

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

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

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