

# James Bond villains and psychopathy: a literary analysis

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## SUMMARY

### Objective

Psychopathy is a construct used to describe individuals without a conscience, who knowingly harm others via manipulation, intimidation, and violence, but feels no remorse. In consideration of the intriguing nature of the psychopathy construct, it is not surprising that a number of psychopathic characters have been portrayed in popular culture, including modern literature. We set out to systematically review Ian Fleming's James Bond novels to assess the presence of psychopathic traits in the characters of Bond villains.

### Methods

We reviewed the full-text of a representative sample of seven novels published by Fleming between 1954 and 1965 ('Live and let die', 'Dr. No', 'Goldfinger', 'Thunderball', 'On Her Majesty's secret service', 'You only live twice', and 'The man with the golden gun'), portraying the fictional characters of six villains. For each villain, we extracted examples of quotations that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R).

### Results

We found ample evidence of the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in James Bond villains. The most commonly observed psychopathic trait is callousness/lack of empathy, which is portrayed by all the examined characters of villains. Contrary to Bond, the villains are consistently described as having physical monstrosity, in addition to their psychopathic traits.

### Conclusions

The villains' psychopathic traits appear to be functional to Fleming's narrative scheme, that revolves around the Bond-villain (Good/Evil) dichotomy. However it has been suggested that this dichotomy is only partial, as a few psychopathic traits appear to be shared by Bond himself. Despite the difficulties of implementing literature in the curriculum of medical students and psychiatry trainees, a healthy interest in literature and art could be beneficial for its educational value and should be encouraged, possibly in the form of book clubs.

**Key words:** Ian Fleming, James Bond, literary analysis, novels, psychopathy, villains

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### Conflict of interest

The Authors declare no conflict of interest

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## Introduction

The first medical description of the phenomenon we recognise today as psychopathy was provided by French psychiatrist Philippe Pinel (1745-1826), who referred to it as 'manie sans délire' ('mania without delirium'). Pinel used this term to describe individuals who maintained the capacity for rational thought but nevertheless sometimes acted 'under the dominion of instinctive and abstract fury, as if the active faculties alone sustained the injury' <sup>1</sup>. The scientific study of the individual without a conscience, who knowingly harms others but feels no remorse, flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century and included speculations by the Italian crimi-

nologist Cesare Lombroso, who claimed to have found evidence for the existence of an 'inborn criminal' ('delinquente nato') in anatomical abnormalities<sup>2</sup>. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, although the labels 'psychopathic inferiority' and 'sociopathic personality disturbance' were applied widely to antisocial types, the concept of psychopathy resisted standard definition<sup>3</sup>. During the second half of the twentieth century, the competing terms 'psychopathy', 'sociopathy', and 'antisocial personality disorder' gained currency among mental health professionals whose clinical descriptions of the social and emotional traits associated with conscienceless individuals became increasingly more precise. However it was not until the end of the twentieth century, with the development of the Hare Psychopathy Scales (especially the widely used Psychopathy Checklist-Revised, PCL-R), that psychopathy became a well-defined and accepted clinical syndrome<sup>4,5</sup>. In the early twenty-first century, the term 'psychopathy' gained general ascendancy over its rivals in clinical discourse, and the label is now applied, as the forensic psychologist Hugues Hervé framed it, to individuals 'instrumentally impulsive individuals with poor behavioral controls who callously and remorselessly bleed others for purely selfish reasons via manipulation, intimidation, and violence'<sup>6</sup>.

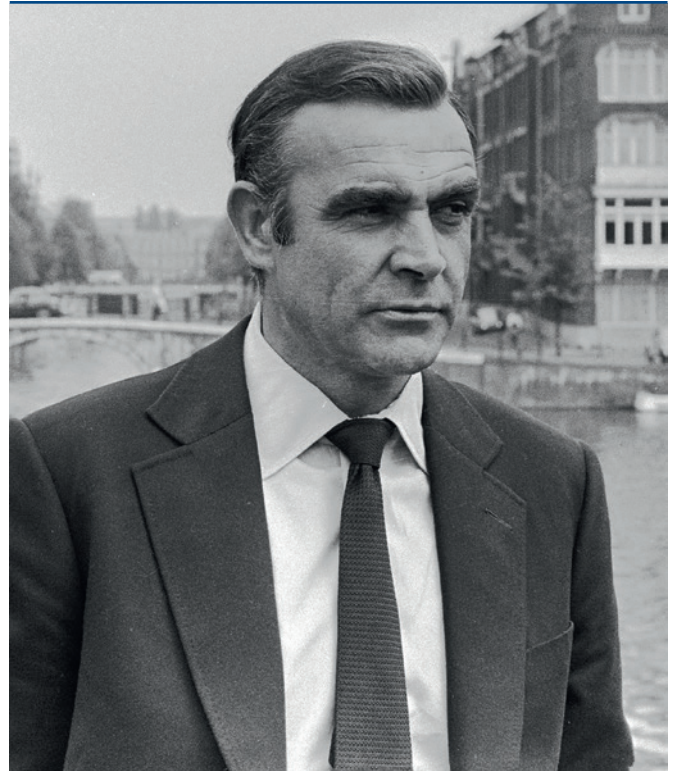
In consideration of the intriguing nature of the psychopathy construct, it is not surprising that a number of psychopathic characters have been portrayed in popular culture. For example, Thomas Harris' 1988 novel 'The silence of the lambs' (transposed into a famous film of the same name in 1991) featured the fictional character of Hannibal Lecter, a psychopathic killer portrayed as an individual with superior intelligence, a quality that enhanced his ability to manipulate and victimize others<sup>7</sup>. Literary portrayals of psychopathic personalities can be consistent with scholarly research to different degrees. British author Ian Fleming (1908-1964) created one of the literary and cinematic icons of the twentieth century, secret agent 007 James Bond (Fig. 1)<sup>8</sup>.

Between 1953 and 1965 Fleming published 13 novels focusing on the endless fight between James Bond and a series of famous villains, whose larger-than-life characters made memorable appearances in the successful series of James Bond films (Fig. 2)<sup>9,10</sup>.

Interestingly, many of these villains appear to portray psychopathic traits. We set out to review the text of a representative sample of Fleming's novels in order to assess the presence of psychopathic traits in Fleming's descriptions of James Bond villains.

## Methods

We reviewed the full-text of a representative sample of seven James Bond novels published by Ian Fleming between 1954 and 1965: 'Live and let die' (1954), 'Dr. No'



**FIGURE 1.** Sean Connery playing James Bond in the successful film series (1971).

(1958), 'Goldfinger' (1959), 'Thunderball' (1961), 'On Her Majesty's secret service' (1963), 'You only live twice' (1964), and 'The man with the golden gun' (1965). We focused our analysis on Fleming's descriptions of the villains, i.e. James Bond main antagonists: Mr. Big ('Live and let die'), Dr. No ('Dr. No'), Goldfinger ('Goldfinger'), Emilio Largo ('Thunderball'), Blofeld ('On Her Majesty's secret service' and 'You only live twice'), and Scaramanga ('The man with the golden gun'). For each villain, we extracted examples of quotations that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R<sup>11,12</sup>. The PCL-R consists of 20 items tapping into the main psychopathic traits and is split into two broad factors (Tab. I).

Factor 1 encompasses interpersonal and affective traits, whereas factor 2 captures behaviours that are antisocial, impulsive, and related to an unstable lifestyle. Three further items do not fall into either of these categories: committing a wide variety of crimes, having many short-term marital relationships, and displaying a promiscuous sexual behaviour. In clinical/forensic settings, each item of the PCL-R is scored 0 (not present), 1 (partially or possibly present) or 2 (present), with a score of 30 or above suggesting a diagnosis of psychopathy.



FIGURE 2. Ian Fleming's James Bond novels.

## Results

### Mr. Big

Mr. Big is James Bond's main antagonist in Ian Fleming's novel 'Live and let die' (1954)<sup>13</sup>. The role of Mr. Big was played by American actor Yaphet Kotto in the

1973 film 'Live and let die', in which James Bond was played by Roger Moore. Buonaparte Ignace Gallia gets his nickname Mr. Big from his extraordinary height and bulk, in addition to his initials. Fleming describes him as physically abnormal, as well as intellectually brilliant, with a 'great football of a head, twice the normal size and very nearly round'. Although he does not smoke or drink, he suffers from chronic heart disease, which gives his skin a greyish hue: 'grey-black, taut and shining like the face of a week-old corpse in the river'. As a young boy, Mr. Big was introduced to the world of voodoo. In Haiti, his home nation, Mr. Big started work as truck driver, but soon emigrated to the United States, where he began his criminal enterprises. He owned half the share of a nightclub in Harlem: the person to whom the other half belonged was later found at the bottom of lake. Mr. Big was conscripted for the war in 1943 and worked for the United States military intelligence. After the war, Mr. Big set up a few nightclubs and a chain of brothels. He also built a voodoo temple and spread a rumour that he was in fact a zombie, thus reinforcing his perverse influence over the African-American community. Examples of passages from the novel 'Live and let die' that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Mr. Big are presented in Table II.

### Dr. No

Dr. No is James Bond's main antagonist in Ian Fleming's novel 'Dr. No' (1958)<sup>14</sup>. The role of Dr. No was played by American actor Joseph Wiseman in the 1962 film 'Dr. No', in which James Bond was played by Sean Connery. Fleming describes Dr. No as very tall (1.98 m) and thin. His shaved head is said to be shaped like a 'reverse oil drop', due to its rounded shape, pointed chin, and yellowish tinge of his skin. He is described as having his hair up-rooted, dark eyebrows, smooth cheekbones, thinned nose, and widened mouth. His eyes are without eyelashes and look 'like the mouths of two small revolvers'. Where his hands once were, he wears mechanical pincers. Dr. Julius No was born in Peking. He

TABLE I. Psychopathic traits in Hare's Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R).

Factor 1	Factor 2	Other items
Callousness/lack of empathy	Early behaviour problems	Committing a wide variety of crimes
Conning/manipulative behaviour	Impulsivity	Many short-term marital relationships
Failure to accept responsibility for actions	Irresponsibility	Promiscuous sexual behaviour
Glibness/superficial charm	Juvenile delinquency	
Grandiose sense of self-worth	Lack of realistic long-term goals	
Lack of remorse or guilt	Need for stimulation/proneness to boredom	
Pathological lying	Parasitic lifestyle	
Shallow affect	Parole/probation violations	
	Poor behavioural control	

**TABLE II.** Examples of quotations from Ian Fleming's novel 'Live and let die' (1954) that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Mr. Big.

Quotation	Trait
"'Mr. Big,' said M, weighing his words, 'is probably the most powerful negro criminal in the world'"	<b>Committing a wide variety of crimes</b>
"'He [Mr. Big] had no known vices except women, whom he consumed in quantities'"	<b>Promiscuous sexual behaviour</b>
"[Mr. Big:] 'Mister Bond, I suffer from boredom. I am a prey to what the early Christians called 'accidie', the deadly lethargy that envelops those who are sated, those who have no more desires'"	<b>Need for stimulation/proneness to boredom</b>
"[Mr. Big:] 'I am content, for the time being, to be my only judge, but I sincerely believe, Mister Bond, that the approach to perfection which I am steadily achieving in my operations will ultimately win recognition in the history of our times'"	<b>Grandiose sense of self-worth</b>
"'I intend,' said Mr. Big, in a matter-of-fact discursive tone of voice, 'to bind you together to a line streamed from this paravane and to tow you through the sea until you are eaten by sharks'"	<b>Callousness/lack of empathy</b>
"'With this engine,' he [Mr. Big] gestured towards the gun trained on Bond through the desk drawer, 'I have already blown many holes in many stomachs, so I am quite satisfied that my little mechanical toy is a sound technical achievement'"	<b>Lack of remorse/guilt</b>

Abbreviation. PCL-R: Psychopathy Checklist-Revised

was the illegitimate child of a German missionary and a high-born Chinese girl. He was abandoned by his parents and instead was raised by his aunt. Apparently it was the rejection he suffered at the hands of his parents that inspired his self-proclaimed name (Julius was his father's name). Before being smuggled to the United States and settling in New York City, Dr. No had been involved with the Tongs, a Chinese crime syndicate in Shanghai. He was deft in things criminal: arson, theft, conspiracy and, of course, murder. After stealing a million dollars in gold from, Dr. No was tracked down and tortured by the Tongs, who cut off his hands, shot him through the left side of his chest, and left him for dead. Dr. No survived, because he has dextrocardia and his heart is located on the right side of his body. Dr. No subsequently enrolled in medical school in Milwaukee (to see 'what this clay is capable of') and after graduating he used his title to garner the misguided trust of his victims. Eventually, Dr. No moved to a palace of fabulous pomp in Crab Key Island, where he conducted sadistic experiments on humans in the name of 'science'. Examples of passages from the novel 'Dr. No' that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Dr. No are presented in Table III.

### Goldfinger

Goldfinger is James Bond's main antagonist in Ian Fleming's novel 'Goldfinger' (1959)<sup>15</sup>. The role of Goldfinger was played by German actor Gert Fröbe in the 1964

film 'Goldfinger', in which James Bond was played by Sean Connery. Fleming describes Goldfinger as 1.52 m tall, with a pale, bland face and thin, chiselled lips. He has red hair and peers from under drooping eyelids with piercing China blue eyes. Overall, his body appears to having been 'put together with bits of other people's bodies'. Auric Goldfinger is trademarked by his love of gold. In fact, talking about gold is the only thing that brings expression to his usually expressionless face. Goldfinger's greedy obsession with gold goes so far as to have yellow-bound erotic photographs, and have his lovers painted head to toe in gold so that he can make love to gold. In the novel, AG is a 42-year-old from Riga, Latvia, who emigrated to Britain at the age of 20. Following naturalization as a British citizen, Goldfinger became the richest man in England, although his wealth was not located in English banks, nor did he pay taxes on it, as it was spread as gold bullion across many countries. Goldfinger was the owner of 'Enterprise Auric A.G.' in Switzerland, maker of metal furniture purchased by several airlines. In addition to being a jeweler, a metallurgist, and a smuggler, Goldfinger was the treasurer of SMERSH, the Soviet counterintelligence agency that was James Bond's nemesis. His henchmen included the Korean giant Oddjob, expert in martial arts, and Pussy Galore, leader of a group of performing catwomen. Examples of passages from the novel 'Goldfinger' that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic

**TABLE III.** Examples of quotations from Ian Fleming's novel 'Dr. No' (1958) that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Dr. No.

Quotation	Trait
"The polite mask [of Dr. No] had gone"	<b>Superficial charm</b>
"[Dr. No:] 'I enjoyed the conspiracies, the burglaries, the murders, the arson of insured properties'"	<b>Committing a wide variety of crimes</b>
"[Dr. No:] 'It was a time of torture and murder and arson in which I joined with delight'"	<b>Lack of remorse/guilt</b>
"[Dr. No:] 'It is a rare pleasure to have an intelligent listener [Bond] and I shall enjoy telling you the story of one of the most remarkable men in the world [referring to himself]"	<b>Grandiose sense of self-worth</b>
"[Dr. No:] 'I called myself 'doctor' because doctors receive confidences and they can ask questions without arousing suspicion'"	<b>Conning/manipulative behavior</b>
"[Dr. No:] 'The German experiments on live humans during the war were of great benefit to science. It is a year since I put a girl to death in the fashion I have chosen for you, woman. She was a Negress. She lasted three hours. She died of terror. I have wanted a white girl for comparison'"	<b>Callousness/lack of empathy</b>

Abbreviation. PCL-R: Psychopathy Checklist-Revised

traits from the PCL-R in Goldfinger are presented in Table IV.

### Emilio Largo

Emilio Largo is James Bond's main antagonist in Ian Fleming's novel 'Thunderball' (1961)<sup>16</sup>. The role of Emilio Largo was played by Italian actor Adolfo Celi in

the 1965 film 'Thunderball', in which James Bond was played by Sean Connery. Largo is depicted by Fleming as a large, muscular, olive-skinned, powerful man exuding animal charm, which women find irresistible. His hair is slick with pomade and his profile resembles the profile of a Roman emperor, with a solid jaw and hooked nose, long sideburns, and hairy hands which

**TABLE IV.** Examples of quotations from Ian Fleming's novel 'Goldfinger' (1959) that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Goldfinger.

Quotation	Trait
"He [Bond] also looked forward to penetrating Goldfinger's highly successful and, on the face of it, highly mysterious method of fleecing Mr Du Pont [during gambling card games]. It was going to be a most entertaining day"	<b>Conning/manipulative behavior</b>
"[Bond to Goldfinger:] 'You're mad! You don't really mean you're going to kill sixty thousand people!' [Goldfinger to Bond:] 'Why not? American motorists do it every two years'"	<b>Callousness/lack of empathy</b>
"[Bond thinking to himself:] 'In what channel did Goldfinger release his vital force? Into getting rich? Into sex? Into power? Probably into all three'"	<b>Promiscuous sexual behaviour</b>
"Goldfinger had, in three minutes flat, got the meeting on his side. Now everyone was looking towards Goldfinger with profound attention [...] Now everyone was hanging on Goldfinger's words as if he was Einstein"	<b>Superficial charm</b>
"[When Goldfinger is talking about gold] For the first time since Bond had known Goldfinger, the big, bland face, always empty of expression, showed a trace of life"	<b>Shallow affect</b>
"He [Goldfinger] had financed the murder of hundreds, perhaps thousands of victims of SMERSH all over the world"	<b>Committing a wide variety of crimes</b>
"'Yes', Goldfinger nodded. 'That is exactly what we are going to do. We are going to burgle fifteen billion dollars' worth of gold bullion...'"	

Abbreviation. PCL-R: Psychopathy Checklist-Revised

are likened to crawling tarantulas. He is supposedly the last survivor of a once eminent Roman family whose legacy he inherited. Fleming describes Largo as a ruthless Neapolitan black marketeer and fence who moved the riskier and more profitable ventures on the international crime scene after five years smuggling from Tangiers and five years masterminding big jewel robberies in the French Riviera. In the novel, Emilio Largo led his cruiser yacht *Disco Volante* and became the second-in-command and eventually successor to Ernst Stavro Blofeld in the global terrorist organisation SPECTRE (an acronym of Special Executive for Counter-intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge, and Extortion). Emilio Largo's heart is made of ice, and his nerves of steel. His ruthlessness is compared to that of Heinrich Himmler, one of the most powerful men in Nazi Germany, as he does not hesitate to torture his mistress Dominetta 'Domino' Vitali for information. She will eventually kill him (before he can finish off Bond) by shooting him with a spear gun. Examples of passages from the novel 'Thunderball' that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Emilio Largo are presented in Table V.

**Blofeld**

Blofeld is James Bond's main antagonist in Ian Fleming's novels 'On Her Majesty's secret service' (1963)

and 'You only live twice' (1964)<sup>17,18</sup>. The role of Blofeld was played by American actor Aristotelis 'Telly' Savalas in the 1969 film 'On Her Majesty's secret service', in which James Bond was played by George Lazenby, and by British actor Donald Pleasence in the 1967 film 'You only live twice', in which James Bond was played by Sean Connery. Blofeld is described by Fleming as a physically massive and powerfully built man, standing 1.91 m and weighing 140 kg, having become flabby with a huge belly. An amateur weightlifter in his youth, Blofeld's weight is now predominantly made up of fat rather than muscle. His hair is a wiry, black crewcut. The eyelashes of his black eyes are silken and could have belonged to a woman, and he lacks earlobes. Ernst Stavro Blofeld was born on 28 May 1908 (which is also Fleming's birthday) in the sea-port town of Gdynia, Poland, to a Greek mother and Polish father. After studying economics and politics at the University of Warsaw, Blofeld capitalized on the imminent World War II by selling copies of top-secret telegrams to Germany and America which he claimed were from a network of spies he was running. Upon the German invasion of Poland, Blofeld fled to Sweden and then to Turkey, whence he sold information to both the axis and the allies. After the war, Blofeld moved temporarily to South America, before

**TABLE V.** Examples of quotations from Ian Fleming's novel 'Thunderball' (1961) that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Emilio Largo.

Quotation	Trait
"There was a cool brain and an exquisite finesse behind his [Largo's] actions that had always saved him from the herd's revenge - from his postwar debut as head of the black market in Naples, through five lucrative years smuggling from Tangier, five more master-minding the wave of big jewel robberies on the French Riviera..."	<b>Committing a wide variety of crimes</b>
"Largo cannot live without a woman within reach"	<b>Promiscuous sexual behaviour</b>
"Largo was very popular with everyone"	<b>Superficial charm</b>
"[After Largo shot agent No. 10:] Largo put the muzzle of the gun up to his nose and delicately sniffed at it, moving it to and from under the nostrils as if it was some delicious phial of perfume. In the silence, he looked slowly down one rank of faces and up the other. Finally he said softly, 'The meeting is now at an end. Will all members please return to their cabins and look for a last time to their equipment. Food will be ready from now on in the galley. One drink of alcohol will also be available for those who want it. I will detail two crew members to look after the late No. 10. Thank you'"	<b>Lack of remorse/guilt</b>
"[Discussing the torture of a femme fatale:] 'There are certain uses of electricity of which I [No. 5] have knowledge. The human body cannot resist them. If I can be of any service...?' Largo's voice was equally polite. They might have been discussing remedies for a seasick passenger. 'Thank you. I [Largo] have means of persuasion that I have found satisfactory in the past. But I shall certainly call upon you if the case is an obstinate one'"	<b>Callousness/lack of empathy</b>

Abbreviation. PCL-R: Psychopathy Checklist-Revised

founding SPECTRE in Paris. Examples of passages from the novels 'On Her Majesty's Secret Service' and 'You only live twice' that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Blofeld are presented in Table VI.

### Scaramanga

Scaramanga is James Bond's main antagonist in Ian Fleming's novel 'The man with the golden gun' (1965)<sup>19</sup>. The role of Scaramanga was played by British actor Christopher Lee (Ian Fleming's step-cousin) in the 1974 film 'The man with the golden gun', in which James Bond was played by Roger Moore. Scaramanga is described by Fleming as a 35-year-old tall (1.90 m) and fit man, moderately built with light brown eyes and reddish crew cut hair extended in the form of side burns and complemented by a thin pencil moustache. His hands are large, well-manicured and ambidextrous. He has a third nipple, considered to be a sign of invulnerability and immense sexual prowess. Indeed, his voracious appetite for inflicting pain and suffering on others is matched only by his carnal desire. Francisco Scaramanga's signa-

ture weapon is a golden gun (a golden Derringer pistol). In the novel, the character is nicknamed 'Pistols' Scaramanga, as well as Paco, a Spanish diminutive of Francisco. Of Catalan origin, Scaramanga performed in acts in a circus owned by his father Enrico while a youngster. He developed an attachment to one of the circus elephants, who went on a rampage and was killed by a policeman during the circus visit to Trieste. Scaramanga witnessed the kill and retaliated it by shooting the policeman through the heart. After killing his first victim at the age of 16, Scaramanga made his way to Naples and the United States, where he became an enforcer for the Spangled Mob. He subsequently traversed the world leaving behind him a series of corpses, including several British secret service officers. He finally settled in Havana, Cuba, where he worked as a freelance assassin, often working for Fidel Castro's secret police, in addition to serving as the chief enforcer for the KGB. Examples of passages from the novel 'The man with the golden gun' that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Scaramanga are presented in Table VII.

**TABLE VI.** Examples of quotations from Ian Fleming's novels 'On Her Majesty's secret service' (1963) and 'You only live twice' (1964) that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Blofeld.

Quotation	Trait
"[Discussing the disposal of enemies' corpses] Blofeld said, 'The piranhas and the volcanic mud are useful housekeepers. They keep the place tidy.' [Bond:] 'The sea and the sharks are also useful.' [Blofeld:] 'But often the sharks do not complete the job. That spy we put through the Question Room. He was almost intact when his body was found down the coast. The lake would have been a better place for him. We don't want that policeman from Fukuoka coming here too often'"	<b>Lack of remorse/guilt</b>
"[Blofeld:] 'All right, Mister Bond. But I am so sure of my facts that I am now going to kill you with my own hands and dispose of your body without more ado. On reflection, I would rather do it myself than have it done slowly by the guards'"	<b>Callousness/lack of empathy</b>
"Bond dropped his lighted cigarette and left it to smoulder on the carpet. His whole body tensed. He said, 'I suppose you know you're both [Blofeld and fellow villain Irma Blunt] mad as hatters.' [Blofeld:] 'So was Frederick the Great, so was Nietzsche, so was Van Gogh. We are in good, in illustrious company, Mister Bond'"	<b>Grandiose sense of self-worth</b>
"[Blofeld:] 'This project involved the holding to ransom of the Western World by the acquisition by me of two atomic weapons. Where lies the crime in this, except in the Erewhon of international politics?'"	<b>Failure to accept responsibility for actions</b>
"[Blofeld:] 'But there has developed in me a certain mental lameness, a disinterest in humanity and its future, an utter boredom with the affairs of mankind. So, not unlike the gourmet, with his jaded palate, I now seek only the highly spiced, the sharp impact on the taste buds, mental as well as physical, the tickle that is truly exquisite'"	<b>Need for stimulation/proneness to boredom</b>
"Truth of the matter is he's [Blofeld] probably the biggest crook in the world"	<b>Committing a wide variety of crimes</b>

Abbreviation. PCL-R: Psychopathy Checklist-Revised

**TABLE VII.** Examples of quotations from Ian Fleming's novel 'The man with the golden gun' (1965) that demonstrate the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in Scaramanga.

Quotation	Trait
"[Scaramanga] ...is an insatiable but indiscriminate womanizer who invariably has sexual intercourse shortly before a killing in the belief that it improves his 'eye'"	<b>Promiscuous sexual behaviour</b>
"[Scaramanga] At the age of 16 [...] emigrated illegally to the United States where he lived a life of petty crime on the fringes of the gangs until he graduated as a full-time gunman for The Spangled Mob in Nevada..."	<b>Juvenile delinquency</b>
"[Bond to Scaramanga:] '...now look here, Mr. Scaramanga. I've had just about enough of this. Just stop leaning on me. You go around waving that damned gun of yours and acting like God Almighty'"	<b>Grandiose sense of self-worth</b>
"Knowing that he was going to kill Bond later that day Scaramanga said to Bond: 'All right, my friend. Now then, you get up front with the driver'"	<b>Superficial charm</b>
"Of course. He [Bond] was fighting for his life. The other man [Scaramanga] was just amusing himself - providing sport for his friends, displaying his potency, showing off"	<b>Callousness/lack of empathy</b>
"[Scaramanga:] 'I eat one of their famous secret agents for breakfast from time to time. Only ten days ago, I disposed of one of them who came nosing after me'"	<b>Lack of remorse or guilt</b>

Abbreviation. PCL-R: Psychopathy Checklist-Revised

## Discussion

The scientific/medical literature on Ian Fleming's fictional hero has so far mainly focused on his drinking behaviour<sup>20,21</sup> and promiscuous sex life<sup>22</sup>. Recently, James Bond villains have attracted the attention of medically-informed readers for their poor knowledge of neuroanatomy<sup>23,24</sup>. In our analysis of Fleming's novels, we have identified a number of quotations showing that individual PCL-R criteria are met by the examined James Bond villains (Tab. VIII).

The most commonly observed psychopathic trait is callousness/lack of empathy, which is portrayed by all Bond villains. Fleming's novels are easy to read and relatively short, yet entertaining, which makes them ideal texts for budding clinicians and professionals alike to hone their ability to detect the psychopathic traits in the narratives of service users. Moreover, the portrayed psychopathic traits are often to be found in the monologues of villains, which are comparable to the histories of patients, albeit with a more dramatic and fantastic flavor in the fictional characters. It is unlikely that Ian Fleming set out to portray clinically defined psychopathic personalities in his villains; instead, the fictional characters probably assumed psychopathic traits by dint of their villainy. As a result, James Bond villains cannot be considered perfect examples of real-life psychopathic individuals.

The late Italian writer Umberto Eco pointed out that Fleming's James Bond novels follow a formalistic pattern whereby in each novel the villain plays a key role for the development of the plot<sup>25</sup>. The typical scheme is

as follows: Bond is sent by his boss M to a given place to avert an evil plan by a villain (described as a monstrous individual of uncertain origin). In facing the villain, Bond meets a woman, with whom he establishes a erotic relationship interrupted by capture by the villain and by torture. The villain is invariably defeated by Bond, and dies horribly. Bond himself, after resting from his great efforts in the arms of the woman, is eventually destined to lose her. Contrary to Bond, the villains appear to be monstrous. Physical monstrosity is a constant point among the examined villains, as only Emilio Largo's monstrosity is purely mental. Eco highlighted that there is also a racial quality common to all villains: they tend to be of mixed blood and their origins are complex and obscure. The villains are usually born in an ethnic area that stretches from Central Europe to the Slavic countries and to the Mediterranean basin<sup>25</sup>. The typical characteristics of the villains (cupidity elevated to the dignity of paranoia, satrapic luxury, physical and mental excess, perversion, radical disloyalty) are opposed to the sober qualities of James Bond, resulting in what Eco describes as a Manichean dichotomy of Good and Evil, which is functional to Fleming's narrative apparatus<sup>25</sup>. If M is the King and Bond is the Knight entrusted with a salvific mission, the villain is the Dragon; at the same time, the Lady and the villain stand for Beauty and the Beast, whilst Bond plays the role of the Prince who rescues Sleeping Beauty. More recently, it has been suggested that James Bond and the villains might be more alike than previously thought, as they might in fact share psychopathic



**TABLE VIII.** *Individual psychopathic traits (PCL-R) met by the examined James Bond villains.*

Psychopathic trait	Mr. Big	Dr. No	Goldfinger	Emilio Largo	Blofeld	Scaramanga
Glibness/superficial charm		x	x	x		x
Grandiose sense of self-worth	x	x			x	x
Need for stimulation/proneness to boredom	x				x	
Pathological lying						
Conning/manipulative behaviour		x	x			
Lack of remorse or guilt	x	x		x	x	x
Shallow affect			x			
Callousness/lack of empathy	x	x	x	x	x	x
Failure to accept responsibility for actions					x	
Parasitic lifestyle						
Poor behavioural control						
Promiscuous sexual behaviour	x		x	x		x
Early behaviour problems						
Lack of realistic long-term goals						
Impulsivity						
Irresponsibility						
Juvenile delinquency						x
Parole/probation violations						
Committing a wide variety of crimes	x	x	x	x	x	
Many short-term relationships						

Abbreviation. PCL-R: Psychopathy Checklist-Revised

traits<sup>26,27</sup>. Specifically, the Dark Triad of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy has been referred to as 'James Bond psychology'<sup>28</sup>. Although Bond ostensibly operates with the (loose) sanctioning of the British government, he frequently operates outside the law: he has a license to kill and frequently uses his repertoire of manipulative tactics to fulfill his missions. Bond has a killer instinct: his psychological disposition that allows him to kill others with a gun or by hand resembles psychopathic cold, uncaring attitudes toward others and limited empathy that facilitates interpersonal aggression. A scene from 'The man with the golden gun', in which James Bond literally sits down and has dinner with the villain Scaramanga, is particularly telling: the villain tells Bond that he (an assassin) and James Bond are the same. Bond's only objection is that when he kills it is by order of his government and those he kills are killers themselves<sup>29</sup>.

Psychopathy is often used as synonym for other antisocial behavioural conditions e.g. conduct disorder and antisocial personality disorder. However, psychopathy should be distinguished from these conditions as it appears to have a stronger heritability<sup>30</sup>, a distinct neuro-

biology primarily affecting the paralimbic regions of the brain<sup>31</sup>, and a poorer prognosis (specifically, violent recidivism)<sup>32</sup>. Despite potentially having serious forensic consequences<sup>32</sup>, psychopathy is not recognized by the ICD-10<sup>33</sup> or DSM-5<sup>34</sup>. Instead, elements of psychopathy are included in the criteria for antisocial personality disorder, explaining the overlapping between the two conditions. Psychopathic personality traits fall on a continuum from absent to severe<sup>35</sup>. Therefore, doctors are likely to encounter patients with psychopathic traits in all areas, although more often in forensic settings. Considering the risk of violence from psychopathic individuals<sup>32</sup>, it is important to be able to identify psychopathic traits displayed by patients. Using the arts as an educational tool in psychiatry is a burgeoning field, gaining momentum especially in the realms of film<sup>36</sup> and literature<sup>37</sup>. Cinema is recognized as a useful medium for teaching about psychopathy<sup>38</sup>. Similarly, literature may also play a role in educating students on this condition. One of the ways literature may be useful is by enabling the reader to practice, in a relaxed and comfortable setting, interpreting the narrative of a patient's history by interpreting the narrative of a novel<sup>39</sup>.

Although it is difficult to objectively quantify the benefit of literature for psychiatry, there have been suggestions about its educational value in this context. An important caveat is the risk of reinforcing negative and harmful stereotypes about mental illness. A further problem is the lack of direct contact with the examined individual, resulting in excessive reliance on indirect information. These issues have not prevented the publication of remote psychodiagnostics investigations on public figures (especially politicians and artists)<sup>40-43</sup>, as well as fictional characters<sup>44</sup>. In 1973, in the wake of the notorious survey of psychiatrists' opinions about Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater's psychological profile, the American Psychiatric Association adopted an ethics annotation that came to be called "Goldwater rule". The Goldwater rule was included as section 7.3 in the American Psychiatric Association's Principles of Medical Ethics, which states that it is unethical for psychiatrists to give a professional opinion about public figures whom they have not examined in person, and from whom they have not obtained consent to discuss their mental health in public statements<sup>45</sup>. Criminal and forensic psychologists and psychiatrists, as well as specialists working for intelligence agencies, are generally held exempt from this rule. Moreover, the Goldwater rule applies only to living persons, not to fictional characters. This leaves teachers and students of psychiatry and psychology, alongside readers in general, the opportunity to practice recognising clinically relevant psychological traits in the large and diverse population of fictional characters<sup>46</sup>.

## Conclusions

After reviewing a sample of Ian Fleming's novels, we found ample evidence of the presence of specific psychopathic traits from the PCL-R in James Bond villains. The most commonly observed psychopathic trait is callousness/lack of empathy, which is portrayed by all the examined characters of villains. Contrary to Bond, the villains are consistently described as having physical monstrosity (with only one exception of purely mental monstrosity), as well as obscure ethnic origin and/or complex genealogy. The villains' psychopathic traits appear to be functional to Fleming's narrative scheme, that revolves around the Bond-villain (Good/Evil) dichotomy. For example, the villains' pathological sense of grandiosity, exemplified by the lavish luxury they surround themselves with, is contrasted with Bond's sober qualities. However it has been suggested that the Bond-villain dichotomy is only partial, as a few psychopathic traits appear to be shared by Bond himself. Despite the difficulties of implementing literature in the curriculum of medical students and psychiatry trainees, in consideration of its potential for benefit, a healthy interest in literature should be encouraged, possibly in the form of book clubs<sup>47</sup>. It is vital that Fleming's James Bond novels – or any art forms that are used as an educational tool – are critically appraised in the context of other, more didactic, learning resources with clear learning objectives set out and adhered to. Finally, specific arrangements should be in place so that the process of extracting clinically useful knowledge from literature does not detract from the intrinsic pleasure of enjoying fiction and art.

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