

Texas A&M University-Commerce

A&M-Commerce Digital Commons

Honors Theses

Honors College

Spring 4-16-2012

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: Cold War for Kids

Kaitlyn Shaw

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.tamuc.edu/honorsthesis>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Shaw, Kaitlyn, "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: Cold War for Kids" (2012). *Honors Theses*. 73.
<https://digitalcommons.tamuc.edu/honorsthesis/73>

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at A&M-Commerce Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of A&M-Commerce Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@tamuc.edu.

Kaitlyn Shaw

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: Cold War for Kids

Phone: (903) 388-5849

Address: 1809 Monroe St. Apt. # 418, Commerce, TX 75428
P.O. Box 621, Grand Saline, TX 75140

Email: kshaw3@leo.tamu-commerce.edu

Student CWID#: 50034546

Academic Major: English

Current Overall GPA: 3.79

Classification: Senior

Expected Date of Graduation: May, 2012

Advisor and Department: Dr. Eric Gruver, History

Introduction:

Fleming's Fantasy Supports Cold War Reality

*"I don't take the movies seriously,
and anyone who does is in for a headache."*

Bette Davis¹

A myriad of media from movies and television shows to novels, comics, and the nightly news brought the Cold War right into the living rooms of the American people. Stories of covert operations and undercover agents held the attentions of not only Average Joes but Joe Kennedy's sons as well. In his biography of Robert Kennedy, Evan Thomas noted that both John F. Kennedy and his younger brother "shared a fascination with secret operations and spy stories."² Their interest was piqued as adolescents by works such as John Buchan's *The 39 Steps* and was refined as adults with the work of Ian Fleming. On March 17, 1961, *Life* magazine published a story depicting Kennedy as a "voracious" reader and listing his ten favorite books, including Fleming's *From Russia with Love*.³ The Kennedys were not simply fascinated by the character of James Bond, but with Fleming himself. The line separating fact from fiction in Fleming's life was a thin one. Although Fleming described his Bond novels as "pillow fantasies," he had a legitimate background in British intelligence serving as the personal assistant to Admiral John Godfrey, director of naval intelligence. Fleming and Kennedy met one night at a dinner party, where the president asked for Fleming's views on how to topple Fidel Castro. With "his tongue firmly in his cheek," Fleming suggested the use of ridicule to force the dictator out of office.⁴ Unbeknownst to most, the CIA was devising psychological warfare at the time in order to overthrow the Cuban Castro, with several ideas resembling Fleming's suggestions. Although

¹"Bette Davis," *The Internet Movie Database*, IMDB.com, Inc., n.d, <http://m.imdb.com/name/nm0000012/quotes>

² Evan Thomas, *Robert Kennedy: His Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2000), pg. 119

³ Hugh Sidey, "The President's Voracious Reading Habits," *Life*, March 17, 1961, pg. 59

⁴ Andrew Lycett, *Ian Fleming*, (London: Orion Publishing Group, 1995), pg. 368

this incident has often been used by historians to demonstrate how out of touch JFK was with the reality of covert operations, it can also be used to examine the ways in which America's fixation with the fantasy world of espionage was shaped in part by the work of Fleming.

According to ancient philosophers, art imitates life. Artists, writers, poets recreate their reality in murals, on canvas, in lyrics and lines. Irish writer and poet Oscar Wilde thought otherwise. He wrote in, "The Decay of Lying" that "Life imitates Art far more often than Art imitates Life."⁵ Wilde held that art sets the aesthetic principles by which people perceive life. What is found in life and nature is not what is really there, but is that which artists have taught people to find through art. People perceive life through the lens that art has provided them. The eye sees what it is trained to see. In the case of Cold War culture, both viewpoints are accurate.

The spy film genre is the perfect example of this phenomenon. The spy film hit its peak popularity in the 1960s when the Cold War had infiltrated every aspect of human life from politics to popular culture. It was a battle of ideology, image, and intelligence, and the world was swallowed up in it. Scholars divide the espionage films from this time into two distinct categories. On the one hand, the realistic spy novels of Len Deighton and John le Carré were adapted into relatively serious Cold War thrillers—including *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1965) and *The Deadly Affair* (1966)—which dealt with some of the realities of the world of international intelligence. At the same time, Fleming's novels were adapted into an increasingly fantastical series of tongue-in-cheek adventure films by producers Harry Saltzman and Albert R. Broccoli, with Sean Connery starring as Bond, James Bond. Simultaneously, Fleming's only children's work allowed Broccoli to create a new genre: Cold War movies for kids. Director Ken Hughes, writer Roald Dahl, and Broccoli used Fleming's *Chitty Chitty Bang*

⁵ Peter Raby, *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pg. 285

Bang: The Magical Car (1964) as the framework for the cinematic *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968) which combined a Cold War context with elements of espionage and adventure. Noticing Broccoli's success in packaging Cold War ideology and intrigue, Disney Studios churned out several spy flicks for kids in the years following the release of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, specifically *Escape to Witch Mountain* (1975), *The Rescuers* (1977), *Return from Witch Mountain* (1978), and *Night Crossing* (1980). Historians, political scientists, and geopolitical scholars have neglected to analyze *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and its Cold War context and messages aimed at young audiences, and this study aims to reverse this trend by examining how *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* was fashioned to fit the existing adult-oriented mold for spy films in order to bring the ideologies and elements of international geopolitics to children.

* * * * *

This study will focus on the cinematic *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* as it functions in the Cold War context as a spy thriller—a Bond flick—for kids. In order to analyze *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* it is necessary to understand first the prevailing climate of the Cold War conflict that brought about Ian Fleming's writing and, ultimately, the series of James Bond films based on Fleming's novels. Initial attempts to translate the Bond stories to the screen proved unsuccessful until Harry Saltzman, a Canadian-born film producer, bought an in option in 1960. He was unable to gain financial backing until 1961 when he joined up with American producer Albert "Cubby" Broccoli. The two set up Eon Productions and in June of 1961 convinced United Artists to provide the money needed for production. The first five films produced from 1962-1967 are the quintessential James Bond movies. These films forged the archetypal formula—guns, girls, gizmos—that producers Saltzman and Broccoli used in each subsequent film of the series. The films serve as a control group for analyzing *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* as a Cold War

spy thriller for children. A synopsis of the films will allow for an introduction to the hero and his gadgets, the villains and their lairs, and the places and play situations that have come to define the Bond series.

Dr. No (1962) was the first James Bond film to hit the screen. Directed by Terence Young, written by Richard Maibaum, and produced by Broccoli and Saltzman, the film introduced much of the perennial cast members and devices of the Bond films, most obviously Sean Connery as Bond, but also Bernard Lee as M, Lois Maxwell as Miss Money Penny, the theme tune by Monty Norman and orchestration, fusing rock and jazz, by John Barry.⁶ The film had a master villain and a striking girl, and began with two views of the British Empire—the club in Kingston that is the center of white, male society, and a night shot of imperial Westminster, Big Ben, and the Thames. These are symbols not only of Englishness, but also of the timelessness and power of a strong Britain. These preliminary British scenes provide the viewer with a clear introduction to the political situation. The director of the British Secret Service, M, calls Agent 007 in to brief him on his next mission. One of his colleagues has disappeared, and it is up to Bond to figure out why. Bond's mission takes him to the steamy island of Jamaica, where mysterious energy waves are interfering with U.S. missile launches. As he unravels the astonishing truth, 007 must fight deadly assassins, sexy femme fatales and even a poisonous tarantula. With the help of CIA agent Felix Leiter and the beautiful Honey Ryder, he searches for the headquarters of Dr. No, a fanatical scientist who is implementing an evil plan of world domination. Only James Bond, with his combination of wit, charm and skill, can confront the madman and save the human race from a horrible fate. So began the longest running film series of all-time.

⁶ Jeremy Black, *The Politics of James Bond: From Fleming's Novel to the Big Screen* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), p. 93.

Bond returned to the screen the following year with *From Russia with Love* (1963). In this installment, which used another screenplay by Richard Maibaum, the evil SPECTRE organization hatched a plan to steal a decoder, the Lektor, which would access Russian state secrets and irrevocably unbalance the world order. It was Bond's mission to seize the device and confront enemies that included Red Grant and the ruthless Rosa Klebb -- a former KGB agent with poison-tipped shoes. Even as Bond romances a stunning Soviet defector, he realizes he was being lured into a deadly trap. The formula in this film was much the same. Bond needed all of his courage, ability and cutting-edge technology to triumph over the forces that sought to destroy him. The next Bond film, *Goldfinger* (1964), brought about the focus on technology that is now known as an essential part of the Bond formula. Bond, armed with his specially equipped Aston Martin (its accessory package included built-in machine guns, a smoke screen and an ejector seat), sets off to stop the powerful tycoon Auric Goldfinger's scheme to deploy a "dirty bomb" inside Fort Knox in order to contaminate the US supply of gold. This time around, Bond faced several outrageous adversaries. First is Oddjob, the mute servant who kills at the drop of a lethal hat; next, the beautiful Jill Masterson, who gives new meaning to the phrase "golden girl"; and finally, sexy pilot Pussy Galore, whose romantic feelings for Bond complicate her involvement in Goldfinger's scheme.

Thunderball, the fourth Bond film in as many years, was released during the Christmas season of 1965. The nuclear motif continued in this film when the evil SPECTRE organization hijacked a NATO plane and seized two atomic warheads, each capable of killing millions of innocent people. As the world is held hostage by the threat of a nuclear nightmare, Bond jumps into action, racing against the clock as the trail leads him to Nassau. There he meets Emilio Largo, a high-ranking agent of SPECTRE, and the stunning Domino, with whom he shares an

irresistible attraction. The confrontation builds to an epic battle on the ocean floor, as Bond and his allies fight to avert a catastrophe of immense proportions. The fifth Bond film, *You Only Live Twice* (1967), commented on the Cold War conflict between the United States and USSR directly, rather than under the surface. The plot, written by the successful writer of children's stories, Roald Dahl, revolved around Ernst Blofeld's attempt to cause a nuclear war between the United States and the USSR by intercepting space missions with a rocket from his secret Japanese base. In actuality, the super-powers had lessened their animosity with the hot-line agreement of April 1963 and the Partial Test Ban Treaty signed in August of 1963 that banned nuclear testing in the atmosphere, outer space, and underwater.⁷ Credibly, the notion of a full-fledged hot war drew on the idea that a third party would cause it. It is this film that truly captured the tension present in a world where the "assured destruction" of a nuclear attack is very real.

⁷ Black, *Politics of Bond*, p. 123.

Setting the Stage:

World War II Allies to Cold War Adversaries

“History is moving pretty quickly these days and the heroes and the villains keep on changing parts.”

*James Bond in Casino Royale*⁸

Any Cold War history must begin with an analysis of World War II. The unnatural disaster of 1935-1945 was, as historian Thomas G. Patterson noted:

[S]o wrenching, so total, so profound, that a world was overturned. Not simply a human world..., not simply a secure world..., not simply a military world..., but all that and more. It unhinged the world of stable politics, inherited wisdom, traditions, institutions, alliances, loyalties, commerce and classes.⁹

The war’s destruction created a perfect storm, with conditions that made superpower conflict likely, if not inevitable. The aftershocks of the Second World War occupied the major world powers on political, economic, social, and cultural fronts for almost forty years.

It was with rather different visions of the future that the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union approached a World War II settlement. A certain sense of distrust accompanied every conciliatory action in the months following the war’s close. There was tension in reference to the “spheres of influence” the war created. The Baltic States, eastern Poland, parts of Finland and Romania had fallen under Soviet control, and Josef Stalin, the Soviet Union’s General Secretary of the Communist Party, equated his occupation of Eastern

⁸ Ian Fleming, *Casino Royale* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1954), pg. 133.

⁹ Thomas G. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making and Unmaking of the Cold War* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1992), pg. 15.

Europe to the amount of Soviet lives lost in the effort to keep the Nazis at bay. In his most recent history of the Cold War, John Lewis Gaddis observed that the Americans embraced Stalin's own equation of blood with influence in the Pacific Theater, occupying Japan and other former Japanese territories.¹⁰ Stalin and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed that the British would handle things in Greece, which angered the Americans. Each party was little prepared or motivated to extend trust to the other. Each had fears of a separate peace being made between two of the three members of the Grand Alliance, leaving someone out.

Meanwhile, the invention and use of the atomic bomb intensified Soviet-American distrust. Simon Sebag Montefiore related Stalin's reaction to the American bomb in his mammoth account of Stalin's political and personal dealings, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*. "Hiroshima has shaken the whole world," Stalin told his scientists, as he sanctioned a crash Soviet program to catch up. "The balance has been destroyed . . . That cannot be."¹¹ On August 29, 1949, the Soviet Union balanced the scale. The prospect of the utter annihilation of the human race through a full-fledged "hot war" involving atomic weaponry was enough to keep both parties tentative and nervous in their dealings with each other. Merely the idea of the repercussions kept both the United States and the Soviet Union in an elaborate dance, both desperate not to step on the other's toes. Stalin intriguingly observed upon the creation of a Soviet bomb, "If war broke out, the use of A-bombs would depend on Truman's...being in power. The people won't allow such people to be in power. Atomic weapons can hardly be used without spelling the end of the world."¹²

In Washington, a search for explanations of Soviet behavior was underway: why had the Grand Alliance broken apart? What else did Stalin want? The best answer came from George F.

¹⁰ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Group, 2005), p. 25

¹¹ Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (New York: Knopf, 2004), p. 502

¹² Montefiore, *Stalin*, p. 601

Kennan, a respected but still junior Foreign Service officer stationed in the American embassy in Moscow.¹³ Kennan responded to the most recent in a series of State Department queries with a hastily composed 8,000-word cable, dispatched on February 22, 1946.¹⁴ To say that Kennan's words made an impact in Washington would be the understatement of the century: Kennan's "long telegram" became the basis for United States strategy toward the Soviet Union for the remainder of the Cold War, a mere four decades. Moscow's actions, Kennan insisted, stemmed from nothing the West had done; instead, it reflected the internal requirements of the Stalinist regime. There was nothing in the foreseeable future that the West could do to alter its course. Soviet leaders *had* to treat the outside world as hostile and dangerous in order to provide the only excuse "for the dictatorship without which they did not know how to rule, for cruelties they did not dare not to inflict, for sacrifices they felt bound to demand." There would be no change in Soviet conduct until it experienced a sufficiently long strip of failures to convince some future Kremlin leader that his nation's strategy was not advancing its best interests. War would not be necessary to produce such a result. What would be needed, as Kennan put it in a published version of his argument the next year, was "long-term, patient but firm and vigilant *containment* of Russian expansive tendencies."¹⁵

Had Stalin been as attentive to intelligence reports on the foreign ministers' conference in 1947 as he was to those on the atomic bomb and Kennan's "long telegram," he might have anticipated what happened next. Truman's recently appointed secretary of state, George C. Marshall, and his French and British counterparts spent long hours discussing the need for cooperation in the rebuilding of Europe. Truman had already announced, on March 12, 1947, a

¹³ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 29

¹⁴ Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, pp.292-295

¹⁵ Kennan to State Department, February 22, 1946, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1946*, VI, 699-700; "X" [George F. Kennan], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, 25 (July, 1947), 575, emphasis added.

program of assistance to Greece and Turkey, insisting that it now “must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. . . [W]e must assist free peoples to work out their destinies in their own way.”¹⁶ Following Truman’s Doctrine, Marshall created a Cold War strategy. Kennan had identified the problem: the Soviet Union’s internally driven hostility toward the outside world. The “long telegram,” however, offered no solution. Marshall employed Kennan to come up with one. The European Recovery Plan, which came to be known as “The Marshall Plan,” committed the United States to nothing less than the reconstruction of Europe.¹⁷ American economic assistance produced immediate psychological benefits and later material ones that would prevent starving Europeans from electing communists into office.

A coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948 convinced the Congress of the United States—which had not yet approved Truman’s program for European recovery—to do so quickly. The events leading up to this had convinced the European recipients of American economic assistance that they needed military protection as well, which led them to request the formation of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization, committing the United States to the peacetime defense of Western Europe. This was the beginning of the tumultuous period of 1949 and 1950. These years saw a series of setbacks for the West. To those who lived through these events, it looked as though the European victories the West had won had been outweighed by an unexpected expansion of the Cold War, almost simultaneously, onto several broader fronts—in none of which the prospects seemed promising.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1947* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 178-79.

¹⁷ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 31

¹⁸ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 35

The first of these lay within the world of military technology. The Americans had expected their monopoly over atomic warfare to last for at least another six years. Under this premise, the United States could safely focus on European economic reconstruction. The atomic bomb would deter the Russians while the Americans revived the Europeans. But on August 29, 1949, the Soviet Union got its own bomb. Surprised that it had happened so soon but fearing leaks if he tried to suppress the evidence, Truman himself revealed the existence of the first Soviet atomic test on September 23rd. The results, for the Americans, were disheartening. Without an atomic monopoly, they would have to consider upgrading their forces to maintain a qualitative and quantitative lead over the U.S.S.R.

Adding insult to injury, a second but simultaneous expansion of the Cold War occurred in East Asia, where on October 1, 1949—a week after Truman’s revelation of the Soviet bomb—a victorious Mao Zedong declared the formation of the People’s Republic of China. This surprised both Truman and Stalin. Neither had anticipated the possibility that, within four years of Japan’s surrender, the nationalists would be running to the island of Taiwan, and the communists would be preparing to govern the most populous nation in the world.¹⁹ The new Chinese leader was a dedicated Marxist-Leninist who was more than ready to defer to Stalin as the head of the international communist movement. The new China, Mao proclaimed in June 1949, must ally “with the Soviet Union, ... and with the proletariat and broad masses in other countries, and form an international united front ... We must lean to one side.”²⁰ The “lean to one side” announcement, coupled with the signing of a Sino-Soviet Treaty in February 1950, fed the fears within the United States that international communism really was a monolithic movement directed from Moscow. Fears of double-dealing on both sides of the Atlantic surfaced. Senator

¹⁹ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 37

²⁰ Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 50.

Joseph McCarthy, a Wisconsin Republican, began raising the question of how the Soviet Union could have gotten the atomic bomb so quickly at a time when communists were equally quickly taking over China. It was “not because the enemy has sent men to invade our shores, but rather because of the traitorous actions of those ... who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest nation on Earth has to offer... the finest jobs in Government [that] we can give.”²¹ The public mind remained occupied with espionage, and with good reason. The Churchill government (1951-1955) faced the high profile spy scandals involved Cambridge-educated (as was the fictional Bond) agents Kim Philby, Donald McLean, and Guy Burgess and their defection to the Soviet Union. On the other side of the Atlantic, American political figures such as McCarthy were preoccupied with the threat posed by communism to domestic life and phrases such as “Reds under the bed” captured a real sense of fear and paranoia on Capitol Hill. Within the halls of the US Government, there *were* communists or communist sympathizers. The Alger Hiss case, of a former mid-level State Department official who evidently did spy for the Soviet Union and was convicted of perjury in a closely-watched 1948 trial, was the most significant.

The Allies’ victory in World War II brought no sense of security to the victors. None of the members of the Grand Alliance could regard the losses and expenditures in defeating Japan and Germany as having brought them closer to safety and security. The former “Big Three,” the joint victors of World War II were, by the end of 1950, Cold War adversaries. A contest that began over the fate of postwar Europe had spread to Asia. Stalin’s dictatorship remained as harsh as ever, and, with the inception of McCarthyism in the United States and the undeniable evidence that espionage had taken place on both sides of the pond, it was not decidedly clear that

²¹ David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: Free Press, 1983), pp.108-9.

the Western democratic capitalists themselves could maintain the respect for civil liberties that distinguished them from the dictators, whatever the variety.²²

For nearly forty years, the Cold War occupied the major world powers on several distinct, yet often interrelated fronts. The political, ideological, economic, and social struggles between the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, the United States, and Great Britain influenced developments of American and British popular culture. Film writers, directors, and producers of this period were significantly affected by the international political conditions of the Cold War.²³ Ian Fleming was among these. His series of James Bond novels produced between 1954 and 1965 provided an interesting study of the degree to which the geopolitical events and atmosphere of the Cold War and the corresponding popular culture were interconnected. Further yet, are the movies based on Fleming's work.

If the World Wars defined the first half of the twentieth century, the sixties defined the second half, providing the pivot on which modern times have turned. From popular music to individual liberties, the tastes and convictions of the Western world are permanently stamped with the impact of that tumultuous decade. Historian Arthur Marwick provided a definitive look at this momentous time in *The Sixties*. Framing the sixties as a period stretching from 1958 to 1974, Marwick argued that this long decade ushered in nothing less than a cultural revolution--one that raged most clearly in the United States, Britain, France, and Italy. Marwick identified several defining characteristics of the time, most notably: the growth of sub-cultures and movements, individualism, youth, technology, international cultural exchange, consumer culture, civil rights, and permissiveness.²⁴ The earliest Bond films such as *Dr. No* and *From Russia with*

²² Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 46

²³ Jason Mulvihill, "James Bond's Cold War," *International Journal of Instructional Media* 28, No.3 (2001), p. 1

²⁴ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Transformation in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c. 1958 - c. 1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Love helped define the spirit of the Cold War era by asserting the power of the individual to make a difference in a world made extreme by nuclear weapons and global tension. According to Jeremy Black, a professor of history at the University of Exeter, James Bond reaffirmed the power of the individual. His capacity to thwart the most dastardly schemes of the enemy emphasized the ability of the individual to affect, indeed effect, a solution in the world of superpower politics. Bond may have been a product of the Cold War, but the Cold War of the films was far from straightforward. Black wrote that the films “drew on current fears, but did so in offering a form of escapism...that assured the public that their future was in good, gentlemanly hands, and that good (us) would always win in the end.”²⁵ Black contended that the Bond films provide an array of evil geniuses with which America has had to deal, but luckily, always able to call upon brave Britain to stand by its side. In a way, “the James Bond of film is like Churchill—brave, bold, and utterly appealing. But what Churchill was to reality, Bond has been to a kind of Batmanesque comic book fantasy come to the screen—only in Bond the comic book stage has been skipped.”²⁶ Villainy, Black wrote, often has to be represented visually on the screen. Such images must be obviously sinister in order to clearly convey a threatening other. The Bond films often accomplish this with the color black—helicopter pilots with dark glasses and black clothes, motorcyclists in black clothes and helmets, the black clothes of Largo’s men in *Thunderball*. Dr. No, the first villain Bond faced on screen, was based on many past screen villains and set a pattern for future ones, each determined to mold the world to their wishes.

Alan Bullock wrote that “narcissism, paranoia, and absolute power came together in Stalin: he was, within the Soviet Union and the international communist movement, enormously

²⁵ Black, *Politics of Bond*, p. x.

²⁶ Jeremy Black, “‘Oh, James’ 007 as International Man of History,” *The National Interest*, No. 70 (2002), p. 109.

feared—but also widely worshipped.”²⁷ This “evil genius” character resurfaces again and again in the Bond stories, which is mildly ironic considering Stalin’s tastes. “The greatest genius of mankind” was in fact addicted to ill-formed pontifications on genetics, economics, philosophy, and linguistics, to long, drunken dinners with terrified subordinates, and—oddly—to American movies.²⁸

The intrigue of espionage and the spy story were highly entertaining and irresistible and relevant. “That a British author of fiction in the 1950s and Hollywood script writers in the 1960s and 1970s identified themes that resonate so well—across not only four decades of movies but also across cultures...”²⁹ elevates the Bond films from mere escapist adventures to something much more global. As Cawelti and Rosenberg wrote in *Spy Story*, “The conflict is melodramatic and Manichean. Bond...represent[s] goodness without ambiguity, and they face a series of supremely sinister, evil, and grotesque villains, whose unbridled lusts and cruelty drive them towards world domination.”³⁰ International relations (IR) scholar Cynthia Weber noted that analyzing visual culture through popular films allows us to consider connections between IR theory and our everyday lives. According to Weber, “using popular films in this way helps us get a sense of the everyday connections between the ‘popular’ and the ‘political.’”³¹

Political geographers such as John Agnew, Joanne Sharp, Gerard Toal, and Simon Dalby helped to expand the intellectual field of geopolitics by reminding readers that the practices and representations of global political space do not reside exclusively in politically elite cultures. In other words, ideas and images associated with world politics “leak” into popular culture and may either reinforce and/or contest dominant political understandings such as the depiction of the

²⁷ Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (New York: Knopf, 1992), p. 464.

²⁸ Montefiore, *Stalin*, p. 614.

²⁹ David C. Earnest and James N. Rosenau, “The Spy Who Loved Globalization” *Foreign Policy* 120 (2000), p. 90.

³⁰ J. Cawelti and B. Rosenberg, *The Spy Story* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 128.

³¹ Cynthia Weber, *International Relations Theory* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 9.

Soviet Union as a threatening other in Cold War America.³² The contrast created between “good”—the United States and Britain—and “evil”—the Soviet Union—is stark. While Bond has never killed in cold blood, “the foreign villains he faces, both men and women, have no such scruples and even take a perverse delight in torturing and killing their enemies as well as women and helpless bystanders.”³³

The James Bond adventures were always sensitive and sensitized by the prevailing Cold War conflict. This is understandable given what historian Tony Shaw wrote on the matter: “virtually everything, from sport to ballet to comic books and space travel, assumed political significance and hence potentially deployed as a weapon both to shape opinion at home and to subvert societies abroad.”³⁴ This idea is carried further by Stephen Whitfield in his account of how the Cold War both produced and was sustained by super-patriotism, intolerance, and suspicion, and how these pathologies infected all aspects of American life in the 1950s. Whitfield cited Frances Fitzgerald’s *America Revised* in order to analyze how images of the American past have been conveyed and rearranged in the texts assigned in public schools. This is a matter of importance, Whitfield wrote, because the only version of the past that most citizens will ever know is what they picked up from the textbooks of their childhood, fixed at one impressionable moment.³⁵ The state of Texas required a loyalty oath from all writers of texts aimed at the school age, and then passed a resolution advising that: “The American history courses in the public schools emphasize in the textbooks that our glowing and throbbing history

³² Klaus Dodds, “Screening Geopolitics: James Bond and the Early Cold War Films (1962-1967),” *Geopolitics* 10 (2005): p. 267.

³³ Robbie B.H. Goh, “Peter O’Donnell, Race Relations and National Identity: The Dynamics of Representation in 1960s and 1970s Britain,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 32.4 (1999), p. 30.

³⁴ Tony Shaw, “The Politics of Cold War Culture,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3 (2001) p. 59.

³⁵ Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 56.

of hearts and souls inspired by wonderful American principles and traditions.”³⁶ The Texas House of Representatives hoped to counter what the Communists had supposedly monopolized: “propaganda.” As a result, foreign relations described in the texts that remained bore little resemblance to the views widely held outside the United States. According to Whitfield, the texts always depicted American foreign policy as motivated by philanthropy and disinterested good will in dealing with other peoples. Whitfield wrote cheekily that: “Unique in its altruism, the United States waged war against disease, poverty, and ignorance...The United States in the twentieth century helped save other continents from the scourges of Fascism, Communism, and militarism.”³⁷ American schoolchildren found themselves instructed to defend against and train themselves to recognize, ironically, propaganda. Public school textbooks were just one of many mediums that promoted the United States as a global force for good. Historians and scholars were urged to join in the fight against international Communism. They were, after all, fighting an enemy whose value system was deliberate in its simplicity in order to achieve swift decisions. It became the goal of legislators, film producers, and writers to reduce “Americanism” to its simplest terms, so simple that a child could understand readily that Americans and their friends have always fought for good, not evil.

³⁶ House Textbook Investigating Committee, “Report to Speaker Byron Tunnell and members of the Texas House of Representatives of the 58th Legislature” (1961) 57th R.S.

³⁷ Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, pg. 57.

II

Chitty Chitty, Bang Bang:

The Cold War for Kids

*“We learn how to kiss or drink, talk to our buddies—
all the things that you can’t really teach in social
studies or history—we all learn them at the movies.”*

*Jack Nicholson*³⁸

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: The Magical Car has the distinction of being Ian Fleming’s only children’s novel. The filmic *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* has the distinction of being the only non-James-Bond film produced by Albert R. Broccoli after the Bond series began. The film also holds the distinction of being the least analyzed of films based on Fleming’s work in the world of academics. Billed by actor Dick Van Dyke as the film that would out-Disney Disney, the film struggled to live up to expectations in the box office. Since its release during the Christmas season of 1968, the film has been written off as little more than something the kids can watch, something with very little substance. The original *Time* magazine review of the film described *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* as a picture for the ages—the ages between five and twelve. “After that, interest is bound to slacken into hostility or slumber,” the anonymous reviewer wrote. “The movie...is a story with enough saccharine to sweeten the Sargasso Sea.”³⁹ This reviewer set the snarky tone for future writing on the subject, of which there is very little. The dismissal of the film by viewers and reviewers alike is rather disappointing considering the context from which it stems. *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* can be read as a James Bond film for the younger set, a Cold War thriller for kids. In making this comparison, we must begin with the storytellers.

³⁸ Jack Nicholson, *LA Times* (2003), in Peter Archer, *The Quotable Intellectual* (Avon: Adams Media, 2010) pg. 25

³⁹ “Chug-Chug, Mug-Mug,” *Time* 92, No. 26 (December 27, 1968), pg. 60

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang began as a story Fleming told his son, Caspar, at bedtime. One of Fleming's friends suggested he write down these stories. Originally published in 1964 in three volumes, Fleming's love of cars, villains and good-triumphing-over-evil asserted itself in the story of a car that looks after and rescues the Pott family, and of course gets them out of trouble by being able to float and fly.⁴⁰ The publication of his children's book earned Fleming's membership into an elite group: authors whose works cross the boundaries of age, whose themes apply to children and adults alike. In 1968, Chitty's story took on a new life on the big screen. The story was adapted to fit the screen and, more importantly, to fit the pre-existing mold for Cold War thrillers created by the Bond films. Albert R. Broccoli enlisted the help of director Ken Hughes and writer Roald Dahl in order to transform the novel into the ultimate spy flick for kids. It became a spy story masquerading as an adventure movie for children. Hughes was an interesting choice considering his recent work; he was one of very few people to work with Broccoli after working on a "renegade" James Bond film (*Casino Royale* 1967). With few exceptions, anyone involved in such productions was spurned by Eon Productions. Whatever his previous "wrongs," Hughes brought a true sense of lightheartedness, humor, and imagination to the work. According to that original reviewer, "most of the film's sporadic success is due to Director Ken Hughes's fantasy scenes, which make up in imagination what they lack in technical facility."⁴¹

Dahl brought his own sense of humor and imagination to the film version of Fleming's story. Dahl, best known for writing children's classics such as *James and the Giant Peach* (1961) and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), penned the original screenplay, at a fee of

⁴⁰ "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: The Book and Its Origins" *Ian Fleming-The Official Website*, Ian Fleming Publications, 2009, www.ianfleming.com

⁴¹ Chug-Chug, Mug-Mug, par. 5

\$125,000, and altered the story to fit Broccoli's spy film mold and his own storytelling style.

Dahl seemed an obvious choice; he was the grand master of his craft. He knew how to shock, he knew how to scare, and he knew how to keep children on the edge of their seats with excitement.

He knew how to make them smile and how to make them roar with laughter.⁴² According to

Dahl, "It's tougher to keep a child interested because a child doesn't have the concentration of an adult. It's tough to hold a child, but it's a lovely thing to try to do."⁴³ Many people have

attempted to account for the astonishing success of Roald Dahl's writing for children. Danny

Devito—who directed, produced, and starred in the movie version of *Matilda*—said that "Dahl will lead a child out onto a windy limb and then suddenly he'll place a ladder underneath and the child will be able to get safely to the ground."⁴⁴ But Dahl's empathy with children goes further

than that. As David Gritten noted in *Sainsbury's the Magazine*, "Dahl books, strong on plot and instilled with a tremendous sense of mischief, insist on seeing the world through children's eyes, and often portray adults as silly, uncomprehending, or insensitive; no wonder kids love them."⁴⁵

It seems this was something Dahl was set upon doing; he continued this in *Chitty Chitty Bang*

Bang. He once declared that, "If you want to remember what it's like to live in a child's world, you've got to get down on your hands and knees and live like that for a week. You'll find that

you have to look up at all these giants around you who are always telling you what to do and

what not to do."⁴⁶ This explains the frame narrative found in Dahl's version. Through the use of

a dream sequence, the viewer is transported into the story and views the events through the eyes

⁴² Donald Sturrock, *Storyteller: The Authorized Biography of Roald Dahl* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), pp. 546-547.

⁴³ "The World's Favourite Children's Author," *Roald Dahl-The Official Website*, Roald Dahl Nominee Limited, n.d., www.roalddahl.com

⁴⁴ Victoria McKee, "Macabre, dry, mad about reading. Like Roald Dahl really, says the late author's wife," *The Independent*, December 19, 1996, pg. 6

⁴⁵ David Gritten, *Sainsbury's Magazine*, qtd. in "World's Favourite"

⁴⁶ "Roald Dahl, the Man," *Roald Dahl-The Official Website*, Roald Dahl Nominee Limited, n.d., www.roalddahl.com

of a child. Dahl seemed an obvious choice for another reason: he and Fleming had known each other well. Both men had worked in espionage together for William Stephenson during the war, and Dahl described Fleming as one of the few writers worth meeting, a “sparky, witty, caustic companion, full of jokes and also full of obscure bits of knowledge.”⁴⁷ According to Dahl’s biographer, Dahl was less than impressed by Fleming’s writing skills.⁴⁸ Dahl had two opportunities to adjust Fleming’s works to his own preference in both *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and the Bond film *You Only Live Twice* (1967). Neither of these films followed Fleming’s original storyline; instead, they were adjusted by Dahl to tell a deeper story than a mere escapist fantasy. Dahl quickly fell out with the director, Hughes, who was used to writing his own movies. Hughes claimed later that he had written every word of the final script on his own typewriter.⁴⁹ He was almost certainly exaggerating. It is hard to believe, for example, that Dahl was not directly responsible for devising the new characters and plot twists—the kingdom of Vulgaria, the lovely Truly Scrumptious, or the “toot sweets” which accidentally summon all the dogs in the neighborhood to the candy factory. Dahl’s biggest fingerprint is left on the “Child Catcher.” The sinister Child Catcher is utterly Dahl-ian. The monstrous man toes the line between the comic and the creepy, luring children into cages baited with candy, sniffing them out with his super-sensitive nose which is oversized to the point of deformity. Dahl altered the Pott family as well, adding an “s” and subtracting a mother. Dahl took the original Commander Caractacus Potts and transformed him into the quirky Mr. Potts, an inventor whose attempts at inventing and parenting are not always successful. Dahl’s version of Mr. Potts fits in perfectly with his description of everything that excites children about a story. This description appears in

⁴⁷ Roald Dahl, Speech given at Chesham High School, January 13, 1978, Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre RD 6/1/15.

⁴⁸ Barry Farrell, *Pat and Roald* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), p. 152.

⁴⁹ Ken Hughes quoted in Jeremy Treglown’s *Roald Dahl* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994) pp. 183-84.

an article that reads almost as a manifesto for his craft: “What...do they love? They love a hero, new inventions, unorthodox methods, eccentricity, [and] secret information. The list is long.”⁵⁰

Caractacus Potts is the first in a cast of characters out of the history books. Caractacus shares his first name with the last independent ruler of Southern England before the Roman conquest. Interestingly, the story itself is set just at the end of Britain’s imperial century, before World War I. The British Empire was still without rival, other than Russia in central Asia, and served as the global policeman, much like the United States of the latter 20th century. At the time Fleming began publishing his stories, the British Conservatives were returning to power. Through Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan and Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the Conservatives promoted relatively liberal trade regulations and less state involvement throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. They oversaw a period of economic prosperity, with Macmillan proclaiming during the 1959 General Election that Britain had “never had it so good.”⁵¹ This economic and political climate enabled Fleming to be “more frankly Churchillian and pro-imperial” than would have been possible in the previous years of postwar seriousness.⁵² In other words, Fleming was able to emphasize luxury and style without having a bad conscious. In this film, Potts symbolizes England in the imperial sense, just as Agent 007 represents Great Britain in the Bond films. Potts is cut from the same cloth as Bond, a “mixture of Cold War warrior and a medieval knight rescuing maidens from modern dragons” or, in Potts’ case, rescuing children from the likes of Baron Bomburst of Vulgaria and his persnickety wife.⁵³ But Potts is not a mere Bond knock-off, he is a composite. Beyond the obvious charm of Bond, elements of Q’s

⁵⁰ Roald Dahl, *A Note on Writing Books for Children* (sent to *The Writer*, Boston, Oct. 4, 1975), Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre RD 6/2/1/41.

⁵¹ Harold Macmillan, Speech in Bedford (Jul. 20, 1957), *BBC News* 20 July 1974.

⁵² Christopher Hitchens, “Bottoms Up,” *Atlantic Monthly* 297.3 (2006), pg. 101.

⁵³ Black, *Politics*, p. x.

trademark knack for gadgets and M's father-figure can be seen in the peculiar Mr. Potts. He sweeps ladies off their feet and saves a country full of children, all while tinkering with his inventions, making cars fly, and raising his own children without a mother. Fleming's heroes are always more than they appear to be. Like 007, Potts calls to mind a version of that favorite action movie archetype: the underestimated man. As Michael Dirda pointed out in his analysis of James Bond as an archetype:

Sooner or later, the long suffering rancher, mocked and abused by the bad guys, will wearily strap on his six-guns—and reveal a lightning draw and a deadly aim. That mild-mannered reporter is really Superman. To the astonishment and sorrow of Penelope's suitors, the beggar in rags strings the bow and notches his first arrow—the remorseless Odysseus returned home at last.⁵⁴

In this same vein, Potts is an unlikely hero. He lacks Bond's heartless, cold approach to his missions and suave, debonair approach to women, even if he is charming. Where Bond is smooth, Potts is a klutz. Where Bond is intimidating, Potts is likable. What he lacks in sly skill, he makes up for in ingenuity, humor, and charisma. These qualities are brought to life by Dick Van Dyke, a natural choice for producers looking to cast a leading man in a children's fantasy. He had such marked success in the big budget Disney musical, *Mary Poppins* (1964), it was assumed that his brand of slap-stick humor, awkward dancing, and lovable nature would bring about the same success for this big budget musical.

If Potts is Bond, then Truly Scrumptious is obviously the Bond girl. As the Potts children, Jemimah and Jeremy, tell her, even if we did not know her name, we could have

⁵⁴ Michael Dirda, "James Bond as Archetype (and Incredibly Cool Dude)," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2008), pp. B20-B21.

guessed it. It had to be something lovely. The names Fleming gives his leading ladies—Vesper Lynd, Solitaire, Tiffany Case, Pussy Galore—are typically a point of humor and innuendo. When we first see her drive up in her motorcar, license plate “CUB 1,” Truly is dressed all in white. So is the first of Bond’s ladies, Honeychild Ryder when we first see her in *Dr. No*. Truly is also a Bond girl in another matter besides the visual. Her actions and attitude set her apart as a protagonist, one of Fleming’s sidekicks with sass, even if she was written in by Dahl. Like Potts, Truly is a composite character. She is a mixture of Dahl’s Miss Honey from *Matilda* and Fleming’s Bond girls and Miss Money Penny. Money Penny is important in the mix of Bond’s girls. She is not only attractive; she is loyal, clever, and intelligent, qualities other Bond girls lack. Miss Money Penny is the personal assistant/secretary of “M”, the head of British Intelligence/MI-6. She has a crush on Bond, and, on occasion, she helps him hide his love affairs with other women. In return, Bond flirts with her whenever he visits M’s office. Her fictional character was inspired by Vera Atkins, who worked as a secretary attached to the French section of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during WWII; her superior was legendary spy master Maurice Buckman who later became Ian Fleming’s model for the “M” character.⁵⁵ Truly is truly a combination of all of these girls. She is rather independent and refuses the gentleman’s attentions and aid initially, as Bond girls are like to do. Eventually, she comes to her senses, of course, falling victim to the charms of the hero. Still, she is able to contribute to the mission individually.

But Fleming’s Bond girls are not always fighting for good alongside Agent 007. In actuality, viewers are presented with two very different varieties of female characters. The first type is the Bond girl; the name is descriptive enough: she is Bond’s girl. Some girls are major

⁵⁵ “Biography for Miss Money Penny,” *The Internet Movie Database*, IMDB.com, Inc., 2011, www.imdb.com/character/ch0000343/bio.

characters and indispensable to the mission's success. Others are expendable, merely for looks or loving like the beautiful Patricia in *Thunderball*. We barely learn her name before her white nurse's smock is slipping to the floor at the hands of Bond. Other minor Bond girls end up dead, like Jill Masterson in *Goldfinger*. Some Bond girls are clever while others are vapid; they are all beautiful. Although they may rebuff Bond's affections at first, these girls are in Bond's arms as the final credits roll. Truly Scrumptious fits into this group of "good girls." Bond, however, does not limit his attentions to this type of girl. He is known for jumping into bed with just about any woman, including those who want him dead. In each of the first five films, Bond knowingly or unknowingly sleeps with the enemy. Miss Taro (*Dr. No*) attempts to set up Bond's assassination, but ends up in jail. Tatiana Romanova (*From Russia with Love*) thinks she is setting up Bond for mother-Russia, and Pussy Galore (*Goldfinger*) could care less if Bond dies. Fiona Volpe (*Thunderball*) enjoys making love and then killing her partner; she is the first black widow of the series. In *You Only Live Twice*, Helga Brandt is similar to Fiona, but she meets her demise at the hands of Blofeld.

Another parallel between the Bond characters and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*'s lies in Baron Bomburst. The visual is obvious. Bomburst and Bond adversary Auric Goldfinger are played by the same actor—Gert Fröbe. For the viewer the connection between the two occurs automatically and, often, subconsciously. The visceral synonymy here takes very little effort on the part of the filmmakers. As Fröbe said himself, "The ridiculous thing is that since I played "Goldfinger"...there are some people who insist on seeing me as a cold, ruthless villain—a man without laughs."⁵⁶ In the land of Vulgaria, where children are imprisoned and happiness is a crime, Fröbe fits in seamlessly. Bomburst fits the mold of previous Bond villains and evil

⁵⁶ "Gert Fröbe Biography," *The Internet Movie Database*, IMDB.com, Inc., n.d, www.imdb.com/name/nm0002085.

geniuses. In his extensive work on the geopolitics of Cold War film, Klaus Dodds pointed out that the adversaries are never described as “white” or “Anglo Saxon,” instead, the descriptions “hark back to monsters such as the Transylvanian Count Dracula and the evil Chinese doctor, Fu Manchu, which filled the pages of Victorian novels.”⁵⁷ Auric Goldfinger was described as Central European and Jewish, Blofeld was a Greek-Polish engineer, and Dr. No was a Chinese-German scientist. The Bond formula utilizes assumptions about origin and appearance to convey evilness in characters. It is no different with Bomburst. In fact, the assumptions about his appearance have already been made for the viewer, simply in casting Fröbe. Bomburst is a ginger, unattractive, red-faced, and overweight. Like Dr. No’s grotesque metal hands and Blofeld’s scarred countenance, Bomburst’s appearance reinforces the dichotomy between good and evil, east and west. The disfigurement does not end with the physical. The Baron is mentally disfigured as well. There is a major disconnect between his physical presence and his mental capacity. He is a large man, but behaves like a child. He is obsessed with toys and speaks in a manner that is childlike, hardly the appropriate behavior for the ruler of a country. The Baron and Baroness look overdressed and sound childlike in comparison to the effortlessly lovely Miss Scrumptious and the clean cut and clever Mr. Potts. Bomburst’s wife also has a Bond connection. Anna Quayle appeared in Ken Hughes’ Bond spoof, *Casino Royale*, the year before *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* hit the screen.

In the Bond films, the megalomaniac mastermind—and in this case, his wife—always comes up with the perfect plan, carefully worked out to the last detail. The evil genius also possesses expert evil henchmen, an extravagant lair, and seemingly infinite resources. The countdown has started, nothing can go wrong. World domination is just within his grasp, when

⁵⁷ Dodds, “Screening Geopolitics,” pg. 282.

that pesky and persistent British agent pops up again to cause a bit of a bother.⁵⁸ Bond is a mere distraction from the imminent doom of a civilization. Such is the case with the Baron. He has the Child Catcher gathering children and throwing them in dungeons left and right. He has his beautiful, but persnickety wife. He has his castle, and soon he will have the fantastic Chitty Chitty Bang Bang in his possession. A common motif from the Bond films is at work here: the theft of technology. This motif has been spoofed on many occasions, most notably by Mike Meyers in the Austin Powers series. The fear of technology theft in Cold War culture was not an unfounded one. The constant question, on both sides of the conflict, was: how do we keep up? This was a major concern in the areas of the space race, nuclear technology, and education. The Eon Productions team took advantage of this fear, turning it into a major aspect of the spy thrillers they produced. In *Thunderball*, Bond heads to the Bahamas to recover two nuclear warheads stolen by SPECTRE agent Emilio Largo in an international extortion scheme. Auric Goldfinger plots to raid Fort Knox and obliterate the world economy. A series of space-jackings take place in *You Only Live Twice*, and Bond is on the search for a Russian decoding machine, Lektor, that has been stolen by SPECTRE. There is one small problem with Bomburst's plan: he has not captured the inventor of the magical car. He has captured Grandpa Potts instead. Caractacus and his sidekick, Truly, outwit the opposition saving the nation's children and Grandpa. This is the way it must end, of course, with good triumphing over evil. The family befriends a toymaker who agrees to hide the children while Truly and Potts attempt to rescue Grandpa. Enter the Child Catcher, who lures the children with lollipops and takes them away to the dungeon. Potts and the toymaker (who now only makes toys for the child-like king) hatch a plan to infiltrate the castle. Truly and Potts sneak into the impenetrable castle dressed as the thing the Baron loves most. What follows is the famous musical number in the castle where

⁵⁸ Dirda, "Bond as Archetype," pp. B20-B21.

Truly and Potts are disguised as huge toys for the Baron's birthday. The family's triumph over the Baron is unlikely but necessary as a plot technique in a spy thriller for kids. Another Bond plot element is at play here: the improbable escape. All too often viewers find Bond physically trapped by the villainous evil genius or trapped by time, as each suspenseful second ticks closer to global disaster. Bond's brushes with death and defeat are often too close for comfort. Bond typically defeats the schemes of his enemies by bravery, determination, and luck. But more often, Bond is only able to save the world because of the villain's hubris. Bond has unflappable and, often, underestimated competence. This is a critical part of his characterization and, as a result, a critical part of the downfall of his enemies.

Fröbe and Quayle are not the only Bond veterans to make an appearance in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. The third is Desmond Llewelyn. Llewelyn, best known for his role as Major Geoffrey Boothroyd—"Q"—in the James Bond series, plays George Coggins, a junk man. Llewelyn is one of the most recognizable Bond veterans, and with good reason. Beginning with *From Russia with Love*, Desmond Llewelyn portrayed the armourer in every official film except *Live and Let Die* until his death in 1999. He appeared in 17 of the Eon Productions films, more Bond films than any of the actors playing Bond. Fleming based Q on Charles Fraser Smith, a real life engineer of gadgets for secret agents, saboteurs, and escaping servicemen.⁵⁹ The new gadgets revealed in 007's meetings with Q became an essential aspect of the cinematic Bond formula. In *Goldfinger* alone, viewers are introduced to grappling hook guns, homing devices, and an Aston Martin that ejects passengers, slashes tires, and spills oil to deter pursuers. The heavy emphasis placed on technological gadgetry did more than just provide moviegoers with

⁵⁹ David Sandham, "Fighting the tyrants," *Engineering & Technology* 3.9 (2008), pg. 19.

“ooohs” and “aaaahs.”⁶⁰ These devices helped portray Britain as a technologically superior nation. Coincidentally, the Potts family acquires their car from Coggins’ scrap yard, just as Q provides Bond with his Aston Martins and other gadgets and gizmos. Seven versions of the magical car were created as “stunt doubles.” There was a worn out car, the restored one, one for the flying scenes, one for the water scenes, and three partials for other various scenes. Chitty is not the only important gadget in the film. Mr. Potts’ gadgets and gizmos also contribute to the technology motif, even if he seems to fail more often than he succeeds in making them. Potts dons a homemade jet pack and takes off down a makeshift runway set up in his front yard. This scene calls to mind the beginning of *Thunderball* when 007 used a jet pack in the pre-title sequence to escape the bad guys and rendezvous with his French contact.

The Cold War is reduced to its purest dichotomy in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. That same moral battle reappears between right and wrong and good and evil. Caractacus Potts, the west, symbolizes goodness, while Baron Bomburst and his henchmen, the east, are utterly evil. The Anglo-American cause triumphs over the evil schemes of foreigners. Embedded in the film are three types of play situations, very Bond in nature. The first is a meal presented in elaborate detail. Mr. Potts has fashioned an invention that cooks a complete breakfast with the push of a button and twist of a crank. The viewer watches as the meal comes together, step by step, with the help of this technology. The Bond books and films are known for their attention to detail in the form of both food and drink. At some point during most Bond films, Bond dines with his adversary. Dr. No offers a four-course meal and an opportunity to join SPECTRE. Red Grant and Bond talk about red wine and fish in *From Russia with Love*. Goldfinger offers mint juleps, and Emilio Largo shares fish stories with Bond over lunch at his home in *Thunderball*. Even if a

⁶⁰ Tricia Jenkins, “James Bond’s ‘Pussy’ and Anglo-American Cold War Sexuality,” *The Journal of American Culture* 28.3 (2005), pg. 314.

person has never actually seen a Bond film, they know that Bond likes his vodka martini shaken, not stirred. The next play situation is the chase. The film opens with a chase—a race, in fact, from Chitty’s days as a racecar. Later, the Vulgarian boat chases Chitty at sea. The varied chase scenes in the film bring to mind Bond’s skill at eluding would-be captors. A Bond movie would not be complete without at least one chase sequence, with each chase more outrageous and unlikely than the last. Bond has driven or operated virtually every vehicle invented or imagined in his attempts to hunt down or escape from a villain. A short list includes the classic Aston Martin DB5 along with amphibious sports cars, jet packs, auto-gyro helicopters, horses, a bobsled, a moon buggy, a cello case, speedboats, skis (water and snow), a double-decker bus, a Russian tank, a camel, a fire engine, motorcycles, parachutes, hang-gliders, and an ice yacht. The last of the play situations is a journey sequence. Each Bond story begins with Bond being summoned to headquarters for a briefing on his next mission. Bond then travels to an exotic location to carry out said mission. Eventually, Bond arrives at the lair of his enemy and the real work can begin. Somewhere between the airport and enemy territory, Bond typically finds a girl to kiss and some henchmen to elude. The journey is an important element of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* as well. This journey is a dream-sequence filled with suspense and intrigue, flying cars and evil henchmen. Viewers quite literally go on this journey with the Potts children. The frame narrative appears as Potts weaves a tale of utter fantasy for his children and moviegoers alike. In this way, viewers become active participants in the story, viewing the story through a child’s eyes. Finally, a lullaby lulls the children and the viewer into sleep or at least peaceful thinking, encouraging a trip to “Hush-a-bye Mountain.” The escapism here is also similar to that found in the Bond films. But instead of a lullaby and children, the Bond films often feature Bond falling into an embrace with his girl, before he leaves for his next mission. Both *Chitty Chitty Bang*

Bang and the Bond films present the hopes and fears of the Cold War conflict in a way that is comforting rather than threatening. The films bathe viewers in the fantastic, while commenting on reality under the surface.

III

The Word Today is Adventure:⁶¹

Cold War Themes for a New Generation

“It’s the movies that have really been running things in America ever since they were invented. They show you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, how to feel about it...”

Andy Warhol⁶²

The 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States brought with them a rebirth of what could be characterized as Cold War paranoia. In this light, an interesting footnote to the 2003 military action in Iraq hardly seems surprising. British soldiers carried out operations named after characters from Ian Fleming’s novels—“Operation James,” was the most notable—and aimed at targets with such code names as Goldfinger and Blofeld, named after the infamous adversaries of James Bond, 007.⁶³ This return of Bond mania was not limited to military missions. Bond returned to the screen in *Casino Royale* (2006) and again in *Quantum of Solace* (2008), with another Bond flick in the works for fall of 2012. Three successive *Spy Kids* films hit theaters in 2001, 2002, and 2003, and two *Agent Cody Banks* films centered on a teenage CIA operative. The children’s literary marketplace boomed with titles featuring “spy” kids, even a young Bond series by Charles Higson, complete with its own dossier-style companion. Other children’s literature focused on the Cold War itself. In his picture book, *The Wall*, Peter Sís related the realism of the conflict and his own story of growing up on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain.

⁶¹ Frank Cottrell Boyce, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again* (Somerville: Candlewick Press, 2011), p.15.

⁶² Andy Warhol, quoted in Effie Bergstein, “More Than Fifteen Minutes of Fame: The Warhol,” *Andy Warhol Museum* (2008), The Pennsylvania Center for the Book, <http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/WarholMuseum.html>.

⁶³ Stephen Watt, “007 and 9/11, Specters and Structures of Feeling,” *Ian Fleming & James Bond* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 238.

Sís used graphics and color to bridge the gap for children ignorant of the harshness of the Cold War.

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang has made a return as well. The stage show premiered in London in 2002, and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again*, Frank Cottrell Boyce's follow up to Fleming's story, was published in the UK in late 2011. Ian Fleming Publications anticipates two more installments to Chitty's story in the future. The sequel centers on another quirky family: the Tootings. The Tootings begin their adventure with Chitty when they find a scrap engine for their 1966 camper van with a mind of its own. When the family learns that the engine belongs to a long lost race car, they search the world over for the rest of the parts to rebuild the magical car, with a sinister bad guy on their trail—one who will stop at nothing to get the magnificent car for himself. The family has countless run-ins with car-obsessed thieves, giant squids, and rogue spies. Sound familiar? Although the sequel features a modern setting, the original motifs such as good triumphing over evil and the theft of technology remain. It is easy to see that Fleming's story has not lost its long term appeal. The car still holds its magic. The themes remain applicable, the adventures fantastical. *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* will provide another generation of children with a spy thriller, full of adventure, suspense, laughter, and plenty of Cold War ideology.

It is easy to see why Fleming's stories have caught the popular imagination and more than half of the world's population has seen one of the films based on them.⁶⁴ There is a startling topicality about his work that cannot be matched—a topicality that Broccoli captured as a producer and brought to another level on screen with the help of Dahl's writing. This topicality along with the versatility of Fleming's writing allowed Hughes, Broccoli, and Dahl to create the cinematic *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, the original spy-kids movie, using the formula set forth in

⁶⁴ Siân Ellis, "Nobody Does it Better," *In Britain*, April/May 2008, pg.23.

the early Bond films of the Cold War era. In the long run, Fleming's world of spy "fantasia has proved to be not a fantasia at all, but a mirror of what is going on in the world."⁶⁵ History tells us that Russians *did* build missile bases in nearby Caribbean islands (*Doctor No*). They *did* plot carefully to get beautiful girls into the beds of Allied agents (*From Russia, With Love*). Fleming said it first. Fleming's biographer, Andrew Lycett, thought Fleming would have been astonished by all the hoopla surrounding his work. "It's not that he was humble, but he didn't really think his written work was great literature. He called them fairy stories for adults."⁶⁶ But, as Fleming's stories prove, the best fairy tales often have more than a grain of truth to them.

⁶⁵ Geoffrey Bocca, "The Spectacular Cult of Ian Fleming," *Saturday Evening Post*, June 22, 1963, pg. 68.

⁶⁶ Thomas Grose, "The Man with the Golden Typewriter," *U.S. News & World Report* 144, No. 13, pg. 28.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Boyce, Frank C. *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again*. Somerville: Candlewick Press, 2011.
- “Chug-Chug, Mug-Mug,” *Time* 92.26 (December 27, 1968), 60.
- Dahl, Roald. *A Note on Writing Books for Children* (sent to *The Writer*, Boston, Oct. 4, 1975), Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre RD 6/2/1/41.
- Dahl, Roald. Speech given at Chesham High School, January 13, 1978, Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre RD 6/1/15.
- Fleming, Ian. *Casino Royale*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1954.
- House Textbook Investigating Committee, “Report to Speaker Byron Tunnell and members of the Texas House of Representatives of the 58th Legislature” (1961) 57th R.S.
- Kennan, George F. *Memoirs: 1925-1950*. Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1967.
- Kennan to State Department, February 22, 1946, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1946*, VI, 699-700; “X” [George F. Kennan], “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, 25 (July, 1947), 575.
- Macmillan, Harold. Speech given in Bedford, July 20, 1957, BBC News July 20, 1974.
- Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1947*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963.

Secondary Sources

- Archer, Peter. *The Quotable Intellectual*. Avon: Adams Media, 2010.
- “Bette Davis,” *The Internet Movie Database*, IMDB.com, Inc, <http://m.imdb.com/name/nm0000012/quotes>
- Black, Jeremy. “‘Oh, James’ 007 as International Man of History,” *The National Interest*, No. 70 (Winter 2002/2003), 106-112.
- Black, Jeremy. *The Politics of James Bond: From Fleming’s Novel to the Big Screen*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.
- Bocca, Geoffrey. “The Spectacular Cult of Ian Fleming,” *Saturday Evening Post*, June 22, 1963, 66-68.
- Bullock, Alan. *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*. New York: Knopf, 1992.
- Cawelti, John G. and Bruce A. Rosenberg. *The Spy Story*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

- “Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: The Book and Its Origins” *Ian Fleming-The Official Website*, Ian Fleming Publications, 2009, www.ianfleming.com.
- Dirda, Michael. “James Bond as Archetype (and Incredibly Cool Dude),” *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2008), B20-B21.
- Dodds, Klaus. “Screening Geopolitics: James Bond and the Early Cold War films (1962-1967),” *Geopolitics* 10 (2005), 266-289.
- Earnest, David C. and James N. Rosenau, “The Spy Who Loved Globalization” *Foreign Policy* 120 (2000), 88-90.
- Ellis, Siân. “Nobody Does it Better,” *In Britain* (April/May 2008), 22-28.
- Farrell, Barry. *Pat and Roald*. London: Hutchinson, 1970.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Cold War: A New History*. New York: Penguin Group, 2005.
- “Gert Fröbe Biography,” *The Internet Movie Database*, IMDB.com, Inc., www.imdb.com/name/nm0002085.
- Goh, Robbie B.H. “Peter O’Donnell, Race Relations and National Identity: The Dynamics of Representation in 1960s and 1970s Britain,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 32.4 (1999), 29-43.
- Grose, Thomas. “The Man with the Golden Typewriter,” *U.S. News & World Report* 144.13 (2008), 28.
- Hitchens, Christopher. “Bottoms Up,” *Atlantic Monthly* 297.3 (2006), 100-104.
- Jenkins, Tricia. “James Bond’s ‘Pussy’ and Anglo-American Cold War Sexuality,” *The Journal of American Culture* 28.3 (2005), 309-317.
- Jian, Chen. *Mao’s China and the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Lycett, Andrew. *Ian Fleming*. London: Orion Publishing Group, 1995.
- McKee, Victoria. “Macabre, dry, mad about reading. Like Roald Dahl really, says the late author's wife,” *The Independent*, December 19, 1996, 6.
- Montefiore, Simon Sebag. *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*. New York: Knopf, 2004.
- Mulvihill, Jason, “James Bond’s Cold War,” *International Journal of Instructional Media* 28, No.3 (2001), 225-236.
- Oshinsky, David M. *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy*. New York: Free Press, 1983.
- Patterson, Thomas G. *On Every Front: The Making and Unmaking of the Cold War*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1992.

- Raby, Peter. *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Sandham, David. "Fighting the Tyrants," *Engineering & Technology* 3.9 (2008), 19.
- Sidey, Hugh. "The President's Voracious Reading Habits," *Life*, March 17, 1961, 59.
- Shaw, Tony. "The Politics of Cold War Culture," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3 (2001), 59-76.
- Sturrock, Donald. *Storyteller: The Authorized Biography of Roald Dahl*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010.
- "The Man," *Roald Dahl-The Official Website*, Roald Dahl Nominee Ltd, www.roalddahl.com.
- "The World's Favourite Children's Author," *Roald Dahl-The Official Website*, Roald Dahl Nominee Ltd, www.roalddahl.com
- Thomas, Evan. *Robert Kennedy: His Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2000.
- Treglown, Jeremy. *Roald Dahl*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994.
- Watt, Stephen. "007 and 9/11, Specters and Structures of Feeling." *Ian Fleming & James Bond*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Weber, Cynthia. *International Relations Theory*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Whitfield, Stephen J. *The Culture of the Cold War*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.