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The officer and the gentleman: A comparison of the characters of james bond and george smiley

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Abstract
This article compares the characters of George Smiley (created by John Le Carre and James Bond (created by Ian Fleming). Bond was the archetype of a member of the officer class who obeyed orders unquestioningly. Smiley was a gentleman as revealed by his behavior and reactions to events. I have compared them on two broad parameters namely, a) physical appearance, and e) morality, by which I mean their attitudes to women. There could have been many more of such parameters, but I felt that these were the important ones and were also a comprehensive platform for the analysis of the two men. The basis of this article are the novels written by Fleming and Le Carre in which these two characters appear. Familiarity with their writings will give the reader a better insight into this article. I have not touched on the Bond or Smiley movies, because the Bond movies especially, do not depict him as envisaged by Ian Fleming in his novels. The main thread running through the article is how an adventurous figure like Bond and a short, worried looking figure like Smiley could hold the attention of readers even though they differed in so many aspects.

Keywords: morality, spy genre, realpolitik, writing styles, morality

Introduction

The remarkable thing about both these two fictional characters is that they capture the readers' imaginations in different but powerful ways, even though they come from different hemispheres and operate in totally different settings. Consequently, the main thrust of this article will be to see how this paradox of captivating the reader was achieved. The following quote sums up the differences between the two fictional captures succinctly.

'In the popular imagination, there are two types of spy. One is James Bond, the suavely seductive yet psychopathic secret agent, who confidently trots the globe with a suitcase full of secret weapons as he single-handedly rids the world of evil. The other is the George Smiley-type figure, the portly spymaster who is torn by ethical doubts, who questions his own methods and the cause for which he is fighting. The espionage depicted by Bond creator Ian Fleming is simple and glamorous. Both in the books and in the films, Bond appears to be licensed not only to kill, but also to spend half the annual budget of the Treasury. Unlike with most men, senescence and safari suits only increase his sex appeal, and beautiful women the world over are ready to share their beds, and their country's secrets, with Bond.

The world of John le Carré's George Smiley is very different. There are no wildly extravagant action scenes and few, if any, secret gadgets. His spies lack glamour, and are weary of life, or rather the double life – they have doubts, bad marriages, addictions, Conflicting loyalties. In short, the world of le Carré is far more sophisticated.

However, is it any more realistic? It most certainly is. Today's spy sits behind a desk rather than the wheel of an Aston Martin, and instead of a Walther PPK in their hand it will be a computer mouse. Meetings between agents and handlers are more likely to take place in nondescript cafés and suburban parks than between silk sheets in luxury hotels'. (Walters 2017) [3].

Fleming and Le Carre are the titans of the spy novel, who have elevated thrillers to the level of literary fiction. Much imitated, much adapted by the big and small screens, Ian Fleming and John Le Carré have painted our picture of post-war espionage: Fleming through the dashing figure of James Bond, with his lush locations and Martinis as icy as his heart; Le Carré through his damning portrait of the British secret service drawn from his own time in MI5 and MI6. But which of the two novelists is the greater? This article will answer that question in the concluding section, though opinions will differ widely on this aspect.

As Anthony Horowitz (2016) [5] said, 'Fleming is one of the very few writers – Charles Dickens and JK Rowling might be two others – who have transcended fiction, who have created stories that capture a particular time and place, that are universally recognizable and that are, it would seem, immortal. George Smiley is a fascinating character. James Bond is an icon. That's the difference.' The remarkable point is that Smiley is a fascinating character even though he possesses and shows all the ingredients of not being one. In which case is Bond both a fascinating character and an icon? This is because he too possesses all the characteristics of a fascinating character. In which case why is Smiley not an icon? Though not of the bond type? These are difficult questions to answer but I will see if some light can be thrown on these seeming contradictions in the coming sections.

Fleming's contemporary Graham Greene, and, later, John le Carré, possessed a firmer grasp of realpolitik, both with regard to the state of the empire and the international pecking order. This does not mean that Fleming is in any way 'behind' the other two writers. A mere look at the popularity of the Bond novels is a sufficient indicator of this fact. What this proves is that the write of a novel, the protagonist of which is a spy, need not be a person fully *au fait* with contemporary political trends, and at the same

time possess a deep understanding of how nations regard one another. What is needed to be successful is to have a strong story line and have an equally strong but essentially straightforward plot. Smiley possesses qualities that would certainly appeal to a secret service. He is gifted with a prodigious memory. He is cognizant of what is ethical and what is not. He is extremely adept at discovering and utilizing human fallibilities, precisely the quality needed of a case officer looking to recruit agents or 'assets'. Bond on the other hand, shows how the glamorous agent can be equally successful and also have a bit of fun on the side. Fleming and Le Carre have this ability to hook the reader and put him in the zone where (and Fleming is the master at this) a willing suspension of disbelief is obtained. Once the reader is in this zone, matters are easier and the pages are turned without pause.

The Spy Genre

I will now look at the reason for the hypnotic hold spy stories have on people. Essentially the reason is because of the innate nature of the beast which goes back in time. Bloom (1990) [2] indicated that the: 'formal origins of the spy genre lay hazily within an amalgamation of the imperial adventure tale and the detective novel. Both forms emerged in their proper state in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and were themselves responses to social pressure. The spy thriller coming early in the twentieth century (in its fully-developed form) was, more than both its predecessors, the genre tied to international political and social tensions. Indeed, more than any other form the spy thriller responded to a need to represent covert activity by state organizations. The spy genre records that process in one of the least attenuated forms of fiction. In this sense the spy novel read as a historical record as well as a 'mere' form of entertainment can be highly enlightening'.

The appeal of spy fiction comes from the reader wanting to be challenged to solve the mystery along with the main character(s). For spy fiction, the main character(s) are also an appeal factor for readers. Teens will gravitate to spy fictions if they like a certain main character (usually as part of a series), or a character from history (Sherlock Holmes etc.). The action, adventure, and high emotions of the spy fiction stories also draw readers in, as well as the idea that the main characters can be average teens with above average abilities and reasoning skills. Spy fiction, a genre of literature involving espionage as an important context or plot device, emerged in the early twentieth century, inspired by rivalries and intrigues between the major powers, and the establishment of modern intelligence agencies. It was given new impetus by the development of fascism and communism in the lead-up to World War II.

It will be appropriate to make a distinction at this point between a detective and a spy. The first "official" detective story was 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', written in 1841 by Edgar Allen Poe. While Poe's was not the first story to include a mystery or a murder, it was the first to introduce the then-new character of the detective. It was also the first story to revolve entirely around the solution of a murder-related puzzle.

Poe's writings were short stories, but 'The Moonstone', by Wilkie Collins, was a full-length gothic novel which was, at the same time, a murder mystery. The most famous of all fictional detectives, Sherlock Holmes, was invented by Arthur Conan Doyle for the Strand Magazine in 1887. It was Conan Doyle who developed the idea of the "private consulting detective," who works independently from the police, along with a not-quite-bright companion whose involvement may provide comedy, drama, suspense or an opportunity to befuddle the reader with misinterpretations of clues and red herrings.

The "Golden Age of Mysteries" -- the 1920's and 1930's -- included authors such as Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Josephine Tey, ngaio Marsh. These authors created gentlemen detectives and evocative settings such as manor houses, cruise ships, and archaeological digs, among others, which have continued to fascinate readers.

Detectives and spies function in different zones. The only common point in their professions is that both are after the villain who is brought to book at the end of the story. As far as this article is concerned, both Bond and Smiley are spies. In most cases, detectives have to decipher after going through a forest of clues, as to who the villain is. A spy does not have to do this so much, as he or she is functioning at a broader level and their job is more concerned with protecting their country. The identity of the villain is known to a spy and the villain again may be an individual or an organization. Thus we can have a SPECTRE (organization) which looms large in Bond's existence or a Dr. No (individual) who is operating more or less on his own. In some cases the organization and the individual can come together. Auric Goldfinger is a typical example of the latter, as he is a villain in his own right and is also the treasurer for SPECTRE.

The spy genre, as I have said earlier, has the advantage of being linked to the wider world and this gives the writer of the novel a slightly broader canvas on which he or she can function. I am not making a definitive statement that because of this freedom, the spy novel is automatically more interesting than the detective novel. I am merely stating it as a matter of fact; however, this can also increase its appeal to some readers. The detective novel is confined because it usually involves the protagonist (the detective) and the villain and the entire story consists of a series of interactions between the two. Holmes and Moriarty are typical examples of this, as in fact are all the Holmes stories where Holmes is crossing swords against the perpetrator of a crime. 'A Scandal in Bohemia' is an exception to this as Irena Adler can under no circumstances be termed a villain.

Both the genres are therefore of interest as they combine the elements of drama, mystery, danger, violence, conspiracy, all overlaid with a romantic angle. What gives additional relevasnce and depth to the writings of both the authors is that they are writing from what they have actually undergone and witnessed. That is, Fleming and Le Carre are writing from experience (Le Carre worked as an MI5 officer and Fleming in Britain's Naval Intelligence Division). It is this that gives the unmistakable air of authenticity to the novels.

Writing Styles-the Different Approaches

There are many ways in which the style of a writer can be analyzed. The main thrust of these analyses is usually to see if there is any particular characteristic which can be identified as being unique to the writer. In this paper I shall now take a look at one of these analyses in order to put the rest of what I am saying in perspective.

The example has been chosen because of its clarity and the depth of meaning it carries.

Professor John Lye has said that a common way of identifying the qualities that characterize literature as 'good' is through the

concepts of depth, complexity and quality. He goes on to elaborate these three elements as follows:

Depth

The concept of depth as a value begins with the idea that we are historical and symbolic beings who are formed largely by culture but who also have common human needs, and who experience life with the complexity that I have just referred to. Depth is the word used to capture the representation of the symbolic and historical meaning of life.

Complexity

The idea behind complexity is that our human experience is:

- governed by a number of interacting factors -- environment, character, situation and so forth, and
- Comprised of a number of different elements -- thought, feeling, sensation, memory, imagination, significant symbols, conventions, culturally-formed ways of saying and thinking.

Representation of experience which best evokes all of these varying and interconnected elements of our experience will give us the truest sense of the world and its meanings and of what it is to live life. That's the gist of the argument which values complexity.

Quality

In order to evoke the complexities and the depth of experience, literature has to use all of its resources well. For example, an apt, precise and powerful use of language, one which uses the resources of sound, connotation and description to evoke the experiences to which the language refers. The skillful use of the resources of the art form in evoking depth and complexity is known as quality. (www.brocku.ca/english/courses/1F95/depth-etc.html)

Needless to say, the two writers we are focusing on in this paper, display the concepts of depth, quality and complexity in their writings as described in the preceding paragraphs. More specifically, they resort to the skillful use of the resources of the art form in evoking depth and complexity. But it is our view that they go beyond these three concepts in ways which are unique to them and which add to their appeal. It is our view that what they have in common is the ability to create characters which appeal to the reader and holds his or her interest. We will be focusing on this latter aspect in more detail.

What I will now do in this paper, is compare the writing styles of the two writers which are so radically different even as they focus of the same spy genre. This is truly unique as is the ability of both styles to captivate the reader.

John le Carre's Smiley vs Karla trilogy - for the record these are 'Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy' (1974), 'The Honorable Schoolboy' (1977) and, 'Smiley's People' (1979). Le Carre's writing heavily subordinates action to suspense. 'Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy', the first novel in the trilogy, contains very little action at all, but is also considered very realistic espionage. The next two books in the trilogy are easier to follow. The only problem is that Le Carre often keeps the reader in the dark for too long, which causes confusion.

If we look at Fleming's 'From Russia with Love' and 'On Her Majesty's Secret Service', we find that Fleming's spy fiction is more dramatic than that of Le Carre, with a great deal of action. However, these two books actually contain ingenious plots and suspense, in addition to action, whereas some of Fleming's other works, for example 'Dr. No', are much simpler thrillers.

Le Carre's prose is much slower than Fleming's. The stories do not move at the same pace as does the Bond stories. This is in keeping with the much more subdued character of George Smiley and the much more complex plots, and the style entirely fits the character of the worried and academic protagonist and his activities. There is a studied and methodical progression in the Smiley novels which is in keeping with their complexity. The tone is sometimes brooding and the overall impression the reader gets is one of high seriousness and depth. To go back to 'Call for the Dead', it is set in a London of yellow fog and of a River Thames that smells of tar and coke, this is a novel that paints a brilliant picture of post-war Britain. The novel has as much to say (albeit unconsciously, to a certain extent) about the nature of the class system as it was in this country, barely fifty years ago, as well as the murky world of post-war espionage. But it is also concerned with 'the human condition', as all truly good books are. The following quotation from the same novel is vintage Le Carre (we are getting a glimpse of how Smiley is mentally attached to his profession as a secret agent):

'His emotions in performing this work were mixed, and irreconcilable. It intrigued him to evaluate from a detached position what he had learnt to describe as 'the agent potential' of a human being; to devise minuscule tests of character and behavior which could inform him of the qualities of a -candidate. This part of him was bloodless and inhuman – Smiley in this role was the international mercenary of his trade, amoral and without motive beyond that of personal gratification.

Conversely it saddened him to witness in himself the gradual death of natural pleasure. Always withdrawn, he now found himself shrinking from the temptations of friendship and human loyalty; he guarded himself warily from spontaneous reaction. By the strength of his intellect, he forced himself to observe humanity with clinical objectivity, and because he was neither immortal nor infallible he hated and feared the falseness of his life.'

The prose is as different from Fleming's as it can possibly be. Yet it holds the readers' attention.

Fleming portrays Bond as the typical disciplined officer who is duty bound to do what his boss (M) tells him to do, whether Bond likes the order or not. Bond invariably listens to M and is sent like a projectile to any part of the world to solve a problem. The novels also have a unique quality about them insofar as they swing sharply from the routine happenings in a Head Office (the secretaries, the Chief of Staff, M himself), and then taking the reader on a journey with Bond to solve some really unique, exciting and almost unbelievable adventure. Fleming has the ability to take the reader with him and make it appear that yes, atomic weapons can be stolen, a garden of death can be made, a beautiful Russian girl can fall in love with Bond (under orders) and bring with her a highly secret machine, ordinary English girls can be brain washed to destroy British agriculture, and so on. It is this contrast between ordinary everyday office routine and the bizarre adventures which Bond falls into, that gives the Bond novels their inherent dramatic tension. The novels therefore usually begin on a sober note with no inkling given of the adventures to come in the second half of the novel. The Bond

villains are also portrayed convincingly and frighteningly. Fleming's villains all have a macabre touch of fairy-tale to them. Who can forget the demonic emerald-green contact lenses that Blofeld wears in 'On Her Majesty's Secret Service' - to protect his eyes, he claims, from the glare of the snow? Or the uncanny Dr. No, who resembles a giant white centipede and has metal pincers instead of hands? More than anything else, the novels are simply incredibly readable. Fleming not only had a gift for gripping plots, but an abundantly moreish prose style with pin-sharp descriptions. Betjeman (who was a fan of Fleming) was right. Fleming conjured an entire world, infinitely more colorful than our own, and one that may well go on forever. In fact, Betjeman had written to Fleming that, 'the Bond world is as real and full of fear and mystery as Conan Doyle's Norwood and Surrey and Baker Street. I think the only other person to have invented a world in our time is PG Wodehouse. This is real art.'

Another characteristic of Fleming's prose is the attention to detail. The Fleming style, which he consciously adopted and employed in all his work, includes details calculated to excite the senses and give readers a taste of luxury and hedonism. In order to write like Ian Fleming, try using some of the techniques he found so effective:

- Describe food in detail, but make sure it's good food.
- Have your characters drink plenty of alcohol.
- Include sensuous details about clothes.
- Let your characters take time to relax and enjoy themselves now and then.

These techniques are evident on almost every page of Fleming's novels. I just opened 'From Russia with Love' at random and came upon the scene in which Bond is sitting in Darko Kerim's office in Istanbul.

'There was a knock on the door and the head clerk put a china eggshell, enclosed in gold filigree, in front of each of them and went out. Bond sipped his coffee and put it down. It was good, but thick with grains'.

Another example is 'From Russia with Love.' The following excerpt shows how in Bond's world, an ordinarily generic meal like breakfast can turn into a remarkable experience:

'When he was stationed in London it was always the same. It consisted of very strong coffee, from De Bry in New Oxford Street, brewed in an American Chemex, of which he drank two large cups, black and without sugar. The single egg, in the dark blue egg cup with a gold ring round the top, was boiled for three and a third minutes. It was a very fresh, speckled brown egg from French Marans hens owned by some friend of May's in the country. (Bond disliked white eggs and, faddish as he was in many small things, it amused him to maintain that there was such a thing as a perfect boiled egg.) Then there were two slices of whole wheat toast, a large pat of deep yellow Jersey butter and three squat glass jars containing Tiptree "Little Scarlet" strawberry jam; Cooper's Vintage Oxford marmalade and Norwegian Heather Honey from Fortnum's. The coffee pot and the silver on the tray were Queen Anne and the china was Minton, of the same dark blue and gold and white as the egg cup'.

Both the foregoing examples relate to food and drink but Fleming uses the same technique for describing clothes, alcohol and even the looks of a person. As an example of the latter, the description of Donovan Grant at the beginning of 'From Russia with Love' is a fine example.

Studies in Contrast

If Bond is colorful, and cuts a fine figure as a human being, Smiley is the polar opposite. He makes his first appearance in 'Call for the Dead' (1961) and the opening lines of this novel are: 'When Lady Ann Sercomb married George Smiley towards the end of the war she described him to her astonished Mayfair friends as breathtakingly ordinary. When she left him two years later in favor of a Cuban motor racing driver, she announced enigmatically that if she hadn't left him then, she never could have done; and Viscount Sawley made a special journey to his club to observe that the cat was out of the bag.

This remark, which enjoyed a brief season as a mot, can only be understood by those who knew Smiley. Short, fat, and of a quiet disposition, he appeared to spend a lot of money on really bad clothes, which hung about his squat frame like skin on a shrunken toad. Sawley, in fact, declared at the wedding that 'Sercomb was mated to a bullfrog in a sou'wester'. And Smiley, unaware of this description, had waddled down the aisle in search of the kiss that would turn him into a Prince'.

When Lady Ann runs away from Smiley and leaves him alone, 'a little of him had died.' As Le Carre says, 'that part of Smiley which survived was as incongruous to his appearance as love, or a taste for unrecognized poets: it was his profession, which was that of intelligence officer. It was a profession he enjoyed, and which mercifully provided him with colleagues equally obscure in character and origin. It also provided him with what he had once loved best in life: academic excursions into the mystery of human behavior, disciplined by the practical application of his own deductions'.

Short, pudgy and wearing badly cut but expensive suits, George Smiley is not the sort of spy we usually read about. His habit of wiping his spectacles with the fat end of his ties is entirely in keeping with the person. But the outward appearance masks a ruthless intelligence which came in useful during the cold war. His outward appearance was deceptively innocent, his intellect was the force with which he tackled his enemies, both within the organization and outside. The best description of George Smiley comes from the first book. It says that Smiley was 'short, fat, and of a quiet disposition, he appeared to spend a lot of money on really bad clothes, which hung about his squat frame like a skin on a shrunken toad.' It further refers to his 'fleshy, bespectacled face puckered in energetic concentration.' In all matters, George Smiley is the absolute last person you would suspect of being a spy, least of all a man destined to become a great spymaster. Unless, of course, it is your misfortune to have done something the Crown would did not like or you had some information that was thought important and Smiley was put onto it. His incredible persistence and tenacity, his innate understanding of people, albeit with considerable distaste, and his tremendously devious mind would wear you down and finish you. Smiley seldom lost because he could not envision himself losing.

And 007? In 'Moonraker' (1979), Special Branch Officer Gala Brand thinks that Bond is 'certainly good-looking... rather like Hoagy Carmichael in a way. That black hair falling down over the right eyebrow. Much the same bones. But there was something a bit cruel in the mouth, and the eyes were cold." Others, such as journalist Ben Macintyre, identify aspects of Fleming's own looks in his description of Bond. General references in the novels describe Bond as having "dark, rather cruel good looks'. He is also tall (6 feet) and dresses with

sophistication and is conscious of the comfort which his clothes must have. The color of his eyes are bluish grey.

He has a very good knowledge of gambling with cards, car and horse racing and, different types of alcoholic drinks. He is also an expert with firearms and is one of the best shots in the service. He is also a very good skier and golfer.

As can be seen, the physical contrast between the two men is very sharp.

The same contrast can be observed in what I term their morality; more specifically, their attitudes to women. Black (2017), writing on the characteristics of Bond's women says that 'far from being a 'sadistic womanizer' and card-board cut out misogynist, Ian Fleming's Bond admires strong female characters who were far more modern than the female ideal of the 1950s and 60s, when the books were written. Although created in the age before the pill, 007 respected women who were as sexually liberated and adventurous'. Black goes on to say that, 'Bond was a very modern man for the 1950s. This was the pre-pill age, but he admires women who offer sex, femininity and masculinity. His women are independent and driven. He is a far more complex and interesting character in the books than in many of the films and the fact that in the films all the Bond Girls are stunning, and with startling regularity acquiesce with a sigh of "Oh James", has fed 007's reputation as an arch misogynist. Is James Bond a feminist? Perhaps not. Fleming's Bond, as he created him, may have been a club-land hero with many pre-war attitudes and manners, but he was far ahead of his time in his respect for independent sexually-liberated women who had character, drive and attitude.'

This is revealing, as the popular image of Bond as a seducer of women has mainly been fueled by the Bond films. In fact, he is according to me, a sentimentalist as far as women are concerned. His falling in love and marriage to Tracy in 'On Her Majesty's Secret Service' is the ultimate example of this. She brings out the protective instinct in him and this is an instinct which lies just beneath the surface.

As opposed to Bond, Smiley has only one encounter with a woman whom he too marries; this has been referred to earlier in this article. So while the women in Bond's life add interest, there is no such feature in the Smiley novels. The novels pull the reader based entirely on their plot construction and the essential character of Smiley; the paradox in his character is that Le Carre has the ability to make him extremely interesting while at the same time being (superficially) a very ordinary kind of person.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the two writers approached the spy genre from completely different perspectives. I do not intend to make a case for either of them in terms of their individual merit as a writer. It is enough to say that each brings to the story he writes, his experience of having worked in intelligence. Both writers have converted these experiences into uniquely readable stories. In the Bond novels we get the colorful adventures while in the Smiley novels we get a more sobering paradigm of what working in intelligence means. There is one unique difference in the novels; Bond has a supportive boss in M while Bill Haydon is the total opposite of M. Smiley perhaps had the more difficult task of working under a boss who was also a betrayer – a betrayer who also deduced Smiley's wife in the bargain. Haydon is recruited as a Soviet agent by Karla, Moscow Centre's crafty and legendary spymaster. In the early years of the Cold War, he limits his espionage activities to 'selected gifts of intelligence' that advance the Soviet cause over the American one without harming British interests. The Suez crisis of 1956 convinces him that Britain has lost all influence as a world power and leads him to become a full-time Soviet mole with no holds barred. Naturally, these facts would add to Smiley's introspective and brooding nature. (For the record, Bill Haydon, with his easy charm and strong social connections, bears a close resemblance to real-life double agent Kim Philby whose defection to the USSR in 1963, and the consequent compromising of British agents, was a factor in the 1964 termination of Le Carré's own career in the SIS. Philby, along with Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, Anthony Blunt, and John Cairncross, was part of a group of Soviet moles in Britain which later came to be known as the Cambridge Five).

M on the other hand, though autocratic by nature is a genuine person who has a lot of concern for the wellbeing of his staff. M is an autocrat but autocratic leadership is vital in many workplace environments and this style is necessary within organizations and companies that demand error-free outcomes. And the Secret Service was definitely such an organization. While autocratic leadership is one of the least popular management styles, it is also among the most common. M had an autocratic style, but where M was different was that his style was autocratic and in its own way flamboyant, yet it was carefully thought out and characterized by extreme loyalty to seniors (this would be the Prime Minister) and subordinates alike. Beneath the tough exterior, I suspect there is a compassionate man who is essentially a 'people person'. It would have hurt him to do something harsh to a subordinate. It is difficult to think of M in this way, but let me try and show you the reasons why I said this. M likes to protect his subordinates to an inordinate degree and this is a hallmark of a people person. M takes this to great extremes but in the end he proves he was right in taking the people oriented decision. It is obvious that Haydon and M were poles apart in their natures especially with regard to their attitude to their subordinates. It is also interesting to speculate how the two – Smiley and Bond - would have felt and acted if their bosses were M and Haydon respectively. It is an academic question so I will only say that the pairing s would not have been fruitful. The subordinate would have quit the job quite early on.

To pursue this line of thinking a bit more, this feeling of being out of place with different bosses would have been heightened for both of them if we examine the different worlds in which they function. Fleming leaves us with no doubt who the bad people are. Le Carre's world has people who pass off as good guys but are not really so. And bad people who are the opposite. For Bond to operate in such a world would be difficult. And I really cannot see Smiley dealing with people like Ernst Stavro Blofeld, Goldfinger, Hugo Drax, and more of the same type. In an interview with John Naughtie on BBC Radio 4's Today program, (14 September 2011), Le Carre has this to say of Smiley:

'I think he is also puzzled by his own emotions. Yes, he sees a lot; yes, he knows all the possibilities of the people he is interrogating….He himself is a divided man, and he has in the middle of that a great love of England.' Bond has no complexities in his mind like Smiley. He is a straightforward secret agent and he knows who his enemies are. All M has to do is send him like a projectile to the part of the world which needs Bond's attention. In Smiley's world in contrast, there are no wildly extravagant action scenes and few, if any, secret gadgets. His spies lack

glamour, and are weary of life, or rather the double life – they have doubts, bad marriages, addictions, conflicting loyalties. Bond's world is not dark – it is a clear world filled with illumination and it is Bond's job to kill those who try and extinguish the light.

Both Bond and Smiley are iconic figures in their own way and it will for the reader to judge which is the better icon. In my view they are equal in their iconic statures. It is a toss-up as to which world the reader would prefer in which to wander. Suffice it to say that James Bond was the officer and George Smiley the gentleman.

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