



# FASHIONING FILM STARS

Dress,  
Culture,  
Identity

Edited by  
**RACHEL MOSELEY**

**F**ashioning Film Stars brings together work by established and emerging scholars in the field of film costume and star studies, to address the significance of the relationships between fashion, dress and star image. While studies of individual stars have often commented on the importance of style to the construction of their persona, such work has until now remained largely focused upon the female Hollywood, or occasionally European, star. This scholarly and readable volume redresses that balance, offering close analyses of the detail and significance of male and female star style in Hollywood, European, Asian and Latin American contexts.



The book brings together a range of theoretical and methodological frameworks from textual analysis, archival research and audience study to offer, for the first time, a detailed consideration of the importance of the fashioning of film stars. *Fashioning Film Stars* asks: how does dress operate in relation to stardom to articulate particular identities – gendered, national, classed, ethnic, sexual? How, precisely, does film costume operate, and how is it understood, semiotically, socially, culturally? Does star dress ‘disappear’ against the body as ‘clothes’ or speak out performatively as ‘costume’ or ‘spectacle’? It answers them in an engaging and accessible volume which will be of interest to film scholars and film fans alike.

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## Brad Pitt and George Clooney, the Rough and the Smooth: Male Costuming in Contemporary Hollywood

Pamela Church Gibson

On the cover of *Vanity Fair* for April 2003 is a group portrait of some of the most popular male actors in present-day Hollywood. This image – given the differences of costuming and stance – resembles a recording for posterity of the male members of some extended family, posed carefully at a casual but important gathering – a birthday, an anniversary, whatever. The photograph, taken by Annie Liebowitz, is artfully staged. The central figure in her carefully arranged grouping is Jack Nicholson, wearing dark glasses, a well-cut jacket and open-necked white shirt; looking raffishly elegant, he leans forward, grinning broadly into the lens. He is the Bad Father and Errant Husband of classic Hollywood cinema – a cinematic version of Black Jack Bouvier. Leaning on his shoulder affectionately, and smiling gently at the photographer, is Brad Pitt, here presented as the favourite son, a gentle, artistic boy; his hair falls softly over his shoulders and he has a wispy goatee beard, while he wears a rumpled T-shirt beneath a mismatched velvet jacket. On the other side of Nicholson is Tom Cruise, beaming and athletic in black, short-sleeved shirt and jeans. He could be Pitt's protective, outgoing older brother – good at sports, popular with everybody, putative prom king. Behind Nicholson stands Harrison Ford, grey of hair and correctly dressed – Good Father, Responsible Younger Brother and Reliable Uncle of the older generation within this imagined 'family'. The figure sitting on the floor at the front could be his very own son – Tom Hanks as corporate lawyer off duty, casual but smart in neat shirt and tank top. I describe this picture in such detail because it seems to have, as a subtext, Hollywood's continuing fascination with the father and son problematic, with masculine identity and types of role models, and also to display overtly the diversity and yet congruence of the male star personae that dominate contemporary cinema.

This portrait is not the end of the cover story; it forms the first panel of a fold-out, landscape-format image containing more male stars, again seemingly divergent and yet with certain perceptible similarities, coyly tagged 'It's Reigning Men'. Jude Law, studiously elegant despite his jeans, in pristine white shirt and beautifully cut navy blue blazer, could have stepped out of a fashion spread – Abby Field, in the story of the shoot, describes Law as 'an exception to the rule that a young male movie star must always dress like a mechanic from San Bernadino' (Tabach-Bank and Field, 2003, p. 128).

Sprawled across the front of the panels is a languid Hugh Grant; he exemplifies the classic Wayward Bachelor, the smooth Ladies' Man. Clooney, the other archetypal

Lounge Lizard of contemporary Hollywood, is, strangely, absent from this particular line-up, this roll-call of polarised archetypes – heroes and attractive villains, fathers and sons, the smoothly suave and the down-home, blue-collar guys who dominate contemporary Hollywood and, arguably, are part of a complex trajectory within its history. So confused are contemporary ideals and ideas around and concerning masculinity that these hybrid yet interrelated personae are both necessary and familiar. Cinematic icons, on and off screen, reflect current bewilderment and the need for reassurance together with a wish for fashion leaders whose style makes some clear statement about the particular form of masculinity they embody.

Certainly the dress codes found within this picture encapsulate current trends; this declared aim of the typical younger movie star 'to look like a mechanic', a style often consciously deployed within the diegeses of contemporary Hollywood, has found its way into the vocabulary of current street fashion. In clubs, pubs and bars, it is possible to see just how many young white men have adopted this particular look. But the uniformity of their dress does not necessarily indicate any uniformity of attitude – unless it be confusion about their social role and the behaviour now expected of them. And of course, there is their new worry about their own looks, their faces and bodies; men are finding that a set of standards and norms, similar to those by which they have judged women for so long, are now applicable to them. It is equally harsh, youth-dominated and narrow in its focus. As Tim Edwards observes,

The positive or valorized images of masculinity remain, despite variations, primarily young and white, slim and trim ... a hierarchy of masculinities is emerging, according to image and appearance, where young white men with pumped-up pecs, strong jawlines and flat stomachs rule over the rest with a phallogocentric intensity. (1997, p. 130)

This description of the dominant ideal of male desirability perfectly describes Brad Pitt, one of the two contemporary icons considered here. This particular male image was reinforced, if not created, within the world of advertising, in the so-called 'menswear revolution' of the 1980s (Mort, 1996; Nixon, 1998; Simpson, 1996).

The other star examined here is George Clooney, Pitt's antithesis and co-star in *Ocean's Eleven* (Steven Soderbergh, 2001), a seminal text and perfect model of current codes of costuming in contemporary Hollywood. Clooney's omission from the line-up of 'reigning men' is odd, given the power he currently wields within Hollywood and his considerable popularity. He represents the primary contrasting type or 'variation'; he is, perhaps, no longer 'young', but he fits in perfectly with the debonair Lotharios who also hold sway within current cinematic narratives, the 'smooth' men who are not, necessarily, the cloth from which an ideal father can be cut, but who are presented as possessing undeniable appeal for women.

(Overleaf) The rough and the smooth personified, or two ways with a suit and shades (*Ocean's Eleven*, 2001)



Clooney is invariably seen on screen fully clothed; he is the suited hero, the antithesis of the rugged, bare-chested man so ready for action. The suited hero, of course, harks back to an earlier era in the history of Hollywood. He may indeed possess the 'pumped-up pecs' needed to meet today's exacting standards of male beauty – but his body is in the main outlined by his clothes, sheathed rather than stripped. Unlike the body of Pitt, that of Clooney is not presented to us as fetishistic spectacle. It is, rather, hinted at – tantalising glimpses may be provided and the contours be clear at moments, but the effect of conventional 'smart' menswear – sports jacket and slacks as well as the suit – is to shroud and to sheath. Interestingly, when his body was first, briefly, revealed on screen, as he prepared to seduce Jennifer Lopez in *Out of Sight* (Steven Soderbergh, 1998), he was wearing pristine white boxer shorts, which he did not remove. Neither did the matinee idols of classic Hollywood – and, like them, Clooney is Eternal Bachelor, whereas Pitt is often cast as husband material, his off-screen lifestyle reinforcing this notion.

### Masculinity and Its New Configurations: From *Fight Club* to *Ocean's Eleven*

Debates around masculinity are currently centre stage – within cinema studies, the arguments that Steve Neale initiated (1983) now figure prominently, with anthologies appearing apace. Many of them, sadly, ignore dress codes – just as literature within cultural studies too often neglects the influence of film. Meanwhile, cinematic texts themselves seek to show us increasingly complex narratives of masculinity – while at the same time trying to offer up solutions or models. *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999) features Ed Norton as corporate man – white-collar educated, besuited and bored, who is forced to dream up a 'rough trade' alter ego to be what he wants to be, do what he wants to do. Significantly Pitt, that same alter ego, explains his creation by Norton as the man who can 'fight the way you want to fight, fuck the way you want to fuck'. This is no slur on 'smooth' man's sexual prowess; Norton is near-nerd, not 'smooth' man at all. Announcing early on in the film that 'We're a generation of men raised without fathers', Pitt devotes his energy to providing a way for such men to reconfigure their destabilised male identities.

In so many Hollywood films today the central relationship of the film is that between two male protagonists – buddies or enemies, mismatched workmates or genuine siblings, surrogate father and longed-for son – and invariably, the bonds between them form the emotional epicentre of the film. The relationship between Pitt's character, Rusty, in *Ocean's Eleven* and his friend and co-conspirator, the suave Danny Ocean (Clooney) is just as significant as that between Danny and his ex-wife, Tess (Julia Roberts). 'We ought to find Rusty a girlfriend,' Tess tells Danny when they are finally reunited in the closing moments of the film. Rusty's reply 'There's a women's prison right down the road,' is good-humoured but disingenuous – Rusty will remain with Danny (and Tess) whatever relationships with women he may or may not initiate.

Both men are splendidly costumed – often besuited – throughout, but significantly they wear their suits with a difference, marking clearly their 'rough' and 'smooth' personae. Pitt's hair is contemporary in cut, spiky and gelled; he munches on junk food

shroud – robes, ochre  
sheath – puchra, por edro

throughout, undercutting and democratising the glamour of his outfits. But Clooney, even when stripped down to vest and jeans for the heist that forms the plotline, is still effortlessly elegant in black co-ordinates. And when released from prison in the opening scenes, he is wearing the dinner jacket in which he was arrested – with the untied bow tie slung around his neck like a scarf. The jacket itself is a very dark navy blue, with a satin lapel; this particular sartorial style was initiated by the Duke of Windsor, fashion leader of the 1920s. In the scene around the poker table, where he is reunited with Rusty after three years in prison, he wears a black polo sweater under matching sports jacket, further confining and hiding his body from view, while Pitt, although he is wearing a co-ordinating tie with his silky beige shirt, soon discards it and runs a hand up through his hair, rendering himself ruffled, vulnerable.

*Ocean's Eleven* is particularly interesting in terms of contemporary costuming and of the argument advanced within this essay, for we have here, at the forefront of the film, these two central archetypes of cinema today, as sketched out within this essay – the sophisticated man and the man seemingly without artifice. Furthermore, they are located within an all-male group, the members of whom are brought together by Danny and Rusty to carry out the heist, and who form a kind of shambolic family, a group of ill-assorted, squabbling, racially mixed siblings who have an elderly 'uncle' in the retired conman, Saul (Carl Reiner) and a surrogate grandfather, Reuben, the casino owner (Elliott Gould). Andy Garcia, who plays the villain, Terry Benedict – the owner of the three largest casinos in Las Vegas, who has bought Reuben's own former casino in order to raze it to the ground, and who is now living with Tess – has extremely stylish clothes. In fact, they are too perfect, too artfully arranged – always a sign of danger. Stella Bruzzi has written the definitive account of gangster style and its inherent 'instabilities' (1997,



Different strokes for different folks – contrasting models of masculinity (*Ocean's Eleven*)

pp. 67–95). From the moment we see Garcia, with his slicked-back hair, expressionless face, black suit, high-buttoned waistcoat and tie, his watch-chain and the slim black case he carries, we are convinced of the truth of Reuben's warning words 'He'll kill you – and then he'll go to work on you.' For where Clooney is debonair, Garcia is terrifyingly dapper – there is something insouciant in Clooney's self-presentation, whereas Garcia is so immaculate it is chilling. Later outfits reinforce his status as arch-villain who has purchased Tess, just as surely as the Bracque painting he has bought for his gallery at her instigation, and who has chosen many of her clothes: the Nehru-collared linen jackets both wear as they inspect the canvas, the matching cream outfits with long coats donned for the public demolition of Reuben's former much-loved casino, and Garcia's own brocade waistcoats and heavily patterned silk ties, plus a wing-collared shirt and white tie that he wears to watch a prizefight. We are, therefore, unsurprised when he agrees to the suggestion that he release Tess from their relationship in exchange for the return of his stolen millions. Here is a man whose suits and formal attire conceal a real, psychotic menace – not, as with Clooney, the pleasures and promise of his hidden physicality.

This film is not only a template for the current state of Hollywood costuming; it was very popular at the box office, and, as with so many films intended primarily to reach the main target audience – young (eighteen to twenty-four) and male – it was picked up by the fashion and style magazines targeted at the young male consumer. This is perhaps the moment for some reflection on the socio-cultural implications of men's fashions past and present – together with a consideration of the precise meanings of the suit and the recent growth of oppositional styles around and in relation to it.

### Suits, Sexuality and the New Oppositional Chic

The suit – analysed carefully and constantly by those working on the cultural significance of fashion – both sheaths and conceals. But above all, surely, it renders the male body totally inaccessible, something no-one has yet mentioned. Zippered in, buttoned up, it is thus presented to the world as a monolithic, even phallic, block. The tie is another phallic hint, but again the phallus is inaccessible, controlled, regulated, just as the tie is carefully knotted. Conversely, significantly, since the 60s, women's clothes have made their bodies increasingly visible objects of desire – and more than ever accessible. The disappearance of protective undergarments, the exposure of so many erogenous zones simultaneously, the proffering of so much flesh; women are constantly visible, available.

However, since the 80s, when the lucrative power of the young male consumer was identified and targeted as never before, we have become accustomed to the visibility of the male body – which, interestingly, coincided with the suit becoming a fashionable outfit, desired by the young, rather than connoting the stuffy, bureaucratic adult world. The 'buff' male torso first appeared in Calvin Klein advertisements and in fashion spreads, tucked away within the pages of magazines, but it moved swiftly onto billboards and television screens. It is now a familiar sight, used to advertise everything from Nike sportswear to soft drinks. It has become just as much an object of commodification as the female body before it – and one of emulation, with a tranche of glossy

magazines now available – to show the man whose body is far from perfect ways in which he might seek to remedy the situation.

The 'rough' image, personified by Pitt and currently so fashionable – for the bodies of the Calvin Klein models are now offset by designer stubble and tousled hair – renders the male body available, as opposed to the protection provided by the concealing, sheathing suit. Jeans hug the buttocks, T-shirts reveal the biceps and pectoral muscles, the chest may be bared or visible through an unbuttoned shirt, and tousled hair hints at body hair beneath. The 'rough' star constantly disrobes – while the suited man, personified by Clooney, is usually kept from view, the hints of his physical strength shown through shots of arms, hands and the occasional topless moment, always an integral part of the plot and invariably fleeting. Lastly, of course, the 'rough' look suggests not only the man of action but more importantly the blue-collar worker and proletarian roots.

The suit indicated, historically, that its wearer was either a man of leisure and wealth, or a member of the rapidly expanding professional middle classes. Since its revival it has had 'aspirational' associations; in the Thatcherite economic boom, the young man of working-class origins with a City job could purchase the high-street suits swiftly made available. Chenoune suggests that the suit was revived in a very particular way; with the spread of sportswear across class and generation, front-pleated, fluid trousers became popular for business wear, as did looser jackets – a move that started on the streets and was quickly assimilated by designers, culminating in Armani's enormously influential unstructured jackets. 'The goal of unstructured garments was to make suits and jackets lighter and more comfortable, putting an end to the sartorial schizophrenia of white-collar professionals' (Chenoune, 1993, p. 292).

These changes did not mean that the split between work and leisure disappeared – nor that class differences in dress are no longer significant. Diane Crane, the only fashion scholar to have chronicled carefully the relationship between dress and social class, sees the changes of the 1980s differently:

Despite recent changes in executive dress codes, two very different clothing cultures remain in effect, one representing the world of work and the other ... the world of leisure. Clothes in the workplace mark social hierarchies very precisely. Leisure clothing, by contrast, tends to blur social class differences. Rich and poor participate in the same stylistic world, which is dominated by images from popular culture and the entertainment media. (2001, p. 178)

It is against these changing patterns that we should place contemporary Hollywood costuming, which as I have argued has a 'sartorial schizophrenia' of its own, with a different cultural agenda. The two contrasting modes of self-presentation found in contemporary cinema, located within a dual trajectory of male typology, have their roots in the 1950s. During this decade, the classic Hollywood hero was joined on screen by a new type of male star. The 'oppositional' look, first seen on these stars – Marlon Brando, James Dean, Montgomery Clift – has since been widely adopted and is no longer

associated with youthful rebellion. Brando claimed to be the first to have adopted garments intended for agricultural labour, heavy industry and military service as ordinary day wear; he accused Dean of having stolen his trademark 'slob' look and used it for his on-screen costumes.

### The Naked and the Dressed

The most significant tenet in the literature on menswear has been discussed by Stella Bruzzi in her chapter in this collection. It is Flügel's notion of 'the Great Masculine Renunciation' (1930, p. 110), the assertion that at the end of the eighteenth century men rejected fashionable dress, which became thereafter exclusively feminine. Others have refined Flügel's idea and taken it in different directions, tying it in more specifically with the rise of industrial capitalism, the increasing power and influence of the professional middle classes and the triumph of the Protestant work ethic, or even refuted it (Craik, 1994; Wilson, 2001).

However, sumptuous garments and other aspects of ostentatious self-presentation did become gender-specific in the late eighteenth century, while fashionable men adopted the three-piece suit, a static and utilitarian form of dress which has remained remarkably similar for over two hundred years.

Anne Hollander, however, suggests that the notion of the 'renunciation' is 'far too easy' (1994, p. 22), for men were embracing a style which was to embody modernism, to remain highly desirable – and which would be emulated by women. She argues that the suit is not only stylish, but, in its controlled way, sexy – an argument which I have here taken much further. Hollander sees the suit as hinting at the body beneath, emphasising its contours – since clothes may 'unconsciously imitate and mock bodily forms' (Ibid., p. 36), so she sees the suit as the '3D casing of the body of the antique male hero'. Tailors, she argues, set out to create 'an abstract statue of the naked hero' of classical antiquity (Ibid., p. 86) – the suit as body cast. She emphasises the 'nude suggestion' (Ibid., p. 112) but it is that of the body; I would argue, however, that the 'cast' of the torso is, rather, a 'cast' of the phallus itself; today, when the unsheathed torso is everywhere, surely the suit is robust condom rather than cast, the torso/phallus inaccessible rather than available.

### Class and Change

The rise of 'youth cultures' and the young stars of the cinema initiated changes in menswear, and the 1960s, that decade of social mobility, saw more widespread changes. Now, the anti-heroes of the 1950s were superseded by a new form of hero.

Dean was always outsider and misfit, complex and problematic, moody and difficult, but as today's journalistic cliché has it, he was in touch with his feminine side. The first scene in *Rebel Without a Cause* shows him wrapping his coat around the shivering Plato (Sal Mineo), and there are the flowers in the milk bottle with which he attempts to liven up his shanty-dwelling when Elizabeth Taylor comes to tea in *Giant* (George Stevens, 1956). However, no-one could accuse Brando of being in touch with his feminine side – and while Stanley Kowalski may be blue-collar sexuality personified, he is most

cast-hotel/hodivuh  
hint-polygynidell na prau mearon  
renunciation-liberapneut

emphatically not a hero. Heroes of the 1960s were more macho and cool than Dean, less sulky and antagonistic than Brando – and often authentically blue-collar in their own right. The contact with their feminine side would come with their successors, after the changes wrought by feminism and the moves by advertising executives to identify and target the 'New Man'.

Steve McQueen, real-life 'garage mechanic', who continued to service his own vehicles, was arguably the first of this new type of hero, the first to dress and behave in a qualitatively different way. The trends he set continue to the present day, on and off screen. He is currently the face of Tag Heuer watches, expensive toys demanded by today's would-be men of action. He had acted in various films before *The Magnificent Seven* (John Sturges, 1960). Supposedly Yul Brynner's sidekick here, it was his appearance to which the audience responded and which made him a star. In *The Great Escape* (John Sturges, 1963) McQueen plays Hilt, a laconic American loner who spends most of his time in solitary confinement. When the mass breakout takes place, he participates in the necessary teamwork – and then takes off, commandeering a motorbike on which he reaches the Swiss border. Having vaulted the lower level of barbed wire, he tries to jump the motorbike over the final barrier that forms the last obstacle to freedom. Here as throughout the film, his clothes were of the moment – indeed dateless. Everybody else is correctly dressed in uniform – only he wears, anachronistically, blue T-shirt and chinos. But what gave him his extra edge was the fact that he performed most of his stunts himself. It was known that he was a real-life Action Man, who spent his time fixing and racing cars and motorbikes. In other words, unlike his predecessors Brando and Dean, who adopted a blue-collar image to reflect their oppositional stance, McQueen was possessed of authentic proletarian origins. In *The Thomas Crown Affair* (Norman Jewison, 1968), he escapes from the boredom of his wealthy existence not only through masterminding the heist around which the film is built, but by exchanging his elegant business suits (and his ironic comment on the dress of corporate post-Renunciation Man, the fob watch which he wears) for sports clothes. He is seen gliding, racing a dune buggy and playing polo. Both work outfits and the nature of his preferred activities make an interesting comparison with Pierce Brosnan in the 1996 remake of the film. Brosnan – 'smooth man' – is impeccably tailored, as in his Bond roles. As the 'reconstructed' Thomas Crown, Brosnan doesn't feel any need to swap his work clothes for play clothes – when he is seen off-duty he plays golf in elegant slacks and sweater. The one rogue action – when he deliberately overturns an expensive catamaran during a yachting race – is done while wearing the traditional yachting clothes of American WASPS.

The change in the ending is also worthy of comment. McQueen's Crown demanded that the heroine choose – either love or money – and decamped, leaving her sobbing. But in 1996, Brosnan's hero pretends to do the same – then appears in the seat behind her when she is sadly and dutifully flying home. It seems that our stories, like our heroes, must be without McQueen's harshness.

While filming *The Getaway* (Sam Peckinpah, 1972), McQueen began an off-screen affair with his co-star, Ali McGraw. Within the text, there is a memorable scene in which, discovering her infidelity, he slaps her hard across the face, not once but several times.

Fob watch - pivecklove hodeuly

It was rumoured that the filming of this scene formed a prelude to the physical consummation of their relationship – McGraw, the middle-class girl, was thrilled by the discovery that the 'rough' exterior concealed a truly rough temperament and was excited by his seemingly genuine violence. Later it would form a central part of her divorce plea.

If McQueen, however, was the 'real thing', today's rough-looking heroes must conceal beneath an unruly exterior a soft heart, a very different persona. Their exterior must figure forth their robust physicality, their ability to carry out dangerous tasks and to fight if necessary to defend their women or children – but within the butch clothing, now become designer dishevelment, they must be new men, reconstructed men, able to express and articulate their feelings. Ideal husband material, in fact – and in the era of celebrity culture, of endless magazine stories and tabloid headlines, there is a conflation of the star's on-screen persona with their well-documented off-screen personal lives. Celebrity-led journalism means the dissemination of much extra-diegetic material, which the stars bring with them as baggage to their films. Here the prominence of Pitt as the 'rough' and Clooney as the suave heartbreaker is easily explained.

### 'Beautiful Brad' versus 'Gorgeous George' – Divergent Siblings?

Pitt is a much softer McQueen for the new millennium – and his personal life is exemplary. Through his marriage to Jennifer Aniston, Pitt forms part of that new unit, the 'celebrity couple'. He seems to be genuinely uxorious and will talk happily to interviewers of his desire for children, his love of stability. *Vanity Fair* (1998) put him on their cover in jeans and white T-shirt – then included an editorial which praised Pitt for his real-life physical strength and bravery. During the drive back from location shooting, the weather changed dramatically – and Pitt took over the wheel of the hired jeep, driving the terrified magazine staff to safety.

Like McQueen, he had played several roles before one film captured the public imagination. In *Thelma and Louise* (Ridley Scott, 1991) he is only on screen for ten minutes or so. However, wearing a cowboy outfit with a Stetson pulled low over his forehead, he seems to be paying sartorial homage to both James Dean and to McQueen himself. But it was the sex scene with Geena Davis that was most memorable. He appears on her doorstep, dripping wet, and within minutes she has had the first vaginal orgasm of her life. The scene is notable for the way in which the two bodies are presented to the spectator. In an inversion of Hollywood norms, we see far more of his body than we do of hers. His perfectly proportioned, honed, toned torso fills the screen – the camera lingers lovingly upon it. It is both erotic object and offered to us for aesthetic appreciation – for it is posed and lit to resemble, at moments, a Greek statue on display in a well-appointed museum. It is there as fetishised object in every way – for sexual pleasure or more demure appreciation. Cinema has perhaps finally incorporated the 'homospectorial gaze' (Nixon, 1998, p. 83).

*A River Runs through It* (Robert Redford, 1992) is set in Montana in 1910 – given fashion's inability to escape from its involvement with 'retro' and its endless recycling of the past, Pitt looks as if he would fit perfectly into a Ralph Lauren fashion shoot. In *Legends of the Fall* (Edward Zwick, 1994) he is back in Montana in 1913, as Tristan, wild

sibling with rugged exterior and good heart. He falls in love with his younger brother's fiancée – she admires him, as do we, while he wrestles with bears, rides horses, shoots perfectly. Again he is dressed in authentic period costume that is curiously of the moment – the long gabardine coat he wears resembles the Drizabone mackintosh, imported from Australia in the early 1990s. With the outbreak of World War I, the action shifts to France, where the younger brother dies. But Tristan does nothing as ignoble as to return and claim his brother's wife for himself. He avenges his brother, takes his heart back to Montana for burial – and disappears into the wilds.

In *Se7en* (David Fincher, 1995) he is loving young husband and rookie detective, tie askew and hair spiked-up, paired with the much older Morgan Freeman, tidily dressed, well educated and ultimately paternalistic. *Fight Club* is interesting in terms of both consumption and spectacle. 'Tyler Durden' is supposedly unfashionable and has declared war on consumerism. Yet Pitt is, paradoxically, the epitome of thrift-shop chic – and once again the torso is proffered up that we may gaze upon it. There is a deliberate, gradual mutilation of face and body as if to prove that this spectacle can withstand anything – blood streams from his nose, his eyes are blackened, his nose broken, his teeth chipped. In *Snatch* (Guy Ritchie, 2000), his body is decorated with an elaborate pattern of Celtic tattoos. So often stripped, so frequently venerated – no wonder he was chosen to play Achilles in *Troy* (Wolfgang Petersen, 2004). Only for his wedding did Pitt don designer clothes – and he has refused advertising contracts; Clooney has, however, accepted one – he became the face of Police sunglasses. His clothed body replaced the naked torso of David Beckham on posters and hoardings. Perhaps, in the circling of rough and smooth, the latter is temporarily in the ascendant.

Clooney had languished in television doldrums, or made forgettable films such as *Return of the Killer Tomatoes* (John de Bello, 1988) until cast as Dr Ross in the television show *ER* (1994–). The character he played encapsulated the 'smooth' persona – Ross was lady killer incarnate. In the film *One Fine Day* (Michael Hoffman, 1996), he played a feckless divorced father – smooth-talking, well dressed and irresistible to women. He can look extraordinarily dapper in army uniform – as in *The Peacemaker* (Mimi Leder, 1997) *The Thin Red Line* (Terrence Malick, 1998) and *Three Kings* (David O. Russell, 1999). In *Out of Sight* he is a debonair bank robber; in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (Joel Coen, 2000) he shows the ability to send up this same persona. On the run from a chain gang, he seeks out the correct pomade needed to keep up smooth appearances, one trademarked 'Dapper Dan', and sleeps with his hair in a net. The same self-mocking strain is present in *Intolerable Cruelty* (Joel Coen, 2003), which begins with a close-up of his perfect white teeth as they undergo cosmetic dentistry. He does try, occasionally, to do blue-collar roles – as in *The Perfect Storm* (Wolfgang Petersen, 2000) and *Welcome to Collinwood* (Anthony Russo, 2002), but he looks here rather as if he were in fancy dress – he seems less dressed up, paradoxically, when in his usual smart turnout. Off screen, Clooney's persona matches his most effective roles – there have been many girlfriends, but there is no wife and no ties. The frequent magazine profiles emphasise his understated chic, his ability to look well dressed even in shorts and T-shirt and his 'old-fashioned' charm and sexuality.



Suave man and rugged man circle each other, in cinema, in magazines, in advertising campaigns. With the Oscar ceremonies the world's foremost catwalk show, fashion and film are inextricably intertwined. In the mind of the fashion designer and the stylist, 'rough' and 'smooth' are there to rotate on a seasonal basis. It is for film scholarship to decide exactly what the co-existence and continued popularity of these two archetypes might mean and to predict their survival within the currency of popular culture.

## 6

### Samuel L. Jackson: Beyond the Post-Soul Male

Russell White

Over the course of a career spanning thirty years, Samuel L. Jackson has established himself as one of the best-known and most popular actors currently working in Hollywood cinema. The recent Channel 4 television poll to find the '100 Greatest Actors of All Time', for example, placed Jackson at number 11 ahead of Morgan Freeman (at 27), Denzel Washington (28), Will Smith (51), Sidney Poitier (52), Eddie Murphy (67) and Wesley Snipes (96). While such polls are notoriously fickle in the way in which they privilege the present day and, as such, need to be approached with caution, his presence as the highest placed African-American in the list is testimony to his popularity and reputation as a character actor and star. However, while Jackson can clearly be bracketed with the likes of Washington, Freeman, Snipes and Fishburne (if not Smith who is the first genuine African American star of the 'hip-hop generation'), he does embody a different model of black masculinity to these other stars. More specifically, I want to contend here that the on-screen and off-screen personae presented by Jackson represent a heavily ironic and performative move beyond the so-called 'soul' and 'post-soul' constructions of black maleness identified by African-American scholars in particular.

The term 'post-soul' was coined by Nelson George to describe a shift in the 'tenor of African-American culture' away from 'the "we-shall-overcome" tradition of noble struggle' to a 'time of goin-for-mine materialism' (1992, p. 1). The emergence of this 'post-soul' sensibility is, in many ways, concomitant with what Cornel West has identified as the rise of an increasingly nihilistic take on the black condition and the black experience within working-class black urban communities and young working-class males especially. In his influential essay, 'Nihilism in Black America', published in his 1993 book *Race Matters*, West defines this outlook as 'the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness and (most important) lovelessness' (p. 14). For West and George, the experiences of desegregation and de-industrialisation, together with continued political and economic disenfranchisement, have led many young working-class African-Americans to abandon any hope of 'a better tomorrow'. One of the ways in which this shift from 'soul' to 'post-soul' can be traced is through changing modes and representations of black masculinity in black-identified popular culture. Where the 'soul' male was politically engaged, responsible and disciplined, the 'post-soul' male is politically disengaged, retributive and, as West would have it,

14. *Elle*, 22 April 1960, features Bardot in a *broderie anglaise* shirt and a headline announcing: 'Brigitte launches *broderie anglaise* in Saint-Tropez'.
15. 'Brigitte Bardot contre Martine Carol', *Cinéma* no. 1182, Easter special issue, 4 April 1957.
16. Archive footage of the young Bardot modelling ski outfits can be seen in a *Without Walls* documentary on Bardot, Channel 4 Television (1994).
17. The Lilli doll came from a cartoon in the tabloid *Der Bild*. The doll was designed by Max Weissbrodt and manufactured by the firm O. M. Hausser. From 'Dear Prudence', an article on the Lilli doll. <[home.alltel.net/pennlee/bildlilli.html](http://home.alltel.net/pennlee/bildlilli.html)>, accessed February 2004.
18. Camille Paglia, interview on Bardot in *Without Walls* documentary.
19. One version of this picture can be seen in Crawley, 1975, p. 25. The obsession with these is obvious in, for instance, a website devoted to Bardot's petticoat pictures: <[www.pettipond.com/bardot.htm](http://www.pettipond.com/bardot.htm)>.
20. Servat (2003) claims it appeared in November 1960, in the photographs of Brigitte with her newborn son, Nicolas. However, her hairstyle in, for instance, the 1959 *Voulez-vous danser avec moi?* is close to the *choucroute*.
21. 'La Choucroute de Brigitte Bardot', *25 ans de Marie-Claire de 1954 à 1979*, Numéro special, 1979. No exact date is given for the article, but it coincides with the release of *Vie privée* (February 1962).
22. <[www.drivingwithdawn.com/archives/2002/12/brigitte\\_bardot\\_hair\\_is\\_back.shtml](http://www.drivingwithdawn.com/archives/2002/12/brigitte_bardot_hair_is_back.shtml)>; *The Times*, 28 July 2003.
23. Quoted in 28 December 1989 obituary, <[news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/581320.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/581320.stm)>, accessed February 2004.
24. It is not easy to verify exactly how many films they worked on, as a number of Bardot films have no acknowledged costume designer. However, Réal are credited as having designed Bardot's clothes for *Vie privée*.
25. I thank Steve Allen for helping me clarify this point.
26. *Cinéma*, 22 November 1956, p. 22.
27. In Jacques Estérel cuttings file, Musée Galléria.
28. *Elle*, 7 December 1967 (no page number). Bardot features in a Paco Rabanne ensemble and in a faux-bullfighter costume by Yves St Laurent.

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## 'Sean Connery Is James Bond': Re-Fashioning British Masculinity in the 1960s

Pam Cook and Claire Hines

Within the context of the cinematic James Bond's extraordinary resilience as a cultural phenomenon, there remains the equally interesting question of Sean Connery's status among many fans and aficionados, and in the public imagination, as the definitive Bond. Despite 007's shape-shifting over more than four decades, no other actor has achieved the degree of authenticity attributed to Connery's interpretation – although each of the others has their own following.<sup>1</sup> In theory, James Bond could be played by any sufficiently mature, urbane and athletic actor – and there are rumours that when Pierce Brosnan retires, a non-British actor might take on the role of the British secret agent.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, 007 has already appeared in American form.<sup>3</sup> This is less of a travesty than it appears; after all, the special relationship between Bond and his CIA counterparts is a consistent theme throughout the franchise, and a primary element in a spy's job description is their ability to disguise themselves successfully. In a sense, the way has been paved by Brosnan, who is the most 'transatlantic' of all the Bonds, not least in his accent. However, if this were to happen, it is predictable that the desire to re-establish an original James Bond, most likely in the form of Sean Connery, would intensify.

This article sets out to explore what it is that makes Sean Connery the perfect, the quintessential James Bond. Bond is a post-modern phenomenon, on one hand, an international icon whose origins are indeterminate, on the other, a figure whose Britishness is a defining characteristic, and an essential element in marketing the films – but always an ironic cipher whose existence appears to be predicated on his chameleon-like lack of identity. He constantly re-invents himself – rather like an actor. 007 can, and does masquerade in a variety of roles in the line of duty, yet he remains himself: Bond, James Bond, as he frequently reminds everyone. He is identified by a name, and a number – perhaps a nod to his military background as a commander in the Royal Navy – and his back-story is minimal. It has been argued that the star persona – that is, the loose set of attributes that make up what we understand as a star's identity, creating a recognisable brand name – informs and inflects the characters they play, investing them with special qualities and setting up audience expectations (Dyer, 1979). Clearly, it is important to get the relationship between star and character right, if audiences (and advertisers) are not to be alienated or disappointed. Choosing the right actor to play

007 is a complex and hazardous business, especially as this is a subject on which just about everyone, whether they are fans or not, has an opinion. In cinematic terms, there is no character without the star/actor persona. Yet rather than just being a character, James Bond has become the equivalent of a star persona in his own right, in that he possesses a limited set of characteristics that are carried over from film to film, and that are mobilised in advertising and marketing campaigns. The cinematic 007 is a brand name that extends far beyond the Bond films themselves – indeed, the films are only a part of the global Bond phenomenon.<sup>4</sup> When Pierce Brosnan advertises Omega watches, he does so courtesy of his role as James Bond. It is possible, then, that James Bond transforms the accepted relationship between star and character by conferring star status on the different actors who play him, rather than the other way round. If that is the case, it would seem important that the actors who depict Bond should not be top-rank stars such as Tom Cruise or George Clooney, since their high-profile personas would outshine that of the special agent himself.

The implications of this are, of course, that in playing 007, an actor aiming for major international stardom risks being identified with the role to such an extent that all his other performances are tarred with the Bond brush – and, indeed, despite having become a global superstar with almost seventy films to his credit, Sean Connery's seven outings as James Bond still define his acting career for many people, causing him to distance himself from those films.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, playing James Bond can help revive an acting career – as with Roger Moore, for example – or represent a nail in the coffin, as with George Lazenby, or transform an actor into a star, as in the case of Pierce Brosnan. Connery's and Brosnan's careers as 007 mirror one another to some extent: Connery kick-started the series, making an international name for himself in the process, while Brosnan revived the franchise, achieving worldwide recognition which has gained him considerable power in the industry. Brosnan's turn-of-the-century action hero has travelled some distance from Connery's suave 1960s' dandy – but that is the subject of another article. Here, we want to investigate how the working-class Scot Sean Connery was fashioned into the English gentleman-spy James Bond, contextualising our analysis in the cultural history of the 1960s. Our focus will be on the re-invention of British masculinity in the period, under the impact of consumer capitalism, and how that was manifested in both fashion and cinema. We shall also look at the connections between James Bond and the US male lifestyle magazine *Playboy*, launched in 1953 by Hugh Hefner with a view to re-styling the American man.

Producers Albert Broccoli and Harry Saltzman went to considerable lengths to find the right British actor to play Ian Fleming's sophisticated special agent, who had been popularised during the 1950s in the risqué James Bond novels and a cartoon strip that first appeared in the *Daily Express* in 1958 (Jones, 1999, p. 62). In the early 1950s, at the height of the Cold War, the highly publicised scandals of British communist double agents Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, explicitly linked to their homosexuality, had cast doubt on the trustworthiness of the British Establishment. Burgess and Maclean came from the upper echelons of society, and were Cambridge men. In the context of contemporary research studies into male and female sexuality by Alfred Kinsey,<sup>6</sup> which

had revealed some surprising statistics about the incidence of homosexuality in married men, and the lack of sexual gratification experienced by many married women, the implications were that all was not well with the 'normal' heterosexual marriage that formed the bedrock of the post-war consumer economy. At the same time, state legal intervention into formerly private arenas such as prostitution, homosexuality and abortion was attempting to reform and liberalise sexual morality in the direction of individual freedom and choice (see Hall, 1980). Against this background, James Bond emerged as both catalyst and symptom. His relationship to the British Establishment in class terms was not that clear, but his aggressive heterosexual masculinity and his inclination for slightly kinky rough-and-tumble distanced him from what was increasingly perceived as an effete, snobbish and outdated upper class. As a maverick risk-taker and sexual adventurer, Bond flouted the hierarchical, military-style rules and regulations of his stuffy superiors. While his patriotic allegiance was not in doubt, his rebellious tendencies made him vulnerable, both to exotic female spies and to the authoritarian system for which he worked.

Bond was a hero for the times, a transitional figure encapsulating the changes and contradictions facing British society in the throes of modernisation. The expansion of post-war consumer capitalism had produced groups with increased spending power, among them young working-class males, whose newly acquired wealth created a market for styles and fashions that would reflect their challenge to the status quo. Stars such as Elvis Presley, Marlon Brando and James Dean, dressed in T-shirt and jeans or black leather, articulated this youthful rebellion, which expressed total antipathy to the suits, shirts and ties of the conservative older generation. In Britain, a new style of actor emerged in response to the influence of the disaffected American male: the Angry Young Man, initially incarnated by Richard Burton in Tony Richardson's 1959 film *Look Back in Anger*,<sup>7</sup> who was driven by hatred of the British class system and the elitism of British society in general. In the late 1950s and early 60s, British cinema began to feature muscular, virile, working-class rebel heroes, personified by the likes of Albert Finney, Richard Harris and Stanley Baker, whose bodies were put on display for erotic contemplation, and whose hedonistic, amoral attitudes threatened the polite surface of the public-school ruling class. In this context, James Bond represented a bridge between tradition and modernity. Although not a working-class hero, his opposition to the British Establishment was clear in his tendency to break ranks and his disregard for authority. His aspiration to the lavish lifestyle and privilege of his superiors, coupled with his amorality and proclivity for sexual violence, reflected an impatience with, and occasionally contempt for, British middle-class hypocrisy. In many ways, then, beneath his urbane sophistication, James Bond possessed many of the attributes of a rebel hero, masquerading as a member of the Establishment and producing a kind of ironic commentary on its shortcomings.

In the wider social arena, Bond encapsulated the strengths and weaknesses of Britain on the world stage, and its need to modernise. With the decline of the ruling classes, the Empire and the traditional heavy industries, Britain attempted to reinvent itself as a democratic, technologically innovative nation, vying for a place at the forefront of

developments in aerodynamics, the chemical industries and electronics. During the 1950s and 60s, Britain's trade and cultural links to both Europe and the US were consolidated by ambitious projects such as Concorde, and by the increase in imported ready-to-wear men's fashions from continental Europe, particularly from France and Italy, which challenged the domination of American popular culture in the British marketplace. The latter had inspired many of the youth subcultures, and had also transformed traditional dress for older men by creating a more casual fashion for open-necked shirts, often worn without a jacket. New synthetic fabrics such as Dralon, Orlon and Terylene, when mixed with wool, produced lightweight garments which kept their shape and were easy-care, allowing for greater freedom of movement. These lighter fabrics were to completely transform the military-style, formal tailored suits worn by the English City Gent, which were already being parodied by the street fashions of groups such as the Teddy Boys, who merged English style with elements of American iconography. This period heralded an era of intensified male consumerism in fashion and commodity consumption which had a dramatic impact on attitudes to male dress, and helped to establish Britain as a major force in the burgeoning global consumer economy, led by the US (Costantino, 1997, pp. 78–93).

In the international context, Bond represented a cosmopolitan European–British style in contrast to those youth subcultures inspired by US popular culture and music.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, although relatively young (he is described by Ian Fleming in *Moonraker* as in his mid-thirties), his military background and experience placed him at some distance from both teenage youth culture and the twenty-something Angry Young Man. At the same time, he was definitely not part of the older generation, and his style and expensive tastes identified him as a well-heeled bachelor with no strings – in other words, he spent all his money on himself. Despite being disposed to conspicuous consumption when it came to fast cars and other boys' toys, his dress style was defined by its understated elegance, presumably in order to allow him to merge into the background when necessary.

How, then, did Sean Connery, whose previous cinematic roles had been confined to Celtic working-class villains in films such as *No Road Back* (Montgomery Tully, 1956) and *Hell Drivers* (Cy Endfield, 1957), land the part of the suave James Bond against competition from a prestigious line-up of British actors that included Trevor Howard, Cary Grant, Richard Burton, Patrick McGoohan, Roger Moore and David Niven (see Macnab, 2000, p. 197)? This list is interesting in itself – the inclusion of the Irish McGoohan, the Welsh Burton and the Scottish Connery demonstrates how the bias towards upper-class Englishness that characterised British male stars until the 1950s was breaking down, producing a more inclusive definition of Britishness, in class and regional terms. However, Connery's Scottishness could have been perceived as a drawback, particularly in the all-important American market: despite landing a contract with Fox, and appearing as romantic interest in *Another Time, Another Place* (Lewis Allen, 1958) and Disney's *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* (1959), his career in the US had not taken off. Yet in some respects he possessed the ideal attributes to play Bond. He had an athletic physique,<sup>9</sup> and a certain grace of movement, thanks to some dance training. Due to his experience as a male model,<sup>10</sup> he was used to posing in suits. He also had a dark, brooding qual-

ity that seemed to match Fleming's description of his hero in *Moonraker*: '[A] rather saturnine young man ... something a bit cold and dangerous in that face ... Looks pretty fit ... [a] tough-looking customer' (quoted in Jones, 1999). Connery's relaxed physicality and predatory sexuality, the obverse of the 'stiff upper lip' brigade, was exactly the right image for the cool, modern version of British masculinity represented by the cinematic Bond, who would break with the past and project a vision of Britain at the forefront of technological and economic progress. This image drew on traditional British class stereotypes, while redefining them for the modern world.

Connery's Scottishness can thus be seen as a key element in that process of revision, displaying a new version of Britishness that would be viable in world markets, without sacrificing the hallmarks of quality and superior standards of craftsmanship that traditionally characterised British products. It also carried with it connotations of the history of Scottish antagonism to English imperialism, a factor that would appeal to American audiences in particular. Connery has always insisted on his Scottish roots – something which has endowed his persona with a degree of authenticity (see Macnab, 2000, p. 199). One might speculate, then, that he brought some of this authenticity to his performance as 007, and that it has contributed to his reputation as the 'best' Bond in many people's eyes. The authenticity seems to reside less in his ability to accurately portray the English gentleman-spy, than in his skill in re-defining and updating British stereotypes.

Another significant element in the choice of Connery was the fact that, although he



Designed for action: Sean Connery dressed to kill in *Dr No* (1962)

was an established actor, he was still relatively unknown to cinema audiences. This meant that his persona would not eclipse that of Bond himself, the true star of the films.<sup>11</sup> The working-class Connery had to be tutored in style, manners and dress sense for the role. Terence Young, the director of the first film, *Dr No* (1962), who was an Old Etonian and ex-Guardsman, and whose background was similar to that of Fleming's Bond, acted as mentor, taking the actor to his tailors in London and Paris and encouraging him to go out in the evening wearing Bond's clothes, so that he became accustomed to 007's urbane image. In addition to acquiring the special agent's expensive tastes, Connery was required to enhance his slightly receding hairline with a toupé, and his bushy eyebrows were plucked (see Broccoli, 1998, p. 171). Connery has recognised Young's decisive role in defining Bond's stylish and sophisticated on-screen image through a process of familiarisation which lent polish to the aggressive masculinity and rugged exterior that the actor brought to the role.<sup>12</sup> The biographical details for Connery in *Dr No's* British pressbook continued to emphasise his working-class origins and confident physicality following 'a succession of rough-and-ready jobs requiring plenty of physical activity and stamina', promoting 'James Bond – Milkman' as a populist figure.<sup>13</sup> Bond's was an image constructed through wardrobe and studied by Connery, whose performance in *Dr No* was described by the *News of the World* as 'fitting Fleming's hero like a Savile Row suit', a comparison which forecast both the actor's identification with the role and the continued attention paid to Bond's attire in subsequent additions to the film series.<sup>14</sup>

The immediate cultural impact of the first Bond films was astonishing. Connery was so successful in creating Bond as an international style icon that the image quickly became a trademark, with multiple tie-ins to men's fashions and accessories. As well as the many licences granted to manufacturers eager to label their products with the lucrative '007' or 'James Bond' logo, the style was reflected in contemporary articles and advertisements in men's magazines, which proliferated in the 1960s. In 1966, American *GQ* devoted an editorial to Connery's interpretation of the Bond style, while *Playboy* magazine, which had a long-standing association with Ian Fleming and his James Bond, displayed an approach to male fashion that shared a number of features with the Bond films. The publication of an original Fleming novella entitled *The Hildebrand Rarity* in its March 1960 issue meant that *Playboy* became the first American magazine to print a Bond story, an alliance sustained by the serialisation of a further five Bond adventures during the 1960s.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the growing popularity of Fleming's work, his publication in *Playboy* was also a result of publisher Hugh Hefner's self-confessed admiration for both the 'tall, Continental-suited, profoundly British, profoundly sophisticated' author and his creation.<sup>16</sup> It was an appreciation that, *Playboy* suggested, was based on mutual esteem since Fleming was said have to been convinced that 'James Bond, if he were an actual person, would be a registered reader of *Playboy*', as the reader was offered a hero who lived the fantasy lifestyle that the magazine recommended.<sup>17</sup>

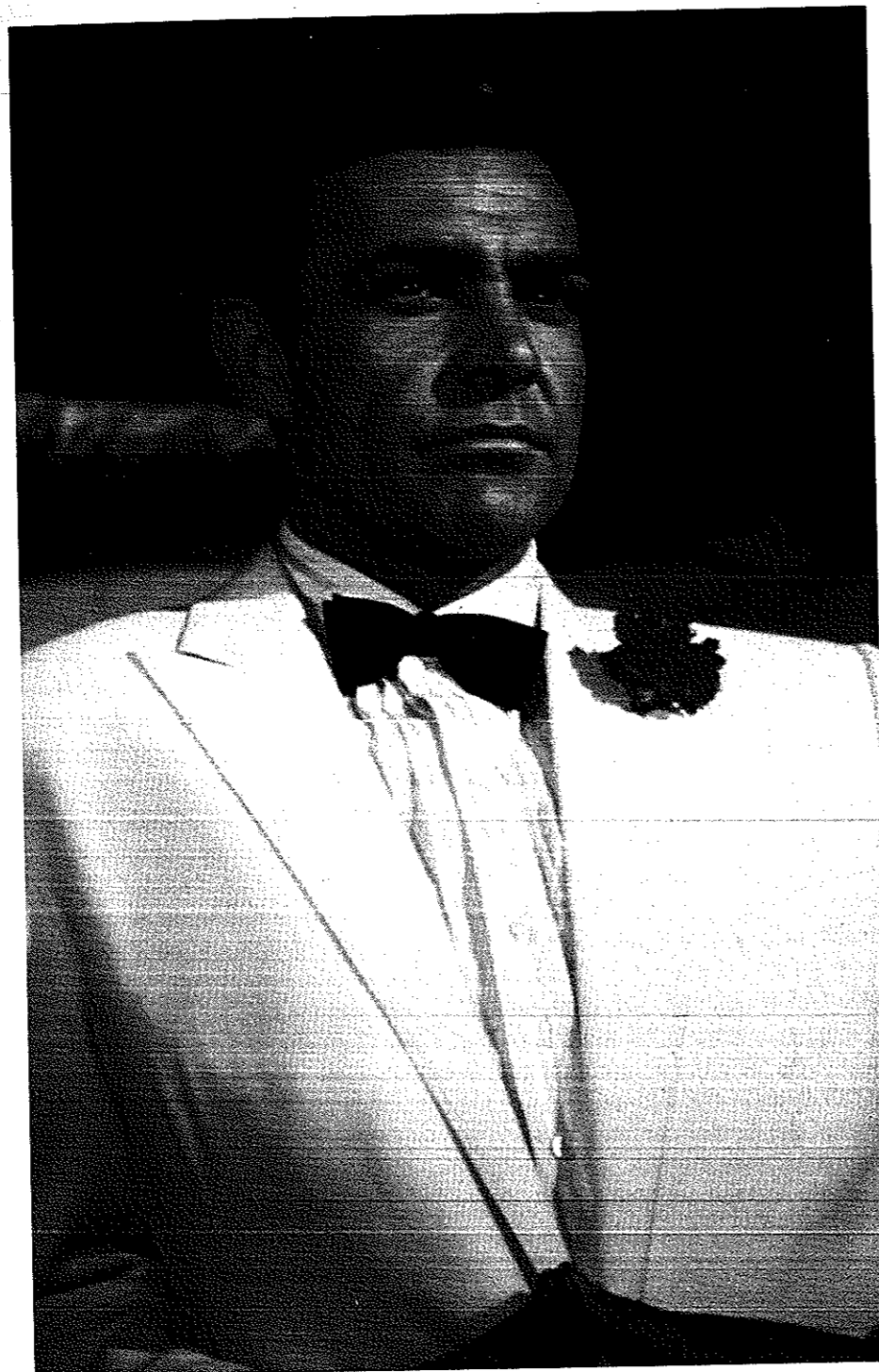
*Playboy's* articles were to take men's fashion seriously, introducing the reader to the importance of sartorial style within the consumerist, sexualised and liberated lifestyle that it promoted. A typical article in the January 1965 issue on 'The Progressive Dinner

Party' illustrated the magazine's propensity to combine fashion with other elements of the playboy lifestyle. The article constructed a fictional narrative of the evening's events, while a series of photographs depicted the party's 'host' and guests engaged in a number of sociable activities including dinner, conversation and dancing, followed by breakfast in a suitably 'exurban hideaway'. Surrounded by women, the playboy host's party attire was described in detail:

Host is impeccable in Italian olive-colour nubby-silk dinner jacket with black satin lapels and sleeve cuffs, black mohair-and-worsted trousers with satin extension waistband and side stripes; jacket \$85, trousers \$35, both by Lord West. Formal shirt is of cotton broadcloth, has narrow pleats, double cuffs, by Excelllo, \$9. (Mario and Green, 1965, p. 107)

Functioning as more than a dinner jacket, the host's 'impeccable' attire was intended as a fashion statement, and as an aspirational style for others to copy. Despite its libertarian approach to (hetero-)sexuality, *Playboy* was reluctant to put the nude male body on display, a reluctance shared by men's magazines even today. Cultural commentators have put this down to the difficulty associated with 'forcing men to look at themselves self-consciously as men', since it is a look fraught with overtones of homo-eroticism – a threat to the aggressive heterosexual masculinity advocated by both *Playboy* and the Bond films (Mort, 1986, p. 41). In surrounding *Playboy* Bond with hordes of glamorous desiring women, the intention was to make it clear that they were the natural objects of male attention. This disavowal of effeminate homosexuality made it possible to redefine consumerism, previously associated primarily with women, as a legitimate masculine activity, as heterosexual male readers and viewers could consider fashion with their sexual identities more or less intact. Even so, the sheer force of the disclaimer indicates the enormous effort required to overcome the 'problem'. The attention to detail exhibited in such articles about male fashion, and in the costuming of the cinematic James Bond, smacks of a dandyism which seems to be at odds with the virile man of action. Such fetishism threatens to distract from the serious business at hand, whether that be the seduction of beautiful women, or saving the world from evil.

Connery's besuited frame achieved the status of an icon during the 1960s, and despite the fact that he wore many different outfits as the secret agent, it is this image of 007 in a suit that has endured, and has become synonymous with the Bond films. The suit also remained an integral item in the wardrobe of *Playboy* magazine. It has been argued that the garment is 'symbolic of traditional manliness', displaying qualities associated with 'self-restraint, and focusing energy on . . . goal-directed behaviour', traditional masculine characteristics which the playboy bachelor transformed, imbuing them with hedonism, style and sexuality (Bruzzi, 1997, p. 69; Rubinstein, 1995, p. 58). Yet for others the modern suit is erotic in itself, revealing the contours of the broad-shouldered, idealised male body established by classical Greco-Roman culture (see Hollander, 1994). As the 60s progressed, the international box-office success of Connery's Bond offered *Playboy* a tangible vision of its model hero, and a special 'James Bond issue' of the mag-



Dandy Jim: Sean Connery as *Playboy* Bond in *Goldfinger* (1964)

azine published in November 1965 contained both an interview with Sean Connery, and a pictorial essay on 'James Bond's Girls'. Connery's comments were indicative of the new attitudes to male fashion fostered by both the magazine and the Bond films:

I think I've got seven or eight suits now; I took them all from the films – plus a couple I bought a while ago in a moment of weakness. Something came over me and I went out one day and spent £300 [\$840] on two suits.<sup>18</sup>

Connery's willingness to spend his disposable income on his wardrobe supported the ethos of affluence presented by *Playboy*, while his admission that he had experienced a 'moment of weakness' endorsed the acceptability of such reckless spending. The masculine identity associated with *Playboy* Bond was defined by an aggressive individualism signified by a sophisticated style based on conspicuous consumption, sexual promiscuity and an easy familiarity with the brand-named products represented as the necessary accessories for his bachelor lifestyle. The suit, which underwent a radical transformation during the 1960s, played a vital role in shaping this identity.

As a version of the gentleman-spy, Fleming's Bond was well dressed, in a simple, classic style: dark suit, white shirt and black silk tie and shoes. The understated style of the modern English gentleman seems to have originated with the dandy Beau Brummell in the early nineteenth century, who was instrumental in creating a new, urban male identity which aspired to aristocratic and upper-middle-class status, but was available to anyone who could afford it. Brummell and his followers revolutionised male dress, creating a fashion for an unadorned look that depended on superb cut and fit, and new pliable fabrics, for its effect. Despite its simplicity, however, this look was blatantly erotic: the dandies' tight, figure-hugging breeches and cutaway jackets displayed the sleek male body in all its graphic beauty. Many of the features of this dandy fashion philosophy can be detected in the Bond image. As described by Elizabeth Wilson,

[t]he role of the dandy implied an intense preoccupation with self and self-presentation; image was everything, and the dandy a man who often had no family, no calling, apparently no sexual life, no visible means of financial support. He was the very archetype of the new urban man who came from nowhere and for whom appearance was reality. His devotion to an ideal of dress that sanctified understatement inaugurated an epoch not of no fashions for men, but of fashions that put cut and fit before ornament, colour and display. The skin-tight breeches of the dandy were highly erotic; so was his new, unpainted masculinity. The dandy was a narcissist. He did not abandon the pursuit of beauty; he changed the kind of beauty that was admired. (1985, p. 180)

The nineteenth-century dandy's look was a reaction to the highly decorated male fashions of the time, whose effeminate take on masculine identity was deemed inappropriate to the more restrained, serious ethos of the Industrial Revolution. It was a classless, upwardly mobile fashion that relied on classic British tailoring combined with innovatory materials and techniques. It was accompanied by a fastidious attention to

style detail, and to personal hygiene, redefining these trivial, 'feminine' preoccupations as legitimate, serious male pursuits. The dandy did not subscribe to the contemporary work ethic; rather, he lived by his wits, and worked on himself, as pure image. The dandy was a style icon, but he also embodied an ironic critique of the emerging middle class.

As a transitional figure, who resolved social change and contradiction on the level of image, the Regency dandy has much in common with Connery's Bond, whose sartorial style was a response to the traditional dress of the English Establishment, as well as to the 'peacock revolution' of the burgeoning counter-cultures. Youth fashions of the 1960s were characterised by mimicry and pastiche. They appropriated styles and iconography from different periods and cultures, mixing them together to produce new, clashing configurations which were deliberately iconoclastic. The 'peacock revolution' referred to colourful, decorative styles for men, which allowed them to enjoy and consume fashion, while displaying themselves to attract women. At its most extreme, this peacock style was exhibited by rock stars such as Mick Jagger, who sported a flamboyant, long, frilled tunic reminiscent of eighteenth-century 'effeminate' dress. The bi-sexual, or 'unisex' fashions of the period challenged gender boundaries while being compatible with heterosexuality. At the same time, French designers such as Pierre Cardin, completely revamped the design of the conventional city suit and the way it was produced, revolutionising tailoring methods to produce ready-to-wear designer garments for the young, fashion-conscious male (see Costantino, 1997, pp. 94–107).

While he participated in the 'peacock revolution' to some extent, notably in his desire to dress to attract women, Connery's Bond positioned himself firmly against the strident iconoclasm of the counter-cultures, and even the milder version exhibited by the Beatles, whose low-necked, collarless suits were inspired by Pierre Cardin.<sup>19</sup> In *Dr No*, Connery

... wore Turnbull & Asser shirts with French cuffs, specially made by Michael Fish (who went on to open his own hugely influential shop, Mr Fish); he wore a Nehru jacket, and razor-sharp suits made for him by Anthony Sinclair in London's Conduit Street. Connery was both smart and casual, and the knitted short-sleeved shirt he wore when helping Ursula Andress out of the sea has been a casual-wear classic ever since.

He was influential in other ways: because he always favoured two-piece tropical weight suits that offered serious mobility, men bought them in their hundreds of thousands; because he wore a white tuxedo, it began filling the pages of countless fashion magazines. (Jones, 1999, p. 62)

Connery's outfits were a mixture of old and new, bespoke and off-the-peg: Michael Fish was one of the new young designers leading the 60s' sartorial revolution. He had trained with traditional outfitters in Jermyn Street, and worked for exclusive shirt-makers Turnbull & Asser, before opening his own ready-to-wear shop just off Savile Row, the bastion of fine English tailoring. Designed by Anthony Sinclair, Connery's jackets were cut a little fuller, allowing Bond room to carry his gun while still following the contours of his figure. Michael Fish provided similarly sympathetic tailoring, supplying Connery with

double-cuffed shirts using buttons rather than cufflinks in order to allow Bond to dress and, of course, undress, more easily.<sup>20</sup> 007's suits may have been custom-made for him, but they were mass-produced and bought in their thousands through the burgeoning men's fashion retail outlets. The 'smart casual' look, which extended to the suits and the formal tuxedo, courtesy of Connery's relaxed body language and habit of posing with his hands in his pockets, evoked the dandy's and the playboy's refusal of the puritanical work ethic. Yet this casual air was something of a masquerade, since in the line of duty, Connery's Bond was required to be quick on his feet in order to extricate himself from sticky situations. Fortunately, the suits were made in lightweight fabrics, allowing for maximum mobility. Like the dandy, Bond lived, and survived, by his wits. On many occasions, it was his own survival, rather than that of the Western world, that seemed to be most at risk. In this respect, he resembled the modern-day super-heroes who exist solely for the purpose of resolving major crises which threaten destruction on a global scale. In Connery's case, it was often explicitly his genitalia, and by implication his heterosexuality, that were under threat.<sup>21</sup> His sharp suits, and his 'smart casual' demeanour, on one hand revealed his body and sexuality, rendering him vulnerable to homosexual and female desire, and on the other masked his ability to muster a repertoire of survival tactics. Thus the suits both empowered him, and revealed his weaknesses. Those weaknesses were necessary to his sexual allure, while making it clear that he would never be able to survive without the array of state-of-the-art technological gadgets developed by the best scientific minds Britain had to offer.

It is not difficult to regard Connery's Bond as an anachronistic throwback to a traditional type of white, heterosexual masculinity, an example of unreconstructed manhood arising just when the radical social changes heralding the modern women's movement, and the gay and civil rights movements were making waves. He can also be seen as a conservative reaction to Cold War politics, and to the growth of continental Europe as a world power at a time when Britain's relationship to the EU was on the agenda. However, such readings do not exhaust the available meanings in Connery's Bond persona. It is precisely his (often cringe-making) regressive qualities, and his lack of political correctness, that underpin his enduring appeal. His sadism and habit of treating some women as disposable objects are counter-balanced by an occasional chivalric tendency, and by a penchant for strong, independent women who present a challenge to his manhood in that they are not necessarily immediately available, and are his equals in professional skills and sexual expertise. While they do generally submit to his charms, they give him a run for his money, and his ability to be 'up to the job' is constantly tested. The crude racism of the 1960s' Bond films, completely unacceptable in social terms, is tempered by a comic-strip quality that removes it from the realms of reality, allowing audiences to enjoy forbidden fruit in safety. These tensions are often played out in sartorial terms: in *Goldfinger* (1964), for example, Bond's superiority is established by the understated elegance of his wardrobe in contrast to the more florid attire of the villainous Goldfinger or the untidy disarray of his henchman Oddjob's outfit, itself a gross parody of the classic English city suit. In this cartoon universe, Bond's aura of 'cool' resides in his ironic awareness of himself as fiction, as pure image. Connery's knowing

performance encapsulates this sardonic distance, while endowing 007 with a certain authenticity, courtesy of his physical attributes, his working-class origins and his Scottish nationality. The success of his rendition of Bond lies in a particular combination of rebel hero, dandy and heterosexual playboy that offers the pleasures of identification while enabling an ironic take on white, heterosexual masculinity itself.

### Sean Connery Bond Filmography

*Dr No* (Terence Young, 1962, UK. Eon Productions)

*From Russia with Love* (Terence Young, 1963, UK. Eon Productions)

*Goldfinger* (Guy Hamilton, 1964, UK. Danjaq/Eon Productions)

*Thunderball* (Terence Young, 1965, UK. Danjaq/Eon Productions)

*You Only Live Twice* (Lewis Gilbert, 1967, UK. Danjaq/Eon Productions)

*Diamonds Are Forever* (Guy Hamilton, 1971, UK. Danjaq/Eon Productions)

*Never Say Never Again* (Irvin Kershner, 1983, UK/USA. Woodcote/Talia Film Productions/Producers Sales Organization)

### TV Documentary Material

*Brits Go to Hollywood: Sean Connery* (Christopher Bruce, 2003), Channel 4, 22 November 2003.

'Inside *Dr No*' documentary, special feature on *Dr No* DVD, UA/MGM, 2000.

### Notes

1. See for example 'Bond 1 – Sean Connery', <[www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Boulevard/5584](http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Boulevard/5584)> accessed 2004.
2. Australian Hugh Jackman is one of those tipped to play the next Bond.
3. American television network CBS broadcast a one-hour adaptation of *Casino Royale* on 21 October 1954 as part of its weekly thriller series, *Climax!*, in which Bond was played by Barry Nelson, an American actor best known for his starring roles on Broadway. See Chapman, 1999, pp. 40–2.
4. In addition to the international box-office success of the Bond films, and Bond's circulation as a popular cultural icon, related merchandise and product tie-ins have included a mini-industry of music, clothing, cars, toys, alcohol, books, cosmetics and memorabilia, updated with the release of each new film. See 'A View to a Sell', *Time*, 11 November 2002, p. 70, with reference to *Die Another Day* (Lee Tamahori, 2002).
5. See the Channel 4 documentary *Brits Go to Hollywood: Sean Connery*.
6. Alfred Kinsey's report on *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*, published in 1948, was followed by his report on *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female*, published in 1953.
7. Based on John Osborne's 1956 Royal Court Theatre production, starring Kenneth Haigh as Jimmy Porter.
8. However, some of the subcultures, such as the Mods, defined themselves in terms of European (i.e. Italian and French) styles as well.
9. Connery won a bronze medal at a Mr Universe contest in London in the early 1950s (see Macnab, 2000, p. 197).

10. As well as posing as a model for students at the Edinburgh College of Art, Connery also worked as a photographic model for a men's mail-order catalogue firm. See Sellers, 1999, pp. 25–6.
11. The tag line 'Sean Connery Is James Bond' was first used on the posters for *You Only Live Twice* (1967), trading on Connery's identity as Bond, in contrast to *Casino Royale*'s spoof treatment of the character.
12. See 'Inside *Dr No*' documentary, special feature on *Dr No* DVD, UA/MGM, 2000.
13. These jobs are said to have included 'cement mixer, bricklayer, steel bender, a printer's assistant and a lifeguard'. See *Dr No* Pressbook, BFI microfiche.
14. See *News of the World*, 7 October 1962.
15. This included two short stories, *Octopussy* (printed in March and April 1966) and *The Property of a Lady*, published in *Playboy*'s tenth anniversary issue, while April, May and June of 1963, 1964 and 1965 featured serialisations of *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, *You Only Live Twice* and *The Man with the Golden Gun* respectively, each within a short time of their initial publication in hardback editions.
16. See 'Playbill', *Playboy*, March 1960.
17. *Ibid.*
18. 'Playboy Interview: Sean Connery', *Playboy*, December 1965, p. 80.
19. Note 007's ironic reference to the Beatles in *Goldfinger*, just before he's knocked unconscious!
20. See 'Inside *Dr No*' documentary, special feature on *Dr No* DVD.
21. Among many references to physical castration, the laser sequence in *Goldfinger* remains a classic.