

cluded elsewhere in the book from which this essay was taken. Much the same sort of comment can be made about the notes to Julia Brigg's essay on *The Paper Men*.

In spite of its weaknesses, however, this book contains much of value to both the scholar and the teacher; it is a welcome addition to my collection of Golding criticism.

David Monaghan

SMILEY'S CIRCUS: A GUIDE TO THE SECRET WORLD OF JOHN LE CARRÉ

Don Mills, Ontario: Totem Books, 1987. Pp. 207, \$5.95

Reviewed by R.G. Dahms

David Monaghan's guide deals with John le Carré's seven "Circus" novels: *Call for the Dead* (1961), *A Murder of Quality* (1962), *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold* (1963), *The Looking-Glass War* (1965), *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (1974), *The Honourable Schoolboy* (1977), and *Smiley's People* (1980). The book is divided into two major sections. The first, entitled "The Circus" (a special department of the British Intelligence Service), contains a detailed chronology and accounts of major Circus cases and operations, as well as a delineation of the hierarchy and a description of the headquarters itself. The second major section, entitled "Who's Who," is an alphabetically ordered glossary which presents biographies of individuals appearing in the works, as well as listing and detailing places, cases, and operations, and defining terms in le Carré's extensive array of espionage jargon. The work also contains a short appendix with notes on the Circus novels, and an index to the nonalphabetical Circus chapter. In addition, there are sixteen photographs and six maps (with two inserts)—although the cover jacket states "nine" maps—which depict important places described in the various operations. There is also a certain amount of cross-referencing between the Circus chapter and the "Who's Who" section with its more than six hundred entries.

Monaghan's introduction presents the rationale for his guide and makes several trenchant points concerning le Carré's Circus series. In Monaghan's view, the air of authenticity and "believability" in le Carré's works derives from their three-dimensional characters and the author's technique of slowly elaborating upon them, their actions, and environments as the works and series progress. Indeed, in this respect, he likens le Carré's Circus novels to those of William Faulkner in his Yoknapatawpha County series and Jane Austen in her evocations of late eighteenth-century society (7). As the Circus series evolves, the major and other characters and places, as well as current and previous operations, are "fleshed out," and new characters, places, and events are added. By the time the series reaches its final stage of development and completion, the resulting creation is, according to Monaghan, "extremely diverse and complex and to analyse its component parts is to discover, not so much a blueprint

as a microcosm, that is, a miniature but three-dimensional and completely functioning world" (8).

There is a problem, however; one which Monaghan sees as stemming from the very technique that enhances the credibility of le Carré's fictional world: the slowly evolving depiction of the Circus from novel to novel. The problem arises because the reader is not supplied (in any one place or work in the series) with a concise, comprehensive history and delineation of the intricate Circus structure. Monaghan notes that le Carré himself required photographs and file cards in order to avoid errors, although this precaution did not avert some chronological and other inconsistencies. Hence, Monaghan senses that the reader "may often feel lost in the labyrinth of the Circus," but by dint of "gathering together scattered pieces of information, it is possible to grasp quite precisely how the complex organizational structure of the Circus works" (8, 9).

That task of compilation and analysis is, of course, one of the prime purposes of Monaghan's guide, as is his recreation of the "landscape" and "personality" of le Carré's fictional world; from the pervasive "atmosphere of decayed grandeur and contemporary nihilism" of his London settings to the intimate personal facets of his main characters: ". . . what they look like, what kind of personality they have, what they believe in . . . the details of their careers and personal relationships, their cover names and nicknames, their taste in clothes, food, drink and sexual partners, their hobbies, and their idiosyncracies" (10). Added to that are descriptions of other departments, agencies, and less central characters, and definitions of approximately two hundred expressions comprising le Carré's lexicon of spying.

While there is no doubt that Monaghan's guide is a fascinating and valuable aid for both the casual reader and the student of le Carré's works, it transcends mere compilation and definition. Although not a work of criticism per se, it is, to a certain extent, interpretive, particularly with regard to central or important characters and crucial Circus cases, operations, and events. In addition, there is a tendency to treat le Carré's fictional world as though it were indeed "real," as though the characters were actual living individuals and the events actual happenings. Nevertheless, Monaghan's approach does incorporate many aspects of more traditional concordances, handbooks, guides, glossaries, and critical commentaries, but, to a large degree, it also merges them and blurs the distinctions. By treating le Carré's fictional microcosm as though it were indeed "real," and by bolstering that impression with actual maps, photographs, and frequent use of narrative style, as well as through interpretive resolution of chronological and other inconsistencies, Monaghan's book not only codifies and "recreates" the world of the Circus, it also substantially enhances the realism of the original works themselves by increasing their immediacy, authenticity, and credibility. What Monaghan evolves, in fact, is an intriguing sort of literary "meta-reality," a fictional world conveyed to the reader in the form of a "guide", a literary-analytical hybrid in a category which comes very close to constituting an entirely separate genre of its own.