



## SPECTRE: CONTEXTS

### Production Context

Released on 26 October 2015, starring Daniel Craig as 007 in his fourth performance as the fictional MI6 agent. Based on a book by Ian Fleming, the film was produced by British company Eon (Everything or Nothing) Productions and distributed by United Artists. The film was created with an estimated \$245 million budget making it the most expensive Bond film and one of the most expensive films ever made. It grossed over \$880 million at the worldwide box office. The poster was designed by Empire Designs, a British film promotion agency. The poster was released on 3 September 2015, as part of a wide global marketing campaign for the film.

### Social Context

The masked man, wearing a skeleton mask was used to symbolise the Mexico City festival 'Day of the Dead', featured in the opening sequence. This did not happen in real life however, the interest in the film, and the government's determination to promote pre-Hispanic Mexican culture, meant that one year later the local authorities decided to organise such a parade (Dia de los Muertos) on October 29th 2016. It was a huge success and attended by 250,000 people. The Tom Ford white tuxedo worn by Daniel Craig revived a fashion trend from the 1970s. Previous Bonds have worn a white tuxedo, and John Travolta famously sported one in the film Saturday Night Fever in 1977. It has been argued that Daniel Craig initiated a fashion trend, as many celebrities including David Beckham and Benedict Cumberbatch were photographed wearing a white tuxedo around the time of the release of Spectre publicity, underlining the cultural significance of the Bond franchise.

## Key Terms and conventions

Central image, protagonist, hero, villain, title, star appeal, credit block, frame, enigma codes, signify, Long shot, facial expression, body language, colour, enigma codes.

## Consider INTERTEXTUALITY

The white tuxedo intertextually references earlier Bond films (previous Bonds, including Roger Moore, have worn the white tuxedo, however this poster specifically references Sean Connery in Goldfinger), providing a sense of familiarity, nostalgia and pleasure to fans who recognise the link. Bond films have often deliberately referenced earlier films in the franchise, for example the 'Bond girl' emerging from the sea (Ursula Andress in Dr No and Halle Berry in Die Another Day). Daniel Craig also emerged from the sea in Casino Royale, his first outing as Bond, however it was denied that this was a reference to the earlier films.



## Consider NARRATIVE

Behind Bond, image of a man wearing a skeleton mask and bone design on his jacket. Skeleton has connotations of death and danger and the mask is covering up someone's identity, someone who wishes to remain hidden, someone lurking in the shadows. It is quite easy to guess that this character would be Propp's villain and his mask that is reminiscent of such holidays as Halloween or Day of the Dead means he is Bond's antagonist and no doubt wants to kill him. This acts as an enigma code for the audience as we want to find out who this character is and why he wants Bond. The skeleton also references the title of the film, Spectre, connoting a ghostly, haunting presence from Bond's past.

## MEDIA LANGUAGE: How the FILM POSTER communicates with the audience using the different codes:

### Technical Codes

1. Central image: long-shot of James Bond, smartly dressed holding a gun across his body. Suggests he is the protagonist, so probably a 'good guy'. - Propp's theory- 'hero'.
2. Direct address- Bond is looking directly at the audience, seemingly making eye contact. This is a common convention of film posters and helps to add to the more personal approach of this format. The intensity of his stare and the lack of a smile could suggest how seriously he expects to be taken.
3. Framing - Bond is in the middle and central.

### Symbolic Codes

1. Bond's attire connotes business and professionalism.
2. The gun, an iconic part of Bond's 'uniform', signifies danger and action and is casually pointed, connoting that Bond is never off duty, he is always alert and ready for action.
3. Colour - Bond's white jacket connotes his heroic status, contrasting with the dark, shadowed antagonist in the background
4. Costume: the tuxedo is iconic of the Bond image, and the white tuxedo connotes luxury, wealth and sophistication, the 'high life' that off-duty Bond enjoys (linked to martinis, women, gambling etc.). The red carnation has connotations of romance and passion, but also of danger.

### Written Codes

1. Breaks conventions as actor name is not at top- not get in way of visuals. Instead, it appears alongside many other names 'Albert R. Broccoli's EON Productions presents Daniel Craig as Ian Fleming's James Bond', reflecting the many iconic figures involved in creating the franchise.
2. Bottom, title appears with the iconic 007 logo. The gold font connotes luxury, wealth, aspiration and exclusivity; the capitalised title suggests power and strength. The title SPECTRE relates to the organisation that is in opposition to Bond in the narrative, but also connotes a 'ghost' from Bond's past.
3. Credit block gives industry information such as other star's names, directors and producers, and is much smaller and tucked away so as not to divert the audience away from the main image or the rest of the poster.

## REPRESENTATION Ethnicity, Gender and social/cultural Issues

### MEN

Bond provides an image of masculinity that connotes bravery, intelligence and strength: Bond's posture is strong and dominant, his arms are folded in a stereotypically masculine stance. This closed body language connotes his lack of emotion, his independence, and also his professional role as a rational, ruthless assassin. The use of the key light on Bond is stark and highlights his chiselled features, constructing a representation of tough, inscrutable masculinity. The gun suggests danger but his posture connotes confidence with a relaxed attitude toward such dangers. This 'hero' archetype is typical of the action genre and audiences are led to believe, through this representation, that this is how a man should be. The villain in the background is also male, reflecting the male-dominated nature of the franchise - the main protagonist and antagonist who drive the narrative are both male.

### WOMEN

The absence of female characters on this poster reflects a feminist perspective, as women are still under-represented within action film franchises. There are stronger female characters in Spectre, however this poster does not feature them and so we can infer that much of the marketing prioritises Bond as an iconic figure who will appeal to audiences

### Social & Cultural Context

James Bond is an action hero who, since the 1960s, has been constructed to embody many masculine stereotypes of strength, independence, sexual prowess etc. The representation of women in the franchise has traditionally been similarly stereotypical: the 'Bond Girl' who is the beautiful 'love interest' for Bond (Propp's princess), insignificant to the narrative and ultimately disposable. The representation of gender in the Bond franchise has evolved over time- to an extent - to reflect the changing social context. It would be useful to consider the poster for The Man With The Golden Gun here. Craig's Bond is not as sexist and overtly stereotypical as the earlier incarnations and reflects some contemporary notions of masculinity as his Bond is older, more thoughtful and shows signs of vulnerability. Interestingly, the poster does not reflect this development and represents Bond as the familiar action hero to 'sell' the film.

## KEY MESSAGES

### Key messages:

1. Men need to be Masculine: strong, powerful, independent and sexual prowess.
2. Representation of gender have evolved to reflect the social context
3. 007 is not as sexist and overtly stereotypical as the earlier 007s