The critique of the convergent discourses of empire and capital can be seen as liminal presences in novels like *The Honourable Schoolboy* and *Smiley's People*. In the post-Cold War novels, however, while the discourse of empire and capital continue to be critiqued with greater vigour than before, the tone of ironic detachment and skeptical balance, the most recognizable generic feature of the Cold War novels, is resisted. By frequently breaking the established pattern—adopting a farcical tone in *The Tailor of Panama*, for instance, or the vituperative rant that American commentators found offensive in *Absolute Friends*—le Carré regularly defies expectations, challenges categorization and ultimately resists the constitutive power of modernity circulated through the spy genre.

In Cold War novels like *Call for the Dead* and *The Honourable Schoolboy* the generic trope of espionage as a Game is deflated through ironic reference to an unending cycle of cruelty and suffering. In the post-Cold War novels, the Game metaphor is invoked to critique the anachronism intrinsic both to espionage and to the ideologies of empire and capital it invariably serves. This is the context in which the metaphor occurs in Luxmore's harangue to Osnard in *The Tailor of Panama*. In a more complex allusion, the setting of *Our Game* intrudes into the historical and psychological setting of Kipling's original formulation—the struggle for dominance between Imperial Russia and Imperial Britain. In this and in later novels the metaphor of the Great Game serves to remind the English spies about the burden of guilt and responsibility that the history of empire imposes.

Whereas in the Cold War novels the agency of the spy hero in defeating the enemy and the fetishization of violence is constantly undermined, the post-Cold War novels appear to acknowledge the possibility of necessary violence in the cause of justice, albeit in the rarest of cases. Jonathan Pine in *The Night Manager*, Oliver Single in *Single and Single* and Luke Weaver in *Our Kind of Traitor* all indulge in physical violence while remaining worthy of narrative empathy.

In a pretty uncanny manner, le Carré deals with issues raised by serious thinkers of the contemporary world. On the one hand, Carré's art seems to align itself with apparently untheoretical issues raised in the domain of popular culture. Having said

that, to miss le Carré's engagements with philosophers such as Foucault, Levinas and Agamben, to name just three obvious cases, would also mean ignoring completely the complex meditations worked into spy fiction. At the same time it should be noted that le Carré steers clear of gratuitous theoretical debates as he consciously directs his novels into a socially committed domain, however ironical and apocalyptic. In fact, le Carré shows how the so called theory battle can be translated into a socially engaged debate on the burden of remaining human. This is pertinent in view of the proliferation of anti-humanist forces and state apparatuses that seek to foreclose all modes of resistance by way of interpellating human consciousness and conscience. This is also effectively foregrounded in his seeming adoption of a popular and apparently non-intellectual stance on issues that affect us deeply. It is true that Foucault's complex meditations on governmentality and biopolitics, especially the invocation of docile bodies, can be and have been analyzed in terms of epistemic abstractions. However, this is in spite of the fact that Foucault routes his theorization through historically verifiable contexts. Similarly, Levinas and Agamben have found exponents of their work who engage more with abstractions rather than concrete examples. So the idea of otherness and the explication of the state of exception run the risk of being turned into inaccessible debates on phenomenology. It is necessary, in a way, to translate complex knowledge systems into understandable ones. Le Carré is conscious of the dangers involved in any translation of knowledge into accessible forms. For, in this transaction, it is easy to miss the role of the translator. No translation is free from an ideological bias or the other. Translated into an elitist form, knowledge becomes inaccessible to large sections of the population. On the other hand, if knowledge is translated into a mass produced popular form, it is likely to be appropriated by different agencies of circulation. In either case, knowledge is appropriated by different forms of the market, where forms of knowledge are forced to comply with power. Le Carré seems to look for a space, that is neither exclusive and unavailable, nor mass produced and distorted. As a writer he looks to a 'Third Space' that transcends the limits set by what may appear to be elitist and pedestrian impulses. He shows how markets, MNCs, states and governments combine in complex ways to deny the individual basic dignity and rights. What emerges as 'decency' in the le Carré texts is ultimately a sign of resistance, a subtle search for an alternative space where the individual can live without threat of exceptions made by the state, as suggested by Agamben, or the 'Multitude,' as suggested by Hardt and

Negri. It is possible to see here that the role played by le Carré closely approximates to that of the intellectual working towards Utopia, as envisaged by Mannheim, or the 'organic philosopher' imagined by Gramsci. Le Carré, despite his involvement with a market-oriented genre and perhaps because of the manner in which he has engaged with it, has come to represent the engaged intellectual with an agenda, who does not forsake his responsibility towards the world at large.

The frequent and destabilizing encroachment of uncomfortable realities in the form of family crises and failed relationships into the world of le Carré's novels constitute another aspect of his resistance to and transgression of the basic assumptions of spy fiction.

As opposed to the critique of the modernity, depicted through the destabilization of subjectivity, manifest in the Cold War novels, the more recent novels may be seen to explore rather the experience of a society where surveillance is pervasive and often, intrusive. The place of the individual in supposedly democratic societies where the individual is ritually conceived as sacrosanct, but subjected to cruel and persistent violations of privacy is an issue that marks novels like *The Tailor of Panama Absolute Friends*, and *A Most Wanted Man*. But the exploration of surveillance should be seen as a subversive move, insofar as the narratives stress the failure of surveillance to take into account human emotion and idiosyncrasy and the unreliability of information obtained through espionage and surveillance. Also, the fact that surveillance and its technologies are shown to be inseparable from the exercise of authority by the hegemonic interests of imperialism and consumer capitalism makes them invariably instrumental in the perpetuation of human indecency. The convergence of surveillance and television technologies and their role in desensitizing society to human suffering is another issue addressed in this critique.

In the Cold War novels le Carré subverts the magic figure of the secret agent who perpetually maintains the balance of power in favour of western imperialism and capitalism by featuring doomed and ineffectual spies. In the post Cold War novels, on the other hand, he not only posits a number of spy heroes who are intent upon subverting the cause of capitalism, but also allows them a moderate capacity for minor victories. Leonard Burr and Jonathan Pine together penetrate Roper's defenses

and manage to relieve him of Jed. Oliver Single manages to rescue his father and scuttle the indecent plot dealing in human blood.

Although the issue of imperialism is explored and critiqued in the Cold War novels, the emphasis is on the anachronistic and indecent nature of the project, with subtle hints regarding the ultimate futility of all western colonial projects across the globe. This is seen in the insistent foregrounding of the restive aspects of former colonial spaces which defy the homogenizing efforts of imperialism. In *The Honorable Schoolboy* the elderly journalist-spy Craw admits that there is a cancerous rancour in the colonial subject that cannot be ignored any more. This is matched by the thoroughly revisionist perspective on the ideology of empire seen in the narration of the Partition of India in *Absolute Friends*. However, the post-Cold War novels evince a reassessment of the situation in the face of the danger posed by the systematic silencing of dissent that accompanies western imperialism in the twenty-first century. In this new scenario, the objects of le Carré's critique appear to be not just the unabashed presumption of American hegemony, but also the pusillanimity of nations which lack the decency to resist. The major target of this reoriented critical scrutiny is le Carré's own country, Britain. The complete subservience of the British intelligence services to American geo-political interests is a theme highlighted in most of the post-Cold War novels.

The strategic modes of resistance employed by le Carré in the Cold War novels may be considered covert and in a way indirect, in the sense that they are not openly directed at the reader. However, one of the major implications of the ideological shift that separates the Cold War novels from the later set is that the le Carre's resistance to the discourse of neo-imperialism and the perversion of ethical values becomes overt, especially in the wake of the Anglo-American geo-political alliance against the "War on Terror."

In far as the relations between the US and British intelligence services go, at least as they are depicted in le Carré's fiction, the Cold War novels highlight envy, condescension, suspicion and the inevitable power struggle underlying the apparent camaraderie of the "special relationship." However, with Britain's gradual slide into international oblivion, the post-Cold War novels signal a closer bond between the

two, albeit marked by British subservience to American interests. The sustained critique of the Anglo-American alliance in the 'War on Terror,' which can be seen in *Absolute Friends* and *A Most Wanted Man*, among others, constitutes one significant aspect of le Carré's resistance to the ideology of imperialism.

In le Carré's post-Cold War novels, it is possible to see an attitude of moral outrage, and that his target is the ideology of unbridled consumerism, spreading unchallenged across the globe following the fall of the Soviet Union. Novels such as *Our Game* and *Single and Single* offer instances where 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, is categorically interrogated. Novels like *The Night Manager* and *Absolute Friends* suggest an ultimate convergence of the discourses of neo-imperialism and consumer capitalism, where neither is shown to allow any room for dissent, Additionally, le Carré also seems to raise a point regarding the stultifying effect of the market civilization and its capacity to produce transient subjectivities rater than stable subjects. Whereas the connection between market capitalism and unethical practices is depicted in *The Night Manager* and *Single and Single*, others like *Our Kind of Traitor* deal with the tendency of crony capitalism to play with legal processes. The law, like the nation, is presented as a fluid concept, susceptible to manipulation by vested interests. Le Carré's critique seems to have an affinity with Adorno and Horkheimer's attack on consumer capitalism and market civilization, inimical as they are to human decency and genuine democratic values.

Le Carré also seems to call attention to the way in which consumer culture deliberately yokes together death, glamour and manliness. In *The Night Manager*, the point is driven home. What is challenged here is the belief that powerful nations like America embark on military adventures motivated by noble ideas such as the protection of weak states. The idea is that momentous decisions such as launching a war or the arming of the Afghan militia are cynically made based on mercenary motives. To this extent this novel is best seen as a parody of conventional spy fiction where dealing with death is invariably glamorized as a manly calling. Once more we find in novels like these a reiteration of a theme from the Cold War novels, that is, the ultimate convergence of the discourse of the market civilization with the ideology of imperialism.

A variation on this theme, available in *The Constant Gardener* and *The Mission Song*, is the persistence of neo-imperialist designs on Africa among the "developed" Western nations. What these novels may be seen to manage is both a continuation and a greater concentration of the narrative strategy that resists and subverts the discourse of imperialism and Capitalism by rendering the other visible through the depiction of subalterns as individuals rather than types. This strategic prioritization of a minor theme in the Cold War novels into a major concern of the post-Cold War narratives also constitutes an element in the shift.

Le Carré's engagement with the postcolonial other also allows for an exploration of the mythic image of the Englishman as constituted by the returned gaze of the other. The post-Cold War novels manifest several instances of this phenomenon, where le Carré ironically contrasts the mythic image of the Englishman with the Englishman on the scene. A related myth examined and critiqued relates to the myth of the just and heroic English nation, apparently constituted as much by the historic discourse of imperialism as the complicit gaze of the other. As a representative of the English nation state, the figure of the English spy becomes central to Le Carré's vision of English decency. In spy characters such as Ricky Tarr in *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, Luxmore and Osnard in *The Tailor of Panama* and Mr. Anderson from *The Mission Song*, le Carré explicitly presents a grim picture of the contemporary British nation state.

Interestingly, in the post-Cold War novels le Carré's pits this inverted image of a degenerate English race against a host of sympathetic representations of the other, members of ethnic minority groups, often locating these not at the fringes of its former empire, but in the neglected spaces within the British nation state. Polish, Congolese, Jamaican and Pakistani immigrants, and English Jews, all marginal to the discourse of 'Englishness,' are all depicted as men and women capable of random acts of human decency. Le Carré shows that there are men and women who realize the responsibility of living up to the romance of decency and who hold that some dreams are worth dying for.

The pursuit of decency in the post-Cold War novels may be understood in terms of le Carré's own description of the opportunities missed immediately after the fall of Communism. This may explain the location of the post-Cold War novels in global spaces inhabited by the victims of injustice and indecency—from postcolonial Congo and Kenya in Africa to the Caucasian homelands of the Chechens and the Ingush. Even in the selection of his locales, le Carré may be seen to subvert the generic convention of the 'exotic' tourist oriented setting of spy fiction which guarantees the reader a "license to look" (Denning 102). What le Carré may be seen doing, instead, is offering an invitation to look aimed at ensuring the involvement of the global community of decency he seeks to constitute through his new fiction. This may also be understood as his adherence to the principle articulated by Orwell on writing. Like Orwell himself, le Carré too is opting not for the literature of escapism, but for the Orwellian "literature of involvement."

The fact that that le Carré utilizes the frame of spy fiction as a vehicle for his literature of resistance generates a new set of implications. In other words, he is using an essentially capitalist-imperialist form in the service of its subversion. This also clarifies our reference to the Trojan Horse, a further legitimation of Bakhtin's idea of ironical complicity, participation and subversion happening at the same time.

The moment of resistance is, in effect, a moment of ethical assertion. We call it the ethical turn in spy fiction. In the post Cold war novels there are numerous moments that extend the horizons of spy fiction, by stretching its thematic and artistic potential. In *Mission Song*, for example, Salvo 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" (135). It may be pointed out that the life–affirming gesture is always an act of human decency.

Yet another aspect of this ethical turn is the creation of spaces for marginalized groups including migrants, exiles and victims of colonial subjection in the works of writers belonging to the dominant 'non-ethnic' political-cultural groups. In le Carré's *The Russia House*, *The Tailor of Panama*, and *A Most Wanted Man*, we see how the

narrative creates characters who represent the ideology of ethnic communities located at the margins of major European nation states. Le Carre sees the marginalized ethnic groups as people forced to choose between assimilation and attrition in relation to the dominant nation states with it on the other. In either case, they lose their roots as well as familiar means of earning their livelihood with dignity.

European nation states—which, at least in the later years of the twentieth century, fashion themselves as politically correct multilingual and multicultural spaces—admit displaced populations with a grudgingly tolerant stance. Le Carré, however, sees this grudging accommodation as a mask for exploitative labour. The presence of the displaced other has also led to a crystallization of White-Christian prejudices and right-wing extremism from Sweden through Bosnia to Italy. This disconnect between the benign official self image of modern European nation-states and their very real postnational and postcolonial predicaments—of everyday negotiation with the ethnic 'other'—is reflected in le Carré's post Cold war novels. The fact that le Carré chooses to prioritize the plight of the migrant and the marginal over the claims of the entrenched nation state may be also taken to imply his resistance to the ideology of autochthony as a basis for claims to primacy of rights.

Le Carré has been the advocate of a global community of decent people who disregard, challenge, and transcend 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 manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities" (Bhabha 300). He appears to be more willing than ever to publicly articulate his allegiances. 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.

As a central motif of le Carré's fiction, the moral repugnance that accompanied the act of betrayal in the Cold War novels seems to be replaced by a new ethical perspective which accommodates the possibility of redemption through the pursuit of personal loyalties. Whereas some critics of le Carré complain about the sacrifice of

technique and artistic sophistication in the later novels, this thesis looks at a major gain: the transparent articulation of human issues—not just problems—in which he has a partisan interest.

The interrogation of the imperialistic bias of the conventional spy novel and its embedded ideology of 'Englishness' are enforced by the rejection of the notion of 'decency' associated with the English upper classes. However, le Carré's investment in decency gets incrementally strengthened by what we see as a process of redistribution and relocation of decency in the fluid margins of the English nation space. In these fringes—more than anywhere else, he appears to suggest—are the most likely victims of human indecency. What is more important, however, is the idea that these margins are home to the most unlikely sentinels of decency.

To sum up, the post Cold War novels present a novelist who sheds what was perhaps his moral ambivalence towards oppressive ideological structures. The 'later' corpus is informed by a clearly enunciated ethical position, which is reflected in a manifest sympathy for victims of injustice. While it is true that the post-Cold War novels of John le Carré carry out a form of passive resistance at multiple levels, there is no doubt that there is a serious engagement with issues of human suffering and injustice, thus perhaps addressing the escapist tendencies of the conventional spy fiction. By electing to align himself with communities and cultures alien to his own location, he may be said to resist the racist, cultural-supremacist ideology embedded within the formulaic spy novel.

Taken together, these instances of resistance to the genre of spy fiction are also articulations of a more committed fight against the continuing victimization of disadvantaged, disorganized and displaced peoples. Clearly, by combining his concerted critique of "marketing civilization" with a strategic utilization of the format of spy fiction, le Carré tries to create a global community that is willing to fight the ideology of the market.

Le Carré's most subtle and effective acts of resistance sometimes appear absurd, romantic, partisan, even pedestrian, but nobody, once persuaded, can ignore his interest and impact. On closer analysis, we see how le Carré responds to a complex

convergence of issues such as biopolitics and governmentality as well as arguments for and against various forms of exception adopted by the state in order to guarantee the safety and security of the citizens. The state's adoption of exceptional charters that provide for suspension of citizens' rights and constitutional guarantees is replete with facetious rationales and invocations of national and territorial integrity of the state itself. The logic behind the exception is that our rights are suspended temporarily so that our larger interests are given long-term protection. Le Carré exposes the hollowness of these claims by showing that most states of exception are directly or indirectly symptomatic of a liminal and insidious collusion between putatively formalized welfare measures and a globalized capitalist Empire.