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**BETRAYAL AND PARANOIA IN
JOHN LE CARRÉ'S ESPIONAGE FICTION:
TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY,
OUR GAME AND
THE CONSTANT GARDENER**

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ABSTRACT

BETRAYAL AND PARANOIA IN JOHN LE CARRÉ'S ESPIONAGE FICTION: TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY, OUR GAME AND THE CONSTANT GARDENER

GAMZE G. ÖZFIRAT

The spy novels of John le Carré mostly revolve around the concepts of loyalty and betrayal and are imbued with a sense of paranoia against the evil figure. In Le Carré's fiction, political betrayal usually goes parallel with personal betrayal and the clash of duty with individual conscience is a common theme.

John le Carré is the author persona created by David Cornwell, a former officer of the British Secret Service who also served as an intelligence agent during the Cold War era. Although it is not a must to go back to the author's life in literary criticism, in Le Carré's case, it is his insider experience about the clandestine world that distinguishes him as a realistic author and gives his critically acclaimed novels their merit.

The aim of this study is to do a close reading of three novels by John le Carré, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** (1974), **Our Game** (1995) and **The Constant Gardener** (2001), in order to examine the elements of paranoia and betrayal in the light of the historical and political atmosphere of their respective era. The study also undertakes a comparison of these novels to portray the evolution of the evil figure parallel to the transformation of the dominant political forces throughout these decades and to point out the author's changing attitude towards the idea of duty from patriotism towards individual conscience.

The method also involves an investigation of the people and events from the author's own life that have inspired his literary creation and are moulded into these novels in terms of characters and plot elements. Finally, the evolution of Le Carré's female protagonists is discussed from a feminist point of view within the context of betrayal.

Le Carré's Cold War novels feature a strong sense of paranoia against communism as an insurmountable corrupting force. In this period, the author's idea of duty is synonymous with patriotism and his novels often portray the clash of duty with individual conscience, where duty always prevails. Considered as his Cold War masterpiece, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** (1974) is a *roman à clef* where the events and characters can be traced back to the author's life. Written in the wake of the revelation of the Cambridge Five spy ring, the novel can also be read as a re-enactment of the greatest treason in the history of the British Secret Service in order to come to terms with the trauma of betrayal.

After the fall of communism, Le Carré's focus shifted to new threats that have replaced his former archenemy. Having celebrated the individuals' effort and sacrifices to keep the threat at bay during the Cold War, the author was disillusioned after its demise when Britain left her former spheres of influence to their fate and abandoned the smaller nations to the mercy of the new Russian nationalism in the ruins of the former communist system. **Our Game** (1995) written in the aftermath of the Cold War presents unbridled nationalism as the new evil figure that has replaced communism. This transitional novel also marks the transformation of the author's idea of duty from patriotism towards individual conscience and action. Seemingly setting out with the same idea of duty as in his Cold War novels, towards the end of the storyline, the author turns the cards over in order to reveal an opposing view, inviting the readers to change their vantage point about the concepts of loyalty and betrayal in a world where loyalty to one's country results in apathy while the conscientious individual has a duty to take heed of the suffering around the world.

The Constant Gardener (2001) written in the monopolar, capitalistic world of the new millennium is an example of docufiction or a thesis novel where the

author focuses on the clash between capitalism and ethics. Also inspired by people, observations and documents from the author's real life, the novel is the story of one woman's quest against wild capitalism; the dominant and unrivalled power which has now replaced communism as the evil force causing the paranoia. In this new world order where multinational companies cannot be controlled by the outdated international organisations and crimes against humanity are committed for the sole purpose of profit, the individual rises above institutions and the conscience becomes the only moral compass in Le Carré's fiction. Unlike communism, which is a force that needs to be destroyed by any means in the author's Cold War fiction, capitalism in the new millennium is presented as a necessary evil that has to be bridled by the appropriate institutions since the author can offer no radical alternative to replace capitalism in a free world. **The Constant Gardener** is also a first in the author's canon featuring his first independent female protagonist who takes action against the outdated, male-dominated world order feeding the capitalist monster. However, the futility of the death of all his heroic characters for the greater good sheds light to his scepticism towards actually achieving a better world.

The study points out that John le Carré's espionage fiction is imbibed with his personal observations and experiences and reflects the shifting vantage point of the author persona to the individuals' choices in the face of the transformation of the political threats over the decades.

Keywords: John le Carré, Espionage Fiction, Betrayal, Treason, **Tinker, Tailor Soldier Spy, Our Game, The Constant Gardener.**

ÖZ

JOHN LE CARRÉ’NİN CASUS YAZININDA İHANET VE PARANOYA: KÖSTEBEK, BİZİM OYUN VE BAHÇIVAN

GAMZE G. ÖZFIRAT

John le Carré’nin casus romanları genellikle sadakat ve ihanet kavramlarını konu alır ve düşman figürüne karşı güçlü bir paranoya duygusunu içerir. Le Carré’nin yazınında politik ihanet genellikle kişisel ihanetle paralel olarak işlenir ve bireyin görev duygusu ile vicdanı arasındaki çatışma yaygın bir temadır.

John le Carré, Soğuk Savaş döneminde kendisi de İngiliz Gizli Servisi’nin istihbarat elemanı olarak görev yapmış olan David Cornwell’in yazınsal kişiliği için kullandığı takma addır. Yazın eleştirisinde yazarın yaşamı ile yazınsal yaratımını bağdaştırmak bir kural olmasa da, John le Carré’nin istihbarat dünyası hakkındaki birinci elden deneyim ve gözlemleri romanlarına gerçekçilik katan ve gerçekçi bir yazar olarak kendisine özgünlük kazandıran bir unsurdur.

Bu çalışmanın amacı John le Carré’nin **Köstebek** (1974), **Bizim Oyun** (1995) ve **Bahçivan** (2001) romanlarına yakın okuma yaparak paranoya ve ihanet unsurlarının romanların yazıldığı dönemlerin tarihi ve siyasi atmosferinin ışığında incelenmesidir. Çalışma ayrıca bu üç romanı karşılaştırarak düşman figürünün bu dönemlerdeki baskın siyasi güçlerin dönüşümüne bağlı olarak evrimini ve yazarın görev kavramına bakışının vatanseverlikten bireysel vicdana doğru değişimini de ortaya koymaktadır.

Çalışma yöntemi yazarın özyaşamından yazınsal yaratımına esin veren ve romanlarına karakter ve kurgu biçiminde yansıyan kişi ve olayların bir incelemesini de

kapsamaktadır. Ayrıca, Le Carré'nin kadın kahramanlarının evrimi ihanet bağlamında feminist bir bakışla değerlendirilecektir.

Le Carré'nin Soğuk Savaş dönemi romanlarında karşı konamayan, yozlaştırıcı bir güç olarak sunulan komünizme karşı güçlü bir paranoya algılanır. Yazarın bu dönemdeki görev kavramı vatanseverlik ile eşdeğerdir ve romanlarında bireyin görev duygusu ile vicdanı arasında kaldığı ikilemde kazanan daima görevi olur. Yazarın Soğuk Savaş dönemi başyapıtı olan **Köstebek**'teki (1974) olay ve karakterlerin izleri yazarın gerçek yaşamında izlenebilir. Cambridge Beşlisi casus şebekesinin açığa çıkarılmasının hemen ardından kaleme alınan eser aynı zamanda İngiliz Gizli Servisi'nin tarihindeki en büyük ihanet olayının yarattığı travmanın yazınsal olarak yeniden analizi olarak da okunabilir.

Komünizmin çöküşünden sonra Le Carré'nin eski düşmanı olan komünizm yerini yeni tehditlere bırakır. Soğuk Savaş sırasında kişilerin komünizm tehdidini uzak tutmak için verdikleri özveri çabaya tanık olan yazar, komünizmin çöküşünden sonra İngiltere'nin eski nüfuz alanlarından çekilerek buradaki etnik azınlıkları eski komünist sistemin yıkıntıları arasında yeni Rus milliyetçiliğinin merhametine terk etmesi karşısında hayal kırıklığına uğrar. Soğuk Savaş'ın bitişinin ardından yazılan **Bizim Oyun** (1995) aşırı milliyetçiliği yeni düşman figürü olarak sunar. Bu geçiş dönemi romanı aynı zamanda yazarın görev kavramının vatanseverlikten bireysel vicdan ve eyleme doğru evrilmesine de tanıklık eder. Başlangıçta yazarın Soğuk Savaş romanları ile aynı görev kavramını destekler gibi görünen romanda yazar öykünün sonuna doğru okuyucuya olayların diğer yüzünü göstererek sadakat ve ihanet kavramlarına bakış açılarını yeniden düşünmeye zorlar. Ülkeye tartışmasız sadakatin duyarsızlıkla eşdeğer hale geldiği bu yeni dünya düzeninde artık bireyin dünyadaki acıları göz ardı etmemek gibi vicdani bir görevi vardır.

İki binlerin tek kutuplu, kapitalist dünyasında yazılan **Bahçıvan** (2001), kapitalizm ve ahlak kavramlarının çatışmasına odaklanan bir belgesel roman ya da tezli roman örneğidir. Yine yazarın gerçek yaşamından kişiler, gözlemler ve belgelerden esinlenen romanda duyarlı bir kadın kahramanın bu dönemde dünyayı pençesine alan rakipsiz güç olan ve paranoyaya yol açan kötülük figürü olarak komünizmin yerini alan

vahŖi kapitalizme karŖı savaŖının öyküsü anlatılmaktadır. KöhnemiŖ uluslararası kuruluşların çokuluslu Ŗirketleri denetlemekte yetersiz kaldığı ve romanda örnekleri verilen insanlık suçlarının yalnızca kâr hırsıyla işlendiğı bu yeni dünya düzeninde kişiler artık kurumların üzerine çıkmakta ve bireysel vicdan Le Carré'nin yazınındaki tek yol gösterici unsur olarak sunulmaktadır. Yazarın Soğuk Savaş yazınında yok edilmesi elzem bir güç olarak sunulan komünizmin aksine, bu yeni binyılda kapitalizm uygun kurumlarca dizginlenmesi gereken ve özgür bir dünya düzeni için bir alternatifi olmayan, katlanılması zorunlu bir sistem olarak sunulmaktadır. **Bahçivan** aynı zamanda yazarın ilk kez kapitalizm canavarını besleyen köhnemiŖ erkek egemen dünya düzenine karŖı duran bağımsız bir kadın karakteri öne çıkardığı roman özelliğini taşımaktadır. Öte yandan, yazarın bireysel olarak savaş veren tüm karakterlerinin amaçları uğruna ölümü yazarın daha iyi bir dünyaya ulaşılacağına dair kuşkuçuluğuna da işaret etmektedir.

Çalışma John le Carré'nin casusluk yazınının yazarın kişisel gözlem ve deneyimlerinden beslendiğini ve yazarın yıllar içinde dönüşüm geçiren politik tehditlere karŖı değıŖen bakış açısını yansıttığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: John le Carré, Casus Romancılığı, İhanet, **Köstebek**, **Bizim Oyun**, **Bahçivan**.

PREFACE

The aim of this thesis is to perform a literary study of John le Carré's espionage fiction. Though Le Carré's novels follow the path of the adventure genre, his works distinguish themselves with their realistic style, masterful language and insight for human emotions. The author creates characters with a deep inner world, all with their beliefs, powers, humanly weaknesses and motives with which the reader can empathise. John le Carré is critically acclaimed as one of the greatest espionage authors in history.

Studying the works of a contemporary author comes with certain difficulties. At the beginning of this study, the limited number of the available sources especially about his more recent novels was a complicating factor. Thankfully, the countless new sources on the author and especially his biography published in recent years have shed light to various aspects of his works, making this study possible.

I hereby would like to thank my advisor Dr. Ferah İncesu for her enthusiastic guidance, endless patience and attention to detail.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to compare three novels by John le Carré, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** (1974), **Our Game** (1995) and **The Constant Gardener** (2001), in the light of their historical and political background in order to analyse the influence of the transforming political atmosphere on the author's fiction over the decades. John le Carré's¹ espionage fiction features works where the political forces are often reflected as evil figures leading to a sense of paranoia instilled in the novels. The plot in these three novels revolves around political betrayal which is also reflected as personal betrayal in the lives of the characters.² While the protagonists of Le Carré's Cold War novels are almost always charged with a patriotic duty which is greater than their individual conscience, his works after the end of the Cold War focus on the duty of the conscientious individual to stand against the political evil.

Although the life of an author might be considered irrelevant to his literary creation, as a former member of the espionage trade,³ Le Carré's novels are usually based on inspirations from real life. Thus, the study will also trace the author's biography to observe the way events from real life are reflected in his creation.

In order to put John le Carré's fiction in context, the background chapter of the study describes the framework of espionage fiction through a detailed outlook of its origins and introduces the prominent writers who have contributed to the genre. This part also gives the definitions of paranoia and betrayal and discusses certain incidents of treason from the 20th century to describe the atmosphere leading to the creation of these novels.

The second chapter of the study examines the elements of betrayal and paranoia and the concept of duty in the light of communism in Le Carré's Cold War novel **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**.

¹ A.K.A. David Cornwell, Adam Sisman, **John Le Carré: The Biography**, London, Bloomsbury, 2015, p.xiv.

² Tod Hoffman, **Le Carré's Landscape**, London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001, p.110.

³ Sisman, **loc cit**.

The third chapter discusses the transformation of the evil figure into unbridled nationalism after the fall of communism in his post-Cold War novel **Our Game**. This chapter also observes the ambiguous presentation of the concepts of loyalty and betrayal as well as the individuals' new role in the face of the changing threats in the novel.

The fourth chapter analyzes the paranoia and betrayal caused by wild capitalism in the new millennium novel **The Constant Gardener** putting the individual at focus as the only power capable of changing the outdated political system.

The conclusion will take a last look on the transformation of the evil figure responsible for the paranoia and betrayal and the evolution of the idea of duty in these three novels.

Before the analysis of the selected novels, we should first take a look at the historical and political origins of the genre in order to better understand the main themes of espionage fiction in the light of the events from the 20th century.

FIRST CHAPTER

A GENERAL OUTLOOK OF ESPIONAGE FICTION

1.1 The Origins

The Spy Novel is a British genre: “If they did not invent it, they perfected it.”¹

The term “espionage” originates from the French word “espion” meaning a spy and was first used in 1793 in the sense of “spying” in English.²

Though espionage fiction is thought to be akin to novels of adventure,³ the genre is also defined as political detective fiction.⁴ In order to put the espionage genre in context, we should first take a brief look at the history of the novel and the birth of detective fiction.

1.1.1 The novel

A novel is a piece of prose fiction of a reasonable length.⁵ Derived from the Italian “novella” meaning “a tale, piece of news”,⁶ initially “the term denoted a prose narrative about characters and their actions in what was recognizably everyday life and usually in the present, with the emphasis on things being ‘new’ or a ‘novelty’”.⁷

Until the 14th century, most of literary entertainment was confined to narrative verse, particularly epic and romance. Detective and espionage fiction may be

¹ Matthew J. Bruccoli, Judith S. Baughman, **Conversations with John le Carré**, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2004, p.xi.

²“Espionage”, The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, (Accessed) <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/espionage>, 30 October 2018.

³ J. A. Cuddon, **The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory**, Fourth Edition, London, Penguin Books, 1998, p.856.

⁴ Murat Yetkin, **Meraklısı İçin Entrikalar Kitabı** [The Book of Intrigues for Enthusiasts], Istanbul, Doğan Egmont Yayıncılık ve Yapımcılık Tic. A.Ş, 2017, p.11.

⁵ Terry Eagleton, **The English Novel: an Introduction**, Malden, Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p.1.

⁶ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.560.

⁷ **Ibid**, p.561.

considered a combination of the epic and romance genres with the military and heroic elements of the epic and the inter-gender elements of the romance united in one melting pot. Thus, the detective trying to solve a mystery follows the footsteps of the knight after a quest and the invincible dragon's stealth has evolved into the almost supernatural cunning of the invisible spy.

In some ways, the novel is a descendant of medieval romances,⁸ where various adventures surround a protagonist and an eventual outcome could matter. The novel genre was first born in Spain at the very beginning of the 14th century, and **Don Quixote de la Mancha** by Cervantes is considered as the greatest of all Spanish novels.⁹ The insurmountable idealism of this visionary knight may be a parallel to the unshakeable belief of the future detective in justice as well as of the future spy in the system he risks his life to protect.

In Britain, first examples of the novel including John Lyly's didactic romance **Euphues** (1578-1580) and Sir Philip Sidney's pastoral romance **Arcadia** (1590) were followed by Mme de Lafayette's **La Princesse de Clèves** in the 17th century.¹⁰ Daniel Defoe's **Robinson Crusoe** (1719) constitutes a turning point in the history of English novel¹¹ through its realistic mode as well as a recognizable socioeconomic background. In the following centuries, the genre flourished and matured with works from numerous authors.

1.1.2 Crime Fiction

According to J. A. Cuddon, "The commission and detection of crime, with the motives, actions, arraignment, judgement, and punishment of a criminal, is one of the great paradigms of narrative"¹² and this trend continues in popular culture even in the new millennium.

⁸ **Ibid.**, p.563.

⁹ **Ibid.**

¹⁰ **Ibid.**, p.564.

¹¹ **Ibid.**

¹² **Ibid.**, p.192.

As the first examples of British crime fiction came into existence in the 18th century, the centre for crime and criminals for many authors was “Newgate, London’s main prison, from which the most celebrated condemned criminals took their last ride through excited crowds to the gallows at Tyburn”.¹³ These crime novels, which have come to be known as “Newgate novels”, have also led to the creation of the sensation novel.

1.1.3 The Newgate Novel and the Sensation Novel

The Newgate novel and the sensation novel were sub-genres of the literature of crime, which enjoyed a relatively brief but extraordinary popular success in the 1830s, 1840s and 1860s, respectively.¹⁴ Newgate novels take their name from the London prison destroyed by fire in 1780.¹⁵ Thus, the Newgate label was attached to a group of popular novels retelling the lives of real or invented criminals published in the Newgate Calendar:

Newgate novels took their name, as they took some of their leading characters and plots, from the various versions of the Newgate Calendar, which, from its first appearance in 1773, satisfied the popular fascination with crime and criminals by gathering together accounts of the lives, trials, confessions, punishments and/or escapes from, or evasions of the law of celebrated criminals.¹⁶

The two novelists particularly associated with this type of fiction are Edward Bulwer Lytton (1803-73) and Harrison Ainsworth (1805-82).¹⁷ According to their critics, “they romanticised and glamorised crime and low life, and invited sympathy with criminals rather than with the victims of crime by making their criminal subjects the hunted object of a chase, by focusing on their motivation or psychology, and by representing them as the victims of circumstance or society”.¹⁸ Leona Buzrllová also states that the Newgate novels - or the so called Old Bailey novels - were

¹³ Lyn Pykett, “The Newgate novel and sensation fiction, 1830-1868”, **The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction**, Ed. by Martin Priestman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.7.

¹⁴ **Ibid.**, p.19.

¹⁵ **Ibid.**, p.29.

¹⁶ **Ibid.**, p.20.

¹⁷ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.545.

¹⁸ Pykett, **op. cit.**, p.20.

determined to glamorize the lives of the criminals they pictured.¹⁹ On the other hand, there were also authors who chose a more conscientious path. The view of the criminal life in **Oliver Twist** (1837-38) by Charles Dickens and **Catherine** (1839-40) by William Makepeace Thackeray constituted something of a reaction against this attitude expressed in Newgate fiction,²⁰ and these novels looked back to 18th century crime fiction and to the radical indictments of oppressive legal and penal systems at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a critical eye.²¹

Another work by Dickens with Newgate elements is his historical novel **Barnaby Rudge** where Dickens took Paul Clifford's theme of oppressive laws as instruments of an unfair legal system.²² According to Lyn Pykett, Newgate fiction also exerted considerable influence on the representation of crime in the 19th century novel in general, and on the development of such later genres or sub-genres as the sensation novel and the detective novel.²³

The sensation novel was a form of fiction that became prominent from the 1860s onwards. It was a literary genre of fiction which was focused on tales based on criminal stories and included elements of the gothic and romantic genres.²⁴ As the name suggests, the themes and action of these novels were improbable and melodramatic, with a guilty secret as the favourite theme.²⁵ "Sensation novels were tales of modern life that dealt in nervous, psychological, sexual and social shocks, and had complicated plots involving bigamy, adultery, seduction, fraud, forgery, blackmail, kidnapping and, sometimes, murder".²⁶

A prominent author of this genre was Mrs. Clive (1801-73) with her novels **Paul Ferroll** (1855) and **Why Paul Ferroll Killed His Wife** (1860). Wilkie Collins and

¹⁹ Leona Buzrlová, "The Spy Novel in English Literature", Diploma Thesis, Masaryk University, Brno, 2010, p.17.

²⁰ Cuddon, **loc. cit.**

²¹ Pykett, **op. cit.**, p.19.

²² **Ibid.**, p.28.

²³ **Ibid.**, p.19.

²⁴ Buzrlová, **op. cit.**, p.21.

²⁵ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.602.

²⁶ Pykett, **op. cit.**, p.34.

Mary Braddon are also well-known authors of this genre.²⁷ Dickens's **Great Expectations**, published in his magazine **All The Year Round** from December 1860 to August 1861, was also reviewed as a sensation novel, but its stories have more in common with the Newgate novel.²⁸ According to Cuddon "it is more than likely that the novel of sensation was eventually to influence the evolution of the thriller and the detective story".²⁹

In contrast to the Newgate novel, the sensation novel did not depict the criminal underworld, but rather explored the dark face of the respectable classes: "The sensation fiction dealt with upper- and middle-class crime and transgression in a modern setting".³⁰ Crime was a family matter and family secrets were mostly to blame for the plot. In most cases, crime and punishment were limited entirely to the family circle.³¹

Another prominent difference was the new role of the female in the sensation novel: While the Newgate novel was written by male authors featuring male protagonists,³² the sensation novel was mostly written by female authors featuring female criminals and (amateur) female detectives.³³ Marian Halcombe in Collins's **The Woman in White** is the first of several female protagonists in sensation novels.³⁴

Perhaps the greatest difference between the Newgate and sensation novels was the shift of the focus from crime to detection.³⁵ "Although the law court was the source of many sensation plots, sensation novels did not end in the courtroom or the prison".³⁶ Pykett observes that this may be the indication of a change in the cultural meaning of crime and the criminal, as well as a shift from a society controlled by the spectacle of punishment to one morally ruled by discipline.³⁷

²⁷ Cuddon, **loc. cit.**

²⁸ Pykett, **op. cit.**, p.33.

²⁹ Cuddon, **loc. cit.**

³⁰ Pykett, **op. cit.**, p.34.

³¹ **Ibid.**

³² **Ibid.**, p.19.

³³ **Ibid.**, p.35.

³⁴ **Ibid.**

³⁵ **Ibid.**

³⁶ **Ibid.**

³⁷ **Ibid.**

By the 1860s crime was no longer perceived as constituting a world of its own, but it was now seen as an integral part of the respectable world, and it was often represented in sensation novels as a particularly individualistic form of the Victorian doctrine of self-help.³⁸

The sensation novel was thus “a means of both articulating and managing the universal suspicion on which modern urban society was founded”.³⁹

1.1.4 Detective Fiction

“The detective story is ‘the only fiction that insists it is dealing with facts’”.⁴⁰

Detective fiction first flourished in the form of short stories in America, initiated by Nathaniel Hawthorne’s **Twice-Told Tales** (1837) and Edgar Allen Poe’s **Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque** (1840).⁴¹ However, the short story in Britain took off only towards the end of the 19th century, thanks to the success of Arthur Conan Doyle’s detective stories published in George Newnes’s “Strand Magazine”.⁴²

The birth of detective fiction in Britain may be associated with the establishment of the Metropolitan Police Office in 1829.⁴³ According to Martin Kayman, “the appearance of a new and modern kind of protagonist from the mid-nineteenth century, who has come to be called ‘the detective’, marks a distinction from earlier mysteries”.⁴⁴

Also, the Matrimonial Causes Act, which was passed in 1857 and made public divorce possible, may have marked a historical turning point for detective fiction in Britain. According to the new legislation, although adultery remained the sole ground

³⁸ **Ibid.**

³⁹ **Ibid.**

⁴⁰ Clive Bloom, “Capitalising on Poe’s Detective: the Dollars and Sense of Nineteenth-Century Detective Fiction”, **Nineteenth-Century Suspense: From Poe to Conan Doyle**, Ed. by Clive Bloom et al., London, Macmillan, 1988, p.14, qtd. in Martin A. Kayman, “The short story from Poe to Chesterton”, **The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction**, Ed. by Martin Priestman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.42.

⁴¹ **Ibid.**, p.41.

⁴² **Ibid.**

⁴³ Pykett, **op. cit.**, p.23.

⁴⁴ Kayman, **op. cit.**, p.42.

for divorce, wives could also allege cruelty and desertion to obtain a divorce⁴⁵ and this gave rise to an army of private detectives.⁴⁶

The first detective stories were in the style of real accounts or memoirs.⁴⁷ The earliest examples of detective fiction in Britain appeared in 1850 with **Three Detective Anecdotes** by Charles Dickens reporting the activities of real London detectives from a journalistic point of view.⁴⁸

The insistence that the story is dealing with facts also constitutes, in a narratological sense, the fundamental structure of the more classic puzzle solving 'detective' genre, in that the test the story sets itself is that the tale the detective eventually tells does correspond to the fragmentary 'facts' which the narrator has displayed objectively before us as the brute material of the world.⁴⁹

Unlike full-length novels, these early detective stories were in the form of short stories in which "the detective's solution provided full narrative satisfaction, but also stimulated an appetite for a similar story".⁵⁰ In these early works, characterisation still left a lot to be desired:

Considering the detective short story in terms of series highlights its principal agent of coherence: the figure of the protagonist. [...] Yet, although most of the heroes of detective fiction are distinguished by some personal eccentricity, they are not exactly 'characters' in the customary literary-realist sense. Rather, they are identified by their methodologies or approaches. This brings us to another definitively modern urban phenomenon: the police.⁵¹

Edgar Allen Poe's (1809-49) "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) is often cited as the first detective story, followed by "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" (1842) and "The Purloined Letter" (1845) also featuring his protagonist detective Dupin.⁵² Though these stories culminate in accidental deaths rather than premeditated

⁴⁵"Obtaining a divorce", (Accessed) <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/relationships/overview/divorce/>, 07 November 2018.

⁴⁶ Pykett, **op. cit.**, p.34.

⁴⁷ **Ibid.**, p.42.

⁴⁸ **Ibid.**

⁴⁹ Kayman, **loc. cit.**

⁵⁰ **Ibid.**, p.43.

⁵¹ **Ibid.**, p.44.

⁵² **Ibid.**

crimes committed by actual murderers, they are generally thought to have “described the situations and devices exploited by later writers”.⁵³

Cuddon also lists William Godwin (1756-1836) for **Caleb Williams**, Charles Dickens (1813-70) for Inspector Bucket in **Bleak House**, and Wilkie Collins (1824-89) for **The Moonstone** and **The Woman in White** among the authors who paved the way for the Golden Age of Crime Fiction.⁵⁴

Detective fiction in Britain came of age when Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) created his charismatic detective Sherlock Holmes in his first Holmes novel **A Study in Scarlet** in 1887.⁵⁵ The Sherlock Holmes short stories Doyle started publishing in the 1890s appealed to large audiences.⁵⁶ Initially, Doyle wished to kill Holmes in 1893, but the popular demand and commercial pressures were so strong⁵⁷ that he had to bring him back in 1905.⁵⁸

According to Kayman, “the elements of the Sherlock Holmes character and stories are skillfully selected from tried and tested elements in earlier sensational novelists and story writers”.⁵⁹ He also underlines that “it is not the plotting or the intellectual work which are the key to the success of these stories, but the very special ‘character’ of Sherlock Holmes”.⁶⁰

It is no wonder then that he is regarded by most critics and the general public as the personification of ‘the Great Detective’: he is a unique creation, whose professional standing is validated by no other institutions than himself – and his readers.⁶¹

⁵³ Dorothy Sayers, **Great Short Stories**, p.17, qtd. in Kayman, **loc. cit.**

⁵⁴ Cuddon, **op. cit.** p.193.

⁵⁵ **Ibid.**

⁵⁶ **Ibid.**

⁵⁷ Kayman, **op. cit.**, p.43.

⁵⁸ “Sherlock Holmes Bibliography”, (Accessed)

<https://www.arthurconandoyle.com/Bibliography1.html#shnovels>, 7 November 2018.

⁵⁹ Kayman, **op. cit.**, p.48.

⁶⁰ **Ibid.**, p.49.

⁶¹ **Ibid.**, p.50.

Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, inspired by his professor Dr. Joseph Bell at the medical school of Edinburgh University,⁶² has proved to be a unique character that continues to influence popular culture even in the 21st century.

The period between the two world wars is usually regarded as the Golden Age of crime fiction.⁶³ During this period, stories are almost always focussed on a murder and elements such as multiple suspects that were randomly present in earlier crime fiction have become a norm, while some earlier tendencies including the use of coincidences and historical explanations have largely disappeared.⁶⁴ The setting of the novels is usually a country house and the criminal comes from among the social circle of the victim:⁶⁵

The victim is usually a man or (quite often) a woman of some importance and wealth, though that position is rarely of long-standing or antique respectability [...] The victim is also a person of little emotive value; he or she is not mourned, nor is the real pain and degradation of violent death represented.⁶⁶

The detectives during this period are usually an amateur or professional male, and unlike the sensation novels, they employ rational methods rather than active or intuitional.⁶⁷ The mature style of the genre now features a range of murder suspects with their own motives and methods rather than a single culprit. **The Moonstone** (1868) by Wilkie Collins, **The Leavenworth Case** (1878) by A. K. Green and **The Mystery of the Yellow Room** (1908) by Gaston Leroux are among the examples of this narrative style.⁶⁸ According to Knight, "the multiple suspects and the rational analysis of determinedly circumstantial evidence" distinguish the novels of this period from their predecessors.⁶⁹

⁶² "Sherlock Holmes", (Accessed) <https://www.arthurconandoyle.com/sherlockholmes.html>, 8 November 2018.

⁶³ Steven Knight, "The Golden Age", **The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction**, Ed. by Martin Priestman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.77.

⁶⁴ **Ibid.**

⁶⁵ **Ibid.**, p.78.

⁶⁶ **Ibid.**

⁶⁷ **Ibid.**

⁶⁸ **Ibid.**, p.79.

⁶⁹ **Ibid.**

The novels usually end with the identification of the criminal. Very rarely, an execution is included; or a suicide or convenient accident takes the murderer's life.⁷⁰

During this period, the readership has also shifted from a male audience to a female one: The earlier short stories were published in magazines predominantly targeting men. But according to library records, seventy-five percent of the readers of the new clue-puzzle novels were female.⁷¹ And soon, a female crime novelist came to prominence.

Agatha Christie (1890-1976)⁷² was a young woman with no formal education when her elder sister challenged her to write a novel in 1916.⁷³ Her eccentric but intelligent detective Hercule Poirot, first featured in **The Mysterious Affair at Styles**, was based on the Belgian refugees she met in the English countryside during World War I.⁷⁴ Her first novel "gathered together all the archetypal features of the clue-puzzle".⁷⁵ Still, in 1930, Christie created her first female detective, Miss Marple, in her **Murder at the Vicarage**.⁷⁶ Christie's prominent works include **The Murder of Roger Ackroyd** (1926), **And Then There Were None** (1939) and **Murder on the Orient Express** (1934).

Agatha Christie, Dorothy L Sayers (1893-1957) and Margery Allingham (1904-66) are called the three "Queens of Crime" in Britain,⁷⁷ while Dashiell Hammett (1894-1961), James M. Cain (1892-1977) and Raymond Chandler (1888-1959) were the prominent authors of detective fiction in America during the Golden Age.⁷⁸

⁷⁰ **Ibid.**

⁷¹ **Ibid.**, p.81.

⁷² Cuddon, **loc. cit.**

⁷³ Knight, **loc. cit.**

⁷⁴ "About Christie" (Accessed) www.agathachristie.com/about-christie#christies-life, 7 November 2018.

⁷⁵ Knight, **op. cit.**, p.82.

⁷⁶ **Ibid.**

⁷⁷ Cuddon, **loc. cit.**

⁷⁸ **Ibid.**, p.194.

1.1.5 The Adventure Novel

Besides the detective genre, another origin of spy fiction is the adventure novel.⁷⁹ The term “adventure” is concerned with things that “come to pass or happen”.⁸⁰ Adventure novels revolve around an unexpected occurrence, danger or risk.⁸¹ In an adventure novel, the protagonist or other major characters typically find themselves in perilous situations and fight for their survival or for a cause.⁸² “The adventure novel [...] has its roots in the medieval romance with its knight-errant in quest of adventure, and develops from the Spanish picaresque through English and French 18th century examples”.⁸³

The aim of an adventure novel is to create the so-called “adventure effect”.⁸⁴ In order to do this, the author creates a persona who is the subject of the adventure and sometimes also the narrator of the story. The reader identifies with this protagonist, whose inner state they can observe.⁸⁵ This protagonist can sometimes be heroic (the adventurous type), or passive and suffering (the victim).⁸⁶ The author also uses vicarious narrative techniques to evoke emotions in the reader. The most common techniques used for this purpose include the build-up of excitement, fear, horror, suspense, or the continual introduction of sudden and unexpected new developments.⁸⁷ The plotline and events in adventure stories are typically unpredictable and unforeseen and the author uses devices like narrow escapes and surprises to create a “roller coaster effect”.⁸⁸

Though various literary genres may contain elements of adventure, spy novels and thrillers are probably the closest genres to the adventure novel.

⁷⁹ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.856.

⁸⁰ Robert Sayre, “On the Borders of the Adventure Novel: Narratives of 18th-Century Travel in Indian Territory”, (Accessed) <https://journals.openedition.org/erea/523>, 29 November 2018.

⁸¹ **Ibid.**

⁸² **Ibid.**

⁸³ **Ibid.**

⁸⁴ **Ibid.**

⁸⁵ **Ibid.**

⁸⁶ **Ibid.**

⁸⁷ **Ibid.**

⁸⁸ Buzrllová, **op. cit.**, p.34.

1.1.6 The Thriller

A thriller is “a tense, exciting, tautly plotted and sometimes sensational type of novel [...] in which action is swift and suspense continual”.⁸⁹ The thriller genre may include the crime novel, the *roman policier*, the cloak-and-dagger story, horror stories or adventure novels:⁹⁰

Where the thriller differs from the detective story is not in any disinclination to resort to deductive methods in solving crimes – though, to be sure, when present they necessarily occupy only a secondary role. Rather, the thriller was and still is to a large extent marked by the way in which it persistently seeks to raise the stakes of the narrative, heightening or exaggerating the experience of events by transforming them into a rising curve of danger, violence or shock.⁹¹

The origins of the thriller can be traced back to the Gothic novel and the “literature of terror” popular towards the end of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th centuries:⁹² “From that period its evolution can be plotted via the development of the crime story, the ghost, horror and detective story, the so-called novel of sensation and what came to be known as Newgate Fiction”.⁹³

During the Edwardian period, Edgar Wallace’s **The Four Just Men** (1905) and Sax Rohmer’s **The Insidious Fu Manchu** (1913) were among the early examples of thrillers. In the 1920s, Dashiell Hammett came to prominence with his crime thrillers, including **The Maltese Falcon** (1930), which gradually established itself as a classic.⁹⁴ Raymond Chandler was another thriller writer known for his novels **The Big Sleep** (1939), **The Long Good-Bye** (1953) and **Farewell, My Lovely** (1940), among others.⁹⁵

The term ‘thriller’ emerged as a loose descriptor that could be applied to a wide range of narratives, some of which – like the spy-thriller from Childers to John le Carré – can be considered as distinct

⁸⁹ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.914.

⁹⁰ **Ibid.**

⁹¹ David Glover, “The Thriller”, **The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction**, Ed. by Martin Priestman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.137.

⁹² Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.915.

⁹³ **Ibid.**

⁹⁴ **Ibid.**, p.917.

⁹⁵ **Ibid.**

sub-genres in their own right, while others are much harder to place and seem deliberately to defy classification.⁹⁶

The thriller was at first criticised for its lack of literary merit.⁹⁷ The success of these novels was associated with their direct impact upon the nervous systems of their readers, causing shocks and upheavals “so characteristic of the modern era”.⁹⁸ However, the thriller has found its audience and distinguished examples of the genre started to emerge.

Thrillers typically revolve around a great threat with immeasurable and boundless ramifications:⁹⁹ “The thriller trades in international conspiracies, invasions, wholesale corruption, serial killers who threaten entire cities or even nations”.¹⁰⁰ Though Seed claims that “spy fiction has tended to follow the patterns of the detective mystery and the search for information, which will confirm suspected conspiracy”,¹⁰¹ the line between thrillers and spy novels is vague and the political thriller can also show common characteristics with spy fiction in some respects.¹⁰²

1.2 Espionage Fiction

1.2.1 Basic Elements of Espionage Fiction

In his classical work **Poetics**, Aristotle outlines the main structure of a drama in order to bring about the desired effect and evoke a series of emotions within the audience. According to Aristotle, the good must always reach the glory at the end of the story, while the villains are punished for their evil deeds.¹⁰³ Moreover, the storyline must hang on either the discovery of a fact (*anagnorisis*), or a reversal of fortune

⁹⁶ Glover, **op. cit.**, p.138.

⁹⁷ **Ibid.**, p.135.

⁹⁸ **Ibid.**, p.136.

⁹⁹ Glover, **op. cit.**, p.138.

¹⁰⁰ **Ibid.**

¹⁰¹ David Seed, “Spy Fiction”, **The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction**, Ed. by Martin Priestman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.129.

¹⁰² **Ibid.**

¹⁰³ Aristotle, **Poetics**, Project Gutenberg E-Book of the Poetics, Trans. by Ingram Bywater, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1920, 10th ed., 2004, Ch. 13, p.14.

(*peripeteia*) that befalls one of the protagonists:¹⁰⁴ “A discovery is, as the very word implies, a change from ignorance to knowledge, and thus to either love or hate, in the personages marked for good or evil fortune”.¹⁰⁵ Also, the plot should involve a certain degree of cathartic suffering “which we may define as an action of a destructive or painful nature, such as murders on the stage, tortures, woundings, and the like”.¹⁰⁶

As mentioned above, born out of the adventure and detective novel genres, early espionage novels also follow these universal rules: While the protagonist almost always wins a triumph at the end of the chain of events and rescues his country and compatriots from incurring a certain loss or disgrace, the villain is punished for his treason. There is sometimes an innocent victim who suffers or perishes due to the betrayal of the villain, arousing tragic fear and pity according to Aristotle’s prescription:

The spy story is a close but distinct variation on the tale of detection with the difference that there is no discrete crime involved but rather a covert action which, [...] transgresses conventional, moral, or legal boundaries.¹⁰⁷ The action is self-evidently political since it involves national rivalries and constantly veers towards a paranoid vision of ‘violation by outside agencies’ and ‘violation of individual autonomy by internal agencies’.¹⁰⁸ A further distinction from the detection genre is that the investigator is often himself an agent and therefore, [...] is implicated in the very processes he is investigating.¹⁰⁹

1.2.2 The Dawn of Espionage Fiction

Espionage is described as the world’s second oldest profession¹¹⁰ and its history dates back to ancient Greece and China. Homer (12th-8th centuries BC) talks of

¹⁰⁴ **Ibid.**, Ch. 11, p.12.

¹⁰⁵ **Ibid.**

¹⁰⁶ **Ibid.**

¹⁰⁷ John G. Cawelti, Bruce A. Rosenberg, **The Spy Story**, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987, p.13, qtd. in Seed, **op. cit.**, p.115.

¹⁰⁸ Introduction to **Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to le Carré**, Ed. by Clive Bloom, London, Macmillan, 1990, p.2, qtd. in Seed, **loc.cit.**

¹⁰⁹ Tzvetan Todorov, “The Typology of Detective Fiction”, **The Poetics of Prose**, Trans. by Richard Howard, Oxford, Blackwell, 1977, p.44–5, qtd. in Seed, **op. cit.**, p.115.

¹¹⁰ Robert Dover, “The world’s second oldest profession: the transatlantic spying scandal and its aftermath”, **The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs**, Vol. 49, No. 2, 2014, p.117.

spies and counterspies in his **Iliad**.¹¹¹ According to the Bible, in 1480 B.C., Moses orders Joshua to lead a band of 11 spies into the land of Canaan.¹¹² In 334 B.C., Alexander the Great intercepted outgoing mail from his soldiers and established the earliest postal espionage system.¹¹³ In 878 A.D., King Alfred the Great, “pioneer of the English secret service”, disguised himself as a bard and wandered through the Danish military camps to gather information that helped him defeat the Danes at Edington.¹¹⁴

Though Sun Tzu (510 BC)¹¹⁵ classifies spies in his classical work **The Art of War**¹¹⁶ and there is evidence of spies in Byzantine history,¹¹⁷ the first “spymaster” in the modern sense was Queen Elizabeth’s diplomat Francis Walsingham:¹¹⁸

The role of spies becomes more evident in the history of late Middle Ages and the Renaissance Period. [...] The diplomatic corps of Europe then (as now) were frequently involved in espionage. Ambassadors, legates and envoys were known to be agents for their governments and accepted as such. [...] The church, too, used priests as spies.¹¹⁹

Perhaps the first spy novel in history is **San Kuo** written by Lo Kuanchung in China (1260-1341).¹²⁰ However, spy fiction in the west was a latecomer to the literary scene. The first examples of espionage fiction, or spy fiction, have emerged as a sub-element of adventure novels and politico-military thrillers in the late 19th century and developed throughout the 20th century, especially since the 1920s.¹²¹ Espionage fiction became popular in two periods: At the turn of the century before World War I, at about the same time when the first modern intelligence services started to appear;¹²² and

¹¹¹ Homer, **The Iliad**, Book X, Lines 299-515.

¹¹²“Introduction and Short History of Spies and Spying”, (Accessed) <https://www.trivia-library.com/a/introduction-and-short-history-of-spies-and-spying.htm>, 23 December 2018.

¹¹³ **Ibid.**

¹¹⁴ **Ibid.**

¹¹⁵ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.857.

¹¹⁶ Sun Tzu, “The Art of War”, **The Complete Art of War**, Trans. by Lionel Giles, Jersey City, Start Publishing LLC, 2012, p.106.

¹¹⁷ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.856.

¹¹⁸ Robert Hutchinson, **Elizabeth’s Spymaster**, New York, St. Martin Press, 2006, p.9 qtd. in Buzrlová, **op. cit.**, p.11.

¹¹⁹ Cuddon, **loc. cit.**

¹²⁰ **Ibid.**, p.856.

¹²¹ **Ibid.**

¹²² **Ibid.**

in the 1960s, “when popular anxieties were growing over the credibility of government processes”.¹²³

Since the 17th century, Britain, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and France were colonial rivals and Britain and - to a lesser extent - France had gained the upper hand with the treaty of Utrecht in 1713.¹²⁴ When the German Empire stretching over Central Europe was founded in 1871,¹²⁵ she became a new rival with her large resources and colonial aspirations.¹²⁶ In this political climate, the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, now widely known as MI6) was established in 1909 and was responsible for gathering intelligence overseas:

In the early 1900s, the British government was increasingly concerned about the threat to its Empire posed by Germany’s imperial ambitions. This led to scare stories of German spies and even the Director of Military Operations was convinced that Germany was targeting Britain. These rumours proved to be overblown, but the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, reacted to popular concern. He ordered the Committee of Imperial Defence to look into the matter and they established a Secret Service Bureau in July 1909.¹²⁷

In the USA, the first formal intelligence organizations had already been formed as the Naval and Army military intelligence services during the 1880s; and when the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, many of these officers turned to espionage.¹²⁸ In 1917, Russia also established its intelligence agency Cheka in the first days of the Bolshevik Government.¹²⁹

¹²³ **Ibid.**

¹²⁴ Judith G. Coffin, **Western civilizations: their history & their culture**, 17th ed., New York, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2011, p.485.

¹²⁵ “Reich”, (Accessed) <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/reich> 13 November 2018.

¹²⁶ “German Imperialism”, (Accessed) <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-worldhistory/chapter/german-imperialism/>, 15 November 2018.

¹²⁷ “Our History, Beginnings”, (Accessed) <https://www.sis.gov.uk/our-history.html>, 13 November 2018.

¹²⁸ “History of American Intelligence”, (Accessed) <https://www.cia.gov/kids-page/6-12th-grade/operation-history/history-of-american-intelligence.html>, 13 November 2018.

¹²⁹ “KGB”, Encyclopaedia Britannica, (Accessed) <https://www.britannica.com/topic/KGB>, 13 November 2018.

At the turn of the century, Britain was “the empire on which the sun never set”,¹³⁰ though the anxieties of an imminent disintegration were prevalent, since the network with the overseas colonies was widespread and delicate. David Stafford attributes the rise of these novels to an underlying feeling of national insecurity in the face of changing international relations: “The world presented by these novels is a dangerous and treacherous one in which Britain is the target of the envy, hostility, of the other European powers, singly or collectively according to context”.¹³¹

On the other hand, Cuddon associates the elements in spy fiction with the actual threats in real life:

The industrial revolution, a succession of wars in the 19th century, and more and more wars in the 20th century have meant the development of ever more sophisticated weapons and lethal substances. Inevitably there has been a genuine threat of secret documents being stolen: a favourite theme in espionage novels.¹³²

The first novel to centre around a theme of espionage was **The Spy** (1821) by Fenimore Cooper, which was set in the war between Britain and the newly independent United States.¹³³ **A Tale of Two Cities** (1859) by Charles Dickens has also contributed to the development of the genre,¹³⁴ though the pioneer of spy fiction is considered to be William le Queux (1864-1927), who was probably the first of the spy novelists who came from an espionage background.¹³⁵ **Guilty Bonds** (1890), **A Secret Service** (1896), **England’s Peril** (1899), and **The Invasion of 1910** (1906) among his works all dealt with political conspiracies, while **The Spies of the Kaiser** (1909) warned of a German invasion in the near future.¹³⁶

Another novelist usually credited with shaping the spy genre is E. Phillips Oppenheim. His novel **The Mysterious Mr Sabin** (1898) is sometimes also described

¹³⁰ ““The empire on which the sun never sets’ refers to what?” (Accessed) <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-empire-on-which-the-sun-never-sets-refers-to-what.html>, 15 November 2018.

¹³¹ David A. T. Stafford, “Spies and Gentlemen: The Birth of the British Spy Novel, 1883–1914”, **Victorian Studies**, Vol. 24, No. 4, Summer 1981, p.497, qtd. in Seed, **op. cit.**, p.116.

¹³² Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.857.

¹³³ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.115.

¹³⁴ Cuddon, **loc cit.**

¹³⁵ **Ibid.**

¹³⁶ **Ibid.**

as the first spy novel.¹³⁷ Oppenheim also discussed a German invasion in his **The Great Impersonation** (1920).¹³⁸

In 1903, when espionage fiction was just establishing itself as a marketable genre,¹³⁹ Erskine Childers (1870-1922) published his only novel¹⁴⁰ **The Riddle of the Sands** (1903), which is one of the prominent novels dealing with the British apathy and conceit against the rising threat from Germany:¹⁴¹ “Edwardian thriller-writers assumed that a political awakening to the reality of the German menace [...] would have to be accompanied, or preceded, by some kind of moral awakening or regeneration of the part of the individual citizens”.¹⁴²

And the main protagonist of the novel, a burnt-out member of the Foreign Office, goes exactly through this moral awakening or regeneration from a “crashing snob”¹⁴³ to a romantic hero¹⁴⁴ when his yachting holiday turns into a patriotic espionage mission.

The Riddle of the Sands also contains very detailed information about sailing, tides, and the geography of the North Sea. According to Cuddon, Childers “was the first to provide the expert technical background and knowledge of the kind which is now commonplace (*and expected*) in spy stories”.¹⁴⁵ The author also analyzes the threat from Germany during a discussion between his rather sophisticated protagonists, the Foreign Office clerk and a patriotic expert sailor:

He used to listen rapt while I described her marvellous awakening in the last generation, under the strength and wisdom of her rulers; her intense patriotic ardour; her seething industrial activity, and most potent of all, the forces that are moulding modern Europe,

¹³⁷ David Trotter, Introduction to **The Riddle of the Sands** by Erskine Childers, New York, Oxford University Press, 2008, p.ix.

¹³⁸ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.117.

¹³⁹ Trotter, **op. cit.**, p.vii.

¹⁴⁰ “A Chronology of Robert Erskine Childers”, **The Riddle of the Sands** by Erskine Childers, New York, Oxford University Press, 2008, p.iii.

¹⁴¹ William Le Queux, **Secrets of the Foreign Office**, London, Hutchinson, 1903, p.72, qtd. in Trotter, **op. cit.**, p.viii.

¹⁴² **Ibid.**, p.xiv.

¹⁴³ **Ibid.**, p.xv.

¹⁴⁴ **Ibid.**, p.xviii.

¹⁴⁵ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.858.

her dream of a colonial empire, entailing her transformation from a land-power to a sea-power. [...] our great trade rival of the present, our great naval rival of the future, she grows, and strengthens, and waits, an ever more formidable factor in the future of our delicate network of empire, sensitive as gossamer to external shocks, and radiating from an island whose commerce is its life and which depends even for its daily ration of bread on the free passage of the seas.

‘And we aren’t ready for her’ Davies would say; ‘we don’t look her way. We have no naval base in the North Sea, and no North Sea Fleet. Our best battleships are too deep in draught for North Sea work. And, to crown all, we were asses enough to give her Heligoland, which commands her North Sea coast.’¹⁴⁶

Although Childers had claimed that the whole story was his own invention, such an invasion plan was actually considered by Germany in the 1890s and the novel was taken so seriously that it was assessed by the Director of Naval Intelligence.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, **The Riddle of the Sands** was so realistic and detailed, that “in a rare instance of political action following fiction, two officers of Naval Intelligence were arrested in 1910 and charged with spying. They had been using **The Riddle of the Sands** as a guide to their investigations of German fortifications and the novel was subsequently produced as evidence in their trial”.¹⁴⁸

Besides the awakening German monster, another threat towards the British Empire was Russia. The 19th century political and military struggle between England and Russia for the control of central Asia is known as the “Great Game”.¹⁴⁹ Though the roots of the Great Game go back to 1774 when the Ottoman Empire started to lose its control in the Balkans and Russia became the dominant force in the region,¹⁵⁰ the classic Great Game period is generally dated from the Russo-Persian Treaty of 1813 to the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.¹⁵¹ According to John Howes Gleason:

¹⁴⁶ Erskine Childers, **The Riddle of the Sands**, New York, Oxford University Press, 2008, p.90.

¹⁴⁷ Maldwin Drummond, **The Riddle**, London, Nautical Books, 1985, p.153, qtd. in Seed, **op. cit.**, p.118.

¹⁴⁸ Richard Deacon, **A History of the British Secret Service**, St Albans, Granada, 1980, p.189, qtd. in Seed, **op. cit.**, p.119.

¹⁴⁹ Jimmie E. Cain, “**Bram Stoker and Russophobia: evidence of the British fear of Russia in Dracula and The lady of the shroud**”, Jefferson, N.C., McFarland & Co., 2006, p.4.

¹⁵⁰ **Ibid.**, p.15.

¹⁵¹ Buzrlová, **op. cit.**, p.30.

The decline and incipient disintegration of the Ottoman Empire induced apprehension lest the tsar be the chief heir of the sick man of Europe [Turkey]. It was feared in England that Russia's control of the Straits would endanger Britain's Levantine trade, her naval power in the Mediterranean, and her position in India.¹⁵²

Britain had every right to suspect Russia, since Tsarina Catherine the Great was already dreaming of seizing the control of India.¹⁵³ In order to gain access to the Black Sea for this purpose, Catherine added the Caucasus and the Crimean peninsula to the Russian empire.¹⁵⁴

To protect its interests in Asia, England chose to support the Ottoman Empire against Russia during the Crimean War (1853-56).¹⁵⁵ Right before the Crimean War, the leader of the Islamic tribes in the Caucasus, Imam Shamil, had sent a plea to Queen Victoria asking for help to fight the Russian oppressor.¹⁵⁶ The Queen was known to favour romantic leaders of lost causes¹⁵⁷ and was inclined to help Shamil against the common enemy, but the help arrived too late to make a difference.¹⁵⁸ During the Crimean War, when Russia had deployed all its forces in Crimea, a historical opportunity to form the independent state in the Caucasus that England so much desired¹⁵⁹ was missed due to British apathy.¹⁶⁰ Although Russia was defeated in the end, "the Russian threat remained as though the Crimean War had never been fought".¹⁶¹ John Howes Gleason claims that "early on in the nineteenth century the English Public developed an antipathy toward Russia which soon became the most pronounced and enduring element on the national outlook on the world abroad".¹⁶² This hatred or fear of Russia and its people or influence came to be known as Russophobia.¹⁶³

¹⁵² John Howes Gleason, qtd. in Cain, **loc. cit.**

¹⁵³ Cain, **op. cit.**, p.16.

¹⁵⁴ **Ibid.**

¹⁵⁵ Lesley Blanche, "**The Sabres of Paradise: Conquest and Vengeance in the Caucasus**", London, I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2004, p.255.

¹⁵⁶ **Ibid.**

¹⁵⁷ **Ibid.**

¹⁵⁸ **Ibid.**, p.258.

¹⁵⁹ **Ibid.**

¹⁶⁰ **Ibid.**, p.257.

¹⁶¹ Norman Rich, qtd in Cain, **op. cit.**, p.47.

¹⁶² Gleason, qtd. in Cain, **op. cit.**, p.2.

¹⁶³ "Russophobia", **Webster's New World Dictionary**, Third College Edition, Simon & Schuster, 1994.

The political and diplomatic events over the next forty years kept the memories of the war alive.¹⁶⁴ The Russo-Turkish war in 1877 brought England on the brink of another war with Russia.¹⁶⁵ Dating from 18th century England,¹⁶⁶ Russophobia continued to influence the English worldview well into the 20th century¹⁶⁷ and manifested itself in the literature of the era.

Among the spy novelists interested in the threat towards the British presence in Asia, the leading one is perhaps Rudyard Kipling. Jimmie E. Cain claims that Kipling, whose father was living in India, showed Russophobic tendencies from an early age. He had “debated the headmaster over the proposition that ‘the advance of the Russians in central Asia is hostile to British Power’” and won the debate with great success.¹⁶⁸ His picaresque novel **Kim** (1901),¹⁶⁹ the story of a British orphan who grows up in India and finds himself in the middle of a spy game between Britain and Russia, reveals his position in the “Great Game” and his anti-Russian tendencies. “Kipling’s **Kim** [...] helped to establish the metaphor of spying as the Great Game, although the phrase originally denoted Anglo-Russian rivalry for the Central Asian sphere of imperial influence”.¹⁷⁰ With its unique focus on the competition between the two countries for the control of India, **Kim** has reportedly influenced both future spies like Kim Philby¹⁷¹ and espionage authors like John le Carré.¹⁷²

Another author focussing on the Russian threat is Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), who published two novels about revolutionary agents, **The Secret Agent** (1907) and **Under Western Eyes** (1911), both of which involved espionage and secret service activities.¹⁷³ **The Secret Agent** is especially interesting since it presents an early

¹⁶⁴ Cain, *op. cit.*, p.70.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Cain, *op. cit.*, p.72.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.92.

¹⁶⁹ Rudyard Kipling, **Kim**, London, Harper Collins, 2010, p.vii.

¹⁷⁰ Seed, *op. cit.*, p.119.

¹⁷¹ Andrew Boyle, **The Climate of Treason**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1979, p.108.

¹⁷² John L. Cobbs, **Understanding John Le Carré** Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1998, p.17.

¹⁷³ Cuddon, *op. cit.*, p.858.

example of an agent provocateur serving Russian interests¹⁷⁴ in a narrative style edging on farce.¹⁷⁵

However, World War I brought the German threat to the foreground and “produced a number of spy stories of nationalistic and right-wing tone in Britain, in which, inevitably, the Germans were the ‘baddies’”.¹⁷⁶ John Buchan (1875-1940) was an author and statesman who wrote a four-volume history of World War I; biographies of Julius Caesar, Sir Walter Scott, and Oliver Cromwell; numerous collections of essays and poetry as well as espionage stories.¹⁷⁷ Reflecting the zeitgeist of World War I, the protagonist of Buchan’s novels, Richard Hannay, struggles against an alliance of German and Turkish spies for the safety of Britain. Buchan’s novels including **The Thirty-Nine Steps**¹⁷⁸ (1915), **Greenmantle**¹⁷⁹ (1916), **Mr Standfast**¹⁸⁰ (1919) and **The Three Hostages**¹⁸¹ (1924) called his “Hannay Quartet”¹⁸² are one of the first series of espionage novels to be linked by a recurrent hero;¹⁸³ a trend to be followed by future authors including Robert Ludlum with his Jason Bourne series and John Le Carré with his novels featuring George Smiley. Buchan has admittedly modelled his fictional character Hannay on an army officer named Edmund Ironside, whom he had met in France when Ironside was dealing with intelligence operations in Russia:¹⁸⁴

In retrospect, Buchan emerges as central to the evolution of the genre for his stories reflect the penetration of enemy espionage networks, depict solitary agents and lonely escapes, and, most importantly, expose the thin veneer that stands between civilized behavior and barbarism even in the most elegant London drawing rooms. For his time, Buchan defined the spy story formula and from the 1915 release of **The Thirty-Nine Steps**, until the 1963 appearance of Alec Leamas, the cynical British spy in le Carré’s **The Spy Who**

¹⁷⁴ Joseph Conrad, **The Secret Agent**, Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1993.

¹⁷⁵ Seed, **loc. cit.**

¹⁷⁶ Cuddon, **loc. cit.**

¹⁷⁷ Brett F. Woods, “The Last Victorian: John Buchan and the Hannay Quartet”, **California Literary Review**, 26 March 2007, p.1 (Accessed) <http://calitreview.com/42/the-last-victorian-john-buchan-and-the-hannay-quartet/>, 20 November 2018.

¹⁷⁸ John Buchan, **The Thirty-Nine Steps**, London, Harper Press, 2012.

¹⁷⁹ John Buchan, **Greenmantle**, Istanbul, Literart, Altınbilek Publishers Ltd., 2014.

¹⁸⁰ John Buchan, **Mr. Standfast**, Istanbul, Literart, Altınbilek Publishers Ltd., 2015.

¹⁸¹ John Buchan, **The Three Hostages**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1924.

¹⁸² Woods, **loc. cit.**

¹⁸³ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.120.

¹⁸⁴ Woods, **loc. cit.**

Came in From the Cold, the formula remained firmly tied to Buchan.¹⁸⁵

1.2.3 The Period between the World Wars

In the period between the two World Wars, several other writers published spy fiction of varying quality.¹⁸⁶ A few of the names are Taffrail (pseudonym of Capt. Henry Dorling) (1883-1968); Francis Beeding, the pen-name of a partnership of two authors: John Palmer (1885-1944) and Hilary Saunders (1898-1951); Sydney Horler (1888-1954); Bernard Newman (1897-1968), E. Phillips Oppenheim (1866-1946), Valentine Williams (1883 - ?), Martha McKenna (1893-1969), Sax Rohmer (1883-1959) and John Creasey (1908-1973).¹⁸⁷

The period after World War I saw a number of shifts in the style and structure of spy fiction.¹⁸⁸ In 1928, Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) published his Ashenden stories collected in his **Ashenden or The British Agent**,¹⁸⁹ which is considered as a landmark in the genre.¹⁹⁰ The stories were based on the author's own experiences as an officer for the British Intelligence in Switzerland¹⁹¹ and are notable for their detachment and neutrality as well as their quiet tone.¹⁹² "Maugham presented spies who were very ordinary and quite amiable people doing a job. There is a complete absence of anything sensational in the stories".¹⁹³ This deglamorising of espionage was a stylistic novelty and John le Carré later "praised Maugham for being the first espionage author to 'write about espionage in a mood of disenchantment and almost prosaic reality'".¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁵ Robin W. Winks, "John Buchan: Stalking the Wilder Game", **The Four Adventures of Richard Hannay**, Boston, Godine, 1988, p.xi, qtd. in Woods, *loc. cit.*

¹⁸⁶ Cuddon, *op. cit.*, p.858.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Seed, *op. cit.*, p.122.

¹⁸⁹ Somerset Maugham, **Ashenden or The British Agent**, New York, Avon Publications, 1951.

¹⁹⁰ Cuddon, *op. cit.*, p.858.

¹⁹¹ Seed, *op. cit.*, p.122.

¹⁹² Cuddon, *loc. cit.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Ted Morgan, **Somerset Maugham**, London, Jonathan Cape, 1980, p.313, qtd. in Seed, *op. cit.*, p.122.

During this period, some of the best spy stories also came from Eric Ambler¹⁹⁵ (1909-2007),¹⁹⁶ especially **The Dark Frontier** (1936), **Epitaph for a Spy** (1938), and **The Mask of Dimitrios**¹⁹⁷ (1939). In the latter, Charles Latimer, a lecturer turned author of detective stories, is offered a subject, Dimitrios, a mysterious Greek from Asia Minor, by the head of the Turkish secret police.¹⁹⁸ Interestingly, at a time when Germany has become a threat for Britain once again, the focus of Ambler's novel is the Balkans. "Demetrios¹⁹⁹ is less a character and more a personification of the scheming which is taking place in the post-war Balkans".²⁰⁰

Ambler was original because of his detachment and his "exceptional gift for creating and sustaining tension without being melodramatic".²⁰¹ According to Brett Woods, Ambler belongs to a different class than the ordinary espionage writers:

Like his predecessor Somerset Maugham, Ambler sought to transform the genre from the verbal banality and minimal characterizations of authors William Le Queux and Edward Oppenheim to a more sophisticated, morally ambiguous world of deception and danger. Ambler also coursed the genre in another markedly different direction by moving away from the more conservative, pro-British, "King and Crown" intrigues of John Buchan to explore other, more complex political venues.²⁰²

Looking at the historical development of the genre, it can be observed that "initially spying contrasted unfavourably with an ethic of open courage".²⁰³ The cloak-and-dagger nature of spying was perceived as cowardice and dirty business. In order to keep the distinction clear between the good and the bad, spying was what other countries did, whereas the national heroes were typically young and athletic gentlemen, usually resourceful amateurs,²⁰⁴ joining the world of espionage unwillingly and out of a sense of duty. However, as authors coming from Public Service or espionage

¹⁹⁵ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.859.

¹⁹⁶ Woods, **loc. cit.**

¹⁹⁷ Eric Ambler, **The Mask of Dimitrios**, London, Penguin Classics, 2009.

¹⁹⁸ Seed, **loc. cit.**

¹⁹⁹ Seed writes the name as Demetrios throughout his essay.

²⁰⁰ Seed, **loc. cit.**

²⁰¹ Cuddon, **loc. cit.**

²⁰² Woods, **loc. cit.**

²⁰³ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.115.

²⁰⁴ **Ibid.**, p.116.

background including Somerset Maugham,²⁰⁵ Graham Greene,²⁰⁶ and John le Carré²⁰⁷ started to reflect an insider's view of the secret world, the patriotic hero was replaced with the morally ambiguous officer of the secret service. Somerset Maugham depicted his Ashenden as the handler who "saw his spies at stated intervals and paid them their wages".²⁰⁸ Reviewing Ashenden in 1928, D. H. Lawrence declared: 'Spying is a dirty business, and Secret Service altogether is a world of under-dogs, a world in which the meanest passions are given play'.²⁰⁹ Eric Ambler was also one of the first authors to draw a more objective picture of the spies from both sides as members of the same dirty trade:

Ambler struck a note of neutralism in his spy novels, sharply and astringently enlightening the reader that, in the pursuit of espionage, one side was really as bad as the other and that spies and spy-catchers were not only mainly un-heroic, but very often of minor significance and unpleasant mien.²¹⁰

The turmoil and destruction in Europe during the Second World War from 1939 to 1945²¹¹ may also have contributed to the acceptance of espionage as a necessary evil. Since desperate times call for desperate measures, espionage may have gained public legitimacy as a distasteful way of disarming the enemy to protect fellow countrymen. Seed observes that "this distaste would be replaced by a perception of centrality in 1966 and a character in Kingsley Amis's **The Anti-Death League** (1966)²¹² would claim that the spy is a 'uniquely characteristic and significant figure of our time'".²¹³

²⁰⁵ **Ibid.**, p.122.

²⁰⁶ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.123.

²⁰⁷ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.210.

²⁰⁸ Maugham, **op. cit.**, p.101.

²⁰⁹ **W. Somerset Maugham: The Critical Heritage**, Ed. by Anthony Curtis, John Whitehead, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987, p.177, qtd. in Seed, **op. cit.**, p.115.

²¹⁰ Woods, **loc. cit.**

²¹¹ Bruce Robinson, "World War Two: Summary Outline of Key Events", (Accessed) http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/ww2_summary_01.shtml, 21 November 2018.

²¹² Kingsley Amis, **The Anti-Death League**, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1966, p.117, qtd. in Seed, **op. cit.**, p.115.

²¹³ **Ibid.**

1.2.4 The Cold War Era

During the Second World War, the United States, Great Britain, twenty other democratic countries and the Soviet Union - which is unlike the others a totalitarian country - had formed the “Grand Alliance” against the Nazi Germany.²¹⁴ Although allies against a common enemy for the duration of the war between 1939 and 1945, the Grand Alliance remained under constant strain after 1941 because of a lack of confidence in Stalin. Still, the alliance held together and won the war.²¹⁵

In 1945, from 4 to 11 February, the leaders of the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union convened in the Crimean town of Yalta and practically divided Europe among themselves.²¹⁶ But the friendly relations did not last long: While the western countries believed in democracy and free trade, the Soviet Union was committed to totalitarian communism.²¹⁷ After a small conflict about Iran between the Soviet Union and the United States in 1946, Stalin stated that “communism and capitalism were ‘incompatible’ and that the Soviet Union therefore had to begin a military build-up”.²¹⁸ Immediately afterwards, Harry Truman invited Winston Churchill to his hometown in Missouri and together they gave a warning to Soviet expansionism.²¹⁹ In fact, these were the declaration speeches of the Cold War.²²⁰ When the Soviet Union consolidated its communist rule in Poland, which was “the traditional corridor for invasions of Russia and therefore a matter of ‘life and death’”, the move was perceived as a mockery of the promises made in Yalta.²²¹

In 1956, while the Soviet Union was busy forcing its communist rule on Eastern European countries like Poland and Hungary, a crisis came up between Great Britain, France and Egypt over the control of the Suez Canal, a joint venture of Britain

²¹⁴ Michael Kort, “**The Columbia guide to the cold war**”, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998, p.16.

²¹⁵ **Ibid.**

²¹⁶ **Ibid.**, p.18.

²¹⁷ **Ibid.**, p.22.

²¹⁸ **Ibid.**, p.24.

²¹⁹ **Ibid.**

²²⁰ Walter La Feber, qtd. in Kort, **loc. cit.**

²²¹ **Ibid.**

and France constructed to shorten the way to India and South-East Asia.²²² Until then, the control of the Canal was in Britain's hands, but Egypt's nationalist leader Nasser had suddenly decided to seize its control together with the revenues of Suez.²²³ In October 1956, France, Britain and Israel attacked Egypt in an attempt to take back the Canal, but the United States - a traditional ally of these countries - did not support their cause and instead joined forces with the Soviet Union in condemning the war.²²⁴ As a result, Britain lost the control of the Canal to Egypt.

In 13 August 1961, East Germany began building a wall in order to divide East Berlin from the West²²⁵ and prevent East Germans from escaping to freedom. The Berlin Wall became the symbol of the Cold War, and although the official end of the Cold War was to come on 21 November 1990 with the Charter of Paris,²²⁶ the historical night of 9 November 1989, when this wall was demolished,²²⁷ would be remembered as the true end of the Cold War.

In spite of the nuclear armament, or perhaps because of it,²²⁸ the tension between the East and the West did not turn into a Third World War, but took the form of a Cold War where both sides had numerous vital secrets that had to be protected in order to preserve their country, people and livelihood. And in this political atmosphere, spies have probably gained the greatest importance in the history of civilization:

The hardest and most bitterly fought confrontation between the Soviet Union and the western democracies during the 50 years of the Cold War was on the espionage front. In this arena the KGB, the 'sword and the shield' of the USSR, pitted its wits against its principal adversaries - the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States (CIA) and the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) [...] The soldiers in this war were the spymasters, the spies and their agents, all of whom operated in a world of shadows where deception and betrayal flourished.²²⁹

²²² **Ibid.**, p.41.

²²³ **Ibid.**

²²⁴ **Ibid.**

²²⁵ **Ibid.**, p.190.

²²⁶ **Ibid.**, p.87.

²²⁷ **Ibid.**, p.200.

²²⁸ **Ibid.**, p.88.

²²⁹ Phillip Knightley, Introduction to "**My Silent War: The Autobiography of a Spy**" by Kim Philby, New York, Modern Library, 2002, 1968.

Literature was also influenced by this politically-charged atmosphere. “With the radically transformed Cold War, espionage was now in vogue, more mysterious, more sensational, and more popular than ever”.²³⁰

Perhaps the most prominent characteristic of this era is the dominance of the authors who were public servants or agents themselves. As their predecessors William le Queux,²³¹ Erskine Childers,²³² Somerset Maugham,²³³ and Eric Ambler²³⁴ who came from Public Service or secret service backgrounds, Graham Greene²³⁵ (1904-91) and John le Carré²³⁶ were also officers of the British Secret Service, while Ian Fleming had a senior position in naval intelligence.²³⁷ Greene had even served in “Kim Philby’s section of the British Intelligence during the Second World War, while Philby was an undercover Soviet agent, and remained well disposed towards him even after Philby’s defection to the USSR”.²³⁸

According to Seed, “Greene does not separate espionage from other human activity but rather weaves that issue into dramas of commitment”.²³⁹ His prominent novels are **The Confidential Agent** (1939), **The Ministry of Fear** (1943), and perhaps his masterpiece, **Our Man in Havana** (1958), which turns espionage into a situational comedy.²⁴⁰

Greene was not the only government official to try his hand at writing; there were also others who chose to write under pseudonyms: One of them was Richard Clayton writing espionage novels such as **Slow Burner** (1958), **The Telemann Touch**

²³⁰ S.J. Hamrick, “**Deceiving the Deceivers: Kim Philby, Donald Maclean & Guy Burgess**”, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2004, p.160.

²³¹ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.857.

²³² Childers, **op. cit.**, p.xxi.

²³³ Maugham, **op. cit.**, p.7.

²³⁴ Woods, **loc. cit.**

²³⁵ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.123.

²³⁶ Sisman, **op.cit.**, p.210.

²³⁷ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.124.

²³⁸ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.123.

²³⁹ William M. Chase, ‘Spies and God’s Spies: Greene’s Espionage Fiction’, Ed. by Jeffrey Meyers, **Graham Greene: A Revaluation**, London, Macmillan, 1990, qtd. in Seed, **op. cit.**, p.123.

²⁴⁰ Seed, **loc. cit.**

(1958), **Venetian Blind** (1958), **The Closed Circuit** (1960), and **The Arena** (1961) under the pseudonym William Haggard.²⁴¹

While Maugham, Ambler and Greene deglamorized the spy and the whole business of espionage,²⁴² Ian Fleming (1908-64), the creator of the James Bond enterprise, chose a completely different path.²⁴³ The son of an MP and the grandson of a Scottish financier and philanthropist, the Eton graduate and Sandhurst dropout Fleming spent his youth in Europe learning languages and getting to know the culture.²⁴⁴ During the Second World War, he served as a senior officer in the Naval Intelligence²⁴⁵ and dealt with counterespionage in the Iberian Peninsula where he fed the German High Command false reports.²⁴⁶ In those years, he was chosen as the personal assistant of Rear-Admiral John Godfrey, who is believed to be the model for the character M. in his Bond series.²⁴⁷ During his naval intelligence years, he also gained experience with espionage gadgetry, agents, and procedures that he later described in his Bond novels.²⁴⁸ He also participated in confidential missions to the United States for the Naval Intelligence Service.²⁴⁹ His work took him to France, Spain and North Africa, where he visited British embassies and followed operation Golden Eye, a plan to defend Gibraltar in 1940.²⁵⁰ After the war, he reportedly continued to work for MI6.²⁵¹

However, in 1952, Fleming decided to try his hand at espionage novels. His first James Bond novel **Casino Royal** (1953) was inspired by Casino Estoril in Portugal, which he had visited together with Admiral Godfrey during the war.²⁵² The name of the protagonist was borrowed from the author of the book entitled **A Field Guide to the Birds of the West Indies**, written by American ornithologist James Bond,

²⁴¹ Bruccoli, Baughman, **op. cit.**, p.xi.

²⁴² Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.859.

²⁴³ David Seed, **op. cit.**, p.124.

²⁴⁴ "Ian Fleming", (Accessed) <http://www.ianfleming.com/ian-fleming/>, 28 November 2018.

²⁴⁵ **Ibid.**

²⁴⁶ **Ibid.**

²⁴⁷ **Ibid.**

²⁴⁸ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.125.

²⁴⁹ Buzrlová, **op. cit.**, p.43.

²⁵⁰ Jeremy Black, **The Politics of James Bond**, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2005, qtd. in Buzrlová, **loc. cit.**

²⁵¹ Yetkin, **op. cit.**, p.12.

²⁵² "Ian Fleming", (Accessed) <http://www.ianfleming.com/ian-fleming/>, 28 November 2018.

which was Fleming's "Jamaican Bible".²⁵³ But the spy character himself was based on the Yugoslavian double-agent Dushko Popov, who was a womanizer, a talented cook and a creature of the nights working for both the British and the Germans.²⁵⁴ When *Casino Royal* was published, Fleming had already started writing **Live and Let Die** (1954), which was published a year later. The success of the first books paved the way for **Moonraker** (1955), **Diamonds Are Forever** (1956), **From Russia with Love** (1957), **Dr. No** (1958), **Goldfinger** (1959), **For Your Eyes Only** (1960) in which the short story "Quantum of Solace" paid homage to Fleming's friend Somerset Maugham, **Thunderball** (1961), **The Spy Who Loved Me** (1962), **On Her Majesty's Secret Service** (1963), **You Only Live Twice** (1964), **The Man with the Golden Gun** (1965), and **Octopussy and The Living Daylights** (published posthumously in 1966).²⁵⁵ **Goldeneye** (1995), a James Bond novel written by John Gardner, is named after Fleming's house in Jamaica, which took its name either from operation Golden Eye he had participated in during the war, or – more probably – a Spanish tomb discovered in his garden which had a golden eye in a golden head.²⁵⁶ All his Bond books were written in Golden Eye.²⁵⁷

Bond is a figure designed to resist the menace to empire, Bond was seen as a defender of United Kingdom and the whole empire. Later, the setting and dynamics of the plot changed, as the cultural, historical and political environment in which the Bond characters are put, altered and changed as well. The changing British world role and view of the world was demonstrated via Bond. Bond was created and formed as a cold-hearted hero, a gambler, society man. He is connected with an image of toughness, stubbornness, sharpness, cleverness, gentlemanliness and male sexuality. Attributes of a gentleman were important to Bond's success. With Bond, Fleming represents the unrealistic school of glamour-espionage because he tried to glamorize him in all aspects.²⁵⁸

Fleming also admitted the unrealistic nature of his Bond adventures. To him "the secret agent had become an anachronism" due to the nuclear threat. So, stories of the secret service had to be either incredible or farcical.²⁵⁹ Indeed, the Bond

²⁵³ **Ibid.**

²⁵⁴ Yetkin, **loc. cit.**

²⁵⁵ **Ibid.**

²⁵⁶ **Ibid.**

²⁵⁷ **Ibid.**

²⁵⁸ Buzrlová, **loc. cit.**

²⁵⁹ Seed, **loc. cit.**

adventures were taken as “compensatory fantasies where Bond embodied the imaginary power that England might once again be placed at the centre of world affairs during a period when its world power status was visibly and rapidly declining”.²⁶⁰

Fleming himself has stated that he regularly used two narrative devices: “Speed and the inclusion of ‘familiar household names and objects’ to locate his action”. Consumables, tourism, and games are the central ingredients to any Bond novel.²⁶¹

According to Umberto Eco, the Bond novels “function according to traditional formulaic oppositions between hero and villain, or knight (Bond) against king (his boss M)”.²⁶² Referring to the head of the British Secret Intelligence Service only by an initial may be a tribute to Fleming’s friend Somerset Maugham’s **Ashenden**, or it may be reflecting the tradition within the service in those years.²⁶³

However, during the 1960s, a realistic anti-hero agent/spy/operator figure, the opposite of James Bond, had already started to evolve, especially in the novels of Len Deighton (1929-) and John le Carré (1931-).²⁶⁴

[...] they between them established an even more realistic form of spy story than that conceived by Maugham, Ambler and Greene. They revealed the squalor, cynicism, treachery, expediency and corruption of the world of espionage and in their novels confirmed the actualities of that world in real life.²⁶⁵

Unlike his predecessors, Len Deighton was born to a working-class family and his mother did cleaning jobs for an Anna Wolkoff, a British citizen of Russian descent. When Deighton was eleven years old, Wolkoff was arrested for being a Nazi spy, an incident that has lit the fire of espionage in him.²⁶⁶ During the war, he was

²⁶⁰ Tony Bennett, Janet Woolcott, **Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero**, London, Macmillan, 1987, p.28, qtd. in Seed, **op. cit.**, p.126.

²⁶¹ **Ibid.**, p.125.

²⁶² **Ibid.**

²⁶³ **Ibid.**

²⁶⁴ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.860.

²⁶⁵ **Ibid.**

²⁶⁶ “Len Deighton”, (Accessed) <http://www.deightondossier.net/Author/>, 29 November 2018.

attached to the RAF Special Investigations Branch as it offered a chance to train as a photographer. This was his first step into the world of “secrets and investigations”.²⁶⁷

After the war, he studied art and worked as an illustrator before he tried his hand at writing.²⁶⁸ His first four novels including **The Ipcress File** (1964) and **Funeral in Berlin** (1965) feature an anonymous anti-hero, who came to be called as Harry Palmer in the movie versions.²⁶⁹

These books proved instant hits and set a new tone for the spy novel with a working class hero who was womaniser and cook, subordinate and team member. Palmer contrasted vividly with Ian Fleming’s upper-class, Navy Officer Bond and the more traditional literary perspective of the English ‘gentleman spy’.²⁷⁰

Towards the end of the Cold War, Deighton published the **Berlin Game** (1983), **Mexico Set** (1984) and **London Match** (1985) trilogy about the “careworn working class British spy Bernard Samson” and featuring “the first believable, multi-faceted female spy character Fiona Samson”.²⁷¹ Deighton continued with two more trilogies: **Spy Hook** (1988), **Spy Line** (1989) and **Spy Sinker** (1990); and **Faith** (1994), **Hope** (1995) and **Charity** (1996), completed by an additional volume called **Winter: A Berlin Family 1899-1945** (1987).

Len Deighton’s novels made an initial impact through his narrators’ tone of voice and through documentary techniques.²⁷² Though Deighton had the finer style,²⁷³ he has not achieved the standing of John Le Carré: “Of the British spy novelists now writing, John le Carré has been accorded the most respect as a literary figure [...]”.²⁷⁴

Espionage also entered the post-war American fiction “as an increasingly important subject”.²⁷⁵ Richard Condon’s **The Manchurian Candidate** (1959), Thomas

²⁶⁷ **Ibid.**

²⁶⁸ **Ibid.**

²⁶⁹ **Ibid.**

²⁷⁰ **Ibid.**

²⁷¹ **Ibid.**

²⁷² Seed, **op. cit.**, p.129.

²⁷³ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.860.

²⁷⁴ Bruccoli, Baughman, **op. cit.**, p.xii.

²⁷⁵ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.130.

Pynchon's **Under the Rose** (1961), James Grady's **Six Days of the Condor** (1974) are among the prominent examples of American political thrillers.²⁷⁶ One of the successful writers of the political thriller genre is Frederick Forsyth (1938-). Formerly trained as an RAF pilot, Forsyth started working as a freelance MI6 agent under the cover of a journalist in Africa in 1968.²⁷⁷ Forsyth came to prominence with his 1971 novel **The Day of the Jackal**,²⁷⁸ an international bestseller²⁷⁹ revolving around an assassin hired to kill Charles de Gaulle.²⁸⁰ The novels that followed all deal with political matters around the world: **The Odessa File**²⁸¹ is "about a Nazi plan to liquidate Israel by using rockets filled with bubonic plague"²⁸² on a backdrop showing "the purposeful lethargy of West German officialdom in investigating Nazi war crimes";²⁸³ **The Dogs of War**²⁸⁴ - taking its name from Shakespeare's verse "cry 'Havoc' and let slip the dogs of war"²⁸⁵ - tells the story of a group of mercenaries hired by a British company to carry out a coup d'état in Africa,²⁸⁶ and **The Devil's Alternative**²⁸⁷ portrays a starving Soviet Union's plans to invade Europe for food while the author foresees the Ukrainian claim for independence about a decade in advance.²⁸⁸ His 1984 novel **The Fourth Protocol**²⁸⁹ even features Kim Philby as a character.²⁹⁰

²⁷⁶ **Ibid.**

²⁷⁷ Alison Flood, "Frederick Forsyth: I was an MI6 agent", **The Guardian**, 1 Sep 2015, (Accessed) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/sep/01/frederick-forsyth-i-was-an-mi6-agent>, 6 December 2018.

²⁷⁸ Frederick Forsyth, **The Day of the Jackal**, New York, Bantam Books, 1971.

²⁷⁹ "Frederick Forsyth", Biblio, (Accessed) <https://www.biblio.com/frederick-forsyth/author/145>, 15 May 2019.

²⁸⁰ Michiko Kakutani, "Books of the Times", **The New York Times**, 30 August 1984, p.20 (Accessed) <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/08/30/books/books-of-the-times-164150.html>, 15 May 2019.

²⁸¹ Frederick Forsyth, **The Odessa File**, London, Corgi Books, 1972.

²⁸² Kakutani, **loc. cit.**

²⁸³ Earl W. Jennison, Jr., "The Odessa File by Frederick Forsyth", **Journal of Baltic Studies**, Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer 1974, p. 159.

²⁸⁴ Frederick Forsyth, **The Dogs of War**, London, Hutchinson, 1974.

²⁸⁵ Hugh Rawson, Margaret Miner, "Cry 'Havoc' and let slip the dogs of war", "**Dictionary of Quotations from Shakespeare**", London, Penguin Books, 1992.

²⁸⁶ Donald Goddard, "The Dogs Of War", **The New York Times**, 14 July 1974, p.267 (Accessed) <https://www.nytimes.com/1974/07/14/archives/the-dogs-of-war-by-frederick-forsyth-408-pp-new-york-the-viking.html>, 15 May 2019.

²⁸⁷ Frederick Forsyth, **The Devil's Alternative**, London, Corgi Books, 1979.

²⁸⁸ "The Devil's Alternative", Kirkus Reviews, 3 March 1980 (Accessed) <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/frederick-forsyth-2/the-devils-alternative/>, 15 May 2019.

²⁸⁹ Frederick Forsyth, **The Fourth Protocol**, London, Hutchinson, 1984.

²⁹⁰ Kakutani, **loc. cit.**

Robert Ludlum (1927-2001)²⁹¹ is one of the greatest American thriller authors of recent decades. His first novel, **The Scarlatti Inheritance** (1971)²⁹² was an instant bestseller²⁹³ and was followed by **The Osterman Weekend**²⁹⁴ in 1972.²⁹⁵ **The Matarese Circle** (1979)²⁹⁶ features two agents, an American and a Russian who were former enemies, uniting their powers against an underground organization.²⁹⁷ Ludlum is probably best known for his Jason Bourne series which was very popular during the '80s. Ludlum has twenty-seven published spy thrillers.²⁹⁸

Among the few female spy novelists, Evelyn Anthony (1926-2018)²⁹⁹ is a prominent one with espionage romances. Anthony was introduced to the world of espionage thanks to the contacts made through her father, a Lieutenant Commander who had worked with British intelligence officers including Desmond Bristow, “who, with Kim Philby, had recruited one of the most important double agents of the war”.³⁰⁰ Bristow’s stories inspired among others **The Rendezvous** (1967)³⁰¹ and **The Poellenberg Inheritance** (1972).³⁰² Anthony’s most successful novel is **The Tamarind Seed** (1971).³⁰³ Her other espionage novels include **The Defector** (1987),³⁰⁴ **No Enemy But Time** (1987),³⁰⁵ and **The House of Vandekar** (1988).³⁰⁶

It is commonly observed that the Spy Novel is a British genre³⁰⁷ and “the spy story has not flourished in other languages and literatures” but the English and the American.³⁰⁸ However, Boris Akunin is the greatest exception to this rule. Born in 1956

²⁹¹ John Williams, “Robert Ludlum”, **The Guardian**, 14 March 2001 (Accessed)

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/mar/14/guardianobituaries.books>, 15 May 2019.

²⁹² Robert Ludlum, **The Scarlatti Inheritance**, New York, Bantam Books, 1982.

²⁹³ Williams, *loc. cit.*

²⁹⁴ Robert Ludlum, **The Osterman Weekend**, New York, Dell Publishing, 1978.

²⁹⁵ Williams, *loc. cit.*

²⁹⁶ Robert Ludlum, **The Matarese Circle**, London, Panther Books, 1984.

²⁹⁷ Cover of **The Matarese Circle** by Robert Ludlum, London, Bantam Reissue Ed., 1983.

²⁹⁸ “Robert Ludlum”, (Accessed) <http://www.robert-ludlum.com/authors.html>, 6 December 2018.

²⁹⁹ Danuta Kean, “The Evelyn Anthony Obituary”, **The Guardian**, 10 October 2018 (Accessed) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/oct/10/evelyn-anthony-obituary>, 23 December 2018.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ Evelyn Anthony, **The Rendezvous**, New York, Coward-McCann, 1968.

³⁰² Evelyn Anthony, **The Poellenberg Inheritance**, London, Sphere Publishing, 1972.

³⁰³ Evelyn Anthony, **The Tamarind Seed**, London, Little, Brown Book Group Limited, 1988.

³⁰⁴ Evelyn Anthony, **The Defector**, London, Hutchinson Publishing, 1987.

³⁰⁵ Evelyn Anthony, **No Enemy But Time**, London, Hutchinson Publishing, 1987.

³⁰⁶ Evelyn Anthony, **The House of Vandekar**, London, Putnam Publishing Group, 1988.

³⁰⁷ Bruccoli, Baughman, *op. cit.*, p.iv.

³⁰⁸ Cuddon, *op. cit.*, p.862.

as Grigory Chkhartshvili in Georgia, USSR, he is an expert in Japanese language and history and a prolific writer of the espionage genre under the pseudonym Boris Akunin.³⁰⁹ His hero Erast Fandorin goes through a series of historical adventures during the tsarist era throughout nine novels including **The Winter Queen** (Azazel, 1998),³¹⁰ **The Turkish Gambit** (1998),³¹¹ **Murder on the Leviathan** (1998),³¹² and **The Black City** (2012),³¹³ and the reader gets the chance to observe Fandorin from the young age of twenty, until his sixties.³¹⁴

The fact that he is a historical detective is not important. The important thing is that this sort of writing was wanted by Russian readers but was non-existent in Russia. [...] By the mid-nineties, there were two sorts of books: elitist highbrow fiction or very low literature, with nothing in-between. My books are mass-market literature for people with some education, people who like to use their brains.³¹⁵

It should be more than a coincidence that a considerable group among successful espionage novelists are former spies themselves. On 29 June 1984, Len Deighton threw a surprise 75th birthday luncheon for Eric Ambler at the Savoy in London and invited the most acclaimed British spy novelists to attend.³¹⁶ Besides Len Deighton and Eric Ambler, the guests included John le Carré, Anthony Price, John Gardner, Frederick Forsyth, Ted Allbeury, Lionel Davidson, Gavin Lyall, Kingsley Amis, Julian Symons, H. R. F. Keating and Miles Tripp.³¹⁷ The only one missing was Graham Greene, who was living in Southern France then and had sent a cable to celebrate Ambler saying “to the master from one of his disciples”.³¹⁸

³⁰⁹ Yetkin, **op. cit.**, p.16.

³¹⁰ Boris Akunin, **The Winter Queen**, New York, Random House, 2004.

³¹¹ Boris Akunin, **The Turkish Gambit**, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005.

³¹² Boris Akunin, **Murder on the Leviathan**, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004.

³¹³ Boris Akunin, **The Black City**, London, Orion Publishing, 2018.

³¹⁴ Yetkin, **loc. cit.**

³¹⁵ “Boris Akunin: The Riddler of Russia”, (Accessed)

<https://www.google.com.tr/amp/s/www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/boris-akunin-the-riddler-of-russia-305249.html%3famp>, 26 November 2018.

³¹⁶ Jeff Quest, “The Spy Writers Club”, (Accessed)

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/spywrite.com/2017/06/28/spy-writers-club/amp>, 13 December 2018.

³¹⁷ **Ibid.**

³¹⁸ Ethan Iverson, qtd. in Quest, **loc. cit.**

The fact that some of the guests at this table including Eric Ambler,³¹⁹ Graham Greene,³²⁰ John le Carré,³²¹ and Frederick Forsyth³²² were either agents of the British Secret Service, public servants, or freelancers more or less related with the world of intelligence like their predecessors William le Queux,³²³ Erskine Childers,³²⁴ Somerset Maugham,³²⁵ and Ian Fleming,³²⁶ points to a certain drive among former spies to tell about the world of espionage in fiction. The reasons for this may be various, ranging from the need to confess to realism, nostalgia, and even revenge.

One of the prominent factors leading former spies to write seems to be the need to confess. According to Milton W. Horowitz, if a person feels that s/he has caused a negative act, this leads to feelings of guilt and self-hostility. To confess relieves the person from this self-hostility, and making amends helps the person feel less negative – or even more positive – towards himself.³²⁷ Thus, fictionalising the past may be “seen as a salvation and perceived as a means [...] through which the person may go to get to the region of freedom”.³²⁸ Spies revisiting the past in fiction may thus purge the residual feelings of anxiety, fear, or guilt.

As officers of the country they serve, spies in the field are often asked to carry out missions without considering the consequences and sometimes the benefit of the country may clash with the individual’s conscience. Ex-spies may also use fiction as a means to distance themselves from events in their past: “According to the Construal Level Theory, creating psychological distance from a certain event by changing their linguistic self-distance can affect how close they feel to that event from an emotional perspective”.³²⁹ Self-distancing helps people cope with difficult events from their past,

³¹⁹ Woods, *loc. cit.*

³²⁰ Seed, *op. cit.*, p.123.

³²¹ Sisman, *op. cit.*, p.210.

³²² Flood, *loc. cit.*

³²³ Cuddon, *op. cit.*, p.857.

³²⁴ Childers, *op. cit.*, p.xxi.

³²⁵ Maugham, *op. cit.*, p.7.

³²⁶ Seed *op. cit.*, p.124.

³²⁷ Milton W. Horowitz, “The Psychology of Confession”, *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Sci.*, 197, 1956-57, p.196, (Accessed)

<https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent>, 14 December 2018.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

³²⁹ “Self-Distancing: What It Is and How You Can Use It to Make Better Decisions” (Accessed) <https://effectiviology.com/self-distancing-rational--decisions/>, 14 December 2018.

decrease the duration of negative emotions and relieve anger.³³⁰ For the authors, retelling real-life events through a third person's vantage point may help put things in a new perspective to make peace with the past. **The Spy Who Came in From the Cold** by John Le Carré, a novel still regarded as a game changer and a turning point in the history of espionage fiction,³³¹ may also be read as confessional about the clash of duty and conscience in the field.

Some authors like Floyd L. Paseman, a CIA operative in Asia and Europe for nearly 35 years³³² and the author of **A Spy's Journey: A CIA Memoir**³³³ writes because he believes that people simply have a right to know: "We're asking the public to support us when things go bad. [...] People need to understand how difficult and fragile the whole human intelligence effort is".³³⁴

On the other hand, in the glamorous espionage world of Ian Fleming, his reasons for writing may be nostalgia for the clandestine work that took him around the world from Africa to Europe and America during the Second World War when he was a senior officer in naval intelligence.³³⁵ Many of his novels revisit the places, events and personalities he met along the way.³³⁶ The deglamourising of the espionage novel by John Le Carré and Len Deighton can also be regarded as a reaction to the unrealistic style of the authors led by William Le Queux and Ian Fleming. Creating characters like Alec Leamas³³⁷ and Bill Haydon³³⁸ inspired by flesh-and-blood spies in real-life operations can be taken as an effort to reflect the true nature of the clandestine world to the public.

Finally, another strong motive to write is revenge. Robert Baer, who was a CIA agent for 22 years, "wrote his novel **See No Evil** in 2002 'out of Anger' for spy

³³⁰ **Ibid.**

³³¹ Robin W. Winks, "John Buchan: Stalking the Wilder Game", **The Four Adventures of Richard Hannay**, Boston, Godine, 1988, p.xi, qtd. in Woods, **loc. cit.**

³³² Scott Shane, "Ex-Spies Tell It All" **The New York Times** (Accessed) <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/15/books/exspies-tell-it-all.html>, 13 December 2018.

³³³ Floyd Paseman, **A Spy's Journey: A CIA Memoir**, Minnesota, Zenith Press, 2005.

³³⁴ Shane, **loc. cit.**

³³⁵ "Ian Fleming" (Accessed) <http://www.ianfleming.com/ian-fleming/>, 29 December 2018.

³³⁶ **Ibid.**

³³⁷ Plimpton, **op. cit.**, p.149.

³³⁸ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.128.

bureaucracy, which had ordered him polygraphed twice in one year because of what he considered groundless suspicions”.³³⁹ Melissa Boyle Mahle,³⁴⁰ a CIA operative who worked mostly in the Middle East for 14 years,³⁴¹ and Lindsay Moran,³⁴² who quit the agency after five years in the Balkans,³⁴³ have recently published their memoirs about the service.³⁴⁴ Moran says: “I don’t think anyone outside the agency has any idea how dysfunctional the agency is, [...] a lot of people inside do.”³⁴⁵

1.2.5 Elements of Paranoia and Betrayal in Espionage Fiction

Born in an age when the footsteps of the two World Wars were already being heard, the espionage genre features a strong sense of protectiveness against a foreign enemy threatening to conquer one’s country and impose its own system of values upon the native people. “The subject of espionage is itself endlessly fascinating, because it deals with the rawest, most elemental side of human behaviour”.³⁴⁶

The early spy novels expressed a simple view of the world divided between the good representing the Western democracies and an evil force, usually in the form of the communists³⁴⁷ or Nazis. During this period, the spy novel had not flourished in other languages and literatures yet.³⁴⁸ This unilateral perspective was strongly supported both by spy novelists and their audiences until the end of the 1960s, when the world could no longer be seen in such simple terms.³⁴⁹ By this time, spy novelists from the Communist bloc, who would reflect a mirror-image of this worldview, started to emerge. One of these novelists was the Bulgarian Andrei Gulyashki, who “was ‘invited’ by the KGB to refurbish the image of Soviet espionage which had been tarnished by

³³⁹ Shane, *loc. cit.*

³⁴⁰ Lindsay Moran, **Blowing My Cover**, New York, Berkley Books, 2005.

³⁴¹ Shane, *loc. cit.*

³⁴² Melissa Boyle Mahle, **Denial and Deception**, New York, Nation Books, 2005.

³⁴³ Shane, *loc. cit.*

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁶ Frederick P. Hitz, **The Great Game: The Myths and Reality of Espionage**, New York, Vintage Books, 2005, p.7.

³⁴⁷ Katy Fletcher, “Evolution of the Modern American Spy Novel”, **Journal of Contemporary History**, Vol. 22, No. 2, Intelligence Services during the Second World War, April 1987, p.320.

³⁴⁸ Cuddon, *op. cit.*, p.862.

³⁴⁹ Fletcher, *loc. cit.*

[...] James Bond”.³⁵⁰ Gulyashki’s protagonist Avakum Zakhov was a “proletarian Bond”³⁵¹ fighting against the British with the mission to liquidate none other than James Bond.³⁵²

Though the espionage genre is rooted in political assumptions, the earlier spy fiction “relegated the political situation to a subordinate position, while elevating the exploits of the spy hero”.³⁵³ The spy novel is essentially an entertainment read as a form of escapism, which thrives on conflict and prejudices.³⁵⁴

The spy novel is very much a recitative of popular clichés [...] the post World War II spy novel is a recitative of cold war clichés. Ian Fleming, a great favorite of John Kennedy, is probably the best example of that. Spy novelists like Fleming did little to help us understand the Russians or the Soviet bureaucracy, did little to help us better understand ourselves or our times. (As George Kennan points out in a recent article in *The New Yorker*, the genre has probably contributed to our gross ignorance of the Soviet Union and heightened our paranoia.)³⁵⁵

The term ‘paranoia’ derives from Greek and is a compound word meaning ‘beside oneself’ or ‘out of one’s mind’.³⁵⁶ Originally referring to a kind of mental disorder, the term is also a part of everyday language and has come to indicate an irrational fear of persons or objects in the outside world.³⁵⁷

The paranoia in spy novels is mainly directed towards the individuals who are secretly serving foreign interests whilst seeming to be loyal to their country and thus leading a double life. The protagonist of a spy novel is constantly on the watch for the tell-tale signs of the Judas figure, the ‘wolf in sheepskin’, in order to sense and divert the threat before it destroys the independence of a country and the well-being of its people.

³⁵⁰ Cuddon, **loc. cit.**

³⁵¹ **Ibid.**

³⁵² **Ibid.**

³⁵³ Fletcher, **loc. cit.**

³⁵⁴ **Ibid.**

³⁵⁵ Letter from S.J. Hamrick (W.T. Tyler) to the author, 30 October 1984, qtd. in Katy Fletcher, **op.cit.**, p.321

³⁵⁶ David Bell, **Paranoia**, Cambridge, Icon, New York, Totem, 2003, p.11.

³⁵⁷ **Ibid.**

The sensational spy novel of the 60s with an overt propaganda function has evolved into a more realistic spy fiction in the 70s and 80s. While communism ceased to be a threat after the end of the Cold War,³⁵⁸ this did not mean the demise of the spy novel. However, it necessitated a re-alignment of the agents and a re-definition of national enemies.³⁵⁹ In the wake of the events of 11 September 2001,³⁶⁰ international terrorism,³⁶¹ and cyber-terrorism³⁶² have become the popular subjects in the espionage genre. However, whatever the origin of the threat is, the central motif remains the same: the fear of losing control and the paranoia against possible traitors.

The clash of loyalty and betrayal is probably as old as the conflict between good and evil. Perhaps the most prominent act of betrayal in traditional history is committed by Judas, who reveals the identity of Jesus to the soldiers of the High Priest by kissing him on his cheek in the garden of Gethsemane in return to thirty pieces of silver.³⁶³ Judas has thus become a figure symbolising disloyalty and betrayal in western culture.

Another famous act of betrayal in history is the assassination of Julius Caesar on the Ides of March in 44 B.C.³⁶⁴ Caesar, a commander, leader and politician who had contributed to Rome's glory, was suspected of having royal aspirations and was therefore attacked on the floor of the Senate's chamber and stabbed to death twenty-three times by a group of fellow politicians.³⁶⁵ Brutus, his trusted second heir, was also among the conspirators,³⁶⁶ and according to recent findings, he was the one who had delivered the fatal blow.³⁶⁷ According to Plutarch, Caesar "opposed the rest,

³⁵⁸ Kort, **op. cit.**, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998, p.287.

³⁵⁹ Seed, **op. cit.**, p.131.

³⁶⁰ **Ibid.**

³⁶¹ Fletcher, **op. cit.**, p.323.

³⁶² Donald McCormick, **Who's Who in Spy Fiction**, London, Elm Tree Books 1977, 11, qtd. in Fletcher, **op. cit.**, p.329.

³⁶³ Matthew 26:15, The Holy Bible, London, Harper Collins, 2001, p. 1003.

³⁶⁴ Coffin, **op. cit.**, p.159.

³⁶⁵ **Ibid.**, p.158.

³⁶⁶ Plutarch, **Lives, Translated from the Original Greek: With Notes Historical and Critical; and a Life of Plutarch**, Philadelphia, Hickman and Hazzard, 1822, Vol. 3, p.280.

³⁶⁷ Larry Getlen, "The real story behind the assassination of Julius Caesar", **New York Post**, 1 March 2015, (Accessed) <https://nypost.com/2015/03/01/the-real-story-behind-the-assassination-of-julius-caesar/>, 30 December 2018.

and continued struggling and crying out till he perceived the sword of Brutus; then he drew his robe over his face, and yielded to his fate”.³⁶⁸

Betrayal is also a central theme in the Arthurian legend. In Sir Thomas Malory’s **Le Morte d’Arthur**,³⁶⁹ King Arthur is betrayed both by his queen Guinevere, his trusted knight Sir Lancelot,³⁷⁰ and his son Mordred.³⁷¹ While Guinevere and Sir Lancelot engage in an illicit affair behind his back that lasts for many years, his son Mordred makes plans to usurp the throne and marry Queen Guinevere. In the end, Mordred’s betrayal of Arthur leads to both their deaths and to the end of the Round Table.³⁷² The rebellion of Mordred against Arthur is also a re-enactment of Satan’s rebellion against God.³⁷³ According to Austin:

The biblical tradition is apparent: Satan betrays his “father” and corrupts his greatest creation. For Arthur, that creation is his kingdom and Round Table of knights and Mordred, like Satan, channels the unconsciously destructive elements of the human psyche through his rebellion to undermine and obliterate the best intentions of the father.³⁷⁴

All these notorious historical traitors have found their way to another classic medieval work: In his **Divine Comedy**,³⁷⁵ Dante devotes the whole ninth circle of hell to traitors,³⁷⁶ whom he views as “the worst of all sinners because they are guilty of denying God’s Love along with all the natural, social, and familial bonds of humanity”.³⁷⁷ The ninth circle contains four rings, in which he has placed the sinners “according to his personal offense or variation of treason against those who the sinner

³⁶⁸ Plutarch, **op. cit.**, p.282.

³⁶⁹ Sir Thomas Malory, **Le Morte d’Arthur**, (Accessed) <http://www.heroofcamelot.com/docs/Le-Morte-dArthur.pdf>, 30 December 2018.

³⁷⁰ **Ibid.**, Book XX, p.698.

³⁷¹ **Ibid.**, Book XXI, p.723.

³⁷² **Ibid.**, Book XXI, p.730.

³⁷³ Michael Austin Phillips, “A Trust Betrayed: The Role and Evolution of the Arthur- Mordred Relationship in Medieval Arthurian Texts”, Research Thesis, The Ohio State University, June 2012, (Accessed) https://kb.osu.edu/bitstream/handle/1811/51997/1/A_Trust_Betrayed.pdf, 30 December 2018.

³⁷⁴ **Ibid.**, p.4.

³⁷⁵ Dante Alighieri, **The Divine Comedy**, Tr. by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, (Accessed) <https://www.paskvil.com/file/files-books/dante-01-inferno.pdf>, 30 December 2018.

³⁷⁶ **Ibid.**, Canto 32, p.215.

³⁷⁷ Timothy Ryan, “Dante’s Assessment of Traitors and Treason”, p.2 (Accessed) https://www.academia.edu/3650192/Dantes_Assessment_of_Traitors_and_Treason, 29 December 2018.

shared special ties with”.³⁷⁸ In the first ring, Dante sees the sinners who have betrayed their kin, like the Biblical Cain who killed his brother Abel and Mordred who killed his father King Arthur.³⁷⁹ In the Second Ring, we find those who betrayed their country or political party.³⁸⁰ The third ring contains those who have betrayed their guests and hosts.³⁸¹ Finally, the fourth and last ring of hell houses the greatest traitors according to Dante: Satan, Judas, Brutus and Cassius.

At the very center of Cocytus Dante and Virgil reach the worst of all sinners, the “King of Hell” Satan, who is condemned for committing the most evil of all sins, personal treachery against God himself. Satan is trapped in the icy expanse up to his chest and he flaps and beats his bat-like wings furiously in a futile attempt to escape from his eternal sub-zero prison. [...] Satan’s body stabs the center of the Earth where he fell when God expelled him from the Kingdom of Heaven. Each of Satan’s three mouths chews one of mankind’s three most notorious sinners: Judas, the betrayer of Christ, and Cassius and Brutus, the traitors to Julius Caesar.³⁸²

Loyalty and betrayal are in fact two sides of the same coin, since in an act of betrayal, the person is usually expressing his loyalty to the rival side he is serving. According to Frederick Hitz:

Betrayal, of course, is what distinguishes espionage from most other human transgressions. To provide secret information to a foreign country is a treasonous act. [...] And once the spy has performed an act of espionage there is no possibility of return. The Rubicon has been crossed. The betrayal of trust is permanent and irredeemable. Once violated, trust can never be restored.³⁸³

Still, in the espionage world, there are grey areas between right and wrong and betrayal is ubiquitous for various reasons from - first and foremost – ideals and beliefs, to more worldly concerns like money.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁸ **Ibid.**

³⁷⁹ Alighieri, **op. cit.**, Canto 32, p.217.

³⁸⁰ Ryan, **loc. cit.**

³⁸¹ **Ibid.**

³⁸² **Ibid.**

³⁸³ Hitz, **op. cit.**, p.29.

³⁸⁴ **Ibid.**, p.142.

The reasons for betrayal are summarised in the acronym MICE: M for money, I for ideology, C for coercion or compromise, and E for ego or excitement.³⁸⁵ Money is understandably the first reason that comes to mind: “In a study of 104 Americans who spied and were caught between 1947 and 1989, the majority [...] reported that money was their sole or primary motivator”.³⁸⁶ Ideology is seen as a greater threat to counterintelligence officers since a spy serving solely for reasons of belief, though very much respected, is also a powerful weapon.³⁸⁷

Sex is also a method used to collect clandestine information. Following the footsteps of Mata Hari, specially trained agents called “sparrows” by the KGB,³⁸⁸ “Romeo spies” by the East German Secret Service,³⁸⁹ and honey traps - a term coined by John le Carré³⁹⁰ - in the west would use their male or female sexual attraction to access information. Thus, a call girl called Ellen Rometsch, who was also a suspected East German spy, has allegedly become involved with President John F Kennedy.³⁹¹ Since the times of the Cold War, coercion or compromise, i.e. blackmail, has been a method actively used by secret services. The method involves luring a targeted official into illicit behaviour to collect blackmail material; like the security guard at the US embassy in Moscow who was blackmailed into leaking intelligence to the KGB after enjoying what he thought was a chance encounter with a young woman at a metro station.³⁹²

Compromise and coercion were clearly prime concerns of CI officials during the Cold War. Anyone with a security clearance was warned that any illegal or “deviant” behavior as defined in the day put a person at risk of being blackmailed into spying. Stories abound in both fiction and nonfiction of officials being coerced on account of their illicit sexual behavior, whether it was homosexuality or adultery

³⁸⁵ Randy Burkett, “An Alternative Framework for Agent Recruitment: From MICE to RASCLS”, **Studies in Intelligence**, Vol. 57, No. 1, Extracts, March 2013, p.9.

³⁸⁶ Katherine L Herbig, “Changes in Espionage by Americans: 1947–2007“, **Department of Defense Technical Report** 08-05, March 2008, qtd. in Burkett, **op. cit.**, p.9.

³⁸⁷ Burkett, **op. cit.**, p.10.

³⁸⁸ Jessica Salter, “The real Russian spy schools”, **The Telegraph**, 27 Feb 2018, (Accessed) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/red-sparrow/real-russian-spy-schools/>, 1 February 2019.

³⁸⁹ **Ibid.**

³⁹⁰ Melvyn Bragg, “The Things A Spy Can Do: John le Carré Talking”, **Conversations with John le Carré**, Ed. by Matthew J. Bruccoli, Judith S. Baughman, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2004, p.33.

³⁹¹ Salter, **loc. cit.**

³⁹² **Ibid.**

resulting from being caught in the “honey traps” set by the infamous Soviet “sparrow squads”.³⁹³

Last but not least, ego or excitement is a factor leading agents to leak information. Unlike espionage novels, in the real world, intelligence work is usually a desk job involving evaluations and reporting, which can become dull over time. Also, any disgruntled officer who is denied a promotion or believes to be treated unfairly may seek revenge by leaking information.³⁹⁴

Since betrayal is by nature an insidious act that may cause great damage including the loss of lives, it is inevitable that it leads to a prevalent paranoia in the world of secrecy. In order to understand the origin of this paranoia of betrayal and treason manifest in espionage fiction, certain real-life characters and their significance should be investigated.

1.3 Spies in the 20th Century

1.3.1 The Manhattan Project

Though the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union were allies during the Second World War,³⁹⁵ during the 1940s, the Soviet Union launched an all-out espionage effort to uncover the military and defence secrets of the United States and Britain.³⁹⁶ In those years, Britain and the United States were cooperating in the Manhattan Project,³⁹⁷ the American initiative to build the first nuclear bomb,³⁹⁸ which would have given the upper hand to the US in world politics. However, the Soviets soon built their own nuclear bomb, thanks to three western scientists whose loyalties lay elsewhere.

³⁹³ Burkett, **op. cit.**, p.11.

³⁹⁴ **Ibid.**

³⁹⁵ Michael Kort, “**The Columbia guide to the cold war**”, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998, p.16.

³⁹⁶ Marian Smith Holmes, “Spies Who Spilled Atomic Bomb Secrets”, 19 April 2009 (Accessed) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/spies-who-spilled-atomic-bomb-secrets-127922660/>, 31 December 2018.

³⁹⁷ “Klaus Fuchs”, The Atomic Heritage Foundation, (Accessed) <https://www.atomicheritage.org/profile/klaus-fuchs>, 31 December 2018.

³⁹⁸ Holmes, **loc. cit.**

One of these scientists was Klaus Fuchs. Born in the German Empire in 1911, Fuchs studied mathematics and physics at the University of Leipzig and joined the German Communist Party in 1930.³⁹⁹ After graduation, he went to Britain and earned his Ph.D. in Science at the University of Edinburgh. In May 1941, he was invited to join the British atomic bomb research Project. When he became a British citizen in August 1942, he signed the Official Secrets Act, “pledging not to pass state secrets related to national security and defense to foreign governments”.⁴⁰⁰ However, he was still sympathetic to the Communist cause.⁴⁰¹ In 1943, Fuchs was part of a British delegation of scientists sent to Columbia University in New York to work on the Manhattan Project.⁴⁰²

At the beginning of 1944, Fuchs was contacted by Harry Gold, a KGB agent with the codename Raymond, and started passing the nuclear secrets to the Soviets. A few months later, Fuchs was transferred to Los Alamos where he witnessed the Trinity Test, the explosion of the first atomic bomb, on 16 July 1945. During this time Fuchs was passing detailed information about both the atomic and the hydrogen bombs to the Soviet Union. It is estimated that the intelligence obtained through Fuchs enabled the Soviets to develop and test their own atomic bomb one or two years earlier than expected.

In 1949, four years after the end of the war, the United States Army Signal Intelligence Service (SIS) discovered that Fuchs was a Soviet spy. He was arrested and sentenced to fourteen years in prison. When he was released nine years later, he returned to East Germany and received the Karl Marx medal of honour, “the highest distinction in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) for exceptional merit”.⁴⁰³

The second member of the espionage triad in the Manhattan Project was Theodore “Ted” Hall, another significant scientist who passed critical secrets to the

³⁹⁹ “Klaus Fuchs”, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

Soviets.⁴⁰⁴ Hall graduated from Harvard at the age of eighteen and joined the Manhattan project as the youngest scientist in 1944. He also had communist tendencies, and upon arrival at Harvard, had joined the Marxist John Reed Club. When he was recruited to work at Los Alamos, he was “haunted by [...] thoughts of how to spare humanity the devastation of nuclear power”.⁴⁰⁵ Finally, in 1944, he decided “to equalize the playing field” and contacted the Soviets to keep them informed about the developments in the bomb research. In December 1944, “Hall delivered what was probably the first atomic secret from Los Alamos, an update on the creation of the plutonium bomb”.⁴⁰⁶

After the war, he enrolled in the University of Chicago and was working on his Ph.D. when the FBI came across his real name in a decrypted message. However, the courier of Fuchs, Harry Gold, could not identify him as a source and Hall never went to trial. Later he explained his actions with the fear of a monopolar world: “It seemed to me that an American monopoly was dangerous and should be prevented. I was not the only scientist to take that view”.⁴⁰⁷

The third mole in the Manhattan Project was David Greenglass.⁴⁰⁸ When Klaus Fuchs confessed in 1950, his courier Harry Gold, a 39-year-old Philadelphia chemist, was also arrested.⁴⁰⁹ He was already involved in industrial espionage since 1935. Gold’s confessions led the authorities to Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and Ethel's brother David Greenglass.⁴¹⁰

David Greenglass was a machinist who was working in Los Alamos in 1944. His brother-in-law, Julius Rosenberg, who was an engineer from New York with communist tendencies, convinced Greenglass to supply information from Los Alamos. When he was arrested, Greenglass confessed, implicating his wife, his sister and his brother-in law. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, a couple known for their communist tendencies, denied everything and refused to give names or answer questions. They

⁴⁰⁴ Holmes, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

were found guilty, sentenced to death and executed in 1953. Greenglass was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment due to his cooperation in the trial of his sister and brother-in-law.⁴¹¹

George Blake was born in the Netherlands in 1922. His father was a Spanish Jew resident in Egypt, who had fought for the British and was decorated in the First World War. His mother was Dutch.⁴¹² When Blake was 13, his father died and he was sent to Cairo to live with his relatives, where he was introduced to the first left-wing ideas through his cousins.⁴¹³

The Second World War broke out at a time when he was visiting his family and he was stranded in the Netherlands. He was in Rotterdam when the Germans invaded.⁴¹⁴ As a British subject through his father, “he acquired false papers and went underground. He was in the Resistance for two years until he escaped to England”.⁴¹⁵ In England, he joined the Royal Navy, where he was “talent-spotted” as a possible Foreign Office recruit due to his fluency in Dutch. He was sent to a course in Russian at Cambridge,⁴¹⁶ and there he fell in love with Russia and its culture.⁴¹⁷

At the Foreign Office, Guy Burgess - a member of the Cambridge Five spy circle⁴¹⁸ - made friends with him, possibly to recruit him for Russian interests.⁴¹⁹ In 1948, when he was serving in Korea, the Korean War broke out and he was evacuated to the North by the communist soldiers and was impressed by what he saw there:

It was the relentless bombing of small Korean villages by enormous American flying fortresses. Women and children and old people, because the young men were in the army. We might have been victims ourselves. It made me feel ashamed of belonging to these

⁴¹¹ **Ibid.**

⁴¹² Ian Irvine, “George Blake: I spy a British traitor”, **The Independent**, 1 October 2006, (Accessed) <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/george-blake-i-spy-a-british-traitor-418245.html>, 21 December 2018.

⁴¹³ **Ibid.**

⁴¹⁴ **Ibid.**

⁴¹⁵ **Ibid.**

⁴¹⁶ Boyle, **op. cit.**, p.349.

⁴¹⁷ Irvine, **loc. cit.**

⁴¹⁸ S. J. Hamrick, **Deceiving the Deceivers: Kim Philby, Donald Maclean & Guy Burgess**, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2004, p.1.

⁴¹⁹ Boyle, **loc. cit.**

overpowering, technically superior countries fighting against what seemed to me defenceless people. I felt I was on the wrong side [...] that it would be better for humanity if the Communist system prevailed, that it would put an end to war.⁴²⁰

With this conviction, he contacted the KGB and offered his services. For the next nine years, wherever he was posted by the MI6, he reported to his KGB case officer every three weeks to pass over information.⁴²¹

In 1960, a senior Polish intelligence officer defected to the West and uncovered the major spies in England.⁴²² Blake was recalled to London in April 1961 and was sentenced to forty-two years' imprisonment,⁴²³ although the maximum sentence for "passing official secrets in peacetime" was fourteen years.⁴²⁴ Since Blake did not come from the same class with the Cambridge Five and was also considered a foreigner as a colonial British subject, his punishment was extremely severe. After serving for five years, he escaped from prison and defected to Russia⁴²⁵ where he stayed in close contact with Kim Philby.⁴²⁶ He still lives in Moscow:

[...] he has no regrets for his support of communism: "The Communist ideal is too high to achieve [...]. But I am optimistic, that in time, and it may take thousands of years, that humanity will come to the viewpoint that it would be better to live in a Communist society where people were really equal".⁴²⁷

Another physicist, Alan Nunn May, was a contemporary of Donald Maclean during his Cambridge years.⁴²⁸ A gifted nuclear physicist at King's College London in 1939, Nunn May was recruited for secret wartime research on radar and later on the planning of the atomic bomb.⁴²⁹ When he was appointed to the nuclear reactors related to the Manhattan Project in Canada, he used this position to pass reports on nuclear

⁴²⁰ George Blake, qtd. in Irvine, **loc. cit.**

⁴²¹ **Ibid.**

⁴²² **Ibid.**

⁴²³ Boyle, **op. cit.**, p.462.

⁴²⁴ Irvine, **loc. cit.**

⁴²⁵ Boyle, **op. cit.**, p.483.

⁴²⁶ Boyle, **op. cit.**, Illustration 10.

⁴²⁷ Irvine, **loc. cit.**

⁴²⁸ Boyle, **op. cit.**, p.483.

⁴²⁹ Brian Cathcart, "Alan Nunn May: Britain's first convicted atom spy", **The Independent**, 29 January 2003, (Accessed) <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/alan-nunn-may-729994.html>, 28 June 2011.

progress as well as stolen samples of processed uranium to Soviet intelligence.⁴³⁰ When a Soviet cipher clerk defected to Canada, he disclosed Nunn May's identity to the west.⁴³¹

On his arrival in Britain, he was immediately arrested.⁴³² During his trial, it was revealed that he gave the Russians detailed plans of the bomb dropped in Hiroshima.⁴³³ In his defence, he said that "he could see no reason why the Soviet Union should be deprived of new inventions [...]". He was sentenced to ten years in prison.⁴³⁴

1.3.2 The Cambridge Five

On 25 May 1951, British diplomats Donald Duart Maclean and Guy Francis de Moncy Burgess defected to the Soviet Union⁴³⁵ and started an era of suspicion and retrospective paranoia in Britain. They were in fact the first members of the spy ring later called "The Cambridge Five" to seek refuge in Russia. Soon, rumours about a third member of this spy group started to circulate, although it took the newspapers five years to come up with the name Kim Philby.⁴³⁶

The Cambridge Five consisted of Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, Kim Philby, Anthony Blunt and John Cairncross,⁴³⁷ who were all recruited by the Russian Secret Service during their Cambridge years:

In the early 1930s, the democratic world appeared to be in trouble. The Great Depression had caused widespread unemployment. Fascism was on the march in Germany and Italy. To many young students at Cambridge University, privileged though they were, this was worrying and unacceptable.

Four of them - Philby, Burgess, Maclean and Blunt - wanted to do something about it. They believed that the democracies would prove too weak to stand up to Hitler and Mussolini, and they knew

⁴³⁰ **Ibid.**

⁴³¹ **Ibid.**

⁴³² Boyle, **op. cit.**, p.310

⁴³³ **Ibid.**

⁴³⁴ **Ibid.**

⁴³⁵ Hamrick, **loc. cit.**

⁴³⁶ Kim Philby, "**My Silent War: The Autobiography of a Spy**", New York, Modern Library, 2002, 1968, p.191.

⁴³⁷ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.22.

that many people in Britain did indeed admire these leaders. They also thought that only the Soviet Union would be powerful enough to defeat Fascism. So, when they were approached by a recruiter from Moscow, the four young men agreed to serve the KGB.

The KGB believed that recruiting clever people from a respected university was a good game plan, because the chances were that sometime in the future these young men would be among Britain's rulers and well placed to betray their country's secrets.

This is how it turned out. By the time World War Two was underway, Maclean was climbing the ladder in the Foreign Office, Burgess was an intimate of prominent politicians, and Blunt was an officer in the Security Service - MI5. Even more astoundingly, Philby was an officer in the SIS [the British Secret Intelligence Service]. And all the while they were establishing themselves in these positions, these four men were reporting to Moscow.⁴³⁸

Donald Maclean was the son of a Liberal MP, Sir Donald Maclean.⁴³⁹ Because young Donald “had brains”,⁴⁴⁰ he was sent to a public school where he excelled in sports although he was a silent bookworm most of the time.⁴⁴¹ Later, he won a scholarship to Cambridge,⁴⁴² where he studied modern languages and was introduced to communism.⁴⁴³

While at Cambridge, he was so certain about socialism that after graduating in 1934 with a First in French and German he was determined to “renounce what he called his British ‘privileges’ and move to Russia to teach English while he awaited world revolution”.⁴⁴⁴

During a supper with Kim Philby, who was a fellow socialist at Cambridge before becoming a journalist, he confessed that he was devoted to communism and was reporting to his handler Otto, the codename of a Soviet spy in London. The first job

⁴³⁸ Phillip Knightley, “The Cambridge Spies”, BBC History 17 February 2011, (Accessed) http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/coldwar/cambridge_spies_01.shtml, 21 December 2018.

⁴³⁹ Boyle, *op. cit.*, p.45.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.50.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.51.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p.55.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.62.

⁴⁴⁴ Roland Philipps, “The spy who beat his wife: The tall, charming and well-connected 'English gentleman' who had blistering rows at the drop of a hat and took his fists to his long-suffering American spouse”, *Daily Mail*, 14 April 2018, (Accessed) <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5614459/The-spy-beat-wife-connected-English-gentleman-took-fists-spouse.html>, 21 December 2018.

Otto had given him was to approach Maclean, who was a great candidate for the Foreign Office. Otto thought that Maclean could be of special benefit there.⁴⁴⁵

Although Maclean was known for his Communist views during his Cambridge years,⁴⁴⁶ he passed the Foreign Office exams with great success⁴⁴⁷ and became a member of British diplomacy: “He was only 22 when he became a third secretary – seemed part of that inevitable progression granted to those with silver spoons clamped firmly between their teeth”.⁴⁴⁸

Guy Francis de Moncy Burgess came from a long and proud line of military men⁴⁴⁹ and he was also sent to the military school in Dartmouth at first, only to be dismissed due to his poor eyesight.⁴⁵⁰ He continued his education at Eton⁴⁵¹ and won a scholarship to study history at Cambridge⁴⁵² where his path crossed with the other members of the Cambridge Five. After graduation, he worked as a journalist for a while and started to collect information for the British Secret Service as he stepped into a short-lived career in the Service.⁴⁵³

Harold Adrian Russell “Kim” Philby, the most prominent member of the group, was recruited to work for Russian interests by an anonymous OGPU⁴⁵⁴ agent in 1934.⁴⁵⁵

It was a slow and brain-racking process: my transition from a Socialist viewpoint to a Communist one took two years. It was not until my last term at Cambridge, in the summer of 1933, that I threw off my last doubts. I left the university with a

⁴⁴⁵ **Ibid.**

⁴⁴⁶ Boyle, **op. cit.**, p.115.

⁴⁴⁷ **Ibid.**, p.117.

⁴⁴⁸ William Boyd, “The silver spoon spy: how Cambridge double-agent Donald Maclean got away with it for so long”, **New Statesman America**, 29 April 2018 (Accessed) <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/books/2018/04/silver-spoon-spy-how-cambridge-double-agent-donald-maclean-got-away-it-so-long>, 21 December 2018.

⁴⁴⁹ Boyle, **op. cit.**, p.117.

⁴⁵⁰ **Ibid.**, p.85.

⁴⁵¹ **Ibid.**

⁴⁵² **Ibid.**, p.87.

⁴⁵³ **Ibid.**, p.150.

⁴⁵⁴ Soviet Security and Intelligence Service 1923-1934. Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.xvi.

⁴⁵⁵ Phillip Knightley, Introduction to **My Silent War: The Autobiography of a Spy** by Kim Philby, New York, Modern Library, 2002, c1968, p.xxxi.

degree and with the conviction that my life must be devoted to communism.⁴⁵⁶

Philby was named after Kipling's character Kim since his nursery days in India where he was born.⁴⁵⁷ Like Kipling's Kim, Philby also came from an adventurous family. His father was Harry St. John Bridger Philby, a former magistrate in the Indian Civil Service, an explorer and an Arabist who became an adviser to King Saud. He felt that life should be lived to the hilt, an example he passed on to Kim.⁴⁵⁸ Kim had also absorbed the traits of Kipling's boy-hero, whilst envying the self-reliance and boldness of his own father.⁴⁵⁹

Philby entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in October 1929. Guy Burgess followed from Eton in 1930 and Donald Maclean arrived in 1931.⁴⁶⁰ In late 1934, Philby recruited both Maclean and Burgess for Moscow's OGPU when all three were classmates: "From the earliest days, our careers had intertwined. [...] I had put forward his [Burgess's] name as a possible recruit for the Soviet service, a debt which he later repaid by smoothing my entry into the British secret service".⁴⁶¹

Indeed, after working for the Soviet Secret Service in Spain during the Spanish Civil War, Philby made first contact with the British Secret Service in 1940⁴⁶² and was subsequently recruited with the help of Guy Burgess, who was already a member of the Service.⁴⁶³ In three years, he rose to be the head of its anti-Soviet section.⁴⁶⁴

Yet right from his Cambridge University days this urbane, pipe-smoking paragon of the English middle class had been an agent of the KGB. So the man running British operations against the Russians was actually working for the Russians himself. [...] No wonder so many Western agents who slipped behind the Iron Curtain were never heard of again.

[...]

⁴⁵⁶ Philby, **op. cit.**, p.xxxi.

⁴⁵⁷ Boyle, **op. cit.**, p.108.

⁴⁵⁸ Knightley, **op. cit.** p.x.

⁴⁵⁹ Boyle, **loc. cit.**

⁴⁶⁰ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.93.

⁴⁶¹ Philby, **op. cit.**, p.165.

⁴⁶² **Ibid.**, p.7.

⁴⁶³ **Ibid.**, p.10.

⁴⁶⁴ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p. viii.

In 1949, Philby was promoted to be the British Secret Service's liaison officer in Washington with the CIA and the FBI. This gave him access not only to British operations against Moscow but to American ones as well. The result: at the height of the Cold War, every move the West made against the Communist bloc was betrayed by Philby before it even began.⁴⁶⁵

So, MI6's own principal Soviet spy catcher was a Soviet agent.⁴⁶⁶ At one point in the Cold War, "the Soviets had Maclean and Burgess at the centre of the British Foreign Office, Blunt in MI5, Cairncross at the Government Cipher School and Philby at MI6. The penetration was extraordinary and complete".⁴⁶⁷

But a joint Anglo-American investigation of Soviet Intelligence activity in the United States had already yielded a strong suggestion that there had been an information leak from the British Embassy in Washington during the years 1944-5.⁴⁶⁸ The source of this leak was Donald Maclean employed at the British Embassy in Washington, who was also appointed "the joint secretary of the Western Allies' new combined policy committee on atomic development"⁴⁶⁹ and therefore had full access to the nuclear secrets of the United States. The person who tipped Maclean off one day before his expected arrest⁴⁷⁰ was Kim Philby, the chief of station for MI6 in the USA and the third member of the Cambridge spy ring.⁴⁷¹

MI5 had identified Donald Maclean as a Soviet agent long before 25 May 1951.⁴⁷² Therefore, there was no other alternative left to him but to defect to the Soviet Union: "Wary of Maclean's frail nerves and uncertain determination, Moscow had insisted that Burgess accompany Maclean".⁴⁷³ Since Guy Burgess and Kim Philby shared a house in the United States, Philby immediately came under suspicion and was called back to Britain:

⁴⁶⁵ **Ibid.**

⁴⁶⁶ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.9.

⁴⁶⁷ Boyd, **loc. cit.**

⁴⁶⁸ Philby, **op. cit.**, p.147.

⁴⁶⁹ Boyle, **op. cit.**, p.317.

⁴⁷⁰ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.3.

⁴⁷¹ **Ibid.**, p.4.

⁴⁷² **Ibid.**, p.5.

⁴⁷³ **Ibid.**, p.3.

And there was every possibility that had it not been for one mistake, Philby would have gone on to become CSS, Chief of the British Secret Service. The KGB would, in effect, have been running the MI6, a disaster that could have changed the course of the Cold War.⁴⁷⁴

After several interrogations in London, Philby was dismissed from the Secret Service, but he was not arrested because although the evidence against him was impressive, it was yet inconclusive.⁴⁷⁵ In 1954, the defection of a high-ranking Soviet official named Petrov finally brought Philby's name to the headlines as the third member of the spy ring, and after spending a few years in the Middle East, Philby finally followed Maclean and Burgess to Moscow on 23 January 1963.⁴⁷⁶

Sir Anthony Blunt was the cousin of Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, better known as the Queen Mother: Blunt's mother Hilda was a second cousin of the Earl of Strathmore, Elizabeth's father.⁴⁷⁷ By 1932, he had been recruited by Russia to spot potential spies among his peers: "He was lured in by his brilliant, hard-drinking and gay friend Guy Burgess, an Old Etonian who became a double agent working for MI6 while his real masters were the KGB".⁴⁷⁸

Blunt joined the British Army from Trinity in 1939. MI5 recruited him the following year.⁴⁷⁹ But he came under suspicion⁴⁸⁰ and retired from Government Service in 1945.⁴⁸¹

After playing the role of intermediary in the escape of Maclean and Burgess,⁴⁸² when Blunt recovered a guitar case full of letters including one from Cairncross⁴⁸³ while tidying up Burgess's flat after he left for Moscow,⁴⁸⁴ he once more

⁴⁷⁴ Knightley, **op. cit.**, p. viii.

⁴⁷⁵ Philby, **op. cit.**, p.188.

⁴⁷⁶ **Ibid.**, p.205.

⁴⁷⁷ **Ibid.**

⁴⁷⁸ **Ibid.**

⁴⁷⁹ **Ibid.**

⁴⁸⁰ **Ibid.**

⁴⁸¹ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.121.

⁴⁸² Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.5.

⁴⁸³ Tom Bower, "John Cairncross", **The Independent**, 10 October 1995, (Accessed)

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituaries-john-cairncross-1576877.html>, 28 July 2011.

⁴⁸⁴ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.120.

came under the suspicion of being a Soviet agent. He was interrogated eleven times by the MI5, but they could never break him down. Years later, it was revealed that he was passing on important messages from encrypted Enigma intercepts to the Soviet Union, though the British authorities could never prove it.⁴⁸⁵

The moment of truth in 1964 was April 23 [...].

Intelligence officer Arthur Martin arrived at Blunt's flat at the top of the Courtauld Institute off London's bustling Oxford Street and told him, that the agency now had unimpeachable evidence of his treachery.

[...]

Blunt, knighted by the Queen in 1956, at first denied it. Martin told him he was authorised to grant him immunity from prosecution. Blunt paused briefly, then said: 'It's true'.⁴⁸⁶

The King's royal servant and the surveyor of the King's pictures could not be treated like ordinary people.⁴⁸⁷ Blunt's 1964 confession was covered up as part of a deal in which he was granted immunity from prosecution. In return, he was meant to reveal to MI5 all he could about the Soviets.⁴⁸⁸ The identity of the fourth member of the Cambridge Five remained a secret to the public, until in 1979 Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher revealed it in the House of Commons.⁴⁸⁹

John Cairncross, the final and least famous member of the Cambridge Spy ring, had joined Cambridge's Modern Language Society when he was a student of languages. Though his left-wing sympathies were noted here by Anthony Blunt, Cairncross was first approached by the KGB in 1936, after he joined the Foreign Office.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁵ Geoffrey Levy, "Last secrets of the Queen Mother's favourite traitor: Memoirs of society spy Anthony Blunt could rock Royals", **Mail Online**, 27 June 2009, (Accessed) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1195881/Last-secrets-Queen-Mothers-favourite-traitor-Memoirs-society-spy-Anthony-Blunt-rock-Royals.html>, 28 June 2011.

⁴⁸⁶ Levy, **loc. cit.**

⁴⁸⁷ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.121.

⁴⁸⁸ Levy, **loc. cit.**

⁴⁸⁹ **Ibid.**

⁴⁹⁰ Bower, **loc. cit.**

In 1941, Cairncross was posted to GCHQ, the intercept station at Bletchley Park decoding secret German signals. His value to the Soviets was proven in February 1943 when he handed to his Soviet contact the original papers of the intercepts, containing the full details of Germany's summer offensive.⁴⁹¹ "I was promoted to become one of the Five after the Battle of Kursk in 1943. I had provided information which helped the Soviets to win that battle against the Germans".⁴⁹²

Cairncross held a variety of positions in the British Government and was transferred from the treasury to the Ministry of Supply in 1951.⁴⁹³ His new position gave him access to top-secrets documents on British rearmament and weapons development. "According to a KGB file examined by Nigel West, some of Cairncross's heist of 1,339 pages of British rearmament reports found their way to Stalin".⁴⁹⁴

Cairncross came under suspicion in 1951 when a note he had written was found in Burgess's apartment by Anthony Blunt⁴⁹⁵ - or more probably intercepted by the MI5 at the London Post Office⁴⁹⁶ - just after Burgess fled to Moscow. After being questioned by MI5 in the same year, he was eventually released⁴⁹⁷ but told to leave Britain never to return.⁴⁹⁸

After Blunt's participation in the spy ring was discovered in 1964, Cairncross was again interrogated. He admitted to spying, but said he had never passed Moscow any information harmful to Britain's interests. Again, British officials decided not to charge him.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹¹ **Ibid.**

⁴⁹² Richard W. Stevenson, "John Cairncross, Fifth Briton In Soviet Spy Ring, Dies at 82", **The New York Times**, 10 October 1995, (Accessed) <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/10/10/world/john-cairncross-fifth-briton-in-soviet-spy-ring-dies-at-82.html>, 26 June 2011.

⁴⁹³ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.121.

⁴⁹⁴ Hamrick, **loc. cit.**

⁴⁹⁵ Stevenson, **loc. cit.**

⁴⁹⁶ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.120.

⁴⁹⁷ **Ibid.**, p.121.

⁴⁹⁸ Stevenson, **loc. cit.**

⁴⁹⁹ **Ibid.**

Although it was widely believed that there had been a fifth Soviet spy involved in the ring and there was widespread speculation about this identity, John Cairncross was not positively identified as “the Fifth Man” until 1991.⁵⁰⁰

It must be underlined that the members of the Cambridge Five were committed to their political beliefs and did not betray the secrets of the West to obtain any financial benefits. Sir Robert Mackenzie, a Foreign Office security expert, says: “Make it clear - and this is important - that Philby didn't sell his country's secrets. He gave them away. He didn't do it for money. He never got a penny. He did it for his ideals”.⁵⁰¹

In Moscow, Philby admitted that “if it hadn't been for Burgess's flight from Southampton with Maclean, he could have worked for MI6 for another ten years”.⁵⁰² Indeed, Phillip Knightley, the journalist who helped uncover Kim Philby's identity as a double agent for the Soviet Union and later interviewed him in Moscow,⁵⁰³ claims that after Philby's defection “the British Secret Service in Moscow had found ways of making several offers to persuade Philby to return”⁵⁰⁴ - most probably through Graham Greene, his former colleague in MI6 who visited him three times in Moscow⁵⁰⁵ - but Philby never thought of going back:

That someone was capable of such treachery puzzles and frightens us. If Philby did not do it for money [...] what did he do it for? Philby made a total ideological commitment when he was only twenty-one and had the strength of purpose to stick to it for the rest of his life. Like a character in a Graham Greene novel, he mixed duplicity with charm. In his treachery he risked all for his convictions, and he got away with it.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁰ **Ibid.**

⁵⁰¹ Sir Robert Mackenzie, qtd. in Jessica Mitford, “Old School Spies”, **The Washington Post**, 26 March 1989, (Accessed) <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/access/73867684.html?FMT=FT&FMTS=ABS:FT&date=Mar+26%2C+1989&author=Jessica+Mitford&desc=Old+School+Spies>, 22 June 2011.

⁵⁰² Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.158.

⁵⁰³ “Phillip Knightley, journalist who helped expose Kim Philby as Soviet spy, dies at 87”, **The Straits Times**, 11 December 2016, (Accessed) <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/phillip-knightley-journalist-who-helped-expose-kim-philby-as-soviet-spy-dies-at-87>, 15 May 2019.

⁵⁰⁴ Knightley, **op. cit.**, p.xii.

⁵⁰⁵ **Ibid.**, p.xiii.

⁵⁰⁶ **Ibid.**, p.xv.

Knightley says that Philby “forced us to examine our attitudes to patriotism, treachery, class and political conviction”⁵⁰⁷ and calls Philby the most remarkable spy in the history of espionage.⁵⁰⁸ Anthony Cave Brown believes that the Philby affair is the spy case of the century.⁵⁰⁹ Graham Greene criticizes those who accuse his former colleague Philby with treason and claims that he was serving a cause and not himself:⁵¹⁰

“He betrayed his country” - yes, perhaps he did, but who among us has not committed treason to something or someone more important than a country? In Philby’s own eyes he was working for a shape of things to come from which his country would benefit.

Greene supports this view by quoting Philby’s own words:

It cannot be so very surprising that I adopted a Communist viewpoint in the thirties; so many of my contemporaries made the same choice. But many of those who made the choice in those days changed sides [...] I stayed the course.⁵¹¹

Drawing a parallel between Philby’s ordeal and the Spanish inquisition, Green even praises Philby’s loyalty to his faith.⁵¹² “Philby has a chilling certainty in the correctness of his judgement, the logical fanaticism of a man who, having once found a faith, is not going to lose it because of the injustice or cruelties inflicted by erring human instruments”.⁵¹³

On the other hand, S. J. Hamrick, the author of **Deceiving the Deceivers: Kim Philby, Donald Maclean & Guy Burgess**, states that “a cold undercurrent of betrayal runs through Philby’s personal life in counterpoint to his espionage career”. Hamrick also claims that Philby’s “other betrayals were left to imaginations richly stimulated by the events of the 1960s, including the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban missile crisis, and especially the Berlin Wall, the sinister presence that divided East from West and that only spy novelists could penetrate”.⁵¹⁴ Also John le Carré, who claims that his

⁵⁰⁷ Phillip Knightley, qtd. in Mitford, **loc. cit.**

⁵⁰⁸ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.20.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁰ Graham Greene, Foreword to **My Silent War: The Autobiography of a Spy** by Kim Philby, New York, Modern Library, 2002, 1968, p.xvii.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.xviii.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, p. xviii

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, p.xvii.

⁵¹⁴ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.159.

real identity was passed to the KGB - or in the espionage jargon, “whose cover was blown” - by Kim Philby,⁵¹⁵ is not so gracious about Philby’s actions:

Philby has no home, no women, no faith. Behind the inbred upper-class arrogance, the taste for adventure, lies the self-hate of a vain misfit for whom nothing will ever be worthy of his loyalty. In the last instance, Philby is driven by the incurable drug of deceit itself.⁵¹⁶

But Philby’s disagreement with him is apparent in his words to journalist Murray Sayle as he denied treachery: “To betray, you must first belong,” Philby told him, “I never belonged”.⁵¹⁷

The Cold War was an era where every nation was paranoid about its own secrets, especially the nuclear ones, while they were desperate to get information about the secrets of the enemy. In the United States, Senator McCarthy had raised a nationwide spy-fever against communist penetration⁵¹⁸ and even accused Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, the director of the Manhattan Project⁵¹⁹ with known communist tendencies,⁵²⁰ of being a Soviet spy.⁵²¹ On the other hand, spies from the countries behind the Iron Curtain were also defecting to the West seemingly in search of freedom,⁵²² only to act as double-agents for their country. In such an era where it was nearly impossible to tell the patriot from the traitor, it was not a surprise that the political atmosphere was charged with the paranoia of betrayal, which manifested itself in espionage fiction.

1.3.3. John le Carré

⁵¹⁵ George Plimpton, “John le Carré: The Art of Fiction”, **Conversations with John le Carré**, Ed. by Matthew J. Bruccoli, Judith S. Baughman, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2004, p.154.

⁵¹⁶ Le Carré, cover of **My Silent War: The Autobiography of a Spy** by Kim Philby, New York, Modern Library, 2002.

⁵¹⁷ Murray Sayle, **The Telegraph** 21 September 2010 (Accessed) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/culture-obituaries/books-obituaries/8016790/Murray-Sayle.html>, 21 June 2011.

⁵¹⁸ Philby, **op. cit.**, p.162.

⁵¹⁹ Robert F. Bacher, “Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967)”, **Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society**, Vol. 116, No. 4, 15 Aug 1972, p.281.

⁵²⁰ **Ibid.**, p.282.

⁵²¹ **Ibid.**, p.291.

⁵²² **Ibid.**, p.108.

David John Moore Cornwell was born on 19 October 1931 in Dorset. His father Ronald was a “con man, social climber, and speculator who lived alternatively in mansions or jails during le Carré’s youth”.⁵²³

Deserted by her mother at the age of five while his father was in prison for fraud,⁵²⁴ Cornwell was sent off to a boarding school.⁵²⁵ Although very unhappy there, he won the Sherborne school prize for English verse before he fled to Europe at the age of sixteen “to escape both his father and the public school system”.⁵²⁶ He studied languages at the University of Berne,⁵²⁷ developing a mastery of German.⁵²⁸ Returning to England, he joined the Army and worked for the army intelligence in Vienna between 1959-1952.⁵²⁹

After the war, he studied modern languages at Lincoln College, Oxford.⁵³⁰ After taking a prestigious first degree in Modern Languages in 1956, he taught French and German at Eton and worked as a freelance illustrator for a year when he was possibly employed by the British Security Service until he officially joined the Foreign Office in 1960.⁵³¹

His first novel **Call for the Dead** (1961)⁵³² was published under the pseudonym John le Carré since “no intelligence functionary could be permitted to write about the secret service under his own name”.⁵³³ Although he claims not to remember where he got the idea for his pseudonym⁵³⁴ and has recently admitted that it is his

⁵²³ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.1.

⁵²⁴ Bruccoli and Baughman, **op. cit.**, p.xv.

⁵²⁵ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.2.

⁵²⁶ **Ibid.**

⁵²⁷ Bruccoli and Baughman, **loc. cit.**

⁵²⁸ Cobbs, **loc. cit.**

⁵²⁹ Bruccoli and Baughman, **loc. cit.**

⁵³⁰ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.3.

⁵³¹ Bruccoli and Baughman, **loc. cit.**

⁵³² Le Carré, **Call For The Dead**, London, Gollancz, 1961.

⁵³³ Stephen Schiff, “The Secret Life of John le Carré”, **Conversations with John le Carré**, Ed. by Matthew J. Bruccoli, Judith S. Baughman, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2004, p.100.

⁵³⁴ Miriam Gross, “The Secret World of John le Carré”, **Conversations with John le Carré**, Ed. by Matthew J. Bruccoli, Judith S. Baughman, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2004, p.69.

fabrication,⁵³⁵ “*carré*” means “square” in French and “*homme carré*” means “a well-set man”.⁵³⁶

The novel introducing his main character George Smiley, who would later be the protagonist in six of his novels including **Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy**,⁵³⁷ was well received by the critiques.⁵³⁸ His second novel, **A Murder of Quality** (1962)⁵³⁹ was an old-fashioned murder mystery with a strong undercurrent of social criticism⁵⁴⁰ and it also received favourable reviews.⁵⁴¹

By this time, Cornwell was appointed as a second secretary to the British Embassy in Bonn.⁵⁴² In reality, he was posted to the embassy as an “undeclared” MI6 agent.⁵⁴³ Working both in Bonn and Berlin,⁵⁴⁴ he witnessed the erection of the Berlin Wall on the night of 12 August 1963,⁵⁴⁵ and the event had an impact on him, causing a creative surge:

The first barbed-wire entanglements were going up. [...] And people were being brought out, and they were jumping out of windows, and there was shooting. For three or four nights I hardly slept, and I got into that extraordinary vortex, which you can get into at that age, of sleeplessness and crisis. [...] And I just had this notion of a story about this beat-up agent runner trying to get his agents out of the East.⁵⁴⁶

The resulting novel **The Spy who Came in from the Cold**⁵⁴⁷ (1963) revolutionized the genre:⁵⁴⁸ “In its way, it marked a boundary between two eras: the era of God-is-on-our side patriotism, of trust in government and the morality of the West, and the era of paranoia, of conspiracy theory and suspicion of government, of moral

⁵³⁵ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.213.

⁵³⁶ “Carré”, **Boyer’s French Dictionary**, Boston: Hilliard, Grey and Co., 1833, p.102.

⁵³⁷ **Ibid.**, p.208.

⁵³⁸ **Ibid.**, p.228.

⁵³⁹ Le Carré, **A Murder Of Quality**, London, Gollancz, 1962.

⁵⁴⁰ Sisman, **loc. cit.**

⁵⁴¹ **Ibid.**, p.229.

⁵⁴² **Ibid.**, p.218.

⁵⁴³ **Ibid.**

⁵⁴⁴ Schiff, **op. cit.**, p.97.

⁵⁴⁵ **Ibid.**

⁵⁴⁶ Schiff, **op. cit.**, p.98.

⁵⁴⁷ Le Carré, **The Spy Who Came In From The Cold**, London, Pan Books, 1963.

⁵⁴⁸ Schiff, **loc. cit.**

drift”.⁵⁴⁹ Even the main character, Alec Leamas, was inspired from a real-life agent the author met at London airport:

[...] there was a deadness in the face, and he looked, as we would have said in the spy world in those days, as if he'd had the hell posted out of him. It was the embodiment, suddenly, of somebody that I'd been looking for. [...] he was my guy, Alec Leamas, and I knew he was going to die at the Berlin Wall.⁵⁵⁰

Two years after the critical and popular success of the novel, David Cornwall resigned from the Foreign Office and devoted his time to writing as John le Carré.⁵⁵¹ Still, until 1986, his books were routinely submitted to the Foreign Office for clearance before being published.⁵⁵²

His following novels **The Looking Glass War** (1965)⁵⁵³ and **A Small Town in Germany** (1968)⁵⁵⁴ were followed by his only non-espionage novel **The Naïve and Sentimental Lover** (1971),⁵⁵⁵ which was not well received by the critics.⁵⁵⁶ In 1974, he published his masterpiece **Tinker Tailor, Soldier, Spy** (1974),⁵⁵⁷ which turned into a trilogy with the sequels **The Honourable Schoolboy** (1977)⁵⁵⁸ and **Smiley's People** (1980).⁵⁵⁹ His next work **The Little Drummer Girl** (1983)⁵⁶⁰ was followed by his first autobiographical novel⁵⁶¹ **A Perfect Spy** (1986).⁵⁶² After his worldwide bestseller⁵⁶³ **The Russia House** (1989),⁵⁶⁴ a collection of spy stories entitled **The Secret Pilgrim**⁵⁶⁵ marked the end of the Cold War in 1991.

⁵⁴⁹ **Ibid.**

⁵⁵⁰ Plimpton, **op. cit.**, p.149.

⁵⁵¹ Brucoli and Baughman, **op. cit.**, p.xv.

⁵⁵² Schiff, **op. cit.**, p.100.

⁵⁵³ Le Carré, **The Looking Glass War**, New York, Random House, 1965.

⁵⁵⁴ Le Carré, **A Small Town In Germany**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1968.

⁵⁵⁵ Le Carré, **The Naive And Sentimental Lover**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1971.

⁵⁵⁶ Sisman **op. cit.**, p.345-6.

⁵⁵⁷ Le Carré, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1974.

⁵⁵⁸ Le Carré, **The Honourable Schoolboy**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977.

⁵⁵⁹ Le Carré, **Smiley's People**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1980.

⁵⁶⁰ Le Carré, **The Little Drummer Girl**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1983.

⁵⁶¹ Sisman **op. cit.**, p.441.

⁵⁶² Le Carré, **A Perfect Spy**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1986.

⁵⁶³ Sisman **op. cit.**, p.467.

⁵⁶⁴ Le Carré, **The Russia House**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1989.

⁵⁶⁵ Le Carré, **The Secret Pilgrim**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1991.

Now that the Cold War was over, the critics wondered what Le Carré would write next.⁵⁶⁶ Though his next novel **The Night Manager** (1993)⁵⁶⁷ was focussed on international arms dealers, his 1995 novel **Our Game**⁵⁶⁸ predicted the conflict in the Caucasus after the fall of the Soviet Union. His 1996 novel **The Tailor of Panama**,⁵⁶⁹ a black comedy paying tribute to Graham Greene's **Our Man in Havana**,⁵⁷⁰ was followed by **Single & Single** (1999),⁵⁷¹ his second novel with autobiographical elements.⁵⁷²

The **Constant Gardener** (2001)⁵⁷³ set in the heart of Africa differs from his previous works with its strong female protagonist. The novel was followed by **Absolute Friends** (2004),⁵⁷⁴ **The Mission Song** (2006)⁵⁷⁵, **A Most Wanted Man** (2008),⁵⁷⁶ **Our Kind of Traitor** (2010),⁵⁷⁷ **A Delicate Truth** (2013),⁵⁷⁸ and **A Legacy of Spies** (2017)⁵⁷⁹ where his famous character George Smiley makes another appearance.

John le Carré turned down a knighthood because he “thought the whole process corrupt”⁵⁸⁰ and “not good for artists, writers & the like”.⁵⁸¹ In 2011, he asked his name to be withdrawn from the Man Booker International Prize shortlist refusing to “compete for literary prizes”.⁵⁸² He lives in Cornwall and London⁵⁸³ and continues writing.

Like all his predecessors, John le Carré's artistic creation was also influenced by the staggering incidents of espionage and treason witnessed by the author

⁵⁶⁶ Sisman *op. cit.*, p.473.

⁵⁶⁷ Le Carré, **The Night Manager**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1993.

⁵⁶⁸ Le Carré, **Our Game**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1995.

⁵⁶⁹ John Le Carré (David Cornwell), **The Tailor of Panama**, New York, Ballantine Books, 1996.

⁵⁷⁰ Sisman, *op. cit.*, p.513-517.

⁵⁷¹ Le Carré, **Single & Single**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1999.

⁵⁷² Sisman *op. cit.*, p.527.

⁵⁷³ Le Carré, **The Constant Gardener**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 2001.

⁵⁷⁴ Le Carré, **Absolute Friends**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 2004.

⁵⁷⁵ Le Carré, **The Mission Song**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 2006.

⁵⁷⁶ Le Carré, **A Most Wanted Man**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 2008.

⁵⁷⁷ Le Carré, **Our Kind of Traitor**, London, Penguin Books, 2010.

⁵⁷⁸ Le Carré, **A Delicate Truth**, London, Penguin Books, 2013.

⁵⁷⁹ Le Carré, **A Legacy of Spies**, London, Penguin Books, 2017.

⁵⁸⁰ Sisman, *op. cit.*, p.587.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.588.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.xvi.

firsthand as an insider of the clandestine world. His observations are reflected in his fiction featuring themes of political and personal betrayal as well as the clash of duty and conscience under the shadow of the paranoia created by an evil political force. A close reading of the author's novels written in three consecutive decades provides us with a better understanding of these elements in his fiction.



SECOND CHAPTER

TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY

“Survival is an infinite capacity for suspicion”.¹

It is a known fact that survivors of a trauma often relive or re-enact the traumatic event in their minds in order to come to terms with it.² The intrusive memories, nightmares or flashbacks can sometimes be experienced over longer periods³ and the victim may be in a state of hyperarousal with a hypervigilance for threat.⁴

In Britain, the era following the defection of Kim Philby was a time of distrust in the society's institutions.⁵

The Age of Paranoia we've lived in for the last half century – the plague of suspicion, distrust, disinformation, conspiracy consciousness that has emanated like gamma radiation from intelligence agencies East and West, the pervasive feeling of unfathomable deceit that has destabilized our confidence in the knowability of history – is the true legacy of Kim Philby.⁶

In his book entitled **The Art of Betrayal: Life and Death in the British Secret Service**, Gordon Corera describes the damage done by Kim Philby's betrayal as follows:

Philby tore the service's guts out and then held up the messy entrails he had exposed. [...] The full extent of the carnage he wreaked, the agents blown, the operations compromised was truly shocking, according to those who read the report. But it was his introduction of the cancer of betrayal and suspicion into an organisation and its relationships which was hardest to assess but perhaps most lasting in its effect.

¹ Le Carré, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1974, p.326.

² “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder”, Behavioral Health Virtual Resource, E-Resource, March 2014, (Accessed) https://jpshealthnet.org/sites/default/files/ptsd_e-resource_june_2015.pdf, 23 February 2019.

³ **Ibid.**

⁴ “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Management of PTSD in Adults and Children in Primary and Secondary Care”, NICE Clinical Guidelines, No. 26, 2, Post-traumatic stress disorder, National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health, Leicester, Gaskell, 2005 (Accessed) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK56506/>, 26 February 2019.

⁵ Tod Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.111.

⁶ Ron Rosenbaum, **Kim Philby and the Age of Paranoia**, p.31, qtd. in Tod Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.111.

The depth of the pain was largely hidden from public view. It would be years before the public at large began to understand that the ‘mid-ranking civil servant’ who was described as having defected was something far more. Some like Sir Stewart Menzies, the wartime head of MI6 on whose watch Philby had been recruited, knew all too well what had happened and felt haunted. When his son-in-law briefly moved in to stay with Menzies, the thin walls revealed that Menzies was ‘suffering from the most appalling nightmares’. [...] Philby knocked the self confidence of MI6. Even in the mid-1970s, new recruits remember wondering why certain operations and capabilities were not employed against the Soviets and they slowly realised that it was the legacy of Philby's betrayal and the fear of its being repeated.⁷

John le Carré's Cold War era novel **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** describing the hunt to identify a suspected Russian double agent among the highest ranking officers of the British Intelligence can be read as a *roman à clef* re-enacting and analysing the events in the wake of the defection of the Cambridge spy ring in order to prevent it from occurring again. Throughout the novel, art actually imitates life and the storyline traces Philby's footsteps and the impact of his treason on Britain in retrospect through fictional characters inspired from real life.

During the time the novel was written, the members of the Cambridge five were only partially identified and suspicion about the identity of the remaining members of the group still prevailed in the intelligence circles. The hypervigilance and paranoia caused by the shadow presence of these double agents is perceivable throughout the novel.

2.1 Roman à Clef

A *roman à clef* is a work of fiction in which actual persons are presented under fictitious names.⁸ According to Cobbs, “it is useful with any roman à clef to understand what the key represents, and it is particularly so with this novel”.⁹

⁷ Gordon Corera, **The Art of Betrayal: Life and Death in the British Secret Service**, London, Phoenix Books, 2011, n. p.

⁸ Cuddon, **op. cit.**, p.475.

⁹ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.103.

Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy taking its title from the nursery rhyme “Tinker, tailor [...]”¹⁰ describes the hunt to identify a suspected Russian double agent with the code name Gerald among the highest ranking officers of the British Intelligence.¹¹ Gerald stands for Kim Philby’s code name “Stanley”.¹²

Since Gerald is in a key position in the British Secret Service called Circus¹³ in the novel, every investigation effort to identify him is bound to be thwarted by the mole:

We can’t move. We can’t investigate, because all the instruments of enquiry are in the Circus’s hands, perhaps in Gerald’s. We can’t watch, or listen, or open mail [...]. We can’t interrogate, we can’t take steps to limit a particular person’s access to delicate secrets. To do any of these things would be to run the risk of alarming the mole. It’s the oldest question of all. [...] Who can spy on the spies?¹⁴

Thus, a former high-ranking intelligence officer of the Secret Service, George Smiley, is called back from retirement to conduct a secret investigation.¹⁵ George Smiley, “one of the most memorable characters of modern Western literature”,¹⁶ is familiar to the reader from Le Carré’s first novels **Call For the Dead** and **A Murder Of Quality**:

This pudgy, befuddled, beleaguered intellectual with the Jesuitic mind of an investigator of the Spanish Inquisition and the field instincts of a professional soldier is not only the most fully realized character in spy fiction, but is subtly crafted by the artistic standards of any literature.¹⁷

¹⁰ “Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, richman, poorman, beggarman, thief”, **Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes**, Oxford University Press, 1992, p.483.

¹¹ Le Carré, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1974, p.39.

¹² Charlotte Philby, “The spy who loved me: Charlotte Philby returns to Moscow in search of her grandfather Kim Philby”, **The Independent**, 6 March 2010, (Accessed) <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-spy-who-loved-me-charlotte-philby-returns-to-moscow-in-search-of-her-grandfather-kim-philby-1915508.html>, 12 January 2019.

¹³ The British Secret Service is called Circus in Le Carré’s novels because of its imaginary location at a building in Cambridge Circus in London. James Cameron, “Schoolmaster Who Came in From the Cold”, **Conversations with John le Carré**, Ed. by Matthew J. Bruccoli, Judith S. Baughman, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2004, p.24.

¹⁴ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.77.

¹⁵ **Ibid.**, p.79.

¹⁶ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.91.

¹⁷ **Ibid.**, p.92.

The Smiley character has been inspired by two people from Le Carré's life: His former colleague John Bingham,¹⁸ and Vivian Green,¹⁹ his tutor in Oxford and a long time friend. John Bingham is a short, tubby, bespectacled middle aged man who shared a room with Le Carré during the first years of his career at MI6.²⁰ In his biography, Adam Sisman compares Bingham with Smiley:

David would acknowledge his debt to Bingham by borrowing some of his traits for his most important character, George Smiley – his habit of polishing his spectacles on the end of his tie, for example, which became one of Smiley's trademarks. Bingham had an inconspicuous, unassuming quality, which David appropriated for Smiley; his agent Peter Watt used to say of Bingham that he could 'lose himself in a crowd'. His skill as an intelligence officer was overlain by an endearing helplessness in everyday matters. [...] Like Smiley, Bingham was squat and pudgy, almost toadlike in appearance.²¹

Vivian Green was the chaplain of the Sherborne School when Le Carré was a student there²² and he was also his tutor at Oxford.²³ Sisman also observes the similarities between Green and Smiley:

[...] David would use many of Green's characteristics in his portrayal of Smiley – in the silences which punctuated his conversation, to take just one example. David acknowledged that Smiley's conscience derived from Green's 'strong moral intellect'. Green was famous in Oxford for his eccentric dress sense; Smiley 'appeared to spend a lot of money on really bad clothes'. Years later Green himself would identify some of his own qualities that David might have drawn on his creation of Smiley: understanding of human nature, sympathy for human frailty and a capacity for listening.²⁴

In the course of his investigation, George Smiley interrogates some of his former colleagues. Cobbs compares the style of these interrogations "with the catechismal method of Stephen Dedalus's Jesuitic conversations with [...] religion

¹⁸ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.207-8.

¹⁹ **Ibid.**, p.146.

²⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 200.

²¹ Michael Jago, **The Man Who Was George Smiley: The Life of John Bingham**, Biteback 2013, p. 251-2, qtd. Sisman, **loc. cit.**

²² **Ibid.**, p.67.

²³ **Ibid.**, p.145.

²⁴ 'John le Carré: The Secret Centre', Interview with Nigel Williams, BBC 2, 2000, qtd. in Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.146-7.

students” in **A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man**²⁵ by James Joyce, underlining the clear influence of Joyce on Le Carré.²⁶

One of the colleagues Smiley interrogates is the former Secret Service employee Connie Sachs. The Connie character, an “obsessive, eccentric spinster”,²⁷ is in fact based on Milicent Bagot, an international communism expert in MI5:²⁸

Bagot was also one of the first to raise doubts about Kim Philby. [...] she was a difficult colleague, whose robust opinions were expressed with passionate conviction. But her memory for facts was so extraordinary as to have passed into Service folklore.²⁹

Endowed with a memory reminiscent of Bagot,³⁰ Connie is also the first intelligence officer to suspect the presence of a mole in the service.³¹

Another character on Smiley’s list, Jerry Westerby, is based on Peter Simms, a British foreign correspondent who also worked as a freelancer for the British intelligence.³²

Also, Percy Alleline, the new chief of the secret service, is a character based on George Kennedy Young, the very tall, red-headed, squash-playing Scottish Assistant Chief of MI6.³³

Smiley’s investigation of the events narrated in a retrospective manner through the memories of side characters lets the reader grasp the story piecemeal like a jigsaw puzzle and culminates in the arrest of the traitor Bill Haydon.³⁴

²⁵ James Joyce, **A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man**, Ware, Wordsworth Classics, 1992.

²⁶ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.99.

²⁷ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.191.

²⁸ **Ibid.**, p.190.

²⁹ **Ibid.**, p.191.

³⁰ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.103.

³¹ **Ibid.**, p.113.

³² Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.364.

³³ **Ibid.**, p.211.

³⁴ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.349.

When Le Carré was asked if he has created Bill Haydon, the Russian mole in **Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy**, based on Kim Philby, he claimed that “he had all the traitors in mind”.³⁵ Though he insists that he did not consciously pursue any particular origin when he created Bill Haydon,³⁶ the character carries distinctive traits of two former double agents, Kim Philby³⁷ and Sir Anthony Blunt.³⁸

A fellow British intelligence officer, John Le Carré has repeatedly expressed his dislike of Kim Philby in a number of interviews:

I had a difference of opinion with Graham Greene over Philby; we take different views. I’m obliged to say that I feel Philby was essentially dead wrong all the way through and all the time. I don’t think the ideology was especially important to him, and certainly the money wasn’t. But his consistent objective was to get rid of the values and conditions I hold to be all right, and I don’t go along with it.³⁹

Le Carré has also blamed Philby for passing the names of a number of British spies – including himself⁴⁰ - to the Russian Secret Service.⁴¹ When he was invited by Graham Greene to meet Philby in Moscow, Le Carré turned down the invitation:

I refused to meet him, for I always held him to be a perfectly disgusting person. To this day no one realizes what havoc he created by delivering up dozens of our agents to a gruesome fate in the Soviet Union. That still gives me a fright.⁴²

At the beginning of the novel, a junior intelligence officer tells Smiley that he was approached in Hong Kong by a woman called Irina, who told him that there is a Soviet mole at the top of the British Secret Intelligence Service.⁴³ Irina turns out to be a high-ranking Soviet Secret Service (KGB) agent who is about to lose her mental

³⁵ Gross, **op. cit.**, p.62.

³⁶ **Ibid.**, p.64.

³⁷ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.358.

³⁸ **Ibid.**, p.413.

³⁹ Cameron, **op. cit.**, p.25.

⁴⁰ Plimpton, **op. cit.**, p.154.

⁴¹ “What Would I Be Like If I Were He”, **Conversations with John le Carré**, Ed. by Matthew J. Bruccoli, Judith S. Baughman, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2004, p.119.

⁴² **Ibid.**

⁴³ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.63.

balance because of living under constant secrecy and suspicion.⁴⁴ She can only stand the strain of her duty through her heavy drinking.⁴⁵ In return to the identity of this mole, Irina demands defection to the West.⁴⁶ During their meetings, “Irina was frightened stiff, not just of her husband but of the security guards attached to the delegation [...]”.⁴⁷ Having lost her trust in everyone, Irina is determined not to disclose the name of the mole until they are in safety.⁴⁸

That evening, the British intelligence officer informs the British Secret Service about the situation,⁴⁹ but while he is waiting for a plane to pick them up, Irina is drugged and taken back to Moscow in an unconscious state.⁵⁰ The diary left behind by Irina before she was whisked away to Moscow relates a story she heard from a former lover who acted as a go-between for a Russian diplomat in London, Colonel Polyakov, and the British mole using the code name Gerald,⁵¹ who is a high functionary within the British Secret Service.⁵² “Moles are very precious to the [Moscow] Centre because of the many years it takes to place them [...]”⁵³ and Gerald supplies abundant material about the West to the Moscow Centre.⁵⁴

This whole story is actually a literary re-enactment of an incident called the Volkov affair⁵⁵ that took place in Istanbul in 1945. On 4 September 1945, a Russian diplomat named Volkov went to the British Consulate in Istanbul to ask for asylum for himself and his wife in return to the names of the three high-ranking British officials who were Russian spies. He also pledged to hand over the list of all the Russian spies and informants on duty in Turkey.⁵⁶ Volkov must have been aware that his asylum

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.53.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.51.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.53.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.50.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.54.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.57.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.58.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.64.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.65.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.63.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.65.

⁵⁵ Sisman, *op. cit.*, p.358.

⁵⁶ Yetkin, *op. cit.*, p.65-66.

request could end up on the desk of the double agent he was about to disclose, but this was a risk he had to take.⁵⁷

Indeed, on 19 September 1945, his case file ended up in the hands of the head of the Soviet desk, i.e. Kim Philby. Philby was shocked to read about the information Volkov offered. The next morning, he informed Boris Krötenfeld, his contact in the KGB station in London. Soon, the KGB centre in Moscow was in alarm.⁵⁸

In his memoir **My Silent War**, Kim Philby relates his version of the same story:

A certain Konstantin Volkov, a Vice-Consul attached to the Soviet Consulate-General in Istanbul, had approached a Mr. Page, his opposite number in the British Consulate-General, and asked for asylum in Britain for himself and his wife. He claimed that, although nominally a Vice-Consul, he was in fact an officer of the NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs]⁵⁹. He said that his wife was in a deplorably nervous state, and Page remarked that Volkov himself was less than rock-steady. In support of his request for asylum, Volkov promised to reveal [...] details of Soviet networks and agents operating abroad. *Inter alia*, he claimed to know the real names of three Soviet agents working in Britain. Two of them were in the foreign office; one was head of a counter-espionage organization in London. [...] he stipulated with the greatest vehemence that no mention of his approach should be relayed to London by telegram, on the grounds that the Russians had broken a variety of British ciphers.⁶⁰

As soon as the news reached Kim Philby, he decided to go to Istanbul in order to take the case in his own hands. Still, he took his time to process the case, obviously giving time to the Russians to take care of Volkov before he has the chance to defect to the West.⁶¹ When the British mission in Istanbul finally tried to contact Volkov, the Soviet Consulate initially denied Volkov's existence.⁶² In their third attempt, they were told that Volkov was in Moscow.⁶³

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.66.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.68.

⁵⁹ Hamrick, *op. cit.*, p.xvi.

⁶⁰ Philby, *op.cit*, p.119.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p.122.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.127.

⁶³ Yetkin, *op. cit.*, p.69.

Although he does not admit it in his memoir, after Kim Philby had tipped off the Russians in order to protect the Cambridge Five, two hit-men who had arrived from Moscow under diplomatic cover had drugged Volkov and his wife, hid them in crates, and flown them to Moscow as “diplomatic package”. Years later, after the KGB broke up, the archives revealed that Volkov was executed for treason in Moscow.⁶⁴

Another character who has greatly influenced Bill Haydon is Sir Anthony Blunt, whose treason was publicly disclosed at about the time when the novel was published.⁶⁵ Like Blunt, who happened to be a distinguished art historian and the official art advisor to the Queen,⁶⁶ Haydon has a taste for arts and is himself a hobby painter who had his exhibitions during his Oxford days when Jim Prideaux, with whom he was in a homosexual relationship, helped him hang his canvases.⁶⁷ Haydon’s relationship with Jim Prideaux⁶⁸ is also reminiscent of Anthony Blunt’s private life.⁶⁹ Le Carré has expressed equally negative sentiments on Blunt:

We don’t know what Blunt did, nor how he obtained his amnesty. What deal did he make with the authorities? Whisper who dares.

I was hypnotised by his television performance, and I think it made me angrier than anything I can recall in recent times.

[...] it was pretty macabre to hear a self-confessed Russian spy primly taking refuge in the Official Secrets Act. But mainly I think it was his voice, the feeling that he was somehow patronising us. Telling us that because he was *this* kind of person, in *this* setting, he demanded *this* kind of credulity. His performance in The Times offices brought out practically all the social resentments that are still left in me.⁷⁰

Cobbs claims that “Bill Haydon is a composite of four men - Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, and Anthony Blunt - of whom Philby is the most important in providing the prototype for le Carré”.⁷¹ There are indeed many parallels between the Haydon character and other members of the Cambridge Five: Bill

⁶⁴ **Ibid.**

⁶⁵ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.104.

⁶⁶ **Ibid.**

⁶⁷ Le Carré, **loc. cit.**, p.265.

⁶⁸ **Ibid.**, p.224.

⁶⁹ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.413.

⁷⁰ Gross, **op. cit.**, p.63.

⁷¹ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.103.

Haydon's father is a "monster"⁷² who was "unashamedly conservative".⁷³ Kim Philby also had a "tyrannous old monster" for a father,⁷⁴ who was "an explorer, eccentric, Muslim convert, liar, con man, voluptuary, spy"⁷⁵ and an unloving father.⁷⁶ While St. John Philby was working as an advisor to King Fahd in Saudi Arabia, he converted to Islam and took a number of wives. By that time, he had become a very powerful, unpleasant and anti-British figure. When Kim was twelve or thirteen years old, he was given to the Bedouin to be turned into a man.⁷⁷ In the novel, Haydon is also many times referred to as "our latter-day Lawrence of Arabia".⁷⁸

Like Kim Philby, Bill Haydon is a womanizer: "Well, he has the glamour, hasn't he, not like some of us. Star quality I call it, one of the few. I'm told the women literally bow down before him, if that's what women do".⁷⁹ Le Carré also admits the connection between Philby and Haydon: "Philby was a bent voluptuary: Come to think of it – yes, I gave that quality to Haydon, and perhaps I did pinch it from Philby".⁸⁰

According to Cobbs, Haydon's "sexual predatoriness, easy-going noblesse oblige charm, aristocratic access to bureaucratic power in a class-conscious society, and self-justification [...] all correspond to Kim Philby's character".⁸¹ Bill Haydon is also mentioned to have an affair with "a snotty little sailor boy"⁸² clearly referring to the bisexuality of certain members of the Cambridge Five: "Even in a world noted for the intellectual chic of homosexuality, Burgess was notorious, particularly for his penchant for 'lowering' affairs".⁸³ Cobbs also associates Haydon's hauteur with Anthony Burgess.⁸⁴

⁷² Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.364.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.261.

⁷⁴ Plimpton, *op. cit.*, p.155.

⁷⁵ John Le Carré, qtd. in Tom Matthews, "In from the cold", *Newsweek*, No.113, 5 June 1989, p.55.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Plimpton, *loc. cit.*

⁷⁸ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.28, 134, 158.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.29.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Cobbs, *op. cit.*, p.105.

⁸² Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.356.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Cobbs, *loc. cit.*

The Russian spymaster Karla, “the mysterious and apparently all-powerful head of the ‘Thirteenth Directorate of Moscow Centre’”⁸⁵ is perhaps the most enigmatic figure in the novel. Though it is usually believed that the Karla character was inspired from Markus Wolf, the chief of East German Intelligence (Stasi) who was called “the man without a face”, John le Carré has “repeatedly denied the connection”.⁸⁶ Later, the real-life model of Karla was identified as Major General Rem Krassilnikov (1927-2003),⁸⁷ nicknamed “the professor of counterintelligence” within the KGB.⁸⁸

Rem Sergeyevich Krassilnikov served as the head of the KGB's department tasked with investigating and disrupting Central Intelligence Agency activities in Moscow. Krassilnikov served in Beirut from 1965 to 1970, operating against British intelligence according to his autobiography. In the 1970s and 1980s, he was a successful counterintelligence chief, rising to the rank of chief of the American section of the Second Chief Directorate with the rank of major general. He disrupted several Western operations, arresting Soviet citizens who were subsequently shot. Never satisfied with the credit he believed his office deserved, he authored two books on KGB counterintelligence. He was referred to by one journalist as the "real Karla" after the fictional spymaster in John Le Carre's novels.⁸⁹

In the final years of the cold war, Krassilnikov was in charge of the investigations and arrests of western spies whose names were passed to him by CIA moles including Aldrich H. Ames and Robert P. Hanssen.⁹⁰

2.2 K for Communism

The Karla figure created in **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** and chased by Smiley in the two sequels to the novel, **The Honourable Schoolboy** and **Smiley's People**, is an enigmatic, even surreal character. The name “Karl” is of East European

⁸⁵ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.352.

⁸⁶ **Ibid.**, p.217.

⁸⁷ Robert W. Pringle, “Krassilnikov, Rem Sergeyevich”, **Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Intelligence**, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015, p.168.

⁸⁸ James Risen, “Rem Krassilnikov, Russian Bane of C.I.A., Dies at 76”, **The New York Times**, 24 March 2003, (Accessed) <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/24/world/rem-krassilnikov-russian-bane-of-cia-dies-at-76.html>, 27 February 2019.

⁸⁹ Pringle, **loc. cit.**

⁹⁰ Risen, **loc. cit.**

origin and is related to the word “emperor”.⁹¹ Both Krassilnikov’s surname and the Russian word for communism (*коммунизм*) also start with the letter “K”.⁹² The question why the author has chosen the female version of the name as “Karla”⁹³ is yet to be answered. However, since both the words, *strana* (*страна*) meaning “nation” and *rodina* (*родина*) meaning “homeland” in Russian are of feminine gender, the name Karla may be a reference to “mother Russia”.⁹⁴

Smiley describes Karla’s past as follows:

Yet legends were made and Karla was one of them. Even his age was a mystery. Most likely Karla was not his real name. Decades of his life were not accounted for, and probably never would be, since the people he worked with had a way of dying off or keeping their mouths shut.

[...] He is said to have learnt his tradecraft from Berg [an alias used by real-life spy and defector Alexander Mikhailovich Orlov]⁹⁵ - to have been his ewe lamb in fact- which is a bit like being taught music by ... oh, name a great composer.⁹⁶

Karla is Smiley’s Black Grail⁹⁷ and the trilogy beginning with **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** is suitably named **The Quest for Karla**.⁹⁸ The mysterious figure of Karla never utters a single word throughout the trilogy, save from a conversation related by Jim Prideaux.⁹⁹ According to Irina, “even his name is not one that Russians understand”.¹⁰⁰ Krassilnikov’s name Rem is also an acronym for “*revolyutsiya mirovaya*” meaning “world revolution” in Russian,¹⁰¹ a name created by Communist parents who were eager to reject traditional names.¹⁰²

⁹¹ Patrick Hanks, Flavia Hodges, “Karl”, **The Oxford Dictionary of First Names**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990, p.187.

⁹² “Communism”, **The Oxford Russian Dictionary**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p.346.

⁹³ Hanks, Hodges, “Karla”, **op. cit.**, p.187.

⁹⁴ “Country”, **The Oxford Russian Dictionary**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p.354.

⁹⁵ Boris Volodarsky, **Stalin's Agent: The Life and Death of Alexander Orlov**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p.356.

⁹⁶ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.200.

⁹⁷ Le Carré, **Smiley’s People**, p.162.

⁹⁸ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.389.

⁹⁹ Le Carré, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**, p.298.

¹⁰⁰ **Ibid.**, p.63.

¹⁰¹ “Rem”, Weird Names of Soviet Children (Accessed) <https://weirdrussia.com/2015/04/08/weird-names-of-soviet-children/>, 03 March 2019.

¹⁰² “Rem”, “Behind the Name” (Accessed) <https://www.behindthename.com/name/rem/submitted>, 03 March 2019.

Smiley meets Karla for the first time in a jail in India when he is temporarily disgraced in Moscow.¹⁰³ He describes his appearance as “modest and avuncular”.¹⁰⁴ Karla is sitting in an interrogation room as hot as hell, wearing a red tunic,¹⁰⁵ the symbolic colour of communism and fire.¹⁰⁶ Believing Karla is a clear candidate for defection,¹⁰⁷ Smiley offers him a new life in the West.

It is mentioned that in 1936 and 1941, Karla visited Britain for six months under an unknown name and cover.¹⁰⁸ As Karla is the one who recruited Bill Haydon as a Russian agent during his Oxford years,¹⁰⁹ his story also converges with Arnold Deutsch, who recruited Kim Philby and the other members of the Cambridge Five in the mid-1930s, only to be disgraced and executed under mysterious circumstances later.¹¹⁰

But although a similar death sentence awaits him in Russia,¹¹¹ Karla is committed to his country and never for one moment considers defection to the West.¹¹² In this sense, Smiley and Karla are actually the mirror image of each other: Both men are patriots with an unshakeable loyalty to their country. They are “twin cities... two halves of the same apple”.¹¹³ While Smiley represents the free West, Karla is the unwavering rock of communism. However, they have both witnessed the loss of human lives for no reason on both sides, and as a middle-aged spy, Smiley is now disillusioned and can see through both systems. Smiley’s words to Karla in the prison cell reveal how jaded both sides are from the constant paranoia prevalent during the Cold War:

‘Look,’ I said, ‘we’re getting to be old men, and we’ve spent our lives looking for the weaknesses in one another’s systems. I can see through Eastern values just as you can through our Western ones. Both of us, I am sure, have experienced *ad nauseam* the technical satisfactions of this wretched war. But now your own side is going to

¹⁰³ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.201.

¹⁰⁴ **Ibid.**, p.205.

¹⁰⁵ **Ibid.**, p.205.

¹⁰⁶ Rex A. Wade, **The Russian Revolution, 1917**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017, p.284.

¹⁰⁷ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.204.

¹⁰⁸ **Ibid.**, p.201.

¹⁰⁹ **Ibid.**, p.201.

¹¹⁰ Robert W. Pringle, “Deutsch, Arnold”, **Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Intelligence**, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015, p.84.

¹¹¹ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.206.

¹¹² **Ibid.**, p.210.

¹¹³ Le Carré, **Smiley’s People**, p.215.

shoot you. Don't you think it's time to recognise that there is as little worth on your side as there is on mine? Look' I said, 'in our trade we have only negative vision. In that sense, neither of us has anywhere to go. Both of us when we were young, subscribed to *great* visions [...] but not any more'.¹¹⁴

As Smiley tries to convince Karla, he is in fact revealing the conclusions he has reached in his mind:

Did he not believe for example that the political generality was meaningless? That only the particular in life had value for him now? That in the hands of politicians grand designs achieve nothing but new forms of the old misery? And that therefore his life, the saving of it from yet another meaningless firing squad, was more important - morally, ethically more important - than the sense of duty, or obligation, or commitment, or whatever it was that kept him on this present path of self-destruction?¹¹⁵

According to Hoffman, this scene between Karla and Smiley "masterfully reduces the Cold War to a standoff between two very human characters".¹¹⁶

Their confrontation is also reminiscent of the duel between Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty, "the Napoleon of Crime".¹¹⁷ Like Karla, "Moriarty was a 'genius, a philosopher, and abstract thinker with the demeanour of a schoolmaster and the focussed will of the mad scientist he truly was'".¹¹⁸

In the end, Smiley cannot convince Karla to change sides and leaves the room without saying a word.¹¹⁹ Smiley observes in retrospect: "I believed, [...], that I had seen something in his face that was superior than mere dogma; not realising that it was my own reflection".¹²⁰ This scene is perhaps the first unravelling of the author persona in terms of his conviction about the superiority of duty to individual conscience for the greater good.

¹¹⁴ **Ibid.**

¹¹⁵ Le Carré, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**, p.213.

¹¹⁶ Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.141.

¹¹⁷ Cobbs., **op. cit.**, p.94.

¹¹⁸ **Ibid.**

¹¹⁹ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.210.

¹²⁰ **Ibid.**, p.212.

2.3 Loyalty and Betrayal

“There is no loyalty without betrayal”.¹²¹

Surrounded by characters inspired from real life, the fictional character Jim Prideaux is “the most English character” in the novel.¹²² Prideaux is in fact a personalization of Britain: Bill Haydon’s loyal friend, former lover¹²³ and lifelong colleague, he is the son of a French aristocrat.¹²⁴ Though his mother’s nationality is never mentioned, the fact that he is a native speaker of English points to an English mother. Raised in various countries before he came to Oxford,¹²⁵ his English and French origins are reminiscent of the Norman heritage of Britain after the War of Hastings¹²⁶ and his international upbringing is a reference to colonial Britain.¹²⁷ Prideaux considers himself an Englishman and is proud of everything that is English. As noted in his Secret Intelligence Service file, “though he is made up of all different bits of Europe, make no mistake: the completed version is devoutly our own”.¹²⁸

With a Union Jack drawn on the bonnet of his car,¹²⁹ in the school he works as a teacher, Prideaux the ultimate patriot expresses his love for England at every opportunity:

[...] took no account of Jim’s passionate Englishness, which was the only subject where he could be relied on to waste time. [...] Spikely has only to venture one disparaging comment on the monarchy, extol the joys of some foreign country, preferably a hot one, for Jim to colour sharply and snap out a good three minutes’ worth on the privilege of being born an Englishman. [...] England was his love; when it came down to it, no one suffered for her. ‘Best place in the whole damn world’.¹³⁰

¹²¹ Le Carré, **Smiley’s People**, p.74.

¹²² Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.109.

¹²³ Le Carré, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**, p.343.

¹²⁴ **Ibid.**, p.262.

¹²⁵ **Ibid.**, p.262.

¹²⁶ Christopher Hibbert, **The Story of England**, London, Phaidon Press Limited, 1992, p.44.

¹²⁷ **Ibid.**, p.149.

¹²⁸ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.262.

¹²⁹ **Ibid.**, p.120.

¹³⁰ **Ibid.**, p.17.

Prideaux's name is a pun for "prix d'eau",¹³¹ French for "price of water",¹³² perhaps standing for an undervalued or wasted person. Prideaux is first introduced to the reader as a middle-aged, hunchbacked¹³³ man with an unhealing wound and two bullets stuck in his shoulder bone, paralyzing his right arm.¹³⁴

Right from the beginning of the novel, Prideaux's character involves a certain element of paranoia: When he first arrives at the school, he chooses a unique spot in the yard where his car and caravan are disguised from the passers-by while he can observe the road leading to the school without being recognised.¹³⁵ One of the students watching his arrival even observes that Jim must have made a reconnaissance or studied maps before his arrival in order to pick the best spot to set his camp,¹³⁶ an old habit of him as a spy constantly watching his back in the field.

While working at the school, Prideaux applies regular surveillance methods like checking if his mails are tempered with.¹³⁷ Ready to move any moment, he is also constantly on the watch for strangers appearing in this remote corner of the country.¹³⁸

For days he had known there was someone. That also was part of his routine: to watch the places where the watchers asked. [...] And sure enough in Taunton two days ago [...] Jim had come across the footprint he was looking for. [...] from then on [he] made his dispositions. He bought railway tickets to places because he knew that if he were on the run again, tickets would be hard to come by. He had uncached his old identities and his gun and hid them handily above ground; he dumped a suitcase full of clothes in the boot of the Alvis, and kept the tank full. These precautions made sleep a possibility; [...].¹³⁹

¹³¹ "Prix, **Boyer's French Dictionary**, Boston, Hilliard, Gray and Co., 1833, p.414.

¹³² "Eau", **Ibid.**, p.195.

¹³³ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.12.

¹³⁴ **Ibid.**, p.269.

¹³⁵ **Ibid.**, p.10.

¹³⁶ **Ibid.**

¹³⁷ **Ibid.**, p.34.

¹³⁸ **Ibid.**, p.121.

¹³⁹ **Ibid.**, p.273.

Prideaux also keeps a gun buried in the vegetable patch in the school grounds and he digs it up when he feels in danger.¹⁴⁰ All the school sections of the novel are “suffused by an atmosphere of paranoid watchfulness”.¹⁴¹

Prideaux’s story slowly unravels in retrospect as Smiley interrogates him.¹⁴² Prideaux is a former senior intelligence officer.¹⁴³ A year ago, the late chief of the Secret Service, mentioned only with his title “Control”¹⁴⁴ throughout the novel, sent him for a top secret operation to Czechoslovakia¹⁴⁵ under the name Ellis.¹⁴⁶ His alias Ellis is borrowed from a code name Guy Burgess from the Cambridge Five had used before his defection.¹⁴⁷ Jim was supposed to meet a Czech general who would sell him the name of the mole in the British Intelligence Service.¹⁴⁸ The five upper-ranking officers who were suspects were given codenames using the tinker, tailor nursery rhyme which the novel takes its title from.¹⁴⁹ After the mission was completed, Jim was to get the one codename to Control under any circumstances.¹⁵⁰

However, the whole mission was a trap set by Bill Haydon and Karla to disgrace Control, who was suspicious of a mole. The general was especially chosen to be a Czech to ascertain that it would be Jim Prideaux, a fluent Czech speaker and the most senior Czech expert in the service,¹⁵¹ who would be sent to the mission. Bill Haydon, the oldest and closest friend of Prideaux,¹⁵² had set up a death trap for him in order to “bring down the temple” of the secret service.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.221.

¹⁴¹ Cobbs, *op. cit.*, p.110.

¹⁴² Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.278.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.83.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.26.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.280.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.119.

¹⁴⁷ Cobbs, *op. cit.*, p.122.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.283.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.283.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.83.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p.301.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.360.

Jim survives the trap with two bullets in his back and endures severe torture and interrogation over months¹⁵⁴ until he is returned to England, maimed for life.¹⁵⁵ The Ellis scandal also brings East and West on the brink of a war.¹⁵⁶

The big, strong and athletic¹⁵⁷ Prideaux shot symbolically in his back and now turned into a cripple in constant pain due to his wound is a personification of Britain after Philby's treason. As stated in a question directed to Smiley by a politician, "a bullet in the back is held to be quite a sacrifice, isn't it, even in your world?".¹⁵⁸ The damage done by the trust betrayed has also taken an equally long time as Prideaux's wound to heal.¹⁵⁹

The night before Prideaux departs for Czechoslovakia for the ill-fated mission, he goes to warn Haydon, because he has his suspicions about him: "He came to warn you, Smiley thought; because he loved you. [...] Jim was watching your back for you right till the end".¹⁶⁰

However, Haydon does not show the same loyalty to Jim and still sends him to the death trap he has set. His unscrupulous attitude towards the agents he betrays and sends to a certain death is also reminiscent of Philby:

Philby had no moral qualms about the agents he had betrayed during his spying career. He saw the struggle between Western intelligence and the KGB as a war. "There are always casualties in war" he told me, adding, "Anyway, most of them were pretty nasty pieces of work and quite prepared themselves to kill if necessary".¹⁶¹

Bill Haydon's betrayal does not end with Prideaux, he also betrays his colleague Smiley. Haydon spends the night of the failed mission with Smiley's wife Ann¹⁶² under Karla's orders who insisted that Haydon should be "dallying with Ann"¹⁶³

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.295.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.297.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.83.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.99.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.79.

¹⁵⁹ Corera, *loc. cit.*

¹⁶⁰ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.360.

¹⁶¹ Knightley, Introduction to *My Silent War* by Kim Philby, New York, The Modern Library, 2002, p.xiii.

¹⁶² Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.238.

both to create an alibi for Haydon and to defame Smiley and put him out of the picture. Thinking that Smiley represented the biggest threat to the mole Gerald, Karla told Haydon “to join the queue” of Ann’s lovers,¹⁶⁴ in order to cloud Smiley’s judgement¹⁶⁵ and distract him from pursuing his suspicions:¹⁶⁶ “But you had this one price: Ann. The last illusion of the illusionless man. He reckoned that if I was known to be Ann's lover around the place you wouldn't see me very straight when it came to other things”.¹⁶⁷

In order to mask his treason, Haydon uses his own cousin Ann¹⁶⁸ for his own agenda, and taints her for Smiley forever. Perhaps because Ann sensed Haydon’s ulterior motives, or perhaps because she feels guilty, she is broken in the aftermath of the affair. Like Haydon, she loses all sorts of morality in life, “starts living wildly, taking anyone who would have her”.¹⁶⁹ She develops a wasting cough she blames on “the things she can’t say”.¹⁷⁰ Smiley understands that she is trying to bury something that hurt her very much:¹⁷¹

Gradually it dawned on him that she was deeply unhappy. She lost weight, she lost her sense of play, and if he didn't know her better he would have sworn she was having a bad bout of the guilt, even of self-disgust.

[...]

But he knew that somehow Bill had hurt her deeply, which was the sin of sins.¹⁷²

Though Smiley has tolerated Ann’s previous affairs,¹⁷³ the affair with Haydon becomes a breaking point for him too, and at the end of the novel, he sees her as “essentially another man’s woman”.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶³ **Ibid.**

¹⁶⁴ **Ibid.**, p.362.

¹⁶⁵ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.141.

¹⁶⁶ **Ibid.**, p.114.

¹⁶⁷ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.362.

¹⁶⁸ **Ibid.**, p.75.

¹⁶⁹ **Ibid.**, p.148.

¹⁷⁰ **Ibid.**

¹⁷¹ **Ibid.**

¹⁷² **Ibid.**, p.164.

¹⁷³ **Ibid.**, p.204.

¹⁷⁴ **Ibid.**, p.366.

His affair with Ann Smiley is also reminiscent of Kim Philby's affair with his friend Maclean's wife Melinda.¹⁷⁵

From time to time Philby borrowed other men's wives as mistresses - not terribly wicked if one doesn't make a habit of it. Philby did. He made it a vocation. He married one in Beirut, who faithfully followed him to Moscow; during her absence he fell out of the matrimonial bed and borrowed Donald Maclean's wife as his live-in mistress.¹⁷⁶

Smiley's cigarette lighter is an important motif for Ann's love throughout the trilogy. The lighter inscribed "to George from Ann with all my love" is a gift from her to Smiley. During the encounter with Karla in the prison, a feverish and frustrated Smiley blabbers about Ann's infidelity. As Karla leaves the room, he drops Smiley's lighter in his pocket, and though Smiley is aware of it, he lets him have the lighter.¹⁷⁷ Fire is a very rich literary symbol of passionate love, jealousy, and even hell fire.¹⁷⁸ By stealing the metaphoric fire given by Ann to Smiley, Karla also takes the first step towards setting up the destructive love triangle between Smiley, Ann and Bill Haydon. Later, as Karla interrogates Prideaux in Moscow, he shows him the same lighter as if it were a prize of war,¹⁷⁹ and makes a joke of it saying "after Bill Haydon's fling with her, she might care to redraft the inscription".¹⁸⁰ Finally, at the end of **Smiley's People**, as Karla crosses the bridge to West Berlin, he drops Smiley's lighter at his feet.¹⁸¹ But since the now hardened Smiley has already left Ann,¹⁸² he does not pick it up.¹⁸³

2.4 Motives for Betrayal

In Le Carré's most autobiographical novel¹⁸⁴ **A Perfect Spy**, the protagonist's wife Mary Pym relates her husband's words about betrayal:

¹⁷⁵ "Spies and Lovers", **The Guardian**, 10 May 2003, (Accessed)

<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2003/may/10/weekend7.weekend2>, 03 March 2019.

¹⁷⁶ Hamrick, **op. cit.**, p.30.

¹⁷⁷ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.210.

¹⁷⁸ Michael Ferber, "Fire", **A Dictionary of Literary Symbols**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.74.

¹⁷⁹ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.298.

¹⁸⁰ **Ibid.**

¹⁸¹ Le Carré, **Smiley's People**, p.383.

¹⁸² Le Carré, **The Honourable Schoolboy**, p.143.

¹⁸³ Le Carré, **Smiley's People**, **loc. cit.**

¹⁸⁴ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.4.

‘Betrayal’ she said. ‘We betray to be loyal. Betrayal is like imagining when the reality isn’t good enough.’ He wrote that. Betrayal as hope and compensation. As the making of a better land. Betrayal as love. As a tribute to our unlived lives. On and on, these ponderous aphorisms about betrayal. Betrayal as escape. As a constructive act. As a statement of ideals. Worship. As adventure of the soul [...].¹⁸⁵

Philby’s betrayal is explained with his belief that the Western democracies were unable to stand against the rise of Fascism in Europe in the ‘30s and that “only the Soviet Union could save the world”.¹⁸⁶ According to Hoffman, “there is nothing shocking in his youthful attraction to communism or his earnest, if naïve, longing to change the world”.¹⁸⁷ He also adds that the turmoil of the late 1920s to the 1930s in the West had led many young academics to question the intellectual foundation of the capitalist society.¹⁸⁸

In the novel, Karla also uses the same sentiments to recruit his future agents:

Most of the English moles were recruited by Karla before the war and came from the higher bourgeoisie, even aristocrats and nobles who were disgusted with their origins, and became secretly fanatic, much more fanatic than their working-class English comrades who are slothful. Several were applying to join the Party when Karla stopped them in time and directed them to special work.¹⁸⁹

In defence of Philby, Graham Greene claims that “in Philby’s own eyes he was working for a shape of things to come from which his country would benefit”¹⁹⁰ and adds, “if I had to choose between life in the Soviet Union and life in the United States of America, I would certainly choose the Soviet Union”.¹⁹¹ In his autobiography **My Silent War**, Philby insists that he was “a straight penetration agent working in the Soviet interest” and had never betrayed his true loyalty.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁵ Le Carré, **A Perfect Spy**, p.163.

¹⁸⁶ Knightley, **op. cit.**, p.xi.

¹⁸⁷ Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.115.

¹⁸⁸ **Ibid.**

¹⁸⁹ Le Carré, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**, p.106.

¹⁹⁰ Greene, **op. cit.**, p.xvii.

¹⁹¹ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.314.

¹⁹² Philby, **op. cit.**, p.xxix.

Le Carré associates Philby's motives with the disillusionment after the British Empire - once the empire on which the sun never set - has lost its colonies¹⁹³ and became secondary to the United States:

I think that I belong almost to the last of that particular generation who still, after the war, were being advised by their careers masters at public school to go and govern India, Kenya, the Sudan or where you will. We really were brought up to believe we were the best and the brightest, that we'd inherited the mantle of post-war imperialism, that we were the people for whom the war had been fought and now the earth was ours and we had a great duty to run it decently. And of course, within fifteen years of that, we realised that our problem was not to run the world, but to come to terms with the fact of the world running us.¹⁹⁴

In the novel, Haydon lists his reasons for treason in the apologia he writes:

The United States is no longer capable of undertaking its own revolution...

The political posture of the United Kingdom is without relevance or moral viability in world affairs...

The cold war began in 1917 but the bitterest struggles lie ahead of us, as America's deathbed paranoia drives her to greater excesses abroad...¹⁹⁵

Stating his deep hatred for America,¹⁹⁶ Haydon also claims that the Suez affair has finally persuaded him of the "inanity of the British situation and of the British capacity to spike the advance of history while not being able to offer anything by way of contribution". Americans sabotaging the British action in Egypt was the last straw that had pushed him into the arms of Karla.¹⁹⁷

Cobbs describes these reasons as "agitprop slogans and chic leftist jargon" trying to explain an empty ideology.¹⁹⁸ He also states that the novel is "a study of how two types of well-bred people respond to loss, or to a world suffering a dying fall".¹⁹⁹ While Smiley adapts to the new situation with grace, because he defines himself with

¹⁹³ Hibbert, *op. cit.*, p.213.

¹⁹⁴ Paul Vaughan, "le Carré's Circus, Lamplighters, Moles and Others of that ilk", *Conversations with John le Carré*, Ed. by Matthew J. Bruccoli, Judith S. Baughman, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2004, p.59.

¹⁹⁵ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.354.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.358.

¹⁹⁸ Cobbs, *op. cit.*, p.119.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.102.

more self-respect than a mere “British gentleman”; Haydon, who is “less, far less than the sum of his apparent qualities” chooses to react.²⁰⁰ In this sense, the motive for his treason can be associated not only with ideology, but also with ego.

At the end of the novel, the trap set by Smiley to identify the mole is a reversal of the Biblical scene in Gethsemane:²⁰¹ While Smiley’s secret team is waiting outside, the Russian general Polyakov, Haydon’s handler and his personal Judas, comes to the safe house to meet the mole. Thus, he exposes Haydon’s identity, not with a kiss but with the offer of a drink.²⁰² The image is also foreshadowed in the words of the character Mendel: “Jesus Christ only had twelve, you know, and one of them was a double”.²⁰³

Perhaps because he has this empathy with Haydon, as Smiley realizes the identity of the mole caught by the trap he set, he does not simply feel victory or vengeance. As he had poured his heart to Karla in the Indian prison, he finds himself once more in revolt against politics and institutions destroying the individuals’ lives:

Then for a moment one part of Smiley broke into open revolt against the other. The wave of angry doubt which had swept over him [...] and ever since had pulled against his progress like a worrying tide, drove him now on to the rocks of despair, and then to mutiny: I refuse. Nothing is worth the destruction of another human being. Somewhere the path of pain and betrayal must end. Until that happened, there was no future: there was only a continued slide into still more terrifying versions of the present. This man was my friend and Ann's lover, Jim's friend and for all I know Jim's lover too; it was the treason, not the man, that belonged to the public domain.

Haydon had betrayed. As a lover, a colleague, a friend; as a patriot, as a member of that inestimable body which Ann loosely called the Set: in every capacity, Haydon had overtly pursued one aim and secretly achieved its opposite. Smiley knew very well that even now he did not grasp the scope of that appalling duplicity; yet there was a part of him that rose already in Haydon's defence. Was not Bill also betrayed? Connie's lament rang in his ears: 'Poor loves. Trained to Empire, trained to rule the waves... You're the last, George, you and Bill.' He saw with painful clarity an ambitious man born to the big canvas, brought up to rule, divide and conquer, whose visions and

²⁰⁰ **Ibid.**

²⁰¹ John 18:5-6, The Holy Bible, London, Harper Collins, 2001, p. 1090.

²⁰² Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.342.

²⁰³ **Ibid.**, p.189.

vanities all were fixed [...] upon the world's game; for whom the reality was a poor island with scarcely a voice that would carry across the water. Thus Smiley felt not only disgust; but, despite all that the moment meant to him, a surge of resentment against the institutions he was supposed to be protecting.²⁰⁴

But unlike Kim Philby who made a lucky escape to Moscow,²⁰⁵ as Bill Haydon is waiting to be deported to the Soviet Union, he is killed by a shadow who follows Smiley towards the end of his investigation.²⁰⁶ The identity of Haydon's killer is never disclosed, except for a foreshadowing at the very beginning when Jim snaps the neck of a wounded owl in an act of mercy,²⁰⁷ the same way Haydon's neck is broken in the end.²⁰⁸ However, since Haydon is destined for a free future as a communist hero in Moscow,²⁰⁹ his assassination is less of a merciful act than a wishful ending on the author's side. The fact that Smiley does not disclose the killer's name, although he is well aware that it is Jim Prideaux,²¹⁰ reflects the author's leniency towards the betrayed.

However, exposing Haydon by no means eliminates the paranoia of betrayal, because as long as Karla's power continues, there will be no end to the moles. "Le Carré's point is that the Haydons – or Philbys – are not unique. [...] Karla himself has to be toppled".²¹¹

Still, if trapping and catching Bill Haydon is a Pyrrhic victory for Smiley,²¹² finally capturing his nemesis Karla turns out to be yet another one.

When Smiley's colleague Peter Guillam asks if Karla is fireproof, a man who cannot be bought or beaten, Smiley's answer in fact predicts the downfall of communism: "Karla is not fireproof, because he's a fanatic. And one day, if I have anything to do with it, that lack of moderation will be his downfall".²¹³

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.343.

²⁰⁵ Philby, *op. cit.*, p.205.

²⁰⁶ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.350.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.19.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.363.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.351.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.364.

²¹¹ Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p.142.

²¹² Cobbs, *op. cit.*, p.100.

²¹³ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.216.

And yet, this prediction proves to be wrong for Karla. In **Smiley's People**, Smiley finally corners him using his schizophrenic daughter in an institution in Switzerland.²¹⁴ Since Karla has illegally transferred money to Switzerland to pay for his daughter's therapy,²¹⁵ reversing the process of emotional coercion Karla used through Ann,²¹⁶ Smiley blackmails him, leaving him no way out but to defect to the West. However, he does not defect because he loses his belief in communism or his country. Karla is a figure ready to give his life for his beliefs, and were it not for his daughter, there would be no way to convince him to surrender to Smiley. In this sense, it is actually his human side, his love for his daughter, the last illusion²¹⁷ of another illusionless man, which causes his downfall:

[...] that adversary had acquired a human face of disconcerting clarity. It was no brute whom Smiley was pursuing with such mastery, no unqualified fanatic after all, no automaton. It was a man; and one whose downfall, if Smiley chose to bring it about, would be caused by nothing more sinister than excessive love, a weakness with which Smiley himself from his own tangled life was eminently familiar.²¹⁸

However, Smiley's life-long obsession with Karla also takes its toll on him. As he observes Karla crossing the very symbolic Bridge between East and West Berlin, he is not proud of the method he used to bring Karla down. He realizes that now he and Karla have switched their roles:

[...] He looked across the river into the darkness again, and an unholy vertigo seized him as the very evil he had fought against seemed to reach out and possess him and claim him despite his striving, calling him a traitor also; mocking him, yet at the same time applauding his betrayal. On Karla has descended the curse of Smiley's compassion; on Smiley the curse of Karla's fanaticism. I have destroyed him with the weapons I abhorred, and they are his. We have crossed each other's frontiers, we are the no-men of this no-man's land.²¹⁹

The words of Smiley when he tries to reconcile himself remembering all the damage Karla has done only reflect that there is no winner of the Cold War:

²¹⁴ Le Carré, **Smiley's People**, p.351.

²¹⁵ **Ibid.**, p.357.

²¹⁶ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.141.

²¹⁷ **Ibid.**, p.142.

²¹⁸ Le Carré, **Smiley's People**, p.361.

²¹⁹ **Ibid.**, p.381.

He thought of Vladimir and Otto Leipzig and the dead Kirov; he thought of Haydon and his own life's work ruined; he thought of Ann, permanently stained for him by Karla's cunning, and Haydon's scheming embrace. He recited in his despair a whole list of crimes – the tortures, the killings, the endless ring of corruption – to lay upon the frail shoulders of this one pedestrian on the bridge, but they would not stay there: he did not want these spoils, won by these methods.²²⁰

Le Carré's 2017 novel **A Legacy of Spies** brings closure to Karla's story. After his debriefing, Smiley resettles Karla in South America as a professor of Russian studies. However, a broken man who was forced to betray his beliefs and loyalties, Karla shoots himself a year later, leaving Smiley with a burden of guilt for the rest of his life.²²¹

According to Cuddon, the title of the novel **Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy**, a simple children's rhyme implying that the traitor is among us, is "about the familiar corrupted into the alien, the vicious and deceitful masquerading as the innocent and decent".²²² And where there is no trust to the familiar, paranoia of betrayal prevails.

While in this novel the evil figure creating the paranoid atmosphere and leading Bill Haydon to betray his own country, service, friends and duty is communism, as betrayal is an inherent theme of espionage fiction, the same conflict between loyalty and betrayal as well as duty and conscience continues with a different evil figure in the second novel, **Our Game**, written in the next decade when communism finally ceases to be a threat.

²²⁰ **Ibid.**

²²¹ Le Carré, **A Legacy of Spies**, p.341.

²²² Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.109.

THIRD CHAPTER

OUR GAME

3.1 The Post-Cold War Period

In March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union¹ and set out to restructure the Soviet system. But because “the Cold war began as a result of Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe and the imposition of the Communist regimes on the countries of the region; its termination required that the Soviet satellites receive the right to self-determination”.² In 1989, as the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe started to collapse one by one, Gorbachev made a historic choice and refrained from using force to protect the Soviet influence in Eastern Europe.³ Then, the symbolic resolution of the Cold War came on the night of 9 November 1989.

3.2 The Fall of the Berlin Wall

Towards the end of 1989, “the year of the people”,⁴ groups from behind the Iron Curtain had already begun to pass to the West over Hungary and Austria. On the night of November 9, the Communist regime in East Germany finally opened the Berlin Wall: “Tens of thousands of Germans from east and west celebrated freedom around and on the hated structure that for twenty-eight years had stood for oppression, the division of Europe, and the Cold War itself”.⁵

Although the end of the Cold War brought freedom to Eastern Europe, beyond the borders of the Western world, the aftermath of the Soviet system was less than favourable. Russia was “not the formidable adversary that the Soviet Union was”.⁶ In certain areas within the former Soviet Union, grudges frozen for decades were being rekindled, leading to “ethnic conflicts that wreaked havoc in many regions, including in

¹ Kort, **op. cit.**, p.198.

² **Ibid.**

³ **Ibid.**, p.86.

⁴ **Ibid.**, p.85.

⁵ **Ibid.**, p.200.

⁶ Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.225.

some of the world's poorest countries".⁷ Russian nationalism soon replaced communism as the evil figure of the decade.

On the other hand, now that communism was finally toppled, the western countries were given to lethargy in the wake of their victory, turning a blind eye to the chaos and suffering in the remote parts of the world: "The end of the Cold War created the opportunity to devote more time and resources to those problems, but by itself did not assure that the necessary commitment would be mustered to combat them".⁸

When Le Carré published **Our Game** in 1995, "much of the critical commentary was focussed on the astonishing timeliness of the novel",⁹ because as **Our Game** describing a brutal Russian attack on an ethnic minority in the Caucasus took its place in the bookshops, life was imitating art and Russia was invading Chechnya's¹⁰ capital Grozny in order to crush the Chechens' dream of independence.¹¹ According to Cobbs:

A few critics even speculated that it was le Carré's bad luck to have chosen Ingushetia for the setting of the novel rather than neighbouring Chechnya, but most saluted his prescient realization that the Caucasus had the most potential for becoming the Balkans of the post-Cold War.¹²

3.3 Our Game

"To kill without being killed is an illusion".¹³

John Le Carré's **Our Game** is the second one of his purely post-Cold War novels¹⁴ where the evil figure of communism of the former era is now replaced with

⁷ **Ibid.**, p.90.

⁸ **Ibid.**

⁹ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.224.

¹⁰ The author's own spelling in **Our Game** will be used throughout this thesis. However, in his later novel **The Constant Gardener**, he prefers the modern spelling "Chechnya".

¹¹ Cobbs, **loc. cit.**

¹² **Ibid.**

¹³ Le Carré, **Our Game**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1995, p.127.

¹⁴ Cobbs, **loc. cit.**

“vicious and mindless nationalism”.¹⁵ **Our Game** deals with a different Russia from the established Soviet image of the past. Since communism is the Goliath already slain partly through the sacrifices of the spies, the new Russia is no more the greatest enemy of the West. But Russia’s transformation does not happen painlessly as the new administration deals with the problems arising within the borders of the former Soviet Republic with the brutal methods of the former era.

As an intelligence officer who has witnessed the personal sacrifices made to bring down communism, John le Carré’s disillusionment caused by the apathy of the politicians in the aftermath of the Cold War is instilled in **Our Game**:

Of his purpose for undertaking a novel set in this confusing mess of obscure blood feuds and seething nationalist aspirations le Carré writes, “I wanted to say something rather bitter about the repression of small nations, and about the unfashionable wars that politicians may safely ignore”.¹⁶

Our Game introduces the reader to a world where the definitions of loyalty and betrayal are ambiguous. Unlike **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** published during the heyday of the Cold War when loyalty was indisputably defined as loyalty to one’s country and betrayal was synonymous with treason, **Our Game** written after the fall of communism questions the concepts of loyalty and betrayal from an individual aspect. While patriotism was the guiding light distinguishing between loyalty and betrayal during the Cold War, in this day and age of globalisation, this line started to fade away and individuals are torn between their duties and conscience.

The novel’s title **Our Game** refers to football the main characters played when they were together at Winchester College.¹⁷ However, since nearly every major male character in the novel is a former spy, it is actually a double entendre also referring to espionage¹⁸ as well as Kipling’s Great Game.¹⁹

¹⁵ **Ibid.**

¹⁶ Le Carré, “My New Friends in the New Russia”, **The New York Times**, 19 February 1995, p.33, qtd. in Tod Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.226.

¹⁷ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.187.

¹⁸ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.229.

¹⁹ **Ibid.**, p.228.

The first-person narrative style of the novel also underlines this personal point of view. Seemingly starting out on the same premise of loyalty and betrayal with **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**, as the plot unravels, the reader realizes that there is more than one side of the story and begins to question the rightfulness of the narrator.

The storyteller is Tim Cranmer, a former officer of the secret service,²⁰ who is “an educated gentleman, always very polite, more like the BBC than human [...]”.²¹ Forced to retirement²² after the end of the Cold War, Cranmer lives in the lap of luxury in a large estate suitably called Honeybrook Manor²³ inherited from an obscured uncle.²⁴ Thanks to a dubious fortune also inherited from a distant aunt,²⁵ he does not depend on his pension for a lush lifestyle. Surrounded by his own vineyards,²⁶ Tim Cranmer lives isolated from world politics, seemingly content with his unsuccessful hobby of growing grapes and producing wine after long years of spying.²⁷

Always a conformist and a man of the political system, he believes that he has done his duty to his country and now it is time to devote the rest of his life to leisure:

He will go small, go country, go free. He will remove himself from the complexities of the big world, now that the Cold War is won and over. Having helped secure the victory he will with dignity leave the field to the new generation. [...] He will literally harvest the peace to which he has himself contributed: in the fields, in the soil, in rustic simplicity. In decent, structured, overt human relationships he will finally savour the freedoms he has defended these twenty-something years. Not selfishly, not by any means. To the contrary, he will engage in many socially beneficial acts: but for the microcosm, the small community, and no longer for the so-called national interest [...].²⁸

²⁰ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.121.

²¹ **Ibid.**, p.37.

²² **Ibid.**, p. 35.

²³ **Ibid.**, p.16.

²⁴ **Ibid.**, p.20.

²⁵ **Ibid.**, p.93.

²⁶ **Ibid.**, p.16.

²⁷ **Ibid.**, p.19.

²⁸ **Ibid.**, p.175.

The name Cranmer is a reference to the Archbishop of Canterbury who wrote the poetry of the Book of Common Prayer²⁹ that remains in use today.³⁰ After playing an important role in the divorces of Henry VIII and the execution of his wives, Thomas Cranmer “experienced spiritual agony because he compromised his moral instincts in the service of Henry VIII”.³¹ Cranmer was denounced by Queen Mary I for promoting Protestantism, convicted of heresy and burned at the stake.³² He died in the fires of Smithfield “recanting his betrayal of his own conscience”.³³

In contrast to his spiritual namesake, Cranmer is at first a superficial and hedonistic character lacking any spiritual depth. His estate Honeybrook is like a monument of Cranmer’s own materialism as well as the old Empire: “Most first-time visitors to Honeybrook make a reverent pause at this point while they take in the minstrels’ gallery, the great fireplace, the portraits, and the wagon roof with its armorial bearings”.³⁴

Having also inherited the title of a squire,³⁵ Cranmer seemingly tries to perform those socially beneficial acts he mentioned, but his interest is only short-lived. At first, determined to “become a keeper of the faith”,³⁶ he repairs the church within his uncle’s estate at his own expense³⁷ and “obtains the services of a pallid curate”.³⁸ But he loses his interest a short while later partly due to his insincerity and partly because the judgemental congregation does not approve of his private life “contradicting the values for which the church stands for”.³⁹

²⁹ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.227.

³⁰ Geoffrey R. Elton, “Thomas Cranmer”, Encyclopedia Britannica, 17 March 2019 (Accessed) <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Cranmer-archbishop-of-Canterbury>, 21 March 2019.

³¹ Cobbs, **loc. cit.**

³² Elton, **loc. cit.**

³³ Cobbs, **loc. cit.**

³⁴ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.17.

³⁵ **Ibid.**, p.119.

³⁶ **Ibid.**

³⁷ **Ibid.**

³⁸ **Ibid.**

³⁹ **Ibid.**, p.120.

Also, the foundation for “the Poor and Needy Gentlefolk of Wales”⁴⁰ he is a member of is nothing but a group of people who have the financial means without the wits to use them for the sake of the ones in need:

The Trust’s offer of an extra children’s ward [...] cannot be taken further until additional Trust monies are set aside for staffing. None are presently available for such purpose [...].

Our proposal to supply a mobile library to meet the needs of children in illiterate areas has run up against political objections from the local Council [...].

‘Free books for the ignorant? That’s daylight bloody *communism!*’⁴¹

Arguably a symbol of Britain after the Cold War, Tim Cranmer with his title and fortune finds himself as a dysfunctional aristocrat: “[...] again and again over the last weeks I have heard myself play the long-suffering Good Samaritan while in my secret heart I am the worst Samaritan on earth”⁴²

In his farewell meeting with his Soviet counterpart Zorin from the embassy in London, he describes his expectations from retirement as follows:

‘So what shall you do with the rest of your life, Friend Timothy?’

‘I shall limit it,’ I reply. ‘I shall do a Rousseau. I shall turn my back on grand concepts, cultivate my grapes and perform good works in miniature.’

‘You will build a Berlin Wall around yourself?’⁴³

The storyline in **Our Game** starts when two police officers visit Tim Cranmer to ask him questions about the disappearance of Dr. Larry Pettifer, an expert in Russian language and culture.⁴⁴ Larry Pettifer is a former schoolmate of Cranmer. Although Larry is three years younger than Tim, they have been “bosom pals”⁴⁵ since their school days. But unlike Tim Cranmer, Larry Pettifer is not a conformist. Even as a

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.152.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.150-1.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.56.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.30.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.17.

boy, he has been true to his own beliefs and principles.⁴⁶ It is as if Larry liked identifying himself with the minority, the outcast, the underdog even in his youth and had the courage to suffer rather than fit in. Cranmer remembers a time when Larry refused to follow the school tradition:

It is the night after Sixes Match, the annual festival of Winchester Football. [...] Now, by tradition, the victorious Six are feasting themselves in House Library while the New Boys stand on the table and regale them with songs and entertainment. [...] And one New Boy refuses to sing at all and must in the fullness of time be beaten; and that is Pettifer.

‘Why didn’t you sing?’ I ask him, later that night as he bends over the same table.

‘It’s against my religion, I’m a Jew.’

‘No, you’re not. Your father’s in the Church.’

‘I’ve converted.’

‘I’ll give you one chance,’ I say expansively. ‘What is the Notion for Winchester Football?’ It is the easiest test I can think of in the entire school vernacular, a gift.

‘Jew-baiting,’ he replies.

So I have no alternative but to beat him, when all he needed to say was Our Game.⁴⁷

Larry and Tim continue their acquaintance at Oxford.⁴⁸ After graduation, Cranmer introduces Larry to the world of espionage, turning him into a double agent between the British Secret Service and the Soviets⁴⁹ and thereby luring him into a schizoid double-life that would last more than twenty years.⁵⁰

However, the young and innocent Larry has scruples about being a double-agent. The first time Larry has to meet his Russian handler to deliver him misinformation, he has a crisis with his conscience and seeks solace in his controller Cranmer:

‘Don’t see the *goal*, Timbo, old horse,’ Larry is protesting as he peers myopically through the windscreen. He is a boy still, in silhouette a Pan child [...] His air of reckless daring and high-born purpose greatly endears him too his Communist suitors. They do not understand - and how should they? - that their newest conquest can turn full circle in an instant if this perpetual craving for action is not answered; that Larry Pettifer would rather see the world hurtling

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.97.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.187.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.84.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

towards catastrophe than standing still. ‘You’ve got the wrong man, Timbo. Need a lesser sort of chap [...]’.⁵¹

But Tim, his elder brother figure, is also a very possessive character and a master manipulator:

‘It’s called service, remember? You’re cleaning the political drains. It’s the dirtiest job democracy has on offer. [...]’
[...]
‘You don’t think, democratically speaking, Timbo, that we might actually be *better off* with dirty drains, do you?’⁵²

The name Pettifer is of pre-medieval French origin and derives from “pedefer” or “*pied de fer*”, meaning “iron-foot”. It was originally given as a nickname to a soldier, particularly good at marching.⁵³ Also Cranmer states that Larry has joined the espionage world because he was “footloose, a soldier”.⁵⁴ Always the idealist, Larry shoulders the burden of the Cold War only out of his sense of duty: “We’re talking the depths of the Cold War. We were fighting for our survival. We believed in what we were doing. [...] I imagine these days that comes a little harder”.⁵⁵

After twenty years of working as a double agent between Britain and Russia during the Cold War, Larry is sent to retirement in the wake of the fall of communism.⁵⁶ The secret service arranges him a teaching position at the University of Bath, where he is miserable since he is left without a purpose in life.⁵⁷ Out of boredom, he starts paying weekly visits to Cranmer’s estate where he meets his young and attractive girlfriend Emma.⁵⁸ Soon, Emma is infatuated with the good looks and eloquence of Larry the “love thief”,⁵⁹ the “beautiful, lawless [...] extrovert”⁶⁰ and leaves Tim without even a farewell.⁶¹

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.51.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ “Pettifer”, Surname DB, (Accessed) <http://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Pettifer#ixzz5i8jdkRu>, 14 March 2019.

⁵⁴ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.101.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.100.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.35.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.37.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.45.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.86.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.98.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.132.

After her departure, Tim invites Larry to a showdown near Priddy Pool in Somerset and has an altercation with him about Emma.⁶² The fight turns physical, and in a dream-like scene, Tim hits Larry with the butt of his gun, throws him into the pool and leaves him to drown there.⁶³

When Cranmer is visited by the police about Larry's disappearance, only because he is worried about its repercussions on himself,⁶⁴ he contacts the secret service and finds out that Larry has embezzled thirty-seven million Pounds from the Russian Government together with his former Russian handler Constantin Checheyev.⁶⁵

Checheyev is a mysterious figure. Though he is a Russian agent, he is in fact an ethnic Ingush who has fought his way through life and sacrificed his loyalty to his roots for a career in the KGB.⁶⁶ Like Karla, his real name is never mentioned. Constantin Abramovich Checheyev is a name of mixed ethnicity mockingly invented by his KGB supervisors since he cannot have a place in government service with his ethnic birth name.⁶⁷ In Larry's words, "Checheyev is a Caucasian werewolf, [...] rational spy by day, *gorets*⁶⁸ by night. By six in the evening you can see his fangs appear [...]".⁶⁹ He also describes him as "half noble, half savage, all Mensch,⁷⁰ and bloody funny".⁷¹ Started out as Larry's handler, he builds a close friendship with him over the years and continues to visit him after Larry leaves the espionage scene.⁷² According to Larry, "the Ingush has a cause, passion, commitment, ideals".⁷³ In other words, as Karla and Smiley eventually become mirror images of each other, Checheyev is also Larry's mirror image.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.123.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.126.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.42.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.103.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.77.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.383.

⁶⁸ "*Gorets*" (Ru: *zopey*): Mountain-dweller, highlander, **Oxford Russian Dictionary**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p.46.

⁶⁹ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.135.

⁷⁰ *Mensch* (Ger): Man, human, Collins German-English Dictionary, (Accessed) <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/german-english/mensch>, 1 April 2019.

⁷¹ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.130.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.23.

⁷³ Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p.229.

It turns out that, with the help of Emma's mathematical mind as well as her charms,⁷⁴ Larry and Checheyev have designed an elaborate scam over a company called Free Prometheus Ltd.⁷⁵ to use Russian money to purchase arms for the Ingush war of independence.⁷⁶ The company name is a reference to Prometheus, the saviour of mankind in mythology,⁷⁷ who is bound by Zeus to the rocky peak on the Caucasus Mountains to be tortured by an eagle for giving the fire to men until he is rescued by Hercules.⁷⁸ In this sense, Larry is the Prometheus figure as he steals the proverbial fire from the Russian Zeus to give it to the Ingush people.

3.4 The Paranoia

Since Larry's scam also throws suspicion on both Cranmer and his former Russian counterpart Volodya Zorin, the British Secret Service as well as the KGB start treating them as suspects.⁷⁹ Tim's Secret Service colleagues confiscate his passport,⁸⁰ search his house,⁸¹ and invade his property.⁸² The priesthole in his private church becomes his secret sanctuary where he reviews the files he stole from the secret service for self-protection:

[...] whatever genius designed my secret chamber – whether for refuge or for ventry – had had the further ingenuity to provide one slender horizontal arrowslit high in the wall at each point where the main joists support the wooden canopy that skirts the outside of the tower. So that by standing my full height and moving from one arrowslit to another, I commanded a perfect all-round view of the enemy's approach.⁸³

⁷⁴ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.159.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.236.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.316.

⁷⁷ Edith Hamilton, *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*, Boston, Signet Classics, 1969, p.25.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.72.

⁷⁹ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.105.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.73.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.115.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.145.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.120.

Now that he has found out that Larry has survived the fight at Priddy Pool,⁸⁴ Tim starts to follow Larry's footsteps both to find Emma and to warn Larry about "the hounds on his trail".⁸⁵ But he is also followed by the police and the Secret Service,⁸⁶ which makes him both the hunter and the hunted on the run.⁸⁷

Standing on the pavement outside the surgery I breathed heavily, feeling the thick fog sting in my eyes and nostrils. Ten yards away a parked car lurked in the short arc of a street lamp. My watchers? [...] I marched twenty paces and swung round. Not a shadow dared approach me.⁸⁸

At every step along his way, Tim is followed by agents in disguise⁸⁹ and has to constantly watch his back. Finally, when the Secret Service agents try to put him under house arrest, he becomes a fugitive.⁹⁰

However, the real danger does not come from the agents, but from a ruthless Ossetian organisation called "The Forest" on their trail.⁹¹ As a literary symbol, a forest symbolizes a mysterious and dark danger.⁹² Indeed, the Forest in the novel is described as the "Ossetian Ku Klux Klan".⁹³ Ossetians are a Christian tribe supporting Russian rule in the Caucasus and are in return supplied arms by Moscow⁹⁴ to suppress the Muslim Ingush and occupy their lands.⁹⁵ As Cranmer reaches the Turkish arms dealer collaborating with Larry, he finds everyone at the store massacred by The Forest.⁹⁶

Left with no home to return to, Cranmer has no other way but to follow Larry and Emma and warn them about the Forest. Using fake passports and aliases,⁹⁷ he

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.164.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.230.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.148.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.184.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.180.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.163.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.273.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.243.

⁹² Michael Ferber, "Forest", *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.79.

⁹³ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.287.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.282.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.284.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.321.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.322.

travels to Paris, Moscow and finally to Ingushetia,⁹⁸ where he learns that Larry has died fighting for the cause he believes in.⁹⁹

3.5 The Betrayal

According to Hoffman, **Our Game** is Le Carré's "bluntest expression of disgust (but not surprise) at the West's failure to implement the principles for which the Cold War was allegedly contested".¹⁰⁰

In **Our Game**, the "moral wastes of post-Cold War Europe"¹⁰¹ are embodied in Tim Cranmer, while conscience is personified in his foil Larry Pettifer. Cranmer admits that he "epitomizes the shortcomings of the morally torpid west" for Larry,¹⁰² who criticises the moral bankruptcy of the Western foreign policy in his lectures.¹⁰³ Also, according to Hoffman, Cranmer "epitomizes the utter contempt of the intelligence bureaucracy towards any inclination to do right".¹⁰⁴

Frederick Hitz, the author of **Great Game**,¹⁰⁵ states that double-espionage is regarded as "the moral gutter of deceit, betrayal, and manipulation" the West descends into in order to treat "the Soviets with their own medicine".¹⁰⁶ It is in fact none other than Cranmer, "the puppet-master",¹⁰⁷ who has initiated Larry to the double game in spite of his moral hesitation. As Larry expresses his doubts about the schizoid life he is stepping into, he is worried about his own integrity:

[Larry:][...] 'It's my innocence'
[Tim:] 'Your *what*?'
[Larry:] 'Our problem, Timbo, is my purblind, incurable,
omnivorous innocence. I can't leave life alone. I love it. [...]'
[Tim:] 'And the corollary to that?'

⁹⁸ **Ibid.**, p.400.

⁹⁹ **Ibid.**, p.406.

¹⁰⁰ Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

¹⁰¹ Quotation from the book jacket of the Blackwell edition, Blackwell North America, Inc, Lake Oswego, 2016.

¹⁰² Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.258.

¹⁰³ **Ibid.**, p.64.

¹⁰⁴ Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.225.

¹⁰⁵ Frederick P. Hitz, "**The Great Game**", Vintage Books, New York, 2004.

¹⁰⁶ **Ibid.**, p.40.

¹⁰⁷ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.52.

[Larry:] ‘And the corollary to that is that you’ve got to be jolly careful what you ask of me. Because I’ll do it. [...]’

Then he turns and lifts his face to me and I see the alcoholic tears running down like rainwater [...] ‘I mean it’s all right for *you*, selling your soul. You haven’t got one. But what about mine?’¹⁰⁸

Cranmer already knows that “with doubles, you assume a certain wastage of loyalty. The opposition is always more attractive to them than the home side”.¹⁰⁹ And yet, under the pretext of service, he pushes his best friend and protégé deliberately towards a lifestyle that may eventually corrupt him, which may count as the initial betrayal.

At the beginning of the novel, the story told from Tim Cranmer’s point of view tells the reader how Larry Pettifer, the “action freak”¹¹⁰ bored at the university adopts the quest of a remote mountain folk and betrays his own secret service and country by risking a conflict with Russia as he embezzles Russian money to finance the Ingush war of independence. Larry also recklessly recruits Tim’s girlfriend Emma to his scam and steals her away from Tim.

However, according to French statesman and diplomat Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand,¹¹¹ loyalty is about dates.¹¹² What a person believes in at certain time point may change in time.¹¹³ In the era after the Cold War, the definition of betrayal depends on the subjective point of view of the individual. While Tim Cranmer decides that he has done his duty towards his country and chooses an isolated and self-centred lifestyle turning a deaf ear to the conflicts around the world, Larry Pettifer cannot help but empathise with the suffering of the less fortunate even in distant parts of the world and takes action. In this sense, it may also be Cranmer who is actually in betrayal, maybe not of his country, but of humanity and righteousness.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.53.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.84.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.86.

¹¹¹ Jacques Godechot, “Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, prince de Bénévent”, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 13 May 2019 (Accessed) <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Maurice-de-Talleyrand-prince-de-Benevent>, 19 May 2019.

¹¹² Robert Siegel, “David Cornwell Discusses His Novel *Absolute Friends*, Which Was Written under His Pen Name, John le Carré”, *Conversations with John le Carré*, Ed. by Matthew J. Bruccoli, Judith S. Baughman, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2004, p.173.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

Tim treats Emma as an object of desire or a work of art¹¹⁴ rather than a flesh-and-blood human being with a mind of her own. He does not value her intellect and despises the “women’s novels” she reads.¹¹⁵ In Larry’s words, Tim does not love people, he invents them.¹¹⁶ He shapes her looks¹¹⁷, buys her a piano worth a fortune¹¹⁸ although she prefers a more modest one,¹¹⁹ an antique Queen Anne women’s kneehole desk¹²⁰ for her to write on “country affairs”,¹²¹ designer clothes and purses,¹²² a silk nightdress she refuses even to unpack,¹²³ and a necklace symbolizing a collar on her neck.¹²⁴ He himself admits that he has bought her an “ever-growing collection of costly trinkets”,¹²⁵ worth thirty thousand Pounds,¹²⁶ “to fill gaps in their relationship that cannot be filled”.¹²⁷ He still thinks she is ungrateful towards him.¹²⁸ However, what he does not understand in the first place is that she shares Larry’s disdain for materialism.¹²⁹

The fact that Tim and Emma share separate parts of the house and that he is hesitant to enter her room¹³⁰ is also an indication of the emotional distance between them.¹³¹ His insincerity is reflected in his words as he tries to console her when she questions Tim’s trueness:

I look down and am surprised to see my right hand operating on its own initiative, patting her back and bestowing comfort on her. [...] And it occurs to me that, when there’s nothing useful left for you to do on the whole of God’s earth, patting someone’s back is as good a way to pass the time as any [...].¹³²

¹¹⁴ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.43.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.67.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.116.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.43.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.19.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.336.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.117.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.116.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.58.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.69.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.93.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.69.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.221.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.46.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.55.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.67.

For in the world where Larry and I did our growing up, it would be quite wrong to suppose that, merely because the right hand is bestowing consolation, the left is not considering covert action of its own.¹³³

Cranmer accuses Larry of manipulating Emma, remorselessly moulding and seducing her by appealing to her conscience.¹³⁴ However, Larry also gives Emma a purpose, values her mind, and offers her the chance to use her intellect for a higher cause.¹³⁵ In the words of her French guardian to Tim:

Before she met you, she was a shipwreck. She had no centre, no stability. She could have been anyone. Like you, perhaps. All she wished was to climb into a shell and live the life inside it. But now it is over. You were the last of her shells. Now she is real. She is defined. She is one person. Or feels she is. [...] Thanks to Larry.¹³⁶

The love triangle between Tim, Larry and Emma is a complicated one. At first sight, it looks like Emma and Larry have both betrayed Tim by running away together. However, there is also a latent homosexual undercurrent between Tim and Larry. Both Emma and Tim's secret service supervisor Merriman ask Tim if they have ever been lovers with Larry, but according to Tim, Larry is "that public school rarity: the Compleat Heterosexual".¹³⁷ However, he never claims that he also belongs to that rarity. When asked about their friendship, he calls him the risk he would never take.¹³⁸ Still, Emma suggests that they should have been boyfriends "to get it out of their systems".¹³⁹ Also when talking with Checheyev, Tim lets slip that he loves Larry, only to immediately modify it as "I owe him".¹⁴⁰ He is even jealous of Checheyev's friendship with Larry.¹⁴¹ So, in fact, Tim feels betrayed by two lovers, Emma his girlfriend and Larry his secret love, whom he calls "his two creations".¹⁴² As he remembers his visit to Emma in Paris, his mental dialogue with her sheds light to his true feelings for Larry:

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.68.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.65.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.240.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.334.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.109.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.100.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.63.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.385.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.130.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p.65.

*Larry will never let you down, you simpleton? Larry's going to dump you in the deepest pit you ever saw! That's what he does! Don't preach to me about your love for him! Larry as life? Your sacred feelings? How many times can you be true to your feelings, and have any feelings left to be true to?*¹⁴³

Larry the mercurial,¹⁴⁴ surrealistic character¹⁴⁵ and romantic hero¹⁴⁶ is presumably dead from the beginning of the novel and is always related through flashbacks from Tim's memory. According to Myron Aronoff,¹⁴⁷ Larry is a Joseph Conrad-like character who is "part mad genius turned savage" like Kurtz in **Heart of Darkness**,¹⁴⁸ and a romantic like Jim in **Lord Jim**.¹⁴⁹ Also, there is a Byronic image following Larry throughout the novel: At the beginning, Tim calls him a Byronic figure¹⁵⁰ with a "Byronic smile",¹⁵¹ the "Secret Protector of the Righteous"¹⁵² and a "studious and sensitive duellist about to die young".¹⁵³ Indeed, Larry is an admirer of Lord Byron, "the saviour of the Greeks *sending his own money* to help prepare the Greek ships for battle, *raising soldiers and paying them* so that he himself can lead the attack on the Turks at Lepanto."¹⁵⁴ He also claims that "Byron is a Caucasus freak, on the grounds that he wrote a grammar on the Armenian language".¹⁵⁵ After finding out Larry's elaborate scam, Tim cynically calls him "a Byron of his own imagining".¹⁵⁶ These references foreshadow Larry's Byronic death organising and fighting the Ingush war for independence.¹⁵⁷

Like the mountain people of Ingushetia, Larry is also "money-illiterate" and "a financial Neanderthal".¹⁵⁸ Preferring to fight for a cause rather than working for

¹⁴³ **Ibid.**, p.238.

¹⁴⁴ Myron J. Aronoff, **The Spy Novels of John Le Carré: Balancing Ethics and Politics**, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1999, p.84.

¹⁴⁵ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.231.

¹⁴⁶ **Ibid.**, p.233.

¹⁴⁷ Aronoff, **op. cit.**, 131.

¹⁴⁸ Joseph Conrad, **Heart of Darkness**, London, Penguin Classics, 2012.

¹⁴⁹ Joseph Conrad, **Lord Jim**, Oxford, Oxford University Press Classics, 2008.

¹⁵⁰ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.57.

¹⁵¹ **Ibid.**, p.254.

¹⁵² **Ibid.**, p.54.

¹⁵³ **Ibid.**, p.45.

¹⁵⁴ **Ibid.**, p.242.

¹⁵⁵ **Ibid.**

¹⁵⁶ **Ibid.**

¹⁵⁷ **Ibid.**, p.390.

¹⁵⁸ **Ibid.**, p.102.

money, he calls his secret service salary his “Judas money”.¹⁵⁹ For Larry, Ingushetia is a land of innocence, far from the evils of the materialistic west: “It’s the sounds and smells of youth coming back to you. [...] It’s the sky you used to look at when you were a child. You understand ideas again. Money has no power”.¹⁶⁰

Unlike Larry, Tim lacks spiritual depth at the beginning of the novel, though he has a potential for spirituality, which will be fulfilled at the end of the novel: “I am not a God man [...]. I do not reject Him as Larry does [...]. But I do not accept Him either.”¹⁶¹ The church he tries to revive has become obsolete, he finds the air inside the church frightening, because it is “the air the dead breathe”.¹⁶² His charity work is insincere and he lives in a materialistic and hedonistic void. His words reveal that actually his belief in his duty as a spy was a substitute for spirituality in his life:

Nobody who has not lived in secrecy can appreciate its addictive powers. Nobody who has renounced the secret world, or been renounced by it, recovers from his deprivation. His longing for the inner life is at times unendurable, whether of the religious or clandestine kind.¹⁶³

In another tribute to Conrad, reminiscent of his **Victory**,¹⁶⁴ the dilemma between participation and renunciation is apparent in the characters of Larry and Tim where Larry stands for participation, while Tim stands for renunciation. Although Cranmer misses his former life when he at least had a purpose, he chooses not to take action. On the other hand, in Emma’s words, “*Larry is action. Action is character. In music, in love, in life...*”.¹⁶⁵

When Larry criticizes him about his indifference to the world’s agonies, Tim’s words reflect that he has no scruples about the so-called, traditional “white man’s burden”.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ **Ibid.**

¹⁶⁰ **Ibid.**, p.275.

¹⁶¹ **Ibid.**, p.118

¹⁶² **Ibid.**, p.122.

¹⁶³ **Ibid.**

¹⁶⁴ Joseph Conrad, **Victory**, London, Penguin Books, 1994.

¹⁶⁵ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.237.

¹⁶⁶ Chris Brooks, Peter Faulkner, **The White Man’s Burdens**, Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 1996, p.307.

I have said that I have always been, and would continue to be, prepared to make sacrifices for my neighbours, compatriots and friends. But when it came to saving barbarians from one another in countries no bigger than a letter on the map, I failed to see why I should throw myself into a burning house to rescue a dog I had never cared for in the first place.¹⁶⁷

In a letter to Emma, Larry criticises this apathy in Tim's character:

Timbo is also fireproof, since the man who believes in nothing, and therefore has space for everything, has a terrible advantage over us. What passes for a kindly tolerance in him is in reality a craven acceptance of the world's worst crimes.¹⁶⁸

In contrast, the *gortsy*, or mountain people,¹⁶⁹ live for spiritual values. The Ingush are described as "a bunch of unruly mountaineers who love God, drink, fight, boast, steal, [...] wage blood feuds, and can't be organized into groups of more than one".¹⁷⁰ They believe that "greed makes a man stupid [...] manhood and honour are all that count".¹⁷¹ In Checheyev's words, what they have is what the West used to fight for when they "were men".¹⁷² Although Checheyev betrays Russia, he has no scruples about using Moscow's money to buy arms for their fight against the Russians, since this is only fair after he has betrayed his own people for twenty years to work for the KGB, even leaving his real identity behind: "I took a holiday from who I was. It lasted twenty years. Now I've come home and I wish I'd never been away".¹⁷³

As Tim is imprisoned by a group of Ingush near Moscow, he is "treated with honour and respect"¹⁷⁴ and he gets to know their culture and the purity of their values.¹⁷⁵ In the scenes that take place in Russia, the author draws an idealistic portrait of the Ingush. Here, he is told about an old prophecy prevalent among the people of the Caucasus referring to the promise made by Queen Victoria a century ago. Although Britain is no longer interested in the region, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.259.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.77.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.388.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.83.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p.388.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.397.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.370.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.365.

prophecy was revived by the elderly, which is also the reason why Larry - and later Tim - are welcomed by the Ingush as brothers in arms:

There is a prophecy, widely believed in Sufist circles ever since the nineteenth century when the Imam Shamil sent letters to your Queen Victoria, that the Russian Empire will one day collapse and the North Caucasus, including Ingushetia and Chechnya, will come under the rule of the British Sovereign.¹⁷⁶

At the end of the novel, even after the massacre committed by Russian missiles, Ingushetia is described as an untainted Eden, “primitive, beautiful, and an arena in which people may once again make choices that are not only moral but also spiritual”.¹⁷⁷ As Tim enters the region on horseback, he is united with the surrounding nature:

The sky lightened, black peaks appeared among the clouds, snowcaps rose above them and my heart lifted in mystical response. [...] We entered a forest of trees veiled in lianas, but the forest was to one side of us and on the other lay the chasm of the valley, full of swirling dawn mist and the sigh of wind and the scream of birds below. [...] I should have swooned with each new sight of the precipice between my horse’s slithering feet, and of the tiny, winding valley floor ...and at the unearthly and mysteriously graceful sounds of waterfalls that were as much to breathe and drink as hear. But the survival I craved was Larry’s, not mine, and the lucid, unencompassable majesty of the mountains drew me upward.¹⁷⁸

Faced with the unity, courage and devotedness of the mountain people, Cranmer’s journey to Ingushetia becomes a spiritual journey. According to Cobbs, “the novel is replete with spiritual touchstones”.¹⁷⁹ Cranmer’s private church provides him a shelter, a watchtower against enemies and a secret stash to hide the files he stole from the secret service.¹⁸⁰ The title of the pamphlet Larry wrote about the suffering of the Ingush is “The People’s Calvary”¹⁸¹ referring to the suffering of Jesus.¹⁸² At the end of the novel, Tim joins the “tauba” ritual, which is the repentance ceremony of the Muslim

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.368.

¹⁷⁷ Cobbs, *op. cit.*, p.226.

¹⁷⁸ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.400.

¹⁷⁹ Cobbs, *op. cit.*, p.227.

¹⁸⁰ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.121.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.257.

¹⁸² “Calvary”, Merriam Webster Dictionary, (Accessed) <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/calvary>, 1 April 2019.

Ingush.¹⁸³ During the ceremony, Tim as a representation of the western world realizes that he himself has in fact more sins to absolve than the sinless Ingush.¹⁸⁴ Thus, the journey to Ingushetia turns into a kind of pilgrimage for Cranmer, where he purges his own evils and perhaps goes to his own death recanting his sins like his namesake.

I will be your champion, your friend, your ally. I will be the facilitator of your dreams, I whispered in my heart to the passing crags and forests. Just let Larry be alive for me when I come over the brow of the last hill, and whatever I have been I will never be again.¹⁸⁵

Christopher Lehmann-Haupt describes Tim's quest to find Larry as "a spiritual journey that lifts him out of his frozen self and into communion with Larry".¹⁸⁶ Larry is Tim's alter ego.¹⁸⁷ He calls himself the true version of Tim, "the Timbo unbound".¹⁸⁸ Though Tim never dares to lead Larry's life, he leads it "vicariously through him".¹⁸⁹ While he is returning home from London, he sees Larry's face in the reflection of himself on the train window.¹⁹⁰ As he tries to drown Larry in Priddy pool, he yells: "Die, and then there'll be only one of us to live my life. Because two of us Larry, old boy, is actually a crowd".¹⁹¹ However, as he leaves Emma behind forever in Paris, his idea is that only by going after Larry, he can fill "the pit that for so long has done duty" for his soul.¹⁹² As Emma's guardian¹⁹³ claims, Tim does not wish to find his friend, but to become him.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, at the end of the novel, after he finds out that Larry is probably dead, he finally becomes Larry and picks up his life where he had to leave.¹⁹⁵

However, the reader is never directly introduced to Larry. The character is observed strictly through Tim Cranmer's mind, memories and point of view. It is not even certain that he dies at the end of the novel, since there is nothing left behind from

¹⁸³ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.413.

¹⁸⁴ Cobbs, *op. cit.*, p.227.

¹⁸⁵ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.401.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.230.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.124.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.111.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.124.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.343.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.331.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.335.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.414.

him. He may never have existed other than in Cranmer's imagination. According to Cobbs, "the novel is not *about* Larry any more than **Waiting for Godot** is about Godot: it is about Vladimir and Estragon".¹⁹⁶ In this case, the dream-like fight at the Priddy pool becomes Tim's struggle with himself and his conscience.

At the end of the novel, as the Ingush create a shrine in memory of Larry and those who died with him,¹⁹⁷ Checheyev asks Tim to make a speech in honour of Larry. Tim half-heartedly improvises a eulogy which perhaps reveals his true subconscious feelings for him:

I said that Larry was an Englishman who had loved freedom above everything. He had loved the courage of the Ingush and shared their hatred of the bully. And that Larry would live because he had cared, and that it was those who cared too little who died the death. And that since courage went hand in hand with honour, and both with loyalty, it was necessary also to record that, in a world where loyalty was increasingly difficult to define, Larry had contrived to remain a man of honour even if the necessary consequence of this was to go out and find his death like a warrior.

For it occurred to me as I spoke [...] that if Larry had led the wrong life, he had at least found the right death.¹⁹⁸

According to Cobbs, this is the apotheosis of the "atheistic iconoclast Larry",¹⁹⁹ who is "named a ghost in a holy shrine".²⁰⁰ It is not a coincidence that the moral redirection of Cranmer is brought about by another Englishman and not an Ingush.²⁰¹ Thus, Cranmer's idea of duty to his country is contrasted with Larry's conscientious choice to fight for a foreign nation.

As Tim picks up the proverbial standard where Larry had to leave, "his conversion is not expressed through words, but through actions directly contradicting the words that precede them".²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.231.

¹⁹⁷ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.409.

¹⁹⁸ **Ibid.**, p.407.

¹⁹⁹ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.234.

²⁰⁰ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.409.

²⁰¹ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.230.

²⁰² Aronoff, **op. cit.**, p.131.

For a moment longer I stood alone, converted to nothing, believing in nothing. I had no world to go back to and nobody left to run except myself. A Kalashnikov lay beside me. Slinging it across my shoulder, I hastened after him down the slope.²⁰³

Thus, Cranmer atones for the apathy of the western world he symbolizes and he “*can* still be saved, if he survives the trial by fire of his pilgrimage to the perilous castle of Ingushetia’s mountain fastness”.²⁰⁴

However, there is also another way to read Tim Cranmer’s narrative: During his initial debriefing with the Secret Service, Cranmer is asked about the source of his wealth allegedly inherited from an aunt:

Half a million quid’s worth of the best, added to what you’ve already got, paid in two instalments from a nice Channel Islands trust fund. The solicitors never *met* the aunt, mind. They were instructed by a firm in Lisbon. The firm in Lisbon never met her either. They were instructed by her business manager, a lawyer in Paris. [...] I’ve seen *money* laundered before, but never *lawyers*. [...] If Aunt Cecily turns up in a pauper’s grave, Cranmer’s for the high jump.²⁰⁵

Thus, it is also possible that Cranmer is actually the master-mind behind Larry’s scam, manipulating him as he did throughout their lives, leading Larry to embezzle a fortune from the Russian embassy for a cause he believes in while taking his commission through overseas accounts. His Secret Service supervisor also has the same suspicion as he investigates the destination of a large sum withdrawn from Larry’s bank account:

Unless he gave it to *you*, [...] Mr. Cranmer.
[...]
Or unless it was yours in the first place [...]

You fiddled it. The Doc banked it. He was your winger. Your accomplice.²⁰⁶

Also, the valuable jewellery purchased by Tim for Emma only to be sold later to finance Larry’s arms deals²⁰⁷ can be another indirect payment to the cause by Tim.

²⁰³ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.414.

²⁰⁴ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.228.

²⁰⁵ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.94.

²⁰⁶ **Ibid.**, p.195.

Though Cranmer protests all these accusations, he does not even find himself credible. “Yet as I heard myself protest my innocence, I sounded like any other guilty man. [...] I became as unconvincing to myself as to my accusers.”²⁰⁸ In this novel, nothing is for certain and it is the reader who will decide on the truth.

Written in the aftermath of the Cold War, **Our Game** can be taken as a conscientious warning by the author about the dangers presented by unbridled, fanatical nationalism. Though communism no longer prevails, it is replaced by nationalism as the source of paranoia in the novel, until the wild capitalism in **The Constant Gardener** presents a global threat for humanity. In this new world of shifting values, the definitions of duty and betrayal also become ambiguous and individual conscience becomes the deciding power. Consequently, the novel puts forward a multi-faceted discussion of the concept of betrayal from the characters’ different vantage points. Starting out as a classical story of political and personal betrayal, the cards are turned towards the end of the novel to reveal the motivations behind every character’s actions, inviting the reader to view the betrayal from different angles. And since the story is told by none other than Tim himself, who happens to be an untrustworthy narrator, perhaps it is actually the reader who is betrayed.

²⁰⁷ **Ibid.**, p.203.

²⁰⁸ **Ibid.**, p.196.

FOURTH CHAPTER

THE CONSTANT GARDENER

4.1 Docufiction

The Constant Gardener can be described as an example of “docufiction”, meaning a documentary novel or a thesis novel. The documentary novel is a form of fiction first invented by the Goncourt brothers in the 1860s.¹ In the 20th century, it has been transformed into “a form of fiction which [...] is based on documentary evidence in the shape of newspaper articles, legal reports, archives, and recent official papers, sometimes described as ‘instant fiction’”.² Similarly, a thesis novel is a work of literature “which treats of a social, political or religious problem with a didactic and, perhaps, radical purpose” and draws people’s attention to the shortcomings of society.³ Since the characters and events in **The Constant Gardener** are based on witnesses, incidents and documents from real life, the novel can be regarded as an example of “docufiction”.⁴

The seeds of **The Constant Gardener** were sown about twenty years before its publication when on a summer’s evening in a beer hall in Basel a cyclist coincidentally sat on John le Carré’s table. He was a former chemist who had turned into an anarchist “because he refused to take part in the poisoning of mankind.”⁵ He told the author about the evil deeds of the multinational pharmaceutical corporations – called “multis” by the author – along the banks of River Rhine in Basel, who would “poison the globe [...] if by doing so they could bump up their share prices”.⁶ Le Carré decided then and there to write about this young man and his “multis” one day.⁷

¹ Cuddon, *op. cit.*, p.233.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p.913.

⁴ Giles Foden, “Garden of good and evil”, *The Guardian*, 23 December 2000 (Accessed) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/dec/23/fiction.reviews>, 4 April 2019.

⁵ Sisman, *op. cit.*, p.530.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

When the author started to plan a novel about “the crimes of unbridled capitalism”, his first idea was to set the novel in Africa, since these crimes were nowhere more evident than in the black continent.⁸ The first location he chose was Nigeria, a country “plundered and polluted by oil companies”.⁹ Then, a former SIS member, Ted Younie, who had spent almost his entire career in Africa, came up with the idea of pharmaceuticals. “If one was looking for a metaphor for the exploitation of Africa, beyond even oil [...] it was the pharmaceutical industry”.¹⁰

John Le Carré’s investigations in Basel, talking in confidence to mid-level managers in pharmaceutical companies, revealed stories of falsified clinical trials and human beings used as guinea pigs in experiments.¹¹ Having finally decided to set the story in Kenya, the author travelled there only to find a hopeless country devastated by the AIDS epidemic and corruption.¹²

The more that David [John le Carré] investigated the behaviour of drug companies in Africa, the more outraged he became. They dumped inappropriate or out of-date medicines on the Africans, suppressed information about their contra-indications and their side-effects, and encouraged their indiscriminate use. The most effective drugs were arbitrarily over-priced and attempts to manufacture generic substitutes blocked. Africans were encouraged to buy drugs they did not want and prevented from getting drugs they desperately needed. Increasingly, the ‘multis’ used them as guinea pigs in their trials.¹³

The author also observed the close ties between the pharmaceutical industry and the Western governments. According to him, healthcare professionals and research facilities were often in the pocket of pharmaceutical companies and no dissent was tolerated.¹⁴

There has been a steady trickle of alarming cases where inconvenient scientific findings had been suppressed or rewritten, and those responsible for them hounded off their campuses, with their

⁸ **Ibid.**, p.531.

⁹ **Ibid.**

¹⁰ **Ibid.**

¹¹ **Ibid.**

¹² **Ibid.**, p.532.

¹³ **Ibid.**

¹⁴ **Ibid.**

professional and personal reputations systematically thrashed by public relations agencies in the pay of pharmas.¹⁵

Calling pharmaceutical companies “the most secretive, duplicitous, mendacious, hypocritical bunch of corporate wide-boys”,¹⁶ the author also does not find it impossible that they may even resort to commit murder to silence their critics: “I am sure people have died”.¹⁷

The Constant Gardener is set in Kenya, a country ruled by President Daniel arap Moi between 1978 and 2002, allegedly through electoral fraud.¹⁸ Since the corruption in every area of the country during Moi’s rule and the transgressions against humanity are extensively described in the novel,¹⁹ **The Constant Gardener** has been banned in Kenya.²⁰

Though the novel is an example of art striving for a better world, Le Carré’s own words reveal that its work is far from being complete: “As my journey through the pharmaceutical jungle progressed, I came to realise that, by comparison with the reality, my story was as tame as a postcard”.²¹

4.2 The Constant Gardener

In this new age of unrivalled, wild capitalism, the new evil force in Le Carré’s fiction becomes the multinational companies as standard bearers of capitalism which is betraying humanity. The paranoia they create with their immense power influencing governments and institutions without refraining from using brute force is so powerful that an ordinary individual using conventional methods to oppose them has no fighting chance. In this corrupt world where personal benefit has silenced the

¹⁵ John le Carré, “The Biggest Pushers of All”, **The Spectator**, 16 December 2000, qtd. in Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.533.

¹⁶ Le Carré, **The Constant Gardener**, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 2001, p.203.

¹⁷ Ann Treneman, “Le Carré comes in from the cold”, **The Times**, 9 December 2000, qtd. in Adam Sisman, **loc. cit.**

¹⁸ “Daniel arap Moi”, Encyclopaedia Britannica, (Accessed) <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Daniel-arap-Moi>, 17 April 2019.

¹⁹ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.58, 74, 402.

²⁰ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.536.

²¹ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.568.

conscience of those who have a say, trust is a weakness leading to destruction. Thus, the only person who can stand against the multis becomes a Foreign Office clerk with intelligence training capable of using espionage methods.

In the sense of a thesis novel, **The Constant Gardener** reveals the multifaceted corruption among the pharmaceutical manufacturers, healthcare institutions, humanitarian aid organizations, government officials and politicians through fictional characters also inspired from real life.

The story begins with the death of Tessa Quayle, a young and attractive,²² crusading human rights lawyer²³ and the wife of Justin Quayle, a Foreign Office first secretary at the British High Commission in Nairobi.²⁴ Tessa is the daughter of a wealthy judge and an Italian doctor,²⁵ who also happens to be a Tuscan contessa.²⁶ After a privileged education, she graduates from law school and becomes a barrister until she marries Justin Quayle. Justin is a middle-aged,²⁷ handsome²⁸, well-born,²⁹ well-bred,³⁰ good-mannered³¹ Eton graduate³² brought up and educated to join the Foreign Office like his ancestors.³³ In the beginning, he is an over-controlled person who does not show his emotions or act upon them.³⁴ He is the “apostle of unsurprise”,³⁵ devoted to his hobby of gardening.³⁶

The Tessa character is based on a real-life aid worker, Yvette Pierpaoli,³⁷ whom Le Carré met in Cambodia when he was doing research for his novel **The**

²² **Ibid.**, p.57.

²³ Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.251.

²⁴ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.39.

²⁵ **Ibid.**, p.168.

²⁶ **Ibid.**, p.133.

²⁷ **Ibid.**, p.170.

²⁸ **Ibid.**, p.30.

²⁹ **Ibid.**, p.161.

³⁰ **Ibid.**, p.171.

³¹ **Ibid.**, p.274.

³² **Ibid.**, p.155.

³³ **Ibid.**, p.161.

³⁴ **Ibid.**, p.32.

³⁵ **Ibid.**, p.165.

³⁶ **Ibid.**, p.161.

³⁷ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.534.

Honourable Schoolboy in 1974.³⁸ Like Tessa, Pierpaoli was half Italian.³⁹ In those years, she was running an agency flying aid to the remote parts of Cambodia stricken with civil war.⁴⁰ As they flew aid missions together to villages besieged by the Khmer Rouge, Le Carré was fascinated by her courage,⁴¹ toughness, and energy:

But it was all for a cause. And the cause, you quickly learned, was an absolutely non-negotiable, visceral requirement in her to get food and money to the starving, medicines to the sick, shelter for the homeless, papers for the stateless, and just generally, in the most secular, muscular, business-like, down-to-earth way you could imagine, perform miracles.⁴²

Le Carré and Pierpaoli continued their friendship for a quarter of a century. When Le Carré set out to write **The Constant Gardener**, he wrote to Pierpaoli that in his new book set in Africa, “his heroine would be somebody as impossible as herself”. Because it is Pierpaoli, who in the author’s words “like almost no one else, had opened my eyes to constructive compassion, to putting your money and your life where your heart was”⁴³ and it is her work, after all, that he wished to celebrate in this novel.⁴⁴

Though Tessa differs from Yvette Pierpaoli in age, occupation, nationality and birth, ‘her commitment to the poor of Africa, particularly its women, her contempt for protocol and her unswerving, often maddening determination to have her way stemmed [...] from Yvette’s example.’⁴⁵

When Yvette Pierpaoli died on the mountains of Albania as she was helping refugees from Kosovo during the war in the Balkans,⁴⁶ Le Carré dedicated **The Constant Gardener** to her,⁴⁷ because in his opinion, “living life on any other terms is cheating”.⁴⁸

³⁸ **Ibid.**, p.368.

³⁹ “The End of the Journey”, **Newsweek**, 2 May 1999, (Accessed) <https://www.newsweek.com/end-journey-166948>, 9 April 2019.

⁴⁰ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.369.

⁴¹ **Ibid.**

⁴² **Ibid.**, p.368.

⁴³ John le Carré, “The Constant Muse”, **The New Yorker**, 25 December 2000 and 1 January 2001, 66-74, qtd. in Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.250.

⁴⁴ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.534.

⁴⁵ **Ibid.**, p.534.

⁴⁶ Sisman, **loc. cit.**

⁴⁷ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.5.

⁴⁸ Hoffman, **loc. cit.**

The inspiration for Justin came from an “elegant, grey-suited man with a basket of fresh-cut flowers under his arm” at a London restaurant who “began bestowing bouquets on each group of diners, before accepting a kiss and a glass of wine from the proprietress”.⁴⁹ The restaurant owner and the author have “together decided that he must have suffered bereavement and that bestowing flowers gave him comfort”.⁵⁰ The author wrote a chapter with the title “the mad gardener” and kept it for future use.⁵¹

While Justin the duty-bound but passive civil servant is the embodiment of the British institution, Tessa is a questioning activist who follows her emotions without losing her belief in the justice system.⁵² After she comes to Nairobi, instead of behaving like a “diplomatic geisha”⁵³ like the other Foreign Office wives, she devotes herself to women’s rights and welfare in Kenya⁵⁴ and becomes close friends with an African doctor, Arnold Bluhm.

Justin is the British representative and committee secretary on the East African Donors’ Effectiveness Committee, EADEC,⁵⁵ a fictional think-tank composed of ranking diplomats with no efficiency or function.⁵⁶ This committee is an “emotion free zone”,⁵⁷ reflecting Justin’s attitude to Africa and to life in general. Tessa is an idealist, Justin is a pessimist.⁵⁸ For Tessa, the social injustice in Nairobi - in her view a great crime - is her mission and a reason to survive after the loss of her child, while in Justin’s profession, “studied ignorance is an art form.”⁵⁹ As Justin seemingly gives Tessa her freedom, he actually leaves her alone burying his head in his garden while she goes against the pharmaceutical giants with Arnold. “Unlike the pliable civil servant”, Tessa has not “conceded victory to those forces that inevitably defeat idealism”.⁶⁰

⁴⁹ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.530.

⁵⁰ **Ibid.**

⁵¹ **Ibid.**, p.531.

⁵² Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.186.

⁵³ **Ibid.**, p.165.

⁵⁴ **Ibid.**, p.40.

⁵⁵ **Ibid.**, p.94.

⁵⁶ **Ibid.**, p.96.

⁵⁷ **Ibid.**, p.96.

⁵⁸ **Ibid.**, p.163.

⁵⁹ **Ibid.**, p.168.

⁶⁰ Hoffman, **loc. cit.**

Again, a theme of participation versus renunciation, reminiscent of **Our Game**, emerges: For Tessa, pain observed is only journalistic pain, diplomatic pain, television pain. She believes in sharing the pain. Thus, unlike Justin who initially chooses to renounce the corruption and suffering around him, Tessa needs to participate: “Those who watch suffering and do nothing about it [...] were little better than those who inflicted it”.⁶¹

Arnold Bluhm, the “bearded Apollo of the Nairobi cocktail round, charismatic, witty, beautiful”⁶² doctor, the “film star in the aid business”,⁶³ is a version of the dark-bearded⁶⁴ real-life chemist the author met in Basel. Born in Congo, Arnold is called the “Westerner’s African”⁶⁵ because he has been adopted by a Belgian couple and studied in Brussels and Sorbonne.⁶⁶ Arnold is actually a hero of the war in Algeria and has given lectures in the United Nations on the medical priorities in disaster situations.⁶⁷ He has his heart set on aiding the less fortunate in Africa.

In fact, both Arnold and Justin’s names are references to martyrs whose footsteps they follow. Saint Arnold of Soissons (1040-1087) was an abbot also from Belgium, who had prevented the plague and the cholera epidemic in Oudenburg by telling his people to drink beer instead of water since he had sensed that the diseases were water-borne.⁶⁸ Justin’s namesake, Saint Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165), is known to have converted to Christianity in adulthood. After writing an apology, St. Justin was tried and beheaded since he refused to worship pagan idols.⁶⁹ Justin’s name suitably foreshadows the transformation he will go through the course of the novel.

⁶¹ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.171.

⁶² **Ibid.**, p.35.

⁶³ **Ibid.**

⁶⁴ Sisman, **loc. cit.**

⁶⁵ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.35.

⁶⁶ **Ibid.**, p.73.

⁶⁷ **Ibid.**, p.35.

⁶⁸ Trevor Saxby, “Faith, Beer and Public Health: the Story of Arnold of Soissons”, (Accessed) <https://makinghistorynow.wordpress.com/2018/08/22/beer-and-public-health-the-story-of-arnold-of-soissons/>, 20 April 2019.

⁶⁹ “St. Justin Martyr”, Catholic Encyclopaedia, New Advent, (Accessed) <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08580c.htm>, 20 April 2019.

The novel's title is a reference to Justin, who is an avid gardener. The whole novel is woven with motifs related to gardening: Tessa, short for Theresa,⁷⁰ is cognate with the Greek verb *therizein*⁷¹ meaning "to reap, to harvest".⁷² Since the native women she helped sing a lament for Tessa as "Mama Tessa" at her funeral, the name is also a reference to Mother Teresa, who was known for her charity work towards the victims of floods, epidemics and famine, as well as AIDS sufferers.⁷³ Justin and Tessa's stillborn child is named Garth,⁷⁴ meaning a "garden".⁷⁵ Tessa's computer password is "freesia",⁷⁶ a flower Justin plants to celebrate their wedding.⁷⁷ The villain Lorbeer's name means a "laurel" or "bay leaf"⁷⁸ in German, which is a medicinal plant.⁷⁹ And Arnold's surname Bluhm is a pun for "bloom" or the Dutch word "bloem" meaning "flower, blossom".⁸⁰ Thus, the novel features an underlying theme of yearning for the days when cures were obtained from medicinal plants and flowers from nature and not through technological methods aiming for profit.

4.3 The Conspiracy

While working as volunteers in the slums of Nairobi, Tessa and Arnold observe suspicious side effects of a tuberculosis drug called Dypraxa.⁸¹ During her stay in a Nairobi hospital after she gives birth to a stillborn child,⁸² Tessa comes across a fifteen-year old Kenyan girl called Wanza and nurses her child, because Wanza is too

⁷⁰ Hanks, Hodges, "Theresa", **The Oxford Dictionary of First Names**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990, p.318.

⁷¹ "Theresa", Behind the Name, (accessed) <https://www.behindthename.com/name/theresa>, 15 April 2019.

⁷² Liddell, Scott, "*therizo*" (*θερίζω*), **Greek-English Lexicon**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1891, p.315.

⁷³ "Mother Teresa Biographical", The Nobel Prize, (Accessed) <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1979/teresa/biographical/>, 15 April 2019.

⁷⁴ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.130.

⁷⁵ "Garth", Merriam Webster Dictionary, (Accessed) <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/garth>, 15 April 2019.

⁷⁶ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.306.

⁷⁷ **Ibid.**, p.261.

⁷⁸ "*Lorbeer*" (Ger): Laurel, bay leaf, Collins German-English Dictionary, (Accessed) <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/german-english/lorbeer>, 21 April 2019.

⁷⁹ "Bay Laurel Medicinal Uses and Benefits", The Herbal Source, (Accessed) <https://www.herbal-supplement-resource.com/bay-laurel-benefits.html>, 21 April 2019.

⁸⁰ C. J. Van Rijn, "*bloem*" (Dut.): Flower, **Dutch-English and English-Dutch Dictionary**, Cape Town, Gouda – G. B. Van Goor Sons, 1905, p.40.

⁸¹ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.315.

⁸² **Ibid.**, p.130.

sick to nurse herself.⁸³ When Wanza dies due to the side effects of Dypraxa, both her corpse and her child mysteriously disappear,⁸⁴ adding to the suspicions in Tessa's mind. Thus, Tessa and Arnold start a personal investigation on the conduct of the pharmaceutical companies in Kenya and soon uncover a conspiracy involving an upstart British businessman, Kenneth K. Curtiss known as Kenny K.,⁸⁵ a multinational pharmaceutical giant, KVVH, based in Switzerland,⁸⁶ and the British Foreign Office.⁸⁷

Kenny K.'s brand ThreeBees is stamped everywhere in Kenya from the airport⁸⁸ to the medicine packages,⁸⁹ doctors' coats,⁹⁰ household goods and gas stations.⁹¹ The symbol is in fact a reference to the flag of the Island Elba created by Napoleon after his arrival on the island on exile.⁹² Elba also happens to be the home of Tessa's Italian mother.⁹³ The initials of ThreeBees, TB, are also an abbreviation used to denote tuberculosis.⁹⁴ The bee symbol is another image inseparable from nature and gardening, but it has been "shamelessly deported to Kenya and sold into commercial slavery".⁹⁵

The tuberculosis drug Dypraxa is discovered by two female doctors trained under the Communist rule, Lara Emrich and Kovacs, whose first name remains a mystery throughout the novel like Karla and Checheyev.⁹⁶ The drug has great promise as a miracle cure for multi-resistant tuberculosis, which is expected to become a pandemic around the world in the near future.⁹⁷ Thus, the molecule is a potential goldmine,⁹⁸ but it needs to be extensively tested before being licensed in the USA.⁹⁹

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.82.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.173.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.185.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.204.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.463.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.148.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.260.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.174.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.185.

⁹² "History of the flag of the Island of Elba", Info Elba, (Accessed)

<https://www.infoelba.com/discovering-elba/curious-facts/the-flag-of-the-island-of-elba/>, 15 April 2019.

⁹³ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.257.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.373.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.148.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.372.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.315.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.363.

When Markus Lorbeer, who is known as Dr. Lorbeer but actually has no title,¹⁰⁰ meets both women, he persuades them to sell the molecule to the pharma giant KVH.¹⁰¹ While Emrich values scientific ethics over money,¹⁰² Kovacs has become extremely materialistic in the new reign of capitalism¹⁰³ and has no scruples about distorting clinical data and risking human life for money.¹⁰⁴

KVH makes a lucrative deal with Kenny K.'s company ThreeBees to test the drug in Africa,¹⁰⁵ where corrupt politicians do not monitor public health and the people are devastated by AIDS-related tuberculosis.¹⁰⁶ However, the drug soon shows severe side effects:

It was killing people. In the villages. In the slums. Arnold was sure of it. It was a good drug, he said. With five more years' development they'd probably get there. You couldn't quarrel with the idea of the drug. It was short-course, cheap and patient-friendly. But they'd been too quick. The tests had been selectively designed. They hadn't covered all the side-effects [...] - all right, there were problems, but there always are. That's the grey area the drug companies exploit. It's at the mercy of statistics and statistics prove anything you want them to prove.¹⁰⁷

When Dypraxa starts to cause blindness and kill patients, Dr. Emrich tries to publish a warning on the safety of the drug. However, "the Forces of Darkness",¹⁰⁸ i.e. KVH, make sure her report is destroyed.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, since KVH controls both the university hospital¹¹⁰ she works in and the medical journals,¹¹¹ she loses her job, reputation, home and career.¹¹² She is called an anticorporate communist.¹¹³

¹⁰⁰ **Ibid.**, p.374.

¹⁰¹ **Ibid.**, p.205.

¹⁰² **Ibid.**, p.429.

¹⁰³ **Ibid.**, p.427.

¹⁰⁴ **Ibid.**, p.429.

¹⁰⁵ **Ibid.**, p.205.

¹⁰⁶ **Ibid.**, p.316.

¹⁰⁷ **Ibid.**, p.282-3.

¹⁰⁸ **Ibid.**, p.376.

¹⁰⁹ **Ibid.**, p.431.

¹¹⁰ **Ibid.**, p.424.

¹¹¹ **Ibid.**, p.431.

¹¹² **Ibid.**, p.362.

¹¹³ **Ibid.**, p.432.

It is no coincidence that Le Carré's Dr. Lara Emrich works in Canada, because she has been inspired from Dr. Nancy Olivieri, who was the whistleblower in the case of the drug deferiprone at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.¹¹⁴ The contract Emrich signed with KVH has a confidentiality clause against revealing anything negative she might turn up.¹¹⁵ Dr Olivieri was also restricted by a confidentiality clause, but violated it to publicize the negative side effects of the drug in the **New England Journal of Medicine**. Like Emmerich, Olivieri was the recipient of threatening notes.¹¹⁶

Though Dypraxa is an imaginary drug,¹¹⁷ its story is reminiscent of an incident from real-life. In 1996, the American pharmaceutical company Pfizer opened a clinic in Kano, Nigeria, to test the unapproved drug Trovan against the meningitis outbreak. Allegedly, there were no ethics-approval protocols for testing Trovan on children. The patients were not properly advised that they were participating in an experiment and no proper long-term follow-up was implemented. During the treatment, eleven among the two hundred children treated died, while others suffered serious meningitis-related symptoms such as deafness, lameness, blindness, seizures, and disorientation.¹¹⁸ Trovan came into spotlight only after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved it to be used in the USA: within sixteen months, more than a hundred patients developed liver failure and six of them died due to the drug.¹¹⁹

At the end of their investigation, Tessa and Arnold finally find Lorbeer and learn the whole truth from him, but they are ambushed and murdered in the desert during their journey home.¹²⁰ Tessa's body is found on the shores of Lake Turkana, raped by multiple men¹²¹ before her throat is cut.¹²² Arnold is crucified on a tree¹²³ and his body is left to hyenas.¹²⁴

¹¹⁴ Siobhan Roberts, "Le Carré's Olivieri Look-alike", **National Post** (Toronto), December 2000, qtd. in Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.253.

¹¹⁵ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.426.

¹¹⁶ Roberts, **loc. cit.**

¹¹⁷ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.568.

¹¹⁸ Joe Stephens, "Did Patient 6587-0069 Have to Die?", **Gazette** (Montreal), 20 January 2001, qtd. in Hoffman, **loc. cit.**

¹¹⁹ Hoffman, **loc. cit.**

¹²⁰ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.23.

¹²¹ **Ibid.**, p.101.

¹²² **Ibid.**, p.23.

¹²³ **Ibid.**, p.377.

¹²⁴ **Ibid.**, p.512.

Tessa's death is also a re-enactment of the death of Julie Ward, who was raped and brutally murdered by three men on the Masai Mara game reserve in 1988.¹²⁵ Ward had travelled to the Masai Mara with an Australian friend, Dr Glen Burns. When their car broke down, she spent the night alone at the Mara Serena lodge because Dr Burns had to return to Nairobi. The next day, she drove to the nearby Sand River camp to recover her camping equipment and was not seen again. The remains of Julie's burnt body were found by his father a week after she vanished. A former Kenyan intelligence officer later came forward and claimed that he has witnessed Julie Ward being gang raped and murdered by three men.¹²⁶ The incident is also mentioned at the beginning of the novel when the news of Tessa's death reaches Woodrow, Head of Chancery: "[...] he summoned up the sensational case of a young Englishwoman who had been hacked to pieces in the African bush ten years ago".¹²⁷

The spot Arnold is crucified, the Leakey dig,¹²⁸ is the birthplace of civilization.¹²⁹ Thus, Arnold becomes an African Jesus figure who sacrifices himself for the sins committed by the white multinational corporations that are symbols of civilization. Indeed, Lorbeer calls himself Judas for betraying Africans at the moments when he is overwhelmed by feelings of guilt.¹³⁰ Since Lorbeer is a religious man, he seeks redemption for his past sins by devoting himself to aid work in Sudan.¹³¹ Still, when Tessa and Arnold come to him asking questions to fill the gaps in their investigations,¹³² he still reports them to KVH, which makes sure they are silenced.

Justin at first receives the news of Tessa's death in an extremely controlled manner.¹³³ He is also given a subtle warning by Sir Bernard Pellegrin, the head of the

¹²⁵ Andrew Alderson, "New witness: Julie Ward was gang raped then killed", **The Telegraph**, 06 Jun 2004, (Accessed) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/4192616/New-witness-Julie-Ward-was-gang-raped-then-killed.html>, 4 April 2019.

¹²⁶ **Ibid.**

¹²⁷ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.12.

¹²⁸ **Ibid.**, p.13.

¹²⁹ **Ibid.**

¹³⁰ **Ibid.**, p.375.

¹³¹ **Ibid.**, p.534.

¹³² **Ibid.**, p.377.

¹³³ **Ibid.**, p.39.

African desk at the Foreign Office,¹³⁴ to let the death of his wife go and stop investigating in order to cover up her death.¹³⁵ However, his grief brings about a subtle change over him and he decides to take over her flag. The crime against humanity she discovered was more important to Tessa than her life, and now it is to Justin too.¹³⁶ This is the point when he moves from renunciation to participation:

I failed her.
[...]
By detaching myself. [...] By letting her go it alone. By
emigrating from her in my mind. By making an immoral contract with
her.
[...]
She follows her conscience, I get on with my job. It was an
immoral distinction.¹³⁷

The transformed new person, “Justin the loner, taking nobody’s orders but his own”¹³⁸ is left with two choices: to go home and fight through the system,¹³⁹ or to follow Tessa’s footsteps till the end. He chooses to do the latter.¹⁴⁰

Prior to her murder, Justin “had regarded strongly held convictions as the natural enemies of the diplomat, to be ignored, humoured or, like dangerous energy, diverted into harmless channels. Now to his surprise he saw them as emblems of courage and Tessa as their standard bearer”.¹⁴¹ With this vision in mind, he embarks “to extinguish his own identity and revive hers; to kill Justin, and bring Tessa back to life”.¹⁴²

According to Giles Foden, “Justin makes his journeys like a kind of holy rogue agent, picking his way through shady commercial deals, government collusion and outright corruption as if he were on a latter-day Pilgrim's Progress”.¹⁴³ Like Christian in **The Pilgrim’s Progress**,¹⁴⁴ Justin burdened by his guilt seeks deliverance in following Tessa’s path. Throughout his journey, the reader can observe the

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.80.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.212.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.272.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.153.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.467.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.512.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.518.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.164.

¹⁴² Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p.250.

¹⁴³ Foden, *loc. cit.*

¹⁴⁴ John Bunyan, **The Pilgrim’s Progress**, New York, Reformation Press, 1999.

transformation of Justin from the controlled civil servant into a man of action like Tessa who defies danger for the cause he believes in. Justin is a character matured and transformed through pain. When he is beaten up and threatened by Kenny K.'s thugs in Germany,¹⁴⁵ he feels he has crossed a threshold:

*They did this to me, but I have remained who I am. I am tempered. I am able. Inside myself there's an untouched man. If they came back now, and did everything to me again, they would never reach the untouched man. I've passed the exam I have been shirking all my life. I'm a graduate of pain.*¹⁴⁶

As he sits in front of the KVH factory in Basel that looks like a morbid castle smelling like a mortuary, he comes to terms with the past:

I am thinking about your courage [...] it was you and Arnold against all this, while dear old Justin worried about keeping his flower beds [...] I am thinking I don't believe in me anymore, and all I stood for. That there was a time when [...] your Justin took pride in submitting himself to the harsher judgments of a collective will – which he happened to call *Country*, or [...] the *Higher Cause*. There was a time when I believed it was expedient that one man – or woman – should die for the benefit of many. I called it sacrifice, or duty, or necessity [...] all I feel now is: it was you against the whole pack of them and, unsurprisingly, they won.¹⁴⁷

Like many other novels of John le Carré, also in **The Constant Gardener**, “a ‘small man’ is yanked up from his comfortable life and a moral dilemma is thrust on his shoulders”. And the small man makes “the most courageous of choices” even if he loses his life in the end.¹⁴⁸

4.4 The Paranoia

While in Kenya, Tessa is distrustful and starts to fear everyone who is white. She does not trust the High Commission or the diplomatic phones, “with reason”.¹⁴⁹ She feels safer among African women¹⁵⁰ and her best friends are Arnold,

¹⁴⁵ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.380-1.

¹⁴⁶ **Ibid.**, p.382.

¹⁴⁷ **Ibid.**, p.413.

¹⁴⁸ Mata Hari, “The Constant Writer: John le Carré, the master of the spy genre in English literature, continues to provoke readers”, **and Political Weekly**, Vol. 48, No. 36, 7 September 2013, p. 84-85.

¹⁴⁹ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.122.

¹⁵⁰ **Ibid.**, p.121.

who is African, and Ghita, a young Indian woman.¹⁵¹ Indeed, the mercenaries who rape and murder her in the end turn out to be two white men¹⁵² hired by KVH.¹⁵³

However, the white masters of this conspiracy also hide in a prison of their own making: After the bomb attack on the US Embassy in Nairobi, higher ranking staff live in houses with crash-proof iron front gates manned day and night. Their garden is surrounded with electric fence “crowned by razor wire and intruder lights that blazed all night”.¹⁵⁴ Not only the diplomatic personnel, but also the powerful Kenny K. lives in a luxury farm with bulletproof windows,¹⁵⁵ fortified with razor-wire fences and protected by motion sensors, panic buttons and security guards with hand-held radios.¹⁵⁶ Considering that Kenny K. is the embodiment of Capitalism, his house stands for the symbolic prison of the capitalist world built by the inequitable distribution of the wealth gained through dubious commercial relationships. As the moral philosopher Adam Smith states: “For one very rich man, there must be at least five hundred poor. [...] The affluence of the rich excites the indignation of the poor, who are often both driven by want, and prompted by envy, to invade his possessions”.¹⁵⁷

But also Justin is not free from the paranoia. Throughout his journey following Tessa’s footsteps, he has to constantly look over his shoulder since he is followed by the Scotland Yard,¹⁵⁸ agents of the British Foreign Office,¹⁵⁹ and the mercenaries of KVH.¹⁶⁰ As soon as he arrives in London, he recognizes the agents waiting for him outside the airport.¹⁶¹ When he arrives at Tessa’s ancestral home in

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.122.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p.227.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.510.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.41.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.452.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.453.

¹⁵⁷ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into The Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations*, Ed. by Edwin Cannon, University of Chicago Press, 1976 (1776), Book V, Chapter I, Part I, p. 232, qtd. in Amy L. Chua, “The Paradox of Free Market Democracy: Rethinking Development Policy”, *Harvard International Law Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 2, Spring 2000, p.287, (Accessed) https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5578&context=faculty_scholarship, 24 April 2019.

¹⁵⁸ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.242.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.198.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.380.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.198.

Chelsea,¹⁶² he finds the house ransacked and searched.¹⁶³ His house is constantly watched,¹⁶⁴ his phones tapped.¹⁶⁵ Justin is in danger, because “the Forces of Darkness” think he knows what Tessa knew.¹⁶⁶ Thanks to his prior security training,¹⁶⁷ he transforms himself from the unassuming diplomat into a spy.¹⁶⁸ “This is the watchfulness they learn from their cradles. This is how they cross a dark street, scan doorways, turn a corner: are you waiting for me? Have I seen you somewhere before?”¹⁶⁹ Using a fake passport,¹⁷⁰ Justin travels to Italy, Germany, Switzerland and Canada to uncover the conspiracy that has led to Tessa’s death. He discovers that Tessa’s computer as well as everyone else’s who was in contact with her in London, Elba,¹⁷¹ Germany¹⁷² and Canada¹⁷³ were either destroyed by a computer virus or stolen to get rid of the documents related to Tessa’s investigation. In Germany, Justin is ambushed, beaten up and threatened in his hotel room as a last warning to drop Tessa’s case.¹⁷⁴ When he arrives in Canada, he finds Dr. Lara Emrich who is also constantly followed and watched by KVH.¹⁷⁵ After a secret meeting with her, the tyres of her car are slashed and they can hardly escape the thugs with baseball bats hired by KVH.¹⁷⁶ Thus, Justin’s whole journey turns into one man’s fight against the capitalist Goliath KVH.

4.5 The Betrayal

After Tessa’s death, instead of finding the truth, everyone around them tries to cover up the scandal with lies. Tessa’s relationship with Arnold is described as an adulterous affair by the British High Commission and the Scotland Yard, and the case is

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p.230.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.233-8.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.242.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.239.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.242.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.357.

¹⁶⁸ Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p.252.

¹⁶⁹ Le Carré, *op. cit.*, p.357.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.246.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.331.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p.365.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.371.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.380-2.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.419.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.441-2.

dismissed as a crime of passion where Tessa has been killed by her lover Arnold.¹⁷⁷ However, Justin's trust to Tessa is never shaken, even before he found out the truth about Arnold's sexual orientation.¹⁷⁸ While the only betrayal openly declared turns out to be lie, the real betrayal is kept secret at all costs.

When Tessa writes a report proving the misconduct of ThreeBees and KVH in Kenya based on medical evidence she has collected with Arnold, she gives it to her husband's colleague and supervisor Sandy Woodrow to be presented to London.¹⁷⁹ Though she has no trust in Kenyan authorities,¹⁸⁰ she still has faith in the British legal system.

Sandy Woodrow, the Head of Chancery, secretly covets Tessa¹⁸¹ and he is so obsessed with her that he has sent her a note declaring his love and proposing to leave his family to elope together.¹⁸² However, the same Woodrow call Tessa "crazy, unhinged by her dead baby and unstable before it" after her death.¹⁸³

When Woodrow sends Tessa's report to Sir Bernard Pellegrin, he immediately informs KVH¹⁸⁴ and destroys the report since he fancies his chances on the executive board of ThreeBees and KVH after his retirement.¹⁸⁵

Tessa's vulnerability to those who would silence her is heightened because she insists on voicing her concerns through the system. She is determined not to bypass it to rant and rail publicly, but to force the system to work as it theoretically should.¹⁸⁶

John le Carré has often been criticized for his depiction of the female characters.¹⁸⁷ Though his women are more complex, convincing and realistic than the

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.341.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.313.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.121.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.272.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.56.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p.273.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.79.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.499.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.500.

¹⁸⁶ Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p.251.

¹⁸⁷ Sisman, *op. cit.*, p.510.

‘love interests’ in the Bond novels,¹⁸⁸ they are still “objects of desire, invariably beautiful and almost always unattainable”.¹⁸⁹ According to novelist Diane Johnson, “Le Carré’s women are faithless, restless, complicated, and kept, the men mistrustful and always forlornly adoring of some unworthy woman who has gone off with another male [...]”.¹⁹⁰ In this sense, it can be claimed that his earlier novels carry elements from the courtly love tradition with the protagonists hopelessly risking their lives for the unattainable young women who are mistresses of powerful villains. Lizzie Worthington in **The Honourable Schoolboy**, Jed in **The Night Manager**, Bella in **The Secret Pilgrim**, and even Katya in **The Russia House** are all damsels in distress to be rescued by the protagonist. On the other hand, George Smiley’s wife Lady Ann Sercombe is a lost and ultimately unfaithful woman. And Charlie, in **The Little Drummer Girl**, is rather a puppet whose strings are in the hands of male spies.

Emma in **Our Game** is a transitional character who sets out as a damsel in distress, only to be transformed into an activist by Larry. She is the first of Le Carré’s female characters who starts to think on her own. Tessa in **The Constant Gardener** is a more developed version of Emma from **Our Game**, one who does not need a man to show her a cause to fight for. Both Emma and Tessa are half Italian, perhaps to add some Mediterranean fire to the British calmness. While Emma comes from a modest family,¹⁹¹ Tessa is from the crème of the society. She is an impetuous, headstrong, unswerving young woman¹⁹² with no care for materialism¹⁹³ and unafraid to risk her life for a cause.

Though Tessa is dead before the action of the book starts, she is a vivid presence throughout, both in flashback and in Justin’s interior dialogue with her. She becomes his conscience and he takes up her cause. In the end he sacrifices himself, as the ultimate individual act of defiance against corporate power.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ **Ibid.**

¹⁸⁹ **Ibid.**

¹⁹⁰ Diane Johnson, “Missionary”, **New York Review of Books**, 20 May 1999, qtd. in Adam Sisman, **loc. cit.**

¹⁹¹ Le Carré, **Our Game**, p.232.

¹⁹² Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.531.

¹⁹³ Le Carré, **The Constant Gardener**, p.31.

¹⁹⁴ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.534.

Unlike the child-woman Emma, Tessa is a mother figure. However, Tessa's white child is stillborn for an unknown reason since neither a white child, nor a black one can thrive in the misery of Kenya. In a symbolic gesture, she nurses Wanza's child to give life to the future of Africa, even when her own child is dead.¹⁹⁵

The similarity between Tessa and Larry is also obvious: both characters are killed before the beginning of the novel, trying to save the people of another continent. As Tim took over Larry's fight, Justin also takes over Tessa's. The quest also costs him his life in the end, but not before he discloses the conspiracy to the world.

4.6 K for Capitalism

The Constant Gardener has been written in a decade when the Russian economy was struggling for reforms in the aftermath of communism and wild capitalism dominated the world.¹⁹⁶

Capitalism is defined as a system where "we own, we exchange, we seek to accumulate, to translate other relationships into property relationships, like labour, and we compete about all these processes".¹⁹⁷ Unlike communism, capitalism claims to value "the liberty of generating your own resources, of increasing your property, and the opportunities and political liberties that these bring".¹⁹⁸

The motivation of capitalism is about gaining more profit, property, resources and opportunities. Social good is not an aim. Thus, capitalism is not an ethical system.¹⁹⁹ "The problem with capitalism is that it is a practice resting on property

¹⁹⁵ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.82.

¹⁹⁶ Kristi Govella, Vinod K. Aggarwal, **Responding to a Resurgent Russia: Russian Policy and Responses from the European Union and the United States**, New York, Springer, 2011, p.3.

¹⁹⁷ Dr Rowan Williams, "Can Capitalism be Ethical?", Capitalism on the Edge series of lectures organised by Murray Edwards College, 2016/17, (Accessed) <https://www.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Rowan%20Williams%20summary%20report.pdf>, 24 April 2019.

¹⁹⁸ **Ibid.**

¹⁹⁹ **Ibid.**

relationships and prone, again and again, to redefine every other relationship in terms of property, profit and exchange”.²⁰⁰

Therefore, in a capitalistic society, it is a prerequisite to establish the social order and institutions which will create and safeguard “the predicable, stable environment that capitalism takes for granted”.²⁰¹ However, if the same society lacks the appropriate institutions to regulate the capitalistic system, the “national economies are driven to poverty and destitution and are regularly unsettled or destroyed by international competition”.²⁰² It is for this reason that the system may get out of hand and turn into unbridled, wild capitalism in failed states,²⁰³ where the proper institutions are lacking. This may also be interpreted as a modern version of exploitative colonialism.

The plot in **The Constant Gardener** takes place in Kenya under the rule of President Daniel arap Moi.²⁰⁴ The main discussion underlying the story in the novel is the balance of ethics with capitalism and political responsibility. The premise of the novel is voiced at the beginning of the novel through a discussion between Tessa and Justin on the first occasion they meet:

T: ‘So when is a state not a state, in your opinion, Mr Quayle?’
[...]

J: ‘[...] I *suppose* the answer to your question is [...] that a state ceases to be a state when it ceases to deliver on its essential responsibilities.’

[...]

T: ‘Essential responsibilities being what?’

J: ‘[...] the qualifications for being a *civilised state* amount to – electoral suffrage, [...] protection of life and property [...], justice, health and education for all, at least to a certain level – then the maintenance of a sound administrative infrastructure – and roads, transport, drains, et cetera – and – [...] the equitable collection of taxes. If a state fails to deliver on at least a quorum of the above – then one *has* to say that the contract between state and citizen begins to look pretty *shaky* – and if it fails on *all* of the above, then it’s a *failed state* [...]’²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ **Ibid.**

²⁰¹ **Ibid.**

²⁰² **Ibid.**

²⁰³ **Ibid.**

²⁰⁴ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.402.

²⁰⁵ **Ibid.**, p.156.

T: '[...] You *negotiate* with other countries, don't you? You cut *deals* with them. You legitimize them through *trading* partnerships. Are you telling us there's one ethical standard for *your* country and another for the rest?'²⁰⁶

According to Justin's description, Kenya under Moi's rule is definitely a failed state by the author's definition.²⁰⁷ And yet, throughout the novel, the British High Commission turns a blind eye to the situation while the British and European corporations conduct their business in the country through illegal ways, ignoring political and business ethics. Pertinently, the corruption of capitalism is not limited to Kenya as a failed state. When Tessa as a lawyer believing in the British system tries to disclose the corruption and crimes against humanity through the appropriate legal institutions, her report is destroyed by the Foreign Office and she is silenced through brutal murder. Thus, it can be claimed that the dynamics of the political system and the institutions in the supposedly well-established British society are no more efficient to control capitalism's corrupting power than in Kenya, which may lead to the discussion of the impossibility of an ethical capitalistic system.

As Karla in **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** is the embodiment of communism, in **The Constant Gardener**, Kenny K. is the personification of unbridled capitalism that can go to any lengths for more profit.²⁰⁸ However, unlike communism, which is a force that needs to be destroyed by any means in the author's Cold War fiction, capitalism in the new millennium is represented as a necessary evil which has to be bridled by the appropriate institutions since the author cannot offer a radical alternative to replace capitalism as a pillar of democracy and freedom, a common discourse used to rationalise capitalism.

As Tessa's investigations reveal, in an elaborate scheme of corruption, the multinational pharmaceutical giant KVH manipulates the drug tests,²⁰⁹ case reports and statistics to market Dypraxa prematurely to be the market leader,²¹⁰ while ThreeBees

²⁰⁶ **Ibid.**, p.157.

²⁰⁷ **Ibid.**, p.209.

²⁰⁸ **Ibid.**, p.464.

²⁰⁹ **Ibid.**, p.429.

²¹⁰ **Ibid.**, p.431.

distributes the drug to the people in Kenya without giving information to the patients,²¹¹ and suppressing the fatal side effects.²¹² The British Foreign Office covers this scheme up because KVH has promised to invest in Britain and ThreeBees has promised a chair in the executive board to Bernard Pellegrine.²¹³ Kenny K. thinks he is untouchable because he has connections to the British Cabinet,²¹⁴ while he helps the British Secret Service with arms transports²¹⁵ and British companies with telecom deals in Africa.²¹⁶

Through Justin's conversations with various characters on his way, the novel reveals how corruption and bribery is ubiquitous in the world of pharmaceuticals from Russia, where health ministers receive luxury cars from pharmaceutical companies;²¹⁷ to Poland²¹⁸ or Germany,²¹⁹ where pharmaceutical giants invite eminent doctors to luxury holiday destinations under the pretext of educational trips.²²⁰ Companies "buy health officials, fast-track clinical trials, purchase drug registrations and import licences, and feed every bureaucratic hand in the food chain".²²¹ The patients participating in Dypraxa trials in Canada are also "the Indians from the reservations who are susceptible to old tuberculosis" and "the hippy community susceptible to the multi-resistant one", rather than the upper echelons of the society.²²² Thus, the same prejudice towards underprivileged patients is also prevalent in the developed countries in the west, making them little better than the failed states of Africa and suggesting that corruption is an inherent trait of capitalism wherever one goes.

Since The World Health Organization (WHO) is subsidised by America, "it favours big corporations, reveres profit and doesn't like radical decisions". Lobbyists are active in WHO assemblies offering promotions to the members, "while the Third

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.428.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p.281.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p.500.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.496.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.241.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.368.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.369.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.*, p.430

World has no money or experience to gain favour”.²²³ The humanitarian organisations are described to be no better:

With their safe jobs and tax-free salaries, their pensions, nice cars, free international schools for their kids! Travelling all the time so they never get to spend their money [...] In the fine Swiss restaurants, eating big meals with the pretty-boy lobbyists from the pharmas. Why should they stick their necks out for humanity?²²⁴

Patients are asked to give their informed consent before joining a trial, but since they cannot read the forms and do not understand what they are signing, they are unable to realize that a drug is tested on them. “They are generously recompensated in return and even offered free food”.²²⁵

Expired and destabilised medicines are distributed in developing countries, usually with “their indications and contraindications rewritten for the Third World market to broaden their field of use far beyond its licensed application”.²²⁶ Thus, pharmaceutical companies get a few million dollars’ worth of tax break for their charity and also save a few more millions of warehousing and drug disposal costs.²²⁷ “Africa is the pharmaceutical dustbin of the world”.²²⁸

Although Africa has eighty percent of the world’s AIDS patients, three quarters of them receive no medication, since the US State Department threatens any country that dares produce its own cheap version of American-patented medicines with sanctions.²²⁹ In Lorbeer’s words:

The pills in this jar cost twenty US dollars apiece in Nairobi, six in New York, eighteen in Manila. Any day now, India’s going to manufacture the generic version and the same pill will cost sixty cents. Don’t talk to me about the research and development costs. The pharmaceutical boys wrote them off ten years ago and a lot of their money comes from governments in the first place, so they’re talking

²²³ *Ibid.*, p.357.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.533.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.428.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.281.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.533.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.282.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.532.

crap. What we got here is an amoral monopoly that costs human lives every day.²³⁰

It is not only the pharmaceutical companies and aid workers who gamble with human lives in Africa. Ambitious politicians who support civil wars and sanction bloodshed are another reason for the misery of Africa and these politicians are supported by multinational oil companies.

The multis love Khartoum, man! “Boys,” they say, “we respect you fundamentalist principles. A few public floggings, a few hands cut off, we admire that. [...] We want you to use our roads and our strips just as much as you like. Just don’t you go letting those crazy African bums in the towns and villages stand in the way of the great god Profit!”²³¹

The author also criticizes Britain’s attitude towards the corrupt African regimes through the words of the SIS station chief, who happens to be the only conscientious Brit in Nairobi:²³²

The Moi government is terminally corrupt [...] The country is dying of Aids, it’s bankrupt, there is not a corner of it, from tourism to wildlife to education to transport to welfare to communications, that isn’t falling apart from fraud, incompetence and neglect [...] Ministers and officials are diverting lorry-loads of food aid and medical supplies earmarked for starving refugees, sometimes with the connivance of aid agency employees [...] And we do not protest. Because we are here, mercifully, to represent *our* country, not *theirs*.²³³

Arnold’s Belgian Congo connection is no coincidence, but a reference to Joseph Conrad’s **Heart of Darkness**. While Conrad was criticizing the atrocities committed by European colonists in Congo,²³⁴ Le Carré takes it one step further and adds capitalism to the equation to underline that the suffering of the African people under imperialism are not over, but has only become more complicated:

By the same argument, aid to the Third World is exploitation under another name... The beneficiaries are the countries that supply the money on interest, local African politicians and officials who pocket huge bribes, and the Western contractors and arms suppliers

²³⁰ **Ibid.**

²³¹ **Ibid.**, p.537.

²³² **Ibid.**, p.511.

²³³ **Ibid.**, p.58-9.

²³⁴ Coffin, **op. cit.**, Glossary, A 20.

who walk away with huge profits. The victims are the man-in-the-street, the uprooted, the poor and the very poor.²³⁵

In this world of corrupt relationships, Tessa and Arnold become two idealistic figures who give their lives to right the wrongs to build a better world:

They saw a wrong and worked relentlessly to redress it, to the ultimate price. In doing so, they assumed a responsibility we would be mistaken to presume some government to take on. Governments have already abdicated, leaving us to fend for ourselves with whatever conscience and courage we can muster. This, [...] is what has happened to capitalism in the absence of an opponent.²³⁶

The purpose of the author in giving these detailed examples of corruption he observed in Africa is in fact to emphasise that the whole thing is a betrayal against humanity. Africans too hungry and ill to question anything and too uneducated to read any materials are stripped from their basic human rights and reduced to the level of guinea pigs. The author analyses the reason in the words of a pharma-watch worker: “The modern pharmaceutical industry is only sixty-five years old. It has good men and women, it has achieved human and social miracles, but its collective conscience is not developed”.²³⁷ Since the multinational corporations are responsible to their shareholders and are worried about their stock prices, they are reluctant to withdraw a suspicious drug from the market²³⁸ and thus they may go to great lengths to manipulate the outcome. The real evil behind this crime against humanity is in fact unbridled capitalism valuing profit over humanity and corrupting anyone on its way. In Kenny K.’s words, “you think *countries* run the [...] world? [...] It’s ‘God save our multinational’ they’re singing these days”.²³⁹

Like Larry in **Our Game**, Tessa, Arnold and Justin, the three characters who fight the capitalist monster are all killed at the end of the novel. They are all romantic heroes and their death, “like all of le Carré’s absolute romantics, is futile”.²⁴⁰ According to Aronoff, “that is because part of le Carré favors such efforts over inaction

²³⁵ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.186.

²³⁶ Hoffman, **op. cit.**, p.254.

²³⁷ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.370.

²³⁸ **Ibid.**, p.499.

²³⁹ **Ibid.**, p.466.

²⁴⁰ Aronoff, **op. cit.**, p.131.

in the face of tragic political events, but he also sees their futility”.²⁴¹ Since democracy relies heavily on the economy and the economy relies on the free market,²⁴² the individual has little power to make a difference.

Wallace Katz claims that the sad love story in the novel serves two purposes:

First, it is a way of bringing home to the population of the core - we dismiss the suffering of Africans but feel deeply when our own kind are affected - how cheaply human life is held and how Americans and Europeans profit shamefully from the poverty and suffering of Third World populations. Second, the love story personalizes and conveys through characterization the disappointment and disgust felt by a growing proportion of intellectuals and professionals for capitalist and governmental exploitation of unsuspecting native populations.²⁴³

In a world where capitalism is seen as the only economic system compatible with democracy, John le Carré discloses the betrayal of humanity by wild capitalism over the personal betrayal of his characters. Called the “forces of darkness” by the author,²⁴⁴ the masters of this conspiracy create a worldwide paranoia that follows Justin from Africa to Europe and Canada. These evil forces go to any lengths to protect their unethical trade methods. While even observing these crimes is equated to participation, the established methods of the civilisation are too corrupt to stand against them. Thus, only the clandestine methods of the espionage world can give them a taste of their own medicine.

The novel has received negative reviews especially from American critiques²⁴⁵ and was even called “social blackmail” by supporters of pharmaceutical corporations.²⁴⁶ However, six months after the book’s publication, the director of Oxfam, Barbara Stocking, wrote a letter to John le Carré to make sure he knows how helpful **The Constant Gardener** has been to their “Cut the Cost” campaign to make

²⁴¹ **Ibid.**

²⁴² Chua, **op. cit.**, p.287.

²⁴³ Wallace Katz, “Hollywood Rarity: Imperialism Unmasked”, **New Labor Forum**, Vol. 15, No. 3, Fall, 2006, p.110.

²⁴⁴ Le Carré, **op. cit.**, p.376.

²⁴⁵ Sisman, **op. cit.**, p.537.

²⁴⁶ Morgan P. Miles, Linda S. Munilla, Jeffrey G. Covin, “The Constant Gardener Revisited: The Effect of Social Blackmail on the Marketing Concept, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship”, **Journal of Business Ethics**, Vol. 41, No. 3, Dec., 2002, p.288.

drugs more accessible to people in developing countries at prices they could afford”.²⁴⁷ The letter stated that certain pharmaceutical companies had to drop their court case against the South African government aiming to ban the manufacture of generic anti-HIV drugs. Stocking was “certain that public opinion was influenced by **The Constant Gardener**”.²⁴⁸ In John le Carré’s words, this letter was worth “better than 6 Bookers and 20 Soapy awards”.²⁴⁹ It is also an indication that art helps to make the world a better place.

²⁴⁷ Sisman, *op. cit.*, p.536.

²⁴⁸ **Ibid.**

²⁴⁹ **Ibid.**

CONCLUSION

The three selected novels of John le Carré included in this study, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** (1974), **Our Game** (1995) and **The Constant Gardener** (2001), feature themes of paranoia and betrayal under the shadow of an evil figure changing through the decades. Also, in all the three novels, political betrayal goes hand in hand with personal betrayal. Beginning *in medias res*, the novels reveal the story through flashbacks, adding to the feelings of irremediable loss caused by the betrayal of the characters.

For the purposes of this thesis, the method of study involved a close reading of the novels in order to examine the elements of paranoia and betrayal in relation with the historical and political events of their respective era. A comparison of the novels has shed light to the evolution of the evil figure parallel to the transformation of the dominant political forces throughout decades and pointed out the author's shifting attitude towards the idea of duty from patriotism to individual conscience. Also, in the light of the author's biography, the characters and plot elements in these novels were traced back to people and events from the author's life that have inspired his literary creation. Finally, the evolution of Le Carré's female protagonists has been discussed from a feminist point of view within the context of betrayal.

The study displays that John le Carré's fiction is imbued with his personal observations and experiences, and his vantage point about the individuals' choices has shifted in the face of the transformation of the political threats over the decades. The observations also reveal that the novels feature a perceivable atmosphere of paranoia brought about by an evil figure personified in a character or organisation. This invincible and satanic figure tempts the individuals to betray their country and duty as well as the people around.

In Le Carré's Cold War novels, communism is featured as an insurmountable corrupting force breathing at the neck of the patriotic agent protagonist, creating a paranoid atmosphere. In this period, the author's idea of duty is synonymous with patriotism and even though his protagonists struggle with their conscience in the field, their final choice is the duty. Considered as his Cold War masterpiece, **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** (1974) is a *roman à clef* based on events and characters from the author's life. Written in the aftermath of the historical treason committed by the members of the Cambridge Five spy ring, the novel is imbued with the paranoia caused by a suspected Russian mole within the high ranks of the British Secret Intelligence Service threatening the whole Western world. Communism personified in the dark and mysterious figure of Karla becomes an invincible, satanic force no individual including the protagonist, the spymaster George Smiley, can resist. In this conjuncture, the individual's sole duty is towards his country. Bill Haydon, the mole, breaks this code and chooses to serve the Communist system for no other reason than his own beliefs. However, even though supporting communism is his conscientious choice, it is tarnished by his betrayal of almost every person who values him. Thus, he is shown no leniency in the novel and pays for his multifaceted betrayal with his life.

As an intelligence officer firmly believing in western democracy, the author must have witnessed great sacrifices, tortures and executions in the espionage world when agents had to make a choice between their own conscience and duty every day in the field. The only justification of these sacrifices first portrayed in **The Spy Who Came In From the Cold** and also reflected in **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy** was that they were fighting for the greater good, for the promise of a better world that would be built after the fall of communism.

However, when communism was finally toppled, the west and especially Britain turned into itself, turning a blind eye to the chaos and conflict in the remote corners of the world. The less fortunate smaller nations were now left to the mercy of the new nationalistic Russia. Between the lines, **Our Game** hints at the author's disillusionment by the political system after the Cold War and his new-found belief in the individual conscience as the key to a better world.

Our Game (1995) written in the aftermath of the Cold War presents unbridled nationalism as the new evil figure that has replaced communism. Though this transitional novel where the story is told through a first person narrative begins as another tale of political and personal betrayal based on the same premise of duty as that of **Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**, towards the end of the narrative, the author changes his vantage point and lets the reader see the whole story from a different angle. Thus, the betrayal of the Secret Service by the former spy and romantic hero Larry Pettifer turns out to be a conscientious quest he follows to save a disregarded minority in the Caucasus, which is left to the mercy of unbridled Russian nationalism by the apathic West after the fall of communism. What was a breach of duty a decade ago is now celebrated as an act of conscience. The paranoia caused by fanatical nationalism in the novel is embodied in the underground Ossetian nationalist organisation The Forest leaving a trail of blood behind from Britain to the Caucasus. On a personal level, the protagonist Tim feels betrayed by his girlfriend Emma who leaves him for Larry, but in the end, her departure turns out to be a journey to find her own identity and finally make her own choices in life.

The Constant Gardener (2001) written in the monopolar, capitalistic world of the new millennium is an example of docufiction or a thesis novel where the author focuses on the clash between capitalism and ethics. Also inspired by people, observations and documents from the author's life, it is the story of one woman's quest against wild capitalism, the power presented as the evil force in the novel. The multinational corporations described in the novel influence and control any government, international regulatory body or humanitarian organisation through the stock exchange, investments, bribes, and threats for the sole purpose of increasing their profit. Called the "forces of darkness" by the author, these forces go to any lengths to protect their unethical methods and create a worldwide paranoia with their power reaching from Europe to Canada and Africa.

In the post-Cold War fiction of John le Carré, the dilemma between participation and renunciation becomes more prominent. If Tim Cranmer's occupation with his vineyard as wars and suffering prevails around the world is a tongue-in-cheek way of criticizing the British apathy in **Our Game**, Justin's hobby of gardening in **The**

Constant Gardener is presented as an act of betrayal as he detaches himself from the corruption and death surrounding him. In the corrupt world described in the novels where the established methods and organisations of the civilisation are inadequate to protect humanity, renunciation of the individual to take positive action is in a sense participation in the crime. In this new world order where wild capitalism knows no boundaries, the individual rises above institutions and the human conscience becomes the only moral compass in Le Carré's fiction. However, unlike communism, which is a force that needs to be destroyed by any means in the author's Cold War fiction, capitalism in the millennium is presented as a necessary evil that has to be bridled by the appropriate institutions since the author cannot offer a radical alternative to replace capitalism in a democratic world.

The Constant Gardener is also a first in the author's canon featuring his first independent female protagonist who takes action against the outdated, male-dominated world order. However, the futility of the death of all his heroic characters fighting for the greater good sheds light to his scepticism towards achieving a better world.

According to Wittgenstein, "all knowledge is subject to the perception and interpretation of the human mind".¹ These three novels written in three consecutive decades shed light to the author's changing view of loyalty, betrayal, duty and free will as well as the identity of the evil force causing the paranoid atmosphere. However, one thing remains the same: the clash between politics and the conscience. And the only power to stand against any force, may it be communism, nationalism or capitalism intimidating humanity with paranoia, is ultimately individual determination.

¹ Cobbs, **op. cit.**, p.237.

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