

Stereotypes and landmarks

*The urban environment of a hero of popular film culture in one of the many episodes contains a museum, government office building, river, symbolic landmark of a city (country), a rehabilitation area of a former dilapidated inner city industrial area and an edge-city leisure centre. Of course the hero is Bond, James Bond and the film is *The World Is Not Enough*, first shown in 1999. The interesting fact is that all these shown icons were buildings completed the year before, mostly in Great Britain, since the hero is a civil servant of that country, and the film is at least nominally British.*

The story of the film, similar to all so far, is another variation of the joust between establishment and multinational companies that are outside the establishment. Sometimes the latter was supplanted with one or the other communist regime, later it was just corrupt individuals of collapsing communist regimes, now they are mainly global criminal associations, similar to those at the beginning of the series with our distinguished hero. Careful viewing of Bond films compares to flicking through a catalogue of advertisements with »trendy« consumerist merchandise, amongst which architecture and cities also belong. Although our hero is a conservative traditionalist, especially when it comes to booze, weaponry and selection of companion of the opposite sex, he nevertheless uses the best and most spectacular cars, best furniture, excellent clothes, watches and scientific gadgetry, which could apparently and effortlessly go in to mass production and flood the market, and what have you. The setting of the stories is surely the city, advertising is done in environments wherever our hero is at the moment, but the end of the story is somewhat ambiguous. Bond's employer does end the film in the city in his/her office from where Bond's actions are monitored by satellite links, while he, most often in the company of a beautiful woman, is levitating towards pleasant abandonment in a non-urban environment, for example a South Sea island, snowed in mountain cottage, orbiting space station, to contemplate paired up in nature.

Therefore, back to the beginning, the stars in the film's setting are the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, palace of the her Majesty's intelligence agency MI6, the clean river Thames, Big Ben, South Bank – rehabilitated warehouse area along the Thames and the Millennium Dome, the multipurpose bubble in the South-east suburbs of London. All were completed in 1999, or more precisely between the filming of the last and second to last Bond film, except Big Ben of course, all icons of urbanity, building skill, as well as the developed and the technologically leading Western world. Icons in domestic environments are new building successes, while the ones abroad are taken from tourist guides. When Bond was going around his business in Paris, of course he was seen near and on the Eiffel Tower, in Vienna the scene was below the wheel in Prater and in Venice he used a hovering gondola to race around St. Mark's Square and in the process demolished the clock tower, which still hasn't been repaired. He was also seen in Bolshoy Theatre and on Red Square. In the last film, produced in 2002, the central setting is a sort of ice palace, far from civilisation and usual traditional urban environments. Bond is moving to the countryside? Is this the last frontier of democratic liberal society, which the establishment, building skill and technological excellence, if one would take the film seriously, still haven't conquered?

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