

**Sometimes the Old Ways are Best: Regressing the 007 Franchise**

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DISSERTATION

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## I. INTRODUCTION

When I needed it, the term ‘third space’ had not yet been coined. I was trying to explain to friends of mine in Philadelphia why I feared the Center City Borders bookstore was in danger of losing business for having done away with the cushioned armchairs that had once littered their store. My friends countered that, if anything, Borders was threatened by online book sales, but I knew from having managed a bookstore that there was more to the story than that. I knew that people didn’t just buy books because they wanted them, they bought books because they discovered them while enjoying their primary pursuit, the experience of the third space; the joy of being alone together- to paraphrase Turkle (2012)- in the company of strangers.

My point here is that too often the arguments we need to make, at the time we need to make them, are hindered by the lack of a common vernacular. This dissertation sets out to provide a vernacular that will help us to address the significant cultural impact of a global socio-political regression integrally tied to gender, technology, and the media. In it, I will be discussing the interplay between mass media and the public sentiment of its audiences; new media and its impact on the performance of masculinity in the United States and Britain; and finally, the significant future role that critical cultural studies can play if it is afforded the attention deserved by other scholars.

The difficulty in making the arguments set out above is that explaining how these various relationships exist, and then how they interconnect, is a bit like arguing the merits of a third space to bookstore sales, when the term ‘third space’ doesn’t yet exist. I am making an argument that is bound by a unified theme, but to my reader it may not seem that way at times. Such was the case in 2012 when I saw the James Bond film *Skyfall* for the first time. My favorite character, M, died at the film’s end. A black woman had been reintroduced as the marginalized and subservient

secretary, Moneypenny. Q had returned to the franchise in the form of a young hacker, only slightly less queer than the villain of the piece, an overtly queer techno-master, who bested Bond in a litany of ways that forced 007 to retreat literally and symbolically into an antiquated world where hegemonic, rather than techno masculinity ruled.

Though I had only become a Bond fan with the reboot in 2006, I was perplexed by *Skyfall*'s narrative dissimilarity. How could a film released so soon after the reboot be so different in so many ways? What did it mean that just six years after adapting the franchise to contemporary standards for action films, the producers of the franchise were re-formulating the film series in an entirely new way? These questions ultimately led to an operating hypothesis that is central to the research in this dissertation. First, that *Skyfall* represents a departure from the rebooted film series formula, which I explicate in this project as the second era of the franchise; and secondly, that the producers shift from a second era to a third era in such a short space of time signaled a corresponding change in the socio-cultural climate of both the United States and Britain, a trans-Atlantic hybrid of which is acknowledged as the culture that produces the 007 franchise.

I set out in this dissertation to understand the cultural relevance of *Skyfall* using what Williams (54) calls the "structures of feeling" of our contemporary times. In keeping with Williams' theorization, I will do so in a critical cultural studies project that uses the dramatic conventions of the film series to do so. Like the third space, I feared for with the closing of Borders, there is a cultural shift at play in society that to me seems clearly exemplified by the distinct narrative of *Skyfall* when compared to the other films in the 007 franchise. Like Williams, and the whole of cultural studies scholars before and after him, I believe that cultural texts reveal more about the cultures that produce them than we might first realize. Using a narrative structural analysis of *Skyfall*, as part of a broader study of all 007 films, I intend to discern what the narrative

differences are within the film, how they relate to the change in dramatic conventions via the commutations of key recurring characters, and then to piece these two analyses together in order to evince what *Skyfall* reflects about the structures of feeling when the film was produced, and in the years following.

To bolster the argument that mass media corresponds in a meaningful way with the public sentiments of its audiences my work will demonstrate first that recurring themes exist within a set of Bond films produced in the twenty first century. Proving that these themes exist however also demands that I establish that the themes diverge from the longstanding format that other scholars have already examined. Proving this then allows me to make an argument about what social forces drive the new themes being presented, and in turn to prove the significance of these social forces by illustrating how they are perceived by the culture at large, through the medium of film. Finally, having documented a set of novel discourses in a prime mass media text, and having established that these discourses reflect the socio-political reality of the countries that produced the text, and where the text is most readily consumed, my dissertation evidences the fact that the socio-political reality presented via mass media discourses preceded society's recognition of this reality, thus affirming the value of critical cultural studies as a prime field of study in the discipline of communication.

As I will explain further in my next section, this approach to critical cultural approach to media studies affords a more nuanced reading of the film as a cultural text, not just as a cultural product or a singular media experience. My initial research found manifest themes of gender performativity, masculinity, and technological ability to be central to the film script. Within the context of the film franchise, these discourses were explored in novel ways that illustrated a broader structural tension emanating from socio-political reality of the time, and which threatened

the ongoing feasibility of the Bond universe. More notably, my initial research indicated that the ideological foundations of the film franchise were deliberately regressing, only six years after a reboot of the franchise had updated some antiquated Bond tropes.

This project adopts the notion of Structures of Feeling intuitively, since it was the structure of feeling in society at the moment that I first saw *Skyfall*, which sparked my interest in studying this film. The film was notable because it dealt with the longstanding conventions of the franchise, the commutation of characters that distinguishes each film, in a new way. The commutations of minor, recurring characters received as much attention as the commutation of the villain, henchman, and Bond girls, whose commutations are typically the focus. This departure from the dramatic conventions of the franchise, coupled with other major departures in terms of how the narrative resolves, mark *Skyfall* as a unique event in the franchise, and, because the franchise is known to reflect contemporary masculine ideals, it signaled that perhaps the change signaled some corresponding shift in the structures of feeling in the British and American cultures embedded in the franchise at the level of production.

The key to this project is the suitability of the text that is being read. James Bond represents a masculine archetype in the Anglo-American cultures driving the new media expansion. Bond also represents a prime example of the ties between masculinity and technology. His gadgets give him the edge in his missions, but the missions themselves are typically focused on retrieving a rogue technology that has gotten into the hands of an enemy who might use it to disrupt the existing balance of power.

The Bond franchise depends on a highly formulaic, continually popular, longstanding film franchise that's tendency to abide by a uniform and consistent formula is well documented. That this formula depends greatly on the commutation of characters is not something other scholars

have argued as such, however, their work does prove the focus on commutations is a central facet of how the franchise is able to adapt their formula to changing times, and changing socio-cultural audience expectations. Also, well documented, is the centrality of technology and gender as discourses within the formulaic narratives of Bond films. This is useful to my project because it helps frame the structures of feeling reflected in *Skyfall*, and in its deviations from the formula as implemented prior.

My goal with this project is to root out the structures of feeling that *Skyfall* reflects to provide a better frame of understanding for the impact of technology on gender relations in the United States and Britain. This work contributes to existing work by masculinity scholars, like Carroll (2011) and Kimmel (2016), whose research established a context for the concurrent rise of what Kimmel calls “angry white men.” Both scholars built on previous research, most notably that of Faludi (1995) who recognized that a backlash by masculinist white heterosexual men was fomenting around larger changes in society. Other masculinity studies scholars like Cockburn (1985), and Carroll (2011), tied the shifts in the economy, to corresponding shifts in the tech sector, where old cultures of misogyny were being adopted in new workplace environments.

This project may also be able to help contextualize major geo-political shifts that were driven by gendered discourses, and enacted in highly technological forms that emanated from a latent structure of feeling in American and British cultures, during the 2016 Brexit and U.S. Presidential campaigns. Is it possible that *Skyfall* presaged, as it seems to have, the key discourses of regressive gender and technology stances that became paramount in the triumph of regressive policies at the seeming behest of the world’s most famous real-life villain, Vladimir Putin? Did *Skyfall* reflect in 2012 the nascent shifts in this direction, and if so, what were the key discursive

ties between the regression on film in *Skyfall* and the regression of the U.S. and U.K. political landscapes?

In an effort to answer the questions raised above, this dissertation will document how the film *Skyfall* departs from the formulaic traditions of the franchise, and how these departures tie to the core (often intersecting) discourses of gender and technology. Many scholars have already documented the complex, but in many ways fundamental relationship between the use of technology and the performance of masculinity in western culture (Marvin, 1997; Oldenziel, 1999; Wajcman, 1991; Cockburn, 1988). Some of western history's benchmarks, including the enlightenment, the industrial revolution, and the arms race can be similarly said to illustrate how technology and masculinity, as dual social constructs, have evolved responsively to one another (Blackbourn, 2007; Connell, 1995; Seidler, 2013; Forth, 2009;). With the rise of what some describe as another industrial revolution driven by the use of digital technologies (Gordon, 2012) it is logical to wonder whether the new affordances of digital technology warrant corresponding changes in the performance of masculinity by those who use them.

This project's relevance is increasingly salient considering that serious contestations over digital space, digital technology production, and use of digital technologies regularly play out in highly gendered ways in the public sphere (Massanari, 2017). From the dearth of women in Silicon Valley (Lobo, 2014); to attacks on Hillary Clinton's use of email (Beck, 2016); to the #gamergate controversy (Massanari, 2017), there are routine instances of gender antagonism surfacing around the use of new media technologies. My research considers why this is happening, including the possibility that this antagonism stems from white western men's fears that new technologies threaten their ability to perform masculinity adequately; a phenomenon that has occurred before during times of technological transformation (Clark, 1995; Kimmel, 1995).

While societies around the world re-calibrate their policies to accommodate a more dynamic, and more diffuse, media environment, opportunities present themselves to consider how, and whether, these changes will incorporate the more expansive understanding of gender equality that has developed since the atomic age. In the critical tradition, this project will situate the relationship between technology and masculinity as the nexus of two practices of hegemonic control, which sustain white capitalist patriarchy, and underlie imperialist constructions of other cultures. By linking techno-masculinity in media with the broader political economy of the culture at large I am contributing to an existing thread of cultural studies research on masculinity initiated by researchers who link evolving masculine performances to changing socio-economic conditions (Forth, 2009; Carroll, 2011) and evolving geo-strategic rhetoric (Tasker, 2012; Jeffords, 1994). To do this, we will focus on the commutations of characters in the film, in the process confirming this is the principle mechanism through which the film reflects contemporary social realities. This will allow us, in the conclusion, to draw conclusions about what structures of feeling are being reflected in the film, and what their presence in the 2012 film *Skyfall* means about media studies ability to consider film themes as predictive, as well as, reflective.

## II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This dissertation draws on a range of theoretical approaches to the reading of cultural texts that function together in a holistic way. My approach layers compatible theories up from a semiotic base, to incorporate critical cultural studies and performative readings of gender, that are supported by other approaches to gender studies that provide context for how gender is being performed within a given context. For this reason, let us begin this section by exploring the meaning of semiotics as it is used here and its relationship to this project's approach to cultural studies. Let us then review how gender can be read as a performative act, and how these readings are informed by the gendered cultural contexts that feminist scholars from a range of disciplines and theoretical approaches have documented with their work. Lastly, we will consider the specific research focused on masculinity in British, American, and Anglo-American cultures.

### A. Semiotics

Semiotics, a qualitative process of analysis known as “the science of signs,” emanates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century linguist, Saussure, and his structuralist view of words as “arbitrary” utterances dependent on “sign systems” to give them meaning (Hansen, et al., 1998, p. 205). Saussure argued that language reflects and shapes our social understanding by establishing a complex set of signs that we employ in order to interpret words using what Barthes (1973) later called the denotative meaning, or the first level of signification, but also connotative meanings at the second level of signification. Saussure theorized this as a relationship between signifiers (e.g. words) and the signified meanings that these signifiers produce for us. (Gill, 2007). This distinction between signifier and signified is open to constant investigation because the relationship is not static. As Gunter (2000, p.84) says, “Over time, new associations and new meaning can become

attached to signifiers,” making it necessary for semiotic research to adopt both synchronic and diachronic models of study.

Hansen et al. (1998, p. 205) explain that, “though originally conceptualized in relationship to written and spoken language, semiotics has subsequently been developed and applied to diverse social objects and practices.” Saussure’s contemporary, Pierce, actually coined the term semiotics when he proposed it as the name for the study of cultural signification in a broad range of artifacts, media and communicative methods. In looking at images, Pierce identified signs fitting three categories, the iconic, the indexical, and the symbolic. Iconic signs bare a likeness to the object they signify. Indexical signs depend more heavily on culturally inscribed associations between the signifier and the signified with stronger emphasis on the connotative meanings of a sign. Symbolic signs are those that are understood only with a prior understanding of their meaning because they bear no resemblance in form to what they represent, and, culturally speaking, evoke “no ‘natural’ relationship between signifier and signified” (Gill, 2007, p. 48).

Semiotics are particularly apt for cultural studies because they allow scholars to separate, “content from form and concentrat[e] on the system of signs that make up the text” (Gunter, 2000, p. 84) by using “the full arsenal of semiotic concepts and techniques” (Hansen et al., 1998, p. 203), as they read cultural artifacts as reflections of the political economies that produced them (Hall, 1987; Fiske, 1990; Ang, 1985). As Barthes (1967, p.9) explains, semiotics examines the “systems of signification” contained within a cultural text. Signs by his measure, and as understood by others engaged in semiotics, are not limited simply to words or sounds, but exist as “images, sounds, gestures,” or in any communicative practice where meaning can be read (Barthes, 1967, p. 9).

## **B. Cultural Studies**

In cultural studies, where the primary object of the researcher is to “read” our culture by close examination of the artifacts it produces (Hall, 1987, p.1) semiotics is a useful way of engaging with a text, particularly when that text contains a variety of communicative practices as visual media often do. Using cultural artifacts as ways of “reading our world” Hall (1987) is precisely how the semiotic tradition extends itself into the field of cultural studies upon which feminist media studies builds. Cultural studies is an approach to the study of communication that examines how culture imbues its values into the cultural artifacts, particularly texts produced in mass media. Our media represent the synthesis of many cultural forces that have acted upon both the media artifacts, their producers, and the audiences for whom they are produced. Consequently, media artifacts provide useful entry points to examine the broader cultures where they were produced.

Early cultural studies work used texts as entry points to argue broad critical interpretations of society with a heavy focus on the Marxist perspective. Gramsci’s work, for example, which influenced the thinking of the Frankfurt school, vacillates between texts, cultures, and time-periods unified primarily by the consistent application of the critical perspective (Gramsci, 1988). Where the Frankfurt school succeeded as critical scholars by making vociferous arguments against the contamination of culture (Adorno, 1991), they failed by adopting elitist dispositions toward mass culture, and by implication, the integrity of the masses to whom that culture appealed. The first wave of British cultural studies adopted a more inclusive stance toward the working class, reclaimed ‘mass culture’ as an object of study, but retained the Frankfurt School’s vehement opposition to the degradation of culture which was strongly imbued within the mass cultural artifact. Both schools claimed that this is achieved through systems of cultural production aimed

at propagating bourgeois dispositions toward capitalist democracy, and eroding radical oppositional beliefs.

Raymond Williams (2003) was the key thinker during this period. His break from the Frankfurt school ultimately created a division in the field, when the second wave of British cultural studies moved even more distinctly away from the modernist traditions of the Frankfurt school. Led by Stuart Hall and Richard Hoggart, a movement began to integrate considerations for race, and gender, and multiculturalism into the body of critical theory being applied within cultural studies known as the Birmingham School. The Birmingham School's format was highly successful in advancing the legitimacy of cultural studies, in part, by coalescing scholarly interest around specific political movements at the time, which shared the liberal agenda that permeated through cultural studies scholarship. Because cultural studies afforded its researchers a forum for their political agenda, these researchers saw the field as a correlate to the popular political movements of the times (Kellner, 2002). When these movements dissipated however, cultural studies research was negatively affected. In their zeal to demonstrate the relevance and elasticity of Marxist thought the Birmingham School tied their fortunes to the temporal trend of political resistance in the sixties and seventies (Kellner, 1995).

A new approach to the study of media effects, later championed by Fiske (1992) as the hallmark of a focus on 'popular culture studies', took the notion of an active audience, capable of reading a text at multiple levels, and in myriad ways, to a more fervent argument for polysemy, with the distinction being that proponents of polysemy dismissed the potential for a media text to impact an audience in a broad uniform way as modernist scholars of the Frankfurt School first theorized. Instead, said Fiske, the audiences were capable of so many different interpretations of

any given media text, that concerns about recurring ideological subtext was no longer a fruitful area for research.

The primary tension between modernist, and post-modern, research focuses on the question of structure versus agency in a conception of how media is produced, and how it effects audiences. The modernist disposition argued that structural constraints not only outweighed the potency of agency in the production of media, but also by virtue of shaping how audiences construct their own realities, structural constraints also limit audiences from interpreting their media in a manner that could actively resist cultural hegemony. The post-modern turn favored the agency of audiences in their abilities to interpret media in a variety of ways, and credited media producers with greater individual agency in what messages they chose to present. As with all theory histories, this one includes many complicating have sought to justify the tactics of hegemonic adherents by positioning them as bound to overwhelming structural constraints.

To that end, most cultural studies scholars prefer to frame their methods as adaptations or accommodations of earlier approaches rather than label them as departures from any of the three specific schools outlined above. Kellner (1995) succeeds in this by advocating for a multi-perspectivist approach; while others have simply grounded their work in specific theories they apply so as to evade identifying with one faction of cultural studies over another. For example, Interpretive Modernism, Mumby (1997) says, is distinct from positivist modernism, as it constitutes a different discourse in the debate about modernism and postmodernism. Mumby's argument that modernism has been misunderstood by most scholars, and too often reduced to positivist modes of inquiry is valid, but his conciliatory tone belies the fact that his claims are less about what makes modernism useful than what makes postmodernism useless as a direction in communication studies.

In a similar vein to Mumby, Kellner (1995) reconciles the postmodern and modern thinkers with the claim that we have not yet reached a postmodernist state, but are instead situated between the modern and postmodern eras in western culture. The postmodern approaches that Kellner dissects in useful detail, both in the history of the field that makes up his introduction, and in the specific cases he studies throughout the book, receive fair treatment and yet they still present significant deficiencies. The remedy for these deficiencies, Kellner finds, is for cultural studies to accept the interdisciplinary quality that the field affords (Kellner, 1995) despite the protestations by other scholars that doing so makes communication “‘the handmaiden’ of other disciplines,” with “no ontological grounding of its own” (Mumby, 1997, p. 5).

Kellner assuages these fears by re-casting the interdisciplinary nature of communication as “trans-disciplinary” thereby highlighting its ability to occupy a unique space of its own while still venturing into the territory of other disciplines (1995, p. 28). This new disposition towards cultural studies’ mandate also implies a more inclusive approach to research that elides the debate over theoretical perspectives. Kellner calls this a “multi-perspectivist approach,” (p. 26) and he characterizes it as a method that allows researchers to adopt a flexible theoretical framework that suits the fluidity of a modern “media culture,” a moniker he devised that represents the synthesis of mass and popular culture taking place today (1995, p. 34).

### C. **Structures of Feeling**

In Williams and Orom’s (1954) *Preface to Film*, Williams suggests that by methodically mapping changing dramatic conventions in the narratives, and production of films, it is possible to chart the evolution of the “structures of feeling” of the contemporary culture that these films reflect as a product of the culture in which they were produced. Over time, Williams says that by charting this evolution, and by noting the specific dramatic conventions that tied to specific shifts

in structures of feeling, one may be able to read the contemporaneous social dynamic of a film, when it is released, and to predict changes in the structures of feeling of a society based on the changes occurring in the dramatic conventions onscreen. This dissertation aims to do just that.

The term “structures of feeling” as Williams (Williams & Orom, 1954) defines it, refers to the shared affective disposition that permeates a society at any given time. As I understand it, the structure of feeling does not refer to momentary episodes of national uproar over a temporally specific event, but rather to what we might call the dominant affective discourse that characterizes an extended period of months, or years. By this measure, I would say that the shared attitude of just one part of a culture is not enough to rate as the structure of feeling for the entire community, unless that community is large enough to qualify as a sub-culture. Williams says that the structure of feeling is distinct from dominant discourses, or general life circumstances, in that the structure of feeling reflects, “the totality, the dominant structure of feeling” composed of all other intersecting elements of a moment in the cultural life, “from which the artist draws”.

“Structures of feeling” is an apt phrase considering that the goal of a film is to produce a catharsis in its audience, a transmission of feeling from the artwork to, and through its audience. For cultural studies to read a culture, as Hall says we do, requires that we consider the structures of feeling that films reflect so that they can produce catharsis in the audience. One must accept that at the most basic level, an audience only agrees to see a film on the promise that the film appeals to some existing structure of feeling whereby catharsis is possible. If no such structure of feeling exists, if the film is not able to communicate feeling, much less the apposite feeling for the audience, than it is impossible for catharsis to be achieved, and the film has failed in its purpose. My research, which focuses on a franchise film, addresses this pre-requisite for selecting a useful text, because the franchise audience has proven their affection for specific conventions, and in so

doing, have proven that the films produced by this set of recurring producers are bound in format to a structure of feeling that has been successfully cathartic in the past.

Williams' theory proscribes an interest in the latent, rather than the manifest, emotional discourses that are bound in the structure of a film. In his reference to the mode of thought that this theory occupies, Williams alludes directly to the tradition of the Frankfurt School, where scholars used analytical means to recognize in our cultural products a synthesis of the cultural forces that drove this product to existence, the demand, and the exigent forces that prompted it, as well as the supply, and the exigent forces that made it possible/practical/desirable to be achieved. The structures of feeling that Williams theorizes therefore exist as part and parcel of the process of creativity that emerges in an artistic, rather than just a cultural product, meaning that Williams is extending the same structuralist, modernist focus of the Frankfurt School to the production of films; blurring the lines (as was his tendency) between the production of high and low value films.

Key to Williams' theory is the explication he provides about the role of dramatic conventions as the focal point of analysis for cultural studies scholars interested in films. It is not enough to identify the manifest implications of a film, which, as the product of collaboration (read: community) are praiseworthy as an artistic expression that is total, rather than separable. To clarify, what Williams sees in dramatic conventions is a way of considering at the production level, what Barthes would later identify in semiotics as the commutation of signifier. Because films synthesize so many artistic contributions, Williams (1954 p. 22) views them as artistic products that are a "totality of expression". Films bring together music, visual art, performing arts, photography, and literature in a product that synthesizes these mediums and creates what contemporary theorists could call an intersectional artistic medium.

As such, film depends on the use of specific dramatic conventions to provide cohesiveness for the audiences. These may come in the formulaic use of imagery, or the customary use of certain sound effects, or music, just as in my research they can be studied at the level of narrative conventions. Because the film is a total artistic expression, it is necessary to consider it at the level of construction by layering various dramatic conventions. Williams calls for a documenting the use of dramatic conventions, looking particularly for any changes in convention that correspond with a film reflecting a different structure of feeling. There is the obvious difficulty of doing so in such a prolific industry.

However, in harmony with Williams (1954), the study of a film that embraces a formula, and a well-known, and well-documented formula, for dramatic conventions makes the process easier. My work focuses on the commutations of characters as a synthetic whole of the film's varying artistic inputs. Through the analysis of how these commutations take place I can then provide a broader reading of the film's semiotic reflection of contemporary structures of feeling. In order for my work to wholly contextualize the structures of feeling at play in contemporary society, it is necessary to recognize how the scholarly framework that I adopt as a cultural studies scholar interacts with my theoretical approach to the study of gender, and technology.

My work does differ from some recent scholarship that crosses the boundaries of technology and gender by adopting a post-feminist disposition. Instead, my research considers gender and technology, principally as interlinked constructs that demand a structuralist, modernist approach. I have explained above why I favor the modernist approach. As a gender studies scholar, the modernist approach is also helpful by providing more concrete parameters for my scope of interest. I am not interested in the reading of the text at the post-modernist, or post-feminist level, because, as I will explain below, these readings do not allow for the kind of unified interpretation

by audiences that my work pre-supposes in trying to discern the structures of feeling of a time period.

**D. Post... Everything**

The origins of the post-feminist movement's influence on cultural studies tie intricately to the emergence of the post-modern turn in the field, with Radway (1991) and McRobbie (1984), respectively cited as two key scholars that bound the two disciplinary shifts together. McRobbie (1984) was a key advocate for the claim that women can engage in practices of self-objectification, physical subjugation, and structural devolution as a matter of liberating choice. McRobbie's (1984) work finds that some female film audiences interpreted sequences of female subjugation and objectification as models for behavior that would afford them liberating sexual expression. Post-feminist scholars point to women's ability to express their sexuality in open terms as an act of liberation, and assert that women occupied by consumer culture, and conforming to hyper-sexualized self-objectification to advance their individual place in the patriarchy are asserting agency rather than conforming to structural mandates, so long as they are aware of what they are doing.

These scholars give only glancing, and inadequate thought to the structural constraints that define women's construction of agency, and virtually no critical attention to the cumulative effect of lauding women as feminist icons for their wholesale embrace of white capitalist patriarchy. Partly thanks to work by authors like McRobbie (1984), and Paglia (1990) the post-feminist movement has also influenced a third wave ideology that, like the post-modern turn, places primary focus on the concept of self-identification rather than structural critique.

The unifying theme Radway (1991) and McRobbie's (1984) studies share is that both shift the focus of critical discourse analysis from the content of texts to the process of interpretation (or

reading) by audiences. Radway's argument is more pronounced, in this respect. She claims that regardless of what themes recur in romance novels, or how those themes reinforce social conditioning designed to replicate a disempowering status quo, the women who read romance novels experience liberation through the act of reading, which affords them the space to operate outside the restrictions imposed in daily life. This assertion reflects a multitude of post-modern revisions about how liberation is constructed, and elides core concerns about whether the limited construction of agency professed by the respondents correlates to the media messaging that may have shaped them in their preferred genre.

Radway's (1991) work echoes the format and failures of earlier cultural studies projects that displaced a focus on the implications of a media text to the experience of the audiences who read the text for meaning (McRobbie, 1984; Ang, 1985). This approach drew from Hall (1973)'s "encoding-decoding model" and the suggestion that cultural studies should consider not only "the preferred meanings" producer's hope to transmit to their audience, but also the "negotiated" and "oppositional" meanings that audiences may construct. Hall's intent was to extend the study of production to include a study of reception. However, in the theory fever days of the late seventies this nuanced approach gave way to media studies projects that elided questions of encoded messages, and the agency exhibited in decoding them, to focus exclusively on the process of decoding- which was ascribed a liberating agency based on how researchers decoded the self-reported experiences of the audiences.

This new approach to the study of media effects, later championed by Fiske (1992) as the hallmark of a focus on 'popular culture studies', incorrectly used the notion of an active audience, capable of reading a text at multiple levels, to justify the argument for polysemy. Polysemy claims that not only are multiple readings possible, but that they are definite. Again, borrowing from the

specious generalizing tendency of post-modernism, polysemy rejects the possibility of a shared, unifying reading of a text. Proponents of polysemy dismiss the potential for a media text to impact an audience in a broad uniform way, as modernist scholars of the Frankfurt School first theorized. Instead, said Fiske, the audiences were capable of so many different interpretations of any given media text, that concerns about recurring ideological subtext was no longer a fruitful area for research.

Thus, the primary tension between modernist, and often structuralist research, and post-modern, and sometimes post-structuralist, research, focuses on the balance between structure and agency in media production, and audience reception. The modernist disposition argued that structural constraints outweighed the potency of agency in the production of media, and that, in shaping how audiences construct their own realities, structural constraints limited the agency of audiences to interpret media in a manner that could actively resist cultural hegemony. The post-modern turn favored the agency of audiences in their abilities to interpret media in a variety of ways, and credited media producers with greater individual agency in what messages they chose to present.

As with all theory histories, this one includes many complicating factors, including the fact that modern and post-modern scholars have undermined their own arguments in numerous articles, especially when delineating their meanings. For example, some modernist research affords powerful agency to specific producers, whereas some postmodern theorists have sought to justify the tactics of hegemonic adherents by positioning them as bound to overwhelming structural constraints. In short, though, the primary tension remains focused on the structure versus agency debate, echoing the dynamic between second and third wave feminisms. Whereas first and second wave feminists viewed the institutional forces of patriarchy as fundamental in the social

conditioning of men and women regarding gender politics, and the construction of gender identity, post-feminists credit women with greater agency in negotiating their identities, up to and including, justifying women's embrace of subjugation and self-objectification as acts of resistance, and self-actualization.

Third wave feminism aims to be redress the exclusion of marginalized viewpoints from second wave feminism, while paradoxically displacing critiques of institutional sexism, and patriarchal social controls, in favor of nuanced discourses about the semantic and practical considerations of feminism with respect to social location. In this way, one can see that third wave feminism represents a parallel evolution in theory to the popular culture shift in cultural studies. Both evolutions stem from modernist scholars presenting modernist, structuralist critiques of their own academic fields. In the case of the feminist movement, hooks (2004) theorized the importance of social location, whereas in cultural studies it was Hall (1973) who called for a more nuanced interpretation of how audiences read their texts. In both cases, hooks and Hall were champions in their fields for broader inclusivity, and both scholars sought to reform the practices of their field in order to extend its liberating potency. Also in both cases, their arguments were later used by scholars lacking the intellectual heft to employ meaningful critical theory in the Marxist tradition to justify the belief that agency is capable of being constructed in the mind of an individual without being primarily influenced by structural constraints.

Kellner was right when he decried the postmodern condition, but in the years since then the structural boundaries that girded society against the anarchy that characterizes a truly postmodern condition have disintegrated in all but name against a rising tide of anti-establishment popularism that, in form, closely resembles the social shifts that corresponded to the rise of modernism. Like the industrial revolution, that made possible the mass-scale devastation of

‘absolute destruction,’ via the expanded capacities of machines, the digital revolution is transforming Anglo-American social institutions in profound ways that *Skyfall*’s narrative reflects.

### **E. Acting the Part**

It is Kellner’s trans-disciplinary approach that I adopt in my reading of gender within the Bond franchise. Because this project focuses on the reading of gendered discourses, which appear in myriad forms at the semiotic level, a trans-disciplinary approach integrating varying theoretical lenses is required in order to competently interpret the complex gendered dimensions of the text. However, these varied lenses are not applied haphazardly. My choice to integrate a range of theories to analyze how gender is represented in media is consistently centered on a reading of gender as a performative act.

West and Zimmerman (1987) defined gender not as who we are, but as what we do. Gender, as it is understood in this dissertation, can only be interpreted if it is first performed in some active way by the person whose gender is being interpreted. For researchers interested in studying aspects of gender identity that tie to biology, or psychology it may be possible to elide the issue of how gender is constructed discursively, but for anyone studying media representation of gender discourses it is necessary to recognize how gender is conveyed to the audience through consciously constructed performances.

Butler’s (1990) seminal work on the performed and performative constructions of gender is crucial to any framework developed around sexual identity. Butler argues against the conflation of gender and sex and instead asserts the notion that gender is performed in response to gender imperatives that are socially constructed, and culturally enforced. She distinguishes performativity from performance by defining it as a discursive act that is responding to conscious rather than unconscious warrants. Butler’s theory lends itself ably to studies of gender variance by advocating

for performative and culturally proscribed gender signifiers that make coding for gender and lapses in gender easier for social scientists.

Sedgwick (1985) adapted Butler's theories of gender performance into her own literary analysis and drew ties between queer identity and affective postures like theatricality, extroversion and shaming. Sedgwick & Frank (1995) argue that the queer sense of self is informed more intensely by shame than a culturally normative self and for that reason the indices of shame, or humiliation, are enhanced and reacted to with greater intensity by queer characters. Motschenbacher (2011) extends this research into linguistics and finds that western gender binaries have encouraged the conflation of non-sexual non-normative speech tendencies with interpretations of queer identity.

Dhaenens et al. (2008) provide a useful and concise summary of the origins and parameters of modern queer theory. The authors encapsulate the complicated history of queer theory as a collision between emerging feminist theorists concerned with resisting the urge to define gender on a cultural basis, and the work of post-structuralists seeking to legitimize the inclusion of homosexual historical perspectives in mainstream academic thought. Dhaenens et al. concur with Seidman (1995) that in order to establish a meaningful cultural understanding of queer theory, and its purview, queer theorists must be willing to eschew radical intersectionalist advocates who would define every individual according to their unique circumstances. Seidman calls for queer theorists to elevate the substance of their debate by defining queer tendencies and readings at the cultural level.

My project defines any performativity that positions an individual's gender as non-normative by contemporary western cultural standards as queer. My conception of non-normative gender identity constructions are drawn on two critical frameworks; firstly, that of gender as a

performative act, secondly that all male performativity is composed of varying, and at times conflicting, masculinities. This definition syncs with the approach to the study of gender using performative queer theory models that focus on both narratives and character comparisons for contextual evidence of the gender norms being transgressed. In her discourse analysis on gender identity in Almodovar films Pastor (2006) identifies characters whose gender is inverted in relationship to others. She connects that inversion to “transgressive otherness” characterized by one character’s sexuality crossing a boundary into the space of another’s (p. 9). The conflated gender variances Sedgwick and Motschenbacher identify, paired with the inverted gender dynamic Pastor considers provide a lens to examine the antagonistic rhetoric that typically develops between two co-creating archetypes such as the villain and the hero (Alsford, 2006), or through conflicting commutations of characters within an established formula.

#### **F. I DO See Gender**

As mentioned earlier, this project’s ability to interpret how gender is constructed for the audience depends on a trans-disciplinary approach. Deciphering the gendered import of a performance on screen depends on interpreting what is presented within the gendered context of the culture at hand. This requires some consideration for theories of gender development that may seem to conflict with the theory of gender as performance, but this is not so. The intersecting theoretical frames considered here are all used in the service of arguing how gender is performed on screen in order to convey gendered meaning to the audiences.

While producers and audiences may be using biological, cultural, or psychological theories of gender development in order to encode, or decode the media text, respectively, the transaction of the message in a film text always depends on performativity, be it the performativity of the character, the actor, or the producers in their conscious choices about how to insinuate meaning

through sets, costume, editing, lighting, etc. This is a nuanced aspect of how performative gender research is undertaken. Though the researcher may reject notions of fixity in gender identity, or biological arguments that insist gender and sex are intertwined, they are still able to identify these discourses in their reading of gender as a performative act.

In order to interpret the gender performances in my study I will draw on Gardiner's (2002) work on masculinity studies. Gardiner argued not only for a structuralist study of the cultural conditions that created the male identity, but also for a plurality of masculinities that were temporally, and culturally, specific as explicated by Connell (1995), Kimmel (1995) and Hearn (2009). Thanks to this intervention the rigid conception of masculinity that was often cast against a more nuanced and fluid interpretation of femininity was problematized. Theories of female masculinity depend on more nuanced understandings of how gender is performed and enacted, as do readings of femininities and masculinities that compete and conflict with one another. When indicated these theoretical frames will also be used.

Stryker (2004), and other transgender theorists claim that the body is the center of masculinity. While transgender scholars acknowledge that sex and gender make for conceptually distinct constructs, their mutual presentation in the gendered body makes abstracting the two concepts problematic. This means that readings of masculinity in visual studies must consider the physical body as well as its relationship to other masculine identity markers in the interpretation of a character. The construct of gender that many people entertain often embeds gender within the embodiment, so that ignoring the perceptions of a body as a representation of not just sex, but gender, could not limit one's ability to accurately interpret the messages being sent and received about gender constructs in the media.

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study will adopt a structural narrative analysis. Narrative analysis, as opposed to discourse and textual analysis interprets the texts narrative as a framework for a broader interpretation of social practices and, or cultural norms. Structuralism “is aimed at the myth underlying the narrative [s]” that inform shared cultural understandings (Gunter, 2000, p. 86). In a narrative analysis structuralism extends the traditional considerations of story, setting, costume, and character development (Hansen, et al., 1998) by affording a means of studying specific recurring dyadic relationships that may operate symbolically on audience perceptions of the text (Gunter, 2000). In this respect, my approach to narrative analysis will adhere to the paradigmatic model promoted by Levi-Strauss (1966), which privileges binary oppositions as a key cite for the interpretation of character development, and therefore the foundation of a comprehensive narrative reading.

#### A. Text

The text I choose to consider for this dissertation is the Bond film franchise. The Bond series (as a whole) is a significant media text in that its films comprise the largest and most enduring film franchises in history. As such, the 007 franchise has become a significant part of Anglo-American cultural heritage (Moniot, 1976). The films themselves have also become a trans-generational media event for Anglo-American audiences, helping Bond and the Bond films to achieve iconic status (Moniot, 1976; Abrams, 2006). Additionally, Themes of masculinity and technology play central roles in Bond’s identity as a super spy (Cox, 2014), and the franchise is frequently cited, and studied, as a conscious purveyor of the culture’s attitudes about the relationship between men, machines, and western imperialism (Commentale, et al., 2005). Recent box office performances illustrate that despite radical changes in cultural mores regarding gender,

race, and international relations, the iconic James Bond character still appeals to wide audiences across the globe (Owens, 2005), and is therefore influential in how gender performativity is understood by the culture at large.

The suitability of this franchise for a study is bolstered by the fact that the franchise is highly formulaic, as well as highly popular (Dodds, 2014) meaning that analysis of its narrative structure can be performed at the diachronic level, and examined as responsive to shifts in the cultures where the films are produced, and in line with audience expectations where the film is distributed. In answer to questions of creative consistency between installments it is important to note that, with the exception of the original *Casino Royale* starring David Niven and the film *Never Say Never Again*, which also featured Connery, all of the Bond films have been produced by the same company, controlled by the Broccoli family, providing a unifying element to franchise's production (Battsek, Chin & Riley, 2010).

Eon productions was founded by Albert 'Cubby' Broccoli, an American producer who worked for the first decade of the franchise with his co-producer, and co-founder, Harry Saltzman before taking full control in 1974, and eventually passing the company on to his daughter Barbara Broccoli and his step-son Michael G. Wilson when he died in 1994 (Lycett, 1995). Eon Productions has exclusively produced Bond films during its sixty-five-year existence, with only two exceptions: the film *Call Me Buana* (1963) starring Bob Hope, and a film adaptation of Ian Fleming's children's book *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968). Understanding the relationship of Eon Productions to the franchise is important considering the profound influence that Cubby Broccoli has had on the Bond archetype (Bennett & Woolacott, 1987).

Another crucial understanding about Eon Productions, uniformly observed by scholars, is the notion that the only sanctified Bond films are those that were produced by Eon (Black, 2002).

Though the cinematic Bond is in many ways a departure from the Bond character that Fleming presented in his books, Fleming worked closely with Eon Productions, and it was the films produced by Eon that made the Bond franchise one of the most profitable in the world (Black, 2002). An outside company did produce a second film adaptation of the novel *Thunderball* in 1983, titled *Never Say Never Again* starring the actor who originated Bond on screen, Sean Connery, but this occurred only due to prior legal action against Fleming over the film and literary rights to the original screen treatment of *Thunderball* (Poliakoff, 2000). The first film version of *Casino Royale* was similarly the result of a production team seeking to exploit the popularity of Bond's success as a product of Eon Productions, through another set of convoluted circumstances regarding the film rights to Fleming's first Bond novel (Lycett, 1995).

Despite this, audiences have formed their identifications with the filmic Bond primarily through the films produced by Eon that have established for audiences the tropes, formulas, and nostalgic traits that are universally understood by the general public as what makes a Bond film (Woodward, 2004, p.174 in Pomerance, 2005). This unique set of circumstances, allows me to theorize the franchise as a sub-genre of the larger action genre constructed in accordance with a consistent set of sub-genre codes, governed by the stewardship of (in most cases) a single producer. In my look at the semiotic discourses recurring in the narratives of the franchise I will make a clear distinction between those films produced by Albert Broccoli, and those more recent films produced by his daughter Barbara to account for possible shifts in the modes of production, the intrinsic values of the producer in shaping the final product (and its ancillary merchandise), and most importantly in the producer's responsiveness to audience reception, which can in part be gauged through modifications made from film to film regarding style, structure, casting, key personnel

changes, and production design as these qualities may be indicative of the political economy, and or audience reception of the franchise.

## **B. Approach**

My approach to narrative analysis will seek to extend the research on masculinity in the Bond franchise by integrating findings about other performances of gender in the films, by focusing on what Barthes (1964) calls “commutations.” Barthes’s notion of commutations calls for the methodical study of every aspect of narrative disjuncture between what appears in a text, and what does not. Its application is best suited for narrative texts like mine, which heavily depend on a static formula. In the case of the Bond franchise, the commutations between installments are not only manifestly recognizable, but, as Barthes specifically requires, they can be read at the sub-textual level for an array of significations that are dependent on their variation from what a reader of the text might have expected to encounter.

Commutations of interest are those related to the supporting characters with whom Bond interacts in responsive dyadic relationships. To do this I will focus on how the gender performance of supporting characters compare, and contrast, to Bond’s through an analysis of narrative elements like dialogue, plot points, interactions on screen that are non-verbal, and readings of supporting characters’ appearances that may evoke inter-textual comparisons. I will also be considering how the supporting characters subvert, overcome or challenge Bond’s masculine performativity through their own performance of gender.

My analysis of Bond and the supporting characters that appear opposite him will be segmented so that each of the primary dyadic relationships (M, Money Penny, Q, Silva, and Bond as archetype) receives separate attention in their own chapter, where the commutations of the characters can be read in binary terms. The exception to this segmentation is for those instances

where the dyadic reading of commutations also requires the study of other characters. Mallory, for example, is such a character. His overlapping tenure as head of MI-6 with the character of M played by Judi Dench complicates her dyadic relationship with Bond, and creates a new dyadic relationship between M and Mallory that requires attention.

Drawing on previous depictions of Bond, and the supporting characters he plays against in the film, I will be able to identify commutations at the manifest, and latent levels, and consider how these commutations impact the dyadic relationship between the character and Bond, between Bond and the larger narrative, and between the aims of the producers in crafting these commutations in line with others related to the portrayals of gender in the film. This will be done by drawing synchronic comparisons within specific texts, and diachronic comparisons between texts, when indicated. The diachronic comparison of gender performativity will be indicated for some characters when actors of different sexes play the part (notably 'M'), or when the characters do not appear consistently in every film of the franchise (notably 'Q'). These shifts will also be notable for what they may reveal about changes in audience dispositions about gender performance on film, or the adaptation of the broader political economy of the film industry in response to changing socio-cultural conditions.

My reading of these commutations will depend on questions of cultural difference, gender performativity, costuming, narrative consistency, and the discourses these questions may evoke. Given that the primary identifier for Bond has always been his sexual magnetism and demonstrable masculinity (Kendall, 2008), a comparative examination of his screen partners in terms of their gender performance is apt. For fifty years Bond has represented the masculine ideal, and has done so in various incarnations, each of which reflects the cultural expectations of masculinity and heroism for the times, while adhering to the core Bond character of the fifties (Simpson, 2006).

By contrast, the supporting characters in the Bond franchise can be read as temporal representations of the cultural other, meaning that gender variances between the two characters provide a unique place for a diachronic study of gender performativities. Depending on how gender is performed by these characters as a product of the dyadic relationship my research can perhaps shed new light on a tradition of gender performance in the Bond franchise that has been overlooked in previous scholarship.

### C. Discourses

The discourses I am looking for in my text will center around the relationship depicted between technology and gender by considering these constructions separately and together. Beginning with discourses of gender performance, my research will focus on the conflicts that may be present between different genders, or different performances of the same gender. In line with the notion of masculinities as co-existing, both within a given culture and a given person, I am open to the idea that the contest of masculinities I may find most interesting need not necessarily adhere to a narrative dialectic between characters (e.g. protagonist vs. antagonist), but may be evidenced within a character's portrayal by an actor, or the variations of that portrayal by different actors in different installments of the series. For this reason, the masculine performativity of Bond as both a fixed character (symbolically signified), and as a character portrayed differently by each actor that plays him (indexically, and iconically signified) will be of particular interest. Aspects of embodiment, accent, dress, physicality, promiscuity, violence, misogyny, sensitivity, and sexualization will pair, and compare with performances of technological prowess within and across Bond's many incarnations. This quality of the franchise also allows me to examine the role that the preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings of Bond's masculinities by audiences may have

played in shaping how the production of the adjusted from film to film in deference to market demands.

Discourses of technology will be considered for what added agency characters are afforded by their access to, aptitude with, or control over technologies. I will consider how technologies figure as narrative elements, and how these narrative elements inform the franchise's overall depictions of technology within Anglo-American culture and its referent place in the political economy of that culture, and the film industry. Means of inscribing gender, sex, race, ethnicity, and nationality into depictions of techno-masculinity will be noted, along with means of gendering technologies in order to assess whether, and if so, how, the franchise positions techno-masculinity differently over time. All of this is significant to understanding how the depictions of techno-masculinity are designed to concretize the online sphere as the dominant arena for both technological and masculine display, and therefore hegemonic geo-political status.

I further aim to explore how filmmakers use technology as a narrative element that either affirms or negates the worth of a character by casting them as either adept or inept users, respectively. My research considers whether this practice of using technology to confer value onto characters aligns with the tendency in white Anglo cultures to identify technological usage as the domain of men. In the film *Skyfall* for example one could consider how M's use of technology is used to position her character as incompetent, and then consider whether the same can be said for the character of Mallory, who is her masculine counterpart in the film. In addition to considering how technology is used differently to position characters in relationship to their gender and cultural value my research aims to consider distinctions between technologies in this process. By this I mean that different types of technologies may have been used in the film series in different ways as a mechanism of conferring value and/or masculinity onto a character. I will consider how the

use of digital technologies compares to the use of non-digital technologies as an effective means of ascribing gender to a character, and/or conferring on them cultural value.

Again, using *Skyfall* as an example, I will consider how new media technologies depending on the Internet affect his masculine performativity, and how that effect on his masculinity impacts on his efficacy as a secret-agent, and therefore as an archetype for Anglo-American masculinity. Contrarily, I will then consider whether his masculinity and competency are affected differently by his use of non-digital technologies. Does his ability to adeptly use one technology ascribe more masculinity than his ability to use another? Does his inability to use one technology impact his masculinity more than his inability to use another? How his overall competency as an agent is impacted by his ability to use one technology versus another, and vice versa, and is this related to masculinity afforded or denied him by his usage?

One of the key discourses my research undertakes to study is the use of technology as an agent of disempowerment. In *Skyfall* specifically I am interested in how the use of technologies by women is portrayed in the series in ways that may denigrate their character's agency and authority. The film series features a number of women who are tasked with the use and oversight of technology, but this does not mean that these women are gendered by their governance of technology in the same way. I wish to study narratives that depict women as inept users of technology and what impact those depictions have on the characters' reputation, agency, and status.

Theories of competing masculinities are interpreted in correspondence with questions of gender performativity, and the use of technology as a performative mechanism. Some sections use specific areas of critique in order to understand the comparative gender expectations between different characters by assuming the perspective of the audience, who may view the text in latent

terms that depend on a binary view of gender, whereas other sections may interrogate the text using a more nuanced scholarly frame of interpretation that locates gendered meaning at the symbolic level, and considers gender performativity more fluidly.

#### **D. Definitions**

Technology in my study will be defined broadly as any human made device capable of augmenting bodily function, or expanding the functional capacity of a person or thing to interact with the world around them. A key distinction in my analysis will be between digital computer technologies and those that are not. As you can see, this distinction between types of technology, like some definitions of masculinity, assumes a relational and oppositional dimension (Gunter, 2000). This occurs frequently in discourses on technology that contrast their development to the notions of a natural pre-existing state (Hayles, 2008), as well as in masculinity studies where masculinities are conceptualized as practices specifically designed to negate femininity (Buchbinder, 1994). However, researchers in both semiotics and gender studies who depend on this oppositional mode of definition face critique that they may be inscribing oppositional relationships that don't exist (Gunter, 2000; van Zoonen, 1994; Wood, 2011). I acknowledge the validity of this concern however the existing scholarship bears out the validity of interpreting both digital technologies and masculinities through a relational, and or, oppositional lens given their distinct places in contemporary society.

Digital technologies already occupy a special place in the fields of science and technology studies (Wajcman, 2007; Sismondo, 2011; Fuller, 1993) and philosophy of technology (Auge, 2008; Wark, 2006), where the relationships between technology and culture are theorized. This is largely because the affordances of digital technologies realize a number of prior theoretical possibilities (Lessig, 2008; Haraway, 1985; Harvey, 2006; Rheingold, 1993; Jones, 2000; Hayles,

2008; Deuze, 2012; Jenkins, 2006) and thereby evoke a broad span of new theoretical possibilities that scholars are eager to engage because they highlight the centrality of technology in western culture and its importance in the short and long term future of a global society (Halberstam, 1991; Kvasny & Truex, 2000; Castells, 2011; Turkle, 2012; Couldry, 2012; Papacharissi, 2014; Fuchs, 2015).

At times throughout this dissertation I will use the term Networked Technologies. Though this may connote, or evoke the Internet as synonym, in fact I define networked technologies differently. Networked technologies encompasses a range of technologies that are networked by more than just digital means. For example, railroads, electrical power grids, and analog phone lines are networked technologies that are not digital, and do not (always) depend on the Internet. When I refer to Networked Digital Technologies I am referring to computer based technologies (using binary code) that are connected to one another, presumably by the Internet, but again note that I am not referring to the Internet when I use this term, but rather to the technologies that connect to the Internet.

Similarly, masculinity merits distinct consideration from the broader categories of gender, because of its identification within, rather than without capitalist patriarchy (hooks, 2004; Berger, et al., 1995; Hearn, 2009, Howson, 2008). Too often masculinity, like whiteness, and sometimes as whiteness, goes unmarked in our cultural readings rendering it an invisible, but potent force in how we construct reality (Gilligan, 2012; Kintz, 2010). By highlighting the presence and function of masculinities as a discourse my research will help to expose its centrality in all discursive production, and how that reflects the larger practices of the hegemonic order.

The character M, whose name is a single letter moniker that is ascribed within the world of the film to whichever character occupies the role as Chief of Secret Intelligence Services, is

played by two different actors in the film in two different incarnations that correspond to their distinct characters, as well as to the different actors portraying those characters. For this reason, I would like to clarify here that when I refer to M as a character I will do so with the phrase “the character of M”. When I refer to M in specific relation to how it is played by one actor versus another I will do so by using the actor’s last name as a descriptor, e.g. ‘Dench’s M’. However when I refer to M simply as ‘M’ I am specifically referring to the character as it is played by Judi Dench.

Likewise, the character of Bond is played by multiple people over time and so when I am referring to Bond as a character I will refer to him as the character of Bond. When I refer to Bond simply as Bond I am referring to the character as it is played within whichever film I am discussing, by whichever actor may have played him at that time. When I am specifically referring to Bond as a performance of one actor versus another than I will describe Bond using the last name of the actor in question, e.g. ‘Connery’s Bond’. This naming formula applies to all the other recurring characters, Moneypenny and Q in the same way.

Lastly, though I assert that *Skyfall* constitutes a third era of the Bond franchise, and prove this to be the case throughout my dissertation, I do not refer to *Skyfall* as the third era until the conclusion. Prior to the conclusion *Skyfall* is addressed by name only, whereas the other films of the series may be referred to collectively at times as part of either eras one or two, as delineated in the literature review.

#### IV. RELATED LITERATURE

A key claim in this dissertation is that the film *Skyfall* represents a turning point in the franchise where the discourses on technology and gender intersect in pronounced, and profound, ways. With this in mind, let us explore the existing literature about the films that precede *Skyfall*. First though, let us recognize that the Bond franchise has experienced a significant shift in its history even before 2012's *Skyfall*. The 2006 film *Casino Royale* was a reboot for the 007 film franchise (Arnett, 2009). This means that we can segment the Bond films prior to *Skyfall* into two different eras.

##### A. The Eras of Bond

The first era began with the first Bond film *Dr. No* in 1962, and concluded in 2002 with *Die Another Day*, the final film produced before the franchise rebooted itself. This first era featured five actors playing Bond in the official Eon Productions (here classed as the franchise under consideration). Connery originated the role on film and starred in era one's first five films before he was replaced by George Lazenby for *Her Majesty's Secret Service*, only to return in the next installment, *Diamonds Are Forever* in 1971; his last performance for Eon Productions. Two years later, Bond returned to the screen in the form of Roger Moore, who would play era one Bond until 1985. In 1987, era one's fourth Bond actor, Timothy Dalton took over, but he only appeared in two films, ending his tenure in 1989. There was a six-year break before Pierce Brosnan would appear in 1995's *Goldeneye* as the final actor to play the Bond of era one, completing his run seven years later in *Die Another Day*.

By contrast to era one, the second era of the Bond franchise contains only two films: *Casino Royale* and *Quantum of Solace*, both of which featured the same actor, Daniel Craig. Craig has since appeared in both *Skyfall* and *Spectre*, and is slated to return for another Bond film to be

released in 2019, when he will tie Roger Moore's record for the most years (thirteen) continuously playing the part. Tracing the time of the different actors who have played Bond is not incidental to the classification of the franchise into separate eras. The ritual re-casting of the James Bond role during the forty years before the franchise reboot plays a significant part in how the character achieved his iconic status for American and British audiences. Informing the Bond archetype is the notion that the character transcends the actors who perform him (Hockley, 2009). As we move through the history of Bond in the first era, it is important to remember this, and to remember that Bond's filmic identity in era one is not defined in the audience's mind as the product, or possession of a single actor (Eco, 1976).

The alternating embodiment of Bond reinforces the resilience of the character over time, and through the many battles that mark him as a hero. His enduring youth also support some of the fundamental dynamics within the film formulas. Many scholars frame the relationship between M and Bond in Oedipal terms (Woodward, 2004; Bennett & Woolacott, 1987; Eco, 1979). Hockley (2009) adopts a psychological interpretation of the Bond films through the lens of Jungian psychology by arguing that Bond illustrates the 'Puer Archetype' of perpetual adolescence that Jung theorized. Hockley (2009) makes a point of extending the Oedipal analysis performed by Eco to Dench's film character of M by pointing out the fact that it is before M's eyes in the film *Tomorrow Never Dies* that Bond kills Electra King- evoking references to the Electra complex, and in Hockley's view the corollary Oedipal complex. Strangely, Hockley doesn't consider the possibility of Bond having an Electra complex, but sticks to the well-trod territory of Bond as an Oedipal figure.

Fleming's education in Switzerland strongly supports a psychoanalytical reading of his work. The school he attended was the Tennerhof, run by a former British spy and diplomat named

Forbes Denis who relied explicitly on the psychoanalytic theories of Dr. Alfred Adler (Lycett, 1995, pp. 24 & 32). Existing letters evidence that while attending Tennerhof, Fleming met Jung and later corresponded with him to discuss psycho-analytic theories (Lycett, 1995). Fleming himself suggested that his motives for writing the Bond books were in part psychological in an interview that Ziegler (1965, p. 112) cites, in which the author says, “Perhaps Bond’s blatant heterosexuality is a subconscious protest against the current fashion for sexual confusion.”

### **1. The spy who loved me (if only)**

In the first era of Bond films Bond was portrayed as a daredevil playboy, an aesthete with a powerful appeal to women (Landa, 2006; O’Donnell, 2005). His job made it possible for him to travel the world in style among the elite class of jetsetters who could afford to do so at the time (Gibson, 2006). Bond was shown to be handsome and masculine, but still stylish and refined (Jaffe, 2005) with a taste for fine foods and drink, and a superior fashion sense (Roof, 2005). These upper class identifiers, combined with his talent for winning at gentlemanly games, like cards, and golf, positioned him as a man of good breeding (Cook & Hines, 2005, p. 147-159, in Mosely, 2005), while his weakness for women, and the fact that his luxurious lifestyle depended on his work, made him relatable to audiences as the ultimate “company man” (Moniot, 1976).

Bond is frequently cited as the ideal masculine archetype (Landa, 2006; Gallagher, 2006; Winder, 2006). He possesses all of the sophistication and knowledge needed to operate in, and across, any range of cultures, but he also demonstrates when necessary the powerful physicality that is so intricately tied to the masculine identity (Gardiner, 2012). Bond is not simply masculine, as Donovan (2010) claims, Bond is an exemplar of manliness because of his fluidity in nature, not his fixity (Gallagher, 2006). Fans enjoy his ability to move between and sometimes around the often-conflicting gender expectations that confound most men, and for this reason he many cite

him as a hero (Donovan, 2010; Albion, 2005, Black, 2001). This quality is amplified by the reality behind Bond, that he represents a real profession where real men (theoretically) operate this way, which viewers cite as a key component to Bond's appeal (Donovan, 2010; Albion, 2005).

Bond's masculinity is an important component of his ability to maintain an active audience among film fans. Bond must compensate for his profession by making his heterosexuality abundantly clear to the audience. This is because the very act of espionage may constitute a queering event for the male spy given that he must transcend cultural boundaries in order to accomplish his task, and in the process enact a variety of culturally specific masculinities (Abrams, 2006). Carter (2006) considers the stigmatization of spies as gay after the revelations of the Cambridge Spies in England. Her research indicates that, to the British mind at the time of Bond's creation, association with both the scandal, and the terrain of trans-nationalism that their work demanded, inherently queered spies. This apprehension of the spy's sexuality may explain the machismo that is emphasized in the Bond films, which followed the scandal by just a few years (Winder, 2006).

Miller (2003) argues in his study of the imperialist quality of Bond's sexuality on film that the emphasis on sexuality paralleled the conquering of culture that was the series recurring theme. According to Miller the power that is seized by the contesting rivals in Bond films is notably illustrated by their coercive abilities over the female characters. He who wins the devotion of the Bond girl therefore demonstrates through his masculinity his imperial might. That Bond's British sophistication was woven into his portrayal as an irresistibly sexual man was restorative to British morale in the sixties. At the time it was unusual for British characters to win popularity in hero roles denoting masculinity and sexual appeal. The demoralizing years of privation and suffering in England during, and after, World War II (Winder, 2006) coincided with the ascension of a new

mediated masculinity rooted in American culture (Albion, 2005). In the mid-century super-hero comics won favor over punch cartoons in weekly circulations (Johnson, 2012), gumshoe detectives supplanted Sherlock Holmes in detective stories (Appignani, 2016), while Hemingway code heroes replaced bright young things in literature (Young, 1965). In each genre, the localized narratives emphasized American characters as heroes, and presented a new masculinity bound in American qualities like self-sufficiency, and independence. Making matters worse for the national British identity was the fact that on film a new action genre had emerged called Westerns that positioned American cowboys as the height of masculinity (Albion, 2005).

There seemed to be no place for the British man in a post-war world, until Ian Fleming revived the imperialist spy genre with audacious plotlines, and hypersexual characters that later served for a new incarnation of the action genre on film (Winder, 2006). The 007 franchise introduced a new male hero- a cowboy in a tailored suit, whose masculinity synthesized qualities from both British and American cultures (Albion, 2005). Bond was a loner, like the cowboys on film, but he was complex and angst ridden like the angry young coming of age in a bleak United Kingdom (Patton, 2005). Bond was undoubtedly more American on film than he was on the page (Moniot, 1976) but he was explicitly branded as British, and it was this nationality that distinguished his masculinity as a new model for the era of the company man (Chapman, 2000). Unlike the American cowboy, who finished the job and then rode off alone with his horse, Bond was rewarded for his bravado with the means to consume conspicuously, and attract the attentions of beautiful women everywhere (Earnest & Rosenau, 2000; Roof, 2005; Owens, 2005).

Bond's urbane identity also serves his ability to function as a spy, in ways that marked him as superior to his American counterparts (Commentale, 2005). Being English made Bond less conspicuous as he traveled the world; because so many of the places he visited were current or

former colonial outposts (Chapman, 2006). Bond's travels reinforced the privilege of his position since such frequent travel in the sixties was a practice reserved for high income, high status people (Miller, 2003; Gjorgievski & Trpkova, 2012; Halloran, 2005). His British identity also suggested that he was more accustomed to travel than Americans, most of whom had only recently been afforded the chance to travel extensively outside their country's massive geographic footprint by the introductions of planes. The English identity prided itself on cosmopolitanism, albeit a cosmopolitanism girded by imperialist and colonial assumptions of cultural supremacy (Chapman, 2006).

British upper crust identity was informed in part by the 'Grand Tour' and British class assumptions held largely that understandings of other countries and their customs was a crucial indicator of one's breeding. Consequently, being a part of upper and upper middle class British society was itself preparation for the world of espionage. The educated Briton could be understood to travel for no ulterior purpose because the practice was well established. Similarly, the well-educated Briton would be expected to know other languages and to make an effort to respect the customs of their host country (David, 1991). This disposition away from outward signs of ethnocentrism allowed the British to be better received by their hosts when they traveled, even if the British were secretly disliked for their colonialism, as much as Americans were disliked for their crudeness, and ignorance (Chapman, 2000; Halloran, 2005).

## **2. A man for all nations (that are white and English-speaking)**

Britons were not the only audiences to clamor for 007 films. The franchise was equally successful in the United States, adding to its appeal in England (Albion, 2005). Quickly after his appearance on film, Bond ascended to icon status: with Bond-mania sweeping through the media and merchandising marketplaces on both sides of the Atlantic (Owens, 2005). The films appealed

to U.S. audiences by design, but were still incredibly popular in Bond's native U.K. Bond's fan base also crossed genders. Both men and women were fans of James Bond, and replica TV programs featuring both sexes as clever, capable spies soon appeared to exploit the fact that fans in general didn't just want Bond, they wanted to be him (Albion, 2005).

Bond's transnational success became a point of pride for Britons, who in the aftermath of World War II found their international cultural influence usurped by their wartime allies in the U.S. and the U.S.S.R (Chapman, 2005). The strict rationing and harsh economic conditions that lingered for many years during the rebuilding period of the fifties only exacerbated the sense that Britain had lost its leading role on the global stage, and was now languishing in the wings (Black, 2004; Dodds, 2005). Even by 1962 the United Kingdom had, as famed American Diplomat Dean Acheson said, "not yet found a role" as a post-imperial nation (Robertson, 2015). When Bond appeared, in his distinctly British characterization, and to fanfare on both sides of the Atlantic, many Britons felt a sense of extended validation (Chapman, 2005). For the first time in decades, Britain was being celebrated as a vital actor on the world stage as it was the British government America needed to resolve conflicts of international importance (Rosenberg & Stewart, 1989, p. 81, 83-84). Their expansive empire had disintegrated, but the U.K. had finally found their role- as an arbiter of diplomacy, and intelligence gathering, during a cold-war era that forced nations across the globe to align themselves with either the United States or the U.S.S.R (Woodward, 2004).

As Bennett and Woolacott (1987) note, first era Bond was a product of Cold War cultural politics. He straddled the contested space between the East and West, with a clear devotion to the dominance of the west, but with a less jingoistic rationale. Amis (1965) notes that Bond's directive as an agent was to keep the world safe from tyranny, with the understanding that this meant maintaining a status quo in which the U.S. continued to gain on, and surpass, the U.S.S.R in

technological development (Woodward, 2004). Bond was not dispatched to thwart Soviet agents; his mandate was to deal with more intricate concern of preventing new technology from being used by third parties seeking to instigate a war. Bond screenwriter Neal Purvis explains that the rogue technology construct is so significant that it is often the first thing writers establish, before building the rest of the plot around it (Woodward, 2004, p. 175). Bond's job is therefore not to infiltrate enemy territory, but to respond in a counter-terrorist capacity to possible threats, and to do so in aid of England's cold war ally, the United States (Commentale, et. al, 2005).

Winder (2006) points out that Bond was capable of intervening in the disputes between the U.S. and the Soviet Union specifically because of his British nationality. Occupying the intersection between the world's superpowers gave Britain the perspective necessary to understand the failed logic on both sides (Laucht, 2013), and to see how these flaws could be exploited by terrorist groups like S.P.E.C.T.R.E. Bond was therefore a middle man in the best possible sense because he could do what neither the Russians nor the Americans could do (Woodward, 2004). The U.K. was portrayed as a third party in the bi-polar geo politics of the Cold War and their objectivity allowed them to counter the evil villains at S.P.E.C.T.R.E. (hereafter SPECTRE) whose modus operandi was to pit the world's global superpowers against one another through manipulation and deceit (Landa, 2006; Commentale, et. al, 2005; Winder, 2006). As long as the Cold War existed SPECTRE had a chance to ignite global tensions and exploit the fall out for their own gain (Woodward, 2004).

The special use for MI-6, and for Bond in particular, as what Woodward (2004) calls "third position" stakeholders in the world of global espionage was a key aspect of the plots in the early films of the first era. Unfortunately, the first era of the Bond films continued so long that eventually the Cold War ended. By the time Brosnan appeared as Bond in 1995 the U.S.S.R. was consciously

devolving into independent nation states, and the films began to focus on how this process presented new threats to global security (Willis, 2009; Stock, 2000). Still, Cold War tensions remained central to the plots of the Brosnan films where villains were either Soviet oligarchs, traitorous Russian spies, or North Korean generals (Lawless, 2014; Kim, 2015), and racist stereotypes that had permeated the franchise (Simon, 1989; Rosenberg & Stewart, 1989; Price, 1992; Norton, 1997; Stock, 2000) persisted into the new millennium (Dodds, 2003; Shinhee Lee, 2007; Shin and Namkung, 2008; Goffe, 2015; Kim, 2015). For audiences used to the long-standing rationale for Bond's existence as an intermediary agent in the bi-polar standoff of the Cold War the newly shifting geo-strategic relations between the U.S. and Russia (Price, 1992, in Woodward, 2004, p. 183) tainted the franchise's formula as passé (Funnell & Dodds, 2015).

### **3. Women take over**

Era one's final decade featured a new twist on the longstanding format of the franchise. Dame Judi Dench took over the role of 007's boss, M, possibly reflecting some of the changes taking place off-camera. Barbara Broccoli, daughter of Albert Broccoli took over Eon Productions in 1994 and acted as the producer for the final four Bond films in concert with her stepbrother Michael G. Wilson. The stepsiblings, along with Broccoli's widow now control Eon Productions, Ltd. In 1994, Harry Saltzman, who severed ties with the franchise in 1975 when he sold his stake in Eon's holding company Danjaq to United Artists, died (Lycett, 1995). Albert Cubby Broccoli died two years later after the release of *Goldeneye*, which his daughter had produced, but which still credited him as a producer. In these last films of the first era of Bond one might think that the new producers had bold new ideas. The cold war had ended, the franchise was the most profitable in the world at the time, and film budgets in the nineties were soaring ever higher. But in substance Bond would not change in any measurable way for another decade.

In the final four films of the first era producers made weak attempts at redressing criticisms of chauvinism by introducing a female M (Garland, 2009). The change was noteworthy, and was certainly a positive step in terms of female representation in the cast, but it did little to counterbalance the latent, and often manifestly sexist depictions of women in other roles. Nuendorf et al. (2010) comment on the significant placement of Bond girls as a feature specific to the film franchise and one that therefore constitutes an important aspect of the transmedia phenomenon. Their study finds that rampant sexism characterizes the film franchise and that there is no disparity between the sexism asserted by Bond or the villains he faces off against.

In his discourse analysis of Bond films, Garland (2009) reminds us that a key aspect to the villainy of the Bond franchise is the pivoting role of the Bond girls- some of whom turn out to be villains themselves. Garland notes that before *Casino Royale* Bond girls were filmic constructions that more accurately reflected masculinity than Bond himself. Their refusal to bed Bond, or their betrayal after doing so, enhances the sense of treachery surrounding them in part because they are perceived to be exerting agency uncommon for their gender. Most significantly Garland highlights the signification attached to Bond girl names, a concept equally applicable to Bond villains.

Part of the franchise's sexism is rooted in their faithful adaptation of the novels. The franchise persisted in its final years of era one employing the formula that was first documented by Amis (1957) in his review of the books, and later interpreted by Eco (1979) as a key feature of the film franchise. Just as readers, Eco (1979) says, enjoy the repetition of themes and plot devices in the books, movie goers enjoy the franchise's formulaic narratives as a matter of tradition. Because of this, Bond audiences are easy to satisfy because their expectations are so well understood by the producers, and in turn the producers can be counted on by audiences to satisfy audience desires because they rely on familiar tropes. Of these, the role of women as objects of

desire, or symbols of territorial possession routinely recur. Boyd (1976) used the formula of the Bond films to establish a taxonomy of the Bond characters, including the ever changing 'lady' who appeared as a model of femininity that contrasted with the female villains, that Calisi (1966, p. 83) said must be wooed over by Bond in order for him to prove his masculine dominance over the villains for whom they were once loyal.

Bennett and Woolacott (1987) argue that Bond's role as a "gentleman warrior" depends on his finding pure "maidens" along his journey in need of saving (as quoted in Woodward, 2004, p. 179), a formula that subsequent scholars have documented in both eras one and two (Nuendorf, et al., 2010). Toby Miller (2003) argues in his study of the imperialist quality of Bond's sexuality on film that the emphasis on sexuality paralleled the conquering of culture that was the series recurring theme. According to Miller the power that is seized by the contesting rivals in Bond films is notably illustrated by their coercive abilities over the female characters (Garland, 2009). He who wins the devotion of the Bond girl therefore demonstrates through his masculinity his imperial might.

#### **4. The man is not enough**

Just as the female characters remained un-evolved in the Brosnan films, Bond himself had not changed with the times. Brosnan's Bond was no less pre-occupied with chasing women on the job, whether at MI-6, or in the course of his missions where a sequence of beautiful young 'bond girls' were always crossing his path. His relationship with Moneypenny, who had by now been re-cast with a younger actress, remained equally prurient, and even more inappropriate than ever, considering the newfound awareness of sexual harassment gave a name to his behavior that connoted hostility and aggression (Brabazon, 1999). The Bond that Brosnan portrayed depended on a masculinity that was no longer deemed acceptable by audiences for a professional man of

honor. Instead, Bond's libidinous tendencies began to color him in the nineties as being anachronistic in both his function (as a British spy) and in function (as a chauvinist). In the psychoanalytic terms, bandied openly in the nineties, Bond appeared to be compensating for his own feelings of inadequacy, a salient concern given the dissolution of his *raison d'être* (i.e. diffusing cold war tensions).

In era one, Bond's job afforded him an enhanced white male privilege that more than compensated for the queering implications of being a spy. Carter (2006) notes, the defection of Kim Philby, and the subsequent revelations about MI-6's collusion with the KGB tarnished the agency in the public's eyes considerably in the fifties. Compounding the public skepticism was the fact that some of the Cambridge Five were openly homosexual at a time when homosexual acts were a crime in Britain. The emergence in the sixties of a hyper-masculine spy character is therefore even more interesting. Jeffords (1994) argued of the American action films in the eighties that they served as a remedy to the wounded national pride Americans endured after Vietnam and Watergate. It is possible to rationalize Bond's success as an action hero using a similar logic. The crucial fact of era one Bond however is that his masculinity was assured to audiences in explicit ways through the films. The same is true of era two Bond, however, the form of masculinity Bond models in era two is quite different.

Bond's masculinity in era one was bound to his work. All the traits that made him masculine also made him exceptional in his profession (Chapman, 2000). He could seduce women, and this gave him an advantage in tracking and infiltrating terrorist networks. He was brave enough to face down lethal enemies, making him one of the few people capable of accomplishing such dangerous missions. He was confident enough in his abilities to take on overwhelming odds and therefore was the best man to have in a tough spot. Era two's Bond affirms his masculinity through

his work as well. His strength allows him to defeat enemies in hand-to-hand combat, and to perform required feats to achieve a difficult mission. His endurance allows him to tolerate the brutal physical punishment to his body, and mind. These masculine traits are affirmed by his job, so if his job is compromised then Bond's ability to perform hyper-masculinity, or at least to perform masculinity on a more constant basis than other men is also threatened.

Era two Bond is equally conscious of the power he possesses in a way that era one Bond was not. The Bond of era two is conflicted about the expectations of his job, and about the implications of his decisions. In *Casino Royale*, his first interaction with M is a conflict over his mishandling of an operation in Africa. Bond was sent to track and capture a bomb maker in order to obtain information from him that would lead MI-6 up the chain of command of a terrorist network. Instead, Bond winds up killing the bomb-maker and inciting a diplomatic incident captured on camera. Bond's justification for his action, that, "I thought one less bomb-maker in the world would be a good thing," is parried by M's logical response: "Exactly, one bomb maker. We're trying to find out how a whole network of terrorist groups is financed and you give us one bomb-maker. Hardly the big picture wouldn't you say? ...Thanks to your overdeveloped trigger finger we have no idea who hired him or why!" This exchange reveals that the era two Bond begins his journey greatly feeling his moral obligation to help make an immediate impact rather than adhere to the dispassionate institutional policy that M advances in order to serve what she feels is the greater good by evaluating "the situation dispassionately" (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006).

Era one Bond operated according to the prerogative of his employer. There were dangerous figures everywhere, but killing them all was deemed neither practical nor politically feasible. Era one Bond understood this intuitively, and as part of his professional code he could prioritize his

mission objectives over his fervor to exact social justice. When era one Bond did make a point of exacting justice, it was personal, rather than social. In *Goldfinger* he avenged the death of Jill Masterson just as in *Diamonds Are Forever* he kills Blofeld in retaliation for the murder of his wife, Tracy. Bond's affective disposition in era two gives the character more ferocity, and provides each film with a sub-plot involving Bond's evolution into the dispassionate character that we know from his history will emerge at some point in the future.

The Bond franchise has always struggled to maintain a consistent image of Bond as a masculine hero throughout the history of the franchise because, as a masculine archetype, Bond was queered over time by virtue of his inability to adapt to a radically transforming set of gender relations in the industrialized world (Carter, 2006; McKay, 2010). The comparative masculinities featured in Bond films span decades, during which gender performance, and constructions of male gender, experienced considerable flux (Edwards, 2009; Franklin, 1988). In the years since Bond's introduction, the spy genre had evolved to emphasize depth of character, physical ability, and cultural verisimilitude. This latter component of the modern spy film genre was particularly significant for the Bond franchise to address. Era one Bond had become a farcical archetype by the nineties as evidenced by the various parodies that succeeded at the box office during this time. *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*, *Johnny English*, and *Spy Hard* were just three of the many big screen films that mocked the Bond archetype (Abrams, 2006).

Lindner (2005) notes that Bond's sexuality has been highly negotiated through the years, partly in relationship to the cultural context receiving the Bond films. According to Lindner, the major cultural shifts of the past fifty years have left the original Bond identity too far culturally removed from the global consciousness of today. Dodds (2010) affirms this not just in the cultural context, but even within media frames for masculinity and heroism (2010). In his essay "James

Bond's Penis" Miller (2003) contests the presumption of heterosexual assuredness in Bond films, citing even Connery's performances as containing a highly negotiated performance of masculinity that is at times tenuous.

Masculinities scholar, Gardiner (2002), asserts that men experience pressure to affirm masculinity, particularly because the meaning of masculinity is not static in our culture. This would explain why the Bond franchise struggles to maintain a consistent image of Bond as a masculine hero (Dodds, 2010; Simpson, 2006). Bond as a franchise, as an icon and as a symbol has been queered by time (Carter, 2006). This is indicated by the cultural reception of Bond in the media (Link, 2008) and in his place in popular culture (Owens, 2005). The ascendancy of more realistic character centered spy dramas which focus on the gritty and nuanced issues of modern day espionage have supplanted the stylized British spy hero of the cold war (Chapman, 2005) whose elitist affectations and hyper-sexualized bravado read to sophisticated audiences as compensatory gestures for an inadequate male (McKay, 2010).

Specifically, Bond has been queered by two distinct issues within the franchise narrative his relationship with his female supervisor M, and the growing disjunction between Bond's age old reputation as a master of technology and the cartoonish depictions of him in recent films (Abrams, 2006). Gates (2006) claims the nineties action films shifted from the grizzled muscle bound heroes of eighties films to youthful, slim built protagonists, who were both beautiful to look at, and notably clever. In fact, the same year Eon Productions' final era one film, *Die Another Day* debuted, the spy genre greeted a notable addition in the form of *The Bourne Identity*. The 2002 film starring Matt Damon as a highly skilled amnesiac re-introduced the notion of the super spy as man of action, but with several derivations from the existing Bond archetype. Firstly, *The Bourne Identity* pivots the spy film genre toward one overwhelming recent trend in the larger

action genre to which spy films belong. As Jason Bourne, Damon appeared in top physical condition and his supremacy as a physical combatant was complimented by demonstrations of his high pain threshold. Bourne was a tough guy, like the jingoistic macho men of other action movies (Jeffords, 1994), while at the same time he was intelligent, culturally savvy, and emotionally vulnerable (Dodds, 2010). The multi-dimensional characterization of a spy like Jason Bourne was a far cry from the Bond archetype of era one. Unlike Bourne, era one Bond was a company man, with no qualms about the work he did for his country, and no desire to quit (Chapman, 2005). Bond and Bourne did share a tendency for daring feats of physical ability, but whereas Bond often depended on either elaborate gadgets, or the nearest available futuristic technology to perform his feats, Jason Bourne was capable of killing an armed assailant with nothing but a dish towel (McKay, 2010; Dodds, 2010).

##### **5. It's how you use it that matters**

Of all the components of era one Bond's identity, his access to, and facility with, new technologies is perhaps most salient in the mind of the public. Fleming's novels were distinct for including an array of fantastical weapons, gadgets, and customized vehicles that reflected Fleming's own pre-occupation with such possibilities during his war time service as an intelligence officer (Lycett, 1995; Lane, 2006). In the standard formula of any Bond film Bond is dispatched to track or recover a technology that in the wrong hands poses a threat to the public safety (Patton, 2005). When Bond goes on a mission he often winds up having to destroy the technology in order to keep it from the hands of the enemy, often doing so in an ingenious, or dramatic, fashion. Bond's ability to destroy the technologies wielded by villains is a mark of one form of techno-masculinity. This ability is frequently afforded him only because of his aptitude for quickly and intuitively figuring out how to control new technologies (Zani, 2006).

In the first two Bond films of era one technology was a key aspect of the films, but in less proscribed ways. First era Bond only began to rely heavily on technology in the film *Goldfinger*. It is worth noting that the budget for *Goldfinger* was equal to the budgets of the first two Bond films, *Dr. No* and *From Russia With Love* (Woodward, 2004, P. 175). This may partly explain why Bond was suddenly outfitted with a customized Aston Martin including oil slick, smokescreen, and firing capabilities, as well as an ejector seat and bulletproof glass. Adding to this, Q supplies Bond with a radio transmitter device in the heel of his shoe that becomes a key focus of the film as Bond moves freely from country to country under the watchful eye of MI-6 (O'Donnell, 2005). Moore's Bond appeared at the height of Q's prominence in the franchise, and as Bond Moore donned a space suit to depict Bond's aptitude with spacecraft as Bond's missions took him further and further into the world of technocracy. By the time Brosnan took over Bond from Timothy Dalton in 1994 Bond was positioned as a daredevil technophile whose skillset as an agent during the cold war was being utilized in new ways during the post-cold-war era (Zanni, 2006).

Bond's relationship with technology is so notorious it has become the subject of several books (Gresh & Weinberg, 2006, and Dougall, 2010) and numerous articles (Zani, 2006; McKinney, 2006; Chapman, 2006). Starting with his signature Aston Martin, and extending to the fantastic imagined devices his enemies try to deploy, each Bond film has made technology a core feature. Steven Zani argues that technology is used in the franchise as an object of both masculine bravado and moral compass, as Bond is tested in his ability against the enemy who would use technology as a weapon. McKinney (2006) begins his analysis on the subject of Bond and technology by distinguishing the moniker James Bond as human and 007 as "a weapon" itself a technology operated by the British government. McKinney delves into the notion that technology

is not just the material mechanisms of science but also the “skills and techniques” that Bond ably demonstrates.

While this syncs with the concept of 007 as the ultimate weapon, it robs the human James Bond of his innate ability to master the human dimension of society; an ability that is specifically cited by both Nuendorf et. al (2010), and Carter (2006) in contrast to his technological prowess. In her work on eco-feminism, Sandilands (1999) identifies just such a dichotomy via the implicit cultural assumption of women as innately tied to nature and men as forces of culture. Sandilands’ argument rests on the social distinction between nature as the domain of the female and culture as the domain of the male, who wishes to master nature with innovation. The female tie to nature is implied by her reproductive capacity- a notion that adheres cleanly with Engels (1951) claims that patriarchy emanates from the threat of a feminine advantage in society because of her perceived natural supremacy, not to mention the strength of matrilineal ties, which are evidenced by nature, unlike patrilineal ties which can only be established by enforcing patriarchal social controls.

Era one Bond films are known for the competition between Bond and his villains over technologies being developed as a means of hegemonic control. As feminist scholars like Marvin (1988), Oldenziel (2004), Sandilands (1999), and Cockburn (1985) have argued, technology provides a prominent platform for the development, and performance of, gender, with masculinity inherently tied to cultural dominance via performances of technological mastery. As Gresh & Weinberg (2006), Roof (2005), McKinney (2006), and Patton (2005) illustrate these contests between techno-masculinities routinely play out in Bond films in era one.

That culture is perceived as a force designed to master and dominate nature (Sandilands, 1999) explains the supremacy that men assert as they assume roles of technological mastery (Oldenziel, 2004); a performative practice at the very core of the Bond franchise (McKay, 2010).

Bond's two chief attributes are his demonstrable mastery over technology- be they gadgets from the Q branch (McKinney, 2006), or mundane cultural artifacts like Binoculars (Zanni, 2006)- and his sexual magnetism (Hovey, 2005; Nuendorf, 2010). Butler (1990), whose seminal work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* problematizes fixed gender notions as conflated with sex, might say Bond performs his masculinity through his ability to master technology more so than through his sexual exploits. While several authors explore how technology confers masculine traits, two seminal works stand out. *When Old Technologies Were New* by Marvin (1997) and Oldenziel's (2004) *Making Technology Masculine*. Marvin's work is the seminal history of technology, and in it she relates the gendered nature of how technology was developed and introduced through the media to the public. By examining how the relationship between technological advent and gendered depictions of technology usage, Marvin laid out the groundwork for subsequent theories about the implicit tie between men and technology (1997). In her article on the disparity in IT related community projects Kvasny (2006) portends the likelihood of a male dominated cyberspace that precludes women's participation. Wark (2006) also follows Marvin's path as he makes the connection between hegemony, technology and gender in his article on the privatization of the Internet, and specifically he notes that the early innovators of the web were men, whose ideological influence (geared toward neoliberalism) has come to pervade new media technology, allowing for the kind of social reproduction of existing hegemonies that Bourdieu (2018) forewarned, and Kvasny (2006) documents.

Patton's (2005) explanation of technology in the Bond franchise as a cultural prize indicates that Bond's principal goal in era one, as documented by Chapman (2005) and McKinney (2006), of averting technological misuse, is effectively to protect the interests of the western world against the foreign other hoping to turn the tables of power. Willis (2009) notes that the franchise

depends on the question of masculine competition between Bond and his villains over a technology being cultivated for world domination or decimation. As Miller (2003), Roof (2005), McKinney (2006) and Patton (2005) illustrate, technological man measuring between Bond and his enemies play out routinely in the films in large and small ways. Indeed, themes of masculinity and technology play such central roles in Bond's identity that the franchise is frequently cited in mass media, and studied by academia, as a conscious purveyor of the culture's attitudes about the relationship between men, machines, and western imperialism (Bennett & Woolcott, 1987; Chapman, 2005; Commentale, et al., 2005, Cox, 2014).

One of the key foci of the film series is the role of the MI-6 quartermaster 'Q' who is depicted dispensing concealable weaponized gadgets he to Bond that he has designed to help Bond accomplish his missions. 'Q' is positioned as a caretaker of the gadgets he builds, whereas Bond is often positioned as the reckless user (Webber, 2014). In either case Bond's gadgetry has become such a central feature of the film series that some scholars (Zanni, 2006) believe it diminishes Bond's masculinity. Nitins (2011) implicitly agrees this line of thought, and argues that the gadgetry of the Bond films was not an original fixture of the film franchise anyway, as it did not appear in *Dr. No*, but later became more and more emphasized in the scripts. She also highlights the role that technology played in the early films "as a way of distinguishing gender roles" where Bond used devices like cars, guns, and watches that have a masculine character, while women in the films used weaponized perfume, "lip stick transmitters", and "handbag radios" as their technology. In part this division speaks to the broader gendering of accoutrement (Woods, 2012) but Nitins quotes Willis (1996) to argue that it also reflects, "'the clear connection between technology and masculinity/sexuality' in the James Bond films" (Nitins, 2011, p. 461).

Nitins (2011) claims that with the advent of private sector driven new media technology 'Q' was not even needed in the first two Craig films. Instead Bond depends on his cell phone to track, survey, communicate, and photograph and research his enemies. Consequently, new media has affected Bond's techno-centricity in significant ways that also affect the narratives being delivered. Willis (2009) cites *Goldeneye* as the key departure point from both the cold war narratives of the original Bond films that centered on fears of weapons technology to millennial anxieties about the increasing power of networked digital information technologies. Willis claims the Pierce Brosnan Bond is positioned as being a far greater techno-specialist than his predecessors including a scene with 'Q' where he, and not his quartermaster, is able to readily control his new BMW using a remote control. What Willis finds in the Brosnan films is that Bond is no longer charged with alleviating the audience's fears about Soviet supremacy of nuclear or space age technology, as Chapman claims was true of the early Bonds. Instead, Brosnan's Bond's is tasked with re-asserting human supremacy as the controlling agent at a time when "cybernetic threats" were exacerbated approaching the millennium.

## **B. Bond Reborn**

Black (2001) charts Bond's use of technology against the cultural tensions that were present at the time each film was made. Like other scholars (Bennett & Woolacott, 1987; Chapman, 2005) he notes that the film franchise was launched during the cold war when the threat of Soviet techno-supremacy was palpable in the west, and prominently featured in the early films. In fact, *Dr. No*, which featured a hidden nuclear reactor, premiered in London just two weeks before the Cuban missile crisis reached its climax (Nitins, 2011). Black ties similar events in geo-political and socio-political history to other themes in the films. For example, he notes that in 1973 as the Black Power movement swept the U.S. Bond took on a techno-crazed Caribbean dictator

doubling as a drug kingpin in *Live and Let Die*. Similarly, films like the *Spy Who Loved Me*, *Moonraker*, and *A View to Kill* dealt with trending issues like nuclear independence, the space race, and computerization respectively.

The reboot of the Bond franchise in the form of 2006's *Casino Royale* marks the beginning of a new era for the franchise that departs from the first era in several significant ways. Like those that preceded them, the Brosnan films, which made up the final 007 movies of era one, portrayed the world in the same starkly bi-polar terms that had existed at the time the franchise began in the sixties (Sugarman, 2011). Even though Brosnan's Bond was working in a post-Cold War world, the films still focused on the villainy of communism in Asia, and the dangers presented by the disintegration of the Soviet Union (Kim, 2015).

Because Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson oversaw the final four Bond films before the reboot, one may wonder whether it is fair to use the re-boot as a demarcation point between the first and second eras of the Bond franchise. This is a fair question given that networked technologies, a focus of this project, were present in the Brosnan films. However, the notion of using networked digital technology as a marker is not sound given the broad way that networked technologies have traditionally played a role in the franchise, and a demarcation that doesn't account for other more salient differences between the rebooted Bond and the Bond films prior overlooks other more salient shifts worthy of note.

The atomic age is the name given by historians to the era that bridged the post-World-War II era with the information age that arose from the prominence of networked digital technologies in the nineties, which incidentally coincided with the dissolution of the cold war. During the cold war the atomic bomb figured prominently in the cultural consciousness as the ultimate technology, a weapon that was born out of a new scientific understanding of particle physics. Atomic energy

wasn't just the power behind weapons though it was also proffered as the source of renewable energy that would literally and figuratively light the world (Boyer, 2005).

During the atomic age the power of nations was largely interpreted by their access to atomic weapons, with the U.S. and U.S.S.R. assuming new roles on the global stage as central figures in a cold war that spanned the globe. For those in Western Europe the cold war was particularly troubling because it was a dispute between two relatively unknown players in geo-politics. The U.S.S.R. had barely established its own borders when WWII forced Stalin into a series of uneasy relationships, first with Hitler, and then with Roosevelt and Churchill (Boyer, 2005). By the time the cold war had become an acknowledged permanent state of hostility in the early fifties Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill were all dead, and the governments that had formed in their respective countries were busily reforming under new leaders, with new post-war agendas aimed at normalizing societies that had undergone drastic changes during war time (Black, 2005).

The atomic age that existed when Bond first appeared on screen in 1962 was a time of global insecurity, cultural instability, and technological wonder (Woodward, 2004). When the rebooted Bond appeared on screen in 2006 the world was similarly in a state of global insecurity, cultural instability, and technological wonder but for different reasons (Cox, 2014). The conservative doctrines that drove the Bush administration to declare two overlapping wars after 9/11, and in two countries rich oil reserves prized by the oil industry supporting the administration prompted a new era of paranoia about fascism, this time in the United States (Watts, 2005). The notion of an information age took on new meaning in post 9/11 America where the threat of mass destruction was being touted as ever present, and the only deterrent was said to be the government's ability to collect and analyze information that would rout the terrorists before they could act. The passage of the Patriot Act giving the U.S. government unprecedented ability to

survey American citizens and foreigners alike marked the passage of the government from a passive observer of the rising power of networked technologies to a primary force in shaping their role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Watts, 2005; Wark, 2006).

In its first era, Bond films usually begin after a technology has been created, but before its power can be realized. In era one the technologies that threatened humanity were developed and possessed by the government, and it was Bond's job to ensure that outsiders did not use them. This persistent narrative theme in era one suggests that technology is a threat, and human intervention is a constant necessity. Era two treats technology as an integrated, mutable, feature of a now networked world. In era two, the threat comes from those who misuse technology, not those who develop, or acquire it. Of era two's many departures from the era one formula, the most striking may be the omission of any plotline demanding the retrieval, or destruction, of a specially designed technology. The threats that MI-6 faces in its second era come from humans willing to misuse available network technologies, rather than terrorists' ability to acquire special technologies for evil purposes. In era two Bond's relevance as a cultural hallmark is renewed by his reinvention as an affect driven maverick agent engaged with networked technologies as a matter of course. Bond is again triumphant, but not because he is able to contain the technologies that threaten the public. Bond triumphs in era two because he is able to adaptively use digital technologies in ways that undermine the operations of terrorists and destroy the networks they depend upon to thrive.

In era one the explicit discourse over the dangers of the cold war played an important role in establishing Bond's credibility as a relevant cultural icon. Bond's appeal wasn't just driven by sex appeal, or recklessness, as some suggest (Albion, 2010). Bond's mitigation of cold war tensions made him a warrior for peace in a time of perpetual hostility. His willingness to destroy, rather than just confiscate, technology resonated with a public terrified by the very existence of

nuclear and atomic weapons. For Bond to be relevant in the reboot meant that Bond needed to do more than just play out his formulaic adventures with updated references and a more culturally sensitive treatment of others. The re-booted Bond needed to do for the digital age what the original screen Bond did for the atomic age; he had to shine a clear light on the technological threats being posed in contemporary society and intuitively find a way to neutralize those threats and provide audiences with the psychic satisfaction of seeing man triumph over machines.

Era two Bond could not plausibly avoid interacting with digital technologies, instead he does so routinely, and expertly in order to map the terrorists' social network. Though we often think of networked technology as part and parcel of the digital age, the reality is that the internet existed for the use of governments prior to its introduction to the public as a structural framework for the World Wide Web. To assess the Bond films that were produced after the advent of the world wide web, and the introduction of mobile, nano-technology that was accessible to a broad market of lay consumers, one still finds that while the Brosnan films included mention of these technologies they were not used by characters in the film in a way that represented them as part of a newly networked society. Papacharissi (2010) identifies the networking of our identities as a primary consequence of increased mobility of, and access to, the internet. The Brosnan films, beginning with *Goldeneye* still treated the internet technologies as restricted technologies and portrayed their users as members of a small but elite group of privileged workers, tied to government operations of which most audience members were presumed to have little prior knowledge. It was not until *Casino Royale* that a smart phone replaced Bond's standard accouterment (Edwards, 2011).

Bond's imperative in *Casino Royale* is not about Bond's ability to restrain technology, rather it is a film that takes for granted Bond's need to use the same technologies as his foes in

order to make their covert network visible to MI-6. Bond's job as a 00 is refocused in era two from hunting down rogue technologies to mapping the social networks of terrorists around the globe. This singular mandate recurs through the era two films; each time highlighting the uneasy socio-political relationships that exist in a post-cold war world (Benkler, 2006). Bond's new modus operandi does not remove the centrality of technology however. Instead, the narrative focus on social networks in era two simply redirects the audiences concerns from what tools the enemy might use to enact their evil scheme, to what threats are inherent in a networked global society. These different narrative treatments of technology qualify the argument that the reboot represents a new era in the franchise's history, one that mirrored the realities of the time, and the shifting geopolitical, and gender dynamics tied to changes in technology (Edwards, 2010).

### **1. The enemy is everywhere**

As a re-boot, *Casino Royale* works in a world where the watchword is terrorism, and where the role of intelligence agencies has shifted away from policing other world powers, to mitigate the diffusion of power among individuals capable of inflicting damage that transcends national boundaries (Watt, 2005; Yeffeth & Wilson, 2013; Thomas, 2009). The significance of this shift is note-worthy despite the fact that Bond has always contended with terrorists in the form of SPECTRE. But one must remember that as Bennett and Woolacott (1987) have proffered, SPECTRE's function still depended on the Cold War model. SPECTRE was not a rogue terrorist organization, but rather a sophisticated network of marginalized socio-paths who sought to manipulate the U.S. against its communist enemies. In most Bond films, British national interests were never mentioned as a motive for Bond to act. Instead, era one Bond represented an extension of MI-6 as a dispassionate "third position" player in a precarious standoff between two superpowers (Woodward, 2004, p. 174).

Choosing *Casino Royale* as the novel to adapt for the reboot signaled to the audience that producers intended a re-birth for the character, since *Casino Royale* was the first Bond novel Fleming wrote, even though *Dr. No* was the first novel adapted to the screen (Lindner, 2009). *Casino Royale* (as an Eon production) affirmed audience's expectations that a rebooted franchise was going to be in many ways different; in particular, that the producers would seek to align the filmic Bond more closely in character to the brooding, anti-hero of the books (Watt, 2005). We first meet Craig's Bond while he discusses the two kills that qualify an agent to earn 00 status, imbuing the reboot with a more explicit focus on the darker side of Bond's life as a spy. Craig's Bond was a darker, moodier Bond, wrestling with his conscience because he is acutely aware of his job as an assassin (Lindner, 2009; Cox, 2014). The script, and its inclusion of a storyline of Bond losing his love Vesper, reflects the cynicism and contained hostility that motivates Bond in the succeeding films (Lindner, 2005; Cox, 2014).

Era two maps Bond's childhood traumas with the intention of layering the rebooted Bond with a psychological motive for his career choice. Providing this new dimension to Bond's identity speaks to the producers' decision to deepen the character's backstory and expand the dimensions of his psychological reasoning. Their decision syncs with the profound influence of psycho-sexual subtexts in the original books (Hockley, 2009). The reboot took these disparities into comparison, and when Bond reappeared in 2006's *Casino Royale* his character had transformed in noticeable ways to satisfy the expectations of 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences. *Casino Royale* was an apt choice for a franchise reboot, since the novel from which it was adapted is Fleming's first Bond adventure. The film's premise draws audience back to Bond's origins as a neophyte 00 agent, though the film is set in contemporary times. As the scholarship on the films documents, the new Bond retained

trademark character traits, but with a new embodiment, new emotional depth, and a new prerogative about the morality of his work, and its purpose.

In discussing the critical reception of *Die Another Day*, Dodds (2006) highlights the recurring commentary on the relevance of the Bond film villains in light of the media's shift after 9/11 towards real world terrorists like Osama Bin Laden, and rogue nation states like North Korea, which coincidentally figured prominently in the film. At that time the concept of terrorist network mapping, geo-strategic alliances, and high-tech weaponry was in vogue with the news media as much as the film industry; so much so that U.S. Military commanders were reported to be using the names of Bond villains "to label their Iraq-based military operations..." (Dodds, 2006, p. 117). Still, as others (Lindner, 2005; Simpson, 2006) interpreted the moment, the fact that Bond's *raison d'être* was being validated by a shift in geo-politics didn't make up for the outdated characterization of Bond, which had changed little since it debuted four decades prior.

## **2. Not so much *Pussy Galore***

That the re-booted Bond also coincided with a controversial casting choice (Lindner, 2009) speaks to the producers' goal of differentiating between the reboot and its predecessors, what we call eras one and two. Brosnan had been the final Bond of the first era, and the final Bond selected by Cubby Broccoli before he died, and his children assumed control of Eon (Lycett, 1995). Craig was the first Bond selected by the new generation of Broccoli producers, and his appearance was markedly different from that of the iconic Bond of the first era. Daniel Craig is noticeably more muscular than any other Bond actor, to say nothing of that fact that, as critics pointed out, he is also the first "blonde Bond," a character shift that elicited a popular outcry in England. So entrenched in the popular mind of the public was Bond's dark hair, and slim build, and so strongly is Bond grafted to ideals of masculinity, that the younger, taller, more fit Craig was openly

challenged by the public as not sexy enough to play the part of James Bond. In retrospect this seems ironic given that Craig was particularly chosen in order to embody an updated version of Bond- one whose body would be featured more prominently than any Bond before (Cox, 2014).

Bond's body is mentioned routinely throughout *Casino Royale*, particularly in the film's climax where Bond is strapped naked to a chair while his enemy admires his body saying "You've taken good care of your body," (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006). Bond's body remains a key focus of the films beginning with his emergence from the ocean in a swimsuit- a scene that echoes back to two previous iconic Bond moments- one in *Dr. No* featuring Ursula Andress as the character of Honey Ryder stepping out, and another in *Die Another Day* where Halle Berry playing the character of Jinx re-enacts the earlier *Dr. No* scene wearing a matching costume to the one that Andress sported in *Dr. No*. By replicating this scene with Bond as the object of desire clearly exploits the sexual appeal of his body, and licenses the viewer to objectify him (Cox, 2014).

Bond's newfound embodiment in Craig is a critical notion when you contextualize it within the research by other scholars studying the action genre and looking at the significant changes that took place during the eighties and nineties in terms of action hero embodiment. Jeffords (1994) documents the movement toward a pumped up wholly embodied cold war hero during the eighties, which mirrored the type of aggressive foreign policy that was being trumpeted by hawkish conservatives given an attentive audience in the Reagan Administration. *Rambo*, *Predator*, and *The Terminator* were par for the course in a nation that was still healing psychologically from the defeat of Viet Nam, and was experiencing newfound concerns about the cold war threat, via a deliberate political campaign from the neo conservatives who supported Reagan's presidency. The action film took on symbolic meaning for its audiences because it represented a complex of semiotic

meanings that permeated the zeitgeist (Jeffords, 1994). Other action heroes like Bruce Willis also called on nationalistic themes by fighting terrorists against all odds in *Die Hard*.

Jeffords (1994), and later Tasker (2012), argue that the enhanced muscularity of American action movie heroes, tied to a brooding, anti-heroic disposition born out of disillusionment and disenfranchisement, modeled a more distinctly American, working-class, body centered masculinity than had been displayed in the spy films of the sixties and seventies. Jeffords (1994) theorized that the muscle-bound masculinity of action stars like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone corresponded to the neo-conservative rhetoric of the Reagan administration designed to bolster American national pride after the emasculating loss of the Vietnam War, and the contemporaneous downfall of the Nixon Administration. Jeffords research builds from the well-documented phenomenon of men compensating for their emasculated state in the socio-economic structure by building up their bodies (Harlow, 1951; Goff, et al., 2012).

Carroll (2011) extends the logic of compensatory masculinity by arguing that the neo-conservative economic policies that have dramatically suppressed wages, exacerbated income disparities, destabilized unions, and reversed mobility in the United States and Britain since their endorsement in those countries in the seventies and eighties, respectively, have left white men without the economic security that had been a key component of the working and middle class masculine identity prior. Because of this, Carroll says, male characters in film and television have continued to reflect a compensatory masculinity, not only through embodiment but also through a more aggressively hostile nationalism of the type that has since become commonly embraced by the population of what Kimmell (2013) calls 'angry white men'. Carroll identifies the call for hegemonic masculine heroes as part and parcel of "the crisis of masculinity" that Faludi (1991) argues American men faced moving towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Carroll argues that the

monetarist policies of the neo-conservatives drove the economic shifts that perpetuated this crisis via mass layoffs that undermined the once dominant masculinity of the American laborer. Though they differ on their theories about why hegemonic masculinity became so popular in action films both Jeffords and Carroll agree that overt masculine performances on film soothed the collective male ego as the millennium approached.

Ironically, the muscular masculinity Bond exhibits in era two more closely mirrors that of the literary Bond who differed from his onscreen version because of his fervently nationalistic British identity (Laucht, 2013; Chapman, 2005; Winder, 2006), and a dark, anguished psyche (Landa, 2006; Hockely, 2009; Carpenter, 1967), that Patton (2005) believes makes him more akin to the 'angry young man' archetype than the seasoned professional spy we see on screen. Winder (2006) even argues that like the contemporary muscular masculinity that American films use to compensate for their audiences' feelings of inadequacy, the literary Bond functioned to restore the British national identity in the post-war period in a similar fashion. Though the original film version of Bond does illustrate some of the embodied masculinity that is currently popular by virtue of the more rugged masculine embodiment of its first actor, Sean Connery (Cook & Hines, 2005), Bond's embodiment was actually the one comparative feature of the literary character that doesn't correspond with the action movie heroes of today. Every other aspect of Bond's literary aspect was adapted to the big screen in ways that conflicted with the identity of Bond on paper. Bond was crafted to appeal to the American men of the time by appearing as more transatlantic, than British (Black, 2005), as a protector of primarily American, not British interests (Dodds, 2005), and as a carefree bon vivant (Moniot, 1976; McKay, 2010) who in many ways echoed the emerging white collar masculinity of the 'company man' that in post-war America became the ideal (Mulvihill, 2001).

Whatever the reason for the changing embodiment of masculine heroes, the effect was pronounced, particularly for a cinematic hero who pre-dated the muscle-bound eighties action heroes by three decades. James Bond had already been performed by five actors by the time the eighties drew to a close and none of those actors fit the muscular embodiment that had become commonplace in the action genre by then (Funnell, 2011). Funnell (2011) builds on Lindner's (2009) argument that in sync with Bond's newly enhanced embodiment, there is also a deliberate shift of the gaze onto his body in a manner that Funnell says, positions Bond as a "Bond-Bond girl hybrid." Only a few years after Halle Berry emerged glistening wet from the ocean as the character of Jinx, Craig, as Bond, mimicked the same scene in *Casino Royale*, indicating that the gaze was now directed at Bond, and to his prominently featured body. As Funnell (2011) sees it, *Die Another Day*'s failure to present heroic masculinity in an acceptable form prompted the producers to consciously present Bond in *Casino Royale* as having been "merged into a single figure" with the Bond girl (p. 466). This shift, she claims, adhered to new the new trend in rebooting action franchises in order to synthesize the hard body aesthetics of eighties action films with the youth centered trend of action stars in the nineties.

Lindner (2005) argues that the more significant shift in *Casino Royale* was not just to Bond's body, but the punishment of his body by his enemy, inspiring a gender narrative contained therein. For Chapman (2005), who views Bond as a corporal manifestation of 20<sup>th</sup> century English nationhood, the scene of Le Chiffre effectively castrating Bond in *Casino Royale* constitutes a transnational assault on English isolationism. Bond's body is frequently under attack, but in previous films Bond's body is only threatened by violence (Hovey, 2005; Funnell, 2011), whereas in the rebooted series Bond's body suffers routine trauma including castration by Le Chiffre (Lindner, 2009).

C. **A New Era. Yes, already.**

Just six years after *Casino Royale* premiered, rebooting the franchise in accordance with the superhero model of films then ascending into the widespread popularity they now enjoy, Eon productions released *Skyfall*. In its style, substance, and story, *Skyfall* broke from the new model that *Casino Royale* and *Quantum of Solace* had so deliberately established in order to restore relevance to the franchise. As my research will document in this project, *Skyfall* was not a new installment of the second era of Bond films, it was another transitional film in the series that marked the beginning of a third era for the franchise.

Though eras one and two were distinct in some ways, it is also necessary for us to recognize that at the level of narrative, the films were also alike in many ways. In both eras one and two the villains were marked by disability that contrasted against Bond's ideal physicality. In era one Bond's physicality was preserved by virtue of a rotating cycle of actors playing the part, whereas in era two, Craig's enhanced muscularity, and the deliberate objectification of his body served to highlight his superior physicality. In both eras one and two, Bond demonstrates superior techno-masculinity by beating his villains at their own game. In era one Bond's intuitive use of the augmentations provided to him by Q illustrated his techno-masculinity, whereas in era two Bond's ability to adaptively use networked technology to trump his enemies proved him to be the superior technologist. Lastly, in both eras one and two Bond was a rebel agent, whose tendencies to defy authority embellished his masculine appeal to audiences. In era one, Bond's tendencies to violate protocol centered principally on romantic attachments, whereas in era two Bond's rebelled by pursuing targets outside his purview.

As the proceeding research will illustrate, *Skyfall* is a distinct departure from era two in each of these ways, as well as several others. 1) The film assigns disability to Bond, as well as his

villains, undermining the focus on Bond's embodiment as a corollary to the superhero protagonists popular at the time. 2) In *Skyfall* Bond is bested as a technologist. The intuitive use of networked technology that he demonstrated in era two is proven inferior to that of the film's villain, Silva, and to that of the re-constituted character of Q. Even when Bond is augmented in order to defeat Silva he cannot do so in the rogue manner that was his fashion in era one, instead he is forced to co-operate with Q in a novel show of Bond's dependence on others. 3) *Skyfall* focuses intentionally on figuratively and literally killing off the female characters, including M, whose previous commutation was central to the gender dynamics of era two. Bond's inability to save even one of the women who appear in the film contrasts dramatically with the noble heroics ascribed to him in both eras one and two. 4) *Skyfall* brings back marginalized characters whose roles in era one were obviated in era two by an affective characterization of Bond, and a sophisticated trans-humanist depiction of networked technologies.

These shifts in the narrative formula, and their semiotic implications, contrast so greatly with those of era two, that *Skyfall* is as distinctly a marker of a new era in the franchise as is *Casino Royale*. Knowing, as we do, how the franchise transitioned from one era to another, it is now possible for us to examine *Skyfall*'s distinctions from all prior Bond films. As we do so in the following chapters, it will become apparent that while *Casino Royale* signaled the start of Bond's second filmic era, *Skyfall* is equally transformative, signaling the start of a third era for the franchise.

## V. ANALYSIS

### A. **It's Not for Everybody: Regressing Moneypenny**

Of the three MI-6 characters reintroduced in *Skyfall* the most problematic commutations attend to Moneypenny. The character returns to the franchise as a black woman quickly relegated to a sidelined role in Bond's adventures, ultimately assuming an assistant role that is depicted in the same sexist one-dimensional confines as that of era one. The character is problematic from both a scholarly perspective, and from the logistical perspective of producers concerned about audience reception. The elaborate narrative dedicated to her reintroduction illustrates how problematic the screenwriters found it to justify for the audiences the return of MI-6's most visible anachronism: the love-starved secretary.

#### **1. The woman behind the desk**

Until Judi Dench took over the role of M in *Goldeneye* Miss Moneypenny was the only female character that recurred throughout the Bond franchise. She worked at MI-6 as M's secretary, and in that role she occupied a physical workspace in his outer office. It was in this interstitial space between the private sanctum of the ministry's most senior officer, and the extended world of MI-6 that Miss Moneypenny coyly flirted with Bond, often to the consternation of her boss. Era one's Moneypenny's character was expressly marginalized in almost every respect; she was a single woman, she served as a gatekeeper to M, but never sat in on his private meetings, she had no seniority, and no path to upward mobility in her career. Unlike Q, who occupied a position of relative equality to Bond, Moneypenny was distinctly positioned as his subordinate (Carter, 2005; Eco, 1979; Boyd, 1975; Brabazon, 1999; Soter, 1993; Nuendorf, et al., 2010; Wight, 2015; Hovey, 2005; Caplen, 2010).

Of course, Money Penny did play a key role in the franchise. Her lovelorn interest in Bond assured audiences that the heterosexuality so crucial to his undercover work was not a fabrication put on with his alias, but a verifiable trait of his identity whether he was under cover in the field, or under the covers at home. Money Penny's adoration of Bond in era one symbolizes the enduring power of his sex appeal by showing audiences that Bond is sexy in and out of action; as attractive to sensible marrying types like Money Penny, as he is to femme fatales like Pussy Galore (Boyd, 1975).

Money Penny's love for Bond also proscribed desirable traits for women. Money Penny is aroused by Bond's callous attitude to her, forgiving of his remoteness, and understanding of his promiscuity (Talafierro, & Le Galle, 2006). Most importantly though, Money Penny does not seek a fling with Bond, as a Bond Girl might do, she seeks a relationship, even marriage from him. These virtuous traits are highly important to the formula of the era one Bond film, because Money Penny, with her security clearance, and her marginalized place within MI-6, represents to the audience the only reliably good female character that Bond can trust in his life as a secret agent. Every other woman that appears in the formulaic Bond film is introduced as a potential villain (Garland, 2009). Because these female characters were typified in era one by their association with evil-doers audiences can never wholly trust that their lust for Bond is genuine. Even when Bond seduces them to penetrate their defenses doubt remains about the fidelity of a woman who is in league with villainous terrorists; whereas Miss Money Penny could always be relied on to model the integrity of character that leaves no doubt about her attraction to Bond, and therefore Bond's appeal to women.

Money Penny does not appear in the era two films, but the role of assistant to M still exists. In *Casino Royale* and *Quantum of Solace* M is assisted by male characters named Villiers, and

Tanner respectively. Unlike era one Money Penny, who rarely left the outer office where she worked, Villiers and Tanner are shown not only traveling with M to her appointments around London, including to her home, but they also accompany her on trips abroad into the field, where she rendezvous with Bond. Though both are also featured inside MI-6, Tanner never even sits down, and has no visible workspace that he occupies, much less is bound to physically in the way that era one's Money Penny is bound to M's outer office. In the first two decades of era one Money Penny occupied an enclosed workspace guarding the cushioned door to M's oak paneled private office, that she never left, even in films where M was shown traveling abroad, or working in a temporary base at his country estate. In later years of the franchise, after Judi Dench took over the role of M, and the character enjoyed greater mobility to places like Scotland, and Turkey, Money Penny did accompany her, but in each case she was featured only inside the temporary MI-6 bases there.

That the era two films are part of a reboot may explain why the assistant characters are granted more freedom in their movement. It's also true that M is virtually never featured in her office in either of the era two films, and (as explicated in detail elsewhere) is primarily featured in her home in order to amplify her identity as a maternal figure to Bond. Yet, these narrative changes don't explain why the character of Money Penny is replaced by men. It may be that producers felt audiences would see a presentation of Money Penny working in a strictly professional capacity as a violation of her core character. Money Penny after all doesn't provide strategic services to MI-6 in era one, her primary function in the narrative is to affirm Bond's masculinity. Since era two re-shaped Bond's masculinity in a more sophisticated way such interactions with Money Penny would have been counterproductive.

This theory presumes of course that the masculinity depicted in era two was still meant to convey a wholly heteronormative dimension, thus the male actors hired could not appear as Moneypenny in a different sex. The theory also falls short of explaining why, if Bond is capable of adapting to a more nuanced gender performance that Moneypenny's character could not have been revised in this way as well. Moneypenny could have appeared as either sex, or in either gender, or Moneypenny could have re-appeared as a cis-gendered female that functioned strictly as a professional. That this didn't happen reflects era two's reticence to reshape gender performativity for women in the way that it did for men. As Bond was updated to a more sophisticated, contemporary masculinity, and M's gender identity was subtly reshaped in sync with third wave feminist pretensions toward a new construction of woman that synthesizes traditional feminine identities with newfound roles in traditionally masculine domains, other variations of gender performativity, including that ascribed to Moneypenny were simply ignored.

## **2. Losing agency, literally**

The Moneypenny introduced to us in *Skyfall* appears at first sight in a very different incarnation than that of era one. As we'll explore later, the 21<sup>st</sup> century Moneypenny is black, but this is hardly the most significant difference in the character. Moneypenny returns to the big screen playing a very different role than the deskbound, love-starved secretary from era one. Audiences first lay eyes on Moneypenny as she skids to a stop behind the wheel of a Land Rover during a chase scene in the pre-credit opening sequence. Dressed in slacks, boots, and an army green shirt, Moneypenny is introduced as an MI-6 field agent working with Bond to retrieve a stolen file containing the identities of embedded undercover NATO agents around the globe. Though the introduction sequence features Moneypenny in an action packed chase scene, driving, shooting, and keeping pace with the world's best secret agent, Moneypenny does not remain in the field

long. Throughout the film Money Penny's status is systematically diminished so that, in the penultimate scene of the finale she resumes the constrained and marginalized position behind the desk in M's outer office that her character occupied throughout all of era one.

In the following pages we will explore just how producers managed to regress the character from field agent to secretary in a manner that audiences may find believable, but that in fact, exemplifies the pervasive institutional sexism that goes so un-noticed off-screen that it can appear onscreen in manifest, and manifold ways that are even used to justify women's oppression. Adding to this, we will explore how producer's used inter-textual references, and exploitative industry practices to concretize the legitimacy of Money Penny's regressive role in future Bond films in order to consciously combat the criticism they anticipated when deciding how she would return to the film.

**a. If it's integral to the plot**

Even before the film premiered, producers hoped to pre-emptively counter feminist critiques using Naomi Harris, the actress playing Money Penny, as a buffer during the film's press tour. Film producers often fend off criticism by shielding their own role in designing the film's and their characters behind the question of choice by the performer. Graphic nudity and sex scenes are routinely defended this way, with actors justifying why they chose to do the scene, rather than producers having to justify why they chose to script and film it (Smith, 2015).

Eon Productions headed off concerns about the return of Miss Money Penny by allowing Harris to defend the integrity of her character's choice, and to emphasize a semantic difference in her character's workplace title meant to impress upon the public a notion that the character had evolved from era one to now. In a 2015 interview with Hannah Furness for *The Telegraph* Naomi Harris, the actress who now plays Money Penny pointedly identified Money Penny as "not a

secretary,” but rather “more of an adviser” (Furness, 2015). The semantic difference is not incidental to the feminist project. Titles with gendered identifications complicate issues of competency and parity in the workplace, while reinforcing assumptions about job segmentation by gender that have only recently begun to erode. Still, in the case of *Skyfall*'s producers consciously resurrecting its only recurring female character in the same marginalized job status that she occupied previously, and doing so in a film that kills off the only other recurring actress so that a male actor can take her place playing the most senior character, makes the semantic distinction between two job titles a rather arbitrary qualification.

**b. A woman's prerogative**

The narrative justification for Moneypenny's derogation in *Skyfall* is equally questionable to the arguments put forth to the press. Though Moneypenny begins the film as an agent, she is subsequently suspended to an administrative position that by film's end she chooses to make permanent. In one of the final scenes of the film Bond encounters Moneypenny in the courtyards of Whitehall, Britain's Pentagon equivalent. There she tells him she's decided to remain in her administrative desk job as the assistant to the new M.

Bond: I thought you were going back out on active service?

Moneypenny: I declined. You said it yourself, field work's not for everyone (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

Scripting Moneypenny's permanent demotion from the field as a matter of personal choice is one of the ways the filmmakers attempt to make Moneypenny's regression palatable to 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences. Similar to the intricately crafted exit for the female M, Moneypenny's character arc is a carefully constructed devolution in status that exploits post-feminist dispositions intended to broaden the scope of feminist liberation, but are manipulated by the producers to make Moneypenny's oppression easier for mass audiences to accept.

The rhetorical framing of Money Penny's demotion from agent to office worker as a choice is seemingly justified in the film's storyline by post-feminist arguments claiming that any agency asserted by a woman constitutes a liberating agency, even when the agency is used to embrace a feminine role traditionally seen as disempowered (Gil, 2007). Respecting the choice of women, no matter what mitigating circumstances inform it, is purported by some post-feminists as a necessary step in respecting the prerogative of the individual, in an effort to avoid enacting patriarchal tendencies that disempower women by infantilizing them (McRobbie, 1984). Through this logic Money Penny's decision is a personal one, abstracted from the larger narrative about gender or race, and illustrating her agency rather than its limits.

The post-feminist rationale is meant to raise awareness within feminist communities about the multi-dimensionality of life as a woman, via intersectional considerations and interlocking oppressions that make women's choices harder to understand than some second wave feminist theorists may have considered. Unfortunately, the pitfall of employing this approach to media studies is that it can, and has been, appropriated by both conservative commentators and media producers as a convenient manner of eliding concerns about structural inequality by reframing instances of oppression as matters of choice. A salient example of this occurrence is the way that conservative media dismiss the well-documented gender pay disparity in the United States with the invalid claim that it results from women opting-out of the workforce to care for their families (Stone, 2008; Pasztor, 2016). As many feminist scholars note, this argument, and those like it, fail to adequately account for the structural constraints that shape our decisions, and even our own desires (Seidman, 1995).

### **3. Consent by coercion**

A careful analysis of the circumstances surrounding Money Penny's ultimate choice to sacrifice her position as field agent in *Skyfall* illustrates in several ways how the structural constraints implemented by Money Penny's sexist peers, and supervisors, actively diminished her agency, in a storyline that licensed the audience to accept regressive gender politics. In order to show the audience just how Money Penny descended the ladder of success to a marginalized position where she claims to feel more comfortable, producers rely on sexist tropes about the inferior physical and technological abilities of women that they embed within the script from Money Penny's first appearance.

Within the power structure of MI-6, as reflected in *Skyfall*, Money Penny's future career path was not as open as the producers would have us believe. The structural constraints that outlined Money Penny's choice in *Skyfall* reflect the gender biases, and gender discrimination tactics that employers often enact unconsciously as managers (Sugden, 2009). In truth, Money Penny's choice to accept a role of diminished agency at the end of the film only existed because Money Penny was demoted in the first place. This model of rhetorical imposition of preferences is one that has been adopted widely in organizations seeking to influence the decisions of their employees. Money Penny's demotion from active service, for example, serves as the platform upon which she is further marginalized in ways that erode her individual credibility as an agent. Therefore, the subjugation of a woman in her workplace is not incidental, but incremental, and structurally imposed, rather than personally doled out.

The film opens with a protracted chase scene that pairs Bond and Money Penny together in order to highlight the differences in their abilities as agents. Money Penny's junior status as a field agent is implied from the start by the fact that, unlike Bond and Ronson, she is not dispatched into the building where the file trade was underway, but rather had been assigned to drive the pursuit

vehicle. As in many action films where the primary action hero has the agency to move freely while their sidekick drives the car, Money Penny is positioned from the start as an ancillary character.

Driving is an act that has traditionally been rife with negative stereotypes about women's abilities (Cockburn & Ormrod, 1993; Wajcman, 1991). Because of this tradition Money Penny is automatically distinct for being the face that appears operating Bond's chase vehicle. The role of driver reflects a paradoxical symbolism in that while a woman driving the car defies stereotypes about their techno-masculinity, in this case it also ascribes to Money Penny a diminished status because the chase is a default plan engaged only because the primary plan, featuring a male agent, has failed. Her relative inexperience to Bond is signaled by her role as the driver, but is then affirmed for audiences when Bond asserts his opinion on her driving in a paternal tone that implies a power imbalance tied to gender.

During the car chase the Land Rover's right side view mirror is knocked off, after which Bond comments to Money Penny from the passenger seat "That's alright, you weren't using it." (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). This sentence reads as a judgement on Money Penny's driving, and an assurance from her superior meant to allay the anxiety he presumes she feels. The sentence is also predicated on the assumption that the mirror smashed unintentionally, deriving from the idea that as a woman Money Penny is unlikely to treat a vehicle with cavalier precision, but rather with temerity. On top of this Bond's offhanded comment further presumes both that he has the power to ease her fears about having damaged the mirror, and that, assuming it was accidentally, she would be bothered by it in the first place.

Bond's comment constitutes a form of micro-aggression Solnit (2014) terms mansplaining. Mansplaining occurs when men provide uninvited, often un-necessary explanation, or commentary

to women in the tone of an authority. Whether consciously, or not, when men mansplain to women they exercise their privilege by inserting themselves into a conversation in the role of an arbiter of fact, reason, or legitimacy, without justification. Underlying the act is a set of sexist assumptions about the intellectual inferiority of women, and the unquestioned utility of men. Some scholars ascribe the phenomenon to the ways that masculine speech communities compete in their conversations, and use their speech to dominate those around them and assert authority (Wood, 2011). This does not mitigate the fact that this micro-aggression usurps the authority of women, and undermines the validity of their assertions.

As we see by examining Bond's comment on Moneypenny's driving, the act of mansplaining is laced with sexist overtones that impugn, and dismiss, women's power. Bond wouldn't make a point of re-assuring Moneypenny about it unless he was presuming that her smashing the mirror was unintentional. This presumption indicates his assumption of differences in their style of action in the field; an assumption laden with sexist overtones by the symbolic setting of the car, and the tone in which the message is conveyed. Anglo-American cultures systematically condition young women to perceive their femininity in terms of the inhibited ways in which they engage the items in their care. Whereas men have privileged access to costly machinery through occupational disparities, that grant them agency to recreate childhood play behaviors where they find innovative and unexpected uses for their 'toys' women have traditionally been granted access to technology in conditional and supervised arenas that emphasize the importance of caretaking, and preservation (Cockburn 1985; Oldenziel, 1997; Varney, 2002; Horowitz, 2013; Holt & Thompson, 2004). Bond's comment to Moneypenny conveys at the Meta level what he assumes are her doubts and concerns about her own performance as a driver, because she is a woman.

For Bond to comment that Moneypenny need not worry about the loss of a side view mirror belies an almost comical double standard on his part given its relative insignificance to the technologies he routinely destroys. Bond is notoriously reckless with the machines and technology that he uses in his missions (Nitins, 2012). Bond views the technologies provided to him as expendable, and in his view, their use, or misuse, is subject to his prerogative as an agent on the ground dealing with unexpected challenges as they arise. In era two Bond's recklessness is initially focused more on the technologies and surroundings he finds as he goes- since the Q character does not appear as such in either *Casino Royale* or *Quantum of Solace*. In era two Bond un-repentantly wreaks havoc on property in general indicating an even more cavalier view of his responsibilities as an agent. In *Casino Royale* alone Bond demolishes a construction site, an embassy, a Venetian Palazzo, and a Miami airstrip, in the process killing a bomb maker, Diplomatic workers, countless henchman, and two terrorist organizers. His recklessness also costs two women their lives- one of whom he loved (Nitins, 2012; Dougall, 2010).

Another example of Bond's mansplaining comes only a moment later in the same chase sequence when he leaps out of the car into a shootout with Patrice while commanding Moneypenny to "keep your head down!" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Ostensibly, Bond is warning Moneypenny that Patrice's next move will be to fire on the car, as though Moneypenny might not have considered this, or know how to react when it happens. In the fast-paced action scene Bond's stating the obvious confers on him a measure of implicit seniority based on experience, that conversely casts his female partner as inexperienced and junior via the implication she needed his advice.

Like his prior comment on her driving, Bond's command demeans Moneypenny's agency in the moment by asserting a paternal authority cloaked in a sentiment of concern, which reflects

the layered nature of sexist language. Bond does not enjoin her in a plan of action, or even inform her of his next move. Bond instructs Money Penny to hide herself from the impending shootout, as though she too were one of the civilians whose presence on the scene was a hindrance. This is clear by his choice of wording. Bond uses the verb 'keep' in his command, indicating his desire that Money Penny hide, and remain hiding, while he takes action unilaterally. Bond uses his words to relegate Money Penny to the invisible masses of onlookers who exist only as potential collateral damage in any zone where Bond asserts his manifest right to operate unimpeded. Bond isn't just reducing Money Penny's role with his command, he is claiming the field of combat as his territory, in the existing tradition of masculine action heroes (Mulvihill, 2001; Alford, 2006).

In both instances, the way Bond speaks when he addresses Money Penny reveals the patriarchal attitude that shapes his view of women. His statements are delivered with a tone of authority and finality that shuts down the conversation. Doing so constitutes a micro-aggression in itself, because it forces Money Penny to either ignore Bond's assertion of dominance, potentially signaling an acquiescence to this unbalanced dynamic, or else to respond to the seemingly conclusive statement from a defensive position that can be read as emotionally driven.

Money Penny navigates the gendered politics of deflecting Bond's micro-aggressions with defiant humor; smashing the other side-view mirror with a grin and parrying back in an even amused tone, "I wasn't using that one either." (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). This clever evasion of enacting a threatening stereotype speaks to Money Penny's cognizance of Bond's chauvinism, and her superior ability to manage it. In this case, it may be that Money Penny's sharpened skills countering sexist micro-aggression are informed by the skills she has honed dealing with similar acts of micro-aggressive racism. Steele (2012) documents the holistic impact of micro-aggression in his theorization on stereotype threat. According to Steele, the recurrence of micro-aggressions

often incentivizes people of color to engage in pre-emptive counter behaviors meant to disabuse the stereotypes others might form on meeting them. In *Skyfall*, Money Penny enacts a cheerful, pliant disposition throughout that dispels the image of an angry black woman. This is first scene in the car scene, but then again in subsequent interactions with Bond, such as when he returns from faking the death that left her demoted, and when she is dispatched to assist him in the field.

Money Penny's ability to counter stereotypes illustrates the added work that women and people of color must perform in order to achieve parity with white men in the workplace. Adding to this workload is the imposed work of having to balance the individual identity with the identity demands imposed by other's stereotypes (Steele, 2012). For women, this is particularly challenging in that, as *Skyfall* illustrates with the storyline of M, women face greater penalties for their mistakes when the mistake is seen to have transgressed gender norms (England, 2010). For Money Penny, the practical concerns of her gender are most apparent in the field, where MI-6 agents enjoy the license to operate with indifference to others, a mode of behavior most women are conditioned against, and sharply rebuked for enacting.

Money Penny's language choices in the chase scene exemplify the kind of gendered conditioning imposed on her character, and which- when deliberately inserted by producers- can diminish her ability to perform the masculinized role of 00. For example, when Bond absconds on a motorbike without her, Money Penny gives chase shouting to the pedestrians around her, "Just get clear!" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). This command is levied in an authoritative tone, but it also indicates a concern on her part that contrasts notably with the way that Bond and Patrice treat the civilians in their paths. The two men tear across rooftops, through windows, marketplaces, and onto trains with nary a word of warning for those who are endangered by their behavior. As male action heroes they exhibit the kind of recklessness and privileged indifference typical of the action

genre not only with what they do, but with the laconicism of a peerless man who speaks only to his peers (Baumgarten, 2003). The producers' choice to present Moneypenny as an agent concerned for those around her, others her from the action hero model in a gendered way, by casting her as more empathetic and caring to strangers; less privileged, and more communicative (Wood, 2011). In practice, one can rightly wonder whether a group of pedestrians, faced with a woman behind the wheel of a car would yield to her as quickly as they might a man. Though the producers only show Moneypenny's face when she shouts aloud, "Just get clear!" they could have shown her path blocked by impassive onlookers, refusing to accept the threat of her running them down based on her gender.

**a. Taking the wheel**

Bond's gendered aggression toward Moneypenny escalates from latent to manifest through their non-verbal interactions. During their chase Moneypenny begins ramming Patrice's car to drive him off the road. Bond wordlessly indicates that Moneypenny is not ramming Patrice's car hard enough by physically grabbing the wheel from her and re-directing the car. That he asserts himself physically in this instance instead of vocally indicates that, having been outmatched in their last verbal exchange, Bond feels the need to escalate the gendered power struggle to a new level. His literal power grab over the steering wheel reiterates non-verbally his low opinion of Moneypenny's skills, which he later expresses verbally when he says of fieldwork "It's not for everyone" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

Bond's assumption of control illustrates his own sense of himself as a co-worker. Bond sees himself not as an equal, but as an alpha, entitled to overpower her bodily if he feels the need to do so. Bond abandons his partner and their transport so that he can commandeer a motorcycle and give chase solo is characteristic for the second era Bond. He is an agent who thinks in singular

terms and operates instinctively from moment to moment on his own authority. For all the popular identification made between Bond and his Aston Martin DB8, the motorcycle better symbolizes his approach to his work. Bond drives the bike alone, and is followed, not accompanied, by his team-mates.

Unpacking the gendered nature of Bond's wheel grab requires that we consider the maneuver Moneypenny is portrayed as failing to perform. Ramming the car is an act of violence, and an act of destruction. To imply that she is incapable of inflicting violence either implies that Moneypenny lacks the will to act out in the destructive ways so commonly attributed to men. But when Moneypenny is working solo her capacity for destruction is clearly illustrated. In the moments that follow Bond's departure Moneypenny intuitively smashes out the windshield of the Land Rover in order to give chase. She does this so that she can follow alongside the train in the car, proving that Bond didn't need to demolish the rear train cars with a crane to catch up with Patrice. In the chase sequence's climax, Moneypenny wields her rifle with confidence and fires as ordered, just as she later uses a Haliburton briefcase in Macao as an impromptu weapon that saves Bond's life. These acts of techno-competence are never verbally acknowledged. Instead, they are sometimes strategically overlaid by manifest derogation of Moneypenny's skills in the dialogue.

When Bond jettisons himself onto a moving train in pursuit of Patrice, Moneypenny reports this development back to M, only for M to reprimand Moneypenny, "Well, get after them for god's sake!" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). In itself, this comment may seem a spur of the moment exclamation, but within context it is revealed to contain sexist assumptions. At this point in the film MI-6 has lost its satellite feed and has no visual coverage. For this reason, M demands to know, "what's happening?" Both Bond and Moneypenny can hear this demand, but only Moneypenny bothers to reply. As M cannot see the scene in front of her, she has no way of knowing

what Money Penny is doing, and only knows what Bond has done because Money Penny bothered to maintain communication. For M to therefore command Money Penny to “get after them, for god’s sake” indicates that M was making an assumption that Money Penny had demurred in the face of an obstacle, and wasn’t following them, when there is no reason to think this. M doesn’t know that Money Penny isn’t in the car, as she was before, and is again later (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Nor does M issue directions to Bond, whom she knows is listening. Instead, M respects Bond’s autonomy to pursue Patrice without interference, but assumes that Money Penny needs guidance.

That her exclamation ends with “for god’s sake” further implies that Money Penny is a failure for not following Bond’s lead, even when Bond’s lead- for all M knows of the situation- could be faulty. Indeed, before reporting back Bond’s whereabouts Money Penny says “It’s tricky Mam” (Broccoli, 2012); A statement that should suggest to M that Bond’s actions may have been reckless. But M doesn’t inquire further about this aspect of the situation, she is only concerned with making sure that Money Penny follow suit.

The film doesn’t allow much time for audiences to recognize the sexist undertones of the dialogue in the chase sequence because it is overlaid against so many quick shots of characters in motion. Consequently, M’s critique appears valid given the way it corresponds to what is happening on screen. Though M doesn’t know it, she is right that Money Penny is not following the train, and upon hearing the reprimand Money Penny leaps into the Land Rover as directed. Money Penny reacting this way validates M’s behavior, and serves to portray Money Penny as both deferential to authority and tentative to act unilaterally. When Money Penny then follows Bond and Patrice by chasing after a speeding train in the same way that has long been used to ascribe bravery

to action movie heroes like Indiana Jones, or Mad Max, it does not reflect on her intrepid spirit, but instead her eagerness to follow orders.

Even as Money Penny is sidling along the speeding train the producers make a point of insinuating that Money Penny is technologically unsophisticated by scripting an exchange between Money Penny and M, in which Money Penny can't identify the make and model of a car. When Bond lets loose a cargo haul of Volkswagens that Money Penny deftly dodges using her evasive driving skills, the music and camera angles don't frame the moment as one of triumph for the pursuing agent. Instead, M demands of Money Penny "What was that?" to which Money Penny replies in a flustered voice, "Volkswagen Beetles, I think." (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Here, the film actively chooses to frame Money Penny reacting to the situation with audible distress in her voice, and with dialogue that plays on longstanding stereotypes about women's lack of familiarity with cars (Oldenziel, 2004). Indeed, the identification of the car as a phallic symbol in the vein of McClintock (2013) is partly traceable to the Bond franchise (Zanni, 2010). In this example, producers rely on it to affirm franchise fans' existing prejudice in a way that also degrades Money Penny as a field agent.

**b. She never really had a shot**

To begin Money Penny's arc by contrasting her field skills with those of Bond cleverly positions her at a fault from the film's start. Bond is, after all, considered the top agent, as well as the personification of masculinity, so for Money Penny to compare negatively to Bond denigrates her character, at the individual, and gender level. This gendered comparison is amplified by the fact that Money Penny's introduction to the franchise prominently focuses on her use of technology, a narrative device that in previous Bond films plays an integral part in establishing both Bond's competency and his masculinity (Roof, 2005; Willis, 1996). Within that context

Money Penny's depicted failure as a driver, a tracker, a reporter of information, and as a marksman undermines her competency in a consciously gendered way.

Indeed, the purpose of the opening sequence seems to be to contextualize for the audience why, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Money Penny, who is soon to be the only recurring female character, will not be reintroduced in a more active, autonomous role. By showing audiences that Money Penny was given equal opportunity to earn the high-status position of a 00 but failed to do so on the merits of her performance, producers hope to disabuse audiences from viewing the new Money Penny as equally disenfranchised to the original. Failing that, the attention devoted to explaining why Money Penny occupies a subordinate role at least provides some cognitive cover for the dissonance that audiences must experience in order to enjoy future Bond films featuring such gender disparity.

In Money Penny's case the slow decline from agent to assistant stems specifically from the demotion she receives for, "Killing 007" at the film's start. The logic of which- that she performed inadequately- justifies her further descent. When one considers the damning consequences Money Penny faces for shooting Bond, one would think that the filmmakers would have made an effort to script the event so that the blame was distinctly hers. However, this is not the case. Even within the universe of the film Money Penny's demotion illustrates a gendered double standard at MI-6 that constrains the advancement of women.

Let us begin by noting that although Money Penny was the most junior agent present during Bond's shooting, she disproportionately shoulders the blame for its consequences. Bond, whose failure to co-operate compromised the mission, and whose choice to play dead abrogated his duty to MI-6 is not only never punished, but re-admitted under special circumstances. Meanwhile, Money Penny is suspended from active field duty following the mission as punishment for "Killing 007" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). As Bond's superior it is understandable that M would take blame

for the losing an agent, and that Bond, who faked his death thereby figuratively killing 007 to be punished, but instead the blame falls on Moneypenny, in a plot point integrally tied to the devolution of her character, but that makes no sense.

Moneypenny only shoots Bond under duress after a direct order from M. once Moneypenny has pursued the train as far as possible she follows protocol by taking out a rifle and positioning herself to shoot Patrice if so ordered. M orders Moneypenny to do so, even after Moneypenny explains that she does not have a “clean” shot (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Moneypenny accedes to the order she receives to shoot, and inadvertently strikes Bond, allowing Patrice to escape with the data file he has stolen. Objectively, this blunder can hardly be considered an error on Moneypenny’s part. She does not defy orders, as Bond does at the film’s start by tending to Ronson when M clearly orders him not to; nor does she shoot unilaterally, as Bond later intimates. She acts only under a direct order from her superior, and yet she is held solely responsible for the consequences.

The fact that Moneypenny is suspended and re-assigned as a result of doing her job faithfully and within the understood bounds of risk highlights the double standard at play. One of Bond’s most salient characteristics is his penchant for reckless behavior. In the multi-era history of Bond’s onscreen career he has been blamed for the death of fellow operatives or allies. At times he has been suspended from duty for this, as Moneypenny is, but unlike Moneypenny, Bond is disciplined for willfully violating protocols and direct commands, not following them. Looking just at era two Bond is explicitly blamed for the torture and murder of MI-6 agent Holly Fields, and for the arrest, torture, and murder of his ally Mathis. Yet Bond is never re-assigned from the field to an administrative position, even after he holds M at gunpoint in *Quantum of Solace* while fleeing military police that have come to remand him to Britain for court-martial.

Fairly assessed it is Bond, not Moneypenny who is responsible for both the mission failure, and his presumed death. Bond is shot because Bond refuses to co-operate with his female colleagues. A key plot point that the film only recognizes indirectly is that Bond is still wearing his earpiece when M and Moneypenny were discussing the shot. We know this because when Bond returns from the dead he quotes back to M the order she gave for Moneypenny to, “take the bloody shot,” proving that he heard the whole exchange between the two women (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). That Bond had his earpiece in is only implicitly recognized in the film, and then, only to qualify Bond’s demonization of M as uncaring. However, if Bond could hear that Moneypenny had established a shot on the target, this means that in the moment he could have cleared the scene to give her a clean shot. Instead of accommodating his teammate, though he acted unilaterally and knowingly comprised the mission while putting himself at risk. Bond’s choice to compete against, rather than cooperate with Moneypenny typifies a documented tendency by men to view the workplace as an arena for competition, where individual success is prized over group achievement (Wood, 2011).

Tellingly, Bond’s revelation about the ear piece is not presented by the producers as damning information about his behavior during the mission, but rather as damning evidence of M’s callousness. Bond implies in their exchange that his decision to fake his death was informed by her decision to prioritize the mission above his safety, never allowing that his safety was meant to be protected by the means of communication his earpiece provided. Nor do the producers give much attention to the fact that Bond’s admission that he ignored his female superior, and his female team-mate, contrasts sharply with the concern he shows for his male colleague Ronson; both in the opening sequence, and later when he shames M for her indifference to Ronson during the mission.

Most significant to the injustice Money Penny experiences, and the illogical rationale for it, is that her suspension is said to be a consequence of killing 007, not shooting him; yet when Bond later re-appears alive and well her suspension remains in effect. In fact, we first learn of Money Penny's suspension when she is explaining it *to him* after he has returned from his own faked death. When Bond finally meets Money Penny again he never reveals to her that he could hear her during the mission. Instead he uses the conversation to patronize her with unwanted advice on her aptitude for the field. Like so many men in The U.K. and the U.S. Bond operates under a hyper-privileged set of assumptions about his place in the workforce. His access to adequately paid work is a matter of right, not luck, and his inability to attain that which he feels entitled to is an experience of oppression rather than one of equality with the now larger field of competitors coming from outside the privileged space of white male patriarchy (Kimmell, 2013).

The producers employing a double standard in MI-6 policy as a means of diminishing Money Penny's agency in the workplace says something about the way they see their audiences. The fact that Money Penny is derided by a double standard indicates that producers either felt the audiences would accept the justification, or that the producers are themselves blind to the fact that a double standard exists. In the case of the former, we must consider why producers would view their audiences as agreeable to chauvinism, even at latent levels. Modern audiences are credited with being cognizant of media portrayals subject to criticism. If we are to assume that producers are themselves unaware that their narrative treatment of Money Penny, M, and Bond reveals a gendered double standard then we must consider whether their lack of enlightenment regarding gender relations informs other aspects of the franchise, and how so.

Producers didn't need to demonstrate incompetence to justify her demotion in the film, they only needed to gender Money Penny as female, so that her incompetence would be more

readily accepted by the audience. Any pretense of incompetence would have been accepted by the audience once they saw her as a woman agent rather than just as an agent. The producers primed the audience to expect techno-incompetence by emphasizing her gender in the short scene with Bond at the start of the automotive chase. The same thing was done to M. Producers primed the audience to think of her as a woman so that they could more readily make her incompetence seem believable.

### **c. The learning curve**

While the opening sequence establishes Money Penny as inferior to Bond, her appearance in Macao positions her as a subordinate to him, and confers on their relationship the sexual tension missing in the opening sequence. Here we can see that once Money Penny is marginalized by virtue of her demotion, she becomes vulnerable to further degradation, because her demotion from active duty positions her as a supplicant who must earn back the status that was taken from her. Money Penny's compromised station is evident in the opening line Bond delivers when she arrives in Macao.

Bond: Aren't you a little overqualified to be delivering messages?

Money Penny: It's all part of the learning curve, and Q's afraid of flying (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

Notice that Money Penny doesn't agree with Bond that the errand is demeaning, instead she frames it as part of her "learning curve" in an administrative capacity (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). She is there not only to support Bond, but to do so in the service of Mallory. The line also establishes her inferior rank in MI-6 to Q. Unlike Money Penny, Q evidently enjoys the agency to refuse the assignment because of his personal phobia. That he can do so even though he has shorter tenure at MI-6, and is not a field agent, highlights his status relative to Money Penny, and intentionally reinforces the derogative connotation of Money Penny having to perform this task.

Money Penny relays this information in an uncomplaining way that enjoins the audience to take Q's superior status for granted as she seems to do. Neither she nor Bond discuss whether Money Penny had a choice in refusing the assignment, as Q did, affirming through omission her lack of autonomy as an administrative aid.

Money Penny's continued acceptance of the administrative role in Macao, well after Bond has not only been resurrected, but also reinstated, frames her character in diametric opposition to M, the only other woman we see at MI-6. M is indignant about being blamed for the failure of the mission, she resents the implication that she was culpable in either Bond's or Ronson's fates, and she refuses to comply with the proposed resignation scheme that will allow her to "go gracefully" from MI-6. M's recalcitrance reflects her sense of privilege, garnered through a long career that has also provided her economic security, as illustrated by her townhouse. It also reflects the masculine character that she adopts in adherence with the M character trope. Money Penny, on the other hand accepts her demotion, and never challenges it. In this way, Eve Money Penny in *Skyfall* adheres to the unquestioning obedience of the Miss Money Penny character trope.

Money Penny begins the film by being unfairly demoted from a position where her performance was undermined by lack of support from her partner, and a superior who had micro-managed her actions in a manner that was wholly inconsistent with the way she treated her male agents. This experience, combined with the attitude of derision she faces from Bond when he returns from having faked his death constitute what is known in America as "hostile workplace environment harassment" (Wood, 2011, p.304). For many women, as for Money Penny, this form of routine harassment not only serves to overwhelm the victim by subjecting them to harassment that takes on the appearance of a sanctified behavior, it also obfuscates the potency of the harassment by making its impact indirect rather than direct. Consequently, victims have

traditionally responded in more muted ways than they might if they experienced an act of sexual aggression. As is the case with Moneypenny, some victims even begin to establish their own cognitive dissonance in order to normalize the harassment so that they can persist in their careers.

By inserting Moneypenny into the Macao sequence producers skillfully synthesizes the new Moneypenny's enhanced status within the context of the franchise while simultaneously underlining the character's diminished status within the universe of the film. Moneypenny's appearance in Macao as both a messenger and a field agent implies that the character's demonstrated abilities in combat may be called on in the future, as indeed they are in later scenes, when she saves Bond by taking out a henchman in the casino, and wields a gun to shepherd government workers to safety during the shootout in Parliament. Merely for Moneypenny to appear outside the office environment suggests that even in her demoted position she may still enjoy freedom of movement around the world, that was not afforded her era one counterpart. On the other hand, producers also scripted Moneypenny's interaction with Bond as another failure of her competency. As Bond points out, Moneypenny was sent to him under the guise of a messenger, with the secret agenda to spy on him. Within minutes Bond elicits from her a confession that her true purpose there is to spy on Bond for Mallory. By unmasking Moneypenny's scheme Bond derogates her abilities as an agent, subtly reinforcing her ineptitude for field work.

Moneypenny's self-subordination at the film's end is only the most dramatic example of several instances in which she acquiesces to the unjust circumstances of her demotion. Throughout the film Moneypenny is depicted by the producers as progressively submitting to the false logic of her own inadequacy as an agent, making her later decision seemingly more logical. Such is the case when she arrives in China as an envoy from Mallory. There, in Bond's hotel room, a setting rife with overtures of sexual impropriety, Moneypenny is reduced to kneeling before a shirtless

Bond and shaving him as if she were his concubine; an apt reading given the setting (Miller, 2009; Goffe, 2015; Dodds, 2006). The dark skinned Money Penny performing in service for the European man evokes long-standing franchise stereotypes about the exoticized female other, the savage women being sexually conquered by the colonizing European male, and in so doing, compromising the figurative resistance of her nation.

The most striking example of Money Penny embracing the era one character trope is when she playfully flirts with Bond while simultaneously defending the integrity of her new boss, Mallory by listing his credentials.

Money Penny: You know, Mallory's not as bad as you think.

Bond: He's a bureaucrat.

Money Penny: You should do your homework. Gareth Mallory is a lieutenant Colonel...So, there's more to him than meets the eye (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

Her act of devotion to Mallory, performed as she kneels before Bond, foreshadows to the audience that Money Penny has begun transforming from an independent-minded field agent into a docile and malleable servant. Money Penny's acquiescence to this newfound malleability is projected as pleasurable by the seductive smile she wears while shaving Bond, and listing their male supervisor's record of masculine bravado. Miss Money Penny after all was always devoted to M in era one of the franchise, but she straddled the line between devotion and dereliction when she flirted with Bond, knowing that he was typically appearing in M's office to be scolded for some form of misbehavior. In *Skyfall*, the dynamic of flirtatious interplay is reimagined, but still present, in line with the film's aim of regressing the franchise.

In the shaving scene, Money Penny is reduced to handling a domestic tool, in the posture of a servant, in a way that markedly contrasts with her use of more advanced weapons, and machinery in the opening sequence. She acknowledges in the scene that the razor is not only

masculine, but still deadly: “Money Penny: Cut throat razor? How very traditional.” Yet, unlike the gun, the razor is a weapon more akin to a murder mystery than a spy thriller. It can only be used at close range, and in this way reads as gender queer in its form. As Nitins (2012) notes in his examination of the gendering of technologies in Bond films, women in era one were traditionally armed with weapons that compelled them to make close contact with their target. Bond hands her the razor, and by taking it she has signaled her amenability to servitude. Handling the straight edged razor, at the discretion of Bond illustrates the practical impact of her demotion. Money Penny is reduced from accessing the masculine technologies she uses in the opening sequence to using domestic tools, in service to men, and in a physical setting that evokes the colonial past of British foreign agents.

Themes of colonial imperialism permeated era one (Miller, 2009) but were not featured as such in era two. *Skyfall*’s decision to re-embrace cultural imperialism indicates a new era of the franchise, one that is part and parcel with the subjugation of women. In *Skyfall*, these themes of reinforced in later scenes during Bond’s trip to Macao via his interactions with Severine, who was sold into the Macao sex trade. That Bond moves in one night from his provocative interaction with Money Penny to flirt with another woman of color underscores the imperialist tenor of this segment of the film. When Bond later creeps into Severine’s shower without warning and begins intercourse from behind the film brings the sub-text of figurative rape as a means of colonial imperialism to the fore with a literal enactment that Money Penny participates in as a pre-requisite for keeping her job.

#### **d. Bond girl Eve**

Money Penny’s scenes in Macao play on perhaps the most cunning strategy used by the producers to regress Money Penny’s character in a coercive form that ultimately valorizes her

regression as an accomplishment in the audience's minds. By withholding Moneypenny's last name throughout the film, and by deliberately scripting her interactions with Bond to echo the dynamic of previous femme fatales in the franchise, the producers exploited inter-textual significations of femininity to present her as duplicitous Bond Girl 'Eve' rather than faithful Miss Moneypenny. Doing so made the revelation of Moneypenny's identity read to the audience as a validation that masked the character's embrace of subjugation. More importantly, because Moneypenny had been presented in the form of a Bond girl, a character type that is notoriously disposable in the franchise, her 'transformation' into Moneypenny at the film's end reads as a reprieve for the character, rather than a regression.

When Moneypenny turns up at Bond's hotel in Macao offering assistance he accuses her of having ulterior motives:

Moneypenny: My official directive was to help in any way I can.

Bond: Like spying for Mallory (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

The sub-text of Bond's challenge to Moneypenny, still known to him at this point only as Eve, is that her character represents the traditional Bond girl. Introducing Moneypenny as Eve, the Bond girl in *Skyfall's* opening was a clever decision by producers who used the symbolism attached to these two female character types to elevate and oppress the new Moneypenny using a post-feminist logic. As Bond girl Eve, rather than faithful Moneypenny, the character is imbued from her first moment onscreen with an agency, according to Garland (2009) because the Bond Girls, willing to violate the gender norms that constrain most women in their interactions, are able to keep pace with Bond even as he engages in the type of reckless behavior that characterizes his approach to espionage. Giving Eve Moneypenny the veneer of a Bond Girl, also glosses her character with the veneer of agency. When that agency is relinquished at the end of the film, audiences can rest accept that the gender dynamic being restored to the franchise occurs

organically, borrowing from the sexist assumptions about the naturalness of job segmentation in the workforce (Wajcman, 1991).

The plotline is clearly designed to manipulate the audience's expectations. But not just for the pleasure of a narrative reversal. When Eve finally identifies herself as Moneypenny the character transitions at the symbolic level from a tertiary marginality, that in Bond films means the character won't return, to a secondary marginality, that means the character is now recurring. We all know Bond girls never last. Unlike Moneypenny, who returns film after film, a Bond girl is never seen again, even if she survives to the closing credits. Bond girls are disposable characters of whom the audience has come to expect so little that when they do assert agency it is treated as noteworthy (Garland, 2009; Woodward, 2004; Brabazon, 1999; Nuendorf, et al., 2010). Producers depended on Eve's implied agency as a Bond Girl, and more importantly her disposability in such a role, to frame her eventual position on the bottom rung of the MI-6 ladder as a relative success story. For Eve to transform from a disposable Bond girl into the recurring character of Moneypenny at film's end signifies a promotion for the character according to the rigidly proscribed roles for women in the franchise. The reprieve that the character is granted by ascending to a recurring character distracts from the fact that Moneypenny has emerged in the 21<sup>st</sup> century just as marginalized as she was in era one, and possibly more so, given her race.

**e. Not that it matters...**

It cannot be ignored that Moneypenny's gender interlocks with another marginal identity as a person of color. The Bond franchise has historically featured women of color in blatantly exoticized, eroticized, and degrading depictions (Norton, 1997; Ortner, 1996; Brabazon, 1999). Hiring a black actress to portray Moneypenny can be viewed as a conscious decision by producers to obfuscate the regression of the franchise with a veneer of progress. Moneypenny returns to the

same marginality she suffered in era one, but because the character is now played by a black woman the franchise can be seen to have evolved. By comparison to the overtly racist undertones in the narratives of era one's black female characters, casting a black woman as Moneypenny is a progressive step. Unfortunately, the marginality that Moneypenny experiences in *Skyfall* because of her gender negates the notion that the franchise has progressed in its representation of black women. Moneypenny is doubly marginalized as a woman, and as a black woman. As a woman of color Moneypenny is bound to interlocking oppressions (hooks, 2004), so that while she is enjoying a level of enfranchisement atypical for women of her race, she is still hampered by the disenfranchisement imposed on her because of her gender.

Interestingly, Moneypenny is only black to the audience. Her race is never mentioned by the other characters in the film. In Macao, where racism against black people is pronounced (Sautman, 1994), Moneypenny experiences no noticeable difference in the way she is treated from the way Bond is treated as a white man. Her blackness is conveniently ignored when filmmakers need it to be, but it remains ever-present for the audiences who can recognize this attribute as a contrast to the iconic image of Moneypenny as a film character. Because of the unstated, but recognizable fact that Moneypenny is black, her character reads to the audience throughout the film as doubly at risk, so that when she survives to the end of the film, and takes on a recurring role it can be hailed as a departure from the archaic tendencies of the franchise in the past, even though as a woman, her character is no better off in 2012 than she was in 1962.

#### **4. Regression first, story second**

The way that producers crafted Moneypenny's re-introduction in *Skyfall* signifies that the character is once again modeling ideal female behaviors for the audience; in this case earning a reward from the producers for the humble way that she embraces her gendered, and unfair

subjugation. Moneypenny announces her decision to remain an assistant in the scene immediately following M's onscreen death. This sequencing suggests a connection between the death of the Bond universe's most prominent female character, and the subjugation, of the franchise's longest running female character. To extend beyond the gendered norms of the mid-twentieth century world in which Bond, and the franchise appear to be frozen puts women at mortal risk. M's death represents the consequences that women face when they resist the white capitalist patriarchy that is by any measure the core fixture in the Bond universe. Accordingly, Moneypenny opts out of her progressive career trajectory in favor of one that is safe.

This chapter not only illustrates that the film series has embraced a regressive model for gender dynamics, but it also shows that what prompts this regression is the threat posed by women progressing enough in institutions of power that they gain access to technologies that were previously controlled by men. As mentioned briefly at the beginning of the chapter, Moneypenny is not the first women in a Bond film to use a technology. Pussy Galore wields a rifle in *Goldfinger*, to say nothing of other villainous woman to follow.

What is different about Moneypenny in *Skyfall* is that her character does not compete with Bond for status by using her weapons in the service of a villain, she aims for parity with Bond within the same institutional structure where Bond has always reigned supreme. Moneypenny's appearance on screen in the driving segment as a younger, equally capable woman implies that she is a threat to Bond's own established role in MI-6, and for this reason that he exerts himself so dramatically in order to capture Patrice without her help. Bond goes solo in his scenes with Moneypenny in order to limit her ability to succeed, while proving his own worth as an individual. He does this because Moneypenny poses a genuine threat to his sense of place, and it is for this reason that he negs her later on- negatively reinforcing her own self view.

The producers tacitly side with Bond in this subtext by illogically relegating Moneypenny into a subordinate position, and then use the post-feminist logic of self-subjugation as a means to justify it to the audience. But like Bond, the fact that they do this only goes to show that when women gain access to power they are perceived as a particular threat. This fact reflects on the centrality of technological control in the construction of masculine identity, and the centrality of technology in the accrual of power within existing patriarchal institutions. In other words, if women can achieve techno-mastery, they can achieve techno-masculinity, and if this is possible, then masculinity itself is no undermined.

As with the transition of M from female to male, the producers' decision to devote narrative time to establishing how the female Moneypenny finds herself relegated to a lower-status administrative role, and without achieving promotion in subsequent films, speaks to two obvious mandates underlying *Skyfall's* narrative. Firstly, that the film serves to consciously regress the gender dynamics of era two. Secondly, that it should do so in a way that explicitly justified the regression to audiences whose mores regarding gender imbalances, onscreen and off, conflicted with the regressive project of the film. The fact that the producers decided to re-introduce era one characters with specific emphasis on replicating their gender, and the gender dynamics between them, indicates that the film's narrative was not about progressing the rebooted Bond forward to the place in the character's history where film audiences first encountered him in era one. *Skyfall's* function within the franchise was to consciously regress the progressive gender dynamics of era two, back those of era one, but in a format that made the disenfranchisement of palatable to 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences.

In the case of *Skyfall* the goal is to find a way to justify the regression of a progressive and potentially liberating gender dynamic at MI-6, as represented in era two, to a mid-twentieth century

gender dynamic, that is repressive, and in some ways oppressive. This means reducing women characters from their positions of agency- quite literally in Moneypenny's case- to positions of subservience, or else expunging those characters from the franchise entirely. That so much screen time must be dedicated to these regressionist tactics reflects the second mandate informing the *Skyfall* narrative. It is clear from the amount of screen time dedicated, and the exposition regarding Moneypenny's arc from agent to assistant, that producers' wanted to avoid accusations of chauvinism, and insensitivity from critics and audiences. This is a valid concern considering that audiences, scholars, and critics, have uniformly criticized the Bond franchise for the latent and manifest chauvinism permeating every film in era one.

#### **B. The Latest Thing from Q Branch: Regressing Q**

Like Moneypenny, Q is reintroduced to the franchise in a progressive commutation, performing a masculinity that for the first time challenges that of Bond. Like Moneypenny, Q finds his character's enhanced masculinity inexplicably regressed to the tenuous state that it occupied throughout era one. Also, like Moneypenny, Q's character does not exist in the same form in era two that it did in era one, making his reintroduction to the franchise a significant point of commutation for the franchise, not just the character.

As the explication below makes clear, any understanding of Q as a commutation depends on understanding him as a reflexive identity to Bond. Q's existence as a character depends specifically on Bond's needs for augmentation, and because Bond's needs for augmentation reflect a crucial meeting point of the discourses of technology and gender, Q is therefore a key figure in understanding the role of gender and technology in the 007 franchise.

##### **1. I don't need the directions**

Throughout all of era one Bond is outfitted with special gadgets by the Q branch, whose head, the Quartermaster referred to as 'Q', works tirelessly to develop new technologies that will aid 00 agents in their covert missions. Some of the inventions Q branch develops include bulletproof umbrellas, exploding watches, and infrared eyeglasses (Gresh & Weinberg, 2006), but in era two Bond is not specially equipped with cleverly disguised weapons in the form of gadgets. Q does not even appear in the first two films of era two. Instead, Bond becomes his own quartermaster in era two; making his body the surprise weapon he unleashes on his enemies and performing as a sophisticated hacker.

*Casino Royale* opens with Bond already in the field, using a gun that he steals from the drawer of a superior in order to assassinate him. He then appears midway through a North African mission scolding his partner for misusing his concealed ear bud. Bond travels across two continents stealing cars, hacking networks, and bypassing security systems before he is presented with a representative from Q branch, a character with no lines that injects a tracking device into the skin of his arm at M's direction. Injecting Bond with a tracker plays on the newfound emphasis on Bond's embodiment in era two. The property ownership that MI-6, through Q, had previously limited to their gadgetry is now extended to the bodies of their agents, signaling that Bond's most potent weapon in era two is his own body. Unlike the Bond of era one, who favored the use of gadgets over fisticuffs, era two Bond prides himself on his physicality (Lindner, 2009); a muscular embodiment that was noticeably lacking in the Bond of the eighties and nineties at a time when enhanced muscularity became a key stalwart of the action movie hero (Jeffords, 1994; Tasker, 2012).

Bond's muscular embodiment in the rebooted franchise make him a new kind of British spy hero, one that is as much brawn as brains. Early in *Casino Royale* Bond endures a protracted

chase scene that proves to the audience that the era two Bond is as much superhero as secret agent. Bond scales cranes, drives bulldozers, improvises Parkour and runs through walls. By film's end Bond has gone mano y mano with a long list of opponents, each time in a destructive display that affirms to audiences that Bond is as much a model of masculinity in the twenty first century as he was in the twentieth. Bond's muscular embodiment in era two once again aligns his masculine performativity with that of the American action hero: the muscle bound average joes of the eighties and nineties, or the bodily 'enhanced' superheroes of the early naughts (Jeffords, 1994; Tasker, 2012; Lindner, 2009).

Adding to the newfound credibility of his body is Bond's now dominant aptitude with digital technologies, another key feature of action movie heroes in the United States. As Edwards (2011) notes, the emergence of mobile technologies like cell phones and satellite-tracking systems prompted changes in the twenty first century that resulted in such dramatic shifts in the social world that it required corresponding shifts in narrative tropes. Considering that so many of the mobile technologies that gained popularity in the United States and Britain in the early naughts already mirrored the kind of special communications devices that Bond writers had invented for the franchise in its early years (Gresh & Weinberg, 2006), it makes sense that Bond is rebooted in era two as a techno-expert in his own right. As we see in *Casino Royale*, Bond is not only able to use his own Nokia cell phone to perform any number of tasks that era one Bond would have required augmentation for, but he infiltrates the enemy terrorist network by capturing one member's cell phone.

Bond is also able to hack online networks in era two as skillfully as he penetrated the offline social networks of terrorists in era one. He hacks MI-6's network using M's password in *Casino Royale* to pull up data that will help him pursue leads M has specifically forbidden him to pursue.

In *Quantum of Solace* Bond uses his cell phone, and a stolen earpiece, to flush out nodes on a terrorist network who surreptitiously have gathered in the audience of an opera, and then captures their images for identification. Yet, Bond is not just the geek who only knows how to function in the world of technology. With his newfound embodiment, and his predilection to appropriate and use technology without permission era two Bond models the kind of maverick hacking identity that Fernbach (2000) labels a “console cowboy”.

With his superhero body and his console cowboy abilities Bond’s masculinity in era two contrasts starkly with that of Brosnan’s Bond in the final years of era one, a time when the character’s body was augmented by the most spectacular array of gadgets in franchise history (Willis, 2009). Producers at the time felt they were competing in the burgeoning action market by emphasizing the technologies that were all the rage (Zani, 2006), but their depiction of Bond as a man in need of augmentation undermined his masculine performativity by distinguishing his body as less able than that of the un-, or self-, augmented American action heroes. McLuhan (1965) theorizes the augmentations people adopt as extensions of the body, and by virtue of being extensions, evidence of the bodies futility in the face of some contemporary task (Harvey, 2006). In this light, the gadgets that Q provided to augment Bond in era one represent proof of Bond’s inadequacy as an embodied man. Conversely, when Craig’s Bond appears in era two without specialized augmentations the masculinity derived from his embodiment is affirmed.

This is not to say that era two Bond goes completely un-augmented. Bond is augmented by new media technologies that prove to be crucial tools, but as these tools are but ubiquitous, rather than specialized, the question of augmentation is more complex than it is when we consider the machine based technologies augmenting Bond in era one. Gadgets ‘Q’ provided in era one typically augmented the 00’s bodies, so in an era of a hyper athletic, superhero 007 augmentation

seems redundant. The flipside of era two Bond's new embodiment is that without the gadgets that removed him from harm in era one, era two's Bond must face down his foes in physical combat. Consequently, he experiences the pronounced physical toll these battles take on his body (Lane, 2006) so that the Vesper martinis that were just an idiosyncrasy in era one, are featured in era two as a needed pain reliever (Hasian, 2014).

The few technologies that second era Bond is provided mostly attend to his health, not his habits. The tracking device injected into Bond's arm relays biographic information back to a team of MI-6 handlers monitoring his vital signs remotely. When Bond arrives in Montenegro in *Casino Royale* he finds that he has been outfitted with an Aston Martin customized to contain weapons and ammo, as well as a defibrillator, he uses after being poisoned. Later, Bond enjoys a lavish Italian villa, but only as a cover for the hospital suite where he recovers from being tortured by Le Chiffre. These technologies prove critical for Bond's success as an agent, however the film presents them as routine equipment, not specialized gadgets, so as not to diminish Bond's masculinity with the connotation of augmentation.

Given that Bond's muscular embodiment coincided with the debut of his technological prowess in era two, it is significant to note that when Bond rejoins MI-6 in his weakened physical condition in *Skyfall* he is immediately sent to be outfitted by the quartermaster with augmentative technologies to aid him in his mission. Bond's physical deterioration in *Skyfall* regresses his physicality to that of era one, and in sync with this regression Bond is forced to accept the augmentations that he had previously eschewed, and to do so by supplicating to a newly imagined Q; constructed as a superior techno-specialist in the digital mold, which degrades Bond's techno-masculinity by comparison. Hence, the re-introduction of Q in *Skyfall* signals the end of Bond's era two hybrid masculinity as both man of action, and a man of science, indicating the myriad

ways that technology undergird the masculinity of the character. As part of a larger narrative that strips Bond of his era two sensibilities, and converts him back to the era one character that needs to prove his tenuous masculinity by competing against other male characters, Bond resumes dependency on Q, even though Q proves to be one of the male characters against whom Bond must compete.

## 2. **“You’ve still got spots!”**

*Skyfall’s* Q contrasts starkly with earlier embodiments of the character. In era one Q is a scientist cum engineer who uses his job at MI-6 to experiment, and invent. Q is understood to be an eccentric by virtue of his attachment to the gadgets he produces. When Bond visits Q in the windowless lab where he stores his prototypes, Q is always wearing his lab coat, and overseeing a crew of other staff. Era one Q is always older than Bond. In fact, while the other characters in the franchise were replaced by other actors so that their characters retained a specific age for the audience, Q was performed by the same actor: Desmond Llewelyn for 36 years from 1963-1999. Q’s ability to age as a character reflects the public’s confidence in men of experience regarding matters of invention and design, a stereotype retained in era one even after Llewelyn’s passing, when a then sixty year-old John Cleese took over the role, originally appearing as ‘R’ in *The World is Not Enough*, and only taking over the moniker ‘Q’ in *Die Another Day*.

*Skyfall’s* Q is different in almost every respect from the doddering inventor Q of era one. In lieu of casting another gray-haired middle-class company-man type to play the part, *Skyfall’s* producers cast Ben Whishaw, a young, wiry, openly gay actor. Whishaw’s Q isn’t introduced to the audience in a basement laboratory, but rather at the national gallery, outfitted with a faux fur lined hooded winter coat that evokes the image of hacktivist, Julian Assange, rather than a lab-coated inventor like Nikola Tesla. .

Whishaw's Q is younger than Bond, as Bond notes on their first encounter, with the quip "You've still got spots;" highlighting a key reversal in the prior dynamic between the two characters. Most notably, Whishaw's Q makes no pains to defer to Bond in the way that the Q of yesteryear tried to do. *Skyfall* allows the underlying hostility between the two characters in era one to play out in manifest ways that re-positions Q's masculinity as no longer subordinate to, but rather competing with, Bond's hegemonic masculinity. Each of these distinctions between the Q of era one and the Q of *Skyfall* reflects a change in how technology, and the relationship between technology and masculinity, is understood in a networked society.

**a. "Grow up 007!"**

*Skyfall*'s choice to reverse the age disparity between Bond and Q is significant considering that era one Q traditionally considered Bond incurably immature. In *Tomorrow Never Dies* Q intones "Grow up 007" after Bond plays with a remote controlled car as if it is a toy. By contrast, *Skyfall* features interplay between Bond and Q where Bond questions Q's maturity, and, echoing the voice of Q's past, argues for caution against Q's predilection for techno-philia. In *Skyfall* Bond is fully grown and proud of it, whereas Q appears in an impish form that Bond explicitly targets as a vulnerability. This flip in the relationship dynamic can be seen in their first scene together. Bond is sent to meet his new quartermaster, and while sitting in the appointed spot he is approached by a young man who sits beside him and comments aloud on the painting in front of them.

Q: Always make me feel a little melancholy; grand old warship being ignominiously hauled away for scrap. (sighs) The inevitability of time don't you think? (beat) What do you see?

Bond: Bloody big ship. (rising) Excuse me.

Q: 007? (Bond stops, resumes his seat.) I'm your new quartermaster.

Bond: You've got to be kidding me.

Q: Why? Because I'm not wearing a lab coat.

Bond: Because you've still got spots.

Q: My complexion is hardly relevant.

Bond: Your competence is.

Q: Age is no guarantee of efficiency.

Bond: And youth is no guarantee of innovation (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

Notice that Bond and Q begin their first encounter by parrying over the issue of age in latent terms, before discussing it manifestly. The metaphor of the ship being hauled away is a dig at Bond and the human agents of 00 being supplanted by the more advanced mode of intelligence gathering that digital networked technology represents. Bond's resentment at Q's reading of the painting is plain in his tone of voice, but also in his focus not on the ship's future, but on its physical dimensions. The only thing Bond sees is that the ship itself is "bloody big" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012); a telling reference to form rather than function, coming from a man whose body-oriented career is in jeopardy of being automated.

The age reversal from era one is compelling, and particularly so considering that Bond is only now appearing before Q in order to augment his worn body. Q's youth references the popular construction of young people today as digital natives; a moniker that ascribes to an entire generation of people technological aptitude when dealing with new media (Quail, 2011). Bond symbolizes the analog technologies that, during World War II, Fleming fantasized about using to gain an advantage against the military might of Germany (Lycett, 1995). Bond is the masculinity of the machines of old, when boys played with their toys as a rite of passage into manhood (Oldenziel, 1997; Horovitz, 2001), whereas Q symbolizes the emerging digital technologies that challenge norms online and off, and are viewed as innovative in and of themselves so that their usage doesn't need to be (Isaacson, 2014; Bray, 2018).

### **3. Is that a gun in your pocket?**

Skyfall doesn't just re-fashion Q through his age, and his specialization, Q 2.0 also comes to us as more noticeably queered than his predecessors. To be fair, Q's masculinity has always been subordinate to Bond's (Webber, 2013), and in that way the Q character can be read as quintessentially queered. However, *Skyfall* takes the queering of Q's character further through a series of filmic mechanisms that emphasize the character's queer latency in a nearly manifest way.

This occurs firstly at the level of casting, and the intertextual inferences of queerness that are carried over from the actor, Ben Whishaw's, previous screen roles. The reintroduction of Q in the form of Ben Whishaw, an openly gay actor whose filmography is almost exclusively comprised of roles as gay men, heightens the latent interpretation of Q as a queer character. Whishaw, whose breakout role was as the effete homosexual aristocrat Sebastian in the remake of *Brideshead Revisited*, has played queer characters at least ten times. In addition to *Brideshead Revisited*, Whishaw has played queer characters in *Cloud Atlas*, *Lilting*, *The Danish Girl*, *The Escort*, *Queers*, *My Brother Tom*, *Perfume: Story of a Murderer*, as well as playing the young gay lover at the center of the Jeremy Thorpe Affair in the film *A Very English Scandal*, and most notably as a gay man who falls in love with a brilliant super-spy in the BBC miniseries *Spy*. For British audiences in particular, these intertextual references may imbue Q's character with a more manifestly queer sensibility.

More telling than the intertextual references evoked by Whishaw's casting are the myriad ways that Q is queered in the narrative of *Skyfall*. Q's presentation in the narrative evokes a pronounced contrast between the character's heterosexual performativity and that of Bond's. Q speaks to Bond in a more overtly queer tone than Llewellyn's Q did in era one. Using terms like "melancholy" "grand" and "ignominiously" signify a queerer sensibility than the jargon-prone Q of the MI-6 armory in era one (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Era one Q belongs to a masculine

speech community where language is utility. Q's detailed and florid interpretation of the painting he and Bond view in *Skyfall* reflects the feminine speech community's tendency to use conversation to build relationships (Wood, 2012). Because it is laden with a sly critique for Bond's profession, Q's assessment of the painting also reflects a more advanced communicator; contrasted against Bond's laconicism, a trait identified with women (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

One can see in the disparate ways they describe the painting and its effect on them in *Skyfall*, that Q's sophistication now rivals, and perhaps exceeds, Bond's. Q is able to offhandedly analyze and assess a painting of Bond's tacit choosing in terms that illustrate not only his advanced verbal skills, but his class and education (David, 1991). Bond offers no meaningful reply, signaling a comparative deficiency in cultural aptitude (Horovitz, 2001). The roles are hereby reversed in terms of class as well as age from era one, when Bond's sophistication- evinced by his dress, manner, and occupation- contrasted with Q's role manufacturing gadgets. At that time, the distinction between the manufacturing class, and the white collar educated worker was pronounced given that the U.S. and U.K. still operated as manufacturing based economies (Forth, 2008; Smith, 2012). Gone is the middle class masculinity that era one Q could at least claim by virtue of working with cars and weapons (Horovitz, 2001), and in its place is a new masculinity tied to the presumption of techno-sophistication derived from computer science (Dempsey, 2009).

*Skyfall's* Q looks down upon the boys' toys Bond had the privilege of appropriating in era one as his own. The new Q's weapon of choice is a laptop and Bond isn't educated enough to play with it. The online sphere is Q's domain in the same way that it appeals to Silva. The online world is a hybrid space that by definition queers the long held understanding of the world in gender binary terms, through the (ironic) use of binary code. The online space requires the kind of synthesis between feminine and masculine communication competencies that queer people

develop by necessity growing up (Dhaenens, et al., 2008). It is a framework for code switching and identity creation, occupied prominently by women willing to assert themselves, and men willing to objectify themselves. The Internet's most prominent users are often those willing to queer their performativity in order to attract attention using conventions assigned to other sexes (Gabriel, 2014).

Though it is doubtful that an era one Q, who worked as much with math and science in designing weapons, could have been less educated than a millennial hacker, the maverick identity of the hacker bespeaks greater sophistication than the inventor because it involves crossing cultures, and adopting false identities (Nakamura, 1995) as only Bond was able to do in era one. Rodriguez (2011) finds that the greater the cosmopolitan experience of the man, the greater potential exists for him to perform a queer identity. If Q's online activity now affords him the same access to the cosmopolitan identity that Bond enjoys, than he is also privileged by it to assert the queer identity that Bond so consciously tries to aver.

Q makes no effort to conceal his queerness. Q's queer sensibility even underlies his introduction to Bond. Q chooses to first meet Bond at the National Gallery in London, a cosmopolitan setting, unlike the laboratory of era one, that connotes the cultural immersion tied in media to queer sensibilities, and compromised masculinity (Diaz, 2012; Rodriguez, 2011). At the museum, Q broaches conversation by sidling up beside Bond on a bench without identifying himself and musing aloud about a painting that Bond is viewing. In this moment, Bond replies curtly and then rises to leave, only stopping when Q finally addresses him as 007. The way Q approaches Bond in the museum could read as a come on, and Bond's attempt to flee signals his disinterest in Q's advances. Until Bond realizes that Q is his quartermaster, he treats him with

reserved disinterest, but not curiosity. Bond's subtly irritated reply mirrors the kind of behavior of one who is used to such uninvited approaches.

Finally, Q's stylized appearance in the mode of a hacktivist queers him in a sinister way, just as his inclination to contest Bond's superiority echoes the era one disposition of the villain. As a queer hacker, Q closely resembles *Goldeneye's* hacker villain, Boris Grishenko, who was played by Alan Cumming, a queer actor as well-known as Whishaw. As discussed in earlier chapters, in media queerness equates to radical otherness, which in the 007 franchise is strongly identified with the villain.

#### **4. The man of action and his wife**

In era one producers made a point of promoting Bond's savoir faire through static comparisons between Bond and other men. As a comparative masculinity, Q's is always subordinated by his job type and his disposition towards the inventing of, or birthing of, gadgets that he tests, but never gets to use. As quartermaster, era one Q works safely at headquarters, designing, constructing and refurbishing gadgetry to be used in the field, and sometimes recklessly so, by men who are more capable than he of performing the super-human feats of daring demanded of the 00.

Q's role in era one is to augment the 00s with his armory. To do this, Q must first invent gadgets useful to the men of action who will take them out into the field. His process of invention demands that he envision scenarios in which such gadgets are needed, and this requires him to fantasize about such scenarios with close attention to how agents' bodies will have to move, or function in any given scenario. His goal of keeping them safe and secure, through a work routine that demands he constant imagine them, and specifically their bodies, confers onto Q the queer behavior of objectifying the 00 agents, with all the same instincts of one applying their gaze to the

body of a filmic character (Pritchard & Moran, 2000). Just as Mulvey (1989) argues about the way movie audiences impose their gaze on the bodies of women in a scopophilic manner that targets the women as objects of prey, Q imagines Bond through the same scope used by his enemies, as a target in need of protection. Through prolonged gazing at mental images of Bond, and his body in its every use, Q replicates the work of the villain, looking for vulnerabilities that could be exploited, and that require defense, and in so doing he borrows from the villains the same gender queer affectation of one who attends primarily to the body of another man.

Fortunately for Bond, Q's job mandates that he provide resources for the 00s comfort, as well as their acts of bravado. Q's job is therefore imbued with gendered significance that can be read in the same psycho-analytic terms as that of M. If M is cast as Bond's parent, then Q functions as the dutiful fifties housewife, standing at the doorstep each morning with her husband's keys and briefcase as he heads out into the world to make a living. Bond's last stop before heading out to face danger in era one is invariably at Q's lab, where the cautious Q introduces Bond to a series of new gadgets designed to blend in with Bond's trademark fitted suits. During their exchange Q is apt to admonish Bond about Bond's tendency to recklessly abuse the technologies Q provides him, in a bickering byplay that mirrors *The Honeymooners, or I Love Lucy*. These scenes illustrate Q's role as a caretaker of not only the 00s, but of the technologies he has painstakingly brought into the world, with which to outfit them (Webber, 2013).

Q's maternal attitude toward the machines he creates negates the working class masculinity that might be ascribed to a man who builds things. Q's identity as a caretaker of the technology at Special Branch equates with him with a traditional maternal figure. Q gives birth to new technology and then cares for it like a precious child before allowing the agents to bring the innocent gadgets out into the world. Q is always worried about how Bond will behave on his

missions, and whether Bond will treat the Special Branch gadgets with respect. Q presents each new gadget to Bond with beaming pride, as if he is handing his husband a newborn child, replete with a warning on how to hold it. Routinely Q beseeches Bond to “return the equipment intact” or some similar such appeal (Broccoli & Hamilton, 1964). Over the decades this scene was refashioned and replayed so that Q’s frustration took the form of a stereotypical nagging wife, and Bond’s dismissal of Q’s requests became a point of gleeful humour for male audience members (Webber, 2013). Bond responds like the typical husband by paying lip service to his wife and her fears about ‘her children’ (Q’s toys), while secretly hoping for the chance to misbehave.

The effort Q puts into his gadgets is formulaically taken for granted by Bond, who gives Q’s gadgets no more thought than Ward Cleaver might give to one of June’s perfectly planned dinners on *Leave it to Beaver*. Reflexively, Q’s recurring concern throughout the fifty years of era one was that Bond recognize his contribution to the larger household of MI-6, a request that Bond never satisfies. Not only does Bond dismiss his work wife’s contributions, he uses them to bolster his own masculinity. Note that in many Bond films Bond uses the technologies in the film to bed women, and to ‘cheat’ on his doting wife at MI-6.

Part of what genders Q’s admonishments to Bond in era one is how these expectations contrast with the practical realities of field-work. In effect, Q’s sentimental attachments to Bond’s augmentations, are, in Bond’s view, equivalent to a sentimental attachment to Bond himself. For Bond to accede to such a sentiment would undermine his detached masculinity, and in this way, the contrast between the two characters serves to highlight Bond’s hegemonic masculinity on film even before he is able to illustrate it in the field. Bond’s fieldwork requires that he preserve his own life, or else that of others, not the gadgets sent out to help him. Q’s affection for the gadgets

is then all the more like that of a fifties mother and wife, who, barred from entering the world on her own invests all her energy into those extensions of herself that will be able to.

Q's feminine performativity in era one is reinforced by the connotations of Q working at headquarters, rather than in the field; a post-war equivalency to the home duty assignments reserved during war time only for those deemed unfit for active service. Work on the home front was heavily gendered as feminine, particularly at a time when women were stepping into roles of authority that had previously been held by men (Davis, 2000). Similarly, Q works in the lab partly because of his skillset, but also because of the skillset he lacks. Like Einstein or Alan Turing, who participated in the war effort from the relative safety of the home-front where they did calculations, and built equipment that could be put to use by the daring agents on the front line (Copeland, 2004), Q is queered by their removal from the battlefield and the masculine molding experience of military service (Hutchings, 2008).

In keeping with the reciprocal construction of gender binaries, where to be perceived as masculine means not being feminine (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Berger & Watson, 1995), Q is thereby not an agent because he is a quartermaster, and as agents are masculine, Q is therefore feminine because of his work. Fleming himself straddled these two roles during his war-time service by devising outlandish schemes, some of which were executed, in his role behind a desk in London, which he considered to be emasculating, leading him to aggrandize the role of technology in combat in the same way that Q does in the 007 films (Lycett, 1995; Macintyre, 2009; Hartley, 2013).

**a. “I can do more damage with my laptop...”**

*Skyfall*'s Q doesn't invent gadgets he merely distributes them. His primary creative work is to write code, which he implements himself via the weapon he considers supreme: his computer.

*Skyfall*'s Q doesn't have to share his weapons with Bond; he gets to wield the weapon himself in ways that era one's Q would only have done in simulations or trials. In his introduction to Bond *Skyfall*'s Q asserts himself as being as much an agent as he is an administrator when he says, "I'll hazard I can do as much damage on my laptop sitting in my pajamas before my first cup of earl grey than you can do in a year in the field," (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Here Q presents himself as a hacker, not an inventor. He does not mention designing or developing new weapons, which was the foray of the character in era one, instead Q speaks specifically about inventing a code designed to encrypt, and thereby protect, information. He is therefore no longer protecting the protectors of hegemony, but is instead working on the frontlines of counter-terrorism himself, using his skills as an operator of the computer control to the status quo just as Bond did in eras one and two.

Q's engagement with the networked environment of the Internet- the new battleground for foes of Britain- implies that he is no longer homebound, but in the field of action. He doesn't avoid conflict in the networked world by virtue of his role, instead he joins Bond in a later segment functioning as the online component of a two-man illustration of the augmented reality that is the new normal for twenty first century living. That Q is introduced to us in *Skyfall* without a lab, but already in full function further emphasizes his newfound liberation from the home-front laboratory. As we see when Bond presents Q with Silva's captured laptop, Q is fearless about engaging enemy tech. Q even cracks his knuckles before plugging in the Ethernet cord and then connecting the device to his mainframe. He then proceeds undaunted to hack into the device, which is protected by a special firewall that Q himself invented. When Q realizes he's been hacked his response is visceral- yanking the cords out of the computer and shouting "He's hacked us!" forcibly. Q is not terrorized by the event, rather he is bested by an opponent in battle, and his brute

response echoes the violent nature of masculine role models in Anglo-American culture (Hearn, et al., 2013).

**5. “Were you expecting an exploding pen?”**

Bond: A gun and a radio; not exactly Christmas is it?

Q: Were you expecting an exploding pen? We don't really go in for that anymore, (rising). Good luck out there in the field. (turns- then stops and turns back) And please return the equipment in one piece (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

One might expect that in their first encounter Bond and Q might parry over the elaborate toys that Q has brought with him, but in *Skyfall* the opposite occurs. Q brings only a gun and a radio transmitter, disappointing Bond so much that he exclaims, “Not exactly Christmas is it.” Here Bond witnesses his integrity as a digital savant being subtly undermined by a tech genius who is proscribing tools from another era. With that Q implies that Bond, like the antiquated gadgets he receives, is incompatible with the more sophisticated digital technologies that Q prizes.

The weapons that Q provides to Bond when they meet are not networked. Even the radio transmitter that he provides to Bond is designed only to “broadcast” Bond’s location, not that it tracks his movements. The reference to broadcasting, the method of dissemination associated with mass media (Jenkins, 2006), is only one of many hints that Q identifies the gadgets Bond used in the past as passe in a new media environment. Q positions himself not only as a youthful counter to the noticeably aging Bond of the *Skyfall* narrative, but also as a quartermaster with little time or care for the task of augmenting the bodily functions of the 00.

Since digital technologies have usurped the potency of weaponized gadgets Q sees himself as a more capable and adept agent than Bond. For the first time in the franchise Q does not defer to the masculinity of 007, he contests it. Q sees no competition to his prowess as a computer geek

from the gadgets of old, which MI-6 has relinquished to his control anyhow, but he does seem threatened by the embodied intelligence gatherers like Bond, whose physical presence Q supposes to be as antiquated an approach to fighting terrorism as the “exploding pens” devised by his predecessors, in a defensive manner that belies his the valid threat embodied masculinity poses to one who depends on the trans-human condition for his own techo-masculinity.

When Q mocks the old technologies of the Q branch he does it to distinguish his tenure, and mark his territory. By providing Bond with just a gun and a radio he also reinforces his earlier assertion that Bond's primary utility is as an assassin rather than an intelligence gatherer. The pretext for this assertion is that the online world is a more important place to gather and use information, and conversely, that the offline world is no longer the primary space where meaningful action occurs.

#### **6. A brave new world**

Bond closes his first dialogue with Q with a sarcastic reference to Huxley's *A Brave New World*; in which John Savage travels from his home on the margins of society to find himself antiquated, and unwelcome in the autocratic techno-utopia that exists in futuristic London (Huxley, 1998). This allusion foreshadows a film long antagonism played out between Bond and Q over the strengths and weaknesses, reaches and limits of networked technologies that parallels the antagonism between M and Mallory, and later, between Silva and Bond.

John Savage's name reflects the nature of he who is not ordained to live within the bounds of this technologized, emotionless society. Bond's allusion to the book suggests that he too feels suddenly displaced in a world he thought he knew; one where young men like Q view themselves as superior by virtue of their aptitude with computers, and where Bond, like John Savage, has

suddenly found himself no longer in the order of an alpha, as he always had been, but instead relegated to a subordinate masculinity.

The opening exchange between Bond and Q crystalizes for any audience members not yet hip to *Skyfall*'s central conflict that the film will play out as a re-telling of the John Henry fable where man must outpace machine in order to prove his continued value in society. Using John Henry's fable as an instrument of analysis is apt considering that the technological world that *Skyfall* aims to depict is one where many scholars already envision post-human experiences (Hayles, 2007; Haraway, 2013).

Bond's role as a modern day track layer trying to outpace the industrial machine echoes the beliefs of many, including this author, that what we are experiencing today with the rise of networked digital technologies is no less significant a cultural moment than the apex of the industrial revolution in the early nineteenth century. Just as social change was occurring then in an exponential fashion, new media is driving social flux today at a remarkable pace (Couldry, 2012). One key aspect of the emerging new media technologies is their affordance of trans-human interactions online that confound traditional assumptions about the centrality of embodiment in the construction of human identity. For questions of gender performativity in particular, the trans-human experience can be highly liberating, as we all as validating for those whose transgender life experiences have been centered on questions of their embodiment (Hayles, 2007; Haraway, 2013).

As one whose own masculinity is dependent on bridging the divide between the online and off, Q reinforces his opinion of Bond's futility in the networked world by conceding that Bond's only value as a field agent is that, "every now and then a trigger has to be pulled," (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). These well-chosen words, coated in acid, highlight Q's myopic view of intelligence work as a technological endeavor. Bond is useful because he is capable of pulling a

trigger, i.e. operating an antiquated technology, and one that demands proximity, and by extension, requires a disposable being to perform the task. In effect, by limiting Bond's function to his work as an assassin, Q is further insinuating Bond's irrelevance as an agent. Q thereby asserts his masculinity as a challenger to Bond's for the first time in the franchise, so that even before Bond faces down with the master hacker Silva, his masculinity is already contested by Q.

Bond's having to prove his value throughout *Skyfall* reflects the subordination of his masculinity in a digitized network world. The Bond of old was prized specifically for his ability to traverse the offline social networks that underpinned the transactions between nefarious villains, but in *Skyfall* this skillset is proven to be a liability after it leads him to a trap that ultimately compromises MI-6. Likening himself to John Savage in his allusion to *A Brave New World* reflects Bond's view of himself as now technologically inept; an abrupt shift from the Bond of era two who frequently demonstrated superior hacking abilities. With Q's appearance in *Skyfall* it seems the producers aim to segment the use of networked technology in a manner that echoes of the dichotomous relationship between gadget inventor Q, and gadget user Bond in era one. Unfortunately, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world of networked mobile technology, this form of dichotomy between those who produce technologies, and those who use them is no longer as viable.

In many ways, era two's portrayal of networked tech was far more astute. In era two, Bond's fluency with the use of networked technology mirrored the increasing access to, and competency with, networked technology possessed by many professionals in the western world at the time (Cox, 2014). Mobile technologies have made network technology ubiquitous for the general public, leading to a more synthesized manner of interpreting these technologies as an extension of the self. Turkle (2012) best explains the way that smartphones have become a tethered extension of their users, particularly among young users who have limited experience without the

devices. Jurgenson (2012) proffers an even more provocative theory that as users of mobile networked technologies we enter into a an “augmented reality” where our embodied self is no longer distinct from the self we craft and perform online.

Networked technologies alter Bond’s agency during era two by enhancing M’s ability to track his movements. In *Casino Royale* he is injected with a tracer, whereas in *Quantum of Solace* Bond is tracked by his cell phone. Both films explicitly position Bond’s traceability as a liability to him. In *Casino Royale* his movements belie his claim of going on holiday, and in *Quantum of Solace* he is on the run from MI-6. All this focus on monitoring Bond’s movements reflects the diminished agency of 00s in a time of networked mobile technology.

Some of the agency that Bond enjoyed in era one came as a product of the technological abilities afforded to him at the time as an agent. In the sixties when Bond’s ability to send and receive messages to his superiors was limited by the dearth of available communication technologies it was understood that Bond would, by necessity, act unilaterally to achieve the broad objectives outlined by his superiors. In practice this meant that the ability for his supervisors to micro-manage his decisions was limited, and therefore Bond had to be entrusted with the authority to revise his plans as needed, and or, to bring into his confidence others without clearance. His relationship with CIA agent Felix Leiter develops this way in *Casino Royale*, only for Bond to trade on it again later in *Quantum of Solace*.

Bond’s license to kill is another prominent example of a 00’s authority to act independently (Tescadero, 2006). The license to kill is more than just immunity from prosecution, it is authorization to act autonomously when needed. The 00 agent’s prerogative is established by his license to kill, which privileges him to make decisions unilaterally in ways that even his superiors cannot within the bureaucracy of a democratic government. Granting the license to kill to a 00 is

also the bureaucratic means by which the nation-state can unilaterally impact foreign relations without accounting for it publicly. Bond and M wind up arguing the same case throughout *Skyfall* that human agents must continue to operate, and both invoke the importance of a license to kill as a primary reason why human intelligence is needed, particularly in an era when the transparency of global relations is both enhanced and diminished by the rise of new media.

Bond's agency as a spy serves a sub-theme that mirrors the larger tension over MI-6 and its ability to control others throughout the franchise. As Bond's primary function is to serve the interests of the British government audiences enter the Bond universe with a presumed understanding of how that relationship works. Bond is an agent, but he reports to an administrator, M, who in turn reports back to a democratically elected government, which in the U.K. functions under the titular auspices of the Monarch. It is further understood that if MI-6 is to exert control over the events threatening national security, it is first necessary that they control the operatives working for them. *Skyfall's* opening sequence brings to a head the longstanding tension between Bond and M over his own agency by demonstrating the complicated, and not altogether, efficient dynamic that takes place when MI-6 administrators have the power to operate their agents like avatars. Bond loses more than his autonomy by allowing M to dictate his movements through an earpiece; he loses his physical abilities as a result of being shot, and is reduced back to the need of augmentation; a black mark on his masculinity.

Bond's diminished embodiment sets off a new dynamic in *Skyfall* that, by Jurgenson's (2012) standards, seeks to undermine the permanence of augmented reality by promoting the resonance of what Jurgenson calls digital duality. Digital duality is the pre-networked state of being where individuals existed in the corporeal world without conflating their identity with their identity online. Those who adopt Jurgenson's notion that augmented reality is already an

established state for most people argue that digital dualism has become an increasingly less viable state of being because of the ubiquity of networks. In the semiotic world of 007 era two used the network technologies available to bring Bond 'online' in myriad ways that tied to his offline existence. This is most notably demonstrated when Bond's heart stops in *Casino Royale* signaling to the MI-6 staff watching it onscreen that he has died. By creating a juxtaposition between the embodied Bond, and the augmented Silva, and allowing Bond to triumph against Silva's personification of the augmented real *Skyfall* attempts to present a counter narrative to that of era two. An example of this can be seen when Q guides Bond via an ear piece in Bond's pursuit of Silva through the tube tunnels of London. Bond is inside the enclosed tube track struggling with a jammed exit door when Q instructs him to "put your back into it!" Noticeably frustrated by Q's own foray into mansplaining, Bond retorts angrily, "You come down here and put your back into it!" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012) Bond is finding himself tethered to Q via the earpiece but not assisted by him. Whereas Q, who has advanced the potency of his laptop versus Bond's body, treats the opening of the door as a minor logistical inconvenience, Bond experiences the stuck door in mortal terms; particularly so when he spots an approaching train.

Q does not respond to the impending collision in the underground in some *deux machine* form, as he implies he is capable of doing in his opening exchange with Bond, but rather to exclaim "that's vexing," (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012) and begin urging Bond to use his body more forcefully. In this scenario Q's networked tech cannot save Bond. Only Bond's enhanced embodiment can save him from the coming train. Technology bares down on the man, and it is up to the man to defend himself by using his own body: the source technology that McLuhan notes served to inspire all future technological extensions (Harvey, 1995). Q's inefficacy in helping Bond as he faces the train reinforces the premise of a digital duality that is tethered, but not augmented. The distinction

between Turkle's conception and Jurgenson's is that Jurgenson's notion of augmented reality specifically requires that one's being co-exist on and offline, whereas Turkle's conception of the tethering of devices affords that the offline self can extend into the online space, but does not exist between the two spaces. In other words, Jurgenson decries the dichotomy between the offline and online worlds in ways that Turkle does not.

The supremacy of the embodied man over the networked man is asserted in a more elaborate way when Bond removes himself from the networked environment by escaping to his family's Scottish estate, Skyfall. There, Bond can resolve the crisis of masculinity he faces in the new media landscape by demonstrating his mastery of old tech. In this environment, Bond is able to resume his masculinizing role as an ingenious, and innovative techno-specialist. The sequences of Bond booby trapping his family home remind audiences that technology was not always digital. More importantly, by setting this sequence at a hunting retreat of the old gentry, the producers are able to remind audiences that technology was once the designated terrain of the masculine; a place where women like M are given their orders to stay inside the house, and men like Bond have free reign.

For Bond, these theories are interesting to consider given that at the film's start he is perceived to have died specifically because he is able to disappear from the figurative network of MI-6. His rebirth is then signaled by his return to the network, only for him to finally realize that his best chances of defeating Silva depended on him using the network to his advantage rather than trying to evade it entirely. In these ways one could read the film as expounding the validity of an augmented reality viewpoint. Yet, the film also sets out to reify the power of old technologies over new, and the necessity of the embodied agent in a networked world.

**a. “So why do you need me?”**

Q: I'll hazard I can do more damage on my laptop sitting in my pajamas before my first cup of earl grey than you can do in a year in the field.

Bond: Oh? So why do you need me?

Q: Every now and then a trigger needs to be pulled.

Bond: Or not pulled. It's hard to know which in your pajamas, Q.

Q: 007 (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

As mentioned, Q's only concession to Bond's utility is his ability to kill. This skillset inherently reflects the archaic notion of masculinity as a force opposed to the presumed life-giving power of women. It also centers Bond's identity in the embodied world, where life and death are conceptualized only as bodily experiences. In the networked world that Q favors, the concept of transhumanism, a theoretical supposition that confounds the notions of gender performativity by displacing the identity from the body, where so much performativity is traditionally enacted, abounds.

Q's transhumanist disposition; subtly affirms his queerness. Nakamura (1995) highlights the concept of identity tourism that can be experienced online, in the same way that Bond is able to fluidly adapt to cultures by adopting whatever cover is necessary. The key distinction between Bond's embodied work traversing the social networks of terrorists, and Q's work tracking the digital networks of terrorist organizations, is that in the trans-human imagination gender need not exist at all.

Despite growing acceptance that gender is performed rather than embodied in the same way that sex may be, it cannot be denied that gender still functions as an organizing principle in western culture, so that even those who identify as non-binary or trans are denied a gender free existence in the offline world. Consider the dearth of genderless public restrooms, or the pervasive gaze of others, and it becomes clear that the offline world has formed so concretely around binary

gender relations that those who resist the gendering of mundane activity are compelled to actively resist forcing the binary construct into the center of their daily life. Consequently, gender dynamics persist as a constant even in the lives of those who reject their validity in the offline social world of the west (Stryker, 1998). Online, however, cultural norms are still developing, and the incorporeal form of the user detaches the online identity from the embodied notions of sex and gender that can be so constraining offline (Pearce, 2006). The trans-human does not view embodiment as inessential, rather incidental, meaning that the identity can experience greater fulfillment in a social world that is not limited to the embodied state (Hayles, 1995).

For Q, the online world is not only a place where his identity can be fulfilled, but it is also a place where he can enjoy greater power than he does offline. Q's aptitude as a hacker makes him a potent threat online, as reflected by his claim that he "can do more damage on [his] laptop sitting in [his] pajamas before [his] first cup of earl grey, than [Bond] can do all year in the field," (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Q challenges Bond's masculinity with this claim, while marking out his own territory at the same time. By claiming his laptop as his weapon of choice, Q is identifying his own skillset, and distinguishing it from Bond in terms of old vs. new.

Q is an advocate for a new form of warfare that neither depends on, nor risks the lives of its agents. His milieu affords one with the power to attack others without leaving one's self vulnerable. Consequently, Q is advocating the trans-human approach of the hacker, an extension of the body that is inviolable, impervious to penetration by others, but ever-ready for the penetration of others. Q is proposing a digital phallus that trumps any gadget Bond might use to extend his own violable body. The networked environment affords Q a dominant masculinity that in many ways has already replaced the intelligence gathering work that era one Bond performed. *Skyfall* recognizes this primal challenge to Bond's masculinity by fusing it to Bond's need for

augmentation. However, the film does not end with Bond and Q working together to fight Silva in the same way they do in the sequence following Silva's escape. Bond depends on Q only to lure Silva off the grid, so that Bond can perform his role as an assassin unaided. Symbolically, this evidences the producers favoring of hegemonic control as a dominant show of masculinity that counters Q's techno-masculinity in a seemingly conclusive way.

### **7. A promising career in espionage**

Even though Q's masculinity is narratively degraded in *Skyfall*, he still enjoys a greater privilege than either Moneypenny, or M. As a computer genius, and inventor of a crypto-code so sophisticated only "four people on the planet" could hack it (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012), Q should be held accountable after Silva hacks their network, but he is not even reprimanded for this error, even though it allows Silva to escape, puts an entire parliamentary committee in grave danger, results in a derailment, leaves his incoming boss wounded, and his forces his outgoing boss into hiding. In stark contrast to the penalties Moneypenny faces for following orders, Q is never disciplined for his mistake.

Mallory, Tanner, and Bond speak to him after the hack and none mention his culpability. In fact, only minutes after the gunfight in parliament that occurs as a result of Q's incompetence, Bond is already trusting Q's abilities with computers to help him lure Silva into a trap. After Q acquiesces to the plan he laments, "There goes my promising career in espionage," (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012) proving that even Q himself viewed his position at work secure, up to the point he agrees to violate protocol. Yet, following protocol did not protect Moneypenny from consequence, so for Q to risk punishment only once he's defied protocol makes little sense. The point is moot though since Q's career continues despite his subterfuge with Bond being discovered. Like Bond,

and Mallory, Q fails demonstrably in matters of technology, but is immediately provided narrative reprieve denied to the women with whom he works.

This double standard illustrates the unequal way that white men, even queer white men, benefit from the regressive politics central to sustaining white capitalist patriarchy. Though queer white men have traditionally experienced marginalization in Anglo-American culture, their intersectional identities as white men have shielded them in ways that are not available to queer men of color (Diaz, 2012), or to women (Munoz, 2005), whose intersectionality is more often than not a reflection of interlocking oppressions (hooks, 2004). The double standard between how Q is treated, and how Moneypenny and M are treated, also indicates that the regressive aims of *Skyfall*'s narrative are not only femiphobic, but primarily, misogynistic. Q may be queer, but he is still a man and as such he benefits from extraordinary privilege in the hierarchy of MI-6.

Q's privileged exemption from consequences emanates from his mutability, a mutability afforded him by virtue of his techno-masculinity, a trait the film pointedly suggests is limited only to men. After Q is bested by the superior hacking skills of Silva, he teams up with Bond via an earpiece and the two work together to track Silva together. In this moment the dichotomous masculinities that Bond and Q represented in their first meeting merge together to form the kind of hegemonic hacker masculinity that is modeled by Silva throughout the film. It is only when Bond and Q pair up together that Bond is able to keep pace with, and eventually thwart Silva. Had Bond and Q not worked together in tracking him, Silva would have succeeded in his attack on Parliament. As a hegemonic hacker combination Bond and Q function as the ultimate secret agent, demonstrating brains and brawn in a semi comical adventure sequence more akin to the Bondian exploits of era one than any other sequence of the film.

When Bond then relies on Q to lure Silva to Skyfall their work is again successful. This shows that traditional modes of protection for hegemony, in this case symbolized by Bond, must augment themselves both in terms of their embrace of the digital and the gender queering that it implies, as symbolized by Q. The very fact that Bond must defer to the abilities of Q, and to Q's augmentation via the Internet, indicates that even more than in previous eras, Bond is in need of compensatory extensions to his person in order to succeed. By allying with Q, Bond regains the techno-masculinity he possessed in eras one and two, while Q benefits from the alliance by distinguishing himself from the other marginalized workers at MI-6, M and Moneypenny; both of whom have been relegated to futility after their own instances of (supposed) technological ineptitude. As one half of a 00 duo, Q not only proves himself still useful with technology, he earns a share of Bond's privileged imperviousness. We see this when Mallory interacts equably with Q after Silva's hack. Mallory says nothing of Q's failure, even though he himself was wounded as a result. Instead, he conspires with Q in aiding Bond's plan to dupe Silva, thus tacitly recognizing Q's employment status as secure.

Mallory's lone scene with Q is a way of reconciling both characters' attitudes toward gender liberating technologies with the practical reality that hegemonic domination still exists in a digital dualist form in our society. For Mallory, this lesson is more pronounced than for Q, because Mallory's character is used throughout the film to defend, if not advocate for, a post-humanist state that is even more threatening to the hegemonic male than transhumanism. Because post-humanism allows the identity of the individual to not only extend, but transcend the physical plane (Harway, 2013), it also means that those who bind their conceptions of self to the embodied world have much to lose by it. Conversely, those who are oppressed because of their sex, gender,

race, class, religion, ethnicity, and/or other identity markers encoded in appearance of, or functions of, the body, may experience liberation in a post-human state (Hayles, 2008).

When Mallory criticizes M for using human intelligence he is tacitly alluding to the greater desirability of drone and satellite technology in the same way that Q advances his preference for hacking over killing in his first meeting with Bond. In both cases the argument asserts the advantages of post-humanist approaches to global conflict in the same context in which Jurgenson (2011) decries digital dualism in a time of augmented reality. The difference though, between the transhumanist view that Q asserts, and the post-humanist view that Mallory contemplates, if not endorses, is that the post-humanist future seeks to automate the functions of man, in MI-6's case, obviating the need for human intelligence.

*Skyfall* therefore contends with the question of the post-human as a core theme in its narrative. That Bond ultimately uses a trans-human lure, in the form of a fabricated track to his Scottish estate, in order to force Silva to battle him bodily, suggests that the regressive model promoted by the film views both trans-humanism and post-humanism as threats to white capitalist patriarchy. This is not surprising considering the extent to which transhumanism affords gender fluency, and by extension gender equality. Nor is it surprising that the implicitly queer Q, the film's chief advocate for transhumanism is ultimately stymied by it, and proven ineffectual by comparison to Bond because he lacks the embodied masculinity that Bond ultimately uses to save the day. Like Money Penny, and M, Q must be denigrated in the film's narrative in order for Bond to emerge in the final scenes with his masculinity affirmed as superior.

It is worthy of note that Mallory, who begins the film arguing for a wholesale post-humanist adoption of new media technology will provide greater transparency in favor of democracy, is later shown to recognize the fallacies of such an argument after M is attacked in parliament and Bond's

intuitive skills save her. In his next scene, Mallory sanctions Bond's covert, high-risk plan to face down Silva without any technological, or logistical cover from MI-6. Doing so signifies Mallory's disavowal of the genderless post-human state; and acknowledgement of the advantages of the trans-human environment where networks can be manipulated, in a manner that allows hegemonic masculinity to prevail.

Mallory's attitude-shift away from the virtue of post-human automation coincides with a shift in his masculine performativity. Firstly, we see Mallory side with M during her hearings, and pointedly against the female chair, Clair Dowar, through an act of chauvenism. Then Mallory leaps into action wielding a gun during the proceeding firefight demonstrating his abilities as a man of action. Finally, Mallory, like M, is wounded in battle, but unlike M, he survives the wound, presumably by virtue of the greater bodily strength he possesses as a man, his embodiment is assured. When Mallory then comes upon Q and Tanner working in a subordinated position to Bond his worldview has changed, just in time for him to approve of a plan that uses technology to augment the body in a trans-human, rather than post-human fashion.

#### **8. Thanks for the help, but I've got this**

As the preceding analysis shows, Q's newly imagined role in *Skyfall* serves several key functions. Firstly, his manifestly queer identity establishes a connection between gender fluidity and aptitude with technologies; a connection that is reinforced when his character, whose queerness is latent, is bested as a hacker, by the manifestly queer Silva. Secondly, Q's techno-masculinity rivals Bond's hegemonic masculinity, indicating that the technological mastery in a networked society is considered more dangerous than it was in prior eras. Lastly, Q's gender-queer techno-masculine character is eventually paired with Bond's character in order to illustrate the superior power of the augmented real, versus the digital dualist.

Thus, in *Skyfall*, the marginalization of men does not end in regression, but reinvention; a handy tool that perpetuates toxic masculinity. As the console cowboy is simply a transformed variation on the computer geek, the maverick hacker is now the re-packaged version of the console cowboy. This ever adapting transformation of techno-masculinity is welcomed by white capitalist patriarchy because it allows subordinated white men to maintain a claim to masculinity in the service of an equally adaptive hegemonic masculinity. In a new media environment that, in form, if not always in function, threatens the stability of existing hegemonies (Castells, 2011) the transformative nature of techno-masculinity proves vital to the perpetuation of male social domination.

What *Skyfall* contends though, by providing a narrative for Q that demands he merge his masculine identity with that of Bond is that even techno-masculinity is not immune to the reactionary power of the hegemonic male. Because ultimately white capitalist patriarchy depends on patriarchy, and because the new media environment challenges the fundamental social structures underlying white capitalist patriarchy, the film reflects a reality of the modern society where hacktivists are increasingly being either co-opted into the service of the hegemony, as Q is, or neutralized like Silva. Whether it's the ability to sustain hegemony, as is the case with Q, or the ability to disrupt in order to assert power, as is the case with Silva, the geeks of yesteryear are now adopting a new form of masculinity that re-frames their marginality as rebellion, in a manner that ironically preserves the existing hegemony by eliding direct challenges to the basis of patriarchy (Wark, 2006).

In order for the white capitalist patriarchy to retain its existing power structure, rooted in the hegemonic power that comes from military, economic, and social control (Seidler, 2013), it must fend off the challenges to these institutions posed by the affordances of new media (Poster,

2008). Doing so requires the help of the techno-masculine, so the techno-masculine is now conferred new status that carries with it implications of hegemonic masculinity. What was once the purely intellectual act of computer science, is reframed as the destructive act of hacking (Webber, 2014; Wark, 2006). The once subordinated masculinity implied by working with communication technologies (Quail, 2011), in the vein of the secretary, is now elevated to the status of the hegemonic man, by reframing the computer as a technological extension that is as lethal as a gun (Massey, 1995; Poster, 2008; Dempsey, 2009).

On the national stage we see now that hegemonic hackers are not working independently, but in service to the same hegemonic forces that seek to dominate the world through force, be it by upsetting digital networks as Silva does, or by using the fragmented new media environment to disseminate traditional forms of propaganda. The end result of the techno-masculine merging with the hegemonic masculine is that the disruptions promised by the hackers of the naughts (Wark, 2006) are being re-directed away from existing hegemonies and towards those social institutions that challenge them (Fuchs, 2015) either by forces of military control, as in Russia, China and the United States, or at the behest of Venture Capital firms whose funding is obviously contingent on a profit oriented model.

All this contrasts greatly with the early aspirations of those who developed the Internet in the hope of enhancing community (Rheingold, 1993), or alleviating forms of social injustice (Biocca, 1997). On the contrary, the online environment has become another platform for the toxic masculinities that perpetuate the marginalization of women, people of color, and the queer community (even those intersecting with the hacker identity), while shielding the hegemonic order from being de-stabilized by those affordances of new media technology that have been proven capable of liberating and enfranchising marginalized users (Haraway, 2013).

### C. **This is a Man's Job: Regressing M**

The practice of regressing the gender dynamics of *Skyfall* not only meant re-introducing original characters but also addressing the prior commutation of the of M from a male to a female character during the final years of era one. Transforming M from her female embodiment back to the male embodiment original to era one was a major plotline in the film, as seen by the amount of screen time dedicated to it. Ultimately, producers achieved the task in a manner that confirms their intention to reinstate the misogynist aims of the original films into the franchise. This is evident by the way that producers swapped Dench's M for Fienne's Mallory. M is not only replaced, her character's salient identity as an unruly, but hyper-competent manager is assailed, in tandem with a matrix of narrative mechanisms designed to dismantle her gender queer performativity. Through the film M is gendered as a woman using the same sexist tropes for female characters that recur throughout media, and era one of Bond. Here I refer specifically to the way that M is portrayed as an Iron Maiden, a Sex Object, a Mother, and a Child through the narrative of the film.

Analyzing the commutation of the M character in *Skyfall* is complicated by the fact that the commutation takes place at multiple semiotic levels through overlapping storylines concerning varied signifiers. At the first level, M exists not as an embodied character, but as a position within the Bond universe. The moniker of M carries signification for Bond fans that corresponds to the professional administrator who bares M as a title, in much the same way that Q is identified by the letter Q for quartermaster. However, unlike Q, no one is clear what M stands for; is it a title, or a last name? Bond indicates in *Casino Royale*, that M is a personalized moniker when he says to her, "I always thought M was a randomly assigned letter. I had no idea it stood for-" (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006). M cuts him off at that moment, but the implication is clearly that it M does not

represent a title. This implication is bolstered by the fact that Dench's M is replaced in *Skyfall* by a character whose last name is Mallory. In any case, all this narrative attention reflects the power of the name M as its own signifier for audiences.

The second level of signification surrounding the character of M is attached to the actors who portray the role, and in the case of *Skyfall*, M's character is signified at the start through Judi Dench's performance. Dench is not only female, but she is also the only woman to have played the role of M, and she is the only actor to have appeared in all three eras of Bond films, though *Skyfall* was her final performance. For audiences, the fact that Dench's M was already a commutation of the pre-existing M, who had been played by older white men in a notably paternalistic fashion, is embedded in how they read M as a female, though not necessarily feminine, character. Krainitzki (2014) argues that M remained masculine in Dench's performance, despite the fact that her sex and gender were consciously highlighted in *Goldeneye* when Dench first appeared on screen, and accused Bond of being a "misogynistic dinosaur; a relic of the cold war" (Broccoli & Campbell, 1996).

If one were to look purely at the question of M's gender one would find that Dench's supervisor is often more masculine in her manner, and style of communication than either Bernard Lee's or Robert Brown's performances of the character (Krainitzki, 2014) in a model of the female masculinity that Halberstam (1998) chronicles as a hybrid performance that best exemplifies the notion of gender queerness. That is not to say that Dench's M signifies the same thing as the M character that either of these men performed. As Stock (2000) points out, M transformed in multiple ways when Dench took over the role, moving from an "admiral to an accountant," in his view, and from a metonym for empire, to a symbol of global progress. This brings us to the third level of signification involved in the commutation of the character of M. We must consider what

M means as a government figurehead, and a symbol of British geo-strategic interests. Bond may function as an agent of, or extension of British imperialism, but ultimately this is only a means to the ends of validating his masculine identity through the work of a spy. We know this because of the times when Bond goes rogue in order to complete a mission that the government prefers to abandon. Therefore, M signifies the British government, not Bond, and for this reason her character occupies a different standpoint from Bond.

Considering these levels of signification, it stands out that M's replacement in *Skyfall* does not differ in the first and third respects, but only in the second. Replacing Judi Dench with Ralph Fiennes does not change the semiotic connotation of the M moniker, nor does it change the position that M occupies as a representative of the British government. Ostensibly then, the only signification that shifts with the change of this signifier is the character's sex. Yet, the narrative of *Skyfall* was not simply about a male replacing a female, it was very consciously about a man replacing a woman in what became the narrative centerpiece of the film. As we'll explore, this is because the goal of the film was to regress the gender dynamics in a holistic way that is not only sexist, but homophobic. M's sex was not what the producers needed to change, it was her gender queer performativity that they wanted to regress. In other words, what *Skyfall's* producers could have handled as a transition from one sex to another in the narrative was consciously structured in regressive terms that imposed a cis-gender performativity onto a gender queer character.

That producers decided that M's sex needed to match M's gender speaks to a regressive view of gender relations, one that invests in a gender binary, and that seeks to appeal to audiences by illustrating this commitment to regressive ideologies. More importantly though, the producer's decision reflects how the gender performativity of the M character influences and challenges the performativity of Bond.

### **1. Nobody does it better, than M**

In era two, Bond is not only a more affective character, he also functions within the franchise formula in an entirely different way, which, in turn, privileges M to illustrate a skillset that is so subtly interlaced within the reboot's structural changes that it may be hard to notice. I am referring here to M's greatest claim to techno-specialist: her unique ability to manage, what *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, and *Skyfall* each asserts is that the most valuable technology MI-6 possesses: James Bond. Era two Bond's enhanced embodiment, and his hacking abilities have allowed him to excel in preta-natural fashion in the augmented reality afforded by the new media landscape. Era two also recasts Bond as the unstable technology that era one films had always been built around. In era two, Bond is not dispatched to re-acquire an unstable technology that threatens the world, instead, he goes rogue and needs to be controlled. As his supervisor, M becomes the heroine of hegemony who must track and manage Bond in order to contain his explosive potential.

In a world where grown men need to be controlled in order to preserve global security, nobody does it better than M. M's ability to manage Bond, despite his volatility, and immaturity is the hallmark of her character in era two. Throughout both *Casino Royale* and *Quantum of Solace* M chooses to allow Bond the freedom to transgress boundaries in order to maximize his performance. Though Bond's juvenile antics could be considered impertinent, M allows it. When Villiers notifies her in *Casino Royale* that Bond has hacked into MI-6 using her password, M replies, "How does he do these things?" (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006). Here, M is annoyed by Bond, but she doesn't act on the breach of security, instead she covertly monitors Bond's activities online, and, as she later admits, allows Bond to continue in his rogue pursuit even though she had previously taken him off duty. We know this because when M later catches up with Bond he asks

her “you didn’t really think I’d stop did you?” to which she replies, “I knew you’d be you,” (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006). This exchange evidences that the operational purview Bond thinks he is taking, has actually been given to him, and that M, knowing Bond’s disposition, allows him to think this in order to get from him the best possible performance.

Knowing that the method to the madness of managing Bond is to allow him to transgress boundaries in their professional relationship the same way he does in the field, demands that M adapt her management style for Bond. In this light, one must reconsider the ending of *Skyfall* where the producers seemingly degrade M’s authority by depicting her operating under Bond’s control and protection. Is M kidnapped by Bond in *Skyfall*; or does she accompany him, knowing that by taking control of the situation Bond is operating in the maverick style that is his *métier*? By accepting the role Bond needs her to play in his ploy, M provides Bond the chance to operate at full throttle, which she considers necessary for Bond to defeat Silva. As Silva personifies the growing dangers of the shadows that she has warned against, M’s decision is not sentimental, so much as strategic. M is jeopardizing her own life in order to ensure that the “job is done” (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012), the only circumstances, she tells Mallory, under which she’ll leave her post.

By looking at M’s relationship dynamic with Bond as one where M maximizes Bond’s productivity as a weapon for MI-6, and contains his capacity for destruction using the same skillful manipulation that earned Bond acclaim in era one, it can be said that M’s dominance as a technologist in era two is contingent on Bond functioning as a technology during that era. Consequently, by degrading Bond’s potency as a technology of the state in *Skyfall* producers rob M’s character of a platform to demonstrate her techno-mastery. Without Bond there to function as a prized technology, M has no way to prove her abilities to control technology, and it is therefore

fitting that after Bond is believed dead in *Skyfall* Mallory arrives to retire M. Hence, the storyline that denigrates Bond's utility as an agent also serves to undermine M's utility as a manager.

The gender queering that M and Bond exhibit in the first act of *Skyfall* are carry overs from their era two relationship dynamic. *Skyfall* sets forth to normalize both of the characters' performativities through complex means. M's gender-normalizing arc begins with a narrative focused on repositioning her gender fluidity as gender non-conformity in the stereotype of the Iron Maiden.

## **2. The iron 'M'**

In era two M's masculine performativity rendered her character as shrewd, detached, perceptive, and methodical. Though she was commanding when needed, era two M was also understanding. Her demonstrated loyalty to her staff, and her flexibility regarding their conduct proves to the audience that M endows her agent's with commensurate authority to the responsibilities they take on. By displaying some of the same character traits associated with era one M, but modifying them reflexively in response to the more affective version of Bond (Lindner, 2009) M demonstrates a fluid gender performance that is masculine when needed and feminine when needed. As Halberstam (1998) notes this type of female masculinity is not only more common than many realize, but it is also more apt for contemporary culture, where traditional masculine performances are no longer required. Dench's M is therefore a more reliable authority because of her female masculinity in era two, which translates to her also being an effective counter to the unstable 00 that Bond performs in her formative years as an agent.

*Skyfall's* opening sequence presents a very different M, from the controlled, and competent woman who ran Special Branch for MI-6 in era two. M is micro-managing the operation, and instead of exhibiting the controlled demeanor and rakish good humor that is her trademark in era

two, in this sequence M is more demanding than commanding; a display of authority that is typically reserved for Bond villains, not Bond heroes (Price, 1992). For female characters, this villainy adheres to a specific media archetype known as The Iron Maiden (Rudman & Glick, 2008).

Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, professional women face the complex gender politics incumbent on those who are perceived to be invading the space of others simply by showing up for work. The exclusive long-time occupation of executive level occupational spaces bred as much a culture of masculine jocularly as exists in the manufacturing, transportation, and public service sectors (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). Consequently, as women enter the workforce, even in workplaces where other women are widely employed, they face the pressure to carve out space for their own identity as a professional separate from the gendered identity that is unfairly highlighted by their presence in a space that is perceived to be masculine (Kanter, 1977).

Navigating this experience is made even more challenging by the gendered expectations that are imposed on women by their co-workers, who project gender ascriptions onto women's professional identities in a manner that reduces said identity from an individual expression of the person, to an expression of the person's gender (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). The most common stereotype projected onto professional women, and the most prominently borrowed trope for powerful professional women in media, is the "ice queen," the "castrating bitch," the "ball breaker," known as the Iron Maiden, (Rudman & Glick, 2008, P. 162).

The Iron Maiden is always depicted negatively in media, even if the character isn't a villain. Other character's resent, or fear her so that within the work environment she is isolated from her co-workers, seemingly by choice. The trope of the iron maiden has increased in media content as women have continually ascended to powerful positions in a greater variety of occupations (Elliott & Stead, 2017), appearing even in films that feature female lead characters such as *The Devil*

*Wears Prada*, *Private Benjamin*, and *9 to 5*. Like the anti-heroines of these films, M is depicted in *Skyfall* as: narcissistic, rather than career oriented; such as when she refuses to resign from her job; self-serving when she resists self-sacrifice; such as when she refuses to leave the hearing for fear of losing face; and alternately admired for, then criticized for, her defiance of traditional feminine performativity (Stead & Elliott, 2009).

The intertextual reference to *The Devil Wears Prada* can be drawn in the opening sequence where we see that, like Miranda Priestly's offices in *The Devil Wears Prada*, M's offices are designed in pale, fashionable white, and her large view overlooking the Thames easily marks the office at the very top of River House in a visual position of status. In era two M's offices were always shown to be enclosed private spaces that no one entered except she, Tanner or Villiers. M's office has consistently reflected the British empirical character, and the country's geo-strategic seniority during the franchise (Stock, 2000) so that when M's offices are transformed in *Skyfall* to mirror the cosmopolitan look of New York, the latent impression for the audience is that M's identity as a leader conflicts in some central way with her assigned role as a protector of the British way of life.

When Silva then targets M by first blowing up her offices when he knows they are unoccupied, the act reads as an attack on her credibility on multiple levels. One the first level, Silva targets her office in a manner that exploits and exposes its prominence. Era two M never had such an auspicious office space. Her office, as depicted in *Quantum of Solace* was subterranean: to target it when it was unoccupied would have produced little affect within MI-6, and likely none for the public. M's presumptive choice of an office that serves more use in its form, than its function feminizes her, by association with the world of fashion, where aesthetics, and women, are thought to dominate (Marshall, 2013). Silva's attack exploits this quality of the River House

offices to emphasize M's vulnerability in such a space, and the practical liability of situating the offices of Britain's secret services in such a well-known public space.

Silva's attack on M's offices is also an attack on the trans-Atlantic influence that such a modern building represents in the heart of London. By virtue of its recency, its architectural style, and its location in the Manhattan like corporate conclave of the east end, River House was erected as a monument to modernity, and Britain's embrace of the wider world. Attacking it signifies Silva's rejection of progress, the same progress that made M's ascension to power possible, and that modern chauvenists in the U.K. claim has weakened the U.K.'s credibility (Guerrina, 2017) as what Woodward (2004, p. 183) calls a "third position" global power. When the offices that the iron maiden so proudly occupies are attacked, M is forced to retreat, sacrificing some of the hard-won masculinity that makes her an iron maiden.

Differences inside M's offices exhibit gendered sub-text as well. In era two, M uses futuristic technologies at her will, and without assistance. In *Casino Royale* and *Quantum of Solace* M has hidden terminals even in her bedroom nightstand and bathroom so that she can seamlessly drop in and out of her work-life at will. M's incorporation of technology into her offices and her homes reads as a masculine trait because of the way contemporary culture has inscribed masculinity into the use of domestic technology (Wajcman, 2007). In lieu of washers and dryers, today's domestic technology is about control and surveillance via Nest devices, security cameras and large screens in every room so that the owner can be constantly gazing at whatever object of interest they wish to observe. M's home is similarly outfitted, as is her office.

Until *Skyfall* when her optics are shut down in the opening scene, the rebooted M engaged with communication technology at the visual level. Even during a routine phone call in *Quantum of Solace* the phone call is mapped out visually on a screen in her office that she is able to watch.

M looks, and gazes, and surveils with her technology in the same way that field agents used to do as the enacted masculinity through their work as 00s. As such M shared in the agents' tendency to perform masculinity on film through their active gazing at others. This practice, which Mulvey (1989) detailed as a method of male encroachment on the bodies of women was prominently featured in era two as a mechanism to queer Bond's positionality as an agent by re-positioning him as the object of the gaze. Inversely, M's gender is queered in era two when she is afforded a private view of her own.

This is not so in *Skyfall*. In *Skyfall* M shares her workspace with an entourage of aides, whom the director, Sam Mendes positions as underlings by denying them close ups, names or dialogue. Tanner, the exalted first assistant, akin to Emily from *The Devil Wears Prada* is the only one allowed to speak to M. While M's desk is bare of a computer, the two aids sit facing screen in a set of four computer stations across the room, in an office set up to visually dislocate M from the screens present. In this dynamic M is forced to elicit information through dialogue with her staff, in accordance with the feminine speech community rather than through the masculine performativity of watching as she did before (Coates, 1986; Wood, 2009).

Harvey (2004) might cite M's depiction in *Skyfall* as an older woman, suddenly disconnected from the networked self she performed prior, as an example of a character being visually gendered through the way they are de-augmented; a unique twist on McLuhan's theory of technologies as extensions of the body. M's displacement from the screen consoles or computer terminals she used in era two that afford autonomy and control, to the telephonic technologies that rely on the feminine coded practice of talk (Marvin, 1997) has shifted her metaphoric gendering by altering the bodily extensions she uses. Tanner brings a laptop with him in the car, and to the parliamentary hearings, but M never does, except for in a single scene when she is alone at home,

and even then she is using her computer on the sofa, wearing house clothes, in a tableau more reminiscent of one's parents trying to figure out how to skype, than a leader of the world's most elite intelligence agency working from home.

The scene of M using the laptop implies age, gender, and antiquity beyond just the way M is shown to use her computer. Her gaze on the screen reveals to us that she is confronted by an image that frightens her. She opens a suspicious email to find a gif of her face overlaid on the queen's face, which morphs into a skull. Like so many senior citizens being targeted online by hackers M opens a suspicious email and is upset by the results. The act of doing this confers age and ineptitude onto her character, just as the image she sees positions her as one with the queen, and then moves forward to suggest her imminent death. M's experiences with technology are no longer demonstrations of power, but illustrations of obsolescence. They no longer provide her with an empowering gaze, but rather, as we see in a later scene of M watching agents being beheaded, they provide her only with threats to her position.

M's character also deviates from narrative tropes typically assigned to women characters because M is defined in the films solely by her work life (Sarkeesian & McIntosh, 2009). Unlike most female characters M does not speak of, or refer to her romantic life, her children, or family before *Skyfall*. The two times we see her home in *Casino Royale*, are when Bond breaks in, or when Villiers wake her from sleeping. *Quantum of Solace* only shows us M's home when she receives an urgent work call while readying for bed. In *Skyfall* we see M at home when she encounters Bond in her dining room, and later when she is working from her sofa. In each case M's home is depicted when it has been invaded literally, or figuratively, by her work life.

In sync with the Bechdel Test and subsequent theory about the gendered way women are scripted in films (Sarkeesian & McIntosh, 2009), M, who in era two is presented exclusively in

her professional role, is not depicted speaking to any women at all. Her back and forth with Moneypenny via earpiece in *Skyfall* is a first for the rebooted M, as she has never communicated with a woman prior, and her scene in Parliament featuring a female chair, Clair Dowar, is the first time since the reboot that M appears in the same shot with another woman. Moneypenny is present in the committee scene as well, but M is never shown in the same shot with her, nor is M shown speaking to Dowar in the same shot. Moneypenny and Clair Dowar only share the screen with each other for a brief moment when Moneypenny is shuffling MPs out of the room.

Speaking to the depth of M's gender queer identity is the comparative similarity between her interactions with women in *Skyfall* and her interactions with men prior. Apart from occasional moments of candor and shared sentiment, M and Bond interact as formally as M interacts with any other man onscreen. Her professional disposition subsumes her personality so that even while she jests with Tanner or Villiers, neither one jokes back. M is consummately professional in her interactions and in response she is always addressed formally by those who work for her as 'mam'. The gendered language here- mam, as distinct from sir, conveys respect with a feminine connotation that is underlined by the British pronunciation of the word, and its attachment to the most senior mam in England, H.M. Queen Elizabeth II.

British accents are as diverse as those in larger countries like the United States, except that they often signify more than a regional identity, but a class identity as well. In the United Kingdom the pronunciation of certain words, particularly those associated with Protocols of state or aristocratic conduct carry particular meaning. Such is the case with the word 'mam' which can be pronounced by the elite phoenetically, or by others from different regions to varying degrees as 'marm' (Hughes, et al., 2013); which sounds similar to 'mum' or the American 'mom'. When M's subordinates address her as 'mam' their pronunciation dictates the subliminal impression the word

confers, but the conscious gender identification of it always casts the respect they direct towards her as being filial in nature. Compounding the gendered nature of the word is its popular usage as a form of address for the Queen, a connotation that is not only gendered, but maternally so given the Queen's position as a head of both the Royal Family, and the governments formed in her name.

Finally, M is most concretely tied to the Iron Maiden identity through her verbal and paraverbal communication in the opening sequence. Though M is famous for trusting Bond's instincts, in *Skyfall* she appears nearly panicked as she paces her office shouting out orders at Bond, Moneypenny, and Tanner. Though M frequently vents rye comments to, and about her peers, she is never shown in era two to speak in abusive tones to her staff. When she shouts orders through her headset, M's paralanguage echoes the disinterest shown by her in the dialogue itself. The only time in *Casino Royale* that M gives any direction to Bond in the field is when he needs medical attention, and out of concern she orders him to "push the button!". By contrast *Skyfall* opens with Bond discovering a wounded agent, and M shouting "Leave him! There isn't time." This tone recurs in her interactions with people of inferior status, to whom she uniformly condescends, including even a police officer, whom she berates for blocking her path by saying, "For god's sake, just get out of the way! Don't you recognize the car?" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Again, her lack of concern, and her assumption of superiority echoes a villainous trope.

**a. "Regret is unprofessional"**

Silva: You're smaller than I remember.

M: Whereas I barely remember you at all.

Silva: No remorse? Just as I imagined you.

M: Regret is unprofessional (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

M's claim that "regret is unprofessional" accurately reflects M's beliefs about her job (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). In order to ascend to the position of power she occupies, M has had

to contend with the complex, and difficult decisions that Mallory and his fellow MPs hope to dodge by automating the world of espionage. M's work counts lives in its cost/benefits analyses. Her routine decisions involve matters of torture, violence, and national reputation. Like others faced with such high-pressure stakes in their jobs M employs the emotional distance necessary to remove her professional identity from her personal one (Zapf, 2002). This delineation between her two identities conflicts with contemporary double standards for the emotional labor demanded of men and women in working relationships. M's choice to absent her emotions from her work-life is not accepted as a professional choice, instead it is framed throughout *Skyfall* as a characteristic of her personality, and, more crucially, her identity as a woman.

M's termination in *Skyfall*, ostensibly resulting from losing the data file, is framed from the start as a consequence of her female masculinity. When Bond admonishes her for the unfeeling way that she ordered her agents to complete their mission in the opening sequence it is her lack of maternal instinct that he is so disappointed in. Yet, when Mallory cites her sentimentality for Bond he implies she is too maternal to be objective about him. Thus, M is accused of failing to satisfy gender expectations on either end. She is too sentimental for the tastes of her superiors, but not maternal enough for the tastes of her agents. The paradox reflects the difficulties of being a gender queer woman in a position of leadership. The disposition that is favored sometimes in some situations is then liable to be resented in other situations (Valocchi, 2005).

In *Skyfall* M's dispassionate decision making is interpreted by both Bond and Silva as indifference. Yet her brand of indifference is precisely what characterized era one Bond. Connery's Bond worried for the fate of the world, sure, but he didn't express any overwhelming desire to murder Dr. No, or Goldfinger on sight. This recurring conflict between moral obligation and institutional need underlies each film of era two. While it sets up chiding interplay between M and

Bond that echoes back to the relationship dynamic of era one, the conflict being discussed is not the same. Era one Bond is creative in his methods of completing the task, but is duty bound to follow his instructions and achieve the mission as intended. He only deviates from the plan when the situation demands it, and even in these cases he is shown to report back to his superiors the change of plan when possible. When M chides Bond in era one, it is not because Bond deliberately undermines the orders of his superiors; it is because Bond's approach to his work appears cavalier. Era two Bond is presented as not only more reckless than Bond of era one, but deliberately subordinate to a literally criminal degree. M has him arrested in *Quantum of Solace* after multiple ultimatums are ignored.

Bond's era two autonomy is noticeably intruded upon in the opening sequence of *Skyfall*, because M is personally overseeing the mission, remotely from her offices at River House. M is shown relaying her orders to the agents in the field via earpieces, beginning with an order to leave Ronsen, a wounded agent behind. Bond resists the instruction, prompting M to shout "Leave him!" in a tone of exasperation that underlies the rest of her dialogue throughout the scene (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). The urgency in her voice suggests she is managing this mission because of its extraordinary importance. M proceeds to direct her agents up to the final moment in the sequence when it is M, not Bond who makes the split-second decision that decides the fate of the mission. Unfortunately, whereas Bond always makes the right call, and saves the day, M's stint as agent in command ends in failure; a failure Bond and Silva explicitly tie to her female masculinity.

Bond, of course is not to blame for having failed, but the two women, whose uncharacteristic presence in his work environment, are framed (in every usage) by the producers as the guilty parties. Having stripped Bond of the privileged agency that he enjoyed previously as solo man of action by overseeing the mission herself, M is portrayed as having made it impossible

for him to do what nobody else does better. To thwart Bond even more, M sends him into the field with a female agent, whom Bond treats with derision before abandoning her to perform his machismo heroics on the rooftops of Istanbul. It is therefore M, not Bond, who lets the data drive slip away because it was M, not Bond who inserted women in a world that the franchise has established for its audiences is best navigated by men. Brabazon (1999) documents how women who defy Bond's paternalism rarely survive in the underworld where Bond and his villains do battle. In *Skyfall*, the rationale for such a common fate is explicated by showing the audiences what horrible consequences occur when women are allowed to exert agency in such spaces.

Later in *Skyfall*, producers compound M's complicity in the failed mission by tying it to M's core trait from era two- her masculine performativity. Throughout the second era Dench's M performs a female masculinity that corresponds with the traditional character traits of the 'M' character, and in ways that compensate for the fact of her being a woman, and therefore expected to perform in a more nurturing, traditionally feminine filmic manner. The most recurring element of M's masculine performativity is the manner in which she communicates with her staff, Bond specifically, in order to emphasize a clear distinction in their status, and the professional nature of their relationship. M is stern, and even cold with her staff in era two. Sometimes though, she provides them with amusing candid asides that are shown to enjoin their personal loyalty. *Skyfall* presents a different M, one who makes discarding agents a habit, starting with her instinct to abandon Ronsen, followed by her order to shoot on Bond, and confirmed finally by her admission that she traded Silva for other agents to ensure the transition of Hong Kong to the Chinese government.

When Bond returns to London from the dead he is not there just to save MI-6, but to save M specifically. He is drawn home by the news he sees on television that MI-6 has been attacked.

Bond does not report back to MI-6 however, he reports back to M. He chooses to present himself to her at her home, in her intimate personal space. Doing this tacitly affirms that Bond reports specifically to M, because he knows M will forgive him for faking his death. Still, the substance of their conversation focuses less on his dereliction of duty, than on M's supposed complicity in Bond getting shot. Bond frames M's demeanor during the mission as ruthless, rather than determined, and her prioritizing the recovery of the data file as a breach of trust, rather than a professional necessity. In short, Bond is angry that M cared more about the success of the mission than she did about the agents working for. In his view, the field agents were under her care, not her supervision, and it was her responsibility, not theirs, to ensure safe returns for all.

This fallacious logic is consistent with the gendered expectations that women have long faced in the workplace (Wood & Conrad, 1983) but for the audiences watching the reunion scene play out on screen Bond's indignation has been qualified by the scenes leading up to it which emphasize the finality of Bond's death in order to frame M as having not only ordered the shot that hit him, but the shot that killed him. All this affective build up obscures that Bond was really only wounded in the course of action, as he has been many times before, so that when Bond confronts M as angrily as if she had actually killed him, audiences empathize with him.

Even M doesn't attack Bond's hypocrisy for blaming her for a death that he faked. Nor does she refer, as she easily could, to Bond's own history of incurring collateral damage during his missions. Instead, M defends herself stoically by restating the inherent logic of her decision in a masculine performativity starkly contrasting Bond's emotional, and therefore stereotypically, feminine screen performativity. In a similar scene with Silva M is called to reckon for her past. As she faces him for the first time since turning him over to the Chinese government during the

nineties, M rebuffs Silva's attempts at familiarity. Her choice in both scenes to protect her professional identity is meant to reflect indifference.

**b. The taming of the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service**

Having established M's gender performativity as deviant, rather than resistant, by presenting her as an Iron Maiden, producers were able to progress M's gender normalizing storyline by having her non-conformity challenged through the introduction of a male counter: Mallory, who eventually takes M's place as head of Special Branch. Mallory's performativity of harsh, old fashioned, masculinity feminizes and thereby normalizes M's performativity by comparison in a storyline that marries the Iron Maiden off to an even more leaden husband, conferring onto M the role of the Sex Object.

The female sex object is a filmic trope that the Bond franchise did much to concretize in the minds of film audiences, even though it predates the franchise by decades. Women on film were sexualized from film's start in the silent era, through portrayals of archetypal sirens, nymphs, and damsels (Balinisteanu, 2007). The sex object is quiescent, risqué, hard-won, and sometimes unruly, but by the film's end the sex object is inevitable conquered by a masculine counter in a narrative that reifies the dominating sexual power of men. The Bond franchise adopted this narrative trope automatically, expanding its prevalence by bringing the sub-textual themes of imperialism and domination to the manifest level to the delight of male audiences in both the United States and the United Kingdom (Neuendorf et al., 2010).

According to the taxonomy that (Boyd, 1967) and Eco (1979) discuss regarding female characters in Bond books and films One of the types of female characters in the Bond franchise is the "lady." The lady is virtuous and true, but her appearance in the story does not always make this clear immediately. The lady is the narrative contrast to the female villains, who in era one,

worked for their masculine bosses by luring Bond into traps. The lady is often suspicious at the start until her moral rightness is confirmed by the revelation of the female villain, signaling to Bond which of the two characters deserves saving. M winds up fitting this format by the end of act two in *Skyfall* affirming her femininity but also her dependency on Mallory as the chivalrous hero. In the process M is diminished in power because she is reduced from her position of authority to a subordinate and submissive position in the power dynamic that mutes her female masculinity in favor of a portrayal of feminine vulnerability.

M's career ends when she dies at the end of *Skyfall*, an exit for the character that is foreshadowed earlier in the film when Mallory asks her to resign because she, "lost a computer drive containing the identity of almost every NATO agent embedded in terrorist organizations across the globe. A list, which, in the eyes of our allies, never existed," and M replies that she'll "go when the job is done," (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Mallory's assertion of authority, and M's defiant response are the opening salvo in a battle of the sexes between the characters designed to re-position the recalcitrant M as a feminine character. The back and forth between M and Mallory provides the sub-textual basis for their courtship using the narrative trope of the Shakespearean comedy, *The Taming of the Shrew*, known as one of canonical literature's most overtly misogynist texts (Aspinall, 2002). Like Catherine from *Taming of the Shrew*, M is presented to the audience in need of having her unruly spirit broken by an overwhelmingly dominating man as punishment for deviating from the gender expectations of a woman.

Before Mallory informs M she has been fired, he first inquires as to whether she has, "considered pulling out the agents?" Hence, the concern that Mallory says prompted the Prime Minister to ask for M's resignation is that MI-6 has not adapted to the new media age, and that M's continued use of human intelligence is evidence of her larger inability to adapt. Though

Mallory specifically labels the work special branch does as a “war we don’t understand and can’t possibly hope to win,” he chafes at having to be accountable for the high costs of war-time, like the deaths of agents (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). For her part, M argues, throughout the film, that dismantling the 00 program is an administrative goal predicated on the specious trend of technophilia, seeping from the public sphere hastily into practice. M’s hesitancy to replace human intelligence with digital technologies actually illustrates her superior understanding of the technologies available. M, who is a frequent user of networked technologies is not opposed to their use, but understands them as only one tool needed in order to provide national security, and is deft enough to avoid the tendency toward forced adoption, and automation that often results in failure (Liang, Saraf, Hu, & Zue, 2007; Wolf, Beck & Pahlke, 2012).

Mallory initially frames M’s nuanced argument against forced adoption of new media technology as masculine stubbornness, but he later recognizes the wisdom of M’s stance. His concession to her ability to reason, takes place in tandem with his character’s transformation from a domineering husband to a loving one, during the parliamentary hearing where M is being publicly called to account. M is no stranger to such situations. In era two M is never seen in the company of a superior unless she is being scolded. When she first appears in *Casino Royale* M is exiting the chambers of some ministers of parliament who have been chastising her over Bond's antics in Africa; a scenario repeated in *Quantum of Solace*:

MP: What's today's excuse, that Bond is legally blind?

M: No, minister.

MP: I don't think I need to tell you how upset the P.M. is.

M: With respect, the P.M. has my direct line.

MP: And he'd have used it if he wanted to speak with you (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006).

The parliamentary hearing should therefore be no different for M given her history, but the film presents it as more meaningful than those in era two. M's vulnerability in the hearing is shown to be exacerbated by the masculine performativity, that serves her well in similar instances before. M is summoned there to answer for the data breach, for which she is said to be "almost single handedly responsible," (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012), but it is her behavior in the hearing that provokes the strongest reaction. When M answers the charge of incompetence by explaining that her department has "apprehended the responsible party and are taking all necessary steps to ensure that sensitive information is contained," M is immediately attacked for her use of the masculine speech community. Clair Dowar, the hearing's chairperson responds to M's report of due diligence by sarcastically saying "So it's a job well done is it?" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). M hasn't apologized. She hasn't groveled, or self-deprecated. These are the forms of communication that women are often pressured to perform in order to receive positive responses from those around them. Failing to subjugate one's self verbally projects a confidence, and an assuredness that even today reads for audiences as cocky, arrogant, or any number of other male connotative terms (Kimmell & Messner, 2013).

The producers' choice to cast a woman to play the part of the committee chairperson is interesting because as the hearing unfolds it becomes obvious that Dowar's gender is of central concern to her character. For example, she replies to M by saying, "You'll forgive me for not putting out the bunting," (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012) referring to an old-fashioned tradition of adorning homes with decorations to celebrate a returning soldier, a war-time victory, or a victory in the figurative fields of business, sports, or politics (Fussell, 2013). The connotation of the decoration reads as feminine, firstly at the level of the domestic work involved, secondly at the level of decoration as an aesthetic practice, and thirdly as it reflects the work of one who was not

in action, but monitored from the sidelines. Each of these traits corresponds to traditional roles for women, particularly in the context of military action (Parker, 2010; Davis, 2000). By sarcastically referring to herself as the individual who has not put out the bunting, Dowar consciously highlights her gender using traditional definitions of women's work, while also creating a metaphor where she occupies the feminine gender role of the devoted women on the homefront to M's masculine war hero.

Other indicators of Dowar's feminine performativity are communicated nonverbally. She wears a textured Chanel jacket; a more feminine apparel choice by comparison to the dark suit M wears. The placard in front of Dowar on the dais where she sits- which is the only way for the audience to learn her name since she is never identified in the dialogue- identifies her as 'committee chairperson,' a term that is gendered by its conscious avoidance of the male generic language inherent in the term 'chairman' (Wood, 2012). The term conveys in linguistic form the post-gender conception of neutrality, but because of the inconsistent way that gender-neutral terms are used (Deutscher, 2002), it may just as easily reflect gender difference as a term like 'chairwoman'.

At the intertextual level it is significant that the character of Clair Dowar is played by Helen McCrory, an actress with two highly gendered roles to her credit. Dowar played Narcissa Malfoy in the Harry Potter films, a villainous character defined entirely by her relationships with her sister, husband, and son. Dowar also played prime minister Tony Blair's controversial wife, Cherie, in the film *The Special Relationship* in 2010. Cherie Blair is both cheered and jeered in Britain for her forthright independence, and her unabashed promotion of her own progressive agenda (Page, 2013), which the film used to cast her as a nemesis to the Queen's vulnerable, loving, grandmother and wife.

**c. She may be a shrew, but she's my shrew**

Dowar's role as an aggressor to M ties back to the construction of the sex object as 'lady' in the formula of the Bond film. As explained, the lady can only be confirmed as a good character by comparison with a duplicitous female villain. In *Skyfall* Dowar plays the part of the evil woman, whose supposed abuse of power, and affinity for the networked world that is being used against MI-6 symbolically aligns her with Silva. To emphasize how Dowar's worldview corresponds with Silva's the producers set her scene, antagonism M for her performance, immediately after one in which Silva does the same. Dowar's verbal assault on M not only echoes Silva's in tone it also echoes Silva's earlier claims that the "MI-6, England, The Empire" are antiquated in the global networked society. Dowar's opposition to the 00 program is given special attention by the way the film is edited. Her dialogue is inter-spliced with scenes of MI-6 getting hacked so that audiences can have contemporaneous evidence of the importance of Special Branch as she is denouncing it.

By comparison to Dowar, M is quiescent and well-behaved. Her unctuousness in prior scenes is consciously controlled. When she speaks, she speaks of the empire, marriage, of fear, and of invading forces. M represents displays during her long-awaited opportunity to speak the nobility and civility that is expected of the good woman. But, in line with the regressive tactics of *Skyfall* it is not M who proves to us that she is the lady in the narrative, it is Mallory. When he sees the way Dowar behaves during the hearing Mallory performs the important function of the hero and recognizes which life it is that deserves saving, and it his choice to protect M from Dowar that signifies that M is a woman worth saving.

Mallory refuses to join in on attacking M during the hearing, and instead sympathizes with, and advocates for, her in a seemingly chivalrous manner that draws on several forms of sexist talk. Mallory begins by interrupting Dowar while she is speaking by exclaiming frustratedly, "Just

for the sake of variety might we actually hear from the witness?" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). His condescending tone underlines the disparaging subtext of his message. His paralanguage conveys the message that he is not speaking over her, but speaking out against her. On top of this, the sarcastic prelude to his question "just for the sake of variety" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012) serves to subtly mansplain to Dowar that she is violating the protocol of the hearing, and by implication is undeserving of the platform she uses to speak. In so doing Mallory performs deliberately the tactics of interruption and derogation that men disproportionately direct towards women in the workplace (Mulac, et. al, 1988).

Since Dowar is cast as a villain through filmic elements prior to Mallory's derogation, audiences are unlikely to recognize Mallory's chivalry for the chauvinism that it really is. Women are commonly attacked for the use of their voices in traditionally masculine domains (Johnson, 2000). This has occurred to women in public spheres offline, such as congress and parliament, but it is equally common in other arenas (Hoffman, et al., 2013). The backlash that women gamers, and game scholars experienced in the form of physical and verbal threats during the Gamergate controversy (Massanari, 2017) indicates that the online space can be just as hostile to women's voices as offline domains have been. In this example, one could illustrate the double standard that Dowar faces by comparing her dialogue in *Skyfall* to any number of similar congressional hearings run by men, to say nothing of Churchill's notoriously loquacious speeches in the House of Commons (Toye, 2013).

Dowar's voice symbolically represents the right of the people in a democracy to speak back to those in power, a right that Mallory initially endorses when he says to M in a meeting before the hearing, "For Christ's sakes listen to yourself. We're in a democracy. We're accountable to the people we're trying to defend..." (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). M's resistance to the logic of

democracy exudes masculinity, which correlates inversely to Mallory's feminine faith in the collective good of democracy. In this light, we cannot excuse Mallory's attack on Dowar as a reflection of his opinion of the hearing, only the way she performs at it. In point of fact, Dowar's conduct is not unusual for a government hearing. Elected officials often use such occasions as a platform to assert their own views, and to garner media attention for their role as a voice of the people (Kelly, 2015). Dowar uses her time in the hearing to play up the media present in a manner that reflects a more sophisticated understanding of the real purpose of the hearing, a point M validates earlier when she compares it to "standing in the stocks at midday" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

After Mallory shames Dowar, he sends a sympathetic glance M's way that she returns with an uncharacteristic blush, and a polite "thank you," (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). His performance of kindness as a protective husband elicits M's performance as a compliant wife, signified by a furtive smile reinforcing her vulnerable (read feminine) positionality at the nonverbal level, complimented by a quietly spoken, short statement of gratitude that evokes the feminine speech community's tendency to defer to masculine talk in formal settings (Geurrero, 1997). Her welcome reception of Mallory's assistance signifies M's consent to an amicable relationship with him. In the formula of *Taming of the Shrew* this moment mirrors the point at which Katherine yields to the brutal force Petrucchio inflicts on her, only for him to show compassion in return. M has been degenerated and brought low by the hearing. Dowar, in her role as a distinctly female MP is assigned Petrucchio's work of breaking M through verbal assault, only for Mallory to finally intervene in an act of gallantry, that M recognizes as such in return.

M follows her show of feminine performativity with another concession to the role of wife. In a climactic moment at the end of her prepared speech, M deviates from her plan to elaborate on

her sentiments by citing her late husband, a sole reference to a character that has never been a relevant part of previous films, except for a sight of him in silhouette sleeping beside her.

M: ...My late husband was a lover of poetry, and uhm, I suppose some of it sunk in, despite my best intentions, and here today I remember this, I think from Tennyson: 'We are not now that strength which in old days moved earth and heaven. That which we are, we are. One equal temper of heroic hearts, made weak by time and fate. But strong in will, to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

M prefaces her poem by adulating her husband while at the same time deprecating herself. This syntactical choice reads as a symbolic act of self-subjugation, a tactic powerful women have been known to employ to bolster their husband's egos (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). M's recitation of the poem symbolically consummates her new marriage with a reference to her old one. Identifying herself as a widow confirms her eligibility to re-marry, and her the performative act of memorializing her husband reveals her to be sentimental in her personal life in just way that she has so forcefully denied behaving as a professional. Through this act of consent M is transformed from a female character who existed outside of a relationship category, to the standard trope of any female character onscreen one whose identity is primarily attributed to their relationship status (Sarkeesian & McIntosh, 2009).

### **3. Shall I be mother?**

In terms of gendered representations one can see in the narrative transition from Dench's female 'M' to Fiennes male 'M' a complex set of gendered stereotypes are at play, some of which adhere to previous theory about the Bond formula. Eco (1979) was first to recognize that unlike other characters in the Bond books M transitioned to screen largely intact, which Eco claimed indicated the significance of the character as a counter to Bond. Bennett and Woolacott (1987) agreed, as did they agree with Eco's reading of M as a paternal figure to Bond, whose existence

provides for the audience a moderate example of British manhood that provides a stable alternative to Bond's rakish masculine bravado. Since then, scholars have adapted and elaborated on the manifest and latent consistency with which M and Bond engage in an Oedipal relationship on film (Eco, 1979; Bennett & Woolacott, 1987; Woodward, 2004; Hockley, 2009).

Of particular interest in the literature on the Oedipal relationship between Bond and M is Hockley (2009) who argues that era one M's oedipal relationship with Bond is actually necessary for audiences to accept Bond's iconoclastic approach to the work of espionage. Hockley casts Bond as Jung's Puer Archetype, a perpetual adolescent incapable of achieving adulthood because of his own damaged psyche. Hockley documents the ways that era one M enables Bond's resistance to maturation, and how franchise's re-casting of the character visually reinforces Bond's puer identity.

Recent scholarship has considered how the relationship between M and Bond shifted once a woman took over the position of M. M is literally identified in *Skyfall* as a mother to her agents. The deliberate mothering of M in *Skyfall* occurs at the manifest level, and as such, has been examined already by feminist scholars in terms of how this occurred and what it meant for the character in light of M's complex gender dynamics in the years that Dench played the role (Funnell, 2016). In particular, Wight's (2015) research on the role of M during Dench's tenure, and particularly as it transforms during what I call era two, and culminates in *Skyfall* rightly identifies the varied ways that the character is form-fitted into the mold of mother in order for her character to be 'erased' in favor of the male-dominated workplace tropes that permeated the original films.

a. **"Don't ever break into my house again"**

As a figurative mother Dench's M goes through all the struggles of raising her son from his infancy as a 00 in *Casino Royale* through his adolescent rebellion in *Quantum of Solace* to the point when he finally breaks from home in *Skyfall* by faking his own death and moving away to live on his own. M hasn't asked to be Bond's mother, yet the film positions M as being made to take responsibility for Bond, partly because of his behavior. Metaphorically Bond is the rebellious adolescent acting out for attention, as we see when he violates protocol, defies orders, and resists disciplinary action in a show of contempt for his mother figure; a theme that culminates when Bond is given a psychological evaluation in *Skyfall* during which he equates "M" with "bitch" in a show of juvenile contempt that the examining psychiatrist deems part of, "a pathological rejection of authority based on unresolved childhood trauma," (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

Bond's diagnosis should come as no surprise to audiences familiar with him since the reboot. Era two makes a point of highlighting Bond's adolescence. *Casino Royale* re-introduces Bond at the start of his career, as a novice 00, who earns his status on screen in the opening sequence before the credits. When Eon first presented Bond to the film going public with *Dr. No* in 1962 Bond appeared to them as a fully established agent. His playboy ways, his testy relationship with his superior M, and his playful flirtation with M's secretary Miss Money Penny were treated by the screenwriters as matters of exposition not narrative exploration. The early audiences could identify Bond as a company man (Commentale, et. al, 2005). By contrast, the Bond that is introduced in *Casino Royale* is still unformed as an agent, and laden with burdens from his childhood that are manifestly tied to his career as a 00. Era two explicitly discusses Bond's orphan-hood, providing insight into his past. Bond's orphan-hood is carried forward in each of the era two films. In *Casino Royale* Vesper discusses his orphan-hood, and notes that it qualified him as a recruit for MI-6, a point that M refrains in *Skyfall* when she declares impassively, "Orphans

always make the best recruits” (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). *Quantum of Solace* not only begins with Bond avenging Vesper’s death, but it also draws him into contact with another orphan character named Camile Montes, with whom Bond claims to identify as a fellow orphan.

Like a good parent M tries to discipline the rebellious Bond in era two, but as the films show reining in a super spy is not as easy as grounding an out of control teen. Even without the auspices of MI-6 to fund his activities Bond has the means to operate as a rogue agent. He does so in both *Casino Royale* and *Quantum of Solace* proving that suspending him from active duty has no effect. Similarly, M’s attempt at blocking Bond’s access to the MI-6 databases is proved futile in era two when Bond works around it by hacking in to the system using M’s password. M even brings a battalion of armed military police to La Paz in order to apprehend Bond and return him for court martial, only for Bond to escape.

Further complicating M’s ability to constrain Bond’s behavior is the practical reality of the work at hand. The impact of a 00s work can be so great that it is nearly impossible for M to assess with certainty the downside of shutting down a mission. A 00s work could cost or save lives immediately, with the reverse effect in the long term. It could upset or stabilize international relations. 00s are even responsible with preventing against global annihilation. How then is M expected to find someone daring enough to fill that job description, but meek enough to easily control. M needs 00 agents who are willing to sacrifice their lives; she can’t be reasonably be expected to find them in a typical pool of applicants. In Bond M can at least rely on the requisite intrepidity that will see the mission through to its end.

While M may be justified in disciplining Bond on the grounds that his insolence undermines her authority, she also knows that if Bond is right, and she doesn’t support him, the larger objectives of their work will be compromised, undermining her credibility with her peers

anyway. The visibility, and measurability, of a mission failure also hangs over M's head so that while she may succeed in silence, any failure that reflects on her resonates with the voting public, and by extension the government that defers to them. M is thereby vulnerable to castigation either for not controlling her agents, even when their conduct achieves a necessary aim, or else for hindering their potency and risking a terrorist attack. In either case, her work is not being assessed based on performance, but on public perception of her performance; a form of scrutiny that is unfairly applied more often to women in leadership positions than to men; a predicament Ryan and Haslam (2005) call the glass cliff.

Where the glass ceiling prevents women from achieving gains in the workforce by means of sexist double standards, occupational segregation, and exclusion from network building, the glass cliff refers to the tendency of organizations to promote women into high-risk positions where they are finally afforded the authority due to them, but are simultaneously laden with a disproportionate level of responsibility, and scrutiny, leaving them without the security other leaders enjoy (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). M protests the absurdity of her own glass cliff in her first scene in era two. Exiting a meeting with a Parliamentary oversight committee she laments to Villiers, "They don't care what we do, they care what we get photographed doing!" (Broccoli & Campell, 2006). M is precisely right about this, and as in *Skyfall*, the penalties applied when women in leadership fail are not limited to the leaders themselves. Just as Moneypenny suffers in tandem with M on film, in real life when women leaders in an organization are blamed for failure, the consequences often extend to other women below them, who become less likely candidates for promotion (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

The glass cliff M experiences in era two partly reflects the heightened state of media in the post 9/11 world, but it also reflects the gendering that era two producers have imposed on M. She

is routinely positioned as marginalized in her position, rather than aggrandized by it. Bond's behavior reflects on her, and thus M is never stable enough to condone Bond, or to dismiss criticism of him. Instead, M, like the housewife in a period drama, is judged by the conduct of her figurative child, and his failures therefore cast her as a failure for having raised him poorly. Even in the final scenes when she is confronted with the possibility of his having stolen money from the exchequer as part of his resignation, M is considerate in her tone of voice, and willing to cover for him. She describes the man as "a lovely man" using the faux tone of voice indicating that he and she have company listening in on the call.

Adding to all the added pressures M faces navigating the edge of a prominent glass cliff is the fact that a 00 is not only difficult to replace, but difficult to terminate. Silva's resurgence in *Skyfall* provides ample evidence of the pitfalls involved in allowing an agent with top secret clearance, elite training, and institutional knowledge to live on outside the control of MI-6. As *Casino Royale* opens with the head of a field office being assassinated for his betrayal, the possibility that Bond will face a similar fate would be logical but for the fact that Bond tests this possibility in the very next scene, by "violating the only inviolable rule of international relations" when he blows up an embassy only to have M threaten that, "these bastards want your head, and I'm seriously considering feeding you to them" suggesting that his worst probably fate was demotion and parliamentary interrogation (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006).

One could read M's aversion to killing Bond as evidence that M is emotionally attached to Bond, but in another exchange with a superior M is ordered to, "pull him [Bond] in, or the Americans will put him down" because Bond is, "running wild" to the extent that the minister wonders if Bond "...hasn't been turned?" (Broccoli & Forster, 2008). That even M's superior, pondering the possibility of Bond's treason, never contemplates that Special Branch assassinate

him. The minister even uses the possibility of Bond being killed by the Americans as a dire warning, indicates that the M's approach to disciplining Bond, including her attempt to capture him accords with MI-6 policy, rather than with any personal affection for him on her part.

In the end, M does issue a "capture or kill order" for Bond in *Quantum of Solace*, proving that M is capable of divorcing her feelings from her duty, and implying that she her prior restraint regarding Bond reflects her own managerial style, rather than a specific gender disposition. Because of M's sex it would be easy to examine such decisions as a dualism in gender that requires Dench's M to perform masculinity in addition to her inherent performance of femininity, or vice versa but this kind of logic still reduces M's gender to a matter of a binary that is being transgressed. A more accurate reading of M's gender performativity in era two considers the transgressive nature of her gender performances without assigning the character a single base gender identity. This more accurate reading is also more interesting because in concert with M's gender queer performativity one can better read her figurative role as a parent to Bond.

**b. I have to be both mother and father to my agents**

M's parental role has heretofore been considered by scholars in psycho-analytic terms that depend upon traditional, typically regressive understandings of the family structure. But as a figurative parent to Bond, M has never enjoyed the traditional nuclear family structure. In eras one and two, M has always functioned as a single parent. In this designation one can identify the nexus of M's gender queering performativity.

As a single father, era one's M is able to retain a more consistent gender performativity by virtue of the apparatus of MI-6, and the distinct gender performativity of Bond as a man, and therefore as his son. The cultural norms of the twentieth century viewed the gender development of a child as a product of parental modeling, even after this theory faced challenges within

academia. In the mediated world, examples such as *My Three Sons*, *Yours Mine and Ours*, *The Courtship of Eddie's Father*, *The Brady Bunch*, *One Day at a Time*, and *Who's the Boss* were all premised on the contemporary belief that children required a parental figure of the same sex in order to properly develop normalized gender role competency. Because M was a man in era one, there was no question in the large part of era one that he was capable of parenting his son to gender role competency. This changed though in the nineties when Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson took over the franchise.

The relationship dynamic between Bond and M changed dramatically in *Goldeneye*. Pierce Brosnan took over the role of Bond, just as Judi Dench took over the role of M. One might think this shift in the gender relations of the figurative parent and child of the Bond universe corresponded to the recent spate of media content like *Kate and Allie*, *My Two Dads*, and *Full House*, that featured single parents teaming up to performing either/both gender roles, as they raised children of the opposite sex, but it did not. When Dench took over the role of M in era one, the relationship dynamic between Bond and M changed to present M and Bond as equals.

In their first scene alone together in *Goldeneye*, Dench's female M accuses Brosnan's era one Bond of being a "sexist, misogynist dinosaur" in a manner that beseeches him to change his behavior, rather than demands he do it (Broccoli & Campbell, 1995). Bond banters back with his boss in a smug performance of imperviousness typical of the privileged white men of film and television (Connelly, et al., 2010). While the exchange appears to have been meant to incorporate some element of feminist critique into the franchise, making the films less tone deaf to their own history of chauvinism, M's challenges to Bond's sexism actually reinforce the franchise's commitment to gender double standards by depicting M appealing to, rather than commanding Bond.

**c. “Your mother?” ... “She likes to think so”**

M’s relationship with Bond is changed in era two, partly because her character is different in era two than in era one. Like Bond, who re-appears in a darker, more nuanced characterization, M is also written as a more cynical, world weary individual. The emergence of terrorism as a daily watchword in the intervening years between eras one and two also colored the rebooted Bond films as more relevant, and more realistic than they had been in the nineties. M’s character evolved between Dench’s performance in *Die Another Day* and her return in *Casino Royale* to reflect the shift in the audience’s experience, and to produce a more dynamic relationship with Bond, that afforded her more screen time, and a more prominent role in the narratives.

In line with M’s increased function in the era two storylines, her relationship with Bond is explored in greater depth in each film, than it ever had previously. M is no longer just Bond’s supervisor in era two, she is his mentor, his conscience, and by consequence of the more personally involved stories about Bond and his relationships, his key source of emotional support. These differences in the relationship dynamic between M and Bond suggest a gendered element in how M is portrayed in era two, that support the argument she acts more as a maternal figure than a paternal one.

Bond doesn’t need a playful father to cover up his errors, and encourage him on to even greater tests of his white male privilege. Era two’s Bond needs someone to help him process the emotional turmoil incumbent on him as an assassin for justice. In *Casino Royale* Bond laments the paradoxes expected of him when he snaps at M, “so you want me to be half monk, half hit-man?” in response to her scolding about his recklessness. M replies that she needs him to, “judge the situation dispassionately;” i.e. without the intense emotion that clouds his decisions in a performativity that is stereotypically more feminine than masculine. M’s frustration with Bond is

also aimed at his performativity since his inability to conform to a masculine performativity by acting within the hierarchical chain of command (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) demands that she queer her own performativity in order to nurture him to maturity as an agent.

The demands of symbolically parenting Bond queer M's gender performativity in era two. Research shows that the prominence of gender binaries in defining the roles of fathers versus mothers in Anglo-American cultures often force single parents to adapt their gender role performativity in order to satisfy social expectations that are insinuated into the minds of their children (Wood, 2011). When M appears in *Casino Royale* and *Quantum of Solace* as Bond's parent, she is neither father nor mother but, like more recent depictions of single parenting: *Terminator 2*, *Little Man Tate*, *Erin Brockovich*, *As Good As It Gets*, M is a single mother whose parenting style crosses, and fuses, normative gender roles in a pattern that has been documented to queer the gender performativity of both the mother and the child (Maier & MacGeorge, 2014; Lee & Hofferth, 2017; Carroll, 2018). Consider the contrast in how M disciplines Bond in *Casino Royale*. After his first offense she sits him down, scolds him, and takes him off active duty. Bond is figuratively sent to his room. On his second offense however, M takes a more radical step that signifies her fluidity of gender. M's insertion of the tracking device is both brutal and penetrative. She is the only person to penetrate Bond in such a fashion in era two. Her doing so signifies her ability to dominate him. In the metaphoric byplay of an Oedipal relationship, the mother has returned to penetrate the son, rather than the other way around.

M plays the gender bending single parent for Bond in *Casino Royale*, and the relationship they establish in turn queers Bond's performativity. Just as M is a single parent, Bond is an only child. His dependence on M for emotional support is absolute, particularly after Vesper dies at the end of *Casino Royale*. *Quantum of Solace* tests the strength of this relationship firstly by presenting

M under threat, and in need of Bond, and then by reversing the dynamic and depicting Bond in need of M's protection. The film opens with M being attacked by Mr. White, and betrayed by her own body guard, triggering an obsession on Bond's part to find white, his allies, and eliminate the potential threat to M that was nearly realized before his eyes. Bond's dauntless pursuit puts him on the trail of an organization whose members are found to be dealing with the CIA in covert transactions designed to bolster the United States stability in the degenerating energy markets. Where Bond undertook the mission fueled by a personal ambition to shut down the terrorist organization that put M in jeopardy at the film's start, he is later ordered to stand down when his work threatens to interests of Britain's key trade partner, the U.S. Bond's work in protecting M then demands M's work to protect him, ultimately forcing both characters to go rogue in aid of one another's interests.

Bond's character arc in *Quantum of Solace* leads him to accept the pragmatic viewpoint that has served M well in her long career. At the psycho-analytic level, the narratives of era two, that gravely foreshadow after Vesper's death, and Bond's realization about the endemic corruption of the British and American governments, that adolescence is ephemeral prepare Bond to mature out of the Puer archetype of interminable adolescence that he enjoys in era one, to the symbolic adulthood he achieves in *Skyfall*, when M dies. The Bond producers used era two as an opportunity to identify Bond's figurative adolescence in consciously psycho-analytic terms that demand resolution in *Skyfall* in order to close the loop between the reboot and where the franchise picks up in the narrative of era one. While *Skyfall* represents Bond's ascent into manhood by depicting him assuming his archetypal identity, era two represents the process of maturation that gets him there. M's role as a paternal figure to Bond becomes a crucial component of this maturation in

*Skyfall*, one that builds on, but also greatly elaborates on, the existing dynamic between them in era two.

M trusts in Bond implicitly throughout *Skyfall* and pays with her life as a result. Only then, in that final moment, when M has proven with great sacrifice her faith in Bond, is she wholly loved by the audience. Only then is she fully, and consummately, proven to be a maternal figure, and therefore, a decent woman in the same manner as the similarly self-sacrificing Money Penny, or Vesper. Self-sacrifice recurs as the crucial proof of a woman's virtue in the Bond franchise. Until *Skyfall* M refuses to embrace the notion, and in fact her conflicted loyalty to Bond is only conflicted by her instincts for self-preservation. In this conflict we can see how the character wrestles in era two with the masculine and feminine gender roles proscribed by the franchise to its characters. Men are affirmed as men by their ability to survive, and women are proven to be women by their willingness to sacrifice their independence to the inherent good represented by Bond, or else die trying. The primary example of the self-sacrificing woman is Vesper, who trades her own life for James, after falling for him while trying to save her boyfriend's life through a separate act of self-sacrifice.

M survives era two because she is not like Vesper. M achieves success through the same grit and self-preservation skills that characterize men like Bond. M is so aware of this dynamic in fact that she comments on it explicitly in *Quantum of Solace* about the agent Holly Fields, who is found drowned with oil by Bond's foes after she submits to a fling with Bond rather than returning him to MI-6 as instructed. In *Casino Royale* M makes a similar statement when Solange Dimitrios is mangled to death because she inadvertently disclosed vital information about her husband while Bond was seducing her: "I'd ask you to try to remain emotionally detached, but I don't think that's your problem," (Campbell, 2006).

**d. “You should have called”**

When Bond returns from the dead in *Skyfall* the scene that plays out reads like the return of a prodigal son to his disapproving mother; a subtext supported by his decision to greet M at her townhouse. Breaking in to M’s townhouse is a throwback to their first onscreen face to face in *Casino Royale* between Craig’s Bond and Dench’s M, when she finds him lurking in the dark of her living room, waiting for a scolding he could have avoided had he chose to. Though M greets him with anger, she had let slip in the middle of her rant in the scene before that she wanted to know where Bond was, and the empathetic tone she adopts as they speak suggests that she is concerned with his development after having promoted him too quickly. M is not worried about Bond; she worries for him in these scenes. Bond’s tendency to invade M’s personal space mothers her, and it also removes her relationship with Bond from the confines of the purely professional to reflect a personal identification with him. Bond’s fractious behaviors, and M’s tolerance for it, reflect that among her 00s Bond is special.

In *Skyfall* Bond uses his habit of breaking and entering in order to return from the dead, and force a personal conversation in which he reveals that M’s choice to sacrifice him for the mission hurt him emotionally, and contributed to his decision to fake his death. Bond rebuffs M’s attempts to maintain a professional footing, until the interview devolves into the two characters hashing out their mutual grievances; his rooted in a desire to verify her affection for him, and hers rooted in indignation over the way he over-reacts every time she has to put him second to some other priority (like saving the world).

The byplay of their confrontation in *Skyfall* documents the change occurring in their figurative mother/child relationship. When Bond’s threw a tantrum in era two he was still tethered to M through his work for special branch, a bond that he tested by constantly running away from

her after she is forced to confront him about this behavior. *Skyfall*'s Bond returns to her voluntarily from his independent life seeking a confrontation where he speaks openly with her in a way that he never does in era two. In the metaphor of the parent/child relationship *Skyfall*'s Bond has finally left home, but has returned on the condition that the family settle their unresolved issues. Unfortunately, for the prodigal Bond M doesn't clamor across the room and embrace him warmly like so many mothers in so many similar movie scenes. Instead, M plays the recalcitrant father who refuses to apologize, but grudgingly concedes that, "we [she] need[s] you [him]" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012), thereby meeting Bond's emotional demands halfway in order to avoid losing him again. When Bond reciprocates M's guarded vulnerability by posturing that her words have convinced him to return home, M retreats from the sentiment of the moment in classic paternal fashion by gleefully informing Bond that his belongings have been packed away- that his room has been metaphorically converted into a den- followed by the rejoinder, "You're bloody well not sleeping here" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

Bond's choice to return is not enough in the first act of the film to redeem M's credibility as his guardian, nor is her welcome enough to normalize her gender. What is needed then is for the audience to see that, despite her insistence to the contrary, M does treat Bond with favor; and in so doing protects him from the scrutiny of others as a mother might protect her child by ignoring their flaws. She does just this when she approves Bond for duty even after he fails his qualifying exams to re-enter active service. Given her dispassionate approach to her job in the opening sequence, M's later choice to over-ride logic and approve Bond for active duty clarifies for the audiences that she is taking uncharacteristic risks to pursue Silva.

These risks are motivated by a personal agenda to protect herself from derogation is underscored by her concealing from Bond that he fails his re-entry exams. Silva later suggests that

M's choice to coddle Bond by sheltering him from the difficult truth of his condition is both a maternal, and neglectful act, when he says "What is this if not betrayal? She sent you off to me knowing you are not ready; knowing you will likely die. Mommy was very bad." (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012) Practically speaking, Silva is right that M should not have cleared Bond, but the more significant discourse played up in his dialogue is the one that producers hoped audiences would recognize: that M acted toward Bond in a maternal fashion, and was therefore adhering to the feminine performativity that reinforced the narrative that would wrap up her tenure on screen.

The third act brings M face to face with her prodigal sons at *Skyfall*, where her maternal instincts for Bond are finally confirmed by her empathy for his boyhood trauma; the familiar relationship dynamic she accepts with his avuncular gamekeeper, Kincaid; and a montage of her readying the household for Silva's arrival, albeit with exploding light bulbs. M is no longer in control of her boys or her own actions, instead, like any aged mother, she has finally relinquished herself to the care of her children, only to die in her son's arms with a final maternal nod of approval when she admits to Bond "I did get one thing right" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

e. **"Don't cock it up!"**

Let us consider that M's character arc in *Skyfall* serves to conclusively affirm M's gender identity as a woman by escalating the subtext of her role as a mother to Bond, and that this escalation is driven by the same narrative mechanism that is used to drive her characterization as an Iron Maiden. By introducing Mallory as Bond's father, producers finally provide Bond with the two-parent family that he lacked in era one. This change to the hetero-normative nuclear family model implies that M must now adopt one of the binary gender roles assigned in traditional families, where one parent plays the father and another plays the mother. When Mallory enters the relationship dynamic between M and Bond, he adopts the stern paternal disposition of emotionally

removed, disapproval. The resulting storyline illustrates by contrast M's underlying maternal disposition towards Bond, in a series of scenes designed to normalize the gender queer performativity both M, and Bond exhibited in their relationship during era two.

After all the struggle that M faces as the single mother to Bond's teen assassin, Bond winds up behaving much more maturely when confronted with a cis-gender father figure in the form of Mallory. After his re-entry exams, Bond is called into M's temporary office space where he finds M and Mallory waiting for him. This is the first time Craig's Bond has ever visited M's office. Where he normally finds her at home alone, once Mallory enters the dynamic Bond must adhere to the professional code by dealing with M in her professional domain. This change automatically signals the power of Mallory as a parent in that he can break Bond of his adolescent habits by imposing the order in Bond's relationship with his parents that M, as single mother, always struggled with. The office scene also depicts Mallory's role as a father in outdated terms because Mallory is positioned as a male authority figure more powerful than M, mirroring the nuclear family dynamic promoted in the post-war years (Lorber & Farrell, 1991) when men and women's gender roles were heavily prescribed as an antidote to the gender queering that women experienced by occupying male roles in the workforce during the war (Oldenzien, 2004).

In his role as father figure Mallory further imposes on the relationship dynamic formed between Bond and his single mother by challenging Bond's decision to return to the field, and by implication, challenging the hard-won self-determination that Bond enjoys in his work with M. As the following dialogue reveals, Mallory adopts the tone and demeanor of a father questioning his son's choice of career, and Bond's indignation prompts M to intervene in the exchange in the role of protective mother.

Mallory (standing with hands in pockets): Look, you've been seriously injured. There's no shame in admitting you've lost a step. The only shame would be in not admitting it until it's too late.

Bond: Hire me or fire me; it's entirely up to you.

M (hands knitted together, pleading to Mallory): If he says he's ready, he's ready (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

Mallory's traditional paternal masculinity affords M's character the latitude to slip out the gender queer disposition of the single parent and perform a feminine maternity in this scene that was never possible for her before. Interestingly, as soon as M relinquishes her masculinity in favor of a mild show of femininity Mallory pounces on her with charges that she lets her emotions interfere with her objectivity.

Mallory (to M): Perhaps you can't see it.

M: What are you implying?

Mallory: You're sentimental about him (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

Mallory's admonition that M is "sentimental" about Bond echoes the trite refrain of filmic fathers warning their wives not to spoil their sons. The intertextual reference herein automatically genders M by casting her as the wife. Even without the intertextual context though, Mallory's charge is highly loaded as a gendered term because it attributes her decisions to her emotions, rather than her intellect, and suggests that she lacks the ability to control her emotions, an accusation that has a long history of being used to deride women in the workplace unfairly (Harding, 1986). In this case the charge is doubly unfair since M's feminine performativity only occurred as a reflexive contrast to the hyper masculinity Mallory performed as a traditional father figure. Within the gendered context that Mallory's behavior established, any protest on M's part in favor of Bond could have been construed as feminine.

Mallory's accusation also undermines M's own previously established standard for professionalism as someone with the capacity to "judge the situation dispassionately" as she commands Bond to do in *Casino Royale* (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006). M counters Mallory's

accusation of sentimentality with the retort, “As long as I’m head of this department I’ll choose my own agents” (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). By staking her territory M evades the gendering question of emotion by asserting a masculine rhetoric about dominance. To be a man means to govern one’s own territory, and to repel attempts at invasion (Adams, 2008). M thusly performs the masculinity that Mallory has just questioned as a supervisor, but because her voice is infused with the emotion his frustrating claim has evoked, she simultaneously affirms his claims. The pregnant pause that follows, as she and Bond wait for Mallory to reply, only belies her posturing further by showing that Mallory has final authority in the matter, proving that his role as father trumps her gender queered performance as a dual mother and father single parent.

When Mallory accedes to M’s request for Bond to re-enter service, he strides over to Bond and advises him not to “cock it up,” in the mixed tone of admiration and admonition that any prodigal son might recognize. True to form Mallory delivers this final line, as any traditional father would, with one foot already out the door. This performance highlights Mallory’s masculine entreaty on the space that had previously been shared only by M and Bond; a relationship dynamic that is later reinstated when Bond and M escape to *Skyfall*. Mallory enters the familial dynamic tentatively, and then only because of his concern for Bond’s welfare, and he leaves the space in an act of seeming retreat before succumbing to too great an emotional exchange. Unlike M, who lets Mallory bait her into performing just the kind of emotionality that he claims is her weakness, Mallory is able to leave the interview with his masculine performativity untarnished. He not only gets the last word, but he chooses words that are both foul and sexually suggestive; choices that resonate in Anglo-American culture as masculine (Gilbert & Gubar, 2018).

In the following scene M is depicted affirming Mallory’s chauvinism when she candidly admits to Tanner, that in fact Bond hadn’t passed his exams, but she certified him anyway. M’s

faltering before Mallory, and her admission that he was right about how she was handling Bond coincides with M's choosing to submit to Bond's style of affect driven, rule-averse behavior affording her character an arc that tilts away from the masculine disposition she asserts early on in era two, and toward the feminine disposition that in *Skyfall* is central to affirming her maternity.

By contrast, Bond's character arcs away from affect in *Skyfall* by embracing the guidance of masculine authority figures. He does this firstly when he finally accepts Mallory's advice to be realistic about his advanced age. In their first encounter Mallory questions Bond's decision to enter the field given that "it's a young man's game." (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012) Bond discovers for himself that Mallory's claim not only applies to the physical demands of the job, but also the shifting landscape of networked terror that occupies as significant a place online as off. After the shootout in Parliament that nearly takes M's life, Bond finally accepts that he is no match for Silva in the augmented reality of the digital sphere: the shadows, that M has tried in vain to explain to her peers. Realizing that Mallory was right about the limitations of his age, Bond decides to use his age, or at least the age of the character, to his advantage by departing from the networked world. Bond ditches M's traceable Jaguar for a vintage Aston Martin that fans recognize as the original Bond car. In doing so, Craig's Bond visually steps into the world of Bonds past, signaling an end to the adolescent Bond he had played thus far. In his retro car, Bond assumes a quiet confidence as he runs away with, rather than from, his mother.

At his family's Scottish estate, Bond also seeks out the help of his avuncular former gamekeeper, Kincaid. Like Mallory, Kincaid is characterized according to masculine British stereotypes of the mid-century. Where Mallory has his three-piece Saville Row suits and Lob's lace tied shoes, Kincaid wears his tweed pants and brogue boots with his weather mac overcoat and flat cap. Each man is outfitted with fitting accents as well, and between the two, Bond has a

range of distinctly British masculinities to emulate. While practicing his marksmanship at Skyfall Bond dons a similar outdoor wear to his old shooting tutor Kincaid, but later when Bond presents himself to Mallory in the new M's offices, Bond has traded in his Italian cut suits for a three-piece suit like Mallory's. All of this subliminally reinforces the relational models of mentorship that for Anglo-American men often play out in non-verbal ways (Kimmell & Messner, 2013).

With M, Bond displays the gender queering tendencies of the only child by engaging in the feminine speech community while simultaneously bonding through the masculine ritual of shared activity. This is typical of Craig's Bond. He breaks into M's houses, database, and car, but always to communicate with her. Transgressing boundaries is his way of provoking revelatory conversations where he can express anxieties under the cover of having enacted masculinity by framing their exchange as the product of their doing something unique together. Such is the case when Bond takes the time to stop on the way to Skyfall so that they he and M can discuss what returning home means to him. M is joining him in this symbolic act, this shared activity, but that also frees the two to build their relationship through talk.

Bond has no such discussion with Kincaid while they are shooting together. Bond doesn't even tell Kincaid what he does for a living, even when Kincaid asks him as they prepare for a siege. Mallory and Bond spend no more time speaking to each other than Bond does with Kincaid. At the film's end Bond greets Mallory with a smile even though this is their first meeting after M's death. Bond only shares his feelings out loud with M, and because of this, *Skyfall* illustrates how Bond, as every man, maintains relationships differently with female and male authority figures, and in a way that requires less of the men responsible for him, than of the women. As Bond's principal confessor, and designated emotional support, M is tasked with responsibilities that would be unthinkable for a man in her role, and she resents the incumbent emotional labor that the

dynamic thrusts on her. She says as much in *Casino Royale*: “In the old days if an agent did something that embarrassing he’d have the good sense to defect. Christ, I miss the cold war!” (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006)

When the role of M is recast with a man in *Skyfall*, Moneypenny becomes Bond’s emotional support as we see in the penultimate scene of the film, where it is Moneypenny, and not Mallory who speaks to Bond about M’s passing. This exemplifies the essentialist disposition of the producers in gendering the characters moving forward; a stark contrast to the more fluid gender performativity of era two. M, whose character tried so hard to resist the maternal role her co-workers tried to affix onto her, dies in a manner that ascribes maternity to her, and as a result Moneypenny must assume the feminized role that M had performed prior, leaving Mallory to perform the role of M in the professional, managerial style that Dench’s M had tried to do.

**f. Take my wife... please!**

As the third act of *Skyfall* gets underway with Bond absconding to Scotland in order to trap Silva, Mallory asserts himself as the head of MI-6 even before his figurative wife, M, has died. Mallory’s promotion of sorts occurs at the semiotic level when he discovers Q and Tanner working unofficially for Bond, and condones their conduct. Condoning Bond’s plan is Mallory’s way of placing the same trust in Bond’s risky methods that M had; the same trust M had to justify to Mallory earlier. When Mallory adopts M’s trust in Bond, he adopts her role as a guardian of the 00s. This is the moment where Mallory inherits his role from M, in the eyes of the audience, except that where M had to dither for years over the correctness of her affording so much trust in Bond during his formative years as an agent, Mallory assumes M’s role at MI-6 with the issue resolved in his mind. In effect, Mallory adopts Bond from M only after Bond has already been fully raised. Mallory’s privileged adoption reflects the unspoken understanding of the audience that his male

'M' is not an embattled middle manager, but rather a fully trusted and powerfully endowed government authority; or to paraphrase Stock (2000) Mallory's M is once again more admiral than accountant.

Pointedly, Mallory takes over his role as Bond's sole guardian in a traditionally masculine retro setting that confirms for the audience that the dynamic for Bond and his new 'M' will play out sans the gender queering dynamics of era two. The new office for Mallory's M is decorated with wood paneling and leather chairs in the style of an English study, where Mallory has summoned his dutiful son to brief him (hint brief), and provide instructions. Outside his solid oak door, covered with padding in an old-fashioned method of blocking noise, Mallory has a pretty young secretary who greets his guests in an outer office.

Mallory's new digs are situated in Whitehall, the mid-century British Headquarters for all military intelligence. River House, the contemporary office site for MI-6 that had been first introduced in the series when Dench took over the role of 'M', has been abandoned as a base of operations, and Mallory's literal move to Whitehall implies a figurative return to the MI-6 of old. In these environs Mallory greets Bond with the masculine greeting of a firm handshake: a reward for a job well done symbolizing Bond's welcome to manhood.

#### **4. The hell with dignity**

The crucial underlying implication from the start of *Skyfall* is that M is in need of rescue; if not from bodily harm, then from impending termination, and thereby from a position of authority in society. Her job security is vanquished, her reputation is tarnished, and her positionality is compromised. The source of all these threats is a breach in MI-6 cyber security that exposes the identities of NATO agents in the field. The loss of the digital file is the impetus for M's downfall. In its pursuit she alienates Bond, and in losing the file she is accused of incompetence. From this

specific incident M is being threatened in a myriad number of ways that clearly aim to undermine the confidence and authority that had previously been key to her masculinity.

To provide an exit for Dench's M the writers conceived of a complex plotline that threatened to put the 00 program, as well as Bond and M out to pasture. Wherein other Bond films MI-6 uses 00 agents on behalf of global security, in *Skyfall* the 00 program must defend itself. As in many Bond films the threat the 00 program must counter is produced by a villain playing two sides against one another. In early Bond films SPECTRE sought to manipulate the Cold War powers. In *Skyfall* former 00 agent turned nefarious hacker, Silva, infiltrates MI-6 security by exploiting the weaknesses of digital technology and proceeds to publicly humiliate them by methodically revealing the identities of their 00 agents in the field. The result of this is that the 00 program comes under intense government scrutiny, M is fired, and in response to videos of undercover agents being executed- public sentiment turns against the practice of human intelligence gathering.

The conflict then exists only for adherents to the "old ways" of human intelligence gathering- a practice the film does much to defend in the service of justifying the continued need for spies like Bond in a networked global society. As the chief proponents of using 00 agents Bond and M also view with suspicion networked media technologies, which they realize Silva is using to drive out human intelligence gathering and usher in an age of technologically dependent security apparatuses that hackers, like Silva, can use to consolidate power. Both Silva and those who would unwittingly extend his reach in misguided attempts to stop him are therefore attacking M.

When Silva and his henchman intrude on the hearing, and begin firing openly at the attendees, M does not cover or hide, as others are seen doing in the background. Instead, she stands to face him and makes direct eye contact. It is an act of bravery and defiance that adheres

to her performance of masculinity in the face of enemies. But M's performativity, and Silva's shot are both thwarted when Mallory leaps from behind and physically pushes M out of the way. Because of his intervention, Mallory takes a bullet for M, presumably using his superior muscle mass as a shield for her comparatively fragile frame. Seconds later, M is again physically controlled by a man, when Tanner climbs on top of her and forces her bodily out of the line of fire.

The shootout in parliament serves as a bridge between the second and third acts of the film, and also between the gendering depiction of M as a wife and mother, and her transformation in the third act into the figurative role of child. M's physical vulnerability ultimately becomes the single factor that is shown to gender her in a more feminine way, and is central to her role in the third act of the film.

M: 007, what the hell is going on? Are you kidnapping me?

Bond: That would be one way of looking at it.

M: Too many people are dying because of me.

Bond: If he wants you, he's gonna have to come and get you. We've been one step behind Silva from the start. It's time to get out in front; change the game.

M: And I'm to be the bait? Alright, just us, no one else (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

M concedes her authority to Bond after the shootout in parliament because she recognizes that his ability to combat a physical threat trumps her strategic abilities in this scenario. Bond's physical ability has always compensated for his lack of strategy in times of crisis, and M depends upon this again drawing on long held beliefs about the function of masculinity in the way cultures envision gender politics. Among these beliefs is the notion that masculinity is tied to bodily strength and ability (Holmlund, 2013), and therefore the more masculine male is biologically afforded an advantage over the female. Many chauvinists use such logic to justify imbalances in the participation in, and control of, social institutions. The gist of this dynamic is that men

are afforded more social agency and cultural authority because this is commensurate with the added physical power with which their bodies have been endowed (Hartley, 2013). Current understandings of gender, sex, and cultural anthropology illustrate how flawed this type of reasoning is. Bodies are shaped by cultural beliefs and practices and the real distinction between men and women is not really about strength in a biological sense, but rather about how our cultures dictate bodies to be conditioned and developed (DuCat, 2005; Foucault, 1977; Gardiner, 2012). In large part the media participates in the cultural dispositions about shaping bodies to meet specific gender role expectations (Franklin, 1988; Forth, 2008; Holmlund, 2013).

However current Anglo beliefs about men and women have developed, for viewing audiences there is still a strong identification between the notion of masculinity and muscularity, or between manliness and a body's ability to tolerate punishment, or perform in athletic ways; particularly in combat with other muscular, able bodies. Conditioning the male body is a primary nonverbal form of communicating masculinity (Jeffords, 1995; Tasker, 2012). The writers and producers of *Skyfall* exploited these stereotypical audience interpretations to craft a third act narrative that gendered M as a woman by virtue of her need for rescue. She is rescued first during the Parliamentary hearing, then again at *Skyfall* when Kincaid sneaks her out through the priest's hole, and once more when Bond kills Silva seconds before Silva shoots M.

M's speech community transforms at *Skyfall*. She goes from being snide and loquacious to being quiet and submissive. She no longer commands or asserts herself, but instead she becomes very apologetic and grateful. For example, M thanks Kincaid for a shawl to keep her warm, rather than demanding one as she would have at the film's start. She is given her responsibilities in preparation of Silva's arrival, and she complies without protest or comment. M becomes a domesticated female character and the way she communicates with Bond is no longer sharp or

commanding, but quiet and respectful. In line with claims about the feminine speech community M deferred during her time at Skyfall to the greater experience of the men around her in order to avoid conflict. Her newfound communication style signaled a shift toward a more collaborative approach to those around her that differed greatly from the competitive form of talk that M performed in the vein of the masculine speech community throughout era two, and the first half of *Skyfall* (Coates, 1986; Wood, 2012).

Bond takes M in hand in *Skyfall* by abducting her bodily, and then by asserting his authority by withholding information, and controlling her physical environment. Yet this fact belies a contradiction in the logic of the film. Bond had earlier blamed M for the loss of an agent under her command, but after M dies under Bond's authority Bond does not assume blame for her death, neither in *Skyfall*, nor in *Spectre*. Bond's failure to save M isn't positioned as an example of his incompetence; it is merely a matter of heroism, just as Bond's persistent inability to achieve his mission's objective without violating specific orders is never presented to the audience as a mark of incompetence. This is a fascinating contradiction in the identity maintenance of Bond as a character, particularly given that while the franchise has ignored it, a plethora of other media texts have highlighted it in different, but very explicit ways. The TV shows: *Archer*, *Get Smart*, and movies like *Spy*, *Johnny English* and *The Pink Panther* have all used the incompetence of a male super-spy modeled after Bond as their conceit for humor. In these films many of Bond's trademark idiosyncrasies are mocked as illogical, impractical, implausible, marks of an incompetent agent.

**a. These heels are killing me!**

A feminist reading of *Skyfall*'s subtext could be viewed as a bridge text in accordance with the definition by Duggan and Hunter (2006), that this film provides an illustration of the relationship between different feminist approaches and thereby bridges the discourses of techno-

masculinity with the more studied tradition of gender performance in constructing a queer sexuality. As such, *Skyfall* can be interpreted as remedying the implicit queering of the franchise's core characters during era two by fully embracing the tradition of queering that has been occurring through the relationship between Bond and M. M is disenfranchised by gender stereotyping, yes. But why is this long narrative so crucial to *Skyfall* and not the films of era two? The answer is that M was gendered as a woman, specifically in order to make the specious attack on her competence palatable to audiences used to seeing women portrayed as incompetent with technology. Had M always performed a consistent feminine performativity than the work of gendering would not have been necessary, but because of her gender queer performativity M was insulated at the start of *Skyfall* from the stereotyping that action films traditionally employ to discredit woman as able users of technology. In queering the franchise in full, producers have finally cleared the slate and allowed a full return to the traditional gender norms evident in the original series. Their approach to this requires that they reframe M as a maternal figure, and degrade her substance as an authority, while paradoxically embracing Bond's queer sensibility thereby recasting him as confident in his heterosexuality, and assured in his performance of hegemonic masculinity.

M's death resolves all things; it frees Craig's Bond to resume the character identity of the original Bond archetype undaunted by maternal fealty, and restores his masculinity by allowing him to kill the queering influence of his mother. It further resolves the gender revisions that M's female incarnation had brought about in the franchise by tying the franchise's gender regression (as signified by M's death) with plotlines about emerging technologies. Bond finally achieves the cognitive dissonance that M tells him he must adopt in their first scene together in *Casino Royale* by witnessing her death. With her gone, the mother/child relationship between them collapses into Bond's gender affirming relationship with Mallory. As M's replacement, Mallory is allowed to

not only usurp the position of his female predecessor, but the credibility she established through years of combative relations with Bond and the government. Mallory is then playing the victor enjoying the spoils of M's hard work by enjoying a status his character did not earn. Indeed, Mallory's status as a credible head of MI-6 comes specifically at M's expense. She had to die fighting a powerful hacker before her argument in favor of an augmented, but not wholly digitized intelligence agency could be accepted.

M's death in the face of a cyber-villain simplifies the onscreen portrayals of gender by eliminating the gender queer M, and replacing her with a cis-gendered Moneypenny who happily sits just outside the sanctum of power, where questions of technology are left in the capable hands of men. This narrative development illustrates the manner in which techno-masculism threatens women's gains in the workforce, primarily by implication (Kvasny, 2006). If technology is coded as the male domain then its prominent debut as the new functional center of the working world displaces the authority gained by professional women as their specific talents are subordinated to a perceived ineptitude with technology (Oldenzeil, 2004). Whether or not the perception proves true, women are burdened with having to demonstrate an already established competence in order to regain respect as a professional (McRobbie, 2000). The prevalence of technology also brings with it an attitude of masculine privilege that upsets the establishment (Marvin, 1988) at a time when women have only recently achieved hard won gains (McRobbie, 2000), and inserts a new performance demand that is heavily biased against working women (Kvasny, 2006).

#### **D. The Last Rats Standing: Regressing Bond**

The most regular commutation of any character type in the Bond franchise occurs for the villains. Not only are there often new villains and hench-people in each film, but when villains do recur they are more frequently re-cast than other supporting characters. Even though Bond's arch-

nemesis, Ernst Blofeld appeared in only five of the 007 franchise films before *Skyfall*, the character was played by four different actors. By comparison, Bond has appeared in nearly five times as many films as Blofeld, but has only been played by nine actors thus far. The Villain is a crucial character type to consider in the franchise because it is the villains that Bond defeats who provide the most direct contrast to his core identity, and the most explicit counter to his performative masculinity.

Silva appears in *Skyfall* as the consummate Bond villain. He symbolically represents an amalgamation of past villains, and therefore a more cohesive challenge to Bond's masculinity. Silva also personifies new media technologies as a counter to Bond's personification of an analogue augmented man. As models for both competing masculinities and competing technological landscapes, the two characters provide a discursive platform that allows us to interpret the overlapping significations of technology and gender in a global networked society.

### **1. It's all about who you know**

Though era one only highlighted the connections between SPECTRE's various members, era two made the social network its primary narrative consideration. In the world of espionage, the social network is a critical concept because it is often the spy's job to infiltrate the network of the enemy and obtain information by these means. In network analysis terms, Bond's goal is to map the networks of his enemies in order to identify its nodes, and their density, the circuits through which they communicate, and the reachability that ultimately draws him to the network's main actor (Carrington, et al., 2005; Scott, 2017).

By mapping the social networks of the villains he meets in person, Bond embraces the augmented reality of a networked digital culture. As a reminder, the concept of augmented reality suggests that because so many people engage simultaneously in crafting identities on and offline

that it is no longer possible to entirely disengage one's self from the online identity without altering the identity of the person offline (Jurgenson, 2012). Social networks and augmented realities are two different concepts that tie together in contemporary culture because of how our technologies are used. The concept of an augmented reality depends on the notion that a social network exists through our devices because augmented reality not only asserts that we view the world differently because of our dependence on technologies, but that we establish an identity online through technological devices that is recognizable to us and to others. In order for individuals to express their identities online it is necessary for those identities to be seen and recognized by others when social networks are established online. Indeed, one of the most salient illustrations of the augmented realities we experience is the social network that we communicate with through social media web sites. Having X number of friends, or followers, and knowing that many of them may only keep tabs with you by means of a social media profile reifies the abstract concept of a social network by cataloguing it in a visible format (Vitak, Blasiola, Patil & Litt, 2015).

In *Casino Royale* the augmented reality of the terrorist network becomes their weakness. The network leaves digital traces of their interactions behind on their devices with the result that Bond can see through their cover identities and establish their roles in the terrorist network. Bond's primary goal in *Casino Royale* is to map a terrorist network. From his first encounter with the treasonous MI-6 station chief onward every new contact Bond meets leads him to another, almost uniformly by virtue of their use of mobile phones.

**a. Another network, not my own**

In era one the social network of the enemy was given a name, SPECTRE, and its members recurred across films. The terrorist network of era two was not yet named in *Casino Royale* but its existence was already presumed. M assigns Bond to map the social network of terrorists. He does

so by following their digital network to the central node, a banker who services them all. The third act culminates when Bond realizes that, after all his work mapping an elaborate network of terrorists, he is betrayed by his newfound love Vesper Lynd. Realizing that the terrorist network he sought to uncover was now joined with his own social network proved pivotal to his character's arc.

Vesper's betrayal in *Casino Royale* informs Bond's approach to his work, but in turn it influences the ways that his professional conduct reflects his masculinity. As she does in the books, the on-screen Vesper Lynd serves as the first woman to entice Bond only to betray him afterward. Her character is one that Bond trusts implicitly, and the impact of her betrayal can be read as justification for Bond's ensuing mistrust of women and relationships with them, personal and professional. Bond loves Vesper, so much so, that he proposes quitting his job and moving away with her. This admission about his feelings belies the cold exterior Bond adopts in his work and reveals to the audience vulnerability and a capacity for emotional expression that is uncharacteristic for the filmic Bond of era one. Before Bond uncovers Vesper's duplicity, he tenders his resignation from MI-6 so that they can marry. His decision to break his existing network ties for a life with her reveals the tenuous strength of his connection to MI-6. Vesper's death at the hands of a villainous terrorist network induces him to remain a 00 agent so that he can avenge her by tracking down the men behind her killing, ironically strengthening Bond's ties to MI-6 just as quickly as the prospect of a life with her had threatened them.

Vesper's ability to hack Bond's network of one compromises him as an agent in both narrative terms, and within the metaphor of a social network analyst. In the age of hyper-vigilance Bond let his guard down and let the enemy into his bed. Bond allowed his own network to be hacked. As a spy Bond is meant to be the hacker, because in effect spying is hacking. Bond is not

just charged with mapping the networks of terrorists, he must infiltrate them in order to understand their internal mechanisms, and anticipate their future actions.

Bond's mandate for vengeance carries over into *Quantum of Solace*, though his methods of mapping networks become more intuitive. The primary lead that Bond follows in *Quantum of Solace* comes from analysts at MI-6, who have been tracing individual bank notes in order to identify associates of Mr. White. Bond follows this clue to Haiti and pursues a series of social ties to a concert in Austria being used as a cover for the network to gather and communicate using earpieces that make them indistinguishable from the large number of other audience members. When Bond finds himself surrounded by the many nodes on the terrorist network he is pursuing, he uses his cell phone and an earpiece he acquires to improvise a way of flushing out the terrorists from the remainder of the audience and then captures their images for identification.

The titular terrorist cabal Bond uncovers in *Quantum of Solace* is found to be a cartel of business people using underhanded methods to consolidate control of the global water supply for commercial interests. The threat to British national security by this endeavor is not clear and present, so much as it is indicative of the dangerous array of alliances that modern nation states undertake in order to maintain hegemony. M's gravest concern about the plot Bond uncovers is that it evidences the CIA's role in deliberately manipulating governments in return for oil rights. As the C.I.A. and MI-6 operate as allies the evidence of their malfeasance, and of Britain's choice to allow it, undermines the integrity of their own democratic institutions.

As in *Casino Royale*, the critical threat to democracy in *Quantum of Solace* comes not from a network of villains working against the system of hegemonic control dominated by western democracies, but rather from a villainous network within the system. The Bond producers illustrated this newfound geo-political dynamic in the form of a complex social network that's

elaborate structure stymies Bond with the same structural dilemma that users of social network websites face every day; a dilemma known as a context collapse. The term context collapse refers to the problems that can arise when a single person tries to cultivate an online identity using one online profile visible to the broad spectrum of their social contacts. Many social media users have experienced some level of context collapse when they post a message only to have it read out of context by different people who know them in different contexts (Binder, et. al., 2009).

The threat of context collapse speaks to the importance of context in understanding messages and their meanings. Context collapse is made even more complicated by the dynamics of social media that reward users for their continued expression, and actively try to promote the sense that social media sites are safe spaces for individuals to share (Vitak, 2012). In reality, social media sites depend on broadcast messaging in order to thrive, and when individual users forget to craft their messages with a view to communicating their message to a broad audience the likelihood of context collapse increases (Marwick, 2011; Vitak, Blasiola, Patil, & Litt, 2015). In the Bond universe, context collapse illustrates the shifting ground that MI-6 navigates as globalization, and geo-political de-polarization extend the reach of networks small and large.

When a Minister of Parliament defends England's dealings with anti-democratic figures to M in *Quantum of Solace*, he justifies it in protectionist terms, claiming "If we refuse to do business with villains, we'd have almost no one to trade with." He then frames Britain's dilemma as a second-tier global power to their third-party cold war positionality when he says, "The world's running out of oil M. The Russians aren't playing ball; the Americans and Chinese are dividing up what's left. Right or wrong doesn't come into it. We're acting out of necessity" (Broccoli & Forster, 2008). The Minister's frustration emanates from the demoralizing position the country is in, but also how the nation's impotence in controlling resources has forced them to compromise

their network of allies in direct conflict with the role they so meaningfully carved out during the cold war as a trusted mediator between superpowers (Woodward, 2004).

Britain's expanded network, and embrace of questionable nodes leaves M with her own context collapse as she attempts to retain credibility as head of MI-6, while navigating the political minefield that threatens to blow her up with one false step. As Bond sees it the new mandate for MI-6 is to carry on fighting for democracy and justice, but from M's vantage point those values are no longer practical guidelines for action. Not only does M need to map the world's social networks, she also has to navigate the intersections between Britain's network of alliances, and the networks of evildoers that pose a threat to the public safety.

Globalization subsumes the independent mandate of the United Kingdom, making every decision a political one. The cold war has dissipated, economic exchange has expanded, and the question of economic interests subsumes the concept of national security. In turn, MI-6 no longer asserts an independent prerogative on national security threats. By the time *Skyfall* begins, M's decision-making powers have been usurped by the intervening voices of government bureaucrats advocating for competing national interests. Era one also showed politics driving MI-6 as well, but in era one the political dimensions that M had to navigate were more clear-cut because the enemies MI-6 faced were operating to undermine western interests. SPECTRE was a terrorist organization that sought to destabilize relations between east and west by positioning itself outside the bipolar geo-strategic dynamic that the cold war created. Era two sees SPECTRE like groups colluding with the United States in a dynamic contrary to the one imagined in era one.

The figurative context collapses that Bond and M face in era two extend equally to their job performances, and thereby to their performances of gender. Just as The U.K. and U.S. are portrayed undermining democracy in *Quantum of Solace* in order to achieve the necessary ends of

survival, so too are M and Bond shown to engage in questionable tactics. M allows Bond to escape in Bolivia, after capturing him there at the Minister's direction. Having to reign Bond in from pursuing the very terrorist network she so adamantly ordered him to defeat undermines her hard won masculinity by revealing the limits of her authority as a middle manager. Bond is equally compromised through his encounter with M, whose presence is framed as a context collapse even before she is seen onscreen. When Bond returns to his hotel room, he crosses paths with Camille, who gives him a note to run. Bond assumes her note refers to enemies awaiting him, only to find that it is M Camille is warning him about. The lecture M provides next emphasizes how Bond's identity in the field collapses when M arrives. As part of a running byplay in *Quantum of Solace*, M criticizes Bond's habit of killing the nodes in the network he is mapping before getting information from them. In this particular scene she reveals how Bond's associate was treated the same way by his foes, inversely exposing how Bond's violent tendencies and his hyper-sexuality reflect his own moral hypocrisy.

**b. All in a day's work**

Bond's newfound insecurity about his identity as a British agent in era two is exacerbated by a world where Britain does business with terrorists, complicating his sense of masculine integrity. As the stalwart of hegemonic masculinity personifying Britain, Bond's ambiguous mandate in the new geo-strategic model hampers his ability to valorize his country's honor. Having to escape from his own agency cements for the audience Bond's compromised positionality now that he operates in a globalized geo-strategic spectrum where "good and bad don't come into it" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2008). His new positionality, and the ferocity with which he gives vent to his frustration about it, harkens back to the "crisis of masculinity" that men reported in the nineties,

and that scholars tie to the rise of globalization, automation, and neo-liberal trade policies Carroll (2011).

*Skyfall* continues discourses of context collapse by adapting the figurative context collapses presented in eras one and two through MI-6's offline social network to the digital age. In *Skyfall*, Silva uses the Internet to expose the identities of undercover NATO agents who have mapped and infiltrated offline terrorist networks. In eras one and two, Bond is a company man (Soter, 1996; Chapman, 2005). Like the skilled laborers who work, sometimes generations in a row, for a single car manufacturer Bond is loyal to his employer, and builds his life around his job. Bond's identity, like other masculine action heroes is integrally tied to his work. Bond needs to be a secret agent to perform the skills that prove his hegemonic masculinity. Similarly, the working-class masculine identity is reinforced by the idea that workers are making machines (Cockburn & Ormrod, 1993). The masculinity of the manufacturing technologist is now being usurped by that of the digital technologist who works with machines that have the capability to extend power further, and to greater affect (Massey, 1995).

Bond's face off with Silva reflects the broader cultural conflict posed by techno-masculine programmers and hackers against the metaphoric muscle of the blue-collar factory worker. Silva's mastery of digital technology is established by his ability to hack MI-6, twice- firstly through the gas main system at their River House headquarters, and then again in their WWII era underground bunker. But Silva's advantage over Bond is not just that he has this technological ability, but that, unlike Bond he his technological ability doesn't tie to his embodiment. Though some today argue for the notion of augmented reality in an extreme form that obviates the reality of embodiment as a tool of social capital (Jurgenson, 2012), working class workers face authentic offline threats to their employability if they experience injury, illness, or chronic disability (Carroll, 2011). Nurses,

policeman, factory and domestic workers, are just some of the majority of Anglo-American laborers whose jobs depend intrinsically on their physical abilities (Horowitz, 2013), just as Bond is required to be physically able in order to perform in his capacity as a field agent. In *Skyfall* Bond's re-entry to MI-6 is made contingent on this point, and Bond's weakness for having been shot is emphasized as the source of his newfound inability to perform as needed (Dodds, 2014).

M chooses to overlook Bond's ineligibility as a show of generational sympathy because she too is being phased out by the rise of developing technology, and it is presumed that because she sympathizes with Bond on this overlap in their job insecurity that she decides to authorize him for active duty despite his failing the requisite exams. What is interesting about the parallel between M and Bond is that to some degree they are outwitted by Silva as a result of their long success at MI-6. While Bond and M have been pre-occupied with the tasks implicit in running human espionage networks, Silva has been afforded an opportunity by way of marginalization to develop a new skill set that ultimately serves to upend their position of power. In the heart of the metaphoric shadows prominently discussed in *Skyfall* Silva operates unsupervised in establishing a skill set that so advanced that its applications have not yet been touched by government regulation. As the film asserts, Silva's career change from MI-6 skilled laborer to underworld hacker was timely for a man seeking revenge. Silva emerges from the margins to the mainstream as a formidable counter to the established power structure represented in the person of Bond.

Silva is not Bond's younger counterpart; in fact, his service dates from 1986 to 1997, meaning that he pre-dated Bond as a 00 by twenty years. Yet, Silva has immersed himself in developing the skills of a hacker, whereas Bond has served a career dedicated to maintaining literal and figurative networks of power. The contrast illustrates that in his long-plotted revenge Silva has identified the key duty of espionage agencies: to maintain network integrity. Bond, as some

scholars have identified (Calisi, 1989) is positioned as a moral hero, designated to protect the world. In practice, what this means is that Bond protects the world as it is, under the implied belief that this is as it should be. He does not protect the people of the world from any atrocity, only those that threaten the status quo, and the people who are served by it. Gallagher (2006, p. 9) identifies Bond's unflinching devotion to his nation as "willful blindness" to the disintegrating state of western powers. This blindness allows Bond to identify with an imperial power whose post-colonial reckoning makes up much of his work. Bond, of course, assumes his cause is always just (South, 2006). "More often than not however, Bond [is] fighting to keep the world free not for, but from democracy" (Landa, 2006, p. 89).

By transitioning his focus from the offline networks that are the backbone of Anglo-American geo-strategic supremacy, to the developing digital networks that bind social, financial, and government institutions together Silva re-establishes his strategic value, in effect restoring his identity as a crucial player in the transaction of global affairs. The word transaction here is chosen carefully because it reflects how we deconstruct the assemblage of workplace masculinity. Before the rise of digital networks, skilled labor was depended upon to sustain industries known for their trans-national reach, and their national importance (Hearn, et al., 2013). The United States rose to economic dominance after World War II specifically because its industry remained intact and capable of serving the needs of a widely expanded market in Europe where industry had been systematically decimated. Consequently, American companies became, in their service to a global market, distinctly American (Go, 2008). Their success served as a marker of national pride. To work for a prominent American company during these times then imbued the laborer with what Weber (1930) explained in his theory of the Halo as a refracted sense of value. Skilled laborers were not just earning money through their work, they were supporting the national economy, and

by extension national interests. To build a car for Ford carried the symbolic weight of contributing to America's international esteem (Franklin, 1988; Buchbinder, 1994), just as Bond's work in protecting the interests of the British, and more often, American, governments earned him personal glory in the service of his nation (Patton, 2005).

Though Silva worked for MI-6, and presumably must have been a citizen of either the United Kingdom or one of the Commonwealth nations, his darker skin, and his accent exhibit Silva's trans-national disposition, an identity trait that conflicts with Bond's embodiment of Britishness as a cis-gendered heterosexual white man. *Skyfall* illustrates this notably when a transnational Silva invites Bond to join him in a global perspective, which Bond refutes out of love for the country he identifies by name as "England" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Later we see that Bond was born and raised in Scotland, part of the UK but not England. In effect Bond is being asked to affirm his own trans nationality in this scene and his refusal evidences the significance of that factor in his identity as a normative being. Silva notes his Hispanic heritage and the fact that his grandmother owned a small-unpopulated island, reinforcing the idea that Silva (or Tiago Rodriguez by birth) represents a convert to British culture from one of its distant colonies. This is similar to Bond, who is revealed to be Scottish born, and like Silva, trained to believe in the supremacy of the British Empire. Thus, when Silva tries to convert Bond by mocking "the empire" he is speaking as one colonized brother to another. Silva's choice to double cross M by working with the Chinese also implies disaffection from national ties. Notably Silva refers to MI-6 as serving 'the empire' whereas Bond refers to his country during his psyche exam specifically as 'England'. Silva is read as British by affiliation, a fragmented identity where race and nationality have been subordinated to imperial identity.

Silva's transnational identity adheres to the nationless identity of the modern hacker (Wark, 2006; Castells, 2011). The hacker identity that Silva represents in *Skyfall* bares no national ties or identity. As a former 00 Silva can also be presumed to have once personified his nation, as Bond does. As Bond's predecessor, Silva was a maverick agent working in Hong Kong under section chief, M. M discovered he had been hacking the Chinese without permission and so he was handed over to them in order to guarantee "the successful transition" of Hong Kong from the U.K. to China (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). This is a telling story because it frames Silva as having once been a believer in the empire, a rogue agent willing to sabotage Chinese independence in order to serve his imperial master, but has now transformed into an enemy of the British state, empowered by the agency he asserts independently.

Silva is the anti-Bond; he is the ultimate villain because he represents the tacit understanding from the beginning of the franchise, that Bond and the villains he faces are only different because of whom they choose to serve. Bond serves the white capitalist patriarchy where he is rewarded for his loyalty with status and masculine adoration, while the villains he faces serve their own ends, and in the process represent an anarchic state. Notice that this is the world that Silva offers to Bond when they meet. Silva does not talk of working together in order to control the world, but rather of the power inherent in being able to disrupt it. Ironically though, Silva's anarchistic view of the world is not born out of a desire for revolution, rather it is rooted in a desire for self-aggrandizement. By disrupting the white capitalist patriarchy that used him and discarded him, Silva proves his own value, and finally compensates for the inadequacy that he feels for having been exploited.

Silva has no qualms about exploitation once he has the power to do it. He participates in human trafficking, as we know from his relationship with Severine. Silva uses panic to force an

entire community from their home in order to take control of the island. This shows that while Silva opposes the institutions that exploited him, he does not object to their methods. Silva's failures as an ideologue are a significant factor in assessing his signification for the film. Silva is not a revolutionary who is driven by belief, he is an opportunist driven by a desire to compensate for his own inadequacies. In part, this is signified by his focus on MI-6 as a target that must be undone specifically by exposing its vulnerabilities. He begins this process, by drawing out his successor in the 00 program to explicate latent ties that bound their networks together even without Bond knowing it.

## **2. The chimera**

In order to track down Silva, Bond sneaks aboard Silva's yacht, The Chimera, as it sets off for days at sea to reach Silva's lair; an un-named island that has been abandoned by the locals and left covered by a yellow dust that evokes references to China, India, North Africa, and Central America all at once. As the name Chimera suggests, Bond's first encounter with Silva turns out to have been only an illusion of success for Bond. But the trip also plays on the signification of a chimera using its alternative definition. A chimera also refers alternately to plants, Greek mythology, and genetics, to signify a hybridization of two things. (Chimera, 1998; Chimera, 2007; Rogers, 2018). In *Skyfall* the chimera references the inversion of Bond's identity that he encounters in Silva.

Though Silva, as we'll discuss presently, is novel in some ways, his function as an inversion of Bond's identity is not new. While Bond, as a character, has remained little changed since his inception, Bond villains are constantly appearing and adapting so that the fixed cultural entity of Bond, as a cultural holdover is perpetually being challenged by the contemporary reality as embodied by the villains he encounters. That Bond is counterbalanced by the un-real

supervillain, typically replete with some augmented ability (Bennett & Woolacott, 1987; Taliaferro & Le Gall, 2006), accords with Pastor's theory of "the inverted body" in visual narratives depicting gendered otherness. Pastor claims, "these inverted images go beyond being 'strange' or extravagant, they culturally evolve to a radical Otherness, opposed to the cultural concept of normality" (Pastor, 2006 p. 8).

As Bond successfully operates on both sides of what Donovan (2010) calls "the eminence/dominance dichotomy", he therefore represents the acceptable other in Pastor's equation. While Bond asserts through his "free male sexuality" (Bennett & Woolacott, 1987), he is also an image conscious consumer, and a cultural aesthete (Simpson, 2006). In modern terms this is frequently known as the metrosexual (Kaye, 2009). Silva flaunts his style in ways that transgress Bond's performance of metrosexual ideal. Bond is what Pastor terms the "acceptable" other (2006, p. 19). Bond successfully balances his metrosexual tendencies with a calculated show of contemporary heterosexuality. Much like real life sex symbol and noted metrosexual David Beckham, Bond travels the world performing exceptional physical feats and is widely known for his audacious style choices and his willingness to expose his body for public consumption (Rahman, 2004; Winder, 2006; Halloran, 2005; Lindner, 2009).

The concept of the metrosexual problematizes the straight/gay binary that for so long has dominated the cultural discourse, and highlights the distinctively queer inclinations behind a man who transgresses gender norms by undertaking a feminine interest in his appearance and demeanor. Bond exemplifies culturally accepted metrosexual queerness in part because of his refinement mixed with rugged masculinity, but also because he is understood by his audiences to abide by a moral code that syncs with homo-normative values (Taliaferro & Le Gall, 2006). By contrast, Bond's nemeses, who forsake normative values take the role of the dandy. Baudelaire

(1964) described the Victorian dandy as the wealthy, physically fragile, man who doggedly pursues personal happiness (Kaye, 2009). Dandies were gendered-queered for similar reasons to the modern metrosexual, but were considered to lack the normalizing function of expressed heterosexual desire that affords metrosexuals respect (Kaye, 2009). Simpson (2002) makes it clear that dandies and metrosexuals are not evolutions of one type but two distinct variations of queer. Unlike the metrosexual, who is concretely recognized as both heterosexual and male, the gender transgression of the Victorian dandy was extreme enough that a modern corollary would more aptly be the transsexual (Davis, 2008). This appears so in the Bond franchise. Whereas Bond puts his queer sensibilities to work securing hegemony as a spy, the villains he faces surrender to the temptations presented by what M calls a life “in the shadows” (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012).

The terrorist network SPECTRE, is overseen by the dandiest of them all: Ernest Stavros Blofeld, also known as ‘No. 1’. Blofeld’s queerness comes largely from his own place as an administrator of villainy, rather than an active terrorist. As Morris (2002) and Monaghan (2002) have found in their separate studies of male performativity, gender is revealed as much by a failure to perform competently to cultural expectations as it is by competent performance. Blofeld is rarely seen in full, much less in action. His bejeweled hands rest astride the arms of his wheelchair, or else stroke his pet cat, while he dispatches an army of henchmen, who in turn play central roles as villains themselves, in order to complete their work in taking over the world. The dandy is beyond being image conscious- he is cautious about undertaking any activity that may interfere with or impair his appearance (Kaye, 2009, Simpson, 2002). Blofeld metes out his dirty work to a network of fit men (and women) signaling that he himself lacks the physical prowess to defeat the world's most-manly super-agent. This perception is reinforced for the audience by the tendency of Blofeld, and other villains, to evade physical combat with Bond even when he is within reach.

Silva escalates the dandified queer performativity of the Bond villain that Blofeld epitomizes. In his first encounter with Bond, Silva challenges Bond's metrosexual performativity, by caressing Bond and partially undresses him while laying on flirty innuendo that Bond counters. When Silva suggests this as Bond's introduction to queer sex play Bond seductively replies "what makes you think it's my first time" causing Silva to flush in surprise (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). This scene discursively addresses a key question that Bond's metrosexual identity has always skirted in previous films. How does a purportedly heterosexual man like Bond retain his masculinity when his entire career depends on his ability to penetrate queer domains in pursuit of queer villains.

Silva's appearance, hailed as significant because he is the first openly gay villain, only builds on the longstanding presumption of queerness among Bond villains. Aside from their requisite physical abnormalities, Bond villains have generally demonstrated a frailty that popular culture interprets as a queering of their character. Silva's intertwined performances of sexuality and violence echoes the traditions of the franchise, but by actualizing the conceit of a villain seducing Bond by pawing Bond's body in their first encounter Silva brings the latent homoeroticism of the villain hero dynamic to a manifest exchange. This amplifies the danger Bond faces as an agent of the state, by illustrating how much of his identity is jeopardized by his willingness to pursue the enemy. Bond risks more than his life in his dangerous pursuits, he risks his masculinity, and the integrity of the nation he represents.

Through these specific alterations the producers present Silva as a perversion of Bond's ideal 00 in a more manifest form than ever before. He is a consummate villain, and cannot be read otherwise, yet is also the proto-Bond, once M's favored agent, once the most reliable 00. Even the fact that Silva went rogue during his mission, the pretext upon which M ultimately fired him for,

mirrors Bond's identity. As such, Silva symbolizes the commonality between the Bond archetype and the Bond villain archetype just as much as he signifies an inversion of era two's Bond specifically. In Silva's eyes this makes them brothers; a symbolic identity that notably draws upon their common gender.

**a. The shadows**

M is proven right to have suspected that her tormentor was someone like Bond, that came from the world of the shadows that Mallory argues no longer exist in the seemingly transparent digitized world. Notably, Mallory describes the shadows as the place where villains gather on the margins, but in her description of it, M sees it as interlaced with the everyday world. When she says, "He's one of us. He comes from the same place as Bond; the place you say doesn't exist: the shadows," M identifies the shadows as a common birthplace for the world's marginal identities. An assertion bolstered by the fact that she recruited both Silva and Bond from marginalized roles as outcasts. The shadows, therefore are not distinct from the world that M Bond protects, they are a part of it.

As a spy, Bond must work in the shadows. There he confronts the facets of hegemonic social controls that most Britons and Americans prefer to ignore. His interactions with deviants wishing to challenge white capitalist patriarchy taint him by association. As M intones in a dramatic speech during *Skyfall*, the agents of MI-6 must seek out the world's terrorists by tracking them into the far dark corners of the globe and operating inside, not apart from the enveloping moral challenges that in her view have made the world "more opaque" in the wake of the cold war (Broccoli, 2012).

However, there was never a time in Bond's history when he wasn't tracking villains across the globe. Bond villains have a habit of constructing spectacular secret lairs that exemplify not

only their penchant for dramatic schemes but also their inclination toward an existence off the radar. Consequently, Bond's interactions with his dyadic counterpart always take place in secret where he and his villains play out elaborate rituals in order to identify and then contact one another, mirroring the repressed and surreptitious sexual liaisons that for years characterized the queer community (Brown, 2012; Eadie, 2002).

Exposure and invisibility are recurring themes for Bond films. In *Moonraker* Bond tracks Hugo Drax first to his secret research center in the desert, then to an Amazonian temple cum launch pad in Brazil and ultimately into space where Drax has constructed a secret self-sustaining space station undetectable to U.S. or Russian satellites. Here Drax has gathered model human subjects to create a new civilization of super humans whose breeding he will oversee on his extra-terrestrial arc. It is up to Bond not only to thwart the space station's function but, as in *Goldeneye*, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, and other films in the series, Bond must expose the existence of this weapon to others, in this case by sabotaging its radar cloak.

Given the queerness Bond villains exhibit it makes sense that they would seek social isolation. Connell (2010) says transgender people prefer stealth, and a common theme in research on queer spaces (Steinman, 2011) is that of visibility. Davis' work (2008) ties visibility and social isolation to the question of self-removal by transsexuals who may want to maintain a truly fluid gender identity but feel they must do so in obscurity. For the culturally removed, one is only queer when situated outside their native context (Tatonetti, 2010). This may explain the desire on the part of villains and henchman to gather in secret locations where they create their own utopian safe spaces; places where they can rest from what Diaz (2012) theorizes as the added work of passing in the outside world.

Online, gender is obscured, so that users can pass beyond their offline gender identity in ways that may liberate them, while challenging others. The Internet fosters a gender queer space by virtue of affording people the opportunity to perform their gender through strictly verbal means, so that even those who choose not to do so are enacting the gender queer sensibility tied to their insecurity in a space where gender is only verifiable through deliberate means (Laukkanen, 2007). The affordance of transgender performativity online is one reason so many members of the queer community acted as early adopters of the technology (boyd, 2004). The Internet was a virtual space that obviated the challenges posed by the embodied world, not only for transgender people, but for anyone whose gender queer identity was hampered by the gender role expectations ascribed to them based on their sex (Pearce, 2006). As such, the Internet became the world's most accessible gay space.

Gay spaces are utopias for the queer community (Munoz, 2005; Rodriguez, 2011) which ties heavily to the utopian image of villainous lairs in Bond films, that frequently contain self-sustaining support systems and exist off the radar, such as the space station in *Moonraker*, or on Crab Key, the lair where Dr. No plots global reckoning in the eponymous film. As in many queer/trans utopias Bond villains create genderless spaces for their own work, places removed from the normative environment because, according to Connell (2010) the normative environment imposes too much gender segregation. Dr. No creates a genderless work environment on Crab Key where men and women alike dress in gender neutralizing lab garments to conduct experiments with him inside his lair. Once its purpose is served, the space where he lives and works is no longer meaningful because it never really existed in any official capacity in the first place. This accords with Schilt's concept that physical spaces threaten the gender integrity of trans people and for that reason attachments to places of work are either resisted or negated by trans people (Schilt, 2004).

Dr. No's commanding disembodied voice may establish his male identity on the island, but Dr. No is obsessed with his identity as half-man thanks to the mechanical hands, despite the "mystical powers" (Stryker, 1994) that they afford him.

When Bond villains interact openly they do so in notably transnational spaces, frequently those that serve as cultural meeting points like Turkey, Hong Kong, East Germany and the Caribbean (Halloran, 2005), all of which have been cited as popular sites of queer culture (Diaz, 2012). The villain's preference for border-states and post-colonial territories also indicates a preference for the queering surrounds of a nationless environment. The desire for villains to identify themselves within the global community and eschew the national ties that bound them in development is analogous the desire of many queer people to lose themselves in the cosmopolitan city after escaping the narrow communities where they were raised. Tatonetti (2010, p. 171) describes this as the "symbolic 'choice' of community exile" and ties it to the work documenting this trend done by anthropologist Kath Weston.

The modern metropolis is a commonly the site of queer activity (Diaz, 2012) perhaps explaining why Bond is always turning up in foreign capitals when hunting evildoers. Rodriguez (2011) finds that the greater the cosmopolitan experience of the man, the greater potential exists for him to perform a queer identity. Essentially then this makes both Bond and his nemeses prone to queer identity by a greater factor than those men who do not travel as extensively, or as exotically, as they do. This interpretation of queerness as a bi-product of travel is likely one that changed over time as the rate, and propensity, of travel among middle class westerners increased over the fifty years since *Dr. No* first premiered (Bennett & Woolcott, 1987; Halloran, 2005). But as Rodriguez (2011) notes, this framing device is still an active one in mass media today, and it still assigns queer potential, if not queer identity to the men who fit within it.

Keegan (2006) illustrates with examples the restrictive form that queerness must take in modern society, namely that it functions as the between state for hetero and homo normativity rather than a distinct space of its own value. This trope applies equally well to the Bond films if one notes the common status of the villain and their accomplices as producers of some coming event. In *Casino Royale* it is first the plane bombing and then the poker game, whereas in *Goldfinger* it is the robbery of Fort Knox. Most emblematic may be *Goldeneye* where Trevelyan plots to overthrow world powers by unleashing a powerful new digital device that will pit the U.S. and Russia against one another. Trevelyan has been working in isolation for years to build the Goldeneye system with the help of a power crazed technocrat named Boris who was queered by his lack of recognition working for the Russian government. That Bond's villains are pre-occupied with destruction automatically casts them against the dominant narrative of reproduction, which pervades the heteronormative culture both literally, and figuratively (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). These subversive queers are also frequently seeking rectification, and their goals are less often pointed at destabilizing a single government or political system (Matheson, 2006) but rather exploiting the discrepancy between superpowers.

In *Tomorrow Never Dies*, Elliott Carver launches phantom missiles to provoke a war between China and NATO. Carver is not a force against Bond, but rather a loose cannon- a radioactive isotope whose lack of clear allegiance to any institutional force is itself a threat to the precarious balance of power that both east and west proclaim to dominate, but in reality depends entirely on their mutual cooperation (Black, 2001). By exposing the mutual reliance of the east and west, Bond villains out these seemingly independent and self-reliant superpowers by exposing the closeted relationship that exists between them despite public shows of animosity. Were Carver to succeed it would not only emasculate Bond but the hegemonic forces he embodies (Winder,

2006) as “an exemplary hero of capitalist competitive individualism” (Bennett & Woolcott, 1987). Bond is hereby cast as the heteronormative crusader, a role widely attributed to him by past scholars (Albion, 2005; Winder, 2006). The villain, in turn, seeks to "explore unknown powers" (Stryker, 1994) and to transcend their objectionable state by demonstrating their worthiness through a dramatic act capable of, "expanding or altering the norms associated with gender" (Connell, 2010).

As gender and sexuality variations are more likely in situations of crisis- particularly those crises that threaten the world (Rubin, 1984), Bond villains are therefore seeking not only the liberating event that demolishes the world and allows for absolute gender freedom, but they are equally interested in perpetuating the crisis that portends world destruction as it allows a space, though marginal still, where "dangerous" sexuality" (Rubin, 1984) can express itself with impunity. Stryker highlights the "war with nature" that is assigned on trans people and that many trans people feel they are required to either embrace or vocally refute (Stryker, 1994). Bond's villains make their choices here too. The common impetus for Bond's missions is that technology acquired by a villain, threatens the existing order of the world by tilting the balance of power and destabilizing the precarious balance between the capitalist west (McKinney, 2006) and the communist east.

#### **b. Safe words are forever**

Bond's encounters with his enemies are still bound to technology in era two, but the technologies that pose bodily harm to him are often less elaborate than those employed by the villains of era one. First era Bond villains are notorious for the sometimes-preposterous weapons they use in their work. Oddjob's razor sharp bowler hat, and the metal teeth that Jaws gnashed in combat, were less practical than menacing. The rebooted Bond franchise pivoted away from such

improbable methods of inflicting harm, without sacrificing the conceit that Bond faces novel weapons in his work. In *Casino Royale* Bond contends with machetes, braided ropes, scaffolding, and poison. He chases bomb-makers, shows down guerilla warriors in hand to hand combat, and strangles, beats, stabs, and drowns his foes; and while he does also shoot people he is equally likely to blow them up- as he does in Nairobi, Miami, and Venice.

The less affected weapons used by villains in era two reflect on the enhanced masculinity of the villains, but also in Bond's enhanced masculinity because he endures their wounds. Bond's body endures dramatic punishment in each of his missions in *Casino Royale*; in marked contrast to the way era one Bond faces his enemies using special gadgets that protect him from harm. This plays on the most notable perversion in the franchise: the enjoyment his enemies take in their attempts to kill him. Hovey (2006) identifies this as retributive violence and a key component of the Bond/villain dynamic. Bond villains are not prone to quick shooting and effective methods, instead they prolong their torture of Bond as much as possible, often by concocting melodramatic schemes to accomplish the task with the justification that they want Bond to witness the climax of their evil plot.

What takes place inside the villains' lairs illustrates the recurring themes of pleasure and risk that Mulvey (1989) ascribes to cinema. The Bond films are not a surprising place to find this given Bond's propensity to be lured into traps by seductive women (McKinney, 2006). But Bond's tendency to take the bait that is offered him implies that he is tempted by the sadomasochistic foreplay that these sexual dalliances typically suggest. In the franchise, Bond's sexual pursuits are often just a pre-text to the more gratifying symbolic penetration that takes place when Bond infiltrates the villain's defenses in the third act. The narrative in Bond films leading up this third act penetration are little more than cinematic foreplay (Hovey, 2005), titillating audiences with

expected come-ons, and macho bravado. True to Mulvey's conception of sub-textual sexualization in modern cinema Bond is routinely challenged by physical assault before or during sexual encounters (Hovey, 2005). In *Goldeneye* he explicitly engages in sadistic foreplay with Miss Onatop that mirrors more implicit but similarly structured encounters in *Goldfinger*, *Dr. No* and *The Living Daylights* (Hovey, 2005).

Over the years Bond has been fed to sharks, snakes, dragons and rats, tied to explosives, sealed in vices to say nothing of being nearly eviscerated by centripetal force. Sometimes the threat to his masculinity is explicit, as in scenes where Bond's genitals are targeted with gunshots, lasers, and saws. Yet Bond tends to enjoy these challenges to his manhood, as seen in *Casino Royale* when Le Chiffre tortures Bond by slowly castrating him with a braided rope. During the encounter Le Chiffre admires Bond's body aloud, only for Bond to taunt Le Chiffre by pointing out the homoerotic subtext of the situation. The technology Le Chiffre uses to slowly pulverize Bond's testes is a braided rope. While in era one, Bond evades the threat of being emasculated by table saws and lasers without any harm done, in era two Bond's torture does extensive damage, and only ends when he is rescued by another man acting on the pleas of his girlfriend.

The naturalistic approach to weaponry in era two adapts the original formula to make the latent psychosexual interplay in era one manifest in the exchanges between Bond and villains in era two. Modern performativity of assured masculinity is, in part, dependent on a confidence in one's own sexuality (Carter, 2006) generally demonstrated by a casual acceptance of gays and bisexuals as non-threatening (Forth, 2008). For Craig's Bond to be comfortable flaunting his physical sexuality means that his character enjoys an ingrained sense of sexual identity, which obviates the questionable urgency of former Bond's to demonstrate their masculinity through sexist exchanges with women (Link, 2008). Craig by contrast is so comfortable with his body that

even as he sits naked at the end of *Casino Royale* being tortured by Le Chiffre he accepts praise for his body with jocularly and even proves his manliness by provoking Le Chiffre to continue pummeling Bond's testes with a braided rope.

Since Bond is now explicitly faced with homo-eroticism he must perform a more sophisticated, and more contemporary, form of masculinity that affirms itself through a controlled submission to the queer gaze. Manago (2005) argues that men being gazed at as an object is inherently queering because of the social connotations of the gaze as a male activity. The scopophilic nature of the gaze is persistently symbolized in Bond films by the scope Bond's enemies use to monitor his movements. Though no scenes in era two feature such specific scenes, the reference to the villain's scope always appears at the climax of every Bond film's title sequence, embedding it in the minds of viewers as a franchise trope (Racioppi & Tremonte, 2014). Bond producers account for Bond's compromised masculinity as a sex object by infusing his character with a new approach to fighting his enemies that overtly compensates for any diminished positionality, while putting the buff Bond body to a use that lets audiences excuse his new incarnation as necessary to another purpose in era two.

### **3. Blunt instrument**

Bond's body is not just more attractive in era two, it is also more functional. As we discussed in an earlier chapter Bond's enhanced embodiment obviates the need for the type of augmentation that Q provided in era one. But, the synthesis of Bond's body with his weapon is not as seamlessly managed in the narrative as it is at the visual level. M's frustration with Bond over his use of judgment in era two underlines Bond's struggle to discipline his violent abilities from the very beginning of *Casino Royale*. After Bond shoots a bomb-maker on the grounds of an embassy in full view of a camera M admonishes him using phraseology directly out of Fleming.

M accuses Bond of being “a blunt instrument” incapable of demonstrating the finesse expected of a 00 (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006).

Bond’s transformation from a loose cannon to a sniper rifle is visually reinforced in the opening and closing scenes of *Casino Royale*. The film opens by displaying Bond’s first kill using a series of flashbacks that contrast sharply with the primary sequence depicting Bond confronting a rogue station chief named Dryden who will soon be his second victim. Whereas in the flashbacks Bond follows his target to a secluded location, in the primary sequence Bond surprises Dryden by sneaking into Dryden’s office ahead of him. In the bathroom flashback, Bond’s target is armed and ready, but when Dryden reaches surreptitiously for his gun in the alternate scenes, he finds Bond has removed it, signaling that Bond has learned to be prepared. When Dryden begins to pontificate on the difference between a messy first kill, illustrated in depth as he speaks, and the ruthlessness of a second kill Bond shoots him before he can even finish his sentence without even moving from his seat. This swift action contrasts Bond’s hesitancy to use his gun in the flashback until after he has gone to the trouble of trying to kill him in hand-to-hand combat. Bond is trying to be a cudgel during his first kill, when he needs to be a gun.

In killing Dryden mid-sentence Bond illustrates his fast learning curve, but he also acquiesces to a model of conduct that his instincts during the first kill indicate he had not envisioned for his work. Bond sacrifices his masculine honor to the necessity of using his firearm in his scene with Dryden. Bond has learned not just to be as efficient as possible, but also to do so because he must in order to counter his enemies. It is the evildoers who have prompted Bond to sacrifice honor, and, as by accepting the advantage of using a gun, he allows his masculinity to be compromised. Bond is using the gun with full knowledge that is ruthless. This ruthlessness allows

him to rob Dryden of completing his final thought, while simultaneously evidencing Bond's indoctrination into an espionage career that queers the genders of the men who adopt it.

The final scene of *Casino Royale* evidences Bond's transformation from a "blunt instrument" to an efficient weapon vividly. The mysterious Mr. White- the man responsible for all the machinations leading up to Vesper's death- receives a phone call from Bond just as he arrives at his waterfront villa. Though White is unarmed and without guards Bond doesn't confront him face to face, instead he confirms White's identity and then shoots him with what is revealed to be a high-powered sniper rifle. Bond's choice to shoot White rather than capture him physically evidences movement along his character's arc. He has transitioned from the unwieldy "blunt instrument" he was at film's start into an efficient weapon removed from the scene of action, but still just as potent (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006). This symbolic transformation is affirmed when Bond emerges in the final shot of the film dressed in the tailored suit typical of Era one Bond, with a rifle slung over his shoulder, and introduces himself using the famous phrase "Bond, James Bond" (Broccoli & Campbell, 2006).

**a. The man with the golden... gun**

Bond's newfound synthesis with his weapon opens a new era for Bond, and one that is notable for its altered commutation of the character traits that were consistent between eras one and two. Both eras featured Bond as an ever-renewing character. He never changes in eras one and two by virtue of the fact that he changes all the time. The rotation of embodiments that Bond inhabits means that he never ages and is therefore always possessed of the same gender specific bodily attributes: his age, his attractiveness, and his physical ability. As such Bond is a phallus as defined by McClintock (2013). Her argument is that the phallus is not the same as the penis because the phallus is always erect. The penis cannot maintain a permanent erection and this inability is

interpreted by men as part of their inadequacy. Bond, however, as a character metaphor for the penis is always erect. He is a phallus, not just an erection and in this way he represents the ultimate masculine ideal.

Bond's phallic status exists only because Bond is a fictive man, and one who audiences expect in many physical incarnations. The many changing embodiments of Bond in the form of different actors provide his cinematic character with the ability to maintain phallic status and perpetual masculinity. Though it was controversial at the time, replacing Connery with a new Bond was a strategic masterstroke for the franchise. It displaced the identity of Bond from a single embodiment, and allowed the character to maintain his phallic status through perpetually renewed embodiment. Throughout era one Bond never died, never aged, never lost his abilities, his sexual appeal, or his vigor. He did however begin to lose his relevance because his character's primary underlying purpose- as a mitigating force balancing the powers of the cold war- became redundant once the cold war ended. Brosnan's incarnation of Bond was as phallic as ever, but without a worthy conquest.

In era two Bond's phallic status is justified in a new way. Craig's Bond is positioned in *Casino Royale* as a loose cannon, a phallus that is forever chasing conquests and inexpertly used. In the scene where M chastises Bond for killing the bomb-maker she is metaphorically accusing him of premature ejaculation. In order for Bond to be a great agent he needs to train his instrument through practice and patience so that he can control it in a way that will not only penetrate the enemy, but also manipulate them into submission. Fleming's fascination with domination and sadomasochism is well documented (Lycett, 1995), as its role in the original Bond novels, and films (Hovey, 2005). Part of Bond's appeal to male audiences is that he is depicted using his phallus to not only penetrate his enemies (in the form of beautiful young honey pots), but also to

convert them over from enemy to ally with the use of his sexual prowess. This conceit is not metaphoric, it is the literal method that Bond uses to sway enemy forces, in order to solicit information, and assistance, that allows him to figuratively penetrate the enemies' defenses.

Metaphorically speaking, Bond himself is the phallus and his ability to control himself in temper, behavior, and as a sexual partner are all part of the tantric control he is expected to perform as a permanent erection. Craig's Bond however is not yet a phallus at the beginning of *Casino Royale* because he can't control his temper and he does not display the dispassionate disposition that will maintain his erection permanently.

Era two Bond goes through a narrative in *Casino Royale* that ends with him finally assuming the phallic identity of Bond, but only after he is metaphorically put to use for the purposes of romantic love. Once Vesper is killed Bond need never submit himself to the feelings of love again. He is able to divorce himself from all feelings that might compromise his dispassion, and in so doing he adopts the necessary disposition to maintain his erection endlessly. Bond's phallus is no longer to be used for love, but rather for war. He is finally a phallic weapon; until *Skyfall* that is.

#### **b. Paging 008**

In *Skyfall* the phallic weapon fails, and must be regained, and re-asserted as phallic. The source of his flaccidity is that Craig's Bond ages in *Skyfall*, a novelty according to Dodds (2014), who studied the introduction of aging to the series as an example of how dramatically different the re-booted Bond series was from its predecessors. In *A View to Kill* an aging Roger Moore actors was spared embarrassing, potentially emasculating, interactions that might have highlighted his bodily decline. By comparison, *Skyfall* places heavy emphasis on the deterioration of Bond's body (Dodds, 2014) as a means of building dramatic tension, and challenging the audience to re-think

the career span of a cultural icon that hasn't aged in fifty years. Visually suggesting the futility of a 00 who has aged out of active duty heightened the sense of impending doom that the 00 program faced in the film.

Bond is no match for the physical demands of his job, nor is he technologically sophisticated enough to combat the attacks levied through the web. Bond is by any objective measure not the right man for the job, and yet in his own view this is impossible. If Bond is not able to face the task at hand, then it is presumed no one is. This then calls on the question, where is 008? Why are we left believing that there is no younger, more capable, agent that can be called in to save the day?

Bond loses his embodied masculinity as he ages. He is like the manufacturer who now finds himself outpaced in a newly technologized job market where technological changes have resulted in economic shifts that marginalize men who exhibit the very qualities that had at one time qualified them as hegemonically masculine. As an identity factor, age recurs throughout *Skyfall* touching every character's arc. Q is positioned as too young to be credible, whereas M is positioned as too old. Q is redeemed by his aptitude for technology, whereas M is doomed by the presumption that her age and gender make her inept. As a construct age is most interesting in *Skyfall* because it serves as the only weakness Bond's character exhibits. Ageism is the only oppression Bond has ever felt, and in his case, Bond is proven to be too old to meet the requirements set for others. Bond fails his re-entry exam, then fails again to thwart Silva's plans. Had Bond's fate been decided by a just and fair assessment he would never have been brought back on as an agent, not because of his age, but because he is physically and psychologically unfit for duty.

What this narrative represents is a significant, and integral reflection of the social narrative taking place in the U.S. during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. White, straight, cis-gendered men find themselves overwhelmed by economic and technological challenges to their privileged social position, and rather than interpreting themselves as experience the same marginalization that has been apportioned to all the marginalized groups, they interpret their circumstance as oppression Kimmell (2013). Bond views himself as a supreme agent, someone beyond the rules, and above supervision. He is the iconic model of white male privilege, and for decades audiences have celebrated him in a tacit effort to affirm the status quo of white capitalist patriarchy in Anglo-American culture. Bond's indelibility served as a touchstone for two cultures in rampant shift from the mid-century on. Bond's ability to conquer over forces of social, economic, and technological change in order to preserve the hegemonic status of the U.S., and by association, the U.K. relieved audiences of the psychic tension brought on by the succession of social movements- Civil Rights, Anti-War, Anti-Poverty, Women's Rights, Environmentalism, Gay Rights, etc.- that coincided with geo-strategic threats from Communist nations, oil cartels, foreign investment, and terrorist groups ironically mirroring the kinds of villainy projected in Bond films.

Audiences depend on Bond as a stalwart in the face of perpetual uncertainty, and in this position Bond is responsible for maintaining his hegemonic masculinity as evidence of his unfettered dominance in the social order. When Silva confronts Bond with the truth about Bond's test results, Bond reacts defensively, and yet in the moment of Silva's revelation the veracity of his statements must be clear to Bond. How could a super spy, trained in assessing situations and people have deluded himself into believing that he passed a psychological exam after storming out midway, or that he earned a high marksmanship score when he could see for himself that his aim

was off. Silva does not present the evidence to Bond, rather he forces Bond to face what has already been made plain: that Bond is no longer adequate to the task before him.

**c. This is what she made us**

Dodds (2014) highlights the significant of Bond aging in that it opens him up to the one marginalizing impact equal to all, and to a large extent most feared within the Bond franchise: disability. A central trope in the series has become the disfigurement that Bond villains share, and bear, over the course of the films. These disfigurements are notable in that they serve to cast the villain apart from the model of physical fitness that is Bond. Disabilities also lend an even more sinister bent to the villains, and provide for a psychological explanation for their drive to take over the world.

*Skyfall* features the strongest example of this when Silva finally comes face to face with M only to reveal to her the disfigurement he suffered after a cyanide pill in his tooth failed to take his life. Though his face appears unmarred as his monologue begins, he slowly removes from inside his mouth a metal dental implant that holds up both his cheek and eye socket. Without the augmentation device Silva's face is monstrous. He blames MI-6 and 'M' specifically for bringing about this disfigurement and then immediately extends that blame to the western world and its imperialist agenda. Like so many villains before him, Silva's emergence from the shadows of the underworld is a matter of reckoning, and his hiding is understood to have been only a practical method of coping with the invisibility brought on by his disability. Just as Bond resents M for the shooting that has disabled him, Silva considers the deformity from arsenic poisoning he suffered to be a result of M's negligent care. Their shared logical fallacy bonds them as brothers, thereby validating Silva's implication that M is metaphorically their mother, but also validating Silva's rationale for exacting revenge.

As was seen across the series, villains are not just adversaries of the systems Bond protects they are victims of those systems avenge themselves by destroying the status quo. These discourses of victimization link the Bond villains with the queer theory associations to disability (Rodriguez, 2011) and exemplify the significant trend of recasting the queer other as the aberrant social warrior of oppressed people, handicapped by their sexual orientation. Samuels (2003) notes the increasingly popular notion "that disability has more in common with sexual orientation than with race, ethnicity, or gender" (p. 234) because some people with disabilities can cloak their status and pass for able bodied which in turn requires of them the same form of coming out that is incumbent on homosexuals. The villain ultimately has their coming out moment when they reveal their disfigurement to Bond in a candid and sometimes moving explanation. These instances accord with Samuels (2003) description of the coming out rituals that are akin to both the disability and LGBTQ communities. Like the closeted trans male, the Bond villain has suffered the sexual sacrifice of trying to conform (Davis, 2008) and his suffering is frequently cited as justification for his now unabashed assault on the normative world.

Bond villains share the invisibility of queer or disabled individuals before they come out, as well as the invisibility they inherit from the community once they do so (Samuels, 2003). Consider that Bond's enemies often remain elusive until nearly the end of the film, often employing elaborate measures to present a face of masculinity that shelters their trans self, as Davis (2008) says is typical of the trans male. Once the Bond villain finally reveals their disabled body to Bond it is only a matter of time before Bond disposes of them. Unlike other spy films where foiling the plot and exposing the culprits is the aim, Bond's mission isn't over until he kills his nemesis (Held, 2006) and thus relegates them to permanent invisibility.

Bond villains have good reason to hide themselves from view. Not only do they risk exposure to authorities and the policing functions of society that Foucault (1977) might compare to the stricture of social conformity, but they are also avoiding the enmity that is so common for the trans and disability communities (Stryker, 1994). Even when the disabled villain is able to pass, their passing comes at the expense of gender normativity when elaborate mechanisms or disguises are necessary, implicating a theatricality that Padva (2008) says may read as queer. This is certainly the case for Dr. No, who uses a disembodied voice via intercom system to distance him from the sight of others and thereby hide his mangled, now robotic hands. Stryker identifies the monster in popular culture as a symbol of the queer: of the genderless, inhuman, and transfigured cultural being (Stryker, 1994).

That Bond villains are presented as monstrous, both in spirit, and in appearance, affirms their alienation from the world around them. It is important to consider that Bond's villains have been made monsters by their history (Held, 2006), and the monster, like the disabled, like the queer, is constructed. The rage that may be exhibited is then possibly just a railing against the social injustice of creating a category of otherness and then relegating people to it with the implication of it being a deserved punishment for transgressing the superficial bounds of normative society. Silva was disfigured by the ineffective old technology of the cyanide capsule in his tooth. Silva then adapted his abilities to the Internet thus proving his technological aptitude and therefore his supremacy as an agency. Bond's queerness lies in the disability he suffers as a result of being shot in the line of duty; a marker of his own disintegrating abilities (Dodds, 2014).

**d. “Did you really die that day?”**

Bond's disability is the product of wounding and age; two things that the formula of the franchise has sheltered the character from experiencing in prior films. Bond's archetypal status

privileged him as impervious to the same impact on a human being that anyone else would experience after a duration in his line of work, and through advancing age. But the re-casting of Bond obviated any discourse over the length of Bond's tenure, or any concerns about his advancing age.

Bond's special status as an ever-renewing character metaphorically symbolizes the ideal white capitalist patriarch. Via the privileges of his wealth, his race, and his gender the white masculine patriarch is not susceptible to the negative consequences of life experience that virtually all others face. His wealth affords him the ability to secure himself from physical harm and to adorn himself with the status symbols that have purposefully constructed to convey persisting power and virility. His race allows him to set, rather than follow, protocols for acceptable behavior, so that changes in his conduct as he ages are only adaptations on the theme of living the ideal life. Lastly, the white capitalist patriarch's gender has been consciously constructed as resistant to the same vulnerabilities of being a woman.

Firstly, by conflating wealth with probity, and probity with position, the capitalist is able to reinvigorate their identity through acquisition, rather than achievement. So long as you can afford the status symbols that reflect your wealth, you have inherent power, and as power is conflated with masculine hegemony, the wealthy retains masculinity with ease. Secondly, by insinuating racial constructions of the other into every culture that interacts with Caucasian Anglo-Europeans, early imperialists were able to construct their own racial identity as the norm, thereby asserting control of the mechanisms of social and cultural approbation. It is white culture that decides what constitutes acceptability for the norm, since whiteness has been constructed as the norm. Harris's now famous theory of whiteness as property ties together the mutually reinforcing constructs of capitalism and whiteness to evidence that the underlying threat that whites face from

other races, is principally the threat of losing control of the machinery of capitalism, not just displacement from society.

Lastly, emphasis on body has traditionally been limited to features that are easy to either maintain, or cosmetically perform- such as hair, facial rigidity. Having hard and calloused hands are masculine, just as having a beard, or a full head of hair- in any color ascribes masculinity (Thompson, 2017). Like whiteness and capitalism, masculinity has been consciously crafted as mutable enough that it can resist the persistent challenges of any single era, or gender role expectation. The co-existence of techno-masculinity and hegemonic masculinity is proof of how mutable masculinity can be. No two distinct femininities have so seamlessly co-existed in the past as mutually reinforcing models for woman as a gender. Even the seemingly consistent roles of wife and mother have been constructed since Sophocles time as conflicting gendered roles.

When Bond finally emerges from the privileged cocoon of his archetype in *Skyfall* what he experiences is humanity. Bond, for the first time, is un-augmented by the narrative devices that had previously removed from experiencing the world of espionage where he operates as vulnerably as everyone else there does. Bond is equalized by his presentation in *Skyfall*. He is no more safe from Silva's control, than Severine; no more immune to the penetrative acts of terrorism that had previously only touched others. The piercing of Bond's skin by a bullet in the first sequence showed that, like the people in the marketplace in Istanbul, whose livelihoods suffered because of MI-6's actions, Bond now feels the impact of misfortune.

The genesis of his long overdue self-inventory is his supposed death at the film's start, and his subsequent decision to resurrect himself. The storyline playfully toys with what Bond says in the film is his hobby for resurrection, but unlike the many resurrections of the character in the past that have corresponded to casting changes that make Bond impervious to the universal human

condition, *Skyfall* resurrects Bond as a human being devoid of all the preternatural abilities that privileged him in eras one and two to a performance of dominant masculinity.

*Skyfall* brings the concept of equality as oppression into the forefront of the film's discursive treatment of masculinity. Bond, finally aging, finally susceptible to friendly fire, and the other hazards that he has miraculously avoided for the last fifty years finds himself operating on equal footing with the other characters in the film, including a villain who is as well-trained as he, and even more skilled in the use of digital networks.

The Bond phallus is faced with a powerful threat in the new media landscape; a yonic weapon that threatens to upend society and eliminate the institution of the phallus (MI-6) entirely. In rhetorical terms *Skyfall* is a film about the threats faced by white capitalist patriarchy in a time of new media revolutions. The film begins with Bond's death, signifying that the Bond phallus has fallen flaccid. This demoralizing failure is compounded by the rise of a new yonic threat in the form of networked digital technologies, which overwhelms and outwits the defenses of the symbolic home of white capitalist patriarchy.

#### **4. The honeypot**

While Bond spends era two symbolically transforming into the supreme penetrative weapon, Silva used his time away from MI-6 to do just the opposite. Silva confounds Bond's penetrative tactics in *Skyfall* by testing the strength of the Bond phallus against the complimentary, and superior affordances of a new weapon designed as a yonis.

Prior to *Skyfall* Bond had confronted many villains using networks as a tool to undermine the hegemony, and to usurp power. But Silva is the first villain to use networks (on and offline) as the weapon of choice. Remember the raison d'etre of era one films is for Bond to track the network of a terrorist threat in order to contain or re-capture a technology that is being

weaponized by enemies of white capitalist patriarchy. In the late era one films, after the advent of the Internet Bond is confronted with network threats, but they are notably similar to those that Bond faced early on. *Goldeneye*'s plot revolves around controlling a satellite system in order to fire a pulse weapon that could destroy the earth, *Tomorrow Never Dies* calls back to the first Bond films where the goal is to use mass media networks to incite world war that will destroy the earth, *The World Is Not Enough* centers on nuclear weapons and oil, while *Die Another Day* contends with the networks of MI-6, but is ultimately concerned with a dangerous laser. Each film touches on networks and the networked world, but still focuses on the destructive powers of a weapon that the networks give them control over, but is not the network itself. Era two films come closer to positioning networks as the threat at hand- with M identifying them correctly in both films as the real target of the missions. However, in both films the networks in question are offline networks in the form of the terrorist cabal who use economic weapons, and control of natural resources to extract power, and enable terrorist acts that again depends on destructive weapons.

*Skyfall* departs from this format by manifestly identifying offline and online networks as weapons that Silva is able to manipulate. As he does so, the film reveals the centrality of networks, offline and on, in global society. Silva uses networked tech to cause a gas explosion at River House, and to infiltrate the defenses of the subterranean MI-6 headquarters later on. He uses networked rail systems to create a diversion before his attack on parliament, and he uses the porous transparency of the web as a tool in uncovering the identities of NATO's network of agents. Silva even uses his offline network of henchmen to lure Bond to his island, knowing Bond would track Patrice to Severine, in order to find Silva; Bond's modus operandi to date. These machinations are meant to highlight the integrality of networks in the Bond franchise formula and to establish Silva

as the one Bond villain who finally is able to master the technologies that MI-6 normally are able to contain. At the narrative level, Silva's use of networks confounds the Bond formula entirely because in 2012 networks are not only integral to the operation of government intelligence agencies, they have become integral to social interaction across the globe. By making networked technologies the weapon needing containment by Bond, Silva triumphs in *Skyfall* because Bond cannot contain, or control the affordances of the Internet. Bond fails in *Skyfall* to thwart his enemy by mastering the technology at hand, and so he regresses back to his primary role: the assassin.

As an assassin Bond is able to kill Silva, and his henchmen, but he does not neutralize the real threat that faces MI-6, or white capitalist patriarchy. As an assassin, Bond does assert some control over the networked technology of the Internet by using it as a lure to Silva. What this illustrates is that the weaponization of the Internet is now widely available to both those who traditionally protect hegemonic forces and those who would challenge them. It also suggests that as a weapon, the Internet is more dynamic than the destructive weapons that had been featured in previous Bond films. The Internet is not just a weapon of penetration or destruction like those that had been so often presented in era one. Instead, the Internet represents a new form of weapon that counters and dominates the penetrative weapons of destructive that era one considered.

Era one weapons largely conformed to the type that could, through force, or coercion of use, allow a small group to dominate others. They were weapons that provided the kind of masculinity that Connell describes as hegemonic: a masculinity that dominates over and subordinates others. Era two focused on weapons that were similarly capable of domination, though in form they were different from the phallic weapons of era one. Era two did not focus on weapons that had purely destructive power, but instead targeted the vulnerabilities of networked forms of power. In *Casino Royale* the focus was on the economic markets and how they served both those

who adhered to the hegemony, and those who would subvert hegemony for their own gain. In *Quantum of Solace* the networks being targeted were the networks of trade between nations, with a specific focus on natural resources, such as oil and water, that allowed those who controlled them to dominate others.

*Skyfall* targets networks again, but not as a theoretical concept, instead this time in form and function. The literal networks that undergird society- gas lines, rail lines, even electrical and cable lines are used as weapons, just as the affordances of websites like YouTube on the web are used as weapons, in order to reveal the offline networks of agents, who work together in order to infiltrate the offline networks of terrorists around the world. Here we see that Silva doesn't just use networks to control weapons, he uses them as weapons. The significant difference in the weaponized network is that it cannot be avoided in a networked society. Bond cannot take control of the Internet at the end of *Skyfall* because it provides the platform for communication across the world in such a fixed way that it would be improbable that anyone could undo it now. This is an ironic reality for the Internet. It's fixity as a platform of communication seemingly contradicts its fluidity as a platform of communication. The Internet is meant to be the open channel that its users can engage in various ways, but because of its popularity many institutions, and individual users, have come to depend on it as an integral means of functionality. In other words, the Internet is novel for the affordances it makes available, and how they contrast with the affordances of mass media.

For Bond, the institutionalization of the Internet as a socio-economic structure, that is also capable of destructive potential means that it now falls under his purview as a dangerous technology to contain, while simultaneously being a ubiquitous social tool. In the real world, the portent of such a weapon came on 9/11/2001 when everyday Americans, and people around the

world, recognize that the airplanes we depended on in a mundane way could be weapons in the wrong hands. The Internet is no different, except perhaps that it is even less regulated, and faster reaching than an airplane. Consequently, Silva's potent use of the Internet as a weapon shows that a globalized society, one that is tethered together by mutual necessity, and networks of common use, has given rise to a more powerful form of weapon that the phallic weapon cannot match. The weaponized Internet that Silva uses in *Skyfall* is yonic, not phallic in nature.

The notion of the Internet as a yonic weapon implies obvious gendered undertones. The phallic weapon implies masculinity, the yonic weapon implies femininity. This is not quite fair however. The yonic weapon does not function the same way that the phallic weapon does. He who wields it, uses the phallic weapon to penetrate others in order to convey domination. The yonic weapon does not function on behalf of one who possesses it. The yonic weapon is capable of acting on anyone who engages the yonis. Whereas the phallus can be forcibly wielded, and primarily is, the yonis is a weapon that functions in myriad ways, even when it is being penetrated.

As the yonic weapon is hereby tied to the functionality of networked technologies, then the yonic weapon carries with it the same theoretical potential that the Internet does. In effect, the yonic weapon represents the potential for the post-modern world in which the yonic weapon exists. The post-modern is then characterized by the presence of the yonic weapon, and the two constructs reinforce one another as symbols of a new era in human development. Prior epochs in human existence include the atomic and industrial age, both of which were characterized by the technologies that emerged, and the impact of their weaponization. This far, researchers have documented the emergent powers of the Internet age, but only recently has there been a shift in focus to the use of the Internet as a weapon, or on the ways that a weaponized Internet impacts society.

Consider the various ways that networked technologies- whose masterful use by Silva binds them to his ambiguous positionality- are used to lure Bond into traps from which he cannot escape without further engaging the network. They use the networked database to identify Patrice and his known location, which sends Bond to Shanghai where he thinks he is a step ahead of Silva, but is actually being led to Macao and an encounter with Severine. By seducing Severine Bond believes himself to figuratively penetrating Silva's network, but he later learns that Severine's submission to him was intentional; a variation on the notorious honeypot scheme. Bond is then further drawn onto Silva's island where he believes he is outwitting Silva by transmitting their location, but is in fact playing into Silva's hands by transporting Silva, and his laptop to MI-6's new headquarters. Once there, Bond helps Q to decode Silva's firewall protections only for them to realize that Silva wanted them to do so in order for him to hack their system.

Silva's story about the barrel his grandmother used to traps rats in order to turn them into cannibals metaphorically describes the nature of the yonic weapon of the Internet. The barrel lures the rats into with coconut bait and once there, the rats are forced to "change their nature" and turn on one another. The barrel therefore does not seek out subjects for attack; it simply forces those who would attack to adapt in order to survive. New media in Silva's estimation is not about an altered technology, but about technology's power to alter those who use it. In this way he is not only reifying the potential of the Internet to transform society, but he is classing it alongside the technologies of mastery. The technology that allowed his grandmother to lure in the rats infesting her island is no different than the technology that Silva can use to lure in all those he wishes to see destroyed.

Interestingly, Silva now occupies another larger island in Asia. He was able to seize control of the space not through force but simply by spreading the rumor that the island was contaminated

by a radioactive leak and therefore uninhabitable. Like his grandmother Silva used technology to turn the incite others to adapt their behavior in a manner that was self-defeating so that he could benefit. In his battle with MI-6 Silva does the same. He identifies the function of MI-6 as an organization tasked with monitoring networks of power via their own embedded network of spies, and he collapses the contextual cover that the spies adopted in order to turn both networks against one another, and drive M into the open where he can kill her. Bond ultimately thwarts this plan by doing something unexpected: he retreats in order to lure Silva to him, in an analogue variation of the yonic model.

The Skyfall estate, Bond's family home, and the rustic haven that Bond selects for his showdown with Silva lies in the Scottish Highlands. The rhetorical understanding of Scotland's Highlands is an elementary component in a semiotic reading of the Skyfall estate. In many ways Scotland is the romantic and untouched version of what England used to be. It is the northern reach of the British Empire, just as Britain was once the northern reach of the Roman Empire. In England the Scottish countryside is viewed as unspoiled by the urban sprawl and industrial conversion that resulted from the technological advances of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Fielding, 2018). British audiences may have better recognized this sub-textual allusion when Bond is found driving through the highlands just moments after saying he would transport M "back in time" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Whereas England is a thoroughly modernized country, Scotland's relative remoteness allows audiences to think of it pre-modern in its conveniences, if not it's social customs. This stereotype emanates partly from the characteristics of the landscape. In a rugged, remote place violence in general is harder to supervise at the governmental level. It is incumbent on the property owners to defend their own land (Fielding, 2018).

In concert with a regressive natural environment a return to the Scottish Highlands hails another crucial Bond marker from the past: that of Sean Connery, the first actor to portray Bond in the franchise. Connery was a Scotsman whose dulled accent became a trademark affectation for audiences imitating Bond (Cook & Hines, 2005). Tying Craig's Bond to Connery's cements the relationship between the two commutations of the character, and reinforces the masculinity that Craig exhibits through his regressive behaviors while at Skyfall. As Craig's attitude toward M quickly shifts from antagonistic to paternalistic, audiences are also re-interpreting the Bond on screen in 2012 as being akin to the original Bond of the silver screen from 1962. As this occurs Craig's micro-aggressive disposition becomes easier to accept because it jibes with the audience's memories of Connery, and therefore reads as being nostalgic, rather than just chauvinistic.

By ending the film at Skyfall, the filmmakers suggest that the only possible way for the Anglo white heterosexual man to maintain a hegemonic masculinity is by recreating a pre-modern society. The underlying message in *Skyfall's* ending is that the place for Bondian masculinity is not the present, but the past. The metaphorical value of *Skyfall's* title is that it refers to Bond's origins. The place where, as his gamekeeper describes, Bond went from being a boy to a man after his parent's death. *Skyfall* is where a young James Bond learned to shoot and to kill. It is where he existed without peer, enveloped in acres of land untouched by the authority of outsiders. *Skyfall* is not just Bond's literary home; it is the figurative space where a boy is inculcated with masculinity in order to make him a man.

*Skyfall's* metaphorical implications extend beyond just Bond and his phallic masculinity, but to the broader society where the masculinity of men like Bond was fostered. Since the film presents *Skyfall* as a house constructed prior to the technological innovations that accompanied the spread of modernity, but has been adapted in some ways since then to include wiring for

electrification, and running water, the physical house at the center of the *Skyfall* estate symbolizes a man like Bond whose masculine character has been adapted over time to meet the expectations of a modern society. However, Skyfall is selected by Bond because it has no network connection, and is most definitely pre-digital. I argue that the estate is more than just old, but is presented in a deliberate fashion as being essentially pre-modern. By this I am referring to the concept of modernity in the social sciences and liberal arts that is derived from Marx, Weber and Simmel. Modernity in this sense refers to the social conditions that followed from the industrial revolution and the more networked trans-regional, trans-national and trans-continental means of communication it produced.

Modernity therefore represents a significant re-organization of social values that is primarily influenced by the invention and implementation of technologies affecting communication. The technologies of the railroad, the steamship, the telegraph, and the factory extended the communicative reach individuals beyond their communities to profound affect (Eyerman, 1992). The impact and implications of the new communications taking place during the onset of modernity can be easily compared to those taking place today in the digital age. By interpreting the parallels between modernity and the more recent enhancement in networked connectivity resulting from the Internet it is easier to understand how the pre-modern world represented as Skyfall in the film *Skyfall* is an apt choice for a character wishing to escape the networked world.

The effort by Anglo media to valorize regressive social models serves only white heterosexual men. *Skyfall* illustrates this well by drawing an empowered woman character back into history where she is rhetorically stripped of power, patronized by the men around her, and ultimately murdered because she withheld affection from a man. Silva's presence at the Skyfall

estate was equally damning for him. Though he arrived at *Skyfall* bearing the queer identity that would never have been tolerated in mid-century hunting parties on the estate, he quickly adopted a masculine performance, only to be killed when that performance could not be maintained. The only character whose identity was strengthened, and in fact, redeemed, by traveling to *Skyfall* was Bond. In that more primitive space his masculinity was given free reign, and all the strictures of a modern society where women and queer people had parity were eliminated.

### **5. Did we win?**

When Bond returns to his homeland we see a glimmer of hope that the phallus can rise again, and counter the postmodern threat of the yonic weapon. Fascinatingly, the film ends by suggesting that the phallic Bond cannot defeat the yonic Internet without eliminating the structural framework upon which the yonis depends. The yonic weapon that is afforded power by the Internet depends on the structural underpinnings of the networks that make up the Internet just as the trans-human experience does. The similarity implies that the power of the Internet as a transformative social and public sphere (Papacharissi, 2015) affording new expressions of human identity (Kintz, 2002) that transcend traditional gender binaries (Hayles, 2008) not only threatens white capitalist patriarchy, but that its threat is now bound to the technological status quo.

In other words, so long as networked digital technologies exist the threat of the yonic weapon persists. So long as the yonic weapon exists the new media landscape must be viewed by white capitalist patriarchy as a territory of conquest, necessary to control. Until this can be accomplished, the only alternative is to regress society backwards to a time when the phallus is afforded the unfair advantages that made it dominant in the first place.

The extremity of Bond's response to Silva's yonic weapon says something about the ubiquity of networked technologies. Digital or not, networked technologies abound in Anglo-

American society, and via the Internet are subject to a broad contest for their control. By comparison to the weapons of era one, we see that the Internet is more dangerous, because it is weaponized after its control has been relinquished. This is why Bond makes the novel decision in *Skyfall* to abandon attempts at controlling the technology at hand, and instead focuses solely on the task of killing the person who uses it. Silva is the man Bond could be if he abandons the strictures and controls of MI-6. Once Bond relinquishes his devotion to the structural constraints of hegemony, and symbolically embraces the post-structural world of the nationless independent agent, he becomes susceptible to the gray areas of understanding that post-structuralism argues are the only areas that truly exist. However, Silva's claim that he is free to operate outside the bounds of any stricture is obviously false. Silva does not operate outside hegemony, he is simply at the forefront of building a new hegemony by replicating the one before.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

### A. Summary

The key supposition of this dissertation project is that the film *Skyfall* represents an unexpected turning point in the Bond franchise that signaled a new direction in the structures of feeling in contemporary Anglo-American culture. The preceding chapters have documented many of the distinctions between *Skyfall* and the films of era two in order to justify the first element of this supposition. In them, we have also considered the semiotic meaning of the narrative shifts regarding gender and technology from the second era to the third era that *Skyfall* initiates. Here now, let us synthesize these findings to verify the second element of the supposition above: that the shift from era two to era three in the Bond franchise corresponds to a shift in the structures of feeling within the Anglo-American culture that produces the Bond films. To do this, we return to the question of character commutations, by exploring how those varied commutations overlap.

The most consistent overlapping affective element of each character's commutation is heightened insecurity. Moneypenny's confidence in her abilities as a field agent is undercut from the start of the film, by her demotion, and assailed again through the derision of her co-workers. Q's aggressive posturing about his techno-masculinity clearly compensates for his insecurities as a new hire; a supposition affirmed by his saying "so much for a promising career in espionage" later in the film (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). M's insecurity is evident in her encounter with Mallory where she models a similar compensatory bluster to Q, while experience the same type of derision and dismissal aimed at Moneypenny. Her verbal, and non-verbal bluster is evident in her scenes with Mallory and Bond, but even more so in the scenes without them when these defenses are dropped, and her worried looks about Silva's assault, Bond's abilities, and the

wisdom of her decision to pit the latter against the former bely her characteristic resolution. Most dramatically, Bond rejoins MI-6 in *Skyfall* notably insecure in the physical abilities that had previously marked him as a superior agent.

Insecurity is largely the watchword of the film. It dictates two physical relocations for M, as well as a series of strategic decisions that ultimately embroil every major character in some form of drastic transformation of character. The commutations of the film uniformly center on insecurities with a common source: technology. Consider the instrumental role that technologies play in undermining each character's credibility, while simultaneously regressing them from a progressive state to marginalization. In *Skyfall*, Moneypenny's qualifications as an agent come down to a single shot of her rifle. Q's competence as a hacker diminishes when he is hacked. M's authority as the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service is rescinded when she loses a data file. Finally, Bond comes up short against Silva's superior skills as rogue 00, illustrated visually in their shooting competition.

*Skyfall*, the first film to feature new media technologies as a weapon, not just a tool, illustrates routinely that Bond cannot counter the threats posed by a weaponized internet alone. Following the narrative arc set up in era two, Bond should end his adolescence in *Skyfall*, achieve maturation, and resolve the identity conflict between eras one and two by resuming his role as an augmented rogue agent. This is not what happens. Bond regresses to an augmented state, but he is not augmented by technology; he is augmented by a team of people. Bond has always had helpmates who provide occasional assistance to him, but in *Skyfall*, Bond only succeeds when he works in teams. His every attempt to work solo ends in failure, starting with his rogue heroics in the opening sequence that, as chapter one explicated, led to his getting shot. Later, in Macao, Moneypenny steps in at the last moment and saves Bond from a Kimono

dragon. Bond's subsequent solo trip to Silva's lair leaves Bond outmatched again by Silva's skills, until his rescue team arrives. We have already discussed how integral Q is to helping Bond track Silva in the tube, leading to the shootout in parliament, where Moneypenny, Mallory and Tanner, help Bond to fend off Silva and his henchmen. Finally, Bond enlists aid from M and Kincaid at *Skyfall* to face down Silva and his squadron, proving that Bond depends on teams for help in *Skyfall* at every turn, not just in special circumstances.

*Skyfall* is a shift from the modes of era two in many ways, but it does not return Bond to his era one commutation unchanged. Instead, *Skyfall* shows us that no one man can face down against a networked weapon. In order to succeed, he must be augmented by a team of other human agents. A quick look at *Spectre* confirms this reading. *Spectre* follows *Skyfall*'s lead by focusing on networked technology, in this case networked surveillance technology, as a new weapon usable for, or against, those seeking to maintain hegemony.

Another distinguishing fact is that in *Skyfall*, the rogue technology is not destroyed, even after the villain is killed, as it would be in era one, because the technology is too enmeshed into the structural apparatus that Bond protects. 007 films usually end with Bond thwarting the villain, and then going further, often at great personal risk, to destroy the weapon that is now contained. Bond does this to ensure for the audience that such weapons cannot pose a future threat. In *Skyfall*, the opposite happens. Bond kills the user of the yonic weapon, but leaves the weapon intact.

New media technologies, when considered in these terms, confound and contradict the fundamental role bond plays. In other words, James Bond's role as an archetypal defender of Anglo-American capitalist hegemony, and the governmental institutions that secure this hegemony in a patriarchal model, cannot be performed in a new media environment the way he

did before. He cannot master technology in *Skyfall*. The fact of this figuratively leaves Bond in an incoherent state between adolescence and maturity, between affect and objectivity. Bond is in the same state in which we find ourselves: uncertain about the limits and capabilities of technology, and unable to confidently predict, or even propose, how these technologies should be managed. As a means in our society, technology is now less clear than it was, as is its influence and power over our everyday lives.

What this shows us is that the new media technologies that pose a threat in *Skyfall*, and only in *Skyfall* as such, are different from technologies of the past. In any other Bond film, Bond tracks his villain to their lair, and it is there, on the enemy's own territory, that he faces his foe and triumphs. In *Skyfall*, however, Bond is not able to confront his enemies on their turf and successfully defeat them on their terms. Whereas Bond normally infiltrates a lair on his own and sets about either retrieving or destroying the weapon that threatens hegemony, Bond fails to do so in *Skyfall*. He infiltrates Silva's lair, only to call on back up to rescue him when he cannot take down Silva's thugs alone. Indeed, *Skyfall* is the first time that Bond must retreat to his own lair, his home turf, the only uneven playing field on earth where Bond can successfully defeat his networked foes: the Skyfall estate.

No weapon in Bond franchise history had so powerful a reach that it drove Bond into retreat, before the yonic weapon presented in *Skyfall*. Bond cannot dominate or destroy the internet, per his usual modus operandi. Instead, he mimics the affordances of a yonic weapon by trapping Silva in a geographic space, off the grid, where Silva's weapon cannot reach him. Bond tries, and fails, in *Skyfall* to thwart Silva by tracking his digital network- Bond's modus operandi in era two- and by tracking his offline social network. Each of these approaches reflect the integrality of networks as Bond's area of expertise. The networked world, the shadows M rails

against, are where James Bond 007 not only operates, but also exists; his identity as an agent is bound to them. The Skyfall estate provides a narrative alternative to the world of espionage that Bond inhabits throughout both eras one and two.

The Bond family home in Scotland where Bond and M take refuge represents an archaic and exclusive way of life. As a hunting estate, it is a place constructed distinctly for the performativity of white Anglo masculinity. The Scottish hunting estate is where all the privileges of wealth, whiteness and masculinity, averted by the post-modern, post-human ideology of augmented reality give Bond an advantage over Silva. Silva is the figurative representative of the postmodern world- racially indistinct, divorced from the tenuous nationality he occupied prior, and trained to exist in the cultural meeting points of the world that Bond films uniformly favor as safe zones for the world's evil doers. Silva's pedigree disqualifies him from a life of huntin', fishin' and shootin' with the country gentry, but as Silva's figurative counter-image Bond is quite literally at home on his family's estate.

Bond's retreat to the isolated safety of a place out of time accords with the seeming otherness of networked technology within the film. Despite how the bombing of River House and the derailment of the Tube train, illustrate the interconnectedness of networked and pre-existing non-networked technologies of the built environment, the film still treats new media as a foreign entity. This foreignness is signified by the move from River House to the underground headquarters that Churchill used during World War II when he was evading the reach of Germany's bombers. MI-6 reacts to the use of weaponized new media by adopting a wartime mentality, and retreating to a space that was originally chosen because it was physically out of reach of foreign enemies. But, as the film shows, the networked world still extends to the below ground headquarters where MI-6 sets up shop, proving the futility of trying to escape the threat

of the yonic weapon, when that weapon is built in to the mundane practices of the institution in a contemporary world.

**B. There is No Future for Me in the Past**

*Skyfall*'s themes show how digital technologies create a complicated source of anxiety for 21<sup>st</sup> century men about how to perform their masculinity. A close reading of the film reveals that as men negotiate their gender role expectancies in a digital era, chauvinist attitudes emerge and women are intentionally marginalized; moved to the sidelines of the field, so men can battle it out away from the sight of women and the added anxiety of managing their gender performance for the second sex. For Bond to confront the technological shifts that threatened his dominant masculinity in *Skyfall*, it becomes necessary within the formula for other regressions to occur in sync. The findings of this dissertation bear this out by showing how the merging of Bond's gender performances in eras one and two negatively affected the other characters in the film. In service to narratives that contend with the threats new media technologies pose to the existing hegemony, producers that had previously embraced a more progressive adaptation of the Bond formula consciously regressed the gender dynamics of the franchise.

As in the real world, where regressive policies disproportionately affect marginalized people (Assari & Lankanian, 2016), the regressions in *Skyfall* further marginalized women characters, queer characters, and women of color while benefiting the wealthy, cis-gendered, heterosexual white men characters. The commutation of supporting characters in the franchise was only part of a larger narrative reformulation that sought to honor the franchise's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary by tying the rebooted Bond universe of era two to the Bond universe that existed when the first film premiered.

Money Penny's chapter highlights how 21<sup>st</sup> century men still seek to dominate a control used of technologies but they are not using postfeminist logic against women by the use of double standards that disenfranchise women. This storyline echoes the recent attempts by men to reclaim the online space from women by establishing consciously toxic techno-cultures (Massanari, 2017). Scholars have long noted how Silicon Valley has reproduced in its own sub-culture of computer 'nerds' a parallel chauvinism to that ingrained in other industries (Cockburn, 1985; Massanari, 2017). Women working in Silicon Valley have also reported that these cultures exist within the workforce. Online the culture of the hacker has always conformed to the 'cyber cowboy', and its masculine veneer is bolstered by the way that hackers, including prominent hacker CEOs have labeled themselves disrupters, in order to identify more readily with the archetype of the rebel.

As Kvasny and Truex (2000) predicted, the online cultures that developed around the mythos of the hacker quickly adopted the same hegemonic models that existed offline. White men, with neo-liberal capitalist intent, asserted a patriarchal culture in online spaces designated for the self-presumed tech elite (Kellner, 2017; Massanari, 2017). Sites like 4chan, 8chan, Reddit, and now Quora have become the online information exchanges for misogynist techies who want to expel women from accruing positions of power online, in the same way that Silicon Valley corporations have adopted overtly sexist and exclusionary cultures offline to keep women from gaining power in the tech companies where capital accrues. This, however, pre-existed *Skyfall*. As my research has documented, these cultures appear on film in a useful way that helps to explore the underlying contest for masculinity that is playing out both online and off, because of new technologies that proffer liberating affordances for marginal actors seeking inclusion, agency, and control.

Q's chapter highlights how new media technologies challenge men's ability to perform masculinity in the hegemonic model that values embodiment and physical acts of violence and domination. The postmodern condition that is reified by the affordances of new media have decentered violence from the corporeal to the digital in ways that are confounding to the adherents of white capitalist patriarchy (Futter, 2018) because the Internet demands fluid gender interplay that requires collaborative rather than individualist approaches that combine the technomasculine with the hegemonic masculine. The online space not only demands gender fluidity, it advances the progressive agenda of those seeking to undermine hegemony by attacking its structural pillars, i.e. asymmetrical informational advantages, and social controls over the means of media production (Bray, 2016).

Consequently, men seeking to sustain patriarchy seek wholesale regression because it allows them to dominate the space independently of others, and to enact subordination of other masculinities rather than to accommodate them. We see this in the ways that Russia used the Internet to sew discord in the U.K. Brexit campaigns, and the U.S. presidential election to regress the state of geo-strategic relations, as well as domestic politics in favor of totalitarian leadership, and isolationist policies (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). This is also apparent in the paradoxical, but politically effective tactics of Donald Trump, who embraces the rhetoric of hegemonic masculinity while performing this masculinity through the mechanism of social media (Turner, 2018). Meanwhile, this fluid performativity is only useful to the ends that he can consolidate social controls that target net neutrality, media access, and the integrity of journalism (Waisbord, 2018).

The postmodern embrace of a counter-factual world on the right, and a seemingly progressive rights movement on the left that rejects consensus politics (Kellner, 2017), together

undermine existing protocols for typification. The counter-factual movement makes propositions of fact vs. value, or policy impossible to negotiate. This inchoate state is somehow counterbalanced, or compensated for, by the resumption of hegemonic masculine conditions. Mallory becomes M, signifying masculine authority has been returned to its place of power over marginal actors, like Moneypenny and Q, and Bond's ability to kill has ostensibly overwhelmed Silva's ability to hack. Q's subordination to Mallory is discussed previously as being signified in the moment that Mallory sanctifies Q's service to Bond's secret plan to trap Silva. Therefore, by film's end, white heterosexual men have regained their positions of power in MI-6 (which represents Britain as a white capitalist patriarchal institution), and the marginal identities within the organization are subordinated in service to these men, and thereby the repression of white capitalist patriarchy.

M's chapter shows that women capable of techno-mastery in the digital era face mounting opposition that positions them as villains by recycling heavily gendered stereotypes, and reinstating illogical double standards about the quality of their work. This parallels the travails of women leaders like Hillary Clinton, who was pilloried for an alleged email scandal that amounted to nothing. The primacy of Clinton's emails as a narrative against her is comparable to M's narrative in *Skyfall*. In both cases, powerful women are being castigated in a public way because they are accused of mishandling technology.

In both cases the technology that M and Clinton were accused of mismanaging was digital. In both cases, those around them trumpeted the charges as evidence of their incompetence as professionals overall, and not just in one small part. At *Skyfall*'s end, M, is killed off from the franchise, so that her less experienced, and less intelligent male rival can succeed her. In real life, Clinton improbably lost the presidential election to a candidate no one

expected to win (Kellner, 2017), which subsequent research has affirmed was primarily influenced by the media's focus on her emails (Wolfers & Zitzewitz, 2018).

In both cases, the women in question suffered wildly disproportionate fates to men in the same situation. Where M was vilified by her peers for refusing to adapt to a riskier, and more vulnerable technologized approach to intelligence gathering, Clinton was vilified for refusing to adopt a system of securing her private information that is demonstrably less secure than the system she used. Both M, and Clinton were continuing practices that had been used successfully by their predecessors (Colin Powell advised Clinton on the use of the private server, whereas M inherited the 00 program), and yet both were castigated for the programs as if they had designed them, rather than managed them (Kellner, 2017).

In both cases, M and Clinton were dedicated to less advanced, but more secure processes, in an effort to avoid the risks of hacking (Inkster, 2016), but were attacked by people who were later found to rely on the same systems. On screen, Mallory took over the 00 program only after M died defending it using the very tactics Mallory said were untenable. In reality, Clinton remains tarnished for email use (Powell, et al., 2017) that Trump demanded she be jailed for (Johnson, 2018), while not only do Trump family members serving in his administration use private email accounts (Helderman, 2017), but James Comey, the Director of the FBI who investigated Clinton for the practice, was conducting portions of the investigation using his Gmail account (Hoyle, 2018).

What these comparable experiences show us is that *Skyfall* rightly digital technology as a territory that the media routinely claims for men, over women through nuanced discursive practices. M's death symbolizes more than a departure for the character, or a pivot in the gender relations of the franchise, but rather a reflection of our contemporary society and the grave

dangers resurging against empowered women. For gender studies scholars this research provides a new vocabulary to interpret and understand media depictions of technological use by women, and a platform for discussing how the impact of discourses around technology in mass and new media tie back to the technological shifts affecting media in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Bond's confrontation with his alter ego Silva reflects the larger threat to the institution of white capitalist patriarchy posed by the anarchistic culture of disruption that is part of the postmodern condition ushered in online. The most concrete set of interconnected signifiers relate to Bond as the symbolic defender of hegemony, a role he executes through his abilities to hack the offline networks of institutional enemies, the disrupters labeled in era two as terrorists; and to Silva, the ultimate disrupter by virtue of his ability to hack digital networks as a means of hacking the offline network of agents that protect the hegemonic powers of NATO. From this co-related signifiers, we read a series of significations- that new media reflects a post-modern condition where institutional forces are not only corruptible (as in era two), but disruptable. Silva is able to use the structures built by hegemonic powers against them. He is able to target the shadows they have created as a mechanism of imperial and post-colonial as a vulnerability.

By exposing the reality of how NATO secures its member nations, and their welfare, to the world, Silva forces those democratic nations to face the ire of their citizens. As an institution, MI-6 is threatened by the enhanced transparency that new media culture implies. As an agency dedicated to espionage, this is not surprising. M says as much to Mallory in the film, but what she also says, and reiterates throughout, is that MI-6 operates at the behest of the government, and the people they represent. In other words, MI-6 is an institution that supports the modern world that the U.S. and the U.K. control, by figuratively occupying the interstitial space that is in character as post-modern as the networked world. MI-6 is known to exist, even though its

activities are meant to be secret. MI-6 exists only because the British Government created, funds, and oversees it, yet it is positioned rhetorically as being an independent agency that sits beside, rather than within, the larger government as a whole. Likewise, digital networks, were created by, funded by, and continue to be maintained and operated by institutional powers in democratic nations, and yet those same democratic nations disavow responsibility for how the networks are used.

Silva recognizes the paradoxical positionality that MI-6 occupies, and how it mirrors the post-modern condition afforded by new media. That recognition forms the basis of his post-modern plot to expose MI-6, and allow it to be destroyed by the very democracy it protects. Silva undoes MI-6 by making their existence more apparent than it had been. He bombs River House to draw attention to their symbolic home; he exposes their embedded agents online, and at the same time exposes their betrayal of their NATO allies, whose agents are also revealed. Just like the internet, everyone may have known that MI-6 existed, but until their work was manifested online as having a human toll, no one much cared. Once the new media environment is roiled by the videos of NATO agents being killed, the public begins to question whether the risks of human intelligence can be mitigated by even further dependence on the networked technologies that Silva's plot shows to have only replicated in function.

That Silva succeeds in hacking MI-6 at both the literal and figurative level, illustrates the amplified power that hackers of the 00 mold can wield in a networked world, where they no longer depend on the institutions they protect to provide them with the resources that augment them. As Severine says on Silva's island, "he wanted the island, so he took it" (Broccoli & Mendes, 2012). Whereas Bond needs Q to equip him, Silva is self-sufficient. As he goes on to explain to Bond in their first encounter, his power is derived from his ability to manipulate the

networked world, rather than trying to manipulate the events of the offline world, as Bond has always done. Silva does not need to kill the human nodes on an offline social network, when he can use the digital network to track and destroy anyone he wants.

Silva's power as a hacker reinforces the unsettling duality that pervades post-modernism. Silva is not the opposite of Bond, he is Bond's alter. In the same vein we see that every character is revealed to be only a few shades of character different from others, so that the black and white dynamic of good and evil that so many scholars recognize in the formulas of era one, are not only complicated, as they were in era two, but upended by *Skyfall*. In *Skyfall*, every character is displaced in some way from their core identity: Moneypenny and Q operate in the field; M transforms into a Bond girl; Bond is disabled; the villain, Silva, takes the roles of the tracker, hacker, and techno-master that had always belonged to Bond. *Skyfall* leans in to the uncanny valley of a post-modern world, where everything comes out as a variation of what it was in the modern world, and consequently, nothing means what it once did.

Silva dominates the networked world, just as he dominates the post-modern world where network technologies have insinuated their way into every aspect of the infrastructure. In superhero terms appropriate to the re-formation of the franchise in era two, Silva is the bizarro Bond. He is the consummate enemy that in Marvel films forces an alliance between the many 'universes' where each individual superhero rules. To match Silva, Bond calls on every member of his assorted team. In this light, we can then better understand the significations behind the core characters of Moneypenny, Q, and the sub-altern M performed by Mallory as white male. They are reintroduced in order to heighten the contrast between the unilateral, and individualistic power of the post-modern world Silva controls online, by personifying the offline social network of MI-6 that in the modern world afforded Bond the power to dominate others.

The reintroduced core characters are only able to reinforce the modern dimensions of Bond's world because they re-introduce the dramatic conventions that in era one were so highly identified with modernity. Mallory is an 'M' that still idolizes the democratic institution in a way that era two's M has learned not to do. Money Penny reifies the inferiority of women by deferring to Bond and Mallory. Q's queerness works against his techno-masculine bravado, particularly when Silva's ability to penetrate Q's firewall at MI-6 belies Q's hacker status. In turn, each character subjugates to Bond so that by film's end Bond is asserting the kind of latitude over his social network that Silva asserts over the digital network. Even M, ultimately defers to Bond in a moment that consummates his newfound powers as what Connelly (1995) would identify as a hegemonic male, and others (Hearn, 2009; Kimmell, 2013) might simply describe as a model of dominant masculinity.

*Skyfall* rhetorically links Bond's ineptitude with new media technologies to his compromised masculinity as a disabled agent. In this context, Bond is threatened with extinction in a manner that was previously reserved only for women characters and gender queer villains. In substance, this demonstrates that techno-masculism is not only capable of denigrating already marginalized characters, it can also rescind the privilege of techno-masculinity that characters like Bond, enjoy perennially. Without his privileged status as a techno-masculine man, and robbed of his embodied masculinity, Bond finds himself reduced to a position of equality with the other characters in the franchise. In concert with other white men stripped of their privilege by the disenfranchising effects of late stage capitalism, Bond interprets this positionality not as equal, but as oppressed, in the manner of what Kimmell (2013) identifies as the angry white man. For the first time, Bond must exist without the extraordinary privilege of being either preternaturally superior, or else augmented to superiority, and in this form- he loses the fantasy

sheen that made him so enviable before. Bond cannot stride through the networked world with ease, and without worry. He is subject to fear, and humiliation. *Skyfall*'s Bond is a man like any other, and in that form, his mission becomes familiar to all the men who grew up on the promise of a privileged life, only to find themselves struggling to survive.

### **1. The disrupters**

Kimmell's (2013) work documents the perceived plight of white men, as they grapple with the consequences of equalizing social and economic movements. He finds them to be angry, but unsure of how to articulate it. He finds the men he studies to feel humiliated, and wronged, and constantly searching for an example by looking at the structures of power that in previous eras were reliable instruments of privilege for white Anglo-American men. Kimmell's work aligns closely with the dominant narratives emerging from men's rights groups online, and resonating with the broader population of white men as they are adapted into broader political messages online, and in mainstream politics.

A recurring complaint of popular male media icons of late is that they are outsiders forced to rail against the corrupt strictures of society. This logic syncs with that of the Bond villain who justifies his disrupting the status quo by citing the status quo's inherent injustices. Kimmel (2016) documents how the angry white man interprets equality as oppression because it is a state in which he is deprived of the structural advantages that had previously privileged him and his fathers before him. *Skyfall* brings the concept of equality as oppression into the forefront of the film's discursive treatment of masculinity. Bond, finally aging, finally susceptible to friendly fire, and the other hazards that he has miraculously avoided for the last fifty years finds himself operating on equal footing with the other characters in the film, including a villain who is as well-trained as he, and even more skilled in the use of digital networks.

The tech world is rife with Bondian supervillains- dramatic and megalomaniacal white men, who are as driven by a shared anger at the pace and structure of the modern world, and collectively identify as their work within white capitalist patriarchy as disruptive of a corrupt global hegemony mired in bureaucracy, and obfuscation. Like Silva, WikiLeaks founder, and famed hacker, Julian Assange, has dedicated the past decade to his personal war on a powerful woman leader, Hillary Clinton, whom he has targeted in a series of disclosures aimed at undermining Americans faith in their government by purporting to check the growing influence of a deep state conspiracy (Savage, 2016). Assange centered his attacks on Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, the only powerful woman, and the country's first black president, while ignoring the reality that the issues his WikiLeaks documents contended with were all derived from the policies of the preceding Bush Administration (Assange, 2013). Like Silva, Assange saw Clinton as the personification of the government, to which she had so tenuously belonged for her entire career (Savage, 2016), as well as the shadow leader of a new technocracy that threatened the individual freedoms of all (Assange, 2013). In appearance, the Albino Assange evokes the villainous countenance often featured in Bond movies. In line with the regressive, and deviant nature ascribed to Bond villains by their exploitative use of women, and in recent films, their association with human trafficking, Assange sought asylum in Ecuador's London Embassy (his personal lair) after he was charged with rape in Sweden (Harding, et al., 2018).

Self-branded internet super-villain Milo Yiannopoulos emulates Bond villain Elliot Carver by using his online platform to spur controversial al-right beliefs designed to inflame the liberal public, and lull young conservatives into a false sense that their own extremist attitudes in favor of white supremacy, men's rights, and social Darwinism (Lynskey, 2017). Meanwhile, industry leaders at Google face criticism for rampant sexism in their workplace culture (Lee,

2018); while those at Facebook have been maligned for partnering with a villainous character at Cambridge Analytica, who wound up serving the Russian and Ukrainian groups that mounted a successful social influence campaign on the platform during the 2016 election (Dawsey, 2017). In the aftermath of the Facebook scandal, Cambridge Analytica's founder, Alexander Nix, was even compared in parliament to a Bond villain (Booth & Adam, 2018).

Elon Musk, more than any other technophile fits the characteristics of the traditional Bond villain. Bolstered by the adulation of tech industry bloggers who see him as both a futurist and a self-appointed hero in the style of Bruce Wayne, Musk propels his business ventures forward despite the suspiciously similar aims of his work and that of cinematic megalomaniacs from the Bond universe. At present, Musk has been fined for manipulating markets (Taylor, 2018) like Le Chiffre in *Casino Royale*; has announced plans to colonize Mars and mine asteroids via a private space force (Davenport, 2018), like Hugo Drax in *Moonraker*; and like Green in *Quantum of Solace*, has received approval to bore tunnels under two major U.S. cities (Los Angeles and Chicago) without seeking environmental impact studies (Koziarz, 2018). Recently, Musk's reputation as a heroic maverick has been challenged by a spate of public tirades (primarily on twitter), in which he has revealed himself to be thin-skinned, vitriolic, retaliatory, and at times self-deluded (Davenport, 2018). In short, Musk's social media conduct mirrors that of President Trump, whom Musk continues to support as the prime financial contributor to a super-PAC designed to support Trump-styled far right congressional candidates (Morris, 2018), and before that, as a member of Trump's economic council (Koren, 2017). Still, Musk's male acolytes idolize him for his ability to perform techno-masculinity in the same bold manner of a hegemonic male (Paquette & Holley, 2018).

The techno-masculinity that *Skyfall* asserts as a counter to Bond's masculinity prompts Bond to abandon the more progressive gender queer performativity that he adopted in era two, in favor of the regressive hegemonic masculinity the character performed in era one. This plotline sets up the techno-masculine male as the antagonist to the hegemonic male, and settles the contest between the two in favor of a regressive state where the gender neutralizing attributes of a technologized, post-human world are stamped out. By the end of *Skyfall*, Bond has come full circle from the affective, progressive character that emerged in the prequel films that rebooted the franchise to the archetypal Bond character that Connery first portrayed on film. The film therefore reconciles Bond's conflicting gender performances between eras one and two, by presenting them in a synthetic form that eases tensions all around. Bond's much maligned chauvinism from era one is re-packaged in the guise of maturity, while Bond's queer gender performances in era two are normalized as part of the maturation process. This indicates that the regressive commutations of the secondary Bond characters were the fallout of producers' attempts to reckon with the socio-cultural shifts instigated by the Internet revolution.

**C. This is Madness: This is Postmodernism**

Bond's *Skyfall* storyline prompts a regression for the character that ripples out and impacts every other character as well. This storyline also presages recent events in Anglo-American culture that are integrally tied to the use of new media technologies. The postmodern world that Silva represents contrasts against the modern world that Bond symbolizes. The postmodern world- the condition that Lyotard (1979) theorized is one that many including Kellner (2012) routinely argued had not yet been reached, but the recent developments in the world indicate otherwise. The recent examples of governments weaponizing new media technologies to accrue power through adapted propaganda tactics signals that we may now be

living in the post-modern state that Lyotard theorized, and Kellner (2013) suggested we had been too quick to assume. Here, I am distinguishing between the modern as a movement seeking to reform social institutions from the postmodern movement that seeks to dismantle social institutions entirely. In effect, the modern world is one of reformation and incremental progress, whereas the postmodern world is one that disrupts the existing state so profoundly that even foundational social constructs are challenged. As M says, the shadows are getting bigger, and they now envelop us. The post-modern world where Bond operated is no longer fictional; it is real. We see this in a number of ways.

Consider how Russia's use of misinformation during the 2016 election, and its continuing efforts to stoke political discord through similar means (Tillett, 2017) accords with the tactics that Silva used against MI-6 in *Skyfall*. Silva needed only to expose the names of secret agents in order to create controversy over a practice that was already tacitly accepted so that he could weaken Britain's defenses against the threat he posed them. Likewise, Russia didn't need to impose its will on the voters so much as draw social media users into false news sites, and allow the users- verified members of the social media at hand- shared the false stories as a matter of their right as a legitimate account holder (Alcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Because these campaigns occurred in tandem with the transition from print to online news journalism the impact of creating and spreading fake news has tainted people's reception of news as factual (Alverman, 2017).

What makes this post-modern, rather than modern, is that people do not just reject bias in journalism, or the illegitimacy of some news media forms, as they did during the modernist era of the Frankfurt School. Instead, they reject the concept of news as being capable of objectivity (Marki, 2012; Alverman, 2017) and by implication reject the necessity of the fourth estate.

Adding to the postmodern dimensions of the problem is the fact that media skepticism crosses the increasingly divisive political spectrum just as it did during the interwar period (McNair et al., 2018). People on the right, and a progressive movement on the left seem equally susceptible to conspiracy theories (Bray, 2018) that embrace the paranoid politics that Kimmell (2013) deems inherently regressive (Johnson, 2018). For people with totalitarian aims, this shift towards a post-factual, affective driven dependency on fragmented social media stories may prove beneficial. The current dynamic echoes that which existed during the interwar period (Fussell, 2013).

Situating these recent developments within the frame of postmodernism helps distinguish between the postmodernity inherent in the digital age and the modern age for other relevant scholarship. In the modern age, networks were established and trans-nationality was afforded offline (Blackbourne, 2011). Modernity promoted individualism because the community was no longer the center of the individual's world as it had been in traditional culture (Thompson, 2002). In the modern world, the individual was capable of traveling across time and space in a process that disconnected them from some, in order to connect them with others (Thompson, 2004). In the digital age, connectivity has become so enhanced for most Britons and Americans, that individuals do not need to sever, or suspend their connections with one community entirely in order to engage another (Auge, 2008; Turkle, 2012). The Internet, and in large part social media, have expanded the number of connections that individuals can maintain by altering the form and quality of those connections (boyd, 2004) to afford dynamic media interactions capable of disrupting, and/or extending social institutional controls in a paradoxical manner that aligns with Lyotard's characterization of the postmodern condition.

Like Bond, who evades the persistent challenge to masculine social control by opting for a wholesale technological regression when he escapes to the rural sanctuary of Skyfall, his family's hunting lodge, (a subtle nod to the men's movements of the seventies tarried into the woods to conduct their bonding sessions) men threatened by the progressive portent of the networked society have embraced regressive gender politics that seek to undermine the enfranchisement of marginal groups by re-instating outmoded socio-cultural relations. We see this in both the United States, in the racist, sexist nationalism touted by the Republican Party, and in The United Kingdom in the nationalistic political rhetoric surrounding Brexit (Kellner, 2017).

Just as Trump and May seek to separate from, and alienate, their global partners in a bid to reclaim national identity through overt stances of isolationism (Brands, 2017), Bond goes off the grid when he retreats to his family home. In contemporary parlance, the term 'off the grid' refers largely to the world of networked technologies, though its actual implications are much more draconian. Living off the grid is a lifestyle choice that was originally embraced by naturalists and extreme right wing ideologues that viewed modern society as intrinsically linked to a culture of paternalistic government over-reach (Yuracko, 2008). The grid that this group referred to was not only the energy grid that powers modern technologies, but also the cultural grid that binds people together beyond their immediate communities to a national government authorized to regulate the population's behavior. It is this meaning of the grid that we see accords with the policy agendas of notably regressive Anglo-American political leaders. The paradoxical logic of world leaders seeking to enhance their world standing by removing themselves from international relations is important to note as a reflection of a postmodern world.

The fact that internet companies have largely reproduced in their structures, and cultures, a disposition favoring white capitalist patriarchy makes them a far less potent threat to the existing hegemony, than the vast pool of potential revolutionaries who can use the internet in manifest ways that differ from mass media. The one to many/many to many/many to one dynamics of a new media environment mean that the U.S. government (for example) may be as vexed by a single able hacker, as they would be by an army of hackers engaged in cyber warfare at the bidding of a foreign power. Individual memes can quickly grow through social media to resonate with voters, and provoke widespread uproar, even if first posted by someone with no prior history of insurrection (Inkster, 2016). At the same time, Occupy Wall Street, and the Anti-fa movements have shown that the internet is a useful tool for organizing (Skinner, 2011; Bray, 2017); so much so, that the same revolutionary effects of the Arab Spring (Papacharissi, 2015) seem equally plausible in the United States. Consider the success of the Occupy Movement in shifting the mass media frame of the moment from concerns about the demands of the Tea Party to concerns about social justice via their memes about the nefarious 1% (Gitlin, 2012; Bray, 2017).

*Skyfall* premiered one year after Occupy, and The Arab Spring tilted the media frame mechanisms (Gitlin, 2012; Papacharissi, 2014), but the film does not depict a world where the internet democratizes society. *Skyfall* depicts a world where people in charge of defending existing institutions are no longer capable of doing so in the face of a weaponized internet, and consequently embrace a whole scale regression. This is the voice that I believe reflects the structures of feeling of the historical moment, and my belief is borne out by the subsequent events that have specifically transformed the geo-political landscapes of the United Kingdom and the United States.

I believe that the popularity (as it was) for regressive cultural politics that culminated in 2016, was born out of latent, deep-rooted, anxiety among white elites regarding the transformative powers of a networked society. Part of this emanates from direct sources of anxiety such as shifts in employment trends (Carroll, 2011), but my argument goes further to say that these concerns, though played upon by regressive politicians, were only part of the larger concerns that voters expressed in the 2016 Brexit and Presidential elections. Note that the core messaging for both of the regressive campaigns in these respective elections focused on disengagement from the larger world, isolation, and nationalism- a political ploy built up largely around racist lines (Inkster, 2016; Geurrina, 2017; Virdee & McGeever, 2018). Overt chauvinism was another key element of both campaigns. The killing of Labour MP Jo Cox was a climactic moment leading up to the Brexit vote (Bhambra, 2017; , as was the release of audio tapes in which Donald Trump bragged to a television reporter about how often he had committed sexual assault, noting that fame meant he could grab women “by the pussy” (Gabbard, 2017).

As in *Skyfall*, the 2016 elections featured networked technologies championed by technophiles that created massive vulnerabilities exploited by our enemies to incite chaos, and foster division (Nieva, 2018). Networked voting machines were hacked, social media was infiltrated, and the fragmented media environment fostered online were easily manipulated in the same way that Silva manipulated MI-6’s network, its digital records, and its relationship with the public. As in reality, Silva was only able to do this because the networked world and the premise of digital techno-superiority allowed it. Silva’s actions in *Skyfall* resulted in a manifestly postmodern state; the same state in which those who had achieved gains in the modern world find themselves marginalized in old ways under a new justification.

Both the Brexit and Trump campaigns were promoted online, with Trump making history for his ability to run a successful campaign primarily through Twitter (Bocskowski & Papacharissi, 2018). Another key commonality between both campaigns is that they were similarly influenced by, and potentially engineered, in part or in whole, by Russia's Vladimir Putin as an effort to destabilize the west (Dawsey, 2017). This twist in the story reflects *Skyfall*'s nuanced treatment of the confounding postmodern nature of the new media landscape. In the postmodern world that has finally materialized because of new media, institutions of power are vilified for performing their known functions, while disrupters of the institution are glorified for enacting those same practices in a new way. Affect trumps reason in online movements (Castells, 2011; Inkster, 2016), while at the same time, the logic of the hegemony that opposes rebellion is being meaningfully critiqued (Castells, 2011; Papacharissi, 2015). This is the world where Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump can vie for positions of power over the Democratic and Republican parties, respectively, while claiming that their strongest qualification is the fact that they are not party members, and oppose the two respective parties in toto.

These developments, still underway illustrate that the new media technologies that have accelerated the trans-human, postmodern state are not necessarily the liberating tools that some had hoped would disrupt hegemony by advancing the disenfranchised to an equal footing in the battle for social control. Instead, as *Skyfall* imagined, the rise of new media technologies echoes the rise of previous media technologies, in that hegemonic forces challenged by it at the outset have adapted their postures to exploit new media tools to not only sustain, but also extend, the reach of the existing hegemony.

Some scholars (Wellman et al., 2001; Gruzd et al., 2011) frame social networks as community enhancing spaces, whereas others recognize that the motive for social network usage

is primarily individualistic (Deuze, 2012). In fairness, the rapid changes taking place in the form and use of new media make it hard to generalize about its impact beyond the immediate future (Boczkowski & Papacharissi, 2018). However, for many people the immediate impact of digital networks is enough to provoke deep reaching anxiety about their place in the economy (Poster, 2008), the culture at large (Couldry, 2013), and their gender competency (Chapetta & Barth, 2016). More importantly, what we can say about new media technologies is that they currently serve to at least exacerbate, if not instigate, far reaching social transformations (Boczkowski & Papacharissi, 2018) that threaten the status quo.

What we learn from the co-morbidity of regressions in the Bond franchise is that the progressive state afforded by the early Internet has been co-opted by the hegemonic forces that allowed its creation, and by those who seek to undermine hegemony for their own aims. We also see that networked technology is so enmeshed in our infrastructure that when the Internet becomes a weapon against the societies that initially promoted it, and whose values it was meant to replicate, then the entire social world that it touches is affected. The threat that MI-6, and by default hegemonic order faces in *Skyfall* comes not just from Silva's use of the network technology, but by its affordances, and accessibility. The weapon in this case was not a rogue technology, but a rogue technologist. This is why Silva's existence was so ominous and threatening; because he emerged from within the shadows that M explains are only growing in contemporary times.

Any individual now has the power to challenge the might of a nation, as episodes in recent history have proven. As in *Skyfall*, the current approach to countering cyber warfare is to target the hackers (Inkster, 2016), but this presumes that the ability and or, willingness to hack a system can be limited to a select population. In reality, the concept of the terrorist network has

been adapted readily in popular social movements, such as Occupy specifically to avoid such counter-measures (Schneider, 2011). In the past, it is at times like these in the development and perpetuation of a technology that governments institute widespread programs to limit their accessibility and their control. Indeed, programs like MI-6 exist for just this reason.

White capitalist patriarchy dependably insinuates itself into systems of power over disruptive, or transformative technologies (Marvin, 1997; Kvasny & Truex, 2000; Sconce, 2000; Oldenziel, 2004). Therefore, it is reasonable, given the portent for new media's power to disrupt, to say nothing of the recent displays of such, that institutional powers will begin vying in earnest to suppress accessibility, and dominate the control of new media technologies. In effect, we are witnessing the birth of another atomic age, a new race for space, a new era where governments recognize that dominating the new media environment- via hegemonic means- is now necessary to the preservation of social controls within a given society.

#### **D. Future Research**

The correspondence between the world imagined in *Skyfall* in 2012, as the film contended with issues of postmodern, yonic weapons and the current social realities that have formed in response to the same concerns hint at an interesting possibility that can be considered in future research. This project's findings suggest that while media guides our understanding of what is happening. It can also guide our predictive ability about what can happen. Future research could test, and potentially document whether media, particularly mass media, and more specifically mass media relying on specific formulaic models can indicate cultural shifts and changes before those shifts manifest in more marked ways in our culture.

In reference to the findings about the superior role of augmented reality in the post-modern world, it would be interesting to consider whether my reading of *Skyfall's* team dynamic

can be extended by looking at other action film narratives, beginning with the film *Spectre*. Preliminary research indicates that *Spectre* builds upon the pairing of Bond and Q as a team that signifies augmented reality, but in an even more inclusive way. A study of future Bond films will be a useful way of considering whether the regressive narratives surrounding the characters of Moneypenny and Q continue as such, are modified in new ways to make their regressed state palatable, or are disrupted by narratives that return some agency to the characters. Also indicated is research on how Bond operates in *Spectre* and successive films against secondary characters, including Mallory and the new villains he faces. Lastly, recent speculation about Craig's retirement from the Bond character raise questions about whether the connotation of having overcome marginalization in *Skyfall* will transfer from Craig's Bond to a successor, especially if the successor deviates in some way from the Craig's performance of identity, or masculinity.

#### **E. Limitations**

One limitation of this dissertation model is that it presumes that Box office totals, and critical reception constitute a fair interpretation of audience reception. Future research on media such as this, which model newfound ideological tendencies in concert with technological change, would do well to consider how the audience is receiving the media, and whether the audiences are identifying the latent or manifest ideological subtexts, and if so, how, audiences are interpreting the messages. Hall (1973) acknowledges the variations of interpretations by audiences tasked with decoding the messaging that is encoded by producers. He taxonomizes the meanings being decoded, as either preferred, negotiated, or oppositional meanings. In my study, I can rhetorically identify what the preferred meanings of the film may be, and to provide a justified individual reading of the film that is at times either negotiated or oppositional, but I

cannot generalize how the broader audiences interpreted the film, and whether the film functioned to relay ideological messages that promoted regressionist ideologies, or not.

#### **F. End Scene**

The underlying message in *Skyfall*'s ending is that the place for Bondian masculinity is not the present, but the past. For the increasing number of people marginalized by late stage capitalism this does not bode well. On film, *Skyfall* resolved a conflict that appears to remain. What it predicts is terrifying and yet it appears to be occurring. It predicts a world in which we must regress dramatically in order to protect ourselves from the threats posed by the post-modern, networked world. It predicts a world where those who championed technologies that enhance surveillance, and reduce anonymity did so at the peril of everyone, but most particularly those people already hindered in social mobility.

This hints at the larger premise of the research I do here, which is not just to consider how media guides our understanding of what is happening, but whether media can also guide our predictive ability about what can happen. My dissertation research leads me to believe that media, particularly mass media, and more specifically mass media relying on specific formulaic models can indicate cultural shifts and changes before those shifts manifest in more marked ways in our culture. By this, I mean that by watching movies we can see trends emerging and even predict our futures. In effect, media does not just reflect our world it predicts it. So, it would seem, that this study, conducted under certain circumstances within the franchise, where commutation is an established part of franchise tradition, and within a specific time frame... appears to confirm Williams' belief that it is possible to look at the structures of feeling imbued within our culture's films, as predictive not just reflective.

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## VIII. VITA

### TIMOTHY APPIGNANI

#### RESEARCH AREAS

Media Studies, Critical Cultural Studies, Feminist Technology Studies, Masculinity Studies, Media Theory, Cultural Literacy

#### EDUCATION

##### **University of Illinois at Chicago**

Ph.D. Communication, Gender & Women's Studies Concentration

Dissertation defended December 10<sup>th</sup>, Degree expected May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Dissertation: "Sometimes the old ways are best: Regressing the 007 franchise."

Committee: Steve Jones (Chair), Zizi Papacharissi, Judith Kegan Gardiner, Hamilton Carroll, Diem-My Bui

##### **Temple University**

M.L.A. History, 2011

##### **The Pennsylvania State University**

B.A. Letters, Arts and Sciences, 2002

#### PUBLICATIONS

##### **Books**

Appignani, T. (Publication Scheduled 2019). *The social science sleuth: The hidden legacy of Agatha Christie*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland Books. (Pending Review).

##### **Peer-Reviewed Articles**

Appignani, T. (2016). Murder and emancipation: Agatha Christie and critical qualitative methods. *The IAFOR Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1(2), 4-19.

Appignani, T., Kruzan, K., & Neill Hoch, I. (2015). Spirits in the aether: Digital ghosts in Final Fantasy XIV. *Gamevironments*, 2(1) 25-60. <http://elib.suub.uni-bremen.de/edocs/00104726-1.pdf>.

#### CONFERENCE PAPERS

Appignani, T. (2018). "This is Madness, This is Postmodernism." Cultural Studies Association, Pittsburgh, PA; May 2018.

Appignani, T., & Psarras, E. (2018). "Out and Down in Beverly Hills: A Critical Cultural Analysis of Blind Item Gossip." Cultural Studies Association, Pittsburgh, PA; May 2018.

Appignani, T. (2017). "Coming Out as Liberal: Difficult Conversations in the Family." Conflict Conference sponsored by The University of Texas at Austin Project on Conflict Resolution, Austin, TX; April 2017.

Appignani, T. (2016). "Policing the Home: Public/Private Distinctions and their Political Consequences." Cultural Studies Association, Villanova, PA; June 2016.

Appignani, T., & Psarras, E. (2016). "'Everyone in this town is so full of it': Social Class via Cultural Contexts in the Real Housewives Series." Cultural Studies Association, Villanova, PA; June 2016.

Appignani, T., Jones, S., Watson-Manheim, M.B., & Welch, E. (2015). "Social Media in the Workplace." IR16: Association of Internet Researchers, Phoenix, AZ; October 2015.

Appignani, T., Jones, S., Guzman, A., Archer, J., & Neill Hoch, I. (2016). "The Spectacle of Spectacles." IR:16 Association of Internet Researchers, Phoenix, AZ; October 2015.

Appignani, T. (2015). "Re-Running the New Fall Schedule: Media Memory's Hold on TV Programming." Cultural Studies Association, Riverside, CA; May 2015.

Appignani, T., Kruzan, K., & Neill Hoch, I. (2014). "Avatars as Ghosts in MMORPG." IR15: Association of Internet Researchers, Dagau, South Korea; October 2014

Appignani, T. (2013). "Techno-Masculism and the Deliberate Queering of James Bond." National Communication Association, Washington, D.C.; November 2013.

Appignani, T. (2013). "Women in Dystopia: Female Heroes in Contemporary Action Films." National Women's Studies Association, Cincinnati, OH; November 2013.

Appignani, T. (2013). "The Social Science Sleuth: The Legacy of Agatha Christie." Cultural Studies Association, Chicago, IL; May 2013.

Appignani, T. (2013). "The Missing Other on Television's *Lost*." Beyond the Margins, Chicago, IL; May 2013.

Appignani, T. (2012). "My Veneration: Understanding Occupy as a Defining Generational Event." National Communication Association, Orlando, FL; November 2012.

## INVITED TALKS

McCombs School of Business, University of Texas at Austin, February 2017  
 Co-conducted workshop on conflict resolution for the Bachelor of Business Administration Second Year Experience Workshop

UIC's Gender & Women's Studies Brownbag Series, September 2014

Presentation on progressive themes in the literature of Agatha Christie

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

**Research Assistant** to Dr. Steve Jones, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2014-2016. Assisted in the design, implementation, data collection, and analysis of a large-scale quantitative survey of social media in the workplace; collected relevant background research and submission for conference presentation, and prepared proposals for research funding.

**Coder/Research Assistant** for Dr. Sabrina Pasztor, 2015. Assisted in content analysis coding, and coding design for a study on gender pay equity narratives in mass media news coverage.

**Field Team Leader** for Google glass beta testing, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2014. Organized, and led, ethnographic field research on the use of Google glass wearable technology and worked as principal interviewer for subsequent focused interviews on the social perceptions of Google glass wearers, under the supervision of Dr. Steve Jones.

**Research Assistant** to Dr. Kevin Barnhurst, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2011-2012. Performed background research on “New Long Journalism” project prior to article and book publication. Prepared literature reviews, copy edited proofs, conducted library research, and oversaw international permissions processing for the acquisition of primary materials.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Adjunct Professor** St. Edward’s University 2017-present  
Media Communication/ Public Speaking

**Adjunct Professor** Texas State University 2016-present  
Business and Professional Communication/ Fundamentals of Human Communication

**Teaching Assistant** University of Illinois at Chicago 2012-2016  
Gender Communication/ Writing for Media/ Public Speaking (Instructor of Record)

**Adjunct Professor** DePaul University 2014-2016  
Organizational Communication/ Gender Communication

**Adjunct Professor** Columbia College, Chicago 2011-2013  
Writing and Rhetoric/ Ethnographic Research as Method

**Teaching Assistant** Temple University 2010-2011  
Introduction to Advertising/ Professional Writing (Instructor of Record)

**Master Lecturer** University of the Arts 2005-2011

First Year Writing/ Creative Non-fiction/ Playwriting/ Senior Project Adviser

## **ACADEMIC AND VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

**Member**, Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Committee, St. Edwards University, 2018-2019  
**Volunteer**, 'Beto for Texas' Beto O'Rourke senatorial campaign, 2018  
**Interviewer**, Bobcat Career Prep Mock Interview, Texas State University, 2018-2019  
**Faculty Adviser**, Workplace Social Media Implementation, St. Edward's University, 2017  
**Volunteer**, 'Forward Together' Hillary Clinton Presidential Campaign, 2016  
**Representative**, Graduate Student Council, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2014-2016  
**Reviewer**, Association of Internet Research conferences, 2014-2015  
**Reviewer**, National Communication Association conferences, 2012-2013  
**Volunteer**, Council on American Islamic Relations, Chicago, 2011-2012  
**Steward**, Graduate Employee Organization, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2011-2016  
**Faculty Pilot**, Digication software testing, University of the Arts, 2011  
**Faculty Co-pilot**, imbedded librarian project, University of the Arts, 2011  
**Faculty Judge**, Graphic Design Senior Presentations, University of the Arts, 2008-2011  
**Faculty Collaborator**, First Year Writing Curriculum, University of the Arts, 2007

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (Non-Academic)**

### **Manager of Box Office, Audience Services, and Information Systems**

Philadelphia Theatre Company, 2004-2008

Oversaw all sales and audience service functions for Lort C regional theater on the avenue of the arts including telemarketing, subscription services, audience services, concessions, and front of house staffing. IT duties included daily oversight of all information technology needs, and planning and supervision of all wiring, networking, and outfitting of 32,000 square foot Suzanne Roberts Theater building project.

### **Box Office Manager**

Wilma Theater 2002-2004

Oversaw all sales and audience service functions for Lort C regional theater on the avenue of the arts including subscription services, audience services, concessions, and front of house staffing.

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

National Communication Association  
 Cultural Studies Association  
 UIC General Employees Organization  
 Women's Studies Association  
 Association of Internet Researchers