became the de facto patriarch after his father's death. Peter would become an Oxford-educated travel writer and academic. Living in the shadow of the Fleming patriarchs, Ian, born May 28, 1908, struggled with his personal identity within the family his whole life. He was expected to hold up the distinguished Fleming legacy, with its masculine notions of duty and honor as well as the responsibility of the social status that came with it.

Like all of the men in his family before him, Ian would set out to prove himself at Eton College, one of the most exclusive and prestigious public schools in England⁶ and in which he enrolled in 1921. Eton had established itself as an institution that would break boys down and build them up into men. It champions excellence through masculine pursuits such as academics and athletics. Bored and restless, Ian despised the doldrums of academia and the fierce strictness of his superiors. With his cocky attitude, slicked-back hair, and womanizing, Fleming was constantly at odds with his housemaster, E.V. Slater. Seeking refuge in athletics, Ian became one of the most celebrated athletes in Eton's history, being crowned *Victor Ludorum* from 1925-7.⁷ He preferred to be lauded for his individual successes with women and athletics; his rebelliousness and risk-taking allowed him to form the basis of the masculine identity he developed throughout his life. Having grown so fed up with Fleming's rebelliousness, Slater demanded his mother take him out of Eton and enroll him at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst to instill some discipline in the young man.

Fleming biographer Andrew Lycett believes that in many ways the female relationships that Ian Fleming had would define his personality and actions throughout his lifetime.⁸ His most impactful relationship during his formative years is that with his mother, Evelyn. Upon Valentine's death, Evelyn inherited her husband's large estate in trust, on the condition that she never remarry. Valentine's lingering shadow would constantly put mother and son at odds. The financial pressures of not having immediate access to Valentine's estate would severely affect the attitudes of Ian and his mother. The lack of access to his father's estate due to his older brother's rights to it made his mother bitter and Ian rebellious. Refusing to dignify her with a title, he would call her "M."⁹ Evelyn would treat Ian coldly and abuse him emotionally. For example, Ian would be made to pray to be as good as his father as a form of humiliation. She was "certainly one of the few people he was frightened of, and her sternness toward him, her unexplained demands, and her remorseless insistence on success" fostered in him an inferiority complex that he would never live

down.¹⁰ He would carry with him throughout his life cautiousness and a disposable attitude toward authority figures and women that can be seen in James Bond's attitude. Bond's boss, M, would serve as a conservative doting parent, a foil to Bond's fast-paced, freewheeling lifestyle. Fleming infused in Bond a sense of freedom that he could never experience under his family's legacy or his difficult schooling.

The rigid structure at Sandhurst made Fleming dissatisfied, feeling like a cog in the military industrial complex. He felt like any traditional value in blood sacrifice was lost because, in his words, "a mechanized army is an army without heroes."¹¹ Ian's lack of discipline as well as his contraction of gonorrhea would have him removed from this school within the year. In 1927, Ian found an educational home in Kitzbuhel, Austria, studying under Forbes and Phyllis Dennis at a school called Tennerhof. This school adhered to the principles of Alfred Adler, encouraging personality development from within. The Adlerian model of personality was keenly interested in the development of the individual psychology through a kind of striving for superiority to overcome an inferiority complex.¹² It was at Tennerhof that he fully embraced who he was and created an individual identity for himself. No longer was he the son of Valentine and brother of Peter. He became Ian Fleming: a cultured rake with a rapier wit and a certain cool lack of shyness with women.¹³ The personality he had developed for himself would be carried over to Bond's characterization, as 007 and his creator shared wanderlust, a voracious sexual appetite, and a love for the finer things in life.

Ian began to write poems and short stories while at Tennerhof as he began to weigh his career options. Always intrigued by travel and adventure, Fleming took the necessary test to become part of Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service. He failed the test but realized his talent for writing and decided to become a journalist. He was employed at the international news agency Reuters where he impressed his fellow journalists with his story about a Russian spy on trial. Ian was dissatisfied with following the same career path as his brother Peter as well as the lack of financial support journalism provided. He decided to ply his trade at the family business, banking. Although he had no experience in finance, he used his family connections to secure a position as a stockbroker at Cull & Co. in 1933. Ian found no satisfaction in finance, but thoroughly enjoyed the economic freedom it provided. He would host lavish parties for friends that included high-stakes bridge games, fine cocktails, and elaborate spreads. His need for adventure would be satiated not through the ups and downs of the stock market, but through the pleasures sought through the life of a *bon vivant*.¹⁴ It was during his time at Cull and Co. that he began an affair with his

future wife, Ann Charteris. Charteris, an upper class socialite, had dalliances with barons and lords while maintaining an affair with Fleming.

On the eve of World War II, Ian Fleming was recruited to the Naval Intelligence Division of the Secret Intelligence Service as the personal assistant of Rear Admiral John Godfrey, serving as the liaison between Godfrey's Royal Navy and other branches of government.¹⁵ He had "no obvious qualifications," but Fleming was promoted from lieutenant to commander within a few months due to his proficiency and skill as an administrator and moderator.¹⁶ His deft and creative memo writing led to unprecedented access within British intelligence. Fleming would be a trusted member of any project he worked on, giving him the opportunity to help mastermind many Allied intelligence plans as well as the ability to work closely with "Wild Bill" Donovan, one of the fathers of the CIA. Among his most famous plans was Operation Goldeneye, the creation of an Allied intelligence network in Spain in case of a Nazi occupation.¹⁷ The operation would be based in Gibraltar to launch sabotage attacks against the Nazis from the ground and the sea. Fleming liked the name of the operation so much he would later name his Jamaican estate after it.

Fleming's baby, however, was the 30 Assault Unit. The "Red Indians," as the 30AU was nicknamed, was a commando unit of specialist intelligence troops designed to seize enemy documents from the front lines. Though Fleming did not fight, he selected targets and directed the unit from his desk in London. The unit, which would become one of the most trusted intelligence forces in the British military, was active at the Normandy Invasion, and Fleming even visited the troops in the field during and after the invasion.¹⁸ With a newfound sense of patriotism and discipline as a result of 30AU's success, Fleming helped create the Target Force to, according to the National Archives, "guard and secure documents, persons, equipment, with combat and Intelligence personnel, after capture of large towns, ports etc. in liberated and enemy territory."¹⁹ Fleming would serve on the committee of this force until his demobilization in 1945.

After the war, Fleming would move to his beloved Jamaica, where he designed the Goldeneye estate on the north side of the island. He would become the Foreign Manager for the Kemsley newspaper group and split time between Jamaica and London. His travelogues from his time at *The Sunday Times*, a Kemsley newspaper, are imbued with a sense of the exotic, the mysterious, and the risk associated with travel. In his travelogue, *Thrilling Cities*, Fleming asserts that "abroad, I have enjoyed the *frisson* of leaving the wide, well-lit streets and venturing up back alleys

in search of the hidden, authentic pulse of towns.”²⁰ Travel also provided a respite from England, which lay in shambles as a result of World War II. The vivid descriptions of these exotic locales are a hallmark of James Bond literature. Fleming’s love of travel, especially to the tropics, gave the author the thrill of adventure he experienced during the war.²¹ It is this adventurous spirit that Fleming injected into 007’s character and the text itself.

In 1952, four years after the birth of their stillborn daughter, Ian finally married Ann. Their relationship was full of complexity and tumult, and at times cruelty. Although a womanizer from his school days, Ian found that Ann, as a sharp-tongued aristocrat, posed a challenge. For her, Ian represented a rebelliousness and free-spiritedness unavailable in her other high profile relationships. According to her diaries, “sleeping beside [him] and being whipped by [him]... I don’t think I have ever loved like this before.”²² Their bouts of lovemaking were so intense and passionate that they would keep wet towels around Goldeneye “to relieve the stinging of the whips, slippers and hairbrushes the pair beat each other with.”²³ What made their connection so symbiotic was the sense of adventure they found in each other. Ian’s assertion of his masculinity came in the form of narcissism, rough sex, domination of women. He once told a friend that women were like pets and that men were the only human beings that were worthy of his companionship.²⁴ Fleming at once loved and feared women, objectifying them to create a defense against the emotional attachment that should come with any female relationship. Bond would be written as a masculine force that would use women as sexual playthings and objects of desire. Fleming’s numerous affairs would be mimicked by 007. Carrying this misogynistic view with him into his writings, Fleming used his relationship with his mother and his wife as the archetype of Bond’s relations with women.

II. “Keeping the British end up”: the Literary Bond

It was during the winter months at Goldeneye that Ian would begin creating James Bond on his gold-plated typewriter. With his knowledge of the spy world and his talent for writing, Fleming forged James Bond as an exorcism of personal problems as well as a lament for the condition of Great Britain. The literary Bond offers a commentary on failed leadership, indulgence (particularly as represented by the American alternative to Britain), anxiety over immigration, and Cold war fears of nuclear devastation. He initially began writing in 1952 to take his mind off of his cold feet, as well as the impending birth of his first child.²⁵ What started out as a hobby became Fleming’s calling, as his first Bond novel, *Casino Royale*, was a mas-

sive success and three print runs were needed to cope with the demand. What was it about Bond that so captivated the British public in the 1950s? The Fifties were ruled by the conservatives in thought and action, and the bored, resentful populace needed a catharsis. Though his novels were critically panned, Fleming claimed to write exclusively "for warm-blooded, heterosexuals in railway trains, airplanes or beds."²⁶ Fast cars, beautiful girls, high-tech gadgetry and a license to kill made Bond the ultimate masculine fantasy. 007 lived with danger, an unwavering duty and patriotism, and an individualism that allowed him to take command of any situation. In the wake of World War II, Britain needed a masculine presence with an assured confidence like that embodied by Bond.

Meanwhile, the distinctly aristocratic Anthony Eden's endearing charm, years as a hard working MP, and work under Winston Churchill resulted in his election in 1955.²⁷ Though his resume would permit him to take up such a mantle, Eden's tenure as prime minister proved to be anything but paradise. No less than a year into Eden's term, Egyptian President Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956. The canal, owned by Britain and France, was a symbol of imperial power and a vital European trade route. To symbolically reassure Britain of its rightful place among the superpowers, a plan was concocted behind closed doors take back the Suez Canal. Britain would serve as intermediary and peacemaker in a fabricated conflict in which Israel would serve as belligerent to Egypt. With a conflict in place, Britain could now "rightfully" invade Egypt, toppling Nasser in the process. The conspiracy was kept completely secret. Not even the American government was aware of it.²⁸ Israel attacked on November 5, 1956 with British and French troops not far behind. Support at home for the conflict was scarce. Mass demonstrations were held to challenge the prime minister. U.S. President Eisenhower threatened to pull crucial American funding that came as a result of the Marshall Plan unless Britain pulled out. Forced into an embarrassing retreat, the Suez Crisis would leave the British people distrustful of their cliquish government officials and force Anthony Eden to resign in disgrace.²⁹ He was not the hero that the weary British public was so desperate for. He became a relic, the embodiment of the secretive politicking of a bygone era. The fallen British hero would end up on the island of Jamaica at Goldeneye as Fleming would create a cultural hero reflective of British fantasies. Not finding heroism in their elected leaders, many Britons found it in the fictional 007 instead. In a 1962 interview with *The New Yorker*, Fleming revealed that "people are lacking in heroes in real life today. Well, I don't regard James Bond precisely as a hero, but he does get on and do his duty...and in the end after giant

despair, he wins.”³⁰ Bond was dapper, handsome, and ready. He worked in the Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6 as its known, where the agency was on top of all world developments.

007 answered to no one, especially the Americans. Britons developed an inferiority complex at seeing their former colony become the most powerful nation on Earth as the British Empire and her assets were gradually decimated. American wealth and power, as well as the perks that came with it, piqued and repulsed the British imagination. In *Live and Let Die* (1954), Fleming vividly describes the “exotic” meal 007 indulges in on his stay in New York: “flat beef hamburgers medium-rare from the charcoal grill, French-fried potatoes, broccoli, mixed salad with thousand dressing, ice cream with melted butterscotch and Liebfraumilch.”³¹ Theirs was a culture of excess, a sharp contrast to the austerity Britain faced in the 1950s. 007, as a masculine British fantasy may indulge, but his firm sense of duty to queen and country always allowed him to stay on task. “America’s plebian interest in sex and consumerism” according to Christopher Hitchens became Bond staples on account of Britain’s emergence from postwar austerity and uniformity.³² It became possible to emphasize luxury and style “without having a bad conscience.”³³ Luxury in British society is emblematic of the aristocracy and the tradition that Bond fought so hard to preserve.

007 was a hero that fought for “a world of tennis courts and lily ponds and kings and queens, of London...the first tube trains beginning to run,” no matter the cost.³⁴ Bond contrasts this world by describing his taxi driver in 1961’s *Thunderball* as “typical of the cheap self assertiveness of young labour since the war.”³⁵ For Bond, Britain is an idyllic paradise worth saving, despite a certain degenerative element he sees creeping into British society. Immigration can be seen as one of these degenerative elements that played into public fears of a Britain lost to foreigners. Despite complete right of entry into Great Britain for any subject of the commonwealth, a major backlash against immigrants from the Caribbean, West Africa and the Indian subcontinent resulted in race riots in multicultural neighborhoods like London’s Notting Hill.³⁶ White working class British subjects felt that their jobs and their nation were under siege from an outside threat. In 1959’s *Goldfinger*, Fleming writes Bond to reflect this new wave of nationalism. All of Bond’s enemies were non-British to reflect an intrusion of British society by the other. For example, Dr. No is Chinese-German, Goldfinger is Latvian, and Blofeld is Polish. As the quintessential British gentleman fighting back against the other, Bond becomes the patron saint of England, St. George, reincarnated. During a fight with one of his enemies it

becomes clear that "St. George had better get a move on before the Dragon hatched the little dragon's egg he was now nesting so confidently."³⁷ 007 could not deny that the traditional notion of "Britishness" was fading quickly and the "Dragon," the influx of immigrants into Britain was changing the social fiber of the nation.

The greatest threat to the empire comes in the form of Hugo Drax, the villain in *Moonraker*, which was published in April of 1955. Drax is the enemy from within, a former Nazi working with the Soviets who has infiltrated high society to control British missile silos. His physical deformities, such as his "shining puckered skin" and his "ogre's teeth" are meant to physically distinguish him as an enemy, a stark contrast to 007's "dark, rather cruel good looks."³⁸ Their first battle takes place at Blades, a "private card club" brimming with imperial opulence that serves as a memorial to aristocratic excess. Bond challenges Drax to a card game, a true gentleman's pursuit, to expose him for the fraud that he is. Cards are a masculine pastime indeed. There is a high level of risk involved, and the integrity necessary to play makes cheating a shameful, cowardly option. As 007 sits down to play:

He had the impression that there was a crowd behind him at each elbow, and that the faces were peering over his shoulder, waiting to see his cards. He somehow felt that the ghosts were friendly, that they approved of the rough justice that was about to be done.

He smiled as he caught himself sending this company of dead gamblers a message, that they should see that all went well.³⁹

James Bond was sending a message not just to Drax, the invading foreigner, but to the legacy of the proud British people. The "ghosts" are indicative of Britain's proud aristocratic history as well as the nation's pride in fighting for queen and country. The "ghosts" are just as easily the war dead who have given their lives for Britain, just as Bond is willing to do. Through his "rough justice," James Bond would win because he fights for the very soul of Great Britain itself. His aims are patriotic and virtuous. By catching Drax cheating at cards, he is able to use his masculinity to expose the outsider for the nefarious schemer that he is. The card game at Blades represents a preservation of the British legacy.

The dream of a Britain that would retain its status as a world power was also on the mind of PM Harold Macmillan, who in 1961 began pursuing the idea of Britain as a nuclear power when he made a deal with President Eisenhower that would give Britain new missiles in exchange for an American naval base in Scotland that would house Polaris submarines.⁴⁰ The idea of Britain as a nuclear power made average citizens furious. Fleming would reflect this growing unrest in *Thunderball*.

Published in 1961, this novel would see Bond foiling an international plot to hijack submarines equipped with atomic bombs. Seeing Bond thwart a nuclear holocaust that would cost British lives reflects the increasing public sentiment at home against nuclear proliferation. The average Briton felt powerless, and many began to flex their political muscles for the first time. Protests to the missiles popped up in cities all over the United Kingdom. Although the missile program was not eliminated, it was severely reduced on account of the mounting political pressure from protesters. It was the beginning of an outpour of socially conscious activity from average Britons during the 1960s.

James Bond as a character was aware of the tensions between the political establishment and a newly empowered British public. According to 007, "It was the short men that caused all the trouble in the world."⁴¹ In the metaphorical sense, this meant that the old patrician society of Great Britain would over exaggerate its own importance and assertion of superiority despite its increasingly tenuous grip on national interests.⁴² Another reading of the "short men" is the working classes, immigrants, and young people wrestling for civil liberties and the increasing resistance to these groups by the patrician government. The "short men" of British society are representative of the domestic culture wars beginning to heat up. "Short men" can also insinuate sexual inferiority and emasculation. Those who have the most to prove can be seen as compensating for a lack of sexual prowess and manhood. James Bond could never succumb to such notions as the arbiter of masculinity he was.

The disillusionment with the upper echelons of British society, which had by then become known as "the magic circle," would be brought down by a sex scandal that would delineate Britain of old and an emerging ideal of "Britishness."⁴³ John Profumo, the Secretary of State for War, was a politician, and "educated at Harrow and Oxford, he was a quintessential high Tory who...moved effortlessly in the highest of society."⁴⁴ In 1963, Profumo began an affair with a woman of ill repute by the name of Christine Keeler. One night at a party at the Cliveden estate, Profumo, in an effort to show off for his mistress, challenged a Russian spy named Evgeni Ivanov to a race in the pool. Ivanov coincidentally was also having an affair with Keeler. Only after Ms. Keeler's West Indian drug dealer came looking for her with a gun at a friend's house did the story spill into the tabloids.⁴⁵ The arrogance of the secretive establishment and the bravado of the young outsiders, with a dash of sex and espionage thrown in for good measure, would fascinate and abhor the British public for months. The Profumo scandal would shake British society to its core, as

the culture of sex was creeping into the public sphere, and a distrust of establishment cliques would spread like a virus, leading to a change from a Conservative to a Labour government in 1964.

To reflect the changing social mood, Fleming's later novels from 1960 on would characterize 007 as less of a nationalist rogue and more of an introspective state servant questioning the very institutions he put his life on the line for. These later novels, such as *Thunderball* and *For Your Eyes Only*, allow the common Briton to empathize in a profound way. Bond's job may be glamorous, but he is human, going through the same trials and tribulations as anyone else. He loves, loses, and feels a certain amount of ennui regarding the state of his nation when the mission is complete. As early as 1953's *Casino Royale*, Bond ponders whether "this country right-or-wrong business is getting a little out of date."⁴⁶ Bond's world-weariness only seems to get worse. By 1960's *For Your Eyes Only*, 007 exclaims that that foreign attacks against the crown must be avenged, because if foreigners "find they can get away with this kind of thing, they'll decide the English are as soft as some other people seem to think we are."⁴⁷ It is at this point in time we would begin to see a split between the literary and cinematic Bond. Whereas Fleming's 007 is skeptical of the old world, MGM/EON's Bond is wholly representative of modern times, at once sexy and confident.

III. "A nasty habit of surviving": Sean Connery and the 1960s

If the Profumo affair signified the societal shift from the conservative 1950s to the swinging 1960s, then the cinematic Bond was the embodiment of this change in the eyes of the public. Sean Connery's portrayal of James Bond's first film iteration would reflect the youth culture of sex and hedonism that stood in stark contrast to the conservative mores of the 1950s. 1963's *Dr. No*, the first MGM/EON Bond film, would move the series from the realm of literature into a vivid cinematic world that would solidify Bond as the paradigm of masculinity. Producers "Cubby" Broccoli and Harry Saltzman conducted a search with Fleming himself to "find James Bond."⁴⁸ James Mason, Cary Grant, and Rex Harrison were all initially considered for the role due their classically British, aristocratic look.⁴⁹ None of them could fill the role due to prior contractual obligations, and a virtually unknown Scotsman named Sean Connery was cast to play 007 in his first foray to the silver screen. Ian Fleming hated the choice because his idea of Bond sharply contrasted with Connery's look. Connery was powerfully built, with a fierceness and veracity that could not be conveyed on the page. He exuded a raw, animal, and marketable

sexuality that perfectly embodied the changing sexual mores and economic boom of 1960's Britain. From Connery's first appearance in 1962's *Dr. No*, the films were a commercial success with screenings around the world selling out despite receiving mixed reviews from critics and even a rebuke from the Vatican. Despite initial resistance from critics and the creator himself, Connery's Bond had become the defining symbol of the decade. The sexually charged atmosphere made Connery, and by proxy 007, a sex symbol. Fleming was expecting a more gentlemanly look for his creation. According to Ben McIntyre, the author's vision of Bond was "certainly good-looking...a bit cruel in the mouth, [*sic*] his eyes were cold," a bit like Fleming himself.⁵⁰ So strong was Connery's sexual magnetism on screen that his love interests in the films, the Bond Girls, developed a cult unto themselves. James Bond presented an ideal for how a sophisticated modern man was meant to live his life: girls, cars, and gadgets represented assertiveness and forward-thinking attitude necessary to achieve during Prime Minister Harold Wilson's "Technological Revolution." Wilson was even known to appear with Sean Connery himself at fundraisers and benefits to capitalize on Bond's image. One of the most popular elements of the films and the novels is the use of technology. Bond's gadgets, presented to him under the supervision of his quartermaster Q, present a masculine ideal of technological prowess used with "unflappable calm and technical precision."⁵¹ In the novels, Bond's use of gadgets was minimal, such as the modified attaché case in *From Russia With Love* (1957), but by the time Bond reached the big screen, gadgets became extensions of the character's being and a main way to merchandise Bond and the Bond lifestyle.⁵² The advanced weaponry and gadgets on display in the film served as a parallel to the technological advancements made as a result of a stimulated economy.

Wilson's "Technological Revolution" of his first term was "no place for restricted practices, or for outdated methods on either side of industry."⁵³ Wilson's revolution was ushered in with advancements such as the opening of the Post Office Tower and the surge in popularity of the British Motor Works' Mini in 1964. He would try to invigorate old industrial towns like Birmingham with new advancements in infrastructure as if to make the statement that Labour's appeal came as a result of progressive technological thinking. Commercialization had taken over with the opening of the Bull Ring Shopping Centre in 1962 and the "Spaghetti Junction" motorway that led to it. James Bond would become a commercial icon during this technological and economic boom. Brands like Aston Martin, Omega, and Dom Pérignon would pay thousands of dollars to be featured in the films in

some of the earliest instances of product placement. With brand recognition now firmly in place to enhance the 007 experience, the "Bond lifestyle" was now being sold to men and boys around the world.⁵⁴ To buy products associated with Bond was to live the ultimate male fantasy.

In many respects, Britain was still very much a stodgy social atmosphere by 1967. The wartime generation, hardened by battle and austerity were constantly at odds with the younger generation that was experiencing unprecedented economic freedom and social liberalism. The legalization of abortion, decriminalization of homosexuality, the easing of divorce proceedings, and access to birth control led many of the older generation to believe that Britain was becoming permissive and soft.⁵⁵ A rift was growing between old and young. Connery's Bond was very much able to represent both generations. He was at once a champion of the old guard, staunchly patriotic, emotionally cold, and battle-hardened. He was also a sexually promiscuous pleasure-seeker, a hedonist of the highest order who was able to detach the physical from the emotional. The portrayal of 007's masculinity amidst the culture war of 1967 was able to appeal to Britons of all ages.⁵⁶

British commerce and the commercialism that Bond would espouse that was the backbone of the "Technological Revolution" would come to a grinding halt in the mid-1960s, as shoddy goods built in ancient factories began to slow down a British economy reliant on American loans. Such a humiliating economic output would see the United Kingdom further removed from the world stage and strike a huge blow to the national psyche. James Bond would still live a life of excess on screen and on the page as a reaction to the lack of financial stimulation at home. Bond represented traditional masculinity in the form of finely tailored Savile Row tuxedos and exquisite taste in food, drink, and women, a far cry from the seemingly outlandish fashion trends taking hold of Britain in Swinging London. According to one featurette, "uniforms of the past were bought [at thrift shops] to affront the uniformity of the present."⁵⁷ The "dress-up" trend provided a fantasy and escape that people could buy into that looked simultaneously into the past and the future. The tuxedo at once ties Bond to the masculine, patrician roots of British establishment while serving as a costume affronting the past and embracing modernity.

IV. "That's the part I like": Roger Moore and the 1970s

With the dawn of the 1970s, Britain faced a severe economic crisis that left the national infrastructure at a standstill and national morale low. Roger Moore's portrayal of Bond served as a fantastical escape from the harsh realities of British life.

Roger Moore, “a comforting national stereotype” whose persona as an English gentleman hero helped to endear him to British audiences, took the Bond mantle from Connery in 1973.⁵⁸ Moore was noted for his suave sophistication and goofy sense of humor, a far cry from the sheer physicality of Connery’s portrayal. Moore always kept with him elegance and worldliness as well as an ironic sense of “Britishness,” the “stepping-stone to lead you into this fantasy world.”⁵⁹ The more lighthearted take on the character was a more transcendent escape for the viewing public than a reflection of the times. Moore himself said “I was having a lot of fun doing this and I hope you are enjoying watching it.”⁶⁰ From 1973 to 1985, Moore’s films would gross \$346,530,989, making Roger Moore’s run as James Bond the most financially successful in the series.⁶¹ The new 007 would put more emphasis on the spectacle than his predecessor. Over-the-top stunts, expensive special effects, and tongue-in-cheek comicality became the hallmark of Roger Moore’s seven films portraying the character. In 1973’s *Live and Let Die* Bond is associated with the tarot card demarking “The Fool,” a sly nod to the critical notion that the films were becoming increasingly comedic.⁶²

James Bond took the viewing public to fantastical and exotic locations far away from the harrowing conditions of Great Britain. The 1970s in Britain were harrowing times indeed, as violence seemed to permeate British society. 1972 alone was marked with a mine workers strike, an IRA bombing in Birmingham, and Bloody Sunday, in which 26 unarmed civil-rights protesters and bystanders were shot by British Army soldiers in Belfast.⁶³ The Yom Kippur War of 1973 coupled with the miners’ strike would jack up energy prices that would cripple British energy. Electricity was subsequently cut down, and every sector and industry in Britain was affected. Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath’s promise to the British people that “tomorrow will be better than today” was broken, as what was seen to be an industrious, progressive nation was now being lit by candles. By 1976, Labour would be back in power under James Callaghan, but without any real hope for the future. Industrial unrest remained a problem, Liverpool gravediggers went on strike, stagflation was at an all time high, and one of the coldest winters on record led to the press dubbing the winter of 1978 the “Winter of Discontent.”

As Britain became increasingly violent amidst the socio-economic turmoil, the violence in the films took an increasingly fantastical direction in part because of Moore’s easygoing style as well as the decision to serve as a cinematic escape from the problems that Britain faced during the 1970s. Roger Moore himself abhorred violence and has even stated that shooting guns was his least favorite part of being

James Bond.⁶⁴ While Connery's Bond was a fierce combatant who used hand-to-hand combat to emphasize his physicality, in 1983's *Octopussy*, Moore's Bond is seen diffusing a bomb while disguised as a clown. Another example of the increasingly fantastical direction the series was taking is where the films were shot. The beautiful set pieces were often filmed in nations below the poverty line. The poverty of real life shooting locations was neglected in order to portray the fantasy and escape of Bond's travels.⁶⁵ Rather than disarming nuclear submarines and playing high stakes card games, Bond was now confronting witch doctors in the Caribbean and fighting space battles with laser guns, all as a possible reaction to the violence and austerity at home. Mounting domestic problems would lead to futile government attempts to refute any notions of what was being dubbed in the press, "the British disease."⁶⁶ Callaghan would deny any accusations of mounting unrest in the press with the *Sun* newspaper sarcastically asking "Crisis, What Crisis?" Callaghan was not the strong, masculine leader Britain need. That leader came, ironically, in the form of a woman.

V. "More of a problem eliminator": Timothy Dalton and the 1980s

Timothy Dalton's Bond is the darkest iteration of the character: moody, pensive, and skeptical. This is a reflection of the conflicted feelings of the British public in response to the policies of Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher's popularity and importance in British culture is seen in the 1981 film *For Your Eyes Only*. This film was one of Moore's last as 007 before Timothy Dalton took up the role in 1987. By 1981, Thatcher was only two years into her tenure as Prime Minister and most of her policies had not yet come into effect. The film ends with James Bond having an affable, flirtatious conversation with a Thatcher impersonator. The exchange is brief, as 007's parrot takes over the conversation as he beds his latest conquest on a yacht. The exchange is very much in tune with the humorous nature of Roger Moore's Bond. It also serves as a meta-acknowledgement between the two defining icons of British Cold War culture. Cold War Britain was yearning for a hero. For many years, James Bond held this mantle in the eyes of the British public, but the honor was Margaret Thatcher's by the mid-1980s. Dalton was able to construct a James Bond that was emblematic of Thatcher's strong personality. Both lived for Britain, worked tirelessly to see the nation succeed and were tenacious and strong in their convictions. Bond and Thatcher also always found a way to win, narrowly escaping death and defeating their enemies in the process. "The Iron Lady" became prime minister in 1979 under her Conservative principles of small government and

greater freedom for business. To suit her role as most powerful woman in the free world, Thatcher began to take on masculine characteristics like power dressing as well as taking a deeper tone of voice and a more adversarial style at the podium.⁶⁷ When Labour opponents told her to consider a U-turn on her staunch policies, she replied “You turn if you want. The lady’s not for turning.”⁶⁸

To turn her political fortunes around, Thatcher would set her sights on some little islands 290 miles off the Argentine coast. Thatcher dispatched the British fleet in an assertion of national dominance as Argentina began to reassert their interests in the islands. From the sinking of the Belgrano warship on April 26 to the capture of the capital, Fort Stanley, on June 14, Thatcher had won back the Falklands for England. The Falklands would be Thatcher’s salvation, salvaging her political career and allowing her to reinvent herself as Britannia in the process. Like 007, she became a transcendent icon, at once cold, strong, and sexy, as a result of a victory for Britain. “She was the ultimate house wife grabbing control of the nation, sexy in a scary way. She was also seen as the only man in her cabinet, the repudiation of femininity, cold and vengeful.”⁶⁹ French President Mitterand best summed up this dichotomy by describing her as having “the eyes of Caligula and the mouth of Marilyn Monroe.”⁷⁰ The masculine ideal of British superiority James Bond had represented had finally arrived in the form of a grocer’s daughter from the Midlands.

In many ways, Margaret Thatcher was the closest a British Cold War leader came to James Bond. Thatcher became a symbol for a revitalized, reenergized Britain. Her mythic status as the embodiment of Britain itself could be rivaled only by James Bond. She was undyingly patriotic, truly believed in the British cause, and had a serious problem with Britain’s lack of influence in the world. Timothy Dalton’s Bond would feed off of the image of the Iron Lady in a much more serious and realistic feel of the Bond mythos. Dalton, a classically trained Shakespearean actor, brought gravitas and a grim sense of realism to his interpretation of the character. Gone were the corny one-liners and farfetched scenarios. His 007 was a cold calculating assassin, dark and brooding with a strong moral center and a stronger skepticism of his government. In *The Living Daylights* (1987), MI6 questions Bond’s dedication to his mission. In response he tells his superiors “Stuff my orders!”⁷¹ Dalton’s Bond would question institutions that he held dear if it interfered with his personal convictions of duty and patriotism, similar to how Thatcher would openly defy the men in her cabinet. This 007’s skepticism served as a sharp contrast to the blind patriotism that swept Britain after the Falklands War. James Bond of the 1980s would not take his place as a defender of Britain lightly, much like Margaret

Thatcher.

Just as the Bond lifestyle was sold and commercialized to a voracious public, so too was the Thatcher Revolution. Credit was deregularized for the first time in British history and borrowing became in vogue. The credit boom facilitated spending and with that spending, a lifestyle. National industries were privatized and sold off as stock. The Big Bang, as it was called in financial circles, liberated financial markets and trade exploded.⁷² Young professionals, or yuppies, would finally be able to live the lives sold to them by James Bond, and with the same swagger. Expensive, drug-fuelled lifestyles that included sports cars and new technology like mobile phones would come as a result of the influx of capital. By 1989, the end of the Cold War, James Bond and the image he purported were now one with Margaret Thatcher's Britain.

Both of Dalton's films, *The Living Daylights* and 1989's *License to Kill* portrayed drug trafficking as Bond's anathema. *License to Kill* in particular sees 007 battling Franz Sanchez, a Latin American drug kingpin who seeks to control the world's cocaine supply. The use of a Latin American villain evokes not only the national fervor surrounding the Falklands War against the other, but the influx of cocaine into Britain that became as much of a yuppie accessory as the mobile phone. Sanchez ironically kills his investment banker henchman as a symbol of drugs destroying an unstable yuppie culture.⁷³ "License to Kill" is a meta-commentary on how the masculine aura surrounding the Bond lifestyle is a consummate force, almost a drug unto itself. By the end of the Cold War, people were as addicted to James Bond as ever before.

VI. Conclusion: "James Bond Will Return"

James Bond was a hero created for the Cold War as well as Britain itself. He embodied what it meant to be British and what British society would become in all of its forms. 007 served as a mirror to the nation that he loved and protected, sometimes begrudgingly. Just like British society, Bond had his phases and was in constant flux. It is because of his flexibility and adaptability to British Cold War social movements that Bond has retained his transcendent, iconic status. Both his literary and cinematic forms helped to reflect a society that during the Cold War endured the catastrophic lows as well as some euphoric highs. As Britain saw a succession of new prime ministers, financial ups and downs and alarming social unrest, 007 was the one steadfast British constant. He performed his job with panache and flair for queen and country and gave Britain an identity during the Cold War. 007's mas-

culinity, in relation to women, gadgets, and travel has made him the timeless icon that he is. The character's ability to employ his masculinity in accordance to the British Cold War cultural shifts makes him the perfect hero for the era. In matters of national identity, nobody does it better.

Notes

Derek Del Core was a History major and Media Studies minor at the College of Charleston. Originally from New York City, Derek graduated in the spring of 2013. "What Does it Matter to Ya?: James Bond's Masculinity and Cold War Britain," was originally written as a history capstone for Professor Irina Gigova's Europe in the Cold War seminar. Derek plans to attend law school in 2014 after taking a gap year.

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3. Ian Fleming, quoted in William Boyd, "Ian Fleming," in *Bamboo: Essays and Criticism* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2007), 448. The full quotation reads, "I've always had one foot not wanting to leave the cradle, and the other in a hurry to get to the grave. It makes rather painful splits of one's life."
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38. Raymond Benson, *The James Bond Bedside Companion*, (Seattle: Publishing Online, 1988), 62.
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