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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Becoming James Bond: Daniel Craig, rebirth, and refashioning masculinity in *Casino Royale* (2006).

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Daniel Craig's first outing as James Bond in *Casino Royale* (2006) playfully repositions the extensive and polysemic cultural symbolism that Barthes identified with the character [Barthes, R., 1982. *Selected writings (1966)*. Oxford University Press]. The closed narrative structures which were foregrounded in Umberto Eco's structuralist reading of Bond (2009) are made ambiguous, and Bond himself is represented as incomplete, vulnerable and in a process of becoming. This refashioning of Bond is achieved through modes of birth and rebirth, whereby the character is viewed in a state of transformation. In fashioning and refashioning his identity, the film demonstrates a masculinity that is fluid, and made more so by the frequent references to water. Bond's gender identity is unsettled and is repeatedly affected by his identification with traditionally feminine attributes and connotations. This research builds on the increased critical attention for this new Bond [Lindner, C., ed., 2009a. *The James Bond phenomenon: a critical reader*. 2nd ed. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press; Lindner, C., ed., 2009b. Revisioning 007: James Bond and *Casino Royale*. London and New York: Wallflower Press], and systematically considers and extends our understanding of Bond's gendered identity.

Keywords: James Bond; Daniel Craig; non-hegemonic masculinity; masculinities; water; re-birth

Introduction

In a variety of ways, the figure of James Bond is reborn and transformed in the film *Casino Royale* (2006). This is evident in the narrative decision to return to and revise the original novel, in casting a new actor, in viewing this Bond as part of a continuation of the character, as well as in the transformations of his gender identity. *Casino Royale* is Ian Fleming's first Bond novel (1953)[1] and so the decision to film it as the twenty-first episode of Bond's adventures details an anachronistic cinematic journey that transports the audience back to the beginning, to witness the making of the spy. It is significant and intentional that this move introduces the sixth actor to take up the mantle of Bond in the mainstream cinematic tradition.[2] Though this film rightly suggests a beginning for Bond, it is also a return, as the majority of the audience is largely a privileged one that knows what he will become. Despite the director and crew's desire to remain faithful to Fleming's vision of Bond,[3] this is not solely the Bond of Fleming's *Casino Royale* but a Bond informed by a blend of the novels and films as well as by contemporary culture. This

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positions Craig's Bond as a nodal point upon a journey both towards and away from Fleming's fictional creation of 1953.

At first glance, Daniel Craig's Bond appears again to be the epitome of hypermasculinity [as outlined by Tremonte and Racioppi (2009)] – a rough and muscular spy for a new generation of film-goers – and yet a closer investigation of the character reveals an incomplete and insecure Bond. In the earlier films, Bond's masculinity can also be read as insecure. In *Goldfinger* (1964) in particular, Toby Miller has persuasively argued that Bond's penis is repeatedly threatened and so by extension is the man himself (as well as the nation and world politics he represents). In *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971), the film is redolent with homosexual imagery and bodily threat to the heterosexual male. In *Casino Royale* the gendered identity of Bond remains complex and unsettled, and it is his fluid identity that becomes the cipher for this threat to masculinity. Although the film may be read as a process of becoming, that ends with the final utterance of his name ('the name's Bond . . . James Bond'), I will argue that Bond is still incomplete at the end of the film. The narrative arc caused by his involvement with the female lead character Vesper lasts into *Quantum of Solace* (2008) and beyond to *Skyfall* (2012).

Craig's transformation into Bond is here viewed as a negotiated and an incomplete process of change that is repeatedly presented in gendered terms. Though Fleming's problematic responses to women are here tempered for the contemporary demographic of cinema goers, the gender ambiguities of Fleming's character are made overt, causing Bond to resemble a hybrid of gendered roles and connotations. In the film, Bond threatens to be characterised by a series of traits associated with femininity which, it is suggested, may lead him into chaos and uncertainty. It is only through the symmetry of his relationship with Vesper and his rebirth in the waters of Venice that we are able to view Bond becoming.

Blonde Bond

Bond exists as a global franchise. He remains an icon of the remarkable success of mainstream cinema (Spicer 2003) and, as a result, the media and public alike devour Bond rumour and speculation. Choosing Bond is a very public event, caused in part by the overt consumerism attached to the character. Bond is defined by the objectification central to the films, resulting in a type of public ownership that causes massive consternation at the time of change over to a new Bond. Even the quintessential film Bond, as defined by Connery's butch bravado, when first cast met with stern opposition from the author: '[t]hat couldn't be further from my idea of James Bond. Everything was wrong: the face, the accent, the hair' (Sterling and Morcambe 2003, p. 80; *cf.* Pfeiffer and Worrall 2003, p. 13).[4] Casting Connery enabled the producers to reach out to a wide audience. His Bond situated the elitist 'gentleman' spy of Fleming's vision within a fantasy Playboy lifestyle (see Hines 2009), whereas the figure of Connery himself suggested a rugged, working man's appeal. Craig's Bond is sensitive to this as his characterisation intimates certain class ambiguities.[5] This points to a fleshing out of Fleming's character but also hints at the baggage that actors bring to the part of Bond as, apart from the unknown George Lazenby, each Bond actor has been heralded for the part through the suitability of previous roles. Craig's varied oeuvre is in contrast to the casting of some of his predecessors such as Roger Moore and Pierce Brosnan, whose roles in *The Saint*, *The Persuaders* (Moore) and in *Remington Steele* (Brosnan) were used as a means to confirm their suitability for the part.

Craig's break-through role was in the highly acclaimed and regional drama *Our Friends in the North* (1996), whereas more recent cinematic work saw him as the British baddie in *Tomb Raider* (2001) and a standout brooding portrayal of Ted Hughes in *Sylvia* (2003), but it was his hard man act in *Layer Cake* (2004) which drew him to the producers' attention. These parts effectively unite elements of action hero, working-class man with the Byronic and tortured soul, in a composite that reflects the past and future of Bond. Being part of a lineage of characters is alluded to by Halle Berry in her discussions of her role as Jinx (*Die Another Die*). She perceptively notes that her job is not to replace the other Bond women but rather to '[add] another image to the bevy of the ones before' (cited Sterling and Morcambe 2003, p. 307). For Bond it is the same as he joins what 'across forty years is truly an assemblage' (Cardwell 2002).

When Craig was unveiled as the sixth incarnation of Bond, the decision was met with derision from the world's press and Bond fans alike. In these early critiques of the actor, Craig was referred to as 'the blonde', a moniker usually attributed to female actors and women in general, and one that became a mantra in the press leading up to the film's release. As the BBC confirms '[c]ritics of Craig have pointed out the actor is blond[e] while James Bond has dark hair' (BBC – 10 March 2006). And yet Fleming's books were notoriously imprecise, causing Moore to bemoan that 'I found out only one thing and that was he had a scar on his cheek and looked like Hoagy Carmichael' (cited Sterling and Morecambe 2003, p. 221). Moore's uncertainty is substantiated by Fleming, who in his description of the character confirmed 'I didn't even provide him with a detailed personal appearance. I kept him virtually blank' (cited Sterling and Morecambe 2003, p. 329).

Casino Royale's pre-release publicity shots capture a bare-chested Craig, emerging out of the waves in the Bahamas and walking along the beach in trunks. Here, he is situated as the object of desire (via a process of scopophilia), as the camera emphasises his exposed torso and physique. Although the actor's impressively muscular corporeality visually emphasises his masculinity, there is an excessiveness here coupled with the fetishisation of Craig through the use of these shots before the release of the film which positions him as object of the gaze. This view of Craig reminds us that the gaze is not restricted to the female form but it does see Craig in a space usually occupied by a female actor, as object of spectacle.[6] In addition, the press's emphasis on his hair colour aligns him with archetypal Hollywood actors such as Veronica Lake, Marilyn Monroe, Jane Mansfield and even the comic actor Doris Day. The use of these pictures is ironic as though offered as a means to confirm Craig's suitability for the part through the pronouncement of his muscularity and manliness, and its associations with masculinity, the voyeuristic shots situate Craig as the addressee of the gaze. As Miller notes, this fetishisation of Bond occurs from the beginning of the film versions as '[f]rom the first, Connery was the object of the gaze' (Miller 2009, p. 238).

This pre-release reporting contrasts ironically with early publicity material from Macmillan used to promote Fleming's novels in *The New Yorker*, which heralded that 'Gentlemen may prefer blondes, but blondes prefer Bond' (cited Sterling and Morcambe 2003, p. 63). References in the press to the 'Blonde Bond' align Craig with the women of Bond, who have historically been the object of his conquest. In her analysis of early Bond title credits, Dana Booth writes that 'a blonde woman is spotlighted, she is shown almost fully illuminated as by now, blondes seem to have become a theme of their own in Binder's sequences' (Booth 2003, p. 8). This proliferation of the blonde woman as the fantasy object to be enacted upon again reinforces the extent to which Bond as Blonde is associated with the feminine. Partially, in a response to these taunts, Craig's Bond is overtly muscular, noticeably 'beefed-up' from the floppy-fringed, life-jacketed actor who

had been unveiled at the launch to the world's media on 14 October 2005. However, this accentuation of muscularity is viewed ironically as it is his body that the camera follows and fetishises, causing his co-star to opine that he *is* the Bond girl not her (Green cited Jeffries 2007).

Becoming Bond

The decision to film the first of Fleming's novels was an interesting choice, and is the culmination of years of attempts to secure the film rights, held by the Broccoli family only since 2000. The adaptation is a crucial one that rests both in the reinvestment in a new figure for the role and in the changing nature of the world as represented in contemporary film.[7] The setting of this Bond is anachronistic: it neither resides in the world of Fleming's 1950s novel nor endeavours to unpick its own complicated film history. However, this has been the case since the first of the films as Judith Roof persuasively argues in her discussion of the divergent trajectories of the novels, adaptations and the films (2005, p. 73). The gritty and brutal world of *Casino Royale* contrasts the outlandish gadgetry and frippery in the final scenes of the preceding Bond vehicle, *Die Another Day* (2003).[8] Enormous computer-generated imagery sequences, best typified by the wave-boarding episode in Iceland, closely resemble a platform computer game and so diminish the idea of Bond as an exponent of daring skill and human endeavour.

This level of technological support situates Brosnan's Bond firmly into the realm of fantasy and sits uneasily with the fluctuations of international security in the wake of 9/11, which typically emphasises uncertainty and the renegotiation of the hero in Hollywood film.[9] Post 9/11, Hollywood has invested in a number of big budget re-castings of the superhero in an attempt to redraw the delineations of the hero. These cinematic offerings have tended to be darker or more 'real', offering a glimpse of archetypal heroes re-imagined in such films as *Batman Begins* (2005) and *Superman Returns* (2006) (see for example Hassler-Forest 2011). These recognisable protagonists no longer sweep all before them effortlessly but need instead to change or be reborn into this strange new world of different rules. These heroes are dark, afflicted and not 'super' and contrast to the technological supremacy of Brosnan's Bond. As the 1995 trailer to *Goldeneye* confirmed: '[i]t's a new world. With new enemies. And new threats. But you can still depend on one man' (cited Sterling and Morecambe 2003, p. 283). The trailer announces the fluidity and changeability of the object of the foe rather than a transformation of the hero.

Pivotally, to revive the franchise, it was seen to be vital to alter Bond: to employ a new actor and to return to the formula of the character as sketched in the original novel. This was to be '[a] different Bond in every way' (Campbell, cited Sony Pictures 2006, p. 12) but which paradoxically bore a fidelity to the fictional character. Campbell's comments and direction stresses the divergence of the film and fictional creation, whereas demonstrating that this birth of Bond is simultaneously a rebirth of the figure. The contemporary Bond of *Casino Royale* is 'raw', stripped of most of his gadgets (Campbell, cited BBC 14 October 2005), and so relies upon his wit, intelligence and instinct to safeguard himself. This representation of Bond is congruent with the earliest Bond films such as *Dr No* and *From Russia With Love* (1963; see also Pfeiffer and Worrall 2003, p. 14), and serves both to challenge the 1967 camp adaptation of the book and to confirm the central importance of Craig's performance. This Bond is, at times, hesitant, flawed and, despite earlier passionless reactions to the death of Solange, falls in love and in turn has his heart broken. This is unquestionably a new and 'human' Bond, bearing the fragility of Lazenby in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (see Sterling and Morecambe 2003). Publicity for the film

stressed the new interpretation of the spy in Craig, and yet it is also an old Bond emphasised by the directorial insistence on a fidelity to Fleming's vision and nod towards the other films.

Despite the cast and crew's rhetoric announcing a return to a Fleming-written Bond (see Campbell 2006), they have instead constructed an androgynous figure that bears passing similarities with the dual gendering of women in Fleming's novels (such as Vesper, Honeychilde, Pussy and Till Masterton [sic]) whose attractiveness are exacerbated by descriptors of masculinity. This film is a journey for the character exemplified by the contrast in the murders that earn him his '00' status, as he swings between the chaotic and out-of-control with glimpses of the suave and witty figure of the later books. This ambivalence is again demonstrated in the juxtaposition of the weeping and bereaved lover in the penultimate dénouement in Venice and the start of his revenge upon Mr White which appears to reveal him as Bond. In doing so, Bond undergoes a journey of growth but, as this article demonstrates, this *bildunsroman* is not as straightforward as the publicity material suggests. Bond is repeatedly viewed as ambiguous, as scenes of masculinity are juxtaposed with extended and repeated tropes and metaphors associated with femininity.

Water, birth and re-birth

Crucially, throughout the film, Bond is associated with water. Bond's clothes are often made wet which draws attention to his body. The film's insistence on using water in this way does foreground Craig as object of the male gaze. As Green notes, this displaces the body of the Bond girl which is instead filled by Bond himself. Viewing Bond as part of this female lineage (as 'the Bond girl') is a radical departure from previous representations of his character. This connection can be extended further by considering his iconic dip in the ocean and its relationship to the most famous representations of women and water in the Bond films. In 1962 *Dr No*, the first of the Broccoli and Saltzman Bond films, aired with the original Bond companion, Ursula Andress, emerging from the sea. This iconic piece of cinema views the scantily clad Honey Rider (Honeychilde in the novel) as she steps from the water carrying shells from the ocean. She is both the object of desire for Bond and the cinematic audience, but also a figure of threat, wearing a knife in her belt. Andress in the role unites woman and deity as to view Honey is to glimpse 'Botticelli's Venus, seen from behind' (Fleming cited Sterling and Morecambe 2003, p. 107). Botticelli's fifteenth century depiction of the archetypal female beauty, the Roman goddess Venus, portrays the birth of the goddess after she has arisen from the ocean. Bond is here viewed as part of this association between beauty and water that has traditionally centred on the feminine.

In a deliberate allusion, Honey Rider's climatic cinematic arrival is reprised by Halle Berry's entry as a Bond girl in *Die Another Day* (2003). Strikingly, in the 2006 instalment of the Bond phenomenon, it is the male Bond that is offered up for the audience's voyeuristic gaze as he born not once but three times out of water. The Bahamas sequence, which lingers on a silent and bare-chested Bond, is a deliberate reworking of Andress' entry into cinematic history (Sony Pictures Hemming 2006, p. 17) and in doing so evokes Botticelli's Venus and also Berry's character Jinx in a web of allusion. Crucially, this aligns Bond with these female characters and also with the accoutrements of female representation in the cinema; he becomes the object of the gaze and, as this article will demonstrate, is repeatedly situated with the women and also femininity in the Bond filmic continuum.

It is entirely appropriate that Bond's rebirth is facilitated by emersion in the waters of the Venetian lagoon, and this affirms his close association with water sustained throughout

the film. Aside from his emergence from the waves in the Bahamas, he completes his first messy kill with the partial drowning of a man, is soaked by the airport sprinkler system, cleans his bloody wounds in the hotel with water and whiskey, tends to Vesper in the shower of their suite following the killing of two terrorists, emerges from a rain storm in Italy to make love, rests with her on the beach and, finally, dives into a sinking building in Venice in a futile attempt to save her. The rejuvenating and transformative properties of the liquid throughout the film imply an underlying metonymic evocation of the maternal and the feminine.

The cinematography in *Casino Royale* revisits the city of Venice used in *From Russia With Love* (1963) and for such camp effect in *Moonraker* (1979). In this fluid space, Bond continues the process of refashioning his identity. The city intensifies the gender ambiguities evident throughout the film. Venice has always fascinated and enticed, uniting themes of love and loss, death and despair in literature, poetry, music and film. From the tragic passion of *The Wings of a Dove* (1902), the contamination of *Death in Venice* (1911) to the disquieting cinema of *Don't Look Now* (1973), Venice is viewed as a union of opposites, precariously situated on the lagoon. In her red wrap dress, Vesper leads Bond through the maze-like city in a deliberate allusion to the killer in *Don't Look Now* (see Hemming 2006, p. 18), but also Little Red Riding Hood, with Bond as predator. In an inversion of the scene outside the casino, where Vesper restarts his heart, Bond is unable to bring Vesper back to life, when his attempts at cardiopulmonary resuscitation fail.

Watching Bond

In keeping with Campbell's intentions, we do see Bond in new and unfamiliar territory. Bond is even briefly present in a domestic setting as he infiltrates M's home, surprising her away from the usual office space. In this location he dares to threaten her with the exposure of her name, which he is prevented from speaking. Like a mother, she scolds him for his arrogance and immaturity, and chastises him for flaunting the boundaries of their relationship. In this, the theme of identity is again prominent as she circumvents his naming of her: 'utter one more syllable and I'll have you killed'. Her threats remind the audience of the power imbalance in their relationship but in this she is also the terrible mother, at times cajoling and affectionate and at others menacing. Suitably, Fleming's adoption of 'M' as the dogmatic head of MI5 was intended as a joke, based on his mother's nickname (Sterling and Morecambe 2003, p. 8). The decision in *Goldeneye* (1995) to cast a woman in this role complicates the relationship. M as a pseudo-mother accentuates Bond's inability to sleep with her, and places her as the only unavailable, inaccessible and taboo woman he meets.[10]

The film offers a sense of verbal completion to the opening credits of the first film *Dr No* which announced the character of James Bond with the immortal line: 'Bond … James Bond'. As Dennis W. Allen argues, this use of the name and this particular utterance is superfluous, as the most famous undercover spy, Bond really needs no introduction (2005). Bond confirms this as, when checking into the hotel with Vesper, he gives his real name as it 'is a name [Le Chiffre] already had'. It is only after the death of Vesper and the shooting of Mr White that Bond ends the film by speaking the line.[11] Despite the different actors who have played Bond, the essence of Bond is reaffirmed by that sentence. The decision to delay its deployment is to emphasise the becoming of Bond, although I would argue that is unclear whether the character that shots Mr White at the climax of the film is completely 'Bond … James Bond' or whether his journey is only beginning.[12]

The shifting nature of Bond's identity is at the heart of the film as it plays with the continuing tradition of actors in the role and also with the representation of his gendered

identity. This is explicit in the unusual credits sequence that both parodies and transforms the formula of opening Bond credits. *From Russia With Love* (1963) was the first of the Bond films to adopt an opening sequence that offset Bond and his various technologies against a stylised background of gyrating women. Frequently, these opening sequences offer an objectification of women through fragmented and sexualised body images. The images are ethereal, transient but also universal. The sequences are usually shot with elemental themes,[13] which indicate female exoticism and construct the idea of woman as a possession or site of Bond's quest, but not as his ultimate goal. However, *Casino Royale* plays upon the idea of Bond as the stylised figure, intimating that he is one of a line of actors to carry the part, as the figure morphs from ubiquitous Bond in mortal combat back and forth to Craig's image, denoting the shifting and yet seeming permanence of this cultural icon. Suitably, Vesper's face appears in the montage, imposed upon the Queen of Hearts; her face is elevated above a grounded Bond, caught in a gun's sights, as she looks on impassively. The foregrounding of her face suggests a prolepsis of plot as it supports her role in the card game, her capturing of his heart, but also her saving of his life, first when poisoned by Digitalis (and she restarts his heart) and later when he is threatened with emasculation at the hands of Le Chiffre.

Despite Craig's excessively masculine appearance (that draws admiration from Le Chiffre during the torture scene) this new Bond is recurrently aligned with stereotypically feminine characteristics and attributes. Bond's corporeality is frequently threatened[14] and is represented as permeable: he bleeds, is penetrated by a nail gun, is impregnated by an MI5 tracker device and has this same equipment sliced from his arm. Bond's body is directly affected by Le Chiffre's dose of poison, which causes him to lose his focus, unbuttoning his suit. This is a Bond barely in control as he stumbles apparently drunkenly to the toilet to induce vomiting. When he fails on two occasions to outwit Le Chiffre, he requires rescuing by Vesper, and his early sexual encounters reveal more passion between the men in the love triangle than for the woman.

As Umberto Eco notes in his seminal work on Bond, the structural apparatus of Fleming's work results in an initial Bond girl who Bond must seduce before moving onto the main object of his affections, in this instance, Vesper. In *Casino Royale*, this auxiliary woman is played by Solange, the wife of Demetrius, Le Chiffre's fixer and middle man. Bond's encounter with Solange is an interesting one, though he initially glimpses her on surveillance footage, he first acknowledges her with his gaze as she rides on a white horse along the sands in Bermuda. Already from this footage his interest lies with her husband Demetrius, and his seduction of her revolves around her ability to furnish him with information about her husband, as she notes: 'I'm also afraid, you will sleep with me in order to get to him'. The scene with Solange on the beach at first viewing appears hopelessly clichéd and yet, on close inspection, some interesting analyses can be drawn. Solange, wearing an expensive La Perla bikini and short sarong, is viewed as she canters her white horse along the sand, a group of children chasing playfully in her wake. This group of children indicate her separateness as a wealthy woman, whilst her disinterest at their pleas for her to stop implies her availability as a sexual object which is neither aligned with maternal desires nor obligations. Despite the aqua green of her swimming outfit, she does not enter the water, though her death and torture suggest that she was drowned; rather it is Bond who is aligned with the sea as he views her after surfacing from the waves. Pacing inland from this watery realm, he is a liminal figure, belonging to neither the sea nor the land.

Although Solange wears skimpy and inappropriate riding attire, it is Bond's damp torso that the camera lingers on causing Zoe Williams and Paul Flynn to pronounce that

'Craig is the woman' (2006), a feature exacerbated by the use of pre-publicity shots that foreground Craig as a object of desire and masculine envy. Though he catches Solange's appraising gaze, she acts as a conduit, an objectified link between the two men as her husband Demetrius also watches from above her in his house and it is he that Bond's gaze fixes upon. Demetrius is the object of his desire, aligned as he is with Bond's quest to bring down Le Chiffre, whilst Solange is merely a vessel to bring about this end. Hunger for the job, success and passion are all ultimately focussed towards the male Demetrius, not his wife.

The queer connection between the two men is fascinating: Bond has already captured Demetrius' prized possession, the car, before he seduces his wife as a means of learning more about the businessman. Discussion of the screenplay suggests that their meeting is resultant in sex as the actor playing Solange notes: 'She has great sex. Then he's gone!' (Murino cited Sony Pictures 2006, p. 9) but the film demonstrates that Bond abandons her when he learns of Demetrius' whereabouts. In their entangled position on the floor Solange remains fully clothed and it is Bond whose shirt is unbuttoned. Far from cuckolding Demetrius, Bond appears to leave having failed to penetrate her and tellingly orders his trademark vintage Bollinger champagne and Beluga caviar for one only. This is an unemotional scene and contrasts with the tension between Demetrius and Bond when they finally confront one another.

Following Demetrius to his planned rendezvous requires Bond to enter the controversial exhibition of preserved human figures designed by Gunther Von Hagens, who briefly makes a cameo appearance in the film. The sculptures are life form art that utilises the donated bodies of volunteers, whose figures are exhibited with various acts of life with their skin and muscle tissue partially removed. The effect is the extravagant representation of life in death, which further highlights the living human body evident in Craig's frequent displays of physicality. Prophetically, Bond observes a small party of these figures playing a card game, which intimates the inevitability of the game that *Casino Royale* builds towards. Demetrius draws attention to the game by placing the key number 53 on top of one of the player's chips, the key itself recalling the year of *Casino Royale*'s publication.

The friction and homoeroticism of Bond's relationship with Demetrius is played out in this scene; when confronted by his foe, the two men struggle in this public space with an erect flick knife between them. Though not Bond's weapon of choice, it is telling that he manages to overcome the lesser man, as he did hours before at poker, which he achieves by striking his face and driving the knife into him. In the struggle it seems likely that Bond will be overcome by the other man's strength and control of the knife, which serves as an analogy of his ownership and possession of his wife who, as I have argued earlier, Bond seems unable to possess. The tension and conflict of this scene are compounded by the intimacy of the two men as they draw each other closer as though to kiss. The camera cuts between fixed shots of the two men staring intently at one another and the covert phallic knife that is only revealed to the audience. The final embrace results in death for Demetrius as Bond succeeds in penetrating his body with the knife and so walks him to a chair where he leaves him slumped.

Mannish women and womanish men

In *Casino Royale*, evil is no longer concerned with world domination, creating an alternative society or even showing Bond duelling against a megalomaniac nemesis; rather these new 'baddies' are amongst us, as exemplified by Bond's killing of the double agent,

Dryden, which earns him his 00 status, his lingering distrust of Mathis and, ultimately, Vesper's betrayal. Le Chiffre, though linked to both terrorism and national secret organisations, is revealed as nothing more than a middleman, who is assassinated by his own side, 'an employee [. . .] just like Bond' (Sterling and Morecambe 2003, p. 34). Bond's obvious foes are overtly signified in this film, as elsewhere in the Bond tradition, through corporeal tics and deformity. When identifying the initial bomb maker, Bond wonders aloud about the hazards of a job that leads to such facial scarring; however, Bond's removal of the middle men in this film reflects his own profession, although his scars tend to be on the inside. The film goes on to emphasise modes of seeing: Le Chiffre also has facial scarring which suggests an apparent blindness in one eye, visibly evident in the bleeding tear duct, whilst his asthma points to his fallibility.[15] Later, Vesper's contact is identified through his use of an eye patch. The prominence afforded to sight and seeing reflects Bond's own *hamartia*, as it is his love of Vesper that prevents him from 'seeing' her as she really is: as a betrayer and double agent.

Eva Green's portrayal of Vesper Lynd plays to the slightly mannish character of the novel and so offers the sometimes feminised Bond a type of symmetry through her masculinity. Vesper's gender ambiguity acknowledges the legacy of such traits in the other female Bond villains, such as Rosa Klebb (*From Russia with Love*) and Irma Blunt (*On Her Majesty's Secret Service* 1969).[16] Strikingly, even Fleming's depictions of good women combine their femininity with traits of masculinity, evident explicitly in his depictions of Honeychilde Rider and her boyish buttocks and Tatiana Romanova's exercise hardened rear which 'jutted like a man's' (see also Ladenson 2009).[17]

Vesper's mannishness is drawn from her appearance, through slight references to Katharine Hepburn (Hemming cited Sony Pictures 2006, p. 18), her confidence in handling and reading Bond, which indicates she would make a worthy adversary, and her tendency to dress in suits. Bond identifies this ambivalent mixture of gender signifiers when he challenges her as a woman who 'overcompensates by wearing slightly masculine clothing, [and is] more aggressive than her female colleagues'. Vesper responds by appraising Bond's history in turn with more accuracy, and comments directly on his physical attractiveness when she reveals 'I will be keeping my eye on our government's money and off your perfectly formed arse'. Again it is Bond's physique that is being viewed and evaluated, at the expense of the Bond 'girl'.

Although Miller has commented on a filmic trend to view Bond as a 'commodified male beauty' (2009, p. 233), in *Casino Royale* this is uniquely offset by Vesper's ability to situate herself as a masculinised figure. Accordingly, she dictates his dress for the evening's game of Texas Hold 'Em. She produces an Italian suit by Brioni which was especially tailored to accommodate Craig's 'more muscular physique' (Hemming cited Sony Pictures 2006, p. 17) and which denotes Vesper's ability as she remarks to a baffled Bond that 'I sized you up the moment we met' (writers 2006). Though her gift of the suit mirrors Bond's delivery of a dress for her, the camera unexpectedly lingers on Bond. We witness with Vesper, Bond donning the suit and appraising himself in the mirror.[18] Her capacity to sum him up is evident from the banter between them when she first meets him on the train. In doing so, she deploys the tools of his trade with more panache.

Vesper is routinely seen as being in control. She is able to make the life-saving gadget work, is secretive about her past, works as a double agent, and in outwitting Bond, she also leaves a trail for him to avenge her death and betrayal. However, Vesper is affected by the death of two assassins in single combat who attack her and Bond. Her reaction perhaps mirrors Bond when he completes his first kill. For all the doubling of their roles, she represents a human side that Bond is rapidly losing, as he later repeats to her: 'you do what

I do for too long and there won't be any soul left to salvage'. After the game he finds Vesper in a cold shower, unable to cleanse the imaginary blood from her hands. The returning Bond joins her in the water and maternally licks and sucks the stain from her fingers and hands. This could be seen as another birthing or re-birthing image, as Bond as mother removes the (imaginary) bloody residue from a 'new' Vesper. This is a surprisingly intimate, sexual and literary action. The situation recalls Lady Macbeth's culpability in the death of Duncan. Furthermore, Bond's action is both evocative of maternal soothing and cleaning as well as oral sex.

Examples of gender ambiguity are also found in the depictions of Le Chiffre, who mirrors both Bond as a disposable middle man and as Vesper's occupation as an accountant. Le Chiffre threatens Bond with sexual indeterminacy in one of the most graphic of Fleming's torture scenes. Bond is actively presented with the possibility of castration by the scheming Le Chiffre with his '[s]mall, rather feminine mouth' (Fleming 2006, p. 17). This threat to Bond's sexual organs (also made by *Goldfinger*) appears to be something that Bond does not fear. As with Demetrius, the men share an intimacy that borders on eroticism and the banter between them resembles flirting. Eco identifies this tenderness when he notes the relationship between the two in the novel (see Eco 2009, p. 43). This is clearly evident in the novel, as Le Chiffre's eyes 'looked at Bond carefully, almost caressingly' (Fleming 2006, p. 132), and the intimacy is confirmed in the film by Le Chiffre's appraising comments: 'wow! You've taken good care of your body'. The restrained Bond forms the spectacle of the scene as his bound body is foremost, whilst liminality is again suggested with the location of the torture taking place on board a ship. Perhaps for reasons of film censorship and the targeted audience, Bond's genitalia, is hidden.

In his perceptive analysis of Bond's virility, Miller refers to this masking of Bond's body and implies that in film this relates to issues of 'castration anxiety' (2009, p. 234). Castration here is a very real threat, and yet Bond deflects Le Chiffre's attacks with humour and mock sexual elation, screaming 'yes, yes, yes' as Le Chiffre's blows rain down on his testicles. Le Chiffre appears to hold the ability to emasculate Bond as 'there will be little left to identify you as a man [. . .] will you yield in time?' and Bond's masculinity is further compromised as Le Chiffre threatens 'I'll feed you what you seem not to value'. However, Vesper's redefinition of masculinity refutes Le Chiffre's limited definition of manhood as existing as an extension of male gentalia as she lovingly says of Bond 'if all that was left of you, was your smile and little finger you'd still be more of a man than anyone I've ever met'. Audrey D. Johnson also compares these scenes and sees Vesper as redefining masculinity and crucially 'its limits as well' (2009, p. 126). Bond's response to Vesper is significant as he claims sexual potency for this body part: 'that's because you know what I can do with my little finger'. This is not the over active trigger finger M refers to earlier in the film which she associates with stupidity, violence and death. Instead, this apparently inconsequential body part is represented as playful, active and sexual. Vesper's reading of his masculinity and the innuendo he ascribes to it suggest that pleasure is diffuse and located throughout the body. The little finger replaces the penis as object of desire and in doing so offers a fragmented and queer reading of sexual pleasure. The reduction of Bond to little more than a smile also recalls Lewis Carroll's mercurial Cheshire Cat. In doing so, Bond's masculinity is far from hegemonic and is again viewed an unstable and fluid.

Conclusion

Despite returning to Fleming's first novel, the film details a new and raw depiction of Bond that is typified by vulnerability and gender ambiguity not explicit in Fleming's work.

These are welcome and unexpected additions to the character of Bond which challenges general depictions of the character as an embodiment of hegemonic masculinity. The rebirth and refashioning of Bond begun in *Casino Royale* has done much to reinvigorate the character. After an action-packed but intellectually dull return in *Quantum of Solace*, Bond is again viewed as complex and unsettled in his relationships with the feminine in the critically acclaimed *Skyfall*.

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Notes

1. See Will Scheibel's essay The History of *Casino Royale* on (and off) Screen (2009) for a detailed examination of the representations of this first novel which range from cartoons, to television to film.
2. An early version of Fleming's novel appeared on American television in a reworking of *Casino Royale* (1954). A comedic film version followed starring David Niven (Fleming's initial choice for the role of Bond in *Dr No*) in 1967. So Craig as the sixth actor refers to the 'Broccoli' series of films, produced by Eon.
3. In discussing the film, director Martin Campbell refers anachronistically to the author Fleming as having 'envisaged the Daniel Craig Bond' (Campbell 2007).
4. In the popular imagination, 007 represents the epitome of masculinity and Englishness and yet both of these assertions may be contested. Fleming has contradicted himself on occasion referring to his creation as 'Scottish' (cited Sterling and Morecambe 2003, p. 330) and at other times as an 'Englishman' (cited Sterling and Morecambe 2003, p. 331). The ambiguity of Bond's national identity is an important feature of *Skyfall* where these contradictions are made prominent.
5. As Vesper surmises: 'you didn't come from money [. . .] which means you were at that school by the grace of someone else's charity'. See Donald L. Howard's essay 'Do I look like I give a damn?': What's Right in Getting it Wrong in *Casino Royale* (2009, p. 38) for an insightful discussion of class and Craig's Bond.
6. For an exploration of the male as object of the gaze, see the response to Laura Mulvey's essay on visual pleasure (1975) by such critics as Neale (1993) and Hansen (2004).
7. For a detail discussion of the relationships between novels, moving image and the process of adaptation, see Sarah Cardwell's *Adaptation Revisited* (2002).
8. The 2003 film was very much in the mould of the more outlandish representations of Bond such as *Moonraker* though the opening sequence of Bond's torture at the hands of the North Korean militia was surprisingly graphic and brutal. The unshaven and aging Bond was struggling to maintain his control of the situation and, in hindsight, appears an appropriate last outing for Brosnan's spy.
9. This level of global uncertainty recalls Fleming's creation of Bond as a product of the Cold War. See Joyce Goggin and René Glas (2009) for their reading of global politics in Bond.
10. This idea of M as mother is explored in much more detail in the third outing for Craig's Bond in *Skyfall* (2012).
11. This results in a divergence from the sentiments at the close of Fleming's novel, where Bond ends with the vitriolic line: 'The bitch is dead now' (2006, p. 212). In the film, the team are concerned to affirm identity, marking an important point on Bond's passage of becoming. Bond speaks the unsettling misogynistic line to M earlier on in the film (see Howard 2009, p. 46 for an analysis of this).
12. Naming and identity are also made prominent through musical director David Arnold's collaboration with Chris Cornell. The choice of a singer for the Bond theme is also a highly contested and desirable role, and Cornell was approached as he was a 'strong male singer' (Cornell cited Kawashima 2009), which resulted in 'You know my Name'. The intention here seems to be to combine a masculine performance with Craig's aggressive and raw Bond.

13. For example, *Goldfinger* uses gold; *Octopussy*, the sea; *Diamonds Are Forever*, diamonds; *Die Another Day:* fire and ice and so on.
14. It is significant that Bond is challenged by and repeatedly overcomes black men in this film; to the extent that the question of race could be read as a central concern. From the initial bomb maker to the extraordinary confrontation between Bond and the machete-wielding terrorist/s in the hotel, these 'other' examples of masculinity threaten to overwhelm Bond.
15. Depictions of deformity, disability or foreignness are usually indicators of a character's unreliability or untrustworthiness in Bond films. There are exceptions to this, such as Camille Montes in *Quantum of Solace* (2008) who bears visible scarring caused by a betrayal whilst mirrors Bond's internal scars from the loss of Vesper.
16. See Synnott's analysis of beauty in Bond (1990).
17. In this, Fleming's work recalls the beauty aesthetic of the hermaphrodite which is viewed as the perfect being, bearing the symmetry and ambivalence of both sexes (see for example Angela Carter's discussion of the hermaphrodite 1978).
18. It is significant that we do not see his reflected image; rather our view is of his reception of his image and the audience registers his surprise at his appearance. Again, this does not suggest a complete Bond but one who perceives a lack between his body and his reflection.

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