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### More, Much More Roger Moore :A New Bond for a New Decade

By 1972, Sean Connery, who had successfully played Ian Fleming's invincible British secret agent for most of the previous decade, had seemingly tired of the role. Unable to secure Connery for the eighth official Bond movie, United Artists were in the market for a replacement. Despite the fact that both Burt Reynolds and Paul Newman were considered, the role was given to the British actor Roger Moore. It might have seemed predestined as Moore had been in the frame for the first Bond film, *Dr No*, back in 1962.

Moore had obvious credentials for playing Bond. Although his acting career stretched back to 1945, audiences knew him best as the star of two popular television series: *The Saint* (1962-9), where he played Leslie Charteris's suave hero Simon Templar; and as Lord Brett Sinclair in the *The Persuaders* (1971-2). Both parts placed Moore against glossy backgrounds, put him behind the wheel of stylish sports cars, and frequently into the company of beautiful women. They also allowed him to develop a nonchalant, minimalist acting style which, as he put it, allowed him to 'cover up holes in acting talent by being charming.'<sup>i</sup>

This paper will examine the way in which Moore's version of Bond was modulated to suit the circumstances of the 1970s, an era of violence and confusion a long way from the optimism of the 1960s. If Connery's Bond had provided male wish-fulfilment in a time of social aspiration, what does Moore's Bond tell us about the changed context of the new decade?

<sup>i</sup> Roger Moore quoted by Deborah Murdoch, 'Why the Saint is pleased to be scared', *Daily Mail*, 30 August 1969.