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## Submerged fault lines: Interests and complicities in the Julie Ward case

### Abstract

Julie Ann Ward visited Kenya's Maasai Mara Game Reserve in September 1988 to photograph the annual wildebeest migration from Tanzania's Serengeti National Park into the Maasai Mara. On 6th September 1988 she was reported missing. Six days later, her partly burnt remains were found in the game reserve. Julie Ward's death was a hotly contested matter with various theories about how she had died. Eventually, an inquest revealed that she had been murdered. This finding was followed by a protracted search for her killers, who, at the time of writing, are still at large. Ward's death and the search for her killers is the subject of three books: her father John Ward's *The Animals Are Innocent: The Search for Julie's Killers*; Michael Hiltzik's *A Death in Kenya: The Murder of Julie Ward*; and Jeremy Gavron's *Darkness in Eden: The Murder of Julie Ward*.

GRACE A. MUSILA

## Submerged Fault Lines: Interests and Complicities in the Julie Ward Case

### INTRODUCTION

Julie Ann Ward visited Kenya's Maasai Mara Game Reserve in September 1988 to photograph the annual wildebeest migration from Tanzania's Serengeti National Park into the Maasai Mara. On 6th September 1988 she was reported missing. Six days later, her partly burnt remains were found in the game reserve. Julie Ward's death was a hotly contested matter with various theories about how she had died. Eventually, an inquest revealed that she had been murdered. This finding was followed by a protracted search for her killers, who, at the time of writing, are still at large. Ward's death and the search for her killers is the subject of three books: her father John Ward's *The Animals Are Innocent: The Search for Julie's Killers*; Michael Hiltzik's *A Death in Kenya: The Murder of Julie Ward*; and Jeremy Gavron's *Darkness in Eden: The Murder of Julie Ward*. The one dimension of the Julie Ward death and the subsequent quest for truth that has remained under-scrutinised by the various texts on the matter is the official British involvement in her family's search for the truth and justice. The Kenyan Police's attempts to frame the death as accidental overwhelmingly focused both media and public attention on the Kenyan state actors and their attempt to conceal the truth. By implication, Britain was assumed to naturally support the quest for the truth in the matter. Britain's quiet and non-sensational involvement in the case reinforced this assumption.

In this essay, I attempt to invert this focus on the Kenyan state institutions, by examining the nature of the official British involvement in the search for the truth behind Julie Ward's death. Using John Ward's *The Animals are Innocent*, John le Carre's *The Constant Gardener*, and news articles drawn from Kenyan and British print media, the essay reflects on the configurations of the official British interventions in the case. In his investigations, as documented in *The Animals are Innocent*, Ward approached the matter with rigid assumptions that constructed British institutions and officials as honest, professional and committed to justice, in sharp contrast with Kenyan officialdom's unprofessionalism and lack of integrity. I hope to illustrate that these assumptions — which I term 'bipolar lenses' — though founded on his experiences with Kenyan and British officialdom in the course of his investigations, blinded Ward to the subterranean fault lines of competing interests in the official British involvement in the quest for his daughter's killers. By reading Ward's account of the quest for his daughter's killers alongside a

fictional account of a similar quest in le Carre's novel *The Constant Gardener*, and the subsequent revelation of British complicity in the cover-up of the truth behind Julie Ward's death, I hope to illustrate that contrary to Ward's belief, and indeed, popular wisdom about British moral integrity and commitment to justice as opposed to the failings of the Kenyan officialdom, there were underlying fault lines which suggest continuities and complicities between Kenya and Britain in the cover-up. These fault lines bring the subterranean contradictions embedded in Ward's bipolar lenses to the surface. They also question the notion of the unity of the subject, in the unstated assumption that Britain was a monolithic entity bound by the same ethical codes, moralities and uncompromising desire for justice. Against this background, the essay hopes to show that these binary assumptions — often articulated through notions of Europe's commitment to justice and human-rights in contrast to postcolonial African states' abuse of these<sup>1</sup> — work to mask the intersections between the two, marked by complicities and continuities largely mediated by the interests of capital which fracture the myth of Europe's moral authority sanctioned by a value-neutral progress through modernity.

#### THE CONSTRUCTION OF BIPOLAR LENSES IN JOHN WARD'S *THE ANIMALS ARE INNOCENT*

Ward's personal account in *The Animals are Innocent: The Search for Julie's Killers* constructs a set of bipolar lenses, which sharply polarise Kenyan and British state institutions. Ward's narrative begins with certain assumptions which he propagates throughout the book.

In his preface to the book, Ward says that many people have asked why he wrote it. In response, he explains that firstly he 'wanted the true story of Julie and her terrible murder to be recorded', because in the aftermath, the truth 'has been enveloped in lies and corruption' (Ward xix). His second reason for writing the book is the hope that 'it will act as a warning'. As he writes:

Kenya is a dangerous place. I am continually contacted by distraught and angry relatives of tourists who have been murdered, attacked, robbed or have completely disappeared... 'Why didn't someone warn us it was dangerous? And why can't we get any information from the Kenyans about what happened?'... If something goes wrong — you're on your own. The Kenyans complain, 'why pick on us? Tourists sometimes get murdered in New York or London'. This is true but the difference is that in those cities, the authorities will not try to sweep the murder under the carpet. (xix-xx)

Ward's dislike of Kenya is evident from his preface, which provides a fitting introductory frame to his polarisation of the Kenyan cover-up against what he sees as British commitment to truth and justice. At the time of writing this, Ward was convinced that the attempt to 'sweep the murder under the carpet' was a Kenyan affair in its entirety. This polarity recurs throughout the book.

While the subject of the book — the grisly murder of the author's young daughter — would provoke strong anger and resentment in anyone, Ward tells us that his dislike for Kenya develops on his very first visit to the country before he learns about her tragic death. Ward describes his first encounter of the continent thus:

Africa, Africa, Africa. I believe that if I were to be blindfolded and deposited anywhere on this earth, I'd know instantly if I were in Africa. The sounds, smells, the 'feel' of the continent that bombard the senses trigger in me a wary unease and, as always, I'd want to leave again as soon as possible. I don't like being in Africa. So much is beyond my understanding. I'm sure this sensation of foreboding is not induced entirely by my experiences. (45)

On his first visit to Kenya, Ward collapses the entire continent under a homogeneous blanket of smells, sounds and opaqueness which make him uneasy. In underlining that this 'sensation of foreboding' was not induced by his experiences, Ward appears to ascribe an inherent perilous status to the continent which, as a first-time visitor, he intuitively senses, and the subsequent discovery that his daughter has been brutally murdered merely confirms it. In this, Ward draws on the semantic grammars of preconceived ideas about the strangeness of Africa and its opaqueness to the familiar, normative 'rational' tools of knowing/understanding a place available to a non-African.

The subsequent tragedy of his daughter's death and the discovery of her mutilated, burnt remains inevitably hatch a bitter hatred and anger in Ward. Beyond this, however, it is the official attempts to pass off the death as suicide or an attack by wild animals that seals his hatred for the country (88). In the ensuing drama of alterations on the autopsy report and the Police Commissioner's reluctance to open a murder inquiry, Ward's distrust for Kenyans and Kenyan state institutions deepens further. It is no wonder that on subsequent visits to Kenya, he always looks forward to his departure, and always 'feels a sense of total relief when the [aircraft] door is closed and Kenya is shut outside' (93).

On his first visit to Kenya, when his daughter is missing, Ward contrasts the seeming Kenyan police disinterest with the typical British police's response:

I was only used to an English environment. If a young woman was missing in Hyde Park, in the centre of London for just one night, two hundred policemen would be out searching the park and every other copper in the land would be keeping his eyes open. Yet here in Nairobi, I was being told that it was a real achievement to get any police officer to even take the matter seriously. (52)

Such comparisons recur throughout the book, and increasingly Ward's distrust for Kenyans leads him to seek professional opinions from predominantly Britain and the British diplomatic corps in Nairobi in the course of his investigations.

In Kenya, Ward interacts closely with the officials at the British High Commission, including among them Jenny Jenkins and John Ferguson. The two are particularly helpful with logistics, contacts, processing paperwork and general support at various stages of the investigations. Jenkins and Ferguson are also actively involved in Ward's investigations and Ferguson often accompanies him to meetings with Kenyan state actors, including the Police Commissioner and the government pathologists. In the process, Ward develops great trust and respect for the officials at the British High Commission who provide an indispensable support base for him in Kenya, where he was a stranger, grieving his daughter's

brutal death and faced with official attempts to derail his quest for justice. It is in gratitude for this support that Ward writes approvingly of the Commission:

So many times I have read newspaper reports where Britons abroad have complained of the service, or lack of it, that they received from our Embassy or High Commission. But I could not have wished for better assistance than that which I have received from the consular staff in Nairobi. I have had nothing but good advice and solid support.  
(102)

Ward has similar sentiments about the Foreign Office:

In 1988 the Kenya desk in the Consular section at the Foreign Office was run by a young man named Nigel Wicks. He was very sincere and endlessly helpful and while he ran the Kenya desk, I was always kept fully briefed of any developments. Like Jenny Jenkins in Nairobi [British High Commission], [he] always offered help. (96)

Despite these glowing tributes to the two British institutions, there were slight hiccups in Ward's relationships with them. Two incidents stand out in this regard. For days after his daughter's remains are found the Kenyan Commissioner of Police, Phillip Kilonzo, refuses to acknowledge that they are looking at a case of murder. During this period, Kilonzo is often quoted in the media insinuating that Julie Ward's death is a case of misadventure, as opposed to murder. Suspicious of this misrepresentation of the case — coming soon after the altered autopsy report — Ward decides to hold a press conference in Nairobi and set the record straight. Before the press conference, Ward writes:

[Jenny Jenkins] informed us that while the British High Commission had considerable doubts [about the Kenyan police], the line they advocated for that morning was to support the Kenyan police... At about 10.55 a.m. John [Ferguson] rushed in. 'I've just had a phone conversation with Kilonzo, who now says that the whole matter of the press conference is unfortunate. He insists that no mention be made of the possibility of murder, foul play or a murder inquiry. Also, he doesn't want any details of the post-mortem report released to the press... I must ask you to abide by his request for this morning. (111)

It is puzzling that the High Commission asks Ward to abide by the Kenyan police's instructions, with full knowledge that the Kenyan police were hardly taking the case seriously, and that they seemed bent on presenting Julie Ward's death as an accident. However, Ward explains this away by observing that 'whilst the Consular section were supportive, there were other sections more concerned with avoiding a diplomatic incident — people whose job it was to try to prevent anyone from "rocking the boat"' (111). Persuasive as this rationalisation is, Ward's failing here is in not subjecting these anxieties about 'rocking the boat' to close scrutiny.

In the second instance, when the Kenyan police finally decide to set up an inquest into Julie Ward's death — a seemingly unnecessary step given the overwhelming evidence of murder — a Foreign Office representative, David Muat phones Ward and delivers this news, further indicating that the family has two options:

The matter could be left to the Kenyan police to give evidence, entirely at their discretion. The other alternative was for my family to be legally represented, produce the evidence we had gathered and support that evidence with witnesses. The recommendation of the Foreign Office was that the former course be adopted and the submission of evidence should be left to the Kenyan police... I couldn't believe my ears! Knowing the record of the Kenya police over the last seven months, here was Muat telling me that the official Foreign Office recommendation was we should leave it all to the police. (229)

As Ward rightly points out, this is a bizarre recommendation, in light of the Foreign Office's full knowledge of the Kenyan police's evident commitment to a verdict of misadventure and the post-mortem report, which appeared to have been altered to validate this position. In this instance, Ward rejects the Foreign Office's recommendation and to ensure that there is no confusion about his decision, he writes a letter to the Foreign Office and confirms that his family would be legally represented. Despite this curious incident, Ward immediately goes to the Foreign Office's defence once again:

All this must give the impression that my relations with the Foreign Office were at a low ebb. Generally this was not the case. While there was an attempt to influence events, to limit diplomatic damage, once such schemes were firmly rejected... the majority at the FO extended such solid unwavering support, which was gratefully accepted. It would, indeed, have been a difficult battle in Nairobi, without the help of the British High Commission — and their instructions come from London. (230)

For a long time, Ward remains convinced that his quest for his daughter's killers has the blessings of the British High Commission and the Foreign Office. Whenever the two appear to err towards the Kenyan police's preferred approaches to the matter, Ward excuses it as typical but harmless diplomatic caution.

Although increasingly frustrated by the Kenya Police's seeming disinterest in the case, Ward nonetheless continues to nurse the belief that the British High Commission is on his side on the matter. He attempts to persuade the then British High Commissioner to Kenya to exert diplomatic pressure on whoever is behind the attempted cover-up:

I suggested to Sir John [Johnson, Ambassador], that it could save a great deal of embarrassment all round if someone high up in Kenya's government could tell [Police Commissioner] Kilonzo to abandon the cover-up and arrest and charge the killers. I believed that as Kenya's chief of police and chief government pathologist were involved, the required instruction would have to come from someone much higher up... I considered it would need the president to get involved. I therefore asked Sir John if he would assist in this area. As British High Commissioner, he obviously had many contacts at high level in the Kenyan government. However, Sir John considered my 'private approach' was better as any official contact might cause the Kenyans to 'put up the shutters'. (202)

Ward expects that official British pressure would force the Kenyans to stop the cover up. In this, Ward assumes that Britain as the mother country, retained

significant control over Kenya. Most importantly, he is convinced about British commitment to justice.

It is against this background that Ward feels Police Commissioner Kilonzo is embarrassed when confronted about the attempted cover-up in the presence of John Ferguson, a diplomat. As he writes:

Kilonzo was clearly furious at the cover-up being so obviously exposed. I knew though, that the main cause of his embarrassment was not Frank [Ribeiro, his friend] or me, but John Ferguson. Because, with John present, the British Government ‘knew’. (206)

Ignoring the patronising undertones Ward’s portrayal of Kilonzo as a child who has been ‘caught out’ as it were, by a representative of Her Majesty’s government, the cover-up is represented as an entirely Kenyan affair and Britain is presumed to be as scandalized as he is. This view is built on his conviction that the British diplomatic corps officially feels as strongly as he does about his daughter’s death, the attempted cover-up and his quest for truth and justice. While indeed certain individuals — including Johnson, Wicks, Ferguson and Jenkins — may share his anger and passionate quest for justice, Ward’s assumption that this is the official line may be too trusting. So too, it would appear, is his belief that the Kenyans are on their own in the cover-up and that they may be pressured into promoting the course of justice by the British.

On the whole, Ward’s narrative illustrates his construction of a binary lens through which he reads Kenyan and British state institutions. Ward’s resentment and distrust of Kenya and Kenyan official institutions is balanced against his faith in the British officials and institutions. For instance, he dismisses the investigating officer in charge of the case, Inspector Wanjau, while retaining great respect for the two Scotland Yard detectives sent to Kenya to investigate the murder.

In this polarised attitude, Ward once again illustrates his positioning in a broader architecture of ideas, which associates Europe with modernity, efficient state institutions and strong senses of integrity, ethics and justice. These ideas echo what Anne McClintock terms the ‘metaphysical Manicheism of the imperial enlightenment’ (15). It is from this national moral high ground for instance, that in a confrontation with Dr. Kaviti for altering the post-mortem report, Ward angrily informs him: ‘In England you would be struck off the medical register for doing what you have done. Don’t you know it is a serious offence to falsify an official document?’ (Ward 119). This outburst captures Ward’s conviction about the ethical and moral integrity of British state institutions.

#### **FICTIVE IMAGINARIES: UNMASKING BRITISH INTERESTS IN THE CONSTANT GARDENER**

In some ways, John le Carre’s novel, *The Constant Gardener*, published a decade after Ward’s book, offers interesting insights into other possibilities which Ward may have overlooked in his interactions with the Kenyan and British official institutions, and which he was later to become aware of. Indeed, when read side-by-side with Ward’s narrative, the novel qualifies three important issues in Ward’s



narrative: the essentialised polarity between Kenya and Britain; British diplomatic concerns about the case as purely routine, innocent caution; and broadly, the myth of British moral authority.

Le Carre's *The Constant Gardener* is a fictional narrative set in the 1990s during the Moi regime, which is marked by what a character in the novel describes as 'terminal government corruption, a breakdown in public infrastructure and police brutality' (52). The novel, largely set in Kenya, tells the story of the murder of a young diplomat's wife, Tessa Quayle. After the murder and disposal of her body in a deserted spot by the shores of Lake Turkana in Northern Kenya, the British High Commission in Nairobi attempts to frame her close African friend Dr. Arnold Bluhm for the murder. However her husband, Justin Quayle, launches a private investigation, and in the process, retraces his wife's footsteps, discovering that she may have been killed because she had put together a report about the fatal use of poor Kenyan TB patients for trials of a new TB drug, Dypraxa, by a British multi-national corporation, the House of Three Bees. Tessa attempts to pressure the British High Commission and the Foreign Office into stopping the company from continuing these drug trials and doctoring inconvenient findings in the interests of fast-tracking the trials in order to introduce the drug to the market before their competitors develop similar drugs. All along, the novel reveals, the British government is complicit in the doctored drug trials, Tessa's murder and subsequently, Justin's murder.

Although this is a fictional narrative, within its fictional truths are a range of important insights which, when read beside the Julie Ward narrative, shed important light on the above outlined perception of the British official institutions' support for the Ward family's quest for the truth. In the novel, Tessa Quayle, the wife of diplomat Justin Quayle, prepares a detailed report in which she outlines details of the human rights abuses, corruption and the use of violence by the Moi government, and submits this to Sandy Woodrow, Head of Chancery at the British High Commission in Nairobi. When she asks why the High Commission does nothing about the report, Woodrow retorts:

Because we are diplomats and not policemen, Tessa. The Moi government is terminally corrupt, you tell me. I never doubted it... Ministers are diverting lorry-loads of food aid and medical supplies earmarked for starving refugees. Of course they are... The police routinely mishandle anybody unwise enough to bring these matters to public attention. Also true. You have studied their methods. They use water torture, you say. They soak people, then beat them, which reduces visible marks. You are right. They do... The High Commission shares your disgust, but we still do not protest. Why not? Because we are here, mercifully, to represent our country, not theirs. We have thirty-five thousand indigenous Britons in Kenya whose precarious livelihood depends on President Moi's whim. (52)

Woodrow's response here provides an interesting qualifier to both the notion of British power over Kenya and the myth of its commitment to human rights protection. For Woodrow, Britain's position in Kenya is a delicate one in which

they have to be careful not to upset the host nation as this would put the welfare of the expatriate community at risk.

This fictional portrait of Britain's compromising position on Kenya is confirmed by its involvement in Kenya's quest for democracy during the Moi regime. In an essay on the role of foreign donors in Kenya's democratic transition, Stephen Brown observes that despite the perception that donors were instrumental in facilitating the country's transition to democracy<sup>2</sup> by encouraging opposition parties and enforcing donor conditionality, they played a 'second, less publicized role' (2001 725). After opposition parties were legalised, donors consistently:

Discouraged any measures that could have led to more comprehensive democratization [by] knowingly endorsing unfair elections (including suppressing evidence of their illegitimacy) and subverting domestic efforts to secure far-reaching reforms. In the face of anti-regime popular mobilization, donors' primary concerns appeared to be the avoidance of any path that could lead to a breakdown of the political and economic order, even if this meant legitimizing and prolonging the regime's authoritarian rule.

(Brown 2001 726)<sup>3</sup>

Brown considers Kenya's strategic and economic importance to Western countries as the key reason behind their reluctance to compromise their relationship with the Moi government. As he points out, the United Kingdom for instance 'values close ties with Kenya rooted in colonial history and strong financial and commercial relations' (2003 82). Further 'donors use their generally friendly relationship with Kenya to further other foreign policy goals in the region' (2003 83). Le Carre's fictional character, Sandy Woodrow, sums up this position in his response to Tessa's questioning of the British High Commission's disinterest in the Kenyan Government's corruption and human rights abuses: 'The High Commission shares your disgust, but we still do not protest. Why not? Because we are here, mercifully, to represent *our* country, not *theirs*' (le Carre 53 [emphasis in original]). Woodrow's response to a certain degree echoes Ward's justifications about the delicate position that the British diplomats in Kenya found themselves in. Ward writes: 'I am aware of an element in the Foreign Office, whose only function is to ensure the status quo is maintained between the UK and other countries, including Kenya. Probably there are very sound political or commercial reasons for their activities' (211–12).

While both Woodrow and Ward's arguments here would justify an abstemious attitude towards local politics in the spirit of non-interference, they do not explain active involvement in such activities. In reality, the notion of quiet diplomacy would seem to be a useful discursive mask behind which Britain hides its interests and the contradictions underpinning the macro-discourses it progresses in the Third World, (chiefly democracy and human rights). In reality, Britain's economic and political interests in these countries actually undermine and cast doubts on its commitment to these progressive discourses.

In *The Constant Gardener*, Tessa is murdered to end her interference with the activities of a huge multinational company, House of Three Bees, owned by a Nairobi-based British businessman, Sir Kenny Curtiss.

‘Three Bees. Quite an amazing outfit. Finger in every African pie but British to the core. Hotels, travel agencies, newspapers, security companies, banks, extractors of gold, coal and copper, importers of cars, boats. Plus a fine range of drugs. [...]. And they’re hugger-mugger with Moi’s Boys too’. (le Carre 114)

Three Bees’ economic interests not only serve the interests of the British government, but also, their investments are sustained by a patronage relationship with the Kenyan government, which compromises Britain’s ability to question the Kenyan government’s misdeeds. Further, for Britain Three Bees’ new merger with a large Swedish pharmaceutical company, Karel-Vita-Hudson (KVH), not only means bigger profits for Three Bees, but also, KVH has offered to build a pharmaceutical factory in an economically depressed region in Britain.

The novel’s portrayal of a deeply intermeshed relationship between commercial interests, British diplomatic Foreign Service and the British Secret Intelligence Service provides a fascinating multi-dimensional view, to qualify Ward’s one dimensional portrait of British moral integrity and commitment to justice. The novel reveals a symbiotic relationship between the intelligence unit and business, in this case through Sir Curtiss and the Nairobi office of the Secret Service, housed in the High Commission. This relationship is deeply layered and complicit, as the Secret Service not only uses Curtiss to help do their dirty work, including supplying arms to war-torn Sierra Leone in exchange for political protection (le Carre 414) which in turn assures his business’ success, and feeds British economic growth; but he also gives cash handouts to British political parties and classified intelligence to the Secret Service. As he reminds Tim Donohue of the Secret Service’s Nairobi office:

‘I’m *Sir* fucking *Kenneth* Curtiss! I have subscribed — last year alone — half a fucking *million* quid to party funds. I have provided *you* — British fucking Intelligence — with nuggets of pure gold. I have performed *voluntarily*, certain services for you of a very, very tricky sort’. (le Carre 409 [emphasis in original])

Although the novel insists on its fictiveness, the narrative nonetheless gives interesting insights into the symbiotic relationships between British politics, commercial interests and its foreign missions. What is important here is not so much whether this reflects the reality or not, but the possibility — even in fictional imaginaries — of the fault lines that fissure Britain’s mythical mantle of virtue and uncompromising moral integrity.

These fictional portraits shed interesting light on the Ward quest for truth and the British officialdom’s involvement in the process. An interesting coincidence is the novel’s use of the notion of ensuring that nobody ‘rocks the boat’, which Ward uses in his book. Ward’s comment about ‘people whose job it was to try to prevent anyone from “rocking the boat”’ (Ward 111), gains suggestive meanings when

read beside similar sentiments expressed in le Carre's novel by two Scotland Yard detectives — Rob and Lesley — who are sent out to Kenya to help investigate Tessa Quayle's murder. As they tell Justin Quayle in confidence, soon after being pulled off the case for getting too close to the truth:

The glorious House of Three Bees is never to be mentioned again and that's an order. Not their products, their operations or their staff. Nothing's allowed to rock the boat. Lots of boats.... Curtiss is untouchable. He's halfway to brokering a bumper British arms deal with the Somalis. The embargo's a nuisance but he's found ways of getting around it. He's a front-runner in the race to provide a state-of-the-art East African telecom system using British high-tech. (le Carre 217)

Although Ward seems to take the notion of not 'rocking the boat' to be an innocent preservation of diplomatic relations between the two countries, le Carre's novel suggests that the concerns may be less innocent than Ward takes them to be.

The novel presents the Foreign Office, the British High Commission and Scotland Yard as all caught up in these complicities and power games, even though a few individual members remain upright, and act with integrity. A case in point here is the British High Commissioner, Sir Porter Coleridge. Soon after Tessa Quayle's death, the High Commissioner receives instructions from the Foreign Office in London to cover it up:

'The shit [Foreign Office Director of Affairs for Africa] Pellegrin says, shove the whole thing under the carpet' Porter Coleridge announced, slamming down the telephone. 'Shove it far and fast. Biggest bloody carpet we can find... Off the record and only if asked, we respected her crusades but considered them under-informed and screwball'. A pause while he wrestled with his self-disgust. 'And we are to put it out that she was crazy... The [Foreign] Office wants long-suffering. She was our cross but we bore her bravely. Can you do long-suffering? It makes me absolutely fucking *sick*'.

(le Carre 70–71 [emphasis in original])

Here, the Foreign Office orders the British High Commissioner to completely cover-up Tessa Quayle's murder. Coleridge's failure to toe the official line is punished by a sudden removal from his post in Nairobi, when he is considered a threat to the web of political lies intended to discredit both Tessa and her cutting report on British complicity. The official story put out to the staff at the High Commission is that on the spur of the moment the High Commissioner has decided to take some home leave and find his disabled daughter Rosie a special school in Britain (le Carre 301).

A similar scenario plays out in the Scotland Yard where, soon after Tessa's death, two young detectives, Rob and Lesley, are sent to Kenya to investigate. The two piece together evidence of British involvement in Tessa's death and submit a detailed report to the Scotland Yard, with recommendations about the involvement of key figures. In response, their Scotland Yard boss rejects their report, pulls them off the case and appoints two new detectives, under strict instructions on the bounds of their investigations. As they inform Justin — now their ally:

‘[We] are off the case. Gridley has sent two new officers to Nairobi to help and advise the local police in the search for [Tessa’s close friend Arnold] Bluhm. No looking under stones, no deviations. Period... And our replacements aren’t allowed to talk to us in case they catch our disease’. (le Carre 216)

Rob and Lesley are angered by the realisation that there is a high-level cover-up in the case, and that the very institutions they have worked for with loyalty and a strong sense of integrity, are morally bankrupt, driven by pure greed, endorsed by state apparatuses, including the High Commission, the Foreign Office, the Secret Intelligence Service, the national political parties and the Scotland Yard, all of which present a front of commitment to justice and integrity. Rob and Lesley find themselves unmasking the depths of lies and complicities, which Tessa had earlier unmasked, when she observed: ‘The mother of democracies is once more revealed as a lying hypocrite, preaching liberty and human rights for all, except where she hopes to make a quick buck’ (le Carre 53).

Tessa’s observation here — and indeed the entire novel’s portrayal of the layered interests that underpin the Kenya-Britain relationship — suggests interesting insights for the Ward case. Even as a fictional text, the novel powerfully dismantles John Ward’s assumptions, all of which are anchored on the dichotomy of an inherent British commitment to justice, truth and moral integrity as contrasted with Kenya’s lack of these values. Although the novel confirms Ward’s experiences in so far as the existence of some upright wo/men of integrity like Nigel Wicks, John Ferguson and Jenny Jenkins are concerned, these people’s commitment to justice, the novel suggests, remains constrained by the broader institutional structures under which they work, and which dictate the limits of their interventions, as illustrated by le Carre’s fictional Justin Quayle, Rob, Lesley and Porter Coleridge, all of whose efforts to counter the system are clipped.

But perhaps the most interesting oversight in Ward’s assumptions which the novel eloquently articulates, is the power of capital and its interests. In the novel, it is capital that mediates the subterranean fault lines in the Kenya–Britain relationship. The novel suggests that faced with the interests of capital, the moral integrity and commitment to justice which Ward associates with British institutions melts down. Consequently, the artificial moral distinction between the colonies and the mother-country fizzles out as the two work in partnership towards capital accumulation, and the mother country finds itself deploying the very strategies it publicly condemns in the post-colonial African state through its discursive mask of the promotion of justice and democracy.

#### **BEHIND THE SCENES: THE FOREIGN OFFICE, THE SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE AND THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION IN KENYA**

Although the author underlines the fictiveness of the entire narrative, le Carre’s *The Constant Gardener* nonetheless displays two striking allusions to real events: pharmaceutical scandals in Africa<sup>4</sup> and the death of Julie Ward in Kenya. Though fictional, and making no overt reference to Julie Ward or her death, the narrative

in *The Constant Gardener* is grafted into a familiar Kenyan topography, with the Julie Ward case as the closest referent. Indeed, in the opening pages, the novel alludes to ‘the sensational case of a young English woman who had been hacked to pieces in the African bush ten years ago’ (le Carre 11) — an allusion that can be read as a fictional nod to the Julie Ward case. The narrative in *The Constant Gardener*, gains instructive relevance when read beside the subsequent revelations about the alleged British involvement in the cover up of the Julie Ward death.

Looking at the ever-helpful staff at the British High Commission in Nairobi, one would argue, as Ward was wont to, that he had official British support in his search for answers in the mystery of his daughter’s death. To a certain degree though, Ward’s trust grew into an unquestioning faith and even defence of the British High Commission’s codes of diplomacy, in ways that may have blinded him to certain nuances of competing British interests in the matter. One particular incident which Ward narrates in his book stands out in this regard. Two weeks after his daughter’s remains are found Ward goes to the British High Commission in Nairobi, accompanied by his friend and business partner Frank Ribeiro:

At the High Commission we told John Ferguson and Jenny Jenkins about the chance meeting with Shaker and as always, John made meticulous notes for the consular records. At one point, I was asked to go to another room, leaving Frank [Ribeiro] behind with Jenny. On the way, a request was made to which I agreed. I was to meet a man who had very good contacts at the highest level with the Kenyan police. I was to meet him on the understanding that his name was never disclosed for fear of jeopardizing his position... He told us that the latest suggestion being put about by the Kenyan police was that Julie had been struck by lightning.

‘They can’t be serious. Surely they don’t think I’m going to buy that, do they?’

‘A lightning strike can cause an injury with the appearance of a cut,’ he said. ‘In my career, I’ve seen injuries like that and, of course, it would explain the burning.’

His attempt to justify this ludicrous theory immediately rang warning bells with me. He affected to be there to help us but I formed the impression that his real assignment was to deliver a message. He seemed to be trying to sound me out, to see if I’d accept any different theory other than murder. I wondered who this man really worked for... I satisfied myself that the Kenyans paid his salary. Whether anyone else did too, I never bothered to find out. (Ward 133)

This curious incident should have merited closer scrutiny. But Ward completely brushes it aside.

The relevance of this incident dawns on Ward over a decade later at the second inquest into his daughter’s death, held at Ipswich, England, in April 2004. During the inquest, an agent attached to the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) testifies that he had met and discussed the Julie Ward death with David Rowe, a former Kenyan Assistant Police Commissioner who was his contact and a covert surveillance expert days after the discovery of Julie Ward’s remains. Both Rowe and the SIS agent, [code-named Mr. A] had earlier denied having met and discussed the Julie Ward case, and only admit this after the Independent Police

Complaints Commission discovers a record of Mr. A's meeting with David Rowe at the Secret Intelligence Services offices in London. In the record, Mr. A had logged that Rowe briefed him about the Julie Ward case. Later Mr. A admits that he paid the Commissioner of Police, Phillip Kilonzo, a courtesy call soon after Julie Ward's death. Further, he admits that he was:

Asked by the High Commission to bring in Mr. Rowe, whom he knew well socially, and who was partly paid by the British government. He [Rowe] provided information about the Kenyan Police force... Four days after their meeting, Mr. Rowe tried to persuade Ward that his daughter was struck by lightning. (Barkham 2004)

These two incidents represent what I term the 'invisible' face of the official British interventions in the case. These were the behind-the-scenes activities of officials affiliated with the High Commission. A few issues stand out for me in this series of events: firstly, that the SIS agent in question holds a meeting with the Kenyan Commissioner of Police, Phillip Kilonzo, a few days after the Julie Ward's remains are found. Secondly, that soon after, SIS tasks Rowe with securing John Ward's buy-in to the theory of lightening, which closely approximates the Kenyan police's theories of accidental death. Third, and most importantly, this meeting is facilitated by the British High Commission, takes place in its offices, and comes just before a meeting with the ambassador John Johnson and immediately after a meeting with John Ferguson and Jenny Jenkins.

In hindsight, I begin to see why the British High Commission appeared to be pushing the Kenyan police's preferences on John Ward. Most importantly, I understand why Britain completely abstained from exerting pressure on the Kenyans in the Ward matter, preferring to remain officially non-committal when other governments were outspoken about it. From the above incidents, contrary to Ward's belief that the cover up was an exclusively Kenyan affair, the British Secret Intelligence Service would seem to have been complicit in the Kenyan police's preferred 'truths' in the case as suggested by Mr. A's involvement in the matter.

These two incidents provide interesting perspectives, especially when read beside the fictional portrait of the Foreign Office and the British High Commission in *The Constant Gardener*. The novel becomes an interesting reference point also, when read from the perspective of the conventions of documentary realism. Sauerberg defines documentary realism as 'a narrative mode which, while adhering in principle to the time-honoured narrative conventions of realistic narrative, draws on verifiable reality to various extents, but invariably in such a way as to call attention explicitly or implicitly to the difference between the fictional and the factual' (Sauerberg 6). According to her, documentary realism includes isolated reference to a factual phenomenon which works through the double-reference technique. This double-reference typically manifests itself 'either as integration of more or less obviously factual material in the form of quotations or references into the narrative's otherwise quite fictitious universe, or as the adaptation of a wholly factual series of events to a traditionally fictional narrative

pattern, and sometimes as a combination of both' (Sauerberg 7). Arguably, *The Constant Gardener* deploys the double-reference technique, not only in its allusion to real places, institutions and individuals in Kenya, but also in the ways in which the narrative is grafted onto a familiar Kenyan topography with such identifiable features as police brutality, corruption in the Moi regime and broadly, a recognisable geo-political topography. Indeed the apparent complicity of the British Secret Intelligence Service in the Julie Ward cover up, the SIS agent Mr. A's secret rendezvous with the Commissioner of Police Phillip Kilonzo, and the attempts to persuade John Ward that his daughter was struck by lightning would seem to be a real-life precursor to the fictional narrative of Tessa Quayle's murder and the British High Commission in le Carre's novel. In the novel too, the High Commission attempts to persuade Justin Quayle that his wife was having an affair with the black doctor, Arnold Bluhm, and that he went berserk and killed her.

The possible involvement of influential people in Kenyan politics in Julie Ward's death was later to figure as a reason behind the British High Commission's reluctance to be outspoken about the case. At the second inquest into Julie Ward's death held in Suffolk, Jenny Jenkins acknowledged that rumours regarding the possible involvement of one of President Moi's sons in the matter meant that the British High Commission in Nairobi had to handle the matter carefully, in the interests of the diplomatic relations between Kenya and Britain. Years later, John Ward was to speculate that perhaps Britain chose not to pressure the Kenyan government out of fear of the 'volatile' president Moi:

'President Moi was a volatile man who could kick the British out of Kenya just by flicking his fingers and the boys who look at the big board have to take that into consideration' he said. They probably thought 'We cannot bring Julie back, so there is nothing to be gained by being kicked out of Kenya'. (McVeigh online)

The parallels between this statement and the fictional Woodrow's claim 'we have thirty-five thousand indigenous Britons in Kenya whose precarious livelihood depends on President Moi's whim' (le Carre 52) are striking.

Certain insights emerge from a reading of these 'behind the scenes' actions alongside le Carre's novel. From these three sets of texts, we realise that Kenya had no monopoly over corruption and the derailment of the course of justice in the Julie Ward case. While it may be the case that British institutions and professionals had access to better facilities, which Ward opted to mobilise in his quest for the truth, this was evidently no insurance against manipulation of truth. The irony here lies in Ward's claim that while tourists get attacked, robbed or murdered in Europe too, 'the difference is that in those cities, the authorities will not try to sweep the murder under the carpet' (Ward xix). Ward's belief in British official commitment to truth and justice as contrasted with the Kenyan cover-up disintegrates in light of the British official complicity in the cover-up.

Read against the earlier mentioned implicit polarisation of Kenya and Britain, these contradictions alert us to the submerged fault lines which often lie beneath



the surface of accepted Manichean tenets of popular wisdom. In this sense, the concept of fault lines, drawn from geology, provides a useful metaphor for conceptualising the contradictions and competing interests that lay beneath the visible face of British support for Ward's quest for justice. Faulting is a particularly apt metaphor for understanding the textured nature of hegemonic enterprises by penetrating the outer crust of a unified position, to catch glimpses of the cracks that lie beneath the seemingly solid surface.

In geology, a fault refers to a crack in the earth's crust. Fault formation is the result of fracturing of solid rocks due to pressure and the movement of rock planes in different directions. Although the earth surface often appears to be continuous, the earth's crust beneath is made up of layers of different rock compositions, which are constantly under pressure. These rock plates often push and pull sometimes towards each other or in different directions, resulting in cracks or faults. For the most part though, these faults do not rupture the earth surface. However, under extreme pressure, or significant movement of the rocks within the earth's crust, there may be substantial movement which results in visible shifts on the earth surface leading to sinking or protrusion of sections of the earth surface.

I am alert to the complexities of transposing theories and conceptual tools across disciplines — especially ones as disparate as geology and social sciences. This is especially problematic when, as in this case, one transposes mechanical dynamics into the more abstract world of discourse. However, I find these geological ideas on faulting processes to be very useful as a metaphoric handle on ways of understanding internal contradictions inherent in structures and discourses because these geological processes in many ways mirror the tensions and contradictions that underpin seemingly homogeneous discourses. Thus, in the Julie Ward case, discourses such as the Kenya–Britain moral polarity; British commitment to justice and human rights; British diplomatic caution in dealing with the 'volatile' President Moi; Kenyans' cover-up to protect the tourism industry; all worked to mask the underlying fault lines of British involvement in frustrating the Ward family's quest for truth and justice. By extension, this unmask the popular discourse of Western/centre domination of the periphery.

These fault lines, if surfaced, would crumble Britain's discursive mask and in this case unmask the fact that its commitment to human rights and justice is contingent on its other interests in a given context. Despite the self-evident injustice and brutality of Ward's death and the implicit admission of a high-level cover-up by the state, Britain appeared to prioritise its other interests in the country; in much the same way as Brown rightly points out, the UK dissuaded radical reforms in Kenya's pursuit of democracy to preserve other polit-economic interests in the region which Kenya was strategically well-placed to serve. Put differently, in the Julie Ward case, unstated interests seemingly made it inconvenient for Britain to 'walk the talk' of human rights and justice.

The apparent British complicity in the cover-up suggests a covert symbiotic relationship with Kenya which collapses the popular wisdom articulated by Ward's bipolar lens. It further raises interesting thoughts about the notion of complicity, especially in contexts of sharp, hierarchical polarisations such as the Kenya–Britain relationship. Here, one is interested in the shapes of relationships that unfold in what Mary Louise Pratt has termed contact zones. Although she uses the phrase specifically in reference to those zones of interaction between black and white people in colonial setups, where 'black and white interests collided in a thousand different ways' (Pratt 7), I see the term as equally useful in describing those sites of convergence between overlapping spheres of control, in contexts marked by multiple epicentres of power, that defy linear hierarchies especially when they operate in concurrent orbits. The under-explored issue here becomes the shapes of relationships that ensue in contact zones where overlapping spheres of influence dispense with simple hierarchies.

Feminists often emphasise the 'simultaneity of oppression' of black and African women, where they are confronted with race, class, and gender subordination at the same time.<sup>5</sup> Implicit in this is what I term the simultaneity of domination, which can be seen to unfold at the juncture of these sets of identities or discursive structures where, to use the case of African women, they find themselves confronted by three concurrent sets of dominant discourses articulated through race, gender and class. The idea of simultaneity of domination was at play in Julie Ward's death in Kenya which presented a complex contact zone between Britain and Kenya, with a range of overlapping spheres of control or epicentres of power that created interesting configurations of power relations. Geographically, Julie Ward died in the Maasai Mara Game Reserve, itself a space marked by several power centres, including the Narok Country Council and the surrounding Maasai community; the local and international investors in the tourism industry; and nationally, the Kenyan state institutions, including the police and the judiciary. At the same time, as a British citizen, Julie Ward's death further drew the interest of the British High Commission and by extension, Britain, both of which found themselves in a complex position, caught between the Ward family's anger and demand for justice, the Kenyan state actors' keenness to pass off the death as a natural accident and the pursuit of Britain's multiple interests in Kenya and the East African region which included diplomatic, economic and socio-political interests. In essence, Julie Ward's death was situated in this complex cartography of interlinked nodes of power centres with multiple and conflicting interests. These layers of interests in the case alert us to the concentric nature of power, and the co-existence of sometimes coinciding circles of influence, which re-configure hierarchical patterns of power relations between the dominant group and the subordinate group. These concentric circles of control and interests gesture towards the highly nuanced textures of complicity that often lie beneath

superficial constructions of polar binaries such as the centre — periphery moral scheme that Ward constructs in his book.

### CONCLUSION

In her study, *Imperial Leather: Race Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, Anne McClintock writes: ‘I remain unconvinced that the sanctioned binaries — colonizer-colonized, self-other, dominance-resistance, metropolis-colony, colonial-postcolonial — are adequate to the task of accounting for, let alone strategically opposing the tenacious legacies of imperialism’ (15). McClintock’s observation is instructive in making sense of the complicities that fractured the British–Kenyan interactions in the quest for the truth behind Julie Ward’s murder. My discussion reveals that beneath hegemonic structures and forces which often present an image of coherence often lurk submerged fault lines which contradict accepted wisdom. The British–Kenyan interactions in the Julie Ward matter highlight two key concerns. Firstly, that hegemonic groups’ pursuit of the discourses they endorse is often constantly in flux, and contingent on a range of other interests, which determine the earnestness with which such discourses will be pursued.

From another perspective, Ward and le Carre’s narratives are instructive on the workings of narrative in relation to dominant discourses, and the ways in which the narrative space allows for the possibility of either the reproduction of dominant discourses, as in the case of Ward’s unquestioning replication of the bipolar lenses, or the destabilisation of such ideas as suggested by le Carre’s narrative. Yet this is never a clear-cut process as narratives often challenge certain hegemonic discourses while simultaneously constructing others.

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Makau Mutua’s (2001) notion of the savage-victim-saviour metaphor for a discussion of these dichotomies in international human rights discourse, which occupied a dominant position in Kenyan public discourse during the repressive Moi regime of the late 1980s – 1990s.
- <sup>2</sup> This idea, though true, often overshadows the contribution of local actors in Kenya’s democratic transition, by over-emphasising donor-pressure, which in any case, as our discussion here reveals, was both interested and qualified.
- <sup>3</sup> Brown further discusses a more specific case of the donor representatives’ caginess in the face of gross human rights abuses in his essay ‘Quiet Diplomacy and Recurring “Ethnic Clashes” in Kenya’. The international community was content to support the UNDP’s intervention in the 1992 ‘ethnic clashes’ in Kenya, thus avoiding direct involvement while simultaneously turning a blind eye to overwhelming evidence that they were instigated by high ranking officials in the Moi government. The state security officers’ refused to intervene and state security officers disarmed victims who attempted to defend themselves (78–79). For Brown, this reticence was a strategic decision, since donors and diplomatic missions in Kenya were reluctant to antagonise the government because this might have jeopardised their programmes as their activities predominantly required them to work with the government (78–79).

- <sup>4</sup> The film approximates pharmaceutical scandals in Africa, more recently in Nigeria and Uganda.
- <sup>5</sup> See for instance Nnaemeka (1997); Nnaemeka (1998) and Ogundipe-Leslie (1994).

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