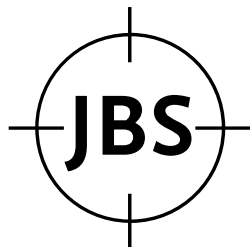


Ian Fleming Introduces Jamaican Plants

Gardens, Plantations, and Natural Threats in *Dr. No* and *The Man with the Golden Gun*

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Ian Fleming's *Dr. No* (1958) and *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1965) – published before and after Jamaican independence in 1962 – each connect the botanical concerns of the island of Jamaica to its colonial past. A plant humanities approach enables further exploration of the role of plants in the Jamaican novels, and how this role is shaped by Fleming's engagement with Jamaica before and after independence. Paying close attention to the ways Fleming writes about plants reveals that his interest in Jamaican flora and fauna is inseparable from his interaction with Jamaica as a colony and his reaction to independence. Fleming displayed this interest in his wider writing about the island, such as a 1948 article he wrote for the *Kingston Gleaner* offering recommendations on Jamaican agricultural and economic development (Fleming 1948) and his introduction to the essay collection *Ian Fleming Introduces Jamaica* (Fleming 1965). This intersection between the botanical and political concerns of Jamaica should not be seen as plants simply taking on the symbolic role of representing human concerns, but rather as a recognition of the colonial context in which Jamaican plants have co-existed with humans. While there has previously been a great deal of interest in talking about race in the Bond novels, here I will instead discuss the Caribbean



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colonial context in relation to botanical and environmental issues as alternative methods of examining Fleming's response to independence. After providing some theoretical context about the plant humanities and an overview of Fleming's engagement with plants and nature in his work, I will then look closely at the pre-independence novel *Dr. No* and briefly at *The Man with the Golden Gun* as a postcolonial comparison.

Fleming's engagement with environmental concerns has received some previous attention, such as Matthew Griffiths' (2019) ecocritical analysis of the undersea fauna of "The Hildebrand Rarity" (1960), or Oliver Buckton's analysis of "James Bond's vital role, as a defender of fragile ecosystems and protector of endangered life forms" (2021, 152). They discuss the non-human animals and natural environments of the novels broadly, without focusing specifically on plants. Tim Gardiner's (2022) ecocritical approach to *Dr. No*, which relies on a quantitative overview of biodiversity in both novel and film (1962), could be taken further through a closer analysis of the language used by Fleming. Gardiner finds that there is "a higher biodiversity for the novel compared to the film", that "plants are most prominent in both formats", and that "plants feature a little less prominently in the novel" (6). What Gardiner does not address is the intention behind the level of biodiversity in the novel; each plant and animal mentioned in Fleming's text is necessarily a decision, included with the intention of the author. Many of these plants function not merely as setting but as part of the plot, whereas the filmic version routinely includes a quantity of background biodiversity simply because it was filmed in the rich, tropical landscape of Jamaica. Building on the existing recognition of Fleming's environmental interest, further consideration of the language Fleming uses to describe the flora of Jamaica will uncover the role of plants in his narratives.

Plant humanities approaches to literary texts focus on the relationship between plants and humans, and the role of plants in human culture (Driver et al. 2021, 8). This requires being attentive to plants in literature, art, and history, not just as background or setting, but as actors shaping the plot, described in just as much detail as human characters, thereby "rehabilitating literary plants from their typically backgrounded designation as 'environment'" (Lawrence 2022, 641). This approach aims to counteract "plant blindness" (Wandersee and Schusler 1999), or the human inability to fully see, understand, or represent plant life. The phrase was coined in the late 1990s and depicted in a blurred image of a natural scene. It has recently garnered increasing attention in a plant humanities context as a necessary boundary to overcome in order to address ecological crises, and thus forms a vital framework for current readers encountering Flem-

ing's work. But Fleming was certainly not blind to plants; I would argue that some of his best writing is reserved for the natural world. In *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1962) there is "the billion-strong army of pine trees that marched away northwards towards the Canadian border, the real, wild maples flamed here and there like shrapnel-bursts" (Fleming 2012d, 1-2). Or in *Live and Let Die* (1953):

The road wound down towards the northern plains through some of the most beautiful scenery in the world, the tropical vegetation changing with the altitude. The green flanks of the uplands, all feathered with bamboo interspersed with the dark, glinting green of breadfruit and the sudden Bengal fire of Flame of the Forest, gave way to the lower forests of ebony, mahogany, mahoe and logwood. And when they reached the plains of Aqualta Vale the green sea of sugar-cane and bananas stretched away to where the distant fringe of glittering shrapnel bursts marked the palm-groves along the north coast. (Fleming 2012b, 169)

As Fleming momentarily forgets about Bond altogether, he creates these botanically alert images of trees bursting like shrapnel and accounts of the varied forest ecosystems of Jamaica. The detailed and varied language used to describe individual plant species takes this beyond a background description of "beautiful scenery"; while the use of the phrase "shrapnel bursts" to describe the trees, here, signals the association of plants with violence across many of Fleming's novels. The clear refocusing of attention away from Bond and towards plants in this passage indicates that this was not originally written for the Bond novels. Fleming appears to reuse an earlier description of the island's natural landscape in an article he wrote for *Horizon* magazine in 1947, which similarly moves through the varied vegetation at different altitudes, singling out the "Bengal flame" and "ebony, mahogany, mahoe":

As you can imagine, the landscape varies with the altitude. In parts the uplands, with their stone-walled meadows and Friesian cattle, remind one of Ireland or the Tyrol – except for the orchids and the backdrop of tropical trees and the occasional green lightning of parrakeets or Bengal flame of a giant Immortel [*sic*]. Then you drop down, often through a cathedral of bamboo or a deep-cut gully of ferns, into a belt of straight tropical vegetation – palms, cotton trees and Jamaican hardwoods such as ebony, mahogany, mahoe, red bullet and the like. Amongst them grow thick the tribe

of logwood, and dogwood. Indigo comes from logwood and the bees make particular honey from its yellow blossom. (There is another variety of dogwood called “Bitchwood”, but this is politely referred to as “Mrs. Dogwood”. I will tell you more of this likeable Jamaican *pudeur* later on.) [...] The lowlands, and the valleys which comb the flanks of the hills, are all sugar cane, citrus, cultivated palms and bananas and various fruit-vegetables like mangoes, bread-fruit, guavas, sour-sop, naseberries and the like. (Fleming 2008, 211-212)

The transformation of this journalistic travel account into the literary landscape of Jamaica in the novels offers a sense of how Fleming’s impressions of the Jamaican environment developed. His botanically oriented account is remarkably detailed after less than two years living in Jamaica, referencing characteristic features of the Jamaican landscape like the fern-walled stretch of road from Ocho Rios known as Fern Gully. The attention in this article is directed towards the distinguishing features of Jamaican flora and its significance in human culture, with the local naming of “Bitchwood” or the use of logwood to produce indigo dye. Similar notes on the diverse medicinal and cultural uses of poisonous species are included in the extended list of plants imported into Blofeld’s poison garden in *You Only Live Twice* (1964), provided by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, such as the Rosary Pea (*Abrus precatorius*) “used by Indian goldsmiths as weights” or Jimson Weed (*Datura stramonium*) “used as a truth-drug by Zapotec Indians in courts of law” (Fleming 2012e, 67, 71). In the context of the Caribbean novels, Fleming’s interest in the uses of plants in human culture draws on the botanical knowledge acquired during the long history of colonial exploitation of plants.

Botanical gardens were established in Jamaica in the 19th century to improve agricultural efficiency on plantations by sharing knowledge with growers, experimenting on new crop varieties, and overseeing the transfer of plants to and from the island.¹ Jamaica was primarily an agricultural island while under British colonial control, and plantation agriculture methods were used to maximise the profits of the colony by growing large monocultures of single crops worked by enslaved – and later, indentured – labour. These plantations produced valuable plant products for export, such as sugar, various exotic fruits like bananas and mangoes, and other food and drink products including cocoa and

1 For further details on the role of botanical gardens in Jamaican agriculture, see Mark Nesbitt’s “Botany in Victorian Jamaica”, in *Victorian Jamaica*, eds. Tim Barringer and Wayne Modest (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 2018): 209-239.

coffee. Botanical gardens provide some background for Fleming's depictions of plants in the novels. He clearly visited both the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in London, and the Hope and Castleton botanical Gardens in Jamaica. Some of Fleming's later novels mention Kew: in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1963), M receives an orchid specimen from a friend who is "assistant to a chap called Summerhayes who's the Orchid King at Kew" (Fleming 2012c, 192), referring to keeper of the orchid herbarium Victor Summerhayes; and Blofeld's poison garden in *You Only Live Twice* is created with the support of Kew and the Jardin des Plantes in Paris (Fleming 2012e, 62). In Jamaica, Bond and Quarrel drive through Castleton botanical gardens in *Live and Let Die*. These "famous palm-gardens of Castleton" (Fleming 2012b, 170) form part of the public image of Jamaica's tropical richness. Discussing the representations of the Jamaican botanical gardens in the context of their colonial origins, Duncan Taylor suggests that Fleming evokes "a certain vision of the colony [...] through the site of Castleton Gardens, narrated amongst folklore and images of 'foreign' nature" (2015, 32). Fleming's description of Jamaica in *Dr. No* opens that novel, focusing on the trees and flowers from the Hope Botanical Gardens bordering the beautiful English lawns of Kingston's wealthiest homes. On Bond's arrival in Jamaica, his "heart lifted with the beauty of one of the most fertile islands in the world" (Fleming 2023, 40). His pleasure in this fertile and lucrative landscape remains, in part, the result of colonial sentiments, but this is also an instance of James Bond being mesmerised by nature. Fleming is aware of the fading of these colonial spaces, however, as the "stubborn retreat" of the Queen's Club, outside which Bond's ally Strangways is shot, "will not long survive in Modern Jamaica. One day Queen's Club will have its windows smashed and perhaps be burnt to the ground" (ibid., 2). This indicates that the "unnatural", cultivated colonial spaces Bond is captivated by may also be under threat.

The Hope Gardens that Fleming mentions were just one of the colonial botanical gardens in Jamaica established by the British government to exploit this "most fertile island" by improving its agricultural industries, and the earliest iterations of these gardens in the 18th century used enslaved labour (*Journals* 1799, 285). Hope Gardens was originally created as a base for sugar cane experimentation in an attempt to stabilise this staple industry during second half of 19th century, after emancipation contributed to a decline in the profitability of sugar (Nesbitt 2018, 215). These gardens cultivated the major crops listed in the filmic *Dr. No*'s song "Underneath the Mango Tree": "Underneath the mango tree / [...] Mango, banana and tangerine / Sugar and ackee and cocoa bean". All of the

plants mentioned in this song were brought to Jamaica as part of colonial exchange, either to Hope or earlier iterations of colonial botanical gardens and plantations: ackee and bananas were transferred from West Africa, mangoes from India, and cocoa from South America (see Higman 2008). Ackee trees are in fact one of the plants most closely associated with Jamaican independence; they were likely brought to the island on ships carrying enslaved people and now act as markers of the gardens of formerly enslaved people (Higman, 153). It is also a highly toxic fruit which can cause vomiting sickness if eaten when unripe, so attempts to instil knowledge of its safe consumption are abundant in Jamaican culture. Ackee is now the national fruit of Jamaica, consumed in the national dish, ackee and saltfish, which Quarrel eats for breakfast in *Dr. No*, in Fleming's only reference to ackee across the novels: "Salt fish an' ackee an' a tot of rum". Bond calls it "tough stuff to start the day on", but Quarrel "stolidly" replies that it is "Mos' refreshin", defending the qualities of this culturally significant food (Fleming 2023, 59).

The character of Honey Rider is central to the engagement with nature throughout *Dr. No*; for instance, she provides the knowledge needed to use bamboo to breathe underwater in order to hide from Dr. No's guards in the novel, using this plant material to overcome the threat of discovery. This seems much more likely than in the film, where it is Bond rather than Honey who is inspired to use the plant in this way. But Bond is also engaged with the natural world. In moments of insecurity – for instance, while preparing to travel to Dr. No's island – Bond concentrates on the plants and animals nearby as a way of calming himself:

The undertaker's wind that blows at night from the centre of the island clattered softly in the tops of the palm trees. The frogs began to tinkle among the shrubs. The fireflies [...] came out and began flashing their sexual morse. For a moment the melancholy of the tropical dusk caught at Bond's heart. (ibid., 93)

He then questions his uncertainty about the situation: "What was he drinking for? [...] Because of Doctor No?" (ibid.). Likewise, while preparing for his final encounter with Scaramanga in *The Man With the Golden Gun*, Bond "put himself into the mind of the 'John Crow' [turkey vulture], watching out for a squashed toad or a dead bush rat" (Fleming 2009, 155). "Amused by his own thoughts", Bond then returns to himself, ready to face Scaramanga. Bond's subsequent amusement seems to undermine the significance of these small moments of ecological atten-

tion, but despite his sudden desire to recover his usual self, they do reveal his personal reliance on the environment to prepare for challenging situations.

Fleming also advertises the diverse fruits available in Jamaica as the vehicle by which Bond's enemies attempt to poison him in *Dr. No*, though this is perhaps not the most effective advert: "On his dressing table was a large, ornate basket of fruit – tangerines, grapefruit, pink bananas, soursop, star-apples and even a couple of hot-house nectarines [...] Bond stopped turning the nectarine. He had come to a minute pinhole, its edges faintly discoloured brown" (Fleming 2023, 65-66). Bond later finds out that "EACH OBJECT CONTAINED ENOUGH CYANIDE TO KILL A HORSE" (ibid., 91; capitalisation in original). This detailed discussion of Jamaican fruits displays an awareness of the abundance of fruit in cultural representations of the island, and Bond's "minute" examination of the details of the fruits using a jeweller's glass shows an unexpected attentiveness to plants. His singling out of one of the "hot-house nectarines" calls to mind the greenhouses of botanical gardens, though a heated space would not necessarily be required for cultivation in the warmth of a Jamaican garden. Fleming uses the properties of the fruit to disguise the poison, as "[t]he pinprick was always there, concealed in the stalk-hole or a crevice" (ibid., 77). The fruits act as an agent threatening Bond's safety, in a subversion of the rich tropical luxury with which they are normally associated. This, accompanied by the extraordinarily long and detailed account of a centipede working its way up Bond's body just a few pages later, forms an entire chapter in which Bond deals methodically with multiple natural threats.

Bond's encounter with this basket of poisoned, glasshouse-grown tropical fruit is a precursor to another threat disguised by a natural product: guano, a garden fertiliser front for Dr. No's operation at Crab Key. Most of the threats in *Dr. No* are from plants, animals, or nature more broadly – or are at least disguised behind "natural" facades: Strangways' assistant Mary Trueblood's body is hauled away in a Tate & Lyle sugar sack; Bond fights with a giant squid which he calls a "mythical Kraken" (ibid., 252); Honey faces (though is not actually threatened by) black crabs; and Dr. No hides his missile interruption system behind guano, or bird dung, and is eventually drowned in the substance. After this series of natural threats, Dr. No's death clarifies an idea that arises in both novels: that bad things happen to those who damage or otherwise fail to respect nature. Dr. No destroys the Roseate Spoonbills' habitat, and Scaramanga burns sugar cane fields and is violent towards animals. Fleming's writing is in some ways proto-environmentalist, reflecting the early stages of environmental awareness around the time of the

publication of these novels, with the appearance of texts like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962. Matthew Griffiths notes that *Silent Spring* appeared two years after "The Hildebrand Rarity", and the publication of *Dr. No* in 1958 further pre-dates Carson's seminal text. The justice received by villains who fail to respect the environment is consistent: Gardiner describes Dr. No's burial in guano as a form of "environmental justice" (Gardiner, 9), in an alternative use of this term; while Buckton also sees Krest's death in "The Hildebrand Rarity" as "natural justice" (203). Fleming's plants are threatening, as in the case of *Dr. No*'s poisoned fruit basket, and are themselves threatened, as is the case of the cane fields that are burned by Scaramanga. The consistent association of plants with danger and the punishments received by those who pose ecological threats support Buckton's claim that Fleming held a "post-Darwinian attitude toward the natural world as a constant battlefield in which the appearance of tranquility is a disguise for the 'struggle for existence'" (ibid., 196). Weaving together the seemingly opposing threads of Bond's environmentalist leanings and the destruction of life inherent in his job, Buckton suggests that Bond is aware that environmental threats "are also vital national security issues", and thus his "sensitivity to threats of environmental destruction, in fact, is an essential part of his equipment as a spy" (ibid., 203). In this way, framing plants as natural threats serves as a reason for Fleming and in turn Bond to pay such regular and meticulous attention to them.

Bond also acts in defence of the two very important birds on Dr. No's island: the rare Roseate spoonbill, revered by the Audubon Society, and the guanay cormorant, producer of valuable guano. The delicate and easily disturbed Roseate Spoonbills are the reason Bond is sent to Jamaica, as the sway they hold over the Audubon Society members triggers a series of violent actions from Dr. No to preserve the privacy of his island. The island wardens supposedly go insane due to the isolation of being alone on the island with the birds. Bond wonders about "Guano – bird dung. Who wanted the stuff? How valuable was it anyway?" (Fleming 2023, 58). The guano fertiliser industry in 19th century Peru was extremely valuable and the product acted as the catalyst for a series of wars and the colonisation of many sea bird islands across the world. It was often extracted using indentured and forced labour leading to violent resistance, such as the 1889 revolt of black guano miners on the Caribbean island of Navassa (see James 2012). Fleming modelled Dr. No's Crab Key on Great Inagua in the south of the Bahamas, where he learned more of the guanay cormorant, and other Caribbean islands were drawn into the guano industry, including Morant Keys, an island off the south coast of Jamaica which was claimed by the US in the 1856 Guano Is-

lands Act (Lycett 1996, 287). Much of the knowledge Bond gains about nature in *Dr. No* is filtered through colonial institutions. During the four pages Fleming provides on the history of guano, Colonial Secretary Pleydell-Smith tells Bond that he has “[b]itten off a bit more than you can chew on guano. Talk to you for hours about it [...] around 1850 someone discovered it was the greatest natural fertiliser in the world” (Fleming 2023, 66). The rise of guano as a popular garden fertiliser in the 19th century turned the guanay into “the most valuable bird in the world” (ibid., 69). Fleming is alert to the colonial resonance of using guano as a front for Dr. No’s schemes, perhaps learned from his friend the guano heir Ivar Bryce, and filters knowledge about this natural “fuel” behind industrial agriculture and horticulture through the Colonial Secretary to Bond. Vivian Halloran argues that the guano mine “reestablishes an exploitative plantation economy to administer the collection of organic material”, using a captive workforce under poor conditions (Halloran 2005, 170). This recalls the use of immigrant and indentured labour on plantations which is reflected in the “racial intermixing” of Dr. No’s workforce (ibid., 169).

Fleming’s novel is starkly different to the filmic *Dr. No*, in which the guano and roseate spoonbill plot is erased entirely, to make way for nuclear reactor-powered radio beams. This in turn erases the novelty of the specifically Jamaican ecological context in the novel, as well as the colonial context which the guano factory recalls, transforming Dr. No into a different kind of villain altogether than Fleming imagined. This forms part of the wider problem of environmental issues being regarded as too distant from human experience to be film-worthy. This distance is caused by what Lawrence Buell terms the “environmental unconscious” (2001, 22), or the limitations on human awareness of our place in the environment. While the filmic *Dr. No* fails to engage with this challenge and instead simply removes the guano narrative, Fleming repeatedly overcomes this by writing engaging thriller novels with environmental themes.

The birds of *Dr. No* are vital to Bond’s pretence of representing the Audubon Society as an ornithologist like his namesake, James Bond, the real-life author of *Birds of the West Indies* (1947). Bond’s selection of animal- and plant-related disguises continues in the plantation context of *The Man with the Golden Gun*, which requires him to reassume a similar role to the “Jamaican plantocrat” (Fleming 2012a, 27) he passes as in *Casino Royale*, dealing here with the West Indies Sugar Company. So, in both the first and last James Bond novel, Bond pretends to represent the authorities of flora and fauna in Jamaica, choosing these seemingly innocent agricultural and zoological roles to justify his presence and

interference in Jamaican matters. However, these choices also hint towards the real authority that still remains within the agricultural industries in tropical former colonies like Jamaica. Scaramanga is also described as looking like “the smartest plantation owner in the South” (Fleming 2009, 152), as he prepares to board the sugar train in the final action of the novel. The plantation mindset is significant in many of the Caribbean novels; Halloran proposes that in *Thunderball* (1961), “[b]oth M and the SPECTRE council (re-en)act the role of colonial absentee plantation owners when they plan from afar to use the resources available to them in an extended Caribbean region” (172). Even Fleming himself became “something of a plantocrat” (Kinane 2021, 23) while living at Goldeneye, his Jamaican home. Closely associated with enslavement and colonial agriculture in the Caribbean, plantations continue to act as spaces of agricultural conflict in *The Man with the Golden Gun*. The scale of the threat posed by Scaramanga’s burning of sugar plantations emphasises the dependence of Jamaica’s economic security on agricultural plants. Mary Goodnight informs Bond that “there’s a tremendous chess game going on all over the world in sugar – in what they call sugar futures [...] It’s in Cuba’s interest to do as much damage as possible to the Jamaican crop” (Fleming 2009, 54), and so Scaramanga undertakes cane sabotage with Rastafari assistance. Preceded by the agricultural form of warfare Blofeld chooses in *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service*, and his botanical “garden of death” in *You Only Live Twice*, *The Man with the Golden Gun* continues the series of ecological threats that underpin the final novels. Fleming’s continued evocation of the plantation system from the pre-independence context of *Dr. No* through to the post-independence Jamaica of *The Man With the Golden Gun* suggests a reluctance to leave behind this symbolic site in Jamaica’s colonial history, despite the shift to a post-colonial Jamaica in the latter novel. However, by highlighting the uncertainty of “sugar futures”, Fleming centres food security as a fundamental concern in post-colonial Jamaica, just as it was in the 19th century colonial botanical gardens, as environmental, botanical, and political insecurity overlap. Fleming’s interest in Jamaica’s postcolonial food security consolidates the novel’s significance as a response to the economic issues of independence. Scaramanga’s focus on destabilising the sugar industry recalls the historic primacy of sugar cultivation in colonial Jamaica and the Caribbean more widely. As sugar remains an important industry on the island, the attention given to this agricultural security firmly situates Jamaica as an independent country within the political pressures of this post-independence period.

The detail with which Fleming describes plants is closely connected to his wider depiction of Jamaica. Ian Kinane argues that Fleming’s ambivalence to-

wards Jamaican independence led him to write a version of Jamaica which “is not an organic reproduction of the island he knew well” (31): rather, “Fleming invariably selects which elements of the ‘real’ Jamaica are to be included in his pseudo-ethnography and which are to be excluded” (ibid., 8). Kinane sees this imagined Jamaica as part of a long tradition in British imperial history which casts the Caribbean as an imaginary location. The presence of mythical creatures like the “dragon” and “kraken” that Bond faces in *Dr. No* certainly support this claim, forming part of the novel’s heightened sense of tropical “otherness”. However, the extent of the natural detail that Fleming offers firmly grounds the novel in reality. The detailed descriptions of plants in the novels appear to form part of what Umberto Eco calls Fleming’s “relish for the inessential”:

What is surprising in Fleming is the minute and leisurely concentration with which he pursues for page after page descriptions of articles, landscapes, and events apparently inessential to the course of the story and, conversely, the feverish brevity with which he covers in a few paragraphs the most unexpected and improbable actions. (2009, 49)

Eco suggests that these instances are “rarely a description of the unusual [...] but a description of the already known”; for example, “Fleming does not describe the Sequoia that the reader has never has a chance to see” (ibid., 52), but instead he focuses on card games, cars, restaurant menus, or cigarette boxes. But Fleming does describe in great detail exotic and poisonous plants that are likely unfamiliar to most readers. Pleydell-Smith’s multi-page history of guano in *Dr. No* is certainly unfamiliar. Through these descriptions, Fleming suggests that these plants and natural phenomena ought to be familiar, seeking to counteract the blindness to plants amongst his readership. This challenges Eco’s implication that the landscapes which Fleming describes in such detail are ‘inessential’ to the plot, as Griffiths suggests of “The Hildebrand Rarity” where “environmental detail does serve ‘narrative mechanism’ on many occasions” (15); or in *Dr. No*, which relies consistently on the details of plant and bird life for the basis of the plot. Viewed from a plant humanities perspective, Tiger Tanaka’s declaration to Bond in *You Only Live Twice* that “[y]ou will be interested to learn what charming vegetation grows on the surface of the globe” (Fleming 2012e, 67) can be read as a command from Fleming for the reader to be attentive to the plants that follow, which once again do not function as aesthetic decoration but as a central feature of the narrative.

Fleming pays a lot of attention to the plants of Jamaica, as well as its gardens, animals, and their connections with the history of the island. Plants are more than setting or background in his work; they feed into Fleming's wider interaction with the threats of the natural world, and with colonial exploitation and power both pre- and post-independence. Fleming's engagement with Jamaican plants in their colonial contexts, through botanical gardens, plantations, and imperial horticultural products like guano, reveals his interest in and knowledge of this historic connection. The constant threat associated with plants and gardens represents Fleming's awareness that, in the Caribbean, these natural objects and spaces continue to reflect colonial contexts and cannot be disconnected from their colonial past, even within his fictionalised Jamaica. Fleming reserves, whether intentionally or not, some of his most personal and "literary" writing for descriptions of flora and fauna. This demands more attention within Bond scholarship, as a way of engaging a new readership with the breadth of his work in a time of ecological crisis.

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