

Both literary and popular texts can be either highly code governed or code-transgressive: neither of these has any necessary advantage.

(Denning 31)

This chapter aims to study the nature and operation of “ideology” and “resistance” in literature, to start with, and then with specific reference to the western tradition of spy fiction in general and the novels of the English writer John le Carré (pseudonym of David John Moore Cornwell b. 1931) in particular.

This chapter tries to show certain forms of linkage between literary and social structures. Given that this thesis contends that the modes of resistance evinced by the texts also involves opposition to and subversion of such concepts as ‘modernity,’ ‘genre,’ ‘nation,’ ‘imperialism,’ consumer capitalism and ‘surveillance,’ this chapter proposes to examine some perspectives on these concepts at length. These perspectives necessarily look at literature and society creating and circulating a complex network of signs and systems that we often take for granted.

1.01 Ideology

One of the most commonly accepted perceptions regarding the meaning of ideology is available in James M. Decker’s *Transitions: Ideology* (2004):

...ideology primarily manifests itself as an unthinking—whether brutal and oppressive or merely selfish—other, whose rigid, irrational adherence to an overdetermined system or policy defies common sense. As characterized by various western media outlets, then, the ideologue sacrifices open debate for a hermetically closed set of values, and, thus, will refuse to listen to – and may attempt to destroy – anyone with an opposing viewpoint (Decker 3).

In his *Ideology: An Introduction* (1991), Eagleton notes with consternation the premature “end of ideology” proclamations and the failure of postmodernist and post-structuralist criticism to engage constructively with it, as a result of which he remarks ironically, “the concept of ideology obediently writes itself off” (Eagleton, *Intro* xi). However, he argues that far from becoming redundant, ideology continues to manifest itself in a multitude of forms all over the world. He lists at random at least seventeen different available meanings for the word:

- a) the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life
- b) the body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class

- c) ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power
- d) false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power
- e) systematically distorted communication.
- f) that which offers a Position for a subject
- g) forms of thought motivated by Social interests
- h) identity thinking
- i) socially necessary illusion
- j) the conjuncture of discourse and power
- k) the medium in which conscious social actors make sense of their world
- l) action oriented set of beliefs
- m) the confusion off linguistic and phenomenal reality
- n) semiotic closure
- o) the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations
- p) a social structure
- q) the process whereby social life is converted into a natural reality

On the basis of the variety of available meanings, Eagleton constructs a case for an “ideology critique” (Eagleton *Intro* xiv). The present study intends to adopt and employ Eagleton’s formulation of the “ideology critique” (Eagleton *Intro* xiv) in its study of John le Carré and his chosen genre, spy fiction. Inevitably, following on Eagleton’s explications, this study aims to focus on critical turns in the historical development of spy fiction, which, in turn, will help identify and isolate “those ‘valid’ features of the experience which point beyond the subject’s present condition” (Eagleton *Intro* xiv).

This study proposes to use a reading of ideology from a Marxist critical perspective. To that end, it will offer a critique of the history of ideology as reflected in popular fiction, especially the spy novels of John le Carré, in order to understand the complexity of the relationship between literature and resistance.

1.02 Marxism and Ideology

The description of Ideology as “false consciousness” is derived from Friedrich Engels rather than Marx himself (Eagleton 89), although Marx did write extensively on Ideology, especially in his early writings such as *The German Ideology* (1846; hereafter *German*), in which Marx defines ideology as “false consciousness” that serves to blind people to the actual state of things, including the historical-material

class conflict. David Hawkes suggests, that the notion of ideological thinking or false consciousness hinges on the “fetishism of commodities” (Marx *Capital* 45), in other words, the human tendency to mystify and idolize the products of their own labour. That this tendency is perceived to be encouraged and crystallized with the active connivance of the dominant sections of society is understood in the context of Marx’s assertion in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) that the “ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class” (Marx *Manifesto* 62). In this explication ideology can be understood as a problem of representation, wherein there is an inability to recognize the mediating function of representation, in assuming that it is an autonomous sphere (Hawkes 97).

However, Hawkes draws attention to the fact that given the large corpus of Marx’s writings his views on ‘ideology’ it would be erroneous to assume that his view of ideology implies a false consciousness deliberately created by the ruling elite to mislead the subjugated masses (Hawkes 93). Interestingly, Terry Eagleton also echoes this view regarding Marx’s nuanced treatment of this aspect of ideology:

What Marx argues here is that our ideological misconceptions are not just the upshot of distorted ideas or ‘false consciousness’, but somehow inherent in the material structure of capitalist society itself. It is just in the nature of that society that it presents itself to our consciousness other than how it is; and this dislocation between appearance and reality is structural to it, and unavoidable effect of its routine operations (Eagleton 12).

What is sometimes overlooked in any explanation of Marx’s theory is the programmatic potential of ideologies to order the social world and its practices, and to direct it both to legitimize and delegitimize its practices (see Freedman 11). In effect, Marx has to be seen not only as the philosopher who links ideology to the unconscious, but also the explicator of conscious decisions translated into unconscious social symbols. This also explains why later studies of popular culture repeatedly foreground the political content of state ideologies circulated as popular, even conventional, rituals.

1.03 Gramsci and the Dissemination of Ideology

Another set of concepts crucial to the examination of ideology may be seen those introduced by Antonio Gramsci through his *Prison Notebooks* (1929-35). Three crucial points of Gramsci’s thoughts on ideology are felt to be of interest to this

project. First, there is the crucial linkage in Gramsci's formulation between popular culture and ideology. What is noteworthy is the recognition of a complicity of the ordinary individual with dominant power groups in the production and perpetuation of ideology through "coercion" and "consent." (Gramsci 234-35).

Second, Gramsci proposes a direct link between social institutions and power structures whereby dominant groups in society to create and perpetuate their power over unsuspecting masses through "cultural hegemony" (Gramsci 234; Hawkes 195). Eagleton's comments on this aspect of society and power structures may be helpful in understanding the process of diffusion of power:

The truth, surely, is that the diffusion of dominant values and beliefs among oppressed groups in society has *some* part to play in the reproduction of the system as a whole, but that this factor has been typically exaggerated by a long tradition of Western Marxism for which 'ideas' are allotted too high a status. (Eagleton 36)

Finally, there is Gramsci's radical vision regarding the potential role of 'organic philosophers' in cultivating the "philosophy of praxis" (Gramsci 350), which is defined as:

an ideological instrument for widening the awareness of the masses about the mechanism of politics and culture, awareness about the historical and economical determination of ideas, and therefore rendering them more able to master their own lives, to lead their own society and to control those who lead (Monasta 597-692).

In other words, one is not looking only at the complexity of what generally passes off as "popular" (Bloom 45), but also at the instrumentality of the form in cultivating the "philosophy of praxis" and generating a resistance to hegemonic power structures, even when it appears complicit with, or helpless before, power.

1.04 Althusser and the Consolidation of Ideology

Clearly inspired by Gramsci's notions of "hegemony" "coercion" and "consent", Louis Althusser's writings, from his *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1971), also provide a further set of perspectives for this study. Althusser's reading of Marx leads him to insist that "the State is a machine of repression" (Althusser 137). Emphasizing the inherent compulsion of capitalism to endlessly reproduce its own

conditions of production, he theorizes that capitalism creates the worker/subject through certain Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) and Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) (Althusser 142-43). He posits a scenario where the ISAs, which include the family, the church, educational institutions and “communications apparatus” or the audio-visual media, create consent through the dissemination of ideology. On the other hand, the RSAs like the police, the judiciary and the military extract compliance or submission through violence and intimidation, thus effecting the consolidation of ideology (Althusser 143-45). He stresses the idea that the dissemination of ideology is essential to the survival of the dominant class, averring: *no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses*” (Althusser 146; italics in original). The role of the Ideological State Apparatuses, in other words is not only indispensable to the exercise and maintenance of power, but also most effective owing to the insidious quality of its operations.

Althusser’s explication of the role played by the cultural political and the educational “apparatuses” in creating and sustaining a range of ideologies, “...nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism...” (Althusser 155), are felt to be especially valid for the purposes of this study. The role played by ‘popular fiction’ in generating propagating similar ideological attitudes and notions of the ‘free market’ will be analyzed in the light of these views. In a way, this thesis goes back to the issue of the individual being always already interpellated, that is, without any possibility of resisting the role played ISAs and RSAs in the private domain of citizens. Instead of figuring and refiguring the individual under erasure, it is argued here, le Carré’s fiction ironically foregrounds the instability of the very apparatuses that force the collapse of morality, ethics and freedom.

1.05 Ideology Commodity Fetishism and Empire

Marx’s ideas regarding the fetishism of commodity fetishism are taken up by Lukács in his *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), where he employs a new term to describe the peculiar form of false consciousness: “Reification” (Lukács 197). Louis Althusser uses the term “interpellation” (Althusser “Ideology” 173-74) to describe the process by which all human individuals are constituted as subjects by capitalist ideology.

It would be interesting to see how Lukács links commodity to form, especially, by way of explaining such ideas as individual desire to fiction. Frederic Jameson takes up from Lukács and offers a complex variation on this theme in his *Marxism and Form* (1971). Even more importantly, explications of commodity fetishism are explicitly grounded in critiques of capitalism and state authority in the thinkers of the Frankfurt School, most notably Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer whose lived experiences experience of American capitalism can be seen signaling an advance on Marx's theory of 'commodity fetishism' in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944). They record a commodification of consciousness resulting in the passive acceptance of ideology in American society. They note that, "...public life has reached a state in which thought is being turned inescapably into a commodity; and language into celebration of the commodity" (Adorno and Horkheimer xiv). Adorno and Horkheimer describe a process where individuals labour under the illusion that they are free to make choices:

But freedom to choose an ideology.... Everywhere proves to be freedom to choose what is always the same...The most intimate reactions of human beings have been so thoroughly reified that the idea of anything specific to themselves now persists only as an utterly abstract notion: personality scarcely signifies anything more than shining white teeth and freedom from body odor and emotions." (Adorno and Horkheimer *Dialectic* 167)

In his *The Culture Industry* (1991), Adorno makes an implicit reference to what could be the commercial orientation of a literary genre:

those characteristics which originally stamped the transformation of literature into a commodity are maintained in this process. More than anything in the world, the culture industry has its ontology, a scaffolding of rigidly conservative basic categories which can be gleaned, for example, from the commercial English novels of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. What parades as progress in the culture industry, as the incessantly new which it offers up, remains the disguise for an eternal sameness; everywhere the changes mask a skeleton which has changed just as little as the profit motive itself since the time it first gained its predominance over culture. (Adorno *Culture* 100)

The validity of this understanding where literature as a product of consumer culture, is denied the potential for resistance or change, will be analyzed in the subsequent

chapters. In fact, what Adorno calls “eternal sameness” has been retraced in this thesis as ideological imperatives, repeatedly critiqued by le Carré and other bodies of resistance writing. In other words, one is looking at a dialectic at work, where resistance is inscribed into the same text that validates hegemonic repression, or devices thereof.

However, further critiques of the consolidation and perpetuation of commodification are available in the works of Herbert Marcuse, Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard. Jean Baudrillard’s *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1972), and *The Mirror of Production* (1973), follow up on Debord’s work and record the systematic constitution of the ‘ideal’ consumer: individual subjects transformed into consumers through the subtle implantation of new needs and desires. Against the code of consumption, Baudrillard introduces the radical category of “consummation,” which he explains thus:

Consummation (play, gift, destruction as pure loss, symbolic reciprocity) attacks the code itself, breaks it, deconstructs it. The symbolic act is the destruction of the value code (exchange and use), not the destruction of objects in themselves. Only this act can be termed "concrete," since it alone breaks with and transgresses the abstraction of value. (Baudrillard 93; emphasis in original).

This study would attempt to read certain actions such repeatedly performed by characters in le Carré’s post-Cold War novels, such as gifting of large sums—especially of ill gotten gains—to charity, deliberate rejection of pecuniary benefits, etc., insofar as they effectively disrupt the value code of exchange and use, as explicit and pointed performances of such consummation. In fact, the possibility of such an act also posits an implicit rejection of Adorno’s position on the unchanging, inexorable force of commodity fetishism.

The categorization of spy fiction as a bestselling commodity complicates its relationship to society, which views literature as an enlightenment tool and spy fiction as a commodity. It should be noted here that the presentation of the spy as a glamorous figure, is in conformity with hidden ideologies of markets and nations that do not come to fore automatically. In other words, what needs to be recognized in any study of spy fiction is the political situatedness, not so much of the spy, as the images surrounding spies and espionage. The best example of this phenomenon has perhaps

been suggested by Sam Goodman who refers to Danny Boyle's short feature film *Happy and Glorious* crafted for the Opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics. Within its 6 minute 15 second duration, it shows the reigning British monarch being escorted to the Olympic venue by the actor Daniel Craig—quite unambiguously in his most best known role as James Bond 007—and eventually floating down together on Union Jack-like parachutes into the stadium itself even as the familiar James Bond theme music plays in the background. As Goodman comments:

Happy and Glorious is an extraordinary piece of filmmaking, not least for the fact that a reigning monarch of the United Kingdom agreed to appear in it, but also because of the prominence it grants the figure of the fictional spy, and for the image of Britishness it promotes. (Goodman 16)

This juxtaposition, even melding of reel life with real life and the blurring of lines between the incontrovertible and the imaginary, lies at the heart of Baudrillard's critique of Simulacra. The spy as a mythic image created and circulated as a fetishized commodity frequently becomes more real than reality and begins even to supplant reality. In fact, such an image acquires its aura through a complex process whereby it simultaneously carries traces of fossilized imperialist and racist ideologies and also offers a compensatory narrative for their undeniable decay. The fact that the spy figure has historically generated a vast array of consumer comestibles in its wake, in turn effectively translating into life choices in its consumers has already been documented (Britton *Television* 3). There are crucial intercut shots in *Happy and Glorious* which show groups of schoolchildren looking out of windows and cheering as they see 'Bond' bounding up the steps of Buckingham Palace. It is hard not to identify them as the "always already" interpellated subjects of consumer capitalist ideology described by the thinkers of the Frankfurt school (Althusser 176).

It is at this point that the insights offered by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their work *Empire* (2000) begin to assume significance to the present study. Hardt and Negri envisage a new form of pervasive evolutionary capitalism, essentially rooted in multinational corporations invested with transnational sovereign power, now spanning the Globalized space. In this form of Empire, that Stephen Gill calls a "market civilization" (Gill 57), political authority in nation states colludes with globalized corporate power to create the juridico-political climate necessary for capitalist exploitation. They contend that "In Empire and its regime of biopower, economic

production and political constitution tend increasingly to coincide.” (Hardt and Negri 41). Drawing upon Michel Foucault’s ideas, they conclude that whereas life itself has become the object of power, every aspect of individual everyday existence, including their very vital organs and processes, has now become subject to capitalist exploitation. They explain that:

“In the postmodernization of the global economy, the creation of wealth tends ever more toward what we will call biopolitical production, the production of social life itself, in which the economic, the political, and the cultural increasingly overlap and invest one another. (Hardt and Negri xiii)

The issue of biopolitical production however, goes beyond commerce as it includes the authority to create discourses and devise strategies to intervene and appropriate, manipulate and even annihilate the bodies and life processes of human populations through juridico-political means, on the pretext of communal or national goals. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose suggest at least three different dimensions to biopower, including:

...knowledge of vital life processes, power relations that take humans as living beings as their object, and the modes of subjectification through which subjects work on themselves qua living beings—as well as their multiple combinations. (Rabinow and Rose 215)

Contestations and problematizations of any of these issues, they suggest, could then transform biopower into biopolitics. Whereas Rabinow and Rose take the liberal view that biopolitics essentially involves “desirable, legitimate and efficacious” discourses and regimes of authority, Hardt and Negri insist on the exploitative orientation of biopower which “regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and rearticulating it. (Hardt and Negri 24)

However, they insist that this extraordinary power of Empire is exercised not so much through force but “the capacity to present force as being in the service of right and peace.” (Hardt and Negri 15) A necessary precondition is supplied, they suggest, by a State of Exception, a concept drawn from Giorgio Agamben. Agamben points to the unique position of the sovereign who happens to be simultaneously situated both within and outside of the law. Sam Goodman suggests that in his capacity as the embodiment and instrument of sovereign state power, the spy represents a paradox, for “he acts to preserve sovereign power he does so through actions that undermine the principles of that sovereignty” (Goodman 27). The sovereign embodies the law

but remains exempt from it. This invests the sovereign with the extraordinary power to occasionally suspend the law in order to preserve it, or invoke the law to deprive individual subjects of legal benefits. The extraordinary nature of this situation is emphasized by Agamben, who states that the state of exception is “state power’s immediate response to the most extreme internal conflicts” (Agamben 2) and constitutes “the paradoxical position of being juridical measures that cannot be understood in legal terms, and the state of exception appears as the legal form of what cannot have legal form.” (Agamben 1) However, Agamben also points towards a “...transformation of a provisional and exceptional measure into a technique of government.” (Agamben 2) This provides Hardt and Negri the basis for their argument that the contemporary Empire of globalized capital thrives on the a continual state of exception, wherein it exercises the power to define the state of exception as well as the right to determine the mode and extent of intervention.. They write:

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)

The present study will attempt to demonstrate that the foregoing complex of issues, namely the exploitative operations of globalized capital, biopower, and the State of Exception comprise key concern of le Carré’s post-Cold War novels. This study would in fact like to argue that the neo-Imperial “market civilization” that is responsible for the production and consumption of popular fiction is also implicated in the “mythification” of thought (Eagleton 188) for commercial purposes. The conflation of violence, virility, and masculinity in the figure of the glamorous spy, for instance, involves such a mythogenesis. A process similar to the evocation of “universal values” alluded to by Hardt and Negri is inherent in the mythogenesis that leads to the identification of concepts like “national interest” and the defense of “free market” values with the figure of the spy in conventional spy narratives. To this extent, the role of contemporary spy fiction in critiquing and resisting the embedded discourse of race, nation, Empire and knowledge cannot be denied.

1.06 Art, Literature and Ideology

It may be pertinent to note at this point that the foregoing discussions relate to a single tradition rooted in the notion of ideology as illusion, distortion and mystification (Eagleton 3). This study will also take into account alternative viewpoints on the nature of ideology.

Karl Mannheim's analysis of ideology in *Ideology and Utopia* (1936) is still useful today in the sense that its position on "false consciousness" offers interesting leads for readers of popular literature. Given that it has been one of the earliest accounts to challenge "false consciousness" in the sense of something without any material base, its utility in raising ideology as a multifaceted attribute of consciousness cannot be overstated. In any culture, ideology can be seen to comprise a "multiplicity of symbolic value systems" and cultural formations diffused throughout society. These formations, he argues, arise from different modes of experience and therefore represent a category distinct from scientific knowledge (see Freedman 13-15). In fact Mannheim suggests that the intellectuals of the world have a significant role to play in pushing for a "Utopia", which, in turn, will ensure that the transformative agenda of resistance may be actualized (Freedman 17). That Gramsci and Mannheim formulate a role for the intellectual is important primarily as a marker of what is possibly a disturbing as well as responsible agenda: the engaged intellectual who does not forsake his responsibility towards the world at large. It would not be out of place here to see the intellectuals continually devising and revising their relationship to the state and to power structures that fund and sustain their livelihood. Such a community of intellectuals form, not through commonality of agenda or fellowship, but through a fundamental commitment to human freedom, however loosely formulated, a group that uses resistance as its most valued capital. One thinks of figures like Benda, Said Cabral, Fanon, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Chomsky. Interestingly, le Carré either approvingly cites or strategically appropriates the utopian pursuit of these writers.

Althusser's own comments on art in the context of ideology are again of particular interest. His position is that art does not constitute ideology because while it cannot provide access to scientific knowledge, it does provide glimpses of "...the *ideology* from which it is born, in which it bathes, from which it detaches itself as art, and to which it alludes" (Althusser 270; italics in original). Art can be seen here vested with

the potential of exposing the contradictions within the ideology that gives birth to it, and thereby acting as a catalyst in social transformation.

The relationship of the author to the prevalent ideology of the text world, both as instances of reflection and resistance, is articulated by Bakhtin in *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (1984), *The Dialogic Imagination* (1930s/1981), and *Rabelais and his World* (1993). Bakhtin links responsibility to resistance by offering several models that simultaneously offer political and symbolic resistance. It should also be noted that Bakhtin's understanding and figuration of resistance are unique, given the risks involved in resisting the state in Stalinist Russia. What is further remarkable is Bakhtin's transfiguration of active political resistance into revolutionary readings of language and fiction. Bakhtin is an example to anyone looking for aesthetic, moral and social responsibility, converging in such ideas as of polyphony, dialogism and the carnivalesque. Each of these is an instance, according to Bakhtin, of resistance. The object of resistance is so overwhelmingly powerful, that any explicit mode of contest or opposition is likely to end in complete annihilation. Bakhtin's formulation of resistance is no less revolutionary than Foucault's explication of the link between power and knowledge. Whereas Foucault forces welfare discourses into hollow claims, in a way, denying any possible dignity to the self, Bakhtin innovates modes of resistance that simultaneously partake of and parody structures of oppression. This point about the resisting text making use of official paraphernalia is particularly useful to this study of spy fiction. As suggested by Bakhtin:

Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants. (Bakhtin *Reader* 198)

Bakhtin seems to stress in this explication both the "performative" (Austin 4), nature and subversive potential inherent in participation. In public places, the nature of protest may not be overtly oppositional, and may bring in ideas such as parody, innuendoes, and ironic iterations of those social elements that invite protest or opposition in the first place. In this connection the role of comedy or comic interludes including clowning, mimicry and farcical expressions acquire a different meaning. In

a way, comedy and laughter are liberating forces that remove fear of the oppressing device or agent.

The serious aspects of class culture are official and authoritarian; they are combined with violence, prohibitions, limitations and always contain an element of fear and of intimidation.... Laughter, on the contrary, overcomes fear, for it knows no inhibitions, no limitations. Its idiom is never used by violence and authority. (Bakhtin 209)

The implication of what has been said above cannot be lost on spy fiction and its putative promotion of non serious issues and gestures, such as mockery. The relationship of mockery in *le Carré* and laughter in Bakhtin, therefore, appears transparent. For, laughter insulates the resisting subject from surveillance and retribution in the same way that mockery avoids open hostility. The adoption of such gestures will allow for the surveilled subject to be recognized as a ludic object, and warrant protection from the state and, ironically enough, state-sponsored incentives.

This puts in perspective Jon Thompson's reference to Bakhtin's theory of the novel as a hybridization of pre-existing genres, drawn from both high and low cultures (Thompson 6). In other words, laughter and light hearted mockery are not what they appear to be on the surface. This thesis foregrounds, through literary and non literary tropes, the importance of what has been condescendingly viewed as "low culture" forms like the spy novel. Bakhtin also seems to identify the power of parody to critique ideology at both literal and material levels: "Parodic travestying literature introduces the permanent corrective of laughter, a critique on the one sided-seriousness of the lofty direct word" (Bakhtin 55).

Another dimension to the connection between art, ideology and transformative politics can be seen in the works of Walter Benjamin, who argues in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936) may be seen centered on the revolutionary potential of art unleashed by technological developments in mass media, especially sophisticated mechanical reproduction techniques that allow for "infinite and precise reproducibility" (216). The consequent "jeopardizing" of issues of authenticity through mass duplication seem to have transformed the status of art itself, by removing it from the private enjoyment of the leisured classes to the terrain of the masses for radical purposes. Benjamin speaks of the reference to historical objects when he says that "it may usefully be illustrated with reference to the aura of

natural ones. We define the aura of the latter as the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be” (Benjamin 216). It is interesting to note how Benjamin moves from what is an optical image to a social understanding of the image itself. He says:

If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch. This image makes it easy to comprehend the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura. It rests on two circumstances, both of which are related to the increasing significance of the masses in contemporary life. Namely, the desire of contemporary masses to bring things “closer” spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction. (Benjamin 216-17)

It is important to note how factors such as location and social situation help people transform natural images into reproducible objects. Benjamin’s insists on the deterministic modes of reproduction, whereby individuals either accept natural objects and images as reproductions of things already available, that is, things considered natural in ones social world. In effect, a mountain range is seen as the replica of a post card image one may have received as a gift from a tourist bureau. Benjamin sees this as an extreme case of reproduction determining the meaning of natural or original scenes. Hence,

Unmistakably, reproduction as offered by picture magazines and newsreels differs from the image seen by the unarmed eye. Uniqueness and permanence are as closely linked in the latter as are transitoriness and reproducibility in the former. (Benjamin 217)

When considered in the context of the endlessly reproduced images of the spy since World War II, Benjamin’s argument appears to lead inexorably to the concretization of the Bond type heroic spy in the global imaginary.

The power of this reproduced image to affect the real world is taken up subsequently by Guy Debord, in *Society of the Spectacle* (1967), where he records the next phase of ideology. Here objective reality has been replaced by the immanent sign:

The concept of “the spectacle” interrelates and explains a wide range of seemingly unconnected phenomena. The apparent diversities and contrasts of these phenomena stem from the social organization of appearances, whose essential nature must itself be recognized. Considered in its own terms, the spectacle is an *affirmation* of appearances and an identification of all human social life with those appearances. But a critique that grasps the spectacle’s essential character reveals it to be a visible *negation* of life — a negation of life that has taken on a *visible form*. (Debord 5)

In effect, one faces a situation where the distinctions between reality and representation—or between truth and falsehood—have collapsed. Once again, the previously cited case of Danny Boyle’s *Happy and Glorious*, with its conscious blurring of the distinctions between the reel and the real—in this case HM Queen Elizabeth II and James Bond—the object and the image (Daniel Craig and James Bond), can help to illustrate the points both Benjamin and Debord seem to be making. What is at stake, then, is the image of the image itself, where the image offers passages to other images with certain ideological loads. On the one hand, this image of image(s) forces the onlooker to reexamine public space spectacles, asking him/her to check specifically who creates the spectacles and for whom. If the images are all one had, the denial of life forces—including those of dreaming a utopia or resisting injustice—would be a foregone conclusion. On the other hand, the materiality of the sign-image and its specular reproduction cycle allies the image-producer with ISAs, allowing for critiques to develop at various levels. This is possible because words and images foreground, at unexpected moments, their ideological apparatuses. Spy fiction, perhaps more than any other popular genre, works on this aspect of ideological double-binds in literary and cultural texts.

Benjamin’s thesis on the relationship between aesthetics and politics is too well-known to be discussed here. It would be useful however to recall a few useful points. In fact, in an essay titled “Art Forms,” Jan Mieszkowski emphasizes the inseparability of Benjamin’s views of art from politics:

[T]he performative mechanics of power may be based on theatrical paradigms drawn from drama or on structures of narrative self-understanding derived from the epic or the novel. If in the former approach art is viewed as the

product of a reality external to it, in the latter art itself proves to be a paradigm for human agency and communal existence. (Mieszkowski, Ferris 36).

As Howard Caygill points out, in an essay titled “Walter Benjamin’s concept of Cultural History,” the latter’s critique of the dominant theoretical models of art analysis—formalist and materialist—is rooted in his belief that art and society are not accidentally related, and any consequence that one sees in one may be seen as conditioned in the other. Caygill’s gloss is useful to this thesis in the sense that a work of art—spy fiction is at once a textual object and a commercial product—is not just a formal attribute but also a social formation. The key word here is the ‘responsibility’ of the artist not only to art but to society as well. This is Caygill:

Benjamin ... assumes a position that is between a formal idealism and materialism. Heuristically, he suggests the latter is of more value because it leaves in question the link between style and epoch rather than presuming to know the nature of the link in advance. Yet, apart from their relative heuristic values, both formal and materialist positions, if taken to their limit, absolve works of art from any responsibility for historical change. They are either formally above historical change or the simple reflection of it. In each case, culture is absolved of any responsibility for history and thus of any possibility of a cultural history calling culture “to justice” for its historical responsibility. In Benjamin’s example, Renaissance painting can be considered in part responsible for changes in patterns of dwelling and public space, and by extension of responsibility for historical change. (Ferris 78-79)

The greatness of art is, in this sense, an instance not so much of reputation or respectability as of responsibility. The artist has to respond to the call of his age, not to accept or approve but to intercept and interrogate as well, possibly more so in an age of mechanical production.

The key here is Benjamin’s ability to explain the relationship of art objects to consuming subjects. In this situation, consumers are more interested in possessing—in the sense of in the process guaranteeing proximity—rather than understanding a work of art. This new relationship destroys an age old equation between books and readers, for instance. In other words, this logic of reproduction necessarily opposes what could be seen as an organic bond between reader and text. While the role of the market in promoting this new relationship cannot be overstated, the artist can be seen partaking

of benefits that accrue. Interestingly, the market also valorizes this new artist by creating the space for bestselling authors as opposed to who do not sell. Here is an ironical reversal of the agonizing artist in the marketplace, in the sense that commercial success props up a certain kind of artist image. While the artist and the market feed off each other, the older kind of reading practices premised on organicism stands exposed. Bestselling authors do make socially relevant noises, but these remarks are produced and consumed in such a way that their social import is more decorative than decisive. In fact, writers like J.L. Borges and Umberto Eco consciously narrativise the artist's 'success' in the marketplace through allegories of writing. In other words, one gets to see two performative aspects of writing that are interrelated. On the one hand, the artist performs for the market by producing and re-creating books, objects, and images that sell. The market, on the other hand, prides itself on the idea that it nurtures hard working artists insofar as they serve society clearly. But the artist performs a second time not necessarily away from the market, where s/he defines his or her artistic goals as part of an established tradition, governed by transparent protocols. The artist cleverly glosses these transparent protocols into non elitism, social inclusiveness, literature for the masses, etc. The market, in a corresponding performance, also speaks of its social responsibility by referring to its investment in social welfare, which can be verified from the economic opportunities it creates. More importantly, the market prides itself on transforming the plight and poverty one traditionally associates with poets and artists into iconic images of artistic success. It is at this stage that le Carré stages a third kind of performance. He refuses to turn into a public spectacle—either of the consumptive artist in a garret, or the millionaire artist signing copies of his books to citizens and celebrities in suitable settings—by doing away with the very conditions that sustain market links. An example that needs to be cited here is le Carré's reluctance to stay with one publisher. It is also important to note le Carré's self-conscious attempt to problematize the relationship of his writing to the genre of spy fiction, on spite of the success he has had with the genre. Participation in the market therefore, does not necessarily imply surrender to market forces or to market ideology.

In fact, Terry Eagleton makes the link between social structures and popular fiction more transparent by looking at durable fulfillments in minor gestures of resistance. He keeps social structure and literary forms on the same plane and avers to resistance as a primary factor of change. As Eagleton puts it:

On this argument, even such 'degraded' modes of gratification as pulp fiction encode some frail impulse to a more durable fulfilment, and thus dimly prefigure the shape of the good society (Eagleton 185).

This has been one of the major preoccupations of late capitalism, that is, the link between mass culture and commodity fetishism.

Raymond Williams's articulation of "mass culture" provides an interesting account of popular culture at work in society. His argument, based on his materialist study of British popular culture from the Victorian period to World War II, suggests that the notion of "high culture" is tainted with the residue of ruling class ideology. He argues that "mass culture" is in fact the inevitable outcome of advanced capitalism, and its attendant accent on urbanization, machine production and majoritarian democracy (Williams 316-17). The class conflict manifests itself in a pathological fear that "mass-thinking, mass-suggestion, mass-prejudice would threaten to swamp considered individual thinking and feeling," which are the ideological markers of "high culture" (Williams 317). In his implicit critique of the "Western Canon" of "genuine" and "classic" literature as an ideological construct, Williams can be seen here radically revising the perception of "popular culture," and, by implication, the organic community.

As in Lukács, one finds in le Carré repeated articulation of popular writing incorporating complex intellectual acts of resistance, and calling for political and intellectual intervention. Interestingly, the case of le Carré's spy fiction can be used to show how "class conscious" literature provides the bulwark for resistance to class and ideology.

It is pertinent to note that these issues are taken up by the present study in order to suggest how le Carré's spy fiction contests the ideological imperative of what we conveniently call popular or genre fiction. Whereas spy fiction and bestsellers are perceived to align themselves with the ideology of the free market and consumption, there is evidence to suggest le Carré offers unique modes of resistance to ideologies that align themselves with structures of oppression disguised as nation, development, or the free world. To the extent that the post-Cold war novels foreground the resistance with greater frequency and transparency, this thesis pleads for a distinct

category of analysis. This is not to suggest that there are radical departures and remarkable breaks from the early work, but reiterations that are more explicit.

1.07 Foucault, Discourse and ‘Eye-deology’

An important strand from the discussion on Louis Althusser that has particular resonance in this project is Foucault’s thesis on the notion of ideology perpetuated by dominant power groups in society through what Althusser designates as Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses. The fact that spy fiction makes a substantial investment in themes of deliberate violence visited upon individuals by State agencies—whether legally sanctioned or illegal—has been discussed at length by Atkins and Denning (Atkins 32, 95; Denning 71-72). Bruce Merry states: “The spy novel revolves essentially on the axis of death and destruction. The enemy’s agents must be a) neutralized, and b) his machinery must be destroyed” (Merry 100).

Spy narratives also portray the generation and transmission of overt state sponsored political ideologies (Aronoff 2), which may be disguised in the form of official documents, or even as major characters in the plot. This study examines specific instances in the novels of John le Carré where ISAs and RSAs play a crucial role in ideology formation or dissemination. To that extent, it would now be necessary to consider two other concepts, relating to “discourse” and “surveillance” with the purpose of tracing their incidence in the spy narratives of John le Carré.

Michel Foucault’s analysis of History, and Power/Knowledge in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) leads him to deny the concept of abstract “consciousness”, and by logical extension, to deny notions of truth, falsehood or “ideology” (Foucault *Archeology* 203-04). He posits instead a system of “discourses” dispersed through material “structures” of power such as the family, the school, the Church (Foucault *Archeology* 45). These structures generate various “truth effects”, which are fiercely contested within the social network in an endless play for Power. Ideology consequently becomes indistinguishable from material practice. Foucault describes “discourse” as:

groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations)
but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of

course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. (Foucault 54)8.2.2

Despite Eagleton's contention that Foucault's "discourse" is merely a more "capacious" term for ideology (Eagleton 8), the term is useful because Foucault appears to echo Bakhtin in assuming the presence of multiple discourses operating in society. However, he also attributes to this category the power to legitimize or exclude other modes of representation (Foucault *Archeology* 213). This project consciously engages with the position Foucault adopts in his *History of Sexuality, Vol. I* (1976). Foucault says, for example, that discourse is a "complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy." (Foucault *History* 101)

The implicit potential for resistance 'written in' to power and ingrained in all "discourse" makes Foucauldian thought particularly relevant to this exploration on the possibility of resistance to ideology through literary texts.

Foucault's concept of "discourse" as a network of signs that have the power to construct the objects they describe may be seen extended in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). Said argues the existence of a historic discourse of "cultural hegemony" (Said 7) in Europe, seeking to represent the Orient as the dark, backward, primitive "other" to its own "Enlightened" and "civilized" subject. In developing this argument Said links this hegemonic discourse of European cultural centrality—seen in "scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description" (Said 12)—to European imperialism, which, in turn, seems to validate the imperialist project of "dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said 3). This project invokes and uses Said's formulation of the hegemonic discourse while examining select Cold War spy narratives including such novels by John le Carré as *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (1974) and *The Honourable Schoolboy* (1977). It will be interesting to see what role narratorial practices play in the depiction of the European subject and its Oriental "other" especially in le Carré's critique of the exercise.

Another significant aspect of Foucault's examination of the combination of Power and Knowledge is the concept of the "Panopticon," articulated in *Discipline and*

Punish (1975). In his discussion of the evolution of criminal punishment in Europe, he lights on Jeremy Bentham's model for a circular prison system where each inmate would exist in "a state of conscious and permanent visibility" (Foucault *Discipline* 201) to a single guard located in a central tower. The effect of the system, he argues is a "subtle coercion" to generate self-discipline in the inmate, in the process causing an "internalization of surveillance." Moreover, the inmate's awareness of perpetual surveillance would ensure discipline regardless of the motive or initiative of the observer. The location of the inmates in strictly regimented cells, sequestered from each other and constantly observable, serves to intensify their sense of alienation and consequent loss of power. The efficacy of this "marvelous machine" Foucault suggests, lies the principle of visible but unverifiable power (Foucault *Discipline* 201). This further suggests that the machine is not to be seen only in the construction of the prison house. Rather, it leads to a larger construct in the world of power and ideology. One of the exercises relates to the West guarding the rest of the world through various apparatuses of surveillance, both figurative and real. This study will demonstrate how the Panopticon in its various literal and metaphoric manifestations becomes a recurrent motif in le Carré's post-Cold War novels.

In a way, entertainment mechanics generated in the West and circulated in the rest, guards values and knowledge systems from possible violation. For instance, a bestselling book, or a popular feature film is absorbed outside the territorial boundaries of the West, while the real import of such absorption does not even remotely register as a power device. Films considered popular and books considered bestsellers, evade the attention of critics of surveillance mechanisms, trained as they are to look for sophisticated or high power tools to trace the impact of ideology. The mass market is often theorized as the bastion of the low-brow, and therefore, somehow not instrumental to the foundational effects of Western surveillance. It is at this point that one looks at the revisionary poetics and politics of spy fiction written by John le Carré. It is imperative that one recognizes the simultaneous utility and vulnerability of Said's concept of "Orientalism" and a critical byword for the same concept available in Anne Kaplan's 'the imperial gaze' (see Hawthorn 514). John Berger's analysis of gazes as essentially layered in ideology further removes whatever scope for looking at posters, heroes and heroines as simple objects of entertainment. In other words, Berger does to the discourse of visual culture in *Ways of Seeing* (1972) what Foucault does to discourse, both epistemic and epistemological. This

thesis pleads for a space for spy fiction that is neither completely divorced from ideological criticism nor unmindful of the power of popularity.

In ideological criticism, the power of surveillance is linked to Foucault's "discourse" as well as Eagleton's "ideology" (Eagleton 8). Hence, one sees the implicated nature of surveillance and ideology in David Lyon's work. Lyon, for instance, describes surveillance as "any collection and processing of personal data, whether identifiable or not, for the purposes of influencing or managing those whose data have been garnered" (Lyon "Bentham" 2). However, when Lyon states that "people seldom know that they are subjects of surveillance, or, if they do know, they are unaware how comprehensive others' knowledge of them actually is" (Lyon *Electronic* 5), the strong ties between spying and surveillance is truly revealed. In the light of the foregoing discussion, any definition of surveillance has to account for not only the ideological grounding of the gaze, but also of the multiplicity of the apparatuses that suggest the proximity of the gaze to surveillance, espionage, and power. It is to be noted here that Lyon raises an important point while discussing the roots of surveillance. He says, for instance, the play of light and darkness in the surveillance mechanism can be traced back to the Enlightenment elevation of 'vision' as a part-representational part-parodic reflection of the Christian view of omniscience (Lyon *Electronic* 4). This raises serious questions regarding the Western surveillance imaginaries, given the fact that every act of surveillance is a step towards eliminating something that thrives in the dark. Clearly, this leads to the contiguous nature of surveillance-espionage-ideology-discourse that is available in the evocative phrase *Eye-deology*. In effect, surveillance not only takes care of watching, but also of cleansing what is construed as contaminating. The present study proposes to examine, the ethical aspects of surveillance and its implications with regard to "population, biopolitics, security and governmentality" (Hoffman 27), as seen in John le Carré's work. While le Carré critics trace the inseparable relationship between surveillance and cleansing in novels such as *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1963), *The Tailor of Panama* (1996), *Absolute Friends* (2006), and *A Most Wanted Man* (2008), this thesis sees this as a recurring motif throughout.

1.08 Surveillance, the Gaze and Other

Given the nature of surveillance and its ideological grounding, particularly with reference to the non-European or non-western other, one would require an explication of what Berger calls “ways of seeing” (Berger 1972). As already stated, surveillance has been considered as a primarily visual mode of recording, registering and organizing material reality, particularly with a view to creating and maintaining a position of dominance over the object observed.

An interesting dimension of the ways of seeing relates to the close correspondence between words signifying seeing and those for the human face (see Waldenfels; cit. in Critchley and Bernasconi 64) in the European epistemic tradition. In other words, ways of seeing involve looking at a face, that is, the face of the other. Much of the contemporary discussion on otherness may be traced back to meditations on alterity carried out by Emmanuel Levinas, in such works as *Totality and Infinity* (1961) and *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (1978). In conceiving the category of the “other”, Levinas engages in an essentially ethical task of “translating incommensurables”. Edith Wyschogrod sums up Levinas’s position:

This ‘more’ that remains beyond spoken or written language is the otherness of the other person, an otherness that cannot be configured as a content of consciousness but that issues an imperative that obliges me to assume responsibility for the other. (Wyschogrod 188)

In the study of surveillance, it may be useful to consider Levinas’s formulation of the “other”, the object of the gaze, as implying an essentially disorienting experience for the observing subject. This must necessarily be considered in the context of the disorienting effect of modernity itself as emphasized by Bernhard Waldenfels cites Levinas’s position that “the whole of humanity looks at us” through the face of the “other” (Waldenfels 69). It may perhaps be useful to see a connection between ethical and empirical aspects of otherness, especially in the works of Homi K. Bhabha. To the extent that Bhabha looks at political trajectories of otherness in colonial sites, the link that his thesis establishes between Levinas’s other and the subaltern postcolonial other would appear logical.

1.09 Ideology of the Postcolonial Other

It is interesting to see the way Homi Bhabha invokes Lacan to interrogate the view of colonialism presented by Said in *Orientalism*. He argues that the colonial gaze is never stable or “unidirectional,” but more in the nature of the gaze returned. In fact, he argues, the colonial strategy of ruling through the construction of stereotypes such as the sly and docile native on the one hand, and the official encouragement of mimicry of the European subject on the other, is fraught with “ambivalence.” There is always “slippage” between mimicry and the subject mimicked, which leads to distortion and mockery. The native returning the colonizer’s gaze presents an image that is “*almost the same but not quite*” (Bhabha 86; emphasis in original). Mimicry and “hybridity”, he argues, become double-edged:

The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace. (Bhabha 86)

The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is essentially unstable because of “the colonized’s refusals of their assigned positions as subjected and disarticulated” (Parry 37).

A major portion of this study will attempt to examine how the Orient/Occident encounter gets an ethical dimension in the postcolonial context, particularly in the spy narratives of John le Carré. In fact, this study will argue that such depictions may invariably be seen to involve a degree of generic and ideological transgression, insofar as the objects of mimicry and farce are located in Occidental subjects. Evidence of such depictions will be pursued with particular reference to such narratives as *The Honourable Schoolboy* (1977) and *The Tailor of Panama* (1996).

1.10 The Ideology of the Nation

One of the many ramifications of the postcolonial debate in recent times is a heightened consciousness of the modern nation state as a historical-cultural construct “built out of and upon the artistic, folkloric, theoretical and philosophical discourses about the nation” (Nayar 68). The epiphanic vision of the nation as a transcendent, automatically valorized subject may be seen giving way giving way in the face of postcolonial reality.

Throughout the twentieth century, in the newly independent states of formerly colonized territories in Asia, Africa and Latin America may be seen following a common trajectory of bureaucratic inefficiency, political incompetence, unfulfilled goals, corruption and the perpetuation of social injustice. Pramod Nayar employs the phrase “postcolonial subalternization” (Nayar 99) to articulate the common theme of much contemporary literature. These issues are represented in several postcolonial narratives by such diverse writers as Salman Rushdie, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. Aspects of these concerns are evident in several of le Carré’s post-Cold War novels, including *The Tailor of Panama*, *The Constant Gardener*, and *The Mission Song*.

Against the received wisdom that factors like geographical, spiritual, cultural and historical affinities are responsible for the organization and perpetuation of nations, Benedict Anderson’s provocative argument in *Imagined Communities* (1983), foregrounds the role of the collective imagination, in willing a nation into being. He concedes that in this task, technologies of “re-presenting,” such as the novels, serve to aid the articulation of shared desires and anxieties, and thereby contribute to the construction of the nation.

Apart from the “nation,” which now may be seen being configured as an ideology in itself, several related concepts such as “ethnicity”, “culture”, and “identity” also become similarly subsumed into ideology. The postcolonial debate on ideology is haunted by the concept of the marginalized, disenfranchised “other”. Bhabha seems to locate the category thus:

...a relatively unspoken tradition of the people of the pagus—colonials, postcolonials, migrants, minorities — wandering peoples who will not be contained within the *Heim* of the national culture and its unisonant discourse, but are themselves the marks of a shifting boundary that alienates the frontiers of the modern nation. (Bhabha 164)

The concept of “ethnicity” is generally considered to revolve round “a common language, or religion, or common customs, or political memories” (Weber 398) among a designated group of humans. These elements, generally described in terms of a common “heritage,” can lead to both subjective claims of “ethnic identity” and to dubious external ascriptions. However, it has been argued that both “heritage” and

“culture” are social constructs (see Comaroff 123). Partha Chatterjee appears to make a similar point regarding the ‘identity’ of communities:

Identities and solidarities within the language of *jāti* are contextually defined. The language affords the possibility of imagining new bonds of affinity, but it does this precisely by imposing restrictions on their free flow. There are no substantive affinities that define identity regardless of context. (Chatterjee 222)

The notion that identities are fluid and constantly being renegotiated and constructed, often in response to political exigencies, has also been noted:

Identity struggles, ranging from altercations over resources to genocide, seem immanent almost everywhere as selfhood is immersed—existentially, metonymically—into claims of collective essence, of innate substance and primordial sentiment, that nestle within or transect the polity. (Comaroff 127)

Indeed, Weber’s famous insistence on the *künstlich* or artificiality as a condition of ‘ethnicity’ suggests that “ethnicity” itself is a form of ideology. The views of Clifford Geertz would appear to stress this underlying connection between ethnicity, identity and ideology by apparently explaining the increasingly strident assertions of ethnic identity by communities around the world as the inevitable consequences of social change:

Ideology is a patterned reaction to dislocation, displacement, disrupted class relations, or decay of traditional political authority...for it provides a “symbolic outlet” for emotional disturbances generated by social disequilibrium. (Geertz 204)

Also, going strictly by the notions of shared socio-cultural markers, there seems to be no possibility of “non-ethnic” communities. In multicultural spaces, however, particularly in the discourse of the modern nation-state, ethnic communities are imagined as essentially marginal entities, often existing in positions of conflict with the mainstream culture. There has always been, as Werner Sollors asserts, a “widespread practice to define ethnicity with otherness” (Sollors 191). The marginalized ethnic groups, then, are seen as people frequently forced to choose between assimilation into and acculturation with the dominant hegemonic group within the nation-state on the one hand, and on the other, an uneasy relationship of contestation, friction and attrition with it. It may be argued that this is evident in the

particular context of the contemporary European nation state, where migrant and Diaspora populations comprise communities deemed to be “ethnic minorities.”

The critical and commercial successes enjoyed by writers such as V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, who have chosen to foreground in their fiction individuals representing marginalized or ethnic communities, have in effect brought these communities into sharp focus in postcolonial period. Whereas this focus has been largely confined to the works of writers who have themselves emerged from these marginalized communities, it has spawned at least two conspicuous responses. On the one hand it has led to pious official assertions regarding the “multicultural” nature of modern European nation states such as Britain. On the other, it has also led to a corresponding crystallization of “national”, in effect White and Christian prejudices which are manifest in the right-wing politics of extremism seen across Europe. This rupture between the benign official self image of modern European nation-states and their very real postcolonial predicament— of everyday negotiation with the ethnic “other”—is reflected in le Carré’s post-Cold War fiction.

This study intends to argue that the post-Cold War fiction of John le Carré appears to present a counter-narrative to the standard representation or obliteration of marginal ethnic groups including migrants, exiles and victims of colonial subjection in the works of writers belonging to the dominant ‘non-ethnic’ political-cultural groups. This study seeks to show how le Carré resists and subverts the modes of “othering” manifest in conventional spy narratives of Sapper McNeile, John Buchan, and Ian Fleming by foregrounding characters representing ethnic communities located at the margins of major European nation states. For this purpose this study proposes to examine instances of such resistance in le Carré’s novels *The Russia House* (1989), *The Tailor of Panama* (1996), and *A Most Wanted Man* (2008). This study proposes further to explore the causes and consequences of such foregrounding both in terms of le Carré’s locus and the ethical implications of “ethnicity” and “identity.”

1.11 Ideology and John le Carré

It can thus be seen from the foregoing discussion that debate on the concept of “ideology” hinges on notions of truth, reality, illusion, representation, consciousness and power. The relationship between matter and ideas and, in turn, between these and

the individual in society, may be seen to have historically underpinned the ideological debate. The Marxist position can be seen to have remained more or less centered on the notion of ideology as a “false consciousness” arising from a confusion between the “use value” of objects and their abstract ‘exchange value’ in capitalist societies. All these dimensions of ideology may be seen to constitute ideology as essentially flawed beliefs which a group or a community invests in, internalizes, and uses to organize and rationalize their own lived experiences. The existence of contending ideologies at any given point of time in fact point emphatically not only to the evolutionary nature of social formations and discursive structures, but also to latent revolutionary possibilities. The present study will be informed by this perspective in its exploration of spy fiction and the role played by John le Carré’s fiction within the genre, insofar as they have been considered as sites for the location and transmission of ideology (Denning 14). This study is premised on the belief that there is a need to examine the manner in which the “hegemonic” discourses of race, religion, ethnicity and imperialism are embedded in the popular narratives of spy fiction. Besides, there is also a need to examine the manner in which spy narratives have been received, consumed, duplicated and contested across a variety of print, audio-visual and electronic media throughout the late twentieth century,

This study aims to show that issues of space, territory, nation, exile and exclusion, belonging and marginalization as well as the operations of globalized capitalism in the postcolonial world, which Michel Hardt and Antonio Negri describe in *Empire* (2000), can be seen to have powerful narrative functions as corollary concerns in several post-Cold war novels of John le Carré as *The Constant Gardener* (2001), *Absolute Friends* (2004), and *The Mission Song* (2006). Further, there will be an attempt to examine these and other le Carré novels in juxtaposition with alternative instances of spy fiction from John Buchan to Tom Clancy. This study intends to demonstrate that le Carré’s novels deviate from the standard concerns of the formulaic and conventional spy narratives, where the narrative focus is considered to be on development of the plot (Atkins 155), the celebration of patriotic duty or cynical professionalism (Panek 155, 259), or the validation of nation, ideology or territorial integrity (Garson 30). This study contends rather that the spy narratives of le Carré may be seen to focus not so much on the territories and boundaries that demarcate nation states, as “the spaces of humanity” (Nayar 82) dispersed across the globe.

The study seeks to establish that the deviations from and transgressions of the generic codes of the spy narrative as evident in the post-Cold War novels of John le Carré can be seen to constitute a deliberate strategy of subversion and resistance not only to the generic codes mentioned above, but also to the ideologies of race/class/ethnicity/culture and market civilization they are supposed to protect and proliferate.

Whereas the foregoing discussion may be seen to have outlined the broad contours of the debate on ‘ideology’ so far, as also the perspectives this study intends to take up in the analysis of the materials chosen, it is felt that a the concept of “resistance” needs to be taken up at this point.

1.12 Modernity, Popular Fiction, Genre Fiction and Bestsellers

The idea that “modernity” is an all encompassing field is problematic to a certain extent, given its fractured links with “modernization”. To be modern, surely, is to participate in the process of modernity and enjoy its fruits. However, this is contentious to say the least. For one, to suggest that notions of production and consumption of market goods are linked to forces of modernity would be to call for linking certain modes of production to a historically verifiable moment in Europe. Second, the idea that to be modern is to be progressive also invites the criticism that progress—as we define it and often claim to enjoy it—is not uniformly understood or available. Third, given that modernity is often presented as a European phenomenon and world view, certain areas of the world cannot be accommodated in this process, seen as it is, in relation to countries across Europe. Fourth, there is an explicit criticism of modernity as axiologically bound to capitalism and colonialism in Marxist historiography. In other words, the world cannot be seen as a place or a structure that moves from feudalism to capitalism, and from agrarian modes of production to industrial economies. To this extent, looking at modernity either as a historical trajectory of growth, explained in terms of a shift from idealism in philosophy to materialism, or in terms of development, is inadequate. What we need to stress is the possibility that modernity is an affective phenomenon that has had uneven implications for human society and culture, as well as non-human forms. To put it simply, the West’s definition of modernity is neither available nor applicable in

non-western cultures. In fact, the suspicion that western modernity has had a predatory relationship with non-western cultures, is now sought to be validated through evidence available in alternative or vernacular modernities. In effect, what has been regarded as modernity is seen as colonial modernity. An alternative view of such modernity—that often operates in collaboration with colonialism and capitalism—is available in the discourse of postcolonialism as well. Critiques of modernity, therefore, repeatedly interrogate not only the ideology that produces modernity, but also its various apparatuses. Insofar as Marxist criticism insists on and emphasizes the linkages between modernity, colonialism, imperialism and the market civilization, including popular fiction, it has been convenient for the purposes of this study to use it as a lens through which to examine each category as it stands in relation to the others.

It is imperative here to turn to Marshall Berman's explication of modernity in *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (1982), that echoes a famous phrase from Marx. Emphasizing the role of science and technology, the proliferation of mass movement and the rise of imperialism as essential to modernity, Berman identifies three periods of modernity—early, high and late—roughly corresponding to those described by Eric Hobsbaum as the three “ages” of Revolution, Capital and Empire, respectively. Berman rightly suggests that modernity can be simultaneously inspiring and destabilizing:

To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world- and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology: in this sense, modernity can be held to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: It pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish (Berman 15).

In fact, Berman's view of modernity as “a unity of disunity” is central to this thesis. The essentially disorienting and threatening spectacle of the world is the one in which characters of spy fiction operate with varying degrees of agency. The point to note,

however, is not just the structure and origin of the agency, but the modes of asymmetrical resistance that such agency generates.

Since spy fiction has been discussed as a part of a generic practice of “popular fiction” (Bloom 35; Gelder 42), or “genre fiction” (Frow 105), or frequently, “bestselling fiction” (Bloom 45), it would be necessary to consider the theoretical formulations of these terms as well. It would also be pertinent to point out that spy fiction has frequently regarded as a sub-genre of “crime fiction” and discussed as such (Seed 115-34).

The term “bestseller” has been defined as “a book which enjoys phenomenal sales over a very short period of time...” (Bloom 1). The term “bestseller” has often been used co-terminously with ‘popular fiction’ (Sutherland 33), although some have urged for a distinction (Bloom 39). It has also become customary in contemporary critical theory to discuss “popular fiction” as “genre fiction”, where genre refers to a body of fictional writing that plays on formulaic conventions of a mode of writing, suggesting that such fiction offers nothing by way of serious narrative or intellectual engagement, is predictable and highly mechanical as a mode of reproduction.

Critics of fiction as a novelistic genre mostly draw on Frye’s concept of romance and its various permutations and combinations, working for and against representable realities. However, theorization of genre, both as a typology and as a formula go back to Bakhtin, given his interest in genre specificities and anti-generic features built into every genre. While the genre becomes a convenient short cut to explanations of large socio-historical phenomena, it also acquires a series of formal attributes that are neither universally available, on closer scrutiny, uncontested. This particular in-built self interrogating device is not unique to any particular literary form. However, Bakhtin theorizes and anticipates much of self-conscious, self-contestatory genres in *The Dialogic Imagination*. It is instructive here to recall hugely polarizing debates on ideological and generic consistencies in literary forms (Pechey 59-84). In this context, it may be useful to cite Peter Almansi’s ironical account of genre and generic device:

Perhaps it is true that a book, any book, contains its own inbuilt reader’s guide: instructions to the recipient about what to expect, how to interpret what he has before him. This idea of the book containing the key to itself is ... already implicit in any definition ... of literary genre, since the initial

classification constitutes a powerful and complex cultural influence on the way books are accepted. At its simplest level the notion can be summarized in a tautology: satire is satirical—it predisposes its reader to a satirical attitude to the text, it smoothes the way for the satirical gambit, and so on. (Almansi 19).

Clearly, the belief that genres describe and follow genre conventions without deviation is not exactly supported by evidence. There would be, in such cases, attempts to either naturalize, or defamiliarize, taxonomic elements specific to particular forms (Thompson 8, 48). In other words, when one looks at a specific genre or sub-genre, there is always already the self-contestatory element that Bakhtin suggests, the scope for resistance to the genre itself. Hence, any claims that a writer or a critic may have to generic purity is out of character to the genre itself.

Works categorized as “genre fiction” or “popular fiction” or “bestsellers” have tended to be dismissed as “tosh fiction” (Sutherland 3), with scholars routinely emphasizing the “ephemerality of bestsellerism” (Sutherland 3). Invariably, bestsellers and their writers have been seen as inferior to the “authors” or creators of “literature”. This is made explicit by Tony Bennett, who suggests that,

the concept of popular fiction conveys— beyond the notion of numerical appeal-- that it is not literature. It is in fact a residual concept, the residue which remains once the sphere of literature has been described and accounted for (Bennett 176).

This peculiar attitude has been traced back to twentieth century projects attempting to establish a transcendent and unassailable literary canon untainted by history, which might serve to defend “high culture” against the encroaching consequences of democratization. F.R. Leavis’s *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (1930) and *The Great Tradition* (1963) have been cited as cases in point (Williams 270-72)

In the Australian scholar Ken Gelder’s analysis, another frame may be seen to develop:

...popular fiction has less to do with discourses of creativity and originality, and more to do with production and sheer hard work. The key paradigm for identifying popular fiction is not creativity, but *industry*. (Gelder 15; emphasis in original)

Gelder’s interpretation of “industry” is clearly two-fold. On the one hand, it suggests hard work, reflective more of craftsmanship than artistry, an idea developed famously

by Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (1958), in terms of artists opposed to artisans. On the other hand, the word industry refers to commerce, that is, production and circulation. In both cases, what is denied is to spy fiction is literary responsibility, a point that this thesis intends to interrogate. This shows how Marxist literary theory tries to link popular culture and popular fiction to ideology, specifying in course of time, the role of markets, machines and nations. The idea is to show that popular culture is not necessarily something that is mass produced for popular consumption alone.

The present study seeks to map out this historical dialogue between, among other things, literature and the market and nation and narration. This helps develop a model to understand the role of popular fiction in the dissemination, consolidation and possible resistance to ideology. However, it would be imperative to clarify “ideology” or “resistance” and also set the frames for reference for this thesis. In fact, given that the relationship between the two is layered in several contestatory etymological and socio-cultural traces, it will be necessary to briefly trace the terms in historical and critical usage.

1.13 Resistance

The term “resistance” has been variously used in the social sciences— as opposed to the physical sciences, such as physics or pathology, where electrical resistance or drug/disease resistance may be discussed—to suggest a wide variety of oppositional activities, undertaken at individual, collective, or institutional levels. The notion of “resistance” can be seen to encompass forms of physical protest as well as symbolic acts of defiance, disobedience, or feigned ignorance while under pressure to act in a prescribed manner. Whereas resistance may be seen to comprise acts of verbal articulation, the same may be also expressed through silence. Likewise, resistance may be seen to involve deliberate action, but inertia may be an equally effective in signaling the same. As may be inferred from the earlier discussions on ideology, the issue at stake in nearly all forms of resistance also is power

In an attempt to develop a “typology of resistance,” Hollander and Einwohner suggest that the two elements essential to resistance are *action* and *opposition* (Hollander-

Einwohner 538; emphasis in original), which may be realized individually or by way of collective organization. They posit the categories of *overt* and *covert* resistance, which they distinguish on the grounds of visibility and recognition. Resistance, they suggest, is either geared towards effecting social change, or, conversely, especially among dominant classes, towards thwarting it.

The potential for resistance has been seen as being inherent to discourse itself:

no discourse is ever a monologue; nor could it ever be analyzed intrinsically . . . everything that constitutes it always presupposes a horizon of competing, contrary utterances against which it asserts its own energies. (Terdiman 36)

The actual materialisation of literature as a medium of overt resistance is documented in Barbara Harlow's *Resistance Literature* (1987), which argues that literary works operate as essential sites in the articulation of radical and transformative goals. Citing the writings from a wide range of writers from postcolonial nations, including Amilcar Cabral (Guinea-Bissau), Nicolás Guillén (Cuba), Pablo Neruda (Chile) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Kenya), she equates resistance literature with the actual practice of armed political struggle: "The resistance writer, like the guerilla of the armed liberation struggle, is actively engaged in an urgent historical confrontation" (Harlow 100). Harlow's examination of resistance texts includes poems, narratives, memoirs and dystopian writings, all united by their common potential for mobilizing a collective response to structures of domination. As she makes explicit in her analysis, "resistance literature", or "reverse discourse" (Parry 37) is unambiguously partisan.

This use of the literary text, specifically, a work of fiction as a tool to critique and resist ideology is best exemplified by such works as *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1948) by George Orwell. Indeed, it may be pertinent to point out Orwell's declared objective in all his writings:

My starting point is always a feeling of partisanship, a sense of injustice. When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, 'I am going to produce a work of art'. I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing. (Orwell N.p.)

Orwell's attitude in his deliberate blending of the fictive and polemical modes may be seen captured in Noam Chomsky's declaration that it is "the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and to expose lies." (Chomsky 325) This thesis contends that the post-Cold War novels of John le Carré are motivated by impulses which are largely sympathetic to these views, insofar as le Carré has publicly alluded to Orwell in connection with what he called "the literature of involvement" (Crutchley "Fictional" 6) in an 1966 interview. As matters stand, the strong affinity between Orwell and le Carré has already been pointed out by Abraham Rothberg (Rothberg 63).

However, the relationship between the literary text as a cultural product, as a site for ideological contestation, and as a domain of resistance is complicated. Lennard J. Davis suggests in his *Resisting Novels: Ideology and Fiction* (1987), that the specific form of the novel is doubly ideological, on the one because hand it invites its readers to disengage with material reality and believe in the fiction it represents, and on the other because it functions a "gigantic defense mechanism" (Davis 11), for the bourgeois culture that has been historically responsible for its production. He insists that rather than adopt a stance of acquiescence in reading, the reader is well advised to "resist" the encoded ideology of the novel. Davis may thus be seen dismissing the possibility of the "reverse discourse" in novels.

The issue of ideology and the novel becomes even more ambiguous in the case of popular fiction, where the "reverse discourse" can be seen getting compromised by the reified form of the text as a consumer commodity, packaged and marketed as part of a culture based on hegemonic market structure. Still, Harlow may be seen making a case for such a discourse within the existing institutions despite their compromised nature. She avers that, "the structures of institutional domination can be remade as an act of collaboration within a larger project of collective counter-resistance" (Harlow "Political" 46-61). It is in the context of this possibility of that the post-Cold War novels may be seen resisting, subverting and channeling the frame of the spy novel to critique the assumptions of the market culture it is supposed to support and perpetuate.

However, alternative views affirming the potential of the novel for parody and subversion are also in evidence. The views expressed by Mikhail Bakhtin in

“Discourse in the Novel” have already been discussed earlier. In the specific context of works considered as “popular fiction,” Tony Bennett remarks:

...they are not *just* ideology; they disrupt not merely conventional narrative forms but are often profoundly ... subversive of the dominant ideological discourses of class, nation, sexism and so on. (Palmer; cit. in Basu 190; emphasis in original).

In the light of this assertion regarding the subversive potential of generic and popular texts the present thesis undertakes to argue that the spy narratives of John le Carré, particularly his post-Cold War novels. It argues that these novels may be seen to evince a consistent and multi-layered resistance to geo-political, cultural and intellectual registers in the writer’s environment, often codified in contemporary critical theory as postcolonial or post-industrial. This thesis analyzes specific areas of le Carré’s fiction with particular reference to the fractured relationship between ideology—ethnic, racial, and spiritual, to name the most dominant sites of ideology—and resistance embedded within the spy fiction genre. In effect, this study pleads for greater attention to narrative strategies adopted by le Carré that reflect his ideological positions, more particularly, in the post-Cold War novels. This thesis sees both connections and breaks between his Cold War and post-Cold War novels, instead of pleading for an exclusive stance.

This of course presupposes that narratorial intent not only exists, but may also be effectively communicated to a community of readers, to be either consensually received or contested.

1.14 John le Carré and Resistance

This thesis identifies at least three dimensions to the resistance manifest in le Carré’s novels. The first is his political-ideological resistance to the neo-imperialistic Anglo-American alliance, which may be seen as being portrayed in its nascent stage in novels such as *The Honourable Schoolboy* (1977), and its fully developed form in *The Russia House* (1989), *Absolute Friends* (2004) and *A Most Wanted Man* (2008).

Second, there is a resistance to the established codes and conventions of the conventional spy fiction genre. Implicit in this resistance of genre codes is also a cultural-representational resistance to the racial/imperialist discourse of spy fiction, the very genre which has established and sustained le Carré the writer. This aspect of

resistance can be verified from a contextual analysis of le Carré novels such as *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (1973), *The Russia House* (1989) *Our Game* (1995), *The Constant Gardener* (2001) and *The Mission Song* (2006).

The manner in which the resources of popular fiction are harnessed for the creation of global opinion in a sustained critique of unbridled global commerce will be examined with reference to *The Constant Gardener* (2001), and *Single & Single*. Eva Horn suggests in this context that the le Carré appears to be more aligned with the writings of socialist critics such Carl Schmidt and Margaret Boveri than to the spy fiction genre (Horn 267). As such, the writer may be seen to engage in what Cornel West terms “the cultural politics of difference” (West 203). That le Carré’s novels address an increasingly global readership, receptive to his articulations may help to comprehend both the value and the validity of his strategy.

Finally, this thesis argues that the forms of resistance manifest in le Carré’s novels complicate, and have been complicated by the writer’s locus. Insofar as his writing appears to reflect a certain “narrative intent”(Wolf 7) through a sustained discourse of opposition, this thesis contends that the post-Cold War novels of John le Carré foreground a deliberate cultivation of an ethical identity that is geographically, literally, culturally and ideologically marginal, and yet significant. What may be seen to validate his position is a clear and consistent ethical trajectory that effectively links the post-Cold War novels to the earlier group despite perceived artistic and thematic shifts.