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**Declaration**

I declare that this assignment is my own work and does not involve plagiarism or collusion. The sources of other people's work have been appropriately referenced, failing which I am willing to accept the necessary disciplinary action(s) to be taken against me.

Student's Signature :

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CWK', written over a horizontal line.

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 General background**

### **1.1.1 The *Bourne Film Series* (Ludlum, 2002; Greengrass, 2004, 2007)**

*The Bourne Film Series* (2002, 2004, 2007), adapted by the series of novels written by Robert Ludlum, generated a net worth of 1.6 billion USD worldwide and has been awarded multiple awards per film. This is a set of critically acclaimed movies which makes use of the amnesia trope, a method in which a character loses his memory and identity (TV Tropes, n.d). The amnesia trope is the removal of memory pertaining to personal identity, leaving everything else intact, sometimes resulting in “a complete personality change” (Baxendale, 2004). It is used for its “dramatic potential to create suspense, provoke emotional responses, and explain away preposterous situations.” (Bao, 2018, p.2). In *The Bourne Film Series* (2002, 2004, 2007), the protagonist Jason Bourne loses his memory, while not losing his skills from being a secret service agent in his past, which sets the premise of this series of films. Due to the loss of his memory, he constantly searches for his identity, his past and a sense of purpose throughout the film.

### **1.1.2 Psychoanalysis (Freud, Mulvey, Siegfried)**

Psychoanalysis is the field of study aimed at understanding the human psyche, mainly the id, ego and superego (Siegfried, 2018; Freud, 1923). The id stores thoughts that are not capable of becoming conscious (Freud, 1949), and its sole purpose is “the satisfaction of its innate needs” (Freud, 1923, p.4). These realities are repressed because the ego, or the “intermediary between the id and the external world” (Freud, 1949, p.2), is unable to rationally deal with them. The ego is the part of the psyche which “pursues pleasure and seeks to avoid

unpleasure. An increase in unpleasure which is expected and foreseen is met by a signal of anxiety.” (p.3). Whereas, the superego’s function is the “limitation of satisfactions” (Freud, 1923, p.4), the part of the brain which excels in logical thinking, limiting the amount of satisfaction and anxiety an organism feels (Freud, 1923).

In this paper, psychoanalysis will be used specifically, through the lens of Laura Mulvey’s *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (Mulvey, 1988), to demonstrate how the psychological trauma experienced from the loss of memory and the repression of his identity can “affect the fascination of film”. (p. 57)

## **1.2 Rationale**

This research intends to discover where and how the portrayal of masculinity in Hollywood films have evolved and adapted to shifts in societal perceptions as embodied within *The Bourne Film Series (2002, 2004, 2007)* due to “pre-existing patterns of fascination” (Mulvey, 1998, p.57).

## **1.3 Research Questions**

- How have the notions of masculinity been displayed in the characterisation in *The Bourne Film Series (2002, 2004, 2007)*
- Where is the place for the feminine subject in this film? (Mulvey, 1988)
- How does the position of the feminine subject highlight masculinity in Jason Bourne?

- How restricted is this film to a “formal Mise-en-scene” (Mulvey, 1988, p.58), seen in the traditional Hollywood films of the 1920s to the 1950s?

#### **1.4 Thesis Statement**

The Bourne Film’s Series’ portrayal of masculinity deviates, albeit not fully, from the Hollywoodian established interpretation of sexual differences due to changes in social perceptions of power balance between men and women.

#### **1.5 Scope of Research / Delimitation(s)**

This research is limited by the two theories in *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (Mulvey, 1988) and *The Language of Visual Art* (O’Toole, 2008).

This research is limited to the definition of traditional Hollywoodian masculinity as embodied by Laura Mulvey and other such film theorists.

This research will be focusing on the first three films of the series, or the Bourne Trilogy, including *The Bourne Identity* (Ludlum, 2002), *The Bourne Supremacy* (Greengrass, 2004) and *The Bourne Ultimatum* (Greengrass, 2007). However, there is potential expansion to older films of the same genre, limited by the dominant views propagated by Hollywood hegemony , which is the “unstable equilibrium” between state and people, leading to Hollywoodian films used as a “political weapon” to contribute to homoerotic disavowal (Mulvey, 1988; Gramsci, 1999).

## **1.6 Significance of Research / Usefulness**

This research is an interesting application of multiple fields of study such as Mulvey's classic theory of *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (Mulvey, 1988) into a modern film which has not been excessively analysed and has been critically acclaimed. The scope of this research as well as the integrated framework proposed can also be applied in similar Hollywood action films to analyse the evolution of Hollywood masculinity.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Psychoanalytic Film Theory (Mulvey, Mackinnon, Neale, Greven)**

Psychoanalytic Film Theory is a school of literary theory which was first developed by Laura Mulvey in the article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1988). Laura Mulvey scopes scopophilia as presented by Sigmund Freud to be applicable to films, and proposes a framework to interpret how cinema portrays masculinity and socially acceptable “reflects, reveals and even plays with the straight, socially established interpretation of sexual difference” (p.57). This framework seeks to understand a film through a psychoanalytic approach, and Mulvey aims to use psychoanalysis as a “political weapon” to uncover the biases of a “patriarchal society” in cinema (p.57).

First of all, men are born with an innate wish to look at others, to experience the “Pleasure in Looking/Fascination with the human form” (Mulvey, 1988, p.59). One of the reasons for this is scopophilia (Freud, 1905), an desire to take others “as objects, subjecting them to a curious and controlling gaze.” (Mulvey, 1988, p.59). This is obvious in *The Bourne Identity* (Ludlum, 2002), as Jason Bourne at the start of the film holds a derisive view of Marie who he controls at his will with a threat. His actions fit the notion of the “curious and controlling gaze” that Mulvey proposed (p.59). This instinct to look upon others is also seen from the spectator in the audience to the cinema, and it is even exacerbated, due to a spectator feeling isolated from the scene. This promotes the “illusion of voyeuristic separation” , a feeling of looking from outside into “a private world” (p.60). Cinema goes further than satisfying a primordial wish for pleasurable looking, it also develops scocoplilia in its narcissistic aspect (Mulvey, 1988). The similarities between the screen and real life lets it act as a mirror. While viewing an

image on a screen, the male spectator will take on the protagonist in the film as the “reflected body of the self” (p.60). While this allows for a temporary loss of his own ego by imagining one’s identity to be part of the film, it simultaneously reinforces his perception of self (Mulvey, 1988). A comparison made between the spectator and the protagonist will reveal a subconscious “complex process of likeness and difference”, allowing the spectator to use the protagonist as a mirror to find out more about himself (p.61). However, in the *Bourne Film Series* (2002, 2004, 2007), Jason Bourne’s identity has not been revealed, and should not provide enough to be compared to a spectator’s ego. Thus, in this case, the presence of “cinematic amnesia” will prevent the spectator from fully utilising Jason Bourne as a mirror of himself (Bao, 2018).

Another important point to note in films which propagate the male gaze is the extremely limited role of women (Doane, 1982). Roles in cinema have a tendency of being split into “Woman as Image, Man as Bearer of the Look”, or having men playing more active roles and women taking up passive roles in film (Mulvey, 1988, p.62). This is a result of the visual presence of a woman which “tends to work against the development of a story line” (p.62). This is because the visual presence of a woman signals a castration threat to her male counterpart’s id, due to “her lack of a penis” (Mulvey, 1988, p.64). Unconsciously, male spectators would feel uncomfortable because of the sexual threat the involvement of a woman entails, yet it would capture them because of innate voyeuristic desires. Even though this being a prominent view of male spectatorship, Ludlum takes a different approach in the development of Jason Bourne in *The Bourne Identity* (Ludlum, 2002). He has to rely on Marie, the female counterpart, for everything, and is forced into this corner to interact with the woman who poses a castration threat due the lack of his memories, which proves to be a

greater threat to his survival. The contrast between the traditional way women are presented versus the reliance Jason Bourne has on Marie is worth delving into as it proposes a new method in which the spectator's fascination is created with men relying on women (Mulvey, 1988). Another traditional way the concept of masculinity is created is when male characters tend to be "representative of power", and have a powerful male physique (Mulvey, 1988, p.63, Neale, 1993). True enough, Jason Bourne has a strong, capable body and instincts which lead him in the correct direction. The only thing lacking in his "representation of power" is a fully functioning identity, which had been distorted and used (p.63). Still, by having multiple traits which unquestionably use this "muscular masculinity" as a distinctive trait for men, it creates a reluctance in a male character to "gaze at his exhibitionists like" (Cohan and Hark, 1993, p. 145, Mulvey, 1988, p.63). From the elimination of man as a possible sexual object to gaze upon, a need to view women with an objectifying gaze arises, as seen in *The Bourne Film Series (2002, 2004, 2007)*, thus forming the male gaze (Mulvey, 1988).

However, due to changes in societal views of homoerotic disavowal, especially after feministic movements, there have been major shifts in the cinema paradigm, including the introduction of new film genres, such as the Buddy Film (Mason, Artz, Mulvey, Haskell), the Dual-Protagonist Film (Greven, Thompson) and the New Woman's Cinema (Nash, 1994). These genres take a new approach in crafting film spectatorship, be it for the male viewers or female viewers. The main characters in the film constantly have an "active homosexual eroticism", the sexual attraction to a counterpart of the same gender but the narrative is still able to carry on without distractions (Mulvey, 1988, p.62). This tendency can be understood as a "division or conflict between a narcissistic and a masochistic mode of masculine

identity” and has caused the use of the male gaze to become less frequent (Greven, 2009). *The Bourne Film Series (2002, 2004, 2007)*, is a set of relatively new Hollywood films which span from the years 2002 to 2007 and would likely use less of a traditional composition of masculinity. However, it has not reached the extreme of portraying homosexual characters.

In conclusion, an analysis of *The Bourne Film Series (2002, 2004, 2007)* using a Psychoanalytic Approach would give insight on how masculinity is developed to overcome the different psychological threats presented in the film.

## **2.2 The Language of Visual Art (O’Toole, McGrail)**

The Language of Visual Art is a field of study which delves into the hidden meaning behind a visual composition, such as an artwork, sculpture, or a poem. Film is also one such visual art. In its analysis, an integrated framework targeted at analysing the composition of scenes, or the mise-en-scene, is of utmost importance (McGrail). The composition refers to “the film’s visuals; meaning, all of the elements that appear on camera and their arrangement” (McGrail, n.d, para.3). This includes camera angles, objects in the film, setting, lighting, decor, depth of space and costumes worn. As film is created from a multitude of frames and scenes, mise-en-scene plays an increasingly crucial role in creating mood and meaning to the shots (Barsam and Monahan, 2010). The chosen framework has to be comprehensive and have multiple layers of analysis, from the smallest scene to the trends within the work. As a result, I have chosen the framework proposed in *The Language of Displayed Art* (O’Toole, 1994). It takes a systematic, integrated approach by analysing the individual and working its way up to the entire piece and the meaning behind the construction of the work (O’Toole, 1994).

In his book *The Language of Displayed Art* (O’Toole, 1994), Michael O’Toole’s elaborates on how an analysis of a visual art piece usually involves “extensive information from outside the painting - mythology, social history, and technique” which creates a distinct impact on each individual (p.3). A semiotic approach to analysis would thus “allow us to relate the nature of this impact to the scene portrayed, the social, intellectual and economic world within which the artist and his patrons worked.” (O’Toole, 1994, p.4) This is through using “precise counterparts of perspective” (O’Toole, 1994, p.3) to heavily frame structures visually. To do this, O’Toole highlighted a framework which makes use of “‘functional’ semiotics” (O’Toole, 1994, p.5). The framework is as such:

Unit\Function	Representational	Modal	Compositional
Work	Narrative themes Scenes Portrayals Interplay of episodes	Rhythm Gaze Frame Light Perspective Modality	Gestalt: Framing Horizontals Verticals Diagonals Proportion Geometry Line Rhythm Colour
Trends	Actions, events Agents-patients-goals Focal/side sequence Interplay of actions	Relative prominence Scale Centrality Interplay of modalities	Relative position in work Alignment Interplay Coherence
Episode	Character Act/Stance/Gesture Clothing components	Gaze Stance Characterization Contrast: scale	Relative position in episode Parallelism/Opposition Subframing

	Object	Line Light Colour	
Member	Part of body/object Natural form	Stylisation	Cohesion: reference (parallel, contrast, rhythm)

(O'Toole, 1994, p.24)

In this framework, each row represents a different rank, a member being the smallest unit of the composition, and a work being the entire composition itself. Each column is focused on analysing a different function, which are the representational function, the modal function and the compositional function (O'Toole, 1994). "The Modal function" are the virtually universal features and details of the work which evokes in us a response (p.5). Next, "The Representational function" stems from meaning being built up "from the individual figures through the rank of Episode to discuss the work of the theme last" (p.12, 14). Lastly, "The Compositional function" is meaning created from the "arrangement of form" within the pictorial space" and the relationships between elements in the piece of work (p.22). By conducting systematic investigation of the functions of each rank, this framework takes the analysis to a deeper level, revealing the discourses and relation between multiple features of the film (O'Toole). In *The Bourne Film Series (2002, 2004, 2007)*, many elements of different rankings are used, and this framework will provide a good structure for analysis to be carried out.

To conclude, to analyse the composition of *The Bourne Film Series (2002, 2004, 2007)*, O'Toole's framework proposed in *The Language of Displayed Art* (O'Toole, 1994) will be used, with minor modifications to each rank of the composition.

### 3.0 Methodology

This chapter aims to amalgamate aspects of the theories explained in the literature review into one coherent, systematic and functional integrated framework. This integrated framework will comprise the following theories, Michael O'Toole's *The Language of Displayed Art* (1994) as well as Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. With the help of these theories, I will also take a corpus linguistics approach to analysing *The Bourne Film Series* (2002, 2004, 2007).

A corpus linguistics approach will then be used to analyse the script of the important episodic units and landmark scenes of the films (O'Toole, 1994). Corpus Linguistics is the quantitative analysis of any body of discourse, and this forms the backbone of corpus linguistics (Allen, 2009). This would involve taking transcripts from the landmark scenes as well as the main characters and running them through a word processing software, WMatrix (Rayson, 2008). I will be using key semantic tags of corpus-based node words to find out highly used words which reflect on a certain dominant notion of masculinity throughout the film. Based on semantic domains and lexical frequencies of keywords, I will be able to pinpoint the core component characteristics of masculinity as portrayed in Jason Bourne. The Log Likelihoods generated by the program can show which categories appear more often, highlighting which concepts are used more in creating the notion of masculinity, lending a core element of empiricism in the analysis. This is the three-step integrated approach I plan to take.

1. Categorisation of landmark scenes in the series using an adaptation of the framework in *The Language of Displayed Art*, as shown in Figure 1 (O'Toole, 1994).
2. Extracting commonly-used semantic tags used in transcripts of core scenes with the programme WMatrix (Rayson, 2008).
3. Based on the key semantic tags found in the previous step, apply the theory from Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1988) to conclusively interpret the portrayal of masculinity.

Figure 1:

Unit\Function	Representational	Modal	Compositional
Trends	Motifs, arguments, propositions (Peirce, 1884)	Interplay of modalities in multiple episodes to bring forth a point	Filming techniques used consistently throughout
Episode	Actions, Events, Scenes	Relative prominence	Relative positioning of scene in work, setting
Member	The individual, part of body	Stylisation	Relative position in episode

Adapted from *The Language of Displayed Art* (O'Toole, 1994, p.24)

## **4.0 Discussion and Analysis**

### **4.1.1 Jason Bourne as a reflection of self**

The main concept investigated is the use of the character Jason Bourne as an ideal reflection of self, as the portrayal of his character corresponds to the ideal ego (Freud, 1923). This concept will be investigated in two aspects - power and control exerted by Jason Bourne, as well as his retrograde amnesia acting as an inhibitor in his search for his identity (Bao, 2018).

### **4.1.2 Power and control**

Power and control, which constitutes a strong physique as well as strength of the mind is usually associated with masculinity (Neale, 1993). In *The Bourne Film Series (2002, 2004, 2007)*, Jason Bourne is the embodiment of a perfect male physique, due to his previous life as an American secret service agent. He is portrayed to be physically the strongest in the whole of Europe, and his backstory as an agent sent against the most wanted hitman only adds to the construct of power and control. In an analysis of this powerful construct of masculinity, the USAS semantic tag “Speed: Fast” (Figure 1) also shows a decisiveness to jump into the action without caring about his own life.

Text	Speed	Fast
... of them I don't get back to work I remember nothing the rest of the night	1	1
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	2	2
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	3	3
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	4	4
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	5	5
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	6	6
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	7	7
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	8	8
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	9	9
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	10	10
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	11	11
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	12	12
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	13	13
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	14	14
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	15	15
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	16	16
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	17	17
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	18	18
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	19	19
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	20	20
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	21	21
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	22	22
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	23	23
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	24	24
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	25	25
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	26	26
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	27	27
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	28	28
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	29	29
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	30	30
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	31	31
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	32	32
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	33	33
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	34	34
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	35	35
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	36	36
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	37	37
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	38	38
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	39	39
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	40	40
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	41	41
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	42	42
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	43	43
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	44	44
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	45	45
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	46	46
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	47	47
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	48	48
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	49	49
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	50	50
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	51	51
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	52	52
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	53	53
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	54	54
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	55	55
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	56	56
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	57	57
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	58	58
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	59	59
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	60	60
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	61	61
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	62	62
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	63	63
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	64	64
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	65	65
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	66	66
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	67	67
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	68	68
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	69	69
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	70	70
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	71	71
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	72	72
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	73	73
... starting to scream and then I started because the man he's got the pistol	74	74
... for me I don't know he's got the pistol he's got the pistol	75	75

Figure 1: Concordances of the semantic tag “Speed: Fast”



The screenshot above is an example of such decisiveness. Despite the fact that the opponent came in when he was unaware and was more well equipped than him, he instantly jumped into the action, and managed to win eventually with just his bare hands and a pen as weapons. In these occurrences, his amnesia is also used as a trope to show his instincts are better than many highly trained assassins and hitmen, further developing the notion that he is a strong figure.

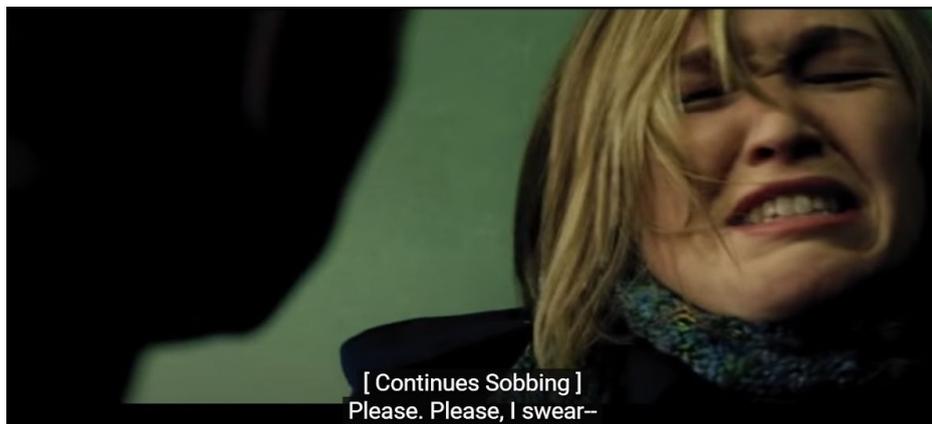
The construct of power and control is also shown during Bourne's initial interactions with Marie. In their first meeting, Bourne uses her as an escape tool to get him away from the scene of the murders. Despite her reluctance to help Bourne, he forces her at gunpoint to do so even though it creates many complications for her.

“BOURNE: Wait up -- (after her now--) -- just wait up -- MARIE: -- get the fuck out of here -- all this money, this crazy offer, I mean give me a fucking break with this, this is -- (stopping because--). BOURNE just grabbed her. Both of them shocked that he's done this. He immediately pulls back.”



The way Bourne uses Marie when he “just grabbed her” is an assertion over the supposedly lesser female protagonist even though it was not necessary to do so. Even during their first meeting outside Marie’s car, as shown in the screenshot, while Bourne does not use force, his actions still show domination over Marie and makes her scared of him. This construct is a modal trend which can be observed within all three Bourne films, with Marie, Pamela and Nicky respectively, which highlights the purposeful placement of the female characters in such a way which Bourne is shown to have power and control over them, a typical hegemonic construct of masculinity (O’Toole, 1997; Neale, 1993). The two extracts below show the use of force to control women in *The Bourne Supremacy* and *The Bourne Ultimatum* respectively. In the first instance, when Bourne faces an identity crises when he was told of something he allegedly did, he was maddened and took out his anger on Nicky, highlighted by the sentence “jerking her down to a LOWER LEVEL”. This shows an objectification of women who were used to men’s will whenever he wanted to.

“BOURNE: Last week? When? Is she supposed to answer? -- Nicky shrugs -- on quicksand. NICKY: And you got to him before we could. BOURNE: I killed him??? NICKY: You left a print! There was Kel that didn't go off! There was a partial print, they tracked it back to Treadstone! They know it's you! BOURNE: I left a fingerprint! You fucking \* people. SUDDENLY -- BOURNE'S jerking her down to a LOWER LEVEL --”



The screenshots also show that Bourne was willing to use force to get what he needed out of Nicky, including forcefully moving her across the city as well as interrogating her with physically harmful methods. The next film also portrays Bourne in the same way. However, it takes a less direct approach. Nicky is suggested to have known and was close to Bourne in the past, and thus helping him out of willingness was natural for her. For instance, the line “It was difficult for me... with you” implies that Nicky was unable to get close to Bourne before due to his identity, and she exploits the lack of it now to help him and thus gain his favour. The line “You really don’t remember anything” shows a want for Bourne to remember something of their previous relationship to be closer to her. It indicates that Bourne was well liked and perhaps even desired by women, another typical hegemonic construct of masculinity.

BOURNE: Why are you helping me? NICKY: It was difficult for me...with you. BOURNE looks up. Another long pause... NICKY (CONT'D): You really don't remember anything? BOURNE: No. NICKY'S face.

To confirm the findings, WMatrix was used to determine their interactions. The results, under the USAS semantic tag “strong”, show a 80% of an appearance of a strong person to be Bourne, thus confirming the usage of a powerful and dominating construct as proposed by Neale (1993).

5 occurrences.	Extend context
is not right , my enemies are too strong . I 'm telling you to wait for this	1 More   Full
( and he means this-- ) This is a strong killer . This is a crazy strong kil	2 More   Full
a strong killer . This is a crazy strong killer . Oh , yeah ... ( circling )	3 More   Full
shing pace along the sand . Moving strong . Effortless . Deep into it . Focus	4 More   Full
ch -- JARDA older and cuffed , but strong and determined -- BOURNE still hamm	5 More   Full

Figure 2: concordances of the word “strong”

This concept of power and control corresponds to Mulvey’s view about how men will instinctively dominate over women to overcome the castration threat, a form of identity threat, they pose (Mulvey, 1988). In the case of Bourne, he is literally acting on instinct, and also dominates over the female characters, not only conforming to, but also being the embodiment of Mulvey’s theory (1988).

#### **4.2 Weakness caused by retrograde amnesia**



of strength (Neale, 1997). In the earlier stages of the movie, when his identity was even more unclear, he was shown to be extremely uncertain when confronted with his identity. He saw his perceived identity as “hollow” yet was scared of the thought of having to face six parts of his life which he left behind. As viewers or as his previous self, six pieces of information would not be anything, but since this scene shows him to be cowering in the face of only six aspects of his previous life, shows his psyche to be extremely vulnerable.

“BOURNE: Bourne. My name is Jason Bourne. I live at 121, Rue de la Jardin, Paris But there's something hollow about this. He came looking for one identity and now he's faced with six. The money... The gun...”



In this scene, Bourne is seen to have the first glimpse of his past identity. When he sees the passport, he says the line “my name is Jason Bourne”, which makes it seem like he is coming to terms with his identity. The screenshot also focuses on his face, and shows the bewilderment he had towards his identity. In the movie, he also pauses for a while as the camera continues to focus on his face, highlighting the uncertainty he was facing in the face of this new threat.



13 occurrences.				Extend context	
pieces jumbled in a box . THE MAN	hesitates	-- takes a black knight from the b	1	More	Full
es way -- crumbling and -- BOURNE	hesitates	. Does he know how to do this or n	2	More	Full
me people from upstairs . CONKLIN	hesitates	. Inside he 's screaming . CONKLIN	3	More	Full
she 's taking his hand -- and he	hesitates	-- looking at her -- is this happe	4	More	Full
ry when you try to ignore it . He	hesitates	. But that gets him . He knows she	5	More	Full
him -- BOURNE We 're blown . She	hesitates	. One minute ago everything was fi	6	More	Full
. The one from his desk . BOURNE	hesitates	, holds the photo out to the flame	7	More	Full
e killed by Jason Bourne . ABBOTT	hesitates	. Blindsided . What ? A courtesy k	8	More	Full
you are ... BOURNE I did . JARDA	hesitates	. It 's really like Bourne just to	9	More	Full
back -- get another car -- BOURNE	hesitates	-- just a moment -- Wrong . SLAM !	10	More	Full
that number you wanted ... ABBOTT	hesitates	-- but only a moment -- he never a	11	More	Full
had access to the archives . ZORN	hesitates	. But it 's out . It 's in the roo	12	More	Full
t want to know how it feels . She	hesitates	. Stunned . He 's leaving . He 's	13	More	Full

Figure 5: Concordances of the word “hesitates”

In figure 4, there are multiple occurrences which show Bourne unable to make a decision because of a lack of confidence in his own instincts due to the lack of memories. Many of these result in him becoming “lost” or a “f\*\*\* up”, which shows the intensity of the failures caused by the lack of memories. Another byproduct of this lack of confidence is hesitation to do what is necessary during certain landmark action scenes, as shown through figure 5. Although there are occurrences of other characters hesitating, the large majority of occurrences are related to Bourne, hence the conclusion that the lack of confidence is preventing him from being the best version of himself.

The second way in which *The Bourne Series* goes against typical hegemonic masculinity complexes is through the interactions with womens. In *The Bourne Identity*, the retrograde amnesia that he does through forces him to rely on Marie for help in areas such as food, transport and mental support. This forces him to confront the castration threat she poses which usually results in total domination over the female figure (Mulvey, 1988). Instead, he has a relationship where both Marie and Bourne are of relatively equal values, and he sees her as an equal instead of someone to be dominated. He also does not hold traditional sadistic

views of seeing women being objectified, and instead is content only when Marie is safe and content as well, as shown through figure 5. Figure 5 shows that over half of the instances where a character is happy is Bourne, after or during his interactions with Marie, Pamela or Nicky, which illustrates that Bourne indeed does not have a dominating nature over women once he gets to know them well, typical of Hollywoodian masculinity (Greven, 2009).



An example of this being shown is when Marie dies in *The Bourne Supremacy*. After her death, he is portrayed to be genuinely sad as seen from his contorted facial expression and his downward looking gaze in the screen capture above. He is also so torn by her death that he gets himself captured by the police. This shows that he treats her as more than just an object to be used to his advantage, thus disrupting the traditional portrayal of masculinity.



## **5.0 Conclusion**

In *The Bourne Film Series*, the main difference in approach taken in its portrayal of masculinity compared to previous Hollywood films of the same genre is the role of women in the film. While Bourne is seen as an embodiment of strength, he does not dominate over the female figure. This appeals to the ideal ego of a human, as we naturally want strength and power, but also provides a more balanced view compared to the typical notions of masculinity which removes the narcissistic and sadistic aspect of a domineering masculine figure (Mulvey, 1977). He is also shown to be kind towards friends and is portrayed to only fight for self-defence. Thus, it can be argued that this film is aimed at providing a new outlook on masculinity which still appeals to the ideal ego of a person but provides gender equality. This change in masculinity is likely brought about by the change in social convention as embodied through the feministic movements in recent times, as well as the push for breaking out of social gender-based stereotypes. Through the portrayal of masculinity in this series as such, it can be seen that Hollywoodian masculinity has changed to parallel societies current ideas of masculinity, and through this change, influence people to change their perception of an ideal masculinity.

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