

UDC 821.111

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32342/anuJPh.2026.31.7>

## Ian Fleming's James Bond: Mythologisation of "007 Formula"

Daryna Holub   
*Alfred Nobel University, Dnipro (Ukraine)*

У статті розглядається образ Джеймса Бонда як героя-шпигуна в англomовній масовій культурі та аналізуються механізми його формування й подальшої трансформації в літературній та екранній традиції. *Мета* дослідження полягає у виявленні особливостей конструювання образу агента 007 як культурного типу героя-шпигуна, а також у визначенні художніх, ідеологічних і культурних чинників, що вплинули на його еволюцію від літературного персонажа до стійкого міфологізованого образу масової культури.

*Методологічну основу* роботи складають історико-літературний, наративний, герменевтичний та компаративний підходи, що дозволяють розглядати образ Бонда в контексті взаємодії тексту та екранних адаптацій, а також у співвідношенні з соціокультурними та ідеологічними умовами різних історичних етапів.

У *результаті* дослідження встановлено, що образ Джеймса Бонда, вперше створений у романах Яна Флемінга, початково поєднує функції професійного шпигуна та культурного символу, що відрізняє його від традиційних моделей шпигунського роману. Підкреслюється, що персонаж конструюється як «гламурний шпигун», у якого професійна діяльність тісно пов'язана з естетикою розкоші, споживання та демонстративного стилю життя. В процесі переходу від літератури до кіно образ Бонда набуває нових семантичних і візуальних характеристик, що підсилюють його масово-культурну привабливість. Екранні інтерпретації закріплюють за персонажем риси харизматичного героя, для якого важливі не тільки функції агента, але й поведінкова модель, заснована на іронії, ефектності та впізнаваності.

Зазначено, що бондівський наратив відображає ідеологічні та культурні зміни другої половини ХХ ст., зокрема трансформацію уявлень про маскуліність, національну ідентичність та роль держави. Образ героя-шпигуна поступово втрачає жорстку ідеологічну визначеність і стає більш гнучким культурним кодом, здатним адаптуватися до мінливих соціальних умов.

Образ Джеймса Бонда формується на перетині шпигунського роману та масово-культурної естетики, що призводить до створення гібридного художнього типу, який поєднує елементи пригодницького оповідання та культурного міфу. Важливим структурним елементом образу виступає фігура «джентльмена-шпигуна», в якій поєднуються традиційні британські культурні коди та модернізовані уявлення про професійну ефективність. Така модель сприяє зміцненню впізнаваності персонажа та формуванню стійкого медійного образу в глобальній масовій культурі. В результаті тривалої еволюції образ Бонда стає стійким культурним символом, який відображає зміни уявлень про героїзм та соціальний лад. Образ Бонда функціонує як механізм культурної репрезентації епохи, фіксуючи зміни суспільних очікувань щодо ролі індивідуального героя

в умовах масової комунікації. Стійкість образу Джеймса Бонда пояснюється його здатністю до постійної адаптації до мінливих культурних та ідеологічних контекстів, що забезпечує його тривалу присутність у глобальному медіапросторі. У результаті проведеного аналізу підтверджується, що герой-шпигун в особі Джеймса Бонда виступає як універсальна модель культурного героя, що відображає суперечності модерної та постмодерної епох. Це дозволяє розглядати його як ключовий елемент вивчення трансформації масової культури XX і XXI ст. та динаміки шпигунського образу в літературі та кіно.

**Ключові слова:** образ Джеймса Бонда, бондіана, образ героя-шпигуна, образ джентльмена-шпигуна, образ гламурного шпигуна, міфологізація формули 007.

**To cite this article:** Holub, D. (2026). Ian Fleming's James Bond: Mythologisation of "007 Formula". *Alfred Nobel University Journal of Philology*, 1 (31), 111-133, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32342/anuJPh.2026.31.7>

## Introduction

The phenomenon of Ian Fleming and the character of James Bond created by him has remained one of the most enduring and influential phenomena in global popular culture for over seventy years. The literary and cinematic Bond franchise has long transcended the spy novel genre, evolving into a complex socio-cultural myth in which literature, cinema, ideology, politics, the media, gender models and mechanisms of cultural memory interact. The enduring popularity of the image of Agent 007, his ability to adapt to different historical eras whilst retaining a recognisable mythological structure, necessitates a new understanding of the artistic and aesthetic specificity of this phenomenon.

The relevance of this study is determined by several factors. First and foremost, contemporary literary studies are increasingly turning to the study of popular literature as a fully-fledged subject of academic analysis. For a long time, Fleming's works were viewed by critics primarily as examples of "lower-class" literature aimed at the mass reader. However, the situation has changed significantly since the second half of the 20th century. Numerous studies have convincingly demonstrated that the Bondian canon constitutes a complex artistic system in which elements of myth, political ideology, popular literature, cinematic aesthetics and national identity interact.

Contemporary literary studies are increasingly addressing the issue of how the hero-myth functions in 20th- and 21st-century culture. In this respect, James Bond occupies a special place, as he is no longer so much the "hallmark of the spy novel" as a unique variation on the archetypal hero, adapted to the conditions of the mass culture era. Like the heroes of ancient myths or chivalric romances, Bond possesses a consistent set of qualities that ensure his recognisability and consistency: exceptional abilities, charisma, a sense of belonging to a special mission, a struggle against global evil, and, at the same time, a pronounced human vulnerability. However, unlike the traditional mythological hero, Agent 007 exists within the realm of modern civilisation, closely intertwined with technology, political conflicts, global media and mass consumption. In fact, this is what makes him a new kind of superhero. And in this sense, the Bond franchise functions as a special "narrative machine," based on the repetition of established plot formulas, binary oppositions and symbolic codes. It is precisely this repetition that ensures the effect of mythological recognisability and creates the illusion of the hero's continuous existence outside the specific text. Bond becomes not so much a literary character as a symbol of a particular cultural order, the embodiment of notions of strength, power, masculinity, heroism and national superiority.

Of particular interest is the exploration of the issue of English national identity and the transformation of the image of the gentleman in 20th-century literature. In Fleming's novels, Bond embodies a specific model of "Englishness," combining traditional notions of British gentlemanliness, imperial consciousness and new forms of heroism from the Cold War era. And here, it is precisely the hero of the "lower-class" novel who, in many ways, emerges as the key to understanding the processes of reinterpreting British cultural tradition in the post-war period, when post-war Britain was going through a difficult period of losing its imperial status, a transformation of political influence and a crisis of traditional values. In these circumstances, the figure of Bond

became a kind of artistic compensation for national trauma, a symbol of the preservation of British strength, intellect and cultural superiority. Agent 007 embodied the idealised image of the English gentleman, adapted to the realities of the Cold War and global political confrontation.

The relevance of this study also stems from the need to analyse the interaction between literature and cinema in the formation of a modern cultural myth. Bondiana represents a rare example of the virtually simultaneous existence of a literary and a screen hero, who constantly influence one another. The very first film adaptations of Fleming's novels significantly altered the perception of the character, transforming him into a visual symbol of the era. Subsequently, it was cinema that ensured Bond's global popularity, yet the literary foundation continued to serve as the source of the image's mythological structure. As a result, a unique phenomenon of media synergy has emerged, in which the character exists simultaneously within the realms of literature, cinema, advertising, video games and digital culture, representing a universal cultural code of the modern era.

### Literary overview

The section represents a scholarly reflection on more than seventy years of the existence of bondiana—a phenomenon of contemporary English-language criticism, prompted by the emergence of a new literary character, James Bond, better known as “Agent 007.” Paradoxically, the concept has firmly taken root both in criticism and in the everyday life of contemporary popular culture, accumulating terminology acceptable to both professionals and the general reader and viewer.

Literary works, films, audiographs, actors, gameplay footage, brands and more, according to Professor of English Literature K. Lindner, “have remained at the forefront of popular culture, continuously modernizing the 007 formula to reflect—and often anticipate—changing social attitudes, major developments in world politics, and shifting trends in popular fiction and cinema culture” [Lindner, 2003, p. 1]. Researchers generally agreed that I. Fleming “clearly created his master spy as an English gentleman” [Berberich, 2007, p. 162] that is “the epitom of the English gentleman,” who is “on a mission to restore British Honor in the eyes of the world” [Cross, 2011, p. 325], and in the films, Agent 007 appears as “a quintessential gentleman” [Berberich, 2007, p. 163], the undisputed representative of “the Hero of Our Age,” according to sociologist Lee Drummond [Drummond, 1966, p. 13]. This served to highlight the continuity of the cultural tradition in the creation of a new literary hero.

The James Bond phenomenon initially became the subject of close scrutiny at an interdisciplinary level, primarily among Western researchers. One of the first high-profile works devoted to the literary analysis of Fleming's novels was an essay by Umberto Eco “Narrative Structures in Fleming” in the monograph *The Role of the Reader*, where the author developed a framework for describing the narrative structures in “The Saga of Agent 007,” as he defines it, and examined the impact of its constituent elements on the reader, thereby highlighting the reader's role in shaping the new hero. Critics have repeatedly noted that this work is not only “a pioneering work” but has also marked a new direction in English-language criticism. The world-renowned Italian writer and critic defined the scope of literary analysis of I. Fleming's novels and their scholarly and artistic significance, which was decisive in his recognition as a Bondologist<sup>1</sup>. The researcher suggested that, starting with his very first novel *Casino Royale* (1953) and then in subsequent works by I. Fleming “there are already all the elements for the building of a machine that functions basically on a set of a precise units governed by rigorous combinational rules”, the smooth running of which explains and determines the success of the “007 saga” [Eco, 1979, p. 146]. Having examined in detail “this narrative machine,” the researcher distinguished five levels: (1) the opposition of characters and of values; (2) play situations and the story as a “game”; (3) a Manichean ideology; (4) literary techniques; (5) literature as collage [Eco, 1979, p. 146]. According to U. Eco, Fleming's “novel, given the rules of combination of oppositional couples, is fixed as a sequence of “moves” inspired by the code and constituted according to a perfectly prearranged

<sup>1</sup> One of the most important terms in contemporary international literary criticism has Scandinavian origins and refers to a scholar who analyses everything related to the fictional literary character, the MI6 spy, Agent 007 James Bond.

scheme” [Ibid., p. 156]. Having analysed the structure of I. Fleming’s texts, U. Eco defined their essence as follows: “an unstable patchwork, a tongue-in-cheek *bricolage*, which often hides its ready-made nature by presenting itself as literary invention ... the work of Fleming represents a successful means of leisure, the result of skillful craftsmanship” [Ibid., p. 172], thereby indicating that from now on I. Fleming’s place is in “high” popular literature.

The hero-myth, as a subject of academic study, cannot be fully understood without examining his characteristics as Superman. U. Eco’s study “The Myth of Superman” focuses primarily on the semiotic and narrative structure of the hero as a myth where the author positions the hero as a myth intended for readers [Ibid.]. Unlike traditional religious myths that possess an irreversible destiny and immutable characteristics, modern mythologised heroes like Bond must navigate a tension between being an archetype of collective aspirations and conforming to the aesthetic universality of a character who appears human and typical [Ibid.].

All subsequent bondology has always been based on a combination of all its constituent elements, rather than on purely literary approaches. The focus was not so much on analysing the artistic characteristics of literary bondiana, but rather on bondiana as a cultural phenomenon, in which literature was one of several constituent elements. Yet it was precisely this approach by Umberto Eco to the analysis of Ian Fleming’s novels that laid the foundations for the development of bondology, and to a certain extent for its socio-cultural mythologisation. His works served as a starting point and were cited by others to articulate their critical positions.

The work *Double O Seven, James Bond, A Report* by Osvald Snelling [1964] is notable for the fact that the author was well acquainted with I. Fleming, who had suggested that he perform a comprehensive analysis of his novels. Fleming’s choice was likely due to the fact that O. Snelling had shared with him the idea for such a work, in which one of the key points was that, for the first time, the author of the Bond series was placed within the historical and literary context of England, along with his predecessors: the Scottish novelist John Buchan, Herman Cyril MacNeil (known by the pseudonym Sapper) and Cecil William Mercer (who wrote under the name Dornford Yates). Accordingly, O. Snelling’s analysis of James Bond in his book was based on the inclusion of both certain elements traditional to English literature and innovative ones introduced by I. Fleming. In O. Snelling’s analysis, Bond was a hero fighting against a threat to Great Britain, against evil embodied in the characters of Le Chiffre, Dr. No, Mr. Big, Ernst Stavro Blofeld and others. At the same time, O. Snelling was one of the first to draw attention to a key element of the Bond franchise—the distinctive nature of the female characters, who are largely associated with the embodiment of evil that Bond combats in his characteristic manner: by seducing and eliminating [Snelling, 1964]. What likely also drew I. Fleming to O. Snelling’s reflections was the latter’s consideration of the cinematic prospects of the Bond franchise and its inextricable link with the literary saga as an evolving phenomenon (time has shown that O. Snelling’s foresight became one of the most significant strands of bondology). It was a moment of non finito that subsequently took firm root. As it is well known, the book was published in the final month of I. Fleming’s life, and this fact could not fail to attract public attention.

The same time as his work, K. Amis’s book was being prepared for publication *The James Bond Dossier* (1965), where the literary aspect—that is, the actual analysis of the works—is eclipsed by an ironic interpretation and mythologising commentary on I. Fleming’s oeuvre, with an emphasis on the fact that the writer is a creator of thrillers, a genre that is largely associated with the low. Reflecting on the commercial success of novels as a phenomenon of popular literature, the critic noted that they were “just as complex and <...> have as much in them as more ambitious kinds of fiction” [Amis, 1965, p. 9]. Elaborating on K. Amis’s somewhat ironic reflections on I. Fleming’s work, Z. Leader described the style of “The Dossier” as one that “... partly guys academic procedures and pretensions by applying them to low-cultural objects” [Leader, 2007, p. 524], thereby becoming blatantly provocative. One of the most significant outcomes of K. Amis is his view of James Bond not as a “spy” —a term associated with the negative aspects of his activities—but as a “counter-spy,” that is, with an emphasis on his positive qualities [Amis, 1965, p. 11], and with an emphasis on him as a new kind of literary hero.

The fact that bondology has developed in various directions, primarily in the fields of cultural studies and mythology, is demonstrated by the work of Tony Bennett and Janet Woolcott *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero*. In the title itself, the authors attempted

to simplify the principle of text interpretation, based on Umberto Eco's concept, by focusing solely on identifying the "narrative codes" present in the novels and films about Agent 007. A key concept in the analysis by T. Bennett and J. Woolcott was intertextuality, which opened up the possibility of a multitude of meanings within a common perception, where the leading role was played by the reader and, consequently, by their particular interaction with the critics. Thus, the modern components of bondology and its mythologisation were already identified. As J. Hay noted, it was the book by the renowned sociologists that became "a key text <...> for thinking about contemporary popular culture" and "the Bond phenomenon" [Hay, 2009, p. 164], and Bond was defined by them as "mobile signifier" [Bennet, Woolcott, 1987, p. 31] —a character who went through dramatic changes, navigating political and social upheavals, yet remained a popular figure. According to Lucy Bolton, the research by T. Bennett and J. Woolcott "forms a fundamental touchstone for many of the authors; a springboard for their analysis of how the Bond image—and brand—has changed over time" [Bolton, 2011, p. 279].

Advances in critical theories, which have become more specifically and confidently focused on engaging with art history; the golden age of British cinematography; a new approach to the study of film history, known as "new film history"; and the growing role of popular culture in society have led to a deeper academic understanding of the James Bond phenomenon. The researchers asked themselves: what is the secret behind such longevity and enduring popularity, noting that the era in which Bond was created held both striking differences and remarkable similarities with the modern world. Therefore, studies from the 1990s and 2000s—a politically, ideologically, historically, and culturally rich period—proved to be the context in which a character such as James Bond emerged, shaped by developments in English literature. It is noted that Fleming's Britain of the 1950s bore the scars of the war and was slowly moving towards post-war recovery. Challenges at the international political level, scientific and technological achievements, the new life of British aviation and television, which brought the winds of change into English homes, the quest for global domination through nuclear power, global espionage, the desire to wield power and the ability to retain it—all of this became firmly entrenched in the public consciousness and was reflected in Fleming's first novel, *Casino Royale*, as a work of popular literature.

Bond was not only the embodiment of his era, reflecting and amplifying the anxieties of those years, but also personified the glory, honour and sophistication of pre-war Britain. As noted by Ian Fleming's biographer, Henry Zeiger, "ours is a violent age and like all popular heroes Bond reflected his own time" [Zeiger, 1966, p. 112]. A look at the history of the 21st-century hero, embodied by the modern-day Bond, who remains a relevant and sought-after figure, with a legacy spanning more than half a century, lends a special appeal to "the Bond ethos" [Miller, 2011, p. xv]. Amplified by the role of Hollywood with its Bond-style films, this appeal became pronounced during an era of global significance for the mass media, which had a substantial impact not only on contemporary cultural life but also on social psychology, subjecting people to an unprecedented influence of fantasy, new socio-cultural interrelationships, and new demands on behavioural models. Consequently, the modern Bond, having undergone a unique transformation from the page to the screen and emerging as a multimedia icon, was not the same figure the 20th century had known. As James Chapman, an American novelist and publisher, notes in his book *License to Thrill: A Cultural History of James Bond Films*, contemporary Bond has "outgrown his origins <...> and become nothing less than a cultural phenomenon recognized around the world" [Chapman, 1999, p. 22].

James Bond is now regarded as an iconic figure in contemporary popular culture, a legendary hero of the epoch-defining Bond franchise—both in literature and cinema—a fact highlighted by many researchers as a reason for a more thorough examination of this phenomenon. Thus, Jeremy Black examined Bond's existence and activities as a kind of barometer of shifting international relations from the early 1950s onwards, drawing equally on both the novels and the films. This helped the author conclude that the literary and on-screen hero is an integral part of a continuous narrative that has helped the British define their attitude towards the world and Britain's place within it [Black, 2005].

The 21st century has seen academic interest focus not only on the Bond phenomenon, but also on its creator. Today, the story of how the Bond series originated is no less fascinating than the novels themselves, through which both the author and the writer as a public figure come into view. The world of the double-O agent, a successful and lucrative literary creation that captivates with romantic escapades, unimaginable gadgets and cocktails, espionage and poverty, is pure fiction.

Research in the field of bondology has gained recognition and demonstrates both interest in and the popularisation of scholarly thought; however, what is particularly significant is the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to the study of this subject. Bond is examined from a multitude of perspectives—political history, film history, cultural and gender studies, postcolonialism and even orthodox literary criticism—as well as contemporary narratology, biographical critical study, material culture and fashion, ludology, and philosophical epistemology—each of which offers interesting insights and may be developed into separate scholarly research.

Current state of critical overview of the “Bond formula” has proved to function as a “master myth” with vital components of the “Bond DNA”—a combination of ruthlessness, luxury consumption, and heroic archetypes [Coghlan, Hackett, Nolan, 2023]. Bond franchise is supported by a massive merchandising empire—valued at over 13 billion pounds—where brand placement (Omega, Aston Martin) is central to the “Bond aesthetic”; it is one of the most successful in history confirming the 007’s commercial and cultural potency through exercising his ability to adapt to prevailing cultural and geopolitical shifts and global anxieties. Scholarly analysis reveals the following key dimensions of the successful 007 formula:

- *Narrative Poetics and “Attenuated Continuity.”* Colin Burnett challenges the view that the pre-Daniel Craig era was purely episodic, arguing instead for a “flexi-narrative” structure of popular film series [Burnett, 2024, p. 6]. He claims that the series sustains an “attenuated continuity” —a “just-noticeable” macro-story linked by recurring nemeses like SPECTRE and “recognition scenes” with secondary characters like Felix Leiter. This allows the franchise to retain an “A-feature” status by avoiding the “lowly” connotations associated with explicit series while still pulling viewers through a continuing narrative [Ibid, pp. 5–6]. With reference to the school of historical poetics the researcher applies the distinction between *syuzhet* (the organize plot of the film) and *fabula* (the story constructed in the viewer’s mind) to explain how Bond series manages narrative memory across decades.

- *The “Fleming Effect” and Reality:* Trevor McCrisken and Christopher R. Moran illustrate how the 007 formula creates a sense of verisimilitude—or “feigned realism”—through detailed descriptions of people, places, and brands. This has created a “James Bond syndrome,” where the world of real intelligence and Bond are “co-constitutive.” The franchise fills a “public knowledge vacuum,” highlighting the idea of engagement with the “imagined” world of Bond to truly understand the discourse of espionage and how it functions in modern world. [McCrisken, Moran, 2018].

- *Geopolitical Reassertion:* Noah Jacoby Lewis states that the 007 formula has survived by mirroring “relevant political fears of each era”: from Cold War Soviet agents SMERSH (in the novels) to stateless criminal organizations SPECTRE (in the films) and later addressing contemporary anxieties like cyberterrorism and “The War on Terror” to maintain global relevance [Lewis, 2018].

- *Masculinity and National Resilience through Torture:* Using an intersectional feminist lens, A. Adams argues that torture scenes are critical literary sites where the boundaries of “hegemonic masculinity” are policed and reinforced. Bond’s survival of these encounters acts as a metonymy for Britain’s survival of post-war upheaval [Adams, 2017].

- *Epic Epistemology and Movement:* This is a fresh look at bondiana and its protagonist by J. Eriksson and K. Jonasson. In their research Bond franchise is explored as a modern epic (“The Bondiad Cycle”) by drawing parallels between James Bond and the Greek hero Odysseus. The authors frame Bond as a modern “Odyssean” figure—a “man of many turns” whose knowledge is not academic but a “literal body of knowledge” gained through athleticism and movement. The formula 007 prioritises “archipelagic thinking,” where Bond masters material conditions through spatial movements: “abyssal submergence,” “sliding on surfaces,” and “soaring to heights” [Eriksson, Jonasson, 2026].

- *Sartorial Storytelling and Brand Identity:* L. Chapman’s book *Fashioning James Bond: Costume, Gender and Identity in the World of 007* [2021] presents the extensive chronological analysis of the Bond franchise’s wardrobe. The author argues that costuming is intrinsic to the character’s identity, acts as a visual signifier for a 007’s education, political affiliation, and sexual inclinations and serves as a vehicle for social, political and economic commentary. The transition from British tailoring to international brands (like Brioni and Tom Ford) reflects the franchise’s evolution into a global consumerist icon, where brand placement is fundamental to the character’s

identity. Thus, Cnapman's work offers a new methodology for researching film history through the lens of the labor, process and agency behind costume production [Chapman, 2021] that is the inevitable part of a Bond formula.

- *The "Idealized Superman" and Biographical Critique*: the latest biography *The World Is Not Enough: A Biography of Ian Fleming* by O. Buckton [2021] signifies the enduring interest in the figure of Bond's creator. The author utilises Adlerian psychology to argue that James Bond is a fictionalized, idealized 'superman' version of Fleming himself, an expression of his life plan for success and dominance. The unique and distinctive feature of the book is the inclusion of the "speculative dialogue"—fictionalised conversations O. Buckton imagines I. Fleming might have had with key figures in his life, as his wife or Admiral John Goldfrey [Buckton, 2021]. Reviewers while being skeptical, still suggest these scenes help reveal the crossovers between the man and the myth [Townsend, 2022].

- *Ludology and Cold War Agency*: P. Guerty explores the cultural impact of the espionage role-playing games, like "James Bond 007" and "Top Secret," and the utilization of the "Fleming Effect"—the immersive games detail of the novels—to provide a safe space for players to exercise "individual agency" through the engagement with the geopolitical tensions of the epoch. In an era of nuclear anxiety, these games allow participants to transform an incomprehensible political situation into a manageable battle between good and evil [Guerty, 2023].

This multidisciplinary discourse reveals that the "Bond formula" is far more than a repetitive set of action tropes; it functions as a sophisticated ideological framework that has consistently reinvented itself to navigate the shifting realities of the modern world. The diverse perspectives mentioned above collectively demonstrate that Bond's longevity is rooted in his unique capacity to bridge the gap between British post-war nostalgia and the demands of an ascendant, globalised market. Agent 007's enduring resonance lies in his function as a changeable cultural icon whose very identity is a site of ongoing negotiation.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the James Bond phenomenon is the role played by the ideological and cultural components of the "Bond problem," and how these evolve depending on the historical context in which he operates, namely his Anglo-American heritage. On the one hand, the image of Bond is presented with obvious traditional British cultural and literary archetypes, inheriting the traits of British heroes. His patriotism is undoubtedly nothing more than an echo of these traditions. But, on the other hand, as Fleming noted in "Moonraker," there is something foreign and non-English about Bond. The author claimed that, for him, the image of Bond corresponds to the world-weary protagonist of the American "realistic" school of fiction. John Shelton Lawrence offered a different perspective on this issue in his essay "The American Superhero Genes of James Bond", where he examined superhero's "significant American mythic dimension" [Lawrence, 2011] of the Bond character. Lawrence put forward the hypothesis that Bond's Manichaeic view of the world is rooted in the American superhero tradition. J. Chapman in his essay "Reflection in a Double Bourbon" challenges this assumption, arguing that there is a fundamental historical difference between the birth of the superhero and the emergence of Bond [Chapman, 2011]. Does this mean that Lawrence is wrong? The existence of various scientifically grounded perspectives and interpretations of the James Bond phenomenon suggests that, for a very long time, his existence was taken for granted and not properly studied.

Such a comprehensive analysis of the state of Bond studies in Western literary scholarship allows us to trace the evolution of academic thought throughout the entire history of one of the most popular franchises, to identify the main areas of academic interest, and to assess the extent to which the 007 formula has been explored. At the same time, despite the broadening of the scope of academic interest concerning the transformation and adaptation of the figure of James Bond (from literary character to screen hero) in response to the challenges of the modern age, no attempts have been made to bring together the components of the 007 formula to study the process of mythologising the image of the super-spy, as well as the influence of the hero-myth on the mass consciousness.

### **Aims and methodology**

*The aim* of this article is to identify the characteristics of the formation and subsequent transformation of the image of James Bond as a spy-hero in English-language popular culture, as well as to identify the artistic, ideological and cultural mechanisms that have shaped the shift in the character's semantics in the process of transition from literary text to on-screen interpretations. The

focus is on the evolution of the image of Agent 007 as a specific type of cultural hero, combining the traits of a spy, a gentleman and the bearer of a certain set of values typical of different historical stages in the development of the Bond myth.

The methodological framework of the study is based on a comprehensive approach that combines historical-literary, narrative, hermeneutic and comparative *methods*:

– *the historical-literary method* is used to trace the development of the James Bond character against the backdrop of the relevant socio-cultural and ideological contexts of the second half of the 20th century and the early 21st century;

– *the narrative analysis* enables the identification of the characteristics of the portrayal of the spy-hero and the principles underlying the plot structure in the literary bondiana;

– *the hermeneutic method* is used to interpret the semantic and value-based connotations associated with the character of Agent 007 in various textual and screen adaptations;

– *the comparative analysis* is used to juxtapose literary sources and their film adaptations, as well as to study the transformation of a character across the various stages of the franchise's development.

Collectively, these methods enable the consideration of Bond as a dynamic cultural construct operating at the intersection of literature, cinema and popular culture.

### **James Bond as an example of the Western mythologisation of the spy**

The history of world literature is known for examples of the amazing fates of heroes who exist independently, detached from the works in which they were first introduced to readers. There are not many of them, but they are world-famous—Odysseus, Don Quixote, Hamlet, Robinson, Schweik, Bender—on the one hand, they gave rise to the development of character types in literature and their numerous variations; on the other, they consistently shaped cultural phenomena corresponding to the essential characteristics of the heroes. At the same time, cultural phenomena named after specific characters—the “Odyssey,” “Robinsonades,” “Don Quixotism,” “Hamletism” and others—have always been, and remain, concepts that are more comprehensive and multifaceted than their heroes, and therefore encompass a wider range of phenomena—social, ethical and aesthetic. Each new era has brought its own meanings, enriching the phenomenon—a process made possible by a clear detachment from the work as a template, yet accompanied by a tenacious memory of it. It is the 20th and now the 21st centuries that have been most successful in interpreting this specifically nominal type of cultural hero or phenomenon. It seemed that the days when such a character could be created were long gone. But the release of the novel *Casino Royale* dramatically changed the situation. Little at the time foreshadowed the emergence of a new cultural icon, as this was Ian Fleming's first novel, and even the author himself could not yet discern the outlines of the future master of the spy genre in popular literature. Yet what unfolded in the following decades could be described not so much as a surprise as an inevitability.

It is worth noting that the publication of each novel was invariably followed by a film adaptation. And if we assume that the film adaptation of any work is regarded as a self-contained phenomenon, since cinematic techniques create a “unique narrative fabric” [Lotman, Tsivian, 1994, p. 128], filled with sound and movement, which creates a particular perception by the viewer of the narrative thread, which does not so much reproduce reality as is “that very reality” [Lotman, Tsivian, 1994, p. 163], then it is possible to speak of the separation of the novel's protagonist from the novel itself. James Bond has made two appearances—as a character in the novels and on the big screen. Bond's portrayal as a film character has always lent a special vividness to the literary character as well. Since the publication of the first novel, Bond has become a renowned and iconic figure of our time. The idea of the general public encountering James Bond, having never heard of the British intelligence super-spy, might seem almost comical. A British Royal Navy commander, also known as “Agent 007” —the protagonist of British author Ian Fleming's novels about the fictional MI6 agent.

The main character is, in fact, a composite figure who has long since become a mythological icon. Although some researchers regard James Bond's creator, Ian Fleming, as his prototype, drawing parallels with his behaviour and lifestyle—which are largely identical (which could be the subject of a separate study) —it is clear that the author sought to create a kind of mythological aura around his hero. One component of this myth is glamour as one of the key elements of James

Bond's appealing persona, and the author's intention in the first novel to create not just a spy, but a glamorous spy: a character who shattered all existing stereotypes of spies, not only in Western literature but even in Soviet literature. The image of the spy already had its own clichés and a certain literary reputation. Traditionally, he is faceless and unmemorable, for a character created by an author is not meant to stand out, catch the eye or impress with his talents. By becoming a spy, the hero seems to lose his very essence, and his success is not so much a demonstration of his personal, remarkable qualities as a manifestation of his exceptional ability to carry out the mission entrusted to him. Visually, the spy embodies the unity and anonymity of society, and it is this very anonymity that "completely separates him from the reader, inviting only empathy. The secret agent's grey overcoat has become a kind of cloak under which this hero hides" [Sarukhanian, 2005, p. 504].

Against this backdrop, Bond's emergence certainly presented a challenge to these established clichés. As early as his first novel, *Casino Royale*, Ian Fleming broke with the established tradition of the spy character in English detective fiction. It should be noted, however, that, on the one hand, English literature tended to portray the hero of the adventure genre as possessing an unusual appearance and unconventional behaviour; in this respect, Fleming does not depart from the English tradition but adheres strictly to it. His hero is always attractive in appearance and demeanour, and in this there is a distinct echo of the heroes of Scott, Byron and Conan Doyle. Furthermore, James Bond's literary lineage is English: his father, Andrew Bond, comes from an old Scottish family, whilst his mother is the Swiss-born Monique Delacroix; both parents are involved in British intelligence, so espionage is a family affair for the hero. What happens to the protagonist gives us reason to speak of those qualities of "britishness" described as "sympathetic empathy" (following M. Bakhtin), expressed through gentlemanliness and glamour.

### **Bond – the gentleman-spy**

In the novel *From Russia, With Love* (1957), the part of popular bondiana, one of the characters made a controversial remark about British heroes, noting that "The English are not interested in heroes <...> In England, neither open war nor secret war is a heroic matter. They do not like to think about war, and after a war the names of their war heroes are forgotten as quickly as possible" [Fleming, 2016]. In this phrase, alongside its historical and cultural undertones, one can discern an aesthetic message from Ian Fleming, the author of bondiana, directed, amongst other things, at Soviet literary studies, inviting an open dialogue and emphasising its significance as a phenomenon of mass literature during the Cold War, with particular focus on the popularity of its revitalised hero. The author also made a statement that was not without a certain defiance: "Within the Secret Service, this man may be a local hero or he may not" [Ibid.], since Bond had already become firmly established in readers' minds as the archetype of the English super-spy, upholding and developing both heroic and gentlemanly traditions, albeit in a transformed form. What happened to James Bond, the hero of the spy novels who first appeared in 1953 from the pen of Ian Fleming and rapidly carved out a new cultural space, becoming an iconic figure not only in literature and cinema but also in the culture of the late 20th and early 21st centuries as a whole, truly exceeded all expectations of both readers and critics. The emergence of this type of hero in English literature was, more than ever, shaped by socio-political and historical events that affected people's lives not only in England but across the world: the painful experience of the losses and consequences of the Second World War, and Churchill's speech in Fulton in 1946, which marked the beginning of the "Cold War," the establishment of a new level of relations with America, and the loss of colonial possessions in India and Pakistan, all of which aggravated the traumatised state of society and its culture.

The search for a way forward coincided unexpectedly with the demands of popular English literature, which had grown somewhat weary of its artistic masterpieces and was now seeking more trivial artistic solutions (this had manifested itself earlier in English cinematography, particularly in films starring Vivien Leigh, such as *Waterloo Bridge* and *That Hamilton Woman*). I. Fleming's desire to become a writer, drawing on his experience in journalism and intelligence work, was entirely shaped by these trends intuitively, through intellectual contemplation and reflection on current events, marked by a jocose literary device: firstly, supposedly to avoid "the horrific prospect of matrimony" [Lycett, 2002, p. 157], secondly, in the hope "to make money"

[Fleming, 1963], which was dictated by the nature of a writer's existence in the context of mass culture. It was, in a way, a light-hearted cover for a very serious undertaking: the creation of a new literary archetype for English literature. Ian Fleming had a keen sense of the convergence of circumstances required to create a superhero, fully appreciating the significance of the demand for popular culture and the historical and literary context of the time.

In his biography of I. Fleming, John Pearson, like the author himself, fictionalised the time and place of Bond's first appearance: "at Goldeneye [Fleming's Jamaican residence] on the morning of the third Tuesday of January, 1952, when Ian Fleming had just finished breakfast and had ten more weeks of his forty-three years as a bachelor to run" [Pearson, 1966, p. 167]. In creating Bond, the author seems to have deliberately departed from the traditional portrayal of the English gentleman, taking a step further than A. Conan Doyle and his image of the gentleman detective who combats every manifestation of social evil. The character conceived and created by Fleming differed sharply both from Sherlock Holmes and from the classical heroes, who belonged either to high society or to the middle class, but who adhered to certain standards of behaviour and a particular way of life (even if he was a criminal, he was invariably noble, as in the novels of W. Scott). James Bond is defined by his profession—a spy—and is artistically portrayed in accordance with this principle as he undertakes various missions, works on behalf of the British government and battles global evil, a narrative that was in demand at the time and was initially perceived as a natural ideological response to the circumstances of the "Cold War." Consequently, Bond's high degree of representativeness within his own archetype intensifies from novel to novel, a process facilitated by the accumulation of a consistent set of narrative formulas and clichés. But Fleming's starting point in creating the hero—Bond-gentleman—is evident in the cultural and literary pro et contra to which Fleming turned, debating, sharpening and transforming them, yet highlighting his gentlemanly-heroic genesis, which is inherent in him according to the English tradition. According to researcher Robert Cross, "Fleming created Bond . . . as a way of addressing the very real anger and anxiety he felt at the time about Britain's tarnished image and reputation" [Cross, 2011, p. 316], with a view to presenting the reasons behind the emergence of Agent 007 in the most ideological light possible, namely: two incidents—a scandal that undermined Britain's reputation, particularly in the eyes of the US intelligence services, the so-called "Cambridge Spy Ring" (a group of prominent figures from the British establishment who turned out to be agents of the Soviet intelligence service); the second, which concerned the monarchical figure of the Duke of Windsor, formerly King Edward VIII, who became the embodiment of a cad, having tarnished the title of gentleman through his reckless behaviour and critical remarks regarding established norms of conduct and decency. In both cases, the traditional values and virtues of English gentlemanliness, which Fleming also embodied without reservation, were undermined, thereby leaving the English establishment—which had already been shaken on more than one occasion—in a precarious state. Ultimately, this had an impact in the 20th century in that "the term *gentleman* is highly ambiguous and amorphous, and consequently almost impossible to pinpoint," as Christine Berberich pointed [Berberich, 2007, p. 4]. This idea, which had existed previously, preoccupied Fleming and found expression in his artistic and ethical views and explorations, which in many respects anticipated research into the concept of the gentleman within the imagery of English literature. It is now indisputable that the concept of the "gentleman" and its key characteristics in the 19th century were most accurately defined by fiction, of which he was a hero, and whose experience Fleming could not fail to take into account, as well as the generalisation of the gentlemanly strata of the Victorian era. It was during Queen Victoria's sixty-four-year reign that the values of life and daily existence found their most vivid expression in the national mindset, way of life, the style of the era, and particularly in gentlemanliness, leaving an enduring mark on the consciousness and way of life of subsequent generations.

The Victorian era provided the impetus for the development of the concept of "Englishness," which became an integral part of the mental landscape, the quintessence of the British national character, which found its reflection in two figures of that era—the figure of Queen Victoria and the image of the English gentleman. Being "a symbol for quintessential Englishness" [Berberich, 2007, p. 12], a gentleman and the gentleman's code became the standards of proper conduct and, in many ways, defined the English way of life. Its decline and the erosion of its foundations, along with disillusionment with the ideals that had sustained the gentlemanly way of life, foreshadowed

the need for a redemptive return to former glory through human transformation and the emergence of a new ideal. This was only possible through the mastery of the laws governing artistic imagery, the consistency of which is evident in Fleming's work. Thus, Bond's fundamental thematic essence—perfection and concreteness—is realised respectively in his role as a gentleman and in his espionage activities, shaping a new reality of the gentleman's existence, in which everything is transformed and exists in a new relationship in accordance with the author's creative vision. Neither Fleming's own experiences—as a journalist and intelligence officer—nor his rich life experiences were decisive in the creation of Bond. Artistic and aesthetic principles prevailed, grounded in a reality that lent them an ideological dimension. Consequently, Agent 007 rapidly took on the traits of a cultural ideal, the result of a perfect blend of gentlemanliness and espionage, embodied in such an appealing figure. Furthermore, according to the researchers, “the Victorian gentleman, builder of the biggest empire the world had ever seen, was a Romantic at heart, deeply embedded in rose-tinted medieval notions of chivalry and knight-errantry” [Berberich, 2007, p. 22], something Fleming was not indifferent to. For him, it was not a case of “self-deception,” but an integral part of his character's way of life. Established in the 19th century “the idea of the gentleman was developed into an “invented tradition”: based on the medieval cult of the knight, it was adapted and modified to fit contemporary needs” [Ibid., p. 21], as an integral part of “Englishness” and the national spirit. Fleming adopted these traits as the basis for his portrayal of Bond-gentleman but attempts to preserve gentlemanliness as a cultural phenomenon were complicated by its ongoing transformation and by its subjective dimension, which further intensified the problem of representativeness. In the 20th century, with its focus on anthropological issues—sparked in England by the collapse of the Victorian era and accompanied by various scandalous incidents that cast a negative light on the very essence of gentlemanliness—there was a sense of “awkwardness” arising from the very nature of the gentleman's place in society, since up to that point “it seems uncomfortably linked to class, images of feudal landlords or snobbish “toffs,” while simultaneously raising issues of education, style, manners, or simply inner values” [Ibid., 2007, p. 5]. Despite all “pro et contra,” the gentlemanly meanings and forms of existence were sought after, above all, in their figurative form, since the artistic image, as is well known, “is not merely a depiction or expression of certain isolated phenomena, aspects, properties or scenes of reality, but an aesthetic manifestation of the harmony between the individual and the world, a harmony in the light of which both disharmony, chaos and disorder are clarified” [Girshman, Domaschenko, 2008, p. 150]. The reflections on the artistic image by M. Girshman and O. Domashchenko particularly emphasise that it is one in which “the universal foundations of existence are revealed in any particular, individual, historically specific life, whatever life may be the chosen subject of direct depiction.” What appears to be important is the “general existential meaning” of the artistic image “as a universal interconnection, a sense of connection—communication in the world of images between everyone and everything” [Ibid.]. These characteristics naturally intersect in the behaviour and lifestyle of Fleming's protagonist, a gentleman-spy who has subordinated the gentleman's code to the service of intelligence. In the very first Bond novel, *Casino Royale* Fleming introduces the reader to a hero who attempts to shatter the gentleman's code by choosing the profession of a spy and the associated conduct, which is least associated with the traditional understanding of gentlemanliness, with its set of mandatory rules. Thus, in the novel by J. Galsworthy *The Forsyte Saga*, a complex system of characterisation is presented, in which gentlemanliness is encapsulated in the form of a challenge and the family's snobbery, as manifested in “an added perfection of raiment, an exuberance of family cordiality, an exaggeration of family importance, and—the sniff. Danger—so indispensable in bringing out the fundamental quality of any society, group, or individual” [Galsworthy, 2006]. Equally distinctive are the personal characteristics that highlight the various aspects of gentlemanliness: “Over against the piano a man of bulk and stature was wearing two waist coats on his wide chest, two waist coats and a ruby pin, instead of the single satin waist coat and diamond pin of more usual occasions, and his shaven, square, old face, the colour of pale leather, with pale eyes, had its most dignified look, above his satin stock” [Ibid.]; James was “over six feet in height, but very lean, as though destined from his birth to strike a balance and maintain an average, brooded over the scene with his permanent stoop; his grey eyes had an air of fixed absorption in some secret worry, broken at intervals by a rapid, shifting scrutiny of surrounding facts; his cheeks, thinned by two parallel folds, and a long, clean-

shaven upper lip, were framed within Dundreary whiskers” [Ibid.]. In *The Forsyte Saga* gallery of representative portraits of Victorian England, each featuring a defining detail with which the subject identified, demonstrates in its entirety a subdued expression of gentlemanliness within the context and against the backdrop of respectability, stoicism, and a sense of class preservation. All this is shattered by the new generation of Forsytes in the novel *A Modern Comedy*.

Traces of these works appear allusively in Fleming’s writing as he explores a new technique of characterisation—cinematic recognition—which gained popularity in the 1950s and 1960s—the patterns identified by Y. Lotman: “The ability of cinematography to divide a person’s appearance into ‘pieces’ and arrange these segments into a chronological sequence, thereby transforming a person’s appearance into a narrative text <...> the image of a person on screen is as close as possible to real life, deliberately oriented towards distancing itself from theatricality and artificiality. And at the same time, it is, to the utmost degree—far more so than on stage or in the visual arts—semiotic, saturated with secondary meanings; it appears before us as a sign or a chain of signs conveying a complex system of additional meanings” [Lotman, 1976, pp. 85–86]. This is precisely why Bond was portrayed in the first novel through the lens of the famous actor Hogi Carmichael, without any psychological nuance, focusing instead on the “on-screen persona” and his “maximum divergence not from a real-life person, but from a literary character” —to reframe Y. Lotman’s words, so to speak. Therefore, in the novel *Casino Royale*, when introducing his protagonist to the reader, the author deliberately subverts the classic English portrait of a gentlemanly figure—“He is very good-looking. He reminds <...> rather of Hoagy Carmichael,” but this is immediately followed, in the form of a caveat, by the need to retain the traits of a gentleman: “there is something cold and ruthless in his eyes” [Fleming, 2015a]. Fleming uses the actor’s appearance, mythologised by the general public, as a cinematic device to foster a mythologised perception of his hero, whilst at the same time counteracting the perceived physical unattractiveness of English literary gentlemen. In doing so, Fleming emphasised the interplay between cinema and literature in the creation of a new hero, shaped by the specific nature of popular cinematography. The English writer’s creation of a myth surrounding yet another star can be compared to the casting of an actor for a role, with the resolute elimination of anything that might irritate the audience. In this case, it was that tiresome Victorian gentlemanliness, on display in its new, modified form—that of a spy—combined with traits of the English national character (which had always inspired admiration among the English in the figure of the eminent intelligence officer Kim Philby). This layering of literary and cinematic strata creates a phenomenon that has become a fixture of English cultural life, enhanced by a biographical detail: the actor bears a striking resemblance to Fleming. In doing so, Fleming, on the one hand, dispels any suggestion that his character might be modelled on known spies as prototypes for Bond, positioning himself in that role; on the other hand, he moves away from the traditional, detailed character sketches typical of English novels, retaining from that tradition only “severity and coldness.” An actor’s attractiveness and recognition dictate the standards of behaviour for Bond, which are perceived as a more relaxed form of gentlemanliness: he “liked to make a good breakfast,” “had always been a gambler,” “a very serious gambler,” “car was his only personal hobby,” as well as a meticulous choice of clothing that added confidence to the look [Fleming, 2015a].

For Fleming, the reader’s recognition of Bond through the actor’s well-established portrayal becomes a clichéd device, one which the author also employs in the novel *Moonraker*: “Rather like Hoagy Carmichael in a way. <...> Much the same bones. But there was something a bit cruel in the mouth, and the eyes were cold” [Fleming, 2015b], as if casually reminding us of the nature and purpose of his character. To a certain extent, the social hierarchy of Bond as conceived by Fleming presents an aesthetic challenge: a gentleman (by birth) —a spy (by profession) —a pirate (by nature), as Agent 007 defines himself. However, in emphasising this combination, the author is effectively highlighting the variations on the concept of gentlemanliness that the character of Bond has introduced into culture. Fleming did not repeat this phrase in any of his novels, but its allusive presence is palpable in Bond’s behaviour.

Each of the subsequent Bond novels is characterised by Bond’s inevitable struggle with the gentleman’s code, dictated by his profession as a spy and a faint sense of “noble” piracy within himself. Thus, the novel *Moonraker* makes a point of emphasising that, for a true gentleman, membership of a prestigious club—and regular attendance—was an integral part of life. Officially,

James Bond was not a member of such a club, but he did visit it on the invitations of other members. The author sets the plot of the novel in one of the world's most famous card clubs, "The Blades," of which the secret agent M's immediate superior was a member: "the club <...> remains to this day the home of some of the highest "polite" gambling in the world. It is not as aristocratic as it was, the redistribution of wealth has seen to that, but it is still the most exclusive club in London. The membership is restricted to two hundred and each candidate must have two qualifications for election; he must behave like a gentleman and he must be able to "show" £100,000 in cash or gilt-edged securities" [Fleming, 2015b]. Fleming gave a brief history of the Blades club, familiarising readers with the rules and peculiarities in detail, emphasising the exclusivity and prestige of this establishment for the cream of society—the club can truly be called a bastion of the old traditions of English gentlemanliness, which intrigued with the privileged status of the elite, which seemed like an ideal one would wish to follow. As the Secret Service's top card player, Agent 007 is due to play a game of bridge at the club and is bound to demonstrate his mastery of the game to the millionaire Hugo Drax, who had been winning huge sums in an inexplicable manner and, according to the chairman of the Blades Club Basildon, was cheating at cards. But such skilful play requires a corresponding appearance. In keeping with the code upheld by every dandy, he must be dressed "in a heavy white silk shirt, dark blue trousers of Navy serge, dark blue socks, and well-polished black moccasin shoes, he was sitting at his desk with a pack of cards in one hand and Scarne's wonderful guide to cheating open in front of him" [Fleming, 2015b]. According to D. Schiffer, the philosopher of dandyism, "the perfection of clothing lies in its ideal beauty" [Schiffer, 2008, pp. 194–195], for whom every detail matters, expressed through a sequence of physical movements as an example of self-confidence and superiority: Bond "filled the wide black case with cigarettes and slipped it into his hip pocket, put on a black knitted silk tie and his coat and verified that his cheque book was in his notecase" [Fleming, 2015b]; taking into account that "He had only played at Blades a dozen times in his life, and on the last occasion he had burnt his fingers badly in a high poker game, but the prospect of some expensive bridge and of the swing of a few, to him, not unimportant hundred pounds made his muscles taut with anticipation" [Ibid.]. In setting such a task for his hero, Fleming-gentleman was undoubtedly aware that this violated the rule of "fair play," which every man who considered himself a gentleman was bound to follow. However, in defiance of "true" gentlemanliness, the writer created the character of a "flawed gentleman," thereby suggesting that villains must be fought using unconventional methods. One could say that James Bond "Doesn't look the sort of chap one usually sees in Blades," who has "Something a bit cold and dangerous in that face. Looks pretty fit. May have been attached to Templer in Malaya. Or Nairobi. Mau Mau work. Tough-looking customer" [Ibid.]. As the embodiment of the qualities of the British national character, in other words, the embodiment of "Englishness," "Bond knew that there was something alien and un-English about himself. He knew that he was a difficult man to cover up. Particularly in England." But Agent 007 wasn't the least bit bothered; he knew: "Abroad was what mattered. He would never have a job to do in England. Outside the jurisdiction of the Service" [Ibid.].

The author of *bondiana* is meticulous in his presentation of Bond's annual earnings: "He earned £1,500 a year, the salary of a Principal Officer in the Civil Service, and he had a thousand a year free of tax of his own. When he was on a job he could spend as much as he liked, so for the other months of the year he could live very well on his £2000 a year net" [Ibid.], in which Fleming's "gentleman-clerk" approach is evident. But this meticulousness regarding finances is two-sided: on the one hand, whilst in England and carrying out his usual work "at home," Agent 007 could count on his salary, and would occasionally win at cards or golf; on the other hand, whilst abroad, Bond led a completely different lifestyle, enjoying the Secret Service's unlimited funds. This state of affairs may partly be of a biographical nature, reflecting the author's desire to use the protagonist to express unfulfilled aspects of his own career. But the fact remains that "Ian Fleming, the author, was a gentleman. James Bond, the character, is likewise a gentleman" [Tornabuoni, 1966, p. 34], that is, by inheritance, which is undeniable. However, this is the biographical and gentlemanly aspect of *bondiana* that calls for more careful consideration.

According to K. Berberich, 20th-century authors refer to the image of the gentleman, thereby emphasising that "the ideal still continuous to fascinate not only the writers but also, and in the long run more importantly, the reading public" since "the figure of gentleman <...> still haunts

the collective consciousness of the British reading” [Berberich, 2007, p. 37]. Bondologists agree that it was his national identity that brought James Bond to fame. According to James Chapman, in the public imagination James Bond is associated with “a particular image of Britishness,” namely with “the suave gentleman hero,” who is “an embodiment of the values of meritocracy and professionalism that helped to shape British society after the Second World War” [Chapman, 2005, p. 130]. A connoisseur of gambling (cards, roulette), spirits (martinis, bourbon, vodka) and female beauty (as Bond himself admits, these are attractive, striking women who are neither famous nor recognisable), Bond felt at ease in a tuxedo and looked like a true millionaire when he visited an expensive restaurant with his companion or sped off in a luxury car, trying to save her. However, Bond is not really a true gentleman; he merely adheres to the gentleman’s code on occasion: he maintains his taste in clothing, food and drink, but as far as his lifestyle is concerned, it is a complete departure from gentlemanly tradition. Bond seems to be challenging the culture through his behaviour: not only does the secret agent have no family, but he also lacks any stability in his relationships with women. Bond’s female companions are either spies, such as Vesper Lynd (*Casino Royale*), Gala Brand (*Moonraker*), Tatiana Romanova (*From Russia with Love*), Mary Goodnight (*The Man with the Golden Gun*), or his involuntary accomplices, such as Simone Latrelle (*Solitaire*) (*Live and Let Die*), Tiffany Case (*Diamonds are Forever*), Hanichili Ryder (*Dr. No*), Pussy Galore (*Goldfinger*), Dominetta Vitali (Domino) (*Thunderball*), Vivienne Michelle (*The Spy Who Loved Me*), Kishi Suzuki (*You Only Live Twice*). It is therefore the stages involved in carrying out a particular mission that determine Agent 007’s attitude towards them; yet it also defines his ideal woman: “Gold hair. Grey eyes. A sinful mouth. Perfect figure” [Fleming, 2017]. However, Bond showed his true gentlemanly nature only towards Countess Teresa di Vicenzo (in “On Her Majesty’s Secret Service”), when he asked for her hand in marriage. But he was unable to start a family with the woman he loved, as she was murdered on their wedding day. And so, it was only his habit of checking everything down to the last detail and his intuition that became Bond’s constant companions. He was a professional, and if he ever allowed himself to be swept away by yet another femme fatale, he knew it would not last a lifetime. He was loyal only to Britain.

James Bond’s patriotism is an integral part of Agent 007’s British identity: “Bond is a conservative hero, a defender of the realm, a staunch patriot and <...> an upholder of monarchy,” researchers note [Chapman, 2005, p. 131]. The conservatism of the literary Bond, as a defining feature of Victorian everyday life, is evident in his habits: the only newspaper Bond reads is “The Times,” and he feels a sentimental attachment to the old five-pound note, as it is associated with the stability and standards of a once-mighty empire; when reflecting on his country, James Bond increasingly equates it with England rather than Britain. It was the Victorian era that cemented the tradition of tea drinking, familiar to every English person. But Fleming’s hero challenges convention in the novel *Thunderball*, when the reader learns that “Bond loathed and despised tea, that flat, soft, time-wasting opium of the masses,” and, whilst on a health retreat at a sanatorium where a trip to the nearest teahouse was a regular ritual, he resented it: “He got to know all of them <...> and a dozen other cottages, raftershops where elderly couples <...> talked in muted tones about children called Len and Ron and Pearl and Ethel, and ate in small mouthfuls with the points of their teeth and made not a sound with the tea things. It was a world whose ghastly daintiness and propriety would normally have sickened him” [Fleming, 2021].

However rebellious James Bond’s spirit may be, he invariably identifies with his homeland and considers it unthinkable to question its power: he is ruthless towards his enemies and sees things through to the end. And if anyone should harbour doubts about Britain’s authority, Agent 007 warns: “You underestimate the English. They may be slow, but they get there” [Fleming, 2015c]. And yet, despite the patriotic spirit, “Bond himself is not the quintessential English gentleman hero” [Chapman, 2005, p. 133].

According to the critic Bernard Bergonzi, Fleming’s novels have “an air of vulgarity and display which contrast strongly with those subdued images of the perfectly self-assured gentlemanly life” [See: Chapman, 2005, p. 133]. In fact, James Bond represents a shift in the key characteristics of the archetypal English gentleman, as interpreted in the Victorian era, which portrayed him as a modest, noble, courteous, humorous, athletic and patriotic figure—a combination that made him particularly likeable. However, as J. Chapman argues, the most frequently used adjective to describe Bond is “cruel.” And yet the Bondologist agrees that the outward signs of gentlemanliness

are certainly present in the glamorous spy: “he knows the right drinks and the right food” [Chapman, 2005, p. 133]. However, in a card game or a round of golf, a true gentleman would never allow himself to engage in “unfair play,” even if his opponent were to do so. Thus, the reader is presented with a modern hero, without any class affiliation, a civil servant and a worthy representative of the professional class, who prefers anonymity to public fame. His sexual liaisons and lack of lasting commitment to any one woman suggest that British society “was breaking free from the prurient Victorianism” [Ibid., p. 134], but has not yet become a “permissive society.” Despite his Englishness, James Bond cannot be described as a thoroughbred Englishman: his father is from Scotland and his mother is from Switzerland. He attended Eton College but did not graduate. His annual income is modest, £1,500 a year. But Bond’s greatest shortcoming as an English gentleman is his lack of membership of the prestigious private club known as “St James.”

And yet, as K. Berberich pointed out, Fleming deliberately created a gentleman “with a flaw,” whilst in turmoil over the “traitors within” the British establishment [Berberich, 2007], who were undermining the authority of what was once one of the most powerful empires and disregarding the traditions of English gentlemanliness as a symbol of national identity. Ian Fleming had an important mission in store for his main literary character— “to restore British honour in the eyes of the world” [Cross, 2011, p. 325], evoking in the minds of readers “the image of a powerful, proud and still imperial Britain untouched and undiminished by post-war decline” [Ibid., p. 326]. Perhaps James Bond was a “hedonistic womanizer and epicurean snob” [Ibid., p. 327], as described by B. Bergonzi and P. Johnson, but he never once let his country or the monarchy down. Appearance in world literature of “a new English gentleman to kill off the old treacherous and discredited “chentlemen” is testimony to the fact that the writer set his new aesthetic views against the spirit of the age and succeeded in achieving his goal by creating the character of the gentleman-spy, “a new flawed gentleman for a new flawed age” [Cross, 2011, p. 327], a much-needed new icon of popular culture.

### **Bond – the glamorous spy**

The phenomenon of “glamour” has become widespread in the contemporary value system and is particularly popular among those who are drawn to the “glossy glamour” that exists as a kind of simulacrum of traditional values, a phenomenon that has emerged in contemporary popular culture. Glamour is thus one of the literary components that determine a work’s aesthetic orientation and the author’s intentions.

It is worth noting that in today’s world, glamour is nothing more than a certain mood of mass consumption, forming the basis of a particular worldview and standard of living with an unmistakable aesthetic stamp. Thus, glamour is not merely beauty, luxury or style; rather, it is an effect whose influence can be compared to the power of the imagination; glamour inspires, making us believe that the unattainable becomes accessible to all, and that a dream life and a fairy-tale life are real. Distant and yet within reach, “it is neither transparent nor opaque. It is translucent” [Rosa, 2004]. “It invites us into the world but it doesn’t give us a completely clear picture” [Postrel, 2004], its main characteristics are “an escape, an illusion, an ideal, a dream” [Rosa, 2004]. Glamour casts its spell; its essential ingredients—mystery and sophistication—cannot be bought with money, “glamour suggests that the good, the true and the beautiful are one and the same.” However, all these associations are symbolic, as they are merely “an artistic representation” [Ibid.], the creation of which seems so effortless and easily achievable.

It is often claimed that glamour is a product of royal courts or the upper classes. However, as Stephen Gundle argues, it is “a quintessentially modern phenomenon,” “best seen as an alluring image,” “an enticing and seductive vision” designed to captivate, to dazzle [Gundle, 2008, pp. 6, 5]. Glamour may manifest itself through “people, things, places, events, or environments, any of which can capture the imagination by association with a range of qualities, including several or all of the following: beauty, sexuality, theatricality, wealth, dynamism, notoriety, movement, and leisure” [Ibid., p. 6]. Fashion, the creation of looks, personas and appearances, beauty, sexuality, attainable exclusivity, a thirst for action, excess, playing to the crowd, egocentricity, and a life of luxury—these are the key components of the glamour of our age. We will consider the embodiment of these elements in the character of James Bond in Ian Fleming’s first novel, *Casino Royale*.

On the surface, the novel appears to be a variation on the spy novel: Agent 007, James Bond, is tasked with neutralising the diabolical Le Chiffre, who is plotting against Western civilisation and is the USSR's most valuable agent. But that is where the similarities with the traditional spy novel end, as everything takes on a completely different artistic interpretation. And the first departure from tradition is evident in the way the protagonist is introduced into the novel's plot—after all, the events take place in France, a country that is anything but a spy-free zone, and one more closely associated with the culture of the fashion industry. The events take place in the small, picturesque resort town of Royale, where all the world's nobility and celebrities flock to entertain themselves at the green baize of the casino's card tables. The author's choice of setting highlights one of the super-spy's traits as a glamorous hero, and from the very first pages the reader is immersed not in a typical spy atmosphere, but in a sophisticated one: "But there was something splendid about the Negresco baroque of the Casino Royale, a strong whiff of Victorian elegance and luxury..." [Fleming, 2015a]. It is worth noting that the luxury surrounding James Bond is not always what it seems but only takes shape through its interaction with the superhero's existence. Moreover, Bond's interaction with the world around him, his existence within it, creates a unique situation where "an increase in the number of amenities and services "for collective use": monuments, museums, parks, churches, fountains, are available to everyone" [Perro, 2017, p. 170]. And this points to the topoi familiar to Fleming's novels. One might accuse the author of faux exoticism, but he convinces us that the abundance of glamorous descriptions of the locale reflects Bond's familiar milieu. Preparations for the encounter with his implacable enemy, Le Chiffre, take place amidst a game of roulette played with great relish. It is surprising that James Bond is so keen on gambling: "Bond had always been a gambler. He liked the solid, studied comfort of card rooms and casinos, the well-padded arms of the chairs, the glass of champagne or whisky at the elbow, the quiet unhurried attention of good servants" [Fleming, 2015a]. This thirst for sophistication and attention to detail highlight Agent 007's desire for and pursuit of luxury, but Bond's lavish lifestyle is not a "display of some usurped status or vanity"; it does not undermine "the foundations of the world order." For a super-spy, luxury is his cover; "it is a prerequisite for his activities to remain secret". After all, "He's a dedicated man. <...> He thinks of nothing but the job on hand" [Fleming, 2015a].

Whatever the reservations, it was impossible to resist the charm of a true English gentleman. And, right from his very first novel, Fleming introduces the reader to his constant companion. "Cherchez la femme!" —reads the famous quote. But what sort of woman should she be? On the one hand, this is a classic conflict in the novel—the protagonist's espionage activities and his personal life. The novel offers only a few details about the latter, whereas in *Casino Royale* the account of the protagonist's personal life reveals a departure from tradition whilst simultaneously reshaping the conflict. The "Bond girl" is not a woman for all times, but merely for the duration of the mission. There is no consistent female archetype that accompanies Bond. The Bond girl is an integral part of his glamorous life as a spy, just as she is of his mythologised persona. In *Casino Royale*, the author creates the character of a beautiful woman who skilfully conceals her true nature: the enchanting Mademoiselle Lynd. As a confirmed bachelor, Bond has excellent taste when it comes to choosing women: "Her hair was very black and she wore it cut square and low on the nape of the neck, framing her face to below the clear and beautiful line of her jaw. <...> Her eyes were wide apart and deep blue and they gazed candidly back at Bond with a touch of ironical disinterest <...> Her skin was lightly sun tanned and bore no trace of makeup except on her mouth which was wide and sensual. Her bare arms and hands had a quality of repose and the general impression of restraint in her appearance and movements was carried even to her fingernails which were unpainted and cut short" [Fleming, 2015a]. Obviously "Bond was excited by her beauty and intrigued by her composure" [Ibid.].

The reader's encounter with Miss Lynd takes place almost by chance by the lift before heading to the restaurant, captivating them with her flawless beauty: "Her dress was of black velvet, simple and yet with the touch of splendor that only half a dozen *couturiers* in the world can achieve. There was a thin necklace of diamonds at her throat and a diamond clip in the low vee which just exposed the jutting swell of her breasts. She carried a plain black evening bag, a flat object which she now held, her arm akimbo, at her waist. Her jet black hair hung straight and simple to the final inward curl below the chin" [Ibid.]. In this portrait, one senses both the

author's gaze, admiring feminine beauty, and the protagonist's gaze, reflecting his satisfaction with his choice. In Fleming's work, the poetics of artistic imagery acquires new qualities.

In the quoted description of Miss Lynd as one of Bond's love interests, the focus is on her physicality, emphasised by her dress. Whilst there are no facial expressions or indications of her facial expression, there is a gesture—her arm “at her waist.” The significance of such gestures was pointed out in a measured yet original way by Yulia Kristeva, who masterfully employed the term “body language,” emphasising: “All forms of non-verbal language (divination, fortune-telling, various forms of symbolism, facial expressions and gestures, etc.) are, to a greater extent, universal than verbal language, which is divided into a large number of distinct languages” [Kristeva, 1969, pp. 38–39]. Among the categories proposed by Ju. Kristeva, the one corresponding to Fleming's heroine is “communication without communicative intent and without an exchange of ideas” [Ibid., p. 39]. Equally important is the researcher's conclusion on this matter: “... gestural behaviour must be studied as a practice, without attempting to impose communicative structures upon it” [Ibid., p. 38]. In Fleming's work, this is particularly evident in the way he strings together instances of gestural behaviour as a recurring theme from novel to novel, especially with regard to female characters, particularly those portrayed in films.

It is worth noting that Bond does not mind being on his own; he prefers to work solo. As for his personal life, as his partner Mathis put it: “I don't think Bond has ever been melted. It will be a new experience for him” [Fleming, 2015a]. The author provides some clarification regarding this state of affairs: “The lengthy approaches to a seduction bored him almost as much as the subsequent mess of disentanglement. He found something grisly in the inevitability of the pattern of each affair”; Bond “disliked having feminine things around him. <...> He disliked being cosseted. It gave him claustrophobia” [Ibid.].

Although a true connoisseur of feminine beauty, Bond nevertheless remained steadfast in his resolve not to burden himself with long-term relationships, let alone marriage, for according to his philosophy: “Women were for recreation. On a job, they got in the way and fogged things up with sex and hurt feelings and all the emotional baggage they carried around. One had to look out for them and take care of them” [Ibid.].

But in the situation depicted in the novel, what is surprising is what Bond sees in Vesper and how he feels about her. His feelings towards this woman were mixed, and his thoughts kept returning to her. He looked at her with tenderness; she had imperceptibly entered his soul, and his attitude towards her began to change: “He found her companionship easy and unexacting. There was something enigmatic about her which was a constant stimulus” [Ibid.].

James Bond may allow himself to fall in love, but this will inevitably lead to fatal consequences. In *Casino Royale*, he decided to ask Vesper to marry him, but she turned out to be a double agent working for the Reds and poisoned herself to avoid falling into the hands of the SMERSH agents. “Glamorous people are not rooted but rather are constantly on the move” [Gundle, 2008, p. 13]. And this philosophy of life really appeals to a daring, self-assured and utterly seductive British intelligence agent.

Thus, in examining the three principal components of James Bond's glamour—the setting, the nomination of the face, and the “Bond girl”—one inevitably encounters the recurring invocation of certain attributes that later became “trends of James Bond brand.” And the first thing that is memorable is the car and the meticulousness with which Fleming describes it: “Bond's car was his only personal hobby. One of the last of the 4½ litre Bentleys with the supercharger by Amherst Villiers, he had bought it almost new in 1933 and had kept it in careful storage through the war. It was still serviced every year and, in London, a former Bentley mechanic, who worked in a garage near Bond's Chelsea flat, tended it with jealous care. Bond drove it hard and well and with an almost sensual pleasure. It was a battleship gray convertible coupe, which really did convert, and it was capable of touring at ninety with thirty miles an hour in reserve” [Fleming, 2015a]. Cars have always held a certain romantic appeal, and owning an exclusive model from a luxury brand has always been a mark of glamour and style.

The clothes worn by the novel's protagonist are impeccable, chosen with great care, and successfully highlight his unique character. The restaurant, and the food and drinks ordered by the wonderful couple in the novel, are also examples of glamour: “Bond had chosen a table in one of the mirrored alcoves at the back of the great room. These had survived from the Edwardian days

and they were secluded and gay in white and gilt, with the red silk-shaded table and wall lights of the late Empire” [Ibid.]. Bond and Vesper certainly behave as befits millionaires, taking pleasure in this and disregarding the conventional bourgeois notions of restraint and moderation. Fleming provides a detailed list of the entire order, even specifying the brand of wine chosen by the couple “Blanc de Blanc Brut” from 1943, and immediately explains the protagonist’s rather particular attitude towards the choice of food: “You must forgive me,” he said. “I take a ridiculous pleasure in what I eat and drink. It comes partly from being a bachelor, but mostly from a habit of taking a lot of trouble over details. It’s very picky and old maidish really, but then when I’m working, I generally have to eat my meals alone and it makes them more interesting when one takes trouble” [Ibid.].

Alcohol is just as much a part of the glamorous spy’s image as his clothes, expensive restaurants and charming female companions. James Bond’s cocktail is his signature drink. Fleming had been searching for a long time for the exact recipe for the famous cocktail, and on Saint James’s Street, in the side street known as Saint James’s Place, where the Duke’s Hotel is located, a local barman at the bar suggested that the author try mixing “Three measures of Gordon’s, one of vodka, half a measure of Kina Lillet. Shake it very well until it’s ice-cold, then add a large thin slice of lemon peel” [Ibid.]. Bond was looking for a suitable name, and his meeting with Miss Lynd—or rather, her name—gave him the idea: “The Vesper,” he said.” It sounds perfect and it’s very appropriate to the violet hour when my cocktail will now be drunk all over the world” [Ibid.]. And the phrase “shaken not stirred” well-known to all fans of Bond style.

### **The nomination of Bond-spy’s face**

In this section, we will examine the importance of the nomination of the face as one of the essential components of James Bond’s glamorous image. Right from the first novel, *Casino Royale*, what catches the reader’s attention is the way the author “introduces” the reader to the incomparable Agent 007. In the fictional world of Fleming’s novels, and soon afterwards in the film adaptation, the name *James Bond* transcends that of a mere proper name, acquiring the status of “the nomination of the face,” that is, “a specific symbol characterising the created fictional world” [Syritsa, 2007, pp. 45, 12] as glamorous. The portrait of the spy exhibits characteristics of a “system of authorial cues” [Ibid., 2007, p. 49], designed to shape a particular perception of the charming hero’s appearance, in which every detail has its own significance, since physical beauty is one of the key components of glamour, occupying a central position in all its forms: “As he tied his thin, double ended, black satin tie, he paused for a moment and examined himself levelly in the mirror.” Through the protagonist’s eyes, the viewer observes his appearance with curiosity: “His grey blue eyes looked calmly back with a hint of ironical inquiry and the short lock of black hair which would never stay in place slowly subsided to form a thick comma above his right eyebrow”. [Fleming, 2015a]. In this way, I. Fleming moves away from portraying the main character as plain and unremarkable (a characteristic feature of traditional spy archetypes), focusing instead on Agent 007’s charm, whilst not forgetting to highlight his past: “With the thin vertical scar down his right cheek the general effect was faintly piratical” [Ibid.]. Such a departure from tradition undoubtedly appeals to the general public, thereby generating a particular interest in James Bond, which in turn leads to the creation of an iconic hero.

A detailed description of the nomination of the face includes the standard features of the new spy’s look, such as “a flat, light gunmetal box with fifty of the Morland cigarettes with the triple gold band,” “oxidized Ronson,” “a very flat 25 Beretta automatic.” The look is completed by the ever-present “single breasted dinner-jacket coat” worn “over his heavy silk evening shirt.” And only after carefully checking every detail of his appearance James Bond “felt cool and comfortable.” I. Fleming uses his character’s movements and gestures to draw attention once again to every detail of his appearance: “He verified in the mirror that there was absolutely no sign of the flat gun under his left arm, gave a final pull at his narrow tie and walked out of the door and locked it” [Ibid.]. It is also worth noting that Bond’s beloved immaculate black tuxedo is a tribute to English cultural tradition, a certain manifestation of dandyism. As is well known, the inventor of the English gentleman’s style was the celebrated dandy George ‘Beau’ Brummell [Gundle, 2008, p. 58]. A tuxedo, shirt and tie, the ironic gaze of the novel’s protagonist’s grey eyes, as well as such cinematographic attributes as a

status-symbol wristwatch from a renowned Swiss firm and an expensive mobile phone from a popular brand, complement and accentuate the impeccable appearance of a self-assured, glamorous spy.

One aspect of James Bond's portrayal is his physical appearance and emotional impact. This is evident in the brief description of Agent 007 given by his boss, Vesper Lynd, who agrees that Agent 007 is "a good-looking chap," attracting the attention of the opposite sex. And yet, the focus is on assessing professional qualities: "He's a dedicated man. He thinks of nothing but the job on hand and, while it's on, he's absolute hell to work for. But he's an expert and there aren't many about..." that is why "don't fall for him." Despite his professional success, James Bond does not have a reputation as a "man for life" — "I don't think he's got much heart" — that was the verdict handed down to the handsome spy [Fleming, 2015a].

According to S. Gundle, glamour was understood "as an imaginative synthesis of wealth, beauty, and notoriety that was enviable and imitable rather than a hereditary prerogative" [Gundle, 2008, p. 18]. I. Fleming identified not only Agent 007's impeccable taste as one of the defining characteristics of his hero, but also his ability to "disguise" himself when the situation demanded it, highlighting precisely this aspect of a spy's professional life as one of the key—yet no less glamorous—elements. Thus, Bond dines at the most expensive restaurant, because "The food here's the best in Royale" and he is not in the habit of overlooking such subtleties of life. The elegance of the surroundings is striking: "The fashionable part of the restaurant was beside the wide crescent of window built out like the broad stern of a ship over the hotel gardens"; Bond chooses the most prestigious locations—"a table in one of the mirrored alcoves at the back of the great room. These had survived from the Edwardian days and they were secluded and gay in white and gilt, with the red silk-shaded table and wall lights of the late Empire" [Fleming, 2015a]. As for the choice of dishes, Agent 007 dispels his companion's hesitation by insisting to "be expensive" since chic clothes and a chic venue call for a dinner that's just as chic: "behaving like a millionaire" [Ibid.] is the superhero's motto. Bond really enjoys what he eats: "the caviar, <...> a very small tournedos, underdone, with sauce Béarnaise and a coeur d'artichaut. <...> half an avocado pear with a little French dressing, the Blanc de Blanc Brut 1943" [Ibid.]. The author recreates every detail, every little thing, that helps to create the unique image of a British super-agent who takes pleasure in every movement of his "exquisite" cover, disregarding the conventional bourgeois notions of restraint and moderation. From the outside, his lifestyle seems luxurious and desirable; one feels the urge to emulate him.

The world of Agent 007 is not just about exclusive clothing, a luxury car, and expensive, strong spirits. "Living like Bond" means finding yourself in the thick of the most incredible events and adventures, speeding off in a posh Bentley to rescue the enchanting Vesper Lynd, engaging in an unequal battle with a dangerous adversary and still emerging victorious—in other words, being a true hero. He seems somewhat dangerous and mysterious, and this is part of his glamour, which bears the mark of the English heroic tradition, in accordance with M. Bakhtin's view—The main task is to *glorify the present*. This is by no means a simple task. It has been set many times in the history of literature, but it has never been resolved. From the perspective of established literary traditions, this task is paradoxical. Consequently, since there was no intention of breaking with these traditions, the solution was paradoxical: to link the present to the past, to present it in the guise of a heroic past, to elevate it to the level of the past, to the level of fathers and grandfathers, to the glory of our forefathers. But such heroisation required abstraction from everything concrete and specific in the present. Yet the past must be heroised in terms of the future; only then could the slightest bit of modernity, the slightest detail of everyday life, be heroised [Bakhtin, 1981]. His elegance, his romantic entanglements, and the spectacle of his triumphs and defeats keep the public constantly fascinated by the figure of Bond.

## Conclusions

The research conducted in this article leads to a number of specific findings regarding the interpretation of the image of James Bond as a spy-hero within the context of English-language popular culture and his gradual transformation within the literary and cinematographic tradition. The analysis has established that the image of Agent 007 was originally formed as a complex cultural construct, combining the traits of a literary hero, a mythologised character and a mass-cultural symbol operating across various media environments.

One of the findings of the study has been to confirm that, from the very moment of his appearance in Ian Fleming's novels, James Bond has been conceived not as a traditional spy character, but as a specially constructed "glamorous spy," which fundamentally distinguishes him from the established clichés of the spy novel. The text demonstrates that, from the pages of the first novel (*Casino Royale*), there is a deliberate shift in focus from the functional figure of the spy to the image of a hero embedded within the world of fashion, luxury, gambling and the cultural representation of elite leisure. Thus, the character's role as a spy is embedded within a broader system of cultural codes associated with visuality and prestige.

A key finding is that the character of Bond is initially presented as a mythologised and "constructed" figure who has no single prototype and is conceived as a cultural model rather than a realistic type. The study emphasises that the author seeks to create a distinctive mythological aura around the hero, which is manifested in the combination of the professional characteristics of an MI6 agent with elements of glamour, style and ostentatious exclusivity. This allows Bond to be viewed as a character originally geared towards mass appeal and cultural recognition.

It has been established separately that an important component of this image is the "gentleman-spy" archetype, which combines traditional British cultural archetypes with modernised notions of professionalism and efficiency. The article notes that Bond simultaneously inherits and transforms the ideal of the English gentleman, whilst retaining elements such as patriotism, loyalty to the state and commitment to institutional values. At the same time, it is emphasised that this image is not static: it incorporates elements of internal contradiction linked to changing perceptions of British identity and the crisis of the traditional gentlemanly ideal.

The results of the analysis also indicate that his cultural and ideological ambivalence plays a significant role in shaping Bond's image. On the one hand, 007 is associated with British tradition; on the other, elements are found in his character that researchers link to the American mythological model of the hero. This highlights the hybrid nature of the character, who operates at the intersection of various cultural codes and literary traditions.

A key finding of this study is the identification of the process of mythologisation within the Bond narrative, in which the literary and cinematic dimensions form a unified cultural system. The analysis presented in this article demonstrates that Bond's transition from literature to cinema does not undermine his image; on the contrary, it reinforces his symbolic significance, establishing him as an enduring cultural phenomenon of popular culture. At the same time, the cinematic version of the hero not only reproduces the literary image but also actively reinterprets it, endowing it with new visual and behavioural codes.

It has also been noted that the character of Bond is gradually acquiring the status of a cultural indicator, reflecting shifts in social and political perceptions of the world; through the figure of Agent 007, the transformation of perceptions regarding international relations, British identity and the UK's role in the global context is revealed. Thus, the hero becomes a mechanism for the cultural representation of historical reality.

Another finding is that, within the contemporary academic tradition, bondiana is regarded as an interdisciplinary phenomenon situated at the intersection of literary studies, cultural studies, political history and film studies. This testifies to the expansion of the field of research and the shift from a narrowly literary analysis to a comprehensive examination of the Bond myth as a cultural phenomenon.

Overall, the study allows to conclude that the image of James Bond constitutes a dynamic cultural construct that is shaped at the intersection of literary tradition, cinematic interpretation and popular culture. His evolution from a spy character to a mythologised hero of the mass consciousness reflects the complex processes of transformation of cultural codes associated with changing notions of heroism, identity and the role of the individual within a historical context.

## References

- Adams, A. (2017). 'The sweet tang of rape': Torture, survival and masculinity in Ian Fleming's Bond novels. *Feminist Theory*, 18 (2). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700117700043>
- Amis, K. (1965). *The James Bond Dossier*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). Epic and novel. In M. Holquist (Ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (pp. 3–40). Austin: University of Texas Press.

- Bennett, T., & Woollacott, J. (1987). *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a popular hero*. London: Macmillan Education. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-18610-5>
- Berberich, C. (2007). *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth-Century Literature: Englishness and Nostalgia*. London: Routledge. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315556840>
- Black, J. (2005). *The Politics of James Bond: From Fleming's Novels to the Big Screen*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Bolton, L. (2011). Review: Christopher Lindner, ed. (2009) *The James Bond Phenomenon: A Critical Reader*. 2nd Edition. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press. *Film-Philosophy*, 15 (1), 278-282. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3366/film.2011.0021>
- Buckton, O. (2021). *The World Is Not Enough: A Biography of Ian Fleming*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Burnett, C. (2024). A poetics of the popular film series: How the James Bond films tell continuing stories differently. *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 54 (1), 1-36. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jnt.2024.a929260>
- Chapman, J. (1999). *License to Thrill: A Cultural History of the James Bond Films*. London, New York: I.B. Tauris.
- Chapman, J. (2005). Bond and Britishness. In E.P. Comentale, S. Watt, S. Willman (Eds.), *Ian Fleming and James Bond: The Cultural Politics of 007* (pp. 129-143). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Chapman, J. (2011). Reflection in a Double Bourbon. In R.G. Weiner, B.L. Whitfield, J. Becker (Eds.), *James Bond in World and Popular Culture: The Films are Not Enough* (pp. 489-494). Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Chapman, L. (2021). *Fashioning James Bond: Costume, Gender and Identity in the World of 007*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Coghlan, J., Hackett, L., Nolan, H. (2023). Editorial: The world is not enough: The impact of James Bond on popular culture. *The International Journal of Bond Studies*, 6 (1), 1-6. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24877/jbs.93>
- Cross, R. (2011). Ian Fleming's refashioning of the English gentleman in *From Russia With Love*. In R.G. Weiner, B.L. Whitfield, J. Becker (Eds.), *James Bond in World and Popular Culture: The Films are Not Enough* (pp. 316-329). Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Drummond, L. (1996). *American Dreamtime: A Cultural Analysis of Popular Movies and Their Implications for a Science of Humanity*. New York: Littlefield Adams.
- Eco, U. (1979). *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Eriksson, J., Jonasson, K. (2026). Epic epistemology: Archipelagic thinking in the Odyssean adventures of James Bond. *The International Journal of Bond Studies*, 9 (1), 1-18. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24877/jbs.149>
- Fleming, I. (1963). How to write a thriller. *Books and Bookmen*, 8 (8), 14-19.
- Fleming, I. (2015a). *Casino Royale*. *A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook*. Retrieved from <https://www.fadedpage.com/books/20151102/html.php>
- Fleming, I. (2015b). *Moonraker*. *Project Gutenberg Canada ebook*. Retrieved from <https://gutenberg.ca/ebooks/flemingi-moonraker/flemingi-moonraker-01-h.html>
- Fleming, I. (2015c). *Goldfinger*. *Project Gutenberg Canada ebook*. Retrieved from <https://gutenberg.ca/ebooks/flemingi-goldfinger/flemingi-goldfinger-00-h-dir/flemingi-goldfinger-00-h.html>
- Fleming, I. (2016). *From Russia with Love*. *Project Gutenberg Canada ebook*. Retrieved from <https://gutenberg.ca/ebooks/flemingi-fromrussiawithlove/flemingi-fromrussiawithlove-00-h.html>
- Fleming, I. (2017). *Diamonds are Forever*. Retrieved from *Project Gutenberg Canada ebook*. Retrieved from <https://gutenberg.ca/ebooks/flemingi-diamondsareforever/flemingi-diamondsareforever-00-h.html>
- Fleming, I. (2021). *Thunderball*. *A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook*. Retrieved from <https://www.fadedpage.com/books/20191233/html.php>
- Galsworthy, J. (2006). *The Man of Property*. *The Project Gutenberg ebook*. Retrieved from <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2559/pg2559-images.html>
- Girshman, M., Domaschenko, A. (2008). Art image. In N. Tamarchenko (Ed.), *Poetics: Dictionary of Topical Terms and Concepts* (pp. 149-151). Intrada Publ.

- Guerty, P. (2023). Licensed to play: Espionage role-playing games in the late Cold War era. *The International Journal of Bond Studies*, 6 (1), 1-21. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24877/jbs.97>
- Gundle, S. (2008). *Glamour: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hay, J. (2009). Statecraft, spycraft, and spacecraft: The political career (and craft) of a popular hero in outer space. In J. Parker (Ed.), *Secret Agents: Popular Icons Beyond Bond* (pp. 163–188). New York: Peter Lang.
- Kristeva, J., (1969). *Séméiotikè. Recherches pour une sémanalyse*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Lawrence, J.Sh. (2011). The American Superhero Genes of James Bond. In R.G. Weiner, B.L. Whitfield, J. Becker (Eds.), *James Bond in World and Popular Culture: The Films are Not Enough* (pp. 330-348). Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing
- Leader, Z. (2007). *The Life of Kingsley Amis*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Lewis, N. (2018). Shaken not stirred: The Cold War politics of James Bond, from novel to film. *Liberated Arts: A Journal for Undergraduate Research*, 4 (1), 1-14.
- Lindner, C. (2003). Introduction. Mr Kiss Kiss Bang Bang. In C. Lindner (Ed.), *The James Bond Phenomenon: A Critical Reader* (pp. 1-12). New York: Manchester University Press.
- Lotman, J. (1976). *Semiotics of Cinema* (M.E. Suino, Trans.). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lotman, Y., Tsivian, Y. (1994). *Dialogue with the Screen*. Tallinn: Aleksandra Publ.
- Lycett, A. (2002). *Ian Fleming*. London: Phoenix.
- McCracken, T., Moran, C. (2018). James Bond, Ian Fleming and intelligence: Breaking down the boundary between the ‘real’ and the ‘imagined’. *Intelligence and National Security*, 33 (6), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2018.1468648>
- Miller, J. (2011). Cynthia foreword. In R.G. Weiner, B.L. Whitfield, J. Becker (Eds.), *James Bond in World and Popular Culture: The Films are Not Enough* (pp. xiii-xvi). Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Pearson, J. (1966). *The Life of Ian Fleming*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Postrel, V. (2004,). On glamour. TED. Retrieved from [https://www.ted.com/talks/virginia\\_postrel\\_on\\_glamour](https://www.ted.com/talks/virginia_postrel_on_glamour)
- Rosa, J. (Ed.). (2004, October 10). The gilded age. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/10/style/tmagazine/GLAMOUR.html>
- Sarukhanian, A. (2005). Spionskii roman. In A.P. Sarukhanian (Ed.), *The Encyclopedic Dictionary of English Literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (pp. 503-506). Science Publ.
- Schiffer, D.S. (2008). *Philosophie du dandysme: Une esthétique de l'âme et du corps*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Snelling, O.F. (1964). *Double O Seven, James Bond, A Report*. London: Neville Spearman, Holland Press.
- Syritsa, G.S. (2007). *The Poetics of Portrait in F. Dostoevsky's Novels*. Gnozis Publ.
- Tornabuoni, L. (1966). A popular phenomenon. In O. Del Buono, U. Eco (Eds.), *The Bond Affair* (pp. 13-34). London: Mcdonald.
- Townsend, L. (2022). Review of *The world is not enough: A biography of Ian Fleming* (2021), by O. Buckton. *The International Journal of Bond Studies*, 5 (1), 1-4. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24877/jbs.83>
- Zeiger, H. (1966). *Ian Fleming: The Spy Who Came In with the Gold*. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce.

## **Ian Fleming's James Bond: Mythologisation of "007 Formula"**

*Daryna Holub*, Alfred Nobel University, Dnipro (Ukraine)

e-mail: [darja.golub@gmail.com](mailto:darja.golub@gmail.com)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32342/anuJPh.2026.31.7>

**Keywords:** *James Bond, bondiana, spy-hero, gentleman-spy, glamorous spy, mythologised 007 formula.*

This article examines the image of James Bond as a spy-hero in English-language popular culture and analyses the mechanisms behind his creation and subsequent transformation in literary and cinematic traditions.

*The aim* of the study is to identify the characteristics of the construction of Agent 007 as a cultural archetype of the spy-hero, as well as to determine the artistic, ideological and cultural factors that influenced his evolution from a literary character into a stable, mythologised figure of popular culture.

*The methodological basis* of the study comprises historical-literary, narrative, hermeneutic and comparative methods, which allow the image of Bond to be examined in the context of the interaction between the text and screen adaptations, as well as in relation to the socio-cultural and ideological conditions of various historical periods.

The study finds that the image of James Bond, first established in Ian Fleming's novels, originally combines the functions of a professional spy and a cultural symbol, which distinguishes him from traditional models of the spy novel. It is emphasised that the character is constructed as a "glamorous spy," in whom professional activity is closely linked to the aesthetics of luxury, consumption and a demonstrative lifestyle.

It is noted that the Bond narrative reflects the ideological and cultural changes of the second half of the 20th century, including the transformation of notions of masculinity, national identity and the role of the state. The image of the spy-hero gradually loses its rigid ideological certainty and becomes a more flexible cultural code, capable of adapting to changing social conditions.

It is further established that the image of James Bond is formed at the intersection of the spy novel and popular culture aesthetics, leading to the creation of a hybrid artistic type that combines elements of adventure narrative and cultural myth. It is demonstrated that a key structural element of the image is the figure of the "gentleman-spy," which combines traditional British cultural codes with modernised notions of professional efficiency. It is noted that this model contributes to strengthening the character's recognisability and the formation of a stable media image within global popular culture. The analysis confirms that the spy-hero, in the form of James Bond, serves as a universal model of the cultural hero, reflecting the contradictions of the modern and postmodern eras. This allows us to view him as a key element in the study of the transformation of mass culture in the 20th and 21st centuries and the dynamics of the spy image in literature and cinema.

*Дата надходження до редакції / Submitted: 05.12.2025*

*Дата прийняття до публікації / Accepted: 17.05.2026*

*Дата публікації / Published: 04.06.2026*