Recasting James Bond in Iran: The Voice of Masculinity at the Cost of Silencing Women

Azra GHANDEHARION
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

Ali AGHAEI
Shiraz University

***Abstract**: The widely popular James Bond narratives were originally written by Ian Fleming (1908–1964) in the form of novel. This research compares the movie* Bodyguard *(dir. Ebrahim Hatamikia 2016), a free adaptation of the James Bond franchise in Iran, with* Spectre *(dir. Sam Mendes 2015) to reveal how they metaphorically propagate traditional stereotypes of masculinity. Our comparison is theoretically informed by men's studies, namely Raewyn Connell's* Masculinities *(2005), Ronald F. Levant's "Toward the Reconstruction of Masculinity" (1992) and Levant et al.'s "The Male Role" (1992). The points of comparison are the treatment of women in connection to the movies' narrative, the context, the spatiality of the setting, and the definition of the hero. Female parts are examined to illustrate how women influence the outcome of the narrative. After tracing the reaffirmation of masculinity embedded in different metaphors in the setting, in order to understand what defines a hero in* Spectre *and* Bodyguard*, this paper scrutinizes the characters' dialogue and actions to show whether heroism and masculinity are synonymous. Women in the two films have little effect on the outcome of the narrative; female characters are marginalized, while male characters are glorified. The main character in* Bodyguard*, Heidar, is depicted as a hero because of his religious ideology and self-sacrifice, while Bond's status as a hero is portrayed through his devotion to Great Britain and the Queen. Both characters embody traditional masculine ideology through their heroism. It is concluded that while the movies try to challenge the masculinity of the two leading characters, ultimately they reaffirm masculine traits.*

***Keywords**: masculinity, metaphor, heroism, women, Mendes'* Spectre*, Hatamikia's* Bodyguard*, comparative cultural studies*

1. Introduction

Movies, as a cultural product and a powerful medium that seeks to create change and propagates different discourses directly or indirectly, constitute an important object of cultural studies (Tinkcom, Villarejo 1-30; Ray 83-93). This paper focuses on the indirect aspect where movies, through metaphors, promote the concept of masculinity. It scrutinizes a free adaptation of the James Bond franchise in Iran, *Bodyguard* (dir. Ebrahim Hatamikia 2016) and the James Bond movies, specifically the latest one, *Spectre* (dir. Sam Mendes 2015), from a comparative perspective.

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Though Hatamikia (b. 1961) was reluctant to accept this, *Bodyguard* (2016) has drawn comparisons with James Bond movies from critics in Iran (*Seven*) because both rely heavily on action sequences of the main hero, i.e. Heidar/Bond, and have ideological bases. *Bodyguard* is the story of Heidar, who is the head of a security detail. Failing in his mission by allowing harm to afflict the person he is supposed to keep safe, he tries to come to terms with this incident. Although the rampant sexism of the earlier movies has been dialed down, opinions are still divided as to how offensive the portrayal of women currently might be in *Spectre* and *Bodyguard* (Arnett 8-11; Neuendorf et al. 747-761; Pak-Shiraz 945-967). We will decipher the role of women in the two movies compared to the heroic roles of the male characters. A common point between heroes in different cultures is that they are usually larger-than-life; they possess a certain quality, be it tangible or abstract, that sets them apart from the masses (Korte, Wendt, Falkenhayner 10-12). Whatever the attributes are, heroism usually differs in different contexts. That is why we attempt to show how the discourse of the movie connects heroism to masculinity.

Spectre follows the story of Bond as he tries to find the organization that has tormented him throughout his life. There has not been enough focus on this particular subject; thus, a comparative study will add to the body of work which has been done on each movie or director separately (Arnett 1-16; Dodds, "Screening Geopolitics of Bond" 266-289; Dodds, "Shaking and Stirring James Bond" 116-130; Neuendorf et al. 747-761; Ghaderi; Mahdizade, Esmaeeli 85-105). The grounds for comparison are threefold. First, special attention will be placed upon the role and impact of women on the narrative in order to come to a conclusive decision whether women are important to the plotline of the films and thus challenging masculinity, or whether they are oppressed and silenced, thereby confirming masculinity. Second, this study will try to determine whether the social context and setting of the movies had any bearing on their portrayal of the subject matter. It will be shown whether the movies focus on real-world aspects in the narrative, and whether the setting plays a part in either confirming or challenging masculinity. Finally, as a result of the apparent gulf between the two cultures, this article will try to establish a definition of the hero based on the main characters of the two films.

When analyzing female roles, setting, and heroism through their relationship with masculinity, men's studies such as Raewyn Connell's (2005) and Ronald F. Levant's (1992) will be utilized to reveal how the supremacy of masculinity is represented metaphorically. In *Masculinities* (2005), Connell contends that in the modern era a person's gender conduct is a result of his/her personality type: for example, acting "peaceably" rather than "violently" or "conciliatorily" instead of "dominatingly" signifies "unmasculinity" (67). In "Toward the Reconstruction of Masculinity" (1992) and "The Male Role" (1992) Levant describes seven dimensions of the male role: "Avoidance of Femininity, Homophobia, Self-Reliance, Aggression, Achievement/Status, Attitudes Toward Sex, and Restrictive Emotionality" (329).

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Pivotal to this study is the definition of metaphor offered by Lakoff and Johnson: "metaphor is a property of concepts, and not of words; (2) the function of metaphor is to better understand certain concepts, and not just some artistic or esthetic purpose; (3) metaphor is often not based on similarity" (qtd. in Kovecses ix). Therefore, the characters' reactions to different situations will be compared and examined to come to a conclusion about heroism and how it metaphorically relates the silence of women to the affirmation of masculinity. In other words, the connection between concrete concepts and abstract notions highlights the importance of masculinity.

2. Theoretical Framework: Men's Studies

In "Toward the Reconstruction of Masculinity" (1992) and "The Male Role" (1992) Levant describes seven dimensions of "the male role," which are further illustrated in Levant et al. Thus, according to the latter (335-336), *avoidance of femininity* includes, among others, notions such as housework being for women and men preferring football to needle craft. Men being "detached in emotionally charged situations" illustrates *restrictive emotionality*. Aggression may translate in situations such as "when the going gets tough, men should get tough." The notion that "if necessary, a man should sacrifice personal relationships for career advancement" perfectly sums up the *achievement/status* norm. *Self-reliance* states that "a man should never count on someone else to get the job done." Homophobia underpins the belief that "a man should not continue a friendship with another man if he finds out that the other man is gay." Finally, *non-relational attitudes toward sex* dictate that "men should always take the initiative when it comes to sex." If men doubt their sexual prowess or do not act violently, their masculinity is seriously challenged (Ghandeharion 334-340).

In *Masculinities*, Connell states that "not all applications of masculinity research are trouble-free. In particular, there have been sharp debates about men and masculinity focus in two fields: a) domestic and sexual violence, and b) economic development" (xvii). She later emphasizes the problem of highlighting these two cases because "focus on men will result in resources being diverted from women" and while "men and their practices" should be a part of "the solution," they are a "part of the problem of gender inequalities"; therefore, allowing men to enter a realm whose "development agenda [is] controlled by women, will open the door to backlash" (xvii).

Connell describes gender as a "social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do," without thereby "reduc[ing] [it] to the body" (71). That reductionism would produce the opposite effect because "gender exists precisely to the extent that biology does not determine the social" (71). Connell proposes a tripartite model for the structure of gender in order to illuminate her ideas of masculinity; the model is organized around power, production/productivity, and cathexis (73). Power relations refer to the "overall subordination of women and

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dominance of men" (74); production relations point to "gender divisions of labor" (74); and cathexis views sexual desire as a gendered entity, an "emotional energy [that is] attached to an object" (74-75). Connell mentions that "power relations" point to "the dominant gender who hold[s] and use[s] the means of violence" (83).

The "attempt to create a social science of masculinity centered on the idea of a male sex role" originates in the differences between the sexes (Connell 21). Women were barred from higher education on the spurious argument that they lacked the required traits to be successful in an academic setting (Connell 21), as if a mind capable of logical and scientific thinking were necessarily masculine. Furthermore, the "first generation of sex role theorists assumed that the roles were well defined, that socialization went ahead harmoniously, and that sex role learning was a thoroughly good thing" (Connell 23); in effect, "functionalist theory assumed a concordance among social institutions, sex role norms and actual personalities" (23). Explanatory theories concurred with social practices to endorse received wisdom that there are masculine and feminine traits that prepare individuals for completely different roles in society.

The social and cultural pressures on women forces them to be "sexually available to men, on whatever terms they can get" (Connell 104), but there are certain factors which point to compulsory heterosexuality for men as well. The "stick-it-up-them" mentality makes it compulsory and normative for a man to obtain sex frequently and whenever possible (Connell 103). Due to feminist criticism and because of their adherence to equality some men attempt to reform their masculinity; however, they are "exactly the kind of 'soft' men scorned by the mythopoetic men's movement and other masculine revivalists" (Connell 120). Hence, another masculine trait, toughness, is contrasted with softness, which is synonymous with femininity.

Assessing Connell's description of hegemonic masculinity, Edley and Wetherell observe that the aforementioned view of masculinity is "sketchy" at best ("Imaginary Positions" 336). In order to make her picture of hegemonic masculinity more practical and applicable to real life, they describe certain social positions for men. One of them is the "heroic" position whereby men try to define their notion of self and exalt certain aspects of their actions and personality in a "strongly positive way" such as being "in control" and facing "risky" situations; the heroic position is a good example of what Connell called complicit masculinity (Edley, Whetherell, "Imaginary Positions" 340). It is wise to consider the relationship between masculinity and metaphors here. If metaphors are concerned with concepts, according to Lakoff and Johnson, then the point is to realize how the concept of masculinity is presented using the images of other concepts. This is where the aforesaid social positions come in to play. The concept of the heroic position aptly represents various masculine traits, and thus masculinity, a rather broad concept, is grounded in the tangible concept of heroism. As such, the hero stands as a metaphor for masculinity and the qualities that are ascribed to it.

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3. Who Are Bond and Heidar?

Casino Royale (1953), Ian Fleming's first novel, adapted for the screen by Martin Campbell (2006), portrays Bond as a modern hero. Much like with other modern protagonists, a darker side of the character emerges, and his "psychological instability" is similar to superheroes like Batman (Arnett 8). Bond is emotionless at the beginning, but then he is softened by Vesper; however, this does not last long as he is betrayed by her (Arnett 8). This darker side makes characters more human and identifiable. It also brings the character closer to reality, which contrasts with his previous versions. Bond still wears expensive watches and premium suits, but he does this to become something other than what he is. These beautifying ornaments become just a façade, a mask to silence his masculinity temporarily. His everyday clothing does not include a tuxedo, unlike previous Bond characters (Arnett 11-13). Regarding female roles, there has also been a change in Bond movies since Campbell's *Casino Royale*. M, Bond's female superior, helps him to realize that Vesper has actually saved him, and so Bond no longer aims his hatred toward women; rather, he focuses on the organization that has used Vesper for its own gain. Thus, Ian Fleming's sexism in his 1953 novel has been upturned in Campbell's 2006 adaptation to show M, an authoritative figure, pointing Bond in the right direction.

Some newly discovered patterns suggest that as time has passed, the role of female characters has become heftier. This deviation from the limited participation of women in previous movies and the prominent objectification of their bodies strikes some critics, however, as but minimal (Neuendorf et al. 757). In a patriarchal society, such portrayals only strengthen the ideologies of the dominant discourse (Arnett 1-16; Dodds, "Screening Geopolitics of *Bond*" 266-289; Dodds, "Stirring James Bond" 116-130; Neuendorf et al. 747-761). As Bond is such a wildly popular character, the internalization of patriarchal discourse will occur much faster. The promiscuous women in Bond movies often die; women are the objects of gaze, and they are punished for being objectified, which means they are metaphorically silenced. Aggression aimed at female characters has remained a vital cog of Bond's narrative (Neuendorf et al. 758-59).

The bulk of literature on Hatamikia's movies is not as comprehensive as that on the Bond franchise, most of the texts being movie reviews written in Persian. Ghaderi observes that Hatamikia has put special emphasis on individualism and self-reliance in the case of Heidar in *Bodyguard*. Akin to Levant's description of self-reliance, Heidar's self-reliance as portrayed in *Bodyguard* represents his masculine qualities; this point could have important consequences when discussing heroism in relation to Heidar. Elaborating on masculinity in Iranian cinema, Pak-Shiraz claims: "the selfless men who sacrificed their lives in the frontline were no longer the heroes

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of mythical stories as in the *Shahnameh*[1] or spiritual figures of religious narratives"; instead, the heroes were the "ordinary" men who decided to put forth their own life to defend their nation and faith against the invader in the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) (Pak-Shiraz 2). Therefore, the metaphors related to the War – where selfless soldiers epitomize the heroes – offer essentially the definition of masculinity in post-revolutionary Iran. Heidar, having been a soldier in the War, metaphorically embodies this view of masculinity. His willingness to jeopardize his life and his eventual sacrifice, indicate an exalted view of masculinity.

4. Silenced Women and Loud Men

Examining the influence female roles have on the outcome of a plot can help to decide how masculinity has been portrayed in a movie. Whether or not female characters sway the narrative shows how much power they wield in comparison with male characters, which ultimately contributes to the portrayal of masculinity and femininity.

4.1. *Spectre*'s Sidelined Women

The fact that the female M, the most important figure in Bond's universe in *Golden Eye* (dir. Martin Campbell, 1995) and *Skyfall* (dir. Sam Mendes, 2012), is replaced with a male character in *Spectre* shows that even the number of female roles is diminishing, which pictures a male-dominated environment. In depicting Miss Moneypenny, secretary to M, with limited involvement in the narrative and dependent on Bond, *Spectre* further diminishes women's power and productivity (in Connell's terms). Though the acting résumés of both Dame Judith Olivia Dench (b. 1934) as M, and Naomie Melanie Harris (b. 1976) as Moneypenny, are shining with accolades, and the actresses played the role of strong-willed women in movies such as *Mrs Brown* (dir. John Madden 1997) and *Pirates of the Caribbean II* and *III* (dir. Gore Verbinski 2006 and 2007), their roles are marginal to that of Bond in the development of the plot. The same is true of Madeleine, the so-called Bond girl played by Léa Seydoux (b. 1985). Needless to mention that "Bond girl" refers to a sexually attractive girl who is replaced by a new face in every Bond film; by contrast, Bond's actor remains the same for at least four movies, which also depicts Bond's masculinity in terms of non-relational attitudes toward sex (in Levant et al.'s terms).

In *Spectre*, Bond promises Mr. White, the leader of Quantum organization, to protect Madeleine in exchange for information on Spectre and Blofeld (min. 58). Here the character of Madeleine comes into sharp focus only as a bargaining chip, something that Bond can exploit to gain the information he needs. In the train scene, Madeleine lets her guard down and the rather flirtatious behavior she exhibits is not

[1] *Shahnameh*, literally translated as "The Book of Kings," is the most famous and one of the longest epic poems written in Persian by Abul-Qâsem Ferdowsi Tusi, mostly known as Ferdowsi, in the 10th-11th century.

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reminiscent of the actions of a strong, willful character. However, later she assists Bond in taking down the assassin who attacks them. While she would like to be seen as someone who can protect herself, she is taken hostage almost immediately after Bond leaves her alone in her office (min. 70). Bond's promise to protect Madeleine (min. 58) illustrates how powerless she is in comparison to Bond, whose power and production (in Connell's terms) are glorified. Bond is the only hope she has for escaping, so he is shown to be self-reliant (in Levant et al.'s terms), which once more testifies to hegemonic masculinity. Even though Madeleine manages to take Bond away from the only thing he has known his entire life, his job, it should be noticed that none of it would have been possible without Bond's heroic actions that kept his masculinity intact. Kimmel claims that "to men at least gender remains invisible" (29), but Bond's actions undeniably highlight his gender and masculinity. Bond's actions are governed by violence and aggression, two of the predominantly masculine traits identified by both Connell (2005) and Levant (1992). Bond manages to save Madeleine and build a future away from the perils of espionage, while Madeleine's actions are silenced or at best considered peripheral to Bond's activities.

4.2. *Bodyguard*: Masculinity through Passive Femininity

Similar to Bond's sense of protection for Madeleine, Heidar also comes to rescue his wife, Razieh (min. 19). After Razieh is pushed to the ground by a male drug dealer, Heidar succeeds in dispatching the thugs who had come to aid him. Not only is women's self-reliance questioned but also Heidar's masculinity is reaffirmed as he is able to physically punish three men who are exaggeratedly more powerful. Razieh's lack of self-reliance is portrayed in an event metaphorical for gender identities, even though the metaphor is not verbalized but rather carried out physically. Heidar is shown to be the hero, while Razieh remains powerless on the ground. Undaunted by risky situations, Heidar is put in the heroic position and portrayed as self-reliant, as exemplary of hegemonic masculinity as analyzed by Levant.

Shahrokhi (3) claims that Hatamikia is one of the directors who make a conscious effort against the objectification of women by casting "natural faces" rather than those who have undertaken beauty surgery. The problem, however, is whether his casting actually compensates for the limited portrayal of women or not. In *Bodyguard*, ironically, the most important female part is that of Heidar's daughter, Maryam, even though the celebrity Merila Zarei plays his wife. The prominence of Maryam resides in her refusal to marry a bodyguard, her father's closest friend. Maryam argues that she does not want to be called to the airport one day to pick up her husband's corpse (min. 23-24), which implicitly challenges her father and his masculinity by rejecting his occupation. Other than this, it is difficult to find an example where the women are actually pivotal to the narrative. Even the aforementioned instance shows the importance of a female character in relation to the male lead character. Maryam is less influential when the actress' résumé and

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physical traits are considered. The rhinoplasty beauty surgery and obscurity of Diba Zahedi (b. 1989), who enacts Maryam, stand in sharp contrast with the natural face and reputation of Merila Zarei (b. 1974), whose name appears beside Parviz Parastooi's in *Bodyguard*'s opening credits. Zarei has acted in many acclaimed Sacred Defense[2] genre movies like *Che* (dir. Ebrahim Hatamikia 2012) and *Track 143* (dir. Narges Abyar 2013); furthermore, she has played the role of strong, independent women during her career in *Two Women* (dir. Tahmineh Milani 1999), *Friday's Soldiers* (dir. Masoud Kimiayie, 2002), and *Hush! Girls Don't Scream* (dir. Pouran Derakhshandeh 2013). Needless to mention, Zarei's Razieh, Heidar's committed wife, is shown to be a woman with strong religious beliefs and ideological inclinations since she has willingly married a soldier leaving for the War (min. 34); however, her importance is only accentuated in relation to Heidar. Unlike Bond's final scene with Madeline, where a female character directly changes the course of the narrative, women in *Bodyguard* are incapable to do so. Mahdizade and Esmaeeli (104) believe that although Hatamikia is committed to giving women more comprehensive roles, his female characters are rarely more than complementary and foil characters.

Based on Connell's analysis of power relations, we would argue that Maryam's refusal to marry a bodyguard questions her father's power over her and implicitly challenges his masculinity. Connell's production relations are vividly represented in *Bodyguard*. Because of her refusal, Maryam is the only pivotal part a woman can be assigned; however, her importance is shown in connection with two male characters. Henceforth, masculinity, rather than femininity, is solidified. Razieh's assertion that she decided to marry a soon-to-be soldier again brings production relations to the fore. While Heidar is shown to be more productive by going to War, Razieh is shown to have been passively waiting for his return, which limits her production and reaffirms Heidar's masculinity. Mahdizade and Esmaeeli's view that Hatamikia's female characters are complementary roles (104) points to how women are denied productivity and power. This is how both directors reaffirm masculinity at the cost of silencing women.

5. The Setting: Where Masculinity is Challenged

In the two movies, setting and spatiality play an influential role, whether in reaffirming the protagonist's masculinity or challenging it. Malamuth and Thornhill argue from a feminist perspective that "men are uniquely socialized to dominate and be aggressive toward women in a manner that differs from their socialization vis-à-vis other men" (191). Yet Bond outclasses even men to embolden his claim to

[2] Iranian officials have labeled the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), which burst out in the wake of the Islamic Revolution (1979), as Sacred Defense or Imposed War. Artworks created in the Sacred Defense genre are promoted and mostly sponsored by the government. The discourse of the genre is the amalgamation of ideology, nationalism and Islam, especially Shiism.

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masculinity. Bond represents Britain through his assertion that whatever he does is for the Queen and country. In the end, he leaves his job behind because it has silenced his masculinity by depriving him of his identity: due to the secretive nature of his occupation, he is diminished to digits and codes; he makes no personal decision; and his selfness is marginalized to privilege his espionage persona. On the other hand, in *Bodyguard*, Heidar's masculinity is challenged in series of events where he fails as a bodyguard. He is tasked with protecting the life of Dr. Solaty, the First Vice-President, who plans to run for election. Against his recommendation, they make an unscheduled stop and are ambushed by a suicide bomber in the southeast of Iran bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan; the bomb detonates and Dr. Solaty is badly injured. Heidar tries his best to succeed in his next security assignment, Meysam, a nuclear scientist and the son of his comrade who died in the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). In the end, Heidar is killed by terrorists while protecting Meysam, which metaphorically represents his integrity and trust in the next generation. Lakoff explains that "the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another" (1); in Heidar's death we witness the domain of heroism conceptualized through self-sacrifice. This is when his challenged masculinity finds a voice and is reaffirmed through the devotion to his belief: it is his duty to guard the ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially the Islamic Revolution (1979).

5.1. Bond's Masculinity in Mexico City and Day of the Dead

Bond films are replete with examples of the spatiality of real-world events to garner sympathy and empathy from the audience. An example from the first Bond film, *Dr. No* (dir. Terence Young, 1962), might be quite useful here. In *Dr. No*, the Panama Canal is a central theme (Dodds, "Geopolitics" 276) and the struggle for control has parallels in actual historical events. *Skyfall* (dir. Sam Mendes, 2012) shows England's vulnerability to terrorism, and the events echo the 7/7 suicidal attack of London bombing in 2005 (Dodds, "Stirring James Bond" 118). Enacted by Islamist terrorists, it aimed at London's public transport system and left numerous casualties. These actions and places can be taken as evidence that real events have an effect on the narratives of movies. Similar to *Skyfall*'s unitization of London's spatiality and its vulnerability to terrorism, *Spectre* has exploited Mexico City on *Día de Muertos*, the Day of the Dead. This spatiality – the setting proper and the country – is chosen with considerable forethought. The particular locale reveals Bond's demise or rather the fact that the double 0 program, the British espionage program, is under threat. The Day of the Dead is held to commemorate the departed; metaphorically, it pays homage to M, who died at the end of *Skyfall*. This day is a close reminder of other female characters who paid the ultimate price for their association with Bond, one of whom is Vesper. Her death is yet another reason why this specific setting is such a conscious choice.

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To draw on Bond's action in *Spectre*, one can refer to Edley and Wetherell's studies of masculinity. The authors observe that the "retributive" man (representative of traditional masculinity) stands in contrast to the "new" man. They mention that in the former case, the man is the main source of authority; he is also "tough, competitive and emotionally inarticulate" ("Masculine Identities" 204). In the beginning of *Spectre* on the Day of the Dead, Bond's claim to authority and his overall tough exterior are brought into question. This foreshadowing of Bond's downfall and the threat to the double 0 program portray how powerless Bond has been or might become. Bond was unable to save M or Vesper; his inability to force his will on the situation or environment undermines his masculinity as he is unable to cement his authority. The double 0 program and his persona of the secret agent are the two coordinates on which he constructed his masculine identity: the double 0 program has presented his competitive nature to the viewer as he has had to be the best to overcome enemies, and the persona of the secret agent accounts for his toughness and emotional detachment. However, when the double 0 program is threatened, so is Bond's masculinity. It is as if Bond is about to lose a part of himself (he is shown to be no longer competitive), and the defeat of the secret agent represents the most comprehensive damage to his masculinity (he is no longer required to be emotionally distant). Forceville and Urios-Aparisi state that "metaphor is not primarily a matter of language, but structures thought and action" (3); thus, through the aforesaid events and situations, Bond's masculinity is metaphorically questioned. The Day of the Dead highlights Bond's own mortality and his failure to protect his friends, and hence challenging his masculinity.

Drawing on Connell's ideas about gender, particularly production relations, we suggest that Bond's masculinity is brought further into question since despite all his efforts, he achieves nothing: he has only been able to stand by while his female friends perish, which is again metaphorically linked to the Day of the Dead. The Day of the Dead stands as an ironic reminder of all of Bond's failures. Mexico City has been chosen as a spatial metaphor for the power of Britain and its vulnerability too. The association of Bond with Britain shows how Bond's power and his masculinity are challenged and reaffirmed in accordance with Connell's concept of power relations. The scenes on the Day of the Dead are filled with action and violence, and while this figuratively points to Bond's possession of power, when the setting is considered, it becomes clear that his victory in these scenes over his enemies is illusory: the Day of the Dead could be considered a homage to those whom Bond was unable to save. Therefore, Bond's parade of violence is undercut by the setting. His masculinity is questioned because it is shown to be fragile at best.

5.2. Heidar's Masculinity in Tehran

For the most part, *Bodyguard* takes place in Tehran, the capital of Iran. There are long shots of the metropolis, which place great importance on the spatiality of Tehran (Ravadrad 103) and force the viewer into contemplation of the events of the movie.

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This camera-generated distance should not be underestimated as it is central to the themes of the movie. Ravadrad claims that the camera panning is understood as Heidar's farewell (104).

The long shots of the highway and the vast spatiality in *Bodyguard* metaphorically depict the growing distance Heidar feels between himself and his surroundings, and they foreshadow his death. The fact that he does not explicitly articulate these feelings to the viewer reveals Heidar as an example of Edley and Wetherell's "retributive man." Locher and Watts state that power "is not a static concept, but is constantly negotiated and exercised in social practice" (81); thus, the distance between Heidar and his environment does not allow him to negotiate for power. In this manner, his power, and hence his masculinity is questioned because the viewer can infer his failure and inability to escape death. The scene at the end of the movie also reveals how Heidar's masculinity is undermined because he has failed to accomplish Connell's production relations, as all he has managed to do is to allow two attacks on the people he was supposed to protect. However, he did warn his superiors of the dangers of the unscheduled stop where Dr. Solaty was hurt, and he did succeed in saving Meysam by sacrificing himself. Therefore, in the end, his masculinity, which was temporally relegated, is reaffirmed by his death.

5.3. *Spectre*'s and *Bodyguard*'s Metaphoric Endings

At the end of *Spectre*, Bond decides against killing the man responsible for all the miseries he has been through. After leaving Blofeld alive, he sees the phantom of M standing on one side of a bridge while Madeleine stands on the opposite side. To put it in Kovecses' words, the bridge serves as a metaphor to decipher the concept of destiny in Bond's life (4-7). On one side waits Madeleine, the promise of a new life that he was so close to achieving with Vesper, but was denied because of her death. On the other side lies all he has ever known, M, Britain and the Queen. He chooses Madeleine in a symbolic action when he throws his iconic pistol in the river. As the camera stays still, Bond moves further away, revealing that he is leaving espionage behind; he thereby goes against authority (i.e. MI 6) to cement his masculinity, which this authority has tried to silence by depriving him of his identity.

The concluding scene from *Bodyguard*, when Meysam is attacked in the tunnel, draws parallels with the end of *Spectre*. After disposing of the bomb attached to Meysam's car, Heidar uses himself as a human shield to keep Meysam safe. The camera travels through the tunnel and moves into a bright light, indicating Heidar's dignified death. Both the *Spectre* bridge and the *Bodyguard* tunnel serve as metaphors for a journey that the main character will undertake. Bond has the choice of a life of danger or a life of solace (living with the woman he loves). However, Heidar is never given a choice; he perishes while doing what he has believed in, because he is a man of principles. Consequently, Heidar becomes a hero. The two different cultures in which the movies were produced have different definitions of what constitutes a hero. Heidar's sacrifice of his own life makes him a hero, while

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Bond lives on to fight another day as we are promised by the closing credits. *Bodyguard*'s tunnel scene and *Spectre*'s bridge scene represent how the protagonists leave part of themselves behind. Heidar leaves his wife and Bond walks away from M, relieving himself of the weight of his license to kill. In *Bodyguard*'s tunnel scene, the camera panning out permits the viewer to contemplate Heidar's masculinity and decide whether he has achieved his duty or not. In addition, both the metaphoric highway and the tunnel scenes can be analyzed by taking into account Connell's notion of cathexis. As both portray Heidar's emotional detachment from his surroundings, the scenes depict the affirmation of Heidar's masculinity.

Keeping Lakoff and Johnson in mind, one can claim that the concrete concept of the bridge symbolizes the abstract idea of making a choice; thus, the bridge scene metaphorically portrays Bond's masculinity, in that he is offered a choice. He is productive through making a choice that will affect himself as well as Madeleine. By taking Connell's production relations into account, one can say Bond is productive and Madeleine is not; Madeleine fits Connell's description of subordination because her fate is in Bond's hands, and once again Bond's masculinity is confirmed through Madeleine's passivity. Madeleine stands quite submissively on one end of the bridge while she awaits Bond's decision, which shows her reliance and Bond's independence, or in Connell's terms, dominance (78). Connell argues that "violence becomes important in gender politics between men" (83). The fact that Bond leaves Blofeld alive in the bridge scene suggests that his masculinity is exalted even when compared to other male characters'. According to Connell, it is "overwhelmingly, the dominant gender who hold and use the means of violence" (83). By throwing his gun into the river, Bond shows that he not only has the means to carry out acts of violence, but also does not need the means because he is so confident in his own masculinity. Additionally, as Bond leaves behind the world of espionage, thus metaphorically going against M's authority, M herself is placed in a position akin to Connell's subordination. The above-mentioned metaphor exists because Bond's actions rank as defying superiors; therefore, Bond's masculinity is highlighted in comparison with the gender of other fe/male characters, which shows how untouchable his masculinity is in the end. Though his masculinity is challenged, especially in the metaphoric burden of the Day of the Dead, in the concluding scene Bond has managed to subordinate Blofeld, his enemy, M, his superior, and Madeleine, his beloved.

6. Heroism: A Metaphor to Rejoice Masculinity

What follows is an endeavor to define how the concepts of heroism and masculinity are anchored to more tangible events and notions (i.e. depicted metaphorically in *Spectre* and *Bodyguard*), and to see how far the two male protagonists fit the definition of hero.

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6.1. Bond's Heroic Masculinity

In *Skyfall*, Bond's body and resilience are immensely tested (Dodds, "Stirring James Bond" 118). Resilience in the face of never-ending turmoil is an important asset of any hero. In *Spectre*, Madeleine asks Bond why he would choose the life of an assassin when it involves hiding and being hunted all the time; Bond answers that he never really had a choice or the time to think about it (min. 95). Yet, he starts to have doubts about his role and actions, which is the main cause of being acquainted with emotions. This doubt, an unmasculine trait, can reveal why he wanted to move on with Vesper. While this may seem to expose the cracks in Bond's masculinity through questioning his autonomy and devotion to Great Britain and the Queen, it has resulted in a much more relatable and believable portrayal of this iconic character.

A traditional aspect of male norms explained by Levant is "restrictive emotionality" ("Male Role" 329). An example of this occurs in *Spectre* when Madeleine questions Bond regarding his choice of occupation (min. 95). He does not allow himself a moment of contemplation on feelings which might cause doubt about why he does what he does. This lack of emotion has become a part of his identity, so much so that he subconsciously rejects any emotion or emotional outlet. Although this lack of emotion in Bond's actions can provide the lucidity necessary for his survival, emotionlessness is undeniably one of the traits that cement the masculinity of his personality. The heroic position involves facing risky situations (Edley, Whetherell, "Imaginary Positions" 340); to a large extent this is what Bond lives every day. Like Heidar, Bond moves without hesitation toward any and all dangers without second thoughts, in conformity to masculine ideals. The combination of restriction of emotional response and facing risky situations creates a fearless persona.

It could be surmised that Bond is looking for a way out, but due to his obligation to M, who passed away in *Skyfall*, he believes he has a mission to complete. This sense of duty toward his previous superior, who became his friend, is an indication of Bond's heroic tendencies. Toward the end of the movie he is given a choice by Blofeld: he can either save himself or look for Madeleine while the bomb timer ticks down. Bond chooses to sacrifice himself to save her, and both survive pretty unscathed. This sequence points to another aspect of the heroic personality: the willingness to sacrifice oneself. For Bond, religious ideology rarely comes into play for religion plays a secondary role at best in his secular society. Most of his conundrums stem from humanistic considerations. His strongest beliefs lie in his love for his country. When Bond decides to spare the life of the man who has tormented him for a very long time, he displays an unmistakable sense of forgiveness and power reserved for the most heroic characters – and for the most righteous Christians.

Something else that negates Bond's restrictive emotionality, and partly challenges his masculinity, is the obligation he feels toward the recently deceased

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M: he allows his actions to be governed by his emotions as he decides to avenge her death. Additionally, Bond allowed himself to develop feelings toward M and consider his superior a friend, which indicates that his emotions dictate his actions – an unmasculine trait. However, he is able to control his emotions by leaving Blofeld alive at the end of the movie; therefore, he succeeds in regaining part of his unemotional, heroic masculinity. Though Bond succumbs to emotion at times, his sentiments are always accompanied by aggression, another male norm (Levant et al. 329). Thus, although his masculinity is challenged temporarily, it metaphorically remains intact by the end of the movie, when through the action of deciding his and Madeline's fate, he remains in control and hence productively masculine. When Blofeld gives Bond the choice of saving himself or Madeleine, he decides to save Madeleine; he enters a risky situation, thereby placing himself in the heroic position (Edley, Whetherell, "Imaginary Positions" 340).

6.2. Heidar's Heroic Masculinity

Hatamikia is regarded as one of the most important figures of Sacred Defense cinema (Taghizade and Kafi 29). Hatamikia's body of work offers "a visual history" through the "systematic portrayal of the values of Islamic Revolution" (Taghizade and Kafi 30). Coupled with the depiction of Heidar, *Bodyguard* offers a telling picture of Hatamikia's views of a hero. Hatamikia mourns the deterioration of "Islamic inclination" and society's "indifference toward this disaster"; all his works, but especially *The Glass Agency*, protest against the subversion of the ideology of Islamic Revolution (Taghizade and Kafi 28). The emergent pattern shows that his heroes are always the soldier of the War with unwavering morals.

Expectedly, in *Bodyguard*, Heidar is revealed to have been a soldier in the Iran-Iraq War. Interestingly, Parviz Parastooi (b. 1955), Hatamikia's war hero in the *Glass Agency* (1998), *Dead Wave* (2001), and *In the Name of Father* (2006), also plays Heidar in *Bodyguard*. Thus, Heidar fits into the definition of Hatamikia's hero. To connect his hero with Islamic ideology, Hatamikia names his protagonist Heidar, which literally means "courageous lion" in Arabic and is the title of the Muslim saint and caliph, Imam Ali (7th century). Heidar's morality and values become clear when the protagonist blames himself for allowing an unscheduled stop which leads to the bombing (mins. 25-30). He is not afraid of taking the responsibility of this debacle in his report. Having failed to be the protector, Heidar allows his masculinity to be questioned. Bennett states that "men maintain a 'stiff upper lip' at times of emotional stress" (1); thus, Heidar's fearlessness in confessing recoups his masculinity. In the first half of the movie, a climactic part is reached (min. 27) when Heidar tells his superior, Ashrafi, that he abhors becoming a *Gomashteh* (literally, "servile watchdog"). The reason why he despises this status is that a *Gomashteh* lacks faith in his profession. Heidar believes he is a *Mohafez*, the protector, and not a servant, which illustrates the depth and strength of his belief: he does not protect *Shakhsiyat*,

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the physical bodies, but *Shaksiyat-e nezam*, the body of government in the Islamic Republic of Iran, from physical and ideological harms.

Hatamikia's hero, Heidar, seems to embody Levant's heroic position. He tries to fight when encountering risky situations, much like Bond. When the unscheduled stop results in the situation spiraling out of control (min. 25), Heidar's masculinity is interrogated. However, Heidar manages to regain control and temporarily saves Dr. Solaty. Edley and Whetherell argue that "men's claims to power and authority appear so firmly bound up with the heroic" ("Imaginary Positions" 343). Therefore, when Heidar reacts against his superior Ashrafi by defining himself as a *Mohafez* (protector), he metaphorically exorcises power and authority and consolidates his masculinity. The protest confirms the argument that metaphors are not purely linguistic, but have to do with thoughts and action; Heidar's insubordination becomes metaphoric power.

Levant has delineated seven "traditional male norms," one of which is "seeking achievement and status" (329). When Heidar tries to disrupt the status quo by redefining himself as a *Mohafez*, he actually asserts his masculinity. His claim that he protects the ideology of Post-revolutionary Iran shows that Heidar is seeking a significant achievement, which in turn emphasizes his masculinity. Men are trained in "assertion and aggression" (Levant 381); so, Heidar's enforcement of his will on Ashrafi by negating Ashrafi-assigned duties can be viewed as both assertion and aggression. For Levant, "man's willingness to set aside his own needs" ranks as positive masculinity (385). By Levant's standard, then, Heidar is once again confirmed as masculine because he is ready to sacrifice his job and his safety to protect the ideology in which he strongly believes. Like Bond, who defied his superior, Heidar could have been fired for disobeying Ashrafi. Insubordination is actually the two characters' reinforcement of masculinity.

6.3. Heidar and Bond: Heroes of Masculinity

The fact that Heidar continually questions himself shows that he has no "restrictive emotionality" (Levant et al. 329), which damages his masculinity. Cathexis is also present as Heidar attaches too much emotion to his decision-making moments, and thus his masculinity is in danger. Likewise, Bond still feels guilty for the events that led to Vesper's death. The fact that Blofeld tortures him and taunts him by bringing up Vesper's name indicates a comprehensive challenge to Bond's masculinity. Of course, Bond overcomes all challenges and manages to get away from Blofeld to dispel any doubts about his masculinity.

If Blofeld and Bond's relationship is examined, it can be concluded that power relations, production relations, and cathexis (Connell 73-75) are all at play. In the movie, Bond understands that his guardian after he became an orphan was Blofeld's father, which makes them adoptive brothers. Blofeld becomes enraged that his father favors Bond; he accordingly kills his own father and moreover makes it his mission to destroy Bond. As the struggle between Bond and Blofeld has taken

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years to come to a conclusion with Blofeld's defeat, Bond is shown to be the more powerful one in this struggle. Therefore, the balance of power relations confirms Bond as the ultimate masculine character when he has defeated a life-long enemy. Regarding production relations, it can be said that while Bond manages to complete his mission and arrest Blofeld, Blofeld loses everything he has built over the years. Bradford explains that readers "frequently associate the role of the heroic figure…with notions of maleness" (171); to put it otherwise, heroism goes hand in hand with masculinity. Bond's masculinity is completely left intact. Bond has suffered losses, but he can now find solace with Madeleine, whereas Blofeld is left with nothing. Cathexis indicates that Blofeld is the one with more emotional attachment since he has spent years trying to take revenge out of jealousy. Blofeld's overtly emotional reaction to his father, his lack of restrictive emotionality, cements Bond's masculinity; in this case, another man's actions lead to the metaphoric realization of Bond's masculinity. Unaware of Blofeld's true identity, Bond could not perceive such emotions in his adoptive brother, which indicates not only Bond's restrictive emotionality but also his power. This relation to Blofeld is just another way through which Bond's masculinity is confirmed.

7. Conclusion

Regarding women's effect on the movie narrative, in *Spectre*, although the portrayal of women is changed for the better compared to earlier Bond movies, women are silenced and they still have a relatively small part in the narrative. Bond does choose to leave his job behind and move forward with Madeleine; nevertheless, he will be pulled back into the world of espionage since Madeleine is weak and ineffectual. Madeleine's role as a bargaining chip and the portrayal of her vulnerability contribute to reaffirming Bond's masculinity. Bond is shown to be self-reliant, while Madeleine is not; accordingly, any challenge to Bond's masculinity ultimately becomes null and void. In *Bodyguard*, women have very little to do with the outcome of the plot. Their roles can be best described as complementary to male roles as women's importance is highlighted only in relation to the male protagonist, which further contributes to the glorification of masculinity. Furthermore, the passivity inherent in Heidar's wife, Razieh, provides the foil for his masculinity.

With regards to the setting, an important similarity is the ending scene of each movie. The bridge scene in *Spectre* and the tunnel scene in *Bodyguard* share many aspects in terms of their reaffirmation of masculinity. The Day of the Dead challenges Bond's masculinity by creating the impression that he might not be the once hyper-masculine hero, but the ending once again confirms his claim to masculinity by placing him in power and control. In a similar fashion, Heidar's masculinity is cemented in the tunnel scene as he manages to do his duty, all the while sacrificing his life, which highlights his heroic tendencies. Both movies use the setting to challenge masculinity in the beginning, yet they end up in a reaffirmation of masculinity.

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Bodyguard suggests that a hero should uphold the ideology and beliefs of the Islamic Revolution, i.e. the Sacred Defense. Standing firm with regards to one's beliefs, even in the face of personal harm (risky situations which are reminiscent of the heroic position), is also pivotal. Yet self-doubt is an important characteristic of both heroes. Bond displays a capacity for forgiveness, reserved only for the most heroic of characters. While Heidar's beliefs are mostly religious, Bond's beliefs are predominantly nationalist. Heidar embodies the heroic position; the fact that he acts with conviction when challenging a superior confirms his masculinity, which his superior has tried to silence. He refuses to be defined as anything other than what he believes in. The heroic position also reaffirms Bond's masculinity, as does the fact that he ultimately does not allow his emotions to interfere with his objectives. Even though there are common points between the two movies concerning the setting, heroic actions and the role of women, *Bodyguard* hardly feels like a carbon copy of the Bond franchise.

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