



How Ian Fleming Innovated the Detective Story

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Abstract

The article makes an original contribution in that it claims that previous research had correctly underlined the innovative character of Ian Fleming's novels, but failed to appreciate the true ways in which Fleming's novel innovated the detective story as a genre. Previous scholarship had identified in the formalism, in the repetition of formulas and in what is known/unknown to the reader the main innovations introduced by Fleming in the detective story genre. In contrast to this interpretive line, this paper argues that Fleming innovated the detective story by re-introducing some elements of the myth (such as the spatial disjunction) that the detective stories had thus far discarded and by simplifying the structure of the novel—innovations that previous studies had failed to properly appreciate.



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Introduction

The purpose of the present paper is to critically assess how Ian Fleming innovated the detective story. Fleming's innovations have been extensively debated since Eco (1969) published his seminal work on Fleming's Narrative Structures.

Eco (1969), in what was the first and possibly most influential analysis of Fleming's writing, suggested that Fleming's narrative engine was formal not psychological, that it was based on a repetition of a formula, and that Fleming made a novel use of what is known and unknown to the reader.

In the present paper we wish to show that Fleming was innovative but not for the reasons mentioned by

Eco (1969). We note that the strategies employed by Fleming are not as innovative as Eco suggested, that mechanic (not psychological) nature of the narrative engine was used before Fleming, that formulas were repeatedly used well before Fleming and that the revelation, from the beginning, of the identity of the villain and his plan innovates the detective genre by reducing the number of the unknown variables that one encounters in the formulaic pre-Fleming detective novels and by eliminating the 'noise' that one encounters in the non-formulaic pre-Fleming detective novels.

We suggest that Fleming introduced two main innovations. The first, real innovation that Fleming introduces in the detective story genre is the

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reintroduction of a spatial disjunction that structured fables and myths and that was abandoned by early detective novels in their quest for realism. The second innovation concerns not so much the disclosure of the identity of the villain, but the purpose for which such identity is disclosed.

This paper is organized in five uneven sections. Section One provides an overview of Eco's analysis of Fleming's Narrative Structures (Eco, 1969) and highlights what were, according to Eco (1969), Fleming's most crucial innovations. Section Two is devoted to the role of the space as a structuring narrative device. Section Three explores the mechanic nature both of the narrative engine and of the characters' actions—that, in order to be consistent with the narrative universe set up by the author and to allow the reader to become actively involved in solving the case, must be logical, planned and methodical. Section Four provides a brief discussion of the reiteration of narrative formulas in and before Fleming and suggests that the use of formulas cannot be regarded as one of Fleming's innovation of the genre. Section Five addresses what Eco regards as the main innovation that Fleming introduced to the detective story genre, namely the disclosure of the nature of the crime and the identity of the criminal. We suggest instead that such a disclosure is not innovative in and by itself for there where several detective novels where there was no doubt as to what was the identity of the identity of the villain. What is innovative in Fleming is the purpose for which such disclosure is used. Before Fleming the disclosure of the identity of the villain, of the criminal and the culprit was part of an effort to overwhelm the reader with excessive information, to hide the proper clues for the solution of the case in what statisticians call 'noise' and to set the reader on the wrong path. The provision of excessive information is a strategy to misinform the reader, concealment is the best way to make things manifest and making things manifest is the best way to hide them.¹ For Fleming the disclosure of information is instead part of an effort to reduce the quantum of unknown, simplify the structure of the detective novel, and appeal to the reader on the basis of simplicity itself.

Umberto Eco on Fleming's Innovations

In his analysis of Ian Fleming's Narrative Structures, Umberto Eco (1969) formulates several considerations. First of all, Eco notes that the narrative engine of Fleming's novel is formal (structural) and not psychological as it is structured on the basis of a sequence of oppositions of characters and values and it is organized as a game (between the characters as well as between the text and the reader). Second, Eco (1969) underlines that as in the case of all detective stories, the novels in the 007 series are characterized by the repetition of a formula (and a structure) that is already familiar to the reader, whose enjoyment is not generated by the discovery or the exploration of the unknown, but by the repetition of the known and the familiar. While the success of all detective stories is largely attributed to their reliance on and the repetition of a formula, Eco (1969) suggests that there is a major difference between the novels of the 007 series and the detective stories of pre-Fleming era. In the pre-Fleming detective stories the crime and the criminal were unknown until the very end and the pleasure of the reader was often due to engaging in a game with the text, recognizing the clues scattered in the text and using such clues to unmask the criminal before his or her identity was revealed in the text. The opposite is true in the novels of the 007 series. According to Eco (1969:146), in the novels of Fleming "what is known from the beginning is precisely the identity of the criminal, with his characteristics and his plans. The pleasure of the reader consists in finding him/herself immersed in a game whose pieces, rules – and even the conclusion – are known and deriving pleasure simply from tracking the small variations through which winner will achieve his objective".

While there is no reason to dispute Eco's structural analysis of Fleming's novel, his interpretation of Fleming's ideology, his characterization of Fleming's literary style as a collage embellished by literary references, there is plenty of reasons to dispute his characterization of pre-Fleming detective stories. As we plan to show in the remainder of this paper Eco underplays the importance of the formal structures

of pre-Fleming novels, overplays their reliance on psychological motives, and mischaracterizes the interplay between what is known and what is unknown both in the pre-Fleming as well as in Fleming's novels as we will show later on.

Before addressing the themes developed by Eco (1969) in his essay on the Narrative Structures of Ian Fleming and test whether it is indeed the case that the novels of the 007 series differ from the pre-Fleming novels because of the mechanic nature of their narrative engine, the repeated use of a formula and the reduction of the unknown, we need to address a theme that Eco neglected. While structuralists have emphasized that novels, fables and myths are structured along a temporal and spatial dimension, that the temporal dimension structures events on the basis of an opposition between before and after, that the spatial dimension structures the novel on the basis of an opposition between a 'here' and a 'there', that is the structural correlate of, and henceforth the sign of, an otherness of values, Eco (1969) in his analysis of Fleming's narrative structures overlooks the fact that the first and most significant difference between the detective stories of the pre-Fleming era and the novels in the 007 series concerns the role of the space. While the action in the pre-Fleming novels is immanent, all the action in the 007 novels is transcendent as it takes place in the other place. As we will discuss at greater length in the next section, the existence of an otherness of space as a space of otherness, was a typical feature of the myth. Hence, the first of Fleming's innovations consists in (re)introducing the spatial structuration, typical of the myth, in the detective story.

The role of the Space

The Hero and the Otherness of Space in the Myth

In his analysis of the myth, Greimas (1969) suggested that the myth is constructed around three elements (frame, code, message), that the frame represents the structural status of the myth as narration, that the narration of events is ordered along a temporal dimension (before v after), that different phases can be identified in the myth, and, finally that myths have "an initial sequence and final sequence located on "levels" of reality that are different from those of the body of the story (racconto) (Greimas, 1969:52).

In addition to underlining the importance of the ordering of events along a temporal dimension (as well as the linear nature of such temporal ordering), Greimas (1969, 1974) underlined the structural importance of the spatial disjunction. Myths, as well as other types of narration, are constructed on "two different and disjoined isotopies: the place where society is situated and the place where the hero performs his deeds" (Greimas, 1974: 248).³

Greimas (1974) went on to suggest that the structural need for a spatial disjunction in some respect reflected the fact that the hero is the carrier of a set of values that are alternative to the ones that are held by society, that his (brief) presence in a society amounts to a denial of values that are socially instituted and institutionalized and as such the hero is subversive of the social order. Hence, the need for the other place.⁴ The otherness of space is the essential requisite for the existence of an otherness of values, which in the case of the myth, are embodied in the hero.

The other place (forest, souls' nest,...) is where the young Bororo discussed by Greimas (1974) performs all his deeds, the other place (Pisa in Peloponnesus) is where Laius rapes King Pelops' daughter and seals his fate, the other place (Corinth) is where Oedipus is raised, the other place (the road) is where Oedipus has an altercation with and then kills Laius; the other place is where Hercules performs each of his twelve labours. The other place is where the action is for the mythical narrative, in its modern, tribal, or classical forms.

The whole life of Ulysses is ordered, structurally, by a spatial disjunction, by the contraposition of home where life was relatively uneventful and other place where the action is (in the form of the Trojan war, as well as the meetings with the Lotus-eaters, the Cyclops, Circe, Calypso, Nausicaa and the Sirens).

The Space for the Hero in the Pre-Fleming Novels

The detective novel preserves some elements of the myth (the hero always has some qualities that set him apart from the rest of society, the detective novel is temporally ordered just as the myth was,...) but it totally transforms the stage where the hero acts.

Whereas the myth was constructed on a spatial disjunction between society's and the other place, between a here and a somewhere else, this disjunction disappeared in the detective novel. The hero, regardless of whether he is a criminal (*Fantômas*), a detective (Holmes, Poirot, Bencolin, Gideon Fell, Sir Henry Merrivale,...) or a criminal-turned-detective (Rocambole, Lupin), is here.

The elimination of the spatial disjunction as a structural element of the (detective) novel responded to two different, but inextricably intertwined, needs. The first was that of abandoning the realm of the fabulous, in favour of the realm of the real or, at least, of the realistic. The hero had to be credible, his actions had to be plausible, his stories had to be believable and for this to happen, the hero had to be brought here, he had to be brought among us, he had to look, talk and dress the way we do. Hence, well before Fleming created 007, the hero of the detective story had to look familiar.

But the elimination of the spatial disjunction served also a second, and not less important need. The disappearance of the spatial disjunction, eliminated the other space as the space for the other, the space for what is other, alternative, alien and possibly subversive. In doing so the elimination of the spatial disjunction created the conditions for the social internalization of the other. The other, the alien, the socially deviant, the monster, the criminal, the genius, the diverse, the hero—they are all here.⁵ They are immanent. They are with us, they are among us. They are part of our society. In some cases, the villain is a foreigner (as is, for example, Vorski in *The secret of the Sarek*), who nonetheless comes to live among us, or the criminal, the villain, the hero is one of us (as is the case of Lupin, June, and *Fantômas*). The internalization of the other is nowhere clearer than in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hide* where one individual, in addition to being his civilized self, is also the mysterious, criminal, deviant other.⁶

There several reasons why one may think that the other was internalized, the spatial disjunction was abolished and the 'here' replaced 'the other place' as the place where the action is. There is of

course a need for realist and familiar setting, the need to talk about social changes (industrialization, urbanization, ...) that have dramatically altered the way we live in order to perform, as was the case with the Greek tragedies, an exercise of collective catharsis.

There were two ways in which the spatial disjunction was eliminated. In some instances the hero returned from a mysterious, unknown other place. In the case of several Lupin's novels Lupin appears out of nowhere, as a sort of modern *deus ex machina* both to solve crimes and catch criminals. The alternative solution for the elimination of the spatial disjunction and the internalization of the hero was epitomized by the ubiquity of the hero. The case of *Fantômas* is emblematic in this respect because *Fantomas* is here, nowhere and everywhere.

"He is nowhere and everywhere at once, his shadow hovers above the strangest mysteries, and his traces are found near the most inexplicable crimes, and yet--" (Allain and Souvestre, 1987:4).

The pervasiveness of *Fantômas'* presence, his perceived ubiquity is such that it generates in the reader and in the various other characters in the novel(s) the expectation that everything is due to, caused by or revolves around *Fantômas* himself. So that when Fandor encounters Juve in disguise, in the *Silent Executioner* (Allain and Souvestre, 1987:23), he asks his good friend Juve

"is it anything to do with Fantômas?"

Regardless of how it is achieved or produced, the elimination of the spatial disjunction and the social internalization of the hero is relevant for our present purposes not only because it represents a major difference between the myth and the early detective novels but also because it represents one of the major differences between the pre-Fleming detective stories and the novel of 007 series.

The Space of Bond

A key innovation that Fleming introduces to the detective genre consists in re-introducing the spatial disjunction that structured fables and myths and that had been abandoned by previous detective stories.

Fleming reintroduces the otherness of space as all Bond's deeds are all performed in the other place- (Jamaica, Turkey, Florida). This represents the first and most obvious structural difference between the Bond series and the pre-Fleming stories.

The Narrative Engine

Mechanics not Psychology

In his analysis of Fleming's narrative structures, Eco (1969) observed the importance of performing such an analysis was due to the fact that the engine that drives Fleming's novels is not a psychological one but is instead a formal or structural one. Specifically he suggested that Fleming's narrative structures operated at three levels-at the level of the opposition of characters and values; at the level of the construction of the text as a game and, last but not least, at the level of literary techniques.

While such as assessment of Fleming's novels cannot be disputed, one has the impression that a very similar assessment could be formulated for the detective stories of the pre-Fleming era.

The novels in the *Fantômas* series are a perfect case in point.

Souvestre and Allain acknowledge the quasi superhuman nature of *Fantômas*. In the opening pages of *Fantômas* (Allain and Souvestre, 2006) *Fantômas* is described as someone whose identity cannot be established, who cannot be caught, who is behind and responsible for all the strangest mysteries, a hero of crime and a genius.⁷ Juve's words are quiet clear in this regard (Souvestre and Allain, 2006:66)

"You are right, sir, in saying he is a man; but I repeat, the man is a genius! I don't know whether he works alone or whether he is the head of a gang of criminals; I know nothing of his life; I know nothing of his object. In no single case yet has been possible to determine the exact part he has taken. He seems to possess the extraordinary gift of being able to slay and leave no trace. You don't see him; you divine his presence; you don't hear him, you have a presentiment of him. If Fantômas is mixed up in this present affair, I don't know if we ever shall succeed in clearing it up!"

But *Fantômas* actions on the one hand as well as Juve's and Fandor's actions on the other hand, while inventive, extraordinary and possibly bordering on the super-human are never random, are never motivated nor explained by psychological considerations. They are always inscribed in a tight web of interpersonal relations and interactions. All the action, in a *Fantômas* novel, is built upon the juxtaposition between Juve and some higher power (Minister/Chief of Police), Juve and Fandor, Juve and *Fantômas*, *Fantômas* and Fandor, *Fantômas* and the higher powers, Fandor and the higher powers, *Fantômas* and the victim, Juve and the victim. The action is driven by the structure, by the patterns of interactions, not by the psychology of the characters.

The formalism of detective stories is necessary to satisfy two different, albeit complementary, needs. The first is a textual need. The detective story, to work as a coherent universe, needs to be constructed according to some principles that must be upheld in the course of the text and, most importantly, needs the detective to be in the position of solving the case, by identifying why, how and by whom a certain crime was committed. The second need is an extra-textual one, and concerns the role of the reader. The reader must be engaged in a game with the text. The reader, with some attention to the clues scattered in the text, may be able to solve the puzzle that the novel presented.

In order to ensure that the reader and the detective are in the position to solve the case, some conditions must apply.

First, men must not be irrational. They must act according to a certain logic, their actions are not and cannot be performed at random, by chance. Actions must be purposeful, that is designed to achieve a specific end and they must be consistent;⁸

Second in addition to being logical, in the sense of being both purposeful and consistent, human actions have to be planned. Each and every detail of the plan, as an essential component of a very sophisticated engine, is thought out, planned, designed, and carefully prepared. So that the execution of the plan almost occurs by itself, mechanically, because

of the sheer perfection of the plan (mechanism) itself. If human actions were illogical, if they were not connected to one another in a logical fashion, if they were not planned, it would not be possible to guess either the causes or the consequences of an action:

In addition to these two necessary characteristics, human/criminal actions can assume a third one: they may be patterned, they display recognizable patterns, and each of these patterns suggests a mode of behaviour, a behavioural idiolect, a *modus operandi*, a method. Hence once we identify the method of the criminal, we can see his mark, his signature, and we can uncover his identity. In Lupin's words "there you have the method, and there, Monsieur le Préfet, you have the man" (*Tiger*, pp. 354-5). This is precisely why Juve could look at the method with which a crime was committed and say "Do you realize, sir, that this is the typical *Fantômas* crime?"

And of course, the villain has her method and the detective has her method as well. Holmes is defined by his method, just as much as is Maigret (Napoli and Pelizzo, 2019).

For the detective story to work as a story and to engage the reader, as if he/she were playing a sudoku or a shady puzzle, human actions must be logical, planned, patterned and or methodical.⁹

We probably need to add few more words about the methodical nature of human action in detective stories. Method is what explains human actions and their patterns, method is what gives away the identity of the criminal and the nature of his plan, and it is also what allows the detective to perform his tasks. This was true for Holmes, Ganimard, Juve and, of course, for Lupin. Once we have a method, we have an explanation, and the explanation stands on quasi-scientific ground. As Lupin remarked in Sarek:

"all this is very serious. It's not a story for children who believe in conjuring tricks and sleight of hand, but a real history, all the details of which will, as you shall see, give rise to precise, natural and, in a sense, scientific explanations: I am not afraid of the word. We are on scientific ground"
(Sarek, p. 311)

On Method

The reasons why the conclusions reached by the detective stand, so to speak, on scientific ground is that the detective adopts the same method of inquiry that is employed by the (social) scientist. Several scholars have underlined, in recent years, that the detective has much in common with - and actually he himself is - a social scientist.

The detective, just like the like the scientist, adopts a hypothetic-deductive or in Peirce's words, abductive method (Bonfantini, 1984; Bonfantini and Proni, 1983; Eco, 1983; Peirce, 1984). The point is stated quite clearly by Lupin who observed that

"when a man can't explain this or that physical phenomenon, he adopts some sort of theory which explains the various manifestations of the phenomenon and says that everything happened as though the theory were correct. That's what I am doing" (*Eight*, p. 36).

The provisional adoption of a theory or rule, has three basic consequences. First of all,

it transforms facts that had been meaningless up to this point into meaningful ones.

In Lupin's words

"facts are worth nothing against reason and logic"
(*"813"*, p. 59)

Which makes it quite clear that in the absence of a theory, scattered facts have little to no meaning on their own. It is only when a theory, an explanation is formulated that, facts become meaningful. Lupin is adamant is in this respect, as soon as he devised a theory:

"all the proofs came rushing to my mind of their own accord and at once transformed the theory into one of those certainties which it would be madness to deny" (*Tiger*, p. 269).

The importance of having a theory is due not only to fact that it provides meaning to otherwise meaningless facts, a process known as *Sinngebung*, but also because it establishes a criterion for distinguishing significant facts from insignificant ones-a criterion of demarcation. And since insignificant facts can

be misleading and set the investigation on the wrong path, until a proper theory or explanation has emerged, however provisionally, in the mind of the detective, facts can also be disbelieved and the validity of the existing evidence should be questioned. In Lupin's words:

"why did I go against the evidence? Why did I credit an incredible fact? Why did I admit the inadmissible? Why? Well, no doubt, because truth has an accent that rings in the ears in a manner all its own. On the one side, every proof, every fact, every reality, every certainty; on the other, a story, a story told by one of the three criminals, and therefore, presumptively, absurd and untrue from start to finish. But a story told in frank voice, a clear, dispassionate, closely woven story, free from complications and improbabilities, a story which supplied no positive solution, but which, by its very honesty, obliged any impartial mind to reconsider any solution arrived at. I believed the story" (Tiger, p.266)

Second, it allows the formulation of hypotheses that can be empirically tested. The importance of subjecting hypotheses to empirical testing is stated quite openly by Lupin, who noted that:

"If I had several days before me, I should take the trouble of first verifying my theory, which is based upon intuition quite as much as upon a few scattered facts" (Eight, p.36)

Third, it provides the detective with some behavioural guidance. As Lupin himself admitted:

"I therefore believed. And, believing, I acted according to belief" (Tiger, p. 267)

It is by following this method, by formulating hypotheses that could explain otherwise unexplainable facts, acting as if the hypotheses were correct, and by empirically testing the hypotheses developed in the course of the inquiry, the detective acts like a (social) scientist and the explanations appear to be, in Lupin's own words, scientific (Giovannoli, 2007, Pelizzo, 2019).

Given the importance of formal mechanisms, the quasi-mechanic interaction between characters and values, the logical-planned-methodical nature of human actions in the detective stories of the pre-Fleming era, it is difficult to argue that Fleming's novels innovate the detective genre by replacing the psychological method with the formal one (Eco, 1969:127).

Repetition of a Formula

In his analysis of Fleming's narrative structures, Eco (1969) underlined that there is a fixed set of characters and values, that there are fixed sets of moves (that are sometimes inverted or iterated) to which the novel's action can be reduced to and there is a basically one and the same plot for each of the novel.

Regardless of the identity of the villain, regardless of the identity of the *femme fatale*, and regardless of the nature of the crime, the plot of each and every Bond's novel is constructed with a fairly simple formula (Bond is sent to fight an evil villain, meets a woman, defeats the villains and ends up in the woman's arms).

The formula is very simple, almost formulaic and devoid of the imaginative exuberance of a *Fantômas* novel. But while both the simplification and the quasi-serialization of the formula characterize Fleming's detective stories, neither can be regarded as an innovation in the crafting of detective stories.

A formula was employed in many of the Sherlock Holmes stories, a formula recurs in the Poirot series, and a formula can be viewed in the proper Lupin's novels—where, after the events have shattered the peacefulness of a young woman's life, who is now risking her life in addition to all that is dear to her (love, freedom,...), Lupin intervenes, saves the young woman and eliminates the villain.

There is nothing innovative in the reiterated use of a formula in the 007 series for the reiteration of the formula is a trait of serial narrative in which the same characters display the same behaviour in each of the instalments of the series.

Identity of the Criminal

Eco (1969) suggested that what represents the major difference between the pre-Fleming detective stories and the novels of the 007 series is the relationship between the known and the unknown, between what the reader is told and knows from the beginning and what the reader won't be able to find out until the end of the novel. According to Eco, the peculiarity of the Bond series is that the reader knows the identity of the detective (Bond), the identity of the criminal, the plan of the criminal and the fact that eventually the detective (Bond) will defeat the criminal. What the reader does not know is how the detective will foil the villain's plan and defeat him. The reader of a 007 story knows the who, the what, the why, but not the how and, according to Eco (1969), the pleasure of reading one of these novels is precisely that of finding out the how. A 007 novel is a system with one unknown variable while, according to Eco, the detective stories of the pre-Fleming era were all systems with several unknown variables.

This characterization seems somewhat appropriate for the most formulaic stories: a group of individuals gets together with some excuse (hunting, celebrating a birthday, ...), one of them, usually the richest, is murdered in room that was closed from inside, the various individuals gathered there had all their own motives to eliminate the murdered man (envy, revenge, inheritance,...), and the detective, after reviewing the reasons why each individual may have wanted to commit the murder, through a process of elimination ends up identifying the culprit—whose identity is unknown until the very end.

It is somewhat less clear whether Eco's characterization of the pre-Fleming novels holds up for what one could regard as less formulaic detective stories. And, again, *Fantômas* is a perfect case in point. When reading *Fantômas*, the reader is not confronted with absence of information, but with excess of information. The reader knows too much: the reader knows *Fantômas* can camouflage himself, that he can disguise himself as any of the characters involved in the story, that he is involved in the planning and in the execution of a crime, that he may appear anywhere, that he is responsible for the crime. Hence the game that the reader entertains with the text of a *Fantômas* novel is not so much that of guessing the unknown from the little that he/

she knows and from the additional few clues that are scattered in the text, but is that of eliminating the excess of information that the text provides to mislead the reader and reaching the right conclusion. The reader knows, as the man of a famous Hitchcock movie, too much and has to guess which information should be retained and which should be discarded.¹⁰

Hence we cannot regard the disclosure of the identity of the villain or the criminal as an innovation of the 007 series for such an identity was revealed in several of the pre-Fleming novels. What is new and, therefore, innovative in the 007 series is the purpose of disclosing information. Before Fleming information is oversupplied to the reader, to hide the relevant clues for the solution of the case among an excess of irrelevant information. This excess of information can be thought of as 'noise' which is supposed to undermine the reader's ability to guess correctly and solve the case, not to help him/her.

The disclosure of information in Fleming serves instead the purpose of reducing the number of unknown variables that characterized the most formulaic detective novels of pre-Fleming era, to simplify the structure of the novels and to appeal to the reader on the ground of simplicity. Simplification is the real innovation that Fleming introduces to the detective genre.

Conclusions

We are now in the position of drawing some conclusive remarks. While Eco is correct in stating that Fleming innovates the detective genre, he is possibly less correct in identifying what are Fleming's real innovation to the genre. In fact, it is easy to see that once we address each of the elements in Fleming's novels that Eco regards as innovative, that they have been used extensively before Fleming. The use of a formal mechanism as the main engine of the story, the juxtaposition of characters and values, the methodical, logical and planned nature of action are all features that can be detected in many pre-Fleming novels and cannot, therefore, be regarded as Fleming's true innovation. Equally unconvincing is the hypothesis that the Fleming's innovation consists in the reiterated use of a formula or in revealing upfront the identity of the villain for these devices were employed well before Fleming.

The analyses conducted in this paper suggest that Fleming does innovate the detective genre but for reasons other than the ones that Eco identified. Fleming innovates the detective story by reintroducing the spatial disjunction between the place of normal life and the place for heroic life that characterized fables and myth and that was abandoned in the pre-Fleming detective novels. Before Fleming, the otherness of space and the corresponding otherness of values were eliminated. The hero was no longer the carrier of an alternative, destabilizing, subversive set of values. The hero, regardless of whether he was a detective or a criminal, was internalized in order to make the detective story more realistic and credible and to neutralize the psychologically harming and socially destabilizing realization that established social values and norms always coexist with alternative values and that this coexistence is inherently contested.

With the creation of Bond, the hero is once again returned to his mythic status, he is shaped once again as the subversive carrier of alternative values, and he performs his deeds in the other space. It is only because he acts in a distant other place that many of the morally objectionable actions that Bond has to perform to save Queen and country (and the survival of the whole western world as we know it) become morally acceptable.

The second innovation concerns the balance between known and unknown, disclosed and revealed information, as the basis for engaging the

reader in a game of guess work with the text. While previous detective stories engaged the reader on the basis of complication –the formulaic pre-Fleming novels displayed several unknown variables; the non-formulaic pre-Fleming novels provided excessive information – Fleming by reducing the unknown variables, by reducing the number of variables, by reducing the number of equations in his system, simplifies the narrative structure of the story and appeals to the reader on the basis of this newly acquired simplification. But whereas the reader, before Fleming, could make order out of chaos, find a way through complexity and excessive information, and solve the cases before Juve, Poirot, Lupin or Ganimard, the reader of a 007 novel is disarmed by the simplicity of a story, is unable to find a solution and must wait for Bond to bring the case to a successful conclusion. The reader is defeated by the simplicity that he/she finds so attractive. The reader is warned!

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