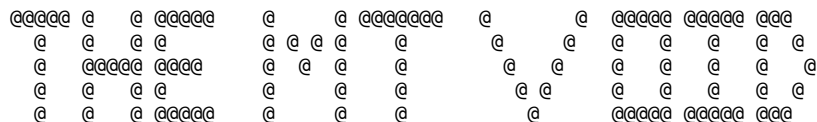


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Bond Songs (Part 3) (LIVE AND LET DIE, THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN) (comments by Mark R. Leeper):

As promised I am continuing this consideration of the James Bond song lyrics looking at the early Roger Moore films. Last week I concluded with DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER. Next comes Paul and Linda McCartney's LIVE AND LET DIE song. This one I remember at the time thinking was a stupid song pasted on an even more stupid film.

When you were young and your heart was an open book,
You used to say live and let live.
(You know you did, you know you did, you know you did.)
But if this ever-changing world in which we live in
Makes you give in and cry,
Say live and let die!
Live and let die,
Live and let die,

```
{this is real monotony}  
{this is monotony}  
{this is monotony}  
{this is monotony}
```

What does it matter to ya,
When you've got a job to do you gotta do it well,
You gotta give the other fellow hell.

```
{I think I once worked for this guy singing!}
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This is a terrible song lyric. Of course song lyrics from the Beatles and former Beatles often were.

Let me paraphrase. When you were young and candid you used to be more tolerant of other people. (Then the singer rubs it in a

most childish way.) He then says, "But if this ever changing world in which we're living makes you give in and cry, say live and let die. What kind of advice is that? I know why the song does that. It is called double-dipping. Whoever works with Paul McCartney and Wings is pretty much guaranteed of a big monetary haul. Whoever writes a Bond title song is equally going to be in upper brackets. What a great philosophy: if the world hurts you, just be less tolerant of others. Great message! And when you have a job to do you have to be proficient and be unscrupulous at the same time. What one thought has to do with the other is not clear.

The next Bond film was THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN. While a step up from the previous film, it is still a very poor example of a James Bond film. Nevertheless the title song really does most of what we would want a Bond film title song to do.

He has a powerful weapon.
He charges a million a shot.

{that used to sound like a lot more money than it sounds now}

An assassin that's second to none,

{or perhaps third}

The man with the golden gun.

{How Freudian}

Lurking in some darkened doorway,
Or crouched on a rooftop somewhere,
In the next room, or this very one,
The man with the golden gun.

{He is played by 6'4" Christopher Lee so probably sticks out at both ends.}

Love is required, whenever he's hired;
It comes just before the kill.

{Boy, I needed a better union}

No one can catch him, no hitman can match him
For his million dollar skill.

One golden shot means another poor victim
Has come to a glittering end.
For a price, he'll erase anyone
The man with the golden gun.
His eye may be on you or me.
Who will he bang?
We shall see, oh yeah!

Love is required, whenever he's hired;
It comes just before the kill
No one can catch him, no hitman can match him
For his million dollar skill.

{overpriced}

One golden shot means another poor victim
Has come to a glittering end.
If you want to get rid of someone
The man with the golden gun
Will get it done.

{Leave your business card with my secretary. We will get back to you.}

He'll shoot anyone
With his golden gun.

{I guess if he has it he will use it. Ours is an equal opportunity llc.}

[-mrl]

Bond Songs (letters of comment by Gary McGath and R. Looney):

In response to [Mark's comments on the James Bond songs](#) in the 08/13/21 issue of the MT VOID, Gary McGath writes:

[Mark quotes the song lyric:]

You only live twice or so it seems,
One life for yourself and one for your dreams.
You drift through the years and life seems tame,
Till one dream appears and love is its name.

It's been decades since I read the book, but my recollection is that Bond composes a pseudo-haiku something like:

You only live twice:
Once when you are born,
And once when you look death in the face.

That's a completely different meaning from the one in the song. [-gmg]

Evelyn notes:

Gary's memory is good. The only mis-remembrance is that the second line was "Once when you're born". [-ecl]

R. Looney writes:

I'm not a fan of the Latest 007's, since I first encountered Daniel Craig in LAYER CAKE so he's always that gangster, to me.

GOLDFINGER and THUNDERBALL really are quite perverse. In the latter, when Bond uses a blonde for a human shield--whew. And how about the former, when Oddjob has that Lincoln Continental (containing a corpse and a bar of gold) crushed into a cube?

In soundtrack circles, ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE is the acknowledged best Bond soundtrack--the whole disc, not just the theme. Another note on that film's sound--why is the whip-crack sound-effect heard whenever anybody hits anybody else? But it's a favorite of mine since 007 has no gadgets--and Diana Rigg really saves his bacon. Such a bumner ending, though.

But my favorite theme song remains YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE--maybe since I'm musical, and don't pay much attention to the lyrics? Also, we really can't move on from THUNDERBALL without mentioning Tom Jones' performance of the theme song, holding that last note.

Thanks as ever for all your words! [-rl]

Mark responds:

I remember being impressed with LAYER CAKE, but I should watch the film again.

ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE had many good points. It is nice to see Bond in over his head for once. But what leaves a bad taste in my mouth is the Christmas Tree song.

Thanks for writing. [-mrl]

R. Looney replies:

Yes, it seems to be a rule--every great soundtrack album is ruined by that one song. The common example given for this is BLADE RUNNER, great Vangelis music except every version (and there are several, like the film itself) has to include the atypical, archaic (and only heard for a moment) "One More Kiss Dear". [-rl]

This Week's Reading (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

IN THE LAND OF INVENTED LANGUAGES: A CELEBRATION OF LINGUISTIC CREATIVITY, MADNESS, AND GENIUS by Arika Okrent (Spiegel & Grau, ISBN 978-0-8129-8089-9) looks at a few of the hundreds (perhaps thousands) of invented languages. By this term, Okrent does not mean computer languages such as Fortran or COBOL, but languages that are used to communicate between/among people the way natural languages such as English or Ibo do. (Okrent does not restrict herself to spoken languages, but includes symbol languages such as Blissymbolics or "performative" languages such as American Sign Language).

Okrent covers a few languages in detail. There is John Wilkins's "Philosophical Language" (which I was somewhat familiar with from Jorge Luis Borges's "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins"). There is Esperanto, clearly the over-achiever of the batch. And there is Loglan/Lojban, one of the better-known ones, but so complicated that no one has ever been fluent in it.

And of course, there's Klingon. The one invented language "owned" by a private entity--the term "Klingon" is trademarked by Paramount--it is second only to Esperanto in the number of speakers (a few hundred), and fluent speakers (twenty or thirty). There are

many natural languages which are disappearing that have fewer. It is probably also the only invented language that had no practical purpose (universality, clarity, etc.), but is still actively used by people other than its creator.

(Esperanto probably has 100,000 speakers, and 10,000 fluent speakers. It also has several hundred native speakers, usually the children of parents whose only common language was Esperanto. There is one documented attempt to raise a native-Klingon-speaking child, with the father speaking only Klingon and the mother only English. The son could understand and speak Klingon, but was clearly not happy with it, so his father gave up after five years.)

Tolkien as a language creator also gets some coverage, and Suzanne Haden Elgin's "women's language" of Laadan is discussed. Elgin seems to be one of the few language creators who was honest enough to label their attempt a failure (when after ten years no one had adopted it). Most of the creators of languages they want to see used (unlike Tolkien's languages of Middle Earth) refuse to accept that their brainchild is not the darling they hoped it would be. Elgin did express unhappiness that her "women's language" failed while Klingon ("a 'hyper-male' warrior language") was thriving.

Okrent also discusses Hebrew (which she certainly agrees is not an invented language) and its re-introduction as a "living" language. But there were similar problems. There was a need to create a large vocabulary--Hebrew had a lot of words, but they were not words about the modern world, or indeed, about many concepts other than the theological or philosophical. There was also the problem that there were no native speakers to pass on the language to the next generation. This was "solved" by having Hebrew be the language of instruction in all the schools, starting with kindergartens.

I find myself wondering about Latin. Where do the new words come from that are needed in the official encyclicals? Do Catholics with no other common language converse in Latin? (I did know someone at work who had many years of Catholic education who said that he once had a conversation in Latin with someone at a train station in Italy.) But it is more the way Hebrew was for close to two thousand years than the way Hebrew is now--usable, but not a living spoken language.

Okrent covers not just the languages themselves--their purposes, structures, and so on--but also the personalities of their creators and the culture of their speakers/users. She even goes into the topic of how to communicate through "deep time", in particular, how to put up a warning about radioactive waste that would communicate this for 10,000 years. Thomas Sebeok suggested displaying the message in all known languages, symbologies, etc., but said that even this is insufficient. So his key suggestion was a "meta- message" asking whoever was reading the warnings should re-encode them every 250 years into whatever was readable then, because no language would remain comprehensible for 10,000 years. (Consider how languages even 1000 years old are incomprehensible to most people, and Linear A, "only" 2500 years old, has yet to be translated at all.) Of course, a catastrophe that killed off enough people to kill off literacy as well would defeat even this approach, so Sebeok also suggested creating a folklore and rituals that would emphasize the "taboo" nature of the site which might be carried forward. (This has been labeled "an Atomic Priesthood" and has come in for quite a bit of ridicule.)

The book is from 2009, so there have probably been a lot more languages invented since it came out, and of course, Klingon keeps rolling along, but I definitely recommend it.

Another book about language that I read is HOW YOU SAY IT: WHY YOU TALK THE WAY YOU DO AND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT YOU by Katherine D. Kinzler is mostly about accents, with some discussion of bilingualism (and more generally, multilingualism). Kinzler covers a lot of experiments run to judge people's reactions to various types of languages and accents, strength of accents, and so on, and concludes that we are far more influenced by these auditory cues than just about anything else, including race, and suggests that language and accent should be included in the list of protected categories.

One example Kinzler gave was a Filipino who applied for a job at the DMV. He was turned down, because they said his accent was too strong and he would have difficulty being understood. He took the case to court and lost. But as Kinzler pointed out, his interviewer had no problem understanding him, the other lawyer had no problem understanding him, the judge had no problem understanding him, and the court recorder had no problem understanding him. In spite of all this, there was no recourse, because the reason given by the DMV was not race, but accent.

This book had more of an agenda than I was expecting, but was worth reading nonetheless.

LOST LANGUAGES: THE ENIGMA OF THE WORLD'S UNDECIPHERED SCRIPTS by Andrew Robinson (Thames & Hudson, ISBN 978-0-500-28816-0) is well-named. Whoever decided to print this book using a sans serif typeface (similar to Pero) in a small font size with very thin lines that make it look more blue than black obviously intended the reader to learn what it was like to read a difficult script. In this he succeeded, but he also succeeded in making me give up after a dozen pages or so. Oh, and it's a large size book, making it physically difficult to hold to read. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

All models are wrong but some are useful.
--George Box

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