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Bond's New Bod: Gender (de)construction in Casino Royale, Quantum of Solace, and Skyfall

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Bond's New Bod: Gender (de)construction in *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall*

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Abstract

This thesis examines how gender is constructed in the three most recent films of the James Bond series: *Casino Royale* (2006), *Quantum of Solace* (2008), and *Skyfall* (2012). The argument revolves around individual gender identity being structured by greater social and culture influences. The thesis argues that the three most recent Bond installments work to deconstruct the traditional masculine ideal established and reinforced throughout the series. Each film instead confronts the looming anxieties of outdated Western norms. Through the hypervisibility of Bond's physical body, the detachment and increasing isolation created by emerging technological influence, and a nostalgia inflicted by the loss of British imperial power and dominating masculine power, the three films expose the interworking's of a character that embodies greater Western ideals.

Keywords: Gender, sexuality, constructed, masculine ideal, Bond

The main reason the James Bond series continues to thrive since its inception decades ago can be found in its ability to incorporate emerging social trends while maintaining its established and recognizable traditions. This methodology directly applies to the series' portrayal of gender identity. The three most recent Bond films *Casino Royale* (2006), *Quantum of Solace* (2008), and *Skyfall* (2012) have attempted to step away from the purely formulaic model of their predecessors without completely severing themselves from the series' traditions. These modern films are aware of the gender disparities in the past Bond portrayals, acknowledge them, and then proceed to deconstruct the seemingly untouchable gender models that have been so thoroughly enforced. A modernized view of femininity and masculinity unfolds as being directly linked to the security, strength, and maintenance of the global economy and the Western world. Without England, MI6, and the long history of detailed tradition that come along with the series, Bond would cease to be anything. Past depictions of Bond's identity are dominated by strict narrative form, solidified patriarchal gender roles, and global consumerism. The contemporary Bond is manufactured and influenced by all the same factors of the modern age, but instead of them forming a solid, stable masculine ideal, Bond's identity seems to be one in crisis. He fails to fit into the impossible male role model created by his predecessors, creating a more honest version of masculinity for the next generation. This thesis examines how these three Bond films introduce and construct gender, deconstruct it, and finally reestablish and configure it according to a changed social reality. The films suggest that cultural and social systems not only structure individual identity, but also are essential to it. There is no escaping socially constructed gendered identity precisely because it is an essential component of identity.

Applying Judith Butler's theory of gender construction to the Bond series, I aim to examine the developed construction of a specific kind of masculinity present in Bond, but also

the deconstruction of that masculinity in *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall*. Each film in the series has been able to adapt to the attitudes of society and gender present in the time of its production. The adaptation these three films undergo reflects the changing attitudes being taken toward gender construction in a modern world. That is to say, Bond's masculinity is no longer defined in an unwavering dominance regarding both his physical and sexual conquests. He is humanized, vulnerable, and susceptible to the underlying threat of existing in world in which his presence is no longer required. First, I will cover the formulaic construction of the series and the requirements that dictate a standard Bond narrative. By looking at the history of the series, I will then be able to reveal Bond's status as surrogate for the masculine ideal. Then I will begin to deal directly with the most recent films and how they conform and diverge from the standard Bond guidelines.

The primary reason the Bond novels and films remain prevalent in popular culture is their ability to adapt, maintaining a healthy balance between established tradition and innovation. The established tradition refers to what Christoph Linder, and other Bond scholars, call the "007 formula". Borrowing from the literary backbone structuring Fleming's novels, each plot balances a specific structure with new elements that reflect changing societal tides. The Bond formula can be best defined as "excess that blends together consumerism, tourism, and elitism with chauvinism, sexism, and voyeurism" (Lindner 3). When Eon Productions translated Fleming's original narrative structure to the silver screen new structural and thematic guidelines took hold. For example, each film begins with an action driven chase scene followed by a shot of Bond firing down the barrel of his enemy's gun. Each new installment must achieve a "balance between repetition and variation," keeping the same narrative structure while inventing villains, women, gadgets and crises that "satisfy audience expectations while simultaneously responding

to new trends and developments in society” (Lindner 5). All the films that deviate from this equation have been the least successful. For example: *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1969) closes with an unhappy ending; *Licence to Kill* (1989) has a non-secret service storyline; most recently, *Quantum of Solace* (2008) lacks many classic Bondian qualities, the principal being that Bond never gets the girl. You can take the formula out of the Bond film, but not the Bond fan. Each new installment continues to be successful based on its ability to adapt to evolving cultural and technological standards. This way, Bond always remains relevant even though his narrative structure remains in a 1950's mentality, at least in regards to gender, race, and politics. Since the world of Bond is based on novels that are “complicit in the racist and sexist cultural politics of the late 1950s and early 1960s,” it becomes tricky to then preserve the Bond tradition without perpetuating his less admirable qualities (Lindner 4). By confronting the problematic aspects of the formula, *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall* are able to maintain the Bond tradition without directly participating in its enforcement of outdated cultural norms. They achieve critical awareness by breaking down and exposing the impenetrable masculine identity of the Bond series.

The link between sexuality and masculine agency evolves from the original Bond formula. Established by the relationship between Bond and the villain, Bond and the girl, and the villain and the girl, a gendered power structure emerges. In their collaborative essay, “The Moments of Bond,” Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott place Bond within his cultural origins. They demonstrate how Bond's status as England's golden boy is solidified by his narrative relationship with the villains and women of the series. As a mobile signifier, Bond emerged first as a Cold War hero, “an exemplary representative of the virtues of Western capitalism triumphing over the evils of Eastern communism” (Bennet and Woollacott 16). His contrast to

each villain establishes Bond's status as a mobile signifier of the Western world. All villains are exotic in some way, often having physical deformities, and in many cases are presented as asexual or sexually impotent. In all cases the narrative tension and plot are driven by the villain's threat to the "peace and security of the 'Free World,' usually represented by Britain or the United States" (Woollacott and Bennett 18). In a time where England's position as a world power was rapidly declining, Bond "embodied the imaginary possibility" of their return to global prominence. In fact, the entire series depends on this illusion (Woollacott and Bennett 18). The significance of Bond's existence reflects the maintenance of England's own autonomy. The nation and its spy become co-dependent on one another, each perpetuating the myth of their own significance. In the same way Bond exists as an embodiment of England and Western culture, the villain represents the threat to that world. Just as the villain's untraditional sexual tendencies challenge the traditional heterosexual masculine ideal Bond embodies. In each case sexuality represents power, autonomy, and lack thereof.

The dichotomy between Bond and the villain is only solidified by the relationship between the villain and the Bond girl. Tracing the role of the Bond girl through the series, Woollacott and Bennett demonstrate how the girl is "tailored to suit Bond's needs" (Woollacott and Bennett 24). In the same way the villain shapes Bond's identity, the girl's adjusted feminine role highlights Bond's own masculine character. The tension between Bond and the girl seem to even surpass that of Bond and villain. The "main ideological work" "accomplished in the unfolding of the narrative is the 'putting-back-into-place' of the women who carry their independence and liberation 'too far' or into 'inappropriate' fields of activity" (Bennett and Woollacott 28). Again, gendered relations dominate the main focus of the narrative. This catered

connection of women to Bond does not carry through in the most recent films. On the contrary, the women are not tailored to Bond's needs, but instead challenge his masculine dominance.

Putting Bond within a gendered context draws similarities between the portrayal of women within the early Bond films. The prominent Bond girl in the first film *Dr. No* (1962) takes form in a tanned and bikinied Honey Ryder (Ursula Andress). She is introduced emerging from the sea glistening and unaware that an amused Bond (Sean Connery) watches from the beach. Throughout the entirety of the film Ryder is never fully clothed for long. This female spectacle is defended in a similar way to *Playboy*, a publication reaching popularity along side the Bond series. Both claim to exist as an exercise in women's sexual liberalism present in the 1960s, rather than their continued objectification. It is an appealingly optimistic argument; one somewhat supported by Hines, but seems problematic when regarding the overwhelmingly male audience that consumes both the Bond series and the *Playboy* magazine. To claim that James Bond and Hugh Hefner are the liberators of female sexuality in the 1960s proves a thin argument. However, the type of women manifested in the Bond girl is a new form of femininity for the 1960's cultural period. Bond and the Bond girl speak to the shifting gender roles and modernization of sexuality at this time. *Dr. No* emphasizes the male sexuality that Bond embodies, recently "freed from the constraints and hypocrisy of gentlemanly chivalry, a point of departure from the restraint, a-sexuality, or repressed sexuality of the traditional English aristocratic hero" (Bennett and Woollacott 24). Developing along side this shift in male sexuality, the Bond girl can be seen as representing the liberation from the "constraint of family, marriage, and domesticity" (Bennett and Woollacott 24). Women may have been liberated from the trappings of a purely domestic existence, no longer constituted by their proximity to the kitchen, but now exist in a sexualized context. Both Bond and the Bond girl have been saved

from rigid gender constructions of pre-war Britain. However, they have been saved to the developing world of marketable sexuality, characterized and dominated by the consumer voyeur.

With the death of Fleming in 1964, *Playboy's* relations with Bond moved on to a new object of affection found in Sean Connery, the actor playing Bond during the 1960s. *Playboy* even used Connery's face in accompaniment with the publication of Fleming's Bond adventures. The attitude regarding the popularity of Bond and his lifestyle during this period of the 1960s is often referred to as "Bondmania." The character of Bond, as well as his human counterpart, first manifested in Fleming and later in Connery, allies with *Playboy* to demonstrate the ideal male lifestyle. In a 1965 interview with Connery, the actor is presented "as a contemporary role model and surrogate 007 for the magazines readers, much in the same way as Ian Fleming had been two years before" (Hines 94). As before, in regards to the critique of the novels, the audience holds a significant role in the James Bond culture. Bond and his human "surrogate" are used as male "role models" for men reading *Playboy*, a magazine largely dedicated nude photos of women. The passing of the torch from Fleming to Connery via the medium of *Playboy* is only one transition that the Bond persona makes. With each new era, Bond, and the Bond "surrogate," the series shifts to emulate its cultural time, attributing the Bond series with a uniquely revealing capacity regarding its reflection of emerging social and gendered norms. This developing persona and lifestyle also builds an identity for Bond, where his masculine dominance is attached to his status as a lady's man and sex symbol.

Passing along the torch of the masculine ideal from generation to generation forms a history and tradition of gender identity that becomes harder to break with each installment. Bond's identity is one comprised of a mass conglomerate of cultural, literary, film, and consumer influences that transcend decades. In "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," Judith Butler

lays out the temporal methodology with which gender identity is constructed and reinforced. No longer viewed as a “stable identity of locus of agency,” for Butler gender “is an identity tenuously constituted in time,” specifically “instituted through a stylized repetition of acts” (Butler 402). These repetitive acts exist in a myriad of forms, but most significantly through “the stylization of the body” and the “bodily gestures, movements, and enactments” that come along with it, melding together to create “the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (Butler 402). Beginning with Fleming’s novels and weaving through each decade, Bond’s gendered identity arrives to Daniel Craig in Martin Campbell’s *Casino Royale* as a deeply rooted illusion. True to Butler, it is an identity that is “tenuously constituted in time,” relying not on any notion of a “substantial model of identity,” but instead a “constituted social temporality” (Butler 402). Craig’s portrayal of Bond can never be entirely severed from his predecessors. In fact, I would argue that each installment of Bond constitutes as Butler’s “gendered acts,” that lead to the formulation of Bond’s gendered identity. Every villain he defeats, every woman he seduces, and every martini he consumes, compile to produce an increasingly solidified gendered identity based on Western, masculine, and consumer dominance. By moving away from the one-dimensional unquestioning masculine model of the Bond persona, *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall* break the “stylized repetition of acts” (Butler 402). They demonstrate the making and unmaking of a man that represents Western masculine ideals. Bond’s pre—007 status at the beginning of *Casino Royale* being the initial signal of this attempt to re-invent the absolute identity of Bond.

Where all past films function in isolation from one another, introducing Bond with a pre-packaged identity in the midst of his established spy career, *Casino Royale* shows the man before the founding of his reputation as a top agent. In fact, the opening scene where Bond earns his

rank is stylistically contrasted to the bulk of the film. Shot entirely in black and white with quick cuts between flashback and present, the sequence serves as a prologue to the film that follows. The present moment shows Bond waiting to kill an MI6 agent for leaking information to a terrorist organization; the flashback shows Bond's first kill, the MI6 traitor's contact in the terrorist organization. The flashback acts as evidence for each statement said in the present moment and becomes significant when the MI6 agent questions Bond's ability to kill him. It also shows the intimacy of killing. Bond's fight with the enemy contact is an especially violent one, ending with Bond drowning the man in a sink. The camera shows a close up of Bond's face as he feels the life drain from the man. Cutting back to the present moment, the MI6 informant smirks: "made you feel it, did he?" He takes a superior tone, as if giving the inexperienced Bond advice. It takes two kills to earn 00-status and just as the rogue MI6 agent begins to reassure Bond that the second kill is easier, he is cut off mid-sentence by Bond's bullet to the head. "Yes, considerably," being Bond's only response as the camera lingers on the dead agent. It is in this moment Bond's dominance, both in action and conversation is established. Bond's interruption of the MI6 agent with a shot to the head, followed by a classic Bond witticism, earns Bond and Craig, the right to the status and identity of the iconic figure. The second kill, as promised, is easier, as reflected through the film's pacing. Contrasting the graphically drawn-out first kill, this one is quick, clean, and devoid of emotional investment. A quick cut returns the viewer to the flashback as the assumed dead man sits up, Bond turns and shoots, fulfilling the classic shot down the barrel of a gun. Blood runs down the screen as the Bond theme song files in. It is this moment that Bond enters the realm of his predecessors. By depicting Bond's entrance into his historical tradition, a level of complexity is added to his character. Showing the construction of his identity allows for the possibility of its deconstruction. If a man can be made, he can just as

easily be unmade. This introduction not only eases the viewer into Daniel Craig as the new Bond surrogate, but also establishes the logic of construction that continues throughout the next two films.

By definition the Bond formula requires that each new installment must balance tradition with innovation. Where previous models have kept constant the essential components of Bond's masculine identity, meaning his status as an emotionally unaffected man, they have only altered the external details of plot, technology, and circumstance. The new Bond takes a different approach, keeping constant the smaller details, while altering the internal composition of the character. In this way, the Bond constructed in *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall*, breaks the repetition of gendered acts. The next step in the process is examining the manner in which new acts of repetition are enacted.

Keeping with tradition of selecting relatively unknown actors to play Bond, Craig brings the development of Bond character forward and backward simultaneously. Adding an internal dimension to the character, critics agree that Craig brings a little bit of the grittiness back to Bond, reminiscent of the Fleming/Connery age (Funnell 455). *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall* play as an origin trilogy, establishing the man before the legend and giving the viewer some sort of reasoning as to why Bond is the way he is. This psychological exploration alone is more than Bond consumers have seen. Fleming's novels, for the most part told in third-person narration, give a glimpse of some of Bond's insecurities, but the interiority of Bond's film identity has remained inaccessible. *Casino Royale* constructs Bond's gendered identity by including an explicitly purposeful concentration on Bond's exposed body. This serves as a break in the repeated acts of past Bonds precisely because it can be likened to the historical

past of the infamous portrayal of Bond girls. The male gaze flips¹, turning an obsessive eye on Bond's bikini clad body, instead of his female counterparts.

This concentration on the body is a shift in the general portrayal of the action hero. It is exemplary of the change from an internal masculinity, characterized by intelligence and emotional detachment, to an externalized masculinity depicted by visible dominance and strength. Lisa Funnell's article on *Casino Royale*, "I Know Where You Keep Your Gun," gives an analysis that examines the history of Bond portrayals, as well as the fluctuation in the action hero figure from physical power to emotional intellectual power. Funnell offers up a "new heroic model" taking form in Craig's Bond, one that is "informed by Hollywood heroic masculinity and Bond Girl iconography, the Bond-Bond Girl Hybrid" (Funnell 456). "Hollywood heroic masculinity" refers to an overt importance placed on the actual physicality of the hero in question in direct relation to his agency and status as a hero. Delving into the history and progression of the filmic action hero, Funnell notes an important digression in the Bond persona from a British masculinity, derived from Fleming, to an Americanized "use of specific body-centered model of masculinity as heroic ideal" in order to appeal to a wider audience (Funnell 259). Funnell tracts the Hollywood image of masculinity to the 1990's where it tries to "reconcile" the hero with "intelligence and emotion" rather than characterized simply by brute strength. In accordance with the Bond formula, she explains that the "evolution of the Bond film has not been a linear progression" and suggests that the film instead depends on "maintaining a balance of continuity and change" in regards to maintaining Bond's "generic identity" while

¹ Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" appropriates psychoanalysis to demonstrate the voyeuristic fascination in film. She argues that "pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female." The "male gaze" is defined by its projection of "fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly" (Mulvey 33). In this case, the "male gaze" is reversed, turning its gaze to a accordingly stylized Bond.

“offering variety” to the fan base (Funnell 457). In alignment with the fluctuating Bond formula, Bond’s physical status as an action hero must maintain a balance. The Bond series is a unique one in that audience reception can and has been taken into account in the actual formation of the latest Bond character. Funnell sees Craig’s Bond as firmly grounded in “contemporary American ideals of masculinity.” The emphasis is placed on Bond’s “exposed muscular torso” instead of on his “sexuality, libido, and conquest” (Funnell 462). The focus is placed on seeing rather than acting, a hero for the American voyeur. This emphasis on the exposed body is what allows Funnell to draw a parallel between Bond and previous Bond girls.

The “Bond Girl iconography” to which Funnell refers is the two instances in *Casino Royale* where Bond emerges from the sea sporting tiny swim trunks that barely cover his muscular physique. For Funnell, this concentration of Bond’s exposed body is a direct reference to past depictions of Bond girls and the considerable screen time given to their physical appearances as a visual spectacle. Funnell goes so far as to say this version of Bond is “feminized relative to the gaze through the passive positioning of his exposed muscular body,” directing equating the feminine with the passive (Funnell 456). In *Casino Royale*, an overconcentration of Bond’s body exemplifies the retreat in the exposition of the Bond girls’. Falling back into Butler, Bond’s exposed body can be labeled feminine precisely because in the historical sense, “to be a woman, by definition, “ is “to be in an oppressed situation” (Butler 406). Again, tradition has attached the exposed body to the oppressed, where meaning can be projected upon the passive silent body². However, Bond’s exposure does not translate as passive,

² “Woman then stands in the patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning” (Mulvey 29).

as it does with his female predecessors. On the contrary, the reverse male gaze seems to work more to enhance his masculine agency.

Funnell continuously associates masculinity with age and physical activity while negating feminized traits to spectacle and passivity. At multiple instances she refers to Bond's exposed body as "spectacle and subsequently feminized" especially during "scenes of limited physical activity" (Funnell 464). She again establishes that the "exposed muscular body" of Bond as spectacle, passive, and feminized, positioning Craig in the role of Bond girl as the visual spectacle of the Bond film (Funnell 467). Funnell provides sufficient evidence proving that Bond is indeed portrayed as a spectacle, his double emergence from the sea is evidence enough, but she fails to mention where she derives the association with passive and feminized. The automatic association made implies that it is an attachment that is implicit. She assumes the pattern of Bond girls being made spectacle permanently attaches the feminine to it. She suggests that to be objectified is to be feminine. Women and the feminine have been so long attached to the idea of passivity and sexualized spectacle, that these instances of passivity also become gendered acts of construction. Where the objectified female and the body spectacle of Bond diverge is a topic Tremonte and Racioppi touch on in their article, "Body Politics and Casino Royale: Gender and (inter)national Security". They state that "while Bond's body may be gloriously specularised in *Casino Royale*, it is not objectified as the bodies of many a Bond girl have been" (Tremonte and Racioppi 192). The visual attention paid to a silent Bond does not translate to passivity because Bond's sexual desirability is never detached from the physical dominance and latent athleticism of his body. The gaze put on Bond does not objectify, because the role of physique in his status as an effective agent is never suspended.

Casino Royale, continually pays attention to Bond's physical body, which as Tremonte and Racioppi explain, becomes a symbol for the international system that Bond represents. Bond literally and figuratively embodies "the British nation," which to an extent, represents the "international order, especially global capitalism" (Tremonte and Racioppi 188). The essay uses the exposed body of Bond as an example of gendered politics, arguing that the concentration on physical dominance is not merely for spectator pleasure, as is true for Bond girls. Instead it reinforces Bond's status, and therefore Britain's status, as a force to be reckoned with. Bond is the complete embodiment the international system. So "in order to be an effective representative of the nation-state and to protect its security, Bond—like the state—must be physically aggressive, self-reliant, logical, and sharp" (Tremonte and Racioppi 189). Bond's physical superiority, in accordance with England's nation security, fluctuates, and always seems attached to his masculinity.

This relationship becomes drastically apparent in the film's stand-out torture scene. Le Chiffre, the primary villain, circles a naked and bound Bond, swinging a weighted rope at Bond's exposed manhood. Nakedness enacts the ultimate state of vulnerability, a foreboding only increased by the looming threat to Bond's testicles. Le Chiffre appears to take pleasure in his brief moment of control: "Wow, you've taken good care of your body. Such a waste." Le Chiffre's comment on Bond's physique reinforces the hyper-visibility of the body and its attachment to masculine status. It also parallels Bond's body as a representative of England's dominance to the opposing force, Le Chiffre, a representative of a foreign terrorism. Le Chiffre continues taunting Bond, who maintains his integrity throughout, "It's not only the immediate agony, but the knowledge that if you do not yield soon enough, there will be little left to identify you as a man." The combination of Bond's exposed body, maintaining its impressiveness despite

its vulnerability, and Le Chiffre's words, link "Bond's body and his (hetero)sexuality to the nation and its vitality (Tremonte and Racioppi 197). The threat to Bond's sexual potency becomes "emblematic of the nation's ability to reproduce and survive" while simultaneously recalling "a fundamental principle of political realism" in that "rational actors yield to superior power or pay the consequences" (Tremonte and Racioppi 197). Bond's refusal to yield, despite what's at stake, provides room for his clever retort regarding Le Chiffre "scratching his balls," but also solidifies England's status as the superior force. The threat to Bond's male potency and the state's global security is short lived; Bond makes a full recovery, confirmed by his and Vesper's romance directly following.

In his article, "Masculinity As Spectacle," Steve Neale highlights the concentration on the mutilated male body in film. He draws from D.N. Rodowick comments on the viewer's experience being "predicated on seeing the male 'exist' (that is walk, move, ride, fight)" through "cityscapes, landscapes" and more abstractly, "history" (Neale 8). Bond's eternal status as the ultimate tourist, each film exhibiting various exotic locations, exemplifies this viewer pleasure. The article goes further, claiming that the viewer also finds an "unquiet pleasure of seeing the male mutilated [. . .] and restored through violence," a pleasure rooted in a "repressed homosexual voyeurism," resulting in a produced look at the male that causes "as much anxiety as the look at the female" (Neale 8). The torture scene cannot help but draw parallels to this manner of thinking. We see Bond repeatedly take blows to his manhood, threatening, as Le Chiffre points out, the very thing identifying him as a man. In this sense, the scene includes both the mutilation and then the restoration of the male, the first shown through Le Chiffre and the later shown through Vesper. Also, it is the future of Bond's heterosexuality that is at stake, that is, his

ability to reproduce³. In contrast, Le Chiffre's concentration and interaction with Bond's body reveals undertones of heterosexual anxiety. Consistent with Neale's article, violence, or "mutilation and sadism" are a "means by which the male body may be disqualified, so to speak, as an object of erotic contemplation and desire" (Neale 8). In an attempt to avoid the male body being an object of the purely erotic, the aspect of political torture is integrated.

The pairing of Bond's masculinity with his nation-state acts as evidence of Butler's theories of gender construction. In this instance, "the body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities" (Butler 403). The words "active process" and "possibilities" are of main importance in that they suggest a fluid identity, rather one completely fixed by tradition. Where past portrayals of Bond have indeed embodied certain cultural trends, Bond's identity and masculinity always come ready-made, established, and unwavering. By allowing for moments of vulnerability, Bond's moments of masculine power are heightened. Similar to the scene when Bond earns his 007-status, it is the revealing of the process to identity, the depiction of constructed masculinity creates a more complex character. In the same sense, it allows for the deconstruction of the reinforced masculine identity created by the overall series.

Tremonte and Racioppi's article draws an attachment reinforced through the latest chapter of the Bond series. It is an attachment between gender and the control over international systems in which "men are the main agents of the state and the international system of states" while "women are positioned as subordinate helpmeets and often embodied as symbols of the

³ "As Foucault and others have pointed out, the association of a natural sex with a discrete gender and with an ostensibly natural "attraction" to the opposing sex/gender is an unnatural conjunction of cultural constructs in the service of reproductive interests" (Butler 408).

nation” (Tremonte and Racioppi 187). This installment in the Bond series does place women in a more flattering position than their predecessors. The female M acts as the head of MI6, and Vesper, “the money” and eventual love interest, proves a dynamic and complex character. The essay borrows from Woollacott’s analysis of the Bond series in which he argues “the narrative pattern . . . establishes the women as in some manner sexually and ideologically ‘out of place.’ Such a girl represents a challenge to the traditional sexual order, and Bond’s answer is that of ‘putting her back into place beneath him (both literally and metaphorically)’” (Tremonte and Racioppi 188). For example, Vesper, the film’s heroine, is intelligent, quick, and beautiful and involved in the “male-dominated” realm of “international body politics” (Tremonte and Racioppi 190). However, it is revealed that she too is “out of place” in that she is forced to betray Bond and her country in an attempt to save the life of her French Algerian boyfriend. Her agency is undermined by her romantic attachment. It is her relationship with Bond that “promises to reconnect her to the nation and to international security norms” (Tremonte and Racioppi 188). The essay argues that *Casino Royale* still reaffirms the gender binary previously established in the Bond series⁴. While the spectacle of Bond’s muscular body adds another dimension to the character, it is debatable as to whether it hybridizes his gender as Funnell suggests, rather than simply providing another medium to demonstrate his masculinity. Bond’s hypervisibility and the sea emerging parallel to Bond girls reveals an aspect that sets *Casino Royale* apart from previous Bond films.

One of the main components of film lies in the viewer identification, specifically gender identification, with each character. Bond is the ultimate male identifier. Each generation is

⁴ “Hence, as a strategy of survival, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. Discrete genders are part of what ‘humanizes’ individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender are regularly punished” (Butler 405).

provided with an updated gender type with which to project themselves. The most recent establishment composes both a physical ideal, but also with a more realistic vulnerability in Bond. Neale's "Masculinity As Spectacle" explores and expands the parameters of gendered identification in film. Expanding on Laura Mulvey's article, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Neale looks directly at the portrayal of constructed masculinity in film, that he believes to be largely overlooked in terms of attentive analysis. His reasoning for this lull in masculine study is expressed with the tradition of "Masculinity, as an ideal at least [being] implicitly known," where by contrast "Femininity is [. . .] a mystery" (Neale 16). An interesting assertion and one that seems to follow stereotypical patriarch norms, also fitting nicely into Mulvey's own appropriation of psychoanalysis where women are defined by their lack. Working with Mulvey's definitions of narcissism, voyeurism, and the fetishizing gaze, Neale ultimately agrees that mainstream cinema is largely dominated by an implicitly male gaze. However, he is successful in his analysis of the constructed masculine identity in film. Neal examines what he labels "male genres," such as Westerns, gangster movies, and epic action movies. Most of the films exist in a tension between omnipotent male narcissism, the ideal form of Masculinity, and the disruption and disintegration of that ideal. Appropriating the ideas of voyeuristic looking and fetishizing, Neale combines the two forms of cinematic looking to serve the male hero, who can then exist as spectacle without objectification. This is due to the hero's ability to never solely subsist as an object of desire.

Bond is an ideal candidate for projection. Existing first and foremost as a historical and malleable masculine model, the formula of the series allows for a more immersive viewer involvement. The viewer can comfortably predict the major plot points, while simultaneously be entertained. The same works for the identification with Bond's character, they are able to

recognize and simultaneously project themselves onto a character they know so well. Bond's identity is completely dependent on the "narcissistic identity" that involves "phantasies of power, omnipotence, mastery and control" (Neale 5). The Bond seen in the three most recent installments proves an interesting study because they allow even more liberty for identification. By exposing the increasingly human and mortal aspects of Bond, while also presenting a less idealized version of the character, the film creates a more accessible character that is perhaps less desirable to relate to. The three films establish an idealized masculine model and then slowly chip away at it, revealing the vulnerable flesh under the muscle of Bond. They return the man to the action hero and then the action hero to the man, using his body as a tool with which to gage his fluctuating masculine agency.

The opening chase scene draws particular concentration to Bond's physicality and for my purposes acts as a useful barometer with which to measure change over the course of *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall*. Scenes that are comprised of fragmented images of the male body, these chase scenes provide a visual insight into the state of Bond's masculine potency. It is at these points in the film narrative that "male struggle becomes pure spectacle" (Neale 12). The very nature and formulation of a chase scene sidelines the plot and concentrates on a purely visual display, in this case, in direct relation to Bond's athleticism. Neal combines Mulvey's definition of voyeuristic looking, "marked by the extent to which there is a distance between spectator and spectacle," creating a "degree of power" by the spectator over "what is seen," with "fetishistic looking," which he characterizes as the suspension of the narrative "in order to recognize the pleasure of display" (Neale 11-12). It is the combination of these modes of looking that allow the male hero to be made into a spectacle without being objectified. The two forms of looking intertwine "to minimize and displace the eroticism they each tend to involve, to

disavow any explicitly erotic look at the male body” (Neale 14). Bond’s body is never presented as purely sexualized, his sexuality instead attaches itself to his physical dominance and overall masculine power.

Casino Royale, Craig’s début as Bond, possesses a notable physical superiority on the part of Bond. The chase is between Bond and a soon-to-be terrorist hired by the primary villain, Le Chiffre. Through South African streets, into a construction site, and concluding with the destruction of the South African Embassy, Bond’s sheer athleticism dominates the chase. The pursuit establishes his body not simply as an object of desire, but of physical dominance and strength.

The opening chase scene in *Quantum of Solace*, directed by Marc Forster, seems more representative of Bonds unstable emotional identity. This is one of the only Bond pursuits that allows for the possibility of Bond’s failure to keep up. After capturing the mysterious Mr. White, Bond and M attempt an interrogation that goes horribly wrong when an MI6 agent, one of M’s own body guards, turns out to be under the employment of the enemy organization. M is shot, White escapes, and Bond pursues the rogue agent on foot, through a thick crowd. The camera follows Bond in his pursuit, which is increasingly sloppy and jostled. A woman gets shot in the crowd. A box of glass canned fruit shatters. Bond and the enemy agent crash through a glass ceiling. Almost every move Bond makes he leaves destruction in his path. The classic shot of Bond staring down the barrel of a gun is only partially enacted. Bond hangs upside down by a rope tied around his ankle, his eyes crazed and blood shot, his face wet with effort as he takes the iconic shot. The Bond we see is not suave; nothing comes effortlessly to him. He kills the rogue agent, but without gaining any information. The whole scene exemplifies a futile destruction, effort without result. The whole film plays out under an exuberant amount of detached physical

and environmental destruction that reflects the deconstruction of Bond's emotional and masculine stability.

Quantum of Solace is meant as a sequel to *Casino Royale*. Where the films of the past have existed in a more isolated fashion, related, but never directly connected by plot, *Quantum* begins right where *Casino Royale* left off. In her essay, "The Operatics of Detachment," Marcia Citron utilizes the opera scene in *Quantum* to show how "Bond lacks 'tense'" (Citron 321). She explains that the Bond films "resist a firm location in time," resulting in the unfolding of a "perpetual present" (Citron 321). Existing in an isolated state, lacking future and past, *Quantum* deals with the tension created by Bond's "temporal detachment." By including the opera *Tosca*, a "relic of the past," the scene becomes an attempt to "restore history." The film exhibits the fleeting tradition of the Bond series. It reaches for the time from which it came, where it was comfortable, but all it does is further isolate itself in the present.

The opera scene signifies detachment, a theme permeating the entirety of the film. The Bond seen in *Quantum* exhibits a silent, callous, and morally removed man. Citron likens the "change in the character" to a "Bourne-like figure" characterized by "emotional emptiness" (Citron 317). Where Bond's character never reaches particular warmth, his "detachment in the sequel is appreciably intensified" to the extent that "cynicism precludes affect and leads to a broken moral compass" (Citron 318). A portion of Bond's detachment stems from the separation voyeurism creates. Multiple gazes combine into a rich visual texture. A massive eye back-dropping the stage demands attention, as does the constant interchange of looks between Bond and his conspiring enemies. The floating stage automatically commands the eye of the viewer and yet remains separated from the audience. This "voyeuristic production" is "crucial in creating the experience of distance," a distance reinforced by the "stark palette of the theater's

spaces” (Citron 318). A notably modern production for a traditional opera, the set contributes to the mood of isolation.

The technology and futuristic design of the opera venue and production add to tone of isolation and detachment. Each installment in the Bond series is known for its integration of excellent technology, whether it be a tricked out Aston Martin, or an exploding pen, but as real world technology continues to reach new heights the fantastic element of film technology falls short. Indeed, Bond’s gadgets seem subtle and somewhat mundane. The cell phones used as surveillance devices “are only faint extensions of current technology” (Citron 318). The design of the theater embodies the cold distance present in a world dominated by technology, especially in regards to human interaction. It also speaks to the distance Bond stands from his own environment.

Various global representatives collaborating with Dominic Greene (Mathieu Amalric), the primary villain, arrive at the opera. Each is given an ear piece with which to communicate from their various seats in the theater. A clever method of inconspicuous conference also adds to the overall mood of isolation. Cuts between each enemy conspirator whispering to one another create a sequence of separation. The shifting cuts isolate each person from the group, nameless individuals in an audience of hundreds; their communication is cold and disconnected. All the while, Bond vigorously scans the crowd from backstage, scoping out the enemy players. The shots alternate between Bond scanning the crowd, various villains pretending to watch the opera, and the vast mechanical eye on the floating stage. As Bond interrupts the conspirators’ dialogue, multiple players rise and flee, Bond snapping pictures of them as they go. The images sent back to MI6 are spliced, fragmented versions of their originals. Citron argues that the combination of the “coldness of technology,” a “strong techno-look” and the “super fast montage” suggests a

fracturing of the “analog world and any sustained gaze directed at the opera” (Citron 321). If the opera represents some sort of idealized past, such as the tradition of the Bond series, than the fractured gaze represents a further and final separation from that past. As the scene progresses the music of the opera increases in volume and vigor. The alternating shots speed up, time moves to the tempo of the music. As Greene’s men chase Bond into the restaurant the music halts, the gunshots are muted and sound is altogether suspended. The action of opera and the action of the chase confuse each other as the rapid cuts blend into one another disrupting the linearity of time. The music returns sound-tracking the violence of the opera along side the violence of the chase. It becomes unclear who is pursuing whom, the disorienting nature of the scene results in a display of violence detached from meaning or purpose.

The inclusion of the encompassing music causes an automatic retreat in the presence of dialogue. An increasingly silent Bond “is cut off from his surroundings as music overwhelms reality and implies a location inside his head” (Citron 325). The scene is dominated by the music, overpowering all other noise, functioning as “the principal narrative agent” that separates Bond from his environment. The music looms over Bond, a figure normally characterized by his mastery of language and wit; he now becomes muted by his own detachment. Neale examines the image of the silent detached man in an action film. He notes that the image of “emotional reticence” is also marked by silence, a “reticence with language” (Neale 7). Language functions as “a process involving absence and lack,” the very components that threaten any image “of the self as totally enclosed, self-sufficient, omnipotent” (Neale 7). Directly attached to the idea of “ideal ego,” Bond’s silence, his lack of language, can be read as a “symbolic castration” precisely because the “ideal” becomes “something to which the subject is never adequate”

(Neale 7). The tone of detachment in *Quantum of Solace* presents another factor that prohibits Bond from fulfilling his masculine ideal.

The hypervisibility of Bond seen in *Casino Royale* continues in the *Quantum*, but significantly and decreasingly less spectacularized. The concentration paid to Bond's physicality no longer reveals his superiority, but instead his waning control and dominance. Specifically in regards to the cold and continual violence present in the film, Bond's emotional separation is by no means glorified as a product of masculine attitude. Although Bond never fully ceases to be desirable or effective, the potency and action of those qualities slowly fade. Though Bond is our hero, the film invites us to identify and sympathize with the more minor and often female characters. Precisely because the notion of Bond as a broken man is repeatedly reinforced, the film seems to take pleasure in the deconstruction of the world's favorite manly man. Bond's coldness, along with the nonstop action sequences he partakes in, dominates *Quantum of Solace*. Although Bond does beat out Dominic Greene in the end, it by no means plays as a happy resolution. The final words of the film, exchanged between M and Bond, confront the underlying conflict driving the plot: Bond is not himself. After having just confronting the man whom caused Vesper's death, Bond emerges into snow-covered streets where M is waiting. As he walks off M calls after him, "Bond, I need you back." He turns and replies, "I never left." As he speaks he discards Vesper's necklace into the snow. The film concludes with a zoomed in shot of the image giving closure to Vesper's death and Bond's revenge. The entirety of *Quantum* shows a broken Bond, one detached, cynical, and removed from the continual violence he inflicts. Reviewers had a hard time with this version of Bond, precisely because he did not fit the mold of his predecessors (Citron 323). The final scene suggests that perhaps Bond's period of mourning, for Vesper and his former self, is complete. Its successor, *Skyfall*, directed by Sam Mendes,

offers up a different kind of mourning. The film presents a nostalgia for the old world of Bond, where the British Empire and its favorite hyper-masculine spy dominated global culture.

Skyfall's opening chase scene adds an additional component in the figure of Eve (Naomie Harris), Bond's MI6 female counterpart. She proves a new breed of Bond Girl. She fights, shoots, and banters, each scene presenting her with a great deal of physical agency. Although her and Bond get along in an expectedly flirtatious way, her presence in the context of the chase scene automatically undermines Bond's masculine authority. The opening scene compacts the major themes of the film: the voyeuristic gaze, the emerging technological threat to the methods of the secret service, and the constant damage done to Bond's masculine significance. Eve serves as the source of all these looming insecurities. As the scene continues it is Bond who is in active pursuit of the target, while Eve remains behind the action in a state of observation, reporting back to M in the London office. When Bond and the target begin to fight atop a moving train, Eve positions herself and her sniper rifle on a hill in view of them. The camera shot alternates between a close up of Eve's eye looking through the gun, the actual view from the gun's scope, a medium camera shot of the fighting, and a shot of M back at MI6 giving orders. A voyeuristic quality attaches itself to Eve's gaze as she watches the two men fighting atop the moving train, she, in contrast, waits and watches. The moment connects to the idea of the passive viewer, the camera's gaze doubling as it's filtered through the lens of the gun. Waiting for orders from M, Eve is temporarily suspended from action; her main act becomes the employment of an intense and removed gaze. The scene compiles a constant alternating of perspective, switching quickly from Bond, to Eve, to the MI6 headquarters. The alternating shots blend together, emblematic of the persistent and inescapable inter-connectedness present in the modern world. This is a threat that arises later, when the single field agent structure of MI6 proves inferior in a world of swelling

cyber terrorism. Ultimately it is Eve's botched shot that "kills" Bond, serving as a critical plot point, but also a thematic statement. The series' historical identity of absolute masculine power is killed by the increasing agency of women in the modern world.

Bond's period of mistaken death gives a glimpse into life without his status as an MI6 agent. Devoid of purpose Bond wastes away in a muted existence. His drinking lacks a former cosmopolitan flair, his female conquests lack passion and investment, and he fades into an ocean-side abyss. His life becomes colorless and bland, lacking the closeness with death that gives Bond life. It is not until the television in the bar he regularly displays news of England that he is pulled back into reality. Bond's personal identity relies on the greater collective. By giving him purpose, MI6, England, and the Western world give Bond a sense of self. The dead Bond is resurrected to once again serve Mother England. In "*Skyfall*, James Bond's Resurrection and 21st-Century Anglo-American Imperial Nostalgia," Marouf Hasian, Jr. views the film's "theme of resurrection" as a way of "celebrating the continued relevance—and implied superiority—of (post) colonial ways of governing societies in the battle that have to be fought against terrorism" (Hasian 570). He argues that *Skyfall* exhibits nostalgia for imperial age where England held the status as a major world power. Nostalgia, defined by the longing for a past that will never again be, hardens the point that the traditional Bond persona can no longer exist in a modern context. The entirety of *Skyfall* confronts the dilemma of the outdated existing in a modern age, in regards to Bond's age as well as the traditional "golden age of espionage" practiced by MI6. The illusion of the English Empire as a reigning world power acts as the base illusion that the entire Bond series relies upon. The film's building nostalgia calls to origins of a Bond that no longer fit in a contemporary era. The clean-cut unrelenting masculine authority can no longer be, in the same way that the spy as a realistically effective tool of national security becomes increasingly

irrelevant. *Skyfall* confronts the underlying tension of that has been haunting the Bond series for years: its fear of being outdated and obsolete.

The source of insecurity manifests in Silva (Javier Bardem), the central villain. A former MI6 agent, Silva confronts Bond directly with the underlying concern of the film: “England. The Empire. MI6. You’re living in a ruin. It’s over, finished. What are you doing clinging to this notion of nation?” The modern world, dominated by the isolation of the technological age, deviates from the unifying “notion of nation.” Silva represents the increasingly isolating future, Bond the idealized past. Hasian argues that *Skyfall* “allows the viewer to escape some of the realities of changing geopolitical conditions” and attempts to “show us the resonance of new nostalgic senses of imperial identity” (Hasian 570). The film attaches to the original function of Fleming’s novels in that it calls for “a new sense of national identity” that shows an “awareness of waning British influence” (Hasian 571). *Skyfall* refurbishes “parts of the Bond legacy” by linking them to “contemporary Anglo-American needs and desire,” thus creating an imperial nostalgia (Hasian 571). The bulk of *Skyfall* deconstructs and questions the myth of English masculine superiority. It remains nostalgic for a past that ceases to be relevant. In some ways the reluctance to let go of the past further complicates the present.

This battle of old versus new manifests itself at multiple instances throughout the film. First seen in a teasing exchange between Bond and the youthful Quarter Master (Ben Whishaw), and later shown in his failure to pass MI6 mandatory testing, the result of Bond’s aging causes a physical inferiority that becomes a major theme of the film. His waning dominance is most discouraging in the scene depicting his failure to save Severine (Berenice Marlohe), the token damsel in distress, due to his degraded accuracy with his gun. It is this last example that best reveals the correlation between Bond’s physical capacities and masculine potency as an

extension of England's national autonomy. Forced by Silva to shoot a glass of bourbon off Severine's head, Bond's injured arm causes him to miss the shot. The competition is one for masculine dominance. The custom pistols decide the fate of a woman whom both Bond and Silva are romantically attached. Bond fails to effectively yield his weapon, a blow to his masculine status, as well as England's defense against Silva's attacks. The nostalgia the film exhibits for imperial England coincides with nostalgia for a masculine ideal.

The tone of *Skyfall* is increasingly nostalgic, mourning for a loss of Bond and what he represents. Steve Neale tracks the "theme of lost or doomed male narcissism" in action genres. He notes that the mourning shown "is not just for a historical past," but also "the masculine ideal" the hero represents (Neale 9). Bond's symbolic death at the beginning of *Skyfall* sets up the rest of the film to be "shot through with nostalgia" as well as "an obsession with images and definitions of [. . .] masculine codes of behavior" and "the threats posed to [them] by women, society and the Law" (Neale 10). Bond's masculine identity is undermined from all sides. As his masculine power is questioned due to his age and waning physical stamina, so is MI6's existence and effectiveness questioned in a new age of technology. As Q puts it, individual agents are only needed when "every once in while a trigger needs to be pulled." Q's words speak both to the emerging power of technology over individuals, but also reinforce the objectivity of Bond as a mere instrument lacking a personal identity. Furthermore, if Bond's existence is qualified by his ability to pull a trigger, then the episode of his botched shot regarding Severine is even more devastating for his masculine identity.

The history of Bond's traditional heterosexuality is also destabilized by Silva. A villain who undermines both Bond's outdated masculine identity, but also Q's, when he infiltrates the MI6 computer network. Silva represents a dangerous future, one detached from tradition, one

that embraces technology and one that allows male sexuality more fluidity. Where the questionable sexuality of past villains has been used as a method to lessen their dominance and further isolate them, Silva's homoerotic undertones seem to heighten his status as a threat. In fact, Bond's heterosexuality, exemplified through Severine, in some way puts him at a disadvantage, precisely because it ties him to the outdated world. Silva expects this; he also regards his break from tradition in all forms as an advantage. As Butler puts it, the "association of a natural sex with a discrete gender and with an ostensibly natural 'attraction' to the opposing sex/gender is an unnatural conjunction of cultural constructs" (Butler 408). In other words, Bond's heterosexuality is another attribution given to him by the traditional Western world. Silva views Bond's sexuality as another conformity to the structure of MI6, England, and all they represent. M acts as the human embodiment of England and the Western world and it is her Silva's vendetta is against.

In their initial meeting Bond is bound to a chair surrounded by shelves of wiring and computer monitors. The scenario is reminiscent of the torture scene with Le Chiffre in *Casino Royale*. Silva slowly unbuttons Bond's shirt, his fingers linger over the bullet wound Eve gave him. "You see what she's done to you?" Silva coos, implying "she" as M, but also all she represents. "She never tied me to a chair" Bond retorts. Indeed, it is only men who have bound Bond. "Her loss," Silva smiles as he attempts to make Bond increasingly uncomfortable. Silva taunts him, continuing his sexualized caress, asking Bond "what's the regulation to cover this?" as he moves his hands up Bond's thighs. Silva expects what I'm sure the viewer does as well, a level of discomfort on the part of Bond regarding the homoerotic advancement. Instead, Bond meets Silva's gaze, implying that it is not his first or last sexualized relations with a man. It is an assertion never confirmed or supported by prior depictions of Bond, but delivered compellingly

enough to convince both Silva and the viewer. Where most instances of “male homosexuality” in film are “dealt with obliquely, symptomatically” and in a repressed state, this scene confronts it directly (Neale 15). Silva’s intended dominance and Bond’s rise to the occasion even imply a new sort of fight for masculine dominance, defined by the flexibility of sexuality instead of rigidness. Silva’s represents the attempt to debunk Western society’s structural norms and in many ways he succeeds. Of course, as the villain, he is defeated in the end, but his threat lingers.

Though the majority of the film undermines the power of an idealized past of imperial and masculine power, in the end “both Bond and the empire are resurrected when they return to the old and true ways” of dealing with threats (Hasian 569). The return to Bond’s childhood home, a manifestation of the past, and the stylized defense of it, embodies the perpetual battle of old versus new. Indeed the resolution of the film takes form in the appointment of a new male M and the revelation that Eve is in fact, Miss Moneypenny, a token character in the Bond tradition. Even the design and structure of the new MI6 office reminisces of the original Sean Connery era, where M sits behind a desk giving Bond packaged missions and Moneypenny’s secretarial desk sits just outside.

The film’s ending re-establishes the traditional Bond order. It shows Craig’s Bond added to the history of his identity and completes the origin story. *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall* deconstruct the Bond persona in order to reconstruct it for a new generation. The three films serve as a method with which Bond has found himself. They have succeeded in analyzing the constructed gendered identity of the Western world’s most beloved spy. Each film confronts a problematic aspect of the Bond persona and then reconciles it with emerging social attitudes. Daniel Craig’s Bond faces a world where gender’s role is no longer clear cut and absolute, violence is no longer glorified, and the status of traditional Western security is

vulnerable to emerging technological threats. Bond represents the dilemma traditional masculine identity faces when confronted with a shifting social reality. The three films exhibit the tension between past and present. They straddle the line dividing established tradition and necessary change. Bond's struggle to reconcile his internal identity with the external world suggests that the character forged by Fleming decades ago, solidified by Sean Connery and the *Playboy* lifestyle, can no longer exist in the modern world. Whether the next installment of Bond will continue in the fashion of internal complexity, or revert back to the illusion of an unwavering hyper-masculinity can only be speculated. However, the effort *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall* put into reconstructing Bond's identity adds a richness and depth to both the character and the realm in which he exists. Self-awareness and self-analysis serve as the adaptation this installment of the series enacts. The films expose the tendons of Bond's previously impermeable exterior; they disclose the illusion that allows Bond to subsist.

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