It is difficult to attribute the mammoth acclaim of Lobsang Rampa’s *The Third Eye: The Autobiography of a Tibetan Lama* to its presentation of Vajrayāna Buddhist philosophy to a Western public hungry for such knowledge, because the philosophy proffered via the text constitutes only a marginal portion of its narrative content. However, it is, perhaps, possible to understand the prodigious popular appeal of the work as deriving less from its attempt to rearticulate Buddhist philosophy, and more from its mirroring of certain of the narrative elements characteristic of Ian Fleming’s *James Bond* novels. This becomes less surprising when it is recalled that, as Michael Denning points out in “Licensed to Look: James Bond and the Heroism of Consumption,” although Fleming’s first *Bond* novel emerged in 1953, the *Bond* phenomenon only commenced around 1957, with the mass publication of both *Casino Royale* and *From Russia, With Love*, after which it started to approximate its current form. That is, this timing makes the emergence of the *Bond* phenomenon contemporaneous with that of the ‘Rampa’ phenomenon. However, this is neither to suggest that the American paperback revolution, which emerged in Britain with the advent of the *Bond* novels, simply provided Rampa’s texts with a wave upon which they conveniently caught a ride, nor to suggest that Rampa’s texts were consciously modeled on *Bond* narratives. Rather, in terms of the approach outlined in the previous chapter, what is being advanced is that, as literary products of the same historico-discursive circumstances, certain parallels exist between the narratives of Rampa’s texts and the *Bond* novels, and that the thematization of such parallels provides potentially valuable insights into the nature of the discursive discontent to which both constituted a response.

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2 Ibid., 212–213.
In short, like Bond novels, Rampa’s texts allow contemporary subjects a figurative, temporary and partial respite from the discursive tension of the disciplinary/bio-power domain, via an imaginative inversion of the dynamics that inform the five main disciplinary/bio-power technologies, all of which, in effect, affords readers the experience of exercising the power to which they are usually subject. This respite is figurative because, in a manner akin to the Bond novels, Rampa’s texts, albeit vicariously, provide contemporary subjects with, firstly, the opportunity to enjoy regimenting space and organizing time within an exotic domain; secondly, the opportunity to efface the individualizing process of the dossier; thirdly, the chance to gain access to the equivalent of the central tower of a Panopticon situated within such an exotic domain; fourthly, the chance to proclaim a new day of sexual freedom; and fifthly, the occasion to interrogate the residents of the exotic domain in question in the interest of obtaining from them ever more authentic cultural confessions. Yet, as such, while this respite can only ever be temporary, insofar as its duration is limited to the length of the narrative in question, it can also only ever be partial, because of the way in which its inversion of the dynamics of the above mentioned five disciplinary/bio-power technologies leaves the divergent transcendent orientations of their respective implicit founding assumptions thoroughly intact.

Firstly, both the readers of Bond novels and those of The Third Eye are granted similar vicarious opportunities to regiment space and organize time within the exotic domains in which their respective narratives unfold. With regard to the regimentation of space, in Fleming’s From Russia, With Love, for example, Bond’s enjoyment of a spectacular morning view from his hotel room is vividly described, as his eyes travel from right to left and take in not only the architectural features of the exotic city in which he finds himself, but also the surrounding natural splendor, before his thoughts begin to gravitate idly around an evaluation of his choice of accommodation. As Denning argues, the above description reflects the quintessential tourist experience, in terms of which an existing social/natural domain is reduced to the level of an object, which can either be construed as an aesthetic whole or have its space regimented according to tourist criteria that remain entirely foreign both to it and to the modes of interaction that facilitate...

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3 Ian Fleming, From Russia, With Love (St. Albans: Triad Panther, 1977), 99.