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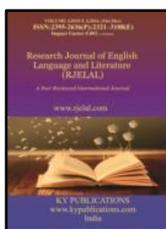
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IAN FLEMING – A TRIBUTE

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ABSTRACT

This is a paper which captures the genius of Ian Fleming and the reasons why Bond became a cult figure. It examines the use of prose and imagery in the Bond novels and comments on the views of a few writers who liked/ disliked Fleming. It shows how the writer made use of imagery and brand names to invoke an atmosphere which was irresistible.

Key Words: imagery, prose, technical knowledge, brand names

Introduction

I was introduced to Bond when I was studying in Delhi for my degree; my parents were then living in Bombay and I used to travel to stay with them three times a year. My father was in the government service and he used to be transferred every two or three years. He was on the bench if the income tax appellate tribunal where he was an accountant member. That is by the way. I used to take the deluxe train (chair car) and the journey took slightly over 24 hours. I understand the time is much reduced now, but the 24 hours was perfect for finishing a Bond novel. One of my friends had asked me to read the 'new' Bond books which had come into the market (he told me they were out of this world) and I purchased the first one from New Delhi railway station. This must have been in 1963 or 1964. I was hooked for all time, and what I remember most of these train journeys is the enormous excitement I got when I plunged into one of Fleming's creations. The train journeys went by in a flash. If I remember rightly, the first book I read was 'From Russia with Love'. I was hooked right from the first chapter and knew that I would make it

a point to read all the Bond novels I could lay many hands on.

I am also comparing Fleming with Conan Doyle and Wodehouse in terms of their prose later on in this paper. So references to the characters created by these writers will be a part of this article. There are many more comparisons I can make between the three writers but I feel that what I have referred to in this article is sufficient to make the points I wish to make.

The article therefore focuses on characters only referred by Fleming in the books. It is not relevant in any way to the movies which I feel are of another genre. I request that this point is kept in mind when perusing the paper. The movies/ television serials made relating to Doyle and Wodehouse will clearly amplify this particular point.

Fleming had the wonderful inborn gift of being able to conjure up images and scenes with an uncanny use of words which is, according to me, unique. The "shaken not stirred" phrase which has become a cult favourite is an example of the genius the man had for using words like a painter. Fleming was a painter in words and had the ability to hold his readers' attention without being unduly prolific and

by maintaining a strong story line from which he never deviated. This maintaining of a strong storyline is one of the reasons for his success. I have given a few examples of the way he can conjure images later on in this paper.

Discussion

My favourite Bond novel is 'On Her Majesty's Secret Service (OHMSS) where he meets Teresa di Vicenzo (Tracy), the daughter of Marc - Ange, the head of the Union Corse, and marries her. There is a touch of deep poignancy in this novel which I do not find in any of the others. We also see the private living conditions of M which is also a rarity. In the other novels M is seen mainly sitting behind the desk in his office and is the quintessentially tough chief. The human side of M is further elaborated in his reaction to Christmas rituals (which he dislikes) but has to suffer through. We know very little about his family and Fleming perhaps deliberately, presents him as a solitary figure who is totally focused on his work. The other novel in which we see a bit of the non-official side of M is in 'Moonraker', especially in the opening chapters which are set in Blades. It should be kept in mind that even Holmes, the quintessential solitary person, had an elder brother, Mycroft. Mycroft also relied on Holmes in a few cases as he disliked physical activity. To go back to M, I thought it significant that he had no qualms of winning three pounds off Bond (in Blades) in a game of piquet. In continuation of this private side of M, we know his first name (Miles) when Basildon, the Secretary of Blades, uses it in 'Moonraker'. I was a bit disappointed when Bond reveals the surname (Messervy) in 'The Man With the Golden Gun' when he is trying to establish his credentials with the MI6 after his brain washing in Russia. Part of his mystique was in the fact that the reader did not know his full name. M's full identity is revealed as Admiral Sir Miles Messervy KCMG; Messervy had been appointed to head of MI6 after his predecessor had been assassinated at his desk. He turned down the post of fourth Sea Lord to become head of MI6.

In spite of the tough exterior which he shows to the outside world, there is in M typical human emotions though these are rarely seen. One place these come out is in 'Moonraker' where Bond

has just made a stupendous bet against Hugo Drax in a game of bridge because Bond was a bit high on champagne and Benzedrine.

"Drax was looking at him in sarcastic disbelief. He turned to M who was still unconcernedly shuffling the cards. 'I suppose your guest is good for his commitments,' he said. Unforgivably

Bond saw the blood rush up M's neck and into his face. M paused for an instant in his shuffling. When he continued Bond noticed that his hands were quite calm. M looked up and took the cheroot very deliberately out from between his teeth.

His voice was perfectly controlled. 'If you mean "Am I good for my guest's commitments",' he said coldly,' the answer is yes.' "

A naval theme runs throughout Fleming's description of M and his surroundings, and his character was described by journalist and Bond scholar Ben Macintyre as "every inch the naval martinet". Macintyre also notes that in his study of Fleming's work, Kingsley Amis outlined that way Fleming had described M's voice, being: angry (three times); brutal, cold (seven times); curt, dry (five times); gruff (seven times); stern, testy (five times). In addition, M collects navy cutlasses and lives in his home surrounded by nautical ornaments and mementos.

There are two incidents in the Bond novels when M acts out of character. This is when he 'uses' Bond for M's own personal needs. We have seen the first one in the incident quoted above, when he calls on M to expose Drax's cheating. This can perhaps be overlooked. The other one cannot. It is in the story 'For Your Eyes Only' where M blatantly asks him to murder people who had killed M's close friends, the Havelocks. In fact, M does not even ask Bond to kill them. He leaves it to Bond to take the decision on his own. As a point of interest, M's character is not diminished by these incidents as they are done with the best of intentions.

As a matter of interest, there are many candidates who are supposed to be the model on which Fleming created the character. My own favorite is Admiral John Godfrey:

'Admiral Godfrey, who was Commander Ian Fleming's boss in Naval Intelligence during World War II, has long been the favorite for the real M. The old seadog knew it too, and later in life, after the popularity of James Bond had taken off across the globe, Godfrey remarked that his former assistant (Fleming) had "turned me into that unsavoury character, M."

Like M, Admiral Godfrey has often been described as, in the words of author and BBC America contributor Samuel West, "skeptical, cantankerous, and practical." "Curmudgeon" would also be an apt description, and like M, Admiral Godfrey was not too keen on babying his charge, even despite the fact that he was the one responsible for pulling Fleming into intelligence work in the first place.

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With his typically British stiff upper-lip and no-nonsense style, Admiral Godfrey, like M, was the personification of imperial Britain's class of career military men. It's not hard to imagine Admiral Godfrey giving a man like Bond orders, although it's a tad difficult to envision him as someone who'd get so bent out of shape about cheating at cards that he'd send Bond in to investigate in a manner similar to 'Moonraker' ('Who was Sir Miles Messervy? – The Men Who Were 'M', Benjamin Welton, 13 May 2015').

Another contender (among many others) is Sir Stewart Menzies:

The Chief of MI6 during the Second World War and the early stages of the Cold War, Major General Sir Stewart Menzies was another tough officer who sometimes hid his Etonian refinement behind a gruff exterior. A veteran of both world wars who had actually signed up for the army years before the recruitment rush of 1914,

Menzies was for years the top man in British intelligence, and as such he sported a single letter monicker (instead of "M," Menzies was "C").

The only black mark on Menzies's record is the fact that he oversaw MI6 during the time when Kim Philby and other Soviet agents had deeply infiltrated the inner workings of British espionage. Furthermore, according to a New Yorker article by Malcolm Gladwell, Menzies was an "amateur at a time when his adversaries were professionals." Like Fleming himself, Menzies was a throwback who preferred luxury items and the life of a Scottish laird to the workaday stiffness of the modern office.

Fleming and Wodehouse and Doyle had the unique ability to paint with words. Fleming and Wodehouse were golfers who loved the game and an example of this ability to make imagery come alive can be seen if we compare the descriptions each writer has given of a golf game. Fleming's golf saga is embedded in 'Goldfinger' where Bond takes on the latter in a stupendous game of golf which Bond wins through a combination of skills and tricks. Wodehouse has written innumerable golf stories. If the two styles of Fleming and Wodehouse are compared, we can pick up a lot of similarities in the descriptions of events and personalities, which are vivid and memorable. I do not intend to do this at this point but maybe in a later paper on the subject.

The Prose

Subsequently, I tried to dissect Fleming's prose and I must have read the novels at least five or six times each to understand their hold on the reader and to understand the plot construction. This is not easy and I think it is amazing that Fleming wrote all the novels in such a short period of time. One of the reasons is that he wrote about things which he had experienced in his working life. I am of course referring to the office routines and systems. Le Carre did this and his novels where George Smiley appears have a credibility which is amazing. This is because Le Carre was also writing about things which he had experienced first - hand. The same applies for Frederick Forsythe. A writer must have experienced what he is writing about if he is to hook the reader. Fleming's use of imagery is amongst the best. This shows how he can play with brand names

and evoke in the reader a craving to experience these things for himself or herself. The knowledge Fleming has of golf, card games, cars, firearms, wines and harder drinks and food are a connoisseur's delight and pleasure to read. His description of underwater sea life is also mesmerizing as can be seen in 'Octopussy' and in 'Dr No', to name just two of the novels which feature these descriptions.

And the ability to create imagery through the evocative use of words is seen in the following paragraph, again from 'Moonraker'. Drax and Bond are having a literal duel in their bridge game and the former's manners had got under Bond's skin:

"And suddenly Bond didn't care about the high stakes. Suddenly all he wanted to do was to give this hairy ape the lesson of his life, give him a shock which would make him remember this evening for ever, remember Bond, remember M, remember the last time he would cheat at Blades, remember the time of day, the weather outside, what he had had for dinner."

In the extract from the paper cited above, I have tried to capture and give a clue to how and why some authors (we chose Fleming, Conan Doyle and PG Wodehouse) have this inborn ability to convey in prose what should have been captured as a painting.

An example very often quoted which convey Fleming's unique use of words are the opening lines of 'Casino Royale' - "The scent and smoke and sweat of a casino are nauseating at three in the morning." This is the opening sentence of 'Casino Royale', the first Bond novel, published 60 years ago; and the writer's air of authority is compelling. In fact, this is the third attempt at the opening sentence; the first two ran as under:

The first - "Scent and smoke and sweat hit the taste buds with an acid thwack at three o'clock in the morning".

The second - "Scent and smoke and sweat can suddenly combine together and hit the taste buds with an acid shock at three o'clock in the morning".

John Sutherland, in his 'Lives of the Novelists', says it was regarded by many as "high-class pulp". Ian Fleming's wife Annie dismissed it as

"pornography" and her smart literary friends sneered, but others were more discerning. Kingsley Amis admired its "power and freshness" and Raymond Chandler wrote a glowing review in The Sunday Times. Then came the movies, and Bond became a global brand. I have not touched on the movies in this book because of the very simple reason that I do not feel that they do justice to the novels. Having a female M and other gimmicks will never compensate for the sheer vividness of the prose of Fleming. I am not sure what Fleming would have thought of the movies and I am not casting any aspersion on the films. The habit of reading amongst the younger people is slowly dying and when I ask my students how many of them have read the Bond novels, not a single hand goes up now. This is unfortunate as they are missing out on one of life's chief delicacies, which is shaken and not stirred. I hope the wheel comes full circle and they go back in future to the Fleming prose. For the record, the dry Martini which Bond drinks (shaken, not stirred) is made up of 'three measures of Gordon's, one of vodka, half a measure of Kina Lillet. Shake it very well until it is ice cold, then add a large thin slice of lemon peel'.

Fleming seemed to intuit what would become of the character that he created--he bought himself a special gold-plated Royal typewriter in 1952 in celebration of the completion of the very first Bond novel. "Like hashish-taking," Fleming would later say of the decade or so of wealth and fame that he enjoyed, "it has no excuse and no end." And he was right, of course--James Bond has survived his creator's premature death from heart disease in 1964, and shows no signs of flagging.

The Imagery

Imagery in Fleming is a unique phenomenon and can be the subject of a doctoral dissertation. The function of imagery in literature is to generate a vibrant and graphic presentation of a scene that appeals to as many of the reader's senses as possible. It aids the reader's imagination to envision the characters and scenes in the literary piece clearly. Apart from the above mentioned function, images which are drawn by using figures of speech like metaphor, simile, personification,

onomatopoeia etc. serve the function of beautifying a piece of literature.

An example from EB White to accomplish a vivid description of events is given below. It is from "Once More to the Lake".

"When the others went swimming my son said he was going in, too. He pulled his dripping trunks from the line where they had hung all through the shower and wrung them out. Languidly, and with no thought of going in, I watched him, his hard little body, skinny and bare, saw him wince slightly as he pulled up around his vitals the small, soggy, icy garment. As he buckled the swollen belt, suddenly my groin felt the chill of death."

The images depicting the dampness of clothes, in the above lines, convey a sense of chilly sensation that we get from wet clothes.

Needless to say, Fleming's use of imagery is of a much higher calibre and has a sophistication not found in most writers.

'There is now a long line of Bond authors. Bond was always a fantasy figure, Fleming's wish-projection. He is a collection of attributes and tastes rather than a character. So Fleming's successors can put him in whatever far-fetched drama they please'. (Allan Massie writing in The Telegraph of 12 April 2012).

The Bond Girl and Brand Names

For the record, I would like to elaborate a little on the Bond girl. Bond girls conform to a fairly well-defined standard of beauty. They possess splendid figures and tend to dress in a slightly masculine, assertive fashion, wear little jewellery—and that in a masculine cut—wide leather belts, and square-toed leather shoes. (There is some variation in dress, though: Bond girls have made their initial appearances in evening wear, in bra and panties and, on occasion, naked.) Nearly all of them are white; they often sport light though noticeable suntans (although a few, such as Solitaire, Tatiana Romanova, and Pussy Galore, are not only tanless but remarkably pale, and they generally use little or no makeup and no nail polish, also wearing their nails short. Their hair may be any colour, though they typically wear it in a natural or casual cut that falls heavily to their shoulders. Their features, especially their eyes and mouths, are often widely

spaced (e.g. Vesper Lynd, Gala Brand, Tiffany Case, Tatiana Romanova, Honey Ryder, Viv Michel, Mary Goodnight). Their eyes are usually blue (e.g. Vesper Lynd, Gala Brand, Tatiana Romanova, Honey Ryder, Tracy Bond, Mary Goodnight), and sometimes this is true to an unusual and striking degree: Tiffany Case's eyes are chatoyant, varying with the light from grey to grey-blue, while Pussy Galore has deep violet eyes, the only truly violet eyes that Bond had ever seen. The first description of a Bond girl, Casino Royale's Vesper Lynd, is almost a template for the typical dress as well as the general appearance of later Bond girls; she sports nearly all of the features discussed above. In contrast, Dominetta "Domino" Vitali arguably departs to the greatest degree from the template, dressing in white leather doeskin sandals, appearing more tanned, sporting a soft Brigitte Bardot haircut, and giving no indication of widely spaced features. (The departure may be due to the unusual circumstances behind the writing of the novel 'Thunderball', in which Domino appears.) Even Domino, however, wears rather masculine jewellery.

As Andrew Lycett said in his book 'Ian Fleming', 'fifty years after 'Casino Royale' was written, there were signs that the focus of attention was beginning to swing back from the cult of 007 to its author and his literary works. After the bluntness of international affairs, in the wake of the cold war, the role of Al Qaeda in the atrocities in New York on 11 September 2001, might have been plotted by Ian, with its spectacular act of terrorism and its clear delineation of right and wrong'.

What therefore prompted me to write this paper was the admiration I have for Fleming's style of writing and the incredible scenarios of evil doings by various villains which Bond had to tackle. The closest comparison I can get on these plots is via Conan Doyle. Both writers had the same mental wave length which knew how to hold the reader. Of course, this is a subjective statement and each admirer of Fleming will have his or her own 'comparison' author. Many writers have written Bond novels, but they just do not add up to the original ones. As Jane Ciabattari said in BBC Culture in 2014, "Kingsley Amis, author of the first post-Ian Fleming 007 novel and the first critical appraisal, The

James Bond Dossier, coined the still useful term "The Fleming effect", which he describes as "the imaginative use of information, whereby the pervading fantastic nature of Bond's world, as well as the temporary, local, fantastic elements in the story, are bolted down in some sort of reality". Some of Fleming's successors come up short when it comes to the crucial balance between imagination, authenticity and believability. Many are influenced as much by the film versions as by Fleming himself. Some have replaced Fleming's Cold War plots with alternative wartime scenarios, to varying degrees of success. A few have lost the daring and witty Fleming flavour altogether. The most successful maintain his taut action style while adding psychological depth and a contemporary sense of humour". The message is clear the original cannot be copied.

The other tactic which Fleming uses to great effect is the use of brand names. As John Mullan said on his article 'Licence to Sell', in the Guardian of 28 September 2001, 'when Bond first enters *From Russia with Love*, it is with an assertion of his tastes. We are to understand that he knows what he likes. His "treasured Scottish housekeeper", May, hands him a tray with his breakfast and the Times, "the only paper Bond ever read". Why should we be told this as almost the first indication of his tastes or opinions? In a different kind of novel it would signify that he was reactionary or narrow-minded. Here it means that he is an exacting man, unswayed by fashion.... Fleming also enjoys luxurious bathrooms, like the one in Dr No's lair, where Bond finds himself comforted with just the right products. "There was everything in the bathroom - Floris Lime bath essence for men and Guerlain bath cubes for women... The soap was Guerlain's Sapoceti, *Fleurs des Alpes*." Yet we know that all this, down to the Lentheric after-shave lotion, is to soften Bond before the kill. The luxury products are seductive, but they are tricks of the villain's trade'.

Ian Fleming often peppered his writing with brand names, justifying himself by saying "I see no point in changing the name of the Dorchester to the Porchester", although that misses the point that his critics considered the use of brand names in this

way to be overtly snobbish. This is, to my way of thinking, is a grossly unfair point of view and the magic of Fleming's prose lies in the brand names he weaves into the story. One of my favorites is the description of Blades just before the confrontation with Sir Hugo Drax over the bridge table.

The first time Ian Fleming tells us the brand of razor used by James Bond is in 'On Her Majesty's Secret Service', when 007 is planning his escape from Piz Gloria. Unarmed, he has just his Rolex and Gillette razor to use as knuckle dusters, wrapping the bracelet of the Rolex around his right hand and holding the handle of the Gillette between the fingers of his left, with the blade-carrier resting flat against his knuckles. The fascination of using a Rolex watch as a knuckle duster has remained with me since my teens.

In fact, Fleming used brands as a kind of shorthand. Kingsley Amis wrote in *The James Bond Dossier* (1965) that one of the attractions of James Bond was that as a secret agent he was anonymous, allowing us all to project ourselves onto him.

Fleming's use of brands helped flesh out his hero; one of the reasons that we associate James Bond with luxury is through the "halo effect" of luxury brands; it was so successful that the halo effect has now been reversed, and brands now want to associate with James Bond so as to benefit from the association.

Fleming stands with the best of the story tellers in the English language. In his death at an early age, we lost a true genius. He is at his best when he is writing a strong story line and suddenly comes up with a passage which shows the amazing touch he had to bring characters and scenes to life. The juxtapositioning of tough scenes with a much 'softer' passage is an art which very few writers have mastered. Fleming has done this. "Diamond are Forever" shows these skills their best. He also had a cadence in his prose which contributed greatly to the pull on the reader. By 'cadence' I mean the way he ended chapters – always on a high. And in the sometimes melancholic way they closed. A typical example is from 'You Only Live Twice'. Bond has just landed on the island of Kuro. The concluding lines of the chapter where he meets Kissy for the first time are, "And the tall man with the dark face, cropped

hair and slanting eyebrows, the tall girl and the old woman walked off along the shore with their angular Japanese shadows preceding them across the smooth black boulders". The slow, melancholy ending contrasts sharply with the faster pace of preceding events in the novel. Fleming had the uncanny and inbuilt sense for timing and this is only one example from the many which I can pick out from his novels.

Contrast in style and in characters is a very good way of holding the readers' attention. Bond is tough on the exterior but inside he is soft. The most remarkable incident where this is revealed is in the short story 'The Living Daylights' where he actually disobeys orders from M to kill a sniper from East Germany as he has fallen in long distance love for the person (he realized that the sniper was a girl only at the last minute and changes his aim so that he does not kill her, but only scares the living daylights out of her), during the three days wait when he was alone in Berlin with the second in command of the station. And of course, he had a penchant for helping 'birds with one wing down'. Tracy is an example of this.

To go back to Jane Ciabattari, she also had this to say, 'the James Bond books have had their ups and downs. Fleming was a shrewd and perceptive chronicler of a Cold War world much more dangerous than ordinary citizens understood it to be. He created Bond as a blunt instrument wielded by his superiors to preserve and protect. Fleming fleshed out his 007 with a flair for clothes and cars, a powerful athleticism and a fondness for women paired with a tragic inability to maintain love. When Fleming's Bond was caught, as he always was, the villain made him suffer. Readers knew that at some point, however, Bond would always prevail. Fleming's work was noir with a safe landing at the end. He wrote with a rare combination of clarity, action, sensuous detail, wit and fantasy'.

Fleming's books were roundly criticized by many highbrow critics and novelists. Paul Johnson lambasted the Bond phenomenon in a famous essay titled "Sex, Snobbery, and Sadism," and the spy novelist David Cornwall (John le Carré) criticized Bond's immorality ("He's a sort of licensed criminal

who, in the name of false patriotism, approves of nasty crimes"). Feminists have long objected to Bond's chauvinistic ways, and the Soviet Union, as the enemy in so many of Bond's Cold War capers, attacked Fleming for creating "a world where laws are written with a pistol barrel." Fleming countered that "Bond is not a hero, nor is he depicted as being very likeable or admirable....He's not a bad man, but he is ruthless and self-indulgent. He enjoys the fight—but he also enjoys the prizes.

In Paul Johnson's essay quoted above, he writes, "I have just finished what is without a doubt the nastiest book I have ever read. It is a new novel entitled Dr. No and the author is Mr. Ian Fleming. Echoes of Mr Fleming's fame had reached me before, and I had been repeatedly urged to read his books by literary friends whose judgement I normally respect. When his new novel appeared, therefore, I obtained a copy and started to read. By the time I was a third of the way through, I had to suppress a strong impulse to throw the thing away, and only continued reading because I realised that here was a social phenomenon of some importance.

There are three basic ingredients in Dr No, all unhealthy, all thoroughly English: the sadism of a school boy bully, the mechanical two-dimensional sex-longings of a frustrated adolescent, and the crude, snob-cravings of a suburban adult. Mr Fleming has no literary skill, the construction of the book is chaotic, the entire incidents and situations are inserted, and then forgotten, in a haphazard manner. But the three ingredients are manufactured and blended with deliberate, professional precision; Mr Fleming dishes up his recipe with all the calculated accountancy of a Lyons Corner House (The New Statesman, 5 April 1958)".

What is of interest is that Fleming can evoke such negative comments with regard to a (what I consider) remarkably written book.

As Fleming himself wrote in 1956, 'I really cannot remember exactly why I started to write thrillers. I was on holiday in Jamaica in January 1951 and I think my mental hands were empty. I had finished organising a Foreign Service for Kemsley Newspapers and that tide of my life was free-wheeling. My daily occupation in Jamaica is spearfishing and under-water exploring, but after

five years of it I didn't want to kill any more fish except barracudas and the rare monster fish and I knew my own under-water terrain like the back of my hand. Above all, after being a bachelor for 44 years, I was on the edge of marrying and the prospect was so horrifying that I was in urgent need of some activity to take my mind off it. So, as I say, my mental hands were empty and although I am as lazy as most Englishman are, I have a Puritanical dislike of idleness and a natural love of action. So I decided to write a book.' This is from Fergus Fleming's (editor and Ian Fleming's nephew) book 'The Man with the Golden Typewriter'.

Conclusions

For the record, Fleming was a heavy smoker and drinker. Throughout his adult life he had also suffered from heart disease. In 1961, aged 53, he suffered a heart attack and struggled to recuperate. Some endings are cruel and this is what happened to Fleming. On 11 August 1964, while staying at a hotel in Canterbury, Fleming walked to the Royal St George's Golf Club for lunch and later dined at his hotel with friends. The day had been tiring for him, and he collapsed with another heart attack shortly after the meal. It is really sad that Fleming died in the early morning of 12 August 1964—his son Caspar's twelfth birthday. His last recorded words were an apology to the ambulance drivers for having inconvenienced them, saying "I am sorry to trouble you chaps. I don't know how you get along so fast with the traffic on the roads these days." This is typical of the character of Fleming and shows the type of mind (and the toughness of mind) which he had.

Fleming was buried in the churchyard of Sevenhampton village, near Swindon.

The combination of the Jesuit/ puritan with someone who lives life to the hilt can be fascinating. I am of course, referring to M and James Bond. A lot of the fascination of the books is because of the inbuilt tension which comes through in the books when these two individuals meet. A comparison can be made with Holmes and Watson – again the meeting of two totally different minded people who look at life in different ways.

Fiction writers employ a variety of characters while weaving their tales. Beyond the

standard definitions of protagonist (the main character in a literary work) and antagonist (the main character or force that opposes the protagonist in a literary work), recognizing the types of characters and the parts they play while reading an interesting story can add to the experience. In addition, a fuller understanding of the character types and their uses can increase a writer's effectiveness in weaving his own fictional tales. It is worth exploring this facet a bit more.

Where Fleming comes on top is his ability to juxtapose opposing characters, but are on the same side, so to speak, and then take the story forward. But the relationship of M and Bond, when compared to the interactions between Holmes and Watson are totally different. Watson is definitely shown as being intellectually inferior to Holmes. Only his goodness of character makes the reader like him. Bond, on the other hand is intellectually equal to M and in addition, has the physical prowess which M does not have. Put two characters like these in juxtaposition and we come up with an automatic tension which provokes the interest of the reader. And Fleming knows how to do this without trying. Add to this, a variety of villains who are just on the verge of being seen to exist and the story takes a turn which is impossible to ignore.

A familiarity with Fleming's novels will of course be valuable to readers. However, it is my intention that even those readers who have not read Fleming will have the urge to do so after going through this paper. I am not in any way over estimating my writing skills with this statement but am merely stating what is in my heart. Fleming is a writer with natural writing skills. And that is not a gift which nature endows freely.

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