



**Universitat de les
Illes Balears**

Facultat de Filosofia i Lletres

Memòria del Treball de Fi de Grau

The New 007: Masculinity and National Identity in Daniel Craig's Incarnation of James Bond (2006–2021)

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Grau d'Estudis Anglesos

Any acadèmic 2022-23

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Paraules clau del treball:
masculinity, national identity, James Bond, Daniel Craig, Britishness

Abstract

Based on Ian Fleming's novels, the James Bond film franchise has been up and running since 1962. With the arrival of the new century and the development of events such as Brexit or Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee, Daniel Craig joined the series of actors who have embodied the character. He managed to maintain the leading role from 2006 until 2021 with *No Time To Die* (Fukunaga, 2021). Craig's saga has been analysed from many different perspectives (race, power, politics...), but scholars such as Lisa Funnell and Paul Green have focused on the issues of masculinity and nationalism, respectively. This dissertation examines discourses of masculinity and national identity in Daniel Craig's incarnation of James Bond, analysing the five films in which the actor appears. It will be argued that this new version of Bond embodies the combination of hegemonic masculinity and a less sexist character, while maintaining his inherent Britishness.

Key words: masculinity, national identity, James Bond, Daniel Craig, Britishness

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1. Introduction

The figure of the hero and the spy genre itself can no longer be conceived without Ian Fleming's collection of novels around the British secret agent James Bond. As a consequence, the filmic adaptations of the above-mentioned novels and Daniel Craig taking up the role in 2005 have implied a huge success for the franchise and an increasingly interest from scholars to carry out further research on a wide range of topics related to the character.

Craig's saga and the changes in it have created a necessity for academics to focus on the most relevant and visible concepts, such as the 'Bond girl', whose meaning has been redirected in this new saga to a type of character more similar to a sidekick than a sexualised object. Besides, Craig's representation of the character has been thoroughly commented on, as his actions and emotions have been the focus of many scholars due to their relevance in certain areas of study. On a more concrete basis, the concepts of masculinity and national identity have been highlighted by academics, such as James Chapman in *Licence to Thrill: A Cultural History of the James Bond Films* (2007), and Jaap Verheul's *The Cultural Life of James Bond: Specters of 007* (2020). Nonetheless, there is a knowledge gap, not on areas of study, but regarding *No Time To Die* (Fukunaga, 2021), probably due to the recent release of the film which has narrowed the possibility of scholars to analyse it. In this dissertation, Craig's entire saga will be considered throughout the research.

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse Daniel Craig's incarnation of James Bond from a perspective in which masculinity and national identity are active and intertwined concepts in the identity of the character. For the sake of the comprehension of this analysis it is necessary to draw attention to a series of notions. The first and most important idea is masculinity, defined as a term which is "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender relations, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (Connell 2005, 289). Moreover, masculinity is a set of performative acts, "by which gender is constituted, [that] bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts" (Butler 1988, 521). Within masculinity, there is a subtype known as 'heroic masculinity'. It makes reference to those individualist men-of-action who embody the spirit of rebellion but also balance their commitment to collective interests with their independent nature (Holt et al. 2004, 428). Another crucial term to be defined is national identity as "a sense of nation as a cohesive whole, as represented (by the maintenance of) distinctive traditions, culture, linguistic or political features, etc." (OED 2023). The use of "sense" in its definition points towards the same direction

as Benedict Anderson's statement that "nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of world's multiple significations, nationness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind" (2006, 4).

The structure of this essay will be organised by three main topics: masculinity, national identity, and the combination of these two terms and its implications. In addition, the first two themes will be divided into different sections in order to help the reader appreciate the different areas in which said topics have defined the James Bond character.

2. Analysis

The object of analysis will focus on the topics of masculinity and national identity in Daniel Craig's incarnation of James Bond. Both concepts are considered to be social constructs among scholars; abstract terms which represent a combination of performative acts, beliefs and institutions which perpetuate their existence. As a British and male character, Bond embodies the combination of said constructs, which make him a rather interesting character for the analysis of how these two concepts interact and the implications of the merger.

Craig's Bond has been widely analysed since it marks the beginning of a new era. Moving past Pierce Brosnan in favour of a new actor – who did not entirely convince the critics (Dodds et al. 2018, 2) – turned out to be a total success. In terms of economic gains¹, Craig's saga was astonishingly welcomed by the spectators (Dodds et al. 2018, 4). Regardless of its success, the implications of Daniel Craig taking up the role of James Bond was a turning point for what was to come next. Starting with *Casino Royale* (Campbell 2006), it marked a new beginning by capitalising the errors from previous films (Funnell 2011, 468).

Daniel Craig is the seventh actor to ever embody the famous British spy. Craig's saga lasted from 2006 until 2021, a period in which five films were produced: *Casino Royale* (Campbell 2006), *Quantum of Solace* (Forster 2008), *Skyfall* (Mendes 2012), *Spectre* (Mendes 2015) and *No Time To Die* (Fukunaga 2021). Although these films are clear attempts to renovate the franchise in a more inclusive and tolerant context, in terms of fidelity to its primary source, they are a 'back to basics' move to more plausible and realistic narratives, with a special stress in *Casino Royale* (Chapman 2007, 242).

¹ see <https://worldwideboxoffice.com/>

2.1. Masculinity and Daniel Craig's James Bond: A New Perspective

This section of the analysis is centered on the performance of Daniel Craig as James Bond, a male and white character who is born in a respectable Scottish family (hence British). Therefore, Bond occupies a privileged position in society, one which previous incarnations of the character exploited so as to reinforce the masculinity of the character. According to Lisa Funnell, the portrayal of Craig's Bond cannot be solely attributed to fidelity to Fleming's vision; the saga is the result of a discourse that draws on Hollywood's ideals of heroic masculinity and the established conventions of the Bond franchise (2011, 456). However, it could be argued that the saga disseminates this discourse rather than resulting from it, as it is a cultural product that perpetuates a specific ideology.

2.1.1. Body and Soul

The choice of Daniel Craig as the new James Bond was significant in terms of representation and “an entirely new departure for the franchise” (Chapman 2007, 241). Taking into account the previous actors² and their respective performances, it would have been expected from Daniel Craig to continue with their legacy: the representation of a character whose only purpose is to serve his country and become a “blunt instrument” to it, as M herself – Judi Dench – describes in *Casino Royale* (Campbell 2006). There is a clear and recognisable difference in this James Bond representation. Throughout Craig's saga, spectators perceive a different Bond, a man who is able to express some sort of emotion and his weaknesses, to suffer pain and loss, and to fall in love not once, but twice – first with Vesper Lynd (Eva Green) in *Casino Royale* (Campbell 2006) and afterwards with Madeleine Swann (Léa Seydoux) in *Spectre* (Mendes 2015) and *No Time To Die* (Fukunaga 2021). It is true that these changes in representation do not mean that this new James Bond does not share anything with his predecessors, as 007 continues to represent a seductive, cunning and pragmatic spy for the British Crown. However, he does challenge some of the notions of ‘hegemonic masculinity’, which is based on the image of the masculinity of those men in power which are (from an “occidental” point of view) strong (mentally and physically), rational, in control, objective, unemotional and patriarchal. It does not imply for men to be violent, although

² Sean Connery (1962-67, 1971, 1983), David Niven (1967), George Lazenby (1969), Roger Moore (1973-85), Timothy Dalton (1987-89), Pierce Brosnan (1995-2002)

hegemony can be supported by force, resulting in a state of supremacy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion (Connell 2015, 833).

Daniel Craig's physique marks a difference in comparison to the other Bonds. Regarding his own masculinity and what it represents, there is a substantial change around his body, as it becomes objectified. In more than one film of the saga (Campbell 2006, 01:21:54; and Mendes 2012, 00:51:54), Bond's body is the focus of the camera. It depicts a muscular and tanned body "positioned as a visual spectacle and aligned with the Bond Girl character type rather than with his Bond predecessors in the filmic franchise" (Funnell 2011, 456). Therefore, the objectified body figure for the camera that once belonged only to women in Bond films, now is shared with the male protagonist. It is a subversion of the hegemonic masculinity of the character as he once was just a mere spectator (and an irresistible man for the objectified women he was watching), and now he becomes the sexualised object of desire for the spectators. As Champan states, *Casino Royale* can be considered as a representation of the evolution of the ideals of the new century towards 'heteroeroticism' rather than 'homoeroticism' (2007, 249). For instance, in *Casino Royale* (Campbell 2006, 00:30:32), Bond gets out of the water in slow motion, while the camera lingers on his wet and muscular body. Another example of this subversion of conventions, taken from the same movie (Campbell 2006, 01:49:21), is that of a torture scene in which Bond's body is completely naked and covered in sweat and blood while Le Chiffre lays his eyes on Bond's athletic body and muscle, before saying to Bond "You've taken good care of your body" (Campbell 2006, 01:49:31). Moreover, it also denotes the capacity of Bond's figure to endure pain, placing him as a man whose body is able to cope with the struggles and disappointments, both in his personal and professional life (Dodds et al. 2018, 9). The same happens in sex scenes, where the focus is placed on both bodies. The camera chooses to linger not only on the female body, but also on James's; as Dodds et al. state, there is "an apparent break from the gendered past of Bond by exploring how Bond's body was positioned as an object gazed at as opposed to the bodies of Bond girls" (2018, 5).

Additionally, James Bond is a masculine, cold and astute character, and regardless of this, there is a notable change in Craig's saga, as he also appears to be an emotional and caring man. Apart from falling in love and suffering the betrayal of the two women he loves (at least for some period of time, before he realises he is wrong), Bond is seen from a position of strength and pragmatism but also of vulnerability. In fact, it could be argued that Daniel Craig's performance

“cements Craig’s legacy of playing Bond not just as a reliable institution, but also as a flawed human [being]”(Sims 2021, 2). Taking into account that hegemonic masculinity often considers men’s feelings as something that makes them weak if seen by others, Bond subverts said statement in the sense that the spectator is able to access what he is feeling, even though his blank and fixed expression makes Bond a difficult character to read (Thomas 2018, 43). By way of illustration, when Bond’s daughter Mathilde (Coline Defaud) is with Safin (the antagonist of the film interpreted by Rami Malek), Bond is visibly tense and he even stutters before saying “I’ll do whatever you want” (Fukunaga 2021, 02:12:01), when Safin tries to take her away. He does not only express his stress, but he is also willing to be at the villain’s service in order to save his daughter.

Seen from the outside, Bond’s mind is often opaque. However, one of the central ideas that is most visible for the public is the internal dialogue that Bond has with himself every time someone close to him dies. The self-punishment he inflicts to himself shows the spectator a sense of weakness and vulnerability which are not expected from a representative figure of heroic masculinity. Nonetheless, it brings a sense of complexity to the character which adds theatricality to it. As stated by Holt et al., “man-of-action heroism is represented through highly dramatic plots that hinge upon a tenuous resolution of powerful contradictions” (2004, 429). Bond’s internal conflict comes into words in *Quantum of Solace* (Forster 2008, 01:32:45) when Dominic Greene (Mathieu Amalric) says “Sounds like you just lost another one”, after almost losing Camille Montes (Olga Kurylenko). In situations like these, Bond subverts the idea of hegemonic masculinity through actions and emotions, depicting the image of a hero who has weaknesses, both physical and emotional.

2.1.2. Craig’s Bond around Women

The twenty-first century has had many implications for women. The fight for their rights is now being heard and considered as a global debate. One of the main issues that women are battling against is the objectification and abuse of their bodies. Hence, it would have been a major mistake for the franchise to perpetuate the portrayal of women as objects with the arrival of Daniel Craig to the role of James Bond. Women in Craig’s saga have now become units of meaning on their own. Some of them acquired relevant roles in the saga such as Vesper Lynd or Madeleine Swann. Funnell argues that out of all the females appearing in Craig’s saga, only twenty-two of them could

be considered as Bond girls, all of them acquiring roles as both side-kicks and romantic interests of 007 (2011, 464). Nonetheless, there is always an exception to everything. That is, in *Spectre* (Mendes 2015, 00:33:43), James Bond has a sexual encounter with Lucia Sciarra (Monica Bellucci), where she is limited just to embody an object of desire for Bond, as her role in the film is that of a lady in distress whose life is saved by Bond when two men try to kill her. As stated by Dodds et al., “*Spectre* arguably is the most conservative [...] in its depiction of female characters. [...] She is presented as somebody merely to be seduced and saved by Bond” (2008, 6). Another example depicting the relationship Craig’s Bond has around women could be the conversation shared between the protagonist and Judi Dench’s M in *Quantum of Solace* (Forster 2008, 01:19:11), where she asks him “They do everyhting for you, don’t they?” while referring to women, and Bond answers “Yes ma’am”. It is a very illustrative and representative interaction which denotes an opposite message to those of Craig’s Bond abandoning the narrative of the “Bond girl” (Sims 2021, 4). Therefore, James Bond’s purpose around women can be considered that of a side-kick but he does not completely reject his desire towards “the conventionally beautiful bodies of a series of ‘Bond girls’ who one way or another succumb to Bond’s charm” (Higson et al. 2020, 109). For the ones that actually become Bond’s sidekicks, they achieve a sort of equality with him in their interactions. Moneypenny (Naomie Harris), Vesper Lynd and Madeleine Swann are all examples of women who have important roles in the saga, apart from the desire and affection they might (or might not) feel towards Bond. Besides, Chapman argues that Craig’s Bond is subject to the influence of females figures such as M and Lynd; the latter being able to control the expenditure that James needs to play poker against Le Chiffre’s poker game during *Casino Royale* (Chapman 2007, 248). Hence, there are female figures who, up to some point, achieve a superior position over Craig’s Bond.

As mentioned above, Judi Dench’s M is the highest figure of authority for Bond in three of the five films of the saga: *007 Casino Royale* (Campbell 2006), *Quantum of Solace* (Forster 2008), *Skyfall* (Mendes 2012). It is important to note that Judi Dench is the first female to ever represent M, the head of the MI6 for the franchise (Dodds et al. 2018, 5). The main implication of her character is that of James Bond having a woman above him in terms of power . It could be argued then, that instead of M being considered a Bond girl, Bond should be considered “M’s boy”. In fact, Dench’s portrayal of Bond’s superior has significantly shaped our understanding of women’s agency within the franchise and the intricate and diverse dynamics between Bond and M (5). First

and foremost, she holds a more dominant role than him as head of the MI6. For instance, in *Skyfall* (Mendes 2012, 00:11:53), M has the power and choice to kill Bond (even if she does not want to) when she orders Moneypenny to shoot and try to aim at her target, while Bond is fighting a villain, which ends up with 007 being shot and presumed dead. On the other hand, Dench's M could also be considered a motherly figure for Bond. She is considered to be the woman Bond loves the most, as it is represented in situations such as the one when he tries to secure her by taking M to the house where he spent part of his childhood in Scotland (Funnell 2020). It is a mutual behaviour for M as well, as she also protects him, For example, she secures his position as a 00 agent, when he faces the tests to enter the MI6 again in *Skyfall* (Mendes 2015, 00:38:21), as she changes his results knowing that he did not pass them.

2.2. National Identity: Embodying The Nation

According to Benedict Anderson, the nation is “an imagined political community” and “it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (2006, 6). National identity is also a form of identification with representations of shared experiences and history itself, which are conveyed through stories, literature, popular culture and the media. Following this idea, James Bond could be considered one of the most important fictional products of the country as he embodies the idea of the British man who is devoted to the security of his nation and his monarch. At the same time, he embodies the duty and professionalism of the secret service of a country which demands cold and pragmatic men for the sake and protection of the nation. The focus of the analysis of this section will be placed on the figure of Daniel Craig's James Bond as the epitome of Britishness.

For the analysis of these subsequent topic, it is necessary to contemplate Craig's saga within its own context. Tony Blair winning the presidential elections at the end of the twentieth century and the start of a labourist government meant a new point of departure for the country. There was also a desire to change the façade of the nation into a more tolerant one through what is considered 'Cool Britannia'. It is based on “a greater sense of equality between the British nations; its cosmopolitan nature; nightlife excess; the expression of sexual liberation; and postmodernity.” (Prieto 2006, 184), and as a “re-invented concept of Britishness designed to provide a fragmented people with some sense of unity.” (196).

Nonetheless, in order to define what Britishness means, there is a necessity to define what it is *not*. Stereotypes and national narratives help in creating the idea of the imagined community and the necessity of belonging to a place or community. In Craig's saga, national identity is explored through three different lenses: Bond as a *Bringlish* figure rather than a British one, the importance of humour in order to define Craig's Bond and the careful choice of certain settings in the films.

2.2.1. Britishness/Englishness/*Bringlishness*

Britishness is often a problematic concept to define, because it usually refers to what would actually be considered as Englishness. John Paul Green argues that as Britishness is not a term in which non-English members of the United Kingdom feel included, *Bringlish(ness)* should be coined when referring to Britishness – but actually thinking about Englishness (2007, 2). Related to this idea, Bond could also be considered as a product of the “*Bringlish* national identity across the globe” (2). In fact, the construction of Englishness is evident in the *James Bond* films (Green 2007, 11).

Throughout the saga, there are multiple references to British symbols such as Q (Ben Whishaw) mentioning the tea brand Earl Grey while looking at *The Fighting Temeraire* (1838) by J. M. W. Turner in *Skyfall* (Mendes 2012, 00:39:44), or the MI6 itself as a powerful institution protecting the nation. There are others instead, that while being presented as national symbols, they are merely *Bringlish* representations of stereotypes such as the continuous appearance of London as the central *Bringlish* location of the saga, more evidently perceived in *Spectre* (Mendes 2015), or M reading a poem by the English poet Alfred Tennyson after the train crash provoked by Mr. Silva (Carlos Bardem) in *Skyfall* (Mendes 2012, 01:40:16). As a matter of fact, Bond himself associates the entire country with England while doing a psychological word-association test in *Skyfall* (Mendes 2012, 00:32:08), as he unconsciously identifies “country” with “England” (Higson et al. 2020, 106).

Craig's Bond himself (and all the other Bonds) embodies as well *Bringlish* stereotypes. The suit he always wears does not only define him as Bond, but it also depicts the image of the stereotypical Englishman. In fact, whenever Bond is not actively in his spy self, he is not wearing the suit, but when he becomes Bond, a symbol of his country, it is because he puts the suit and tie on. Connected to this, is the idea that certain brands increase the Britishness of the character just because they are deeply associated to Bond. They are not exclusive of Craig's saga, but of the

entire franchise, such as the Aston Martin cars that Bond always drives. These brands are inherently associated with the character and they could be considered symbols that define him. Without the watches and the cars, Bond is not James Bond. In Craig's version, he always drives Aston Martin cars and wears OMEGA watches and Tom Ford suits, which is an interesting fact as these last two brands are not British (OMEGA being Swiss and Tom Ford North-American).

There are constant references to the systems and institutions that govern the country, such as the MI6 or Her Majesty the Queen. In fact, and despite not appearing in Craig's saga, it is of an enormous significance for Craig's Bond's Britishness, the appearance of Queen Elizabeth II alongside him in a short film made for the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games held in London (Higson et al. 2020, 106). It is simultaneously a reinforcement of the idea that Bond is at the Queen's service and an approach of the Royal Family to mainstream products.

2.2.2. Humour

Among the stereotypes that define the British, their cunning humour could be one of the most important ones. As James Brassett states, the well known British sense of humour can encompass a variety of elements including irony, self-deprecation, a somewhat unfortunate fondness for puns, and a prevailing sense of futility, often associated with the weather (2009, 220). Craig's Bond is not an exception of this tendency as there are multiple instances throughout the saga where his witty comments define him as a British man. In fact, 007 makes a clear reference about this stereotype in *No Time To Die* (Fukunaga 2021, 01:36:24), where Bond is declaring his love for Madeleine and she asks him in return "Do you know the worst thing about you?", followed by Bond answering "My timing? My sense of humour?". Additionally, this utterance includes another stereotype deeply rooted in British identity: their punctuality. Bond represents his humorous and ironic side in many more situations throughout Craig's saga, one of those can be found in *Spectre* (Mendes 2015, 01:07:03), where a barman offers him something to drink and Bond orders his typical "Vodka Martini. Shaken, not stirred" and the barman answers him that they do not serve alcohol. Q suddenly arrives and orders a shake for Bond. When the order arrives, after a short chat between Q and Bond, the latter says "Do me a favor, will you? Throw that down the toilet, that way we skip a step."

Craig's Bond saga is not only representative of the stereotypical humour of British people, but also a product where this same identity is the source of comical scenes such as the car chase

between 007 and Mr. Hinx (Dave Bautista) in *Spectre* (Mendes 2015, 00:45:14). Bond is trying to use the advanced technologies of the Aston Martin he is driving, but these do not seem to work. When he presses the “Atmosphere” button of the car expecting some kind of weapon for him to use in order to defend himself, he is surprised by the literal meaning of it as Frank Sinatra’s music comes on instead. He reacts by saying “You’ve got to be kidding me.” This kind of scenes offer a fracture from the sober tone of the films as they put Bond in not-so-serious situations, which add further entertainment to the audience’s experience and an unconscious association of his humour being inherently British.

2.2.3. Settings

The concept of place in Craig’s Bond saga and the specific locations that appear in it have a crucial influence in Bond’s actions (Dodds et al. 2018, 7). On the one hand, the United Kingdom, and more precisely, London are portrayed as Bond’s headquarters: the MI6 building is in the capital city as well as Bond’s house. *Skyfall* (Mendes 2012) is a great example of the use of London as the representation of the whole UK (02:14:57), as it depicts Bond on the rooftop of the MI6 building with the Union Jack in front of him, while he stands in view of the iconic London skyline featuring the prominent presence of the Houses of Parliament and the Big Ben. This visual composition serves as a powerful symbol representing the British nation-state (Higson et al. 2020, 106). Moreover, earlier in the same film (Mendes 2012), Scotland is also used to define Bond. This specific location opens a window inside Bond’s childhood, letting the spectator in, so as to offer a new and more intimate perspective of Bond’s life. It also defines Bond as a British (and not an English) man.

On the other hand, the settings in which most action scenes occur are environments which cannot be directly associated to Europe, a fact that presents Craig’s Bond as a “global, cosmopolitan traveler, and an imperialist adventurer: [...] he visits Uganda, Madagascar, the Bahamas, the USA, Montenegro and Italy (*Casino Royale*); Haiti, Austria, Italy, Bolivia and Russia (*Quantum of Solace*); Turkey, Bali and China (*Skyfall*); and Mexico, Italy, Austria and Morocco (*Spectre*).” (Higson et al. 2020, 106). In fact, whenever he suffers the loss of a loved one or the betrayal of a lover, he escapes to paradisiacal or exotic locations where he can run away from reality. For instance, Craig’s Bond lives in Jamaica after finding out that Madeleine had betrayed

him. However, this kind of behaviour is not unique of Craig's saga, as it is based on Ian Fleming's novels.

2.3. The Combination of Masculinity and National Identity in Craig's Bond

The image of the British spy in James Bond is inherently connected to a performativity of masculinity as it has been previously commented on, and at the same time it is also connected to the understanding of James Bond as a symbol of Britishness. The merge of these two concepts could be associated with the term 'temperate masculinity', which refers to a type of masculinity deeply connected to Britishness, effeminacy and traits from other types of masculinity, so as to be opposed to the hyper-masculinity of Nazism (Rose quoted in Dudink et al. 2000, 9), but also from the North-American one as well. It helps to define what British masculinity is from what it is *not*, taking into account the ongoing americanisation of cultures during the 20th and 21st centuries through globalisation. The heroes representing the British nation also embody this temperate masculinity. Nonetheless, Craig's Bond does not completely fit into that mould due to the fact that the production of the Craig's saga sometimes *looks* American (Higson et al. 2020, 118).

007 does have a sense of allegiance towards his own country and the organisation he represents and defends. However, there are multiple instances in which he acts as a separate entity from his own institution. For instance, when he is removed from duty by M (Judi Dench) in *Quantum of Solace* (Forster 2008, 01:19:17) and he ignores her order as he continues to act as an spy. At the same time, he always ends up returning to the MI6. It is the depiction of a hero going from his individual autonomy to his sense of duty towards the institution he is loyal to and the greater good, and also his own adventures versus the responsibility he embodies (Holt et al. 2004, 429). What is more, Bond's masculinity is reinforced and legitimised by the use of violence in order to defend the British nation. Bond's role in protecting Queen and country is not solely based on brute machismo or mindless destruction. Instead, it involves contextualised and regulated acts of violence that contribute to the construction of his masculine persona (Bond et al. 2017, 358). Nonetheless, when having to choose between love and duty to his country, Craig's Bond chooses love. In *Spectre* (Mendes 2015, 02:18:08), Bond refuses to kill Blofeld in the middle of a bridge in London, and right after that, he finds himself having to choose sides between love on one end of the bridge (embodied by Madeleine Swann), and duty in the other where M (Ralph Fiennes) awaits.

3. Conclusion

Representation in cinematographic products is crucial nowadays. In order to promote a sense of inclusion regarding race and gender, films and series must include all parts of society. In this dissertation, it has been argued how Daniel Craig's incarnation of James Bond has implied more than just the change of the protagonist actor. The previous representations of the character often relied on a more conservative depiction of masculinity and national identity, making of Bond an impenetrable man whose only fixation was to protect his country from the villains. Craig's era has proved to be a continuation of said tendency (he continues to fight against villains who threaten the country), but from a complete different point of view. The saga has included a new perspective towards women's treatment and the role they receive within the franchise: they are not just Bond girls anymore, they have significant positions regarding the succession of events in the films and their relationships with James Bond. In addition, the performance of Bond's masculinity towards a more sensitive self, allows the audience to really understand the mind of the spy, to connect with his grief and happiness, to see him enjoy having a family and falling in love. It is the demystification of a character who could only be described as a "flirt" and a spy in the past. Another relevant symbol that Craig's Bond embodies is him being that of a national product to be recognised by everyone as British (or *Bringlish*). The implications of this are not just specific of this saga, Bond will always be a symbol for the British people as the epitome of Britishness and dedication towards one's own country. Craig has succeeded in playing the role of a character who truly loves his country, and simultaneously perpetuates stereotypes of his own nationality from two different perspectives: one in which he acts unconsciously according to the clichés, and the other, in which he indirectly makes fun of them.

To sum up, the cinematographic adaptation of Ian Fleming's novels during Daniel Craig's era marks a new beginning towards a more inclusive and modern perception of the character. There is currently an open debate about the numerous possibilities regarding the actors *or actresses* who could take up the role after Daniel Craig. Whichever option is chosen, there is one thing that everyone is sure about: *James Bond Will Return*.

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