REVIEW ON SHAKEN AND STIRRED: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S PORTRAYALS IN JAMES BOND FILMS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore three basic terms--genre, mode of mass communication, and culture, and their application in research by reviewing the paper Shaken and Stirred: A Content Analysis of Women's Portrayals in James Bond Films. The study finds that Bond girls are portrayed to be well-shaped, slim and enchanting beauty with predictable sexual interactions or a waiting-to-be-rescued fate in Bond movies. With the mere transmission mode of communication, audiences are believed to be influenced by such portrayal and thus change their behavior. Generally, Bond girls are a cultural reflection of male-dominated society with an objectification of women.
KEYWORDS: *Review, Genre, Mode of mass communication, Culture*

In the movie series of James Bond which have drawn great attention of abundant scholars around the world, multiple Bond girls take a regular and crucial role in furthering storyline while presenting distinctive features as individuals. The researches on women's portrayals in film are primarily conducted with qualitative approaches such as narrative, genre and discourse analysis instead of empirical examination (Kimberly et al. 2010). Based on the Bond series, the article-*Shaken and Stirred: A Content Analysis of Women's Portrayals in James Bond Films* mainly aims to "quantify" distinctive features of the portrayal of woman roles (Kimberly et al. 2010, p.750). Content analysis of women's portrayals is made as an approach augumentation to the study of film, sex roles and communication (Kimberly et al. 2010).

GENRE AND CONTENT ANALYSIS

As what has been mentioned in the introduction section of the article, a formula has been formed in Bond movies, which comprise the elements of spy, hidden weapons, cars, alcohol and Bond Girls (Kimberly et al. 2010). Such formulaic elements are familiar to the old audiences of Bond movies as they form a predicted structure. Genre is a style beyond distinct auteur feature, and a pattern supervising film production and audiences' understanding (Ryall 1975, as cited in Neale 2000). Genre conventions govern narration, theme, character, edit, setting, audio and visual features (Hodkinson 2010). As an action/espionage series, the 007 films have developed a unique and stable gender formula that centers on the only male role-Bond. The heroine appears as Bond's assistant or rescued beauty. The Bond girls are constantly portrayed to be well-shaped, slim and enchanting. Beauty and sexual experience are some of the most important weapons for the girls as spies from hostile forces. Sexual relations are for Bond and Bond girls to fight a battle of wits and courage.

However, the article adopts content analysis instead of genre analysis to explore the female images in 007 films. Twenty of James Bond films between 1962 and 2005 are selected as samples for data collection (Kimberly et al. 2010). Fifteen out of one hundred fifty-nine females identify with such standards of data collection as women being over 16 who speak, are introduced or are shown for at least five seconds in any given movies (Kimberly et al. 2010, p.751). Twelve variables measure the personal features of each female character. Five variables measure the amount of involved sexual activities. And another ten variables measure the level of aggressive behavior associated with each female character. Two reliability tests have been conducted to foster re-coding and ensure the inter-coder reliability. The PRAM has been applied for the calculation of inter-coder reliability coefficients including multiple coders, simple percent agreement and correlation coefficient (Kimberly et al. 2010, p.752). With the content analysis, the frequent occurrence of designated female features or behaviors is closely examined in order to present a consistent general image of Bond Girls that has been portrayed in Bond films.

The Research Design and Model of Mass Communication
The social learning framework and its developed version- social cognitive theory by Bandura are laid as the theoretical foundation. They account for the researchers' selection of the empirical approach-content analysis. Meanwhile, the social learning theory is associated with the transmission model of mass communication. The social cognitive theory suggests that individuals' behaviors and values are monitored by a system constructed in a process of observing, imitating and learning from others, even imaginary others (Bandura 1986, as cited in Kimberly et al. 2010). Bandura's social cognitive theory was developed from behaviorist learning theories and eventually came to emphasize individuals' cognition that affects their response to stimuli from environment (Grusec 1992). Therefore, it elucidates the social effect of media when expounding the learning process of individual behaviors when elucidates the social effect of media (McQuail 2010). The behaviorism and statistical analysis have been combined to tackle the problem of media effect since the mid twenty century. The developments of the theory and methodology from psychology accord with the transmission model of communication (McQuail 2010).

With social learning theory as a foundation, the whole research design is in line with the transmission model of communication. In the transmission model, the transmission of message is in a linear order and primarily depends on sender. The revised version of transmission model by Westley and MacLean tends to highlight the influence of audience's interests and needs. However, the way of satisfying audience's demands is through sender's selection. In the article, the consistent features of female roles in Bond movies are the selected message to meet certain group of audience's need and are supposed to affect audience's cognition and consequently behavior as a whole (Kimberly et al. 2010), which is the assumption of the research.

Some previous studies have been made to clarify certain stereotyped portrayal of female in media. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, those stereotypes   are the stimuli to draw audience's attention and influence their understanding of females as social roles. The stereotyped female images are portrayed through the media of magazine advertising, soap operas and films, to be physically thin and beautiful, positively young, successful while physically attractive or with wealthy male counterparts who are in high social status (Kimberly et al. 2010). Some studies also show the objectification of women's body, and women's victimization with a comparison to that of men. Apart from the above studies on female image as media message, other studies are found to focus on media effect, which contain female audiences' negative evaluation on themselves, gender stereotype, opposite sexes' different reactions toward pornographic content, and audiences' attention on sex and violence in combination in daily life (Kimberly et al. 2010).

The research questions are put forward in accordance to Bandura's social cognitive theory and previous studies on female images in media. The first research question is set to examine whether the physical portrayals of women has changed in the Bond movies under study or not. The second and third research questions are posed to explore the sexualization and victimization of female, by observing whether the sexual activities of different female roles remain the same or not, and counting the amount of and differentiating level of violence associated with female roles (Kimberly et al. 2010, p.750). The last three research questions are grouped to inspect the linking of sexual and aggressive behaviors. Those research questions focus on the predicable sexual activity, aggression against female characters and mortality of female roles at the end of each Bond movie (Kimberly et al. 2010). Instead of analyzing media texts as signs in depth, the content analysis approach provides an objective way of calculating repetitive occurrences of female-related content to verify its hypothesis.

Culture and the Bond Films
To explore the relationship between culture and the Bond series, it's important to clarify what culture is. Raymond William defines culture from three levels in a rather broad way, the "ideal", the "documentary" and the "social" level (William 1988, p.48). Ideally, culture is a perfect state of human in a permanent order with universal values or truth (William 1988). The Bond series reinforce stereotyped female image and enhance the effect of communication by means of violence and female characters' sexualization and victimization to a certain degree (Kimberly et al, 2010). Such themes are not based on universal values because the enhanced effect is achieved at the expense of widely represented female images and equal social role for both male and female. Therefore, relevant value that the Bond series transmit is not a permanent and publicly accepted value. However, it will influence individual cognition temporarily. From another perspective, the whole Bond series definitely reflect a timeless value, that is, goodness triumphs over evil, which is close to a perfect state of human society.

In the documentary level, culture refers to works full of knowledge and imagination, recording human idea and experience in a various way (William 1988). Most of storyline and characters in movies are imagined. However, diegesis of movie reflects people's idea and social reality to a certain degree. In the Bond films, social changes manifest in male and female roles' various dresses and hair styles, as well as the weapons and vehicles that character used. Social background in a given era is also clearly stated, including the Cold War, the decline of Britain, and spy systems in different countries. Therefore, the Bond movies under study definitely match the documentary level of culture.

Raymond William defines culture from a social perspective and considers it describes social life in a specific way and conveys implicit and explicit meanings and values in certain way of social life (William 1988). With such a concept, the culture analysis centers more on lived practices instead of text. If the article had explored responses of audiences or production process of Bond series, those aspects would have been more associated with the social level of culture. Nevertheless, the article assesses the portrayals of female characters in 20 of Bond films with an emphasis on their appearances, link between sexual activities and violence. Because the content of texts mainly dealt with, they accords appropriately with William's culture in the documentary sense rather than the social sense.

Apart from being understood culture from the above three layers, culture can be expounded in the following two senses, namely, high culture and popular culture (Hodkinson 2010). High culture refers to the intellectual works and practices, particularly artistic activities (William 1988, as cited in Hodkinson 2010, p.2) whereas popular culture is kind of inferior work to win favour, which is made by certain group of people and welcomed by many people (William 2015). Movies are arts full of imagination and creation. However, the inferior feature of popular culture can be traced in the narration of Bond's indulgence in sensory satisfaction such as alcohol, gambling and sex. Despite the imperfect image of leading male role, the film series have taken the whole world by storm in the past fifty years. A fixed way of narration has gradually formed to satisfy audience's interests for a commercial purpose. Obviously, the frequent violence and pornography, and noticeable consumerism and objectification of female have blurred the distinction between high art and popular culture in the Bond series.

The Research on Bond Films, Culture and Society
To explore the mutual influence between culture and society, four different types are available, which comprise interdependence, idealism, materialism and autonomy. When the research is carried out in terms of the content of Bond films, idealism is the best option to expound the strong influence of media on society. In the idealist relation between culture and society, what counts is not owners of certain media, but audiences' motivation out of which their actions are taken (McQuail 2010). Accordingly, Bandura's social cognitive theory stresses motivation of following certain way of behaviors as a crucial stage in individual's learning sequence (McQuail 2010). In the article, it has been found that Bond girls are consistently attractive, slender and young, and that they are more likely to have short hair, more sexually active and more frequently victimized with time passing by (Kimberly et al. 2010). Greater viewer effects are produced by the predictable plots due to their constancy in the Bond series. The female characters are sex-stereotyped in a homogeneous way, which may be internalized by viewers from the perspective of social cognition (Kimberly et al. 2010).

Mass media is considered as a force to integrate individuals into a large group with certain social value. As a centripetal force, it will promote social integrity when the transmitted social value coincides with the main-stream social value. On the other hand, mass media might also generate a centrifugal effect, which leads to diversity of social values and dissolves one-fold social identity. The two-directional forces complement each other in operation (McQuail 2010). Film as a mass media also functions in social integration as well as fragmentation. In the research findings, sexual activities of the studied movies are proven to predicate aggressive behaviors involving weapon such as killing Bond, which helps to enhance effects (Kimberly et al. 2010). The victimization of Bond women is also predictable when they use weapon or attempt to kill Bond (Kimberly et al. 2010). When a media noticeably tends to satisfy audiences' sensory demands with information of violence and sex, it is more likely to lead to social differentiation with self-triggered individual crime and disorder. However, Bond films are still following the main-stream value concerning gender roles in patriarchal society. The research empirically testifies its assumption based on social cognitive theory and existing literature with evidence that women are sexualized, marginalized and disposable in Bond films (Kimberly et al. 2010). Therefore, Bond movies keep consensus on female's inferiority in social status to ensure male's dominant role.

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