

Introduction

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When I first proposed the idea for this collection, my hope was that the project would fulfill three objectives: (1) challenge espionage fiction's historical pattern of androcentrism; (2) expand coverage beyond its usual Anglo-American parameters; and (3) devote at least equal attention to post-Cold War spy narratives as to those published before 1991. The degree to which we met those goals was somewhat unexpected and highly gratifying. During the summer of 2011, a "Call for Papers" was circulated in nearly a dozen online and print venues. From the responses, and from personal contacts with a number of specialists in the field, ten excellent articles, three in-depth interviews, and reviews of six books were eventually generated.

In her lead-off essay titled "In Light of the Other: The Hero and the Adversarial Spy," Emma Grundy Haigh, without specifically discussing matters of gender, illuminates the Lacanian dynamic of "Otherness" that differentiates the accepted spy-hero from an oppositional counterpart. Her analysis neatly paves the way for feminist reconsideration of that dynamic in incisive contributions by Christine Bold ("Domestic Intelligence: Marriage and Espionage in Helen MacInnes's Fiction"), Mary Anne Schofield ("Manning Coles: The Intermodernism of Espionage Fiction"), Rosie White ("Dorothy Gilman's Mrs. Pollifax and Ian Fleming's James Bond: Soft and Hard Spy Fiction"), and Charlotte Beyer ("Spying Women: Gayle Lynds's Espionage Fiction"). These articles force us to jettison the Mata Hari stereotype so long regnant in the genre. No longer are home and hearth the delimiting boundaries of female "intelligence."

The collection's second goal, that of enlarging our awareness of contemporary spy narratives' reach, is engaged by Paul Bleton in his bibliographic essay on "The French Espionage Dossier: Trends in Francophone Spy Fiction since 2000." (He thereby also addresses the project's third objective.) Thanks to his professional contacts, we were able to include papers by Sándor Kálai on Hungarian novelist Vilmos Kondor's *The Budapest Spy* and by Bérengère Vachonfrance-Levelt on acclaimed French-Algerian author Hédi Kaddour's *Waltenberg*. The current issue of *Paradoxa* thus suggests how the "seduction of clandestinity," a sometimes occulted trope of crime fiction, is not restricted geopolitically.

The third area in which we sought to extend the frontiers of extant scholarship involved post-Cold War espionage fiction generally. In this regard the fulcrum was Brian E. Crim's article on John le Carré's *A Perfect Spy* and *The Secret Pilgrim*, which opened a pathway to Lee Horsley's wide-ranging discussion of how writers, especially after 9/11, "immerse us in the dilemmas, alliances, and enmities of a rapidly changing century." Her assessment is reinforced by free-flowing interviews with novelists Gayle Lynds and Olen Steinhauer, both of whom guide us further into their perspectives on literature of the Great Game today. My own exchange with critic LeRoy Lad Panek, whose *The Special Branch: The British Spy Novel, 1890-1980* pioneered research on the subject, attempts to identify espionage fiction's narratological uniqueness.

Nine years ago David Seed proposed that "The spy story is a close but distinct variation on the tale of detection with the difference that there is no discrete crime [...] but rather a covert action which"—and he here paraphrases John G. Cawelti and Bruce A. Rosenberg—"transgresses conventional, moral, or legal boundaries." Quoting Clive Bloom's fine introduction to *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to le Carré*, Seed then goes on to write: "The action is self-evidently political since it involves national rivalries and constantly veers toward a paranoid vision of 'violation by *outside* agencies' and 'violation of individual autonomy by *internal* agencies'" (115). His canny observation distills essential features of espionage fiction as discussed by most of the articles in this edition of *Paradoxa*. It is noteworthy, though, that none of the authors included in this collection insists upon a narrow or formulaic construct of the primary texts they examine. Given the persuasive arguments presented by these scholars, perhaps the time has come to dispense with concerns about the ways in which such novels align with already established categories, especially when commercial publicists are fond of emblazoning book covers with the word "thriller" and some academic monitors of canonicity remain leery of this "variation on the tale of detection." Good literature, as both Gayle Lynds and Olen Steinhauer intimate herein, doesn't need to be pigeonholed.

Because of its protean flexibility in exploring such foundational issues as individual autonomy when jeopardized by institutionalized forces of erasure, "spy fiction may be *the* popular genre for the present age" (Bloom 11). Under pressure from such adversity, the nominal hero—witness Homer's *The Odyssey*—goes undercover. Substantiating Bloom's 1990 prognosis is Andrew Pepper's recent article titled "Policing the Globe: State Sovereignty and the International in the Post-9/11 Crime Novel," published in *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies*,

which contends that, in an era of globalization, narratives such as John le Carré's *A Most Wanted Man* (2008) and Don Winslow's *The Power of the Dog* (2006)—both of which are discussed by Professor Horsley in this issue—have “excelled at the task of responding [...] to the security environment in the wake of the 9/11 attacks” (404). The nineteenth-century construct of the territorially circumscribed “nation-state” has all but dissolved. If in light of this geopolitical development the Cold War espionage novel underwent hybridization, wherein lies the surprise? “The soul of the spy,” maintained Jacques Barzun in an otherwise antipathetic essay of 1965, “is somehow the model of our own” (168). In that insight, if no other, lies the continuing validation for our paying close attention to this mode of interrogating who and what we have become in the present moment.

Works Cited

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