

(Dis)Continuities in Bond: A Bakhtinian Analysis of the 007 Films

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Summary

Two distinctly Bakhtinian elements are relevant to understanding both continuities and discontinuities across the various James Bond films. Firstly, Bakhtin's so-called "adventure-time" chronotope has been explicitly linked, in film criticism, to the 007 movie-series, particularly in relation to the lack of character development in these movies. This article analyses how the latest cycle of Daniel Craig 007 movies show, on the contrary, clear elements of such development, linked in turn to the greater chronotopic complexity of this recent cycle. Secondly, carnivalesque motifs (casinos, circuses, carnivals *per se*) have been a feature of 007 movies since their inception. This article traces the (re)appearance of such motifs across the 24 films, as well as arguing for a broader carnivalesque significance to these films, linked in turn to their comic nature. Emphasis here is placed on continuities between the Daniel Craig cycle and earlier Bond films.

Opsomming

Twee duidelik Bakhtiaanse elemente is relevant om beide kontinuïteite en diskontinuïteite in verskeie James Bond-films te verstaan. Eerstens, Bakhtin se sogenaamde "avontuurtyd"-chronotoop word in filmkritiek uitdruklik aan die 007-filmreeks gekoppel, veral met betrekking tot die afwesigheid van karakterontwikkeling in hierdie films. Hierdie artikel ontleed hoe Daniel Craig se nuutste 007-siklus in teenstryd hiermee wys hoe duidelike elemente van sulke ontwikkeling op sy beurt aan die groter chronotopiese kompleksiteit van die onlangse siklus gekoppel kan word. Tweedens, "karnaval"-motiewe (casino's, sirkusse, karnavalle *per se*) kenmerk die 007-films sedert hul ontstaan. Hierdie artikel speur die (her)verskyning van sulke motiewe in die 24 films na sowel as argumenteer ten gunste van 'n meer algemene belang van "karnaval" in hierdie films wat aan hul komiese karakter gekoppel kan word. Hier word klem geplaas op die kontinuïteite tussen die Daniel Craig-siklus en die vroeër Bond-films.

1 Introduction

In his article "*I've been inspecting you, Mister Bond: Crisis, Catharsis, and Calculation in Daniel Craig's Twenty-First-Century 007*", Jonathan Murray (2016: 10) states that, in *Spectre*, there is a sense of a "reversion to the

traditional 007 movie blueprint ... now more possible than at any time since Pierce Brosnan's *Die Another Day*". On the other hand, Flanagan (2009: 195) describes the recent re-boot of the James Bond series, beginning with Daniel Craig's *Casino Royale*, as "a wiping of the existing continuity built up across parts of a serial text ... allowing for recasting, the retelling of origins ... and, sometimes, distancing from unpopular previous instalments". In this article, an attempt is made to show that an analysis using the Bakhtinian concepts of chronotope and carnival is useful in pinpointing both continuities and discontinuities between the recent Craig-series re-boot and the other, earlier movies in the 007 series.

Firstly, the application of Bakhtin's (1981) concept of the chronotope helps to explain our sense of plot-continuity across the various Daniel Craig films as well as the development of James Bond's character, particularly in terms of the heightened sense of time and place that seems to characterise and set apart the Craig series. The next section provides evidence for the broad assertion that, while the chronotope of adventure-time can be non-problematically applied to earlier James Bond films, the clear evidence of character development in the Daniel Craig movies constitutes a discontinuity in the series, linked in turn to the greater chronotopic complexity of these later films.

As touched on above, the retelling of origins also characterises the Craig re-boot of Bond, particularly via the use of intertextual references to earlier Bond films (see Murray 2016), one form of which is the reappearance of the carnivalesque. In this regard we note McHale's (1987: 174) observation that "[r]epresentations of circuses, fairs, sideshows, and amusement parks often function as residual indicators of the carnival context in postmodern fiction". Relatedly, Flanagan (2009: 207) emphasises the "intrinsic carnivalesque qualities of gambling". Such motifs are strikingly common in earlier Bond films and will be exemplified later. *Spectre*'s opening scene, with Bond tracking down villains during the Day of the Dead festival in Mexico City, is the most striking example of carnival in the Craig-era films and is evocatively reminiscent of scenes in earlier films e.g. the Junkanoo street-festival of the Bahamas, as represented in *Thunderball* and the representation of the Rio de Janeiro carnival in *Moonraker*. There are other carnivalesque moments as well in the other three Daniel Craig movies: the horse-race scene in *Quantum of Solace* and, of course, the casino scenes in *Casino Royale*.

As emphasised by Stam (1989: 138), "[t]he mere profilmic foregrounding of carnival itself ... does not of itself make a film carnivalesque". Thus, while the appearance of carnival scenes in these films certainly provides an exotic context, their (re)appearance in quite a few Bond films begs the question whether the carnival motifs have more significance than mere superficial glitziness; what Stam (1989: 226) calls ersatz or degraded carnival. The second main section below shifts attention to answering this question. It begins with a broad overview of Bakhtinian carnival theory. Subsequently, the article briefly explores carnival scenes and elements in the earlier

Thunderball and *Moonraker* as part of the broader context of the carnivalesque in James Bond films. Finally, the article will focus on an analysis of similar motifs in *Spectre*. The overall conclusion is that, while it might be going too far to characterise the Bond films as quintessentially carnivalesque, the carnival “logic” clearly contained in these films does point to a degree of anti-authoritarianism in them, linked in turn to their clearly comic tone.

2 Chronotopic Discontinuities across 007 Films

2.1 The Chronotope in Film

In his book on the application of Bakhtinian theory to film studies, Martin Flanagan (2009) dedicates much space to the utility, in the discipline of film theory, of Bakhtin’s notion of the chronotope, loosely translatable as “time-space”. While the term has several possible meanings, the most pertinent one for the purposes of this article is that chronotopes are “stable generic forms which are classified according to methods of representing time and space” (Flanagan 2009: 57).¹ Bakhtin uses this theoretical concept to differentiate, but then to also explain the differences between, different literary genres e.g. the folkloric chronotope or the adventure-time chronotope. It is the latter chronotope that is of particular relevance to the James Bond movie-series.

The adventure chronotope, or what Bakhtin (1981) refers to more generally as “adventure-time”, has a number of characteristics that set it off from other chronotopes, all of which have to do with how time and space are represented and embodied as well as with how time and space are seen to have an effect on characterisation. It is worthwhile quoting in full from the relevant section in Flanagan (2009: 62):

The main characteristics of this mode of temporality include a “broad and varied geographical background” ... against which the adventures take place;

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1. As confirmed by Bemong and Borghart (2010: 5), “a *definitive* definition of the concept is never offered” by Bakhtin and it is, furthermore, characterised by a “lack of analytical precision”. As such, another use of the term “chronotope” is a “more localized rendering of time and space ... Bakhtin [sometimes] refers to elements that fall into this second category as ‘chronotopic motifs’; for example, the motifs of ‘meeting’ or ‘on the road’” (Flanagan 2009: 57). Interestingly, Murray (2016) makes a strong case for the extensive use, in the Daniel-Craig cycle, of two such chronotopic motifs: ruins and subterranean settings. Funnel and Dodds (2017) also explore a whole range of such chronotopic motifs across the whole 007 series: trains, lairs, automobiles, cities etc. The focus in this article is, however, on broader chronotopes, what Bemong and Borghart (2010: 7) refer to as “generic chronotopes”.

a lack of everyday cyclical, biographical or historically bound time, which is replaced by an elastic, “extratemporal” order which has no “internal limits” and therefore “leaves no trace” in the personalities of the heroes ... and the heroes themselves, who are not realized in a psychologically complex way, or connected to real social or historical patterns, but have a purely physical, schematic function of “enforced movement through space” ... adventure-time does not adhere to principles of realism, but rather “possesses its own peculiar consistency and unity ... its own ineluctable logic”. The world of the adventure chronotope is thus ruled by chance and coincidence, structured around wild detours from reality that despite their infeasibility are perfectly acceptable with the self-determined logic of the genre.

The applicability of the above-mentioned description to most James Bond films should be evident and, in fact, Flanagan (2009) specifically mentions the James Bond series as a classical example of the instantiation of the features of adventure-time within film media. Bond films are well-known for their varied (and often exotic) geographical settings and where historical specifics are apparent (e.g. post-Cold War Russia) these have very little impact on any character development of James Bond, who remains essentially unchanged during his various reincarnations, both in and across the various films.² This is despite the fact (or perhaps because of it) that “Bond is a man who might be thought of as ‘on the move’ as opposed to being stationary like the people in his professional life – older men (M and Q) and women (Money Penny and Dench’s M)” (Funnel & Dodds 2017: 164). In short, texts that draw on the chronotope of adventure-time in any serious manner are characterised by a lack of character development and, within film studies, adventure-series such as the *Die Hard*, *Jason Bourne* and, in particular, *James Bond* series are seen to typify the relevant genre.³ What this brief section would like to argue, however, is that the Daniel Craig reboot of the Bond movie-series has introduced something different in this regard i.e. that, in contrast with earlier Bond movies, the Daniel Craig movies are, indeed, characterised by a fair degree of character development and complexity. In addition, such development is clearly linked to the manner of representation of time and place within these movies i.e. with the chronotopes that structure them.

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2. This does not mean that one cannot make connections between the James Bond films and broader historical and social currents, as Funnel and Dodds (2017), for example, clearly do. Every film is influenced by its historical etc. context. The point, however, is that the *character* of James Bond does not develop, at least in the pre-Daniel Craig films, in response to the time and space that he is situated in.
 3. See also Morson and Emerson (1990: 371): “adventure time ... continues to thrive in dime-store novels, comic strips, in movies like *Rambo* or *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and in countless television programmes”.

3 Chronotopic Complexity in the Daniel Craig Series

The Daniel Craig Bond movies are clearly set apart from the earlier 007 movies in terms of the role played by time. This is apparent, firstly, from the obvious fact that there are certain plot-elements that connect all of the Daniel Craig movies i.e. *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, *Skyfall* and *Spectre*. The whole Daniel Craig cycle is very much focused on the past; more specifically on the effect of the past on determining and explaining present events. This generally plays out in terms of the relationships that Bond enters into. We discover that Bond is an orphan. With respect to Vesper Lynd, we see Bond suffering “the heartbreak that impels him to become an inveterate heart-breaker in turn” (Murray 2016: 6), a motif unthinkable in earlier Bond-cycles.⁴ With *M* there is more than the superficial relationship characteristic of earlier 007 movies. As exemplified by Murray (2016: 9), “the developing character arcs of Bond ... and *M* from *Casino Royale* through to *Skyfall* entail that the questions the earlier movie asks of him – Is he psychologically fit for national duty? Is his national duty compatible with psychological fitness? – are increasingly posed of her instead”.

The main motif of *Spectre* is, right from the beginning, clearly the reach of the (dead) past into the present; the film, after all, begins with the epigraph “The dead are alive”.⁵ And while, in typical adventure-time style, Bond does get the girl (Dr. Madelaine Swann) in the end, this occurs not because of, but rather in spite of, his heroic status and deeds. Earlier on in *Spectre*, Swann tells Bond that “I’m not going to ask you to change: you are what you are”. But Bond does change and the end of *Spectre*, and the whole Daniel Craig cycle, entails Bond leaving behind the heartbreak of Vesper Lynd as well as his life as a spy.

Equally important, and as affirmed by Murray (2016: 8), the Craig films are often imbued with an emphasis on place:

Spectre consistently and conspicuously features (like *Skyfall*) the Houses of Parliament in establishing shots for its numerous London-based sequences. No previous Bond film comes close to matching the amount of time these two movies spend on British soil ... the 007 cycle spent decades accumulating air miles ... the Craig movies instead drive mortal danger and defenselessness

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4. The one arguable exception here is Bond’s loss of his wife in *On His Majesty’s Secret Service*, a film that is in any case set apart from the others, not least because it starred George Lazenby as James Bond.
 5. Apart from the dead *M*, the other main example of this theme in *Spectre* is Bond’s main antagonist Blofeld, whose relationship with Bond is determined by a childhood partly spent together, and who is thought to have died.

deep into the nation's physical and political heart ... a pervasive sense of national decline stalks Craig's Bond from his very first moments on screen.⁶

As much as anything else this emphasis on the effect of place on characterisation bespeaks the opposite of adventure-time. Here we have a clear departure from the varied geographical background so characteristic of earlier Bond films and there are clear connections made between the historical and cultural status of post-Cold War Britain and Bond's status as an anachronism. Bond, in these films, is clearly "a subject that is closely involved with the world and is effected by its (social and psychological) environment and the impressions left by it" (Keunen 2010: 43).

4 Bond and Carnival

In *Spectre*, as mentioned above, the words "The dead are alive" appear on the screen just before an opening carnival scene. This is immediately reminiscent of Bakhtin's (1985: 66)⁷ argument that, in carnival, the opposite spheres of life and death merge and are recognisable in each other:

Birth becomes visible in death, death becomes visible in birth, in victory defeat, in defeat victory, in elevation humiliation, etcetera. The carnival laughter ensures that not one of these moments of change are made absolute, that they do not set into one-sided seriousness.

It is thus tempting to read James Bond's world(s) in carnivalesque terms. We begin with a brief overview of this concept.

5 A Brief Overview of Carnival

The florescence of carnival was particularly characteristic of the middle ages and the Renaissance. Bakhtin (1985: 41) states that "the people of the middle ages participated equally in two lives: the official life and the carnival. Their existence was determined by two aspects of the world: by the aspect of the piety of seriousness and by the aspect of laughter". The carnival tradition, as described by Bakhtin (1984) in *Rabelais and His World* is, however, more broadly relevant as it focuses on a more universal condition; one often represented in literature and other media such as film: "it is a special condition

6. Funnel and Dodds (2017: 199-206) in fact trace the beginnings of this shift to what they refer to as "Heartland Geopolitics" to the beginning of the Brosnan era with *The World is Not Enough*.

7. The translations from German into English are those of the first author.

of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part" (Bakhtin 1985: 7). In this carnival world opposite spheres merge and are recognisable in one another. Human life is, in general, characterised by a constant dialectic of oppositional realities: duty and the absence of obligation, work and rest, fear and relief, danger and safety, enslavement and liberation. One can associate these oppositional realities with, firstly, an upward tendency: carnival rebirth implies rising, resurrection, triumph etc. On the other hand, the death of the "official" or "serious" life is associated with a downward movement: falling, death, degradation. Carnival implies a metaphorical death and re-birth. Carnival offers a cessation of serious reality and implies a metaphorical resurrection. Bakhtin (1985: 39) explains:

Seriousness reduced people to servitude, scared them. It lied, was hypocritical, it was stingy and it fasted. It was possible on the fairgrounds to put the serious tone down on the holiday table and another truth began to sound: laughing, crazy, unseemly, swearing, parodying, travesty. Fear and the lie are dispelled due to the triumph of the material-physical and that of the festive.

Carnival thus has the effect of making life endurable again by confirming that life does not only consist of prolonged seriousness and suffering: it also contains a joyful, liberating, festive energy. As Edwards and Grauland (2013: 25) point out, Bakhtin argues that in carnival "there is a release from social mores, a divergence from everyday life that provides a space wherein conventions are overturned or eradicated".

Furthermore, in carnival, both the worlds of seriousness and festivity have their representatives; their leaders. According again to Bakhtin (1985: 51), "[w]e find the center of the carnivalesque experience of the world in the custom of the elevation and humiliation of the carnival king: the pathos of transition and change, death and renewal". Part of this humiliation takes the form of ritual laughter:

Ritual laughter directs itself towards the highest. The sun (the highest god), the other gods, the highest earthly forces were reviled and laughed at. This enforced their renewal. All forms of ritual laughter were related to death and renewal, the act of procreation, the symbols of fertility. Ritual laughter was a reaction to crises in the life of the sun (the solstices), the crises in the life of the divinity, in the life of the world and the human being (see funeral laughter). Diatribe merged in that with happiness.

(Bakhtin 1985: 53-54)

Relatedly, fear, according to Bakhtin (1985: 26), is the extreme expression of a one-sided and stupid seriousness – while liberation is only possible if fear is absent. Bakhtin (1985: 36) confirms that this absence of fear is facilitated by carnival laughter through which everything threatening is transformed into the comical.

We will see in the following two sub-sections that many of these carnival motifs are present both in the earlier Bond films as well as in *Spectre* and the other Craig-cycle films.

6 Carnival and the earlier 007 films

The transition from book to film was characterised by, among other things, the introduction of a comic element. As confirmed, for example, by Benson (2006: 3), in the original Ian Fleming novels, “James Bond is not a nice guy ... [h]e’s painfully set in his ways, looks at the world with cynicism, has relatively no sense of humor, and can claim very few friends”. This is clearly in contradistinction with the filmic James Bond. Again, Benson (2006: 6) confirms that “[f]rom the onset, the producers felt that more humor needed to be injected into the stories”. Benson (2006: 8-9) refers to the series “dipping into slapstick” with the production of *Diamonds are Forever*, while in the Roger Moore era “[t]he movies ... veered directly into what could be called ‘action comedies’ rather than ‘action thrillers’”. It is notable that attempts to portray a more serious Bond (as in the Timothy Dalton era) were generally not successful.⁸

Moreover, carnivals and other carnival motifs are pervasive in earlier Bond films, although of course varying in importance. Thus to mention just a few examples, there is the opening gambling scene in *Dr. No*, the first Bond film. In *Diamonds are Forever* we have the hotel and casino “Circus Circus Las Vegas” that offers circus performances and carnival games. We note the carnivalesque Greek festivities in *For Your Eyes Only*, Pussy Galore’s “Flying Circus” in *Goldfinger*, the carnival-like funeral marches in *Live and Let Die*, the presence of circuses in *Moonraker* and circuses as a major backdrop in *Octopussy* in which Bond deactivates an atom bomb while dressed as a clown.

In *Thunderball* the ritual “festive laughter” of Bond occurs during the Junkanoo street-parade⁹ in the background. An instructive scene is during a dance, during which the villainous Fiona cuts in with the intent to lure Bond away to be executed: “Why don’t you come with us quietly”. Meaningfully, and comically, Bond responds: “You don’t seem to understand. You see, I enjoy my dancing”. The scene, and the comedy, continues with Fiona’s

8. The exception here is, arguably, the Daniel Craig series itself which is certainly more gritty; humor, and the comic, is still a core element of these movies however.

9. “Junkanoo is a street parade with music, dance, and costumes of Akan origin in many towns across Jamaica and the Bahamas every Boxing Day ... and New Year’s Eve” (Wikipedia entry for “Junkanoo”; accessed 22 March 2018).

compatriots trying to assassinate him, but Bond out-manoeuvres the henchman by using Fiona as a shield, who is killed in his stead. When he places her lifeless body at an occupied table he informs the people sitting there that “She is just dead”. The comedy is evoked through the irony of the concealment of her actual state, via the ruse that she is either very tired from dancing, or passed out drunk (or both). This humorous quip, coinciding with the relief of a villain having been removed, can certainly be associated with carnivalesque laughter, especially given the broader context of the Junkanoo street-festival in the background.

The victorious ending of the *Moonraker* preamble is also particularly carnivalesque in its associations i.e. when Bond faces death by being pushed out of an airplane without a parachute. In this scene we clearly see the upward-downward oppositional “logic” of carnival mentioned in the previous section. While Bond falls he manages to steal a parachute from the villain, Jaws, but is then “pursued” by the latter. When Jaws attempts to bite Bond whilst both are still falling, Bond opens his parachute, an act that creates the impression of him rising while Jaws falls at a far greater speed. Bond effectively places himself in the “sphere of life”,¹⁰ in contrast to the “sphere of death” which Jaws inhabits when his parachute fails to open.¹¹ Suggestively, Jaws flaps his arms comically before crashing into a circus tent. As this happens, circus music begins to play, a drum roll being heard just before impact. This is suggestive of a carnivalesque celebration and jeering of the villainous “King”: Jaws, physically the stronger enemy,¹² literally falls to his (if only transient)

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10. The spatial “top”, as elaborated on by Lotman (1977: 219-220).
 11. Here Lotman (1977: 222) refers to the spatial “bottom”, a “movement downwards” followed by “cessation of movement”.
 12. The powerful villain in Bond films often sends a henchman like Jaws, Mr. Hinx etc. who is artificially (mechanically or genetically) strengthened. Here we have a clear evocation of the grotesque and monstrous, key components of carnival. As pointed out by Funnel and Dodds (2015: 126) these unnatural and genetic anomalies are generally in contrast to Bond’s normative body and from this perspective one might want to argue that Bond himself is the antithesis of carnival, with the latter being associated with his enemies. In their later work, Funnel and Dodds (2017: 186-190) also clearly position Bond as being uncomfortable and vulnerable in chaotic, subversive settings such as carnivals and circuses, while being comfortable (and in control) in more formal settings. Among these formal settings they include the casino, failing to note its carnivalesque associations. While we certainly agree that many aspects of the Bond movies perpetuate normative constructions and thus could hardly be characterised as subversive in a carnivalesque sense (e.g. Bond movies could hardly be characterised as feminist), we believe that the comic elements in Bond do lend a certain anti-authoritarian, carnival ethos to the films. At the very least one needs to recognise the (often self-mocking) humor in many of

death. This theme is repeated in varied forms in subsequent confrontations on a cable car as well as a river leading to a waterfall.

In *Moonraker*, the Rio de Janeiro carnival forms a backdrop to a scene in which Jaws again threatens Bond and a local contact, Manuela. Manuela waits outside while Bond investigates a warehouse owned by the arch-villain Drax. Jaws approaches her in a clown costume; while coming to her rescue, Bond non-verbally and comically comments on Jaw's permanent show of steel teeth by broadly smiling at him. The carnivalesque nature of the hero and heroine's escape from Jaws is suggested by the carnival crowds that enable them to outwit the threat.

7 The Carnavalesque in *Spectre* and Other Daniel Craig Films

The carnivalesque alternation between oppression and liberation approximates aspects of the narrative structure in Ian Fleming's novels, as outlined by Eco (1992: 161):

- G Villain tortures Bond (with or without Woman).
- H Bond beats Villain (kills him, or kills his representative or helps at their killing).
- I Bond, convalescing, enjoys Woman, whom he then loses.

For example, in *Spectre*, once Mr. Hinx¹³ is killed, Madelaine Swann asks Bond, "What do we do now?" The answer is sex. Smith (2011: 483) rightly points out that Bond's "sex-capades", as a prominent feature of the storyline of most of the films, have estranged many a commentator. However, Bond's sexual activities – often represented by him being in the company of a woman at the end of the relevant film, when the oppression and threat have been made obsolete – can also be understood, from within a carnivalesque context, as not merely promiscuous, but as a celebratory representation of restoration and renewal in the "fictional 'leisure ontology' of a James Bond adventure movie" (McHale 1987: 38).

Such restoration scenes are usually portrayed in combination with a prior confrontation with his enemies that allow Bond the opportunity to move

the Bond films (Benson 2006: 7) as well as the deep *ambivalence* that the Bond films (along with the novels) display towards all non-normative mixing and boundary-crossing – see, for example, Dresner (2011).

13. Again, a figure far more powerful than Bond and whom Murray (2016: 9) describes as a "conversation-shy Übermensch" and the enigmatic offspring of Jaws.

heroically from the “sphere of death” towards the “sphere of life”. This adventure quality is also made possible thanks to one of James Bond’s most prominent characteristics i.e. fearlessness; a carnivalesque motif dealt with in a previous section. Thus despite the physical and emotional suffering caused during the torture scenes in *Casino Royale* and *Spectre*, Bond’s mockery and laughter correspond to carnivalesque laughter. Bond laughs hysterically as he tells Le Chiffre: “now the world can know that you’ve died scratching my balls”. Preceding Blofeld’s torture of Bond, he also taunts Blofeld by saying: “well, get on with it. Nothing can be as painful as listening to you talk”. Bond’s humour undermines the gravity of each torture session. Carnivalesque laughter also surfaces when Bond laughingly asks Blofeld whether he knows any other birdcalls after Blofeld has compared Bond to a cuckoo bird that monopolised his father’s attention and affection; and which, as a result of jealousy on his part, led Blofeld to commit patricide.

In true carnivalesque vein, Bond is in some important respects an anti-authoritarian figure; the world of authority and seriousness often being linked in the films to the world of evil. As Lucia Sciarra says to Bond when she tries to discourage him from going to the SPECTRE meeting following the death of her husband: “Don’t go James. If you go there you’re crossing over to a place where there is no mercy”. Similarly, the world of seriousness, as represented by the Joint Intelligence Service in *Spectre*, cannot be trusted. M (Ralph Fiennes) describes C’s Nine Eyes project, an international intelligence contract, as George Orwell’s “worst nightmare”. C justifies this monitoring as a means to counteract terrorist power. Blofeld, however, later confirms Bond’s conclusion that C is one of Blofeld’s “disciples”.

Carnival as a momentary celebration focused on the here and now i.e. worldly life in contrast to the oppressive life of the official or serious world, is also reflected by the representation of the Day of the Dead carnival that forms the setting for the beginning of *Spectre*. This Mexican carnival shares many characteristic features with other carnivals, such as a display of bright colours, energetic dancing, music, eating and drinking. It is, like any other carnival, a celebration of life and associated with laughter, the latter exemplified by the smiling sugar skulls seen as part of the festivities (see Klein 2006: 94). Kaleem’s (2015) article, “*On the Day of the Dead, a Celebration of Life to Remember the Dead*”, indeed emphasises life rather than death. But, as the title of the article implies, the Day of the Dead is also a commemoration of loved ones who have died. Through the celebration of remembering, the dead return to the “sphere of life” – hence the epigram “the dead are alive”. The dead that are alive include, in the first instance, the previous M (Judi Dench). Bond shows a video-recording to Moneypenny in which M tasks him with killing the terrorist Marco Sciarra – whom Bond follows to Mexico City. Bond says to Moneypenny: “she wasn’t going to let death get in the way of her job”. After Sciarra’s death, Bond pilots a helicopter with a contented, proud smile – an underplayed carnival laughter – echoing

the end of the film when Bond and Madelaine Swann drive off in the restored Aston Martin from *Skyfall*.

This humour, this restoration, ties in with the nature of the Day of the Dead festival: “there is nothing somber or macabre about the event. The dead come as spirits from another world to be with their living relatives and to visit in their homes” (Learn NC). McNeely (2011: 160-161) points out that the Craig series shows a growing mutual affection between M and Bond. Bond associates with and commemorates the deceased M by stopping Sciarra from exploding the stadium. Whilst doing so he has not only avoided his own death, but also extended the influence of M’s life beyond the grave. More importantly, M, by means of the recording, also orders Bond to attend Sciarra’s funeral. This enables him to find Blofeld and finally overthrowing his reign. The “King”, Blofeld (with his representative C, presumably standing for “Chief”, also a pseudo-King”) is – also through the Nine Eyes project – as Mr. White puts it, omnipresent: “he’s everywhere. Everywhere! He’s sitting at your desk, he’s kissing your lover, he’s eating supper with your family”. Because of its inhuman, cruel nature, the serious life periodically needs to be overturned. In *Spectre*, as in all Bond movies, Bond is the agent that facilitates that overthrow. This becomes even clearer when Blofeld shows Bond and Madelaine Swann the (fictional) Kartenhoff meteorite in his possession in order to serve as a simile for himself as an “unstoppable force”. Bond responds with a carnivalesque restorative metaphor, foretelling at the same time Blofeld’s fate: “except it did stop”.

The reign of literal death as a “King” and obedience to his control or submission to his cruelty is inevitable. Through the pseudo-presence of the visiting souls of the departed, the “King” temporarily loses his control. This is reminiscent of Bakhtin’s (1984: 370) description of the uncrowning of the king during carnival celebrations: “debasement and interment are reflected in carnival uncrowning, related to blows and abuse. The king’s attributes are turned upside down in the clown; he is a kind of world ‘turned inside out’”. Blofeld who is finally “uncrowned” is a “King” not only in the sense that he rules the organisation SPECTRE, but also determines Bond’s and other’s suffering. In the following dialogue, with Madelaine Swann present, Blofeld emphasises the fact that he has been the determining factor in Bond’s pain:

Blofeld: You came across me so many times and yet you never saw me. Le Chiffre, Greene, Silva.

Bond: All dead.

Blofeld: Yeah, that’s right. A nice pattern developed. You interfered in my world, I destroyed yours. Or did you think it was coincidence that all the women in your life ended up dead? Vesper Lynd, for example. She was the big one. Has he told you about her? And then, of course, your beloved M. Gone forever. Me. It was all me, James. It’s always been me. The author of all your pain.

Bond's battles against the villains in *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace* and *Skyfall* as essentially against Blofeld, leads one to recognise that the ultimate carnival moment in the Craig series is when Bond disobeys the "king's" order to "finish it". Bond's response is: "Out of bullets. And besides, I've got something better to do", a response followed by him walking away, throwing away his pistol and embracing Madelaine Swann. These actions signify his having concluded his duty, perhaps even as a secret agent, and enjoying the benefits of his own carnival.

8 Conclusion

The Daniel Craig Bond films show discontinuities and continuities with previous incarnations. On the one hand, and as emphasised by Murray (2016: 7), the films are characterised by an "attempt to insert a deeper sense of backstory and psychological three-dimensionality into the franchise as a whole". This article has argued that an application of Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope is helpful in showing that this added depth entails, in essence, a partial dissolution of the adventure-type chronotope so successfully employed in earlier Bond films, along with a resultant increase in character development and complexity, in particular through a firmer link between the character of Bond and his relationship to time as well as place.

On the other hand, one clear example of continuity with earlier Bond films is the use of carnival motifs. While it would be going too far to characterise the Bond films as subversively carnivalesque, the use of carnival motifs in the film series helps to explain their mildly anti-authoritarian tone, their tongue-in-cheek humour and, in all likelihood, their wide appeal.

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