

Of Migrants and Men: Networks and Nations in the Millennial Bond Text

EDWARD P. COMENTALE AND STEPHEN WATT

“In this image [*heimat*] we, the countless million of migrants (whether guest workers, exiles, refugees, or intellectuals...) recognize ourselves not as outsiders but as vanguards of the future...All we nomads...share in the collapse of settledness.”

- Vilém Flusser, *The Freedom of the Migrant: Objections to Nationalism* (2003)

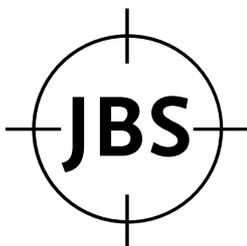
“The text is a fetish object and this fetish desires me. The text chooses me, by a whole disposition of invisible screens, selective baffles: vocabulary, references, readability, etc.; and, lost in the midst of a text...there is always the other, the author.”

- Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975)

“Bond ceases to be a subject for psychiatry and remains at the most a physiological object (except for a return to psychic diseases in the last, untypical novel in the series, *The Man with the Golden Gun*)...In the last pages of *Casino Royale*, Fleming, in fact, renounces all psychology as the motive of narrative and decides to transfer characters and situations to the level of an objective structural strategy.”

- Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (1979)

These three excerpts suggest the intimately connected aims of this article on the evolution of James Bond in both contemporary cinema and, more broadly, the twenty-first century. These aims, after Vilém Flusser, might be termed assessments of *heimat* construed not only as homes “encased in mystification” and



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grown “hallowed by habit”, but also as homelands (Flusser 2003, 2-4). As Raoul Silva (Javier Bardem) taunts Bond (Daniel Craig), encircled by computers in *Skyfall* (2012), “England. The Empire. MI6. You’re living in a ruin”. Our argument, however, focuses less on the devolution of Britain than on the migrant flows and global networks that, for better or worse, vex the very notion of the nation-state. That is to say, in *Quantum of Solace* (2008), Mr. White’s claim while being questioned by M and Bond that the criminal organisation with which he is affiliated has people “everywhere” is hardly inconsequential; indeed, his boast is corroborated when his colleague, embedded within MI6, opens fire on the unsuspecting interrogators. And to combat a foe that exists everywhere, by the final scene of *Spectre* (2015), Bond, albeit not achieving a state of digital unadulteration akin to that of Lucy in Luc Besson’s 2014 film, is nonetheless a transformed figure who exists within digital networks that transcend Cold War binaries. For unlike previous Bonds who, in the films’ final moments, enjoy dalliances in lifeboats or mini-submarines not far from the gaze of M, British intelligence, or the military – or report for duty (*Skyfall*) or announce their continuing service (*Quantum of Solace*) – in this scene Bond and Madeleine Swann (Léa Seydoux) speed away from London (and not in a new Aston Martin DB10 either, but in a replica of the almost talismanic DB5 that was destroyed in *Skyfall*). They and the fictional *heimat* where 007 once resided could be going anywhere – or everywhere.

To trace this process, we start with canonical and more recent Bond novels’ construction of a recognisable home for Bond and his readers, and then track the films’ destruction of these homes personal, professional, and psychical, the last of which includes instances of Oedipalisation and re-Oedipalisation which must similarly be undone. In the process, the Cold War text and its now familiar oppositions – East/West, Hero/Villain – is also redacted to make room for revised definitions of home, migrancy, subjectivity, and technology introduced in the latter half of this essay. In several ways, we follow the lead of critics energised by Martin Campbell’s *Casino Royale* (2006) – Christoph Lindner, Katharine Cox, and Patrick Anderson, to name but three – who regard Craig’s assumption of the role of 007 as a “reimagining”, “rebirth”, or “revision” of Fleming’s famous spy.¹ In doing so, however, we query the very binarisms that have sustained the Bond

1 Here we refer to Christoph Lindner, “Introduction,” *Revisioning 007: James Bond and Casino Royale*, edited by Lindner (New York: Wallflower Press, 2009), 1; Katharine Cox, “Becoming James Bond: Daniel Craig, Rebirth and Refashioning Masculinity in *Casino Royale*,” *Journal of Gender Studies*, 23.2 (2014), 184; and Patrick Anderson, “Neocon Bond: The Cultural Politics of *Skyfall*,” *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 33 (2016): 1.

franchise for over sixty years and continue to define the films' critical reception. To be sure, scenes in *Casino Royale* like the chiselled Craig emerging from the ocean in imitation of Honey Ryder (Ursula Andress) in *Dr. No* and Jinx (Halle Berry) in *Die Another Day*, as Cox argues (2014, 188-89), reposition Bond as the feminine object of the male gaze; and the last two Craig films do reveal the influence of neoliberal and neoconservative thought, as Anderson argues (2016, 5-13). Yet, as we hope to demonstrate, in *Skyfall* and *Spectre* such gender and political binaries are superseded by global capital, mass migration, and invasive digital networks from which the "reborn" or "resurrected" Bond is finally inseparable.

Our analysis requires the juxtaposition of such recent Bond novels as Sebastian Faulks' *Devil May Care* (2008) and Anthony Horowitz's *Trigger Mortis* (2015) with films like *Skyfall* and *Spectre*, a pairing most studies of the Bond phenomenon ignore. We are interested in the tension between these genres, as the novels seem to extend, in content as well as form, more traditional and ritualised conceptions of home and homeland, while the films devise more dynamic depictions of the latter in particular. Such distinctions, we believe, are grounded in the traditions within which each form is produced as well as the audiences they are intended to reach: namely, a limited English speaking and reading audience, on the one hand, and an international and postcolonial one, on the other. While traversing this terrain of Fleming and post-Fleming texts, we privilege the latter for reasons pertaining to the intertextual peculiarities that typically emerge with any media reboot: first, their frequently hypertrophic allusions to prior texts that re-inflect our understanding of the Bond franchise as it once was and where it might be going; and, second, the films' efforts to erase all traces of Bond's nuclear and extended families within a tumultuous context of migrants, refugees, and data points in the information networks that constitute our new reality.

In other words, while, as James Chapman puts it, "the twin processes of continuity and change" are "key" to the "longevity" of the Bond series of films (2001, 248), recent novels guarantee only the former – an instantly recognisable Cold War Bond and a 1960s made familiar by its residue of World War Two, an emergent Vietnam conflict, the nuclear Arms race, and more. The dust jacket for *Devil May Care* trumpets the news that Faulks is "Writing as Ian Fleming" (with Fleming's name printed in a larger font than Faulks'); the cover of *Trigger Mortis* advertises that "original material by Ian Fleming" is contained within. And it is. In his "Acknowledgements", Horowitz explains his slight appropriation from an unrealised Fleming teleplay about Grand Prix racing (2015, 305-6). Even what is arguably the most accomplished of these novels, William Boyd's *Solo* (2013), which

makes no attempt to ventriloquise Fleming or adapt his style, cannot escape this history. Fleming lives in these pages; he desires our attention, as Roland Barthes' playful deployment of the fetish in *The Pleasure of the Text* suggests (1975, 27), and we desire his "vocabulary", "readability", and "references". For over half a century, these have constituted a readerly home, a comfortable *habitus* we want to occupy, if only for a little while.

Not surprisingly, the most important of these tropes and characters is Bond himself. Both Faulks and Horowitz leave nothing to chance in this regard, quickly linking their protagonists with Fleming's. *Devil May Care* takes place eighteen months after Bond defeats Scaramanga in *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1965); and *Trigger Mortis* includes cameo appearances by Pussy Galore two weeks after Bond meets her in *Goldfinger* (1959). Horowitz even recalls the earlier text's most sensational scene by having Pussy painted in gold for 007 to rescue, a better fate than was meted to Jill Masterson. Both novels' *heimat* of references include familiar turns of phrase like "Bond. James Bond", such hallowed vices as vodka Martinis and cigarettes from Morland's, and a myriad of other lexical and narrative features, including the peculiar histories of Bond's principal nemeses in both the novels and films (a topic to which we shall return). There would seem to be little question of Fleming's value, fetishistic and otherwise, to Faulks and Horowitz; after all, doesn't imitating a predecessor or "borrowing" imply that the text "being evoked through allusion" possesses "an admirable creative plenitude" the later ones hope to capture? (Machacek 2007, 524). Doesn't the presence of allusion "divide an audience into those who have a cultural kinship with the author and those who do not"? (526). Fleming and a Bond many of us grew up admiring constitute that "plenitude"; together, they forge a kinship with the informed reader and, in Derridean terms, an archive of features we construct into a domicile.

But who exactly is this Cold War Bond? In "Narrative Structures in Fleming" (1984), Umberto Eco's answer inheres in the essay's title: in Bond, Fleming creates an "object" to locate in structures of opposition, an object too inhuman to benefit from the explanatory light of "psychiatry" or psychoanalysis. Eco takes seriously René Mathis's admonition to Bond near the end of *Casino Royale* (1953): "But don't let me down and become human yourself. We would lose such a wonderful machine" (Fleming 2002a, 139). And, all comic undercutting aside, Bond's mechanical quality, his physical prowess and lack of affect, is developed in numerous texts. *The Man with the Golden Gun*, which Eco discounts as an anomaly because of its emphasis on fetishism and phallic substitutions, contains an in-

stance of this objectification: “And James Bond, if aimed straight at a known target – M put it in the language of battleships – was a supremely effective firing-piece” (Fleming 2002c, 25). More recently, in the film *Casino Royale*, M (Judi Dench), angry that Bond has killed a bomb maker she wanted to question and broken into her apartment, lectures him on how Double-O agents should comport themselves. Remarking that “this may be too much for a blunt instrument to understand”, she urges him to remove his “ego” from decision-making, thus in effect retaining his instrumental status. A “wonderful machine”, “firing-piece”, or “blunt instrument” – these characterisations support Eco’s thesis that Fleming “renounces all psychology as the motive of narrative and decides to transfer characters and situations to the level of an objective structural strategy” (1984, 145). And this “machine” is implicated in a relation to home in a starkly Freudian way that must be revised just as surely as Cold War politics are supplanted by a vastly different system of power in the new millennium. It is precisely these mechanical, habitual, and even ritualised structures that define not just Bond’s relation to home and nation, but the Bond novel itself as a comforting dwelling place for its readers. More important, as a “machine” for producing and resolving binaries, Bond and the entire franchise still seem, despite Eco’s account, implicated in a relationship to home that recalls psychoanalysis and must be revised.

Paramount in both the Fleming and twenty-first century text is the opposition between Bond and his adversary. In the former, “Bond represents Beauty and Virility as opposed to the villain, who often appears monstrous and sexually impotent” (Eco 148). “Vicarious figures” often stand in for Bond’s principal antagonist: Oddjob in *Goldfinger*, Rosa Klebb and Red Grant in *From Russia with Love*, and Chagrin in *Devil May Care*. Typically, these figures exhibit or exceed the monstrosity of their employers and, at times, exude it in ineffable ways. The beautiful Russian girl who has massaged Grant for two years can barely suppress her “animal instinct” that inside his “wonderful body there was an evil person” (Fleming 2002b, 8), just as the deranged mind of Chagrin, altered by Russian doctors who “cauterized an area of his temporal lobe” (Faulks 2002, 178), enables him to feel no pain and ruthlessly rip the tongues out of his victims’ mouths with pliers. This monstrosity may include behaviours ranging from sadism to obsession and total asexuality, which contrast sharply with Bond’s heterosexuality, even as it is influenced by his role as protector of British hegemony (“Oh, what I do for England!”). Grant in *From Russia with Love* “began to feel strange and violent compulsions around the time of the full moon” (2002b, 15); these feelings led him to strangle and mutilate animals, then to murder a tramp and later kill the

“occasional girl”, although he did not “interfere” sexually with girls as heterosexual genital relations were “quite incomprehensible” to him (16). But in the later films this reliable Fleming opposition is put under pressure; the Bond who parries Silva’s homoerotic advances in *Skyfall* with “What makes you think this is my first time?” for example, projects an ambiguity that intimates a wavering connection to home and nation. As Anderson observes, the “repeatedly affirmed heterosexuality” of Fleming’s Bond acts as a “rejection of the ambiguity that Fleming saw in homosexuality, an ambiguity that was political as much as sexual” (2016, 15).

Bond’s principal nemeses reveal traits similar to those of their associates, and their physical deformities or damaged faces – Blofeld’s scar under his right eye in *You Only Live Twice* (1967), Alec Trevelyan’s burns in *GoldenEye* (1995) – signify their monstrosity. Sometimes, their personal habits imply their bestial natures. In Fleming’s *Casino Royale*, Le Chiffre, described as a “brute” at the gaming table because of his vulgar snorting of a Benzedrine inhaler, is introduced as being a “flagellant” and possessive of “large sexual appetites” (2002a, 14), and his later torture of Bond reveals his sadism. In *The Man with the Golden Gun*, Scaramanga, who possesses a third nipple, is thought to seek sexual congress before undertaking an assassination because it “improves his ‘eye’” (2002c, 28), although MI6 analysts believe this ritual masks his fetishism, impotence, or homosexual tendencies. Recent novels continue this opposition. In *Devil May Care*, Dr. Julius Gorner, who fought both with the Nazis and against them, suffers from a condition known as “Monkey’s Hand”, manifested by his over-sized and hirsute left paw. And, if Scaramanga seems to be an “insatiable but indiscriminate womanizer” (2002, 28), Gorner might be just the opposite: he regards prostitutes as expendable “human flotsam” and, in one scene, with the beautiful Scarlett Papava displayed half-naked in front of them, Bond wonders if Gorner “found all women’s flesh repulsive” (151). One wonders similarly about one of the worst of such characters, Kobus Breed in *Solo*, who, missing half of his upper jaw, enjoys hanging his victim with ropes and large fish hooks secured under their jawbones “like so many fishing trophies” (Boyd 2013, 131).

Such killing machines incapable of feeling may indeed require the response of a blunt instrument. Yet, in *Quantum of Solace*, *Skyfall*, and *Spectre* scant evidence exists of the Bond M castigates in *GoldenEye* as a “sexist, misogynist dinosaur” and “relic of the Cold War.” Bond’s “resurrection” – the term he uses in *Skyfall* when being taunted by Silva – amounts to a pronouncement of the larger project of cleaving Bond from his familial and professional past. This revisionary enter-

prise necessarily involves transformations of Bond's villains and of the family romance which Eco deems so irrelevant to Fleming narrative methodology. To be sure, there are moments of emotional coldness in these films that recall the "wonderful machine" of Fleming's first Bond novel, just as there are moments when the monstrosity of Bond's adversaries rivals that of a Scaramanga or *Dr. No*. But, in the Craig era, a twenty-first century Bond emerges. Writing in 2006 before the first Craig film appeared, Bond novelist and aficionado Raymond Benson chronicles the shift from a "classic" Bond in the Sean Connery era, to the "action comedies" starring Roger Moore in the 1970s and 80s in which "everything was played for laughs" (2006, 9). These were followed, in Benson's schema, by Timothy Dalton's "ruthless and serious" (and humourless) figure, and Pierce Brosnan's incorporation of "a little of every Bond actor who preceded him." Still, a "problem" exists, he concludes, for the future of 007: Bond simply "comes with too much baggage" (10-11).

Benson might be right, which is precisely why the Craig films work to strip Bond of cumbersome weight, starting in *Casino Royale*, as Katharine Cox observes, in a shower with Bond "maternally" licking blood stains from Vesper Lynd's hands and fingers after watching him kill two would-be assassins (2014, 193). This process continues, however problematically, with Mathis's dying plea in *Quantum of Solace* for Bond to stay with him, which Bond does, cradling him in his arms. Near death, Mathis (Giancarlo Giannini) hopes that they can forgive each other, and Bond concedes that he should never have left him alone. Mathis, thinking of Vesper Lynd, then whispers, "Forgive her. Forgive yourself", and a close-up suggests that Bond considers the possibility when Mathis dies. Pausing momentarily, Bond picks Mathis up and deposits his body in a garbage dumpster, rationalising his action to an incredulous Camille (Olga Kurylenko) that his deceased friend wouldn't care. In other scenes in *Quantum of Solace*, both M and Mr. White intimate that Bond's love for Vesper – and hers for him – was obvious, which is also the tenor of Mathis's requests: namely, to undo Bond's comment at the end of *Casino Royale* and near the end of the film, "The bitch is dead". Vesper wasn't a bitch, his friend wisely observes, and you don't need the baggage. On the contrary, Bond's rebirth is brought about by women like Vesper and Madeleine, the latter of whom insists to Bond that, unlike a machine, he has the capacity to choose to kill or not kill, to work for British Intelligence or not. This notion of agency (which Barbara Korte addresses in more detail elsewhere in this issue) also serves as a kind of re-Oedipalisation, a recasting of Bond as a rebellious son of M and England, a psychical home from which he will ultimately flee. Most im-

portant, Vesper and Madeleine move Bond in a direction diametrically opposite of M's advice to remove his ego, his humanity, from his professional operations.

The process of reinvention in *Skyfall* and *Spectre* further requires Bond to contend with two symbolic half-brothers – Silva and Blofeld, both of whom have replaced Goldfinger's penis-seeking laser for computer-driven technologies to penetrate Bond's head – a symbolic mother, a surrogate father, and a return to his familial home. A decade ago, Lee Pfeiffer argued that “in a way Bond is one of the least important elements of his screen adventures”, alluding to the fact that in over forty years viewers have been invited into his London flat only twice, in *Dr. No* (1962) and *Live and Let Die* (1973) (2006, 24). This aura of impersonality, however, has changed, as the focus newly trains on Bond's home and relationships. His adversaries, Silva and Blofeld (Christoph Waltz), have changed as well, as the alien and refugee are no longer part of a structural opposition, but something much closer. As a former agent betrayed by M, Silva regards himself and Bond as the last two survivors of a vanishing empire and devious “old woman” in charge of Intelligence: “Mommy was very bad”, Silva alleges, in clearing Bond for active duty when the staff psychologist had observed that he suffered from “unresolved childhood trauma,” among other failings. For his part, Blofeld tells Madeleine (a psychologist by training) that, after Bond's parents died, his father took the orphan in and for two years helped raise him. This generosity motivated the envious older “brother” Franz Oberhauser, now Ernst Stavro Blofeld, to patricide. But this revenge isn't enough: now, as Blofeld tells Bond, he wants to “penetrate to where you are, to the inside of your head” – and destroy it, much as the Bond family home is obliterated in *Skyfall*.

As this threat suggests, in the last two Craig films Bond's subjectivity moves to the foreground. So, for example, when the psychologist conducting a word association exercise with him in *Skyfall* utters the word “Skyfall”, the dialogue changes abruptly, as does the tenor of the scene. Bond's earlier responses to “country” (England) and “murder” (employment) are immediate and cavalier; his association of “M” with “bitch” is followed by a quick cut to the viewing booth where she and her associates overhear his calculated impertinence. But when the psychologist says “Skyfall”, the cheeky banter stops and, after another cut to the booth, Bond rises sturdily and says, “Done”. The interview is over and the allusion to his childhood home suggests an early trauma, just as Silva reports. In short, Bond, no longer a blunt instrument, becomes something more human but ironically more fluid and emancipated as well. As the end of *Spectre* implies, the binaries which have grown so familiar have collapsed, as Bond is no longer an in-

strumentalised son; his “homes”, like the Scottish ancestral manor in which he was raised, are forever altered or destroyed. Now, driving away from London, he is a refugee.

The institutions and rituals that would traditionally support Bond as a man, in other words, have dissolved beneath his feet. The destruction of both *Skyfall* and MI6 destabilises Bond’s identity as a subject, a citizen, and an agent/worker. In serving the nation both home and abroad, he has always followed a certain mapping of the world, one that is stable, ritualised, and hierarchical. More specifically, during the Cold War, Bond’s work mostly involved restoring objects (commodities such as oil, gold, guano, etc.) to their proper places. Unlike most detectives, who work in a single place to reconstruct a sense of the past, Bond moved from one locale to the next in order to reconstruct a sense of place. In Fleming’s novels and the films they inspired, he spent much of his time tracking material objects and physical bodies, using one lead after another to map out the world and the often bewildering political and economic relations between its parts. Recent novels function in much the same way, providing a nostalgic take on Bond as he maintains everything in its right place in relation to existing power structures. Same tobacco, same secretary, same car – “This was his world”, according to the comfortably dry narration of *Trigger Mortis* (Horowitz 35). “Get a photograph. File a description. Find out more” – and in this world, Bond moves smoothly from object to object, place to place (81).

The last four Bond films imply that this world no longer functions effectively – not simply in national or imperial terms, as some have stressed,² but as a coherent sense of place and set of experiences that can be cognitively mapped.³ Various tied to Cold War regimes and powers, Bond’s enemies have always wielded a certain chaos, working via dispersed networks that could infiltrate and corrupt national borders. The new breed, however, is unmoored from any nation or ideology, operating against the very concept of the nation-state and the institutions that sustain it. Existing within global networks, faceless corporations, and

2 See Marouf Hasian Jr.’s argument that “*Skyfall* shows us the resonance of new nostalgic senses of imperial identity, while at the same time inviting audiences to accept the type of counterterrorist violence that Bond and others have to employ in the battles with vicious terrorists”, in “*Skyfall*, James Bond’s Resurrection, and 21st Century Anglo-American Imperial Nostalgia,” *Communication Quarterly*, 62(5) November-December 2014: 569-88.

3 See the theoretical apparatus for geopolitical studies outlined in Jason Dittmer and Klaus Dodds, “The Geopolitical Audience: Watching *Quantum of Solace* (2008) in London.” *Popular Communications*, 11 (2013): 76-91.

nearly legitimate on the surface of things, they pride themselves on their lack of ego as a precondition for a more fluid, more pervasive power structure, one that can insinuate itself into any institution. Again, as the captured Mr. White claims in *Quantum of Silence*, “The first thing you should know about us is that we have people everywhere”. In turn, M seems baffled by the Secret Service’s failure of intelligence: “How can they be everywhere and we know nothing about them?” In all four recent films, the leaders of such networks are master manipulators of global capital – bureaucrats and functionaries, mostly – exploiting the gaps in national and international law to corner markets in mining, telecommunications, water resources, pharmaceuticals, and so on. Often, their tactics involve profitable destabilisations of local markets: Dominic Greene creates civic unrest in South American cities in order to erect his own puppet governments; Le Chiffre bets against the market to pad his coffers. Throughout, they remain “ghosts”, as we learn from Intel in *Skyfall*, with “no known residence or country of origin”. They’ll work with anyone, “the left or the right, dictators or revolutionaries”, and they’ll “kill anyone who disagrees”. In these ways, the films reflect contemporary capitalism and its neoliberal manifestations, especially, according to Brian Baker, the latter’s “emphasis upon free movement: of information, or resources and of the gaze”, while they simultaneously advance “the necessity to police this movement and maintain borders or erect barriers to restrict this fluidity” (2009, 155-56).

These are Bond’s new foes. If both Silva and Blofeld figure as lost brothers to Bond, it is because they have been radically displaced, and this displacement is the origin of their evil. The former was abandoned by M, leaving a gap in the Secret Service hierarchy for Bond to fill as favourite operative, while the latter sees himself as “cuckooed”, shoved out of his home and replaced as his father’s favourite son. In doing so, the films plot what is essentially a global imaginary defined by a nervy logic of “terror” and “homeland security”. While it is beyond our scope here to delineate the dizzying feedback loops of fact and fiction central to these discourses, we might point towards depictions of the new breed of millennial terrorists that seem, for lack of a better term, Fleming-esque. In *The New Jackals: Ramzi Yousef, Osama Bin Laden, and the Future of Terrorism* (1998), for instance, Simon Reeve identifies Middle Eastern terrorists who emerge from war-torn areas, wielding religious zeal and high-tech gadgetry, and operating within networks to wreak havoc on otherwise stable institutions. Essential to Reeve’s account is the depiction of the region as a “place without proper maps, road signs or government” – think Quetta, Karachi, Baluchistan – a restless “wild

west” where nomadic tribes slip across borders and evade security points (46). Here, terrorists such as Ramzi Yousef become “mysterious” figures leading a restless, transient life until, often because of a chance encounter at a university or mosque, they are suddenly politicised, finding focus for pent-up rage in larger, antagonistic causes (114-15). Most importantly, the energy of this new breed stems from their conflicted relation to home. Torn between Eastern and Western lifestyles, they harbour dual commitments to the tribe and technology, faith and education, terror and business. In Reeve’s account, Yousef alternately appears as an old-world religious zealot and a modern international playboy, as a typical Bond antagonist and a demonic mirror image of Bond himself (126). At the University of Wales, he studied computer-aided electrical engineering, applying his skills to both geometric Islamic patterns and micro-electronics, but he also fell in with the Muslim Brotherhood, which, according to Reeve, “set him on the path towards mass murder” (118).

The addition of the appropriate facial disfiguration (Yousef’s eye was damaged in a failed bombing attempt) and a dose of egomania produces a version of the quintessential Bond villain. Here, again, Horowitz’s entry to the Bond series with *Trigger Mortis* proves instructive, organising and amplifying characteristics of villains past in portraying the new breed. Sin Jae-Seong or Jason Sin (the doubleness of the name reflects the doubleness of his existence) appears as just such a wanderer, hell-bent on destroying the country that destroyed his own. His mania stems precisely from his loss of home. He claims, “I have left my past life behind me” (Horowitz 105), and the bombing of his South Korean home and subsequent life as a refugee inspire his plot to detonate a bomb in a New York City subway station and topple the Empire State Building, described as “in itself a symbol of American pride” (229). Although his novel is set in 1957, Horowitz could not have devised Sin and his terrorist campaign before the likes of Ramzi Yousef and Osama Bin Laden appeared on the world stage, and yet Sin’s creepy quirks derive from Fleming’s own rogue’s gallery. In Bond’s eyes, Sin appears effeminate and childlike, yet not without style, even a certain grace. In his grey silk suit and well-polished Italian shoes, he figures as both a double and a near polar opposite of the spy’s own image, causing the latter to recoil out of instinct. Something of this reflection also informs the set piece of the novel, which concerns Sin’s disclosure of his past. He recounts how his boyhood home was occupied first by the Japanese, noting that then his “identity” was stripped away twice from him in the North Korean attacks in 1950 and later by the retaliation of US troops, which forced him and his family to flee the region as refugees. He wit-

nessed the killing of his father and sister by their US protectors, then returned to his city to find his home levelled. Rich and powerful now, Sin recounts this tale blankly, devoid of human feeling. As he tells Bond, “We have a belief in Korea that if you die away from home, you will be condemned to wander for eternity...That is what happened to me. I died at No Gun Ri. It was not my life that was taken from me, but my soul, my very humanity” (221-22). Consequently, he explains, “I have become like death itself...I smile when my rich American friends call me Jason Sin, carelessly trampling on my culture and my origins, and secretly I want to kill them all...I exist now only to destroy everything around me” (222).

This postcolonial history is hardly surprising, as commentators from Franz Fanon to Reeve have tracked its vicious aftermath. The dead wield death in turn, and the destruction of the home becomes, for better or worse, the precondition of a much fiercer revolutionary violence.⁴ And yet Sin’s tale is most disturbing for the paradoxes that accompany its telling. For one, his destructive streak is everywhere countered by his own desire for a home. He has in fact occupied several homes in the West – a *wasserburg* (or water castle) in the woodland south of Bad Münstereifel, an industrial compound previously owned by a London silk manufacturer, and, most bizarrely, an exact replica of the house where the poet John Keats lived in Hampstead, north London. Sin, though, resides in these places without any feeling for them; more disturbingly, he has scratched out the eyes of the portraits that decorate the walls in the *wasserburg* and stripped the Keats house of “any comfort or animation” (205). In all of this, Marouf Hasian Jr.’s account of Silva as a postcolonial character also applies to Sin:

In a number of ways, Silva represents that hybrid figure about which Homi Bhabha (1994) talked in *Location of Culture*, that liminal figure from the so-called “third” world, who suffered the ravaged effects of many variants of Western colonisation. Silva’s conversations with Bond and M provide examples of what Bhabha called cultural strategies that are both “transnational and translational” in his geopolitical movements, migration, and life in the diaspora...(2014, 581-82).

It is precisely Sin’s fraught, violent relation to place and space that most seriously unnerves Bond, who is particularly disturbed by the extreme ambivalence with

4 See Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004).

which his adversary relates to the concept of home itself. Bond wonders what “these strangely barren living conditions tell him about the man who owned the place?” “Already”, we are told, “Bond feared the worse” (Horowitz 205); and it is within this crumbling order that the millennial Bond seeks to establish a place for himself. Especially in the later films, his adventures occur uncannily in deteriorating buildings and on urban construction sites, as if he is operating in a world constantly being unmade and remade beneath his very feet. At the same time, like Sin, he seems to be desperately seeking a home, breaking into M’s digs seeking a kind of maternal solace (we hardly need to point out the aural similarities between “M”, “Ma’am”, and “Mom”, with which *Skyfall’s* script plays brilliantly). Vesper correctly pegs him as an “orphan”, citing this as the origin of his desperate dedication to M and the Secret Service.

The films, though, take this tumultuous landscape and add a contemporary commentary on new technology, which, in its mere functioning, more radically terrorises institutions of home and nation. Tracing the arc from *Casino Royale* to *Spectre*, Bond’s most formidable adversary turns out to be the digital network itself, particularly as it reaches deep into the heart of MI6 and levels the hierarchy that connects Britain to the other forces and flows that span the globe. Consequently, the very nature of Bond’s mission is changed. In the shift from “intelligence” to “data,” he becomes less a spy, using deduction and skill to track down evil-doers, than a computer-like processor, trying to manage the vast amount of information generated everywhere. Where he once tracked material resources and physical bodies from one exotic locale to the next, he now seems destined to follow a programme, shifting from terminal to terminal, logging in and out. Why leave MI6 at all, when a headset and keyboard can get him to a bar or hotel room across the globe faster than good old planes, trains, and automobiles? The films tend to represent this new system in more or less ironic ways, allowing Bond’s superiors to monitor him via the very technology he uses to track others. Cell phones and security cameras are almost omnipresent in *Casino Royale*, and the subsequent films are saturated with digital technology. More than props in a contemporary *mise en scène*, this technology is imbricated in each film’s plot, the only means by which Bond and his foes can get anything done. Digital invasiveness is felt on both the microscopic and macroscopic levels: Q embeds a microchip in Bond’s arm to track his location in *Casino Royale*, then fills Bond’s body with “smart blood” so he can measure his vital stats in *Spectre*. Silva breaches that data security wall in *Skyfall*, while Blofeld plans to combine the intelligence streams of nine major countries in *Spectre*.

The key scene – perhaps the turning point of this millennial reboot – occurs early in *Skyfall*, when Bond meets his new MI6 Quartermaster at the National Gallery to gather his usual set of weapons and gadgets. The encounter is immediately framed in generational terms when a younger and hipper Q compares Bond to the “grand old warship being ignominiously hauled away for scrap” in the Turner painting before them. Bond, in turn, laughs off the idea of taking orders from someone whose face still has “spots”. But the men prove to be divided less by time than by technology. Q boasts he can do more damage on his laptop in his pyjamas before his first cup of tea than Bond can do in a year in the field. As he sees it, Bond is little more than a tool programmed to pull a trigger when needed. Bond replies by affirming his humanity, specifically as it is rooted in his ability to make choices – to pull or not to pull – based on experience and some deeper, suppler ethical sense. The men reach an accord, however, in the meaning-laden exchange of a traditional gun outfitted with new technology. Q gives Bond a Walther PPK with a micro-dermal sensor in the grip that only Bond can fire, a modification that affirms the latter’s unique identity as well as his ability to make choices in the field.

But this is an uneasy *détente*, and the structural opposition invoked by this scene continues to threaten Bond and the franchise’s conventions with which we have become accustomed. Ultimately, the digital system’s ability to render the spy and his shadowy crowd obsolete comes to a head in *Spectre*. As Director of a new Joint Intelligence Service, C proposes “More data, more analysis, less likelihood of terrorist attack”, but he’s secretly scheming for SPECTRE, and his plan will essentially put the world’s major governments in the terrorists’ hands. Ultimately, intelligence and counterintelligence merge into a single databank, one that can support any group powerful enough to access its contents – democratic or communist, nation state or corporation. As C smugly declares, after the Nine Eyes programme is officially sanctioned, “Global intelligence cooperation changes everything...[The Home Secretary] has decided to close down the Double-O programme effective immediately...It’s not personal. It’s the future”. This impersonality is mirrored inside of Blofeld’s lair, which seems to consist of little more than rows and rows of computer terminals, each manned by faceless drones. To Madeleine’s query, “What is this place?” Blofeld responds, “Information. Information is all, is it not?”

To capture both the dangers and the possibilities of a world in which “information is all”, particularly as it upends more traditional experiences of home and place, we turn to media theorist Vilém Flusser, whose biography almost

reads like that of Bond villain. Born in Prague to a family of Jewish intellectuals, he studied philosophy at the Charles University before fleeing from the Nazis in 1939 to London, where he studied economics, and then, Sao Paulo, where he developed his vision of a new techno-utopia. As he famously declared, “I am now without heimat because too many heimats reside within me” (2003, 2), and something of this melancholy underlies his thoughts on technology and culture. Flusser’s work, especially his prophetic study *Into the Universe of Technical Images* (1985), concerns the ways in which a world saturated by telecommunication networks and digitally-produced media images tends towards two “fantastic” possibilities: both a “centrally programmed, totalitarian society of image receivers and images collectors” and a democratic, decentralised, and “telematic society of image producers and image constructors” (2011, 4). His formulation addresses the impact of digital media on structures and experiences of space, specifically home and nation, linking historical shifts in technology to micro- and macro-experiences of dwelling, community, and migration. According to Flusser, the Western world has recently written itself out of its own narratives, beyond history and its relation to space, and reduced the world to bits of data, particles, and quanta. The emotional terrain of this new universe is unsettling and will remain so until apparatuses are developed that can grasp the particles and freeze them, turning the abstract into the concrete. Flusser thus envisions a world crowded with devices – cameras, tape recorders, hard-drives – able to capture the particulate universe and give it new dimensionality, thereby making quotidian reality habitable once again. In turn, a growing number of functionaries and visionaries, structurally-positioned senders and receivers who decode and recode the images, will evaluate their ability to create a sense of balance in a dangerously disintegrated world (2011, 38).

Flusser’s future recalls the scene at Blofeld’s lair, where, standing amidst rows and rows of processors, he flatly declares himself a “visionary”. Bond winces at his self-aggrandising delusion: “Visionaries”, he replies. “Psychiatric wards are full of them”. This same pathology is woven into Flusser’s argument, as new technologies are dangerously hypnotic, he claims, with the potential to trap or absorb their users. Flusser fears the development of programmes that extend themselves in more invasive ways, ultimately incorporating all human activity within their functioning. “In this way”, he writes, “the original terms human and apparatus are reversed, and human beings operate as functions of the apparatus. A man gives an apparatus instructions that the apparatus has instructed him to give” (2011, 74). At the end of this process resides Blofeld’s project, the merging of

discrete programmes into one global superprogramme. Writing near the end of the Cold War, Flusser envisions America and Russia as two vast technological apparatuses whose programmes will ultimately meld into one, creating a “global totalitarianism of apparatuses” that programme the same culture all over the world (2011, 74-75). Conversely, in the potential rewiring of the system and the redistribution of media production, he contends, receivers can also become the creators of images, engaging in true dialogue with others, creating a telematic utopia, the world coded and recoded in more democratic ways. Flusser optimistically predicted, in the development of more dynamic telematic communications, a global network, the World Wide Web, obviously, at its most utopian. As he wrote in 1985,

The social structure that is now appearing represents a synchronization of radiating images with the dispersed, lonely, depersonalized people who sit at the terminals of these rays. Revolutionary visualization tries to replace this structure with another in such a way that the images bring new interpersonal relationships into being and lead to new social configurations... (2011, 67).

This account of the utopian potentials of new digital media may sound quaint and naïve, but it rests on a unique argument about space and place in relation to the expansive networks of digital technology, one essential to further analysis of the millennial Bond films and the dramas of citizenship and homeland they stage.

Flusser’s examination of place comes as a response to the apparent “groundlessness” of the emerging digital world. At his most optimistic, he envisions a process that both scatters and realigns people into new relations with each another. Digital technology provides streams of information, which attack and erode persistent myths of region and belonging, as well as tools for creative redefinition of traffic and space. This groundless, decentralised existence is the precondition for new movement and social connections – multi-directional thread-like patterns of engagement with others, informed by a more generous sense of exchange (Flusser 2011, 64-65). More pointedly, in *The Freedom of the Migrant*, Flusser argues that new information technology restores a progressive experience of nomadic wandering. Here, he urges us to see the nation itself as founded upon an originary crime of discrimination and exclusion. Drawing upon the work of René Girard, he claims that no nation-state exists without a scapegoat; its

existence is only possible through violent exclusion and a silent conspiracy to suppress knowledge of that violence (2003, 16-17). In this context, the nomad emerges not as a threat or even a victim, but as the vanguard of the future, a model for managing an increasingly groundless world: as emigrant, the nomad is forced to revise habits and comforts; as immigrant, (s)he challenges the conventions of settled peoples, exposing as banal what the native considers sacred (2003, 6). Wandering from *heimat* to *heimat*, the nomad awakens consciousness, demystifies local customs, and raises the possibility of living with others without mysteries; moreover, because the home itself “has become drafty, as gales of media sweep through from all directions”, we have all begun to be nomadic (2003, 43).

At his most romantic, Flusser compares this open-ended wandering to the spiritual scattering of the wind, creating a metaphor for posthistorical, postnational digital existence in general. That is, as the nation-state is dissolved, a newly nomadic people are free to congregate via networks of probabilistic occurrence, gathering data potentials as self-chosen communities. Thus, in *The Freedom of the Migrant*, Flusser argues for what he calls pan-Europeanism:

The point is to...break Europe down into its component parts and then to network these parts by means of crisscrossing connections. States of spasm as exemplified by France, Spain, and Italy must be dissolved to facilitate complex networks between such regions as Provence, Catalonia, and Tuscany. The guiding principle is that nationalism, this invention of the enlightened seventeenth- and eighteenth-century bourgeoisie, has proven to be a catastrophic crime... (2003, 72-73)

Here, the network rises in opposition to the criminal logic of the nation, an idea that informs the four recent Bond films as intimated by the slippage between national and terrorist organisations in each. As a result, Bond’s work in salvaging the national order is called into question, and the digital scheming of Silva and Blofeld are symptomatic of a future already here. Paradoxically, in order to survive at all, MI6, as protector of the nation, needs to side with the world of “shadows” against any global organisation as an agent of the future, of information, and of free exchange.

To conclude, we return to *Skyfall*, the film that most strenuously engages the relations between home, nation, terrorism, and digital technology. Whereas Bond once served to restore the international flows of material resources, he is

now charged with the task of securing and managing data, tracking down a stolen disk that contains the names of undercover agents embedded across the globe. The exhilarating chase scene that opens the film showcases both innovative technology and the new modes of tracking that have come to define Bond's world; as he pursues his prey through the crowded streets of Istanbul, manipulating the technology that magically appears in his path (cars, trains, diggers), he is in turn tracked by another agent who herself is being tracked, via cell phones and satellite imagery, by M. The limitations of this new system (what we call the "digital spy apparatus") are exposed when M makes the wrong call from her abstracted position at the London base. Bond's *in situ* operations are upended by the detachment of the media network, which can no longer grasp the nuances of human choice and experience. If the nation is weakened here, it is not just because it is run by women, as Silva later insinuates, but because it exists in abstracted and tenuous technological networks. Still, Bond cannot escape networks, as news of an explosion at MI6 reaches his tropical retreat by way of a CNN broadcast (the television screen is mirrored in front of and behind Bond's head, dramatising his position within this mediated landscape). He quickly returns to London, donating his body (or at least the depleted uranium fragments lodged inside it) as a databank that might be used to track down the terrorists.

This return is complicated, though, by the fact that his professional home is under threat from within, and M receives no help from Gareth Mallory, the Chairman of the Intelligence and Security Committee, who is intent on dismantling her domain and replacing it with advanced technology and surveillance mechanisms. Here, perhaps, the film ventures into controversial territory, as it seems to advance a conservative agenda regarding the nation and security. In light of the breach, Mallory characterises the Secret Service as a "bunch of antiquated bloody idiots fighting a war we don't understand and can't possibly win". "We can't keep working in the shadows", he insists. "There are no more shadows". M's rejoinder affirms a more autocratic version of the nation. The terrorist in question is a former MI6 agent; "He knows us", she claims, "He comes from the same place as Bond. The same place that you say doesn't exist. The shadows". The status of "this place" proves the central issue. If "this place" – the nation – functions as a shadowy organisation, mirroring its enemies, it ceases to exist as a privileged place or even a place at all. Unaware of how her vision compromises the very status of the nation, M reasserts this equation of nation and shadows later in a public hearing before a Parliament oversight committee:

I see a different world than you do, and...what I see frightens me. I'm frightened because our enemies are no longer known to us. They do not exist on a map. They're not nations. They're individuals. Look around you. Who do you fear? Can you see a face? A uniform? A flag? No. Our world is not more transparent now. It's more opaque. It's in the shadows. That's where we must do battle.⁵

As Hasian argues, "The nostalgic longing here is for the return of a Cold-War ideology and form of state decision making that allows nations to fight in 'the shadows' without the encumbrances that come from too much democratic meddling" (2014, 572). But the battle seems already lost. As if on cue, Silva and his men disguised as police storm the courtroom, their entrance corroborating more than M's most immediate argument that the bad guys are very good at infiltrating national security. Rather, on some deeper level, it has become impossible to differentiate between the good guys and the bad guys, to defend the nation as superior to any of the other organisations vying for rights and resources within it.

No doubt, this tension affects Bond on a personal level. After all, Silva is his professional and psychological double, and his difficult relation to MI6 and England threatens Bond's own. He has all of the data on Bond – his "pathetic love of country", his "faith in that old woman" – because they share the same profile. Their similarity makes them interchangeable and replaceable, especially within the programmatic apparatus of MI6. In this struggle, though, Bond begins to "resurrect" himself as a self, not simply by reasserting his humanity, but through his adoption of a new set of skills. Unlike M, the millennial Bond does not insist on the old ways or even the "shadowy" ways; he's handy with a laptop and can read data sets for new permutations. Indeed, Silva models a relation to data that Bond himself comes to adopt successfully. After capturing him, Silva roundly dismisses Bond's claim that he's made his own "choices" and mocks him as a mere function of M's own programme. Surrounded by computer screens and wiring, Silva depicts himself as the apotheosis of free will in the digital era:

⁵ As Anderson observes, M's rhetoric is eerily similar to that of former Vice President Dick Cheney's in his defence of covert state action after 9/11: "We also have to work, though, sort of the dark side, if you will. We've got to spend time in the shadows in the intelligence world. A lot of what needs to be done here will have to be done quietly, without any discussion..." (quoted in Anderson, 10).

Chasing spies...so old-fashioned! Your knees must be killing you. England. The Empire! MI6! You're living in a ruin as well. You just don't know it yet. At least here there are no old ladies giving orders...If you wanted, you could pick your own secret missions, as I do...Destabilise a multinational by manipulating stocks...bip!...easy. Interrupt transmissions from a spy satellite over Kabul...pop!...done. Hmm? Rig an election in Uganda...Just point and click.

To be sure, Silva's egotism contrasts sharply with Flusser's utopian vision, but he models a certain ability to reprogramme the system in ways that demonstrate an emergent, more dynamic form of human agency,⁶ and this is what Bond seems to take away from the exchange. From this point on, he uses information in a new way, both releasing and withholding data in order save himself and MI6. In a beautifully choreographed chase scene, Bond and a stationary Q and his laptop track Silva through the underground's tunnels. Later, Bond manipulates a data trail to lead Silva to the trap he sets at Skyfall, where home and villain meet and are destroyed.

Working with rather than against the digital world, Bond finds his place on a twenty-first century map, so to speak and, partially thanks to Silva, he conducts a careful inventory of values. Just as the former blows up MI6, the latter must destroy his ancestral home. At this moment, Bond becomes a man for the second time, but presumably on a different footing, for he has shed the "baggage" that defined his Cold War self. Tellingly, Silva and his men casually wander through the gates of Skyfall and easily enter the grounds, effectively enacting a second "internal security breach". Bond, however, beats them at their own game by dissolving the manor's walls, destroying the home as well as its enemies. When Bond kills Silva, he is essentially killing off his older, Oedipalised self, with its perverse relation to M; from this point on, the series seems to enjoy a much more flexible and fluid relation to place and nation. As the end of *Skyfall* clarifies, Bond may be left holding M's bulldog, but he's going back out into the field. More to the point, in *Spectre*, and after Madeleine's prompting, he seems more willing to embrace his own choice, even as such is enacted within the technology that defines the new age. The latter film, again, ends with a rather beautiful image of Bond tearing off into the unknown with Big Ben on the horizon, a fitting con-

6 Anderson also points out that while Silva's queerness mirrors his wavering commitments to the nation and MI6, it here underscores his more fluid and devious use of digital technology. See Anderson, 16.

clusion to a long story arc that sought to reconcile nation and nomadicism, stability and fluidity, the past and an uncertain future.

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