Le Carre’s The Spy Who Came In From The Cold: A Structuralist Reading

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Abstract
'Superbly constructed, with an atmosphere of chilly hell' – that was J. B. Priestley's view of John Le Carre's 1963 novel, The Spy Who Came In From The Cold. Now if we agree that the novel is 'superbly constructed' (as we well may), what exactly are we agreeing to? And what is the relationship between the 'construction' and the hellish 'atmosphere'? Or are 'construction' and 'atmosphere' two separate qualities in the book? The present paper attempts to explore these questions by means of certain structuralist theories and methods, especially those of A. J. Greimas. The discussion will focus on applying structuralist ideas to a reading of Le Carre’s novel.

Full Text:

Le Carré was serving in MI6, which is why he publishes his novels under a pseudonym. So readers assumed the novel was authentic, unlike the over-the-top “sex and sadism” of James Bond. In fact, MI6 had the right to vet The Spy Who Came in from the Cold before it could be published. Le Carré has claimed the only reason they approved it was because the book was so unrealistic that MI6 assumed it would not be taken seriously. The Looking Glass War was one of his least popular novels – there is realism and then there is realism. The Spy Who Came in from the Cold: Alternative Cover. I loved how this cover looked when I inverted the black and white. The barbed wire is of course reminiscent of the Cold War and the Berlin wall. The Spy Who Came in from the Cold: My Verdict. John le Carré’s novels “The Spy Who Came in From the Cold” (1963), “Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy” (1974), and “The Tailor of Panama” (1997), focus on how the main characters reflect the somber reality of working in the British more. John le Carré’s novels “The Spy Who Came in From the Cold” (1963), “Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy” (1974), and “The Tailor of Panama” (1997), focus on how the main characters reflect the somber reality of working in the British intelligence service. Through a broad post-structuralist analysis, I will identify the dichotomies – good/evil in “The Spy Who Came in Fr...