

Julie B. Darnell. The Appropriateness of Spy Fiction for the Pre-Adolescent and Adolescent Aged Nine to Fifteen. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April 2006. 64 pages. Advisor: Brian Sturm.

This study examines the portrayal of spies and espionage in literature written for children and young adults aged nine to fifteen. Specifically, it looks at the traits and qualities of the spies as they appear in the spy fiction genre that makes the genre appropriate for the pre-adolescent and adolescent reader. This study looks at twelve books chosen from the spy genre. Content analysis methodology was used to study the works and find common themes within spy fiction that are appropriate for readers aged nine to fifteen. The method chosen to study these books is content analysis and information was grouped into main themes that emerged. The themes within spy fiction that emerged are ethics and values, the portrayal of espionage, the relationship with authority, peer relationships, problem solving skills, their knowledge, skills and training, and the use of technology.

Headings:

Spies—Fiction

Young Adult Fiction

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THE APPROPRIATENESS OF SPY FICTION FOR THE PRE-ADOLESCENT AND  
ADOLESCENT AGED NINE TO FIFTEEN

by  
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**Introduction:**

Since the end of the Cold War there have been many changes in the spy fiction genre, one of which has been books and movies featuring younger spies. The Alex Rider series, featuring a fourteen-year-old spy, began this publishing trend with *Stormbreaker* (2001). Since that series debuted, many other books featuring the child or teen spy have been published including: *SilverFin* by Charlie Higson; *Spy Mice* by Heather Vogel Frederick; *Mission Spy Force* by Deborah Abela; the *Cherub* series by Robert Muchamore; *Secret Agent* by Robyn Freedman Spizman; *Spy X* by Peter Lerangis; and *Spy High* by A.J. Butcher. The Alex Rider series is one of the most popular and in February 2005, sales of the first four Alex Rider books topped 300,000 copies. (Corbett, 22-23).

One important factor in the rise of spy fiction for children and young teenagers is the popularity of recent spy movies targeted to this young audience. The first such movie, *Spy Kids* (2001), was the number one box office hit of the summer. This movie featured two child spies trying to free their parents. (Britton, 229-230) Rick Richter, the president and publisher of Simon & Schuster children's book division, discussed the rise in popularity of child spies with children stating, "*Spy Kids* definitely kicked it off and these trends often come in waves" (qtd. in Corbett, 22). This type of movie remained popular with the younger audience and soon *Spy Kids 2: The Island of Lost Dreams* (2002) and *Spy Kids 3: Game Over* (2003) were released. In 2003 another movie

featuring a young teen spy, *Agent Cody Banks* was released with a follow-up *Agent Cody Banks 2: Destination London* (2004). Similar spy themed television shows also have become more common for this age group including *Code Name: Kids Next Door* and *Totally Spies*. Wesley Britton, who studies spy fiction and film, discussed the rise of these younger spies in popular media, “Clearly, the vogue for agents too young for drivers’ licenses but able to outfox governments and criminal organizations alike is here to stay.” (Britton, 230) The popularity of spies for young audiences continues. The Alex Rider series now boasts six books with the first feature length movie, *Stormbreaker*, expected in theaters in the summer of 2006. The release date of *Stormbreaker* will coincide with a release of a video game based on the novel.

Although much has been written about the spy genre, there has been no previous research of the spy genre in children’s and young adult literature. As a relatively new area to study, this research hopes to begin a scholarly dialogue about spy fiction for this younger audience and the value that it has. Much has been studied and written about the reading preferences of children and young adults over the years including in-depth looks into genres and the treatment of different topics within children’s and young adult literature. Genres and topics in children’s and YA literature mirror genres found in adult literature but the treatment and the presentation of the topics are geared to these younger audiences. Notwithstanding all of these studies, there has not been any recent academic study of the treatment of spies in children’s and YA literature. Spy fiction is appealing because of the sense of adventure, the mystery involved, and the ability to live vicariously in situations with which children and teens normally wouldn’t come into contact.

Novels featuring spies have been popular since the first books appeared in the late nineteenth century. Spy fiction has many appeals and has captured a large audience for years. Spy fiction is enjoyable entertainment that reflects the political values of the time it was written while it “dramatises [sic] events and gives us an insight into human behaviour [sic] in different situations” (McCormick, 2). Spy fiction also garners fans for its fast pace and exciting situations. “Part of the appeal of the spy genre, everyone agrees, is not only the nonstop action and the high-tech tools, but the derring-do spy heroes are often called upon to demonstrate.” (Corbett, 23) Spies live adventurous lives that most of us only dream about.

“All fantasy is escapism, but spy fantasies are empowering” stated Michael Green (qtd. in Corbett, 23). Teens and children today need the escape and empowerment that genres such as spy fiction embody. The child or teen protagonist does that which the reader may not be able to and exemplifies traits that are longed for. The child or teen spy is an iconic figure with traits like high intelligence, adroitness, bravery, and sophistication. They are usually trusted to complete tasks that they can do better than adults and earn the respect of those in traditional roles of authority. Spies are loners who must rely on themselves while on their adventures. They are also adept at managing a secret identity and are able to juggle an outer persona that masks their inner identity. In short, the protagonists in spy fiction have traits and characteristics which children and teens long for and yet may feel they lack in their personal life. By identifying with the protagonist they are empowered as they live vicariously in the adventures that unfold in the spy novel.

For the reader, spy fiction can fill a number of roles. In his study of spy fiction and film in popular culture, Wesley Britton summed up many of the appeals of the spy in popular culture.

On one hand, diverting entertainment takes average people out of the commonplace world and provides wish fulfillment for some, hope for others, escapism from real danger for most. Perhaps one of these fundamentals is the drive for justice or vengeance often denied within legal constraints. In the covert world, heroes and antiheroes alike do what many of us can only fantasize about or, at least, hope some group can perform on our behalf. One continuing motif in spy fiction has been the aggrieved loner out to get the villains who did them personal harm. The most dominant type of character in these stories remains the amateur who steps out of normal life, either willingly or by force, to solve problems even professionals can't address. Such stories are age old and likely to be retold in many forms in centuries to come. Within the world of spies and quasi-spies, avengers can fight evil with a license to do so or, at least, have cover to hide it. (Britton, 232-232)

### **Background:**

Spy fiction is a relatively new genre with its major growth occurring in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It emerged mainly as an adult genre that had some appeal with young adults. It is a genre that focuses on the adventures of the spy. Characteristics of the genre include conflict that is based on a threat or a fear to a country, an agency, or agent. The plot involves "the strategy to end the threat" and usually "involves retrieving or planting information, an object, or a person" (Bruce, 2001). They are usually set in exotic places and feature many action scenes that may include intrigue, killings and kidnappings. The conclusion of the novel is usually thorough with all the loose ends explained. Spies come in many forms including the professional spy, the coincidental spy, and the detective spy which all play different roles. The professional spy is one who is employed by an espionage agency without any plans to return to an old career or to give up spying,

one who has made a permanent choice to act as a spy professionally. The coincidental spy differs in that they stumble onto the opportunity to help their country by enlisting with the espionage agency to help a cause. Usually, this type of spy does not plan to make it a profession but is only acting until their missions are completed. The detective spy is merely a private eye, either employed for someone else or sleuthing to satisfy their own curiosity.

Spy fiction as a genre was born in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the first spy novels was written by an American, James Fenimore Cooper, but the genre has been heavily formed by the British, who some claim are the creators of it. Spy fiction as an adult genre grew in popularity with the First World War (Cawelti and Rosenberg, 34). The incidence of spies acting as characters in novels had grown in the latter end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but didn't grow into a genre until after the work of influential spy novelists like John Buchan and others. Buchan's novels followed a formulaic pattern of "a highly moral amateur hero and his informal allies defending the English way of life against the threats posed by a deeply malignant conspiracy led by an alien supervillain" (Cawelti and Rosenberg 43). Other important early spy novelists included Sandy Arbuthnot, Sax Rohmer, Dornford Yates, H.C. McNeile, and E. Phillips Oppenheim (Cawelti and Rosenberg, 44). The genre was soon influenced by the cynicism of writers like Eric Ambler and Graham Greene whose new version influenced the genre until the 1950s. During these years, the threat in the spy novel came from inside, as well as outside, of the country, unlike in earlier novels (Cawelti and Rosenberg, 46-47).

After World War II, the formula of the spy novel changed with the rise of the Cold War. In this new phase of the spy genre, Ian Flemming created the much loved spy

James Bond in his novel *Casino Royale* (1953). Bond is a professional spy who works for his country's secret service. The formulaic pattern of the spy genre became one where the "hero is given a mission; he enters enemy territory; he is captured, but escapes and finally defeats the enemy, thereby accomplishing his mission at the same time" (Cawelti and Rosenberg 50). During the Cold War the spy genre reached a new height of popularity. Since the Cold War ended, the spy genre has still remained a popular one that has begun to play off the increasing incidence of terrorist acts and the rise in terrorist threats.

While some predicted the end of the genre with the end of the Cold War, it is still very much alive. In an article entitled, "The Spy Novel Returns" in *The New York Times*, Joseph Finder states, "After the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, it seemed that even before the dust had settled the obituary of the spy novel was being written. With the end of the Evil Empire, spies seemed obsolete, and so did the labyrinthine narrative of the intelligence operative, with its tradecraft, safe houses, moles and dead drops. All that has changed with Sept. 11. Once again America has real enemies and a great, ambient sense of anxiety that seems certain to produce a new age of espionage fiction" (4.1). Wesley Britton, in *Beyond Bond* notes that in the 1990s the "changes in international geopolitics were now casting the intelligence community into a state of confusion" as the incidence of domestic terrorism in the United States rose. Events of terrorism like the Oklahoma City bombing and the Unabomber, as well as other acts of terrorism like the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993, the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and the attack on the USS Cole in 2000 (Britton, 217). McCormick noted that the

genre has “moved on from the Cold War theme...to the more modern topics of terrorism, such as the agent of influence and the mole” (McCormick, 317).

The spy genre for children’s and young adult literature has grown out of the popularity of the genre for adults. Whereas in the past, youth wanting to read spy novels had to read those written for adults, now there are spy novels written specifically for the younger audience. The spy genre for children and young adults features protagonists their age engaged in espionage. Books like those written by Anthony Horowitz, A.J. Butcher, and Robert Muchamore feature teenagers that have been hired by the government’s secret service to work as spies because of their special talents or natural proclivity to the job. The spy genre for children and young adults features the same themes that are found in adult spy fiction, but in the books for younger readers the situations are usually less complex, the spy hero is younger, and the literary devices are written specifically for the younger audience.

There have been studies about various aspects of spy fiction for adults. The topics studied include the history of the genre, analyzing individual books, discussions of how they mirror the political atmosphere of the time they are written, describing characteristics of the spies themselves and how they glorify qualities prized by our society, and various other topics (Weir, 1998; Banner, 2001; Price, 1996). Although spy fiction for adults has been studied previously, spy fiction for children and young adults has not been thoroughly studied. My paper aims to fill this hole in the research by studying the spy novels for children and young adults. Specifically, I looked at how the typical spy is portrayed in books written for the pre-adolescent and adolescent aged nine to fifteen. I studied what traits and qualities the spies have in common with each other

and the similarities between the portrayal of the spy and of espionage throughout the novels written for this age group. The purpose of my research is to complete one of the first scholarly studies of the portrayal of spies and espionage in fiction written specifically for this younger audience in order to broaden the scholarly knowledge available and serve as a framework or a point of departure for future studies.

Unlike the adult spy genre that has garnered lots of attention by researchers, the children's and young adult genres have been virtually ignored. There have been no scholarly studies of spy fiction for the younger audience making this an important topic for research. With the increasing rise in the popularity of spy fiction for children and young adults, as evidenced by an increasing number of books published in the past few years, it is even more important to understand the genre and its appeals. This study will help librarians and teachers understand genres available to young readers and will aid them as they help youth find books that appeal to them and keep them actively reading.

### **Literature Review:**

Spy fiction for adults has been the focus of study for many qualitative studies since the inception and popular rise of the genre. These studies have focused on various aspects of the genre ranging from general characteristics of spy fiction, recounting the history of the genre, to analyzing the style or method of specific authors or spy characters. John G. Cawelti and Bruce A. Rosenberg's monograph, *The Spy Story* (1987), takes an in-depth look into the adult spy genre by specifically studying the appeal of espionage, the history of the genre, specific forms of spy novels, specific influential authors including John Buchan, Eric Ambler, Graham Greene, and Ian Fleming, and

providing a motif and type index of spy stories. Their work centers on the premise that research of the spy genre is important because “we live in a time that has become deeply obsessed with espionage, conspiracy, and other forms of clandestinity” (Cawelti and Rosenberg, 1). They define spy fiction as inherently different from the political thriller, another genre that stories of espionage are sometimes grouped with, and point out the specific differences in themes and patterns within the spy genre. Spy fiction is defined as one in which the protagonist has a primary connection with espionage. In comparing the political thriller and the spy novel they state, “Spy thrillers, however gloomy and cynical, are not usually tragedies...there is kind of a moral triumph at the end...[the protagonist] has learned how to differentiate between good and evil and to have the moral courage to reject a life of...servitude to evil practices” (Cawalti and Rosenberg, 5-6). Another trait of spy fiction is how the setting serves as a background for all of the action to take place and is full of hidden secrets that a careful reader must watch for (55). The genre also features the innocent hero, and the supervillain plays an important role in the story. Also, the protagonist must operate under the guise of invisibility and often his life depends on it. “Everything about him—his job, his leisure time, his genuine thoughts, his personal life, if he should be so fortunate as to have one—must be either clandestine or disguised” (Cawelti and Rosenberg, 58). The basic formula of spy stories involve some aspect of chase and evasion, possible capture followed by interrogation and torture, a narrow escape, and then the agent will be on the run (Cawelti and Rosenberg, 61). Other formulaic devices that may be used in the spy genre include the turnabout (where the prey turns into the hunter); drops and exchanges (dropping information off to another agent or exchanging items or people with the enemy); defectors (those who betray one

side to join the enemy); and many others (Cawelti and Rosenberg, 63-70). Cawelti and Rosenberg claim that spy fiction is in fact a separate genre and is deserving of scholarly study.

Donald McCormick and Katy Fletcher accomplished another important study of the adult spy genre. In *Spy Fiction: A Connoisseur's Guide* (1990), McCormick and Fletcher contend that spy fiction is important to study “because of its effect in the past and its potential influence in the future...not just as an enjoyable form of entertainment, but also as a reflection of the social and political values of our time” (1). Their work consists of two major sections, a compiled list of all the adult spy novels grouped by author with short annotations of important works and a section of short essays covering topics pertaining to spy fiction. These topics include a history of American spy fiction (as opposed to British spy fiction), the treatment of real events in the novels, moles and treachery, worldwide writers of spy fiction, screen adaptations, and the future of the spy genre.

Other studies exploring the literary merits and beginnings of the adult spy genre include Alison Marie Weir's dissertation, “The spy in early America: The emergence of a genre” (1998), that explores the American spy genre and traces the history and political implications that formed it. She contends that unlike others who have marked American spy fiction as colonizing literature, her study found that it is both postcolonial and colonizing and mirrors the position of the United States as it moved from a former colony to a colonizing agent in the world. Likewise, Deborah Lynn Banner studied the establishment of nationalism through spy fiction in “Classified maneuvers: Spies and nationalism in twentieth-century fiction” (2001). By examining the texts of Joseph

Conrad, Sinclair Lewis, John Phillips Marquand, Ian Fleming, John le Carré and John A. Williams and the national and international events contemporary with their publications she concluded that the genre serves as a critique of the state about their foreign policy. Other themes within the genre have garnered scholarly study as well. Thomas J. Price studied the history of the spy genre as well as the popular perceptions of allies informed by the spy genre in his studies “Spy Stories, Espionage and the Public in the Twentieth Century” (1996) and “Popular Perceptions of an Ally: ‘The Special Relationship’ in the British Spy Novel” (1994). In these he traced the history of the adult genre and also looked at how the political viewpoints expressed in the popular spy fiction reflected the foreign policy of nations within that time span. As the political arms of the British and Americans worked together in history, that same relationship existed in the spy novels of the time. As relationships became more strained, that too is reflected in the spy novels.

George H. Lewis in “Spy Fiction American Style” (1975) discusses the differences between the American and British writers within the adult spy genre. He started his comparison by looking at the American James Bond, 007, from the Bond movies, who typifies the American hero and the British James Bond created by novelist Ian Fleming. In almost every aspect Lewis looked at (taste in clothing, food, and leisure spots, social class and personality) the American 007 and the British Bond were characterized as almost exact opposites. The British Bond defends the aristocratic society while the American 007 is anti-aristocracy and pro-proletariat. The British Bond enjoys only the best foods and wines, wears specially tailored clothing, is comfortable with “artifacts of aristocracy,” he has a quick wit, and travels to glamour spots in Europe and the Caribbean. The American 007, instead, focuses on the “nouveau riche”

atmosphere, is well dressed but not above tacky outfits including Hawaiian shirts, finds artifacts of aristocracy absurd, he is sardonic and makes bad puns, and travels to American spots like Miami Beach and Las Vegas. The British Bond also features beautiful heroines that are cherished, has immoral, heterosexual villains, and a small emphasis on technological gadgets. In contrast, the American 007 portrays heroines as sex objects, villains as homosexuals, and places a high emphasis on technological gadgets (Lewis, 132-134). This study of the characterization shows the differences in ideals espoused by the British and American versions of the spy genre. In the two portrayals of *Diamonds are Forever*, the distinctive difference between the two is clear. “007, encased as he is in his technological armor, is the rough-riding American proletariat hero, dedicated to eradicating evil; exposing the weakness, hypocrisy, moral depravity and general idiocy of the aristocratic classes; and receiving his reward from gorgeous females. Bond is the champion of a fading genteel style of life, jousting gamely (although viciously) with the nameless foreign forces of evil that are dedicated to destroying this style of life” (Lewis, 134).

### **Adolescent Development:**

To accurately study literature written for youth aged nine to fifteen it is important to understand the developmental characteristics of this pre- adolescent and adolescent age in order to understanding the characters and the appeal to the young readers. In “Adolescent Development: An Emotional Roller Coaster,” Melanie Rapp separates adolescent development stages into early adolescence (aged twelve to fourteen), middle adolescence (aged fourteen to seventeen), and late adolescence (aged seventeen through

nineteen). Early adolescence is marked by testing limits of authority; a growing interest in sex; the importance of peer groups increases; emotional distance from parents; and rapid growth. Middle adolescence is the full of self-discovery and is marked by the search for balance; performance becomes more important; and the importance of relationships. Late adolescence is focused on making life choices; preparing to leave home; and a physical distance from parents (1-10).

Robert Havighurst explored the developmental tasks of adolescence and defined the time as one of “emotional and social” lessons (30). The developmental tasks of adolescence include: accepting one’s physique; forming new and mature relations with age-mates of both sexes; gaining emotional distance from parents and other adults; achieving assurance of economic independence and preparing for a career; desiring and achieving socially acceptable behavior; preparing for marriage and family life; and building a set of values and an ethical code (30-64). These tasks are important for every adolescent to achieve so that they can become happy, productive adults.

Another similar view of adolescent development, summarized in *Hold Them In Your Heart* by JoAnn G. Mondowney, focused on young adults in libraries. Adolescence is a time to prepare for adulthood as they become more independent and move away from parents, siblings and some friends while they still strive to maintain important ties. It is a time to develop increased autonomy in making personal decisions and taking responsibility for their actions. New friendships are formed and a move is made toward greater intimacy. It is also marked by increasingly complex intellectual tasks that need to be faced. In dealing with these tasks adolescents need information, life skills, dependable

relationships, reliable bases for decision making, a sense of usefulness or purpose, autonomy, and a feeling of belonging (10-14).

Spy fiction for children and young adults often deals with some of these developmental tasks, as their young spies must confront these same tasks as they face the dangers on their missions. The emotional distance from parents is evident in the fact that most young spies are orphans, or are separated from their parents physically while at a special school, or are from divorced homes and live with an emotionally distant parent. The young spies are forced to become independent with training that teaches them to work on their own and be suspicious of motives behind offers of help. Yet while this independence is gained, the peer groups of the young spies become increasingly important. In some spy fiction novels, this is strengthened by teamwork and training with other young spies. Often, like with their real counterparts, their life brings a sense of loneliness and isolation as they play an acceptable role for those around them. The spies learn to solve complex intellectual problems that usually involve the lives of many other people. And when things go wrong, they have to learn to take responsibility for their decisions. Spy fiction written for this younger audience shows successful completion of these tasks in a dramatic, entertaining, and thrilling story. The young spy can then become the ultimate ideal for adolescents as they achieve these tasks, and others, in a way that the reader can only dream about. It serves as an escape into a world that empowers teens and shows that they can save the world.

**Method:**

In order to study the depictions of spies and espionage in current children's and young adult literature the method of content analysis was chosen. Content analysis is "the study of recorded human communications" (Babbie, 314). Content analysis is highly useful with some topics because they "are more appropriately addressed by content analysis than by any other method" (Babbie, 314) as the books themselves, in this case, are studied. In this study, the recorded communications being studied are spy books for younger readers in order to discover the characteristics and distinguishing factors these books share. This study recorded both latent and manifest content from the books chosen.

For this study, a spy is being defined as one who actively participates in espionage for their country or state and thus excludes the detective spy (like Nancy Drew or Harriet the Spy) who spy on others out of curiosity or the desire to solve a crime or mystery. A spy is defined as "a person employed by a government to get secret information about or monitor the affairs, plans, armed forces, etc. of another government" (Webster's). Picture books and those not appropriate to the age group being studied were also excluded. Novels were chosen that featured a young spy as the protagonist. Books that were part of a series were chosen with the hope that the characters may be more fully developed than those appearing in single novels. The units of analysis for this study will be spy fiction books written for children and young adults aged nine through fifteen years old. In order to obtain a potential population for research, a number of sources were consulted in order to make up a list of possible books for study. A list of books taken from *Children's Books in Print* (2005) under the heading of Spies—Fiction were then

checked to see if they matched my criteria for subject matter. I also checked WorldCat, local library listings, and Amazon.com under the headings of spy and espionage for more titles that may be available to read but not listed in *Children's Books in Print*. Some titles were also found by shelf reading at libraries and bookstores, and by reading reviews and booklists. The sampling used in this study is non probability purposive sampling “in which you select the units to be observed on the basis of your own judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative” (Babbie, 183). I selected books from the compiled lists that met my criteria of novels within a series featuring a spy who worked for a country or state, was written for the age ranges of nine to fifteen year old readers, and had espionage as a major theme. The books chosen for the study come from four series, all of which feature young spies that work for government or international agencies. The first three books from each series were studied including:

Abela, Deborah

*Spy Force Series*

*Mission: In Search of the Time and Space Machine*

(2002 Australia, 2005 US)

*Mission: Spy Force Revealed*

(2002 Australia, 2005 US)

*Mission: The Nightmare Vortex*

(2003 Australia, 2005 US)

Butcher, A.J.

*Spy High Series*

*Mission One* (2003)

*Mission Two: Chaos Rising* (2003)

*Mission Three: The Serpent Scenario* (2003)

Horowitz, Anthony	<i>Alex Rider Adventure Series</i>
	<i>Stormbreaker</i> (2000)
	<i>Point Blank</i> (2001)
	<i>Skeleton Key</i> (2002)
Muchamore, Robert	<i>Cherub: a division of MI5 series</i>
	<i>Mission 1: The Recruit</i> (2004)
	<i>Mission 2: The Dealer</i> (2004)
	<i>Mission 3: Maximum Security</i> (2005)

The books used in this study were purchased through bookstores or borrowed from local libraries to allow enough time for each book to be read thoroughly and thorough notes taken in order to gather the information for coding.

In order to draw out themes in the spy novels and the characteristics of the spies themselves, I recorded manifest content and latent content. Manifest content studies the concrete terms in the written work and latent content studies the underlying meanings in the work. I recorded the bibliographic information of each book as well as the country of origin of the author, description of the spy (age, sex, country, etc.), the portrayal of the spy, and the portrayal of espionage. Also noted was information regarding other young spy characters in the novels that were not the main protagonist. Notes were taken on each book and quotations recorded that served as examples of themes within the books. Some of these themes include their ethics and values, the portrayal of espionage, the relationship with authority, peer relationships, problem solving skills, their knowledge, skills and training, and the use of technology.

In a content analysis study of the images of teachers in children's storybooks, Sarah Jo Sandefur and Leeann Moore looked at teachers as their topic of study (2004). This study analyzes 62 titles and 96 images of teachers in order to see what qualities and characteristics teachers were presented with or if they were seen in a stereotypical manner. They found that the teacher is usually portrayed as a white, non-Hispanic, woman and that negative depictions far outnumbered positive teacher images. The study also found that images of teachers are polarized with them either being very good, or very bad. Sandefur and Moore conclude that the images children encounter of teachers in books profoundly shape their expectations and views about education and its importance. This study acts as a model for a content analysis study of children's books in which specific characteristics of characters are recorded. This method would allow for other characters or images in children's and young adult literature to be studied based on the relevant possible characteristics that they exhibit. Similarly, in a content analysis of spies in children's and young adult literature, characteristics of the individual spy can be recorded and a composite picture of spy fiction as a whole can be created.

Spies and espionage are a much-loved aspect of our popular culture evidenced by the popularity of movies and books featuring James Bond or the *Spy Kids* movie series as well as many others. Spy fiction reflects the values, fears and ideologies of our society and can influence children as they read. "The fictional spy...is a medium for expressing our noblest aspirations. In his loneliness, his isolation, there is also the opportunity for heroism, manifested as self-possession, inner strength, the courage to do what he feels is right and to make such decisions while removed from societal pressures." (Cawelti and Rosenberg, 76-77) It is important to be aware of what themes and ideas are being

expressed in these novels in order to understand their popularity. The popularity of spy fiction for adults has been studied and it only seems reasonable that spies in children's and young adult literature is an equally important topic to study. Since no real research has been done on this topic for younger readers, this study is important to bring attention to this hole in the research and garner interest for further studies.

This study took place from January 2006 through April 2006. The books were purchased or checked out from local libraries. As each book was read, notes were taken with all pertinent information and useful descriptions recorded. Notes were also taken recording quotes from the text that exhibited adolescent developmental traits.

Information such as character development, personality, and character traits will be recorded as well in order to capture latent content regarding the portrayal of spies.

Possible themes expected to emerge included the portrayal of an accelerated maturing process of the spy character, glorification of the spy and espionage by their descriptions and many others.

Although using a methodology like content analysis excludes some ethical issues that researchers deal with in other studies, there are still issues that must be addressed. The ethical issues found in this research design include researcher bias in selecting the sample. By using a purposive sample selection process, the sample chosen has a possibility for bias as the researcher chooses books that fit their criteria. The researcher must be objective in their choices so that the results don't mirror what they expect to find. In order to prevent this bias from occurring books will only be excluded from the study if they do not match the criteria chosen to facilitate answering the research question.

There are many advantages to using content analysis as a methodology for this study. There are fewer ethical implications to be concerned with because there are no human subjects or participants in the study. There is also less cost involved because unlike surveys, interviews, or more intrusive laboratory studies, there are no surveys to mail with postage and other expenses, costs in traveling to interview subjects or to bring them to a lab. Another advantage to content analysis is that the sample is always available for study and if portions of the study need to be repeated it easily lends itself to repetition.

Some disadvantages with choosing content analysis as a methodology lie in the limitations of what can be studied. Since only written communications can be studied, that limits research questions to those that can be asked of the written documents themselves, like my question of how spies are portrayed in children's and young adult literature. Questions that are excluded from studies using this method are those exploring why children and young adults like spy stories or what aspects of the stories they enjoy the most. Other excluded questions involve surveying libraries and librarians about their feelings about the genre and the perceived importance of the genre in collection development. Instead, only questions asking how the genre is portrayed or biases presented in the text itself can be studied.

Other limitations of this study include the lack of previous research on the topic of spies in literature for children and young adults to provide a framework for my study. The framework instead is based on previous topical studies in children's and young adult literature and the research done on spy fiction for adults. This study will instead serve as a stepping stone for further research in the topic area.

### **Findings:**

Each series focused on the same protagonists. In some series, the protagonists worked together on teams and so more than one main spy character was the focus of the book. Of the four series, three of them focused on a single protagonist with supporting characters, and one of them focused on a spy team of six protagonists and alternated the viewpoints throughout the novels. In all, there were nine protagonists that were featured in the books. Each was a spy, or a spy in training, for government or international agencies. Four of the nine were female and five were male. Two were eleven years of age, four were fourteen years of age, and the ages of three were never identified although they were peers and team members with fourteen-year-olds and it is implied they are also the same age. Two of the nine are British while seven are American with various backgrounds. Four are orphans, one lives with a single, divorced parent, two have both parents, and two of the nine never state their family background.

In two of the series, the protagonists are chosen to attend special schools for the training of spies. The Deveraux Academy is nicknamed *Spy High* and is a high school for “exceptionally talented” students who train for espionage work (Mission Two: Chaos Rising, 3). “Spy High was created to be a bastion of good against the forces of evil, a place where the young train to keep the world safe for tomorrow” (Mission One, 62). The teens of *Spy High* are trained and work together in six person teams when they go on missions. In the *CHERUB* series, the young spies are trained at the *CHERUB* headquarters. *CHERUB* is a special branch of the British MI5 agency that was founded during World War Two that uses children and teens as spies because “Adults never

suspect that children are spying on them” (The Recruit, 1). It has two hundred and fifty agents aged seventeen or younger that live and train for missions on the CHERUB campus. Only the highest government and intelligence officials know about the CHERUB agents and the facility is top secret. While the children and teens are trained together, each child is chosen individually for missions that may involve other child agents as well, but it focuses on individuals rather than teams like Spy High.

In the other two series that were studied, the protagonists live normal lives until it is time to serve a mission. Fourteen-year-old Alex Rider lives with his housekeeper after his uncle is killed. The British intelligence agency, MI6, has discovered Alex’s natural abilities and asks him to help them. His first mission was successful and after each successive mission he is called upon to help again, sometimes after only a few weeks. Alex is not paid for his help and he does not rely upon the espionage agency for his way of life like the young spies portrayed in other novels who live and train at the agency. Similarly, Max Remy is an eleven-year-old who lives with her divorced mother and stumbled upon the opportunity to join Spy Force, an international agency. Max always dreamed of being a spy and after one adventure with a villain was asked to join Spy Force. Max and her friend, Linden, are called upon for future missions as Spy Force finds them helpful for certain undercover operations. For Alex and Max, spying is only a part of their life.

#### Ethics and Values:

The protagonists and characters in spy fiction must grapple with ethical issues as they face the implications of their adventures. Adolescence is a time in which ethics and personal values must be chosen. This theme is evident throughout the spy novels studied.

The dilemmas presented in the novels may be more extreme than most adolescent readers will have to face, but the process is the same and readers can relate to the protagonists as they work through these types of issues.

Alex Rider begins his life as a spy when he makes a decision to put another person's welfare above his own, which is characteristic of our young spies. Alex is given a choice by MI6, help them spy or have his American housekeeper and guardian deported. "Alex considered, but not for long. He had no choice, and he knew it." (Stormbreaker, 54) Another example of this is when he is on his first mission. MI6 has promised to pull him out of the mission if Yassen Gregorovich, a contract killer who murdered Alex's uncle, is involved, yet when Alex's opportunity to pull out comes, he refuses it. "If Yassen was there, Mrs. Jones had promised to pull him out. And suddenly Alex wanted to see this through to the end. Something was going on at Sayle Enterprises. He'd never forgive himself if he didn't find out what it was." (Stormbreaker, 133)

When Alex is trying to escape a dangerous situation and save thousands of schoolchildren, he is faced with a grim decision. A guard is blocking his escape, and Alex must decide if killing the guard is worth it. "It would be easy enough to shoot the guard right now. A harpoon in the back and the Jeep would be his. But Alex knew he couldn't do it. Whatever Alan Blunt and MI6 wanted to turn him into, he wasn't ready to shoot in cold blood. Not for his country. Not even to save his own life." (Stormbreaker, 202) Alex has an ethical code that prohibits taking a life and it guides his actions in extreme circumstances. Yet later, when Alex knew that millions of people's lives were at stake, he had no qualms shooting non-lethal shots at the enemy to stop him from detonating the device that would devastate the country. "Shoot first and ask questions

later was a line from a bad film. But even bad films are sometimes right. He emptied the gun.” (Stormbreaker, 220) Here a distinction is drawn, violence is necessary at times, but killing is unethical.

As Alex’s experience as a spy expands, the repulsive nature of killing at all changes and it begins to seem more necessary in justified cases. His second mission takes him to a private school in the Alps that is run by Dr. Grief who cloned himself and plans to take over the world. Alex is captured and about to be killed by Dr. Grief, but he escapes and is later sent back to the school to lead the special operations forces who are deployed to apprehend Dr. Grief and his men. A fight ensues and Dr. Grief escapes into a helicopter and begins to take off. Alex sees a snowmobile lying near him in the snow and grabs it as his plan to stop Dr. Grief forms. “The helicopter slowed and Grief turned. Grief raised a hand, waving good-bye. Alex caught sight of the red glasses, the slender fingers raised in one last gesture of defiance. With his hands gripping the handlebars, Alex stood up on the foot grips, tensing himself for what he knew he had to do.” Alex drove the snowmobile over to the ski jump, jumped off the machine, and “watched it rocket into the air, propelled by the huge metal slide...The makeshift torpedo hit its target full-on” causing the helicopter to explode and kill Dr. Grief (Point Blank, 256-257). Alex had broken his code of ethics and must either forgive himself for violating his code or else change his values to match his actions. The experience leaves Alex changed and he returns from this mission with “a coldness about him, as tangible as the mountain snow” (Point Blank, 261).

On his next mission Alex is horrified at the thought that he may have caused more deaths. In order to save an American CIA agent that he was working with from a boat, he

started a small fire on board to serve as a diversion. After Alex and the agent had escaped and swam away from the boat it exploded. Alex “knew at once that nobody could have survived. And with that knowledge came a terrible thought. Was it his fault? Had he killed them?” (Skeleton Key, 143). As the agents discuss the events later Alex is sure that the fire was out before they left the boat and denies that he killed everyone, but no one believes him. He is faced with the prospect that he may have killed many people.

In another situation that isn't linked directly to an assignment from MI6, Alex sees the local drug dealer peddling at his school and decides to take matters into his own hands. It wasn't just enough for him to call the police and “something inside Alex rejected that idea. Maybe he would have done that a few months before: let someone else take care of it. But he hadn't cycled all this way just to call the police... This was something he wanted to do himself” (Point Blank, 26). Alex decided, instead, to use a crane from a nearby construction site and lift the drug dealer's boat/laboratory out of the river and set it down in front of the police station. Yet his plans didn't work as envisioned and instead it crashed through the roof of a convention center and injured many people. Although he was attempting to live by his moral code and fight evil himself, he did not take enough thought into his actions and instead the event turned sour.

Similarly, the protagonists in *Spy High* face ethical dilemmas in the course of their missions as well. They form a six-man team of fourteen-year-olds called Bond team. After being taken hostage by a mad scientist, three of them escape and try and save their teammates and stop the villain. Jake overpowers one of the hired guards, takes his laser gun and points it at the guard's head. Another guard says, “You wouldn't kill a man in cold blood. You're just a kid.” At this goading, Jake responds, “Yeah?... Then I'm not

going to get prosecuted, am I?” He doesn’t shoot the guard, but his teammate Eddie “glanced up at Jake’s eyes. They were full of fury. He was glad Jake was on his side because it was suddenly, startlingly clear that he meant what he said. If necessary, Jake would fire point blank into the man’s skull” (Mission One, 150). When his teammates asked Jake afterward if he would have shot the man, he only asks one question in return, “Would you?” and leaves them to decide what course of action he would have taken (Mission One, 152). The team is beginning to realize that their training brings them face to face with ethical issues that they’d never confronted in reality before. Later, Lori is faced with a similar situation when a drug addict takes hostages and she stops fighting. Although she thought she could take them on herself, once they had hostages she stopped fighting them because she didn’t want to place innocent lives in danger. “The rule she lived by: Never endanger an innocent life. She prayed she wouldn’t regret it” (Mission Three: The Serpent Scenario, 73). Instead, she gave up and found herself in an even more dangerous situation. But to Lori, the sacrifice was worth it even though it brought grave ramifications for her.

On another mission, Jake faces another ethical dilemma. A terrorist disaster affected his family, and when he returns from school to offer help his father asks him to stay on indefinitely. Jake faces the decision to show loyalty to his family or to pursue his own independence. Jake tells his father that he never intended to return permanently and his incredulous father asks, “You’d leave us again, by, after what’s happened? You’d abandon your family again, would you? Your mother? Your sister?” (Mission Two: Chaos Rising, 72). Jake finally makes peace with his father yet retains his independence while showing his father that his intent isn’t to abandon his family. “You taught me how

to think for myself. You gave me the confidence and the strength to make my own choices. And I've made them, and they've taken me away but you should be glad, Pa. I want you to be happy for me. And when it matters, like now, I'll always come back. You're never going to get rid of me entirely" (Mission Two: Chaos Rising, 80). Jake made a decision to retain his independence but still show loyalty to his family. He is not going to abandon them completely. His ethical code wouldn't allow for that, but he is going to pursue his own life.

After one harrowing experience on a runaway train, the Bond team discusses the ramifications of blowing their cover and letting civilians see them in action. *Spy High* technology includes the mind wipe that removes any memory of chosen events. This technology may be used on civilians. As they discuss this possible process, Cally asks the others, "Going around mind-wiping people might protect us, but what about the rights of those whose memories are removed? Which is the greater good there?" (Mission Two: Chaos Rising, 106). The discussion is cut short by the next adventure, which is disappointing, but it does raise a necessary ethical question. Where do the rights of one individual impede on those of another? And, is the personal benefit worth infringing on the rights of others? These questions are ones which adolescents grapple with on a regular basis.

The *Spy High* series brings up many ethical issues without much discussion or debate about the issues. Another example comes when Lori, another member of the Bond team, is confronted with the opportunity to manipulate an inventor with dementia by pretending to be his granddaughter who died years earlier in order to harness his genius to save a member of her team. "What she was going to do: Was it ethical? Was it

right? Did the ends justify the means? Lori wasn't sure. All she knew was that one person and one person alone held the possibility of saving Cally" (Mission Two: Chaos Rising, 165). This type of self-introspection, albeit at times shallow, is also evident with Eddie who faces the decision to put his own safety aside to save a team member. He asks himself, "Could I do that? Could I risk sacrificing myself for the others, for the team? And if not, why am I even here? When will my chance come?" (Mission Two: Chaos Rising, 184) Eddie has begun to realize that his training in espionage has lead up to these questions that must be addressed. He had to be willing to put others first and see his life as secondary. Soon, he is able to prove himself as he offers himself as a diversion so that a teammate could be saved and the villain defeated. "Nemesis sensed him immediately. It raised its head like an animal suddenly aware of a new smell...[Eddie] hoped the others would be with Cally now. He'd given them their opening" (Mission Two: Chaos Rising, 190-191).

Often the training Bond team is given at Spy High states that their needs, desires, emotions and safety are subordinate to the success of the mission. In most cases, the young spies relegate their feelings while on missions, but Cally showed moral courage in a mission when she drew a line that she would not cross. Undercover as a drug dealer, Cally refuses to actually sell the dangerous substances to kids. "Absolutely not, Cally was vowing. There was a line she would not cross, not for the sake of poor dead Jennifer, not for anyone or anything. Nothing was worth the sacrifice of her principles, not even the mission" (Mission Three: The Serpent Scenario, 137).

Grant, the mission controller for Bond team, made an interesting distinction between legal actions and ones necessary to take. The leader of a foreign country is

being investigated for selling drugs, yet with his diplomatic immunity legally nothing can be done. Yet the mission controller still brings Bond team together to discuss the situation and plan a course of action. “None of our agencies can touch him. By the same token, we can’t enter the Cultural Exchange Building whatever might be going on inside without appropriate Wallachian authorization. ...Legally, Tepesch can produce as much Drac as he likes in there, and we can’t do a thing about it. Legally, our hands are tied.’ ‘And that’s the system?’ Jake scorned....”What about illegally?’ ‘Illegally is why we’re having this briefing,’ said Grant... ‘what about illegally means, how do you fancy a second visit?’” (Mission Three: The Serpent Scenario, 205). This distinction is one that allows teens to question even the legal guidelines of society and critically accept or reject them based on their ethical code and personal value system. In this case, the teen spies had to decide if they were willing to throw legalities aside in order to fight for their values.

The series *CHERUB: A Division of MI5* also features a special school for training spies. James Choke, later renamed James Adams, is recruited from a home for children after he is orphaned at eleven years old. James comes from a troubled family background where his mother ran a shoplifting crime ring and he has been in trouble for fighting and stealing previously. His ethical code evolves as he moves throughout his adventures and is forced to reexamine his values. “Ending up in this mess made James start asking questions about himself. He knew he wasn’t a very good person. He was always getting in fights...James remembered all the times his teachers told him he was wasting his potential and that he’d end up in a bad way” (The Recruit, 16). Although he begins to question his values, he still ends up running with the wrong crowd, smashing up cars and

vandalizing them, and is arrested for stealing beer from a liquor store. At this time CHERUB recruits him and he sees it as a way to make a new start. But James still has a hard time giving up his old ways. He sneaks off the CHERUB grounds to go and visit his sister, gets in a fight, and messes up a mission by taking too many risks. Yet he does begin to take responsibility for his actions and admits to his faults and errors in judgement.

After his training James is given his first opportunity to go on a mission and he begins to face the ethical issues involved in espionage. James and Ewart, his mission controller, discuss them after James objected to how roughly a woman was treated on the mission. James asks Ewart, "How can we do that to people?" and Ewart answers, "We were trying to get info about a man selling weapons to terrorists. The weapons could kill hundreds of people, so we decided it was okay if two people lost their jobs.... Like they say, James: You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs" (The Recruit, 242).

After his first mission is completed James reflects on everything that happened and tried to make sense of it all. "James couldn't figure out what he was himself. As far as he could tell, he'd stopped one small bunch of bad guys killing a bunch of bad guys and a bunch of good guys got kicked out of their homes by another bunch of bad guys. Did that make him good or bad?" (The Recruit, 321).

The second mission James participates in is investigating a drug dealer. James is part of a team that infiltrates the drug ring and for a time James works as a drug delivery boy. This doesn't seem to bother him and he finds he enjoys the money that he makes from it, although at times it is dangerous. Unlike Cally in the Spy High series, peddling

drugs does not seem to be against James ethical beliefs. Yet after the mission is over, James turns his earnings from selling drugs in to CHERUB who donates it to a charity that helps young people with drug problems (The Dealer, 294). As James gets closer to and friendlier with the head of the drug ring, Keith, he begins to see him as a normal man. James begins to doubt what his reactions will be in the event that he had to turn Keith in. “James asked himself what he’d do if he saw Keith making a run for it. Would he grab his mobile the second he realized, or give time for Keith to get away?” (The Dealer, 263).

Near the end of James’ mission he ends up in a fight where his life is at stake. James is able to disarm his opponent and take his gun away from him. James “remembered his firearms training: from a safe position you can shoot to wound, but if you’re in mortal danger you can’t risk missing. You have to aim for the biggest target: the chest” (The Dealer, 277). James shoots his attacker and is “stunned by the fact that he’d just fired a bullet into a real human being, James felt sick as he scrambled over his bleeding victim and into the hallway” (The Dealer, 277). Although James escapes, he is haunted by the fact that he killed a man and has repeated dreams about it. “James stared at his hands...studying the finger that had killed someone a few hours earlier. He didn’t exactly feel guilty about killing a man who was going to kill him, but it did make him a bit sad. The guy probably had a mother, or a kid, or something” (The Dealer, 287). This description seems shallow and unrealistic of the emotions and ethical reasoning that would accompany such an act. But James is still trying to figure out his values and the ethics of espionage.

On his next mission, James is sent undercover inside a juvenile prison in Arizona. He pretends to be a convicted killer and must play the part and violence is one necessary aspect of that. In order to keep his cover he has to be ready and willing to fight just about anyone. Yet on many occasions James tries to minimize the violence that occurs. He protects one young convict, Abe, who gets picked on by the other more violent inmates (Maximum Security, 121). When other inmates tell of their violent pasts James is “appalled, but he listened intently and laughed when he was expected to” (Maximum Security, 142). After witnessing the violence that is perpetrated against those with low status in the prison he wished he could make things more equal. “James found Abe’s acceptance of his low status depressing. Abe was doing twenty years, and looked like spending most of it getting slapped around and bullied. James wanted to think up some desperately clever scheme that would make everything fair, but he knew the world didn’t work that way; least of all inside a place like Arizona Max” (Maximum Security, 146). He did what he could to prevent unnecessary bullying and refused to participate in it when possible. “He kept trying to find ways to minimise [sic] the daily violence without appearing soft, but he knew that the more time he spent with psychos like Elwood, the more chance there was he’d end up involved in an incident where someone got badly beaten, or stabbed” (Maximum Security, 165).

Again the idea that “good people sometimes get hurt when you’re trying to catch the bad ones” (Maximum Security, 174) appears to justify the actions involved in espionage that may normally be seen as morally wrong. This common theme throughout all the books is evident here as well. James has to knock out and disable a guard when he escapes from the prison for the mission and feels bad doing it, especially since his

“conscience tripped over the idea of laying out a girl; but the mission depended on him holding his nerve” (Maximum Security, 174). Again the message that espionage has different ethical considerations and standards from normal life in society is evident.

The ethical questions raised in the *Spy Force* series are not quite as large as some of the issues previously discussed. This series is geared to younger audiences and so the problems and issues presented are less complex. Max dreams of being a spy and takes any opportunity she gets for an adventure. While visiting her aunt and uncle scientists on their farm, she decides to reunite her Uncle Ben with his estranged brother, Francis by stealing his latest invention. The idea that it is wrong to steal her uncle’s invention is never discussed; instead Max is excited about her possible adventure. “She would go. Max would take Ben’s Matter Transporter to go to London and find his brother, tell him how Ben felt, and get the two of them talking. She’d also see if he’d finished the Time and Space Machine and if he hadn’t, she’d help the brothers change the world with it” (In Search of the Time and Space Machine, 66). When Max asks her friend Linden to help her his only concern is their safety and the issue of stealing the invention is never discussed.

When Max is finally inducted into Spy Force as an official agent, she and her friend Linden are invited to the headquarters. Spy Force is full of state of the art and creative inventions that are used in espionage and for security purposes. One of the most ingenious is the Wall of Goodness which acts like a lie detector test. Beyond it are the restricted areas of the headquarters and everyone who enters must pass this point first. It only allows people it recognizes as a good person to pass that point and go further. “The Wall of Goodness seemed to be having trouble deciding whether to let Max pass. It

made choking, gurgling noises and jostled her around even more, so the massage became more like the spin cycle of a washing machine" (Spy Force Revealed, 143). After a short time Max was allowed to pass through and join the others on the other side of the wall. This example shows how important motives are in espionage. Since agents are trained to deceive and hide their true identities, it is imperative that they are moral, ethical people with only the best motives at heart.

After the villain Dr. Blue captures Max and Ella, another young spy, they are given their options, she can either remain loyal to Spy Force and its ideals, or she can join Blue in his evil schemes. "Max and Ella hadn't accepted [the] offer of joining the ranks of Blue's Foods. In fact, Max had been so opposed to it, she had suggested that [he] take the offer and put it somewhere that sounded really painful. As a result of her blunt suggestion, Max's and Ella's backpacks had been removed and they'd been tied up with rope and tossed onto one of the conveyor belts like sausages on a barbecue" (Spy Force Revealed, 237). They would rather face torture than give up their morals and loyalty to fighting evil.

Like the conclusions that James from CHERUB came to, the world is not a simple place and people are not just good or just bad. Max is warned of seeing the world too simplistically from the villain Blue on another mission. "Maxine, you're a very bright girl. Be careful what you believe. Not everyone is simply a good person or a bad person. Otherwise the world would be a very simple place. And simple it is not (The Nightmare Vortex, 206). The world isn't simple and the young spies are introduced to the complex nature of it as they are forced to construct their own value system.

These novels all deal with similar ethical issues as the protagonists construct their individual moral code and personal values. The common themes presented include valuing the good of others above the self, the need to stand up for personal values regardless of consequences, and the necessity to act instead of remaining passive in ethical situations. The main ethical issues that the protagonists face include using violence or deadly force, the use of manipulation and deception, the rights of others versus the rights of self, and the necessity of hurting good people in order to accomplish a greater good. As the protagonists come into contact with these situations they are forced to create or uphold their moral code and personal value system. One of the major tasks of adolescence is to create a personal value system and these books exhibit this important process. Spy fiction can allow young readers to experience these situations vicariously and may aid them to consider and develop their own value systems.

#### Portrayals of Espionage:

Many different aspects of espionage are portrayed in these books written for this younger audience. Only one of the nine young spies portrayed has reservations about spying and dislikes it. Alex Rider never wanted to be a spy, yet he participates in missions when asked to protect his lifestyle and to protect innocent people although he feels used by the intelligence agency. The other eight spies are grateful for their opportunity to be involved in the exciting world of espionage and to change the world for the better.

Cawelti and Rosenberg point out that part of the appeal of spy fiction is based on the readers' desire for a clandestine life and the readers' feelings of alienation from

society. “We think it is this sense of alienation and the deep feeling of conflict between individual self and social role which it engenders that makes the figure of the spy so compelling as a contemporary everyman hero.” (Cawelti and Rosenberg, 32). Teenagers feel this dual pull as they try to fit the social roles that are constructed for them yet want to express their own growing sense of individualism. This conflict can lead teens, as well as those of all ages, to identify with protagonists who do in fact live the double life that espionage provides.

Alex Rider was coerced by MI6 into working with them. After his uncle, an MI6 agent died, the MI6 officials gave Alex a choice, either help them by becoming a spy or be placed in a home for orphans and have his housekeeper and guardian deported and sent back to America. Alex chose to work for them but never became enthusiastic about his work. On his first mission he became discouraged after life threatening escapes and other dangers. “He stood for a moment, holding the suit in his hands. Suddenly everything seemed unfair. He had never asked to be here. He had been forced into this by MI6 and he’d already done more than enough. There was nothing on earth that would make him enter the blackness of the water. It was simply too much to ask. But Ian Rider had swum through...These people—Sayle, Yassen, whoever—had snuffed out his uncle’s life simply because it had suited them. Well, he didn’t die for nothing. Alex would see to that.” (Stormbreaker, 160) Later, Alex reflects back on his experiences with MI6. “He had been chased, shot at, and almost killed. And at the end of it he had been packed off and sent back to school as if nothing had happened...But it was the secrecy that was getting to him...Alex didn’t want to boast about what he’d done, but he hated having to deceive his friends. It made him angry. MI6 hadn’t just put him in danger.

They'd locked his whole life in a filing cabinet and thrown away the key" (Point Blank, 16).

When Alex bumps into an MI6 official coincidentally and then is approached about doing surveillance work, Alex's mistrust is great. "Was it just coincidence...? Unlikely. In the world of MI6, where everything was planned and calculated, there were no coincidences. It was one of the reasons Alex hated it. They had used him twice now, and both times they hadn't really cared whether he lived or died, so long as he was useful to them" (Skeleton Key, 26). In this portrayal, agents are used as pawns in the intelligence game without much choice in the matter. It dispels some of the glamour surrounding the adventures of espionage.

In Spy High espionage is portrayed as a pervasive force in society as an all-seeing entity. Inside the main building of the Deveraux Academy, the façade for Spy High, is located the main location for collecting information from around the world, the Intelligence Gathering Center. "Nothing happens on the earth today that we don't hear about as, or in most cases, *before* it happens. This room is the eyes and ears of our operation. It tells us where we're needed and why" (Mission One, 52-53). The IGC is full of computers and screens displaying live sounds and pictures from all over the globe at the same time.

As the students arrived at Spy High to begin their training and careers as secret agents, they were greeted with a welcome speech by the founder of the Academy that explained the purpose and role of spies in the world and the mission of Spy High. "From the moment you became students at this institution...you turned your back on your

previous existence and committed yourselves to a daring, dangerous future. Your training period at Spy High will be two years of constant challenge. You will be tested, tried, examined. Driven to your limits and beyond. And there will be no respite, no retreat, no place to hide. Not for one day, not for one moment.... At Spy High, only the strong survive, because only the strong can protect this nation and this world of ours from the dark forces that threaten to destroy it” (Mission One, 54-55). As a secret agent, their whole way of life is transformed and there is no going back. Espionage is not just a job, it’s a way of life that asks for a lifetime commitment to the ideals it presents and protects.

The teens at Spy High are taught that espionage also calls for the removal of all emotions from a successful agent. “For secret agents, emotions were bad. Emotions were baggage. They weighed you down, muddled your thoughts, got in the way between you and what had to be done. A secret agent had to repress emotions, eliminate them” (Mission Two: Chaos Rising, 14). This message is repeated often in their training. Repressing emotions is seen as a form of discipline that must be mastered. “You have to learn to put your personal feelings aside, whatever they are, for the good of the cause. None of us is more important than the mission. To be a successful agent, you have to be single-minded” (Mission Three: The Serpent Scenario, 9). Although emotions are to be repressed, instinct is to be trusted and relied on. “Engraved in the Spy High Book of Rules: Nothing is too small not to matter. Tiny clues save lives...Never disregard your feelings. Your feelings are the way your subconscious warns your conscious mind to beware” (Mission Two: Chaos Rising, 83). This distinction is important because it shows that useful feelings, instinct, are tolerated and admired while being emotional is seen as being easily distracted and potentially dangerous.

CHERUB recruits James for espionage work because he is physically fit, intelligent, and he has an appetite for trouble. “We need kids who thirst for a bit of excitement. The things that get you into trouble in the outside world are the sort of qualities we look for here” (The Recruit, 71-72). He takes the training tests for admittance into the program. CHERUB looks for specific traits in its recruits including strength of character, a desire to be part of CHERUB, high intelligence, moral courage, courage and bravery, and good judgement (The Recruit, 85-86). CHERUB also places the safety of their agents above the mission and never asks them to do anything they are unwilling to. “If you think you are in a dangerous situation, pull out and we’ll clean up the mess afterwards. We’d rather abandon the whole mission than risk one of you guys getting hurt” (The Dealer, 121). This attitude toward their agents creates strong bonds of loyalty and willingness to participate in dangerous situations because the children know CHERUB only wants the best for them.

Similarly, Spy Force presents a positive view of espionage. Max dreams of being a spy and finally her dream come true when she receives her induction letter to Spy Force. Spies “carry out the noble and time-honored task of fighting crime and other dastardly acts for the protection of humanity and betterment of the world” (Spy Force Revealed, 171). The young spies are warned that espionage can also be dangerous. “Danger will become your closest associate, lurking behind you like a black panther. Quiet and dangerous and ready to strike at any second” (Spy Force Revealed, 172). There are many facets of skill that an agent must have to be a successful spy, but the most important skill is being able to follow your instinct. “Most of being a good spy is instinct, but there’s also fitness and agility” (The Nightmare Vortex, 39).

The portrayal of espionage in these books paints a picture of bravery, instinct, intelligence and skill. Espionage places the interests and safety of the individual second to those of the group. The inherent message conveyed is that the individual must conform and think about the good of society as they act. This addresses the developmental task adolescents' face as they try to achieve socially acceptable behavior and fit into society. Adolescents trying to fit into the adult world may relate to the young spy protagonists as they learn to fit into the world of espionage. Espionage, like adulthood, is portrayed as having both positive and negative aspects that must be understood and accepted to become successful.

#### Relationship with authority

The protagonists' relationship with the authority figures in their lives seem to be a complicated balance between working as equals and respecting the difference in status. They are often treated as adults because their work makes them equals as they risk their lives for the benefit of society. In some cases, the young spies do things which adults cannot do and therefore draw power and status from their abilities and skills. Yet this power is often tempered by their seeming lack of control over their lives and the assignments that they are given by the adults in charge.

Alex Rider at fourteen-years-old has incredible prestige for his age and has even been honored by the Prime Minister for his bravery and skills as an agent. Yet he often feels like a pawn in the game of espionage. "Blunt had forced him into this. In the end, the big difference wasn't between him and James Bond wasn't a question of age. It was a question of loyalty. In the old days, spies had done because they loved their country, because they believed in what they were doing. But he'd never been given a choice.

Nowadays, spies weren't employed. They were used." (Stormbreaker, 228) Alex is used by MI6 and is seen as one of their most valuable weapons. In a discussion between two MI6 officials, one is pleading with the other to stop using Alex since he's only a boy. "I think you're forgetting that Alex has just saved the world. Again. The boy is fast becoming one of our most effective operatives. He's the best secret weapon we have. We can't afford to be sentimental about him. We'll let him rest. But you know as well as I do, if the need arises, there's nothing to discuss. We'll use him again. And again" (Skeleton Key, 323). Alex is a prized commodity to MI6 and is treated much like any other agent, regardless of his age. MI6 is in the business of intelligence and uses whatever means are necessary for a successful mission, including using Alex.

Alex learned to mistrust the officials that he worked for. They were never forthright and always seemed to keep secrets from him. "You can never trust them. Alex had already learned not to trust the head of MI6" (Skeleton Key, 105). Often even simple information was withheld from Alex and other agents. Even the leaders of MI6 themselves were cloaked in secrets. "As usual, Alan Blunt didn't seem particularly pleased to see him, preferring to study the file on the desk in front of him rather than the boy himself. It was the fifth or sixth time Alex had met the man in overall command of this section of MI6, and he still knew almost nothing about him" (Skeleton Key, 79).

Like Alex, Lori of Bond team also shows signs of distrusting the information the officials of Spy High give them. She points out the coincidences that have occurred in their training, like on their first mission when they thought they were camping but "we just *happened* to be dropped so close to Frankenstein's lodge...All so convenient, wasn't it? From campfire to baptism of fire in one easy move" (Mission Three: The Serpent

Scenario, 49). The officials at times fail to give them all of the information they are privy to and only gives them the information they deem is necessary for the missions.

On CHERUB missions James checks in with the adult mission controllers frequently to update them on new developments of the mission. The conversations are short and to the point. One example is when James receives a brief phone call from Ewart, the mission controller, “Don’t wind me up, James, I’m in no mood. There’s two things for you to keep an eye out for. In your photos of Bungle’s shack there’s a white folder with a RKM logo on the side...Try and get a look at it...Second, look out for a red van. Amy spotted Fire and Water getting out of it, but couldn’t get the whole number plate. Got all that?” As soon as James answered affirmatively, Ewart ended the call without leaving any time for more interaction (The Recruit, 293).

Often those in a position of authority are noticeably absent allowing for the independent actions of the adolescent spy. The young spies meet with the mission controllers before a mission, make brief and intermittent contact throughout the mission, and report back after it concludes. One of the greatest tasks of the adolescent is to distance themselves from their parents, and in this similar situation, the protagonists must distance themselves from those in authority and act alone.

### Peer Relationships

The nature of espionage work can create a lonely atmosphere, especially for the young teens that are learning to create deeper and more meaningful relationships. Loneliness is common because of the emphasis on independence and secrecy. When the teen spies work predominately alone, it is even more common. Even among teams it is hard to create deep and meaningful relationships when missions take precedence over

personal feelings. Alex Rider poignantly described these feelings of loneliness after his first mission was completed.

The worst time to feel alone is when you're in a crowd. Alex Rider was walking across the schoolyard, surrounded by hundreds of boys and girls his own age. They were all heading in the same direction, all wearing the same blue and gray uniform, all of them thinking probably much the same thoughts. The last lesson of the day had just ended. Homework, supper, and television would fill the remaining hours until bed. Another school day. So why did he feel so out of it, as if he were watching the last weeks of the spring term from the other side of a giant screen?...At first, he had thought the whole school had somehow changed while he was away. But he knew now that what had happened was worse. Everything was the same. He was the one who had changed. (Point Blank, 24-25)

The Bond team of Spy High is not a unified group. There is a power struggle between the team leader, Ben Stanton, and Jake Daly. Jake often undermines Ben's authority because he resents Ben's pompous arrogance. As the team was recruited each individual's traits were considered to see if they could form a cohesive group, yet they didn't form the team that had been expected. In order to diffuse the tension between Jake and Ben, Eddie Nelligan had been recruited. "The hope was that Eddie's sense of humor might create a kind of buffer between Ben and Jake's particular brands of intensity. So far, unfortunately, it hadn't happened. In today's Stromfield program, for example, Ben had jeopardized the mission by not following orders and trying to reach the core before Jake as a matter of personal pride. Jake had then compounded the disaster by contradicting Ben over the defusing of the bomb, when the team leader had been right all along" (Mission One, 39-40).

The power struggle between Jake and Ben is not the only decisive aspect of the team. They haven't gotten to know each other or learned how to act like a team and so many of the teammates feel isolated. At one point Cally decides to run away and

confides in Jake before she leaves. “I’m going. For good, yes. I don’t belong here. Nobody wants me here. Nobody’ll miss me” (Mission One, 88). Jake convinces Cally to stay and finally she agrees to give it another chance, but the feelings of loneliness are still present. Cally was not the only member of the team who felt isolated. Eddie felt left out of the group also. His feelings were compounded when he was chosen to go for help instead of helping his team escape Dr. Frankenstein’s lair. He wondered if his teammates doubted his usefulness on the mission. The decision “left poor old Eddie Nelligan out in the cold again, an irrelevance. Just like now” (Mission One, 156).

Bond team finally begins to come together and act as a team for their third mission. Their shared experiences have brought them closer together after having to rely on each other in dangerous situations. When Jennifer, a member of their team, is killed, they are brought together by their shared grief. Jake was the one who found Jennifer’s body and grieves for her after her death. Soon the team is reunited “and their grief brought them together, closer together, even him and Ben” (Mission Three: The Serpent Scenario, 103). After this somber moment, the relationships among the team members are more supportive and united as they work together.

When he’s not on missions, James and the other CHERUB agents are close friends. In the field they learn to rely on themselves, but when back on campus, friendships are important. “The whole crowd went to the cinema Friday night. Bruce, Kyle, Kerry, Callum, Connor, James, Lauren, and a few other kids. James was happy being part of a big group” (The Recruit, 220). James is happy with his life as an agent and living on the CHERUB campus. “When he pulled on his uniform and walked down to breakfast, he knew most other kids looked at him with respect. Whenever James got to

the dining room and looked around for a seat, there were always a few tables where he could sit amongst friends, spreading the latest gossip and winding each other up” (The Dealer, 301).

Max and Linden became good friends on their adventures with the time and space machine. He was one of her best friends now and she was sad that he lived in the country while she lived in the city. They emailed each other frequently, but it wasn't quite the same. "She missed Linden...Before she met him she was happy not having any friends. She'd made heaps before but just when she was happy, her mom and dad would decide to move again and she had to say good-bye to them, so it was easier not to make any in the first place" (Spy Force Revealed, 13). After becoming a spy and becoming friends with Linden, Max was happier because she was no longer quite so alone and felt like she had important things to contribute to.

All of the spies are capable to work independently, yet it is important to them to have friends their age that can relate to what they are going through. In the case of those like Alex Rider, the loneliness when there is no one to share a friendship with can be acute. Yet even those who do have peers to ease the loneliness work well alone and are independent.

#### Problem Solving:

The ability to solve problems in life threatening situations is a major trait of the spies portrayed in these novels for adolescents. In each novel, the spy must think quickly in the midst of dangerous situations in order to save themselves and others. The protagonists are intelligent, creative, and have a quick wit as they come with at times ingenious ways to get out of trouble.

When Alex Rider's uncle, Ian, had died, he was left with many questions surrounding his uncle's death. He had been told that Ian had been killed in a car accident because he hadn't been wearing a seat belt, but Ian was always very careful about safety and never drove without his seatbelt. Alex began a search for the truth that led him to a wrecking yard where he saw Ian's car full of bullet holes. After a dangerous escape from the wrecking yard, Alex continued to follow the clues until he was summoned to the bank where his uncle had worked. Alex found Ian's office and devised a plan to break in to see if there were any further clues about his uncle's death. "Perhaps the office next door might tell him why. What exactly was Ian Rider involved in?...The flag fluttered again and, seeing it, Alex went over to the window. The pole jutted out of the building exactly halfway between rooms 1504 and 1505. If he could somehow reach it, he should be able to jump onto the ledge that ran along the side of the building outside room 1504. Of course, he was fifteen floors up...It was a stupid idea...Alex lowered himself onto the ledge...he took a deep breath. And jumped" (Stormbreaker, 34). Alex found a way into Ian's office and continued to piece together the clues regarding his death and discovered that Ian Rider had been an agent for MI6.

At times Alex solved problems by relying upon people's perceptions of children. On one adventure Alex is spying on the manufacturing of computers laced with the smallpox virus when a guard finds him. The guard "hadn't expected to come across a boy. That might help. 'Who are you?' he asked. 'What are you doing here?' 'I'm staying with Mr. Sayle,' Alex said. He stared at the gun. 'Why are you pointing that at me? I'm not doing anything wrong.' He sounded pathetic. Little boy lost. But it had the

desire effect. The guard hesitated, slightly lowering the gun. At that moment Alex struck” (Stormbreaker, 170-171).

Alex had become adept at solving problems during his time at MI6. One example is when he needed to escape a building in the Alps only accessible by helicopter. Alex had been snowboarding before so he decided that was his best option for escape, although he didn’t have a snowboard. “He needed a snowboard now. The ironing board would have to do” (Point Blank, 220). He used his disguised Discman saw to cut the ironing board down to the right size and then tied his leg to the sliced off supports. He had created a passable snowboard to facilitate his escape.

Alex relies on his training and knowledge often when he is solving problems that arise during his missions. After the adult CIA agents he is working with on one mission fail to return from a scuba diving search, Alex decides to go after them. He soon finds himself bleeding and facing a shark that is circling him. “Desperately, Alex tried to draw on what little knowledge he had...[the shark] has receptors built into its snout that can detect even the tiniest electrical current. A beating heart for example” (Skeleton Key, 190-191). Then, as Alex continued to think, the words that his uncle had told him years ago came back to him reminding him not to make any sudden movements and that sharks are attracted to shiny metal objects, bright clothes, and fresh blood. As the shark attacks, Alex suddenly moves and the shark swims into a dangerous rock and is killed.

In the *CHERUB* series, James is resourceful when he faces problems. After his mother died, he found her safe where she stored thousands of dollars and figured out how to open it so that her boyfriend, Ron, wouldn’t be able to steal the money. After James

got the money safely back to the youth house he was staying in, he devised a plan to keep Ron from being able to find the money even if he came looking for it. James had a cassette player and decided to gut the insides and hide most of the money there. He hid smaller amounts of the money around his room in more obvious places. “The idea was, if Ron tried to break into James’s room he’d find L4,000 easily, and never realize there was L39,000 more stuffed inside a cassette radio so crummy looking even Ron wouldn’t steal it” (The Recruit, 39).

During James’ basic training, he and his partner Kerry are punished for fighting. They are forced to stay outside the barracks on a freezing night dressed only in their underwear. Together, they come up with a solution to their problem and build a shelter to protect themselves from the extreme cold. James suggested that they go to the bridge on the assault course, “There’s a gap under there before the water starts. We could put branches and stuff along the sides to keep out the wind” (The Recruit, 164). Before they build the shelter, they rummage through the garbage to see if there is anything useful. They gathered everything that was dry and would burn into a pile, the edible food they set aside for later, and they used the garbage bags to wrap around their feet and bodies to keep warm. James figured out a way to start the fire, he took tinder and lined the inside of the garbage can lid with it, and took the lid to where a security camera was set up on the outside of a building. He used the electricity running through the wire to light the tinder on fire, and carried the lid back to their shelter to build the fire. Together, James and Kerry made it through the night and the rest of basic training.

Another example of James’ problem solving skills occurred on one of his missions. A man with a gun chased him throughout the house. James ran into a room,

shut the door, and gained a few moments to look for a weapon. He needed any weapon to defend himself. “James slid one of Keith’s LPs off its rack. He had learned in weapons training that you can make a dagger by shattering any object made out of hard plastic. He leaned the record sleeve against the wall and stamped on it with his bloody trainer...The second he saw the pistol coming through his door, James grabbed the muzzle with one hand while plunging the sharp piece of plastic into the gunman’s wrist” (The Dealer, 276).

Bond team also is forced to use their problem solving skills on numerous occasions. On one mission, a terrorist group, CHAOS, is trying to wreck havoc on the entire world through a massive computer virus. The Bond team is travelling on a computerized train when the virus attacks it and tries to destroy the train and all the passengers aboard it. The team decided that they must reach the cockpit and override the computer system controlling the train. The only way they can reach the cockpit is by climbing outside the train and making their way towards it on the exterior. They use nitronail explosives to force their way out of the train and climb carefully with their clingskin for extra grip along the outside of the train until they reach the cockpit. Once inside the cockpit, Cally is able to manually override the train and slow it to a stop (Mission Two: Chaos Rising, 97-100).

When Max and her friends at Spy Force stumble into a vortex where nightmares come true, Max is able to figure out what is happening and come up with a plan to defeat their enemies. In this vortex, Max, Linden and Ella face their greatest fears and nightmares, but it is only Max who recognizes what is happening. As she realizes that they face their nightmares, she begins to understand that those they face are not real and

can be defeated by being courageous and not giving into personal fear. Max tells the others she solved the problem and knows how to handle the evils they are facing. “Tell them they’re not real...They’re not real Ella. The vortex has taken us into some kind of world where our greatest fears have come to life” (The Nightmare Vortex, 176). She finally convinces the others to believe her, and soon “The men in coats began to waver, like mirages in the sun” (The Nightmare Vortex, 185).

Effective problem solving skills involve both intelligence and confidence. The spies presented both of these traits on their missions as they faced challenging problems that had to be overcome. These examples show the ingenuity and creativity they used to escape dangerous situations and to keep others safe. They effectively solved the problems placed before them independent of adult help and with a confidence that their decisions were right for each situation. This confidence and intelligence in problem solving situations is important for each adolescent to gain as they complete tasks to become competent, healthy adults. The young spy protagonists of these novels show an example of these traits to the readers.

#### Knowledge, Skills or Training:

The MI6 officials who recruited Alex Rider for espionage work are amazed at his training and knowledge. Alex’s uncle and guardian, Ian Rider, was an MI6 agent who, before his death, seemed to be preparing Alex for work in espionage. One of the MI6 official remarked that Ian Rider had been “preparing Alex to replace him. Ever since the boy was old enough to walk, he’s been being trained for intelligence work...but without knowing it. I mean, he’s lived abroad so he now speaks French, German, and Spanish. He’s been mountain climbing, diving, and skiing. He’s learned karate. Physically he’s in

perfect shape...I think Rider wanted Alex to become a spy” (Stormbreaker, 72). After Alex had been officially recruited, he was given a brief, intensive training with the British Special Air Service to augment the skills and knowledge he already had. The training was brutal, but it prepared him for many of his future adventures. “He learned map reading, radio communication, and first aid. He took part in an unarmed combat class and was knocked to the ground so often that it took all his nerve to persuade himself to get up again. And then there was the assault course” (Stormbreaker, 61). His training prepared him well for the many adventures he would face.

The training that the students at Spy High receive covers many subjects deemed necessary for successful spies to have mastered. They were trained in spycraft, the history of espionage, weapons, discipline, tactical planning, infiltration techniques, physical education, and martial arts (Mission One, 66). They are also taught psychology so that they can understand the mentality of those they come in contact with and use that knowledge to exploit the situation to their advantage (Mission One, 8-9). For example, when facing the villain Stromfeld, Ben remembers his lessons and uses the information to help diffuse the situation. “*Play on their vanity, he remembered from spycraft lessons. Puncture their sense of self-importance. Make them mad*” (Mission One, 19).

Each member of Bond team also was recruited because of individual skills and talents that would complement the group as a whole. Ben Stanton was chosen for having many key features. “A brilliant mind. An outstanding athlete. A potential asset to the cause” (Mission One, 31). Jake Daly was chosen for his reputation as being “a rebel. A nonattender at school only because he had already learned more than the undertrained staff could teach...A powder keg of potential...He was powerfully built and fought like a

natural, instinctive and deliberate” (Mission One, 37-38). Eddie Nelligan was recruited after being identified as “a teenage prodigy with one-liners as sharp as his racing skills” (Mission One, 39). Cally Cross was recruited for her skill with technology. “This was what she was in the group for—her wizardry with all things technological. While the others had watched Stromfeld or weighed up the guards, her eyes had been totally devoted to these systems, to assimilating and memorizing what the technicians had done, to girding herself to break the codes and destroy the missiles before they could reach their destinations” (Mission One, 20). Lori Angel had an impeccable background. “Her face and form said beauty queen; her academic record said genius—almost off the scale” (Mission One, 44). Lastly, Jennifer Chen who was “without doubt the most talented martial artist for her age that anyone at Spy High had seen” (Mission One, 44).

James was skilled at math and can do complex math in his head in mere seconds (The Recruit, 51). He was recruited after his mother died, leaving him an orphan. He was chosen “because you’re intelligent, physically fit, and have an appetite for trouble” (The Recruit, 71). These natural talents were enhanced by the training that CHERUB gives their agents.

CHERUB agents went through basic training for 100 days in order to earn the right to go on missions. As James prepared for basic training the other agents told him horror stories from their training like “being cold and muddy, not getting enough to eat, smashed bones, stitched up cuts, being forced to exercise until you either puked or fainted” (The Recruit, 101). One of James friends, Kyle, tried to reassure him about training, as he became more nervous about what was ahead. “I can’t sugarcoat it...Basic training is the worse hundred days of your life. That’s the point. Once you’ve been

through it you're not scared of much else" (The Recruit, 101). Training consists of running the assault course, physical training, language, weaponry, and survival skills (The Recruit, 145). James' assigned language to learn was Russian and everyone in basic training learned a language such as Arabic, Japanese, and Swahili.

Once basic training is over, there are continued lessons in order to hone skills. James had classes in math, Spanish, Russian, history, martial arts, and self-defense classes on a regular basis. "They were teenagers and their unarmed combat training meant that they could handle themselves against most adults" (Maximum Security, 77). CHERUB placed emphasis on training their agents well, not just for their safety and usefulness in the field, but also to give them an opportunity for a productive life after they aged out and graduated from CHERUB. "Classes have ten pupils or fewer. Everyone learns at least two foreign languages. We have a higher proportion of students going on to top universities than any of the leading public schools" (The Recruit, 70).

After being inducted into Spy Force, Max and Linden attend spy training at the Spy Force office in New York. There they found themselves in a gym with equipment for a myriad of training exercises. Training consisted of physical fitness exercises like jumping jacks, sit ups, and work on the treadmills. More involved training took place in the virtual reality chamber that allowed them to train in more realistic circumstances as they learned to rappel down cliffs and cross dangerous rivers (The Nightmare Vortex, 44). The training became easier with time and soon Max "successfully maneuvered her way through the Infrared Night Vision Enemy Hideout course and managed to infiltrate a maximum security Bad Guy Lair to save a captured Spy Force agent" (The Nightmare Vortex, 73).

All of the agents proved to be intelligent and talented. With additional training they were able to do things the average person would never think a child was possible of doing. The abilities of the spies allowed them to gain an equal footing with the adults that they worked with and to gain their respect. The novels show that knowledge is empowering and can give adolescents the confidence to make a difference in the world.

Technology:

The MI6 officials working with Alex Rider refuse to let him go on missions armed, but they do offer him specially designed gadgets to help him get out of trouble. All of the gadgets are designed to look like something the average fourteen-year-old boy would carry with him. On his first mission he is sent off with three devices. The first is a motorized nylon climbing rope disguised as a yo-yo. Next is acid designed to burn through metal disguised as zit cream. Finally, he is given a Game Boy with hidden extra functions including a fax/copier, and X-ray machine that can see through walls, a bug finder to clear a room of recording devices, and a smoke bomb to create diversions (Stormbreaker, 79-80). For his next mission he is given more ingenious gadgets. Alex is given a bullet proof ski suit and ski goggles with infrared vision. He is also given a Discman that converts into an electric saw with a diamond-edged CD blade to cut through anything. The Discman also has a panic button to signal MI6 directly for help. There is also a diamond stud earring that acts as an explosive once the back is taken off the earring and a copy of Harry Potter with a stun dart loaded into the spine (Point Blank, 108-111). On his third mission Alex is again given many gadgets to help on his mission. This time he is given a cell phone with a dart in it, a key chain that activates into a stun

grenade, and gum that when chewed expands to break or shatter anything it is placed in (Skeleton Key, 94-97).

The Bond team of Spy High uses many high tech gadgets. The series is set sixty years in the future allowing for creativity in creating the futuristic tools. They are outfitted with sleepshot, an anaesthetic shot from wrist bands to knock out enemies, and a belt-brain which stores holographic images and maps in a belted device (Mission One, 8-9). Another commonly used tool is the radar vision film that stretches around the head to allow an individual to see perfectly in 360 degrees (Mission One, 12). On every mission the teens wear shock suits which have electricity running through them that can be activated to shock their enemies and use nitronails, mini explosives that are worn on the fingernails until needed (Mission One, 20; 79). They train in virtual reality chambers while lying in cyber cradles so that they can learn to face any imaginable foe. They ride SkyBikes, like motorcycles operated by magnetic power (Mission One, 70). The team also tries out a new device, SPIEs, Surveillance and Protection Invisibility Emitters which makes them appear invisible (Mission Three: The Serpent Scenario, 117).

The technology used by CHERUBs like James is more common than the futuristic devices used by Bond team of Spy High. On one mission James uses a digital camera to gather evidence about a suspect and later a lock gun to open a locked workshop to look around (The Recruit, 286, 294). He is also trained in using GPS units (The Dealer, 5)

Spy Force uses many imaginative and far-fetched gadgets like the Matter Transporter which moves objects through space almost instantaneously (In Search of the Time and Space Machine, 89). Other gadgets include the invisible jet, the Sleek Machine (an invisible glider), bottomless bags to take on missions, substance analyzer meters,

watch radios, laser guns, cupcake bombs, and truth gum (that makes anyone who chews it tell the truth) (Spy Force Revealed, 168, 185-187). There is a special division of scientists at the Spy Force headquarters that invent the items used by the spies on their missions. Silencio is a spray that makes a person completely silent and a Freeze Ray makes a person unable to move. The Slimer is used to cover your enemy in a purple, chewy slime that makes it hard for them to move. The Personal Flying Devices look like regular backpacks, yet they transform into devices designed to help an agent escape trying circumstance (The Nightmare Vortex, 113).

**Importance of Study:**

This study is important because a study of spies in children's and young adult literature has not previously been done. The spy fiction genre has been virtually ignored by researchers. A study of spies in children's and young adult literature would open up scholarly discussion of a subject that has been neglected up until this point. With the rise in the popularity of spy fiction for children and young adults, it is important to understand the genre and its appeals as we work with young readers. This study will help librarians and teachers understand more fully the genres available to young readers and will aid them as they help youth find books that appeal to them and keep them actively reading.

**Summary and Conclusions:**

This study aims to fill a hole in prior research in children's and young adult literature by studying spy novels written for young readers aged nine to fifteen. It looked at the traits and characteristics of the spy portrayed in the novel as well as the depiction

of espionage within these books. Twelve books within four series were selected to study using content analysis looking at manifest and latent content to gather data about spies and espionage. Themes emerged throughout the books studied that mirror developmental tasks of adolescence. Adolescence is a time to form values and decide on ethical behavior and that is a major theme within the spy novels. The protagonists must form their personal ethical codes as they face issues like using violence in self-defense, using lethal force, and the deception inherent in espionage. Overall, the books portray the negative and positive aspects of espionage. They show the action, adventure and glamour, yet they also show the coercion and loneliness that comes from living a double life. Adolescence is also a time to become more distant from parents and achieve independence. The spy novels generally show protagonists that do not live with parents, they are orphans or away at school, and gain independence this way. Also, their relationships with other adults and authority figures in their lives is more equal in status and mutual respect since the children and teens are doing things that adults cannot do. The protagonists are empowered by their profession and by the respect and independence of espionage. Other themes that emerged throughout these spy novels for young adolescents include good problem solving skills, excellent knowledge, training and skills for their missions, and the use of technology as an aid and help on their adventures.

Espionage has always been popular with people of all ages attracted to the enigmatic and charismatic characters, the action and suspense woven into the plot, and the chance to live vicariously in the soul of a hero of some sort. Spy fiction emerged as a genre with the coming of the First World War and the new worries and threats that emerged in society at that time. Since then, the adventures of the spy in literature have

remained popular throughout later times of peace and war. Each succeeding threat in the world has brought with it the gradual change to the plots and themes found within spy fiction. It has remained popular till the present day and the adult genre has been the subject of much scholarly study. Through my study, I hope to bring attention to another avenue of study that is equally important, namely, spy fiction for children and young adults.

This study has limitations based on the chosen methodology, content analysis, and time and budget constraints. Yet it brings to light many other aspects of spy fiction for children and young adults that merit further study. Although it is known that children and young adults enjoy spy fiction, studies are needed to ascertain how popular it is and what ages are drawn to the genre the most. Is it more popular with boys or with girls? Does the sex of the spy make a difference to whether a boy or a girl would read the book? This research would not only help librarians but also teachers, parents, and publishers as well. Other avenues of future study could include performing interview or surveys to find out the impact, if any, that spy fiction has on young reader's international viewpoint and their political assumptions and beliefs. Does being exposed to a certain country as the villain of choice in the spy genre bias the child against that country? Does their reading act merely as entertainment or is it forming their view of the world? Do librarians, parents, and teachers find spy novels useful and important for children and young adults to read, or is it merely another form of entertainment?

Other aspects of spy fiction that could be studied in future research include studying the rate of publication, whether it is on the rise and what effect international upheaval and war has on the publishing rate. Questions could also ask what qualities

exhibited in spy fiction make it appealing. Or studies could look at the difference between American and British spies and spy fiction and the portrayal of espionage based on the norms and ideals of each society.

As I've shown, there is still much that can be studied on the topic of spies in children's and young adult literature. I intend my research to be an interesting framework and a useful starting point for further research on the subject. Studying spies in children's and young adult literature is important because the books, stories and characters are popular with young readers and in order to serve them well we must understand the appeal of the books that they read. Understanding the genre will improve readers' advisory and other functions in the library as we interact with the younger audience.

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