MOVING BEYOND THE CRIME SCENE: UNVEILING THE IDEOLOGICAL CANVAS IN SELECTED PAKISTANI DETECTIVE FICTION

By

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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, **Muhammad Waleed Zafar**

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Moving Beyond the Crime Scene: Unveiling the Ideological Canvas in Selected Pakistani Detective Fiction** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be canceled and the degree revoked.

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October 15, 2025
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ABSTRACT

Title: Moving Beyond the Crime Scene: Unveiling the Ideological Canvas in Selected Pakistani Detective Fiction

This thesis explores the intersection of ideology, power, and resistance in Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction through the lens of Louis Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) and Slavoj Žižek's notions of the 'typical' and the 'stand-in.' Focusing on *The House of Fear* (1955) by Ibn-e-Safi, *The Doomsday Deception* (1987) by Ishtiaq Ahmed, and *The Prisoner* (2013) by Omar Shahid Hamid, the study examines how these novels portray ideological dynamics within Pakistan's cultural and historical contexts. By analyzing the role of literature, media, law enforcement, and religious institutions as ISAs, this research investigates how detective fiction critiques or reinforces prevailing structures of ideology and power. The thesis further explores the ways in which protagonists navigate ideological forces, either upholding or subverting dominant narratives of authority and justice. Through narrative techniques, character development, and thematic concerns, these novels highlight systemic corruption, socio-economic disparities, and political influences, revealing detective fiction as a potent medium for social critique. Additionally, Žižek's framework of the 'stand-in' and the 'typical' is applied to examine how these works reflect broader ideological struggles, positioning the detective figure as both an enforcer and a disruptor of hegemonic power. By situating these texts within their socio-political milieu, this research demonstrates that Pakistani detective fiction functions not merely as entertainment but as a significant literary space where ideology is negotiated, contested, and redefined. In doing so, it contributes to broader discussions on the role of genre fiction in shaping and reflecting cultural discourses on justice, authority, and resistance.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to those who find solace in words, meaning in narratives, and truth in fiction. To those who believe that stories have the power to challenge, to inspire, and to reshape the world.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates how selected Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction engages with and reflects dominant ideological structures. Focusing on *The House of Fear* (1955) by Ibn-e-Safi, *The Doomsday Deception* (1987) by Ishtiaq Ahmed, and *The Prisoner* (2013) by Omer Shahid Hamid, the research draws on the theoretical insights of Louis Althusser, especially his concepts of Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses, and Slavoj Žižek's notions of the 'typical' and the 'stand-in'. These theories provide a lens through which the novels' portrayal of power and ideology can be critically examined. This theoretical framework help uncover how institutions such as law enforcement, media, religion, and education are represented as vehicles of ideological power. Though the selected texts align with the conventions of the detective genre, they reveal how everyday life is shaped by deeper ideological currents, positioning both individuals and institutions as complicit in upholding the prevalent status quo. Through close reading of the narrative form and character development, the thesis places Pakistani detective fiction within broader conversation focusing on its intersection with ideology, authority, and structural violence.

Despite the prominence of ideological critique in literary studies, little attention has been paid to Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction through the combined lens of Althusser and Žižek. Prior research tends to highlight these works for their entertainment value or for their contribution to national or cultural discourse, often neglecting the ideological dimensions embedded within them. This research seeks to address that critical gap by arguing that these narratives do more than solve fictional crimes; they serve as cultural texts that dramatize how ideology operates and how state power is both challenged and upheld. Concepts such as interpellation; which describes the process of becoming a subject within an ideological system, and hegemony; or the dominance of certain worldviews, are central to this analysis. Žižek's categories of the 'typical'; a character that seamlessly reflects dominant norms, and the 'stand-in'; a figure that displaces contradictions without resolving them, offer further insight into how detective fiction in Pakistan navigates ideological tensions. Rather than simply applying these theories, this research approaches theory as a lens to reveal how Pakistani detective fiction engages with deeper structures of ideological formation and resistance.

1.1 Background and Context

Detective fiction has long held a significant place within the global literary canon, with its emergence as a distinct genre tracing back to the early nineteenth century. Widely credited as the genre's originator, Edgar Allan Poe laid its foundational structure with his 1841 short story "*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*", which introduced the concept of a rational, analytical detective as central to the narrative (Rosenheim 375). This pioneering work established many of the genre's defining features, such as logical reasoning, structured investigation, and the resolution of complex mysteries. Later authors, particularly Arthur Conan Doyle, expanded the genre's appeal through characters like Sherlock Holmes, whose methodical approach to crime-solving became a benchmark for detective narratives. Doyle's contributions cemented many genre conventions still in use today. As Link notes, these early innovations not only shaped the form and style of detective stories but also encouraged an interactive reading experience that engages with both intellect and moral inquiry (18). Over time, the genre has proven remarkably adaptable, evolving in response to changing social contexts while continuing to explore themes of justice, ethical ambiguity, and human ingenuity.

Detective fiction, while originally rooted in suspense and mystery, has gradually transformed into a sophisticated literary form that attracts both scholarly attention and broad reader interest. In the Western literary tradition, figures such as Agatha Christie, Raymond Chandler, and Dashiell Hammett played pivotal roles in expanding the genre's scope, weaving into their narratives elements of psychological depth, critiques of social structures, and the moral ambiguities inherent in justice (Moore 29). While earlier detective stories centered mainly on solving isolated crimes, later works began to probe deeper, engaging with questions of ethics, institutional failures, and systemic inequalities. This progression enabled detective fiction to transcend the role of mere entertainment, evolving into a narrative vehicle that mirrors society's underlying tensions and complexities (McCracken 55). By merging intricate plots with social reflection, the genre encourages readers to confront the uncertainties of modern life and reconsider the values that govern their world.

In many parts of the world, detective fiction has transcended its original boundaries, becoming a vehicle for social commentary. Particularly in postcolonial societies, the genre has been adapted and transformed to reflect local realities. In the South Asian context, and more specifically in Pakistan, detective fiction has often been a

lens through which societal shifts, political transformations, and cultural tensions are explored (Hynynen 231). The genre offers readers insights into the political, social, and cultural dynamics of the time, providing a narrative space where issues of power, corruption, and justice intersect with personal and communal identities (Bina 171). By intertwining gripping narratives with social critique, detective fiction not only entertains but also challenges readers to engage with the complexities of their societies.

Despite its widespread readership, Pakistani detective fiction has yet to receive substantial critical attention in academic discourse. Scholarly engagement with the genre remains limited, particularly when it comes to analyzing its role as a cultural product embedded within Pakistan's literary and ideological landscape. This research seeks to address that gap by offering a critical examination of three notable works: Ibn-e-Safi's *The House of Fear* (1955), Ishtiaq Ahmed's *The Doomsday Deception* (1987), and Omar Shahid Hamid's *The Prisoner* (2013). Representing distinct phases in the evolution of Pakistani detective writing, these texts offer insights into the ideological and historical contexts that shaped their narratives. While they center on themes of crime and investigation, these novels also function as reflections of dominant ideologies, highlighting the socio-political tensions and institutional dynamics of their respective eras.

Detective fiction, in the selected texts, does not only serve as a form of entertainment but as a medium of exploring and reinforcing the ideologies according to which the society functions. The study provides a clear framework to examine the ways in which the police, intelligence agencies and branches of government can operate within a society and influence it. Consequently, Pakistani detective fiction provides a critical lens to examine the practices and interceptions of state power, exposing the vulnerabilities of social order and the idiosyncrasies of justice. With their crime stories that contain the elements of a social critique; these works make a reader think critically to process the ways power functions and its implications on individual agency as well as collective resistance.

Ibn-e-Safi's novel *The House of Fear* serves as a representation of the sociopolitical landscape in post-colonial Pakistan, where concerns related to national identity and political control are given significant attention. Written during the early years following Pakistan's independence, the novel portrays the anxiety and instability experienced by the new nation as it attempts to establish functioning systems of

governance, effective law enforcement, and internal security. The character of Ali Imran is presented not only as an investigator solving criminal cases but also as a symbolic figure committed to defending the core values and identity of the state. In this light, his role takes on a broader meaning, as he becomes involved in addressing threats that go beyond individual crimes to reflect larger social and political challenges. The narrative, therefore, does more than follow a detective plotline; it comments on the importance of state authority, nationalism, and the preservation of social order in a time marked by uncertainty and political instability.

Moving forward three decades, *The Doomsday Deception* by Ishtiaq Ahmed, written during the 1980s, reflects a time of increasing religious fundamentalism in Pakistan. This era saw major shifts in the country's political landscape, especially under General Zia-ul-Haq's military regime, which focused on implementing Islamic principles across the legal and social systems. The novel presents these changes through its themes of religious extremism, conspiracy, and the conflict between traditional values and modern ideas (Saleem 3). The novel's portrayal of Inspector Jamshed, the central detective figure, reflects a period when law enforcement became closely connected to religious ideology, and the boundaries between justice and religious morality became less clear. His character is responsible not just for investigating crimes but also for upholding religious values, highlighting how detective fiction of this time served as a commentary on the growing use of religion in politics. These themes allow the novel to raise questions about the political and social climate of the era, encouraging readers to think about how power, religion, and justice were interlinked.

The Prisoner by Omar Shahid Hamid, set in the contemporary era, addresses themes of state failure, terrorism, and the commodification of violence. Drawing from Pakistan's ongoing issues with political instability, terrorism, and corruption, the novel critically portrays the state's inability to protect its citizens from both internal and external threats (Ghosal 10). The central characters, Akbar Khan and Constantine D'Souza, are portrayed as imperfect figures who operate within a deeply flawed and corrupt system. Their attempts at restoring order expose the ethical compromises necessary to survive in a society where lawlessness prevails. *The Prisoner* highlights the breakdown of state institutions, declining trust in law enforcement, and the commodification of violence under the pretense of national security (Hamid). Through its narrative, the novel raises

questions about the difficult moral choices faced by those tasked with enforcing justice and examines the complex link between individual responsibility and institutional decay.

These three novels offer a detailed understanding of how Pakistani detective fiction has evolved over time. These works highlight how the genre reflects shifts in the country's social and political landscape. The first novel looks at the post-independence period. The second focuses on the rise of religious fundamentalism. The third deals with terrorism and widespread corruption. Each plotline captures a different time in Pakistan's history. These texts are not just about solving crimes; they also talk about real social issues and reflect public concerns, fears, and values. Examining them helps us see how literature responds to big ideas like power, identity, and governance. Detective fiction becomes a space where these issues are questioned and discussed. This study argues that Pakistani detective fiction is more than entertainment; it is a way to critically explore social and political realities.

1.2   Rationale for the Study

While detective fiction is popular among readers in Pakistan, most studies focus only on its entertainment value. Its deeper ideological meanings are often ignored. This research aims to fill that gap. It critically studies Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction to show how the texts reflect dominant ideologies within its political and social setting. Using the theories of Louis Althusser and Slavoj Žižek, this study shows how these texts underscore ideological state apparatuses. These are tools that spread and protect the beliefs of the ruling class.

Louis Althusser's idea of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) says institutions like schools, religion, and literature help spread ruling-class ideas. This study focuses on how detective fiction also represents the notion of ideological state apparatuses at work within literary narratives. It often supports the same systems of power that control society (Althusser 134). In Pakistan, where politics, religion, and police power are interlinked, detective fiction gives a useful way to study how these institutions are represented in fiction. It also shows how they affect public consciousness.

Slavoj Žižek's theory about culture as a commodity adds depth to this study. Žižek believes cultural products are packaged in ways that support capitalism and state power. Detective fiction, seen through this lens, often uses symbolic characters or "stand-ins" to show broad social values. These characters help maintain the status quo. So,

detective fiction is not just about solving crimes, it also reflects the ideologies that shape society.

The selected novels offer strong examples for this kind of analysis. Each one deals with important political and social issues of its time. *The House of Fear* (1955) carries nationalistic themes. *The Doomsday Deception* (1987) shows the rise of religious extremism. *The Prisoner* (2013) criticizes state failure. Together, they show how detective fiction serves as a space for exploring ideologies that govern Pakistani society.

1.3 Thesis Statement

Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction functions not merely as entertainment but seems as a critical medium for the dissemination and reinforcement of dominant ideologies. If viewed from Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs), the detective fiction portrays how institutions such as law enforcement, religion, and culture are ideologically portrayed within these narratives. Moreover, Žižek's concepts of the "typical" and the "stand-in" further illuminate how such narratives reflect and sustain ideological norms, normalizing power structures within Pakistani society.

1.4 Research Questions

1. In what ways does the selected Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction engage with Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses in portraying the ideological dynamics within the cultural context of Pakistan?

2. How are the protagonists of the selected detective fiction interpellated and represented by using Zizekian notions of the 'typical' and the 'stand-in' to challenge or reinforce prevailing ideologies of power and authority?

3. How are the themes of corruption, socio-economic disparities, and political influence represented in the selected Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction to reflect underlying ideological structures?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to analyze how Pakistani detective fiction serves as an ideological tool that reflects and propagates the interests of the ruling class during different time periods. Specifically, the study aims to:

1   To examine how selected Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction reflects and engages with ideological structures and power dynamics across different time

periods, using Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses and Žižek's notions of the "typical" and the "stand-in."

2 To analyze the ways in which protagonists either reinforce or resist dominant ideologies related to power and authority, within the socio-political context of Pakistan.

3 To explore how key themes, such as corruption, socio-economic disparity, and political influence, are woven into the narratives, and what these representations suggest about the ideological functions of the genre.

4 To assess how Pakistani detective fiction, despite often supporting dominant ideologies, also opens space for critique and reflection on societal structures.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation

This research is limited to the analysis of three Pakistani detective novels; *The House of Fear*, *The Doomsday Deception*, and *The Prisoner*. Each novel represents a different time period in Pakistani literature and offers insight into the socio-political context of its era. The study focuses on how these texts reflect and propagate the ruling class's ideology. It uses the theories of Louis Althusser and Slavoj Žižek to guide the analysis. The research uses textual analysis as its method. This approach allows close reading of the texts to identify hidden ideological messages. It is a suitable method for the analysis of detective fiction because it helps examine not only the plot and characters but also the broader cultural and political implications of the texts. While the main focus is on the three selected novels, the study also engages with secondary literature on Pakistani detective fiction, ideology, and popular culture. This will help place the study in a broader academic context. However, the scope of the research is delimited to the selected texts and may not apply to all Pakistani detective fiction. Nevertheless, the research aims to show how literature can act as a tool for spreading ideas and shaping public consciousness in Pakistani society.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is important for both Pakistani literary studies and for wider discussions on how literature and ideology are interlinked. It explores detective fiction through the lens of ideological critique, and challenges the idea that popular fiction is apolitical or has no serious academic value. Instead, it posits that detective fiction is a strong cultural product that reflects and shapes social values. It gives readers a way to

ponder upon the dynamics of power and ideology in everyday life. The study also helps us understand the role of literature in shaping people's consciousness. Today, cultural products often propagate ideologies, especially in countries like Pakistan. By examining detective fiction's portrayal of institutions like law enforcement, government, and religion, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how power structures are represented popular culture. Moreover, this research gives a view of how literature, culture, and ideology connect in Pakistani detective fiction. Using ideas from Althusser and Žižek, the study adds to ongoing debates about the role of literature in shaping societal values. It treats detective fiction as a serious space for studying how power and ideologies work in society

1.8   Chapter Breakdown

My thesis includes seven chapters and they all are coherently and logically arranged.

Chapter 1 offers a comprehensive overview of my research project, covering the background of the chosen theories and introducing the selected texts. It also presents the rationale behind choosing the primary texts, along with the thesis statement, research questions, research objectives, delimitation, and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a critical and comparative review of previous works related to the key concepts of this thesis, setting the foundation for the study and identifying the research gaps that my work attempts to address. This chapter is divided into six major sections: the first two sections explore Althusserian concept of ideology used in the West and in South Asian fiction respectively, the third examines the representation of Žižek's concept as used in literature, the fourth and fifth offers an overview of detective fiction in general and the evolution of detective fiction in Pakistani context, and the sixth provides an overview of existing academia on the selected texts. The chapter concludes with the identification of the research gap.

Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework and methodology used in analyzing the selected texts. This chapter delves into Louis Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses, Slavoj Žižek's concept of "typical" and "stand-in", and Catherine Belsey's research method, providing a detailed explanation of how these theories and approaches are used to guide the analysis.

Chapter 4, 5 and 6 comprise the critical textual analysis of the selected texts by using the theoretical framework and methodology outlined in the former chapter. These

chapters address the thesis statement and provide answers to the research questions introduced in chapter one.

Chapter 7 serves as the final chapter of this thesis, presenting the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the selected texts. It also offers the researcher's recommendations for potential future studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review examines existing research relevant to this study. It focuses on South Asian literature, especially South Asian detective fiction, with an emphasis on ideological themes in Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction. By analyzing these areas, the review aims to show how this research builds on current scholarship while identifying gaps. It also highlights how this study differs from previous researches on the genre in general and Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction in particular. Engaging with a diverse body of literature will not only provide a foundation for understanding the role of detective fiction in cultural discourse but also highlight how detective genre in South Asian context reflects complex social and political realities.

This review addresses three central themes: first, the application of Althusser's concept in both Western and South Asian fiction; second, the exploration and incorporation of Žižek's notions within literary studies; and third, the critical examination of Pakistani literature in general, with a specific focus on the scholarly analysis of Pakistani detective fiction. This thematic organization situates the current study within broader academic discussions while identifying gaps that this research aims to address.

2.2 Behind the Text: Tracing Althusser's State Apparatuses in Western Literature

The concept of ideology, as theorized by Louis Althusser, plays a pivotal role in understanding the mechanisms through which dominant social structures maintain power. Althusser's theory introduces the idea of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs), encompassing institutions like the family, education, religion, and media, which perpetuate the values of the ruling class by subtly shaping individual beliefs and behaviors. His notion of interpellation explains how individuals are "hailed" by ideology, unconsciously accepting roles and identities that reinforce existing power dynamics. This framework has been widely applied in literary studies to analyze how texts reflect, critique, or propagate ideological constructs. The literature review in the following two sections examine the scholarly engagement with Althusserian theory in both Western and South Asian fiction, highlighting key applications and interpretations.

"Ideology and Interpellation: An Althusserian Approach to Josh Malerman's *Inspection*" is an article that examines how Malerman's dystopian novel critiques the manipulative nature of ideology as conceptualized by Louis Althusser. It explores how the capitalist ruling class uses ideological control, illustrated through the isolated upbringing of children in two schools; Parenthood for boys, overseen by D.A.D., and Parenthood for girls, governed by M.O.M. These figures represent oppressive capitalist ideologies. The children, called Alphabet Boys and Girls, are subjected to fabricated beliefs, such as the myth of their birth from "Living Trees", to manipulate their understanding of identity. The analysis delves into the mechanisms of both ideology and repression, showcasing how the state apparatus functions by shaping consciousness and maintaining control through both consent and coercion. The character of D.A.D. exemplifies the enforcement of ideological dominance, while the protagonist, J, emerges as a symbol of resistance, challenging the fabricated worldview and seeking personal identity beyond the confines of Parenthood. While this article focuses on a dystopian critique of capitalist systems, my research differs by analyzing how ideological control is depicted in Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction, reflecting the unique socio-political realities of Pakistan. Instead of fabricated dystopian settings, my study explores real-world ISAs, such as religion, law enforcement, and politics, to examine their role in perpetuating power structures.

In his article "Cinema as an Instrument of Ideological War", Ervic K. Angeles critically explores the role of cinema as an ideological state apparatus by analyzing several influential films, including Alfred Hitchcock's *Notorious* (1946), John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956), and Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike and Battleship Potemkin* (1925). These films are used as tools for ideological conditioning, reflecting the political and social realities of their respective times. *Notorious* represents geopolitical conflicts, with its characters symbolizing nations in opposition, highlighting the U.S.'s pursuit of global dominance and its manifest destiny during a period of international tension. In a similar vein, The Searchers addresses themes of racial segregation and the preservation of Anglo-Saxon superiority in the American West, reinforcing ideas of American exceptionalism and justifying expansionist actions. On the other hand, Eisenstein's Strike and Battleship Potemkin highlights class struggles and the brutal actions of the ruling class. They align with Soviet efforts to gain public support for the revolution. These films show that cinema is more than entertainment. It serves as a tool for spreading ideology, shaping

public views, and promoting narratives that support those in power. This reflects Althusser's idea of ideological state apparatuses. Contrary to this, my research focuses on the exploration of ISAs in fiction, particularly Pakistani detective fiction.

In the article "Western Ideological State Apparatuses and Native American Culture in Erdrich's *LaRose*", Tabassum Maqbool and Aqsa Allah Rakha explore how education serves as a tool for ideological oppression, particularly in the context of Native American assimilation and the eradication of cultural identities. Using Althusser's theory of ISAs, they argue that the educational system has been central to creating a class of individuals severed from their cultural roots. The article delves into the historical oppression of Native Americans, focusing on how religious narratives were manipulated to justify colonization and the imposition of Western ideologies. The authors ultimately highlight the psychological and cultural consequences of these assimilation efforts, stressing the need for cultural preservation. While this article focuses on the specific context of Native Americans' cultural oppression and education as an ISA, my research differs in its focus on Pakistani detective fiction, analyzing how the genre reflects and critiques the ideologies surrounding nationalism, power structures, and corruption. By contrast, Maqbool and Rakha examine the role of education in ideological control, my work looks at how Pakistani detective fiction critiques political and religious ideologies through the lens of Althusser's ISAs, with particular attention to the role of law enforcement and the police.

The article titled "Exposing Althusser's State Apparatuses through Ishmael Reed's *The Free-Lance Pallbearers*", authored by Ali Ahmadi, examines Ishmael Reed's *The Free-Lance Pallbearers* within the context of Althusser's theory of ISAs. Ahmadi contends that Reed's novel actively challenges and destabilizes dominant ideological discourses prevalent in American society, especially those related to race, cultural identity, and societal norms. While Althusser asserts that literature typically functions as a cultural ISA hence shaping and interpellating individuals into specific ideological frameworks, Reed's characters and narrative techniques work against this process. The findings suggest that throughout the novel, Reed continuously subverts the prevalent cultural and ideological messages of American society by questioning white standards; from language and perceptions of reality to the broader political and social structures that uphold these norms. Reed's strategic use of parody and critique exposes how ideology pervades art, religion, and media, and demonstrates the ways in which his characters

resist being fully interpellated into these hegemonic systems. Ultimately, Ahmadi illustrates how Reed's work serves as a form of counter-ideological discourse, emphasizing literature's potential to deconstruct and oppose dominant ideological narratives, and providing a critique of Althusser's view that culture primarily functions as an instrument of ideological domination. While Ahmadi critiques Althusser's claim about literature as an ideological tool, my work uses Althusserian and Žižekian framework to show how detective fiction in Pakistan operates within and upholds state ideologies across different historical periods.

2.3 Althusserian Concept of Ideology in South Asian Fiction Specifically Pakistani Fiction

The article "The Application of Althusser's Theory of ISA in E. M. Forster's Novel *A Passage to India*" by Bahramand Shah, Gohar Rahman, and Sana Riaz examines the role of ISAs within the colonial context of E.M. Forster's novel. The authors explore how political and religious ISAs influence societal norms and behaviors, particularly highlighting the cultural gap between the British colonizers and the Indian population. For example, the bridge party scene serves as a reflection of social hierarchies and exclusions, where individuals are marginalized based on caste and sect. Similarly, the depictions of Hindu and Muslim holy sites emphasize the deep cultural roots of these religions in India, in stark contrast to Christianity, which is portrayed as an alien ideology lacking authentic connection to the land. Through Althusser's framework, the study uncovers the subtle ways ideology sustains power structures and reinforces social hierarchies, offering valuable insight into the relationship between literature, colonial power and ideology. My research, while also employing Althusser's theory of ISAs, diverges by focusing on how ideological state apparatuses operate within the socio-political landscape of contemporary Pakistani society as depicted in selected Pakistani detective fiction, rather than colonial India. Unlike this article's emphasis on religious and political ISAs within a colonial framework, my study explores how these apparatuses propagate dominant ideologies to reinforce power structures, particularly examining corruption, manipulation of belief systems, and socio-economic pressures in the selected texts.

Another article "The Role of Ideological State Apparatuses in Identity Formation in Qaisra Shahraz's: *The Holy Woman*," authored by Dr. Amna Saeed and Azher Khan, delves into the relationship between ISAs and identity formation, with a focus on the

character Zari Bano in Shahraz's novel. The authors explore how various ISAs influence Zari Bano's acceptance of her role as a 'holy woman' within the patriarchal framework of Rural Sindh society. The study identifies the Family ISA as a primary force, where figures like Zari Bano's grandfather, Seraj Din, reinforce patriarchal authority and familial norms. The Cultural/Social ISA is equally significant, as the societal beliefs and practices of Rural Sindh impose specific expectations that Zari Bano internalizes, shaping her choices and behavior. Additionally, the Political ISA highlights the role of broader societal structures in influencing identity, revealing conflict between Zari Bano's personal desires and the prevailing political ideologies of her community. The discussion focuses on interpellation and explores how Zari Bano sees herself within an ideological system. While this article looks at how ISAs shape a female protagonist's identity in a rural Pakistani setting, my research shifts to Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction. I study how ISAs like religion, politics, and law enforcement propagate dominant ideologies, influencing narratives around corruption, nationalism, and state power.

The article titled "Legitimizing Oppression: An Althusserian Study of Jamil Ahmed's *The Wandering Falcon*" is authored by Kashifa Khalid, Usama Javed Iqbal and Muneeba Liaquat. The authors examine the oppression of marginalized groups in Pakistan, especially in tribal regions. Using Louis Althusser's idea of repressive state apparatuses (RSAs), the study claims the state plays a role in perpetuating oppression instead of reducing it for the oppressed. The paper highlights how state institutions, including the judiciary, police, and military, collaborate with the ruling class to suppress dissent and maintain the status quo therefore effectively turning the poor into "puppets" of the elite. The narrative of Jamil Ahmed's novel follows the character Tor Baz who witnesses the brutal realities of life in tribal regions including the murder of his parents, the exploitation of women and the systemic violence against those who dare to demand their rights. The article emphasizes the pervasive class inequalities and marginalization that characterize the lives of these communities, illustrating how the state's oppressive mechanisms lead to a cycle of suffering and despair. My research builds upon and diverges from this work by expanding the application of Althusser's ideological and repressive state apparatuses to examine Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction. While Javed's study is grounded in tribal society's socio-political struggles, my research investigates broader socio-political mechanisms, including corruption and the manipulation of justice. Furthermore, my study integrates Slavoj Žižek's concepts of the

'typical' and 'stand-in' to analyze how these works reflect and reinforce class and power structures within urban Pakistani society.

The article "Ideological Manipulation and Exploitation of Minorities in Pakistan: An Analytical Study of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*" is written by Usama Javed Iqbal, Nasar Iqbal, and Kashifa Khalid. It explores the socio-political dynamics of Pakistan, particularly focusing on the struggles of minority groups as depicted in Muhammad Hanif's novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. The authors use Louis Althusser's theories of ideological state apparatuses and repressive state apparatuses to analyze how these systems oppress and marginalize minorities, especially Christians in Pakistan. The story of Alice Bhatti, a Christian nurse, highlights the violence, discrimination, and exclusion faced by people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The study also looks at how gender and class intersect, showing that women in minority communities are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse in a patriarchal society. The authors argue that Pakistan's legal and social systems fail to protect these marginalized groups hence keeping them trapped in poverty and oppression. While this study uses Althusser's ideas to critique socio-political injustices and patriarchal exploitation of women in minority communities, my research focuses on detective fiction as a tool for analyzing ideological manipulation. I have explored how Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction addresses corruption and socio-political complexities.

The article "Subjectivity and Ideological Interpellation: An Investigation of Omar Shahid Hamid's *The Spinner's Tale*" is authored by Hina Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad Asif, and Asia Saeed. The study focuses on Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation, which explains how individuals internalize cultural values and ideologies to become a part of a social system. The authors argue that ideology acts as a belief system that shapes individual identities through social institutions. These institutions maintain social order and control. Using narrative inquiry, the authors examine how the protagonist, Ausi, transforms from an ordinary individual to a jihadi fighter under the interpellating influence of religious and societal pressures. The article highlights how state apparatuses, like educational institutions, can spread discrimination and shape ideologies that can lead to extremist behavior. Ausi's journey illustrates how cultural hegemony leads people to accept repressive ideologies. While this article explores how state ideology shapes identity and supports dominant culture, my research centers on detective fiction. I have analyzed how this genre exposes corruption and state failure.

2.4   Zizek's Concept Used in Literature

Slavoj Žižek's theory of ideology offers a complex view that goes beyond traditional ideas of false consciousness. It intersects with Louis Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) in significant ways. Both theorists view ideology as a key component of social life, shaping people's perceptions and beliefs. They argue that ideology isn't just about ideas but is rooted in practices and institutions that govern social behavior. Althusser's ISAs such as education, religion, and media work to uphold power structures. Žižek agrees, noting that cultural products like films and popular media also propagate dominant ideologies. Both theorists also emphasize the role of ideology in subject formation. Althusser's idea of interpellation explains how individuals see themselves within ideological systems, while Žižek emphasizes the unconscious dimension of ideology. However, Žižek introduces cynicism, where individuals knowingly follow ideological illusions, reflecting a more contemporary understanding of ideology in a postmodern context. Additionally, Žižek's ideas of the "typical" and the "stand-in" are central to his critique. The "typical" represents dominant societal norms in narratives hence symbolizing ideological constructs. The "stand-in" acts as a symbolic scapegoat, shifting blame from systemic issues to individuals or events. Together, these concepts show how ideology conceals its true mechanisms through misleading representations of complex realities hence keeping the status quo intact.

Slavoj Žižek's concept of ideology, especially his concepts of the typical and the stand-in, has not been widely studied in literary and fiction studies. While Žižek's broader critiques of ideology and his psychoanalytic approaches have impacted many fields, literary analysis often prefers more established approaches like Louis Althusser's ISAs or Marxist views on class and power. The typical refers to general representations, while the stand-in acts as specific examples that support larger systems. These ideas provide a unique lens to explore how literature reinforces dominant ideologies. They present characters or events as "typical" examples of societal norms, while "stand-ins" hide deeper systemic flaws. The absence of substantial research in this area highlights a significant gap, suggesting the need for further exploration to understand how Žižek's insights can contribute to the critical analysis of fiction, particularly in contexts where literature operates as a vehicle for ideological dissemination and resistance.

2.5   Detective Fiction: An Important Genre

Detective fiction, while often considered a recognizable genre, is difficult to define comprehensively. T.J. Binyon suggests that "the [detective] genre grew out of the character, rather than vice versa" (Binyon, 1), emphasizing the influence of figures like Sherlock Holmes in shaping its characteristics. Julian Symons (1985) often quoted suggestion that "the two qualification everybody has thought necessary are that [detective fiction] should present a problem, and that the problem should be solved by an amateur or professional detective through processes of deduction" (13), though this definition excludes much of the hardboiled subgenre, where deduction plays a minor role. W.H. Auden (1948) gives plot-based definition of detective fiction; "the basic formula is this: a murder occurs: many are suspected; all but one suspect, who is the murderer, are eliminated; the murderer is arrested or dies" (n.p.), but this fits only the clue puzzle subgenre and overlooks broader examples, as only three of the twelve stories in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* revolve around murder. Additionally, while many Victorian novels contain mysteries and acts of detection, they do not necessarily belong to the detective fiction genre (Reitz, 2006, n.p.). Thus, defining detective fiction often involves balancing the inclusion of its diverse forms and central features.

Richard Bradford (2015) states, "Crime has featured in literature for more than two millennia." Early examples of investigative reasoning appear in stories like the Old Testament narrative of "Susanna and the Elders", where Daniel uncovers the truth through analytical thinking. P.D. James traces detective fiction's roots to ancient tales that offer a puzzle and a solution, but Julian Symons argues that puzzles alone do not constitute detective fiction (Scaggs 41). The formal genre emerged in mid-19th century with the publication of Edgar Allan Poe's stories featuring C. Auguste Dupin in "*The Murders in Rue Morgue*" (1841), "*The Mystery of Marie Roget*" (1842) and *"The Purloined Letter"* (1845), followed by Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1886) and Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892), solidifying the genre's popularity. The detective character who has majorly influenced the portrayal of literary detectives to the present day is, Sherlock Holmes. Not only is he the most renowned detective in literary history, but Sherlock Holmes is also among the most iconic characters in all of fiction. While partially inspired by Poe's detective Dupin, the character of Holmes was also modeled on a real-life figure, Dr. Joseph Bell.

The Victorian era (1832–1914) witnessed major societal shifts, including industrialization, urbanization, economic and imperial expansion, science and technology, and democratic rights of voting and free elementary education. Victorian literature was shaped by historical, political, scientific, cultural, and economic developments. Unregulated industrialization caused cities to grow, leading to higher urban crime rates. This was reflected in literature, where detectives restored social order. The inception of the Crime Investigation Department (CID) and scientific progress made logical detection popular. Detective fiction mirrored society's growing interest in forensic methods and rational thinking. The rise of print culture made crime fiction widely available. Publishers used public interest in real crimes, like the 1860 Road Hill House case, to sell stories. Detective Jack Whicher's work on this case inspired Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868). Public fascination with crime also exposed conflict between class and justice, influencing stories of class conflict.

Victorian imperialism also influenced detective fiction, associating crime with colonial "Others". In Conan Doyle's "*A Study in Scarlet*" (1887) is called "the cesspool of empire", reflecting imperialist ideas. Gender roles were strict, with women often shown as deceitful or helpless, fitting patriarchal views. Feminist movements pushed back, and laws like the Married Women's Property Rights Act (1870) started changing society. According to Charles J. Rzepka (2005), "the hidden culture motives are the public legitimation of privileges specific to the class, race, and gender of dominant social groups ranks high…detective fiction helps interpellate its readers into conformity with the hegemony of white, male, middle-class values in western capitalist society (280)". Hence, Victorian detective fiction emerged as both a reflection of societal anxieties and a vehicle for reinforcing dominant ideologies of class, race, and gender.

Detective fiction though a part of popular fiction is not merely considered as the genre of thrill and entertainment, but the genre has also been analyzed by the researchers as one of the mediums to analyze the society. For instance, in Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* (1939), the private detective Philip Marlowe navigates a world rife with political corruption and moral decay, ultimately exposing the ways in which wealth and power distort justice. This genre provides an insight into the political, social and especially the judicial domain of society. Detective fiction, like other forms of literature, can function as an ideological apparatus in society, shaping perceptions and reinforcing dominant ideologies. Althusser's theory of ISAs posits that institutions such as literature,

education, and media propagate the ruling class's ideology subtly through cultural and social means (Althusser 15). In this sense, detective fiction can be viewed as a form of ISA that reinforces societal norms related to law, order, and justice. The genre often upholds the status quo by portraying the detective as a figure who restores moral order, solving crimes that threaten societal stability (Jameson 6). In many detective narratives, the resolution of the crime signifies the reestablishment of authority, with the criminal's capture affirming the righteousness of the legal and moral systems. This serves as a subtle reinforcement of the ideological belief in the state's ability to maintain justice and control over chaos. By repeatedly presenting these themes, detective fiction contributes to normalizing the structures of power and hierarchy in society, which are seldom questioned within the narrative.

Similarly, South Asian detective fiction, while engaging readers with the resolution of crime mysteries, extends beyond mere entertainment to offer a profound critique of societal structures. It highlights the political failures of postcolonial states and the enduring impact of colonial legacies. For example, Atiq Rahimi's *A Curse on Dostoevsky* (2013) tells the story of a protagonist facing a moral dilemma. He tries to solve a murder in post-war Afghanistan. The novel explores the breakdown of society all the while criticizing political chaos and the lasting impact of foreign occupation. This demonstrates that detective fiction is not only about crime or thrillers; it also acts as a tool to expose systemic problems. It addresses historical injustices and explores postcolonial identity. South Asian detective fiction blends entertainment with social commentary. It brings cultural and political depth to the genre.

2.6   Pakistani Detective Fiction

Since its creation in 1947, Pakistan's socio-political evolution has significantly influenced its literary landscape. The country's formation as a Muslim-majority state established a new national identity, influenced by the legacy of British colonialism and the partition of India (Talbo 27). Post-independence, Pakistan faced political instability, military coups, and a growing bureaucracy, all of which impacted its cultural production. From the late 1970s, General Zia-ul-Haq's rule intensified religious fundamentalism, pushing Islamic values into public and private spheres (Nasr 61). These changes affected not only governance and societal structure but also the themes explored in literature. Writers often mirrored or criticized the state's shifting ideologies. Within this socio-

political context, Pakistani detective fiction emerged, blending entertainment with commentary on justice, corruption, and the legal system.

Detective fiction in Pakistan has uniquely reflected and critiqued the nation's political and cultural history. It serves as a lens to examine societal issues like nationalism, religious fundamentalism, and state corruption. The genre has also evolved to explore power dynamics, corruption, and societal order. Writers like Ibn-e-Safi, through his *Imran Series*, used detective fiction to critique political corruption and moral ambiguities in the Pakistani state. His protagonists often faced corrupt officials and criminal enterprises, mirroring Pakistan's political realities. This made his work not just entertaining but also a subtle critique of the state's failure to ensure justice. In the post-Zia era, themes of religious extremism and fundamentalism became more prominent. Detective fiction reflected the clash between modernity and conservative ideologies. The genre explored moral ambiguities in a society where religious and political powers often intersected. It highlighted how the law was frequently manipulated by those in power for their own interests.

Pakistani detective fiction has become a platform for authors to question the state's failure to tackle corruption and injustice. In recent works, writers use the genre to show public disillusionment with the legal system, where justice is weakened by political meddling and powerful elites. This critique of state corruption is often woven into crime narratives, where the detective's quest for justice is hindered by those in power, mirroring wider societal frustration. By exploring these socio-political issues through crime and investigation, Pakistani detective fiction provides a sharp critique of the nation's struggles with law, order, and governance. The historical and ideological roots of Pakistani detective fiction show its dual role as both a reflection of and a commentary on the country's political journey. From its early post-independence days, when literature aimed to establish a new national identity, to more recent critiques of state corruption and religious extremism, the genre has evolved to capture Pakistan's complex socio-political realities. As a result, detective fiction not only entertains but also serves as a tool for ideological exploration, offering insights into the country's ongoing struggle with modernity, tradition, and the rule of law.

2.7   Existing Scholarly Discourse on the Selected Works

This section reviews previous scholarly works on the selected texts for the current study. It identifies gaps and limitations within the body of literature, including underexplored themes, to establish the rationale for the current research. It also explains how this study aims to address these gaps, highlighting its unique contributions and implications for literary and cultural studies.

Ibn-e-Safi is a key figure in Pakistani detective fiction, best known for his novel *The House of Fear* (1955), which explores themes of post-colonial nationalism and authority. Scholars often note his ability to combine detective stories with socio-political commentary, making his works both engaging and reflective of Pakistan's national psyche after independence. Ibn-e-Safi's protagonists represent the struggles of a new nation grappling with identity, reflecting the anxieties of a society seeking stability and self-definition in a post-colonial context. The detective characters, often symbols of justice and rationality, serve to critique the chaotic realities of Pakistani life, offering a nuanced view of authority. Through the detective genre, Ibn-e-Safi explores moral dilemmas in a society marked by corruption and political instability, creating a critical dialogue between fiction and Pakistan's socio-political landscape.

The article "Religious Tolerance and Coexistence: Pluralist Dimensions in Ibn-e-Safi's Life and Writings" by Zohaib Ahmad explores themes of religious harmony in Ibn-e-Safi's works. Ahmad analyzes Ibn-e-Safi's writings in the socio-political context of South Asia, especially during the Partition. He emphasizes Ibn-e-Safi's support for a pluralistic society based on the Qur'ānic principle of "no compulsion in religion." By analyzing key texts like the *Imran Series*, the article demonstrates how Ibn-e-Safi promotes interfaith respect, portraying both Christian and Muslim characters in a positive light while critiquing sectarianism. Additionally, the study explores his commentary on Muslim-Jewish tensions, emphasizing his call for peace and mutual understanding in a divided world. Ahmad positions Ibn-e-Safi's narratives as more than just popular fiction, portraying them as tools for fostering tolerance, multiculturalism, and unity in a diverse and often conflicted society. While Zohaib Ahmad's article focuses on Ibn-e-Safi's promotion of religious tolerance and coexistence within a pluralistic framework, my research diverges by analyzing the role of religious and political ideologies as tools of control and power, particularly through the lens of Louis Althusser's ISAs. Unlike Ahmad's emphasis on interfaith harmony and multiculturalism, my study examines how

religious institutions and narratives can be manipulated to reinforce dominant ideologies and maintain power structures, as depicted in contemporary Pakistani detective fiction.

In the article "The Neglected Realm of Popular Writing: Ibne Safi's Novels," Christina Oesterheld explores Ibne Safi's contributions to Urdu literature, which are often ignored. She focuses on his 250 novels that blend thriller and fantasy. Oesterheld notes Safi's use of intertextuality, drawing from psychology, philosophy, and technology. His work reflects modern life while promoting bravery and virtue. She also discusses how Safi critiques social injustices, such as police corruption and feudalism, presenting these as root causes of crime and terrorism. This article offers insights into Safi's engagement with ideological and sociopolitical themes. My research, however, focuses specifically on the ideological critique in Pakistani detective fiction. I examine how these narratives interact with power structures, nationalism, and corruption. While Oesterheld's analysis covers Safi's broader social critiques, my work narrows the focus to how detective fiction in South Asia critiques political and social ideologies. Oesterheld's article informs my discussion of the ideological layers in Safi's writing. It helps me explore how characters navigate corrupt systems, like law enforcement, and how these systems either reinforce or challenge dominant power structures.

Ishtiaq Ahmed's *The Doomsday Deception* (1987) critiques religious fundamentalism in 1980s Pakistan. Scholarly reviews note its focus on how religious ideologies merge with state power, causing societal division and conflict. The detective in the novel explores complexities of a belief system and moral ambiguities in a divided society highlighting fundamentalism's growing influence on national identity to show tensions between faith and reason. Set in the socio-political context of the 1980s, Ahmed addresses power, corruption, and the era's climate of fear and paranoia. This makes his work a key contribution to discussions on religious extremism in Pakistan. By blending fiction with societal issues, Ahmed's work reflects on extremism and encourages critical reflection on the underlying structures perpetuating these challenges.

Scholarly research on Ishtiaq Ahmed's *The Doomsday Deception* is notably limited. While other works in Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction have received significant attention, Ahmed's novel remains largely unexplored. This lack of scholarship presents an important opportunity for research, especially in exploring how the novel addresses themes like political power, ideological manipulation, and socio-cultural issues in Pakistan. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of *The*

Doomsday Deception along with the other selected texts. It examines how Ahmed's narrative reflects and critiques the political and social realities of its time, contributing to the broader discussion on Pakistani literature and its connection to ideology.

Omar Shahid Hamid's *The Prisoner* (2013) uses detective fiction to explore themes of state failure and terrorism in contemporary Pakistani literature. Scholars often discuss the novel's depiction of corruption and violence in Pakistan's socio-political system. Hamid's narrative critiques the state's failure to uphold law and order, emphasizing the challenges law enforcement faces in a society marked by terrorism and political instability. The protagonist's struggles mirror broader concerns about the collapse of authority and the effects of violence on daily life. Combining gritty realism with suspense, *The Prisoner* engages in debates about power, identity, and Pakistan's socio-political issues. Hamid's work entertains while pushing readers to face harsh truths about the country's trajectory and its culture of violence and corruption. By portraying societal dysfunction, Hamid encourages readers to analyze how systemic power and individual actions shape Pakistan's socio-political reality.

In the article "Analyzing State Failure and its Consequences in Omar Shahid Hamid's *The Prisoner* (2013) ", authors Athar Farooq, Mustanir Ahmad, and Ghani Rahman provide an exploration of the concept of state failure, particularly as it pertains to the socio-political landscape of Pakistan. They define state failure through the lens of political science, referencing key theorists like Larry Diamond, who argue that many developing nations struggle with ineffective governance and pseudo-democratic regimes that fail to address the needs of their citizens. The authors contextualize their analysis within the historical backdrop of Pakistan, highlighting how political instability, corruption, and violence have eroded public trust in state institutions. Through a qualitative content analysis of Hamid's novel, the authors illustrate how the narrative reflects the dire consequences of state failure, including rampant crime, human rights violations, and the emergence of powerful political factions that operate outside the law. While Farooq, Ahmad, and Rahman focus on state failure and its socio-political ramifications, my research takes a different approach by exploring *The Prisoner* through the lens of ideological state apparatuses, particularly those outlined by Althusser and Žižek. Instead of concentrating solely on institutional collapse, my research highlights the interplay between socio-economic pressures and ideological manipulation, emphasizing how these factors intertwine to sustain corruption and perpetuate control.

The article "Spatial Manipulation in Karachi: A Postmodern Marxist Study of Hamid *The Prisoner* (2013)" by Syeda Hibba Zainab Zaidi, Dr. Ali Usman Saleem, and Ferva Aslam provides a focused analysis on the issue of spatial manipulation in the novel *The Prisoner* by Omar Shahid Hamid, and it illustrates the way globalization and capitalism fragment Karachi as a city. Based on the theoretical frameworks of Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja, the study views Karachi as a disjointed and polycentric metropolis, in which the socio-spatial context defines, controls, and shapes the lifestyles of people. The article states that in *The Prisoner*, architecture, geography, and the system of power hinders the individual autonomy in the face of capital expansion. Although this article provided very insightful information about the spatial dynamics of Karachi, it has glaringly overlooked a significant understanding of the ideological mechanisms that interact in the novel. My work is based on filling this gap by employing the theory of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) by Louis Althusser and the conceptualizations of the 'typical' and the 'stand-in' introduced by Slavoj Zizek to analyze the way such institutions as religion, law enforcement and politics produce and reinforce the dominant ideologies. Unlike the spatially focused approach, I examine the ways in which the given institutions work both symbolically and structurally to sustain power and control over people.

In the article "Post 9/11 Fiction: Questioning the Real Fundamentalist Terrorist in Omer Shahid Hamid's *The Prisoner* (2013)", the authors Hina Rafique and Madiha Ashraf examine the portrayal of ideological fundamentalism in contemporary post-9/11 literature. They analyze how Hamid's novel distinguishes between two types of terrorists: the religious fundamentalist, driven by violence in the name of faith, and the pragmatic jihadi, who uses violence for personal or strategic gains. This distinction reveals the complex interplay between religious ideology and criminal motivations, challenging oversimplified views of terrorism. By situating these elements within Karachi's socio-political environment, the authors demonstrate how narratives like Hamid's provide deeper insights into the diverse factors fueling extremism. Although this article primarily examines the depiction of terrorism and fundamentalism in *The Prisoner*, my research diverges by analyzing how ISAs, as theorized by Althusser, function to uphold power structures, corruption, and socio-political control. Additionally, my study integrates Žižek's concepts of the "typical" and "stand-in" to analyze how characters serve as ideological representations of larger systems. I have built upon Rafique and Ashraf's

insights on fundamentalist and pragmatic motivations to further investigate how religious ideologies are weaponized to maintain societal hierarchies and perpetuate dominant power structures within Pakistani detective fiction.

2.8   Research Gap

This literature review has highlighted the importance of engaging with existing scholarship on detective fiction, ideological state apparatuses, and South Asian literature, with particular focus on the unique contributions of Pakistani detective fiction. The review highlights key themes like the genre's historical development, its role as an ideological tool, and the socio-political influences shaping its narratives. Critical gaps remain, including the lack of focus on Pakistani detective fiction in global literary studies and the limited use of ideological framework in its analysis. Pakistani detective narratives receive little critical attention, limiting awareness of their potential for socio-political critique. This oversight diminishes understanding of how the genre reflects cultural anxieties in South Asian literary studies. Althusser's theory of ISAs and RSAs has been employed in literary studies to explore power, state control, and ideological manipulation, providing a framework for this research. This study analyzes selected Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction using Althusser's ISAs and Žižek's concepts of the "typical" and "stand-in," exploring how these texts reflect ruling class ideologies, engage with power structures, and portray corruption and socio-political control. By addressing these questions, the research positions Pakistani detective fiction as a critical space for ideological critique, shedding light on its role in reflecting and challenging socio-political realities in contemporary Pakistan.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is primarily focused on the theoretical framework that has been adapted to analyze the three selected texts *The House of Fear* (1955) by Ibn-e-Safi, *The Doomsday Deception* (1987) by Ishtiaq Ahmed, and *The Prisoner* (2013) by Omar Shahid Hamid. The study is qualitative as it emphasis on exploring and understanding human experiences, behaviors, and social phenomena in their natural contexts. First, it is interpretative in nature, focusing on the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to events, processes, and interactions. Second, qualitative research employs non-numerical data, such as observations, and textual analysis, to provide rich, in-depth insights. Third, it is flexible and adaptive, allowing the researcher to modify the research design as new patterns or themes emerge during the study. Finally, qualitative research often employs a holistic approach, considering the interconnectedness of various factors and the broader context within which phenomena occur, rather than isolating variables. Together, these features make qualitative research an invaluable method for understanding the complexities of human experiences and social realities. As discussed earlier, the theoretical framework has been adapted by choosing Louis Althusser's influential work *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (1970)* primarily focusing on ideology as well as the state apparatuses and Zizek's concept of typical and stand in from his essay *Multiculturalism, or, the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism (1997)*.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I have provided the theoretical foundation for analyzing the primary texts. I have taken Louis Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISA) and Slavoj Zizek's insights into ideology, "typical," and "stand-in," to research and explore how these texts function as cultural tools that propagate the dominant ideologies of power. The frameworks enable a comprehensive investigation into the ways these novels reflect and reinforce societal norms, beliefs, and power structures, particularly their role in propagating dominant ideologies in Pakistani society.

3.1.1 Louis Althusser's Theory of Ideological State Apparatuses

The first theorist that has been chosen is Louis Althusser, who in his book, *'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' (1970)*, defines ideology as a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence which shapes how individuals perceive and interact with the world. Althusser argues that ideology operates unconsciously and is materialized in practices, rituals, and institutions, ensuring individuals' alignment with the dominant social order (Althusser 27). He argues that the states and ruling class use their ideological apparatus to make their ideologies the ideologies of the class they rule. "The ideology of the ruling class does not become the ruling ideology by the grace of God, nor even by virtue of the seizure of State power alone. It is by the installation of the ISAs in which this ideology is realized and realizes itself that it becomes the ruling ideology" (Althusser 185). Althusser claims that "...agents of exploitation will provide domination for the ruling class" (133). This research focuses on how these concepts are utilized in the three primary texts selected for this research.

Althusser defines the 'ideological state apparatuses' as a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions. He presents the following institutions as 'ideological state apparatuses': the religious ISA (the system of the different Churches), the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'Schools'), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties), the trade-union ISA, the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.), the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.)" (Althusser 143). Practically, ISA is formed as "a set of doctrine" (Eagleton 12) for the ruled class to accept the underlying ideology of the authoritative government. Suggesting literature, as a component of the *Cultural ISA,* plays a significant role in shaping societal consciousness, often embedding dominant ideologies in its narratives and characters.

For the research, three key ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) have been chosen: Political, Cultural, and Religious. According to Althusser, ISAs function by disseminating ideology through various institutions to perpetuate the dominance of the ruling class.

3.1.1.1 Political ISA

This apparatus comprises institutions like political parties, government structures, and legal systems. It disseminates ideology through governance, laws, and policies,

ensuring the alignment of individuals with the ruling class's interests under the guise of serving public welfare (Althusser, 83).

3.1.1.2   Religious ISA

Religious institutions and their practices serve as a powerful ISA by promoting moral and ethical frameworks that often align with the dominant ideology. By linking faith to social behavior, these institutions reinforce societal hierarchies and the status quo, often presenting them as divinely ordained (Althusser, 82).

3.1.1.3   Cultural ISA

Cultural institutions such as media, arts, and education play a critical role in shaping societal values, norms, and beliefs. These institutions operate subtly, embedding dominant ideologies into everyday practices, thus influencing perceptions and behaviors (Althusser, 81).

3.1.1.4   Art and Literature as an ISA

Althusser asserts that art and literature are not neutral but are infused with ideological content. For him ideology serves as a powerful tool to reinforce the status quo by subtly shaping societal beliefs and norms. In detective fiction, a subgenre deeply entwined with themes of law, justice, morality, and authority, this function is particularly significant. "The power system as an agency of state apparatuses, which takes a role in various manners, shows the dominance toward society throughout the story" (Clark and Dear, 1984:ch.2). The detective serves as an emblematic figure of law and order, often working under state institutions like the police or judiciary, thereby legitimizing these authorities and the systems they uphold. Similarly, moral dichotomies between good and evil, truth and deceptions are often presented in a way that aligns with dominant ideologies, framing justice as a natural order rather than a social construct.

Detective fiction, as a cultural product, reflects the ideological struggles and anxieties of the society in which it is created. The genre's conventions, such as the triumph of order over chaos, the heroism of the detective, and the resolution of moral ambiguity, are often aligned with dominant ideologies, presenting them as universal and inevitable truths. At the same time, the genre offers a platform to interrogate these norms, allowing for subversion and critique. By presenting narratives that resonate with societal experiences and fears, detective fiction simultaneously reinforces and challenges cultural ideologies, making it a dynamic participant in the ideological processes described by

Althusser. "Ideology thus, through the process of interpellation, in a sense 'recruits' subjects among the individuals in a society and 'transforms' them into subjects who unconsciously are trained to abide by the norms of society by a force which they consider to be a natural part of their lives". (Althusser 84)

3.1.1.5 Concept of Interpellation

Interpellation, a central concept in Althusser's theory, refers to the process by which individuals are "hailed" by ideology and thereby become subjects within a given social structure. This occurs when individuals recognize themselves in the roles and identities prescribed by ideological systems, such as those perpetuated by ISAs. For instance, when a citizen obeys a law or a religious believer adheres to a moral code, they are responding to the ideological "call" and reaffirming their subjectivity within the dominant social order. Althusser emphasizes that this process is not conscious but occurs unconsciously, ensuring that individuals perpetuate the ideology without questioning its origins or implications (Althusser, 84).

In sum, detective fiction operates as a mirror and a mold for the ideological functions of ISAs. The selected novels engage deeply with these ideological apparatuses, depicting their influence on characters and societies while highlighting the complexities of power, morality, and justice. Through this lens, the genre transcends its role as entertainment to emerge as a significant cultural artifact that shapes and reflects the ideological landscapes of its time.

3.1.2 Slavoj Zizek's Concept of Multiculturalism, and Typical and Stand-In

While Althusser focuses on institutional mechanisms of ideology propagation, Slavoj Zizek delves into the subtler, often unconscious ways ideology operates in cultural artifacts. Slavoj Zizek's theory of ideology adds depth to this analysis by examining how cultural products reflect societal power structures and ideological contradictions. Zizek argues that ideology is not only articulated through explicit political discourse but also manifests in cultural artifacts, such as literature and film, which reveal societal fantasies and fears (Zizek 1994, 12). Detective fiction, with its intricate plots and moral undertones, serves as a cultural symptom that embodies and disseminates specific ideological constructs.

3.1.2.1   Ideology as Cultural Symptoms

Žižek conceptualizes ideology as embedded in cultural symptoms, where societal beliefs, anxieties, and power structures often reveal themselves through seemingly mundane or entertaining forms, such as literature, media, and popular culture. According to Žižek, these cultural artifacts do not merely reflect reality but actively shape how individuals perceive and interact with it. In detective fiction, the genre itself serves as a fertile ground for exploring these cultural symptoms, as it often grapples with themes of justice, morality, authority, and social order; core elements of societal norms and power dynamics. For instance, the portrayal of characters, plot resolutions, and conflicts may highlight issues of social inequality, corruption, or loyalty to authority. Through careful examination of these elements, this study aims to uncover how these novels reflect and shape collective attitudes and beliefs, acting as mirrors of the societal and ideological landscape of contemporary Pakistani culture.

3.1.2.2   The Concept of the "Typical"

Žižek introduces the notion of the "typical" to describe representations that are framed as universal but are, in reality, deeply embedded in specific ideological contexts. In literature and media, the "typical" serves as a representation that connects broader social and political ideologies to the audience's lived experience. This means that a character or scenario presented as "typical" often serves to reflect and reinforce prevailing social norms, power structures, and collective beliefs.

In the context of the selected novels, this research will examine how protagonists and scenarios embody these "typical" representations of justice, morality, and authority. For example, the detective character often symbolizes rationality, loyalty to the state, and adherence to justice, serving as a representative figure of law and order. Such representations align closely with dominant ideologies that celebrate state authority and social hierarchy. Similarly, antagonistic characters often reflect societal threats, acting as stand-ins for instability, chaos, and moral corruption.

This research analyzes how these narrative elements construct "typical" identities and situations to reinforce societal norms while simultaneously marginalizing alternative viewpoints and revealing how dominant ideologies are upheld and normalized, ensuring that any challenges to these beliefs remain peripheral or unacknowledged in the broader cultural discourse.

3.1.2.3   The Concept of the "Stand-In"

Žižek's concept of the "stand-in" is a powerful analytical tool that highlights how specific identities, characters, or representations, in a narrative, function as substitutes for broader societal or ideological constructs. Instead of simply portraying individuals, these elements symbolize larger social, economic, and political issues, making ideological conflicts visible within the storyline.

This research will examine how characters such as detectives, criminals, and victims in the selected novels are constructed as stand-ins for significant societal issues, such as corruption, social inequality, and systemic injustice. For example, a detective might represent loyalty to state authority but also the complexities of navigating personal morality within institutional constraints. Criminals could symbolize societal discontent, economic struggles, or social exclusion, while victims might reflect issues of systemic oppression or class disparity.

Additionally, the research will explore how themes like justice, revenge, and redemption serve as 'typical' for broader ideological conflicts. These themes often align with dominant societal narratives while simultaneously offering a lens through which readers can engage with deeper questions about morality, social loyalty, and power dynamics. Žižek's idea of the 'stand-in' will be employed to understand how specific elements in these novels symbolize universal concepts, creating a crucial bridge between the particular experiences of characters and broader societal ideologies.

3.1.2.4   Ideological Manipulation through the Typical and Stand-In

By focusing on Žižek's concepts of the "typical" and the "stand-in," this research investigates how the selected detective novels embed ideological manipulation within their narratives, shaping readers' perceptions and attitudes toward societal norms and power dynamics.

One way this manipulation occurs is through the legitimation of power structures, where dominant institutions like the state, judiciary, and law enforcement are presented as natural and necessary. These novels often position these institutions as the cornerstone of societal stability and justice, discouraging readers from questioning their legitimacy or actions. This serves to create a sense of acceptance and compliance among readers, making state authority appear self-evident and indispensable.

Secondly, the research explores how detective fiction shapes societal perceptions by embedding ideological battles within narratives of crime, investigation, and justice. The conflicts and resolutions often highlight issues of loyalty, morality, and power dynamics, framing individuals' relationships with state institutions in specific ideological terms. This interplay influences how readers view authority, morality, and community loyalty, shaping collective attitudes about justice, fairness, and social order.

Lastly, by situating these narratives within a specific historical and cultural context, this research addresses how detective fiction reflects the unique social, economic, and political realities of Pakistani society. The selected novels contain elements that speak to issues of class struggle, corruption, political loyalty, and social dynamics, serving as a reflection of the collective consciousness and cultural norms in contemporary Pakistan. This analysis provides insights into the intersection of literature, culture, and ideology, shedding light on the broader societal forces that shape and sustain power dynamics within this cultural landscape.

3.2   Synthesis of Theoretical Frameworks

By integrating Althusser's institutional perspective with Žižek's cultural lens, this research develops a comprehensive framework to analyze the ideological dimensions of the selected detective novels. This synthesis bridges the macro-level operations of ideology, as seen through societal institutions, with the micro-level cultural manifestations within the narratives, offering a holistic approach to understanding the interplay between literature and power structures.

Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses provides a macro-level lens to examine how institutions such as the police, judiciary, and media are portrayed in the novels. These institutions act as vehicles for shaping and disseminating dominant ideologies, often naturalizing power structures and reinforcing the status quo. The study uses this framework to explore how institutional narratives within the texts legitimize authority and influence societal perceptions of justice, morality, and law enforcement.

Žižek's theories provide the micro-level tools needed to dissect the cultural and narrative elements of the texts. The concept of cultural symptoms helps uncover the hidden societal anxieties and aspirations embedded in the stories. Meanwhile, the notions of the "typical" and the "stand-in" facilitate an analysis of how characters, themes, and situations represent broader ideological constructs. This perspective highlights the ways

in which detective fiction crafts "typical" heroes and moral dichotomies, as well as how specific characters work as 'stand-ins' for the set ideological constructs.

The rationale behind selecting Louis Althusser's and Slavoj Žižek's theoretical frameworks for this study lies in their complementary perspectives on ideology and its representation. Althusser's concept of ideology and interpellation provides a foundational understanding of how individuals are constituted as subjects within ideological structures. However, ideology as theorized by Althusser often remains abstract and theoretical, making it difficult to grasp in practical or representational terms. This is where Žižek's concepts of the *typical* and the *stand-in* become essential. Žižek extends Althusser's ideas by illustrating how ideology manifests through tangible and recognizable images or figures, the *stand-ins*, that embody and communicate abstract ideological notions. Thus, while Althusser's theory establishes the mechanism of ideological interpellation, Žižek's framework offers a more concrete lens to visualize and interpret ideology as it operates within cultural and literary texts. Together, these theories enable a nuanced exploration of how ideological constructs are both abstractly formed and concretely represented within Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction.

This synthesis enables a multi-dimensional exploration of the texts, revealing the nuanced ways in which detective fiction reflects and reinforces societal ideologies. By combining macro and micro-level insights, the framework provides a deeper understanding of how these narratives not only mirror societal power dynamics but also contribute to shaping collective cultural and ideological consciousness.

3.3   Research Methodology

This section outlines the methodological approach used to examine the selected detective fiction. It briefly explains why a qualitative design and textual analysis are appropriate for exploring the ideological, social, and cultural dimensions of the texts. By clarifying the analytical steps and theoretical tools applied, this section provides a clear framework for the interpretations that follow.

3.3.1 Research Design

The proposed study has a qualitative design of inquiry with a textual analysis approach to explore the selected texts, *The House of Fear* by Ibn-e-Safi, *"The Doomsday Deception* by Ishtiaq Ahmed, and *The Prisoner* by Omar Shahid Hamid to research and

explore these texts as social and cultural constructs and how these detective fiction function as cultural tools that propagate the ideologies of dominant forces with special focus on Louis Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatus*es* (ISA) and Slavoj Zizek's insights into ideology, "typical," and "stand-in,". Textual analysis of the selected texts is carried out to analyze the social dynamics and power relations depicted in the selected detective fiction and how they go through transformative processes across different time periods. The important factor in using textual analysis as a method is that I have taken specific lines and paragraphs from selected texts and employed the particular models to further analyze and explicate them.

I have followed these steps while analyzing the selected texts using the above-mentioned theoretical framework:

The research has primarily focused on how the theoretical concepts chosen for this research is to be praised. The chosen theoretical concepts have been applied on the plot, theme, characters and the setting of the novels. To trace tht how apparently a benign detective genre is loaded with the ideology of the dominant group and to see how the texts have deployed certain modifications to propagate these ideologies. The key concepts, principles, and methodologies are used to build the research framework within which the analysis was conducted.

I critically analyze the extracted passages and sentences in light of the selected theory.

Finally, I conclude the analysis by reflecting on the findings and synthesizing the relationship between the selected texts and the employed theory.

3.3.2 Research Method: Textual Analysis

In this study, I utilize textual analysis as defined by Catherine Belsey to examine the selected texts, *The House of Fear* by Ibn-e-Safi, *The Doomsday Deception* by Ishtiaq Ahmed, and *The Prisoner* by Omar Shahid Hamid. Textual analysis, according to Catherine Belsey in her essay *Textual Analysis as a Research Method* (2013), "is a research method that involves a close encounter with the work itself, an examination of the details without bringing to them more suppositions than we can help" (160). Hence, it involves a close and detailed examination of texts to understand how they create meaning and impact its reader or interpreter. This method is particularly effective for interpreting the complex social, cultural and ideological dynamics present in the selected novels for

this research. While emphasizing the text itself, Belsey does not completely disregard the importance of knowledge/ information beyond the text as she further notes that there is no such thing as 'pure' reading. Interpretation always involves extra-textual knowledge, some of it being general cultural knowledge, and some of it being derived from secondary sources. Interpretation of a text involves drawing on both textual knowledge and extra textual information derived from its context, which can guide new avenues of study (160).

Hence, textual analysis is a prevalent research approach in literary studies because of its capacity to uncover the subtleties and complexities within literary texts. The reason for choosing textual analysis as the research method in this study is twofold:

a. It encourages a critical exploration of the text, enabling researchers to apply diverse literary theories to scrutinize various facets of the texts being studied.

b. It facilitates rigorous examination of the text to substantiate claims and arguments, thereby allowing the researcher to present a strong and well-supported analysis of the chosen texts.

For example, in *The House of Fear* (1955), Ibn-e-Safi presents a thrilling plot filled with espionage and crime, through which Althusser's concept of ideology is illustrated. The protagonist, Imran, embodies a "typical" hero who fights against the forces of crime and corruption, which reflects the ideological control of the state and its use of political ISAs like law enforcement to maintain order. The novel's setting, urban spaces filled with hidden dangers, acts as a symbolic backdrop to explore how the state controls its citizens through surveillance and authority. The antagonist, often a criminal mastermind, serves as a "stand-in" for the external threats that state apparatuses are designed to protect against, including foreign influences or internal subversive forces. The recurring theme of morality versus corruption in the novel aligns with Althusser's idea of interpellation, as characters like Imran are hailed into a moral order where justice and loyalty to the state are prioritized, reinforcing the dominant ideology that structures their world.

In the second novel, *The Doomsday Deception* (1987), the plot revolves around a global conspiracy, which is reflective of how political and religious ISAs operate to enforce ideological control by manufacturing external threats. The protagonist, Inspector Jamshed, represents a "typical" hero, loyal to the nation, fighting to protect it from global conspiracies. This framing reflects Althusser's notion of ideological state apparatuses

where the political ISA structures the narrative around themes of loyalty, patriotism, and defense against foreign subversion and the religious ISA to protect the religious beliefs of the dominant group. The antagonist in the novel serves as a "stand-in" for the ideological threat, with shadowy figures involved in a global plot, symbolizing societal fears about external influence and internal betrayal which might challenge the political and religious beliefs that the dominant group holds. The setting spans multiple international locations, highlighting how ideologies and cultural ISAs transcend national boundaries. The themes of deception, national security, religion and sacrifice emphasize the ideological control of the dominant group reinforcing the idea that individuals are interpellated into believing in their roles as protectors of national interests.

Omar Shahid Hamid's *The Prisoner* (2013) explores the corruption within Pakistani society through the characters of policemen Akbar, Constantine, Mushtaq Meher, political figures like Don and his political party named United Front, Chandio brothers, security agencies and their officers like Col. Tarkeen and Major Rommel and others. Akbar and Constantine, disillusioned officers, caught in a web of crime and moral decay represent "typical" figures of policemen caught between duty and resistance to the deeply embedded corruption within the political and legal ISAs that govern the state. The characters' internal struggle reflects Althusser's theory of interpellation, as they confront the ideology of law and justice that is propagated by the state apparatus but find themselves increasingly alienated from it. The setting of Karachi, an urban space riddled with crime and systemic corruption, symbolizes the fractured ideological control of the state, where the power dynamics between law enforcement and criminals expose the failure of the ideological apparatuses to maintain moral order. Characters like Mushtaq Meher, Don, Col. Tarkeen, Akbar, Constantine, Chandio brothers, and religious figures like Qari Saif and Sheikh Nouman, all serve as "stand-ins" for the larger systemic forces that perpetuate injustice. The novel's exploration of power, corruption, and loyalty underscores Zizek's critique of how ideologies, including those of law and order, are used to conceal deeper societal inequalities to maintain the status quo.

CHAPTER 4

SHADOWS OF AUTHORITY: POWER RELATIONS AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS IN *THE HOUSE OF FEAR* (1955)

This chapter is focused on analyzing *The House of Fear* (1955), an interpretation of the novel, employing the theoretical framework drawn from Louis Althusser's concept of Ideology and Slavoj Žižek's concept of 'typical' and 'stand-ins'. It is a gripping detective novel by Ibn-e-Safi, set in the fictional world of Imran Series. The narrative revolves around a foolish-looking yet very intelligent secret agent, Ali Imran, who goes after a puzzling case of murders and disappearances involving a sinister mansion called *The House of Fear*. The mansion is believed to be haunted by the general public and therefore was chosen as the center of a network of crimes organized by a mysterious villain. Using his very unconventional approaches, Imran investigates the truth and destroys the crime syndicate without dropping his crazy demeanor to deceive the opposition and above all, his partners. Elements of humor, suspense, and social commentary combine to make the novel stand out, emphasizing on the ideas of justice, morality, and the far-reaching consequences of fear, which resulted in the production of a classic crime novel in the South Asian detective fiction study. As the chapter examines the ideological structures and fantasies the plot relies on, the discussion presents how the text reflects and evaluates sociopolitical dynamics that exist during the epoch of writing the novel. It goes into the detail scrutiny of research questions through a qualitative textual analysis of how the institutional power and individual agency intertwine and result in the conflicts among characters, ideologies and the overall story.

Louis Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses, also known as ISAs, plays a crucial role in examining the inescapable influence of the institutions, such as the police, the judiciary and the media everywhere in the novel. These institutions, seemingly objective and benevolent, play a role in reinforcing societal norms and the status quo. The narrative points out subtle and insidious ways that ISAs interpellate people into roles and behaviors consistent with dominant ideologies (Althusser).

Althusserian concept of interpellation is well expressed through the protagonist who is navigating through deceit and murder. For Althusser, interpellation is is the process by which individuals are "hailed" into subject positions within an ideological

structure, unconsciously adopting roles that reinforce the dominance of the state. Thus, the protagonist is positioned as a subject of the state, embodying its ideological values of justice and order while unknowingly perpetuating the system's control. At the beginning of the novel, the protagonist aligns closely with the ideology propagated by the state by embodying the role of a law enforcement officer who sees institutions such as the police force and judiciary as legitimate and essential apparatuses for maintaining order and justice. This alignment is evident in his uncritical acceptance of the official narratives surrounding the crimes he investigates and his belief that justice is best served by adhering to institutional procedures. For instance, he often refers to the integrity of the system and expresses confidence in the chain of command, illustrating his ideological interpellation as a subject who sees himself as a guardian of the state's values. However, as the plot unfolds, the protagonist begins to uncover internal corruption, political manipulation, and selective enforcement of the law within these very institutions. These revelations force a critical reassessment of the state apparatus he once trusted. His perception evolves from one of allegiance to one of disillusionment, as he realizes that the institutions he serves are complicit in perpetuating systemic injustice rather than combating it. This shift is marked by moments of doubt, moral conflict, and eventual resistance, as the protagonist increasingly acts against official directives and seeks truth outside sanctioned structures.

Althusser believes that ideological reinforcement is rigorously done through ISAs. It is important to state that the ideological reinforcement through the media is of huge significance. In the story, *The House of Fear*, the media has been shown to have an impact on political views and knowledge through propaganda and sensational reporting to somehow benefit those in power for example, making the general public believe that the mansion is haunted while hiding or covering up the illegal operations being conducted by the criminal network. The purpose of distracting the public from questioning the institutional failure or corruption is skillfully achieved. These kinds of portrayals reflect Luois Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatus (ISA) where media is one of the tools used to shape public opinions and control narratives to serve the interests of the ruling class and to ensure societal compliance (Ibn-e-Safi, 1955). As the detective continues on his journey of this investigation, he ends up noticing the part the media plays in upholding the status quo and also criticizes its role in covering the truth, continuing the systemic inequalities in terms of hiding the facts from the general public (Rahim). Not

only does this realization suggest the ideological role of media as a cultural ISA, but it also highlights the tensions between individual agency and institutional control, a concept that lies at the heart of the Althusserian theoretical framework. Through this subtle criticism, the novel exposes how weak and fragile the ideological constructions are and how easily such can be challenged through critical consciousness and resistance.

Althusser's concept of interpellation is deeply embedded in the detective Imran, who at some point happens to be a perfect subject of ideological state apparatus. It is seen through Imran's actions, from the beginning of the novel, that he reinforces the dominant ideology to which he subscribes through his actions during the investigation. He tries to portray himself as an agent of some institutional authority that he worships but that changes when he realizes that the very structures he believed in are the ones most questionable.

Initially, the detective seems to be an honest investigator when he says, "This key has been duplicated recently. Look, it has some wax particles stuck in it" (30). This observation suggests that Imran is a careful investigator who implements institutional frameworks that support logic and evidence. The detective is kept within the ideological boundaries of order and justice, and therefore ensures that his techniques fall within the social norms of truth-seeking (30).

Yet despite seeming a slight reveal, there is much more to it. This scene of opening the key is the one that shows the detective as subservient to institutions and institutional norms, at the same time almost inevitably casting seeds of doubt. This detail remains metaphoric with the progression of the story as it reflects other patterns as well: in the way ideology subtly carves individual perceptions and ultimately, determinations, making the structural imbalances in the system even more confusing and harder to understand.

The detective's interactions with the marginalized characters complicate his assumptions of guilt, innocence and justice. Through such interactions, it is possible to see implicit biases in institutional practice showing how ideology can be employed to establish inequality through structural normalization. The realization that the duplicated key holds state secrets or other deliberate narratives heightens the disappointment and disillusionment of the detective.

When the detective realizes the existence of these systematic flaws, one can also see the turning point in the narrative. The shift from blind faith to critical introspection is a significant illustration of how questioning ideological interpellation has a chance for transformation. The detective transforms into a symbol of resistance rather than an as-directed-by-authority person and the agency and transformation of the oppressive systems is revealed. To a great extent, this journey illustrates an argument presented by Althusser that people are capable of criticizing and challenging the ideologies which they are subject to and therefore it leads to more serious criticisms of institutional authority.

The insights about the ideology and fantasy by Slavoj Zizek offer a sophisticated means of looking into the underlying tensions in *The House of Fear*. Žižek argues that ideology perpetuates itself through the creation of fantasies that hide contradictions in society giving one an impression of stability and order. The titular house represents such ideological constructs in this story act as the depository of the fear and the place of the concealed truths. Its maze-like structure, and its hidden mysteries reflect ideological fantasy of containment, where inner tensions of society are negatively projected in the microcosm of the house. This is a conflict between ideology and reality which is summarized in one climactic scene:

> "Oh, so it is you!" the detective exclaims, confronting their reflection. He made a fist as if to attack the person in the mirror. Then, he slowly started advancing towards the mirror, cautiously measuring steps as if to confront an enemy (Safi, 42).

On the surface, this moment is just another point that underscores the detective's paranoia or self-doubt. But in Žižek's framework, the mirror is a great metaphor for the ideological self. The reflection is the socially constructed identity maintained by institutional norms, while the protagonist's aggressive advance signifies an emerging awareness of the ideological structures shaping his reality (42).

The climactic moment of revelation about crimes happening inside the house ripples with the detective's erosion of trust in the structural integrity of institutions, such that the protagonist and the reader alike have to face uncomfortable truths. In this light, the mirror scene foreshadows ideological unraveling as a pivotal feature of the story. It also integrates Žižek's theoretical constructs to critique the mechanisms that ensure the

obscuring of the very contradictions of society by confronting such veiled realities in themselves.

The exploration of power relations and social dynamics within *The House of Fear* reveals how ideology intersects with class and gender, often reinforcing systemic inequalities through institutional practices. For example, the treatment of women in the novel exemplifies how gendered prejudices are embedded within societal and institutional frameworks. The dialogue surrounding the character of the one-eyed girl, Rabia, illustrates societal suspicion and objectification, as her appearance and associations become grounds for scrutiny and marginalization:

> And these days I see her with a handsome man. Quite possibly he's an idiot like you.'
>
> 'Who is he? I will break his neck!' Imran roared. Then with a start, he muttered to himself, 'La haula wala quwwat! What do I care?'
>
> 'It is very surprising to see such a handsome young man court a
>
> one-eyed girl…'
>
> 'Truly. He must be the eighth wonder of the world,' said Imran. 'Do I know him?'
>
> 'I don't know. At least I don't know him and, if I don't know him, he cannot be from an aristocratic family of this city.' (Safi, 40)

This exchange reflects how women are judged not only based on their appearance but also through societal stereotypes that associate female virtue and morality with physical normalcy, reinforcing gendered power hierarchies. In conjunction with Althusser's concept of ISAs, these social attitudes are normalized and perpetuated through institutions like the family and community, which reinforce these prejudices as natural or justified. For instance, the suspicion cast upon women and their associations with men from different social strata echoes the way ideologies are embedded in societal institutions that produce and reinforce gendered inequalities. Similarly, the characters' attitudes toward social class, evident in the dismissive remarks about the aristocratic background, demonstrate how class distinctions are maintained through institutionalized social judgments. By critically engaging with these textual examples, it becomes clear that the novel does not merely depict individual prejudices but reveals how ideological systems,

perpetuated through ISAs, normalize and mask inequalities related to gender and class as natural social orderings.

Althusser's concept of ideology and Žižek's idea of the "stand-in" can be applied to understand the metaphorical significance of the house. The house, itself, is a metaphor for the hierarchical structures of power that dominate the social landscape of the novel. Its divisions and hidden places are metaphors for the imbalance in privilege and control because some characters are dominant and others are relegated to the periphery.

The detective's exploration of the house mirrors their more general experience of trying to traverse and combat these structural power arrangements. With every discovery about the house, they come face-to-face not only with the abominations but also their own role in perpetuating these structures.

Characters who have institutional power always assume an impression of moral decay. The implication is that being complicit within oppressive structures is corrosive. Their opposites are therefore stronger, as when individuals resist and subvert, they exhibit elasticity and resourcefulness. Resistance can be transformative and shows human capacity to act within a system of oppression.

Althusser's concept of ideology as a means of social control and Žižek's notion of ideology as an unconscious framework shaping perception are integral to understanding the layers of *The House of Fear*. Althusser believes culture is a superstructure that is institutionalized to reinforce dominant ideologies. *The House of Fear* reflects the anxieties and tensions of its historical moment, set against the backdrop of a post-war world. With a focus on crime and corruption, the novel articulates a response to mid-20th-century societal upheavals and the uncertainties of morals that began to surface in its day. Through intricate narration, the text addresses controversies regarding justice, authority, and individual responsibility while taking on the critique of sociopolitical dynamics in the days it was written. Doing so serves to bridge entertainment and critical commentary, speaking to the author's vision of a genre that is also an alternative:

> Alternative? I thought for a while, and then had a vision of an eight-year-old child who had devoured all seven volumes of Tilism-e Hoshruba. I had also witnessed that eighty-year-olds were as fascinated by the Tilism as small children. So I said to myself, all right, let me see what I can do about an alternative genre. (Safi, 7)

The house in the novel is at once a literal and symbolic space, capturing the cultural obsession with security and stability in the post-World War II world. Its labyrinthine structure and hidden chambers reflect the complexities of a world grappling with the psychological and societal effects of trauma. Characters entering this mysterious world are confronted with legacies of violence, betrayal, and loss as an inheritance of the times left to resolve. The theory of the ideological state apparatus (ISA) as presented by Althusser illustrates how such cultural symbols, like the house, function to perpetuate the values of the ideology no matter; the security and control are being emulated to perpetuate the dominant order of things in the social environment.

The house, in this context, also operates as a stand-in for Žižek's critique of how ideology conceals systemic inequalities.. The interior of its corridors and its secrets are an allegory to the internalized agendas of the world, maintaining the status quo of the ruling classes whilst oppressing the marginalized. The peripheral characters portrayed in the novel, including servants and poor people, visibly struggle with the institutional power, which points at the systemic inequalities of the mid-20th century society. Such a critique is further enhanced by the developing consciousness of the protagonist who also starts doubting and challenging the prejudices and falsehoods of the environment he lives in. This change aligns with the author's intention to employ popular literature as a vehicle for propagating complex ideas and filling the gap between entertainment and critical thought.

Finally, *The House of Fear* is both temporal and ahead of its time as it aspires to create suspense and social commentary and access the depths of the imagination to tell the tale of the depths of the concept of justice and the nature of mankind in a world marked by uncertainty.

Later, Imran exposes that truth about the criminals and figures out that the criminals were involved in a much darker conspiracy to get hold of important state secrets but their attempts were made unsuccessful by Ayaz. Ayaz's actions can be read through Althusser's concept of the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Žižek's notions of the "typical" and "stand-in." Ayaz, "a highly prized officer" of the Foreign Office's secret service, embodies the RSA, operating to safeguard classified papers through coercion, surveillance, and the threat of violence. Even after surviving the ambush, he "never reported to his office," choosing instead to work independently. This reflects the internalization of state ideology, Ayaz's sense of duty has been so deeply ingrained that he continues his mission without direct institutional orders. His elaborate scheme, buying

the building, adopting his servant's identity, and creating a mechanism where "three blades would pierce the man's back", demonstrates how RSAs function outside formal legal systems when confronting perceived threats to the state.

Žižek's "typical" is visible in Ayaz's role as the patriotic intelligence officer, loyal, resourceful, and committed to protecting state secrets. However, the "stand-in" emerges in the darker methods he employs: deception, psychological manipulation, and lethal traps. While the official narrative could present him as a hero who lured criminals to recover state property, the hidden reality is sustained by morally ambiguous and violent tactics, revealing the disturbing underside of state power.

Ideologically, the stolen papers symbolize control over knowledge, and thus political dominance. Ayaz's life becomes an extension of the state's struggle, showing how ideology demands not only service but the erasure of personal identity. The criminals, too, are ensnared within this logic, driven by the same power dynamics that sustain the very state apparatus Ayaz represents.

The ideological critique is furthered through the narrative structure of *The House of Fear*, which, in suspense and revelation, involves the reader in the story and shows the limits of institutional power. This approach fits well with the author's stated goal of making high concepts more accessible to a wider audience, as he himself expressed:

> Whatsoever the quality of fictional literature, it is eventually a means to mental escape. Its purpose is to provide recreation of one or the other level. Just as a game of chess cannot entertain a football player, similarly elitist or high literature is absolutely meaningless for a big segment of our society. Then why should I write for a few drawing rooms? Why shouldn't I write in a style which is more popular…maybe this way some high concepts may reach the common people too? (Safi, 9)

The detective's investigation provides the central narrative thread, which gives the reader a framework for exploring the novel's central questions about justice, power, and societal inequality. Flashbacks and parallel storylines add depth and context to the novel, revealing how individual actions are interconnected with larger social dynamics. This layered structure resonates with Althusser's concept of ideology as a structure that functions to mask and naturalize systemic inequalities. Much like ideology, the narratives within the novel present surface appearances that often obscure deeper truths and

contradictions. Each of the narratives extends into a larger scheme involving the processes behind societal forces of grand systemic corruption to the ongoing interior struggles of marginal characters (9). The interplay between these layers reflects Žižek's notion of ideology as an unconscious framework, where the hidden truths of power and exploitation are revealed only when the contradictions in the system are exposed.

The novel's conclusion does not go along with the neat resolution that appears typical of detective fiction, leaving some questions and ambiguities unanswered. This refusal to provide closure aligns with Žižek's notion that ideology works by masking the inherent contradictions and unresolved tensions within a system. By taking away the conclusiveness, in the novel, the incessant wars and systemic disparities inherent in societal orders, are exposed to the reader. This deviation from the norm consolidates its critique of ideology and institutional authority, forcing readers to grapple with the difficult realities it presents. One might discern Althusser's ideological state apparatuses, since the open-ended narration of this historical and open-ended story satirizes the institutions of power namely, the law enforcers and the media that enforce and create the dominant ideology.

Finally, the open ending is an indication that ideological struggle is an ongoing process and that justice and equality are still at large under the prevailing tenets of power. It is also an example of how popular fiction can explore deep philosophical ideas by mingling an involving narrative form and a powerful criticism of the social dynamics. *The House of Fear* confronts the reader both to be entertained by the plot and to ponder over the greater connotations of the themes and concerns, thereby breaking the boundary between entertainment and intellectual engagement.

Fear is the central theme in *The House of Fear* since it is the feature that predetermines the behaviors and intentions of the characters and acts as an ideological manipulation tool. This is within the context of Althusser's notion of ideology where fear is used as one of the ideological state apparatuses to enforce control by manipulating the perception and behavior of the public. Representing the power of fear to hide the truth and propagate oppression, the house portrays an eerie, dark setting. Zizek's concept of ideology as an unconscious system also applies here because the characters internalize fear as a tool of evading more pertinent truths about the systematic forces at work. Here the notion of fear works both on the personal and the collective level as it combines the individual psychological vulnerability with the significances of broader systemic powers,

thus ensuring the dominant ideologies and suppressing resistance. Ibn-e-Safi's imaginary poetry, "The chain of dreams had broken / it seemed as if some wizard like Afrasiyab had caused a rain of magic knives upon all of society / and Love would never ever reign in the Hateland again", reflects the resentful emotion of distrust and despair that perfectly fits this story, making fear a barrier to connection and change (7). The journey from fear to empowerment is the core of the whole analysis; the detective is initially fearful of the uncertainty and danger related to the investigation and ultimately the outside threats are fused with the internal doubts.

Light moments included in the text, like the reflections of Imran, "The roast chicken reminds me of a distant relation of mine. His name rhymes with the word roast. That made me think about his death. Then I thought what if he is thrown into hell fire…Hell…Roast chicken…God forbid" (Safi, 29). This contrasts with the heavier themes while underlining the absurdity that often accompanies human efforts to make sense of the fear. Such moments can be used to humanize characters and to underline tension from their vulnerabilities and their strengths. The novel further seeks to explore the communal nature of resistance. For characters who band together to challenge these oppressive forces within the house, it underlines that strength in solidarity has triumphed over fear. This collective action drives together those who fall victim to ideological control, representing a hope for rebirth and empowerment.

CHAPTER 5

THE IDEOLOGICAL LABYRINTH: SOCIAL DYNAMICS IN *THE DOOMSDAY DECEPTION* (1987)

In the present chapter, *The Doomsday Deception* (1987) is analytically assessed with respect to Louis Althusser's and Slavoj Žižek's theoretical framework with the purpose of uncovering the ideological and cultural dynamics hidden in the text. By interpellation, ideological fantasies, and resistance, the sociopolitical anxieties of the time are thrown out of light from the critique of the novel towards the institutional powers.

Ishtiaq Ahmed stands as one of the most influential cultural producers of late 20th-century Pakistan. His detective and spy novels, particularly popular among adolescents during the 1980s and 1990s, served as much more than entertainment: they were ideological texts that shaped young readers' perceptions of national identity, morality, and global politics. With over 800 novels, and characters like Inspector Jamshed, Kamran Mirza, Mehmood, Aftab, Farzana, Farhat and the Shoki brothers, Ahmed created an imaginative world where patriotism, conspiracy, and religio-political vigilance became central values.

The popularity of Ahmed's novels coincided with a decisive shift in Pakistan's ideological trajectory. The 1980s, under General Zia-ul-Haq's martial law regime, were marked by a systematic Islamization of the state and society. As Althusser theorizes, ideology works through ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) such as schools, media, and religion to reproduce dominant values. In Pakistan, this reproduction was visible in redesigned school syllabi, regulated media, and the silencing of dissenting intellectuals such as Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Habib Jalib, and Ahmed Faraz. Into this cultural vacuum, writers like Ishtiaq Ahmed inserted a new form of mass literature that filled the imaginative and intellectual gap left by censorship. His fiction thus became an extension of the cultural ISA, reinforcing dominant narratives of patriotism, religious vigilance, and suspicion of the "foreign other."

Thematically, Ahmed's novels echo a consistent pattern: Pakistan and Islam are perpetually under threat, often from religious minorities, Western powers, or shadowy conspiratorial forces. *The Doomsday Deception* exemplifies this mode of storytelling, weaving narratives where enemies are both external and internal. The construction of

these threats aligns with Žižek's concept of the "stand-in" enemy, a scapegoat figure through which anxieties about national fragility, cultural decline, and moral corruption are projected. By imagining diabolical plots hatched against the Muslim nation, Ahmed's fiction positioned readers into a permanent state of vigilance, simultaneously reassuring them of their righteousness and reminding them of their vulnerability. Ahmed's novels, while framed as popular spy thrillers, naturalized this ideological trajectory for younger audiences.

It is significant that Ahmed's fiction appealed particularly to youth. In Althusserian terms, this demographic represented the subjects most vulnerable to ideological interpellation: young readers were "hailed" into subject positions of loyal citizens, patriotic Muslims, and vigilant protectors of the nation. Graduating from Ahmed's novels, many readers carried with them a worldview steeped in paranoia and conspiracy, one that easily integrated narratives of Freemasons, Illuminati, Zionist plots, and CIA/Mossad/RAW interference. In this way, his works functioned as an ideological supplement to the state's apparatuses, bridging the gap between official Islamization policies and popular imagination.

Therefore, *The Doomsday Deception* is not merely a piece of detective fiction; it is a text deeply embedded in Pakistan's socio-political history of the 1980s. Its conspiracy-driven plots reflect the cultural anxieties of a society caught between global Cold War politics and internal debates over Islamization. More importantly, the novel demonstrates how popular fiction can serve as both an instrument of ideological reproduction (in Althusser's terms) and a vehicle for the projection of national fantasies and fears (in Žižek's terms).

The Doomsday Deception by Ishtiaq Ahmed is a gripping spy thriller that delves into the murky world of espionage and ideological conflict. It is an action-adventure story about a secret agent Inspector Jamshed and his fellow detectives that expose a dark plot by the foreign agents to destabilize their country and religion. The plot gets thicker as they walks through a maze of lies, global politics and tension filled battles, with their genius and flair to connive with his foes.

Beyond being an action-packed novel, the novel touches upon subtler issues such as patriotism, religion, the effects of ideological warfare, and the ethical dilemmas and morality of those involved in intelligence agencies. The combination of suspense and

humor is keenly executed by Ahmed, so the personality of Inspector Jamshed is rather ordinary and extraordinary at the same time. The story casts light on the geopolitical tensions of the time, providing a criticism to the role played by global powers in influencing regional politics.

The Doomsday Deception, if analyzed through Althusser theory of ideological state apparatuses, seems to portray the state, media and religious institutions as instruments of oppression to make sure that such natural order of the society is in place through impregnation of ideology embedded in day-to-day life that seems normal and not challenged. By doing so, ISAs ensure that the powerful exercise power and that any other diverse ideologies and voices are suppressed and silenced.

The episode in *The Doomsday Deception* in which Inspector Jamshed and his partners are taken on a secret mission "on the promise of serving their country and religion" offers a compact and ideologically rich window into how Ishtiaq Ahmed's fiction functions as both cultural pedagogy and political technology. Read through the combined lenses of Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatuses and Žižek's notions of the "typical" and the "stand-in," the sequence stages a sustained interpellation: the protagonists are hailed into subject-positions (soldier-of-faith, patriot-detective) that have been socially insulated, emotionally primed, and narratively rewarded. That hail is not accidental or incidental to plot; it is the novel's chief ideological operation. The text recruits its youthful reader into a moral universe in which loyalty to the nation and to a particular religious identity become indistinguishable, where the press and the state together provide the terms of intelligibility, and where suspicion of foreigners, of minorities, of anyone imagined as proximate to power becomes an ethical obligation. In Althusser's terms, literature here operates as an ISA: it produces and reproduces consent by offering narratives that make a contested social order appear natural and necessary. In Žižekian terms, the novels provide a "typical" figure, the loyal, violent-capable inspector, and a "stand-in" enemy, external states or internal traitors, whose opposition sustains the subject's identity and enjoyment.

The book's formal devices make this ideological work strikingly efficient. Consider how public media are staged at the outset: a newspaper headline, grammatically banal yet the text's hinge, "Baigal has achieved a great success", is immediately invested with foreboding. That the protagonists read a seemingly triumphant headline as a prelude to attack "They are trying to weaken the Islamic State… as soon as the Baigal succeed in

her mission… they will strike an assault on the State" reveals two linked processes (43). First, the newspaper is not a neutral transmitter of facts but a trigger in a preexisting hermeneutic: the protagonists already possess a suspicious interpretive grammar, so any statement about foreign "success" is read through the filter of conspiracy. Second, the protagonists' reading performs the interpellation: the headline calls them to recognize themselves as defenders of a besieged order. The news item thus functions as an ideological signifier whose meaning is not in what it literally reports but in how it activates identities: it calls patriotic subjects into being, invites them to see threats everywhere, and rationalizes pre-emptive vigilance as duty.

The novel's rhetoric around foreign coalitions further amplifies the scale of the threat. When Professor Rehman reacts with alarm, "This means that… all the other countries have been united against all the Islamic countries", the conspiracy migrates from a single hostile state to a global cabal (93). This rhetorical expansion is significant. Politically, it produces a sense of total encirclement; ideologically, it transforms complex, uneven geopolitical relations into a single antagonistic force. From a theoretical perspective, this is a textbook example of the "stand-in" enemy: a composite figure that condenses disparate anxieties (economic dependency, military weakness, cultural influence) into one easily targeted Other. The stand-in's utility is manifold. It supplies narrative urgency and legitimates the protagonist's violence; it displaces domestic conflict onto an external axis; and it consolidates heterogeneous grievances (corruption, inequality, failed governance) into a single matrix of malicious intent that can be fought with clarity and moral righteousness.

Crucially, the novel does not restrict the violence to spectacle alone; it frames punishment as the necessary and appropriate response of a supposedly civilized state confronted with barbarity. The President of Baigal's announced punishments and narrated with a slow, forensic relish.

> These people will be hanged upside down, their naked bodies will be stabbed with sharp instruments, and then salt would be sprinkled on those wound cuts. This process will be continued until they die. Even after their death, they will be kept hanged like this, and then hungry dogs will be released on their bodies. (111)

The graphic quality of the description is designed to produce disgust and horror in the reader; but the affective calculus is subtle: by placing such cruelty in the mouth of the

foreign president, the text secures moral distance for its home side. The reader is encouraged to view their own side's actions (and willingness to use force) as proportionate, even necessary, against such monstrous otherness. This is an ideological inversion that Althusser's schema helps to clarify: the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), the domain of violence and coercion, is rendered as something the foreign "Other" monopolizes, while the domestic ISA (including popular fiction) remains the source of moral education. In practice, however, the novel normalizes violence by staging it as a justified reaction. The rhetorical effect is to make the domestic reader more comfortable with coercive measures, even while condemning them in the abstract when enacted by enemies.

The text's representation of torture and punishment is not limited to imagined foreign excesses. Its interrogation scenes reveal the normalization of coercive practice among the very heroes who decry foreign barbarism. When Inspector Jamshed threatens the Jabanese agent Bartarni and the agent responds that the Jabanese would inflict "severe consequences," Bartarni describes in horrid detail the methods to which his own side would resort:

> They will tie me to a chair then with the help of special instruments my fingernails will be separated from my fingers one by one that is to say they will be uprooted and after that when salt is sprinkled on the wounds of the fingers how painful would it be? The thought about it gives me goosebumps and then in such a miserly state man dies sobbing and begging. (372)

He continues with an image of bamboo impalement:

> One is an even more gruesome method he said while shaking, when a bamboo plant grows its tip is very sharp secondly the bamboo plant also rises straight up now whoever has to be punished is laid on such a newly sprouted bamboo plant and then punching nails in the ground his hands and feet are tied to those nails with the help of ropes in such a way that he cannot lift his torso off the ground when that plant goes and rises touches his body so it keeps getting bigger by piercing his body then it comes out by piercing his body. (373)

These transgressive details perform two ideological tasks. On the one hand, they amplify the horror of the foreign enemy; on the other, by making violence visible and imaginable, they domesticate it, teaching the reader the grammar of brutality and, implicitly, its

utility. The novel thus performs a double move of condemnation-plus-normalization: it condemns the enemy's cruelty while showing readers that similar measures are thinkable and, in certain circumstances, defensible.

This double move has important implications for how the novel positions its protagonists and how it models legitimate subjectivity. If we read Inspector Jamshed and his comrades as Žižek's "typical" figures, embodying the virtues the text wishes to promote, then their acceptance of violence, and their readiness to confront it, is what makes them exemplary. The typical hero's willingness to use or threaten physical punishment becomes a litmus test of moral seriousness; the stand-in enemy's capacity for cruelty becomes a mirror in which readers see both the danger and the corresponding duty to respond. In short, heroism is measured by an ability to imagine and employ violence, and this imaginary becomes a core aspect of the subject the novel seeks to produce.

The text's insistence on external conspiracy is matched by an equally powerful narrative of internal betrayal.

> Their men also hold high positions in our beloved country. It's obvious that Baigal can easily get most important news of our internal affairs through his soldiers. That is because the Jabanese hired by our army are the relatives of the Jabanese living here in our country, and they remain in touch with each other and thus can get all the important information easily. The situation is very dangerous for our country. (136)

Inspector Kamran Mirza's fear that stages a classic paranoid motif: the idea that the domestic polity is infiltrated and hollowed out from within. The President's caution about Wadi-e-Marjan gives narrative voice to a systemic sense of entrapment.

> They have been recruited to every high-ranked department of the country. Whenever I try to initiate a slightest action against them, immediately the higher officials come with recommendations for them. Annoying all of them at the same time is too risky for the country. (139)

That the leaders feel impotent to act against an allegedly entrenched minority not only heightens narrative stakes but also makes the minority itself appear omnipotent and dangerous. The effect is to naturalize suspicion and to delegitimate pluralistic participation in state institutions: the novel suggests that integrated minorities are, by definition, security threats. This is an exclusionary logic that maps directly onto sectarian

and majoritarian politics: loyalty and legitimacy are imagined as prerequisites for inclusion, and any ambiguity in loyalties becomes a pretext for marginalization.

Ishtiaq Ahmed's deployment of these internal-threat narratives functions psycho-politically as well as narratively. Farzana's pointed observation, "Is this less strange that these people identify themselves as Muslims and at the same time are plotting against all the Muslim countries?" (197), cuts to the heart of the novel's strategy of delegitimating: the notion of "false believers" or pseudo-co-religionists is one of the most potent forms of social exclusion because it weaponizes shared identity. If someone can claim the marks of belonging while secretly conspiring with external enemies, then trust becomes impossible. The novel thereby trains readers to interpret ambiguity as duplicity. This interpretive habit, sustained across characters and scenes, serves a political purpose: it undermines the possibility of plural citizenship and makes the "logics of suspicion" the default civic posture.

The novel's narrative economy also displaces structural causes of social ills onto conspiratorial agents. Corruption, institutional dysfunction, and social inequality are not analyzed as products of political economy, bureaucratic capture, or historical dispossession; rather, they become symptoms of infiltration or deliberate sabotage. In this move the novels perform a deflection: instead of prompting readers to interrogate domestic policies, elite behavior, or material grievances, the texts redirect attention to an external enemy. This is significant for the thesis' third research question: themes of corruption and socio-economic inequality are present, but Ahmed recasts them as ideological problems, morality and loyalty, rather than as systemic injustices requiring redistribution or institutional reform. The narrative outcome is conservatism dressed as radicalism: the detective hunts corruption, but his target is framed as moral deviation or foreign script rather than as the product of class dynamics or policy failure.

Alongside the political argument, there is an aesthetic and pedagogic logic to Ishtiaq Ahmed's work that explains its appeal and its potency. The prose is direct, the scenes of threat and counter-threat calorically vivid, and the stakes are simple and existential; these formal features suit a readership of adolescents and young adults who are being shaped into civic subjects. The novels' accessibility is part of their ideological power: they provide tidy moral lessons, identify the traitor, unmask the conspiracy, restore order, that transform complex historical processes into actionable scripts. For a generation whose public sphere was being reshaped by curricular changes, media

regulation, and the shrinking of dissenting intellectual spaces, such narratives served as both consolation and primer: they offered the emotional satisfaction of clear enemies and the cognitive habit of seeing politics as a battlefield of good versus evil.

The book's rhetorical technique of using fictionalized foreign names, Baigal, Insharja, Vintaas, Jabanese, merits attention. The ciphering of real-world actors into near-recognizable proxies allows the text to perform a double function. On the one hand, it universalizes the threat, suggesting that any foreign power could stand in for the enemy; on the other, it allows readers to map these categories onto real geopolitical actors without authorial overtness. The effect is to make the conspiracy feel both immediate and abstract: immediate because it is personalized by named agents and nations; abstract because the allegory invites readers to project real-world resentments onto the fictionalized cartel. This is a particularly effective ideological technique because it both simplifies geopolitical complexity and preserves plausible deniability; readers can take their own political inferences without the text having to make explicit claims that might be contested.

A further, subtle ideological operation in the novel is the way it frames the moral economy of knowledge and secrecy. Information like who has it, who controls it, who leaks it, is the plot's primary currency. The protagonists regard access to information as tantamount to survival, and the othering of minority communities is often articulated through their alleged informational advantage, "Baigal can easily get most important news of our internal affairs through his soldiers" (136). In such a moral world, transparency is not a virtue of good governance but a vulnerability; secrecy is valorized; suspicion becomes a rational practice. The novel thus educates citizens to prefer opacity in the name of security, and it implicitly sanctions the expansion of surveillance and the curtailing of civil liberties. This is consistent with Althusser's claim that ideological apparatuses render particular social relations natural: here, a security-oriented polity, vigilance, and secrecy are normalized as the common sense.

Perhaps the most politically consequential effect of the novel, given its mass appeal among adolescents in the 1980s and 1990s, is the long-term formation of a hermeneutic habitus inclined toward conspiratorial explanations. The cumulative effect of repeatedly encountering accounts of foreign plots, internal fifth columns, and grotesque punishments is to inculcate a worldview defined by existential threat. A generation raised on such narratives is likely to interpret natural disasters, political crises, and social change

through conspiratorial frames; this is how a literary culture circulates ideology beyond discrete texts and into the social imaginary. For the thesis' first research question, this is a salient finding: Ahmed's fiction does not merely mirror an ideological climate; it multiplies it, transmitting and amplifying anxieties that had institutional support in the era's schools, media, and religious sites.

At the level of character dynamics, there is a recurring ambivalence worth exploring. The protagonists are frequently cast as moral exemplars, ready to endure hardship, willing to take risks, proud of their country and faith, but they are also authorized to use extreme measures when necessary. This moral ambidexterity matters because it means that the text's heroes model a particular ethical formation: fidelity to an imagined moral order outranks procedural norms. The heroes' willingness to override legal checks or to improvise violent methods in the name of national security establishes a tacit ethical hierarchy in which ends justify means. For readers, especially younger ones, this hierarchy can be formative; it offers an ethical template in which loyalty and effectiveness trump legalism and human rights.

Finally, the novel's narrative closure, the detective's eventual unmasking of the plot and restoration of order, performs an ideological consoling function. After a sequence of threatening images, revelations, and moral crises, the resolution reassures the reader that the right people, when vigilant, are able to preserve the nation. Such closure is not politically neutral. It creates the impression that the system, though strained, ultimately functions when exemplary individuals act correctly. This is ideologically useful because it redirects anger away from institutions and toward individuals: reform is personal rather than systemic, and the restoration of legitimacy is achieved not by structural change but by courageous deeds. In Althusserian terms, the text's narrative closure helps reproduce the existing social order by constructing the perception that its weaknesses can be corrected without altering the fundamentals of power.

Taken together, these narrative strategies, interpellation through media cues, dramatization of foreign cruelty, the construction of internal traitors, the normalization of coercion, the moral valorization of secrecy, and consolatory closures, constitute a coherent ideological machine. Ishtiaq Ahmed's *The Doomsday Deception* thus performs the dual cultural work of producing a subject (the vigilant patriotic reader) and legitimizing a political grammar (suspicion, militancy, exclusion) that was consistent with the broader social shifts of its era. The protagonist's acceptance of the mission "on the

promise of serving their country and religion" is not an isolated moral choice but the endpoint of a sustained process of textual and cultural hailing. The novel's rhetorical insistence that foreign powers conspire against "all the Islamic countries" (93) and that minorities within the state are already "recruited to every high-ranked department" (139) performs the key ideological task of converting complexity into a manageable enemy image. In doing so, the text both reflects and reinforces a political imaginary that privileges security, homogeneity, and moral clarity over pluralism, social analysis, and institutional reform. For a thesis concerned with how Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction engages with ideology and power, *The Doomsday Deception* thus functions as an exemplary case: it is literature that educates citizens into a particular political effect and cognitive habit, one that reproduces the dominant ideological formations of its moment while cloaking systemic problems in the rhetoric of external threat and internal treachery.

In conclusion, *The Doomsday Deception* (1987) operates not merely as a work of popular detective fiction but as a cultural artifact deeply imbricated in the ideological and political structures of its time. Through the combined theoretical frameworks of Louis Althusser and Slavoj Žižek, the novel reveals how ideology infiltrates everyday consciousness, shaping subjectivities and legitimizing power. By dramatizing the perpetual siege of the nation and faith, Ishtiaq Ahmed transforms the spy thriller into an ideological state apparatus, one that hails its youthful readership into subject positions of loyal, vigilant, and morally righteous citizens. The narrative's recurrent emphasis on patriotism, religiosity, and suspicion of the "Other" naturalizes the very ideological logic that underpinned Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization project, blurring the boundaries between entertainment, pedagogy, and propaganda.

Ahmed's manipulation of interpellation, the construction of the "stand-in" enemy, and the moral valorization of secrecy and violence reveal how fiction participates in the reproduction of dominant state ideologies. The novel's elaborate conspiracy plots and scenes of punishment transform geopolitical anxieties into manageable moral binaries, good versus evil, believer versus traitor, patriot versus conspirator. In this way, Ahmed's narrative not only mirrors the sociopolitical paranoia of 1980s Pakistan but amplifies it; teaching its readers to interpret political complexity through the grammar of suspicion and defense.

At the same time, the novel's closure, its restoration of moral and national order, serves an important ideological function. It consoles the reader with the illusion that

systemic problems can be solved through individual heroism rather than institutional reform. This rhetorical gesture reaffirms Althusser's insight that ideology functions most effectively when it renders the social order both intelligible and immutable. By embedding such ideological lessons in the accessible form of a spy thriller, Ahmed ensured that these values would be absorbed not through formal instruction but through pleasure, identification, and repetition.

Ultimately, *The Doomsday Deception* exemplifies how popular fiction in Pakistan's late 20th-century cultural landscape operated as both a mirror and a mechanism of ideology. It reflects the sociopolitical tensions of a nation negotiating its identity amid Islamization, Cold War geopolitics, and internal dissent, while simultaneously producing subjects conditioned to sustain those very tensions. The novel's ideological power lies not in overt propaganda but in its normalization of fear, loyalty, and moral absolutism as natural civic virtues. In doing so, it stands as a testament to the potency of narrative in constructing, reproducing, and perpetuating national consciousness within the framework of state ideology and cultural fantasy.

CHAPTER 6

THE CAPTIVE SOCIETY: POWER, IDEOLOGY, AND RESISTANCE IN *THE PRISONER* (2013)

In this chapter, I analyze *The Prisoner* (2013) by Omer Shahid Hamid, focusing on how the novel operates as a medium for examining the intersection of power, corruption, and ideological control within Pakistani society. Using Louis Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) alongside Slavoj Žižek's ideas of the "typical" and the "stand-in," this analysis explores how the narrative reflects or challenges dominant ideologies, particularly through its portrayal of socio-political structures and key figures in law enforcement. Central to this examination are questions regarding the protagonist's role in either reinforcing or undermining these power structures and the depiction of corruption as a pervasive societal force. Through these questions, this chapter aims to unravel how *The Prisoner* not only provides a critical reflection on institutional manipulation but also prompts deeper inquiry into the ideological forces shaping contemporary Pakistani society.

In *The Prisoner* by Omar Shahid Hamid, the ideological state apparatus (ISA) of religion is depicted through characters like Qari Saif and Sheikh Noman, who exploit religion for personal gains. Qari Saif was "…a pimp selling women in the bazaars of Peshawar!" but later hides his past by adopting the guise of a religious figure (324). When Akbar goes to Sheikh Noman's mosque complex to retrieve the American journalist, Qari Saif is also there who thinks of Akbar as a religious scholar, from what he has heard about him. He questions Akbar's loyalty and devotion to the religion and Allah's cause all the while saying, "There are so many imposters in our religion, it is hard to decipher whose message is the true one" (321). The irony of this statement is not lost on Akbar, who is fully aware of Qari Saif's sordid past as a pimp in the bazaars of Peshawar. This shows the hypocrisy of religious figures that do nothing other than pointing fingers at others. They ride the moral high ground, acting as if they are morally superior, while condemning people and ignoring their own flaws and wrongdoings, all while pretending to be righteous.

During the meeting, Qari Saif repeatedly insists that "The American unbeliever must be executed" claiming "It is the will of God!" (322). Later, in a private conversation,

Noman tells Akbar that Qari Saif has convinced most of his followers that carrying out this act is not only justified but also virtuous in the eyes of God. He says:

> He has been pushing me to kill the American. What's worse is that he has convinced most of my other supporters that this is a good thing to do. They have all been carried away with his fiery rhetoric and his stories of fighting in the jihad. (325)

This demonstrates how easily the masses can be led to accept and act upon anything when guided by influential figures. As Althusser proposes, "ISAs function primarily through ideology" (Patel, 2). The ideologies of those in power, particularly religious ideologies, often become the beliefs of the common people, shaping their actions and perceptions without question. In societies like Pakistan, where religion holds a central role in shaping identity and social norms, it becomes even easier to play the religious card. Noman himself says, "They [common people] just want to follow any idiot who starts shouting "Death to America" (325). Religious extremists propagate the ideology that those who are not Muslims do not have the right to live. They claim it is the will of God to eliminate unbelievers, using religion as a justification for violence and intolerance, distorting sacred teachings to suit their own radical agendas. They instill in the minds of ordinary people the belief that Americans, 'the unbelievers', want to destroy them. By spreading fear and hatred, they manipulate the masses into seeing others as enemies, propagating constant threat and division. This aligns with Althusser's concept of ISAs, where institutions, like religious organizations as in this case, serve to shape and control people's beliefs, actions, and perceptions. Through these ideologies, religious extremists maintain power by creating a collective mindset that justifies hostility and violence. As religious extremists like Qari Saif want to maintain their hold over their followers by propagating their misguided religious ideologies and try their best to keep their followers from having a discussion on theology with anybody else as Qari Saif himself says, "… I don't want my followers getting confused and corrupted by anyone else's views, especially a kafir. I have to keep them focused on our mission" (331).

Similarly, Sheikh Noman, formerly known as Nomi, was a fraudster "…who used to cheat people by creating fake religious charities now calls himself a sheikh" as he has transitioned into the business of religious education (153). He illegally occupies land to construct madrassas, ostensibly for the religious education of children, while his true motives remain far from noble. These madrassas were strategically located right next to

Sheikh Noman's gambling den, exposing the hypocrisy behind his image of piety. This character also reveals the exploitation of religion for personal gains. He manipulates the deeply ingrained reverence for religious figures in Pakistani society to amass wealth and build a loyal following. By presenting himself as a spiritual guide, he attracts staunch supporters who see him as a righteous leader, completely unaware of his criminal activities. This blind allegiance stems from the cultural and ideological conditioning that places religious figures above scrutiny, allowing Sheikh Noman to veil his corruption with piety. Akbar says, "Respectability is just one step removed from outright criminality" which shows how ideologies and appearances mask underlying corruption or criminal behavior, highlighting that outward respectability can be a facade that hides a more dangerous reality (153). Akbar describes Noman as:

> He wears fine clothes, dabs his body with expensive perfume when just a few years ago he didn't know the difference between a bar of soap and a biscuit, and is now acknowledged as a scholar of Islam. And all of this in such a short span of time. (153)

This shows how an individual can exploit the respectability associated with religion and religious figures to gain status, wealth, and power, even if their actions are not truly aligned with the values they claim to uphold.

Noman's facade as a reputable religious figure helps him gain a number of staunch supporters. Moreover, the strategy of building these madrasas next to his gambling dens works brilliantly for him as:

> Every time the police tried to raid one of his dens, the poor, unassuming madrasa students would be told that their seminary was being attacked, and they would rally vociferously to defend the premises. The police facing mob would naturally back off. (289)

This instance reflects how the manipulation of religious sentiment serves as a shield for criminal activities. By framing police raids as attacks on the madrasa, the supposed religious leader exploits the innocence and blind loyalty of the students, rallying them to protect his operations. The students, believing they are defending their faith and religious institution, become unwitting tools in safeguarding his illegal activities. This allows him to operate his criminal enterprises without fear of accountability which benefits him even more as:

> The sheikh's remote- control mobs had given him quite a bit of leverage over the city administration and the police, leverage that he would then use to garner further benefits for himself. A fine plot of land here, an extra bodyguard there. (289)

Hence, this reflects how the Sheikh's manipulation of his followers grants him significant influence over the city administration and police. By using his "remote-control mobs" to create pressure, he secures favors such as land and personal protection, further consolidating his power. This also demonstrates ISA of religion, as the sanctity associated with religious institutions leaves law enforcement institutions helpless, making them hesitant to act for fear of public backlash or accusations of targeting religion.

Religious ISA, as described by Althusser, include institutions that interpellate individuals into roles that support and reinforce dominant religious ideologies. Althusser writes in the ISA essay "Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects" (229). "Ideology acts or functions in such a way that it recruits subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or transforms the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing" (ibid.). As in the novel, individuals like Noman run religious institutions such as madrasas to propagate their ideological beliefs, shaping the minds of their followers and reinforcing their control over the community by framing their ideology as both righteous and necessary. Sheikh Noman manipulates his madrasa students by instilling in them the belief that they are defending their faith and seminary from external threats, using them as shields to protect his gambling dens from police raids. These students, unaware of his ulterior motives, blindly follow his directives, believing they are serving a greater religious cause. Similarly, Qari Saif, a former sex trafficker, rebrands himself as a religious authority and commands a loyal following. His followers accept his ideology that unbelievers must be eradicated to fulfill the will of God. This blind loyalty enables Saif to maintain his power and control, despite his criminal activities. The novel also portrays how individuals are drawn into jihadi ideologies, where they are indoctrinated to believe that acts of violence, such as executing unbelievers, are divine commands. This process of interpellation ensures that these individuals view themselves as righteous defenders of their faith, while in reality; they are pawns advancing the agendas of manipulative leaders. By exposing how religious ideology is used to justify and perpetuate violence, the novel critiques the

exploitation of faith as a tool for control and the propagation of systemic power structures.

Corruption does not just affect religious institutions; it seeps into all areas of society. In various institutions such as the police, city administration, and legal systems, individuals often use their power for personal gain. This widespread corruption allows people in positions of authority to secure wealth, protection, and privileges, all while exploiting the system. As corruption spreads across these institutions, it creates a cycle of exploitation, where those in power continue to benefit at the expense of the common people, propagating inequality and injustice.

In the novel, corruption runs through every level of the system, from higher officials to lower-ranking ones. Each character, whether in a position of power or not, is shown taking bribes in exchange for favors. Constantine describes it as, "Everyone has become a mercenary, bartering services to the highest bidder" (220). This widespread dishonesty reflects the deep-rooted corruption within the system, where personal gain outweighs justice or ethical behavior, and individuals at all levels exploit their positions for financial benefit. For instance; the Home Minister, nicknamed as Pakora, accepts bribes and grants favors.

> The levels of his avarice knew no bounds and, even in a department where corruption flourished like crabgrass, Pakora had broken new records. Constantine had gotten first-hand experience of this when he had gone to pay him through an intermediary to secure his current posting. (188)

The Inspector General of the Prisons pays him so that he could keep his post. Moreover, towards the end of the novel, Akbar pays Pakora 'Fifty petis' "…to ensure that the party didn't create any hurdles…" (307). He also thinks that now it would be in Pakora's interests to protect him as by giving him such a large amount of money, he has become his "sone ki chidiya" (307). On acquiring that sum of money, Pakora goes as far as "…ordering the reinstatement of Akbar and his posting to head a special police unit, which would probe kidnapping cases and other high-profile investigations" (306). These instances illustrate the corruption at play, where money is used to manipulate and control the system. Akbar's bribe of "fifty petis" to Pakora is an example of how financial transactions are used to bypass legal processes. Akbar secures his reinstatement and promotion on coming out of jail, by simply paying for it while Pakora gains monetary

benefits from this arrangement. This shows how corruption undermines fairness and justice, where decisions are based on personal gains.

Furthermore, individuals of lower rank also benefit from corruption, taking advantage of opportunities for personal gain in a system built on corruption. Aziz, Akbar's driver is one such example from the novel. When Akbar gets out of jail and Aziz is driving him towards the mosque through Mangopir, he says, "… I suppose this area isn't too bad either. There's good money to be made from the mining and reti bajri contracts in the area" (316). In this statement, the reference to "good money to be made from the mining and reti bajri contracts" alludes to the bribery and corrupt practices that are pervasive within the system. The mention of the area's potential for profit suggests that there are opportunities for individuals in positions of power to extract financial benefits through kickbacks. The implication is that Akbar will directly benefit from the bribe, while Aziz, his driver, will also receive a share from it, demonstrating how corruption operates at multiple levels. This highlights the widespread nature of bribery, where even lower-ranking individuals are included in the corrupt transactions, benefiting from the exploitation of resources and power.

While driving, Aziz goes on to describe his life when his immediate superior, Akbar was put in jail. He says:

> It hasn't been easy since you were locked up. I was suspended for a while… after a couple of months, I bribed the clerk at Headquarters so he quietly put me back on active duty in the motor pool. But it wasn't like when I was with you, sahib… no encounters and no extra cash or reward… I couldn't even afford to buy meat for my family. We have been eating dal for five years… I had almost forgotten what chicken tasted like. (316, 317)

This passage reveals the entrenchment of corruption within the system, showing how even individuals like Aziz, who operated under Akbar, were involved in corrupt practices. Aziz admits to bribing a clerk to end his suspension and return to active duty, indicating that he relied on unethical means to secure his position. Furthermore, his lament about the lack of "extra cash or reward" during Akbar's absence suggests that he previously benefitted from a share of the bribes Akbar received. Aziz's struggle to provide for his family in the absence of these illegal earnings underscores how corruption becomes normalized and even necessary for survival within such a flawed system. This

normalization of corruption is evident in the novel when Constantine reflects on the situation of the Inspector General of Prisons, his immediate boss at the time. Constantine describes him as:

> ... a man willing to do anything to cling to his job… [He was] panicky about the slightest of situations because he feared that any remote eventuality would bring about his ouster. Over whelmed by that fear, he fell at the feet of everyone… and offered them his services like some sort of bureaucratic whore. He had raised spineless into an art form. Only when it came to demanding money from his subordinates did he seem to find his courage. (191)

The Inspector General of Prisons depicts how corruption and self-preservation dominate the system. His fear of losing his job makes him eager to please those in power, showing no sense of dignity or principles. At the same time, he boldly demands money/bribe from his subordinates, revealing his hypocrisy. This behavior highlights how people in such systems abandon their values to protect themselves while exploiting others below them, keeping corruption alive at every level. The Inspector General's actions demonstrate how corruption is ingrained in the system, with those in positions of power using unethical means to protect their jobs and advance their personal interests.

Constantine observes and understands also the Inspector General's dilemma when he arrives at the prison to carry out the orders of the Home Minister of Akbar's release. The Inspector General's "sniveling" attitude continues as he requests Constantine to put in a good word for him as he was not in the Home Minister's good books and in return he would give Constantine anything he likes. He in fact asks for Constantine's help by saying, "If he revokes my contract, I'll never get another job like this one. This job was supposed to secure the future of my children (305)". This reflects how survival and securing a stable future become the primary focus for even high-ranking officials, often at the cost of their moral integrity. The desperation to hold onto a position that ensures financial stability, benefits, and a comfortable lifestyle for their families drives them to compromise their ethics and partake in corrupt practices. In their struggle to protect their personal interests, they set aside moral boundaries, highlighting how deeply corruption is tied to economic pressures in such a flawed system. Constantine reflects on the Inspector General's situation by saying:

… he shared the same compulsions as the rest of them. Family. A slightly better life for their children. A little bit of power and influence. At the end of the day, they were all in the same boat. Swimming in the rough shoals of this city, trying to find a way to survive. (305)

This alludes to the socio-economic disparity that shapes the actions of individuals in the story. The characters such as Inspector General and Aziz, despite their different positions in society, share similar struggles: the desire to provide for their families, to improve their lives, and sometimes gain power and influence. This common drive reflects how socio-economic pressures push people into compromising their values and partaking in corrupt systems, as survival becomes the ultimate goal. The reference to "swimming in the rough shoals" emphasizes how they are all caught in the same difficult circumstances, where the pursuit of a better life leads to moral compromises, furthering the divide between the powerful and the powerless. At one instance Constantine justifies his own corrupt practices by saying,

Yes, I cannot deny that I have taken money from people. But I do it because I want to survive in this world, I want to try and give my children a slightly better life than I had, and I cannot do that if I do not become a part of this system. In our country, sahib, it is the system that makes the individual bad. (138, 139)

These statements underscore the normalization and justification of corrupt practices, illustrating how individuals rationalize their involvement in corrupt systems. Constantine's reasoning that corruption is necessary for survival and to provide a better life for the children, highlights how deeply ingrained and accepted such practices are within the system. By claiming that "the system makes the individual bad," Constantine shifts the blame onto the larger socio-political structure. This reflects how corruption becomes normalized in societies where survival is perceived as dependent on engaging in unethical practices, making it impossible for individuals to break free from the cycle of exploitation and dishonesty.

Though Constantine has played a key role in assisting Akbar with capturing ward boys of UF, fighting terrorists and gangsters still he, himself, is also involved in corrupt practices, reflecting how even those tasked with upholding the law become complicit in the very system they are meant to regulate. His actions demonstrate the pervasiveness of corruption, where personal gain often outweighs ethical considerations. Constantine pays

"five petis" to Pakora to get posted in the Central Prison. Moreover, towards the end of the novel, Akbar pays Constantine "five petis" as a little token of appreciation. He also tells Constantine that he has tied up a weekly sum for him with the same bookie. His man will deliver it to him there every week (313). So Constantine gets his weekly share of 1,00,000 rupees from then on. DSP Akbar, another major character, has storyline that runs parallel with Constantine's as they work together, navigating the complexities of corruption, power, and survival within a flawed system. Though he played a key role in capturing major criminals, but just like Constantine, Akbar is also involved in corrupt practices; giving and also receiving bribes. He used to receive his "cut" (bribe) from "Sheikh Noman" when Noman illegally occupies the land to build madrasa for religious education which were located right next to his gambling den. This reflects how corrupt practices are normalized and accepted at all levels of society.

Moving forward, as Althusser has described Political ideological state apparatus (ISAs) as institutions and structures within society that promote and reinforce the dominant political ideologies of the ruling class. These include the government, legal systems, political parties, and law enforcement agencies, all of which work to maintain the power dynamics and societal order that benefit those in control. Through these institutions, political ideologies are propagated, shaping the beliefs and behaviors of the public to align with the interests of the elite, forming, as Marx names it, false consciousness. It is a term that defines ways in which material, ideological and institutional processes are said to deceive people (working class) and they, in this hidden way, exploit, repress, and subjugate the ruled class and maintain power, stability, and class difference (Cole et al., 2021). In this way, political ISAs function as mechanisms of control, ensuring the perpetuation of existing power structures by influencing both the political sphere and the wider social consciousness. In *The Prisoner*, political ideologies are used strategically by those in power to maintain control and manipulate the masses. The ruling figures, such as the Don, Nawaz Chandio and Yousaf Chandio, The United Front, the Inspector General and other government officials, use their positions within the political system to reinforce dominant ideologies that serve their own interests. These ideologies are disseminated via state institutions especially the police and the legal system to manipulate the minds of the population to establish the control of their minds and repress any resistance. By shaping the beliefs and actions of both lower-ranking officials

and the general public, the political leaders ensure the continuation of their authority, often at the expense of justice and fairness.

Serving one's own interests, whether through political or religious ISAs, often involves manipulating institutions to maintain power and control. Those in authority may exploit ideology, be it political rhetoric or religious belief, to maintain their dominance and suppress opposition. This self-serving use of ISAs ensures that the ruling group's agenda takes precedence over public welfare. For example, in the novel, Major Rommel says, "The image of the country is at stake" (14). At another instance, he says, "It's a matter of supreme *national importance! The nation's honour is at stake*" (20). According to Akbar, the Major's "self-righteous indignation came to the surface" while saying this (20). Akbar retorts by saying:

> I know how your people work and how long they've been raping the "nation's honour" as if it were some two-bit randi standing at the street corner. You people use words like "honour" and "country" to get people to do what you want them to do, then throw them away like a used condom. (21)

This exchange exposes the political ISA at work, particularly through the military and intelligence agencies, which claim to act in the nation's interest but in reality pursue their own agendas. Major Rommel's repeated emphasis on "the image of the country" and "the nation's honour" reflects the strategic use of nationalist rhetoric to manipulate public perception and justify institutional actions. These declarations function as ideological tools that mask the agencies' underlying motives, which may include securing foreign funding, maintaining international prestige, or advancing institutional power. Akbar's harsh reply dismantles this façade by comparing the exploitation of "the nation's honour" to prostitution, accusing these actors of commodifying patriotism to control people and discard them when they are no longer useful, as becomes evident when Akbar was made the scapegoat after the scandal, forced to take all the blame while those truly responsible protected themselves. Through this confrontation, the text critiques how political ISAs operate not as protectors of the nation, but as self-serving entities that instrumentalize nationalistic ideals for coercion and control.

In the novel, Akbar is tasked with going after Nawaz Chandio, a political figure who commands a group of loyal and blind supporters known as "fidayeen". During the operation, a violent shootout ensues in which Nawaz is killed. Despite the fact that Akbar

was acting on the orders of the Inspector General, he is left to bear the full blame for the incident. The government pressure and widespread protests following Nawaz's death force the IG to take the easy way out, abandoning Akbar and throwing him under the bus, to protect his own position. This highlights the corrupt and self-serving nature of the political system, where individuals like Akbar are sacrificed to maintain the status quo, even when they are merely following higher orders. In the aftermath of the killing of Chandio and his fidayeen, everyone reaches a deal or agreement to protect their own interests, except for Akbar, who is left to bear the full blame. The IG is not penalized and is sent to Islamabad, to serve out what little time is left in his career, Hanuman becomes the city police chief and Maqsood becomes his second-in-command, Yousaf gets sacked as CM meanwhile his corruption is overlooked. It is mentioned in the novel, "Those who wielded power always wanted things done their way." (52). The key figures, including the Inspector General, make these deals to maintain their power and uphold the status quo. By sacrificing Akbar and framing him for the accidental killing by calling it "conspiracy", they aim to minimize the political fallout and prevent any widespread riots by fidayeens or UF boys. Akbar himself says while talking to Major Rommel in the jail, "Kya sahib, we small people get crushed in the battles of the big shots and the barey log" (142). This strategic move highlights how those in power often prioritize their own positions over justice, using scapegoats to safeguard the existing power structures and control public reaction. The deals and agreements made by the key figures can be related to Althusser's concept of ISAs, where institutions like the police and political systems work to preserve the power of the ruling class. In this case, the Inspector General and other officials, through their manipulation and strategic decisions, uphold the status quo by using Akbar as a scapegoat to prevent riots and maintain control. The political and law enforcement bodies act as ISAs that enforce the dominant ideologies, ensuring that the interests of those in power are protected, even at the expense of justice. This reflects how the political system operates as an apparatus to regulate and control the masses, maintaining the power dynamics that benefit the elite.

Similarly, the kidnapping of Jon Friedland, the American journalist, in the novel exposes the functioning of various ideological state apparatuses that work to uphold the interests of those in power. The jihadis, driven by a radical religious ideology, aim to kill Friedland to fulfill what they believe is the will of God, eliminating the "unbeliever" sent amongst them, while also sending a message to America by making an execution video.

In contrast, the institutions like the government, intelligence agencies, and police become involved to rescue Friedland, primarily due to the pressure from the American government as Akbar says, "… President sahib is definitely going to have to explain to his mai-baap, the American president, how he allowed an American to get killed in Pakistan" (144). In addition, to maintain the reputation of the State and secure foreign funding, the authorities prioritize rescuing Jon Friedland. The involvement of an American journalist brings international attention, and failing to protect him risks jeopardizing diplomatic relations and financial aid. This pressure drives the institutions to focus on his safety, revealing how political and economic interests often dictate state actions under the guise of justice or diplomacy. It also brings out the role of ISAs like religious institutions, political systems, and military forces in influencing actions and decision-making which favor the interest of the state. These institutions, under both internal and external pressures, collaborate to maintain the status quo, control social consciousness, and protect the power structures that are dominant, whether in the name of religion or international diplomacy.

The United Front in *The Prisoner* can be seen as an example of a Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) as defined by Louis Althusser. According to Althusser, "Repressive suggests that the State Apparatus in question 'functions by violence'" (14). Hence, RSAs operate primarily through coercion, force, and the threat of violence to maintain the dominance of the ruling class and suppress opposition. In the novel, the United Front is depicted as a powerful party, one that establishes and expands its control over a volatile city like Karachi through force. Initially, the party's creation is backed by the Agencies aiming to use it as a tool to serve their interests. However, the United Front grows so influential that Agencies sever ties with it. Its actions such as; physically silencing dissenters, targeting political opponents, and using fear to enforce compliance align with Althusser's concept of RSA, where state power is exercised overtly to ensure ideological conformity. This is evident by Constantine's description of the United Front in the novel:

> …they created a parallel government where they had the power of taxation, dispute resolution, punishment, even life and death, over the citizens of the city. That's when the terror began …the campus violence began between the UF boys and everyone else. Things got nastier after that – massacres on buses, firing between rival groups, target killings…They crushed anyone who stood in their

way. They made fake cases against their opponents and had them locked

up…They had hit squads to bump off their rivals. (23, 24)

Similarly, at another occasion, Constantine talks about the UF in these words, "they run the place like a feudal fiefdom" (43). This shows the United Front functioning as a Repressive State Apparatus by exercising direct control through violence, intimidation, and coercion. Their parallel government used physical force; massacres, targeted killings, and fabricated legal charges, to eliminate opposition and maintain dominance hence relying on fear to enforce their authority.

The process of interpellation and how people are manipulated into upholding the power structures and the status quo are also captured through Akbar's betrayal and Jon Friedland's kidnapping. Akbar is "double-crossed" (141) by his superiors, who use him as a tool to serve their interests, reinforcing his role within the state apparatus and ensuring the continued dominance of the political system. Similarly, the jihadis, that kidnapped Friedland, are interpellated into a role that is beneficial to maintaining the power structures within their group as they are brainwashed into believing that killing Friedland is a divine duty. The two scenarios highlight how both, people in the police service and the radicalized organizations, are under the influence of ideologies supported by the powerful people around them. These ideologies, which may be associated with religious or political systems, assist in maintaining the existing power structure allowing the status quo to continue to fool people into roles which benefit the status quo.

Moving forward, Slavoj Žižek's concept of the "typical" and the "stand-in" can be utilized to understand how individuals are positioned within society to reinforce dominant ideologies and power structures. In the Pakistani context, certain "typical" ideas have become ingrained as universal beliefs. For instance, there is a widespread perception that the police are inherently corrupt. As in the novel, Major Rommel calls Constantine "bloody civilian" and says, "All of you bloody police people are corrupt!... I have heard all the stories about corruption in the jail" (11, 12). This belief has been normalized to the point where corruption is expected within the police force. In contrast, the army is often associated with the "typical" belief that it works solely in the public and national interest, as becomes evident when Major Rommel keeps on repeating "image of the country is at stake", "matter of supreme national importance", "nation's honour is at stake!" (14, 20). This is an abstract idea that is promoted and sustained because it aligns with the army's institutional agenda. Similarly, in the religious sphere, the belief that fighting

"unbelievers" ensures the survival of Islam operates as another "typical," legitimizing certain actions in the name of faith.

Within this framework, characters in the novel serve as "stand-ins" for these "typicals". Inspector General, Akbar, Constantine, and the corrupt police officers embody the "stand-in" for the typical idea of police corruption. These self-serving officers mirror a system where corruption is not just common but is an established means of gaining power. On the other hand, Qari Saif and Sheikh Noman function as "stand-ins" for the typical religious leader, even though they are involved in corrupt practices. Qari Saif, by presenting himself as a religious authority, uses his position to spread extremist ideas, manipulate followers, and serve his own interests. Similarly, the Jihadis who kidnap Jon Friedland are "stand-ins" for the ideological apparatus that uses religion to justify acts of violence. They do not simply mirror the typical image of the religious extremist; instead, they actively work to fulfill the goals set by powerful actors who control the ideological narrative. In all of these cases, "typical" ideas provide legitimacy to the existing social order by shaping public perception, while "stand-ins" are emblems of these ideas, thereby sustaining the system. Together, they reveal how corruption, politics, and religion are interconnected in maintaining the status quo.

In conclusion, *The Prisoner* illustrates how socio-economic pressures, corruption, and the propagation of ideologies through religious and political ISAs are interconnected and maintained through interpellation. Characters are hailed into roles that align with dominant ideologies, particularly as "stand-ins" who serve as tools to manipulate and sustain power structures. Religious and political leaders frame their ideologies as moral imperatives, justifying personal gain and consolidating their control under the guise of righteousness. This manipulation not only perpetuates corruption but also ensures that the masses, struggling with economic hardships, are hailed into supporting the system, often without realizing their complicity. By exposing how ISAs and interpellation work to uphold socio-economic disparities and ideological domination, the novel reveals a cycle of exploitation where corruption is normalized, and power structures are preserved under the pretense of morality and order.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the findings and discussions presented in the thesis by synthesizing the key insights derived from the analysis and summarizing the responses to the research questions. It also reflects on the broader implications of the study, emphasizing its contribution to the understanding of ideological dynamics and socio-political issues within Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction. By employing the theoretical framework using Louis Althusser and Slavoj Žižek's concepts, this research explored how the selected texts critiqued and engaged with the power structures that shape individual and collective experiences. Additionally, the chapter identifies potential areas for future research, outlining opportunities to further expand scholarly discourse in this domain.

One of the key findings of this study is that Pakistani detective fiction subverts the general assumption about genre fiction as being escapist or entertainment-based only. Rather, these novels operate as cultural texts which are deeply rooted in the socio-political context of their respective times. All three texts *The House of Fear* (1955), *The Doomsday Deception* (1987), and *The Prisoner* (2013) engage with Žižek's notions of 'stand-in' and 'typical', and Althusser's notion of ideological state apparatuses with police, religion, media, and education as apparatuses through which individuals are interpellated into dominant ideologies. But at the same time, they also present moments of rupture, disillusionment, and resistance to such ideologies. The selected texts not only entertain but also encourage critical thinking, engaging readers in a discussion about justice, morality, and power.

A comparative reading of the texts yields significant continuities and new shifts in the representation of power. In *The House of Fear*, produced in the wake of Partition, ideological critique is subtle and coded through allegory and satire. The state is a shadowy presence, and Imran's humorous, unconventional character is a figure who mimics and satirizes institutional power. His defiance is playful, indicating a time when criticism was forced to be coded, but it still uncovers the implicit tension between state power and individual liberty.

In *The Doomsday Deception*, produced in General Zia's era of military dictatorship, the ideological critique is more overt. Political leaders and religious institutions are depicted as complicit in sustaining fear, deception, and inequality. Inspector Jamshed, a more conventional detective than Imran, struggles with a moral realm filled with contradictions. His increasing awareness and final resolve to expose the truth entail a more mindful resistance to the ideological control, aligns with Althusser's assertion that resistance needs both awareness and collective resolve.

The Prisoner is a firm shift toward open political criticism. Set in present-day Karachi, it portrays a crumbling law enforcement system completely embedded in a neoliberal, corrupt state. Akbar Khan, in contrast to the other two heroes, is defined by profound cynicism and inner turmoil. Being both a product and a dissident of the system aligns with Žižek's 'stand-in', a character who deconstructs the ideological fantasy by not completely internalizing it. His disillusionment reveals the emptiness of ideological promises of order and justice.

Another important observation gleaned from this comparative lens is the changing nature of resistance. While *The House of Fear* proposes resistance in the form of satire and comic resistance, *The Doomsday Deception* constructs resistance as ethical and revelatory, and *The Prisoner* depicts it as bitter, partial, and imbued with ethical complexity. This change parallels the historical transformations of Pakistan's political culture, from authoritarianism wrapped in idealism to a neoliberal dispensation characterized by disenchantment and fragmentation.

In addition, all three texts examine how socio-economic hierarchies and institutional corruption reinforce ideological dominance. All three works consistently critique the complicity of the elite in perpetuating the status quo through religious manipulation, political propaganda, or institutional decay. This discussion enriches the general understanding of how genre fiction, and specifically detective fiction, can be used as a critical tool to help readers question national ideology, historical memory, and moral accountability.

The first research question examines how Pakistani detective fiction acts as a socio-political artifact, reflecting ideological dynamics in Pakistan's cultural context over different epochs. The analysis identifies the functioning of ideological state apparatuses, including law enforcement, religion, and education, as disseminating hegemonic

ideologies while also laying bare their contradictions. By analyzing the texts through the theoretical framework drawn from Althusser's and Zizek's concepts, the texts seem to uncover the mechanisms of ideological interpellation, revealing how individuals are influenced by and at times challenge the prevailing ideologies. This representation confirms the dual nature of such apparatuses, which support and subvert socio-political norms, thus deepening the reader's understanding of the cultural and historical spheres that construct Pakistani society.

The second research question is concerned with the ways in which the protagonists of the selected texts conflict or support dominant ideologies of power and authority. Figures such as Akbar Khan in *The Prisoner* and Inspector Jamshed in *The Doomsday Deception* travel through complex moral landscapes, revealing institutional failures and systemic corruption. These protagonists embody Althusser's concept of interpellation, as they are hailed into roles dictated by ideological systems while simultaneously resisting these constraints. For instance, Akbar Khan's disillusionment with the police and justice systems is symptomatic of a larger critique of institutional legitimacy and power. By challenging the very myths on which justice and law are based, these texts invite readers to challenge the moral and ethical underpinnings of social structures. This reading highlights the texts' potential to engage with nuances of morality, agency, and resistance within oppressive systems.

The third research question examines how issues of corruption, socio-economic inequalities, and political interference are woven through the narratives and illustrate the complexity of Pakistani society. In *The Prisoner*, institutional corruption in law and order and political structures is presented as pervasive, seeping through every aspect of society and destroying justice and equality. Similarly, *The Doomsday Deception* attacks the politicization of religious ideologies with a critique of religious and political elites' complicity in upholding socio-economic hierarchies. The texts, under the lens of Althusser's and Zizek's concepts. become a tool for critiquing the socio-political order, revealing the machinery of systemic injustice, and challenging readers to face the uncomfortable reality of power and inequality. Through interlacing these themes in their stories, the texts also help identifying the necessity of critical examination of societal structures and their effects on marginalized communities.

7.1   Recommendations for Future Research

While this study provides a focused analysis of three texts, there is significant scope for future research to expand on its findings. Comparative studies with detective fiction from other regions could offer insights into cross-cultural similarities and differences in the depiction of ideological critique. Additionally, applying feminist and postcolonial frameworks could provide a deeper understanding of gender dynamics and identity within Pakistani detective fiction. Exploring the influence of emerging digital media and contemporary political contexts on the genre would also be a valuable area of inquiry. Furthermore, extending the range of texts analyzed to include more contemporary works or those from other time periods could enrich the understanding of how Pakistani detective fiction evolves in response to changing socio-political landscapes.

Pakistani Anglophone detective fiction, as demonstrated in this study, functions as both a cultural artifact and a medium for ideological critique. By engaging with the theoretical frameworks of Althusser and Zizek, these narratives provide profound insights into the dynamics of power, justice, and resistance within the context of Pakistan. The genre's dual role as a source of entertainment and a platform for critical reflection bridges the gap between popular culture and critical theory, offering a rich field for scholarly exploration. Through its exploration of systemic corruption, socio-economic disparities, and ideological contradictions, Pakistani detective fiction invites readers to critically engage with the societal structures that shape their realities. This study underscores the genre's potential to contribute to broader discussions within literary theory, making it an essential area for ongoing research and analysis.

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