> I'm afraid, that the Cold War produced in us a kind of vicarious colonialism. On the one hand we abandoned practically every article of our national identity to American foreign policy. On the other we bought ourselves a stay of execution for our vision of our colonial selves. Worse still, we encouraged the Americans to behave in the same way
>
> (*The Secret Pilgrim* 206).

This chapter aims to undertake a detailed exploration of major themes and techniques in the post-Cold War novels of John le Carré in the light of ideology and resistance in order to see if writing can be and is indeed a mode of resistance. To this end clusters of his post-Cold War Novels will be examined for instances of resistance, opposition or subversion of ideology, specifically a) nationalism, b) imperialism, c) capitalism/globalization, and d) genre. The chapter uses the novels of le Carré as the data while analyzing the ideology of the political world. Nevertheless, clear instances of the aesthetic and the political worlds, as and when they overlap in major historical events of the post-Cold War setting, have not been ignored.

4.01 The Ideological Shift and the Ideal of Decency

The theme of decency is a liminal presence even in John le Carré's Cold War novels. This attested by Abraham Rothberg's comment that "le Carré cannot surrender the worth of the ordinary 'decent' individual…nor can he relinquish the inviolability of human relations to the Leviathan of the state or its purposes, be they capitalist or communist" (Rothberg 63). Given this persistent focus on the individual rather than the state, it becomes necessary to reexamine the validity of Rothberg's suggestion that le Carré favours a gentle, pragmatic form of international socialism (63). Rather, it would seem more appropriate to view le Carré's personal political beliefs as reflecting a form of liberal humanitarianism. This humanitarianism, then forms the basis for le Carré's preoccupation with 'decency,' which begins to receive greater emphasis and consequently acquire increasing significance in the post-Cold War novels.

The Russia House (1989), has been considered the first of le Carré's post-Cold War novels (Cobbs 184). Insofar as the Cold War novels have been seen as depicting honourable individuals who pursue personal ideals in opposition to institutional obligations, and consequently suffer (Panek 241; also Beene N. p.), *The Russia House*

appears to mark a thematic and ideological shift for le Carré. The fact that this is the first le Carré novel where the agent in the field manages not only to survive, but to live in hope, seems significant. Bartholomew 'Barley' Scott Blair, the British agent in this case, is presented as an English book publisher compelled to work for British and American intelligence. At the end of the novel, he appears to hoodwink his employers and return to his 'normal' life, albeit in exile, after striking a deal with the Russians. Despite alternate readings which insist on Barley's sentimentality and the dubious nature of his eventual happiness (Cobbs 199), le Carré's emphasis at the close of the novel seems rather to be on Barley's righteous contentment. This is evident in the narrator Harry Palfrey's observations:

> I could buy nothing else from him, he signed nothing, he accepted nothing, he wanted nothing, he conceded nothing, he owed nothing and he wished the living lot of us, without anger, to the Devil. (*Russia* 344)

Palfrey, a lawyer co-opted by an Anglo-American Intelligence operation to aid the recruitment and legal control over Barley, reappears in two subsequent novels, incrementally dwindling in moral authority. However, in the specific context of *The Russia House*, he displays an ironic, self-deprecatory ethical perspective that seems to validate his position as a reliable narrator.

It is in *The Russia House* again, that le Carré appears to fully develop the theme of decency as an ideological position which can be seen consistently running through the ten subsequent novels written in the post-Cold War scenario, from *The Secret Pilgrim* (1991) to *Our Kind of Traitor* (2010). The theme itself encapsulated in a quotation from the poet Mary Sarton, form an epigraph to the novel. The fact that the lines from the epigraph, "One must think like a hero to behave like a merely decent human being," (*Russia* 89), are repeated by Barley Blair at a private party in Moscow, suggests that they provide a *leitmotif* to the novel. Significantly, the same lines provoke a response in Yakov, a Soviet nuclear scientist who refers to himself as Goethe, who urges Barley, "Promise me that if ever I find the courage to think like a hero, you will act like a merely decent human" (*Russia* 89). Goethe's subsequent offer of classified Soviet documents for Barley to publish, so as to ensure the early demise of both the Soviet system and the Cold War, seems designed as a material test of human decency.

Barley, the reluctant receiver of secret information, is shown to be determined to act decent, for once, more so because he falls in love with the Russian courier, Katya. Despite initial accounts of a dissolute lifestyle, Barley's essential decency is emphasized repeatedly. Palfrey, the narrator, says at one point. "…he was elegant. Not, God knows, by virtue of his shabby clothes. But in his gestures, in his faded chivalry. In his natural courtesy, even if he resisted it" (*Russia* 62). And yet, Barley Blair with his shabby clothes and heroic deeds may also be seen providing a continuing contrast to the debonair James Bond figure.

Palfrey, by contrast, is portrayed as someone who, although appreciative of the innate decency of characters like Barley and Nicky Landau, lacks the necessary courage to act out his beliefs. Like Peter Guillam in the Cold War novels and Ned, Brock and Merridew in the post-Cold War set. Interestingly, Palfrey is developed as a trans-textual le Carré character. What is remarkable about the use of Palfrey across texts is his narrative disintegration in *The Night Manager*.

Barley, interestingly, is revealed in the course of the narrative to have been in line for potential recruitment by British Intelligence in his youth. However, his distance from the world of spying—and by implication, from the world of deception, subterfuge and indecency—is conveyed through a droll passage:

> The recruiting officer had lunched Barley at the Athenaeum and stamped his file 'No Further Action', taking the trouble to add the word 'ever' in his own hand. (*Russia* 54)

In this polarization, the forces of indecency appear to be manifest in the professional spies on both sides of the Atlantic. The narratorial perspective seems to be filtered through Hannah, Palfrey's occasional lover and conscience keeper:

> "They are definitely not the cure, Palfrey," she had told me only a few weeks before, when for some reason I was trying to extol the Service. "And they sound to me more likely to be the disease." (*Russia* 52)

This configuration of spies and spying as a disease that the world would be better off without appears to lead le Carré to the roots of the malaise in *The Russia House*.

Goethe's appeal to Barley may be seen as a call to end the vicious cycle of secrecy, suspicion and spying:

> 'We do not break the curse of secrecy by passing our secrets from hand to hand like thieves! I have lived a great lie! And you tell me to keep it secret! How did the lie survive? By secrecy. How did our great vision crumble to this dreadful mess? By secrecy. How do you keep your own people ignorant of the insanity of your war plans? By secrecy..By keeping out the light. Show my work to your spies if that's what you must do. But publish me as well. (*Russia* 206)

It is possible to see at this point a convergence between the fictional Goethe's vision and the actions of the Wikileaks founder Julian Assange in the real world.

Here, as in the Cold War novels, le Carré holds up to ridicule what seems to him an unseemly tendency among members of the British intelligence community to ingratiate themselves to their American counterparts. Here, the representative of American interests in England is an avuncular CIA man named Bob, who is first seen "lounging with his legs stretched out, one arm flung *proprietorially* over a chair." (*Russia* 62; emphasis added) Although Bob addresses Barley "with the homeliness of an old scouting buddy," there is never any doubt that he is the man in charge, for his voice has "a stereophonic quality, and a knack for changing things merely by its reach." (*Russia* 67) The unequal nature of this "special relationship" is revealed through a private exchange between Niki Landau and Palfrey:

> 'Well I hope old Johnny the Yank is footing the bill for this, Harry,' he said.
>
> But the joke did not receive the applause it deserved, since it happened to be true.
>
> (*Russia* 50)

This would seem to lead inevitably to some ironic comments, albeit filtered through the observing Palfrey persona, on all Americans as a community of people. The interplay between the decent Barley and his American interrogators is presented thus:

> And how deeply they yearned to be loved! - and Barley warmed immediately to their need. Even as they tore into him, they needed to be loved. And by Barley, too! just as to this day they need to be loved for all their staged putsches, destabilizations and wild adventures against The Enemy Out There. (*Russia* 228)

Whereas this attitude is consistent with the perceived anti-American bias in le Carré's fiction, the roots of such an attitude appear to lie in a passage in Chapter 6 of the subsequent novel, which outlines the setting up of an anti-Communist spy network in Munich after the end of World War II:

> …much too soon after 1945 the Americans had installed an unlovely assembly of old Nazi officers under a former general of Hitler's military intelligence. Their brief was to pay court to other old Nazis in East Germany and, by bribery, blackmail or an appeal to comradely sentiment, procure them for the West. (*Pilgrim* 118)

Like the narrator Ned, le Carré speaks as one who has experienced post-War Germany first hand (Aronoff 8), and has been privy to what appears to be the most monstrous indecency on the part of the Americans. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the American intelligence services, along with their inevitable English lackeys are portrayed as cynical collaborators of wealthy US arms manufacturers who are determined to protect their investment in the Cold War. Russell Sheriton, a conscientious CIA man, is shown admitting as much when questioned about the unhappiness on the Americans side with documents provided by Goethe—codenamed 'Bluebird' by the Americans—when they seemed to prove the worthlessness of Soviet nuclear weapons:

> 'How do you peddle the arms race when the only asshole you have to race against is yourself? Bluebird is life-threatening intelligence. A lot of highly-paid favourite sons are in serious danger of having their rice-bowls broken, all on account of Bluebird. You want truth, that's it.'(*Russia* 242)

Sheriton's explication of the situation s intriguingly phrased

> Moribund on the Sov side means moribund our side. The mullahs hate that. So do the manufacturers.' (*Russia* 242)

By using the term 'mullahs' used to denote US senators and administrative heads, le Carré seems to be hinting at a brand of capitalism that has been transmuted into a fundamentalist creed.

It is perhaps in Sheriton's willingness to remain a henchman to the mullahs despite his better judgment, that he remains, like Palfrey, opposed to and different from his decent British counterpart, Ned.

For the most part, however, the CIA men are given relatively positive portrayals, reserving the most trenchant critique for their British cronies. This would seem to account for the fact that the primary target of le Carré's mordant irony appears to be a class of young English intelligence officers too anxious to curry favour with the American "cousins." This group is represented here by Clive, the officious British director of operations, whose composite portrait emerges out of a series of random references. Clive is described as having "one of those English faces that seemed to have been embalmed while he was still a boy king," with" hard clever eyes with nothing behind them," and "ash beneath his skin." (*Russia* 62) To compound this physical description, Clive is also portrayed as having "the arrogance of someone who can't be bothered to lie" (*Russia* 62) and "never read anything except Service files and the right-wing press." (*Russia* 64).

A fuller description is made available at the end of Chapter 4, focusing on Clive's selfishness, vanity, insecurity and consumerism:

> He was a technology man, not at ease with live sources, a suburban espiocrat of the modern school. He believed that facts were the only kind of information and he despised whoever was not ruled by them. If he liked anything at all in life apart from his own advancement and his silver Mercedes car, which he refused to take out of the garage if it had so much as a scratch on it, then it was hardware and powerful Americans in that order. (*Russia* 91)

It is interesting to note that Clive has no problem with the intepellated nature of his existence:

> 'We are a service. We live corporate lives. It is our masters, not we ourselves alone, who have given the Bluebird their blessing. There is a corporate will here that is bigger than any of us.' (*Russia* 319)

The ideological grounding of Clive's attitude is revealed through Palfrey's remarks:

> "Wrong again, I thought. It is smaller than all of us. It is an insult to the powers of each of us, except perhaps of Clive who therefore needs it." (*Russia* 319)

It may be noted here that the corporatized, bureaucratized nature of both individuals and institutions in late capitalism has been a consistent target of ironic commentary throughout le Carré's fiction.

Although the final portrait that emerges of Clive clearly belongs not so much to a person as to a caricature, it does help us to identify the markers of indecency in le Carré's fiction. Yet, Clive is not the principal representative of the British Intelligence services in this novel. The Head of *The Russia House*—which specializes in intelligence missions relating to the Soviet Union—is Ned, a Smiley acolyte, who stands in contrast to Clive as another of le Carré's decent figures. Ned is described thus:

> He despised the in-fighting of intelligence politics and left all that happily to Clive, just as he left the analysis to Walter. In that sense he was the determined primitive, as people who deal in human nature have to be, while Clive, to whom human nature was one vast unsavoury quagmire, enjoyed the reputation of a modernist. (*Russia* 91)

Both Ned's innate decency and the point that indecency is inherent in spying are brought home through this comment by Brady, the American counterintelligence expert:

> 'Nobody hired us for our brotherly love, Ned. That's just not what they put us spooks on earth for. We knew that when we signed up.' He smiled. 'Guess if plain decency was the name of the game, you'd be running the show in place of Deputy Clive here.' (*Russia* 251)

Interestingly, in chapter 12, where the group shifts its base of operations to a New England mansion in private island resort off Maine, Clive is shown being allotted the largest of the scenic blue bedrooms (*Russia* 226). Ned, on the other had is cast in the part of Cassandra, doomed to realize the truth about Barley when no one else is willing to imagine it: "He doesn't belong to us any more…He's gone away." (*Russia* 306)

In this pervasive atmosphere of indecency, le Carré seems to posit through Barley and Goethe-- the two reluctant spies representing formally opposed ideologies—the possibility of a global community of like-minded individuals committed to an ideal of human decency. This ideal disregards and transcends the ideology of 'national interest'. Goethe's—and in effect, le Carré's—romantic ideal may be interpreted in terms of what Bhabha describes as the "counter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries—both actual and conceptual—disturb those ideological maneuvers through which "imagined communities" are

given essentialist identities" (Bhabha 300). The fact that Goethe dies in the process of trying to realize this ideal is important for an understanding of le Carré's view on the persistence and power of the fossilized ideological dichotomies against which his personal politics of liberal humanitarianism and its secret agents must define themselves.

Barley's eventual decision to trade a set of CIA prepared documents with the KGB in order to secure the future of Katya and her family becomes his act of "human decency." Thus, le Carré's intent here seems to ground itself on the redemptive power of the act of betrayal, where individual commitment to universal ideals of human decency are valorized and given primacy over cynical institutional policy. Barley may thus be seen as a Haydon figure in reverse: an individual who commands empathy not despite his act of betrayal, but because of it. Underlying this thematic shift is another significant departure from the novels of the Cold War period; le Carré's frequently noted moral ambiguity is abandoned here in favour of a more or less transparent ethical position that prioritizes love and commitment, on the one hand, and empathizes with those perceived to be victims of injustice and human indecency, on the other.

This rejection of institutional ideology is made explicit at a point when Barley is being primed by Americans for his final mission in the Soviet Union:

> Their flags were nothing to him. They could wave in any wind. But he was not their traitor. He was not his own cause. He knew the battle he had to win and whom he had to win it for. He knew the sacrifice he was prepared to make. He was not their traitor. He was complete. (*Russia* 308)

Interestingly, Barley's final retreat is revealed to be a waterfront *pied-à-terre* in Lisbon, a historic intersection of cultures and political neutrality, at once within Europe and at its margins; a sort of Land's end location that le Carré has, in fact, chosen for himself. Barley could therefore be seen as an alter ego for le Carré himself, in his conscious adoption of an identity marginal to every discourse.

In *The Secret Pilgrim* (1990), le Carré's next novel from the post-Cold War period, this commitment to personal ideals over imposed institutional goals is voiced as a coming of age article of faith by the narrator, Ned: "I decided that from then on, I

would pay more heed to my own instincts and desires, and less to the harness that I seemed unable to dispense with" (*Pilgrim* 104). The novel itself is a loosely organized sequence of disjointed narratives representing past operations recalled by Ned. These episodes are framed by the device of a lecture delivered to a batch of freshly trained spies by his mentor Smiley, which sets off a stream of memories in Ned, the narrator. In one of these episodes Ned is shown empathizing with a renegade British spy Hansen, who forswears his allegiance to the intelligence services in order that he may look after his daughter. Ned's feelings after his encounter with the man he has been sent to debrief are recorded thus:

> I had found what I was looking for—a man like myself, but one who in his search for meaning had discovered a worthwhile object for his life; who had paid every price and not counted it a sacrifice; who was paying it still and would pay it till he died; who cared nothing for compromise, nothing for his pride, nothing for ourselves or the opinion of others; who had reduced his life to the one thing that mattered to him, and was free. (*Pilgrim* 245)

The portrayal of heretics in *The Russia House* and *The Secret Pilgrim* is a throwback o the theme of decency and its ideological opposition to apparatuses such as nationalism as well as corporate loyalty. Ned's repeated failure to persecute dissidents is brought home by the consequent episodes involving Barley and Hansen. Given that the Hansen episode notionally predates Barley's defection and the events of *The Russia House*, both Hansen and Barley Blair become, for Ned, fellow heretics. The fact that Hansen's daughter is a traumatized half-Cambodian adolescent pushed into prostitution by the war in Indochina, makes her one of the most compelling portrayals of subalternity in le Carré's fiction. This scene, which pits the two British spies—past and present—Ned against Hansen, may be also seen to gain added significance from the narrative foregrounding of their common half-Dutch ancestry, marking both as Others in the discourse of "Englishness" inherent to traditional spy fiction (Atkins 54-5):

> Hansen's file gave me a portrait of a type I had grown familiar with because we used a good few of them. I was one myself and Ben was another: the crossbred Englishman who adopts the Service as his country and endows it with a bunch of qualities it hasn't really got. (*Pilgrim* 207)

This narrative empathy with the conscientious objector marks a move away from the "non-declarative narrative" (Buckley, "Terror" 115). Taken together with the increasing narrative investment in the depiction of the subaltern other, this reorientation of narrative and ideological priorities may be seen informing and shaping all the subsequent post-Cold War novels of le Carré.

4.02 Ideology of the European Nation State, "Englishness" and the Other

In *The Russia House* the ideal of human decency also appears refracted through a character that represents another subaltern figure, Niki Landau, a British publisher of Polish origin, who becomes a reluctant courier of the secret documents intended for Barley Blair. He is shown reassuring the Russian woman, Katya, despite being terrified by the risks involved, eventually takes her package to England. The fact that he decides to hand over the secret documents to British Intelligence when he fails to locate Barley Blair also appears to underscore the point that Landau is motivated by feelings of patriotism stronger than those portrayed in any of the full-blooded "English" characters. He dominates the novel's opening chapter, features briefly in the second and disappears altogether thereafter. Despite the brevity of his appearance, this character may be seen to assume a peculiar significance in the novel partly not only on account of his ethnicity, but also because of the radical re-reading of the discourse of "Englishness" that le Carré seems to bring to his narrative world.

That Landau's subalternity is significant to the reading is attested to by repeated references to his Polishness and otherness to the British nation state:

> 'Boys, I'm the Pole you wouldn't touch with a barge,' he would declare proudly as he ordered up another round. Which was his way of getting them to laugh with him. Instead of at him. (*Russia* 11)

The narrative seems to suggest that this simultaneous declaration and destruction of 'ethnic' identity through public self humiliation constitutes just one of many strategies adopted by the 'ethnic' Other in order to assimilate into the culture of the dominant group and thereby to appropriate a new identity. Another strategy on display through Landau is the overt rejection of ethnicity in favour of 'nationalism':

> "Myself, I'm a Brit first, a Pole second and everything else comes afterwards. Never mind there's a lot would have it the other way round. That's their problem." (*Russia*, 40)

However, the ethnic component in identity has a persistent presence that cannot entirely be subsumed by nationalistic claims, especially because identity is socially constructed.

In Landau's case, it is shown being re-inscribed later in London. When Landau attempts to hand over the sensitive documents to British Intelligence, he is manhandled by a couple of English sentries at the Defence Ministry, who justify their actions on the grounds that Landau "shouted loudly in a foreign accent, causing a disturbance" (*Russia*, 29). Le Carré adds a sly afterthought to this, "And him a rampageous little Pole, sir, they might have added" (*Russia*, 29), thus hinting at the latent racism and xenophobia among the custodians of the putatively "multicultural" British nation state. Thus we may see in this passage a reiteration of le Carré's "reverse discourse" of the ruling elite over the subaltern.

Afterwards, Nicki Landau is shown being described in British intelligence reports as a "travelling salesman and taxpayer in good standing, *if of Polish origin*, with nothing recorded against…" (*Russia* 28; emphasis added). The qualification regarding Landau's Polish roots can be read as le Carré's ironic comment on the uneasy negotiations between the "multicultural" European nation state and the ethnic other. Le Carré's subtle insistence on the fact that the road to multiculturalism has to contend with a history of racial prejudice and violence against the subaltern is suggested elsewhere:

> The East End of London had been no rest cure for a ten-year-old Polish immigrant, and Landau had taken his share of split lips, broken noses, smashed knuckles and hunger. But if you had asked him now or at any time in the last thirty years what his definition of a hero was, he would have replied without a second's thought that a hero was the first man out of the back door when they started yelling for volunteers. (*Russia*, 19)

Yet, an ironic inversion of the discourse of the nation can be seen to take place when Landau, the ethnic other is repositioned as perhaps an ethically more deserving occupant of the nation space as well as a better representative of English tradition. This is borne out by the scene where Palfrey, the narrator, tries to rationalize Landau's extraordinarily heroic conduct throughout his adventure:

> Perhaps it was satisfaction enough for him to know that one night in Moscow, when the old country had called on him, he too had behaved like the English gentleman he sometimes longed to be.. (Russia 51)

This desire in the marginalized ethnic other within the English nation-state to mimic, appropriate and perform an essentially mythic "Englishness" becomes a consistent theme in the post-Cold War novels, gaining in intensity with the transformation of the "Great Britain" into a multicultural space. What is even more significant is that le Carré appears to be interrogating the notion of "traditional English decency" by locating it not so much in native "English" characters as in figures situated in the margins of the British nation-state. To this extent, then, his post-Cold War novels seem to present an extended critique of the British nation state itself, especially its dominant English ruling class.

In *The Tailor of Panama* (1996), le Carré's sixteenth novel, the subaltern is also the protagonist, Harry Pendel is initially portrayed as an expatriate British tailor, formerly of Savile Row, London, but now comfortably relocated in Panama City with the pick of the rich and famous for his clients. The temporal context of the narrative places it at a mid-point between the US invasion of the nation for the capture of Manuel Noriega in 1989 and the expiry of the US lease over the Panama Canal in 1999. The gradual revelation of the fact that Pendel's actual identity, unknown even to his American wife, is a carefully constructed "cover story" also serves to establish his childhood in a Jewish ghetto in London, together with details of an undeserved stint in jail, where he picked up the art of tailoring. These revelations, made by a British spy named Andrew Osnard, also provide the basis for Pendel's recruitment into the business of spying, as Osnard begins to use his privy knowledge as leverage over the man who is very much in the habit of cutting his cloth to suit the occasion. Born of a Jewish father and an Irish Catholic mother (*Tailor* 118-119), Pendel is, like Magnus Pym of *A Perfect Spy* and also perhaps le Carré himself, another specimen from le Carré's extensive menagerie of hybrids. Besides a straight forward narrative hint about "hybrid Pendel's heart" (*Tailor* 19), he also happens to occupy a fluid "Third Space" (Bhabha *Location* 36) between cultures and traditions. As in the case of Niki Landau before him, and Bruno Salvador in *The Mission Song*, Pendel's attempts to recast himself in the in the image of the upper class Englishman always eventually mark him out as a mimic man, a recognizable Other, forever doomed to remain

"*almost the same but not quite*." (Bhabha *Location*; 86; emphasis in original).Both Pendel's desperate desire to belong and the continuing evidence of slippage in the performance of belonging are brought out in the following passage:

> To an Osnard, Pendel's origins were as unmistakable as his aspirations to escape them. His voice for all its mellowness had never lost the stain of Leman Street in the East End of London. If he got his vowels right, cadence and hiatus let him down. (*Tailor* 30-31)

And although Pendel's efforts at the spying game eventually result in the suffering of innocents, he is largely portrayed as a marionette, attempting a clumsy dance to a tune played by a strange orchestra which includes his immediate paymaster Osnard, the spy runners sitting in London, and even American spies looking for a "smoking gun" (*Tailor* 343) to justify another military intervention in Panama. That the authorial sympathy is vested in Pendel is borne out by the imprint of personal biography on the characterization of Pendel, which becomes compelling at several places, including the following description of his protagonist:

> Harry Pendel loved his wife and children with an obedience that can only be understood by people who have never belonged to a family themselves, never known what it is to respect a decent father, love a happy mother, or accept them as the natural reward for being born into the world. (*Tailor* 103)

As suggested by le Carré critics (see Cobbs 1, Schiff 102), and corroborated by the narrative of *A Perfect Spy*, the quoted passage could very well describe the David Cornwell, alias John le Carré. What must be noted, however, is that the unambiguous sincerity of Pendel's attachment to his family is held up as a balance against his consistent unreliability in every other sphere. Contrary to a *New York Times* reviewer's reading of Pendel as an anti-Semitic projection of Judas (Rush n. p.), therefore, it is easier to see him as a flawed, but well-meaning character, more sinned against than sinning.

The revelation regarding Pendel's subalternity deconstructs the fictive world of his centrality to politics and power, and underscores his actual marginality, both to the Panamanian society he inhabits, and the England from which he happens to be exiled. The tension between Pendel's awareness of his own otherness, and his anxiety to belong, may be seen to result in a split subjectivity which is materially embodied in his children: "Hannah his nine-year-old Catholic princess, Mark his eight-year-old

rebel Jewish violinist" (*Tailor* 104). This is also reinforced by the fact that Pendel is, both literally and metaphorically, an orphan. Whereas it has been pointed out that Pendel suggests the figure of "The Wandering Jew" in German literature (Cobbs 242-3) le Carré has himself admitted to being inspired by the character of Wormold from Greene's1958 novel *Our Man in Havana* (*Tailor* "Acknowledgements" 460).

The predicament of the postcolonial subaltern in the British nation state may be seen to occur through successive waves of immigration and newer ethnicities demanding further negotiation and accommodation. This is reflected in the personal history of Pendel's luckless Uncle Benny:

> Benny is already an anachronism. By the late 'forties most of the tailoring Jews have risen to Stoke Newington and Edgeware and are plying less humble trades. Their places have been taken by Indians, Chinese and Pakistanis. (*Tailor* 117)

In this case too, the history of relations between the dominant English ruling class and its ethnic other appears to be fraught with insensitivity, intolerance, oppression and cruelty. Pendel's memory of his persecution after being falsely accused of arson at the age of twelve carries suggestions of lingering anti-Semitism among the custodians of law in British nation state. His name becomes a significant marker of his Jewishness and also the likely motive for the unwarranted abuse of a minor:

> He sees blue uniforms wading towards him, seizing him, dragging him to the van, and the kindly sergeant holding up the empty paraffin can, smiling like any decent father. 'Is this yours, by any chance, Mr Hymie, sir, or did you just happen to have it in your hand?'(*Tailor* 116)

This depiction of the police brutality that follows is rendered more effective by the narrative technique which refracts the police station experience through a child's perspective, evoking a recollection steeped in an innocent faith in appearances:

> 'I can't move my legs,' Pendel explains to the kindly sergeant. 'They're stuck. It's like a cramp or something. I ought to run away but I can't.'
>
> 'Don't worry, son. We'll soon put that right,' the kindly sergeant says.
>
> He sees himself standing bone-thin and naked against the brick wall of the police cell. And the long slow night-time while the blue uniforms take it in turns to hit him, the way they hit Marta but with more deliberation, and more pints of beer under their belts. And the kindly sergeant, who is such a decent

> father, urging them on. Until the water covers him over and he drowns. (*Tailor* 116)

The shape-shifting, unreliable spy as a figure of ambiguity is a both a creation of social-ideological practices and a potential agent of contestation. Pendel, the fabricator and impersonator par excellence, is portrayed as a subject constituted by the Western discourses of racism, domination, and the fetishization and pursuit of wealth. Significantly, Pendel is shown being motivated into becoming a spy—apart from the threat of his past being exposed—by the prospect of obtaining money to redeem his mortgaged rice farm. It is in the revelation that Pendel's ill-advised investment in the rice farm stemmed from a desire to gain membership into the elite Club Unión in Panama City that the extent of his reified subjectivity becomes fully comprehensible. When Pendel is asked why he aspired to club membership in the first place, he wonders if it he did it by way of spiting his probation officer, who had suggested that he was "destined for the bad." (*Tailor* 67) These details—deprivation and indecency suffered in childhood, a dissenting consciousness divided against itself in its desperate to belong, together with a tendency to equate material wealth with happiness and security—reveal the typical trajectory in the creation of a traitor and spy in le Carré's fictional universe.

Once again, then, a deliberate resistance to ideology may be seen in le Carré's simultaneous subversion of the discourse of English decency on the one hand and the multicultural British nation on the other. Further, the reference to Pendel's Panamanian secretary, Marta, permanently disfigured by Manuel Noriega's thugs for wearing a white shirt symbolic of resistance, draws up unmistakable parallels with Pendel's childhood ordeal. The presence of Repressive State Apparatuses in ideologically and culturally distinct nation states—ostensibly poles apart—subverts the prevalent discourse of the First World-Third World divide. Also, the way in which generic stereotypes of the benevolent and reliable defender of the nation—policeman, detective or spy—are undermined in this passage indicates how subtly the novel offers itself as a narrative of resistance. The cumulative impact of this passage is to represent the hapless ethnic other as someone who is ethically superior to his powerful English tormentor. Pendel's position in relation to the cynical English spy Osnard, who blackmails him into spying on his friends and his adopted country, carries unmistakable allusions to his ordeal in prison:

> But Pendel was his own master. Ten minutes ago he had persuaded himself he would never walk free again. Now he was sitting at his own steering wheel with his *jailer* at his side and wearing his own powder blue suit instead of a stinking jute tunic with Pendel on the pocket. (*Tailor* 72. Emphasis added)

The memory of the jute tunic with the convict's name stitched on the pocket—ostensibly worn by Pendel during his stint in jail—attains multiple layers of meaning. Apart from serving as a metaphor for Pendel's personal childhood trauma, it also dredges up inevitable associations with the concentration camps, and locates him in the same category of sympathetic victims of persecution as Elsa Fennan in *Call for the Dead*, Leo Hartman in *A Small Town in Germany* and Lippsie in *A Perfect Spy*. Pendel, the identity-shifting spy, has retailored himself in a bid to distance himself from both personal and communal demons, and his reflection on the powder blue suit maps a psychological distancing that mirrors his trans-Atlantic flight. The narrative ultimately excuses Pendel's fatal flaw—his tendency to fabricate—not only in terms of an essentially altruistic and decent human instinct to make others happy, but also as a survival strategy developed in response to tormented childhood:

> It was tailoring. It was improving on people. It was cutting and shaping them until they became understandable members of his internal universe. It was fluence….It was a system of survival that Pendel had developed in prison and perfected in marriage, and its purpose was to provide a hostile world with whatever made it feel at ease with itself. To make it tolerable. To befriend it. To draw its sting. (*Tailor* 78)

It is easy to see at this point the general thrust of le Carré's position regarding the provenance as well as the popularity of the spy as a mythic figure in the cultural imaginary of our times. The spy is the product of a world historical process that has failed to transcend ideology. Pendel, in particular, is a creature of perverse ideological forces and like Frankenstein's monster he becomes at once pathetic and horrifying. Pendel's schizoid inability to connect with reality thus becomes more than just an individual aberration. In effect, it begins to appear symptomatic of a deeper malaise of post-Cold War subjectivity. It should be emphasized here that the malaise also spreads outwards, in this case, from the heart of a xenophobic and racist English society, unable to cope with historic socio-cultural changes.

The Mission Song (2006), le Carré's twentieth novel, further elaborates the problems of the British nation state in the twenty-first century attempting to renegotiate its relations with the former subject races. In a way, this is perhaps the one post-Cold War novel which dramatizes and foregrounds the subaltern with remarkable clarity. This is perhaps the one post-Cold War novel where the most dramatic foregrounding of the subaltern can be seen to occur. The narrator of the novel, Bruno 'Salvo' Salvador, is the product of mixed parentage; half Irish Catholic and half Congolese tribal. Bruno's eclectic education in Africa and England, his consequent proficiency in several European and African languages including obscure tribal dialects can be seen to underscore both his hybridity and his marginality. The fact that Salvo remains an eternal other in the English nation state despite his marriage to a white Englishwoman, seems to be emphasized in the following account, where he describes his mother-in-law's attitude:

> I look more suntanned Irish than mid-brown Afro, plus my hair is straight not crinkly, which goes a long way if you're assimilating. But that never fooled Penelope's mother or her fellow wives at the golf club, her worst nightmare being that her daughter would produce an all-black grandchild on her watch, which may have accounted for Penelope's reluctance to put matters to the test, (*Mission* 4)

The irony is directed here at the persistence of racism in the so-called multicultural British society, which seems to survive despite the increasing incidence of mixed race marriages.

Salvo's hybridity in the novel appears to be fraught with ambivalence. As an identifiable other in an English Catholic orphanage, the adolescent Salvo is subjected to physical and sexual abuse. His gradual transformation from a rebellious adolescent to a compliant adult, desperate for assimilation, seems to mirror the situation Bhabha evokes when he refers to "the desolate silences of the wandering people; to that 'oral void' that emerges when the Turk abandons the metaphor of a *Heimlich* national culture…" (Bhabha, *Nation* 165). Salvo's dream of assimilation with English society appears initially to be supported by his near-perfect English accent, of which he is inordinately proud:

> I've got my voice right. My English voice, I mean. It isn't upper, middle or coach. It isn't *faux royale*, neither is it the Received Pronunciation derided by

> the British Left. It is, if anything at all, aggressively neuter, pitched at the extreme centre of Anglophone society. It's not the sort of English where people say, "Ah, that's where he was dragged up, that's who he's trying to be, that's who his parents were, poor chap, and that's where he went to school." It does not – unlike my French which, strive as I may, will never totally rid itself of its African burden betray my mixed origins. It's not regional, it's not your Blairite wannabe-classless slur or your high-Tory curdled cockney or your Caribbean melody. (*Mission* 15)

Salvo's attitude in this extended rumination on his linguistic capabilities, particularly in the context of the vestigial colonial attitudes within Britain, seems to ironically confirm what Bhabha calls "mimicry", particularly in its final emphasis on *almost the same, but not quite*." (Bhabha *Location*; 86; emphasis in original):

> And it hasn't so much as a trace of the gone-away vowels of my dear late father's Irish brogue. I loved his voice, and love it still, but it was his and never mine. No. My spoken English is blank, scrubbed clean and unbranded *except for an occasional beauty spot: a deliberate sub-Saharan lilt, which I refer to sportingly as my drop of milk in the coffee*. (*Mission* 15, emphasis added)

However, Salvo's attitude also reveals the peculiar anxieties of the migrant intent on assimilation, especially his willed forgetting of all traces of his otherness, including memories of his native national culture. All this may be seen to underscore Bhabha's statement that "…mimicry rearticulates presence in terms of its 'otherness,' that which it disavows." (Bhabha 91) Another significant aspect of the postcolonial situation that may be seen subtly explored here is the appropriation of the English language as an instrument of power. Salvo's attempt to capture the perfect inflection of spoken English is designed to grant him access to traditionally enclosed spaces in the English nation state. The fact that Salvo fails to acquire the coveted 'Englishness' through language a rejection of the basic assumptions underpinning texts such as Shaw's *Pygmalion* (1912).

The tendency of the marginalized other to mimic and perform a mythic 'Englishness' is also visible in a scene where Salvo reacts after preparing dinner for his wife, only to have her ring up to say that she has been held up:

> "I did not scream. I am not the screaming kind. I'm a cool, assimilated, mid-brown Briton. I have reserve, often in greater measure than those with whom I have assimilated. I put the phone down gently." (*Mission* 23)

It is significant that he dumps the entire meal in the waste disposal unit immediately after this in a fit of pique. The act seems to reveal a hiatus, although context-induced, between Salvo's intended performance of the proverbial stiff-upper-lipped Englishman and his material otherness. In a way, what Salvo experiences at this point is the *frisson* of discovering that he is "*almost the same, but not white*." (Bhabha *Location*; 89; emphasis in original)

The final confirmation of Salvo's otherness is provided by an encounter with the bureaucratic representatives of the British nation state, the vanguard of English decency in traditional spy fiction. The ironic portrayal of 'Sam,' the Intelligence Services liaison officer whom Salvo is asked to regard as his lifeline, becomes a particularly chilling portrait of official callousness. In the narrative 'Sam' remains a disembodied maternal voice over the telephone, available for Salvo for help in emergencies. This presence-absence is disconcerting, to say the least. In fact, she appears on the scene only after an angry scuffle between Salvo and Philip, the shadowy British handler who betrays him. During the scuffle, Salvo is knocked unconscious by British agents and, upon recovery, gets to see Sam for the first time:

> When I came round, Philip was standing safe and sound in front of the same brickwork fireplace, next to a venerable grey-haired lady in tweeds and sensible shoes who even before she had said, "Brian dear," could never have been anyone but Sam. She was all the lady tennis umpires you ever saw sitting on the top of their ladders at Wimbledon, advising players six feet beneath them to watch their manners. (*Mission* 324)

The interesting point is the ironical twinning of Philip, treacherous spy, and the apparently benign matron. The narrative here builds up an image of Sam as an agent of English propriety, maturity and amiability through a series of positive details which culminates in the allusion to the game and fair play. However, contrary to expectation, Sam turns out to be an impersonal, near-robotic instrument of the rough justice meted out to Salvo and Hannah at the end of the novel. This, in a way, embodies le Carré's horror at the perversion of English values to the point where human decency has been substituted by a bogus and malevolent geniality.

To substantiate this point, the narrative shows her explaining, along with Philip, in a positively "motherly" (*Mission* 327) tone, the decision to deport Hannah to Congo. She, of course, fails to make a distinction between the state's trumped up charges and genuine acts of "straight terrorism" (*Mission* 325):

> "Once we'd explained the problem to her, she was fully cooperative,"
> Sam agreed. "She was sad, naturally. But she didn't ask for a lawyer, she wasn't tiresome or obstreperous, and she signed her waivers without a murmur. That was because she knew what was best for her. And for you. And for her small boy, of course, her pride and joy. *Noah*. They choose such sweet names, don't they?" (*Mission* 326; emphasis in original)

In this passage Sam's claims regarding the full cooperation of Hannah with the agents of her persecution, and her so called voluntary decision to be excluded from the British nation state she chose to inhabit, are first belied by the ironic narrative. More importantly, her claims serve to underscore the point that state agencies like the British Intelligence services and the Foreign Office are Repressive State Apparatuses implicated in the ideologies of race and nation. Further, Sam's telling use of "they" to describe Hanna—and presumably all Africans—seems to inscribe, Said's thesis of Europe and its others. Further and, it points to the traditional binaries of the British nation and its invisible margins, which this novel exposes and interrogates. When Salvo demands to see Hannah, Sam responds:

> "Yes, well, I'm afraid there are no facilities for talking just now. She's in a holding centre, and you're where you are. And in just a few hours from now she'll be making an entirely voluntary exit to Kampala, where she'll be reunited with Noah. What could be nicer than that?" (*Mission* 326)

Sam's response makes further sense if we look at this portrayal of docile bodies being implicated in their own persecution in the light of Foucault's critique of governmentality. The fact that both Salvo and Hannah are sent to separate internment camps as "unwanted" persons (*Mission* 329) shows how they become ciphers for the "state of exception" (Agamben 2). This is clear if we look at their exclusion from the protection of British law through the invocation of juridico-constitutional measures sanctioned by the British nation state. Thus Hannah and Salvo may be seen joining a long list of persecuted innocents in le Carré's fictional universe, from Elsa Fennan, survivor of Hitler's concentration camps, through Leo Hartman and Lippsie to Pendel,

the wandering Jew. An even more specific evocation of this situation perhaps, is contained in a passage wherein Philip, the archetypal Janus-faced spy without rank or official affiliation explains Salvo's predicament:

> The hard truth is, Salvo, that as you very well know, or should know, you have been an illegal immigrant ever since your ten-year-old feet touched down on Southampton dock-side, and in all that time you never once applied for asylum. You simply carried on as if you were one of us. (*Mission* 327)

This extraordinary situation of a lifetime spent in a state of exception, could very well be a pointer to the identity of what Agamben calls "a legally unnamable and unclassifiable being" (Agamben 3). This also allows us to recall Foucault's governmentality thesis and see its resonance in Agamben's description of the "transformation of a provisional and exceptional measure into a technique of government" (Agamben 2). The entire period of the Third Reich, as Agamben shows, is a case in point. We see, therefore, how the narrative establishes a recurring pattern of equivalence between the indecency of the racist and nationalist ideology of Nazi Germany and the post-War capitalist nation state. In the final paragraphs of the novel, we find Salvo languishing in an internment camp—the classic materialization of the state of exception—pending his eventual deportation to Congo. It is no less significant that the novel concludes with Salvo rejecting Britain as "their England" (*Mission* 337). That he does so in favour of Africa, which he claims as his own, despite a long list of shortcomings set forth in a letter he receives from a Congolese friend, confirms the ironical treatment of disgrace and exception in le Carré's work. In le Carré, the disgraced individual simultaneously operates as the condition and consequence of the state of exception without any conventional or unconventional measure to fall back on. An event like this also points to le Carré's fascination with the spy as an instrument of exception. He repeatedly fails in his mission to either consolidate or legitimize exception as a major apparatus of governmentality.

Salvo's spiritual growth throughout the novel is linked to his growing affinity towards his African heritage, embodied by the Congolese nurse Hannah and her son, even as he becomes increasingly disillusioned and estranged from the Englishness he happens to admire without reason. The gradual awakening of Salvo's conscience may be seen prompted also by the young Congolese firebrand Haj who destroys Salvo's illusion of 'Englishnes' by continually referring to him as "Zebra", thus emphasizing Salvo's

multiracial status, and ultimately reminding him of his perpetual otherness in the discourse of the English nation.

In le Carré's post-Cold War novels, this recurrent figure of the spy as a hybrid of conflicted and ultimately indeterminate identity is more pathetic and reprehensible than heroic. When considered in the light of the prevalence and potency of the spy as a mythic figure in the cultural imaginary of the contemporary world, this portrayal seems to point inexorably towards a critique the ideological power structures that call this creature into being. Given that most of the spies who exhibit an ethical turn in the post-Cold War novels are marginal or subaltern figures, their feeble attempts at ethical action are seldom efficient or decisive.

This is clearly in contrast to the figure of Bond, whose success as an instrument of exception is never in doubt. The idea of exception in a way rebounds on le Carré's spy figure by exposing his vulnerability and by ironically driving home the fact that the exceptional advantages granted to spy figures like Bond could recoil on Salvo. The exceptional self-fashioning that initially thrills Salvo turns out to be an illusion in that he is exceptional in view of his otherness. He is forever excluded, though the knowledge comes fairly late in his life.

The pattern of foregrounding the subaltern may be seen to continue in *A Most Wanted Man* (2008), le Carré's twenty-first novel, where the ethnic other appears in the guise of Issa Karpov, another hybrid, a Russian-Chechen illegal immigrant in Hamburg, Germany. In the novel Issa becomes the target of an international manhunt in the wake of the US led 'War on Terror.' The plot revolves round Issa's attempts to retrieve a large sum of dirty money bequeathed to him by his hated Russian father from a British bank located in Hamburg. The narrative use of Issa as the pivotal character, in spite of the presence of a young German lawyer Annabel Richter, and an English banker named Tommy Brue, is a pointer to the political presence of a new group of marginals and subalterns in Europe. Issa's otherness to the European nation state is perhaps made doubly conspicuous by his identification with Chechnya—the objective embodiment of a political challenge to an entrenched White-Christian nation

state—and its cultural-political other, Islam. The point is rendered through an authorial narration:

> He was from Chechnya, and his mother was dead and all he had to remember her by was the golden bracelet with the Koran attached to it that she had placed round his wrist before she died." (*Wanted* 8-9)

Significantly, this passage places Issa in the ranks of the many traumatized orphans in le Carré's post-Cold War novels. This also helps to identify him as one of life's eternal victims rather than a villain. Issa's avowed intention to "live a life of order and assist all mankind for the glory of Allah" (*Wanted* 76), is received with skepticism. Those who doubt hi include a legion of spies from Germany, Britain and the USA, and also his friends and potential allies like Melik and Tommy Brue, who doubt his sanity. Issa is portrayed as eccentric, high-strung and given to male chauvinism, with occasional bouts of gallows humour thrown in.

Euan Ferguson, in his review of the novel in *The Observer* opines that, "Issa is so annoying that if the gung-ho Americans ever did end up fitting him for a dinky orange boiler-suit, I don't think too many readers would be weeping" (Ferguson N. p.). But it is possible to argue that le Carré's narrative deliberately drains the character of the reader's empathy in order to emphasize the point that an ethical attitude must be defined by the objective merits of the case, not a subjective assessment of individual worth. The predicament of Issa, the subaltern, must always define his status as a victim of circumstances, regardless of the acceptability or otherwise of his manners. In fact, it is on account of our own implication in the discourse of otherness that we would be most tempted to lose sight of our ethical responsibility towards victims such as Issa. Still, the narrative emphasizes Issa's status as a victim through revelations about three separate rounds of imprisonment and torture borne by Issa in Russia, Sweden and Turkey respectively, en route to Germany. The material effects of the discourse of otherness upon Issa are brought home through his bitter reply when asked about the reason for his jail term in Russia:

> "To be a Chechen is crime enough, sir, I assure you. We Chechen are born extremely guilty. Ever since czarist times, our noses have been culpably flat and our hair and skin criminally dark. This is an enduring offense to public order, sir!" (*Wanted* 80)

This passage makes it clear that a complex of racist, ethnic and nationalist ideologies have contributed in constituting Issa, the manifest other. However, his otherness is notoriously difficult to categorize, given that he is depicted as both defined by and defying his Islamic identity. This is conveyed through an account of Issa's conduct provided to Annabel and Tommy Brue by Melik, the young Turkish boxer who grants him refuge:

> "When he was weak—all right?—when he was lying in my bed, recovering? I read him verses from the Koran. My father's copy. In Turkish. Then he wanted to read it for himself. In Turkish. He knew enough to recognize the holy words, he said. So I go to the table where I keep it—open, okay?—I say Bismillah, the way my father taught me—I made like I was going to kiss it but I didn't, he taught me that too, I just touched it with my forehead, and I gave it into his hands. 'Here you are, Issa,' I said. 'Here's my dad's Koran. Reading it in bed is not how you should do it normally, but you're sick, so maybe it's okay.' When I come back into the room an hour later, where is it? Lying on the floor. My dad's copy of the Koran and it's lying on the floor. For any decent Muslim, never mind my dad, that's unthinkable! (Wanted 73)

Melik's outrage is compounded by his realisation that Issa's Issa's perceived anti-Islamic actions are occasioned not so much by inability as by callousness:

> So I thought: All right. I'm not angry. He's sick and it fell from his grasp when he had no strength. I forgive him. It's right to be generous-hearted. But when I yelled at him, he just reached down and picked it up—with one hand only, not two—and gave it me like it was"—at first he could find no suitable comparison—"like it was any book in a shop! Who would do that? Nobody! Whether he's Chechen or Turkish or Arab or—I mean, he's my brother, all right? I love the man. He's a true hero. But on the floor. One hand. Without a prayer. Without anything." (*Wanted* 73-74)

What is being foregrounded here, through Issa, is an otherness so absolute, that it is, in a way, other to Islam as well. The point le Carré seems to be making once against that it is in these circumstances when empathy is most difficult, that the claims of human decency also become most insistent. In the case of Issa, the claims of decency are represented by the material signs of a European history replete with violent persecution of the ethnic other. Issa's own history of pain and persecution at the hands of Russian, Swedish and Turkish authorities is discovered accidentally by Melik:

> "Reaching out to touch his shoulder, Melik drew back in dismay. Issa's upper body was a slough of crisscross blue-and-orange bruises. Some appeared to be whiplashes, others bludgeon marks. On the soles of his feet—the same feet that had pounded the Hamburg pavements—Melik made out suppurating holes the size of cigarette burns." (*Wanted* 14)

The point to be noted here is that the horrors inflicted by the Repressive State Apparatuses of the European state upon the 'docile' body of the ethnic other are invariably justified in the name of state security. Throughout the novel, however, Issa remains a haunting, ghostly presence, an abstraction rather than a credible individual, despite being invested with a vaguely Christ-like description and memorably idiosyncratic turn of speech.

More than anything else, Issa functions as a site where the persistent ideologies of race and nation coalesce, and where the collective forces of an emergent global power carry out their strategies of surveillance, discipline and control over the unconscious multitude. Whereas Salvo's predicament of a life spent in a state of exception in the previous novel is made clear only in the final chapters, Issa is unambiguously portrayed from the start as one of "the people of the pagus …who will not be contained within the *Heim* of the national culture and its unisonant discourse…" (Bhabha 164). His otherness is also a factor in his permanent existence in a state of exception. In *A Most Wanted Man*, then, it is possible to see a convergence of many critical and radical concerns which have so far been sporadically and separately raised in the previous novels. These include postcolonial predicament, surveillance, biopolitics, governmentality and the state of exception. Le Carré's avowed identification with liberal humanitarian concerns through personal interviews and media appearances notwithstanding, there is a need to emphasize that the evidence of his work suggests an implicit solidarity with what could be called a global, emancipatory politics of resistance. It is possible to argue that this evidence of resistance can be as legitimately pursued in literary texts and instances as possibly through personal or archival material from the world outside the text. To this extent, le Carré's concern for the subaltern transcends the borders of the British nation state to encompass a more comprehensive exploration of Europe and its others.

Seen through the eyes of Melik, when he first bumps into the young refugee in the streets of Hamburg, Issa's physical description seems calculated to defy conventional assumptions underlying the discourse of the cultural/spiritual other:

> Melik felt someone's gaze upon him, turned around, and came face to face with a tall, desperately thin boy… with a straggly beard, eyes reddened and deep-set, and a long black coat that could have held three magicians. He had a black-and-white kaffiyeh round his neck and a tourist's camel-skin saddlebag slung over his shoulder. He stared at Melik, then at Leyla. Then he came back to Melik, never blinking, but appealing to him with his fiery, sunken eyes. (*Wanted* 2)

In this particular embodiment of the subaltern, le Carré appears to shed all pretences to authorial ambiguity and objectivity, endowing Issa with both a name and a physical description evoking the Christ figure. Perhaps even more significant is a subsequent encounter between Melik and Issa when the former realizes to his annoyance that he is being followed:

> At the sight of him Melik, who as a rule of life was pledged to love all humanity equally, was seized by an uncharitable aversion. He felt that the skinny boy was accusing him of something and he resented it. Worse, there was an air of superiority about him, despite his miserable condition. (*Wanted* 4)

The disquieting effect of this encounter on the reader, who visualizes Issa through Melik, can be understood in the light of the resonances set up by the narrative with the words of Emmanuel Levinas:

> This face of the other, without recourse, without security, exposed to my look and in its weakness and its mortality is also the one that orders me: 'Thou shalt not kill.' There is, in the face, the supreme authority that commands, and I always say it is the word of God.
>
> (Levinas 104)

As in Levinas's formulation of the other, here the returned gaze of the object is essentially disorienting because it reminds the subject that "the whole of humanity looks at us" through the face of the other" (Waldenfels 69). When Melik risks the security of his own immigrant family in sheltering Issa, the act becomes not one motivated by religious affinity, but because he is moved by the compelling gaze of the other which insists on identification and empathy. It is significant that Malik is a

boxer in Hamburg, trying to earn money, and create a non-racial subaltern identity for himself, so that he might escape his own otherness. He is, in effect, a prototype that signals the very hollowness of multicultural, multiethnic societies, the USA for example.

Yet, the narrative intent behind le Carré's strategic foregrounding of the other may be appreciated only in the context of his consistent ability to discover the overwhelming scale of oppression and injustice suffered by marginalized communities across the world. Issa's revelation to the British banker Tommy Brue regarding the circumstances of his birth is a case in point:

> "My mother is dead, sir. Most dead. My mother died many times. She died on the day that Karpov's fine troops seized her from her village and drove her to the barracks for Karpov to defile her. She was fifteen years old. She died on the day the elders of her tribe decreed that she had collaborated in her defilement, and ordered that one of her brothers be sent to kill her in the tradition of our people. She died every day she waited to bear me, knowing that as soon as she had brought me into the world, she would be obliged to leave it, and that her child would be sent to a military orphanage for the children of violated Chechen mothers. She was correct in anticipating her death, but not in anticipating the actions of the man who had caused it. When Karpov's regiment was recalled to Moscow, he elected to take the boy with him as a trophy. (*Wanted* 86)

Here the narrative perspective manages to reveal not only the oppression suffered by ethnic Chechens at the hands of repressive state apparatuses of the Russian nation state, but also ironically lay bare the doubly subaltern condition of the Chechen women who are equally victims of patriarchal tribal practices. It becomes possible then, to read Issa literally as the apotheosis of le Carré's attempts to represent the ethnic other in the context not only of the British nation state in particular, but of the European nation state in general.

This critique of the European nation state in its relations with marginalized and disenfranchised communities within their borders may be seen manifest also in *Our Game* (1995), which prefigures many of the concerns of *A Most Wanted Man*. Here the subaltern in focus is the Ingush of the northern Caucasus, waging a desperate

battle for survival against the Russian nation state. Here too, through the character of Konstantin Checheyev, a KGP officer who reclaims his ethnic Ingush identity, le Carré provides a sketchy and emotional history of the Ingush which bears a striking resemblance to like that of the geographically and psychologically contiguous Chechens:

> "I was born in 1944, on Red Army Day, which is February twenty-third. That's a big national holiday in Russia. And I was born not in Tbilisi but in a freezing cattle truck headed for the frozen steppes of Kazakhstan."…. "Do you know what happened on 23 February 1944, when I was being born and everybody was having a nice national holiday, and Russian soldiers were dancing to order in our villages and making festive? I'll tell you. The entire Ingush and Chechen nations were declared criminal by edict of Josef Stalin and carted thousands of miles from their fertile Caucasian plains to be resettled in wastelands north of the Aral Sea...." (*Game* 261)

Significantly, the gallows humour that marks the subsequent description of exile evokes unmistakable memories of the Holocaust:

> "The old ones and the sick were spared the journey. They were herded into a nice building, which was set on fire to keep them warm. Then the building was sprayed with machine gun bullets. My father was a bit luckier. Stalin's soldiers shot him in the back of the neck for not wanting his pregnant wife to be forced onto the train.... When my mother saw my father's corpse, she decided she was lonely, so she produced me. The widow woman's son was born on the cattle truck that carried him to exile...." (*Game* 262)

In both these novels, therefore, may be seen a continuation of le Carré's narrative strategy of rendering the other visible by portraying individuals, and thereby putting a human face on the abstract category of the other. In fact, it may be argued that this strategy, which remains a muted undercurrent in the Cold War novels, can now be seen becoming a major concern of the post-Cold War narratives.

Another theme carried from the Cold War novels is the myth of the just and heroic English nation. Clearly, this myth constituted as much by the historical discourse of imperialism as by the complicit gaze of the other. This is manifest in *Our Game*, where the setting, in particular, recalls both historical and generic associations with the Great Game of political intrigue between the Imperial Britain and Russia.

The novel follows the familiar trajectory of individuals committing themselves to the pursuit of human decency in defiance of institutional and ideological imperatives. The ethical awakening that underlies retired British spy Tim Cranmer's journey to Ingushetia in search of his erstwhile protégé, Larry Pettifer, once again foregrounds the myth of English decency. After an initial period of captivity on suspicion of being a Russian spy, Cranmer the Englishman is shown eliciting this confession from an Ingush insurgent:

> "There is a prophecy, widely believed in Sufist circles ever since the nineteenth century when the Imam Shamyl 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." I received this information gravely, which was how he had imparted it. "Many of our elders are speaking of the English prophecy," he went on. "If the collapse of the Russian Empire has now come about, they ask, when will be the second sign?" (*Game* 368)

Cranmer's visible embarrassment at this misplaced faith in British influence and fair play can be seen leading to a slight change of tactic, but also to an insistence on the idea that the English fulfill their obligations

> "More practically, there has always been a view among us that Great Britain could moderate the Russian determination to enslave us. Do you consider this to be another of our empty dreams, or may we hope that you will speak for us in the councils from which we are excluded? I ask you this in all seriousness, Mr. Timothy." I had no reason to doubt him, but I was hard put to provide him with an answer. "If Russia breached her treaties with her neighbours...," I began awkwardly. "Yes?" "If the tanks ever rolled into Nazran as they rolled into Prague in '68—" (*Game* 368)

The narrative exposes the myth of the ethically committed Englishman through Cranmer's obvious insularity and indifference to significant events elsewhere in the world:

> "They have already done so, Mr. Timothy. Perhaps you were asleep at the time. Ingushetia is a country under Russian occupation. And here in Moscow we are pariahs. We are neither trusted nor liked. We are the victims of the same prejudices that prevailed in tsarist times. Communism brought us

> nothing but the same. Now Yeltsin's government is full of Cossacks, and the Cossacks have hated us since the dawning of the earth. He has Cossack generals, Cossack spies, Cossacks in the committees charged with deciding our new frontiers. You may be sure they will trick us at every turn. The world has not altered for us one centimetre in the last two hundred years. We are oppressed, we are stigmatized, we resist. We strenuously resist. Perhaps you should tell this to your queen." (*Game* 368-689)

Cranmer's awkward attempts to prevaricate in this passage may be seen to set up a crucial point le Carré seems to be making; whereas the Ingush have remained subaltern to a still powerful Russia, Britain, the erstwhile dominant player in the Great Game, has been consigned to subalternity, largely on account of its myopia, apathy and pusillanimity. Portrayed as the embodiment of British complacency, Cranmer is reprimanded at an earlier stage by his young girlfriend, who says, "You don't understand the first *thing* about involvement" (*Game* 259). Cranmer shares the "cavernous emptiness" (Game 186), of spies. However, the fact that this call for involvement sets Cranmer off on his journey to commitment and maturity, indicates a general thematic pattern in le Carré's post-Cold War novels.

The idea of commitment and responsibility issues from an ethical consideration built into the idea of a fair and just empire, however liminal or imaginary, for le Carré as well as his ethical spy. This is particularly so because the psychological margins of the British nation may be extended to include and even transcend the historical borders of its imperial Britain, and by implication, the British nation state. However, such a reading points more towards an awareness of responsibility for le Carré's heroes than towards the nostalgia of imperial glory.

It is also possible to find in le Carré's post-Cold War novels repeated reminders of the way in which the fair and just English gentleman appears in the eyes of the other. For instance, the empire is as much responsible for pushing the myth of English justice as the complex expectations and desires of the imperial subject. In *The Russia House*, Barley Blair reports Yakov/Goethe's comments during their first meeting:

> Says he loves the English. The English are the moral leaders of Europe, the secret steadiers, the unifiers of the great European ideal. Says the English understand the relationship between words and action whereas in Russia

> nobody believes in action anymore, so words have become a substitute, all the way up to the top. (*Russia* 88)

In *The Night Manager*, a shady Greek lawyer greets Leonard Burr, one of le Carré's honourable English spies, thus:

> "Sir, you are most welcome," Apostoll cut in hospitably, before Flynn could answer. "It is always a pleasure to match intellects with an English gentleman." (*Manager* 240)

This theme may be seen becoming even more insistent in the more recent novels. A reworked version of the Ingush myth about Queen Victoria appears in *A Most Wanted Man*, where Issa says to the English banker Tommy Brue:

> "You are a gracious and important man, sir. You are an honorable Englishman, not a Russian barbarian. The Chechens once dreamed that they would acquire an English queen to protect them from the Russian tyrant." (*Wanted* 86)

In *Our Kind of Traitor* (2010), Perry Makepeace, an English academic on holiday and his girlfriend are accosted by Dima, a self confessed Russian money launderer who wishes to defect to the UK. Perry's subsequent account of his adventure before the agents of British Intelligence once again conjures up the mythic image of the English decency and justice. This time, however, it is conflated with the figure of the gentleman-spy made famous by le Queux and Buchan:

> 'He [Dima] was trying to overcome an immense obstacle in his mind, which I suppose is
>
> what confession's all about. Then finally he rapped out a question, although it sounded more like a demand: "You are spy, Professor? English spy?" I thought at first it was an accusation. Then I realized he was assuming, even hoping, I'd say yes. So I said no, sorry, I'm not a spy, never have been, never will be. I'm just a teacher, that's all I am.
>
> But that wasn't good enough for him… (*Traitor* 95)

What Dima looks for is a confirmation of an idea that has been jointly produced by the empire and the imperial subject:

> '"Many English are spy. Lords. Gentlemen. Intellectual. I know this! You are fair-play people. You are country of law. You got good spies."
>
> 'I had to tell him again: no, Dima, I'm not, repeat not, a spy. I'm your tennis

partner and a university lecturer, on the point of changing my life.' (*Traitor* 95-6)

The way le Carré portrays the inseparable twining of the spy and the English gentleman in Dima's imagination appears to refer, ultimately, to the global imaginary of the spy, dominated and determined as it is, by the images of Bond. This also provides, in a way, an indication of the power of spy fiction as an Ideological State Apparatus.

More interestingly, the idea of English fairness finds unexpected co-producers in sites traditionally considered outside the rubric of empire. So the non-imperial subject is also entitled to demanding of the Englishman that he live up to the expectations of fair play and justice which his ancestors stood for. In other words, the end of empire does not absolve the erstwhile imperial powers of their obligations and responsibilities either of the past, or of the future. Le Carré subtly inserts into this drama of spectral demands a cautionary note concerning neo-imperialism. To the extent that imperial impulses generate inevitable expectations and myths, le Carré's texts foreground the impossibility of innocence supposedly caused y the end of Empire. Most of le Carré's post-Cold War novels not only return to this thee of responsibility, if only to show its ironical dismemberment, but also reiterate the dangers of moral obligations turning into a predatory ethics.

Later, in the same novel Dima is shown staking everything, including the lives of his family on his belief in the heroic and just English gentleman as he provides British intelligence with incriminating documents relating to his former associates in the Russian mafia: 'You English gentlemen! Please! You are fair play, you have land of law! You are pure! I trust you. You will trust Dima also!' (*Traitor* 147) While the broken syntax in Dima's appeal serves to accentuate the pathetically naïve faith in "dream England's famous sense of tolerance and fair play" (Rushdie 18), it may also be interpreted in terms of le Carré's emphasis on the necessity for the British nation to live up to its globally respected image. In the best of le Carré's English characters, ethical superiority is defined in terms of a realization that "the former wielding of Imperial power has left an obligation, a debt to be paid" (Sauerberg 177). In this sense, le Carré's approach may be seen to evince nostalgia for certain values (Atkins 70), now perceived to have been lost.

However, le Carré also shows that the myth of the English decency has not emerged entirely unscathed from the repeated failures of the British nation to fulfill its obligations or to live up to its own standards. In *Our Game*, an ethnic Ingush with a history of compromises behind him is shown confessing his sins before Cranmer, the English spy:

> "When I came home to my village, my friends and relations still liked me. Okay, I was KGB. But I wasn't KGB back home in Ingushetia. My brothers and sisters were proud of me. For my sake, they forgot they hated the Russians." He made a grim show of enthusiasm. "'Maybe it wasn't the Russians who deported us to Kazakhstan,' they said. 'Maybe they never shot our father. And look here, didn't they educate our great brother, turn him into a Westerner?' I hate that kind of sweetness. Why don't they listen to the damn radio, read the damn papers, grow up? Why didn't they throw rocks at me, shoot me, put a knife in me-why didn't they scream damn traitor at me? Who wants to be loved when he's betraying his own people? You got an idea on that? Who did you betray? Everyone. But you're English. It's okay." (*Game* 390)

It is only in the final line that the unsparing returned gaze of the other disconcerts the English subject and compels him to recognize his own complicity in the betrayal of values.

This process of self recognition and acceptance of responsibility, in fact, may be seen as the distinguishing feature of le Carré's heroes and heroines in the post-Cold War novels. In novel after novel, honourable spies are shown to introspect, and involve themselves in the preservation of decency, frequently jeopardizing their careers and their lives in the process. Barley Blair in *The Russia House* is shown engaging in just such introspection:

> As to his loyalty to his country, Barley saw it only as a question of which England he chose to serve. His last ties to the imperial fantasy were dead. The chauvinist drumbeat revolted him. He would rather be trampled by it than march with it. He knew a better England by far, and it was inside himself. (*Russia* 281)

This may also be seen illustrated in the case of Leonard Burr, one of three good Englishmen in *The Night Manager* (1993):

> He was ten miles out of Newbury and forty miles out of London, but he was in the depths of rural England. He climbed a hill and entered an avenue of bare beech trees. The fields to either side were freshly ploughed. He smelled silage and remembered winter teas before the hob in his mother's kitchen in Yorkshire. We are honourable people, he thought, remembering Goodhew. Honourable English people with self-irony and a sense of decency, people with a street spirit and a good heart.
>
> What the hell's gone wrong with us? (*Manager* 654)

This, it may be argued is as close to the authorial voice as may be found in le Carré's novels. Burr is surrounded by Mother Nature, filled with the memories of his home and tradition, and standing in the heart of an English landscape where the depredations of globalized industry are as yet not visible. This is where the need to reclaim the tradition of English decency may be seen speaking most clearly to him. The fact that soon after this ramble, Burr is shown challenging a powerful clique of British politicians and bureaucrats to rescue another decent spy, would appear to validate such a reading. Burr, like Salvo in *The Mission Song*, makes a "life-affirming gesture," regardless of the consequences. Monaghan explains the significance:

> as a romantic, le Carré attaches great significance to any life affirming gesture, and is ever ready to celebrate those occasions, however fleeting, on which one of his characters is able to infuse a dreary landscape with glorious light" (Monaghan 135).

It may be pointed out that the life–affirming gesture is always an act of human decency. In *Our Kind of Traitor* the commitment by an average English couple, Perry Makepeace and Gail Perkins, to save the innocent family of the Russian money launderer, Dima, from both the Russian mafia and British financial interests constitutes their heroic struggle for human decency.

It is perhaps significant that the trope of the average citizen becoming a spy by accident—derived in the main from Eric Ambler—is discernible in characters such as Salvo, Perry and Gail. In fact the post Cold War novels evince a vivid pattern of such reluctant spies who define salutary politics through the choices they make, and perhaps serve to indicate le Carré's own political convictions. It is also evident that in

le Carré's fiction, ethical agency is occasionally located in marginal presences in the narrative space.

Alan Hepburn suggests that the spy as a generic trope is produced by ideology tempered ideology with private motive. In the process, the spy serves as "a cipher for conflicts waged among national, international, familial, human, humanitarian, ethical, and romantic identities" (Hepburn xiv). In the specific context of le Carré's post-Cold War novels from *The Russia House* to *Our Kind of Traitor*, the spy invariably prefers familial, humanitarian and romantic identities to national or institutional identities. What is interesting is that it is done with an evident narrative empathy which is missing in the Cold war novels. The very act of betrayal which reveals Haydon as a monster in *Tinker, Tailor Soldier, Spy* transforms the clone-like Larry Pettifer in *Our Game* into a hero. Given that the Intelligence services function at the cusp of ISAs and RSAs as the producers and protectors of dogmatic ideology, any act of human decency would seem to presuppose a rejection of all totalizing ideas. Whereas decent Cold War spies like Leamas, Smiley and Charlie retain their institutional allegiances despite their misgivings, those of their post-Cold War novels are defined by their rejection of the same. In the internal logic of le Carré's fiction, the crucial difference is made by the spy's preference for the belief in the sanctity of living individuals over ideas, regardless of how attractive they may appear to be. It is this preference which leads to the life-affirming action defined as decency, and provides the unifying thread for all eleven books of the post-Cold War set.

4.03 The ideology of Imperialism

Much like the ideologies of race and nation, the discourse of empire, understood in its nineteenth and early twentieth century context, has been central to spy fiction, especially British spy fiction. On the one hand, British spy fiction has been read, as a literary genre that "sought to inform a reading public that the vast enterprise of British imperialism was, contrary to all apparent evidence, never more secure" (Goodman 17). On the other, it is seen as a genre that offers a compensatory ideological narrative for the loss of Britain's imperial glory (Denning 92). Therefore, le Carré's post-Cold War novels demand an alternate reading insofar as they evince a contestatory position, and consequently, a mode of resistance to narratives of imperial romance. It should be noted that le Carré's mode of resistance may be deemed covert rather than

overt as the strategies employed involve “acts that are intentional yet go unnoticed …by their targets, although they are recognized as resistance by other, culturally aware observers” (Hollander and Einwohner 545). The targets of le Carré’s mode of resistance in this case may be seen to include the producers and promoters neo-imperial impulses and ideology, together with the purveyors of neo-imperial fantasy through the right-wing species of generic spy fiction.

In chapter 6 of *The Secret Pilgrim*, the tale of Hansen, the renegade Anglo-Dutch spy, happens to be set in the context of the American involvement in Indochina. Here, Hansen’s desertion is articulated in terms of a categorical rejection of Western imperialist designs on Asia. After declaring his intent to stay by his half-Cambodian daughter, he tells Ned:

> Your bombers and your spies and your big talk are not for her. She is not the child of Dr. Kissinger. She asks only for a small existence where she can give pleasure and hurt no one. Which is worse? Your brothel or hers? Get out of Asia. You should never have come, any of you. I am ashamed I ever helped you. Leave us alone" (*Pilgrim* 244).

Here, once again, we find the spy’s personal interests being legitimated by the narrative against his ideological and institutional allegiance. Ned, the heroic counter-intelligence agent of the British nation, vested with the responsibility of apprehending a traitor, is suddenly transformed into a lackey of US interests, personified in Dr. Kissinger. He becomes a representative of an oppressive RSA guilty of deception, symbolized by “big talk,” and indecency in the form of the bombers. Through the reference to the brothel the narrative here sets up an equivalence that connects the espionage to prostitution. Elsewhere in the same story, British national interests, the primary motive factor for the heroic spy in generic fiction, are denigrated through Ned’s own description of the ground reality:

> British interests in East Asia might have dwindled with her Empire, but the Americans were in there knee-deep with an official war running in Vietnam, an unofficial one in Cambodia and a secret one in Laos. In *our unlovely role as camp follower*, we were delighted to offer them Hansen’s precious talents. (*Pilgrim* 211; emphasis added)

Here, the narrative validates Hansen’s gaze which defines his pursuer as a minion of American neo-imperialism even before the reader meets him in person. The fact that

Ned is shown abandoning his pursuit of Hansen, therefore, serves as an acknowledgement of the latter's ethical superiority. Both Hansen, at this point and Ned much later, in the context of le Carré's fictional universe, are portrayed as individuals who undergo an awakening of conscience and deliberately marginalize themselves from the discourses of race, nation and empire. Eva Horn suggests that the innovative brilliance of le Carré's fiction lies "in his erosion of the political" (Horn 262), in other words, in revealing the emptiness at the heart of the Cold War. In fact, rather than pleading for the erosion of the political, it is possible to read instances of resistance in le Carré's fiction as political interventions which plead for an in-between "Third Space" (Babha 36) between entrenched and polarized ideologies. Further, it is possible to see these political interventions asking for an operative space between polarized ideologies. Whether such a formulation comes under an ethical praxis is neither clarified nor pursued beyond ambiguous breakdowns. However, the importance of such alternative spaces can never be denied in the larger context of ideologies of resistance. Le Carré's investments in possible worlds, therefore, are neither apolitical nor incidental.

The persistence of the imperial dream and the figure of the reluctant spy receives a farcical treatment in *The Tailor of Panama* (1996). In this novel, Harry Pendel, the Jewish tailor with a gift for too many cover stories, finds himself having to assume a cloak-and-dagger persona not of his own making. As opposed to Pendel, who is presented as a ridiculous but sympathetic character, the British spymasters who inveigle him into a plot spy on his Panamanian hosts are made to look both comic and cynical (Cobbs 242). Luxmore the senior "espiocrat" in London, is presented as a gung-ho parody of Fleming's 'M', but with Bond's Scottish machismo:

> "What is our geopolitical interest in Panama? Ask yourself that, if you will.' He was away. 'What is our vital interest? Where is the lifeblood of our great trading nation most at risk? Where, when we train our long lens upon the future wellbeing of these islands, do we recognise the darkest storm clouds gathering, young Mr Osnard?' He was flying. 'Where in the entire globe do we perceive the next Hong Kong living on borrowed time, the next disaster waiting to happen?' (*Tailor* 237)

Luxmore represents an outmoded imperialistic impulse that has survived the distressing exigencies of historical reality. More than anything else, he becomes a

character in a burlesque, a farcical send up of the stalwart British spymaster of le Queux and Buchan, outlining the latest threat to an empire that no longer exists:

> 'The barbarians are at the gate, young Mr Osnard. Predators from every corner of the globe are descending upon little Panama. … Will it be the Arabs? Are the Japanese sharpening their katanas! Of course they are! Will it be the Chinese, the Tigers, or a Pan-Latin consortium under-pinned with billions of drug dollars? Will it be Europe without us? Those Germans again, those wily French? It won't be the British, Andrew. That's a racing certainty. No, no. Not our hemisphere. Not our canal. We have no interest in Panama. Panama is a backwater, young Mr Osnard. Panama is two men and a dog and let's all go out and have a good lunch!'" (*Tailor* 237)

Apart from the raging paranoia and xenophobia which mark this outburst, what is particularly striking is the element of fantasy around which the rhetoric rests. As it turns out, the grand plot has no substance as there are no buyers for the Canal. Luxmore's pipe dream of imperial resurgence is built on the fabricated Intelligence supplied by Pendel, code named Buchan. Luxmore's savage irony at the end of this conversation recoils on him. What emerges is a sense of exasperation and bitterness that imperial fantasies invariably generate, when dead. His dismissal of Panama as a backwater, "… two men and a dog" (*Tailor* 237), marks the metamorphosis of agents of empire into Quixote-like characters. Instances such as these suggest how irony can be used as a tool of resistance.

At the time of publication of the novel (1996), the approaching loss the British colony of Hong Kong (1997), and the increasing awareness of British marginality to the discourse of international power is shown here being matched by a growing paranoia rooted in xenophobia and racism. That this awareness is shown to lead immediately to a short-cut to continuing relevance may be seen to implicate both the spies in their privileged enclosures and the British nation state they happen to represent. Osnard, the younger spy, is shown to adapt quickly to the convenient pipe dreams of his senior officer despite his private reservations:

> 'They're mad,' Osnard whispers.
>
> 'No, they're not. They're right. It's not our bailiwick. It's the Back Yard.'
>
> Osnard's comprehension falters, then leaps to life. The Back Yard! How many times in his training course had he not heard it mentioned? The Back Yard! El

> Dorado of every British espiocrat! Power and influence in the Yankee back yard! The special relationship revived! The longed-for return to the Golden Age when tweed-jacketed sons of Yale and
>
> Oxford sat side by side in the same panelled rooms, pooling their imperialist fantasies! (*Tailor* 237)

What is clear here is the ironic authorial tone that identifies and dissects not only this persistent imperial fantasy, but also the pathetic strategy of retaining international power by cozying up to the Americans. What may also be noted is the ease with which Luxmore manages to convince himself about an infallible British sagacity that sets them apart from the more powerful Americans:

> 'The Yankees have done it again. Oh yes. A stunning demonstration of their political immaturity. Of their craven retreat from international responsibility. Of the pervasive power of misplaced liberal sensitivities in foreign affairs. We'd the same problem with the Falklands imbroglio, I may tell you confidentially. Oh yes.' (*Tailor* 237)

Clearly, the reference to international responsibility and liberal sensibilities is ironical in the sense that the phrases are instances of self-serving logic rather than expressions of genuine belief in values. It must be remembered that these issues—Britain's international responsibility and liberal sensibilities—lie at the heart of le Carré's ethical concerns. This scene, therefore strikes a cautionary note about their innate potential for perversion. For Luxmore, the anachronistic imperial fantasist, international responsibility becomes nothing more than a pretext for the revival of the White man's burden. But whereas this burden, in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries, translated into direct military, administrative and economic expeditions in Asia and Africa, in the ethical assertions evident in Luxmore's fear and fantasy, there is scope for more elaborate and insidious forms of intervention. Le Carré once again raises the spectre of what Hardt and Negri call Empire. In a way, the question of ethics and morality, whether genuine or misplaced, is fed by ideologies of economy and power. But of course the ironic narrative shows how quickly the scaffolding of Luxmore's stated ethical concerns collapses:

> Are we to look on while our priceless Western inheritance is handed to heathens on a plate? The lifeblood of our trade, our mercantile power, ebbing through our fingers while the Jap economy zeroes out of the

> sun at us and the Tigers of South–East Asia tear us limb from limb? Is that who we are? (*Tailor* 239-40)

The ghosts of lost imperial glory from Suez to the Falklands and Hong Kong haunt these passages, and the references to "heathen" predators serve to remind readers of the persistent racist tendencies in the highest echelons of decision making in the British nation state. For reasons of political convenience, Luxmore in his London office becomes no less a fabricator than Pendel in Panama. Despite the farcical tone, employed throughout, *The Tailor of Panama* may also be seen to contain a premonition of the dangerous Anglo-American convergence of geo-political interests which becomes a dominant concern of several post-Cold War novels.

In *The Mission Song* the persistent temptation of the British colonial project is presented through the device of a secret "conference" of African warlords and the gradual revelation of a British sponsored plot to engineer a coup in Congo. Although the involvement of the polyglot hero Salvo in the conference as a translator hired by the British intelligence services seems designed to create the formulaic suspense element of the spy thriller, *The Mission Song* may be seen to function more as a critique of the persistence of neo-imperialist designs on Africa among the "developed" Western nations. This reading appears to be supported by the fact that the conference, which occupies substantially more than one third of the narrative space, serves not only as a pretext for le Carré's exposition of the human tragedy within Congo, but also as an opportunity to reveal the material reasons behind the persistence of the neo-imperialistic project. Mwangaza, the moderate Congolese figurehead at the conference, is shown to reveal:

> "Here at Mwenga, gold, my friends! Here at Kamituga: gold, uranium, cassiterite, coltran and don't tell anybody diamonds too. Here at Kabambare, gold, cassiterite and coltan ….Here coltan, cassiterite, and here' the stick lifts, and drifts a little uncertainly in the direction of Lake Albert 'oil, my friends, unmeasured, and perhaps un measurable quantities of priceless oil. And you know something else? We have a little miracle that is hardly known about at all, though everybody wants it. It is so rare that diamonds are like pebbles in the street by comparison. It is called Kamitugaite, my friends, and it is 56.71 per cent uranium!" (*Mission* 135)

Mwangaza's ironic declamation shows that the history of Congo is analogous to the colonial exploitation of Africa, complete with the chaotic aftermath of colonial withdrawal. The perversion of nationalistic ideals, pervasive corruption and postcolonial subalternization (Nayar 69) in former colonies of the "Third World", are all reflected in Mwangaza's words at another point during the conference:

> "But take a closer look, please, at these brand-new politicians of ours, my friends. Lift up the brims of their hats, please. Let a little good African sun into their hundred-thousand-dollar Mercedes limousines and tell me what you see. New faces full of optimism? Bright young graduates ready to offer up their careers in the service of our Republic? Oh no, my friends, you do not. You see the same old, old faces of the same old, old crooks!" (*Mission* 138-139)

The conference also serves to present an accessible image of postcolonial Congo through a number of distinctly drawn portraits— Mwangaza the elderly Shi-Congolese statesman, Haj, his younger and more idealistic compatriot, Dieudonné the Manyamulenge from Kivu's Southern Highlands, and Franco, the ageing Bembe warrior from Uviura. Indeed, it is through these portraits that le Carré manages to render the subaltern visible once again.

It can be argued that in *The Mission Song*, Congo is presented as the signal test through which people affirm their ethical/spiritual allegiances. The fact that Salvo, Hannah and Haj, three figures invested with decent motives and a genuine interest in the future of Africa, are all marginal to the discourse of "Englishness"' seems to be particularly significant, especially as they are contrasted with figures representing the British upper classes. British Intelligence, the traditional bastion of "Englishness" in conventional spy fiction, is marked off by the cruelty/indecency, racism and insularity of its members. This disjuncture between reputation and reality becomes evident when Mr. Anderson, Salvo's recruiting officer at British Intelligence, is shown justifying the putative coup in Congo:

> "And has it never occurred to you that it might be God's will that the world's resources, which are dwindling even as we speak, do better in the hands of civilised Christian souls with a cultured way of life than some of the most backward heathens on the planet?" (*Mission* 297)

This parodic speech serves to dramatize Said's explication of the ideology of European superiority (Said 7), just as a subsequent speech appears to dramatize Said's caricature of revisionist western responses to the process of decolonization (Said 21-22):

> "A rogue country, Salvo, a country that is incapable of settling to an orderly way of life, a country that abandons itself freely to genocide and cannibalism and worse, is not…in my considered opinion, entitled to respect under international law." (*Mission* 298)

The only character who exceeds Mr. Anderson in grotesque repulsiveness is Lord Brinkley, the principal backer of the putative Congo coup, a suave English aristocrat greatly admired by Salvo: "Lord Brinkley of the Sands art lover, entrepreneur, socialite, former New Labour minister and…long-time defender and champion of all things African" (*Song* 65). The hypocritical Lord Brinkley is clearly a representative of the ideology of the mythic "Englishness" that le Carré explores in his post-Cold War novels.

It is interesting to note that the principle of human decency is shown to motivate the actions of other marginal presences in the post Cold War novels. For instance, In *The Mission Song*, Hannah's courageous Jamaican friend Grace, and the Hakims, the Pakistani couple who generously open up their boarding house to Salvo and Hannah during period of hiding as fugitives from British Intelligence. In *The Constant Gardener*, there is Tessa's staunchly loyal friend Ghita. Nevertheless, it may be noted that these novels do not seem to preclude the possibility of courage and decency among the average white Briton. In an apparently random episode early in *The Mission Song*, and set quite apart from the main plot, Salvo is shown to witness an elderly Englishman in a restaurant becoming agitated over the conduct of a large party of obviously wealthy diners. The diminutive Everyman declares, "I shall speak… I owe it to myself, therefore I shall" (*Mission* 24), before boldly reprimanding the group for their horrible manners. This decent Englishman, in fact, despite his relegation to the margins of the narrative space, functions as a double to other characters like Ned and Barley Russia and Leonard Burr in *Manager*. Salvo's sympathies clearly lie with the "little gentleman", but he is shown to lack the courage to openly take a stand. That the narrative dramatizes the gradual development of the

requisite courage in Salvo's character may serve to indicate not just the polemical core of le Carré's 'spy novel', but also the trajectory of his recent fiction.

In contrast to the moral ambivalence towards ideology and allegiance seen in le Carré's Cold War novels, *The Mission Song* is informed by a clearly enunciated ethical position. This is reflected in a manifest sympathy for victims of injustice. Like the little Englishman in the restaurant, and Salvo towards the end of the novel, le Carré appears to be more willing here to publicly articulate his allegiance. Indeed, he may be seen to have closer affinity to the early Orwell in his decision to emerge from inside the whale, so as to engage with the problems of the real world. Specifically in the context of *The Mission Song* le Carré interrogates both the imperialistic bias of the conventional spy novel and its embedded ideology of 'Englishness'. He appears to reject the association of 'decency' with the English upper classes. Yet, he subtly affirms the notion of 'English decency' itself by sourcing it instead to the fluid margins of the English nation space. There, among the eternal others, he appears to suggest, are the most likely victims of human indecency—and the most unlikely sentinels of decency, too.

A thoroughly revisionist perspective on the ideology of empire can be seen in *Absolute Friends* (2003), le Carré's nineteenth novel. The early part of the novel, dealing with the childhood of its protagonist, Ted Mundy, is set in India and Pakistan in the aftermath of Partition. Mundy's father, a derelict colonial soldier, is shown presenting a remarkably atypical version of imperial history for the benefit of his son in the following passage:

> With nothing more to be gained by pretending otherwise, the Major declares himself mortally disgusted by his country's connivance in the disastrous Partition. He heaps curses on the rogues and idiots in Westminster. Everything is their fault, right down to what they did to Ayah's family. (*Friends* 39)

It is true that this revisionist account of the end of the Raj comes refracted through an unreliable raconteur. Yet, it is precisely because the narrative includes such a worm's-eye view of history that it attains a peculiar polyphony. This account represents an alternative discourse of history, more responsive to Asian sensibilities than English. But the Major is "an outcast found guilty of raising his hand against a brother officer" (*Friends* 38). The Major also likes to read stories by Kipling, including *Kim*. From the

description of his parentage to this blatant pointer to the boy spy, it is all too clear that Mundy is a surrogate *Kim*. Inevitably, therefore, it is he who has to bear the burden of Britain's imperial sins:

> It is as if the Major must unload his own guilt onto their shoulders. The bloodbaths and forced migrations, the collapse of law, order and a central administration are a consequence not of native intransigence but of British colonial disrespect, manipulation, greed, corruption, cowardice. Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy, against whom the Major until now will hear no evil, becomes in the fume-soaked atmosphere of their tiny cabin the Jackass. "If the Jackass had moved slower on Partition and faster to stop the massacres, he'd have saved a million lives. Two million." Attlee and Sir Stafford Cripps fare no better. They called themselves socialists, but they were class snobs like the rest of 'em. (*Friends* 39)

The suggestion of British complicity in the tragedy of Partition, either through inefficiency, apathy or cynical planning in this spy novel must be seen as radically transgressive of genre conventions as well as the discourse of a benevolent British empire. The failings of all the major policy makers of the early twentieth century are unsparingly laid bare:

> "As for that Winston Churchill, if *he'd* been allowed to have his way, he'd have been worse than all the other buggers put together. Know why, boy? Know *why*?"
>
> "No, sir"
>
> "He thought the Indians were a pack of fuzzy-wuzzies, that's why. Flog 'em, hang 'em and teach 'em the Bible. Don't you ever let me hear you say a good word for that man, d'you understand me, boy?" (*Friends* 39-40)

The narrative suggests here that contrary to the nostalgic romance of the Raj, the final days of the British empire in the Indian subcontinent were marked by racism, class prejudice and a general failure to act decently.

Later in the novel, a middle-aged Ted Mundy muses on the continuing cycle of deceit inherent in the futile pursuit of Britain's persistent imperial romance:

> As a tender schoolboy, aged nine, he had shared the Major's delirium at the sight of our gallant British forces liberating the imperiled Suez Canal--only to see it remain firmly in the hands of its rightful owners, and to discover that the

> government, then as now, had lied in its teeth about its reasons for taking us to war. The lies and hypocrisies of politicians are nothing new to him. They never were. So why now? Why leap on his soapbox and rant uselessly against the same things that have been going on since the first politician on earth lisped his first hypocrisy, lied, wrapped himself in the flag, put on God's armor and said he never said it in the first place? (*Friends* 255-56).

At this point le Carré's narrative makes a vital connection between the anachronistic dream of empire and Britain's indecent collusion with the United States in the invasion of Saddam Hussain's Iraq, ostensibly in search of the infamous Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD):

> It's old man's impatience coming on early. It's anger at seeing the show come round again one too many times.
>
> It's the knowledge that the wise fools of history have turned us over once too often, and he's damned if they'll do it again.
>
> It's the discovery, in his sixth decade, that half a century after the death of empire, the dismally ill-managed country he'd done a little of this and that for is being marched off to quell the natives on the strength of a bunch of lies, in order to please a renegade hyperpower that thinks it can treat the rest of the world as its allotment. (*Friends* 256)

In the angry denunciation of the Anglo-American alliance, le Carré's narratorial mask may be seen slipping somewhat, abandoning its accustomed tone of ironic detachment.

What seems to be the primary focus in this novel is the danger posed by the systematic silencing of dissent that seems to mark imperialism in the twenty-first century. The fact that the world seemed now to be at the mercy of one super power, free to impose its will upon the rest of the world, becomes the main theme of this novel, which concludes with the stage-managed murder of Mundy and his friend Sasha, two idealists who are subsequently presented as dangerous terrorists to the world:

> The siege of Heidelberg, as it immediately became known to the world's media, sent shock waves through the courts of Old Europe and Washington, and a clear signal to all critics of America's policy of conservative democratic imperialism.

> …. No photographers, print or television journalists were admitted to the scene of the outrage until the authorities were satisfied that every last shred of potential intelligence had been removed for analysis. (*Friends* 370)

Ironically enough, the press, supposedly the custodian of freedom of expression and free flow of information, becomes the first victim of the anti-terror operations. The complaints of journalists regarding the unexpected and undesirable restrictions are met with a terse reminder regarding the exceptional nature of the events and heir countermeasures by the state: "And what goes for the terrorists in Iraq sure as hell goes for terrorists in Heidelberg" (*Friends* 370). What the narrative suggests is that the siege itself has been an elaborately engineered plot to convince western governments about the threat posed by "terror groups" and thereby to manage their support for US state policy. Le Carré's use of telling phrases like "conservative democratic imperialism" serves to underscore the fundamentally unjust nature of the new American foreign policy. Whereas in *The Tailor of Panama* the Americans are perceived as so quiescent that they need to be jogged into action by the British, here world events seem to have affected a radical review of le Carré's position. Now the objects of le Carré's critique appear to be not just the unabashed presumption of the aggressive 'hyperpower,' but also the pusillanimity of nations which lack the decency to resist. Hence:

> "Journalists ….were blandly reminded that the United States reserved to itself the right to 'hunt down its enemies at any time in any place, with or without the cooperation of its friends and allies.'" (*Friends* 370)

In return, what the Germans do is even more unacceptable. Le Carré's excoriating irony targets the hypocritical Germans who speak about "ignoring artificial national barriers in the greater interest of the common struggle" (*Friends* 370). This not so implicit critique of the German attitude is modified somewhat in the character of Gunther Bachmann in *A Most Wanted Man* (2008), a subsequent novel on the same theme.

In *A Most Wanted Man* the Anglo-American geo-political alliance once again provides the backdrop for the struggle for human decency in the context of the "War on Terror." The narrative remains focused on victims of human indecency, in this case, the half Russian-half Chechen refugee Issa Karpov, who is caught up in a web of international paranoia. Issa is portrayed as the eternal subaltern in the discourse of

imperialism: first Russian, then Anglo-American. Soon after his arrival in Hamburg, Issa and his immigrant Turkish hosts become the focal points of a series of intersecting intrigues involving the local German security agencies, the CIA and the British Intelligence services. As rival agencies jockey for authority over their hapless target, subjecting him to constant surveillance, it is made very clear that the motivating factor is ignorance and fear of the other, rather than any objective proof of Issa's guilt:

> The first sighting of Issa, if it could be called one, had been of no apparent interest to anybody. It was a search notice issued under European treaty rules by Swedish police headquarters in Stockholm advising all signatories that an illegal Russian immigrant, name, photograph, particulars supplied, had evaded Swedish custody, present whereabouts unknown. A single day might produce half a dozen such notices. In the protectors' operations center across the courtyard, it was duly acknowledged, downloaded, added to rows of similar notices adorning the walls of the recreation room and ignored. (*Wanted* 44)

Even later, when German security personnel examine surveillance data on Issa, what assumes significance is the pervasive nature of surveillance in a free society, rather than any clear evidence of Issa's culpability:

> Issa's Swedish police mug shot, full-face, both profiles, with WANTED blazoned over it and his name in capitals like a warning: KARPOV, Issa. A ten-line text in thick type describing him as an escaped Muslim militant, born Grozny, Chechnya, twenty-three years ago, reportedly violent, approach with caution. Lips pressed tight together. No smile offered or permitted. Eyes stretched wide open in pain after days and nights in the stinking blackness of the container. Unshaven, emaciated, desperate. (*Wanted* 48-49)

The overwhelming import of this picture is that of an innocent victim, one that is reinforced by Issa's frequent, if naïve, declarations about wanting to become a doctor. The persecution of Issa, the Christ figure, thus becomes le Carré's metaphor for human indecency in the context of American imperialism, and the "War on Terror". The pursuit of decency, on the other hand, is vested primarily in a young German human rights lawyer Annabel Richter, who is assisted by an English banker, Tommy Brue.

The significance of the novel's setting has been attributed to the subsequent revelation that the attack on the World Trade Centre was originally planned in Hamburg. Euan Ferguson favours a reading which views the novel as "a tale of guilty anger—on the part of the Hamburg spies who failed so miserably to latch on to Mohammed Atta and his colleagues; and on the part of the Brits and the Yanks who, desperate for success, are prepared to crawl over anyone for the sake of one small triumph, one imam they can 'turn'" (Ferguson N. p.). Although the novel can be seen to touch upon several themes like the pervasive paranoia regarding Muslim immigrants in western Europe, the plight of the ordinary Muslim individual in European society, and corrupt practices in international banking, the core issue in this novel seems to be the shocking doctrine of "extraordinary rendition" imposed by the USA on a hapless international community.

The novel's final scene, which shows Issa being abducted from foreign soil by American intelligence operatives, is reminiscent of *The Honourable Schoolboy* but is perhaps more closely connected to the stage managed firefight at the end of *Absolute Friends* since both form part of the US 'War on Terror.' Clearly, the American tactics are in willful contravention of international law. In this situation, German sovereignty is emphasized through a confrontation between the Gunther Bachmann, the German security expert who is also the nearest thing to a spy hero in this novel, and Newton, the CIA officer in charge of the "extraordinary rendition":

> "Where have you taken him?" Bachmann asked.
>
> "Abdullah? Who gives a shit? Some hole in the desert, for all I know. *Justice has been rendered, man. We can all go home*."
>
> He had spoken these last words in English, but Bachmann in his dazed state failed to get his mind round them.
>
> "*Rendered*?" he repeated stupidly. "What's rendered? What justice are you talking about?"
>
> "American justice, asshole. Whose do you think?… Have you never heard of *extraordinary rendition*? Time you Krauts had a word for it! Have you given up speaking or what?" (*Wanted* 338-39; emphasis in original).

This portrayal of American national hubris is obviously crudely drawn, and at variance with the fine characterization evident in the Cold War novels. Le Carré's willingness to sacrifice art for emotion can be seen here marking a new phase in his

evolution as a writer and socially engaged intellectual. Despite the common element of American neo-imperialist presumption underlying the two scenes from *The Honourable Schoolboy* and *A Most Wanted Man*, what le Carré seems to be emphasizing particularly, this time around, is the complete subservience of the British intelligence services to American interests:

> "I was asking you about Issa," Bachmann said.
>
> "Issa was air, man," Newton retorted, now seriously angry. "Whose fucking money was it anyway? Issa Karpov bankrolls terror, period. Issa Karpov sends money to very bad guys. He just did. Fuck you, Günther. Okay?" But he seemed to feel he hadn't quite made his point: "How about those Chechen militants he hung out with? Eh? You're telling me they're a bunch of pussycats?"
>
> "He's innocent."
>
> "Bullshit. Issa Karpov was one hundred percent complicit, and a couple of weeks from now, if he lasts that long, he'll admit it. Now get out of my face before I throw you out."
>
> Hovering in the shadow of the tall American, Lantern seemed to agree. (*Wanted* 339).

Needless to say, le Carré's portrayal of Issa's predicament becomes, in effect, another powerful dramatization of the state of exception. Like Ted Mundy and Salvo in the earlier novels, Issa becomes a "legally unnamable and unclassifiable being" (Agamben 3). The hint of torture in detention, leading possibly to death, is contained in the casual mention of "if he lasts that long." There is anger here, but there is irony, too. It is possible to see at this point that le Carré's famed detachment of the Cold War period has been abandoned as his art turns decisively towards the literature of involvement.

Whereas le Carré's portrayal of both the British intelligence representative, Ian Lantern, and the CIA personnel has been considered to verge on the cartoonish (see Jones "Enigmatic" N. p.), it is possible to argue that the narrative investment is less on character delineation than on foregrounding a resistance to the discourse of neo-imperialism and the perversion of ethical values in the wake of the Anglo-American geo-political alliance. It is also possible to argue that this reorientation of narrative

priorities is in fact one of the features of the thematic and ideological shift perceived in le Carré's post-Cold War novels.

4.04 The ideology of Capitalism and Globalization

Among the thematic and strategic elements which serve to connect the post-Cold War novels with the earlier set is a sustained and ever growing concern over unbridled consumer capitalism and globalized market forces. The first indication of le Carré's disenchantment with this phenomenon, together with a tendency to identify it as essentially rooted in American culture, may be discerned in *The Russia House*, where Barley Blair responds to a question from a Russian about a Boston based publishing house:

> 'Are we speaking of an old company, Barley, or a new one?'
>
> 'New in the field. Old in business. They're merchants, ex Washington now in Boston. Venture capital. Diversified portfolio. Film production, car parks, slot machines, callgirls and cocaine. All the usual. Publishing's just one of their sidelines.' (*Russia* 127)

The tendency within globalization to engage in consumerism without regard to ethical values becomes a subject of sustained critique in the post-Cold War novels. While it is true that speeches such as these, spoken as they are by specific characters in a given fictional text, do not necessarily reflect the thoughts of the author, the frequency of recurrence in le Carré's fiction would seem to point inexorably towards some sort of identification.

The issue of commerce without conscience is, in fact, available in even *The Secret Pilgrim*, an early book of the post-Cold War period. At the close of the novel, Smiley's protégé, decent Ned, returns dejected from an encounter with a high born English arms dealer who is too powerful to be touched, and unrepentant to boot. Ned's retrospective account of his feelings at that moment is recorded thus:

> For a moment, it was as if my whole life had been fought against the wrong enemy… I remembered Smiley's aphorism about the right people losing the Cold War, and the wrong people winning it, and I thought of repeating it to him as some sort of insult, but I would have been beating the air. I thought of telling him that *now we had defeated Communism, we were going to have to set about defeating capitalism*… (*Pilgrim* 334; emphasis added)

A more direct instance of such a critique may be seen in *Our Game*, published in 1996, barely four years after Russia's entry into the free market system. Here, the narrative presents Russia as a land of sharp contrasts, especially in this experience of Moscow by night:

> Tsarist chandeliers lit the vast hall. A cardboard dancing girl recommended the casino on the third floor, imitation air hostesses told me to enjoy my day. They should have told it to the muffled beggar women outside on the street corner, or the dead-eyed children hovering purposefully at the traffic lights and in the filthy underpasses, or the twenty-year-old wrecks in doorways, sleeping upright like the dead; or the defeated armies of pedestrians hunting for a morsel of the dollar economy to buy with their evaporating roubles. (*Game* 345)

This passage effectively deflates the celebratory rhetoric that accompanied Russia's entry into the free market in 1991. What the ironic narrative tone foregrounds here is the detritus of consumer capitalism: the children with their innocence destroyed by need, young men and women damaged by drugs and a populace reduced to beggary.

The ironic juxtaposition of images from the two eras—Communist and Capitalist—serve to bring out the dubious nature of the fruits that the consumer civilization has to offer:

> Yet glance up and down the street, and there were the skeletons of yesterday dangling from their grimy gibbets: iron quarter-moons with the rusting stars of Soviet triumphalism trailing from their tails, hammers and sickles carved into crumbling facades, fragmented Partyspeak scrawled in drunken tracery against the rain-swept sky. And everywhere, as evening gathered, the beacons of the true conquerors flashing out their gospel: "Buy us, eat us, drink us, wear us, drive us, smoke us, die of us! We are what you get instead of slavery!" (*Game* 346-47)

The passage, offered through the novel's principal narrator, Tim Cranmer, shows how the regularly identified forces of western imperialism have been substituted, at least in this narrative, by the forces of consumer capitalism that spell as much terror as the bombs and war machines. In a way, the image of the public gibbet suggests more an unjust lynch job on Communism than a trial by jury. Insofar as the concluding lines of this passage may be seen be seen to represent a bitter critique of commodity fetishism,

it may also be considered as constituting a resistance to the "market" (Gill 57) that fetishizes every object, however harmful, for its exchange value. On another level, this passage may be read as a subversion of the Western discourse of the Cold War, which grounded itself on the binary of a 'free' capitalist world as opposed to an enslaved communist society.

Similar critiques of commodity fetishism, aligning capitalism and the free market to death-dealing, may be seen also in *The Night Manager* (1993), where the objects being marketed represent instruments of death:

> In a big hotel, in a conference room protected by men with padded shoulders, Burr and Strelski mingled with the buyers of all nations and listened to the sales talk of wholesome young men with name tags pinned to their lapels. (*Manager* 304)

The marking out of space by wares on sale is subtly counter-balanced by the presence of humans, but the import is not to be missed:

> Behind the men sat girls with order books. And behind the girls, in shrines cordoned off with blood-coloured ropes, stood their wares, each polished like a loved possession, each guaranteed to make a man of whoever owned them: from the most cost-effective cluster bomb through the all-plastic undetectable Glock automatic pistol to the latest thing in hand-held rocket launchers, mortars and anti-personnel mines. And for your reading man, standard works on how to build yourself a rocket-propelled gun in your own backyard or make a one-time silencer out of a tubular can of tennis balls.
>
> "About the only thing missing is a girl in a bikini poking her fanny at the barrel of a sixteen-inch fieldpiece," said Strelski as they drove back to the operations room.
>
> The joke fell flat. (*Manager* 304)

As is usual in le Carré's layered prose, there are multiple points of interest in this passage including the unappreciated witticism at the end. The narrative here contrasts the vitality and youthfulness of the human sales force with the inhuman and life-denying wares they are engaged in selling. Beyond the superficial gloss of the setting and the polished machines on display it is the blood-coloured rope that arrests attention, thereby suggesting the lethal business being transacted. The narrative also seems to call attention to the way in which consumer culture deliberately yokes

together death, glamour and manliness. To this extent this passage may be read as a parodic critique of conventional spy fiction where death dealing is invariably glamorized as a manly calling. This is also the point Strelski—the rare, good American in le Carré's fictional world—seems to be making through his jest. But perhaps most significantly, his joke falls flat because quite like the neo-imperialist American discourse that brooks no dissent, the discourse of the globalized market civilization also insists on unconditional and unthinking acceptance. One is reminded inevitably of Bakhtin's identification of seriousness with authoritarian systems, and laughter with the spirit of liberation (Bakhtin 209).

There is, however, one more aspect of le Carré's resistance to limitless consumerism that bears highlighting. The frequency with which spies, despite their divided selves, disrupt the value code of exchange and use can only be understood in terms of what Jean Baudrillard called 'consummation.' Baudrillard explains the term as signifying rejection of the ideology of fetishized capital through acts of play, gift, destruction or pure loss. In effect, these acts of play attack the code itself, thus breaking or deconstructing it (see Baudrillard 93). In several of the post-Cold War novels, ethically motivated agents gift large sums—especially of ill gotten gains—to charity, deliberately rejecting pecuniary or material benefits. These acts of consummation include Larry's embezzlement and subsequent gift of tainted British Intelligence funds to the Chechnian rebels in *Our Game*, Oliver's decision to betray and abandon an inheritance of—metaphorically and literally—blood money in *Single and Single*, and Issa's efforts to gift a tainted inheritance of millions to a worthy charity in *A Most Wanted Man* In fact, the very possibility of such acts also posits an implicit rejection of Adorno's position on the unchanging, inexorable force of commodity fetishism. In effect, acts that appear indecent can be acts of resistance. Le Carré never discounts the possibility of resistance coming from unexpected quarters at unexpected times.

Clearly, le Carré also seems to raise a point regarding the stultifying effect of the market civilization and its tendency to produce subjectivities rather than subjects. There is a process of objectification at work that denies the basic space to human feelings. The moral and intellectual degeneration of the West under commodity fetishism may be seen in the following passage from *The Night Manager*:

> The title of Jonathan's part of the project was first Trojan, then hastily changed to Limpet—the reason being that while some members of the joint team might not know much about Homer's wooden horse, they all knew that Trojan was the brand name of one of America's most popular condoms. But Limpet was fine. A limpet attaches itself through thick and thin. (*Manager* 81)

It is possible to argue that this deceptively casual evocation of the Trojan Horse, albeit in a humorous context, of particular significance to le Carré's post-Cold War novels. Pine, the "undercover" agent inserted into the enemy camp, becomes a participant in the world of arms dealing while secretly working towards its destruction. To the extent that Pine's surreptitious fight against an overwhelmingly powerful enemy begins at this point to mirror le Carré's own strategy of engaging with the market civilization through the consumer oriented genre of spy fiction, it recalls Bakhtin's thesis on the simultaneously participatory and subversive aspects of the Carnivalesque It is also interesting to note the symbolic associations consciously foregrounded in this novel, which in a way leads into the subsequent works. The fact that the graphic icon of a knight on a charger prefaces each chapter in the paperback editions of *The Night Manager* seems to suggest that Pine is more of a "Knight" manager, setting out to slay a dragon. The image of the limpet, on the other hand, is inextricably linked to ideas of an unnoticed and unshakable instrument of destruction, which both the name and the character of Burr happen to suggest. That the ironic suggestion of an unimaginative market culture is ultimately directed at the Americans in this episode, becomes additionally suggestive in its metaphoric coalescing of two concepts: sexual profligacy and the concealed instrument of destruction from within.

However, despite the occasional instance of wry humour, le Carré's narrative maintains a generally sombre focus on the perils of unbridled capitalism in the post-Cold War novels. In several of these, the forces of human indecency are identified with those who profit by death and misery caused to others. The following instance describes of a camp of international mercenary soldiers being trained as a corporate enterprise:

> They are thirty strong, they are eating chicken and rice and drinking Coca-Cola. Candles in jars, not Paul de Lamarie candlesticks, light their faces down the table. It is as if the twentieth century has emptied its garbage truck of leftover warriors and vanished causes into a camp called Faberge: American

> veterans sickened first by war and then by peace; Russian Spetsnaz, trained to guard a country that disappeared while their backs were turned; Frenchmen who still hated de Gaulle for giving away North Africa; the Israeli boy who had known nothing but war, and the Swiss boy who had known nothing but peace; the Englishmen in search of military nobility because their generation somehow missed the fun (if only we could have had a British Vietnam!); the huddle of introspective Germans torn between the guilt of war and its allure. And Colonel Emmanuel, who according to Tabby had fought every dirty war from Cuba to Salvador to Guatemala to Nicaragua and points between in order to please the hated Yanqui: well, now Emmanuel would balance the score a little! (*Manager* 557)

What is truly on display here is the final blurring of lines between the human and the inhuman: individuals who have survived wars and nations, but remain unfit for civil society. Whereas these derelict souls appear to be variously motivated by ignorance, abiding hatred and the “allure” of war, the narrative hints only obliquely at the one factor that truly unites them. As in the Cold War novels, here too it is the Coca Cola bottle, ubiquitous signifier of the market civilization, which can be seen to provide a context for this motley group to exist. The narrative also significantly focuses on them in the very moment of consumption. The final irony perhaps lies in the realization that these men exist only to deprive others of existence.

The principal representative of indecency in this novel and the sponsor of the mercenary camp, is Richard Roper, yet another well born English arms dealer operating out of the Bahamas. However, the narrative may be seen casting a far wider net in its perspective on the international arms trade, as in the following scene:

> "The Mooj?" Roper repeats amid laughter, picking up on something Langbourne has said about the success of American Stinger missiles in Afghanistan. "The Mujahedin? Brave as lions, mad as hatters!….They'd pop out of the ground in front of Sov tanks, bang away with ten-year-old Armalites and watch their bullets bounce off 'em like hailstones. Peashooters against lasers, they didn't care. Americans took one look at 'em and said: Mooj need Stingers. So Washington finagles Stingers to 'em. And the *Mooj* go crazy. Take out the Sovs' tanks, shoot down their combat helicopters. Now what? I'II tell you what! The Sovs have pulled out, no more Sovs, and the *Mooj* have got

> Stingers and are rarin' to go. So everyone else wants Stingers because the Mooj have got 'em. When we had bows and arrows we were apes with bows and arrows. Now we're apes with multiple warheads. (*Manager* 557-58)

Once we discount the inherent racism of Roper's exposition, what we get is a sordid tale of political misadventure in the arming of the Afghan Mujahedin by the Americans. It must be remembered that this stinging and prescient dissection of the pitfalls of politics being dictated by the exigencies of capital occurs nearly a decade before 9/11. The barb is further sharpened by the apparently unconcerned voice of the narrator-analyst. Roper asks: Know why Bush went to war against Saddam?"

> The question is directed at his friend Manny, but an American veteran replies.
>
> "The oil, for Chrissakes."
>
> Roper is not satisfied. A Frenchman has a second try.
>
> "For the money! For the sovereignty of Kuwaiti gold!"
>
> "For the experience," says Roper. "Bush wanted the experience." He pointed a finger at the Russians. "In Afghanistan, you boys had eighty thousand battle-hardened officers fighting a flexible modern war. Pilots who'd bombed real targets. Troops who'd come under real fire. What had Bush got? Warhorse generals from Vietnam and boy heroes from the triumphant campaign against Grenada, population three men and a goat. So Bush went to war. Got his knees brown. Tried out his chaps against the toys he'd flogged to Saddam, back in the days when the Iranians were the bad guys. Big handclap from the electorate.(*Manager* 557-58)

Once more we find in this passage a reiteration of a theme from the Cold War novels, that is, the ultimate convergence, now undisguised, of the discourse of the market civilization with the ideology of imperialism. This is consistent with what Hardt and Negri describe as Empire, the latest phase in capitalist expansion, where, they suggest that the capitalist project is to bring together economic power and political power, "to realize, in other words, a properly capitalist order." (Hardt and Negri 8-9)

Still, the major idea exposed and subverted here is the belief that powerful nations like the United States embark on military adventures motivated only by noble ideas such as the protection of weak states or the defense of freedom. Yet this is invariably the pretext on which powerful nation states embark on military interventions in less

developed territories. Again, the correspondence of this critique with the trend followed by Hardt and Negri is striking:

> "What stands behind this intervention is not just a permanent state of emergency and exception, but a permanent state of emergency and exception justified by *the appeal to essential values of justice.* In other words, the right of the police is legitimated by universal values (Hardt and Negri 18).

This blending of fictional and actual personalities strengthens the plausibility of the narrative. At the same time it points to the complicity of corporate interests with the state. This not only reiterates the spectre of the globalized Empire raised by Hardt and Negri, but also of multiple forms they may acquire.. This aspect of malfeasance at high levels is articulated in a conversation between Leonard Burr and Rex Goodhew, two decent British spies:

> I'm telling you. I've worked with your master's realists, Rex. I've lived with them. Lied with them. I know them. I know Geoffrey Darker. And I know his Procurement Studies Group. I know their houses in Marbella, and their second Porsches in the garage, and their unstinted devotion to the free market economy, provided it's their freedom and somebody else's economy. Because I've been there!"
>
> "Leonard, I will not hear you, and you know I won't."
>
> "And I know there's more crockery in that shop, more bad promises to keep, more lunching with the enemy, and gamekeepers turned poachers, than is healthy for my operation, or my agency!" (*Manager* 83-84)

The reasons for Burr's indignant outburst, as well as Goodhew's embarrassment, can be said to be rooted in their inability to countenance the loss of decency in British public life. The logic of the free market has blinded senior British public servants like Darker to conflicts of interest between their public obligations and personal ambitions. It may be noted that Burr's indignation on this occasion replicates the periodic outbursts of most of le Carré's post-Cold War spies like Barley, Ned, Ted Mundy, Larry Pettifer and Tessa Quayle among others. These spies, significantly, forsake institutional loyalty to pursue individual commitments. The frequency and uniformity of the choices made allow us to see in these acts glimpses of le Carré's own perspective very closely.

That this malaise is a common feature in the reified subjects of the globalized market culture is suggested by a scene in *The Russia House*. In this scene, which mirrors Burr's indignation, Joe Strelski, a decent American security man, directs an ironic diatribe against the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Ed Prescott, for putting personal profit above every other allegiance:

> "Don't change, Ed. America needs you as you are. Don't give up any of your friends in high places or your connections with the Agency or your wife's arm's-length lucrative directorships of certain companies. Keep fixing things for us. The decent citizen knows too much already, Ed. Any more knowledge could seriously endanger his health. Think television. Five seconds of any subject is enough for anybody. People have to be normalised, Ed, not destabilised. And you're the man to do it for us." (*Manager* 651)

It is in this exchange that we may see an echo of the commodification of thought (Adorno and Horkheimer xiv), where the decent citizens have been so thoroughly reified (Lukács 197) and robotized that their lives may now be utterly manipulated through the television. This exchange may also be seen as a pointed critique of an entire culture of capitalism where a small clique of individuals manages to secure special privileges in an ostensibly democratic society. That market civilization is inherently inimical to democratic values appears to be the ultimate implication of not only this novel but the entire range of the post-Cold War novels.

Whereas *The Night Manager* deals with the market capitalism and unethical practice, there are at least a couple of books dealing with the nexus between consumer capitalism and the perversion of law. The issue of international money laundering becomes a key concern in *Our Kind of Traitor*. In the following scene, a group of British intelligence agents discuss a taped confession by the Russian crook Dima, particularly a common ploy used by criminal syndicates to render black money white:

> "Would somebody mind telling me what a black hotel is?" Matlock demanded of the air in front of him. "I happen to take my holidays in Madeira. There never seemed anything very black about my hotel." (*Traitor* 150)

The explanation is dramatized, but packed with irony:

> "You buy a bit of prime land, usually on the sea, Billy. You pay cash for it, you build a five-star luxury-hotel resort. Maybe several. For cash. And throw in fifty or so holiday bungalows if you've got the space. You bring in the best

> furniture, cutlery, china, linen. From then on your hotels and bungalows are full up. Except that nobody ever stays in them, you see. If a travel agent calls: sorry, we're fully booked. Every month a security van rolls up at the bank and unloads all the cash that's been taken in room rentals, bungalow rentals, the restaurants, the casinos, the nightclubs and the bars. After a couple of years, your resorts are in perfect shape to be sold with a brilliant trading record." (*Traitor* 150)

The mordant irony damns the 'Intelligence' personnel for either remaining clueless or for pretending to be so:

> No response beyond a raising of Matlock's avuncular smile to maximum strength.
>
> "It's not only resorts either, actually. It can be one of those strangely empty white holiday villages – you must have seen them, trickling down Turkish valleys to the sea – it can be, well, scores of villas, obviously, it can be pretty well anything that's lettable. Car hire too, provided you can fudge the paperwork." (*Traitor* 150)

However within the context of the novel's fictional world, possessing this knowledge about the way in which market forces encourage perversion of the law proves too dangerous, and Dima pays with his life for sharing his secret.

International money laundering also constitutes one of the important themes in *Single and Single* (1999). The obligatory intrigue in the novel centers on what appears to be a more disturbing scheme by a group of Georgians to sell Soviet/Russian resources to the highest bidder in the West. Among the items on the list of commodities to be sold one has industrial machinery as scrap metal to Asian states, oil reserves in the Caucasus, and finally, human blood. A legally trained Georgian crook named Hoban outlines a plan to secure total monopoly over the trade in human blood using the perfectly rational language of capitalist enterprise:

> "Blood of all types. Common blood, uncommon, extremely rare. The shortfall between world demand and world supply. The blood of all nations. The cash value of blood, whole and retail, by category, in the medical marketplaces of Tokyo, Paris, Berlin, London and New York. How to test blood, separate good blood from bad. How to cool it, bottle it, freeze it, transport it, store it, dry it.

> The regulations covering its importation to the major industrialised countries of the West." (*Single* 131)

While it is tempting, in literary terms, to read a bit of "third-worldist" (Hardt and Negri 264) rhetoric into the remarks, the materiality of the imagery stops one from such an exercise. The negotiations lead to a perfectly matter-of-fact discussion on the bribes to be paid:

> "…. thirty million dollars will be regarded as advance payment against down-the-line profits calculated at fifteen per cent of gross profit accruing to nominees of Mr Yevgeny Orlov." (*Single* 136)

The narrative ironically underscores its ethical reservations regarding the both the nature of this scheme and the magnitude of the official connivance involved, particularly the inevitability of state intervention in the form of incentives and punitive measures depending on acquiescence or opposition to the enterprise:

> "'Consistent with state of national objective, all Republics of Soviet Union will be advised to establish separate blood facility in each designated city. … *State funding will be available for this project, subject to certain compliances*. State will also declare crisis. Also in spirit of reciprocity… each Republic will be ordered to send specified quantity of blood to central reserve blood bank in Moscow... *Any Republic not contributing specified quantity of blood to central reserve will not receive State funding* (*Single* 134, emphasis added)

Crucial verbal cues in the unfolding details of the scheme serve to heighten the sense that what is being planned here is nothing but the perpetration of a monstrous hoax on the Russian people:

> This central reserve will be known as Crisis Response Blood Reserve. *It will be showpiece. It will be fine building. We shall select fine building.* …. In this building, paramedics will be on standby at all times to meet sudden demand that is beyond resources of local services, anywhere in Soviet Union. (*Single* 134, emphasis added).

Implicit in this exposition is the also the possibility of minor wars being fomented to replenish the "Crisis Response Blood Reserve" periodically, for the specific types of the possible crises are enumerated:

> Example, an earthquake. Example, a major industrial accident. Example, rail crash or small war. Example, terrorist outrage by Chechnya. There will be television programme about this building. Newspaper articles. …Nobody will

> refuse to give to it, even when crisis is small, provided crisis is declared by highest level." (*Single* 134)

The ironic juxtaposition of the matter-of-fact, quasi-legal language of this explication with the bizarre nature of the transaction itself sets up a tension which underscores the dubious nature of the ethics involved. It becomes abundantly clear that human suffering will now provide the excuse for capitalist exploitation across international borders. It is at this point that narrative thrust begins to acquire the unmistakable resonance of Hardt and Negri's position that the neo-capitalist Empire thrives on "a permanent state of emergency and exception" (Hardt and Negri 18) which justifies capitalist intervention on humanitarian grounds. That the scheme to rob unsuspecting Russians of vital resources—metaphorically constituted as blood—for the benefit of rich capitalists in the West— is ethically reprehensible is underscored by the decent English agent, Oliver, who summarizes the situation as: "capitalists living off the blood of peasants" (*Single* 135). That the Russian people, themselves are to remain ignorant of the constructed nature of the crises is revealed though further elaboration from Hoban:

> "We shall sell this blood. Officially but also secretly. *Sales will be State secret, sanctioned in writing at highest level in Moscow*… Transportation will be conducted on extremely confidential basis, eliminating negative publicity. In Russia, we must not hear They sell our Russian blood to victorious imperialists. In the States, it is not convenient to hear that American capitalists are bleeding poor nations literally. This would be counter-productive." (*Single* 135; emphasis added)

The situation depicted here carries unmistakable echoes of Foucault's meditations on biopolitics. To the extent that biopolitics includes "strategies for intervention upon collective existence in the name of life and health, initially addressed to populations that may or may not be territorialized upon the nation,.." (Rabinow and Rose 197), *Single and Single* remains a text singularly focused on the theme of biopolitics. The Russian people clearly represent the docile bodies to "be subjected, used, transformed, and improved" (Foucault 136). Further, the explicit collusion depicted here, between the contemporary nation state and global capital—supported by legitimizing juridical apparatuses—in the appropriation, of vital human bodies and processes for the creation of wealth, actually serves as a dramatization of Hardt and Negri's assertion

that “In Empire and its regime of biopower, economic production and political constitution tend increasingly to coincide” (Hardt and Negri 41). This is echoed for good measure, in another scene, where a policewoman is shown explaining the dirty details:

> Crime no longer exists in isolation of the state, if it ever did,’ … ‘Today’s stakes are too big for crime to be left to the criminals. We are no longer looking at adventurous outlaws who will reveal themselves by clumsiness or repetition. When one container load of cocaine safely landed at a British port is worth a hundred million pounds, and the harbourmaster is enjoying a salary of forty thousand, we are looking at ourselves. At the harbourmaster’s ability to resist temptation on an unprecedented scale. At the harbourmaster’s superior. At the dockside police. At their superiors. At Customs. And theirs. At the enforcers, bankers, lawyers and administrators who look the other way. To imagine that these people can synchronise their collaborative efforts without a central command and control system, and the active connivance from others in high positions, is absurd. (*Single* 90-1)

There is absolutely no ambiguity here about the target of le Carré’s ire. In fact, it becomes impossible, to read *Single and Single* as anything other than le Carré’s response to a complex convergence of issues, including biopolitics, governmentality, and the transcendent regime of globalized capitalist Empire. Nor is there any doubt about the course his decent secret agents, Brock and Oliver Single, are impelled to take. Oliver turns his back on both his beloved father and his patrimony when he betrays the latter’s money laundering activities to the authorities. Yet, when his father is abducted to Georgia by his erstwhile partners in crime, Oliver risks his life to rescue him. On a metaphoric level, it is possible to see le Carré pleading for an ethical rejection of the ideology of inherited loyalty to the paternalistic nation state, without however suggesting the annihilation of the state itself.

As opposed to the globalized imperial power, le Carré appears to sympathize with the general mass of its reified human subjects, which Hardt and Negri prefer to describe as the “Multitude” (Hardt and Negri 61) This is so because in le Carré’s vision, here too it is the subaltern other who constitutes the multitude, however flawed, and emerges the moral superior.

In the context of *Single and Single*, apart from the Georgians, an equal and enthusiastic partner in this scheme is the English firm of 'Single and Single', run by the spy-hero's father. On the other hand, le Carré seems to pay an oblique compliment to the Russian people in general, when he makes Hoban's ironic denigration double back on himself:

> The very notion of selling blood or buying it is foreign to finer Soviet feelings. Soviet citizens are accustomed to giving blood freely and spontaneously, in moments of particular empathy or patriotism, not - God forbid - on a commercial basis. (*Single* 132)

Le Carré's abiding sympathy for the underdog is also attested, interestingly, by a narratorial digression in *The Russia House*, where the subject being described is an ordinary Russian truck driver employed on long distance trips:

> [H]e was one of the Long Distance Gunners, as these luckless creatures are known in the Soviet Union–State employees, miserably underpaid, with neither medical nor accident insurance to protect them against misfortune in the West, who even in deepest winter huddle stoically in the lee of their great charges, munching sausage before sharing another night's sleep in their comfortless cabins–but making for themselves, in Russia nevertheless, vast fortunes out of their opportunities in the West. (*Russia* 274)

This, it may be argued, is the group le Carré identifies most with—the nameless, faceless, ordinary human beings capable of extraordinary generosity, whose ranks the spy hero is eventually compelled to join.

It follows, then, that far from an exercise in making villains of the alien other, le Carré appears to turn the moral spotlight back on the globalized imperial order which declares: "Human blood is a commodity" (*Single* N. p.) Le Carré quotes these words as an epigraph to his novel, attributing them to the US Federal Trade Commission (1966), and thereby provides a basis for understanding his ethical perspective. It is clear enough that le Carré's primary objection to the situation echoes Theodor Lemke's anguished explication of the neo-liberal thought which lies at the heart of governmentality: "What were previously extra-economic domains are now rendered 'economic' and are colonized by criteria of economic efficiency" (Lemke, "Governmentality" 202). The consumerist credo of globalized neo-liberal capitalism is framed in the form of a question at one point in the negotiations: "why not? It's a

crop like any other. Blood, oil, old iron, what's the difference?" (*Single* 135). Whether or not le Carré agrees with the association, it is rather difficult to miss the underlying echo of Marx's assertion that bourgeois capitalism, "…has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment'" (Marx, *Manifesto* 37). What is possible to see in le Carré's narrative, however, is a transparent moral outrage at the philosophy of unbridled consumerism, spreading unchallenged across the globe following the fall of the Soviet Union,

A similar spirit may be discerned in *The Constant Gardener*, perhaps the most moving presentation of this recurrent theme of predatory capitalism and the wretched multitude in le Carré's post-Cold War novels. Set in postcolonial Kenya, this novel opens with a murder, albeit one that occurs offstage. The victim, Tessa Quayle, is a left inclined lawyer given to relief work among the slum dwellers. Her husband, Justin Quayle, a mid-level British diplomat stationed in Nairobi, sets off on a hunt across three continents, trying to unravel the mystery of her death, thus providing the narrative with its genre trappings.

The initial suspect is Dr. Arnold Bluhm, Tessa's friend, and companion on her final trip into the African wilderness. The official British investigation elicits reports that are replete with innuendo about Tessa's unwise friendship across racial lines:

> "Everybody looks at them. The guests, the staff. One beautiful white woman, one beautiful African doctor. That's a nice sight. Over." (*Gardener* 19)

That racism is not limited to the white community in Kenya alone, but symptomatic of a wider range of prejudices may be seen in the following passage:

> The British Sundays had a field day; overnight Bluhm became a figure of loathing for Fleet Street to snipe at as it wished. Until now, he had been Arnold Bluhm, M.D., the adopted Congolese son of a wealthy Belgian mining couple, educated Kinshasa, Brussels and the Sorbonne, medical monk, denizen of war zones, selfless healer of Algiers. (*Gardener* 73)

The persistence of racism and racial stenotypes in the postcolonial world is pointedly evoked in the following passage:

> From now on he was Bluhm the seducer, Bluhm the adulterer, Bluhm the maniac. A page-three feature about murderous doctors down the ages was

> accompanied by lookalike photographs of Bluhm and O. J. Simpson over the catchy heading “Which Twin is the Doctor?” (*Gardener* 73)

The cryptic narrator-analyst interposes again:

> Bluhm, if you were that kind of newspaper reader, was your archetypal black killer. He had ensnared a white man's wife, cut her throat, decapitated the driver and run off into the bush to seek new prey or do whatever those salon blacks do when they revert to type. To make the comparison more graphically, they had airbrushed out Bluhm's beard. (*Gardener* 73)

The text seems to suggest that for a substantial segment of the present day British public Africans continue to constitute the inscrutable, dangerous other, capable of the most atrocious crimes, whatever their professional attainments.

However, Dr. Bluhm eventually turns to be just as much of a victim as Tessa. As a gay African man, he is the other in more senses than one, and appears automatically to qualify for le Carré’s sympathy. Justin’s own enquiries lead him to discover that Karel Vita Hudson (KVH), a multinational pharmaceutical giant, has been testing a potentially dangerous tuberculosis drug, Dypraxa, on unsuspecting African slum dwellers in the guise of administering free AIDS vaccines. This is the dangerous truth Tessa uncovers, and dies trying to expose. The subsequent events in the novel serve to expose the manner in which Africa’s poorest people are routinely used as guinea pigs in illegal drug tests conducted by powerful pharmaceutical conglomerates, often aided by the active collusion of those in government. In effect, after *Single and Single* le Carré once again presents his readers with another *exposé* of the nexus between biopolitics, governmentality and Empire. As one character summarizes the many sides of the novel’s central concern:

> “Issue one: the side effects are being deliberately concealed in the interest of profit. Issue two: the world's poorest communities are used as guinea pigs by the world's richest. Issue three: legitimate scientific debate of these issues is stifled by corporate intimidation." (*Gardener* 429)

It is evident that the situation involves the violation of Human Rights, and in le Carré’s ethical perspective, constitutes the grossest kind of human indecency. The wretched, helpless condition of most victims of this tragedy, and the extent to which their plight has been ignored by the developed world is represented through an emotional outburst from one of Tessa’s closest friends:

> "Africa's got eighty-five percent of the world's AIDS cases, did you know that? How many of those have access to medication? One percent! It's not a human problem anymore! It's an economic one! The men can't work. The women can't work! It's a heterosexual disease, which is why there are so many orphans! They can't feed their families! Nothing gets done! They just die!" (*Gardener* 283)

Ironically, the narrator adopts a tone of clinical detachment to give the problem an intimate, individual perspective. In the following exposition, one of Tessa's 'case studies,' despite its terse relation of 'facts,' serves to turn a bland statistic into a poignant human story:

> "Wanza is a single mother.
>
> She can't read or write.
>
> I met her in her village and again in Kibera slum. She got pregnant by her uncle who raped her and then claimed she had seduced him. This is her first pregnancy. Wanza left the village in order not to be raped again by her uncle, and also by another man who was molesting her. Wanza says many people in her village were sick with bad coughs. Many of the men had AIDS, women too. Two pregnant women had recently died. Like Wanza, they had been visiting a medical center five miles away. Wanza did not want to use the same medical center any more. She was afraid their pills were bad. (*Gardener* 318)

The poignant footnote to this case study states: "Wanza is an African guinea pig, one of many who have not survived Dypraxa" (*Gardener* 320). Here again we see le Carré remaining constant in his strategy of rendering the subaltern compellingly visible, while locating her in the discourse of Empire.

Justin's gradual discovery of the heroic struggle by Tessa and Arnold Bluhm against this overarching exploitation of marginal human beings, despite a steady barrage of abuse and threats to their lives, heightens the suspense factor in the novel. At the same time it also underscores the extent to which the 'pharmas' are prepared to go to prevent the truth from being known. Justin's eventual discovery of a nexus between KVH and his superiors in the British Foreign Office, brings home le Carré's point that in most cases, the perpetrators of these atrocities are to be found among the richest and most powerful in the western world.

Another point le Carré seems to be making is that in the new millennium, international pharmacology is less about life saving and more about net profits:

> "And tuberculosis is megabucks: ask Karel Vita Hudson. Any day now the richest nations will be facing a tubercular pandemic, and Dypraxa will become the multibillion dollar earner that all good shareholders dream of" (*Gardener* 315).

The fact that Justin Quayle is killed at the end of the novel seems to drive home le Carré's point that the forces of consumer capitalism brook no resistance and would stop at nothing in their lust for profits.

The common thread that emerges from these perspectives on the globalized consumer capitalism as reflected in le Carré's post-Cold War novels is a palpable sense of moral indignation at the ideology of the Imperial marketing civilization which "must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere," as Marx once said (Marx, *Manifesto* 38). A point that needs to be made here relates to the evidence regarding the collusion between states and corporate houses in matters of exploiting large chunks of human population to further the interests of capital. While it is possible to garner evidence regarding nefarious states colluding with unscrupulous corporate houses from newspapers, WHO reports and reports of various UN sub-committees, university research reports, as well as reports and memoranda of NGOs, this dissertation has restricted itself to textual evidence available in the novels of le Carré. While such evidence may not be considered maintainable in strict legal-juridical terms, their value and admissibility in literary criticism cannot be set aside. For, every literary work is a social formation and carries reflections of what happens in society. While maintaining that the difference between historical and literary textual evidence cannot be questioned, it is doubtful if we could securely choose one by dumping the other.

4.05 Ideology and Globalized Surveillance Society

One aspect of modernity that is explored and exposed by le Carré in the post-Cold War novels is the vulnerability and helplessness of the individual in an environment where surveillance is pervasive, aggressive and often intrusive. Here, the "license to look:" (Denning 102) has been magnified manifold to include satellite imaging,

recording, transmitting, uploading and storing of both public and private information, in a situation where all information is deemed useful and all individuals potentially dangerous.

In *The Russia House*, for instance, the first indication of indecency in the British spy Clive comes, significantly, through his callous admission of having ordered surveillance over Barley's daughter. Considering that the details of Barley's activities in Moscow are shown being coaxed out through a protracted interrogation by a team of British and American Intelligence personnel, surveillance and suspicion of ordinary citizens may be seen to unite the forces of indecency on both sides of the Cold War divide in le Carré's fiction. In *The Russia House*, le Carré appears to critique the State's willingness to violate individual privacy by reducing such attempts to farce. At a certain point in the interrogation, Barley, somewhat disconcerted, gets up and walks to a window:

> Then comes a most frightful crash like the shattering of several window panes at once, followed by an oil gush, and you would suppose that Barley had staged his long-delayed breakout, taking the ornamental Portuguese wall plates and curly flower vases with him. But the truth is, the whole rumpus is only the sound of Barley discovering the drinks table and dumping three cubes of ice into a crystal tumbler and pouring a decent measure of Scotch over them, all within a couple of inches' range of a microphone that Brock with his characteristic over-production had concealed in one of the richly carved compartments. (*Russia* 69)

References to surveillance operations in *The Russia House* are repeatedly accompanied by farcical deflations of the exercise, as in the following attempt to find Barley's whereabouts:

> But when they tried, with old Palfrey's help again, to tap his phone to get more of this lovely voice, there was nothing to tap because he hadn't paid his bill. (*Russia* 53)

An elaborate surveillance operation is shown being mounted inside the Soviet Union by the joint Anglo-American team to monitor Barley's final meeting with Katya, While observers located in a disguised truck in Moscow track Barley's activities with cameras and microphones, faraway in London, the progress of the operation is analyzed in a sound-proofed room filled with winking telephones and rows of

television sets (*Russia* 274). But the images and sound bites that emerge from the operation yield conflicting and eventually erroneous interpretations.

An apparently casual observation at the Moscow Book Fair in the *perestroika* era Soviet Union serves to foreground the ubiquity of surveillance thus linking both sides of the ideological divide in an ethically inseparable mesh:

> … Wicklow takes charge of the carbon copies of eight unpublishable manuscripts, for this is a world in which the photocopier and electric typewriter are still the forbidden instruments of sedition. (*Russia* 128)

The centrality of surveillance to the world of the spy is made particularly evident in *Our Game*, where Tim Cranmer reveals, among his most treasured possessions, a disused "seven-hundred-year-old private church" (*Game* 120) with an attached "miniature hexagonal bell tower" (*Game* 119) complete with a secret priest hole with arrow slits through which he commands a "perfect all round view of the enemy's approach" (*Game* 121). It is here, in his observatory atop the bell tower that Tim lurks and scans secretly hoarded correspondence to find out the whereabouts of his missing agent Larry. Nowhere else in le Carré's fiction is there a depiction so evocative of Foucault's concept of the "Panopticon" (Foucault *Discipline* 201). The fact that Tim confesses the addictive power of the bell tower and its importance of to his "inner life" (*Game* 121), points also to le Carré's awareness of the nexus between power and knowledge, especially clandestine knowledge. Further, by locating Cranmer's private Panopticon within a disused church le Carré achieves an unmistakable metaphoric significance. The spy, cut off from spiritual roots, begins to substitute vicarious living—a death-in-life—for both vitality and values.

The consciousness among ordinary citizens of being constantly under surveillance—of being, in other words in "a state of conscious and permanent visibility" (Foucault *Discipline* 201) is crucial to le Carré's evocation of the "Panopticon," This is theoretically geared towards inducing large doses of self-regulation in the subject. "It is dangerous for you," Katya whispers to Landau (*Russia* 16), after handing him Goethe's documents, and soon thereafter, the latter spots KGB men among a group of youths watching the entrance to his hotel (*Russia* 17). Elsewhere, Barley has his entire family history—political affiliations, financial disasters and failed relationships

included—recited back to him by the CIA agent Sheriton, who insists that there is “no longer the space in life to take each humble member of the human family on his merits” since “everybody who is anybody has a record” (*Russia* 232). This cynical justification of state surveillance over average individual may be seen as comprising a major component of indecency in the novel.

Again, in *The Mission Song* the protagonist Salvo, a professional interpreter, is engaged by British intelligence to eavesdrop on delegates at a conference of Congolese “Warlords” through a series of concealed microphones. At one point a couple of suspicious delegates wander off in search of a more private space for conversation. The intrusive nature of the surveillance is recorded in the following passage:

> Over my headset I pick up Haj's crocs slapping down the walkway, accompanied by a second pair of footsteps which I tentatively assign to Dieudonne. Sam immediately confirms the identification: watchers report that Haj has grabbed Dieudonne by the elbow and is literally leading him up the garden path. Better still, Haj has put a finger to his lips, commanding Dieudonne's silence until they are clear of the house. My spirits soar. (*Mission* 172)

The narrator Salvo is acutely conscious here that his own notes and responses are also being recorded. However, although Salvo initially appears to react in the manner of the “desired docile body” (Lyon, *Theorizing* 4), Haj, the primary target does not. Because he is conscious of being under surveillance, he attempts to devise strategies to thwart the exercise. Salvo himself adopts a tongue-in-cheek response to spying, and its representation in fiction gets an ironic twist:

> There is no finer music to your part-time sound-thief's ear than: "Let's go somewhere where we can't be overheard," or "Wait where you are while I get to a public phone box."…. As they climb Haj starts to dance. And as he dances he begins speaking in bursts: a rap of the crocs, a rap of speech. Sound-thieves hear like the blind. But sometimes they also see like the blind, which is what I'm doing now: bright and clear as day in my blind man's eye. I see Haj's slime-green crocs skimming the stone steps, slappety-whack, slappety-whack. I see his lacquered forelock bucking, his slender body arched backwards,

> hands trailing like silk scarves against the clear blue sky while he keeps his voice below the level of his slapping crocs. (*Mission* 172-73)

What is to be noted here is that the narrative foregrounds the larger issues of surveillance by establishing a symbolic equivalence between Haj and the non-western world, at once "wild" and ethically "steady." Salvo, the observing subject, becomes a subaltern "mimic man" (Bhabha, *Culture* 87), eager to fulfil his role as a minion of the western world:

> If his body is a wild man's, his voice is a steady man's, and the more quietly he talks, the more din he makes with his feet, and the more he flings his head around in the course of a single sentence as he feeds the mikes, one garbled morsel down each little throat. (*Mission* 173)

As an unconscious agent of the western interests, Salvo exhibits the suspicion of foreign tongues in an insistently multilingual world:

> What language is he speaking? His native Shi which Dieudonné also happens to speak. So what he's doing or thinks he's doing with a little improvisation, and a dash of French where he needs it he's using a language that nobody overhearing them could possibly understand except I can. So I'm coming after him. I'm right in there with them. I'm coming after him so hard that when I press my eyes tight shut I can see him with my virtual eye. When Haj skips away, and Dieudonné trudges after him, spluttering his half cough, Salvo the top interpreter is there beside them with his headphones and his notepad. When Haj skips back, Dieudonne stands motionless and so do I. Up another step, and Haj leaps onto the grass, and so do I. And Haj knows I'm there. I know he knows. (*Song* 172-73)

What is perhaps most significant about the implications of this passage, however, is the epistemic obsession of the western world with one type of knowledge: the knowledge that contributes to the consolidation and exercise of money power. However, in this novel as well as others in the post-Cold War group, le Carré seems to be pleading for an alternative epistemic orientation: more benign, and motivated by compassion rather than contestation and domination.

The questionable ethics underlying this process of surveillance is obliquely acknowledged by Salvo's description of himself as a "sound thief." Throughout this passage, what is remarkably emphasized is that Haj, the object of surveillance is

aware of what is happening and his actions constitute an attempt to defeat this intrusion of his privacy. The unmistakable echoes of Foucault's Panopticon may be seen to inform this scene. Salvo, the hidden observer, experiences the thrill of power as he gains access to knowledge that the object would normally withhold. However, the narrative may be seen to deny any positive utility of this secret knowledge, since both Salvo the observer and Haj, the object of surveillance, are eventually shown realizing that the only worthwhile knowledge for both is the reality of the Congo, and this is the knowledge they learn to share in the end. Therefore, in the end, the surveillance no matter how pervasive or aggressive, fails to produce truly docile bodies.

The fact that surveillance is endemic to espionage would appear to make descriptions of the process a generic convention of spy fiction. Routine descriptions of electronic surveillance abound in the post-Cold War novels of le Carré. In *Our Kind of Traitor*, British intelligence agents are shown examining video footage of a luxury yacht and its occupants:

> In the gloom, an amateur video camera shakily roams the battlements of a medieval fort, then descends to the sea wall of an ancient harbour crowded with expensive sailing boats. It is dusk, the camera is of poor quality, unequal to the failing light. A ninety-foot luxury yacht in blue and gold lies at anchor outside the harbor walls. It is dressed overall with fairy lights, its portholes are lit. Distant dance music reaches us from across the water. Perhaps someone is celebrating a birthday or a wedding? From its stern hang the flags of Switzerland, Britain and Russia. At its masthead, a golden wolf bestrides a crimson field.
>
> The camera closes on the bow. The ship's name, inscribed in fancy Roman and Cyrillic gold lettering, is *Princess Tatiana*. (*Traitor* 155-56)

Despite the limitations of technology indicated through the reference to the poor quality of the camera, the scene serves to emphasize the exhaustive range of the information available through contemporary surveillance technologies. The tinkle of music reminds us of the power of even the lowest grade audio-visual equipment to record both sight and sound from distances. This is reinforced by the scene where the camera zooms for a close up of the name. Accompanying all this is of course

information from additional sources, represented here by the commentary Hector provides:

"Property of a newly formed company called First Arena Credit Bank of Toronto,

> registered in Cyprus, owned by a foundation in Liechtenstein which is owned by a company registered in Cyprus," he announces drily. "So a circular ownership. Give it to a company, then get it back from the company. Until recently she was called the *Princess Anastasia*, which happens to be the name of the Prince's previous squeeze. His new squeeze is called Tatiana, so we may draw our conclusions. The Prince being presently confined to Russia for his health, the SS *Princess Tatiana* is out on charter to an international consortium called, funnily enough, First Arena Credit International, a different entity entirely, registered, you'll be surprised to hear, in Cyprus." (*Traitor* 156)

Yet, this apparently impressive collation of data in the service of the nation's well being may still be seen being subverted by the narrative through the lingering doubts that defy interpretation. In le Carré's fiction, there is always the possibility that all the suspicion has been groundless and all this investment of time and energy has been futile, for the information gathered could relate to something as innocuous as a birthday or a wedding.

The ethical and technological limitations of surveillance are directly voiced in an early novel from the post-Cold War set:

> Espionage technology can do a lot. It can photograph crops and trenches, tanks and rocket sites and tyre-marks and the migration of the reindeer. It can flinch at the sound of a Russian fighter pilot breaking wind at forty thousand feet or a Chinese general belching in his sleep. (*Pilgrim* 211)

But, the next section of the narrative is more somber and more ironic:

> But it can't replace human understanding. It can't tell you what's in the heart of a Cambodian farmer whose hill crops have been blown to smithereens by Dr. Kissinger's unmarked bombers, whose daughters have been sold into prostitution in the city, and whose sons have been lured into leaving the fields and fighting for an American puppet army, or urged, by way of family insurance, into the ranks of the Khmer Rouge. It can't read the lips of jungle

> fighters in black pyjamas whose most powerful weapon is the perverted Marxism of a blood-hungry Sorbonne-educated Cambodian psychopath. It can't sniff the exhaust fumes of an army that is unmechanised. Or break the codes of an army without radio. Or calculate the supplies of men who can nourish themselves on ground beetles and wood bark; or the morale of those who, having lost all they possess, have only the future to win (*Pilgrim* 211)

The fact that surveillance invariably fails to factor in the elements of human emotion and human idiosyncrasy is graphically explicated in this passage. What is also important to note is the suggestion that surveillance and its technologies are inseparable from the exercise of authority by unethical power structures, and therefore are invariably instrumental in the perpetuation of human indecency.

The convergence of surveillance and television technologies and their role in the desensitizing society to human suffering is addressed in the following passage from *The Night Manager*, published in the aftermath of the first Gulf War:

> His eye returned to Herr Strippli's tarty television set, squatting before him like
>
> a man's handbag. It had been playing the same electronic game for the last fifteen
>
> minutes. The aerial bomber's sights centre on a grey fleck of building far below.
>
> The camera zooms closer. A missile speeds toward the target, enters and descends several floors. The base of the building pops like a paper bag, to the unctuous satisfaction of the news caster. A bull's-eye.Two more shots for no extra money. Nobody talks about the casualties. From that height there aren't any. Iraq is not Belfast. (*Manager* 58)

It must be noted that the reference to the "electronic game" is pointedly ironic. The vividly described visuals on the television screen may be seen to approximate to an iconic surveillance footage from "Operation Desert Storm" (1991), replayed endlessly on television screens across the world at that time. Here the technology of surveillance is so thoroughly implicated with the technology of destruction that they have in effect become one. The technology that kills efficiently also manages to sanitize the mayhem and mask the cruelty in the celebratory discourse of technological progress. In the process, the racist presumptions regarding the

expendable quality of non white lives is brought out in the comparison between Iraq and Ireland.

The employment of surveillance technologies in the interests of imperialism and consumer capitalism may be seen critiqued in the following account about the aftermath of the staged killing of Ted Mundy and Sasha in *Absolute Friends*:

> ARNOLD alleged that J, by means of a sophisticated smokescreen of proxies, was the sole shareholder of a security company specializing in bulletproof cars, personal protection and survival counseling for prominent Americans in the corporate and entertainment fields who were contemplating a trip to terrorist-stricken Europe. The same company owned the copyright in the only piece of video footage of the siege ever to appear. This showed a posse of unidentifiable heroes in full anti-terror rig storming through clouds of Hollywood smoke across the roof of the school building. In the background, just distinguishable between the chimney pots, lies the body of the Euro-terrorist Sasha, shot dead in the very act of flight. Medics are running over the cobbles towards him; a battered briefcase lies beside him. The clip, run and rerun on every television station in the world, had earned millions of dollars for its owner. (*Friends* 378-79)

Taken together, these forays into the technological aspects of espionage and information gathering may be seen not only as variations on Foucault's concept of the Panopticon, but also as a layered critique of surveillance as an offensive strategy. This is primarily so because surveillance is implicated in the furtherance of imperialistic tendencies of the western power elite, and inevitably, the interests of the Imperial market civilization.

4.06 Genre and Resistance in the Post-Cold War Novels

The post-Cold War novels continue le Carré's unorthodox focus on spying as a contemplative activity, rather than an action-oriented one. They also appear to deviate substantially in their greater investment in the problematic nature of categorizing victory and defeat, in any ideological conflict. Whereas the generic trope of spy fiction insists on the spy hero "overcoming obstacles and dangers to accomplish some important moral mission" (Cawelti 39), le Carré's post-Cold War narratives like *The Secret Pilgrim* repeatedly dramatize this difficulty of defining accomplishment. For

instance, in chapter 3, Ned is presented as a callow youth, fresh out of spy training, receiving the shocking news that Ben Cavendish, his closest friend and colleague, has disappeared even as his agents in Europe have been captured by the opposition. After getting to know of the circumstances prior to his disappearance from Smiley—whom he meets for the first time—Ned uses his unique insight into Ben's psyche to track him down in order to discover the truth, believing it is "the correct, the decent, the moral course of action" (*Pilgrim* 52). He discovers that despite appearing to have all the requisites of a successful career in spying, his friend Ben is not really cut out for the task, and has, in fact, been hiding after botching his first mission in Berlin. As it turns out, Ned's efforts only enable Smiley and his cohorts to trail him and capture Ben. As Ned's superiors congratulate him on his role in helping the Circus to apprehend their fugitive, he simultaneously experiences professional success and personal failure.

This trope recurs in the farcical episode contained in chapter 6, where Ned watches helplessly by the sidelines even as a duplicitous Hungarian academic Teodor and his actor friend Latzi manage to hoodwink both the CIA and the Circus, garnering both plaudits and privileges as a pair of anti-Communist heroes in exile. In this episode Ned is implicated not so much personally—for he remains skeptical from the start and sees through the sham before everyone else—but by extension. Ned is after all a part of the devious business of spying, where truth and reality remain forever cloaked in ambiguity. Chapter 7 offers a grim variation on the same theme, where Ned manages to enlist the services of a high ranking Polish double agent named Col. Jerzy. Ned's coup brings him accolades from his superiors and facilitates his promotion through the Circus ranks. But Ned recognizes that Jerzy is a born sadist who spies neither for money nor for ideology but rather for the thrill and risk involved in spying. As Jerzy explains to Ned after much coaxing, "No danger is no life…No danger is dead" (*Pilgrim* 170). The generic resistance offered by this representation to the conventional trope of the thrill-seeking spy can be understood by comparing Jerzy's philosophy with that of James Bond, who condemns the vice of "boredom,…particularly the incredible circumstance of waking up bored" (Fleming *From Russia, with Love* 62). Bond constantly craves adventure, as do Hannay and Bulldog Drummond, at the beginning of their respective adventures. Considered in

this light, Jerzy becomes a salutary reminder of how the spy-who-is-addicted-to-danger might look if he did not belong to the right side.

Again, in chapter 8, Ned is shown going horribly wrong in his judgment when, at the behest of the Soviet mole Bill Haydon, he seduces the mistress of one of his European agents in order to find out if she is a traitor about to compromise the Circus's Baltic network. Even as he follows orders and initiates a relationship with the all too willing girl, Bella, he experiences a disorientation peculiar to a spy, which he recalls later thus:

> "I remembered Haydon's suggestion that I should 'get alongside her' and discovered that I was incapable of separating my sense of duty from my desires." (*Pilgrim* 85)

When the network is actually betrayed, Ned becomes responsible further interrogation in England and learns of her eventual deportation to Canada. Here, we may see the spy's conflicted motives and allegiances dramatized through the tension between Ned's ideological commitment towards his duty and his private loyalty to Bella, both on account of her beauty (*Pilgrim* 91) and for an instinctive faith in her goodness (*Pilgrim* 102-3).

A spy, especially a male one, is perceived to be physically and psychologically "invulnerable to sentiment, including the sentiments of effeminacy, happiness, sadness, or charm (Hepburn 14). However, le Carré's portrayal of the spy defeats such a generalization. Ned is shown being deeply affected by his parting moments with Bella as he feels she has rejected his "love" (*Pilgrim* 106). When Bella's innocence is eventually established, many years later, Ned, the mature narrator, acknowledges his abiding sense of remorse:

> And today I think of her each morning as I listen to the news before walking my dog. I wonder what we thought we were promising to those brave Balts in those days, and whether it was the same promise which we are now so diligently breaking. (*Pilgrim* 106)

The fact that Ned is haunted by a sense of guilt in having betrayed both an innocent and a lover, destabilizes the image of the unerring spy hero who affects but is never himself affected by the women in his life. Also, significantly, the betrayal of Bella becomes emblematic in this admission for a larger and persistent pattern of false promises and treachery that the spy necessarily participates in.

Given the valorization of the individual conscience over institutional allegiances in le Carré's post-Cold War novels, what seems to warrant particular attention in this episode, is that Ned identifies it with his leap into maturity (*Pilgrim* 103), and resolves thereafter to privilege his "instincts and desires" over the "harness" of official responsibility (*Pilgrim* 104).

In fact, another element that distinguishes the later set is a deliberate shift from le Carré's earlier refusal to take sides in the ideological conflict of the Cold War. The post-Cold War novels can be seen becoming increasingly critical of Western capitalism, particularly on account of its inherently aggressive and imperialistic tendencies.

The first clear indication of le Carré's continued resistance to the generic conventions of spy fiction can be seen in the very first novel of the post-Cold War era, that is, *The Russia House*. The scruffy, recalcitrant protagonist, Barley Blair, the extraordinary investment in voicing the subaltern, and the narrative empathy with Barley, despite his disregard of "national security"—all these elements may be seen to subvert the conventions of the spy novel. However, it is in the doubts voiced by George Smiley in his final appearance—quoted at the head of this chapter— that the ideological underpinnings of conventional spy fiction can be seen being truly resisted:

> "… I'm afraid, that the Cold War produced in us a kind of vicarious colonialism. On the one hand we abandoned practically every article of our national identity to American foreign policy. On the other we bought ourselves a stay of execution for our vision of our colonial selves. Worsestill, we encouraged the Americans to behave in the same way. Not that they needed our encouragement, but they were pleased to have it, naturally." (*Pilgrim* 206)

This speech, like declaration later made by Ned regarding a new need to combat capitalism, can be interrogating the discourse of triumphant capitalism which the market-oriented genre of spy fiction happens to be saturated in.

It is important to note that a similar spirit of criticism can also explain the new focus on the subaltern inhabiting the geographical and psychological margins of the Western world, as is evident in the following extract from *Our Game*, where Larry

Pettifer, another of le Carré's secret agents with a personal agenda, seeks to explain his apparently odd sympathies:

> It happens to be the Ingush because they exemplify everything most shabby about our post-Cold War world. All through the Cold War it was our Western boast that we defended the underdog against the bully. The boast was a bloody lie. Again and again during the Cold War and after it the West made common cause with the bully in favour of what we call stability, to the despair of the very people we claimed to be protecting. That's what we're up to now.(*Game* 253)

In both the passages cited above, what is critiqued includes, besides the western discourse of the Cold War, a fundamental uncertainty inherent to the motivations and mechanics of espionage. These same uncertainties are represented farcically in *The Tailor of Panama*. In a passage laden with mordant humour, Luxmore, an ageing "espiocrat"—a telling portmanteau coinage that repositions the spy as a bureaucrat—holds forth on the unpredictable nature of the historical events that spies are supposed to anticipate and influence:

> "It's the hardest thing for a Service like ours to put its finger on, Johnny: the human groundswell before it has stirred, the voxpopuli before it has spoken. Look at Iran and the Ayatollah. Look at Egypt in the run-up to Suez. Look at the perestroika and the collapse of the evil empire. Look at Saddam, one of our best customers. Who saw them coming, Johnny? Who saw them forming like black clouds upon the horizon? Not us. Look at Galtieri and the conflagration in the Falklands, my God. Again and again, our vast intelligence hammer is able to crack every nut except the one that matters: the human enigma." (*Tailor* 333)

The long list of failures alluded to here serves to debunk the entire rationale for international "intelligence" gathering. Through a parodic deflation of the moral and psychological certitudes of the espionage game, le Carré may be seen ridiculing some of the most fundamental assumptions of the spy novel. On a slightly more serious note, le Carré also depicts the impossibility of faith in espionage, which is by definition based on the practice of deception and duplicity. The fact that spies invariably fail to distinguish friend from foe is regretfully admitted in this little exchange between Smiley and the narrator, Ned, from *The Secret Pilgrim*:

> "People who are stupid act intelligent. Intelligent people act stupid. The guilty look innocent as the day, and the innocent look dreadfully guilty. And just occasionally people act as they are and tell the truth as they know it, and of course they're the poor souls who get caught out every time. There's nobody less convincing to our wretched trade than the blameless man with nothing to hide." "Except possibly the blameless woman," I suggested under my breath. (*Pilgrim* 67)

This apparently casual reflection can be seen to interrogate the entire rationale of espionage; if all the training and the investment in technology only produces uncertain results, how may espionage be validated? It is by raising these crucial issues which strike at the heart of spy fiction that le Carré may be seen oppose, subvert and transcend the genre.

The importance of location and setting to the spy narrative, both in literature or film, has been noted by critics. The necessity of the spy blending with the terrain, for example, as a theme drawn from Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts movement, has been mentioned not only by critics (Panek 54; Britton14) but also by Eric Ambler in *Send No More Roses* (1977). The trope of the spy traversing national borders and foraying into dangerous enemy territories occurs the works of Buchan, Ambler and Maugham during the early years of the twentieth century. In the decades following World War II, however, the travelling agent becomes reconstituted as a globe-trotting tourist (Britton 14). This trope also apparently recurs in le Carré's novels. However, while the Cold War novels stick to the nominal Cold War hot-spots of London-Berlin-Washington DC—barring *The Honourable Schoolboy*, that is—the post-Cold War novels are set in the far corners of the globe.

From the perestroika era Moscow in *The Russia House*, Chechnya in *Our Game*, Georgia in *Single and Single* to Latin America in *The Tailor of Panama*, and postcolonial Africa in *The Constant Gardener* and *The Mission Song*, the secret agents of le Carré's fiction ply their trade in the same spaces as their adventuring precursors in colonial times. Yet, closer scrutiny reveals the difficulty of facile labels in this regard. If one were to find points of contact between these disparate settings and the narratives they sustain, one could perhaps identify two main factors. First, there is the geographical and psychological distance of these settings from the western

consciousness in the twenty first century. Second, there is the overwhelming presence of suffering humanity in the spaces specified. In other words, le Carré's post-Cold War novels are deliberately set in the geographical and psychological margins of the western consciousness and in the locations of global human misery and suffering. What the post-Cold War novels present before the reader, therefore, is not so much a license to look at exotic spaces, but the obligation to observe the human occupants of those spaces, who invariably happen to be multitudinous victims of continuing injustice and exploitation. Thus the average Chechnian, Mingrelian or even Russian peasant, subjects to exploitation by organized crime as much as by corrupt political masters, occupy centre stage in a setting where the fate of the secret agent pales into relative insignificance. These subalterns, along with the denizens of Panama and Kenya and the Congo are at the receiving end of bombs as well as untested medicines. They are vulnerable to the seizure of their material resources as well as vital processes. They also inhabit spaces where the great games of biopolitics and governmentality ensure a permanent state of exception, far from the concerns of the developed world. In this alone, le Carré effects a radical and unprecedented departure from the generic practice of spy fiction.

As opposed to the adventurous Bond type spy hero who seeks the thrill of heroic action, le Carré's heroes in the post-Cold War novels deliberately play down jingoism and subvert the fetishization of weaponry. The worldly wise narrator Ned in the opening chapter of *The Secret Pilgrim* describes the trade in licensed arms in England as "grisly" (*Pilgrim* 17). In the final chapter he has a particularly depressing encounter with an unrepentant English arms dealer named Sir Anthony Bradshaw. The gun is the most recognizable incarnation of technology (Hepburn 16) in the iconography of spy fiction, as even a cursory look at any number of spy fiction paperback covers or spy film posters might reveal. As opposed to this fetishization of guns and the technology of warfare in conventional spy fiction, Ned is shown uttering this denigration:

> But I've seen enough of the street side of life in the years between to know that more men are in love with war than ever get a chance to fight one, and that more guns are bought to satisfy this love than for a pardonable purpose. (*Pilgrim* 17)

Le Carré's spy heroes are also frequently tired of spying and long for more modest pleasures. At the end of *The Secret Pilgrim* Ned describes the preoccupations and pleasures of his retirement:

> We've bought a cottage on the coast. There's a long garden there I'd like to get my hands on, plant a few trees, make a vista to the sea. There's a sailing club for poor kids I'm involved in; we bring them down from Hackney, they enjoy it. (*Pilgrim* 335)

Likewise, in *Our Game*, Tim Cranmer's thoughts at the end of the Cold War seem to reflect this anti-heroic attitude:

> 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 that Merriman speaks of so warmly. 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, which these days is a mystery even to those best placed to cherish it. (*Game* 175)

In this novel, Tim Cranmer is portrayed as being naturally passive, as opposed to the character of his protégé, Larry Pettifer, who also appears to be closer to the Bond figure on account of his compulsive womanizing. However, le Carré's actual description of this Byronic spy seems calculated to disappoint initial expectations::

> He was a scourge of Western materialism, a champion of Russia good or bad. What powered him-in the fiction and the reality-was his romanticism, his love of the underdog, his gut contempt for the British Establishment and its crawling adherence to America. (*Game* 87)

Larry's empathy for the victims of injustice, his strident anti-Americanism and anger at the British ruling classes for favouring convenience over commitment would seem to align him more with the authorial perspective than any hero of conventional spy fiction.

It must be understood that the post-Cold War novels of le Carré depart from conventional spy fiction not only in the depiction of their spy heroes, but also in the portrayal of the women spy encounters in life. In *The Constant Gardener*, it is the wife of the spy protagonist who comes to dominate the narrative. In her empathy with the subaltern and her passion for commitment, Tessa Quayle comes closer to Larry Pettifer than does her husband Justin, the nominal spy. A conversation between Tessa and Sandy Woodrow, her husband's superior may serve to illustrate this point:

> "Was it black, Sandy, or just a touch of the cream?--I forget," she asks with mock
>
> gentility. *This is the Pharisaic life we lead*--she is telling him--*a continent lies dying at our door, and here we stand or kneel drinking coffee off a silver tray while just down the road children starve, the sick die and crooked politicians bankrupt the nation that was tricked into electing them.*" (*Gardener* 61-62; emphasis in original)

This is a self-conscious dramatization of Sandy's thoughts inserted into the narrative by a leap-frogging narrator. The narrative swiveling between the event and the discourse defamiliaries the content to the regular reader of spy fiction fed on stories either of romance or of betrayal and cuckoldry. The ironic reversal in portraying a politically conscious woman with an ill-equipped male spy is also to be noted:

> A witch-hunt—since you mention it—would make an excellent beginning. Name 'em, shame 'em, chop their heads off and spike 'em on the city gates, says I. The trouble is, it doesn't work. The same List of Shame is published every year in the Nairobi newspapers, and the same Kenyan politicians feature in it every time. Nobody is sacked, nobody is hauled up before the courts." She hands him a cup, swiveling on her knees to reach him. "But it doesn't bother you, does it? You're a status quo man. That's a decision you've taken. It hasn't been thrust upon you. You took it. You, Sandy. You looked in the mirror one day and you thought: Hullo, me, from now on I'll treat the world as I find it. I'll get the best deal I can for Britain, and I'll call it my duty. Never mind if it's a duty that accounts for the survival of some of the foulest governments on the globe. I'll do it anyway." She offers him sugar. He silently declines it. "So I'm afraid we can't agree, can we? I want to speak up. You want me to bury my head where yours is. One woman's duty is another man's cop-out. What's new?" (*Gardener* 61-62; emphasis in original).

Sandy's attempts to interpret the meaning behind Tessa's gestures are clearly shaped as much by his own sense of relative inadequacy as by his knowledge of Tessa's nature. What is unmistakable in this exchange, however, is that Tessa has the upper hand throughout this conversation, owing to her ethical and intellectual superiority over the male spy. Even Justin appears colourless and boring compared to Tessa. Barring the exceptional cases of novels featuring women as spies, or spy fiction authored by women, this foregrounding of empowered and intelligent women is a rare occurrence in spy fiction.

The formula fiction spy is distinguished as much by his sexual prowess and masterful relations with women as by his physical hardiness and capacity for heroic action. However, the spies of le Carré, even the good ones like Smiley and Ned, are wracked with feelings of inadequacy. Jonathan Pine, in *The Night Manager* may be seen to come closest to the conventional hero in that women find him attractive, and he does involve himself in heroic action in the course of the novel. However in the following scene featuring Pine and Madame Sophie, the mistress of an Egyptian crook, the spy hero never quite conforms to the type of the masterful male:

> Jonathan is in the bedroom of the little flat in Luxor, with the moonlight sloping between the half-closed curtains. Sophie is lying on the bed in her white nightgown, eyes closed and face upward. Some of her drollness has returned. She has drunk a little vodka. So has he. The bottle stands between them.
>
> "Why do you sit the other side of the room from me, Mr. Pine?"
>
> "Out of respect, I imagine." The hotelier's smile.The hotelier's voice, a careful composite of other people's.
>
> "But you brought me here to comfort me, I think."
>
> This time, no answer from Mr. Pine.
>
> "Am I too damaged for you? Too old perhaps?" (*Manager* 122-23)

Here, the laconic, ironic detachment of narrator ensures a more productive relationship between the language and the tone. However, the idea is not to enhance detachment in order to achieve what is often seen as an academic, or philosophically determined objective distance. Le Carré is mindful of the writer entering the belly of the whale and use writing as an excuse for not committing himself/herself to a particular political position. The sardonic narrator's apparent happiness at Pine's

discomfiture is a way of challenging spy fiction's masculinity, on the one hand, and hollowing out the claims of objectivity in what is putatively serious art:

Mr. Pine, normally so fluent, continues to preserve a dread silence.

> "I am worried for your dignity, Mr. Pine. Perhaps I am worried for my own. I think you sit so far away from me because you are ashamed of something. I hope it is not me."
>
> "I brought you here because it was somewhere safe, Madame Sophie. You need a pause for breath while you work out what to do and where to go. I thought I could be helpful."
>
> "And Mr. Pine? He needs nothing, I suppose? You are a healthy man, assisting the invalid? Thank you for bringing me to Luxor."
>
> "Thank you for agreeing to come."

Here again, is a conscious reversal of the staple sex encounter scenes between the all-knowing spy hero—who in a way, encapsulates the wisdom of the folk and the knowledge of the scientist—and the typical Bond girl, who combines in the same way as Bond himself, explosive sexuality an unthreatening submissiveness. What needs to be noted is the political subtext that emerges from the event:

> Her large eyes were fixed upon him in the moonlight. She did not easily resemble a helpless woman grateful for his help.
>
> "You have so many voices, Mr. Pine," she resumed, after too long. "I have no idea anymore who you are. You look at me, and you touch me with your eyes. And I am not insensitive to your touch. I am not." Her voice slipped a moment; she straightened herself and seemed to regroup. "You say one thing, and you are that person. And I am moved by that person. Then that person is called away, and somebody quite different takes his place. And you say something else. And I am moved again. So we have a changing of the guard. It is as if each person in you can only stand a little while of me, and then he has to go and get his rest. Are you like this with all your women?"
>
> "But you are not one of my women, Madame Sophie."
>
> "Then why are you here? To be a boy scout? I don't think so." (*Manager* 122-23)

As in the case of Tessa Quayle, here too, it is the intelligent woman who controls the flow of the conversation and in this case, perceives the spy's divided subjectivity. Madame Sophie is later shown following the dictates of her conscience in trying to

reform her lover, Freddie, an arms dealer. In consequence, she suffers an initial beating, and gives Pine an account of how it came about:

> "Look at these people, Freddie," I told him. "Each time someone sells weapons to another tin-pot Arab tyrant, these people starve a little more. Do you know the reason? Listen to me, Freddie. Because it is more fun to have a pretty army than to feed the starving. You are an Arab, Freddie. Never mind that we Egyptians say we are not Arabs. Weare Arabs. Is it right that your Arab brothers should be the flesh to pay for your dreams?"…. "He told me to mind my own business." He catches the choke of fury in her voice, and his heart sinks further. "I told him it *was* my business! *Life* and *death* are my business! *Arabs* are my business! *He* was my business!" (*Manager* 59)

Pine realizes the possible outcome of Sophie's defiance. This realization is shaped by his awareness both of Madame Sophie's courage, and her ethical superiority. In typical le Carré fashion, Pine's thoughts are externalized, highlighting the dangers of ethical commitment:

> And you warned him, he thinks, sickened. You let him know you were a force to be reckoned with, not a weak woman to be discarded at his whim. (*Manager* 59)

One notes how Sophie is ultimately killed—like Leamas in *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* and Pettifer in *Our Game*, to pick up just two random examples—but only after having committed herself to the cause of human decency. Sophie may be seen joining the ranks of a number of other women in the post-Cold War novels who stand for the spirit of ethical commitment to human decency.

Hannah the Congolese nurse in *The Mission Song* is another such character, who embodies the spirit of sincere compassion. When Salvo first encounters Hannah, he helps her to communicate with a dying African vagrant. "I am from the region of Goma in North Kivu, by tribe a Nande" she murmurs, "And this poor man from Rwanda is the enemy of my people" (*Mission* 30). The fact that Hannah chooses to tend to a man she has reason to regard as an enemy, aligns her with the ideal of human decency in the post-Cold War novels. Hannah's uncomplicated rejection of intolerance and indecency can be seen in the simple affirmation of love and beauty that rings through her words to Salvo, "When your mother and father made you, they must have loved each other very much" (*Mission* 36). This, once again, is a reiteration

of the value of decency under pressure, though, ironically, it is seen away from the publicized foundations of moral and ethical values in the West.

Perhaps the most drastic departure from the generic convention of the heroic spy occurs in the most recent novels. In *A Most Wanted Man*, Erna Frey, a senior aide to the German security officer Bachman is described in the following words:

> Erna Frey was tall, fit and frugal, with cropped, sensible hair and a purposeful stride. Saddled with the Christian name of a maiden aunt, and dispatched by wealthy parents to Hamburg's elite convent school for daughters of the eminent, she had emerged laden with the strict German virtues of chastity, industry, piety, sincerity and honor—until a mordant sense of humor and a healthy skepticism put paid to all of them. Another woman might have traded her antiquated first name for a newer model. Not Erna. At tennis tournaments she sliced and volleyed her way to victory over opponents of both sexes. On alpine excursions she outstripped men half her age. Her greatest passion, however, was lone sailing, and she was known to be storing away every penny she earned to buy herself a round-the-world yacht. (*Wanted* 53)

This follows a pattern seen in the anti-novelistic turn in the 1960s and 70s where metafictional texts deliberately present themselves as anti-novels. If Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* provides what was an interrogation of both the Gothic and realistic narrative traditions by repeatedly parodying and inverting the familiar lines from the genre, writers like John Fowles, Thomas Pynchon, and Kurt Vonnegut questioned the uncritical support that authors and readers apparently extended to love stories, spy novels, and science fiction. Though le Carré does not support 'institutionalized' experiments with form, as available in postmodernist fiction, he self-consciously uses a technique that can "bare" the inherent magic of narratives, whether of superhuman spy heroes, or of their fabled female companions (see Alter, *Partial* 9; also see Hutcheon, *Narcissistic* 8-17). Seen this way, Erna Frey is a woman who not only lives life on her own terms, but also presents a certain ideological imperative when it comes to fictional representation of women. She is, in effect, le Carré's positive representation of contemporary woman in western societies: career-conscious, professionally competent, yet ethically grounded.

It would be also interesting to look at the ending of *Single and Single*. The novel concludes with a military style rescue mission launched by British intelligence, where

both the hero Oliver Single and Aggie, his colleague-cum-girlfriend, are involved. The events seem to conform to the generic format of the hero rescuing the damsel in distress until this point. Thereafter, things do not follow the formula at all:

> Stepping forward to remonstrate with Yevgeni's bearded assailant, he felt his feet being kicked from under him. His head flew over his feet, and the next thing he knew he was lying on his back on the floor and a steel hard heel was being driven so viciously into his stomach that the lights went out and he thought he was dead. But he wasn't because when the lights came on again, the man who had kicked him was lying on the ground, clutching his groin and groaning, and he had been put there, as Oliver quickly deduced, by Aggie, brandishing a submachine gun and wearing a panther suit and Apache war paint (*Single* 385).

In a reversal of the famed Bond rescue acts, at least, of the Bond circulated by film, it is the girl who rescues the spy hero. This depiction, of course goes against sexism of the literary—and prior to the advent of Pierce Brosnan in the role (Brabazon 210)—the filmic Bond. In a notorious passage from Fleming's *Casino Royale*, Bond makes the following observations regarding women:

> Women were for recreation. On a job, they got in the way and fogged things up with sex and hurt feelings and all the emotional baggage they carried around. One had to look out for them and take care of them. (Fleming *Casino* 30)

Le Carré stages here a pointed rejection of the sexism inherent in the conventional spy narrative. It is also perhaps an attempt to mark off his relatively more plausible fictional universe from the male fantasy that Fleming and his imitators have come to typify. This is evident from the meditations of Oliver's case officer, Brock, who tells himself:

> You're not Machiavelli, you're not James Bond. You're an overworked welfare officer who's got to hold everybody's life together or somebody will run amok. (*Single* 232)

The point regarding Oliver's rescue has wider implications, of course, given that le Carré's fiction repeatedly foregrounds, among other things, the reversal of masculinities circulated by consumer culture. The presence of these strong women characters— who frequently tend to upstage the spy protagonist in the post-Cold War novels—may serve to indicate how the codified presentations of popular masculinities

can be parodied even as they are used. When all these instances of generic and ideological resistance are considered together, what emerges is a consistent pattern of ideological foregrounding. Le Carré's fiction, by resisting ideologies, constantly reminds the reader of their existence and operation. In this, he achieves a condition of art which, though born out of ideology, detaches itself from it by constantly alluding to it (see Althusser 270).

Michiko Kakutani's complaint in the *New York Times* review of *The Mission Song*, that it lacks "the nuance or chiaroscuro" of his cold war Smiley novels (Kakutani "Translator" N. p.) may be aptly extended to most of the post-Cold War novels. Nowhere in this set is there anything to match the novel of manners sidelights such as Smiley and Guillam's dinner with the Lacons in *The Honourable Schoolboy*. Instead, there are numerous stock figures and set descriptions repeated from one novel to the other. For instance, a hulking bodyguard standing with his hands crossed/cupped "over his balls" features more than once (*The Night Manager* 19; *The Mission Song* 59). The ghost of Ronnie Cornwell which appears as Rick Pym in *A Perfect Spy*, is reincarnated as Tiger Single in *Single and Single*. Besides, a dim witted prototype of Issa from *Our Kind of Traitor* actually appears in the form of Mikhail in *Single and Single*. However, all this does not necessarily prove that the post-Cold War novels are inferior works of art. It can be argued that in the later novels le Carré has deliberately sacrificed technique and artistic sophistication in order to produce, instead, a more focused literature of involvement. Given that le Carré has categorically alluded to Orwell and the "literature of involvement" (Crutchley 6) in connection with his own body of work, it is reasonable to suppose that the artistic and technical shift in the post-Cold War novels mirrors a more significant ideological reorientation. To understand this reorientation of interests and techniques, it is instructive to recall Orwell's own admission regarding his motives in writing. It is possible to argue that just as Orwell's writing begins in "a feeling of partisanship, a sense of injustice" (Orwell, "Why" N. p.), so too does the le Carré's in the post-Cold War novels. In each of the later novels, he seems to start by identifying a geographical space where there is a concentration of human suffering that demands exposure and amelioration. The purpose, then, is not so much to attain artistic perfection, as to highlight a humanitarian problem in which he has a partisan interest. The programmatic element behind his recent art renders it both paradoxically resistant to ideology and

ideologically charged. That he has chosen to carry out his programme of covert resistance by thoroughly subverting the ideologically saturated genre of spy fiction constitutes perhaps the strangest and smartest twist on the Great Game.

4.07 Ideology, Resistance and the Global Community of the Decent

Perhaps the final point of resistance to ideology—nationalist, capitalist, globalizing, imperial, and masculine, to recall the entire spectrum, for a clearer perspective—in the post-Cold War novels relates to an idea first mooted in *The Russia House*, that is le Carré's romantic ideal of a global community of like-minded individuals committed to "human decency." This community would necessarily resist, and transcend the ideologies of national interest obtaining in all considerations of race, ethnicity and religion. This idea is developed in *Absolute Friends*, where the forces of neo-imperialism and globalization necessitate the creation of such a community for the survival of free thought and decency. The idea is voiced by a mysterious philanthropist, Dimitry, as an ideal to aspire for:

> "I have in mind such thinkers as the Canadian Naomi Klein, India's Arundhati Roy, who pleads for a different way of seeing, your British George Monbiot and Mark Curtis, Australia's John Pilger, America's Noam Chomsky, the American Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, and the Franco-American Susan George of World Social Forum at Porto Alegre. You have read all of these fine writers, Mr. Mundy?" (*Friends* 276-77)

The following passage is remarkable in its clarity and resonance, at least insofar as it addresses the role of writing vis-à-vis the dangers of corporatization and cosmpolitization of knowledge and knowledge systems. The key word here is 'ecology' as opposed to 'economy,' especially when the structures meant to protect and promote knowledge exhibit a monocultural obsession with the excellence of one species in complete disregard for other species and other systems. It is critical to recognize the hollowness of international and interventionist programmes to promote nations as knowledge economies. We must note that le Carré does not use the expression directly, and in this manner. However, there is no question that he pleads for an alternative university system to promote what is perhaps a transparent and participatory knowledge ecology, rather than a corrupt and already diseased knowledge economy:

> "From their varying perspectives, each of these eminent writers tells me the same story. The corporate octopus is stifling the natural growth of humanity. It spreads tyranny, poverty and economic serfdom. It defies the simplest laws of ecology. Warfare is the extension of corporate power by other means. Each thrives off the other and the recent war proves the point in spades." (*Friends* 277)

Le Carré uses the phrase "Counter University" to ensure the survival of plurality of thought as well as the possibility and inevitability of dissent:

> The purpose of his great plan is to create *corporation-free academic zones*. It is to foster *seminaries of unbought opinion*, Mr. Mundy, open to students of any age, nationality and discipline who are interested in reinventing human incentive in the twenty-first century. It is to establish nothing less than a *rational marketplace of free opinion*, where the true causes of war, and the means of preventing it, can be aired. And finally his plan acquires a name—not several names, like its author, but one resounding name to echo down the ages: the Counter-University, no less, a global venture, Mr. Mundy, as multinational and elusive as the corporations it seeks to counter, untainted by vested, religious, state or corporate interest, and financed by Dimitri's own immense, larcenous resources. (*Friends* 278; emphasis in original)

This idea of freedom from ideological allegiances is alien to the whole history of spy fiction. The spy is ultimately defined by allegiance to a specific set of ideological imperatives. Like the soldier, the spy, too, performs a complex ritual of faith. This performance is affected by the historical and cultural specifics of the spy's locus, leading sometimes to the fragmented subjectivity of the double agent like Magnus Pym in *The Perfect Spy*, whose is personality is defined, and ultimately overwhelmed, by performance. However, for the most part, literary spies, like real ones, operate under circumstances conditioned by ideology.

The romance of Dimitry's great plan hinges on its promise of an escape from the imperatives of spying and surveillance on the one hand, and the threat to personal and social integrity they constitute. However, rather than an uncomplicated acceptance of the validity of this vision, le Carré seems more interested in pointing to the possibility of alternative strategies in engaging with the most pressing problems of the contemporary world. This is underscored through the frequent and destabilizing peeks

into Ted Mundy's consciousness that the narrative voice offers, while Dimitry outlines his plan. It is possible to argue that Ted Mundy does not readily surrender his skepticism at the first articulation of a plausible moral mission because the experience of history does not encourage unconditional or automatic faith. And yet, the fact that the romance of freedom from any unisonant discourse does exert an undeniable pull on the decent heroes of le Carré's fiction is testified by characters like Goethe, Ted Mundy, and Sasha, who die trying to realize it. To the extent that these characters from the post-Cold War novels may be considered to mirror an alternative social goal, their quest, in a way, may be assumed to be le Carré's own. This does not mean that le Carré uses his novels to uncritically push his own ideas into art in a missionary mode. Rather, he aligns the ideological with the aesthetic in a mode that is validated by an inner logic which treads itself through patterns and variations in his novels. To the extent that he seems to pursue a emancipatory agenda towards a Utopian ideal, he seems to perform the role of the philosopher-intellectual as imagined by Gramsci and Mannheim.