

“SAFE AS HOUSES”: REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FAMILY AS SECURITY

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SAFE AS HOUSES is a portion of a chapter from a book in progress, co-authored with Michael Niemann, on everyday life and the global political economy. At a theoretical level, the chapter deals with international relations as social relations and the links between households and international relations. The category of international relations is disaggregated in various ways and the links between the constitutive social relations are investigated. The household is an everyday space, a place where the social relations are produced and reproduced. Capitalism weathers its diverse crises in part because the necessity of the production and reproduction of social relations in everyday life and the household, organized under the sign of the family, is one of the key sites where these social relations are reproduced. The family is, as Robert Cox puts it, the producer of the last resort.

This paper investigates some of the ways that securing, reconfiguring, reordering, and modernizing nationhood and sexuality work to secure global political relations. The research question driving this chapter derives from an observation by Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott, in their 1987 book *Bond and Beyond*, that there the ways in which the narrative structure of the James Bond stories (in film and in print) are able to reassert Britain's centrality to world politics in the post-World War II context by transposing these questions to questions of sexuality, through the way that Bond repairs the patriarchal sexual order by seducing “the Bond girl” in each narrative. This double re-ordering of the global and the intimate political spheres depends on Bond being a bachelor, available to seduce “the girl.”

In a number of post-Cold War American films, however, securing America's place in the world is not contingent on a dashing American bachelor spy capable of re-ordering the sexual world through the seduction of “the girl”; instead, sexual order is linked to and restores global politics through the family. What explains this shift in the link between the intimate world and global politics? For present purposes, a partial answer to this question is sought in the narratives of three films: *True Lies* (1994, directed by James Cameron), *Traffic* (2000, directed by Stephen Soderbergh), and *Thirteen Days* (2000, directed by Roger Donaldson). Each of these films was produced before 9/11, so the various observations and hypotheses derived from the discussions of these films will be examined further (in a later draft, unfortunately) in an analysis of the post-9/11 television series, *24*.

As this is a work in progress, I am not ready to publish it on the internet. However, if you are interested in seeing and discussing the draft paper with me, please contact me directly at Matt.Davies@ncl.ac.uk