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Trabajo Fin de Grado

No Time for Tradition:
The Representation of Masculinity in
No Time to Die (2021)

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the depiction of masculinity through the character of James Bond in *No Time to Die* (Cary Fukunaga, 2021). For doing so, some masculinity theories are considered as well as Hanna Hamad's study on postfeminist fatherhood. The essay consists of a brief contextualization of the representation of masculinity in the previous films of Daniel Craig saga and is followed by a detailed analysis of Bond's masculinity in *No Time to Die* that explores Bond's relationship with women, his emotional vulnerability and his role as a caring father. *No Time to Die* challenges the patriarchal ideology of the first films of the saga by presenting James Bond as a caring and vulnerable father that respects women and rejects the traditional values of masculinity. Hence, the film portrays a more egalitarian model of masculinity aligned with our contemporary times.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo fin de grado se centra en la representación de la masculinidad a través del personaje de James Bond en *Sin Tiempo para Morir* (Cary Fukunaga, 2021). Para ello, se utilizan varias teorías de la masculinidad a la vez que la investigación de Hannah Hamad sobre la paternidad postfeminista. El trabajo se compone de una breve contextualización sobre la masculinidad en las películas anteriores de la saga de Daniel Craig, y continúa con un análisis detallado de la masculinidad de Bond en *Sin Tiempo para Morir* que explora las relaciones de Bond con las mujeres, su vulnerabilidad emocional y su rol como padre afectivo. *Sin Tiempo para Morir,* desafía el pensamiento patriarcal característico de las primeras películas de la saga al presentar a James Bond como un padre afectivo y vulnerable que respeta a las mujeres y se aleja de los valores tradicionales de la masculinidad. De este modo, la película representa un modelo de masculinidad más igualitario y acorde a nuestro tiempo.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

"Bond, James Bond". These words, first uttered by the character played by Sean Connery in the film *Dr No* (1962), are one of the most memorable quotes in the history of cinema and a recurrent motif in the James Bond saga, a successful movie franchise that tells the adventures of the most famous spy of all times. With more than 20 films and 63 years of history, the character created by Ian Fleming has earned a remarkable and distinguished place within popular culture, becoming a symbol of British identity and Western masculinity. Although seven different actors have played the role of the British spy through the decades, all the Bond films follow a similar pattern: James Bond is presented as a charismatic and resourceful agent that has to fight some kind of menace (be it a terrorist organization or a global corporation, among others) that threatens the world's safety. He usually has a wide array of sophisticated cars and gadgets at his disposal and is usually helped on his mission by the so-called "Bond girl". However, the Bond character has not been preserved in amber throughout the decades. Some of his personality traits, such as his attitude towards women, have changed in accordance with changing cultural discourses about gender roles. The major changes regarding these issues in the saga can be found in the films starring Daniel Craig, especially in the latest film *No Time to Die* (2021).

No Time to Die (Cary Fukunaga, 2021) finds a mature James Bond (Daniel Craig) retired from active service in Jamaica. He receives a call from Felix Leiter (Jeffrey Wright), an old friend from the CIA that requires his help to investigate the disappearance of a scientist. As the plot unfolds, Bond gets involved in a global threat posed by an evil man called Safin (Rami Malek), who wants to eradicate most of the world's population by using a deadly virus called "Heracles" that can target and kill specific victims by tracking their DNA. As the film develops, Bond also reunites with

his former girlfriend and finds out that he has a daughter. He has to stop Safin's plans and Heracles, which ends up becoming not only a global threat but also a threat to Bond's family.

The movie, which became the fourth highest grossing movie of 2021, received many positive reviews in general, both from general audiences and film critics. Kevin Maher, from *The Times*, referred to it as one of the best films of 2021. Sam Sewell-Peterson, writing for *The Film Magazine*, praised the movie's cinematography, action sequences and special effects: "Daniel Craig's last outing as Bond is spectacular to look at, epic in scale and emotionally resonant" (Sewell-Peterson, 2021). Despite the positive reception, *No Time to Die* also became controversial for being the first film in the franchise that dared to sacrifice its famous protagonist. As the writer Anthony Horowitz told The BBC: "I do think it was a mistake, if I may say so, to kill Bond at the end of the last film, and I regretted seeing that, because Bond, you can't kill him, he is an icon". (George, 2025).

The purpose of this essay is to analyse the representation of masculinity in *No Time to Die* (2021) through James Bond's character by examining his emotional vulnerability and attitudes and relationships with women, as well as the concept of fatherhood portrayed in the movie. It offers a description of the evolution of James Bond's masculinity in the films of the Daniel Craig saga and, in particular, in the film *No Time to Die*. For the analysis of the film, I will use Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity, the idea of "caring masculinity" proposed by the scholar Karla Elliot and Hanna Hamad's views on postfeminist fatherhood in contemporary U.S film. The essay will explore how the portrayal of James Bond's masculinity in *No Time to Die* deviates from traditional and hegemonic masculinity in order to adjust to the socio-historical context in which the movie was released.

2. BOND AND THE REPRESENTATION OF MASCULINITY

With the popularity of feminist discourses in Western societies, masculinity has become a topic of debate in recent years. Although masculinity is a very broad and variable term to define, it can be said to be the set of behaviours, traits or attributes that tend to be associated with men. While new and multiple forms of masculinity have emerged in recent years, traditional masculinity has been the social norm for centuries in Western societies. The American Psychological Association (APA) defined traditional masculinity as a type of masculinity marked by stoicism, competitiveness, dominance and aggression, along with an inability to express emotions (De Boise, 2019, p. 147)

The character of James Bond became a symbol of Western and traditional masculinity since its first cinematic appearance in *Dr No* (1962), a film in which the British agent was played by Sean Connery. While, as this essay will argue, the image of Bond has evolved in line with changing socio-cultural discourses on masculinity, the prototypical image of James Bond was for a considerable long time that of a self-centred, self-sufficient, domineering man for whom women were either a tool or an obstacle (Sanchez, 2022, p. 108). Seven actors have portrayed the British spy in film, each with their own distinctive personality. Roger Moore, who played Bond from 1973 to 1985, is usually regarded as the most comedic Bond, when compared to the hard-edged masculinity and suave snobbery of Connery. Pierce Brosnan, who played the British agent from 1995 to 2002, is considered a representation of traditional masculinity with hints of a new man sensibility. Brosnan films became a representation of the changing gender politics of the 1990s, modernizing the saga through the character of M (Judi Dench) as a female boss that called Bond a "sexist, misogynistic dinosaur" in front of him, and incorporating strong female leads with actors like Halle Berry or Michelle Yeoh, who instilled a certain degree of power to former more passive and

usually submissive "Bond girls" (Kord, 2013, pp 124-125). After Brosnan's tenure, Daniel Craig became the next 007. He played the role in five films: *Casino Royale* (2006), *Quantum of Solace* (2008), *Skyfall* (2012), *Spectre* (2015) and *No Time to Die* (2021). The Daniel Craig saga demonstrates an evolution of Bond's personality as the saga progresses, showing that the saga has redefined its concept of masculinity.

Casino Royale (Martin Campbell, 2006) was the first movie of the saga starring Daniel Craig as the agent 007. The film, based on the first book written by Ian Fleming, was a reboot from the franchise as its plot revolves around the early days of James Bond as the agent 007. It was a new starting point for the character and also, according to some, a more realistic approach to the franchise. This realism partakes of a tendency of post 9/11 Hollywood to reimagine well-known heroes in films like *Batman Begins* (Christopher Nolan, 2005) and *Superman Returns* (Bryan Singer, 2006) in order to offer a darker and real version of the archetypical hero (Forest, 2011). Bond was not an exception to this trend as *Casino Royale* presented him as a dark and afflicted character that could be vulnerable and imperfect. Therefore, this change of perception of the character brought with it a new conception of masculinity that deviated from previous incarnations. Bond is seen here as a vulnerable man that makes mistakes, bleeds and gets hurt not only physically but also emotionally and psychologically when he has to face the betrayal and death of the woman he falls in love with, Vesper Lynd (Eva Green). Vesper decides to commit suicide by drowning herself in the waters of Venice. Bond gets her out of the water and, unsuccessfully, tries to save her. At the end of the film, M tells Bond that Vesper was being blackmailed by an organization that threatened the life of her secret Algerian boyfriend. Her death makes the character of Bond more vulnerable and his failure to save her constructs the protagonist as an imperfect character that is unable to save the woman he loves.

Yet, it is not only his emotional vulnerability that challenges Bond's masculinity but also the fact that he is feminized (and becomes the object of the gaze) when he is shown shirtless and muscular in several scenes at the beach (Cox, 2014, p. 186). There are also other traits that relate him to the traditional construction of femininity: the film shows him looking after Vesper, the main Bond Girl, who in some moments is masculinized, as she is as a spy and an active character that ends up saving Bond when he is poisoned, in a reversal of traditional gender roles. As Cox has argued, some scenes seem to have queer connotations. We see a naked Bond getting punished by Le Chiffre (Mads Mikkelsen), the villain who gives him a beating and hits him in his testicles, as some sort of symbolic castration. For Cox, the movie shows a change in a type of Western masculinity that can be considered as fluid because of the constant feminine traits of Bond (Cox, 2014, pp 193-194).

Quantum of Solace (Marc Forster, 2008) starts just after the events of *Casino Royale*. We find Bond fighting against a terrorist organization known as "Quantum" and seeking revenge for the death of Vesper Lynd, which still torments him. Bond's masculinity is similar to the one in the previous movie, but it emphasizes the violence and aggressiveness that already characterized Daniel Craig's first performance. Bond seems colder and stoic as he does not express his emotions after Vesper's death, an event that has left him a broken man. In this sense, he does not seem as emotionally vulnerable as he was in the previous film. Unlike in other films in the saga, Bond is able to see women as something else apart from sexual objects, as happens with Camille (Olga Kurylenko), the main heroine and Bond girl in the movie. Camille is an active and resourceful Bolivian agent that helps Bond to eradicate Quantum. The relationship that is established between both characters is based on mutual respect and companionship rather than love and sex, since Bond admires Camille and does not even

sleep with her, showing that women are not only objects of desire for him (Cohen, 2016, p. 117). He even risks his life in the final moments of the movie to protect her and save her from an explosion. A scene in which Bond is shown hugging Camille in order to calm her shows that Bond's masculinity is not always linked to violence and aggressiveness.

Skyfall (Sam Mendes, 2012) is the film that marked the 50th anniversary of the saga. It presented Bond as a wounded, independent and self-reliant character. In this film the character returns to "Skyfall", his family state and childhood home in Scotland, which stands for his unresolved childhood trauma: the death of his parents in a climbing accident (Cohen, 2016, p. 115). As Kincade (Albert Finney), the old gamekeeper of the state tells M, Bond was a child in pain that hid in his house and did not want to go out as a way to cope with the death of his parents. His childhood trauma adds a new layer to Bond's masculinity and contributes to explaining his cold temperament in adulthood. This also helps the audience to understand the relationship between Bond and M (Judi Dench), Bond's superior. Since both of his parents are dead, M represents a mother figure for Bond. She is the woman Bond respects the most as if she was his own biological mother. When Silva (Javier Bardem) kills M at the end of this film, Bond shows his pain and emotions. Throughout the whole movie he has been characterized as a wounded character but was always able to contain his emotions and stay calm. When Silva kills Severine by playing a game in which he has to shoot the glass of whiskey placed on Severine's head, for instance, Bond's cold reaction is the punchline "What a waste of Scotch", as the whisky is spilled on the ground. After M's death, however, we see Bond crying and kissing her head, which shows that he is not as cold and insensitive as he pretends to be.

The villain in *Skyfall* is Raoul Silva, a character that ends up establishing an interesting dynamic with James Bond because of Silva's queer masculinity. Although it is not the first time that the scenes between the hero and the villain have homoerotic undertones (this was also the case of Le Chiffre's torturing Bond in *Casino Royale)*, the first encounter between Bond and Silva challenges the traditional heterosexual masculinity of James Bond. Bond is tied up to a chair while Silva, talking to him, unbuttons his shirt and runs his hands over Bond's chest and legs, mentioning that there is a first time for everything. Bond's reply, "What makes you think this is my first time?", surprises both Silva and spectators, leaving them to wonder whether Bond could have had any sexual encounters with men in the past, and subverting the traditional heterosexual masculinity that Bond is associated with (Hines, 2018, p. 52).

Spectre (Sam Mendes, 2015) follows Bond fighting a terrorist organization called "Spectre", whose leader Ernst Stavro Blofeld (Christoph Waltz), is revealed to be Bond's foster brother, as Blofeld's parents adopted Bond when his parents died. While *Quantum of Solace* and *Skyfall* did not involve Bond in any romantic relationships, only in sexual encounters, *Spectre* represented a return to the more romantic and vulnerable side of James Bond that had already appeared in *Casino Royale*. Bond ends up falling in love again, this time with Madeleine Swann (Léa Seydoux), the daughter of Mr. White, a member of Spectre. Bond is again caring and protective and worries about what could happen to her, which contrasts with the colder side of the character after Severine's death in *Skyfall*. In addition, Madeleine ends up having an impact on Bond's aggressive masculinity. This is shown in the final moments of the film when Bond, after defeating Blofeld, looks at Madeleine and decides not to kill him and retire from active service with his new lover.

The figure of Q (Ben Whiswaw), a character that aids Bond by providing him with gadgets and technology in order to help him in his missions and that already appeared in *Skyfall*, is also worth mentioning. Traditionally represented as an old man in previous films, *Skyfall* constructs him as a tech savvy young guy. Although Q has never been a field agent, his knowledge and his participation in the story is extremely relevant, guiding and saving Bond in several instances. As Hines has argued, in these latter movies, Q is seen as an alternative representation of masculinity associated with new technology and in tune with the shift in gender norms of the 21st century (2018, p. 54). This is reinforced in *No Time to Die* when Q is presented for the first time in the franchise as a gay man that is expecting a male date.

Daniel Craig's Bond is probably the most violent and brutal Bond of all while at the same time he is the most emotional and vulnerable, subverting some aspects we tend to associate with traditional Western masculinity. Bond is no longer seen as domineering or sexist towards women and does not need to reassert his masculinity through his sexual encounters. Craig's movies represent a challenge to the traditional dominant masculinity that characterized previous incarnations of the character. These four Bond films starring Daniel Craig mark an evolution from the character that continues in *No Time to Die,* in which we not only see how a popular character has changed, but also how masculinity and gender roles have evolved. The next section will analyse several scenes of the film in detail taking into account the representation of masculinity.

3. *NO TIME TO DIE*

No Time to Die is the first film of the saga to give James Bond a child and to kill the famous spy at the end of the film. With James Bond retired from active service, agent 007 is now a black woman and Q, as mentioned above, is constructed as a gay man. For these reasons, it is usually considered to be the most inclusive Bond film of all so far (Shoard, 2021).

Barbara Broccoli, the main producer of the franchise has discussed in several interviews how the #The Me Too movement has influenced our culture and, therefore, the character of James Bond, claiming that the films are representative of the times in which they are produced. As she puts it, one of the aims of the director Cary Fukunaga was to renovate the gender politics of the saga in order to adapt it to the present socio-historical context. Fukunaga sees the first Bond played by Sean Connery as a sexual predator who abused women by stealing kisses from them and even forcing them to have sex (Shoard, 2021). The representation of Bond's masculinity in *No Time to Die* does not abide by the rules of the traditional dominant and sexist masculinity of the first movies of the franchise. This section will argue how the representation of masculinity that was already challenged in the previous films starring Daniel Craig reaches its climax in the latest movie of the saga. The analysis of masculinity in this movie will be divided in three parts: the representation of the character's relationships with women, Bond's emotional vulnerability and the film's portrayal of fatherhood.

3.1. BOND AND HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH WOMEN.

One of the recurrent tropes in the Bond saga is the figure of the "Bond girl". Bond girls are female characters that are presented as either love interests for the protagonist, companions, or even adversaries. The term chosen to refer to them ("Bond girl")

renders their names and personalities irrelevant, showing that what defines them is their relationship with the hero. Bond's relationship and behaviour toward these female characters is essential to define his masculinity. At first, Bond girls were presented as mainly objects of desire and submissive to Bond's sex appeal. There were usually characters with little agency both in the narrative and in action sequences. However, with the passing of time, especially in Pierce Brosnan's Bond era, the Bond girls evolved into more active and resourceful characters. Although that did not prevent them from being objectified and sexualized, Bond girls in the Bond films starring Brosnan ended up becoming characters that could rival or challenge Bond's traditional dominant or hegemonic masculinity, a concept popularized by sociologist Raewyn Connel in the 1990s. According to Connel, hegemonic masculinity places men at the top of the social pyramid, legitimising patriarchy, that is, the dominant position of heterosexual men (since homosexuals are excluded) and the subordination of women (Yang, 2020, p. 320) This is the type of masculinity that was embodied by Bond's character in many films but that does not characterize Daniel Craig's Bond, especially in *No Time to Die*.

No Time to Die presents three different Bond girls: Madeleine Swann (the love interest), Paloma (the companion) and Nomi (both companion and adversary). The three female characters are presented as strong and empowered characters that are not submissive, rejecting the sexist roles that were evident in the first films of the franchise. The construction of these three women as competent and essential characters within the movie's plot contributes to challenging the notion of hegemonic masculinity that Bond traditionally embodied. Furthermore, Bond's personality traits in *No Time to Die* cannot be said to match those of hegemonic masculinity. Bond is not presented as a character that wants to assert any type of dominance over women. In fact, there are several scenes

in the movie that demonstrate that James Bond is no longer an example of this form of masculinity.

The way in which Nomi (Lashana Lynch) is presented in the film is a starting point to analyse how Bond's masculinity is portrayed in the movie. Nomi, the MI6 new 007 now that Bond is retired, is presented as a skilful and competent black agent from the beginning of the film. She wrecks Bond's car and appears on a motorbike offering Bond a ride to his place in Jamaica. When they enter Bond's house, the bedroom is peppered by shadows that contrast with the lighting of the pool outside, which is reflected on the walls and the bed. The combination of lights and shadows suggests intimacy or seduction, giving spectators the impression that the two characters are going to have sex. This is reinforced in terms of composition when Nomi sits on the bed, evoking sexual connotations. Nevertheless, these expectations are subverted when Bond turns on the light and Nomi takes her wig off (even Bond seems to be parodically aware of the way expectations are being subverted in the scene when he says to Nomi that he never thought the wig would be the first thing she would take off). Both characters are looking for Valdo Obruchev (David Dencik), the missing scientist, but they are not working together. The first scene already presents the characters as adversaries. Nomi claims that she is a double 0 agent working for MI6, but not any double 0: she is 007 (see figure 1). This presentation of the character as the new 007 already challenges Bond's masculinity. Nomi is a black female agent that has occupied a role that was traditionally associated with white men like Bond. The scene subverts the notions that are associated with hegemonic masculinity as Nomi is not a submissive woman and Bond is not a dominant man either. Even if Nomi can be seen as an adversary in this scene (she threatens to put a bullet in Bond's knee if he gets in her way), Bond treats her as his equal. He is surprised to see such a young 007 agent but she counterattacks this

14

remark by saying that she is a high achiever and, especially, that the world has moved on. The film already establishes the idea that women can now take men's roles in society and be successful, contrasting with the patriarchal ideology of the first films of the saga. A scene that is first introduced as a potential sex scene between Bond and the new Bond girl turns into a conversation in which Nomi asserts her status as the new 007 agent. Bond is not presented as superior, in fact, just as the opposite. In this case, it is Nomi who seems to be in power, reversing the traditional gender roles.

Figure 1. Bond's reaction to Nomi claiming she is the new 007.

The presentation of Paloma (Ana de Armas) is another scene worth mentioning (see figure 2). Like Nomi, Paloma is a competent and resourceful woman that works for an agency, in this case, the CIA. Bond travels to Cuba to meet Paloma as he needs her help to get to Obruchev. The way her character is introduced resembles Nomi's in the way that it suggests sexual intimacy only to subvert viewers' expectations. Paloma takes Bond to a secret wine cellar and starts unbuttoning his shirt and taking his pants off. Bond giggles and comically suggests that maybe they should get to know each other better before they have sex. As happened in the scene with Nomi, the action takes a U-turn. When Paloma gives Bond a suit, it is clear that she was not undressing Bond

because she wanted to have sex with him but because she was dressing him up for the mission ahead. As can be seen, the movie is aware of the connotations the character of Bond has acquired throughout the years (he is irresistible to women) and uses them to refashion Bond's masculinity and his relationship with women.

Figure 2. Paloma's first appearance

Both scenes establish that Bond is no longer a representative of hegemonic masculinity as was the case in the first films of the franchise. For instance, in *Goldfinger* (1964) there is a scene in a barn in which Bond (Sean Connery) tries to kiss Pussy Galore, the Bond girl. Pussy does not want Bond to kiss her but he insists and uses his force to dominate her. Bond pushes her to the ground and places himself above her, while she is lying, as if they were to have sex. Pussy resists and tries to kick him but Bond kisses her, and the girl ends up doing something she did not want to do in the first place. Bond exerting his dominance over a defenceless woman in this scene is now considered one of the most problematic and disturbing moments of the franchise, especially for today's standards (Hutchinson, 2020).

No Time to Die, on the contrary, presents Bond as a man who treats both women gently and does not consider himself superior to any of them. He conceives them as

companions that are essential in the mission and does not force them to have any type of sexual relationship with him as the traditional Bond would do. In the action scenes, neither Paloma nor Nomi need to rely on his superiority as a male agent. These ideas are reinforced by the presentation of both women as empowered and resourceful characters that can be as good agents as Bond, which shows the influence of feminist movements like #Me Too and Time's Up (Dudrah, 2021, p. 161). Even when Nomi gives the 007 number back to Bond near the end of the movie (therefore reestablishing Bond's status), the movie still abides by the idea that women can take roles that were traditionally associated with men and, in doing so, it challenges hegemonic masculinity. In the case of Madeleine, she is not only Bond's love interest but also a round character (even when she is not an agent like Paloma or Nomi). As will be explored in the next section, Madeleine brings the most romantic and vulnerable side of the character.

3.2. EMOTIONAL VULNERABILITY: EMBRACING LOVE AND FEELINGS.

One of the most distinctive traits of Bond's masculinity in the movie is his emotional vulnerability. Bond is presented as a vulnerable man, mainly because of his love and affection for Madeleine Swann. As if it were a romantic movie, we see Bond at the beginning of the movie in a dream-like vacation with Madeleine in Matera, Italy.

The scene in which they arrive at the hotel in Matera is probably the one that best represents this romantic side of the character. The couple enters the room and start kissing passionately with Bond even saying to Madeleine "Je t'aime" ("I love you" in French, Madeleine's native language) and vice versa (see Figure 3). The dim lighting creates a romantic atmosphere, as part of the room is covered in shadows that contrast with the light coming from the lamps and the candles in the room. The intimacy of the scene is not only conveyed through this type of lighting but also by means of the

romantic and calm soundtrack by Hans Zimmer. After the passionate sex scene, we learn that Bond wants to know more about Madeleine's past and that Madeleine wants to know more about Vesper, Bond's first love. Since her death left a trauma in Bond's life, Madeleine encourages Bond to visit Vesper's tomb in Matera to let go of the past and move on. Bond appears completely vulnerable and submissive to Madeleine, as the composition places Bond, lying in bed, just listening to what Madeleine says. This scene already shows us that Bond can be vulnerable and tender, emphasizing how important Madeleine is to Bond.

Figure 3. Bond and Madeleine in a romantic scene in Matera

Bond follows Madeleine's advice and goes to Vesper's tomb to confront his past inner demons and close a chapter of his life. Bond stares at Vesper's grave and looks at the picture on the tombstone, which constitutes an emotional moment for the character. The character looks sad and, touched by the memories of their time together, utters the words "I miss you", expressing his feelings about Vesper's absence in his life. Then, he burns a paper that reads "Forgive me", since still he blames himself for her death because he could not save her. These two scenes already present the character as a man

that can be vulnerable especially when he is in love. First it was Vesper, now Madeleine, a contrast between past and present.

However, this is the turning point of the narrative since there is an explosion in the tomb, which leaves Bond unconscious for a few seconds. This was an assassination attempt orchestrated by Blofeld, Bond's enemy and leader of the terrorist organization Spectre. This scene is followed by an extended action sequence in which Bond reunites with Madeleine and starts distrusting her and questioning her. Bond suspects she has betrayed him because Spectre could not know where they were. The Spectre henchmen keep attacking the couple and the chase sequence reaches a point in which Bond and Madeleine are in Bond's car surrounded by their enemies. The henchmen start to shoot the bulletproof glass of the Aston Martin but Bond does not do anything even when Madeleine begs him to do so. As he feels that his lover has betrayed him, he does not care whether he lives or dies. The use of many close-ups shots of Bond's face shows Bond speechless and repressing his anger as the belief of Madeleine's betrayal has deeply affected him (see figure 4). Eventually, the hero decides to escape from a sure death and kills Spectre's henchmen using the Aston Martin gadgets. The end of the scene shows Bond putting Madeleine on a train, alone. Madeleine cries when Bond says they will never see each other again but Bond does not seem to care. He thinks his lover has deceived him, just like Vesper did. Later on in the movie we find out that Blofeld (and not Madeleine) was behind the explosion. Bond's leaving Madeleine behind is revealed as one of the hero's biggest mistakes, as he acknowledges five years later when the couple get together again at Madeleine's childhood home in Norway.

Figure 4. A close-up of Craig as Bond when he thinks that Madeleine has betrayed him.

When Bond sees Madeleine again she is standing at the top of a staircase, a framing choice that positions Madeleine as the character in power: the one Bond has to ask for forgiveness after having kicked her out of his life by mistake. Madeleine descends the stairs, showing that she wants to hear what Bond has to say. The dialogue between both characters in this scene is crucial since Bond decides to open up about his feelings. Daniel Craig's performance presents Bond as a character that is vulnerable and regretful about what he did to Madeleine. His words are filled with emotion and even his voice trembles at some specific moments, showing his regret and vulnerability. Bond is seen as a flawed man that has to overcome years of toxic emotional repression in order to be able to trust again and rebuild his relationship with Madeleine.

The lighting in this scene can be said to have romantic connotations and provide a sense of intimacy similar to those in the first scene analysed in this section (see figure 5). However, here the lighting comes from the blinds of the house that are reflecting the last beams of light as the sunset is taking place. This romantic atmosphere is reinforced again by Hans Zimmer's score playing the romantic theme of the movie, and strengthening the bond between the two characters, as they are in the middle of a

reconciliation. The scene mirrors the hotel scene in Matera by showing Bond's emotional vulnerability that stems from his love for Madeleine. An emotional vulnerability that not only comes from Madeleine, but also from Mathilde, Bond's daughter, that appears in the final moments of the scene interrupting Bond and Madeleine's kiss.

Figure 5. Bond and Madeleine reconcile at Madeleine's home in Norway

The scenes analysed above show how Bond's masculinity in this movie is characterized by the presence of emotions and feelings of love and vulnerability that transform the character into a vulnerable man. Traditionally, emotions and feelings have been viewed as signs of weakness that threaten men's sense of masculinity. This constructs the idea of men's emotional incapacity which has its roots in a Western masculine emotional regime where stoicism and emotion control are central (Reeser, 2018, p. 147). In fact, the traditional discourse of masculinity has been described as 'boys don't cry' and directly related to a feeling of vulnerability that men have when disclosing emotions in intimate relationships. But as McQueen points out, a social change has taken place and sociological studies have demonstrated that now men want to be more emotionally expressive and talk about their emotions even when they can

feel vulnerable at times (2017, p. 12). In the scenes mentioned in this section, Bond exhibits a whole range of emotions. From love and happiness in the hotel scene, to anger and even numbness, when he thinks that his lover has been playing with him, and finally to sadness and regret, when he asks Madeleine for forgiveness. In these scenes, he rejects the idea of emotional incapacity linked to traditional masculinity as he expresses his emotions constantly. He tells Madeleine how he feels about her several times and even finds himself on the verge of tears when he apologizes to her for his mistake. He makes a speech about love claiming that Madeleine was the best part of his life as he wants to open up and express his emotions even when he can be seen as vulnerable and hurt. Bond portrays a type of Western masculinity that rejects traditionality and embraces an emotional vulnerability that originates from love and later on, from fatherhood, as he is revealed to be the father of Mathilde.

3.3. FATHERHOOD: JAMES BOND AS A FAMILY MAN.

According to Hannah Hamad (2013), fatherhood has become the dominant paradigm of masculinity in mainstream U.S. cinema in the last two decades, as ideal masculinity in post feminism culture has tended towards fatherhood. As a result, postfeminist fatherhood has become the new form of hegemonic masculinity in media culture (p. 1). Hamad argues that even when cinema presents fathers as protective and heroic figures that are emotionally involved, their masculinity is still hegemonic in the sense that it does not question gender inequalities, and male dominance still prevails. In fact, this representation of fatherhood undermines motherhood, since mothers are not relevant figures in these stories. Men respond to feminism demands with their increased participation in child rearing in a way that it makes women marginalized or absent in stories that become father-centered (p. 18).

Fatherhood is probably the most distinctive aspect of *No Time to Die* since this movie is the first in the long running series to give James Bond a child, a five-year-old girl called Mathilde. Madeleine was pregnant when Bond put her on the train and, as a result, Bond has been an absent father for five years. In fact, when Mathilde appears for the first time, Bond looks at her and wonders why the girl's blue eyes are so similar to his, but Madeleine keeps telling Bond: "she's not yours". However, Bond knows that Mathilde is his daughter as he later tells Madeleine.

After Bond and Madeleine reconcile and sleep together, Mathilde wakes up Bond in the morning as she needs to eat some breakfast. This is the first scene of the movie that presents Bond as a father figure. The first shot shows the animated and colourful cartoons that Mathilde is watching on TV. The camera tilts and shows Bond peeling an apple for Mathilde. This tilt is at the same time a point-of-view shot that represents Mathilde's perspective as she looks up to this strange man that seems to have some sort of relationship with her mother. As the scene goes on, the shot turns into a low angle shot as the camera moves, positioning Bond as Mathilde's caretaker. After a series of shots and reverse shots between Bond and Mathilde, he asks her if the apple is any good (see figure 6). Mathilde says to him that it is not bad and Bond looks at Madeleine as if he was looking for her approval. Madeleine smiles at Bond, who receives a call from M. This scene presents Bond as a father that cares for his daughter. In addition, Bond's clothes in this scene are quite relevant as he is dressed in a white Henley shirt that contrasts with the elegant looks and tuxedos that Bond has been wearing for most of the film. This outfit seems to fit more with the image of a family man. The fact that both parents and Mathilde are present in the scene conveys the idea that Bond has a family for the first time in his life.

Figure 6. Bond after peeling an apple for Mathilde

In the following scenes with Mathilde, Bond plays the role of the caretaker, traditionally associated with women. He tries to protect her at any cost, especially when Safin's men start chasing them. Bond carries Mathilde in his arms (see figure 7) protecting her from the armed men and, when a motorcyclist tries to shoot them, he swerves to get in the way of a bullet aimed at Mathilde. This moment in the woods in which Bond risks his life to protect Mathilde already anticipates the ending as he is going to sacrifice himself for his family. Hamad argues that the portrayal of post 9/11 movie masculinity in action movies like *Taken* (Pierre Morel, 2008) involves the search and rescue narrative of a kidnapped daughter and her sovereign rescuer father, who embodies a type of resurgent protective paternalism (2013, p. 65). The climax of *No time to Die* becomes a search and rescue narrative as well, when Madeleine and Mathilde are captured and held hostage at Safin's base. Bond, like Bryan Mills (Liam Neeson) in *Taken,* is an emotionally involved father that tries to protect his daughter. Although Bond embodies this protective paternalism, the one who actually saves Mathilde in the previous scene is Madeleine since she is the one that shoots the armed man, challenging the notion of hegemonic masculinity of postfeminist fatherhood

described by Hamad. Mathilde's mother is not marginalized or displaced. She becomes a rescuer and a protective figure, just like Mathilde's father.

Bond's behaviour as a caring and affectionate father does not conform to the notions of traditional masculinity which associate caring for and nurturing a child as something feminine and maternal. Bond subverts these concepts and becomes an attentive father. Bond's masculinity can be seen as an example of a caring masculinity, a theory that has become the focus of European critical studies on men and masculinity in recent years. Caring masculinities, as scholar Karla Elliot points out, reject domination (the main characteristic of hegemonic masculinity) and adopt the values of care, traditionally associated with women, embracing the affective, the relational and emotional qualities traditionally associated with femininity. This model of masculinity includes not only providing and protection but also a man's emotional care for his loved ones (2016, pp. 252-253).

The film includes many scenes in which Bond embodies this type of caring masculinity, especially after Madeleine and Mathilde are captured and held hostage by Safin on his sophisticated island. Bond's mission not only consists in defeating Safin and his biological weapon but also saving his family. During the climax, in which Bond manages to rescue his family, there are many tender moments that show Bond's affection for Mathilde. For instance, when Safin has Mathilde in his arms, Bond kneels down and starts begging him not to hurt his daughter. Once Mathilde and Madeleine are finally rescued and Bond takes them to the boat, he gives a final kiss to Madeleine and takes off his navy coat. He comforts Mathilde and puts his coat over her shoulders so she does not get cold, demonstrating how much of a caring father Bond is, since he puts the necessities of his daughter before his own. This is reinforced by the moment in which Bond finds Mathilde's favourite toy on the floor (see figure 8). He knows what it

means to her so he smiles at the toy that evokes the memory of the child and takes it with him. Nevertheless, Bond has been infected with a sample of the virus which targets Madeleine's DNA, meaning that his family would get infected and die if he gets close to them. Safin hits Bond where it hurts the most: his family. Bond rages against Safin and kills him violently, knowing that he has probably destroyed any possibility of him having a future with his family. This leads to the final scene in which Bond sacrifices his life so his family can live. While he manages to open the gates so the missiles can destroy Safin's base, he knows that the only way to save his family is to die. Bond embraces his vulnerability one last time talking to Madeleine by radio and telling her that he loves her. This emotional scene illustrates Bond's emotions through the use of many close-up shots that show that he is deeply saddened to say goodbye to his family. Bond says to Madeleine that *she* has all the time in the world, echoing (with a difference) a similar line at the beginning of the film in Matera when Bond says: "*we* have all the time in the world". In the final moments of the conversation, Madeleine admits that Mathilde has Bond's eyes to which Bond responds by saying: "I know". Bond knew the whole time that Mathilde was his daughter and behaved like an affectionate father. These are the last words uttered by 007, as he looks up at the missiles with a resigned smile accepting his destiny (see figure 9). Bond, for the first time in sixty-three years, embraces his mortality and becomes a martyr. His death is heroic, because he is doing something as honourable as dying for the people that he loves the most.

Figure 7. Bond carrying Mathilde in his arms

Figure 8. Bond picking up Mathilde's favourite toy

Figure 9. Bond's farewell

4. CONCLUSION

James Bond is probably one of the most relevant representations of masculinity in cinema and Western popular culture. Seven actors have played the role of the British spy, each one with a different personality adapted to the sociohistorical moment in which the films were made. The first Bond, played by Sean Connery, was a sexist character, who saw women as objects of desire that he could seduce and control. His portrayals of 007 are an incarnation of Raewin Connel's hegemonic masculinity; the type of masculinity that legitimises patriarchy and the subordination of women and other forms of masculinity. However, the character, together with the socio-cultural context, evolved through the decades leading to a change in his personality and attitudes towards women when played by other performers.

In the 2000s, Daniel Craig movies presented the spy as the most vulnerable and flawed Bond of all. A Bond that could be aggressive and violent but also could respect women and fall in love with them. *No Time to Die* and the representation of masculinity that is provided in the movie was deeply influenced by the #Me Too movement and contemporary feminist discourses. In *No Time to Die*, Daniel Craig's grand finale, Bond is no longer a representative of hegemonic masculinity as he does not exert any type of dominance over women and treats them as their equals. Moreover, Bond's behaviour towards them is not sexist nor toxic and he does not force them to have any type of sexual relationship with him. Bond respects both Nomi and Paloma and has a professional relationship with them, trying to make them feel as comfortable as possible. In addition, the so-called Bond girls in the films starring Craig are presented as strong and resourceful characters that do not accept submission. They even challenge Bond's position and status, especially Nomi who is assigned the 007 number, standing

against the notions of hegemonic masculinity that were so common in the first films of the saga.

At the same time, Bond's masculinity in the last entry, is characterized by an emotional vulnerability that emerges from his love for Madeleine and his daughter. Bond acknowledges that he failed when he distrusted Madeleine and opens up to her, showing his emotions and rejecting the traditional type of masculinity in which emotion control and stoicism are normalized. As a result, Bond subverts traditional masculinity and exhibits a whole range of emotions throughout the whole movie, which makes him a vulnerable man. Fatherhood appears for the first time in the long-lived franchise presenting Bond as an emotionally involved family man. His role as an attentive and caring father with Mathilde represents a caring masculinity in which fathers nurture and exhibit a protective form of paternalism. Bond shows traits that were traditionally associated with women such as showing emotions and nurturing and taking care of children. He is a father that is willing to embrace his vulnerability and sacrifice his life so his family can live. His fatherhood subverts Hamad's notions of postfeminist fatherhood as a form of hegemonic masculinity that displaces or marginalizes women since Madeleine is a character with agency that saves Mathilde, meaning that Bond is not the only rescuer or saviour in the movie. In short, *No Time to Die* exhibits a more egalitarian representation of masculinity that rejects tradition and can be aligned with our contemporary times.

Since *No Time to Die* and the death of James Bond are, so far, the definitive ending of the Daniel Craig saga, Amazon, the new owner of the franchise, is looking for a new cinematic 007. Some fans claim that the new Bond should be set in the 1960's in order to be more faithful to the character created by Ian Fleming (Kelly, 2024). Whether the franchise will return to a more traditional form of masculinity or continue building

on inclusivity and a more egalitarian masculinity, one thing is for certain: James Bond will return.

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Superman Returns (Bryan Singer, 2006)

Taken (Pierre Morel, 2008)