

ABSTRACT

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Title of Ph. D Thesis: “License to Frame: Representation of the Political Other in James Bond Novels”

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Abstract:

As the title suggests, the present research examines the representation of the political other in the Bond novels of Ian Fleming, Kingsley Amis, Christopher Wood, John Gardner, Raymond Benson, Sebastian Faulks, Jeffery Deaver, William Boyd and Anthony Horowitz. The thirty-one novels/novelizations that I have selected for study spread over the entire latter half of the last century—a very critical period in modern history that has seen some major political events and historical shifts, which in turn, have shaped our world as we see it today—and into the post-9/11 era covers seven decades. In my research I have studied the changing as well as the continuous trends in the representation of the trans-national, trans-historical political other/s in the novels by looking at the antagonists in the world of James Bond—how they vary (or do not) as our world evolves through the major shifts in international politics over the period of time under consideration.

The massive world of James Bond is bound together by a few aspects. Primary among them is the treatment of the political other in the novels. The other is not necessarily the antagonists of the novels. The absolute demonization of the antagonists and the essentialist treatment meted out to most of the non-Anglo-Saxon peoples characterize the Bond world indeed. But in the most nuanced and effective of cases, the other is projected as a possible friend. The most penetrative politics of the Bond world lies in such projections. The Soviet Union has continued to remain the other in the Bond world; however, not always the

antagonist. Similar is the case with China. Whenever the policies of the establishment of these two countries have seemed favourable to the West in real-world, the Bond world has appreciated that with eagerness and altered its treatment of them. As we have seen, this tactic has been accompanied by a distortive use of history for the sake of projections that are congenial to the West. The consistency with which the Bond novels follow the policies of the Western Alliance has been remarkable in the post-Fleming era. Fleming's pride interfered slightly with the interests of the Western alliance as a whole; he had lost a step for Britain. But since then, the Bond books have closely followed the political line of the Western hegemony. Fleming began with the Soviet Union and Horowitz has ended up in Russia. One circle of Bond's life has been completed.