007's dark side and other film fantasies

I. Summary

The article explores fan theories from internet websites such as Reddit and says they are more than gossip, they can make films more interesting and credible, and some are utterly convincing.

As the role has been played by six different actors, is James Bond a shape-shifter or a code name for an agent with the three personality traits of the Dark Triad? Each actor has played Bond in a slightly different way. But *Skyfall* puts paid to the latter theory, which is a shame as it was plausible and made the character more interesting.

Fan theories discussed include R2-D2 and Chewbacca being rebel agents in *Star Wars*, *Forrest Gump*’s son being someone else’s, Ferris in *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off* being a figment of his friend’s imagination, Neville Longbottom being the chosen one in *Harry Potter*, props in *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* suggesting that Willy Wonka is a child murderer, and Tarantino fans creating their own ‘Tarantino-verse’.

II. Vocabulary Recap

- Angst: strong worry and unhappiness, especially about personal problems
- Blank canvas: something with no content, upon which one can easily impose one's point of view
- Brooding: making you feel uncomfortable or worried as though something bad is going to happen
- Cameo: a small but noticeable part in a film or play, performed by a famous actor
- Clunky: ungraceful or unsophisticated
- Deadpan: looking or seeming serious when you are telling a joke
- Forgo: to not have or do something enjoyable
- Hefty: large in amount, size, force, etc.
- Hint: to say or do something that shows, but not directly, what you think or want
- Idle: without any particular purpose
- Intel: intelligence
- Melt: to turn from something solid into something soft or liquid
- Moonlight: to work at an extra job, especially without telling your main employer
- Plausible: seeming likely to be true, or able to be believed
- Ploy: something that is done or said in order to get an advantage, often dishonestly
- Prop: an object used by the actors performing in a play or film
- Protrude: to stick out from or through something
- Rugged: describes a man’s face that is strongly and attractively formed
- Shame: an unlucky situation
- Shape-shifting: when a being has the ability to alter its physical appearance
- Shoot something down: to refuse to accept someone’s suggestion or idea and not consider it at all
- Shove: to put something somewhere in a hurried or careless way
- Smooth: very polite, confident and able to persuade people, but in a way that is not sincere
**Spew:** flow out in large amounts

**Suave:** smooth, charming, debonair, sophisticated

**Thus:** in this way; with this result

**Undertone:** a particular but not obvious characteristic that a piece of writing or speech, an event or a situation has

**Unrequited:** not felt in the same way by the other person

**Veto:** to refuse to allow something

### III. Cultural References

The **Dark Triad** is a group of three personality traits, all of which are interpersonally aversive:

- **Machiavellianism:** The Machiavellian personality is characterized by manipulation and exploitation of others, with a cynical disregard for morality and a focus on self-interest and deception.

- **Narcissism:** The narcissistic personality (in the clinical sense) is characterized by a grandiose self-view, a sense of entitlement, lack of empathy, and egotism. On some theories, it is associated with protection of a radically weak, shamed, or damaged self.

  The **psychopath**, or antisocial personality, is characterized by impulsive thrill-seeking, and in its "primary" form by selfishness, callousness, lack of personal affect, superficial charm, and remorselessness.

- **James Bond actors:**
  - **Sean Connery** 1962–1971 & 1983
  - **George Lazenby** 1969
  - **Roger Moore** 1973–1985
  - **Timothy Dalton** 1986–1993
  - **Piers Brosnan** 1995–2002
  - **Daniel Craig** 2006–present

- **Mount Rushmore:** The Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a sculpture carved into the granite face of Mount Rushmore, South Dakota, United States. It features 60-foot (18 m) sculptures of the heads of four United States presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln.

- **Lee Tamahori** is a New Zealand filmmaker best known for directing the 1994 film *Once Were Warriors* and the 2002 James Bond film *Die Another Day*.

- **Reddit** is a social news website where registered users submit content in the form of either a link or a text "self" post. Other users then vote the submission "up" or "down", which is used to rank the post and determine its position on the site's pages and front page.

- **Forrest Gump** is a 1994 American romantic drama film directed by Robert Zemeckis and starring Tom Hanks. The story depicts several decades in the life of Forrest Gump, a naive and slow-witted yet athletically prodigious native of Alabama who witnesses, and in some cases influences, some of the defining events between 1945 and 1982. It was the top grossing film in North America released that year and won 6 Academy Awards.

- **Ferris Bueller’s Day Off** is a 1986 American teen coming of age comedy film written and directed by John Hughes. The film follows high school senior Ferris Bueller (Matthew Broderick), who decides to skip school and spend the day in downtown Chicago. It became one of the top grossing films of the year.
**Fight Club** is a 1999 American film directed by David Fincher and starring Edward Norton, Brad Pitt, and Helena Bonham Carter. Norton plays the unnamed protagonist, an "everyman" who is discontented with his white-collar job. He forms a "fight club" with soap maker Tyler Durden, and becomes embroiled in a relationship with him and a dissolute woman, Marla Singer.

**Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory** is a 1971 musical film adaptation of the 1964 novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl, directed by Mel Stuart, and starring Gene Wilder as Willy Wonka. The film tells the story of Charlie Bucket as he receives a golden ticket and visits Willy Wonka's chocolate factory with four other children from around the world. It developed cult film status and in 1972, received an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Score.

**Donny "The Bear Jew" Donowitz** is a character in *Inglourious Basterds*

**IV. Going Further**

- Would you agree with the adjectives used to describe James Bond in the 1st paragraph? And the adjectives used to describe some of the actors who have played 007?
- Do you think these theories make films more interesting?
- Can you think of any other theories?
- Do you ever go on forums or sites like Reddit?
- Who’s your favourite Bond actor? Why?
- What’s your favourite Bond movie? Why?
- And who’s your favourite Bond character? Why?
- What sorts of films do you prefer to watch? Favourite film? Director?
- Discuss the films listed in the article