

JAMES BOND: CHARACTER EXPOSED

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## ABSTRACT

### JAMES BOND: CHARACTER EXPOSED

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The character of James Bond is a popular cultural phenomenon, surviving from the 1950s through the present. This spy's appeal has been examined by multiple critics, each exploring the malleability of 007. These critics identify how cultures and societies mold the character, but none have identified the central role of the ever-present, so-called Bond girl. The film that best illustrates the relationship between James Bond and Bond girls is *Goldfinger*, a film that arguably created the mold for the excessive masculinity portrayed by subsequent 007s. This unique type of machismo created in *Goldfinger* is identified through examinations of feminist scholars and Bond critics. This thesis examines the crucial role that Bond girls, particularly in *Goldfinger*, play in allowing James Bond to develop into the alpha male of each Bond film and, more importantly, the relentless hero that continues through the decades.

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## JAMES BOND: CHARACTER EXPOSED

### The Mystery and Malleability of Bond

As a spy, James Bond does not succeed in the typical fashion. Instead of being covert and unknown, his character is both recognizable and easily identified throughout multiple decades and cultures. Bond, James Bond, is a figure that has survived the Cold War, the feminist movement, flower children of the 60s and 70s, the big-banged 80s, and even 9/11. French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre is rumored to have been an extreme Bond fan, much to the dismay of the French (Lindner 226). Bond's appeal has been explored and dissected by not a few critics, each arguing how and why Bond has survived – and even flourished – through multiple shifts in power and culture. Christoph Lindner, Bond critic, notes that perhaps Bond has survived through various cultural changes because Bond reflects fantasies which have recently become our reality: 9/11 and the war on terrorism (Lindner 223). Lindner, in reflecting the resilience of the 007 films, mentions that “Bond is a highly unstable and often ambiguous cultural icon” (223). In surviving era to era, Bond has become not a character, but an idea that shifts with the times. While Lindner focuses on how the Bond films portray our fantasies about the rise and defeat of global terrorism, he also makes a related argument that this character neither firm, nor clearly defined. Instead of clear boundaries identifying Bond, this particular male body is “both a site and a source of cultural anxiety about power and control” (223). According to Lindner, as Imperial Britain lost her power, as women

gained equal rights, and as the USSR collapsed, the James Bond character allowed common cultural fears to be expressed and played out. James Bond himself did not develop as an individual character. Rather, he became a site where cultural misgivings could be seen and resolved for a studio audience. Bond films display societal fears in such a way that these fantastical terrors can be faced and vanquished.

Bond, in order to realize and conquer these fears, is molded by the characters he encounters throughout the films. Another 007 critic, Alexis Albion admittedly “attempts” to identify the character and appeal of this favorite spy in “Wanting to be James Bond.” Albion explores the fascination of Bond and, in doing so, how that character is popularly accepted all over the globe (fig.1). Bond appears in America and England naturally, as Bond is British and allied with America, but then he also surfaces in Russia, Korea, and Japan – countries that generally produce Bond’s nemeses. Albion, like Lindner, notes that the Bond persona, particularly of the sixties, was “something that moved easily between countries and cultures” (205). Not only is the Bond character accepted in multiple cultures, but he also “move[s] easily” between these countries. Albion reflects the ambiguity of the character, and how that uncertainty appeals to multiple audiences. Bond, for both Albion and Lindner, is more an idea than a distinct character, a chameleon that can reflect his surroundings to better appeal to the general public even as that public changes. The idea that the female characters - characters that are central to any Bond film – can create the boundaries for this character as the film progresses, then, is conceivable.

This idea of supplementary characters molding Bond has been addressed by critic Jaime Hovey. In making her own argument, Hovey specifies Lindner and Albion’s

assumptions that James Bond can be molded into nearly any form. Hovey ties Bond to feminism and, more specifically, lesbian culture. She argues that, in a world where gender is something that is performed and put on, James Bond is “butch” (45), describing the extreme gender his character constructs. Especially in *Goldfinger*, which was released in theaters shortly after the women’s movement, but was written well before (in 1959), the 007 films emphasize polarized gender roles. Hovey argues that “the most notable feature of Bond films has been the way they have mapped shifting gender roles in the wake of the women’s movement” (43). Appearing in 1964, *Goldfinger* is the epitome of gender opposition. Lindner and Albion have already marked how James Bond is a mold, a construct and not necessarily a character; Hovey here proves their point by emphasizing that the Bond films have shifted according to changes in gender relations and roles. Hovey details her argument more specifically:

A man’s man whose sadistic misogyny in the films of the early sixties mirrored the self-contained masculinity of the era, Bond became much more of a woman’s man in the more comic later films of the post-Vietnam seventies, where the ironic self-presentation of Roger Moore and – to a lesser degree – Timothy Dalton suggested deep cultural misgivings about the correlation of machismo with heroism. (43-44)

While discussing how the different portrayals of James Bond have reflected different ideas of the ideal man, Hovey reflects how the Bond mold changes according to gender relations, according to how masculinity was constructed in response to cultural changes and the feminist movement. As standards of constructed masculinity and heroism shifted, so did James Bond. Where Lindner and Albion assert the character of Bond is



not stable but instead is ambiguous, Hovey illustrates why the Bond character is so: he is keeping up with the gendered times.

In exploring the success of Bond, Craig N. Owens aligns Bond with vodka in his essay "The Bond Market." As vodka is a drink which takes on the qualities of its additives, it is the empty middle to which different tastes can be added - so Bond is both pure and transparent. Like Lindner and Albion, Owens grants that Bond is ambiguous, not a distinct character. In his own way, Owens' assessment of Bond as a mutable figure concurs with that of Lindner's, Albion's, and, to some degree, Hovey's evaluation. Like the shaken martinis he favors, Bond, in Owens's words, "garnishes" (107) cultures with a distinct flavor. Owens details that "Bond is not the collection of various characteristics; rather, he is the blank middle they fill in. He is an opening, a vacant, unclaimed potentiality, rather than an ontologically assignable identity" (111). Rather than being created by the traditions in which the film is produced, Bond as a type lacks a distinct character. Chameleonic, he accents nearly any society. Because Bond is so pliable, he is certainly shaped by the unforgettable female characters in each of the films.

Furthermore, his malleability allows Bond to be examined from a feminist viewpoint.

In their arguments, these critics have stopped just short of exploring how the blank character of James Bond is shaped specifically by the female characters around him. These female characters are crucial aspects of the films, although the characters themselves may not be particularly significant. I argue that James Bond is indeed a blank page, as Owens asserts, but he is not merely constructed by the contexts around him and the cultures that view him. He is specifically inscribed by the female characters, the Bond girls<sup>1</sup> with whom he interacts and must ultimately conquer in order to assume his

role as the alpha male. Hovey reflects on Bond's extreme masculinity, identifying his constructed gender as the opposite of femininity. These constructs for the Bond character require that he is formed into a certain type of dominant, extremely masculine character that will, before the final credits, be able to defeat the master villain.

How Bond and, by association, Bond girls are portrayed in the first 007 films must be defined in order to shape the template for the character of James Bond. The film that cemented the character of Bond – and future knock-off spy films duplicating Bond's sexuality and prowess – is *Goldfinger*. This specific film moves Bond beyond 1960s social masculinity that was changing to allow room for feminism. Perhaps acting as a backlash against the feminist movement, the Bond in *Goldfinger* increasingly constructs his masculinity as he encounters female characters. Compared to previous Bond films such as *Dr. No* where the Bond character requires assistance and sidekicks and is not excessively masculine, this Bond character consistently acts in excess, and that includes his gender. In overplaying his machismo, the Bond character is pushed to create an extreme male, performed to the point that he becomes a style, not a personality, in the film *Goldfinger*. Film historian, producer, and writer Lee Pfeiffer clarifies, "it was *Goldfinger* that established the template for not only the Bond films that followed, but also the scores of imitators that soon flooded the world's movie theaters and television screens" (33).<sup>2</sup> While *Goldfinger* is not the first Bond film, it is the film in which Bond receives his glamorous Aston Martin, openly scorns authority, unleashes his promiscuity, and, ultimately, attracted more viewers than any previous Bond film. Even the soundtrack outsold the Beatles for the number one record in 1965 (Pfeiffer 32). *Goldfinger*, then, remains the film that set the standard for years and scores of Bonds

(and quasi-Bonds) to come. This film established the mold for Bond, not merely giving the audience the ultimate spy, but also the ultimate construction of a stylized male.

The template for Bond is not a solitary model: he requires the assistance of those around him. Bond is sculpted by the characters he interacts with, most significantly the female characters he conquers on his path to defeat each arch villain. Many critics have noted how Bond is shaped by the villain he battles, but Bond's character must be molded before he can face that villain. According to Bond critic James Chapman, *Goldfinger* is a "master criminal" film (137), pitting Bond against a clever villain who has a scheme that Bond must not only decode, but also divert. In order to match wits with this villain, Bond must first conquer several, increasingly strong female characters. The film allows the comparison and development of Bond through challenges with the master criminal himself, but also through sub-challenges with Bond girls. These interactions allow Bond to develop an excess of masculinity, creating a particular constructed gender rather than a realistic one. Excepting his attraction to beautiful female companions, Bond works almost entirely alone, reflecting the work ethic of a master criminal. CIA agents offer assistance when he is imprisoned, but Bond's wit and humor lead them to believe he has the situation under his control. Furthermore, Bond's knowledge of bourbon, bombs, and science suggests he is not only a brut, loner, and shameless womanizer, but also a genius. This excessive character is shaped by the women he encounters, women that critics have seldom considered instrumental to the creation of Bond.

The interplay with the master criminal alone is not enough to push Bond to the spectacle that he has become. Ultimately, the female characters play a significant role in creating this phenomenon. Hovey notes the stylizing of gender in Bond in *Goldfinger*.

She focuses on Bond's interplay with the memorable character Pussy Galore to elucidate Bond's extreme, polarized masculinity. Hovey argues that "Bond's retro masculinity in the early Bond films is dated enough to call attention to itself as stylized rather than 'natural' or even contemporary gender" (45). Specifically in *Goldfinger*, Bond moves beyond the culture viewing the film to create an extreme masculine construct. He is classic "butch" (45). To fulfill his role, Bond is not merely a man – he overacts his own gender, which also contributes to the establishment of *Goldfinger* as the Bond template. Hovey argues that, because Bond is so extremely "butch," he is able to change the sexual desires of the lesbian Pussy Galore. I argue that, in order to succeed, Bond *must* change the sexual desires of Pussy Galore. This powerful, extremely stylized masculinity did not appear until this "master criminal" Bond film, *Goldfinger*. Because this film that established the character of Bond, I will explore how the female characters – specifically Jill Masterson, her sister (and lesbian) Tilly Masterson, and the strong Pussy Galore – are employed to shape Bond's character into the constructed, stylized gender that form this character for years to come. Each of these characters contributes to the continuation of the plot because of how they strengthen Bond's character. Jill, Tilly, and Pussy are the identifiable Bond girls in a film reflecting the feminist movement; hence their roles are especially significant, because they represent more memorable characters and encounters than in previous Bond films. This is a result of both a more excessive Bond and the stronger, more masculine Bond girl. In exploring the importance of these otherwise two-dimensional characters, I hope to show that Bond is not only malleable, as other critics have noted, but that Bond girls form the Bond persona which, ultimately, in each film, save the world from our worst fears.

Bond echoes the era and society in which he appears in the way he responds to the female characters and how he proceeds to conquer them. Indeed, one need only examine the female characters who themselves reflect the societal norms of gender relations. To illustrate how female characters construct Bond, first I will define the role that Bond must fulfill for the film to have a happy ending<sup>3</sup>. I will then use the first female characters Bond encounters to establish his weaknesses and how he fails to complete his role, which allows the master villain to exploit Bond's flaw. From this point, I will show how the Bond character's reactions and his awareness of his flaw become a means by which Bond strengthens his masculinity and proves his worth to the master villain. To do so, Bond must encounter and conquer increasingly masculine females. The character is unaware of the effect women have on his self-construction, but instead his appetite for beautiful women requires the construction of this excessive masculinity. Finally, only when Bond overcomes his ultimate challenge, Pussy Galore, is he able to defeat Goldfinger. Through these points, I will demonstrate the central significance of the female characters in the Bond film. Other critics have noted that Bond is flexible and moves easily between cultures and decades. I argue that the female characters, while they themselves are insignificant, mold Bond into the character that will be successful in each Bond film. Bond requires the female characters in the film, requiring them to shape his masculinity and particular constructed gender in the films. Bond is not more malleable than he first appears, but instead, female characters shape him in a way that is not initially detected.

### Defining a Character: Who (and What) is Bond?

The allure of Bond as a hyper-masculine character has drawn the attention of multiple critics, each of whom uses different terms to describe the same Bond. In exploring Bond in conjunction with lesbian culture, Hovey cannot help but note Bond's "masculinity," his "boyish indifference to sentimental feelings," his role as "a man's man," (even a "monolithic male,")<sup>4</sup> Through the use of these multiple terms, Hovey displays the significant role Bond's constructed masculinity plays in the films. Aaron Jaffe examines Bond as a brand, recognizing the spy's polarized gender and asserts that Bond is "the ultimate self-authorizing agent" (87). Jaffe asserts that Bond's popularity arises from viewers not wanting to meet him, but *be* him. In part, this desire arises from Bond's ability to act ultimately and entirely on his own. Even when his superior "M" orders Bond to stay away from "the girl," or revokes Bond's *License to Kill*, the spy acts entirely according to his own wishes. Specifically in *Goldfinger*, Bond achieved a massive audience, causing film historian and critic Lee Pfeiffer to label that Bond in particular "an enduring phenomenon" (33). Assumptions about Bond's extreme masculinity leave the reader to question who (and what) exactly James Bond is. Each of these critics has described different aspects that create 007, such as his extreme masculinity and his malleability. The combination and accumulation of these descriptions allow a more comprehensive view of Bond. These multiple descriptions help us understand what is meant by the term "alpha male" in reference to Bond films. All of these terms relate to Bond's stylized masculinity, and this act of stylizing his masculinity creates the alpha male.

However, before establishing how and why Bond is able to assert himself as an alpha male, and how that assertion depends on and is affected by the female characters in the film *Goldfinger* specifically, the umbrella term alpha male must be defined to identify the constructed, stylish character of Bond<sup>5</sup>. Feminist scholars such as Muriel Dimen and Bond critics such as Alexis Albion and Aaron Jaffe have not defined this specific term, but they have identified particularly masculine characteristics while defining the ultimate feminine roles. Scholars have identified the cultural masculine as independent and autonomous, charismatic, excessive, and an unnatural stereotype. For example, in each of their respective articles, Dimen, Albion, and Jaffe have asserted that masculinity and Bond is a stereotype, not a definite character, thus he embodies the cultural masculine. I will employ their descriptions of the excessively masculine and unnatural qualities of Bond, as well as the term “alpha male” to formulate a working definition of an alpha male for this essay. These traits will define the dominant male, which are particularly noticeable in *Goldfinger*, one of the earliest Bond films.

Bond, especially in the early 007 films, is an ultra-masculine character. As previously described, many terms, including “man’s man” and “butch,” but also “boyish” (Hovey) and “self-authorizing” (Jaffe) can be brought together under the term “alpha male.” The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* provides a broad definition for an “alpha male,” assigning the term to “a man tending to assume a dominant or domineering role [. . .] or thought to possess the qualities and confidence for leadership” (*OED* 1a). As the main character in the 007 films, Bond certainly assumes that position: he is the character the viewer is invited to identify with, and he overcomes whomever he chooses throughout the films. If a character presents himself as a challenge to Bond, though, that character

must also possess the qualities of an alpha male. Even women, such as the famous Pussy Galore, must master these masculine traits to contest Bond. For this reason, Bond must establish this position for himself before he can conquer any adversary. This definition reflects, in its broad terms, the more specific descriptions that feminist and Bond critics have referred to as “machismo.”

The definition of alpha male is not limited to the physical attributes of a man. It also assumes a host of affective qualities. The man must have complete control over his emotions and appetites, and not allow them to overrun him. No emotions are excused from this rule; the central quality of the alpha male is his control, and he cannot be controlled if his emotions rule him. Early in *Goldfinger*, Bond is not in control of his desires, and is sidetracked by the beautiful Jill Masterson. He does not meet the expected role of a stylized male with regard to his desires. However, as film critic Pfeiffer observes, *Goldfinger* marks the beginning of the lovable Bond puns and witticisms in dire situations, displaying the character’s coyness under pressure – emphasizing his control of fear and anxiety (33)<sup>6</sup>. Even in relations with Bond girls, 007 must learn to manage his emotions and play to the cultural ideal. Dimen explores these expected roles of men and women, and their displays (or lack thereof) of emotion. She discusses the division of emotional labor, asserting that the masculinized person in the relationship does not display emotion and is almost entirely autonomous. She identifies the expected male role as “individualizing” and explains it as “a mainstream cultural ideal. Connoting autonomy, agency, and singularity, the term also suggests the kind of adult who is responsible for himself and no one else. Only the masculine pronoun will do here, for, in our culture, this is the masculinized part of selfhood” (39). The “cultural ideal,” the



societal image of a man is one who works entirely for himself. This person is not a follower, but a man who is only entirely self-loyal, such as Bond, one who often ignores the orders of his superiors. The extreme individuality of this person is “the masculinized part” – the aspects that are associated with a stylistic, masculine ideal. An alpha male, then, is not only a leader, but an individual who controls his own emotions to such an extent that he will not allow others’ emotions to interfere with his individuality. Dimen goes on to explain that an excess of “individualizing” is not a positive aspect, but leads to “becom[ing] emotionally isolated” (40). Bond, as he distances himself from close relationships with women in favor of brief sexual encounters, displays this aspect of “individualizing.” He is removed emotionally, taking the death of a female counterpart as an assault on his ego, not a loss of human life. Dimen explicates that the perceived cultural ideal is not, in fact, ideal, but only severe isolation, such as Bond faces on screen, constantly working alone. The alpha male is entirely masculinized and individualized, both physically and emotionally. To succeed, Bond must control and limit his affective self.

The dominant male is further defined by a glut of control and irrepressible charisma. He has command over himself and over those around him. He is a fascinating character, exhibiting a magnetism which allows him to be a leader. Furthermore, his command feminizes the women around him, pushing the Bond girls to become more passive. Bond displays a stylized, performed masculinity. As Hovey asserts, the gender qualities “marked by excess, signifying something other than authenticity or the merely natural” (43). Bond is not an alpha male by accident; he steps into that role and performs the character according to his gender’s expectations. More generally, the role of alpha

male is not accomplished naturally, but claimed through control, perhaps manipulation, and even over-performance. In exploring the cultural epidemic of “Wanting to be James Bond,” Albion argues that Bond is a character that can be identified through multiple contexts because of particular ideals, such as “independence of action; professionalism; open, guiltless sexuality; a license to kill; a certain insolence toward authority; technological proficiency [. . .] a standard of behavior and morality that many saw as being distinctly modern, perfectly in tune with the times” (206). These traits, specifically “independence” and “insolence toward authority” reflect the individualism of an alpha male. He is a “monolithic male” (Hovey 42) that will not allow another character to control any aspect of his life. The unbounded sexuality is merely a reflection of Bond’s excessive autonomy. As Albion illustrates, an alpha male must also be knowledgeable of the standards which he shuns, and possess a certain intelligence. In order to show discourtesy to authority, Bond must be aware of what is courteous and what is insolent. This awareness of social norms does not stop with social interactions, though. His excess must include knowledge. In order to have an excess of control, the alpha male must be a certain type of male, possessing an excess of knowledge.

Masculinity itself is not enough to establish a person as an alpha male. A particular type of masculinity is required. Even on screen, Bond is not the average male: he dons designer suits, speaks eloquently, and drives only the newest, least accessible vehicles. Hovey recognizes the difference between male and alpha male when she remarks “Hat and suit signify male; gun and action signify kind of male – violent, reactive, graceful, and fascinating” (44). The hat and suit detailing the Bond silhouette in the opening credits of every film identify the character’s sense of class and style. His

three-piece-suit suggests he is white collar, and well educated. The male character is associated with a shining cufflink sense of wealth and upbringing from the moment he enters the opening credits. And then the silhouette turns, and the gun and action signify a type of male – in this particular case, the Bond character. Not only does he represent the social elite, but by wielding an illegal weapon, a man who shuns that society. His magnetism arises from the combination of gentlemanly presentation and mobster violence. While Bond is a type of male –a gentleman, possessing intellect and knowledge of society – he acts as an alpha male when he disregards the codes of that society and aims a pistol at the viewer.

His performance as a constructed male has arguably established Bond as a brand. From a cultural and economic viewpoint, Bond represents the struggle between the advertiser and the consumer, as Jaffe argued. In Bond films, the central spy's image and masculinity is entirely constructed, and the female characters play an integral role in this construction. From a Marxist view, this construction is identified by the consumer and the advertiser. According to Jaffe, Bond's independence and autonomy allow him to exist in the space between the advertiser, represented by the villains who desire world domination, and the consumer, the society that he protects while spurning its conventions. Bond brings together the advertising world - consumerism - and the consumer. He is at once an autonomous agent, and an employee of the British government. Jaffe illustrates how Bond is both needed because of his magnetism and scorn, and created through his independence, in the space between the consumer and the advertiser. Jaffe explains that "Bond represents the ultimate yes man, a charismatic, deterritorializing, and metaphorizing sanction of consumption [. . .] Bond the meta-brand

serves as the ultimate self-authorizing agent, with no fixed textual armature required” (87). Jaffe later clarifies that he intended “metaphorizing sanction of consumption” to signify a sense that brings together radically different things to overcome their differences. Bond is the point at which consumer independence and the needs of the advertiser are met: Bond is individualized, only working alone and for his own benefit but, conveniently, that which benefits him also benefits England. Hence, the dominant male’s autonomy is held in tension with his need to dominate while drawing someone in that he will control. His individuality is carefully balanced with his need to relate and be relatable to others.

In the sense that Bond needs to be both individualized and relatable, Jaffe’s argument can also explain Bond’s interactions with women. Metaphorically, Bond brings together the consumer and the advertiser, as Jaffe explains in his essay. The two things that Bond most frequently brings together on screen, though, are himself and a beautiful woman. He overcomes the differences between himself and the obligatory “Bond girl” to satisfy his lust and to establish his control and role as an alpha male. He requires this female individual to cement his place in the film. Bond’s relationships – if they can be called relationships – with women are a “sanction of consumption” (Jaffe 87). Bond continues working for his own benefit, and, in doing so, assumes the prerogative to use women. What he does not recognize is that he needs these women to become the brand: he cannot bring together the advertiser and consumer without one or the other. Filling this space between the consumer and the advertiser, and even his interactions with women, creates Bond as a brand. He is not simply masculine, but he is a brand of masculinity.

Women, then, play a significant role in establishing an alpha male, because this man must not only conquer women, but also move them to their feminized selves as a result of his conquest. Hovey specifies Bond's power, reminding the reader of Bond's "even brutal efficiency around women, most of whom found their 'true' femininity when they finally succumbed to his charms" (43). Bond's interactions with women, consequently, are just as essential to his filling the role of an alpha male as his defeat of the master villain. This point can be best illustrated in the film in which Bond does not dominate the female lead; rather, he is conquered. Indeed, in a Bond film released shortly after *Goldfinger*, *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, the female lead conquers Bond through marriage. Directly after the marriage scene, Bond fails in his mission, as the villain and his female counterpart murder Bond's new bride and ride off into the sunset. When Bond himself no longer manages his emotions and is no longer autonomous, he cannot defeat the alpha male with whom he battles. Instead, the villain proves himself alpha to Bond. *Goldfinger* allows the viewing audience to understand how Bond must relate to the female characters in order for the film to reach its inevitable alpha male conclusion.

#### The Female Character's Role in *Goldfinger*

From the opening credits of *Goldfinger*, the male viewer not only perceives the spy as a unique type of constructed masculine. The viewer also perceives that the female characters will be the backdrop for the film. From the outset, the viewer is both invited to identify with Bond, but also warned that he, paradoxically, is subordinate to the spy. Instead of allowing the viewer to remain unnoticed in his voyeuristic gaze, Bond quickly

turns to and fires at the viewer, acknowledging and extinguishing that gaze immediately (fig.2). In doing so, Bond asserts himself as dominant to the viewer from the opening scene forward. The viewer is allowed to be male, but not the alpha male. In this same series, shadows and silhouettes of female bodies appear in the background. According to feminist film critic Laura Mulvey, the male film viewer is invited to watch the female characters in the film and to identify with the masculine hero: "In-built patterns of pleasure and identification impose masculinity as 'point of view'" ("Afterthoughts" 122). What is more, the women that appear in the opening credits, appeal to the "pleasure" of a masculine viewer. Bond attacks the viewer, but the female bodies act as a canvas for the action. The camera's eye wanders over the gilded bodies, where different body parts portray different scenes of the film to follow.

In the opening credits, central characters appear as images projected onto the bodies of painted women, inviting the viewer to gaze on the women's bodies when searching for Bond and his nemesis. As canvasses, the women are objects, as they remain for the rest of the film, displaying and providing what Mulvey calls the "primordial wish for pleasurable looking" ("Visual" 749). These women are antithetical to the alpha male in every way: they are passive, gazed upon followers, bending according to the men that are projected onto them. These women set the tone for depictions of women in the remainder of the film – even if not initially passive – who become objects for either Bond or Goldfinger to manipulate and consume (fig. 3). The endless images of painted, naked women, satisfies the male viewers' "primordial wish." The idealized male viewer can gaze on the screen without threat of being seen. This voyeurism is what Mulvey defines as "scopophilia" (749). As the images flash on the

screen (and continue to invite the male eye,) numbers appear across the women's mouths, muting them and then transfixing them as lifeless statues. The women are increasingly objectified: they become numbered, unmoving, painted art objects, stripped of all humanity. Viewers are invited to see the women as only figures or statues, not humans. They show the "loss of mobility, loss of voice" (Bordo 16) that the Bond girls present throughout the film<sup>7</sup>. Bordo's notions are projected on the screen by these Bond girls, who lose first their mobility when they become painted images, and then their voices when numbers replace their mouths. Their objectification is inexplicably linked to Bond's stylized, autonomous, domineering character who becomes not only a brand, but a phenomenon. The 007 character is so extremely dominant that he strips the female characters of their agency, forcing a constructed feminization in response to his stylized masculinity.

I wish to explore the connection between the passive, objectified, extremely feminized women, and the active, dominant, individualized Bond by examining Bond's interactions with central female characters in *Goldfinger*. The role Bond must fulfill in one where he must be autonomous, controlled, knowledgeable, and possess each of these qualities in excess. Bond, I argue, must balance his need to be dominant with his dependence on those he dominates. In action, though, Bond does not begin the film with these qualities in control. In the next section, I will demonstrate that the first females encountered serve to reflect Bond's weakness. Jill Masterson begins molding Bond by revealing how Bond does not fit the role he must acquire in order to defeat Goldfinger. After I illustrate how Bond's weakness is revealed, I will use his encounter with Tilly Masterson to argue that the stronger Bond girl allows the spy to construct a stronger

masculinity. Finally, in the section on Pussy Galore, I will demonstrate how Galore's masculinized femininity allows Bond to strengthen his own masculinity. Through his encounters with each of these subsequent female characters, I will explore how Bond is ultimately able to defeat the master villain.

### Jill Masterson: Exposing Bond's Weakness

While their roles may be shallow, the central female characters in *Goldfinger* do not enter the film as objectifications. Each of the three major Bond girls – Jill and Tilly Masterson and Pussy Galore - have voices and the power to act on their own, each moreso than the last. They never fully evolve as realized characters, however, for Bond's development, not their own, is central. Instead, these female characters function to highlight Bond's weakness and create obstacles which allow the spy to construct a stronger masculinity. These characters each serve as vehicles for Bond's growth in skill, masculine construction, and self-reflection rather than their own development. Before Bond can defeat the villains Goldfinger and Oddjob, he must hone these masculine skills. He must learn how to combine his talents while ridding himself of his penchant for beautiful women. As the film unfolds, Bond meets and is challenged by multiple female characters, each possessing more masculine characteristics than the last, such as autonomy, agency, and control. As Bond overcomes the mounting masculinity in each of these female challenges by further constructing his own masculinity, he draws closer to his final showdown with Goldfinger and Oddjob. More specifically, after Bond has established his supremacy to the male viewer, he must establish his supremacy over Auric Goldfinger, described by Pfeiffer as “a corpulent, extreme intelligent man” (36),



and his sidekick, Oddjob, “a skilled murderer, [. . .] almost invulnerable in hand-to-hand combat” (Pfeiffer and Worrall 37). In order to accomplish this goal, he must exercise and combine his intelligence, his wit, and his physical strength. Bond’s hyper-masculinity is perfected through his interactions with certain, key female characters, leaving these female characters in paradoxical roles that are both significant and necessary, but nevertheless two-dimensional.

When Bond exits the credits and enters the film – unobserved by the guards shown at the entrance to the film, and only visually present to the viewer – he enters a club to attend to some “unfinished business.” The business he refers to is a dancer. She presents very little challenge to Bond, and is almost entirely inconsequential – she has no name or reference in any other point in the film. In Fleming’s novel, she is called Bonita, but this is more of a reference to her appearance – her name being Spanish for beautiful – than a name. She establishes Bond’s dominance to other males on the screen at that point, and highlights his weakness. Bond is the prime agent, the central character in this spy film, hence he is the only agent and he is the only figure capable of action. Clothes in a bikini and hula skirt, the dancer is immediately identifiable as a sexual object in a room (and theater) full of men. This dancer fulfills what Mulvey describes when she comments, “Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium” (“Visual” 751). The first woman to appear in *Goldfinger* fulfills her role as an erotic object when she is dancing before the club filled with men and a theatre of onlookers.

Bonita does have one strength, though: she exposes Bond's flaw. Bond reveals his weakness when he defends his constant wearing of a gun, declaring "I have a slight inferiority complex." The film is only just beginning, Bond is still developing his power and agency, and he already betrays his "inferiority." Even Bond's confidence is questioned when Lindner explores the world of James Bond and its implications on modern society. Lindner makes note of links between crime and human agency, and sex and violence. In reference to Bond's attachment to his pistol, Lindner emphasizes that "Bond's identity and success as a killer are inextricably linked to his gun" (234). With his pistol at his hip, Bond is a spy, a killer, and a dominant male. Without his gun, Bond might just be average, or even "inferior," as he fears. He wears it, then, to bolster his confidence and protect himself from vulnerability, but that gun also provides a reminder of Bond's constant weakness. The gun itself is paradoxical, in that it signifies 007 as powerful while also drawing attention to the spy's weakness. Bond is most vulnerable when he is distracted, and beautiful women are a distraction. In this scene, Bond insists on wearing his revolver to strengthen his indiscriminant sex drive.

Knowing Bond's weakness, the dancer attempts to seduce him while conspiring against him, but Bond refuses to be separated from his pistol. This proves fortunate for the favored spy, and unfortunate for the dancer when Bond sees the betrayal in her eyes – very literally. He throws the dancer aside, and shoots the hidden henchman while uttering "Shocking. Positively shocking." What is actually shocking is the fact that Bond allowed himself to be drawn completely into a trap because of his appetite for beautiful women. However, Bond diverts the attack by looking at the reflection in the woman's eyes instead of succumbing to his desire and her advances. He displays the

ability to individualize himself and control his appetite, but he cannot separate himself from that hunger. His gun becomes the armor needed to cement his identity. He distances himself from the woman that caused this danger, but not before engaging its temptations. Bond asserts his supremacy by not submitting to the expected male gaze; he perceives the henchman in the dancer's eyes, and kills him before the henchman is aware he is the object of Bond's own gaze. Once Bond is aware of the conspiracy, the dancer's short-lived agency is easily extinguished. Bond, with the weight of his pistol on his hip reminding him of his vulnerability, is able to connect this dancer's seduction to betrayal. When he throws her aside, she receives a blow that was meant for him, not only rebuking her power, but also using it against her. Hence, Bond easily reduces her to a cowering figure, naked and quivering on the floor. She had her chance to overcome Bond, but she was forced into a position on the floor, lower than and submissive to Bond, unable to meet his gaze. She is left alive but powerless when Bond exits the scene. Bond, then, enjoys a brief victory, but remains unaware of the degree to which his weakness for women makes him a danger to himself.

Jill Masterson enters the film as the initial female who will reveal Bond's weakness, to both himself and his nemesis. When Bond is opposed by not just another male, but an alpha male – Goldfinger – he also encounters a female that will challenge him, strip him of his weapon, and entirely expose his weaknesses. Masterson is first shown sunbathing in a black swimsuit with her blonde hair perfectly curled, her lips red and her eyes blue (fig.4). She is both the subject and object of the gaze: she uses binoculars to spy on Goldfinger's opponent in cards and helps Goldfinger cheat. At the same time, she is viewed by Bond and the cinema audience. The fact that she exacts

control over others through her gaze suggests her independence and, therefore, also her threat to Bond. However, when she informs Bond that she is paid “to be seen with him [Goldfinger] just seen,” Jill illustrates that she has succumbed to the role of object, not self-authorizing agent. Her agency is reduced when she agrees to be Goldfinger’s object, which allows Goldfinger to use her power to his advantage. Moreover, she loses any command she had gained when she is trapped by Bond’s gaze. Again an object, she is paid “to be seen [. . .] just seen.” The statement “just seen” suggests Goldfinger and Jill Masterson are only that – a couple keeping up appearances, not sexual partners – but this also calls into question whether or not Jill acts of her own volition. Ultimately, she is only an object to be claimed by either Bond or Goldfinger. She may assert agency and chose who will objectify her, but, in the end, she is still an object that cannot escape the masculine eye. Feminist critic Bordo describes the backlash suffered by women who attempt to act and ward off the male gaze:

In our own era, it is difficult to avoid the recognition that the contemporary preoccupation with appearance, which still affects women far more powerfully than men, even in our narcissistic and visually oriented culture, may function as a ‘backlash’ phenomenon, reasserting existing gender configurations *against* any attempts to shift or transform power-relations. (14)

Even though Jill enters the film with a gaze used to aid Goldfinger’s power, a gaze that reveals she holds a power of which others take advantage, she cannot avoid what Bordo terms the societal “preoccupation with appearance.” She is stylishly attired and perfectly made-up, inviting the male eye. Two men are subjected to Jill’s gaze, but Jill Masterson

is overpowered by two alpha males because of the importance placed on patriarchal, visual pleasure. Jill does assert some power when she initially resists Bond and questions who he is, but is stripped not only of her power, but also of her agency when she accepts she is an object, “just seen.” Masterson, capable of perception and deception when she enters the film, is treated as only an object, by her own consent. Because these two assertive male figures view her as only a trophy for the most domineering male to control, she cannot shift the power structure – she cannot change the perception of herself. Instead, Jill may only relinquish her agency. The “visually oriented culture” pulls Jill back from her possible independence by forcing her to become an object only (Bordo 14). At this moment in the film, Jill verbally agrees to forsake her gaze that was used for Goldfinger’s advantage and becomes the object of Bond’s lustful eye. Bond is able to demonstrate his dominance, and he identifies himself in his memorable fashion: “Bond. James Bond.” Bond takes over the scene, only allowing Jill to react to him, and even asserting some control over Goldfinger through doing so.

Though Jill cannot act of her own accord, she can inadvertently reveal Bond’s weakness to Goldfinger. The two men battling for the title of alpha male alternately control her, using her as a pawn to exhibit his own dominance. When Jill begins to act or tease Bond, she is shoved aside, emphasizing both Bond’s perception of Jill as an object and, consequently, Jill’s inability to gain agency. Goldfinger reasserts his own dominance through complete objectification of Jill: he suffocates her by painting her gold. In this one act, Goldfinger punishes Jill for betraying him, and he reclaims her body as his own. She is painted gold in Goldfinger’s image. She loses both her humanity and her ability to choose which machismo will claim her. Jill willingly chooses

Bond over Goldfinger, but Goldfinger cannot allow Bond to beat him, in any aspect, so he removes Jill entirely. Unlike the nameless dancer in the earlier scene, Jill is not even permitted a quiver. She is stripped of her humanity instead of permitting her the agency to decide which alpha male will utilize her power, though she never used her power for herself.

Jill Masterson not only emphasizes the escalating struggle for power between Bond and Goldfinger, but also Bond's lack of control. In being distracted by a woman, in allowing his gaze to rest, Bond hands Goldfinger the opportunity to reassert himself. Bond is overruled by a less emotional man – Goldfinger's henchman Oddjob - and Jill is painted gold. The image of her gilded corpse, the film's "most enduring image" (Pfeiffer and Worrall 36), traps this woman in the unyielding role as object (fig. 5). Jill is the first test of wits, control, and ultimately dominance, and Goldfinger wins because he claims her body entirely when Bond was only able to manipulate Jill's agency. Goldfinger's ability to control Jill completely – not necessarily Jill's death itself – marks his success. This battle of dominance and control will resurface throughout the film, with Goldfinger repeatedly killing the women Bond partially controls until the men reach a climax with Ms. Pussy Galore. At this point early in the film, Goldfinger shows his dominance over Bond because Bond has failed to assert excessive control over Jill or his appetite, as is required of the alpha male. Goldfinger, on the other hand, waits patiently until Bond is off guard to attack. After Bond illustrates his strength and dominance to the viewer in the opening credits and with the nameless dancer, this character also displays his shortcoming, or weakness, first with his refusal to remove his weapon, and then through

Jill Masterson. His weakness is exposed entirely as Goldfinger asserts himself when the alpha male.

After Jill's death, Bond must reestablish himself. He must illustrate his masculinity through a suppression and control of emotion, an undistracted purpose, knowledge, and cleverness. While Bond has acknowledged his shortcomings, he needs to work to conquer them and establish his individuality and autonomy. The fact that this 007 must regain control over himself displays the masculine requirements of a Bond character, and exactly how inconsequential the female characters are to allow Bond to flourish. Immediately after her death, Bond does not grieve for Jill, but flatly announces to Felix, a fellow spy that "The girl is dead." Jill has not only been stripped of her agency, but also of her name. The figure is reduced, like the dancer, to a prop for the narrative, only significant in what she reveals about Bond.

Bond's vulnerability is further emphasized when his superior "M" scolds him for putting himself in danger by seducing Jill. "M" focuses on Bond's strength as a man when he reprimands his charge, reminding the spy of his "assignment" to assess Goldfinger, and the masculine requirements to be "cold" and "objective." "M" ends his rampage by objectifying Jill once more, reaffirming that Jill was nothing more than a frivolous distraction. When "M's" reprimands emphasize the spy's actions with Jill, Bond's masculinity and emotional side are linked for the viewer. This illustrates the need for an culturally ideal man, an alpha male to be independent and in control of his emotions, such as "M" displays. The only emotions "M" exhibits are anger and frustration. As Bond's superior, "M" represents the alpha male lacking the scorn for authority: he is merely a figure, identified only by the letter "M," not coincidentally the

first letter in masculine and machismo. “M” is reduced to a type, just as the nameless Bond women have been. Hence, the irony is multiplied by Bond himself moving towards this type. This mold represents not a distinct character, but an extreme constructed gender that has no name, but only an identifier: “M”. While Bond’s insolence makes him more entertaining than “M,” Bond’s failure to remain objective and cold reflect his inability to remain supremely masculine. Indeed, he was tending to Jill when he was assaulted by Oddjob. Had Bond been focused on his assignment, he would not have been distracted by the female at all. Mulvey, in discussing the relationship between gender and plot development, states “Hence the split between spectacle and narrative supports the man’s role as the active one forwarding the story, making things happen” (Mulvey “Visual” 751). Jill is the “spectacle,” but she is also disposable; Bond must make “things happen.” Bond’s weakness causes him to lose his first battle with Goldfinger. When “M” identifies this weakness, even Bond cannot help but admit “I am aware of my shortcomings.”

“M”s reprimand of Bond’s weakness is not enough to allow the spy to regain dominance and control in the film. Once his shortcoming has been exposed, Bond must regain his strength through interactions with multiple female characters, each showing more strength and culturally masculine characteristics than the last. At this point in the film, Money Penny, a female character that will appear through years of Bond films, initiates a flirtation with Bond, appealing to his masculinity. Money Penny is a character with more agency than either the nameless dancer or the ill-fated Jill Masterson, and she threatens to pull out Bond’s unending lust once again. She is a stronger seductress than either of the previous female characters because she allows herself to be the subject of a



fantasy when she tempts Bond, but she does not submit willingly to objectification. On occasion, she even makes Bond the subject of her fantasy. She hints at a desire to marry Bond and offers to cook for him, both actions rather than objectifications. Such domestic charms appeal to Bond, but he refuses because of “business.” He returns her flirtations, initially caving to his sexual appetite, but when pushed, he objectifies Moneypenny by blatantly making her the object of his gaze: Bond adjusts his position to give himself a better view of her backside. Moneypenny represents the initial threat to Bond’s machismo after he has been exposed – her attentions suggest a desire to tether Bond. She is less of a masculine challenge and more of a symbol of domestication that Bond must individualize himself from. Moneypenny is limited, though, because she is a character that cannot move outside of her feminine place. Moneypenny’s limitations are reflected in Mulvey’s description of woman’s role:

Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning. (“Visual” 747)

Mulvey speaks in general terms, referring to a woman’s place in society, but Moneypenny does represent an unembellished interpretation of this argument. Moneypenny is restricted literally to her place in the office – she is a workplace fixture who cannot tempt Bond outside of her feminine role of a secretary desiring marriage. As much as Moneypenny pursues a flirtation with Bond, she is held to the “other” in the office. Fantasy and flirtation in the office do not move beyond the office door.

Money Penny only appears in this one scene in *Goldfinger*, but even in this brief encounter, “M,” not observing, but sensing Bond’s weakness, must remind Bond to be “cold.”

Money Penny’s illustrates Bond’s progress in a controlled setting, and she holds no further significance in the film. In an essay published later, Mulvey asserted the female’s role of waiting, describing “In fact, all too often, the erotic function of the woman is represented by the passive, the waiting [. . .] acting above all as a formal closure to the narrative structure” (“Afterthoughts” 125). Indeed, Money Penny patiently waits when “M” interrupts the flirtation to remind Bond of their discussion. Money Penny’s role as the subject of Bond’s fantasy displayed through his quick tongue and sexual suggestiveness is replayed again in later films. While Money Penny’s appearance in *Goldfinger* is brief, it functions to display the racy flirtation between the secretary and the spy, Money Penny’s restriction to the office, and Bond’s control in order to move forward in the film. Bond exercises the lessons “M” has recently clarified through this interaction with Money Penny. In this opportunity, Money Penny has been objectified through Bond’s gaze, and then remains in the office to allow the narrative to continue without the “formal closure” that Mulvey describes. Instead, the flirtation between the two serves as an ongoing trope in subsequent Bond films.

Arguably, Bond requires time to rebuild his alpha male status. In subsequent scenes, he has dinner with “M” and a distinguished representative of the Bank of England, and flaunts his wide range of knowledge, the result of which is that he is allowed the *Goldfinger* case again. In this scene with other dominant male characters, Bond at first “looks out of his element” (Pfeiffer and Worrall 39), but as he presents his

wit and intelligence, the character establishes his role. Such scenes permit the famous 007 to form a connection with his male superiors, illustrating a re-energizing of masculine force. As a dominant man should, Bond has a strained relationship with his superior, "M," evident by his demeanor and expressions in previous scenes with "M". Interestingly, though, Bond does not seek revenge through insolence or disregard. He instead seeks revenge through a display of knowledge. Bond may be weak in his self control around women, but his control of a wide range of knowledge is self-assured. Pfeiffer explains that "Bond exacts a small measure of revenge against 'M' during the course of the meal by showing off his superior knowledge of brandy" (38). During the meal, Bond is at first quiet, even uncomfortable, but he slowly reveals his intellectual acumen, displaying his dominant characteristics that allow him to regain the Goldfinger case. Intellectual contest becomes crucial to Bond's role as an alpha male at this point because it allows him to regain his former position of authority, and even confidence in his own abilities. Looking forward, then, the women who will most challenge Bond should be capable of matching wits with both Bond and Goldfinger. As this character is still perfecting a stylized, constructed masculinity, Bond is not yet prepared to face the most masculine female character. He is, however, permitted to match his masculinity with Goldfinger's yet again, on a golf course: a place commonly perceived as male domain. He wins the battle of wits at this point – particularly with no female distractions. When Bond proves himself as Goldfinger's intellectual superior, even his adversary is forced to admit that Bond is, indeed, "clever and resourceful." Bond seizes the opportunity to reestablish himself as a challenge to the domineering master criminal,

notably by defeating Goldfinger in a battle of knowledge and wits. Only then does a reminder of his a temptation reappear to emphasize Bond's continued weakness.

The form of this temptation is not a living woman, but a statue in female form outside of the golf clubhouse (fig. 6). The nude, female statue is beheaded by Oddjob (present as Goldfinger's caddy) as a warning to Bond, reflecting a progression from the quivering dancer, to the gilded Jill Masterson, to a completely dehumanized statue. With this act, Goldfinger conveys their awareness of Bond's weakness. The master villain and his henchman use their knowledge to threaten Bond. Not coincidentally, then, a woman again gives Goldfinger the advantage over Bond. This beheaded statue literally and symbolically alerts Bond that his weakness is apparent. Furthermore, the first woman in three scenes is completely an object; she has no opportunity at agency and she does not threaten any of the male characters. She is placed in the scene to let each of these dominant males know where they stand in relation to each other. Like the gilded Jill Masterson, this female's role is purely to be gazed upon and controlled, even cut away, by the men battling to become the alpha male.

The frightening realization is that the women in these scenes progressively lose their humanity as the men battle. The statue was never human, unlike Jill who was human before she was turned into a piece of art. The dancer, Jill, and this statue are essential insofar as either Bond or Goldfinger and Oddjob need to exert control over them as objects, to display their dominance. These women, or images of women act only in relation to masculine control. The statue's face – her one chance of individuality – is quickly taken away from her when Oddjob decapitates her (fig. 7). The statue's beheading echoes the myth of Medusa, a female whose gaze was so powerful that,

ultimately, she had to be destroyed by Perseus. Following the Greek myth, powerful women must be slain before they are able to gain autonomy and upset the battle for alpha male. Furthermore, a woman with power is so dangerous that she can only be destroyed by an alpha male. This statue does not have Medusa's powerful gaze, but a beautiful woman's gaze is capable of paralyzing Bond, distracting him from his mission.

Ultimately, this beheading is meant to warn Bond that Goldfinger knows of his Achilles heel – women – and how to use that weakness against him. Oddjob, by beheading a statue, not only objectifies women, but also forces Bond to face his weakness.

The lesson of Jill Masterson continues to haunt the favored spy later when Jill's sister surfaces. Jill Masterson, unlike the dancer in the first scene, forced Bond to face his own vulnerability – he was knocked unconscious and very much at risk when Jill was killed. While Jill was being gilded, Bond lost his agency; his gaze was temporarily cut off, putting him in jeopardy. He escaped that scene, but was forced to recognize Goldfinger's superiority through Jill's death. The decapitated statue reflected Jill Masterson in its objectification, and reminded Bond of his vulnerability but, instead of allowing Goldfinger to dominate the film, 007 regains his own power through his excessive knowledge and clever wit. He recognizes his weakness, but still must overcome it. At this point in the film, the female characters are still objectified and two dimensional, but they are essential to the growth and change in the character of Bond. Bond is shaped by the female characters he encounters. His suspicions are confirmed in his encounter with the dancer, reminding Bond of his vulnerability when he is distracted. Jill Masterson paid the ultimate price, and left Bond both vulnerable – Oddjob used the opportunity to knock Bond unconscious – and his talents being questioned. Jill gave this

spy an opportunity to reassess his weakness and, as in the scene with Money Penny, reassert his control. His interactions with these female characters allow the spy's role to develop accordingly. After Jill Masterson, Bond is more determined to overcome Goldfinger as the alpha male. Because of this determination, Bond exercises more control over his emotions, and he exerts more dominance over the other characters, evident by the dinner scene with his superiors and by his continuing banter with Goldfinger.

Bond's greatest fear is the loss of his domineering masculinity. Jill illuminates that fear when her feminine wiles leave Bond defenseless against Oddjob. Furthermore, the female that attempts to move past her position in relationship to man is viewed as assertive and dangerous, as seen later in Tilly Masterson and especially in Pussy Galore. The character of Jill Masterson, especially after her death, only exists in relation to Bond's fear and shortcoming. She represents Bond's lapse in masculinity. If Bond's shortcomings overcome him, he will not achieve the supreme masculinity needed to defeat Goldfinger and become the alpha male. Jill Masterson can only hold a meaning in relation to what she is not - a male. Once Bond's weakness and the threat he faces with the weakness has been established, Jill's "meaning in the process is at an end" (Mulvey "Visual" 746). Hence, the character of Jill dies early in the film, but her function as a signifier of Bond's weakness, similar to the statue Oddjob beheads, resonates throughout the film.

### Tilly Masterson: A Stronger Female, a Stronger Bond

Unlike her sister, Tilly Masterson not only reminds Bond of the weakness revealed by her sister, but also challenges him as she portrays stronger, more masculine characteristics. In Fleming's novel *Goldfinger*, Tilly is a lesbian, but in the film she vacillates between hetero- and homosexual tendencies, initially unresponsive to Bond's charms, and prompts a more polarized masculinity from the spy (fig. 8). Bordo describes the masculine characteristics that women who wish to interact, perhaps challenge, and not simply be objectified by men need, emphasizing "self-control, determination, cool, emotional discipline, [and] mastery" (19). Tilly possesses each of these traits initially, but she becomes more feminine as she responds to Bond's extreme masculinity. Her self-control and emotional discipline reflect Bond's earlier lack of control. Whereas Bond was easily distracted by Tilly's beautiful sister while on his mission, Tilly barely glances at or speaks to Bond when they encounter. Her determination to seek revenge for her sister's death and her initial cool demeanor challenge Bond's own masculinity; she is both Bond's weakness and a strong woman. Through Tilly, Bond is given a chance to revisit his weakness and fear, and conquer it.

Tilly immediately tests Bond, as she passes him on the road, forcing him to repeat the word "discipline" to himself: a trait that Tilly, at this point, exhibits more than Bond. She is so focused on Goldfinger and her mission that she ignores the charismatic spy as she jets by his Aston Martin (fig. 9). She attempts to shoot Goldfinger, assuming the role of sniper. The fact that Tilly takes on Bond's nemesis introduces her as a stronger female than either her sister or Money Penny. Also, Tilly is not only the first woman in the film to use a gun, but she wields a larger weapon than Bond (she uses a shotgun), a weapon

linked inextricably with his identity. Tilly's use of a larger version of the weapon Bond earlier refused to remove because of his "inferiority complex" reflects Tilly's own lack of "mastery" because she needs a larger weapon to make up for her own lack and to make herself more powerful. If Bond's pistol bolsters his confidence, Tilly's shotgun displays her larger insecurity, and her own misperceptions of her own power versus that of either Goldfinger or Bond. Bond, in order to overcome Tilly's lack of perception, must react by changing his own behavior and becoming a more domineering male. Tilly's initial inability to recognize Bond's superior masculinity makes her the balance between Jill Masterson and the stronger, more masculine and more perceptive Pussy Galore. Hovey explains that Tilly "is incapable of shrewd discernment of phallic size, consistently rejecting Bond's attentions and offers of help" (51). Tilly's rejections of Bond are the result of her lack of recognition of Bond's supreme masculinity, which also suggests Bond's stylish masculinity is still progressing. Because Tilly does not recognize Bond as more masculine than herself, she forces Bond to hone his gendered qualities. To dominate Tilly Masterson, Bond establishes his agency by running her car off the road. Subsequently, he catches her in a lie to present himself as more knowledgeable and intelligent, yet still she resists him. Unlike Jill Masterson, in their first encounter, Bond has not entirely established himself because he cannot persuade Tilly to succumb to him; he cannot convince Tilly of his more dominant masculinity. His attraction to women is as strong as ever, yet to prove himself independent and dominant, Bond must do more than control his weakness. He must assert agency over Tilly while holding himself emotionally remote.



After Tilly spurns his advances, Bond “objectively,” as “M” would insist, concentrates on his mission and seeks information about Goldfinger. He aspires to become the alpha male, in part because he has been rejected by a more masculinized female character. Her rejection pushed him back to his mission and a cold focus on the opposing male in the film. As Bond moves forward, Tilly reenters the film, again armed with a shotgun. She immediately attracts Bond’s attentions. As Hovey explains, “Bond’s masculinity responds not only to the challenge of their [Tilly’s and Pussy’s] mannishness, but also to that mannishness itself” (43). As Tilly reenters and takes aim on Goldfinger, Bond sees an opportunity to assert his re-strengthened masculinity. His constructed, more stylized gender finally overcomes Tilly, at which point she displays her emotion, crying “I want him [Goldfinger] dead. He killed my sister.” Tilly allows her emotions to distract her mission for revenge when confronted with the more masculine Bond. Bond’s stronger masculinity evokes the feminine qualities in Tilly – her emotion and, assuming femininity is opposite masculinity, her lack of control from this point forward. Bond, however, does not respond with sympathy or any emotion. He is objective, remote, and “cold,” noting only that “You’re a lousy shot.” His dominant demeanor asserts his newfound control and agency – but he only accentuates his dominance after Tilly fails to hit her mark. When Tilly’s emotions take over, causing her to lose her masculine-like control, Bond is allowed a chance to assert himself.

James Bond is still transitioning to a stronger masculinity. At this point, he is aware of his weakness, but is still uncertain of his own particularly constructed masculinity. Bond’s not entirely stylized masculinity reflects Lindner’s argument that “the superspy’s relationship with his sexuality is not nearly so confident or comfortable

as we might think” (223). Tilly previously rejected the lustful 007, bruising his ego and forcing him to assert a more emotionally controlled masculinity. Bond does not reassert himself until his success is assured through Tilly’s emotional weakness, revealing his continuing construction of his masculinity. Once Bond is comfortable that Tilly will no longer shun his manliness, he orders her to run, duck, jump, and hide while he “takes care of” the guards that are chasing them. In obeying, Tilly succumbs to Bond’s masculinity and gives up her agency. She reflects what Bordo describes as the construction of femininity, and “the appropriate surface presentation of self” (17). In response to this more masculinized Bond, Tilly has no choice but to present her feminine self. She obeys Bond’s orders and surrenders her mission for revenge to Bond’s superior skills. During this chase, Bond displays his dominant masculinity and new-found as he stares straight ahead and into the face of danger: Goldfinger’s men. Tilly, at this point, looks up at Bond, ducking, and checking behind her, showing fear and losing her earlier cool. Bond does not allow his “shortcomings” to overcome him at this point, and Tilly simply becomes another two-dimensional female cowering next to the spy.

Still, in comparison to Goldfinger, Bond’s masculinity is not entirely domineering or excessive; he cannot exert enough control to save Tilly. Bond’s growth is not complete – he is overpowered by Goldfinger and Oddjob when they again kill his female companion. When Bond orders Tilly to run, Oddjob is waiting for his moment to match strength with Bond. Bond’s lack of control, namely over his emotions, revealed by his concern about Tilly rather than his focus on his mission, is again illustrated as he watches Tilly run, and die at the hand of Oddjob. When his gaze is focused on Tilly’s body, he is no longer asserting his masculinity and agency. He is overcome by emotion and

Goldfinger's men capture him. Tilly's death and Bond's capture both emphasize Tilly's restricted role of shaping Bond. Bond is ultimately caught off guard by Jill Masterson's sister. She is inevitably killed as the war for top dog rages on, causing Bond to question himself. Bond's character is one deeply defined by his sexuality, and the challenge Tilly presented to that sexuality causes Bond to reexamine his constructed masculinity.

Through Tilly, his sexuality insecurity –the inability to control his sexuality and lust for beautiful women – is again exposed.

Bond is stronger in his masculinity and control at this juncture, but his increased strength and the increased threat to Goldfinger draws greater consequences when he exposes his weakness. Bond uses his wit to escape Goldfinger's goons, but an old woman wielding a shotgun forces Bond's recapture. This woman and her weapon are a distorted image of Tilly and her own weapon. This misshapen reflection underscores Bond's easy distraction by beautiful women as the reason for Bond's exposure. The shotgun, held by an elder, unattractive woman emphasizes both Bond's resurfacing "inferiority" and his continued need to secure his identity through connection with his pistol. His shortcomings are further emphasized when his recapture because a matronly woman leads to his near castration on the part of Goldfinger. Goldfinger is again forced to recognize that Bond is a "nuisance," and very much a threat to his plan and dominance. Intimidated by Bond's strengthened masculinity, Goldfinger directly threatens castration (fig. 10). The connection between the old woman and the resulting castration scene reflects Bond's need to remember the menace to his dominant masculinity when he is faced with his insecurity. Once more, Bond must prove his masculinity to Goldfinger. At this point in the film, the battle for alpha male is fiercer, the stakes to prove himself

are higher. Bond must either reassert his masculinity or lose his manhood. Only by displaying his knowledge of Goldfinger's plan, and through clever trickery is Bond able to extricate himself from Goldfinger's "new toy," a lethal laser. While these scenes do show significant growth in the character of Bond, they also reveal that he has not fully eradicated his weakness. Bond is captured by Goldfinger's men when he is distracted by Tilly's fall. His dominant male features of knowledge, cunning, and control allow him to escape the most severe consequences of his capture, but he remains imprisoned by his nemesis.

As the film nears its climax, Bond is now distinctly aware of the traits he must fine-tune in order to dominate his enemy and thwart Goldfinger's plan. In an opening scene, Bond's uncontrollable lust allowed a dancer to lure him into a trap. Bond fortunately acknowledged his shortcoming and kept his pistol handy. His weapon permitted Bond to maintain his stylized masculine identity and escape the scene unharmed. Another beauty, Jill Masterson further revealed Bond's weakness when Goldfinger killed her to assert his superiority. The immediate consequence for Bond was a reassessment of his skills. Tilly Masterson proved harder to seduce, forcing Bond to practice a controlled, emotionless masculinity rather than allow his impulsive lust to control him. However, Bond has not completed his journey to a dominant alpha male. He is again open to attack by Oddjob through a woman. A perversion of Bond's lust – an old woman with a shotgun – causes Bond's capture. This stronger Bond also faces a greater consequence when he is threatened with physical castration. To this point, the dancer, Jill, Money Penny to a slight degree, and Tilly Masterson have served as tests for

Bond, each exposing his weakness and requiring him to prove his worth and reassess an extreme individualized, constructed masculinity after each encounter.

### Pussy Galore: Bond's Greatest Challenge, and the Key to His Success

Pussy Galore is arguably the title female in this film. While Jill Masterson's gilded body occupies the film jacket, Pussy Galore appears in the credits between images of the alpha males Bond, Goldfinger, and Oddjob. The relative worth of the Masterson sisters as instrumental to Bond's development can be judged by the fact that they appear on screen for a combined total of less than ten minutes. While they are necessary stepping stones for Bond, their individual significance is limited. The same cannot be said for Bond's final obstacle whose name again emphasizes Bond's weakness: Pussy Galore. Pussy Galore, in name alone, crudely epitomizes the way Bond regards women, ultimately reduced to a body part.

Pussy Galore's appearance late in the film is memorable and marks Bond's final challenge. She introduces herself to Bond as he awakens from a drug-induced slumber. Upon hearing her name, he proclaims "I must be dreaming." At this moment of waking, though, Bond is exposed to Pussy's power; instead of subjecting her to his gaze, he has already been objectified by the pilot, Ms. Galore. Her gaze echoes Bond's earlier gaze on Jill Masterson before subjecting her to his powerful masculinity. In this case, Pussy holds the active, male role of looking while a passive Bond awakens to discover his objectification. Pussy's masculinity is further emphasized by her lesbian sexuality and her declaration that she is "immune" to Bond's charms. Film historian Lee Pfeiffer calls Pussy Galore "one of the first of the liberated screen heroines," and he points out that the

actress Honor Blackman is the oldest Bond girl in the film (34). Pussy Galore is not simply a youthful beauty; while she is beautiful, she is in her thirties and marked with cleverness. Bond will attempt several seductions before he discovers that wrestling with her masculinity (very literally) is the only way to seduce her.

Pussy Galore's decision to work to the advantage of either Goldfinger or Bond is precisely that: her decision. Just as she is liberated from the traditional feminized role of the dependant woman in a heterosexual couple, she is also free from the passive role of female characters as she actively gazes on a drugged Bond. Bond critic Owens also notes the active roles Bond heroines play in the narrative, but he cautions this role with "the parodic names invented by Fleming [such as Pussy Galore] suggest their role is one of titillation and (male) fantasy fulfillment" (134). Even as Pussy declares her immunity to Bond's sexual prowess, her name allows him to subject her to his fantasies and declare "I must be dreaming." Pussy Galore's control, power, and sexual appeal to those same beautiful women that Bond desires combine to present a challenge that Bond must overcome by constructing a masculinity that can feminize the powerful Pussy Galore (fig. 11). Hovey further emphasizes the challenge Pussy creates for Bond, describing "her intellectual, physical, sexual, and gender equality, and her status as foil and competitor to Bond in every endeavor, including the seduction of women" (50). Pussy Galore is Bond's match, even more so than Goldfinger because, instead of waiting to exploit Bond's weakness; Pussy is that weakness. Her name marks her purpose in the film: to challenge Bond to use his weakness to his advantage. Because, only by feminizing Pussy Galore and swaying her to his side will he be able to gain dominance over Goldfinger.

This masculinity, once fully stylized, will present Bond with the skills he needs to defeat his nemesis.

Pussy Galore's masculine, active gaze is further emphasized when compared with the gaze her stewardess attempts to fix on Bond. Bond was unable to escape the pilot's watchful eye, but when Mei Lai endeavors to spy on Bond, Bond immediately both suspects and diverts her gaze. To the amusement of Bond, but only to the frustration of Mei Lai, this aversion occurs three times. Bond's ability to impede Mei Lai's eye while avoiding pursuit of his obvious lust display the change in his character as the film nears its climax. Also, the reversal of this gaze from Bond looking at a woman to averting a gaze reflects the early scene with Jill Masterson. Jill was held by Bond's gaze, objectified both by him and by her role to be "just seen" with Goldfinger. Bond uses his skill to avoid Mei Lai's gaze, but he was unable to avoid Pussy Galore's active gaze. Pussy further emphasizes her active role when Bond questions her part in Goldfinger's plan. Echoing Jill's function to be seen, Pussy clarifies that "I'm a damned good pilot. Period." While Jill's role was passive, that of an object, Pussy's role is active. In both her gaze and her connection to Goldfinger, Pussy Galore is opposite Jill Masterson. Bond's constructed masculinity, and his awareness of his weakness, allow him to meet the challenge that Pussy Galore presents.

Only when Bond displays his sharp knowledge about guns and aircraft does Pussy begin to warm up to him. She engages in his flirtatious banter and comments on his enjoyment of a "close shave." At this point in the film, Bond has learned to control his desires and wait until he can engage Pussy before attempting to seduce her. He slowly feminizes her by illustrating his superior knowledge of guns, and then by opening the

plane for her. He is forced to back off, though, when Pussy reveals her gun. Bond is unarmed at this point, unprotected from his shortcomings. Pussy, on the other hand, clutches to her weapon to prevent Bond from womanizing her. She recognizes Bond's masculinity and, instead of succumbing to it, she presents herself as his match and a challenge.

Even as Bond continues to finesse Pussy, noting that she is a complex "woman of many parts," Oddjob enters the scene and suppresses Bond's masculinity. Oddjob represents a challenge to Bond's masculinity because he has continually exploited Bond's weakness. Oddjob, to this point, has been responsible for the death of two women that were working with Bond. Noting the challenge Oddjob presents, Bond reflects "I thought you always took your hat off to a lady." The implications of this statement are strong. Bond recognizes Pussy's masculinity and sees the challenge to himself. He is warning her – substantiated by his next comment, "you don't know what he does to little girls." Pussy, accepting the challenge, replies "and little boys." In this first meeting, Pussy displays her own constructed masculinity and the challenge to Bond's success. In order to defeat the brutally strong Oddjob and the unusually intelligent Goldfinger, Bond must feminize the very independent Pussy Galore. If he has sufficiently polarized and stylized his masculinity, Bond will be able to feminize Pussy and prove himself the dominant male in the film.

Not coincidentally, then, each scene between Bond and Ms. Galore is followed by a scene where Bond must display his dominant wit and cunning. Stripped of his gun and the American agents trusting his independence, Bond is left with only his masculinity to escape Goldfinger's prison. The favorite spy does manage to escape using trickery, only



to be discovered and recapture by the one and only Pussy Galore. Before this capture, though, Bond learns of Goldfinger's plan. He witnesses Goldfinger's displays of craft to show his supremacy to these men. Amidst constant cries of "what's this" and "what's going on," Goldfinger outlines his plan for ultimate control of the world's gold supply. Bond, before being thrown on his face by Pussy, gathers enough information to warn his fellow American spies. But, before Bond can defeat Goldfinger, he must overcome Pussy Galore – before she defeats him. Shocked again by Pussy's overwhelming display of strength and wit, Bond can only gasp, "Who taught you Judo?" Pussy, who clutched her gun in her earlier scene to protect herself from Bond's flirtations, immediately demands the gun Bond stole. Pussy requires this weapon to protect her against her own shortcomings, namely a lack of a penis. Once the gun is in her hand, Pussy assumes control of the scene. Instead of Bond's weakness being exposed, though, Pussy Galore's is blatantly revealed. She grasps the pistol that, early in the film, Bond refused to remove because of his inferiority complex. Bond, at this point, holds himself in control and no longer requires a pistol to guard against his shortcomings. Bond has assumed such constructed, controlled masculinity that, at this point, he himself must be guarded against. Back in his prison cell, he is surrounded by multiple guards.

Bond may still be imprisoned, but his excessively constructed masculinity is emphasized when the camera scans his cell. Bond is entirely individualized, sitting separate from anyone else. He is dressed in a classic suite and tie, displaying class and sophistication, while wearing a look of bemused discontent. This image of Bond, standing out in a room of men, his look both taunting and rejecting his captors, reflects the necessary aspects of an alpha male. The multiple men, even with their weapons,

cannot approach him. All that remains, then, is for Bond, with his overpowering masculinity, to feminize Pussy Galore. By exercising his power over Pussy, Bond can show his dominance over Goldfinger. Because Ms. Pussy Galore is such an active character and strong female, while also representing – through her unforgettable name – the bare essence of the female sex, she is the key to undoing either Bond or Goldfinger. She can be used to undo the enemy of the man who is best able to control her.

Goldfinger begins with the advantage: he exerts some control over Pussy because she is his employee, working with Goldfinger to achieve Goldfinger's goal. This control reflects the influence Goldfinger had over Jill, who was seen with Goldfinger because that is what she was paid to do. However, his cunning and money are where Goldfinger's manipulative powers end. Pussy acknowledges the only reason she receded some of her agency to Goldfinger is for his money. His attempts to further his power, though, are met with rejection. Goldfinger pushes this beautiful woman, telling her she will be very rich, but also very alone after his plan is carried out. Pussy clarifies her intentions to Goldfinger, demanding "Why else would I be in it?" As the scene continues, Pussy continues to grasp her masculinity, even though she lacks her pistol. She remains curt and disengaging to Goldfinger's advances. The simple fact that Pussy requires a gun to protect herself from Bond's masculinity, but only her sharp mind and tongue to hold Goldfinger at bay reveals Bond's now dominant masculinity. Also exposed is the need for Goldfinger to combine his dominant intellect with some male of brute physical strength, namely Oddjob, in order to become the complete alpha male. Goldfinger failing to seduce Pussy, though, suggests something is lacking in his individual masculinity. This newly seen lack, when displayed next to Bond's independent, freshly structured

masculinity, becomes gaping, and serves to highlight the particular kind of male Bond has become through his own interactions with progressively masculine female characters.

Further emphasizing Goldfinger's lack, and ultimately setting up Goldfinger's downfall, Goldfinger's only slightly veiled attempts at the seduction of Pussy Galore are interrupted by his concerns about Bond. Reflecting the earlier scene with Jill Masterson, where Bond's seduction was interrupted by Goldfinger's brute Oddjob, Goldfinger is now suspended by two men looking for Bond. Bond is now the stronger male, causing such fear in his enemy that Goldfinger is preoccupied, even when pursuing his own desires with Pussy Galore. Goldfinger sees two American spies at his gate and reasons that, to protect himself and his carefully laid plan, he should bring Bond out of his cell and entertain his enemy. With these conclusions, Goldfinger requests that he and Pussy "make him [Bond] as happy as possible," and that Pussy change into something "more pleasurable." Using the control he already exerts over Pussy, Goldfinger not only allows, but promotes her objectification. He pushes her away from her active role of capturing Bond and holding him at gunpoint into a more feminized, passive position. Mulvey details the feminine role of being looked at:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. (Mulvey "Visual" 750).

In order to give Bond a “pleasurable” experience, Goldfinger concludes that Bond will need something to gaze upon. Goldfinger incites Pussy’s objectification by requesting that she become the passive object of Bond’s (and his fellow spies’) gaze. Goldfinger aims to distract Bond with the fantasy an objectified Pussy with ultimately produce. In using Pussy Galore this particular way, by asking her to suppress her active self to be passively objectified and displayed, Goldfinger weakens her resolve against Bond. Pussy, in submitting to Goldfinger’s will, represses her own active will for that of the men. She allows herself to become an object. In a later essay, Mulvey notes, “The correct road, *femininity*, leads to increasing repression of ‘the active’” (“Afterthoughts” 124). Pussy Galore, in repressing her active self, cannot help but become more feminized. Bond’s masculine presence is strong enough to instill fear in Goldfinger, not only truncating Goldfinger’s seduction of Pussy Galore, but also influencing Pussy’s feminization.

The James Bond character, at this point in the film, is ready to meet Goldfinger and his wits directly. Bond has moved from being a nuisance to Goldfinger, forcing him to lose at cards, to an annoying golf partner who is “clever and resourceful,” but whose weakness is clearly identified in the symbolic beheading of a female statue. Finally, Bond is utterly aware of his weakness and the threat it poses to him, and he is controlling that shortcoming to his advantage: he focuses on Goldfinger’s plan rather than the girl.

With both Jill and Tilly Masterson, Bond’s focus on the object of his lust rather than the object of his investigation led to a failure on his part. In this particular meeting with Goldfinger, though, Bond displays his excessive knowledge not only of Goldfinger’s plan, but of the nuances in the information he has gathered. The spy, quickly dominating Goldfinger, points out that the numbers Goldfinger gave in his earlier

oration do not accurately reflect Goldfinger's alleged master plan. Through awareness and a careful balance of relating to Goldfinger while keeping himself separated – constantly gathering information – Bond is able to draw out the missing pieces of information crucial to both Goldfinger's plan and deterring it. Namely, Goldfinger's use of an "atomic device," as he calls it. While Bond utilizes his exceptional knowledge to cajole information out of Goldfinger, the master criminal takes note that "You are unusually well informed, Mr. Bond." Again, as with his early distraction from Pussy Galore, Goldfinger carefully recognizes Bond's unique intellect that more than matches his own. By enticing Goldfinger to reveal the central part of his plan, Bond is able to prove his own superior wit. Continuing his delicate interrogation, Bond discovers his location in the processes of Goldfinger's scheme. Goldfinger reveals, "You will be there. Too close for comfort, I'm afraid." By matching wits with Goldfinger after Bond has constructed a stylized masculinity, he coaxes the details of Goldfinger's plan out of this mastermind. These crucial details give Bond the opportunity to formulate a plan to stop Goldfinger – a plan that must include Pussy Galore, as she is a vital part of Goldfinger's scheme. Hence, even though Bond has displayed the traits of an alpha male, he has yet to turn and shot, as in the opening credits, to unarguably ascend to the position of dominant, ultimately stylized and constructed male. He cannot succeed to this position without the Bond girl Pussy Galore.

Pussy Galore is central at this point in the film not because of her character, but because of the role she offers Bond. If Bond can conquer Pussy, he can prove that his masculinity is stylized to the point that he can feminize the most masculine female. Pussy's parodic name and her late appearance in the film diminish her significance as an

individual character, but she is important because Bond must master her before he can master the master criminal. Because of Goldfinger's fear of Bond, Goldfinger unwittingly hands over the key to his failure when he objectifies Pussy. She returns to the screen dressed for show in a low-cut blouse and without her pistol. She even admits "I'm completely defenseless" to a pleased Bond. Without her pistol to protect Pussy from her lack of a penis, Bond has the opportunity to grapple with Pussy's butch masculinity and feminize her. With his overwhelming masculinity, he can polarize the very masculine Pussy Galore and draw out her feminine side. Goldfinger has already initiated this process by stripping Pussy of her pistol and requesting her objectification. But, in attempting to seduce Pussy, Goldfinger only appealed to her feminine side, only noting how lonely she would be on her own island. Bond, however, notes that Pussy is already individualized – she does not care about the repercussions of Goldfinger's plan, she only wants the money. In order to seduce Pussy, then, Bond must display his "powerful and irresistible Western masculinity" (Hovey 43). He must prove to Pussy that his masculinity is more constructed and more powerful than hers.

Pussy initially recognizes, but does not submit to, Bond's superior masculinity. Bond wonders how to persuade Pussy, asking her "What will it take for you to see my side of things?" Immediately, Pussy banters with "A lot more than you've got." With this line, she attacks Bond's masculinity. Just as Pussy has previously used the pistol clutched in her hand to ward off Bond, she is now attempting to use her wit. Undeterred, and understanding that he will have to prove his superior masculinity, Bond continues to press "How do you know?", to which he finally receives Pussy's honest response: "I don't want to know." Pussy recognizes Bond's superior masculinity, but she does not

want to face it without protection, to this point in the form of a pistol. She would rather note the distinction without being forced to accept the full extent of their differences. In recognizing the dissimilarity between herself and Bond, Pussy recognizes the risk she has of being feminized. Muriel Dimen, the feminist scholar who noted the individualization of masculinity, also reflects on feminine gender roles when linked with sexuality. Dimen writes, "For every woman – heterosexual, lesbian, young, old – sexuality is inextricably entangled with reproductivity, in other words, with procreation, relatedness, and socially felt and as socially instituted" (43). Pussy Galore's sexuality, her homosexuality specifically, is connected to how she relates to the other characters in the film. The implication here is that Pussy is a lesbian because she has not met a man masculine enough to feminize her. If Bond succeeds in this role, then he is more masculine than Goldfinger by the sheer fact that Pussy did not respond to Goldfinger's advances.

In order to overcome Pussy, Bond must also physically wrestle with her masculinity. They enter a barn where they continue to exchange banter, and begin to exchange martial arts moves. Bond suggests Pussy hasn't experienced a strong enough man to feminize her. Pussy attempts to push Bond off, but he forces himself on her. As Bond overcomes Pussy, she surrenders to his kiss and his masculinity. Bond, then, is the alpha male, dominant because he was able to overcome Pussy when Goldfinger was not. This kiss that Pussy at first resists, but then submits to and enjoys, reveals Bond's dominance. Hovey notes the further implications of this event, describing "she too succumbs to the Bond kiss, foreshadowing the ultimate defeat of their employers" (50). Bond's kiss draws out the femininity in the Bond girls, allowing him to gain agency over them and ultimately use the girls, such as Pussy, against the master criminals. These

criminals, Goldfinger for example, do not possess the same constructed masculinity as Bond, so they are ultimately defeated by Bond's superior masculinity, proven through the seduction of the female characters like Pussy Galore. Bond's masculinity, then, could be identified as what makes him the successful 007 that he has become.

*Goldfinger* reaches its climax after Bond overcomes Pussy. The stylized, constructed, domineering Bond is ready to turn and shoot, but the audience is left questioning Pussy's conversion, because she is such a strong, masculine Bond girl. As Goldfinger's plan moves into action, Pussy is seen piloting a helicopter, but she is not heard. Pussy's move to femininity requires the privacy of that realm; she is now gazed upon, but her challenging wit is not heard. Mulvey reflects "The landscape of action, although present, is not the dramatic core of the film's story, rather it is the interior drama of a girl caught between two conflicting desires [ . . . ] an oscillation between 'passive' femininity and regressive 'masculinity'" ("Afterthoughts" 127). Pussy Galore moves from an active character, in control of her own power, to a character that is used by James Bond. Her masculinity was "regressive," because she was working for a stronger male (Goldfinger), but she becomes passive in response to the more constructed masculinity of James Bond. Pussy is the suspenseful core of the film, with the viewer not knowing if Bond's oppressive masculinity is enough to suppress Pussy's butch nature. This Bond girl is critical to the film, and to Bond's development, because her conversion – or lack thereof – controls the outcome of the film. While her character is only minorly important, her character's shift of allegiance is central. Ultimately, the viewer and Bond are made aware of Pussy's sexual conversion and her conversion of loyalty, when one of the American spies informs Bond that Pussy approached the Americans with a plan to



trick Goldfinger into a trap, thinking his scheme was working. Bond replies that he must have “appealed to her [Pussy’s] maternal instincts.” Pussy’s sexuality, and now femininity, is emphasized as passive, not active. She gives way to the male child, fulfilling only a symbolic role that allows Bond to succeed. Bond achieves the role of alpha male because he was able to feminize Pussy with his polarized masculinity. In controlling his weakness of lust, he was able to balance relating to her and controlling Pussy’s agency. By mastering her masculinity, Bond is able to control this character so she would assist him to defeat Goldfinger.

But Goldfinger cannot be defeated by anyone less than a more dominant male; in other words, only James Bond can overcome Goldfinger. Goldfinger is able to slip away in the confusion of his plan gone awry, and then he lures the favorite spy into a trap. At this point, though, Bond has overcome Pussy Galore and defeated Goldfinger’s brute Oddjob, establishing himself as the alpha male in the film. Goldfinger, who earlier controlled his emotions and was domineering when Bond gained power over Jill Masterson, now shows his weakness in his fear of and anger towards Bond. While Bond gained control over his lust for women and is able to use it to his advantage, Goldfinger’s weakness is revealed: his own fear of being dominated. When Bond gains agency over Pussy Galore immediately after Goldfinger fails in his own advances, Goldfinger’s inadequacy is laid bare. Even though Bond falls directly into Goldfinger’s trap, he remains controlled and quick witted, turning Goldfinger’s plan against him once again. A window is shot out, the pressure in both the airplane and the film shifts, and the master criminal is extracted, leaving Bond to save himself and Pussy Galore. Bond, once Goldfinger is literally out of the picture, is the uncontested alpha male of the screen.

### James Bond, a Stylized Alpha Male

Bond did not easily ascend to the role of alpha male, though. As Bond critics such as Christoph Lindner, Craig N. Owens, and Jaime Hovey have suggested, the Bond character is a blank middle, molded by the cultures and characters that surround him. 007 begins each new film as the shadowy figure that aims and fires at the viewer, establishing himself as alpha to that viewer. But, as the film progresses, Bond must be constructed into a male relatable to the society and culture in which he appears. More specifically, the Bond girls in these 007 films create a Bond that will be able to conquer the respective film's master villain. The role Bond's character must appropriate is a stylized masculinity that is created through his interactions with and reactions to Bond girls. As he increasingly acquires the qualities of aloofness, independence, and control, he seduces increasingly resistant women because of his polarized, constructed masculinity. The blank middle that is Bond develops into an alpha male that suits the decade in which the film is set.

The female characters in these films, such as Jill and Tilly Masterson and Pussy Galore, challenge Bond, forcing him to control his lust for beautiful women and exercise his wit. As the film approaches its conclusion, the character of Bond dominates the women, the villain, and then the screen. The movie becomes "a stiff-cock tale, guaranteeing the male fetishist his masculine prerogatives to act in perfect accordance with his desire" (Owens 115). Bond, after achieving his stylized masculinity, establishes the film as excessively masculine and is able to (momentarily) satisfy with his desire for beautiful woman. Once the female characters have fulfilled their role in constructing a

stylized, excessive masculinity in James Bond, Bond is able to defeat the master villain and, almost simultaneously, fulfill his insatiable desire for the unattainable beautiful woman. In this case, that desire is Pussy Galore. Reflecting the opening credits, Bond again averts the viewer's eye at the film's end. Pussy Galore willingly submits to his kiss, and he pulls a parachute over them, blocking the viewer's gaze. Bond, dominant to the viewer from the opening to the ending credits, will not become the object of the viewer's gaze. He dominates the film and is the alpha male.

Bond is truly a character constructed by the events, society, and other characters that surround him in each film. Furthermore, he may just be the silver screen's most excessive womanizer. However, the Bond girl's role is not limited to passive acceptance of Bond's machismo; she is not in the film only to be conquered. The female characters in Bond films are not only essential, but they are extremely powerful. These characters are crucial to Bond's creation. As the decades progress, this power becomes more evident: "M" is replaced by a woman, Bond is rescued by female spies, and the first Bond girl to win an Oscar, the actress Halle Berry in *Die Another Day*, even overshadows the Bond character. *Goldfinger* created the mold for James Bond, indeed, but the film also empowers the female characters, handing them the ability to construct this phenomenon in each Bond film to come.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Bond girl is the term typically used to identify the female characters Bond encounters.

<sup>2</sup> Imitations of *Goldfinger*'s Bond include the recent Austin Powers, the past Napoleon Solo in *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, and the female version of Bond, Modesty Blaise.

<sup>3</sup> The typical Bond narrative begins with an encounter with a villain that Bond defeats, and initial encounter with the master villain in which Bond is defeated, an encounter with a strong female character, and Bond's ultimate conquering of both this strong Bond girl and the master villain. Notably, the final scene in each film is Bond's conquest of this female, not Bond's defeat of the villain.

<sup>4</sup> Hovey seems to be the only feminist perspective that has looked at the effects of Bond films on women's attitudes. Other feminist perspectives look mostly at the character of Money Penny. Money Penny, however, is not a Bond girl, and she only plays a small part in my argument, showing how Bond changes after his first encounter with a Bond girl. Because I will not be addressing the character of Money Penny as a whole, I will not be using these scholars.

<sup>5</sup> The precise term alpha male was originally used in the study of herd animals but has since expanded to describe human interaction ("alpha male" *OED*).

<sup>6</sup> Bond is a "cool-under-fire hero with a propensity to make witticisms even when faced with certain death" (Pfeiffer 33).

<sup>7</sup> Feminist critic Susan Bordo discusses the real-life woman and wife, constantly feeding and giving to others to the extent that the woman loses her ability to voice her own needs, or even perform for herself.



Figure 1

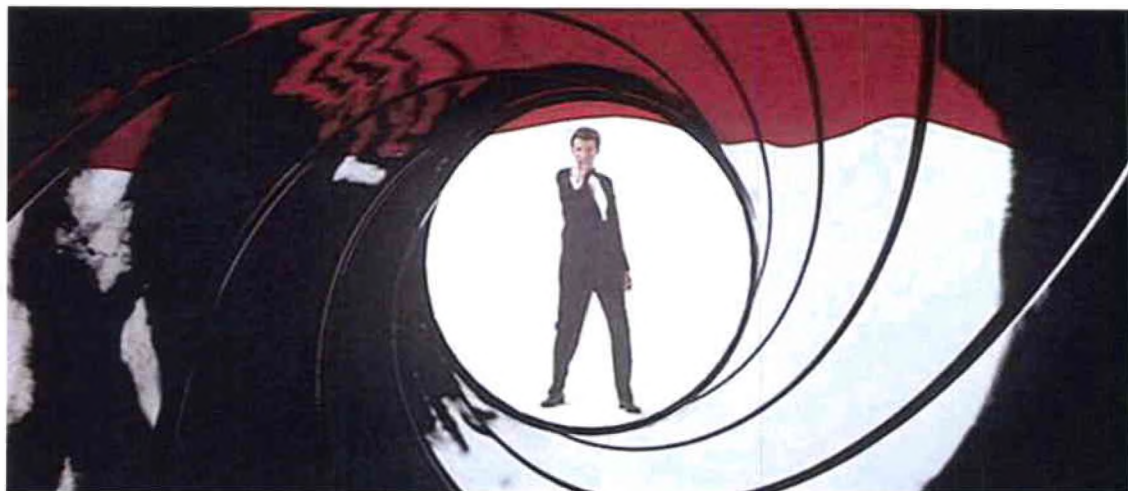


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10





Figure 11

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