Ms. 007: The Evolution of Female Gender Roles in James Bond Films

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

December 2015

Expected Date of Graduation

May 2016
Abstract: This is a rhetorical critical of the evolution of female gender roles in James Bond films. Three theories were employed when examining the Bond phenomena and its message about gender: Feminist Standpoint, Muted Group theory, and Social Cognitive Theory. The methods employed were observing six of the James Bond films in order to analyze the female gender roles within the film. The purpose of this rhetorical critical is to shed light on women's roles in film, specifically looking at the Primary and Secondary Bond Girls, their defining characteristics, their relationship with James Bond, and their evolution over time.
Acknowledgements: I would like to deeply thank Dr. Beth Messner for guiding and advising me throughout this process. She always pushed me to do my best work possible and I couldn’t have done it without her. Dr. Messner has always been someone I have looked up to and admired and I am proud to have had her as my senior thesis advisor. I would also like to thank my family for putting up with numerous moans, groans, and tears throughout my last semester of college.
Introduction

After 54 years, 24 movies, and countless vodka martinis, the iconic James Bond is still thriving in the film industry. James Bond is the definition of evolution. Whether it be the actor himself, the plots, the technology, or the women, and Bond is always changing and evolving with society as well. From its genesis in the 1960s, one of the most popular and renowned aspects of the Bond films have been the Bond Girls. They are the epitome of femininity and beauty and the Bond fans are always eager to see who will claim the title of the next Bond Girl.

The James Bond phenomenon all began when Ian Fleming wrote his first novel about the British spy in 1953. In his lifetime, Fleming wrote 12 James Bond novels and two short stories. Originally, Fleming wanted Bond “to be an extremely dull, uninteresting man to whom things happened; I wanted him to be a blunt instrument ... when I was casting around for name for my protagonist I thought by God, James Bond is the dullest name I ever heard” (Rothman, 2012).

After the Bond novels became popular, so popular even President John F. Kennedy said they were some of his favorite things to read, the idea to make the literary James Bond a cinematic James Bond began to blossom. Harry Saltzman and Albert R. Broccoli purchased the rights to James Bond in 1961. They then hired professional model Peter Anthony to bring the literary James Bond to life. However, the moment they saw the suave Sean Connery audition for the role, the course of the cinematic Bond phenomenon was changed forever (Lane, 2002). Since then, the series has exploded.

Significance

24 movies and even a number of video games have been created around James Bond. The films themselves have been a cinematic sensation; all 24 of them grossing over $14 billion total worldwide (James Bond Box Office Totals). The five top-grossing James Bond films, adjusted
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for inflation, are *Skyfall* (2012), *Thunderball* (1965), *Goldfinger* (1964), *Spectre* (2015), and *Live and Let Die* (1973) (James Bond Box Office Totals). Today, the James Bond phenomenon is still as popular as it was in the 1960’s. It has a language of its own; when you hear 007, vodka martinis, Bond Girls, and Aston Martin, you automatically think of James Bond.

The James Bond phenomenon has had a significant impact on society. According to Chapman (2000), a “Bondian” ideology surrounds each and every film (p. 22). This Bondian ideology “constitutes a set of expectations about what a Bond movie should be like, what it should contain, how it should be made, and so on” (Chapman, 2000, p. 22). In a sense, the Bond films are their own genre (Chapman, 2000, p. 22). The Bond films have found the balance between “repetition and variation, between continuity and change” to keep Bond fans entertained (Chapman, 2000, p. 271). The Bond films feature thrills, cars, set pieces, and new variations that are expected to change and simultaneously maintain constant features such the characters of M, Q, and the ever-so-popular Bond Girls (Chapman, 2000, p. 272). Additionally, Bond himself is expected to stay constant (Chapman, 2000, p. 272). Martin Campbell, director of *GoldenEye*, commented that, “There is no other romantic anti-hero in existence at the moment. They are all blue collar-Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone. There are not sophisticated or British comparisons to Bond” (Chapman, 2000, p. 22). Bond is, in a sense, one of a kind.

Paradoxically, as society changes and evolves, Bond is expected to do the same. As society became more politically correct and less tolerant of sexism, racism, and elitism, Bond became “more universal, like an everyman, but with bigger muscles, and we need him to be even more of an alienated, self-righteous loner seeking personal vendettas rather than patriotically serving England” (Thomas, 2009). He is no longer a “pompous cosmopolitan,” but someone who is “street smart, pragmatic, and alienated” (Thomas, 2009).
Another aspect that separates the Bond industry from other genres and sagas is the fact that Bond is an international sensation. The Bond films encompass both British and Hollywood national cinemas which adds to their uniqueness (Chapman, 2000, p. 22). The Bond films "give us such a singular mirror of history, though, to be sure, it is it a distorted circus-like mirror, bizarre and out of proportion" (Thomas, 2009). For example, From Russia with Love was centered on America's relationship with the Soviet Union and other nations during the Cold War. You Only Live Twice was centered on America's relationship with Japan at the time. And, Moonraker alludes to the international "space race" that was going on in the 1960's (Thomas, 2009).

James Bond

According to Pierce-Jones (2011), when Sean Connery became the first James Bond in 1962, he "became the yardstick by which each generation and each subsequent actor playing Bond would be judged" (p. 363). Sean Connery had

...an aloofness that intrigued, a confidence, a swagger. His sexuality was potent and his physical prowess was evident. He carried with him a somewhat tongue in cheek approach to the genre which whilst providing action and adventure also shared a joke with his knowing audiences who were becoming ever more involved in the fantasy aspect of Bond in post-modern society. (p. 363-364)

Sean Connery created the sense of whom and what James Bond should be and how he should act. Because of Sean Connery, the actor who plays Bond is expected to personify that suave and debonair nature.

Even though Bond is portrayed as being in his late thirties or early forties, Bond's physique conveys and reaffirms his physical superiority as a hero as well as conveying the
impression that Bond was more physically fit than his adversaries (Funnell & Dodds, 2015, p. 124). Bond’s toned and slender physique has become the norm for the Bond actors. In many films, Bond is shirtless or is wearing a button down shirt to accentuate his toned and slender chest (Funnell & Dodds, 2015, p. 124). By comparison, the villain in the Bond Films usually suffers some type of physical impairment, such as a loss of a body part or its function, which is also “assumed to be detrimental to their libido” (Funnell & Dodds, 2015, p. 125). Bond, however, is the complete opposite of this and therefore is viewed as more masculine and able than his opponent (Funnell & Dodds, 2015, p. 125).

Just as the characteristics of the Bond Girls have evolved over time, so have the portrayals of James Bond. The actors who play the role of Bond have portrayed some static characteristics that never change as well as other dynamic characteristics that have changed over time. For example, in 1969, George Lazenby’s portrayal of Bond was more emotional and vulnerable as he struggled between love and duty. Roger Moore’s portrayed Bond as a national hero who had a sense of loyalty and duty to England. Timothy Dalton’s portrayal of Bond was a darker version who struggled to differentiate his personal life from his professional life. Pierce Brosnan’s portrayal of Bond was self-confident, intelligent, witty, and physically capable. The most recent portrayal of Bond, by Daniel Craig, is more human, vulnerable, and like his Moore predecessor, struggles between love and duty (Funnell, 2011, p. 457). Regardless of who is playing Bond, what characteristics stay the same, and which characteristics change, Hoxha (2011) sums up the international phenomenon behind the legend himself:

For men, Bond represents the ultimate fantasy—a secret agent who can confidently choose women with the same casual ease he uses to order a martini, while intelligently fighting criminal masterminds. For women, he is debonair, gallant,
and handsome; their knight in shining armor that embodies the roles of conqueror, seducer, and hero. (p. 203)

Women's Role in Film

Women actors have always played specific roles in film. An extensive study done in 2005 concluded that, women are very underrepresented in film, specifically as actors; they are usually younger than men; and they are portrayed as successful when they are thin, attractive, and sexualized (Neuendorf, et al., 2012, p. 749). Smith and Choueiti (2010) argue that such portrayals of women may contribute to and reinforce the objectification and sexualization of women in society (p. 7). Their study, which observed and analyzed 122 different family films, with ratings of G, PG, and PG-13, and found that 24% of females are shown in tight, sexy, or alluring attire whereas only 4% of men are shown that way (Smith & Choueiti, 2010, p. 2). A similar study in 2014 analyzed gender roles in 120 films across the 10 most profitable countries internationally (Smith, Choueiti, & Piper, 2014). It was concluded that 24.8% of females were shown in sexually revealing clothing whereas only 9.4% of men were shown in sexually revealing clothing, 38.5% of females were portrayed as being thin, and 24.2% of women were partially or fully naked versus the 11.5% of males who were partially or fully naked (Smith, Choueiti, & Piper, 2014, p. 8). Furthermore, from this study, only 46.6% of women were depicted as being employed whereas 69.1% of their male counterparts were depicted as being employed (Smith, Choueiti, & Piper, 2014, p. 13). Behind the scenes, women comprise only 7% of directors, 19.7% of writers, and 22.7% producers (Smith, Choueiti, & Piper, 2014, p. 5). This data indicates that, regardless if women are in the film as actresses or working behind the scenes as directors, producers, or writers, the film industry is a very male-dominated industry.
The male-dominated nature of the film industry has lent itself to a number of storytelling phenomena that portray women a specific way. One such phenomenon that is common in the Bond films is the Male Gaze. The Male Gaze refers to the “camera which is usually operated by a man, looking at women as objects; the look of male actors within the film is structured to make the gaze more powerful; and the gaze of the spectator who is presumed to be male” (Rhoman, 2013, p. 77). An example of the Male Gaze occurs in films when the camera tends to linger on the female’s body a bit longer than necessary without contributing to the plot or storyline. An example of this can be seen in Dr. No when James Bond sees Bond Girl Honey Ryder on the beach wearing the iconic white bikini. This “positioned the first Bond Girl as an erotic object of gaze” (Funnell & Dodds, 2015, p. 131).

Furthering the underrepresented role that women play in film, the dialogue within a film is also significant. Appearance-related comments were directed at females five times more than males (Smith, Choueiti, & Piper, 2014, p. 8). Essentially, this idea of the Male Gaze translates into, as Naomi Wolf puts it, “men look at women and the women watch themselves being looked at” (Cited in Rhoman, 2013, p. 181). This idea of the Male Gaze has a psychological impact on women. It has the ability to change a woman’s thoughts, words, and actions. In society, there are cultural norms that govern not only women, but their bodies as well (Rhoman, 2013, p. 181). These perceptions of a woman’s body are created and constructed through cultural norms, and those norms are introduced and repeated until women accept and no longer question them (Rhoman, 2013, p. 181).

**Bond Girls**

Bond Girls have become almost as well-known and popular as a cinematic phenomenon as James Bond himself. Whether she sleeps with Bond, tries to kill him, or gets killed and
covered in gold, the Bond Girl is an important dimension of the Bond films. According to Garland (2009), the Bond Girl is “one of the most flexible and complete cultural signifiers of Bond” (p. 187). They have “been increasingly important to the film’s ideological system of meaning” and are “reconstituted to support the expectations of Bond films” (Garland, 2009, p. 187). The Bond Girls have become almost as renowned as James Bond himself. Similar to James Bond, their roles have the ability to change and yet remain the same. For example, all of the Bond Girls are usually between the ages of 28 and 32 but in the most recent Bond film, Spectre, the Secondary Bond Girl was around the age of 50—making the Bond Girls flexible, yet static.

The Bond Girl is defined as a “non-recurring character and lead female protagonist, central to the plot of the film and instrumental to the mission of James Bond” (Funnell, 2008, p. 63). According to Funnell (2008), one of the defining features of the Bond Girl is the “strong, intimate and intense relationship she builds with Bond (p. 63).

Within most of the Bond Films, the audience is presented with a sexual female character, generally the Bond Girl, beginning in the title sequences. This title sequence typically shows the silhouette of a woman—sometimes a distinguishable Bond Girl and sometimes an indistinguishable woman—and that woman is usually being “escorted, hunted, and subsequently oppressed by men” (Planka, 2015, p. 145). The directors and designers of the title sequences turn women into objects that draw viewers in and treat them as "small dishes of food served before the main course to stimulate one’s appetite" (Planka, 2015, p. 141-142). The title sequences objectify women in multiple ways including presenting them as unrecognizable, two-dimensional figures. This allows the male viewer to take pleasure in their aestheticized physicality, and use the women as a surface for the credits to be placed on which also is an invitation for close examination (Planka, 2015, 144-146).
In the majority of the Bond films, there are three general types of Bond Girls: the Primary Bond Girl, the Secondary Bond Girl, and the Bond Girl Villains. The Primary Bond Girls tend to present Bond with more of a sexual challenge than the Secondary Bond Girls. It takes Bond “much longer—if not the entire film—to seduce/control” the Primary Bond Girl (Rositzka, 2015, p. 154). The Secondary Bond Girl “affirms the cliché of ‘being easy’” as well as being disposable. This is the distinguishing factor between Primary and Secondary Bond Girls (Rositzka, 2015, p. 154). The Secondary Bond Girls also possess a type of freedom that the Primary Bond Girls do not, due to the fact that the Primary Bond Girl is usually kept “in close physical/emotional proximity to the villain” (Burnetts, 2015, p. 62). According to Funnell (2015), the Bond Girl Villain tends to lie between the Primary and Secondary Bond Girls. She tends to share some similar traits to the Secondary Bond Girl, but because she opposes James Bond, she becomes much more of a threat and her fate (usually death) is sealed from the beginning of the movie (Rositzka, 2015, p. 155). For example, in The World Is Not Enough, Bond Girl Villain Elektra King engages in sexual intercourse just shortly after meeting Bond, as a Secondary Bond Girl would do, but ends up attempting to kill Bond which classifies her as a Bond Girl Villain. When Bond engages in sexual intercourse with the Bond Girl Villain, it is “a symptom of tension whereas sex with the [Primary] Bond Girl is the culmination of tension in a grand reassertion of masculinity and femininity at the film’s climax” (Garland, 2009, p. 183). This is exemplified in Goldfinger, when Bond tried the entire film to get Pussy Galore to sexually submit to him. When she finally does, it asserts those feminine and masculine roles.

However, some Bond Girls contradict everything that the Bond Girls stand for. There are some Bond Girls, both Primary and Secondary, who are “a hybrid composite of the Bond Girl and Female Antagonist” (Funnell & Dodds, 2011, p. 466). A few examples of these women are
Vesper Lynd and Miranda Frost (Funnell & Dodds, 2011, p. 466). Something that these women, and other Bond Girl Villains, have in common is that they “reject Bond’s attempt at domestication” after their sexual encounters with Bond. Because of that, these women are killed off since they “threaten traditional gender roles and representational politics that have long structured the series” (Funnell & Dodds, 2015, p. 127).

Over time, Primary and Secondary Bond Girls have evolved and changed just as society has evolved and changed. Funnell and Dodds (2011) argue that the Bond Girls have evolved into three specific roles: English Partner, American Side-Kick, and American Action Hero Bond Girl. These roles are generally associated with the Primary Bond Girls due to their major role and their significance in the film and plot. The English Partner Bond Girl and the American Side-Kick Bond Girls “play a supportive role to the mission and libido of James Bond” and are “unable to match the sexual and thus heroic standard of James Bond” (Funnell & Dodds, 2011, p. 465). The American-Side Kick Bond Girls are represented in a way that reflects on traditional gender roles. Almost all of the American-Side Kick Bond Girls are at one point kidnapped by the villain and must be saved by Bond, therefore allowing Bond to assert his power, superiority, and dominance over them (Funnell & Dodds, 2015, p. 262-263). Pam Bouvier is an appropriate example of a Bond Girl who is an American Side-kick. She sports short hair, which makes her more masculine, but “does not possess all the necessary generic requirements to be considered a lead and equal action hero (Funnell, 2008, p. 76). While Bouvier ends up saving Bond’s life in a bar fight, Bond establishes his dominance and authority as the male lead by verbally putting her down and physically restraining her (Funnell & Dodds, 2015, p. 262).

Funnell and Dodds (2015) argue that the American-Side Kick Bond Girls “reiterates the problematic notion that to pull a woman up in society, you have to push a man down and thus
women need to remain inferior in order for men to maintain their social standing” (p. 264). For example, the American Action Hero Bond Girl is a “physical and intellectual match to Bond” while being “presented as a sexually equal and thus heroically comparable character” in the final decade of the Bond films (Funnell & Dodds, 2011, p. 465). Furthermore, this American Action Hero Bond Girl is also supported by her professional career in the film (Funnell, 2008, p. 76). An example of the American Action Hero Bond Girl is Jinx. In *Die Another Day*, Jinx plays an undercover NSA agent who “despite her exceptional abilities, nonetheless is second to Bond in skill and narrative power” (Racioppi & Tremonte, 2014, p. 22).

Regardless of the Bond Girls’ status in the films or whether they are Primary or Secondary, female sexuality is threatening to Bond (Black, 2005). As the Bond Girls evolve, they are more than just challenges that Bond needs to overcome, but they become threats—threats to Bond’s life and threats to Bond’s libido (Black, 2005). Bond sleeps with numerous women, but women who are seen as “sexually liberated and debauched” are judged harshly. The women who are defined as easy and who are more sexually open are usually killed off by the end of the film, so not only are they judged but they are punished. If they “challenge Bond’s status as a sexual aggressor,” they are seen as women who need to be “tamed” (Funnell & Dodds, 2015, p. 126). An important note, however, is that when it comes to the Bond Girls, “Bond seeks not to break down Bond Girls’ defenses but to induce her to lower them voluntarily” (Mills, 2015, p. 111). This action of persuading the Bond Girl to lower her defenses confirms Bond’s suave and debonair nature and affirms his hypermasculinity.

The Bond phenomenon is a world-renowned phenomenon. Society is always eagerly awaiting the news of who will be the next actor to star as James Bond and who his Primary and Secondary Bond Girls will be. As the longest running saga in history, it is easy to see how Bond
has remained infamous all these years. With this infamy and recent studies done on women’s roles in film, the desire to research the roles and their impact on society of the Bond Girls blossomed.

Research Questions

Based on the literature that identifies the significance of the Bond phenomenon, women’s roles in film, and the Bond Girls, the following research questions are presented:

RQ1: What characteristics classify a Bond Girl as a Primary Bond Girl?

RQ2: What characteristics classify a Bond Girl as a Secondary Bond Girl?

RQ3: What is the relationship between the Primary Bond Girl and the Secondary Bond Girl to James Bond?

RQ4: Have the Primary and Secondary Bond Girl characteristics evolved over time? If so, in what ways?

Methods

To examine the Bond phenomena and its messages about gender, three theories were employed: Feminist Standpoint Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Muted Group Theory. Each of these theories plays a significant role in society and affect women’s roles in society. To conduct this study and answer my research questions, these three theories were applied to the study of the Primary and Secondary Bond Girls.

Feminist standpoint theory is used to guide the observations and analysis of the portrayals of Primary and Secondary Bond Girls. According to theorists Sandra Harding and Julia Wood, one of the best methods to discover how the world works is by studying the standpoints of those in a marginalized group, such as women (Griffin, 2000, p. 447). In the past, the majority of communication research has been done by white, middle-class males which can, in turn, silence
women and other marginalized groups (Turner & West, 2007, p. 501). Wood and Harding claim that our standpoint helps shape our worldview and how we understand and communicate with ourselves, with others, and with the world (Griffin, 2000, p. 447). According to Wood, standpoints are formed when a marginalized group refuses to accept the way society defines them (Turner & West, 2007, p. 499). By using a feminist standpoint, we can better understand the roles of Primary and Secondary Bond Girls, focusing less on the objectification and sexualization of these women and more on the person themselves.

Film can have quite an effect on society just as figures in film can have an effect. Social Cognitive Theory explains that “individuals will observe, imitate, and learn from others, including fictional characters in a way to provide a monitoring system for their own behaviors, attitudes and values (Neuendorf, et al., 2010, p. 748). This is relevant to this study because “individuals will look to others a way to reinforce their own perceived accomplishments, behavioral patterns, or inadequacies” (Neuendorf, et al., 2010, p. 748). Individuals may look to the figures they see in film and mimic those behaviors and characteristics.

The way that the Bond Girls, and even Bond, are portrayed says something about how society views gender roles, and can affect those who see the Bond Girls on the big screen. For example, if the Bond Girls are portrayed as being thin and relying on Bond to save them, then that can convey a message about women’s roles in society. Subsequently, individuals in society may imitate that behavior. Their portrayals have the ability to affect viewers’ thought processes and how they construct their social reality. This has important implications given that the majority of the Bond Girls are generally scantily clad, viewed as sex symbols, and seen as nothing less than stunning. According to Bandura (2001), “symbols transform into cognitive models that guide judgements and actions and through these symbols, people form their
experiences as well as give meaning to their experiences” (p. 267). For example, a study conducted in 1995 by Neuendorf, et al. looked at the portrayal of female beauty through the media which is still an ongoing issue in today’s society. Someone who is very tall and thin, has small hips, and considered to be very attractive is the typical idea of beautiful in the media. This is troublesome considering that these specific characteristics are found in less than 5% of the female population (Neuendorf, et al., 2010, p. 748). This presents unrealistic expectations of beauty and at the same time forces women to alter their own thoughts on body image and beauty.

According Kramarae, women’s words are discounted in society and their thoughts are devalued because language is dominated by men (Griffin, 2000, p. 459). Because of this male-dominated language, women tend to be more excluded by men and are therefore become a muted group (Griffin, 2000, p. 459). Muted Group Theory states that those in subordinate groups in society may have say lot to say, but they have little power to say it. Not only do they have little power to speak freely, but they fear the consequences of being punished (Kramarae, 2005, p. 55). They are more constrained than men in what they can say, when they can say it, and with what results (Kramarae, 2005, p. 55). Muted Group theory advocates that we “reform language so that women’s experiences from women’s perspectives are fully represented” (Wood, 2005, p. 63). Starting in the 1970’s, Kramarae began researching the way women are portrayed in cartoons. Kramarae discovered that in general, women are portrayed as “emotional, apologetic, or just plain wishy-washy” (Griffin, 2000, p. 459). Additionally, only eighteen out of the fifty-seven cartoons had female characters and only ten of those women spoke which conveys that women, in society, “are rendered articulate” (Griffin, 2000, p. 459). This is also exemplified in the 2016 online analysis done by Anderson and Daniels who looked at the dialogue of men and women’s roles in 2,000 different films. They chose to look at major characters in top-grossing films that
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had a dialogue of 100 words or more. In this study, only in 22% of the films, which is roughly 440 of the 2,000 films, did women have more dialogue than men (Anderson & Daniels, 2016). Considering that women occupied two of the top three roles in the film, this shows that they are more silenced than their male counterparts. The Bond Girls are part of this marginalized group. The way they are portrayed keeps them in an underrepresented and therefore silenced role. Because of the significance of the Bond phenomenon plays, if the Bond Girls are going to continue to be represented in such a way, then it will continue to have a potentially negative impact on society and on women. Guided by these three theories, this study answers the following research questions:

RQ1: What characteristics classify a Bond Girl as Primary Bond Girl?

RQ2: What characteristics classify a Bond Girl as a Secondary Bond Girl?

RQ3: What is the relationship between the Primary Bond Girl and the Secondary Bond Girl to James Bond?

RQ4: Have the Primary and Secondary Bond Girl characteristics evolved over time? If so, in what ways?

Procedure

Six Bond films were analyzed in this study: Goldfinger, Live and Let Die, For Your Eyes Only, Goldeneye, Casino Royale, and Spectre. These six films were chosen based on the following criteria:

- One from each decade
- Highest box office gross (adjusted for inflation)
- Highest user ratings (retrieved from IMDB and Rotten Tomatoes)
Although *Spectre* was released in the same decade as *Skyfall*, it was lower on the average user ratings as well as gross amount earned. But *Skyfall* did not feature a Primary and Secondary Bond Girl so *Spectre* was included in the list instead of *Skyfall* for the purpose of the study.

Selecting one film from each decade enabled me to sample Bond films across the span of the Bond phenomenon and to answer the fourth research question which deals with the evolution of the characteristics of the Primary and Secondary Bond Girls. Highest average User ratings and highest grossing Bond films were chosen as criteria because these directed me to the Bond films from each decade that are expected to have the greatest impact on society. This was beneficial in addressing concerns expressed by the Muted Group theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Feminist Standpoint theory.

The following table identifies the James Bond films that were selected as well as each film’s average user rating, the year the film was released, the Primary Bond Girl, the Secondary Bond Girl, and the box office gross amount.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary Bond Girl</th>
<th>Secondary Bond Girl</th>
<th>Gross Amount</th>
<th>Average User Rating out of 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goldfinger</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Pussy Galore</td>
<td>Jill Masterson</td>
<td>$935,404,000</td>
<td>9.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live and Let Die</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Solitaire</td>
<td>Rosie Carver</td>
<td>$846,046,000</td>
<td>6.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Your Eyes Only</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Melina Havelock</td>
<td>Bibi Dahl</td>
<td>$498,812,000</td>
<td>6.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldeneye</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Natalya Simonova</td>
<td>Xenia Onatopp</td>
<td>$542,985,000</td>
<td>7.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casino Royale</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Vesper</td>
<td>Solange</td>
<td>$686,784,000</td>
<td>7.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectre</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Madeleine</td>
<td>Lucia</td>
<td>$879,437,000</td>
<td>6.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After these six films were selected to represent the Bond phenomenon, a list of data points were selected to differentiate and analyze the difference between the Primary Bond Girls and the Secondary Bond Girls. Data on seventeen different items were collected in order to differentiate included:

- Types of clothing worn
- Occupation
- If they were rescued by Bond
- If they saved Bond's life
- If they engage in sexual intercourse with Bond
- If they use their sexuality to harm Bond
- If they are a hero or villain in the film
- Agency (proactive/reactive character)
- At what point in the film did they engage in sexual intercourse with Bond
- If they went through some form of emotional trauma
- Connection to villain
- Initial relationship with Bond
- Ending relationship with Bond
- Apparent age of character
- End of film mortality
- Number of scenes
- Dominates/demeans Bond
- Occupation

The criteria were selected from previous research as well as factors that could potentially differentiate the Primary Bond Girls from the Secondary Bond Girls and highlight their respective characteristics. Additionally, as the films were being watched, additional relevant data points and themes emerged and were added to the list of criteria.

To generate a more in-depth analysis and to pay more attention to detail, the films were watched twice. In each viewing, I analyzed and observed both the Primary and the Secondary Bond Girls. A spreadsheet (see Spreadsheet in Appendix A) was utilized to track my
observations of the films. Data was collected via tally marks and detailed comments about observations.

These procedures enabled me to collect the data necessary to answer my research questions. In the analysis section, I answer these four proposed research questions.

Analysis

After analyzing and observing the Primary Bond Girls in the six selected Bond films. The data indicated that there are a specific set of characteristics that classify Primary and Secondary Bond Girls and how they are portrayed in the Bond films, their relationship to James Bond, and the evolution of those characteristics.

RQ1: What characteristics classify a Bond Girl as a Primary Bond Girl?

The Primary Bond Girls have much larger roles in the films than the Secondary Bond Girls. Their characters form a deeper relationship with Bond and they have more time on screen for their characters to develop. This is exemplified in the number of the scenes they are in versus the number of scenes the Secondary Bond Girls are in. For example, Pussy Galore is in 10 scenes, Solitaire is in 17 scenes, Melina Havelock is in 26 scenes, Natalya Simonova is in 16 scenes, Vesper Lynd is in 14 scenes, and Madeleine Swann is in 10 scenes. This is significantly higher than the number of scenes in which the Secondary Bond Girls appear. This is a significant piece of data because it shows their character development, makes them more human, and allows ample amount of time for their relationship with Bond to form. They are not nearly as disposable and replaceable in the specific film as the Secondary Bond Girls. Overall, the Primary Bond Girls are overall more important in the film and more important to Bond himself than the Secondary Bond Girls.
Regarding the Primary Bond Girls’ character development, agency is also significant. The Primary Bond Girls tend to have some sort of control and make choices to keep the plot moving. In this sense, they are more proactive than the Secondary Bond Girls. The fact they have agency and are also proactive decision makers makes them much stronger characters than the Secondary Bond Girls. It also presents them as more of an equal than a subordinate to Bond himself, unlike the Secondary Bond Girls. For example, Melina Havelock wants to avenge her parent’s deaths. She actively seeks out the villain to kill him and accompanies Bond on his mission to do the same. Natalya Simonova tracks the villain down and changes the computer codes so the villain does not have access to vital information. She also accompanies Bond on his mission. Madeleine Swann is the one who informs Bond who Spectre is, leads him to her father’s resort, and accompanies Bond when defeating the villain.

Continuing with this theme of character development, some of the Primary Bond Girls also have experienced some type of emotional trauma. Thus, they are portrayed as more human rather than just as an object of Bond’s desire as the Secondary Bond Girls seem to be. For example, Melina Havelock had to watch both of her parents get shot and killed. Natalya Simonova saw everyone she worked with get murdered. Madeleine Swann was forced to learn about her father killing himself and had the video of his suicide played in front of her. This is also another way that the Primary Bond Girl and James Bond are able to form a deeper relationship than the relationship that James Bond has with the Secondary Bond Girl.

The Primary Bond Girls’ occupations are also significant and contribute to their characters. They tend to have some form of prestigious career that is seen in the film. In the films, they are seen performing their occupation shortly after the introduction of the character themselves. For example, the first time we see Natalya Simonova, she is at work. As a computer
programmer, she helps Bond defeat the villain at the end of the film. Similarly, the first time we see Madeleine Swann, a psychologist, she is assessing Bond’s needs at work due to the fact that he posed as a potential client. Lastly, there is Vesper Lynd’s whose role as an accountant was articulated numerous times throughout the film. These Primary Bond Girls’ occupations convey their intelligence as well as their ability to be financially independent, which conveys a certain strength that the Secondary Bond Girls do not have.

Even though the Primary Bond Girls have a certain strength that the Secondary Bond Girls to do not have, they still take on the role of being a damsel in distress and are rescued by James Bond. In the films, the Primary Bond Girls are usually caught in some form of life-threatening situation and Bond saves their lives. Bond, therefore, rescues them from the villain and saves their lives. In For Your Eyes Only, when Melina and Bond are being dragged underwater behind a boat, Bond saves her life by getting them both free and they escape the villain. In Spectre, when Madeleine is being kidnapped by the villain, Bond rescues her and kills her captors. In Live and Let Die, the villain traps Solitaire and is planning to drop her into a tank full of sharks, but not before Bond kills the villain and frees Solitaire. The fact that Bond saves/rescues the Primary Bond Girls signifies his hypermasculinity and the Primary Bond Girls’ hyperfemininity.

Saving the Primary Bond Girls lives leads to the next data point which is End-of-Film-Mortality. With the exception of Vesper, all of the other five Primary Bond Girls were alive at the end of the films. This is important in the comparison between the Primary and the Secondary Bond Girls. The Secondary Bond Girls usually die before the end of the film which shows that they are much more disposable than the Primary Bond Girls. However, even though the Primary
Bond Girls are alive at the end of the film, they are never in more than one of the Bond films (with the exception of Octopussy) which also symbolizes their disposability.

Not only do all of the Primary Bond Girls engage in sexual intercourse with Bond, but when they do so is significant. The do not engage in sexual intercourse with Bond until at least halfway or even close to the end of the film. This occurs after their relationship has developed. By contrast, the Secondary Bond Girls tend to engage in sexual intercourse shortly after meet Bond. The Primary Bond Girls are portrayed as more chaste and less of a sexual object than the Secondary Bond Girls. These characteristics are viewed as being more favorable in society and in the films as well. In the Bond films, women who are more sexually open and promiscuous usually end up dead. The Primary Bond Girls are all alive, with the exception of Vesper, at the end of the films.

The Primary Bond Girls also present a sexual challenge to Bond. At least initially, they tend to dominate or even demean Bond in some way. For example, Pussy Galore calls him a "little boy" and proceeds to tell him that his charms won't work on her. Solitaire, who is a tarot card reader, pulls out "The Fool" card when reading his fortune. Vesper Lynd tells him that she will only be keeping an eye on her government's money and not "his perfectly formed ass." When Madeleine Swann trips and falls and Bond catches her, she tells him that she won't fall into his arms "seeking solace" for her dead father. This is again exemplifying the type of strength and character developments that the Primary Bond Girls have that the Secondary Bond Girls do not. This also may be just another example of how James Bond is able to overcome any challenge and in the end, get exactly what he wants from the Primary Bond Girls.

The Primary Bond Girls also wear clothing that differentiates them from the Secondary Bond Girls. The Primary Bond Girls tended to be much more conservatively dressed than the
Secondary Bond Girls. In this context, conservative is defined as showing less amounts of skin, especially cleavage, than the Secondary Bond Girls but still accentuating the feminine figure. For example, in *Goldfinger* Pussy Galore is seen in outfits that accentuate her curves, but do not show a lot of her skin. She may wear a lower-cut top, but it is paired with black dress pants and a black blazer, or she wears a turtleneck sweater with a blazer. In *Spectre*, Madeleine Swann, similarly to Pussy Galore, wears a black turtleneck sweater with a blazer or a white button up dress that shows no cleavages and goes past her knees. What the Primary Bond Girls wear could be classified either classy or professional. They dress in a very feminine style and sometimes, even to the point of conservative which differentiates them from the Secondary Bond Girls.

When it comes to the Primary Bond Girls, how they are portrayed and the characteristics that classify them as a Primary Bond Girl rather than a Secondary Bond Girls is extremely significant. There were numerous data points that emerged and were repeated throughout the six films. The data points that were observed and analyzed which answers the first research question and leads to the analysis of the Secondary Bond Girls and the relationship between and Primary and Secondary Bond Girls.

**RQ2: What characteristics classify a Bond Girl as a Secondary Bond Girl?**

After analyzing and observing the Secondary Bond Girls in the six selected Bond films, numerous characteristics emerged. The first significant characteristic for the Secondary Bond Girls is the number of scenes that they are present in. Jill Masterson is in 3 scenes, Rosie Carver is in 3 scenes, Lisl Von Schlaf is in 4 scenes, Xenia Onatopp is in 11 scenes, Solange is in 4 scenes, and Lucia Sciarra is in 2 scenes. The number of scenes that the Secondary Bond Girls are in is significantly lower than the number of scenes that the Primary Bond Girls. This suggests that they are not near as significant to James Bond himself but also to the plot of the film as the
Primary Bond Girls are. The Secondary Bond Girls’ lack of presence in the films doesn’t allow for their character nor the relationship with Bond to develop. Because of this, they are seen as less important when compared to the Primary Bond Girls and more disposable.

The Secondary Bond Girls’ lack of agency is also significant. They have very little to do with the plot in most cases, other than satisfying Bond’s sexual libido. In general, they are very reactive characters. The Secondary Bond Girls react to men’s action—they do very little to think or act for themselves. For example, Jill Masterson just responds to what Bond is doing—she goes along with it and allows it to happen. Rosie Carver reacts to seeing a snake in the bathroom and reacts to being ordered to kill Bond, but doesn’t even get close to killing him before she is killed. This is the exact opposite of the Primary Bond Girls’ agency which conveys that the Secondary Bond Girls are Bond’s subordinates instead of his equal.

This leads to the observation that none of the Secondary Bond Girls have occupations and if they do, then it is not portrayed as explicitly in the film as the Primary Bond Girls’ occupations are. Rosie Carver claims that she works for the CIA in order to get closer to Bond, but she is actually working for the villain as she was ordered to kill Bond. Jill Masterson also seems to work directly for the villain, Goldfinger, as she is first seen following his bidding. The fact that none of the Secondary Bond Girls have prestigious careers as the Primary Bond Girls do conveys that they are less independent and physically able. This may lead to the Secondary Bond Girls being seen more as objects rather than people. It also adds to Bond’s hypermasculinity and displays traditional gender roles — the man is the one with a career.

The Secondary Bond Girls’ End-of-Film-Mortality is also significant as is the way they die. All of the Secondary Bond Girls, with the exception of Lucia Sciarra, are dead by the end of the film and killed in a violent way. Jill Masterson was covered in gold paint and was suffocated
to death, Lisl Von Schlaf was run over by a car, and Solange was tortured and then drowned. Their violent deaths lead to the assumption that they are being punished, most likely for their calloused sexual acts with Bond or their villainy. The Secondary Bond Girls do not conform to traditional gender roles due to their "easiness" and sexual freedom which is frowned upon in the films themselves.

Some of the Secondary Bond Girls use their sexuality to try to harm Bond or at least weaken him. Both Rosie Carver and Lisl Von Schlaf were ordered to extract information from of Bond and then kill him. They both sleep with him to lower his defenses. However, neither of them succeeds because Bond is always one step ahead of them. This furthers the point that the Secondary Bond Girls are simply sexual objects to Bond. Even if he knows that they are using him, he uses them right back—they are objects, not people.

The Secondary Bond Girls’ types of clothing are much more revealing than the Primary Bond Girls’ types of clothing. For example, in Goldfinger, Jill Masterson is seen in nothing but a bikini and an oversized men’s shirt. In Casino Royale, Solange is seen wearing a bikini and then later appears in a tight-fitting evening gown with cleavage showing. In Spectre, Lucia Sciarra is first shown wearing a conservative black dress but later is shown wearing a corset with thigh-high hose and a garter. This just adds to their display of "easiness" and open sexuality, especially around Bond.

The Secondary Bond Girls not only dress in more revealing ways, but they are also more sexually open when it comes to how quickly they engage in sexual intercourse with Bond. All of the Secondary Bond Girls, with the exception of Xenia, sleep with Bond either just after meeting him or shortly after meeting him. Unlike the Primary Bond Girls, their relationship with Bond is
strictly sexual. They are there for the sole purpose of being a sexual object to Bond and one is just as disposable as the next.

The portrayal of the Secondary Bond Girls greatly differs from the Primary Bond Girls. There are a number of characteristics that are conveyed throughout the films that classify a Bond Girl as a Secondary Bond Girl which is significant to their character and answers the second research question.

**RQ3: What is the relationship between the Primary Bond Girl and the Secondary Bond Girl to James Bond?**

The Primary and Secondary Bond Girls have very specific roles to play, not only in the film’s plot, but also in their relationship to James Bond. How the Primary and Secondary Bond Girls are portrayed and what characteristics are present lead us to answer the third research question. The Primary Bond Girls are generally more proactive than the Secondary Bond Girls and that characteristic impacts their relationship to Bond. Most of the Primary Bond Girls end up saving Bond’s life, whether directly or indirectly. In *Goldfinger*, Pussy Galore is the one who calls Washington and gets the poisonous nerve gas switched out for a harmless gas and helps Bond defeat the villain. In *Casino Royale*, Vesper Lynd saves Bond’s life after he gets poisoned and needs a defibrillator; she is the one who defibrillates him. In *Spectre*, when Bond is almost thrown off a moving train by the villain, Madeleine Swann shoots the villain and helps Bond defeat him. These accounts are not only significant to the plot of the film, but they also convey the importance of the Primary Bond Girl and the larger role in the film that she plays verse the Secondary Bond Girl.

The Primary Bond Girls are also seen as more of a person than a sexual object or an object of prey, unlike that Secondary Bond Girls. The Secondary Bond Girls generally engage in
sexual intercourse with Bond just shortly after meeting him whereas the Primary Bond Girls engage in sexual intercourse after the relationship has had time to develop. This is also exemplified when it comes to the Primary Bond Girls experiencing some form of emotional trauma. Bond may have to console them in some way or they join Bond to avenge the loss of a loved one. Regardless, they have a past and a future, feelings and memories whereas the Secondary Bond Girls do not. Bond is able to emotionally connect more with the Primary Bond Girls than the Secondary Bond Girls and therefore have a deeper and more developed relationship than with the Secondary Bond Girls. The Primary Bond Girls also present more of a challenge to Bond than the Secondary Bond Girls. Throughout the films, the Primary Bond Girls have demeaned Bond’s masculinity in some way and acted as though they would be the ones that Bond wouldn’t sleep with—something he could not conquer. This gives the Primary Bond Girls more agency and the ability to reject Bond (or at least attempt to). The Secondary Bond Girls have neither of those options, making them a weaker character.

It is also important to note the initial and ending relationship that both the Primary and Secondary Bond Girls have with Bond. They all meet Bond for the first time in the film; there is no previous relationship with him. By the end of the film, the Secondary Bond Girls are usually deceased. In addition, there is generally no further relationship with the Primary Bond Girls after the film due to the fact that their characters do not recur in other Bond films. This conveys the idea that both Primary and Secondary Bond Girls are disposable and they only have one use. There is just one exception—Madeleine Swann. In Spectre, James Bond quits his job to be with her, which makes her role as a Primary Bond Girl much more significant than the other Primary Bond Girls.
The roles that the Primary and Secondary Bond Girls play are extremely significant when it comes to their relationship with James Bond. Whether they are present in the film to satisfy Bond’s sexual libido and hypermasculinity or they form deeper, more emotional relationship with Bond, they add to the Bond phenomenon. Though, for the most part, they are seen as disposable regardless of their status as a Primary or Secondary Bond Girl, the Primary Bond Girls develop a much deeper relationship with Bond than the Secondary Bond Girls ever could.

RQ4: Have the Primary and Secondary Bond Girl characteristics evolved over time?

Over the decades, the James Bond phenomenon has evolved in many different ways, from the actors who have played Bond to the plots themselves. That evolution prompts one to wonder whether the characteristics of the Primary and Secondary Bond Girl have also evolved over time as well. Due to the fact that six films from six different decades were chosen, one can see the evolution of the Primary and Secondary Bond Girl characteristics.

One of the first characteristics that evolved through the films is how the Primary Bond Girls have saved James Bond’s life. The Primary Bond Girls have evolved from indirectly saving his life to directly saving his life. In Goldfinger, Pussy Galore doesn’t directly save Bond’s life, but she indirectly saves his life by betraying the villain, calling Washington for backup, and switching out the poisonous nerve gas in her planes to a harmless gas. In For Your Eyes Only, Melina Havelock indirectly saves his life after Bond crashes his car after being chased by the villain. Without Melina picking Bond up, he would have been captured by the villain and probably killed. In Goldeneye, Natalya Simonova indirectly saves Bond’s life when she uses her computer programming skills to track where the villain is headed and therefore helping Bond complete his mission. However, the peak evolution is seen in Casino Royale when Vesper Lynd directly saves Bond’s life as he is close to death from being poisoned and he is unable to get his
defibrillator to work. She is the one who fixes it and saves his life. This evolution continues when Madeleine Swann directly saves Bond’s life in *Spectre* when he is close to getting thrown off a moving train. Madeleine shoots the villain and therefore saves Bond’s life. This is a signifier that not all of the Bond Girls are simply damsels in distress and can, at some points, even be seen as Bond’s equal.

Evolution also is seen in the way Secondary Bond Girls use their sexuality to try and harm Bond. This begins in *Live and Let Die* when Rosie Carver in sexual intercourse with Bond to try and weaken his defenses in order to kill him. It occurs again in *For Your Eyes Only* when Lisl Von Schlaf engages in sexual intercourse to weaken Bond and try to get information out of him for the villain. In *Goldeneye*, Xenia shows up at the pool wearing nothing but a robe and then proceeds to try and kill Bond. It can be inferred that she was using her sexuality to throw him off guard and weaken him. This trend ends after those three films. In *Casino Royale* and *Spectre*, neither of the Secondary Bond Girls uses their sexuality to harm Bond. In fact, Bond initiates sexual intercourse with them to try and get information out of them due to their connection with the villain. This is significant due to the role of temptress and seductress that women would play in films. As society has evolved that role has not only been eradicated in the Bond films but has shifted roles from the Secondary Bond Girl to Bond himself.

Slight changes also are seen in the ages and marital status of the Primary and Secondary Bond Girls. They are all generally close to the 28-33 year old age range. The exception is Lucia in *Spectre*; she is portrayed as being somewhere in between 45 and 50. Lucia is also the only Secondary Bond Girl out of the six films analyzed that did not die—Bond actually saved her life. There is also a slight evolution when it comes to marital status. All of the Primary Bond Girls were depicted as being single. Specifically, in the earlier films, Jill Masterson and Rosie Carver
were depicted as being single as well as Xenia Onatopp. As the films progress, Lisl Von Schlaf was depicted as being a mistress, Solange was married, and Lucia Sciarra was widowed. This may be a progression of Bond’s ability to conquer any challenge. Regardless of the Secondary Bond Girl’s status, Bond is able to get her into his bed. It also adds to their character’s development. In this fashion, they are seen as more than just the sexual objects that previous Secondary Bond Girls are seen as—they have backgrounds now.

From the 1960’s until present, the evolution of the Primary and Secondary Bond Girls is very prominent when it comes to the Bond phenomenon. We are able to see this evolution through their apparent characteristics which also may be a result of society’s influence and depiction of women in film.

Conclusion

Previous literature and research has discussed problems that women face in film. With the number of women in films and the underrepresented roles that they play in those films, this is a growing issue. This critical rhetorical analysis has shed light on women’s roles in James Bond films by using Feminist Standpoint theory, Muted Group, and Social Cognitive Theory to look at the significance of those roles. By looking at the prominence the Bond phenomenon has in society, one can easily infer that the Bond Girls have a large potential to impact on society. Some of the characteristics that define that Primary and Secondary Bond Girls are the type of characteristics that keep women in a marginalized and muted group. The Primary Bond Girls’ portrayals have indeed evolved and, in some ways, for the better. Today’s Primary Bond Girls have aspects that portray them as smart, capable, and intelligent women with prestigious careers. However, there are still the characteristics that objectify them such as their disposability to James Bond.
The Secondary Bond Girls are portrayed as sexual objects, meant to be nothing more than an accessory to intensify James Bond’s masculinity. Though their roles have slightly evolved, instead of using their sexuality to try and harm James Bond, in recent films it is Bond who uses his sexuality to extract information from them and charm them into bed. After they succumb to these traditional gender roles, they are punished for their calloused acts by being violently killed.

In general, the Primary and Secondary Bond Girls presents unrealistic expectations and at the same time force women to alter their own thoughts on body image and beauty. Subsequently, if the Bond Girls are going to continue to be represented in such a way, then it will continue to have a potentially negative impact on society and on women.

Limitations and Future Research

Throughout this study, there were a couple limitations. First, the number of films that were chosen was only a small sample. Out of the 24 films, I only observed 6 of them. There could be other characteristics that were overlooked or that may have been more prominent in some of the other films that I did not discover. Secondly, the films were only watched twice by one person so the margin for error is higher than if they were watch multiple times by multiple people. Areas for future research include looking at the direct impact that the Bond Girls have on women. Using focus groups and surveys to quantify this data would add to previous research done on this topic. Another area for potential research could be violence towards women in the Bond Films.
### Appendix

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Goldfinger</th>
<th>Live and Let Die</th>
<th>For Your Eyes Only</th>
<th>Goldeneye</th>
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Works Cited


