

**TRACING IDEOLOGICAL HAILING IN IDENTITY  
FORMATION: AN INTERPELLATIVE STUDY OF  
JACKSON-BROWN'S *DRINKING FROM A BITTER CUP*  
AND NAQVI'S *HOME BOY***

By

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## ABSTRACT

**THESIS TITLE: TRACING IDEOLOGICAL HAILING IN IDENTITY  
FORMATION: AN INTERPELLATIVE STUDY OF JACKSON-BROWN'S  
*DRINKING FROM A BITTER CUP* AND NAQVI'S *HOME BOY***

The present research explores and analyses Angela Jackson- Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* and H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy* by invoking Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and the concept of interpellation. The deep-rooted influence of ideology in someone's life cannot be put aside. It is so overwhelming that there is nobody living outside its sphere of influence. Successful ideology is the one that is thought as a natural way of looking at things in the world. Althusser, after much contemplation reaches the realm of ideology to develop, as he says, what Marx only initiated. He opens to question the inescapable influence of ideology in public sphere. According to him ideology is "imaginary relationship" that controls the "real conditions of existence". The main characters in the selected novels seem that they are free in their choices and are unaware of the fact that they have no choices of their own. In fact, things are imposed upon them. Different ideologies not only hail and purport what to do and what not to do but they also enforce a certain kind of thinking in specific ways. The present study also focusses on the subjectivity of such hailed individuals who are the products of the dominant social forces in the form of ideologies. For carrying out the analysis of the selected texts with the chosen lens, I have used close textual analysis as my research method. The research attempts to investigate how actions of characters are restricted by the false consciousness of ideology which is inculcated by ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). Thus, this study is likely to productively contribute in the production of knowledge in studies on culture and ideology.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

1. *DFBC* for *Drinking from a Bitter Cup*
2. *HB* for *Home Boys*

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to *my dear parents*- Khan Sherin and Parveen Khan.



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**Nadeem Khan**

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## CHAPTER 1

### RATIONALE AND PLAN OF RESEARCH

*The 'trick' whereby we are made to feel that we are choosing when really we have no choice is called by Althusser interpellation. Capitalism, says Althusser, thrives on this trick: it makes us feel like free agents while actually imposing things upon us. Interpellation is Althusser's term for the way the individual is encouraged to see herself or himself as an entity free and independent of social forces.*

\_\_\_ Peter Barry *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*

#### 1.1 Introduction

Louis Althusser's Theory of Ideology and the concept of Interpellation open to question the inescapable influence of ideology in our lives. The deep-rooted influence of ideology in someone's life cannot be put aside. It is so overwhelming that there is no body living outside its magnetic field.

Successful ideology is the one that is thought as a natural way of looking at things in the world. For example, the idea to own one's own land and to construct a home on it, is a capitalist ideology which is injected in individuals by different Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) without their being aware of it. Without acknowledging it as an ideology, this seems very natural to individuals living in a capitalist society. Likewise, it is natural for men to hold commanding positions, because they think they are physically, intellectually and emotionally more capable than women, is a sexist ideology. It also does not seem an ideology as it has been a product of cultural

belief system. The present research explores and analyses Angela Jackson- Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* (2014) and H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy* (2010) by invoking Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and the concept of interpellation.

Althusser is not only one of the most influential Marxist philosophers, but he is also known for the revival of Marxist thinking in the late twentieth century. He is the one who not only revived and promoted Marxism at a time when it was attacked by different thinkers for being failed, rather he is also held responsible for giving it a new touch. His name and fame are because of studying the Marxist term "ideology" and the concept of "interpellation" epistemologically and creating a kind of discursivity in his well-known essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses; Notes towards an Investigation" in the book *On the Reproduction of Capitalism* (1968). Not only Althusserian ideas offer us the view to bypass the crude base and superstructure model of Karl Marx, but they also equip and enable us to notice how a society works synchronically without giving up the Marxist perspective.

Althusser explores how societal structures which are dominant doctrines or forces determine the actions, experiences, practices and rituals of individuals. The dominant values of a society are for the most part endorsed by its members and to win their endorsement is the function and aim of ideology. To put it simpler, ideology makes to endorse all these societal acknowledgements very subtly. In the language of critical literary theory, it can be said that Althusser gives agency to ideology. It has the power to enter into our lives tacitly without being realized and noticed. In other words, ideology is as inconspicuous as possible while becoming part of human life, but it is manifested through their actions and practices which are governed by ideology. As a result, our actions, experiences, likes, dislikes and practises are circumscribed, restricted and bound to certain limitations.

Althusser defines ideology as “Ideology represents individuals’ imaginary relationship to their real conditions of existence.” (Althusser 181) Ideology helps to distance individuals from their “real conditions of existence” as it is the manifestation of “imaginary relationship” of their relation to it. In other words, we think of it as true because it becomes the product of the imaginary version that ideology represents and is inculcated through different Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) like the schools, the educational system or institutes, the family, the church, the religions and the religious institutions, the mass media, etc. Thus, ideology is a kind of “false consciousness” that has nothing to do with reality and is used as an instrument for domination and exploitation. The exploited and the dominated do not see the exploitation and oppression as ideology provides them with the logic and rigour in the form of myths, images, ideas or concepts.

Thus, ideology is a kind of illusion that distance people from understanding reality. In the words of Hans Bertens, “Ideology distorts our view of the true conditions of existence.” (Bertens 85) It is a tool used and applied to make distortion of reality. This all is because of two reasons. Firstly, small number of people dominate and so control large groups of people by false representation of the world. The second reason is that the imaginary manifestation alienates/distances people from their real conditions of existence. In short, ideology makes us blind and makes us to see things as if they are real but in fact they are not. The present study explores how different characters in the selected novels are unable to note the influence of the dominant force in the form of capitalist ideology in their lives and how this furthers them not to see their “real conditions of existence” through a kind of “false consciousness”.

Part of my larger argument also shows how ideology represents itself through material actions in the form of likes, dislikes, practices, rituals, inspirations and

aspirations which are governed by the ideology and inculcated by the ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). Althusser describes the second feature of ideology by saying, “Ideology has material existence” (Althusser 183). The ideas of an individual manifest through his material actions. The thought comes first which is influenced by ideology. The thought controls the approach. The ideas or doctrines which shape an ideology do not have spiritual or ideal existence. Now this seems paradoxical as ideology is something intangible. Actually, man is a product of his society and his ideas are his material actions in the form of his practices, likes and dislikes. These material practises are governed by the material rituals and all the rituals in a society exist in legal institutions which spread and inculcate through ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) and people are unaware of all this inculcation. According to Althusser,

At all events, the ideology of ideology thus recognizes, despite its imaginary distortion, that a human subject’s ‘ideas’ exist in her acts or ought to; and, if they do not, it ascribes to her other ideas corresponding to the acts (even perverse) that she does perform. This ideology of ideology talks about acts; we shall talk about acts inserted into practices. And we shall point out that these practices are regulated by rituals in which they are inscribed, within the material existence of an ideological apparatus, even if it is just a small part of that apparatus. (Althusser 185)

The likes and dislikes, the motivation which he/she gets from the upper-class people and their lifestyle, the inspirations, aspirations and the ambitions make them aspirants and desperate beings. This is nothing new but hailing in a subtle way. To go ahead and to be better in life push them in a kind of race and then they start a kind of competition instead of contribution. Life becomes competition and lower-class people

think that if they do not run in the race of life, other people will stram them and go ahead. As a result, they are not in a position to celebrate life. All this makes them to undergo different miseries and hardships. When they fail to achieve the dreams of the utopian world which they inculcate and internalise by aspiring so desperately the lifestyle of the bourgeoisie, then despair devours them. The dissertation also argues that in this competition of receiving the position of upper-class people they suffer, and women suffer more as they are more vulnerable and susceptible to the dominant force (capitalist ideology) that drives them mad.

The notion that an individual is the author and originator of his own ideas and actions leads Althusser to his main thesis on ideology. According to him, “Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects” (Althusser 187). The French verb ‘interpellator’ means ‘to shout at’ or ‘to call out at’ someone. The way a friend calls another in a street. In the second place, it also means ‘to question’ someone. Althusser justifies this by giving the example of a criminal/suspect who is hailed by a policeman in a street. The criminal turns by mere one-hundred and eighty degrees and accepts that it is he who is hailed and nobody else. The hailing of ideology never misses its target.

Besides, the suspect/criminal, called by the police, ensures and maintains law and order by surrendering to the authority. What is important here is that the way the police works for the state, in the same way ideology does for the dominant class/state. Another thing which is equally crucial here is the “subject” position of the criminal which he accepts freely. In short, ideology takes control over individuals through subtle action which is known as interpellation. I therefore also want to explore how capitalist ideology hails or interpellates the main characters into their respective identities and social roles in the selected texts. I argue that they think they are free in their choices whereas, in fact, they are not; rather things are imposed on them.

Thus, ideology turns individuals into subjects after hailing them, the way it does in the selected texts. The function of ideology is interpellation. According to Althusser;

Ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way as to ‘recruit’ subjects among individuals (it recruits them all) or ‘transforms’ individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) through the very precise operation that we call *interpellation* or *hailing*. (Althusser 190)

There is nobody living outside the bounds of ideology. It recruits members among individuals of a society through the subtle operation of interpellation. It recruits them all and even before their birth. That is why Althusser says, “Ideology has always already interpellated individuals as subjects” (Althusser 191). Ideology helps individuals to think that they are free in their choices, they have an identity and personality, but it is ideology that speaks through them by imposing things on them. These recruited subjects consider their subjectivity as independent and freely chosen which means individuals are hailed as free subjects who then become a cause/source of their own belief systems, their rituals, their practises and their institutions.

The “subject” here means as both somebody that is a “subjected being” and someone that is the cause. So, we see a kind of ideological reversal. In the words of Althusser, the individuals in modern capitalist societies are hailed as “free subjects” so that he/she “freely accepts subjection” (Althusser 171). The subjected being is stripped of all his/her freedom by submitting his/her will freely and willingly to some higher authority or dominant force (capitalist ideology). The present research project also argues that the same is seen in Angela Jackson-Brown’s *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* (2014) and H. M Naqvi’s *Home Boy* (2010). Especially, the main characters in both the

novels show a tendency to become subjected, pliant, unresisting and obedient beings through the subtle operation of interpellation.

In real life interpellation acts without any interval. Interpellation and ideology exist and act at the same time. Althusser also proposes some more about “subject” and says that there is no practice except by and in an ideology. Next, he says, “There is no ideology except by the subject and for the subjects” (Althusser 172). The former proposition means that all the actions, likes and dislikes, practices, operations, rituals, performances, manifestations, representations and even thinking of individuals within a society are the outcome of ideology. Nothing happens outside ideology. Even Althusser considers subjectivity/identity as a kind of ideology. The later proposition shows that it is ideology that speaks through the actions and practices of individuals. All these actions and practices are within the limits and bounds of ideology. In short, there is no escape from ideology or nothing happens outside ideology. We all live within the limits of ideology and it controls our actions and practices. On the other hand, ideology is but because of individuals.

Angela Jackson-Brown’s novel *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* (2014) is the story of a mother and a daughter who spend their days and nights in a miserable condition. They both live from hand to mouth and desperately want to change their life style and live like the white people who unlike the blacks are stable in the world of the novel. The mother, Mama Rose, tries her level best to get rid of the rundown rented house and be a part of the wealthy white community in Alabama. For this, she has to work in a hotel in order to carry on not only her studies, but of her daughter as well. She also wants her daughter to be somebody in her life. First, she dreams of becoming a nurse and later she wants to see herself a doctor. This will not only help her to be wealthy but will be quite helpful to take them to the white Alabamian community.



Before the accidental tenderness with Hank Butler, a black but a rich man, Mama Rose works as a singer in a club and lives her life with ease. In a compromise, she spends a week with the rich man thinking that the bond is to promote her to the white and wealthy Alabamian society, but instead that triggers hardships after hardships in her life. Rose is biologically trapped when she gives birth to her daughter, Sylvia Butler, who is protagonist of the novel and who, like her mother, finds herself very badly in this world. Instead of taking care of her as a child, it is she who takes care of her mother who lives in a miserable condition when all her hopes are dashed to the ground.

What is important in the novel is that both the mother and the daughter go around and then come around. The dominant capitalist ideology makes them pliant subjects which interpellates or hails them as free subjects. They accept their subjection freely. The dominant ideology imposes things upon them through the ideological state apparatuses in the form of family and educational system. These ISAs inculcate the dominant force very subtly and without their being aware of it. The result is, they become pliant, blind and obedient subjects.

America is “city upon the hill”, “land of opportunities” and so a source of attraction for the rest of the world. Non-Americans leave their homeland for the hope land to be affluent. H. M Naqvi’s *Home Boy* depicts the same. The story revolves around three main characters- Chuck, Ali Chaudry and Jamshed Khan. Life for them is not like a fish out of water in the US. The dominant capitalist ideology drives Chuck mad who works long hours duty as a banker. Ali Chaudry is a Ph. D dropout, but he enjoys more than a Ph. D scholar as living in America is the only thing that he wants. The family of Chuck expects a lot from his academic success. They want him to get marry within Pakistani society in order to invest all that he earns back at home.

The present research project is qualitative in its nature as it uses explorative and interpretative designs of research. I have analysed the selected texts with a view to explore the discursive possibilities embedded in my primary text with the help of textual analysis as research method taken from Catherine Belsey's essay on "Textual Analysis" in Gabriel Griffin's book *Research Methods in English Studies* (2005). In the essay Belsey is of the view that textual analysis is absolutely necessary to research in cultural studies. On the other hand, Luke Ferretter in his book *Louis Althusser* (2006) says that it is not possible to interpret literature and culture of a society based on capitalist values without thinkers like Louis Althusser. Althusser and Belsey become one when it comes to the importance of this research project. Thus, this investigate productively contributes in the production of knowledge in studies on culture and ideology.

## **1.2 Delimitation**

The present study is delimited to Angela Jackson-Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* and H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy*. The present research uses textual analysis as research method for analysing the primary texts.

## **1.3 Thesis Statement**

Angela Jackson-Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* (2014) and H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy* (2010) portray that the dominant force in the form of capitalist ideology misrepresents the real conditions of existence. The actions of main characters in the selected texts define the dominant ideology which has already hailed them. The prevalent doctrine not only directs them to do certain things and not to do others, but also imposes certain kind of thinking which they accept freely. Then they think that they are free in their choices which, in fact, is not the case. Althusser's theory of ideology and his notion of interpellation are likely to help analyse the selected texts.

## **1.4 Research Objectives**

- (i) To explore how Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) inculcate ideology to individuals in the primary texts without their being aware of and how it exists in the actions they perform.
- (ii) To analyse how capitalist ideology speaks through the characters in the selected novels and how they become a cause to promote it.
- (iii) To find out how Ideological State Apparatuses derive and form the thinking of different characters in the selected texts.

## **1.5 Controlling Research Questions**

- (i) How does ideology circumscribe the actions of individuals in the selected novels?
- (ii) How does ideology hail individuals into their respective subjectivity and social roles in the selected texts? What are the strategies?
- (iii) How does ideology keep the main characters in a state of ignorance and submission in the works under study?

## **1.6 Research Plan**

Keeping in mind the scope, nature and course of this research project, I have carefully planned its layout. The present research project consists of six chapters in total. Chapter One introduces my research project along with introducing the theoretical lenses. I have developed a rationale for carrying out the intended study controlled by the research questions. The chapter also tells us about the research objectives and the delimitation

of the study- Angela Jackson-Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* and H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy*.

Chapter Two, Literature Review, helps me to contextualise and justify the present research project in the already existing scholarship. This chapter sets the present study in the context of the research already done and the literary theory and identifies the gaps in the researches by critically analysing the prior researches thematically. I have related every reviewed source to my research project in terms of context, gaps similarities and dissimilarities. All this investigation of the previous researches has helped me to authenticate and enrich the present study. Literature Review has also helped me in developing the rationale further as which theoretical perspectives I can use for the present research.

That is why I have discussed in detail research methodology and theoretical perspectives in Chapter Three. This chapter covers two important things related to the present study in detail. The first one is research methodology and as research methodology I have drawn on Catherine Belsey's essay "Textual Analysis" which I have used to analyse the primary texts. The second one is theoretical framework which I have applied to the selected texts. The theoretical lenses which I have used are Althusser's theory of ideology and his concept of interpellation.

Chapter Four analyses Angela Jackson-Brown's debut novel *Drinking from a Bitter Cup*. Jackson-Brown teaches creative writing and English at Ball State University, USA. She is an African American author and the novel has somewhat autobiographical elements having great realism. It is very clear that black experience problems of racism, slavery, discrimination, Eurocentric ideals of beauty, the problems of segregation, poverty and so on, but in the novel the real lines are drawn between the

haves and the have-nots. Those who are having the control of natural and human resources and who also shape the lives of the downtrodden are ideals for lower class people in such a society. Such people think to be like the wealthy class people and do not see the economic disparity. In this chapter I have examined how ideology makes them to create a misrepresentation of the real conditions of existence. I have also analysed that how the white ideology interpellates and hails the people of colour inside America. The white ideology carries with itself a lot of privileges. Among them the most important is the economic factor which determines the other structures of a society. The main characters in the novel think that life becomes a celebration for them if they succeed to get a house in the wealthy Alabamian society.

Chapter five explores H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy* with the help of textual analysis. Naqvi is Pakistani-American who has taught and worked in the US. Inside America, as is said, we see that the rich and the white hail the poor through different ISAs but America being one of the leading capitalist countries is a source of fascination for the rest of the world as well. The capitalist idea that America is land of opportunities or city upon the hill for the rest results not only in brain drain but it also hails individuals across the world and so injects the capitalist notions like the American Dream, etc in them. As Naqvi's *Home Boy* revolves around the three main characters who belong to Pakistan so, in this chapter I have analysed that how these Pakistani-Americans succeed to achieve their dream which is one of the corner stones of capitalist ideology. The dominant ideology drives them mad which results in the distortion of reality. Besides, it is also examined that how the dominant forces enter their lives through interpellation.

The Conclusion wraps up this research project. In this part of the research, I recapitulate and review my argument and show that why it is important to undersee the selected texts by invoking Louis Althusser theory of ideology and the concept of

interpellation which enable and equip us to study a society and culture synchronically without giving up the Marxist perspectives. Here I show how the actions of the main characters not only define the dominant thinking, but it circumscribes them as well. It is in this chapter that I come up with my research findings and clarifies that the research project is a worthwhile addition to the research already done in this area. This concluding part also makes it sure that the research has importance in cultural studies and it carries with it a contemporary value. Besides, the concluding chapter shows how some new questions came into light during this research that show a way for the future researchers to consider not only this research project but to fill the gaps as well.

### **1.6 What is New in This Research?: Significance of the Study**

This study is significant as it helps us to study a capitalist society synchronically and enables us to understand a culture based on capitalism without giving up the Marxist perspectives. This study tends to explore how ideology makes individuals blind by representing to them the “imaginary relationship” of things which has nothing to do with their “real conditions of existence”. Not only this research shows that ideology removes individuals from understanding reality, but it also points out that it makes us pliant and unresisting subjects through the subtle operation of interpellation even before we are born. The present study is important from another angle as well and that is; though the dominant force (capitalist ideology) has already hailed/interpellated us then how to come out of its influence and challenge the distortions, misrepresentations, masks and oppressions and result a kind of revolution. The present research is also helpful in exploring that why a vast majority of people do not understand the economic disparity and instead how different thinking in the form of myths, stories, and concepts are imposed on them without their being aware of it. Apart from this, it is also helpful

to throw light on how the dominant ideological forces direct the practices and rituals of individuals in a society. The choosing of Althusser's theory of ideology and the concept of interpellation as theoretical lenses adds much importance to the significance of the present study as Luke Ferretter says, "It is not possible to interpret literature and culture of a society based on capitalist values without thinkers like Althusser" (Ferretter, 1). Besides, as research methodology I have drawn on Belsey's textual analysis which according to her is indispensable to research in cultural studies. So, the theoretical lenses and the research methodology combine one when it comes to the significance of the study. The present research helps people to dismantle different ideologies which make people blind and lead them to work against their interests. It also paves ways to stop oppression and economic disparity present in the super structures. The present study is humanistic in its nature as it focusses human beings and enables them to fight and challenge different myths, false consciousness and tools of oppression. Besides, in the form of human development the research fights against crude mentalities and expand mental horizons.

## CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW: A CRITICAL SURVEY OF EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP

### 2.1 Introduction

Keeping in mind the twin purpose and importance of literature review, I contextualize and justify the present research project within the already existing scholarship. Many critical works of the same nature or carrying the same theme are produced with time. Therefore, I critique those works thematically in order to find elements of contact to the present research. On the basis of this thematic review, I relate reviewed literature in the form of various secondary sources to the present study. I also show which reviewed works are different from my research project. Apart from this, I fill the gaps after pointing them out and then relate various secondary sources to the research under study. The present research project explores and analyses Angela Jackson-Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* and H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy* by invoking Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and the concept of interpellation.

This chapter consists of three parts in all. The first part which is the introduction summarizes the twin purpose and objectives of literature review apart from introducing the present research project. The second part of this chapter is the main body of



literature review in which I analyze the secondary sources related to my research project. I analyze the secondary sources thematically. I point out that on which grounds the reviewed sources differ or carry gaps in the context of my primary research and then relate every reviewed source to my research project in terms of context and gaps. Besides, I also look at the reviewed sources critically and find points of similarities and differences and then relate those to the research under study.

In the third part of the literature review I sum up the review by finding points of similarities, differences and gaps in the reviewed sources and then relate those findings with my research project. This leads me to contextualize and situate the present research project in the already existing scholarship. At the end of the conclusion, I explain how the reviewed literature has helped me to determine the theoretical lenses and the research methodology which I have discussed in chapter three of the research project.

## **2.2 Review of the Literature**

In this part of the chapter, I have reviewed research articles, books and essays similar in nature and context by one way or the other to the present research project. For the sake of convenience and clarity, I have divided Literature Review into three parts.

In part first, I have taken a start into literature review by first taking on the Marxist perspectives by Karl Marx as Marxism provides a base for the Althusserian ideas, situated the present influence of Marxism in the form of Louis Althusser and beyond in the form of Antonio Gramsci's *hegemony*, Michel Foucault's *discourse* and Judith Butler's *theory of performativity* which have parallels with Althusser's concept of interpellation.

In part second, I have tried to situate and contextualize Angela Jackson-Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* in the existing Afro-American scholarship and have pointed out how the white supremacist ideology hails the blacks. In the third part, I have discussed H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy* in the already existing Pakistani-American scholarship in which 9/11 is like a climax or an epiphany in literature attracting much interest of writers. Before the September-11 attacks, we saw history moving in a linear motion and progressing with time, but the fateful attacks caused its abortion conflating the alien with the sinister and the violent Other, Islam with terrorism and Muslims with terrorists.

## I

Karl Marx says that the force that propels the onward march of history is the struggle between different classes (*The Communist Manifesto* 1848). According to him, the superstructure, ideology, is used to create "false consciousness" among the people. The superstructure is produced by the powerful individuals of a society to legitimise and perpetuate the disparities present in the economic structure. "False consciousness" is the inculcation of an ideology which leads one to work against his/her own interest (Tyson 56).

Here ideology is used as a tool which is employed to maintain the economic disparity between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marx argues that one day the proletariat will revolt against the bourgeoisie domination to bring about a classless society. However, he does not specially mention the ways that how the proletariat realise the false consciousness or the false nature of the capitalist ideology and affect a revolution. Gramsci and Louis Althusser respond to the inevitable question which Marx

left unanswered and unresolved which I have discussed at length as the rationale develops.

The most basic Marxist postulate which is also known as 'vulgar Marxism' is that the base (economy) controls the superstructures of a society in the form of ideology, institutions and practices like art and literature (Newton 165). This notion has given rise to a debate which is contested even today by diverse Marxist scholars. Contemporary Marxist scholars are of the view that there is no such straightforward and simplistic relationship between the base and the superstructures including art and literature; rather a multitude of diverse factors come in play in which the role of economy comes in the last degree. In other words, it is one among many that determines the superstructures of a society including literature.

The Hungarian Marxist, George Lukacs, argues (Newton 166) that literature mirrors the socio-economic reality, but he is dismissive of the deterministic connection or association between the base and the superstructures. He adds that the greatest works of art not only reproduce the prevalent ideologies of the time, but also provide a subtle kind of critique of these dominant forces. Lukacs also dismisses that literature is a slavish copy of the economic base and ideology.

Louis Althusser was against the notions of totality and Hegelian-influenced Marxist theories. This leads him to dismiss the simplistic notion/concept of the controlling base and superstructures. He believes in the 'decentred' nature of the 'social formation'. Althusser is of the view that art and literature enjoy certain degree of freedom and have 'relative autonomy' and are 'overdetermined' which means they are influenced by a wider range of influences- not simply by the straightforward relationship of base and superstructures (Newton 166).

Althusser's influence is seen on the contemporary Marxist critics like Terry Eagleton who is also dismissive of the traditional Marxist ideas. In his essay "Towards A Science of the Text" he continues with the Marxian concept of ideology but soon changes it. He bases his argument on Althusserian notion by saying that the connection of ideology and a literary text should be taken in terms of 'overdetermination'. So, we see that Terry Eagleton also gives certain freedom to literature by making it free from the clutches of the base (economy) and ideology.

Ellis and Coward adopts a kind of criticism known as syncretist criticism which means Marxism is mere one element among many. They align feminist theory, structuralism and post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, discourse theory, Kristevan semiology with Marxism. Fredrick Jameson, the famous American Marxist critic is also influenced by Louis Althusser. He sees a strong association with traditional Marxism of the Hegelian totalising type but is of the view that Marxism can incorporate all other forms of notions (Newton 167).

It is Althusser who is credited for the present influence in Marxist thinking. Not only he brings a revolution in cultural theory, but it is he who revived Marxism in the late twentieth century when it was attacked by different intellectuals. Instead of considering the base and superstructure model and thinking over it, Althusser reaches the realm of ideology and triggers his ideas by creating discursivity. It is not true that Althusser has neglected the ideas of Karl Marx. He ponders much over his works and initiates what Marx left incomplete. After reading the works of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, he puts forward his important contribution in the form of *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*. He creates a new space while speaking from the within of ideology and its magnetic field. That is why he is known as "a Marxist in Philosophy" (Vincent and Leitch 1476).

Althusser takes us towards the ‘ideology’ debate without giving up the Marxist perspectives which prepared a ground for different books like John Frow’s *Marxism and Literary History*, in which the author discusses the Marxist literary criticism of Pierre Macherey, who was Althusser’s student like Michel Foucault, Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson and others. Though Althusser has contributed a lot in the form of different books, but he earns name and fame because of the ground-breaking essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” originally published in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1971).

The above magnum opus becomes a source for Terry Eagleton’s *Ideology: An Introduction* (1991) in which he takes us through the ideology debate without surrendering to Marxist perspectives. The debate does not stop here but it results in Pierre Macherey’s *A Theory of Literary Production* (1978). In the book, the author successfully applies Althusser’s theory of ideology. Another interesting book regarding the debate of ideology is Stephen Knight’s *Form and Ideology in Detective Fiction* (1980) in which Althusser’s theory of ideology is applied to a particular genre very interestingly. Althusser’s theory of ideology and his concept of interpellation helps us to study synchronically the culture of a society based on capitalism.

Sara Salih’s book *Judith Butler* (2002) analysis Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (1990) *Bodies That Matter* (1993) *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997) and her Theory of Performativity. It is a book that introduces Butler’s works and shows us how to approach her works for the first time. Besides, she has challenged and then changed the way we think about sex, sexuality, gender and language in the above books. In the book, the author discusses how identities are constructed within language and discourse and what is the role of interpellation. Performativity is a key Butlerian idea. While discussing the idea, Butler is interested in the subject position of an individual and the

process through which his/her subject position is constructed and contoured through discursive practices; rather than in the individual whose identity is fixed. Butler is of the view that sex, sexuality and gender are constructed within language and discourse through discursively constructions.

Butler traces this emergence of the subject position with the help of genealogical analysis which is a kind of historical investigation. Through this investigation, in which she is in debt to Foucault, she reaches to a point that gender and sex are the effects and not the causes of discourses and practices. In other words, Butler argues that it is discourse that causes sex, sexuality and gender and not the subject that causes and determines the discourses, institutions and practices. Here are two important points to be noted. The first one is that there was a 'doing' before the 'doer', secondly, nothing happens outside the boundaries of language and discourse. At last, she comes to the conclusion that gendered and sexed identities are performative which means that subject positions and the given and constructed identities are 'doing' and not 'being'. One has to be a male or a female. There is no other way. The societal forces in the form of discourses drag you to follow certain behaviour that befits a man or a woman in the already existing norms and values. She endorses this notion by referring to a famous line in Simon de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1986) "One is not born a woman rather one becomes a woman" (de Beauvoir 281).

In the same book, Sara Salih discusses Althusser's concept of interpellation under the topic "Interpellation and the Assumption of Sex". There she says that Judith Butler deconstructs sex and gender by saying that these are allocations of a society allocated at the time of birth or even before birth through medical interpellation. The baby is changed in the foetus through sonogram from an 'it' to a 'he' or 'she'. By naming the girl is 'girled' and this girling of the girl is on and on which is reiterated by

the norms and values of a society. The hailing of the girl not only sets a boundary and makes her different from boys, but also inculcates the norms and values through discourse and language. As a result, the girl/sex/gender becomes a girl and her subject position and identity is given or constructed through discursive practices in a society. Judith Butler takes discourse the way Michel Foucault discusses it which according to him is a group of statements that build a reality.

Althusser has also used the concept of interpellation which does not differ in the nature of hailing but in other areas. Though Althusser expounds the concept and feminists and other thinkers apply it as well. For example, Butler has used the concept for girling a girl, for giving and constructing the gendered and sexed identities which, according to her, is the result of discourse and language. So, Butler uses the concept in her works in terms of feminist perspectives. Here discourse, language, norms, values in a culture interpellate females and results in their subjective position, but as far as Althusser is concerned, he adduces that all ideologies interpellate individuals and impose a certain kind of thinking upon them which not only makes them to work against their own interest because of false consciousness but makes them pliant and obedient subjects as well. Althusser narrows down this notion of hailing to capitalist ideology and so do I in this research project.

Judith Butler's book *Gender Trouble* (1990) opens to question sex, sexuality and gender by erasing the line of demarcation between the binaries related to gender and sex in the form of male and female, man and woman, feminine and masculine, etc. By sex she means the 'male' or 'female' box in census and application forms which juxtapose them based on male and female genitalia. Butler deconstructs sex, sexuality and gender and argues that there is no relation among them rather the heteronormative world creates a kind of hegemony through which things appear natural because of the

norms, values and culture. She justifies this by giving example of the nineteenth century hermaphrodite, Herculine Barbin, who does not fit well in the heteronormative world as she possesses ambiguous sexual organs. This ground-breaking work adduces that so far, all the feminists were wrong to say that there is a common concrete feminine identity and frees that identity from the limitations of language and discourse. In the book, Butler brings into question the category of 'the subject' and says that it is not something that pre-exists rather it is something that is in process and is constructed by and in discourse and language. The subject is doing and not an ontological being. In other words, it is a performative construct that keeps the 'doing' through discursive practices.

In *Gender Trouble* (1990) Butler adduces that all these identities are not intrinsic rather it is society that constructs them through discursive practices. Butler's subject is an actor and it is discourse that governs her actions. The subject is neither 'behind' nor 'before' the deeds and the sequence of acts by the gender identity. It is a kind of sustained process in which dominant group of statements (discourses) play an important role in the civilisation and culture and other discursive practices. By using Hegel's dialectics which runs through his works, Butler says that heterosexuality can be repudiated by reversing 'compulsory heterosexuality' or by attacking 'Heterosexual Matrix' from back-to-front. Now we see that there is a parallel between Althusser and Butler in the form of ideology and discourse. In Butler's notion, the identity is constructed by and in discourse whereas in Althusser's concept it is ideology that governs the actions of individuals and Althusser argues that there is no action outside ideology. In the former discourse confers the identity and subject position while in the later, ideology does the same work. The present research project narrows down the



theory of ideology and the concept of interpellation to hailing of the dominant force in the form of capitalist ideology.

Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter* (1993) inquires what other things play their role in the production of materiality of bodies to construct identity formation apart from the hegemony of normative sexuality. Material outside the range of language and discourse has no signification. The domain of power consists of a complex structure in which heterosexuality, discourse, cultural hegemony, language, ideology, race, politics and so many other things which are pervasive in their nature and they all come into play and interpellate individuals into subjects and so form their identity. The word 'hegemony' was used for the first time by the Italian Marxist Philosopher, Antonio Gramsci, by which he means the dominant power structures which contours through ideology and not through physical force. We can refer to Simon de Beauvoir's famous line in this context 'one is not born, but rather one is called, a woman'. Gender and sex are performative acts and can be re-enacted against the grain of the heterosexual matrix.

## II

In this part of the literature, I have tried to contextualise and situate Angela Jackson-Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* in the existing Afro-American scholarship and I have also pointed out how the white supremacist ideology, which carries with itself many privileges, influence the blacks.

In *Gender Trouble* (1990) there is no discussion on race. Enough is said about sex, sexuality and gender and how discourse and language construct them through reiterated discursive practices in both *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*. This time I critique the later from another angle in this part of the literature review and show that how race plays its role in the power structure and identity formation. As far as

power structure is concerned, white ideology interpellate the blacks because of its dominance which carries with it a lot of privileges. Once again to cite de Beauvoir's famous statement from *Second Sex* and to change it 'one is not born but rather one becomes black/white'. According to Butler, sex and sexuality do not come before race and she considers that 'race' also plays its role to construct material body. Butler takes race in terms of 'racializing norm' which means that race, like sex, sexuality and gender, is also constructed by discursive practice. Butler is of the view that that they are connected victors of power which that happen in life at the same time. So, there is similarity among Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, *Bodies That Matter* and the present research project. In Butler's books, she argues that it is discourse and language that construct and contour materiality of body by signification and discursive practices which results ultimately in identity formation and subjection position. Discourse and language have a wide range of influences on the construction of a body like Althusser's ideology because of which he is dismissive of the simplistic relation between base (economy) and the superstructures of a society. Apart from this, the present study narrows down the influence of capitalist ideology in the form of a dominant force in identity formation. Among this wide range of influences, this research project explores the influence of capitalist ideology on the main characters in the selected texts through interpellation and their subject position.

Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008) raises a potent voice for the people of colour and solves many psychological enigmas of the *others*. The book is a critique about the lived experiences of black people in a dominant white people society and its harmful repercussions on the marginalised and psychological victimised people. Colonial mentality kills the language and culture of black people as those blacks who used to convey the orders of the masters to their fellows were honoured. As a result,

mothers started to rebuke their children and forbade them completely for using own language. Fanon argues that when the black speaks the “the French man’s French”, still they do not consider them full humans.

Fanon investigates that the way a woman of colour wants desperately to marry a white man in order to purge off that feeling of inferiority, in the same way a black man wants a white woman to feel that he is worthy of white love whereas they both are poles apart. black is sin and white is virtue. Inferiority complex in people of colour is the result of white man’s arrival in their life. It is/was the white rule that shapes them through oppression in America and Martinique. They black are considered lesser human beings.

There are two visible gaps in Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*. They are; he ignores the economic reality which really matters in the rise and fall of nations and highlights only the blacks and not the other minorities. White ideology carries with it a lot of privileges which the *others* think they do not have. The whites have been the lords and the black slaves. It is more a relation related to power. Fanon has not analysed the economic disparity and the oppression by capitalist ideology. Why the whites are a source of inspiration for the black is a multifaceted question in which the role of capitalist ideology and the resultant hailing cannot be put aside. The present study focuses how the dominant ideologies in general and capitalist in particular hails the individuals in the selected texts.

Toni Morison’s *The Bluest Eye* (1970) relates the story of a young girl in a deep racialized society. The white ideals of beauty drive her not only mad to achieve the prevalent and purported ideals, but also result in her inferiority complex and self-hatred. The protagonist of the novel, Pecola Breedlove, lives because she is thrown into this

world. When her black parents fight with one another to the great disgust of Pecola, she just wants to disappear. Her father, Cholly, is a drinker who takes no responsibility at all in their domestic affairs. Similarly, her mother, Pauline works at a white people's house who loves and cleans their house but ignores and hates her own. First, when Pecola's father is in jail as he burns the family house down, she lives with her uncle. After joining once again she lives with her parents, her father impregnates her. In short, on the one hand the sorry state of affairs affect her very cruelly and on the other she wants to have blue eyes very desperately.

Above all is the question of white supremacist ideology in *The Bluest Eye* which seeps into Pecola's life and results in her miseries. She yearns for blue eyes so desperately that she thinks she has achieved them and as a result loses the common touch with reality. She considers all the hardships and miseries a kind of restitution for her so-called blue eyes. Toni Morrison in the novel offers a critique that how white masculine culture oppresses black subjectivity by implying the notion that ugliness lies in blackness and all ideals of beauty in whiteness. Women are double marginalised in the novel, first by the colonial mindset and secondly, by the men in patriarchal society. Wide range of influences in the form of gender, race and economic forces determine the fate of poor Pecola. The present research project explores the oppression and reverse effects capitalist ideology.

Seyyed Shahabeddin Sadati's article "The Influence of Ideological State Apparatuses in Identity Formation: Althusserian Reading of Amiri Baraka's *In Memory of Radio*" (2013) examines the role of ideological state apparatuses in identity formation. "In Memory of Radio" is one of the famous poems of Baraka who is also known as a leader of the Black Arts movement. In the poem, the poet tells us about the influence of radio on people in a time when television was not available to majority of

the people in the US. He praises some radio stars who are pop-culture idols and shares the influence of their programmes particularly on the mind of the poet. He criticises some of the programs and praises other. For example, he loves Lamont Cranston and “The Shadow”, F.J. Sheen, Oral Roberts, Kate Smith, and “The Red Lantern”. He adds that “WCBS and Kate Smith” are not attractive and implies a kind of link between the listeners and the radio. Among the many programmes, Baraka loves “The Shadow” and “Let’s Pretend” that amuse the poet for a long time and so the pop-culture seeps into his mind. Kate Smith’s WCBS is very famous as it immortalises “God Bless America”.

One famous line from Baraka’s *In Memory of Radio* is “It is better to have loved and lost” which asserts one of the popular American beliefs. The poet differs with the line as he confronts quite the opposite when he encounters white people. Baraka criticises American society by saying,

*“& love is an evil word.*

*Turn it backwards/see, see what I mean?*

*An evol word”*

One of the bitter things in the poem is that Baraka grows up with a white mentality though he is black which is the function of ideological state apparatuses. In short, the researcher in the article explores the influences of white ideology and the dominant American culture on the mind of the poet and generalises it. Nowhere in the article, the researcher examines the influence of capitalist ideology upon the minds of the individuals which differs from the nature of the present study. As far the theoretical logylens, only the role of ideological apparatuses is invoked.

So far, I have reviewed books and articles that in one way or the other implies how discourse, language, ideologies and dominant culture have influenced *other*. Now

I review two articles showing how the writings of different authors influence the writers in the making, especially the black adolescent girls.

Gholnecsar E. Muhammad's research article "The Role of Literary Mentors in Writing Development: How African American Women's Literature Supported the Writings of Adolescent Girls" (2015) applies Royester's framework of Zamani and Rosenblatt's reader response theory to investigate how American African women's writings influenced the writings of adolescent girls. His findings revealed that the 'mentor texts motivated the girls in generating ideas; made them in meditating about their identities; helped them in understanding the style and structure of genres and invoked a response in reader by utilizing critical writing. He suggested that English educators must understand the role of literary mentors in shaping identity of the youth.

Koss and Teale maintain that the role of multiple texts in the adolescent's literacy development should not be explored. Although they referred to reading texts their point may be extended to the role of reading for development of writing. Their findings imply that the educator's must not underestimate the role of reading multiple types of texts in developing writing of adolescent learner's. Along with advancement in writing, reading multiple texts also inculcate critical understanding in young learners. Langer's (1991) envisionment theory stresses the significance of the role of texts in developing critical understanding in the students.

Tatum perceives an interrelationship between reading and real-life experience which enables the learner to reproduce the newly gained experience into print. This experience helps the adolescent writers to feel that they may impact their future generations as they have been shaped by the past generations. In this process, different

texts not only teach them advancement in writing but guide them in shaping a self-awareness of their own identities.

Tara Hembrough's article "Writing as an Act of Self-Embodiment: Hurston, Moody, and Angelou Combat Systemic Racial and Sexual Oppression" (2016) views that African-American auto-biographers, Zora Neale Hurston, Anne Moody, and Maya utilize their feminine standpoint to highlight male dominance in their society and develop a self-awareness of their own. These writers highlight the male domination by describing the father-daughter relationship. These writers counteract the negative roles of their fathers by setting their role models in their mothers. In doing so, the writers, in fact, aim to establish their own identities by setting their own standards for establishment of identity. They suggest a dire need to overcome stereotypical pretences and challenge the standards imposed by a male dominant society.

### III

In this part of the literature review I situate and contextualise H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy* (2010) in the Pakistani-American existing scholarship. Naqvi, like Mohsin Hamid, has lived in America. In their fictional writing there seems a parallel. Among many examples one is; in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) the protagonist, Changez, chases his American dream and succeeds but the unfortunate mishap in the form of 9/11 triggers troubles for him because of which he is in hot water. In the same way Chuck in Naqvi's *Home Boy* also pursues his American dream and succeeds but 9/11 drops over in the way. The former is at home after leaving America whereas the latter is nostalgic about the US.

Birte Heidemann's research article "We are the glue keeping civilization together": Post-Orientalism and counter-Orientalism in H.M. Naqvi's *Home Boy*"

(2012) examines that how the 9/11 attacks have changed the post-Orientalist discourse(s) and diffused the orientalist ideologies which dissect their way from mainstream academia to the knowledge of public domains. Hamid Dabashi even stresses the need to redefine the Saidian framework in order to explore, locate and dislocate new sites of knowledge (Orientalism) in the post-9/11 scenario. The researcher examines that the novel carries with itself counter-Orientalist narratives and justifies this by saying that the tri do not consider themselves the same immigrants; rather they consider them different from the rest “we weren’t the same”.

The three Pakistani protagonists consider themselves ‘Metrostanis’ and people of the city (New York). Ali Chaudhary says with pride that he really cares for this city and befoams into rage by expressing his anger that the bastards have ruined his city. The main character, Chuck, expresses self-hatred because he indirectly takes the responsibility of the mishap of the 9/11 attacks and considers that he has threatened order and civilisation. Besides, Chuck shows pity for those who suffer in the aftermath of 9/11 and shares victimhood with those who belong to the Third World countries which all come in post-Orientalism and its parallel in minoritization. The researcher has critically analysed the novel by post and counter-Orientalist perspectives which differs from the present study in its different nature. The research under hand analyses H. M Naqvi’s *Home Boy* by invoking Althusser’s theory of ideology and the concept of interpellation.

As I have said earlier that there is a parallel between Naqvi’s *Home Boy* Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The resonance of 9/11 compels both the novelists to revolve their stories around the destruction of twin towers and show the repercussions on the lives of Pakistanis. After assimilating in the American culture, the protagonists in both the novels are on their way back to Pakistan in the horrific



aftermath of the deadly 9/11 attacks. They both consider New York as their own city and themselves New Yorkers but the dramatic change in the behaviour of the Americans makes it unbearable for them to go ahead.

Professor Dr Safeer Awan in his research article “Unwilled Choices”: The Exilic Perspectives on Home and Location in the Works of Zulfikar Ghose and Mohsin Hamid” (2013) examines the issues of identity, exile, home and cross-culturality by selecting *Triple Mirror of the Self* (1992) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) respectively. His findings are that Ghose’s exile is classical exile as he feels nostalgic and homesick. He feels alienation as well because of racism and skin colour at school in England. In *Confessions of a Native-Alien* (1965) he tells about his multiple exiles and considers himself an ‘Indo-Pakistani’ who becomes ‘Anglo’. As far as his identity is concerned, he has a kind of hybrid identity who lives in a state of psychological limbo and moves back and forth with time. However, with the turn of the century and September-11 attacks, romantic exile gives way to new fears in the form of xenophobia and Islamophobia because of the megalomania of the world leaders.

The 9/11 attacks not only resulted in the abortion of linear history, but it also left things in a confused state where diasporic communities were confused too. All these challenges and the surge of racism after that fateful attack run through the whole novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. In the wake of 9/11, racism and different fears are on the rise which changes the identity of Changez, the protagonist of the novel, from an assimilated identity to the one in which he appears a reluctant fundamentalist who keeps bear as a reaction to the different questions posed by the newly born confused circumstances and racism. Both Ghose and Hamid have voiced a reaction against their exclusion and unacceptance in the west. The present research differs from this research article in many ways as it shows the influence of exile and the dramatic changes after

9/11 attacks upon the main characters and their identities, but the influence of capitalist ideology is not shown which really matters in life.

Gohar Karim Khan's research paper "The Treatment of '9/11' in Contemporary Anglophone Pakistani Literature: Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a Postcolonial Bildungsroman" (2011) analyses that 9/11 has been treated in the Pakistani Anglophone fiction as a climax or an epiphany in the form of crisis in an unprecedented way. The researcher examines that the war on terror which ensues in the wake of September-11 attacks labels all Muslims as potential terrorists and argues that Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* gives an alternative discourse, like many other novels, to the mundane exposition on contemporary Islam and terrorism. His findings reveal that the novel disrupts the hegemonic anti-Islamic discourses which present that there is a cause and effect relationship between Islam and Muslims. By erasing the politically imperfect binary as 'moderates' and 'terrorists', 'dangerous' or 'safe', the paper explores that the novel has impressively addressed the crisis in a significant way. It is because of this that the story of the protagonist ends as a post-colonial and nationalist bildungsroman character. Though the paper has synchronically examined the present sorry situation of the Muslims in the post 9/11 world and offers a counter argument and discourse but not from Marxist perspectives which Althusser helps us to do in his theory of ideology and the concept of interpellation.

Dr Uzma Imtiaz's research article "The East and West Trust Deficit in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*" (2015) critically analyses *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and concludes her discussion by highlighting the ideological distance between the East and the West. She has looked into the mind of Changez (protagonist of the novel) in general and particularly in the mind of Mohsin Hamid and has brought under discussion the political turmoil, racial polarization and the ill image of the East

after 9/11 incident developed in the collective conscious of the western world generally and in the American minds specifically. She has ended her discussion by digging out the indirect thoughts of the writers. The two characters, when walk together, have depicted the suppressive feeling of getting together and have believed in peace and no violation which metaphorically explains the bridging of the gap between the East and the West by Mohsin Hamid. Though Uzma Imtiaz bridges the ideological gap in her paper but she does not pay attention to how America and its capitalist ideology influences Hamid's protagonist.

Margaret Scanlan's research paper "Migrating from terror: The postcolonial novel after September 11" (2010) analyses that post 9/11 public rhetoric in America equates Muslims with terrorism and Islam with terror. On the one hand when leading newspapers and democratic politicians support and fuel the argument on the war on terror without their being aware of its complacency in future. On the other hand, when one turns to literature as an alternative, he/she comes across novels like Updike's *The Terrorist*, Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, and Alexie Sherman's *Flight* who unintentionally reinforce the rhetoric. The more we have these commonly found public rhetoric, the more we have distortion in the form of "Islamic terrorists" and "Islamofascists" which leads reactionaries to do acts of discrimination, seclusion and alienation. But Margaret argues that there are novels like Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), and Hisham Matar's *In the Country of Men* (2007) who offer postcolonial perspectives and provide a breathing space to the conflating things which the war on terror has fused indistinguishably.

The above three texts challenge the complacency of public rhetoric ensued in the wake of September-11 attacks. These novels have not only differentiated the good from the bad, but they also have separated the fused identities in the form Muslim and

terrorist, terrorist and migrant, Islam and terrorism by creating a breathing space. Margaret Scanlan's research paper is very fruitful as far as the misunderstandings are concerned which are on the rise after the 9/11 attacks but it is also important to know how different ideologies help create such people. A lot of evils come into being because of the race in life which capitalism injects in us. Then the dominant force (capitalist ideology) curb the actions of individuals in a society and make them blind as a result they do not give any room for others. This makes the research paper different from the present research project.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

Now that I have reviewed different works in the form of books, research articles and essays related to the present research project in one way or the other. I have also pointed out the gaps and shown how they differ or have similarities with the present study. Every reviewed secondary source has not only enriched my research project in terms of context and gaps, but they also help me in analysing the primary selected text in the forthcoming chapters. I have discussed the theoretical framework and research methodology in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

After Literature Review, now I am in a position to decide what theoretical perspectives can be applied to analyze my primary texts, *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* (2014) and *Home Boy* (2010). Not only it has helped me in this regard, but now I am in a position to determine which research methodology would be suitable for the present investigation. In this chapter, first, I discuss the theoretical framework that I have applied for the analyses of my primary texts. Then I have explained the research methodology which I intend to carry out for this present research.

#### 3.2 Theoretical Framework

The idea to study synchronically a society and culture based on capitalism without giving up the Marxist perspectives has urged me to take Louis Althusser as a theoretician for carrying out this investigation.

Though Althusser is known for expounding many key terms and concepts like over-determinism, relative autonomy, decentering, his epistemological notion of

ideology and interpellation, etc. Under this theoretical umbrella, I have narrowed down my theoretical framework to his theory of ideology and the concept interpellation to study my primary texts- Angela Jackson-Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* and H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy*.

Althusser is dismissive of the simplistic base and superstructure notion of 'vulgar Marxism' that there is a base (economy) that controls the superstructures of a society in the form of ideology, different institutions and practices like art and literature (Newton 165). This notion gives rise to a debate that is contested by diverse contemporary scholars. George Lukacs argues that literature, no doubt, reflects social, political, historical, and economic reality of a society but he, like Althusser, dismisses the deterministic controlling link between the base and superstructures. Similarly, Terry Eagleton in his essay "*Towards A Science of the Text*" adduces that literary text should be taken in terms of 'overdetermination' and hence frees literature from the clutches of economy and ideology.

Althusser reaches the realm of ideology and studies it epistemologically from the inside. In other words, he examines ideology and exposes its anaesthetic nature not from the outside. He himself lives inside the magnetic field of ideology. According to him, "Ideology is the representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Ferretter 79). Between individuals and their "real conditions of existence" there stands the imaginary relationship (ideology) in the form of misrepresentation. Ideology helps to distance individuals from their real conditions of existence as it is the manifestation of imaginary relationship of their relation to it. In other words, it removes individuals from understanding reality.

Thus, ideology is a kind of “false consciousness” that has nothing to do with reality and is used as an instrument/tool for domination and exploitation. The exploited and the dominated do not see the exploitation and domination as the misrepresentation provides them with a kind of logic and rigour in the form of myths, images, ideas or concepts. In the words of Hans Bertens, “Ideology distorts our view of the true conditions of existence” (Bertens 85). It is an illusion used and applied to make reality a distortion. That is why clear majority of people do not understand the economic disparities. The powerful individuals of a society produce the superstructure in the form of misrepresentation (ideology) to legitimise and perpetuate the disparities present in the economic structure. “False consciousness” is the inculcation of an ideology which leads one to work against his/her own interest (Tyson 56).

Althusser describes the second feature of ideology by saying “ideology has material existence” (Althusser 180). The ideas of an individual manifest through his material actions. The thought comes first which is influenced by ideology. The thought controls the approach. The ideas or doctrines which shape an ideology do not have spiritual or ideal existence. Now this seems paradoxical as ideology is something intangible. Actually, man is a product of his society and his ideas are his material actions in the form of his practices, likes and dislikes, rituals, inspiration and aspirations. These material practises are governed by ideology in the form of material rituals and all the rituals in a society exist in legal institutions which spread and inculcate through ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) and people are unaware of all this inculcation.

The likes and dislikes, the motivation which he/she gets from the upper-class people and their lifestyle, the inspiration, aspiration and the ambition make them aspiring and desperate aspirants. To go ahead and to be better in life push them in a

kind of race and then they start a kind of competition instead of contribution. Life becomes competition and lower-class people think that if they do not run in the race of life other people will stram them and go ahead.

The notion that an individual is the author and originator of his own ideas and actions leads Althusser to his main thesis on ideology. According to him, “ideology hails or interpellates individuals as subjects” (Althusser 164). The French verb ‘interpellator’ means ‘to shout at’ or ‘to call out at’ someone. Althusser justifies this by giving an example of a police officer who calls a suspect/criminal in a street. The suspect/criminal all of a sudden stop, realises that it is he who is called and accepts the authority of law in the form of the police.

What is important here is that the way the police works for the state, in the same way ideology does for the dominant class/state. After all state also rises with capitalism. The “subject” position of the criminal is equally crucial here which he accepts freely. In short, ideology takes control over individuals through the subtle action of hailing which is known as interpellation. In the same way ideology turns individuals into subjects after hailing them. It recruits them all that is why Althusser says, “Ideology has always already interpellated individuals as subjects” (Althusser 190).

As a result, individuals think they are free in their choices and have their own identity and personality, but in fact, it is ideology that speaks through them by imposing certain thinking and things upon them. The “subject” here means as both somebody that is a “subjected being” and someone that is the cause of his/her subjection. In the words of Althusser, the individuals in modern capitalist societies are hailed as “free subjects” so that he/she “freely accepts subjection” (Althusser 171). In real life interpellation acts without any interval. Interpellation and ideology exist and act at the same time even



before our birth. Althusser also proposes some more about “subject” and says that there is no practice except by and in an ideology. Next, he says that there is no ideology except by the subject and for the subjects (Althusser 172). All the actions, practices, operations, rituals, performances, manifestations, representations and even thinking of individuals within a society are the outcomes of ideology. Everything happens inside the magnetic field of ideology. Even Althusser considers subjectivity/identity as a kind of ideology. Nothing is possible outside ideology.

After explaining my theoretical framework, theoretical lenses and key concepts for the present research project, now research methodology follows which I have used for this investigate in studies on culture and ideology.

### **3.3 Research Methodology**

As I research a study in culture and ideology by selecting two novels, hence my research is qualitative in its very nature. The research design is exploratory and interpretative. The present study uses qualitative approach to analyse the selected texts by invoking Althusser’s theory of ideology and his concept of interpellation. The research method which I have used for carrying out the investigation is Textual Analysis. Qualitative research deals with the understanding of human behaviour.

As I have said earlier, this present research project is a study/investigate in culture and ideology that has parallel with textual analysis. Catherine Belsey presents a kind of virtual idea in her famous essay “Textual Analysis as s Research Method” published in Gabriele Griffin’s book *Research Methods in English Studies* (2005). She explains that “textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism, where cultural criticism includes English, cultural history and cultural studies, as well as any other discipline that focuses on texts” (Belsey in Griffin 2005: 157).

Apart from this, the theoretician, Louis Althusser, whose theory of ideology I have taken as a theoretical framework for carrying out the present study, is also very important in cultural studies. Luke Ferretter claims in his book *Louis Althusser* (2006) about Althusser that “it is not possible to interpret literature and culture in a society based on capitalist values without thinkers like Althusser” (Ferretter, 1). Belsey gives importance to reader/researcher by quoting Roland Barthe’s essay “Death of the Author” where he writes that reader/researcher is “the ‘destination’ of the text” (Belsey in Griffin 2005, 161). She empowers a reader/researcher by referring to Barthe’s idea of a sovereign reader who reads the text himself/herself and comes with his own interpretation without considering the author’s biography, his intended interpretation and the time in which he/she lived. Though importance is given to a reader by making him free but at the same time he is made alert that he/she should not make his interpretation “vague subjectivism”. Textual analysis believes in valid and objective interpretation. It does not bring a text to a closure and always leaves room to further research. In short, it believes in the fluidity of meaning and interpretation.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In light of the above discussion on theoretical framework and research methodology, it may be concluded that Louis Althusser’s Theory of Ideology and his concept of Interpellation as theoretical framework and Catherine Belsey’s Textual Analysis suit my present study the best.

Having the theoretical framework and research methodology in the background, I start critically and objectively analysis of the primary texts in the next two chapters. Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, I have tried to find answers to the

controlling research questions by applying the above-mentioned theoretical framework and research methodology.

## CHAPTER 4

### HAILING DRIVES YOU MAD: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *DRINKING FROM A BITTER CUP*

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine Angela Jackson-Brown's debut novel *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* (2014) by invoking Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and the concept of interpellation. The writer is African-American poet and author who teaches Creative Writing and English at Ball State University, USA. There is always a man/woman behind a book. Writers, by definition, are products of their society and they not only mirror the socio-economic reality in their writings, but also implicitly critique the dominant ideologies of the time in which they live. This is how writers show a kind of reaction to the vicissitudes in life.

After the dangerous Atlantic journey, Africans had been treated as slaves till recently in the United States of America. They were considered lesser human beings and judged on the basis of their skin colour which resulted in poverty, racism, segregation, marginalization and ghettos. This is what Martin Luther King Junior says in his famous speech "I Have A Dream" that "One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity". The supremacist white ideology injects inferiority complex in the *others*. In such a situation,

the down trodden people desperately want to reach the upper class and rule and enjoy the privileges accompanied by wealth without considering the economic disparity present in the economic system. Angela Jackson-Brown depicts the same in her first lucidly written novel, *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* (2014).

The novel is autobiographical in its tone and realistic in its nature. In the acknowledgement part, she is very much thankful to her family members, especially to Jackson uncles, aunts and cousins, with whom she has heart relation that really matters for him. Besides, after years separation she is very grateful to her family for welcoming her with open arms and hearts again. This is what we see in the novel as well- Miss Cora accepts Sylvia with open hands after her spending four terrible years in Alabama. The novel is a divide between two opposite places- Louisville and Alabama. The former is the abode of most black people whose life is full of miseries and they live a hand to mouth life and the latter is the dwelling of whites having quite the opposite life style.

The main characters in the novel want desperately to get rid of their wretchedness and live like the “white folks”. This leads them to create a kind of imaginary relationship which works no less than a pain reducing pill and keeps them in a state of ignorance. With the help of ideological state apparatuses, a certain kind of thinking is imposed on them without their being aware of. My main concern in this chapter is to examine critically the novel *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* and to point out how the dominant forces in the novel enforce a certain thinking upon the main characters which they accept freely, and which results in the restriction of their actions.

## 4.2 Analysis

Angela Jackson-Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* (2014) draws the real battle lines between the haves and the have nots. Basically, there are two communities, having opposite life styles, living in the world of the novel that covers mostly the life a mother and a daughter. This dichotomy of the economically privileged and unprivileged runs through the novel from beginning till the end. The story is told from the daughter's perspective who is just ten years old which strengthens further the thesis statement of the present study by implying how the dominant forces in a society influence individuals right from their childhood or even before they are born.

The mother, Mama Rose, tries her level best to get rid of the rundown rented house and be a part of the wealthy white community in Alabama but all in vain. Sylvia says that their "house was one of the most rundown" (*DFBC* 8). The owner of the house is a "fat white dud" named Fat Louie. There are several missing bricks and to keep the cold wind out Sylvia's mother stuffs them with old clothes and papers. Besides, the deplorable condition of the house, the furniture inside the house comes from 'goodwill' or 'yard sales'.

### **4.2.1 "Ideology has always already interpellated us"; We'll buy us a house out on the east side of the town and live just like the rich white folks do".**

Sylvia's mother works at Brown Hotel in the housekeeping department under her supervisor, Mr. Schlesinger and attends classes at Jefferson Community College during night. She is more than happy when she attends the school for the first time and comes back with all her books and shows them one by one to her daughter, Sylvia. She stresses

the importance of books by saying “books are the key, Syl. Books open the door to everything” (*DFBC* 12). First, she wants to become a nurse and later she dreams to see herself a doctor in order to put an end to the present miserable condition. Here we see that the dominant thinking has already hailed Sylvia’s mother who then inculcates the same thinking to her daughter without her being aware of.

Either society/family or the education system has inculcated the idea of becoming a doctor to Mama Rose. They sit to do their homework together and wholeheartedly. The mother gets A’s and gets appreciation from her teachers. Her English teacher tells her that she has a way to deal with words and inspires her for becoming a writer. The dominant thinking controls and governs the practises, likes and dislikes through inculcation by the ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) in the form of media, family, education system, etc. As is seen here, the mother influences her daughter implicitly to work hard and study medicine as it is the only way to qualify for the wealthy Alabamian society. Mama Rose tells her daughter;

Mama said she wanted to get a nursing degree first, and then after a while, she said she might go back to be a doctor. Baby Girl, you just wait and see. Once Mama finishes school, we we’ll be on easy street. We’ll buy us a house out on the east side of the town and **live just like the rich white folks do.**” (*DFBC* 12, stress added)

The above quoted lines also show the role of education system or educational institutes in promoting and preserving capitalist thinking. As it is said earlier, the general perception, imposed by the dominant mode of thinking, found among individuals in a capitalist society is that a doctor earns more, and hence his/her profession is so demanding. It is not based on humanistic notion that a doctor serves

humanity rather it is the other thinking based on material pursuits governed by the dominant capitalist ideology. The family and education system which fall in ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) are very crucial in the inculcation of capitalism.

When things are out of her control and when she sees her hopes dashed to the ground, Mama Rose in some fit throws all her books into the fire and burns them. She was very happy when she attended her classes at Jefferson Community College. Sylvia says, “Mama seemed so happy when she first started school” (*DFBC* 11). Now dejection devours her, and she says, “Cleaning up other folks mess is easier than school and careers” (*DFBC* 13). In fact, it is difficult for her to manage so many things. Instead of thinking about the economic disparity present in the system, she makes myths in her mind that has nothing to do with reality rather; the myths (ideology) help her not to understand her “real conditions of existence” (Althusser 181). At times when Mama Rose cornrows her daughter’s hair, she used to tell her ‘fairy tales’ in which the characters are mostly black little girls. She says, “You see, there was this one little girl called Little Red, and she was going down the block a way to see her big Mama who felt kind of poorly” (*DFBC* 8).

This is how she tells her daughter fairy tales about poverty and yearns to qualify for some higher position in the social strata. By treating the subject of poverty and pointing the ways out, she injects the dominant thinking in her daughter. As a result, Sylvia becomes poverty conscious and her mother tells her how to get out of it. She tells her, “Books open the door to everything” (*DFBC* 12). It means that getting education is the only way to open the iron doors in life. This justifies the role of family and education system as the storehouses of the dominant thinking. These two are the places where capitalist ideology rests and Althusser call them as ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). Sylvia describes the vicinity as;



Mama and me lived in a two-story house in the West End of Louisville where most of the poor, black people lived. Our house was one of the smaller houses near 26<sup>th</sup> and Broadway. Mama rented it from this fat white dude named Louie.... Several of the bricks on our house were missing and a few of the windows were broken. Mama stuffed those windows with paper to keep the air out. (DFBC 8)

The houses are very close to one another. Miss Cora says, “If someone broke wind in their own house, their neighbour could smell it in the other” (DFBC 15) When Mama Rose throws all her books into the fire, we see Sylvia busy in saving as many books as possible. Sylvia says, “I cried. I loved books” (DFBC 12). The love of books influence Sylvia and she has a taste for them. Now she reads Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* where she has depicted the fear of poverty, discrimination and the misrepresentation/misconception of beauty standards. Pecola, the protagonist of the novel, wants blue eyes so desperately that she loses common touch. She thinks that she has got blue eyes whereas it is impossible to lose black eyes for the love of blue. All these things shed a deep influence on the character building of Sylvia- the protagonist. She becomes what is given to her in the form of books and ideas.

#### **4.2.2 Hailing drives you mad; Mama Rose’s desperate journey**

Before the accidental tenderness with Hank Butler, a black but a rich man, who lives in Alabama, Mama Rose sings as a singer “at Jazzy’s Palace” and lives her life with ease.

In a compromise, she spends a week with the rich man which later results in the birth of their daughter, Sylvia Butler. The rich man promises to come back to her after taking care of his business and want to start life afresh, but he does not. Leaving Alabama and a white skinned wife is a real trial for him. “He lied Syl” says Rose, “He

went back down there to her and stayed” (*BFBC* 18). The standards of beauty fixed by the society and imposed on Hank Butler make him to live with the light skinned Alabamian woman and not with Rose who carries black beauty. For accomplishing the real standards of a rich man, Hank has to be with a white woman.

If the question, why Rose brings the misery upon her by marrying the rich man is traced when she was living a life without troubles. The answer is; firstly, she wanted to be a part of the white Alabamian society to which Hank Butler belongs, secondly, Hank Butler is very rich having his own mill and it has been Rose’s desire to be rich as well. Poverty is one of her depravities. So, not only the marriage would have transported her to Alabama, but she would have some part in Hank’s wealth as well. She comes to Sylvia and says, “Sylvia, your daddy is somebody you should be proud of, honey. He owns his own business. Your daddy is a high-class black man” (*DFBC* 18).

It is true that Rose consoles her daughter regarding her father but on the other hand the ambitions and yearnings of the mother cannot be put aside. It is the dominant thinking in the form of ideologies that governs and restricts her actions, practices, likes and dislikes. Her hope dashes to the ground. The only thing she achieves in life is Sylvia. She says, “You are all I got, Syl. Promise you won’t ever leave Mama” (*DFBC* 17). Except Sylvia, she couldn’t win over anybody. She wants Hank Butler to come back and start a new life with her, but it is Hank who cannot prefer her over Vivian- his light skinned wife at Alabama. This also helps to explore why she burns all her books. She wants to be somebody, qualify for the wealthy Alabamian society and live happily like the “white folks” but she gets nothing. She hopes for the best but is unprepared for the worst. The thoughts of Rose reflect in Sylvia.

At times, poor Sylvia gets angry with her daddy and wants to call her as he does not come to take her Mama out from the present hopelessness. Sylvia feels sorry for her mother and her mother's ideas influence her the way dominant forces has influenced her mother. These dominant forces which are ideologies rest in and perpetuate through ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). This is what we see when Sylvia expresses her views about her father and happiness,

But sometimes, when things were really bad, I thought to myself it would be nice if he could come and see about us. **Take us away to the east side of Louisville where everyone was happy.** But, instead I just stayed afraid-worried Crazy would one day come and take Mama away for good, and I guess, in the end, it did. (*DFBC* 19, stress added)

Sylvia, like her Mama, wants her daddy to come and help them like a saviour and put an end to the present dejection. Similarly, she thinks like her mother that happiness dwells in "the east side of Louisville" which is the abode of "white folks" (*DFBC* 12). Sometimes it is neither the education system nor the family and media that promote the dominant thinking rather it is the society which is held responsible for the reproduction of these dominant forces which work as life force for its individuals.

After her orphanage, Rose sings in a club and lives with ease but the mutual tenderness between Hank and Rose triggers sufferings and hardships in her life. She is biologically trapped when she gives birth to Sylvia and she collapses when she couldn't chase her dreams. Sylvia says, "Mama ended up in the system because she had no one to take care of her" (*DFBC* 20). Being a child, Sylvia needs to be taken care of, but it is she who takes care of her mother who lives in a miserable condition. Sylvia fears the social services for taking her away like her mother was taken.

Sylvia has her own depravities. Her mother is as good as dead for her as she has stopped growing technically. She lives without a father when she needs him the most. That is why she desires that her mother should marry Uncle Ray who helps bring them groceries and manage other things. In Sylvia's words, "I really thought it might happen and he, Mama and I would be a family. The only thing in the world I ever really wanted" (DFBC 24).

Uncle Ray is more than a father for Sylvia but for her mother, he is not acceptable at all which is still a dilemma for poor Sylvia. Ray proposes Rose to get married who turns down the offer and poo poos him. She says, "Best friends don't get married, Ray" (DFBC 30). Sylvia thinks that perhaps her mother hopes that one day her father would come back. When Uncle Ray is alive, he is of no value. Rose fights with him frequently which makes Sylvia to refuge under her bed. Sometimes their fight becomes so violent that the neighbours call the police to intervene. But as he is shot dead, he becomes valuable. Rose misses him to the full. Meanwhile Boon, Uncle Ray's best friend, comes to Rose's house and breaks the news of Uncle Ray's death for selling bad stuff to some man, "The man pulled out a gun and shot Uncle Ray in the face. Boon said Uncle Ray died before he hit the ground." (DFBC 36)

After the death of Uncle Ray, Mama Rose's condition is going from bad to worse and Sylvia does not know what to do. His death not only triggers more sufferings but speeds up and adds tremendously to her trauma. Poor Sylvia now thinks that her mother should marry Mr. Schlesinger, her supervisor at Brown Hotel. He helps bring them groceries and hands over Sylvia "fives and tens" like Uncle Ray. Sylvia is under the threat of further depravities and fears that "something bad would happen". Her mother's mental collapse worries her a lot. She depends on vodka and pills to live every hour. Without giving Sylvia any impression what is to happen tomorrow, she tells her

to hand the letter over to Miss Cora the next morning when she wakes up and to take care of the jewellery box- containing earrings, necklaces and rings worth nothing. Then she advises her after giving a cuddle, “Don’t love anybody too much. Keep just a little back. You understand baby?” (*DFBC* 43).

The above line helps a lot to explore further the tragedy and misery of Rose. It was her misconception to think that her marriage with Hank Butler will help her transported to Alabama. It is now that she understands that her getting too close to Hank was a rash decision. That is why she advises her daughter to keep people at arm’s length and not to go too close to them. Her not doing so triggers one suffering after another in her life. When Sylvia returns her mother’s love by saying that she loves her too, Mama Rose addresses her yet in another advice, “I love you, Sylvia Renee Butler. You were the first person on earth to tell me you loved me and truly meant it. Don’t ever let anyone steal your joy, Syl” (*DFBC* 46).

If taken dialectically, it means Hank Butler does not mean truly when he expressed his love to Rose and steals all her joys by not keeping his words. Rose lets him to culminate her joys in miseries and sufferings. In fact, it is the dominant thinking that restricts her actions/thinking and keeps her in a state of ignorance. On the night when she is going to kill herself, she makes Sylvia to take half of the sleeping pill for sleeping soundly on that cold night having no wood for the fireplace. When she wakes up late in the morning, she finds, “When I woke up, I was no longer Dorothy and Glinda, the Good Witch was dead” (*DFBC* 46)

The influence of the sleeping pill is equal to the influence of ideology. The way the sleeping pill kept Sylvia unaware from the suicide of her mother. In the same way capitalist ideology keeps her mother in a state of “false consciousness” and distances

them from understanding the “real conditions of existence”. Similarly, Rose never complains about the economic disparity nor she considers the economic system complicit in her oppression. She considers Hank complicit in her miseries and she is never found in her own soul searching. In fact, it is the success of capitalist ideology that enables individuals not to notice the economic disparity and the oppression present in the economic system.

#### **4.2.3 White supremacist ideology hails blacks; Sylvia gets influenced**

Sylvia is left with no other choice than to go with his father to Alabama after the death of her mother. At last they reach Alabama- the abode of white people. Grief-stricken Sylvia judges the difference between Louisville and Alabama. She sees “a lot of white people” and “a handful of black people” (*DFBC* 57). The people stare at them as if they do not belong to the place. Her father also makes the difference clearer by saying that in Alabama the air is fresh because of many trees, there are many farm houses and “the people are nice” (*DFBC* 58).

This also shows why Sylvia’s father preferred Vivian over Rose. Besides, Vivian is “real light skinned”. The former is a symbol of material advancement whereas the latter signifies the opposite. The self-evident discussion not only juxtaposes the under developed Louisville and developed Alabama respectively, but it also hints at Hank’s choice. The point is further enriched when Hank adds that his wife’s family has bought most of the property after the abolition movement. Sylvia is fond of books and when she comes to know that books are easily available over there, she flashbacks;

Mama didn’t care for libraries any more than she did for clinics and the food stamp office. “Folks don’t loan or give you stuff for free. There is a catch

somehow. If you want books, we will buy them. If we can't afford them then you will just have to wait until you are older and can buy yourself. (*DFBC* 59)

Mere survival was the first and foremost issue for her mother. Reading books and achieving the resultant dreams had secondary importance. Having the background of her past life in mind, the present entry in Sylvia's life seems princely. Her new house is "ranch-style house" having lights all around. Her father has blue impala in which they drove to Alabama. Hank plans to do shopping for Sylvia the next day and "eat at the Golden Corral" (*DFBC* 60).

On the other hand, this line of demarcation between the rich and the poor becomes more visible when things are seen from Sylvia's angle. After judging the difference between Louisville and Alabama in the form of material advancement, she now sees the difference between her abandoned house and the present adopted house. When she enters the house for the first time, she finds Vivian "real light-skinned" living in a "ranch-style house" which is quite the opposite to their "rundown" rented house back at Alabama. Then she starts comparing things and her eyes took notice of a "'fancy white piano". She compares the pianos "Mama's old piano look shabby by comparison" (*DFBC* 62). When Vivian stares at Sylvia with eyes "cold and hateful", she avoids her looks and instead glances around the room,

The room was fancier room than any room I had ever seen. The burgundy chairs and sofa made me think of the chairs kings and queens sat in. The carpet was white and burgundy curtains hung from the windows. There were paintings all over the place-mostly of Jesus and angels. In front of the large window facing the front of the house was a fancy white piano with a gold candelabrum on it. It made Mama's old piano look shabby by comparison. (*DFBC* 61)

This is how Sylvia gets influenced from the set up and material advancement of Vivian house. Having the bereavements in mind, she later on not only wishes to be like the rich, but the dominant thinking hails her and then she becomes a pliant and submissive subject. For Sylvia there is a kind of motivation in the form of this advance material set up. She recalls her past, realises the deprivations which she had and in future dreams for becoming somebody by marrying Drew who is her boyfriend. Same was the case with her mother who desperately wanted to be a part of the rich Alabamian society. Such set ups have a kind of impetus for the poor who then want to be like the rich ignoring the economic disparity.

After the confrontation with Vivian who thinks low of Sylvia and considers her a child brought up “like a heathen” as she has been part of a broken family having manners not matching with those of Vivian. Hank takes her to a room. The room belongs to Sylvia and she notices “a bedroom with a huge bed and its own TV” (*DFBC* 64). The colour of the wallpapers matches the colour of the bed sheets. Sylvia feels the difference and thinks that Mama and she do not “had wallpaper”. Their house at Alabama was a “smaller house” and the room which she is going to have is beg and has even an attached bathroom. The description of the room shows that comfort and facilities are part and parcel of a wealthy life style. The poor lack the comfort and facilities. One dies hard for mere survival and others just spend to satiate the thirst of showing their status quo. Sylvia thinks of the room as;

I couldn't believe how big this room was, and there was even a bathroom on the other side of the closet. This room scared me a little. I didn't want to be in such a big room by myself. I would have slept on the floor if he would have just stayed with me, but I didn't want to ask. I didn't want his wife to get even angrier with me. (*DFBC* 65)



This is what Sylvia wishes, like her mother, to be as the dominant thinking has hailed her very subtly but she has compatibility problem of how to go with Vivian. The way it was a compulsion of Rose, being black and poor, to marry Hank Butler in a compromise. In the same way it is a compulsion of Hank, being black but rich, to live with Vivian who is light skinned. When Hank tenders with Sylvia and helps her to sleep, she recalls the love of Uncle Ray. Sylvia thinks that had his father come back to her mother during the miseries, she would not have suffered so badly.

Why her father left her mother in Dickie's meadow is still an enigma for Sylvia. She inquires about and Hank praises her mother's beauty and her melodious voice in singing. He says, "she could cut you open with one note and sew you up in another" (*DFBC 70*). At last he realises that spending a week with her mother and giving her his words to come back and live afresh was a mistake, "I made a bad mistake" (*DFBC 71*). Hank couldn't live with Rose because of several reasons. Firstly, she is poor and black as well. Secondly, she lives in Louisville which is considered an abode of poor people and hence backward and lacking in facilities. The last but not the least is, being black and rich he needs a white woman to meet the accepted ideals of beauty. Besides, Alabama has a pull for both the rich and poor.

Rose's version of marrying Hank is clear; she wanted to be qualified to the wealthy Alabamian society and live happily like the white folks. She was serious to marry Hank. This is what she wants but she couldn't, and her miseries culminate in her own killing when she was left with no other options. Sylvia thinks almost the same; "I wish he would have married my Mama. I bet she wouldn't have been so sad if he had" (*DFBC 72*).

The line not only interprets her mother's desire and shows why her mother spend a week with Hank in a compromise that triggers miseries in her life, but it also hints at the capitalist notion. Sylvia shows her concerns about her permanent stay when she and her father say their prayers at the end of her first day at the new house. She says in her prayers, "Help me to be a good girl so she won't hate me and send me away" (*DFBC*, 73). This shows she does not want to be sent away and now she forgets to go back to Miss Cora. She calls her father 'daddy' and thinks her mother wanted her to do so. Hank picks up the gravel and tells her "not to worry about being sent away" (*DFBC* 74).

The thing her mother failed to achieve, Sylvia achieves ultimately. She is happy now and has found herself in Alabama. It seems she overcomes the sorrow of her mother's death and leaving her birthplace and house. In times of happiness, she forgets her mother and Miss Cora whereas her mother does come to her mind when she suffers from some hardship. Her mother is a symbol of misery and melancholy and behind her immiserating conditions there stands utter impoverishment. Sylvia is at ease now and feels herself at home. According to her; "The sky had finally gotten clear. The stars even seemed brighter than the stars in Louisville" (*DFBC* 68). Dismal clouds of dejection are finally no more.

Sylvia feels a hell of difference between her past and present life. Even natural things seem different to her. Sylvia's father takes her to shopping and they eat at the Golden Corral. Sylvia gets further influenced when she goes to Vivian's shop in her 1978 Cadillac Seville. The car is shining, and Hank has bought it for \$13,000 for her wife during their anniversary. The amount is unimaginable for Sylvia. She just remembers the twenty dollars which Uncle Ray gave her when she got all A's in school.

This is how poor people get influenced from the life style of rich people. Their set up having facilities and comfort gives an impetus to the downtrodden.

#### **4.2.4 Is richness directly proportional to hard work and good manners, and vice versa?**

Sylvia couldn't stop herself from saying that they are rich after knowing about the price of Vivian's 1978 Cadillac Seville. Vivian reprimands her and stresses not to say so again. She emphasises that they "aren't rich" rather they "work hard". An impression is given that the rich are because they work hard. The poor are poor as they are lazy. But above all remains the question that Rose also worked hard, and she couldn't achieve what she dreamt.

Vivian keeps Sylvia busy at her shop. Vivian directs her that she does not want her to roam like the "street urchins". Sometimes tells her to take the towels out from the drawer and fold them. Next time directs her to do some other chore. Vivian dismisses Trey Johnson's requests to let Sylvia out so that she can make new friends and tells him that Sylvia needs to know "there are no free rides in this world" (*DFBC*, 89). Poor Sylvia does not have her own freedom of choice and expression. Sylvia is not happy and is possessed how to change the hatred of Vivian, but she does not know what to do "to change her feelings" (*DFBC* 95).

Sylvia does not respond well to what Vivian asks as she is new to the house and young as well. Vivian gets angry and asks, "Hasn't anybody ever taught you how to speak to people?" (*DFBC* 62). Vivian wants Sylvia to speak up and follow her to the room where she is supposed to sleep. She not only looks down at her but orders and directs her as if she is inferior. By one way or the other Vivian influence Sylvia by

attacking her manners and giving her the impression that her life style is inferior. Sylvia is not acceptable because her status, life style and manners do not match Vivian's.

Hank Butler suggests that he should take Sylvia to her room as she is used to him. He comes forward and tells Vivian that Sylvia is young and gets frightened in her company. Vivian gets angry and says, "She is ten years old not two" (*DFBC 63*). She even reprimands Hank that men are not required to get girls dressed and undressed and it does not suit them. It is women who do so. Meanwhile Sylvia whispers that Uncle Ray used to help her to get ready for sleep. Now is the time for Vivian to show real concerns about her upbringing and she goes to the extend and says "I thought she didn't have any family. Who is this Uncle Ray?" (*DFBC 63*).

When Sylvia musters up her courage and dare says that he was "Mama's boyfriend" who used to visit their house frequently and teach her chess too. It is Uncle Rays' everlasting love effect that makes her to say so boldly about him. Hank stresses Vivian to mind her words and stop treating her harshly while Sylvia is crying. Vivian expresses her anger and hatred by saying that Sylvia "has been raised like a heathen" (*DFBC 64*). She is not ready to have such a heathen child at her house. Soon she befoams into rage and addresses Jesus that what has he sent to "my house". She shows her sole possession on their house by saying "my house" excluding the possession of her husband, Hank Butler, who is black but rich. Then she addresses Sylvia,

Jesus what have you sent to our house? I done heard it all now. Well, Sylvia, we don't run no house of ill repute. We are hardworking Christians and whatever shenanigans went on in your house up there, we ain't having it here. You understand me?... It is clear this child has been raised like a heathen. Well

I ain't having no heathen ways in my house, Hank Butler. I'm not having it.  
(*DFBC* 63)

The above lines point out two important prevalent ideas. Firstly, they refer to the idea that poor people have broken family system having ill manners and no values. It is the rich that do care for these manners and values. Secondly, the lines convey the message that rich people are but because of hard work. Hard work seems natural to most of the people (Americans) which draws attention to “the success of self-made men like Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln” (Tyson 58). Actually, it is American dream that bases the argument that “we are all born equal and are free to advance as far as our own “get-up-and-go” will take us” (Tyson 57). Sylvia is given the message that hard work brings wealth and she accepts that it is really so. She cannot ponder over the economic inequalities present in the capitalist economic system.

Now the upbringing of Sylvia starts with her step mother in Alabama. She stresses her to be with women so that she may learn ‘manners’. She is made to learn “yes, ma’ams and no, ma’ams” to answer questions. She is bound to live with them as she is economically dependable. Being so young she wants to play with the boys outside but is not allowed. Instead she is directed to do some other chore. Vivian tells her “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop” (*DFBC* 84).

Vivian uses the words ‘heathen’ and ‘shenanigans’ for Sylvia. She objections Sylvia’s answering to questions but how about if Vivian’s manners are judged against the grain. She treats Sylvia real strangely and roughly knowing her mother has died, she has no body to take care of, she is very young and still doesn’t care for her likes and dislikes as a child and above all considers her a lesser human being. Vivian wants to apply lye on Sylvia’s hair but she, following her Mama’s advice, refuses to get her

hair straight and “look like the white folks”. Sylvia argues with Vivian that if God wanted her hair straight “He would have made it that way” (*DFBC* 81). Instead of appreciating her for talking sense as a child, she gives a tit for tat reply by saying that they come to this world naked but that does not mean that they should ‘flash’ their private parts.

So, we see in the world of the novel that the rich characters, especially Vivian, affiliate richness with hard work and rich people with good manners but that is not the case. Rose tries her level best and works hard to put an end to her present despondency, but she gets lost in the disparity present in the economic system. Though Hank Butler is rich and shows great humanism towards Sylvia unlike Vivian, but he is legally bound to take care of her. Not keeping his words to Rose triggers miseries in her life. Vivian’s rough treatment of Sylvia and considering her lesser human being on the basis of race are highly objectionable. Besides, the good heartedness of Miss Cora and Uncle Ray cannot be put aside who are poor but having great compassion.

#### **4.2.5 Happiness lies where your heart is, Sylvia’s assimilation; “In a matter of just few days, it was like I had always belonged”**

Sylvia’s past depravities and her present possession of having things not only juxtapose her past life with present but also hints at her insinuation and assimilation that influence her at large. She recalls her mother in times of trouble and she becomes happy when she embraces the things she used not to have. The dominant thinking creeps into her life imperceptibly and for her there is excitement in the air.

It is Sylvia’s first time to go for shopping with her daddy and Cousin Jean. She also gets introduced with Jean who is “real light-skinned” and have green eyes like most of Mother Viv’s family members. Having her past life in mind when most of her

clothes were homemade or she got them from Goodwill, it is difficult for Sylvia to choose among so many sets of clothes. She is beside herself with joy, but at the same time she suffers from inferiority complex and feels embarrassment for having all homemade clothes. Buying school uniform, church kits, after-school outfits and weekend suits is something unimaginable for Sylvia, but she feels that it is “the most normal thing” for her new family.

After shopping in Dothan, they drive back to Ozark to take dinner at Golden Corral Steakhouse, but Sylvia hardly eats;

My excitement over all the new clothes was through the roof! I didn't even want anything to eat. All I wanted to do was to go home and look at all of my pretty new clothes. Cousin Jean and I shared a steak and French fries. Before we made it to the restaurant. Daddy stopped at a payphone and called Mother Viv to see if she wanted to join us, but she told him she had cooking to do for his birthday dinner the next day. (*DFBC 97*)

As Sylvia knows that it is her daddy's birthday the next day, she buys a birthday card for her daddy. She finds the card having the picture of a father pushing a girl in a swing who “were both white”. White supremacist ideology prevails everywhere, and its influence is seen on Sylvia as she cannot stop herself from noticing green eyes and light skin everywhere. Slowly and gradually the marginalisation of blacks becomes conspicuous to Sylvia and this time she intends to colour “the daddy and the little girl” brown as she reaches home. She also remembers her mother saying that the shopping malls inject inferiority complex in black people as they cannot afford to buy things in those shopping malls.

At the church, she disappoints when the ceremony at church came to an end very soon. Her father appreciates her idea of colouring the daddy and the little girl with brown and says that birthday cards “for people other than white folks” should be made. (*DFBC* 107). After the church services, they all come home, and it is more than a surprise for Sylvia to see more than a dozen dishes, being prepared for her daddy’s birthday, on the tables. Most of the foods are unknown to Sylvia. Her father delivers thanks giving speech for throwing the birthday party and accepting her daughter as a family member after they all sang happy birthday to him.

Her daddy’s kith and kin attend the birthday party and Uncle Ralph says that Sylvia resembles Gwen, her grandmamma. Before this, Vivian and Cousin Jean have said the same regarding her resemblance. After passing five months in Alabama with the new family’s set up, Sylvia considers herself else like. She thinks how it comes that she resembles “so many different people all at once” (*DFBC* 111). She emphasises her being different from her people. This is how white supremacist ideology hails black people which carries with itself a lot of privileges and on top of them is the economic privilege. Now Sylvia has no want of food and clothes. Meanwhile she misses her mother, but she says, “this type of scene was what I had always dreamed of -of family” (*DFBC* 111). She dreams of such life like her mother.

Soon after the whole family goes on Easter break to Panama beach where they spend holidays. Having the miserable condition of blacks in mind, Sylvia cannot imagine that black people can have “such a fancy place”. She also thinks that if her Mama were alive, she would have loved all her family except Mother Viv who has symbolical importance. She engages Sylvia in her shop as a boss by snatching all her freedom, bears a grudge against her after the misshape of Uncle Ray’s ashes and even



takes the tip given to Sylvia for her good work. Vivian symbolises the economic oppression present in the economic system as Sylvia's tip goes to her pocket.

The trip to Panama beach provides Sylvia with the chance to free her Uncle Ray from inside the vase. He wanted Rose to cremate her dead body when he dies and then spread the ashes on some beach. Mama Rose did the cremation but couldn't spread the ashes which Sylvia is going to do. She feels happiness in accomplishing the tasks of her mother. During the mid-night when Sylvia is out along with Uncle Ray's ashes in a vase to do what her mother couldn't, Vivian notices her in the dark and wants willy-nilly to take control of the vase which Sylvia does not want to hand over at any cost and condition. The haphazardness leads to Sylvia's unconsciousness. Though her father later helps her to spread Uncle Ray's ashes on the beach but not without leaving a bitter taste.

A month after the Panama trip, Sylvia is having her eleventh birthday. All her cousins and several of her school friends attend the birthday party. She is beside herself with joy and has "great time at" her "party" (*DFBC* 134). Everybody thinks at the end that it was a wonderful party ever and it adds to Sylvia's self-esteem as it is thrown for her birthday. At the Panama beach, Sylvia feels herself inferior by not having an expertise in swimming and playing soft ball game which point out her backward upbringing. Now she considers herself part of the white Alabamian society, but her skin colour becomes an obstruction time and again. She appreciates Cousin Jean's beauty and tells her "You don't even need makeup" which means it is she who needs if thought dialectically. Slowly and gradually Sylvia gets adopted and absorbed in the new set up;

I didn't have time to be disappointed long because once we made it back to home, the fun began. There were two large tables for the grown-ups in the

dining room and two smaller tables for the kid in the den. I met all of the aunts, uncles, and cousins and everyone treated me real nice. In a matter of just few days, it was like I had always belonged. (*DFBC* 109)

This birthday party is unlike the one which Sylvia's mother arranged for her in Louisville when, to her great disgust, no body showed up then. The huge difference between her past and present life not only signals the line of demarcation between the haves and the have nots but it also shows how there is an impetus for the poor to adventure for the life which the rich have without paying any attention to the economic disparity. It is capitalist ideology that clicks and stops the poor from revolting against the rich through a kind of "imaginary relationship" that not only furthers them from understanding the "real conditions of existence" but hails them as subjects who then want to be like the rich and help promote the capitalist thinking. (Althusser 181)

#### **4.2.6 Sylvia's journey from calm to storm and her drinking from a bitter cup**

Now is Sylvia stable in life having no worries. The storm, in the form of her mother's death, deplorable condition and the sorry state of affairs because of utter poverty back at home in particular and in Louisville in general, is no more rather it has changed into calm.

To her, now life is like a walk in the park but who knows that his father is going to die and sufferings, once again, trigger in her life which get accelerated when Uncle Charles appears over the horizon from Vietnam war and proves an evil for Sylvia. Now she learns how to get along with Mother Vivian who still bears a grudge against her. Having no children makes Vivian to come even closer to Charles and she treats him

like a son. Charles seems more than sad to Sylvia and he says that he has “fought in the thick of the war” (*DFBC* 147). Uncle Charles’s eyes reminds Sylvia her mother’s eyes which used to be sad and strange because of drinking.

Everybody comes to see Uncle Charles. He gets closer to Sylvia and expresses his war guilt by showing his leg which “was blown off”. He adds, “We hunted and we were the hunted” (*DFBC* 153). States rise with capitalism and poor kill each other in the name of patriotism and the rich and authorities take benefits from waging wars. The poor cannot realise their real conditions because of ideologies (patriotism). Uncle Charles expresses his sadness over the loss of war, but he still does not understand the reality because of making myths and false concepts (ideologies). Charles shares with Sylvia;

They discharge us, a bunch of wild animals, and they expect us to go back to acting like house pets. “But maybe...” It cannot be done, Sylvia. They should kill us. Just like you an animal in misery. You kill it so it won’t have to suffer anymore and so it won’t hurt anybody else. Anything in pain will eventually act out. (*DFBC* 154)

Uncle Charles lives just because of drinking. His excessive drinking reminds Sylvia her mother whose sadness resembles that of Uncle Charles. They both are victims of oppression. The former is oppressed by the ideology of war (patriotism) and the latter is oppressed by the capitalist ideology. The one is dying and the other has died by the oppressive hands which are similar in nature.

After painting Sylvia’s room, her daddy suffers from heart attack and is in a critical condition. She is too sad and worried as her daddy’s health is directly related to the present stability and prosperity in her life. Besides, her father not only proves a

saviour for her when she was surrounded by sorrows from all sides. For the first time in life, she finds hard ground to stand on, but it seems she is in danger and she is in for trouble.

Anyhow a voice wakes her up in the morning that his dad has died leaving Sylvia with no one. She wears white for her daddy's funeral and swears not to wear white again because for her "white meant death" (*DFBC* 193). Her daddy's funeral reminds Sylvia her Mama's funeral and she juxtaposes the two;

There were so many people at Daddy's funeral. It seemed like all of them had a story they wanted to tell. My mama's funeral had been pretty short. Daddy's funeral lasted three hours. They kept the lid to his coffin open the whole time. I didn't take my eyes off him. I tried to stare life back into him. (*DFBC* 194)

After the death of her daddy, Sylvia loses hope and despondency devours her. She goes to bed without saying her prayers. She thinks she is all alone in this world now and says, "there was nothing left to pray about" (*DFBC*, 192). She collects all her white dresses and sets them on fire. The dislike for white colour is the counter argument in racial controversy. White dominates in the presence of black and it is white that has brought death (destruction). The misery of blacks is because of whites. When her father is in the hospital and it is late night, Uncle Charles takes her home while buying drink on the way. Worried Sylvia does not know that it is a situation like out of the frying pan into the fire. After they reach home, soon she finds her Uncle Charles in her room to lose her virginity. She is raped when she is just eleven years old.

She needs now a fatherly figure to love her like her father and she thinks it may be Uncle Charles. Day changes into night and night into day and during the interval Uncle Charles changes from goodness into evil like brightness of a day into the

darkness of a night. When it is day, Uncle Charles becomes Sylvia's uncle but as it changes into the night, he transforms into an evil again. She fears if she says no to Uncle Charles for the nasty ongoing, he will turn against her and as a result Vivian will throw her out. That is why she decides "It would be better to do what Uncle Charles wanted" (DFBC 197).

Sylvia becomes a psychological limbo and she does not know which way to follow. She is in the mid of no way. At times she "plans to die" and at some other time, she does not want to carry on the nasty and "awful things" with Uncle Charles. When Uncle Charles comes to her room and climbs her bed with a lost leg, she is not active in the "futile thing". She feels his warmness but her "insides" are "cold". In such a sorry situation, she thinks it is her daddy who cuddles her, or she makes some story, reminds some song or limerick to her mind. She also knows if Vivian comes to know about his coming to her room, she will turn her blind eye. Once again, she decides that as far as she is "armed with lightness and joy" she is okay "no matter what he did" (DFBC 205). Poor Sylvia gets plucked in the adversity of circumstances;

Uncle Charles was my bitter cup. I knew this. And I couldn't stop drinking from it. The sad part- I didn't want to stop. And I hated myself for being so weak. I hated for not being faithful to Drew. I sort of convinced myself what happened between me and Charles wasn't cheating. Charles never told me he would force me to do it with him, but something told me he wouldn't just let me walk away. So, I told myself, I didn't have any choice. (DFBC 226)

#### **4.2.7 Educational system (ISA) promotes capitalist ideology: And I will become a doctor and our life will be fantastic.**

Sylvia's life depicts a realistic picture which is full of ups and downs. Anyhow Sylvia is doing well in her studies and games at school. She has got this taste for reading books because of her mother who once told her that books are important.

Sylvia couldn't learn well in Louisville because of being too sensitive regarding her mother's health and having no peace of mind. Now she becomes a centre of focus for her teachers because of extensive reading. All her teachers were black back in Louisville and she has the opposite at D.A. Smith Middle School in Alabama. First, she is nervous facing a white teacher but later at ease after Mrs. Grey treats her very nice who, according to Sylvia, is a "real pretty white lady". Sylvia is "a phenomenal young lady" for her teacher. She says, "My grades had really gotten bad in Louisville, but I was back to making all A's and I loved it" (*DFBC* 139).

After taking tests, Sylvia's teacher writes to her parents about her brilliance in school. Her teacher wants Sylvia to skip one grade as she has got ninety eight percent in Maths and hundred in reading and comprehension. Her parents agree to the proposal and her father gave her high five when he was alive. Besides, she is selected for the school chess team and she has won county competition. Now she prepares for the state competition. The school imbibes in her the spirit to go ahead in life. Her chess teacher, Mr. Crawford tells that she is the first black student in the school's history to be selected for the school team. Though Cousin Jean is senior to Sylvia, but it is Sylvia who helps her in her homework.

When Sylvia turns fourteen, she encounters Drew who is known among the rest for his blond hair and graceful looks and girls fall for him at school. They both get

closer when Carroll High School assigns Drew to give Sylvia freshman student tour. For Sylvia, there is fascination in Drew from another angle. He is good at playing basketball and he has bright chances to be selected for some famous college like University of Indiana, Georgetown University or University of Kentucky. Besides, Drew belongs to a rich family and owns a 1973 Volkswagen Beetle which his father gifts him on his sixteenth birthday. Drew has a taste for literature like Sylvia and his mother teaches modernist literature at Troy State University.

Drew introduces her to many new and different things. His world is new and full of fascination for Sylvia which she chases. She does not want to be static and the society imposes on her the spirit to go ahead in the race of life. Drew comes to know about Sylvia's compulsions and the imposed restrictions. They both dream a better future and Drew says that they are going to have a successful life and shows determination to get some huge academic scholarship;

You just wait, Sylvia. Our life is going to be golden. I will get a scholarship somewhere huge, and then a few years from now you will get an academic scholarship to the same school and you can study medicine just like you always wanted to do." Then I would jump in, my voice brimming with excitement. "And then you will get drafted to the NBA and I will become a doctor and our life will be fantastic." (*DFBC* 220)

Neither their dreams are for some noble cause nor they are meant to serve humanity rather; they are meant to achieve materialistic pursuits. They are in search of a golden life. Getting a better life means to study medicine and accumulate as much wealth as possible. Sylvia's mother also wanted to study medicine and so to qualify for the white Alabamian society and live happily like the white people. Here we see that

family and education system promote capitalist ideology by injecting it in individuals. Sylvia and Drew think that they both are free in their choices, but it is the dominant thinking that is imposed on them without their being aware of. The prevalent thinking not only speaks through their actions by directing them, but it also circumscribes their actions. They cannot think beyond the imposed thinking. Hence, they are not free in their choices rather they accept their subject position freely.

#### **4.2.8 “There is no pain”; Ideology, stories, myths, lyrics and the “comfortably numb” effect**

The storm is still on in Sylvia’s life and it does not seem that it may change into a calm again. Sylvia feels great pleasure and warmth for Drew unlike she has for Uncle Charles. She wants to get rid of the ongoing nasty things with Uncle Charles and start a new life with Drew according to her own wish, but she is not allowed.

Sylvia has created a space for her, but Vivian is still antagonistic towards her. Vivian is devoid of motherly feelings for Sylvia. On weekends, she does her work with great skills at Vivian’s shop and even one day a woman gives her twenty dollars tip which Vivian takes. Vivian does not like the growing number of clients coming to the shop just because of Sylvia. For the sake of maintaining her hegemony, it is Sylvia who lives like a slave. She has no choice of her own. Capitalism has many evils and among many one is slavery. Same is the case with Mr. Trey, a worker at Vivian’s shop, who lives from hand to mouth. He has no other option and when he dies, his family buries him without a funeral. Similarly, Sylvia wants to be Drew’s mistress instead of Uncle Charles, but she cannot be, “Uncle Charles was my bitter cup. I knew this. And I couldn’t stop drinking from it” (*DFBC* 226).



Sylvia has no other choice and the warmth for Drew makes her to be free from the clutches of Charles. Drew introduces her to new music, and she reduces this agony of her mind by listening to the music. Her best song is Pink Floyd's "Comfortably Numb". She plays the music time and again until her thoughts become one with the lyric;

Sometimes I didn't even know where my thoughts and the lyrics began or ended. *This is not how I am. I have become comfortably numb.* Those lyrics were me. Comfortably numb. My favourite line in the whole song went "There is no pain, you are receding." I cried the first time I heard the song "Comfortably Numb." (DFBC 223)

Then she feels "There is no pain" which is also her "favourite line" in the song. In order to avoid the unavoidable and unfavourable, Sylvia recalls stories of the past or composes some limericks when she has to bear Uncle Charles. She has no feelings and warmth for him and overcomes his sexual oppression by diverting her mind so that she may not feel the pain. Same was the case with her mother. On the one hand she dreams to live happily like the "white folks" by studying medicine. This dominant thinking not only drives her mad, but it also helps her not to notice the oppression in the form of economic disparity present in the economic system. On the other, she used to drink excessively to unburden the heavy weight of her sorrows when all her dreams are dashed to the ground. The way Sylvia forgets her griefs and oppression by listening to the music, making stories and limericks which cause numbness and reduce her pain. In the same way, her mother makes "imaginary relationship" in her mind in the form of hopes, myths, dreams which have nothing to do with her "real conditions of existence" (Althusser 181). Capitalist ideology is like analgesic that helps forget the wounds and injustices while pursuing dreams once individuals are hailed. When Sylvia is not in a

position to get rid of Uncle Charles and to be Drew's queen, she reduces her sorrow and pain by listening to the music which Drew introduced to her and that has a kind of soothing effect for her;

Comfortably Numb" was about way more than using drugs to me. It connected with me and when I played it, I didn't just hear the words, they flowed all through me. Drew labelled me a melodramatic queen. I just smiled, ignored him and cranked up the music... Sometimes I experienced the worst case of guilt ever. I was his girl, but at the same time, I wasn't. (*DFBC 224*)

The song creates numbness in Sylvia like a drug and helps her to overcome the imposed limitations and sexual oppression. Ideology, like the song and a drug, does the same. In pursuing high capitalist targets, Sylvia, like her mother, never succeeds in judging the economic disparity and dependence of which they both are victim of. Capitalist ideology has the same effect as that of a drug. It not only imbibes in them the spirit to go ahead in life without considering the inequalities, but it keeps them in a state of ignorance and imposes specific thinking which restricts their actions, practices, likes and dislikes. And above all the oppressed mother and daughter seem okay with the oppression present in the economic system and it is ideology that makes them blind.

Being with Vivian and Uncle Charles, it is more a question of freedom. Apart from her economic dependency, she is not allowed to go for the prom with Drew. Besides, she sees her bright future in Drew and not in Charles. Still she is not allowed. Sylvia and Drew are determined to study medicine and earn a huge scholarship respectively and so achieve a "golden life". The warmth for Drew contains the germs of freedom which Sylvia wants so desperately. She feels herself like a bird in a cage and realizes the imposed physical restrictions and limitations, but she is not at all in a

position to understand the imposed limitations of ideology which has resulted in the circumcision of her thinking, actions, likes and dislikes. She seeks Charles permission and says, "I want to be free" (*DFBC* 235). When Charles does not allow her, she retaliated that she was just eleven years old when he raped her for the first time. She used to press the things but at last they burst out.

Charles befoams into rage and not only he beats Sylvia but does nasty things by force as well. In a state of utter hopelessness and extreme body pains, she cuts her hair and calls Miss Cora to send Leon to receive her at the station. To forget the present pathetic situation and reduce the pain, she recalls her early romantic days with Drew but all in vain. Nothing seems to console her. She also thinks that how her, and the life of her mother took turns, but it is hard for her to find where things went wrong;

Sometimes, I would spend hours poring over the items in her jewellery box, hoping I would see something in those artefacts that signalled to me why my life turned out the way it did. But of course, I found nothing. No great revelations about Mama and me. (*DFBC* 208)

It is the success of capitalist ideology that stops her from understanding the turns where things went wrong in their life which are their "real conditions of existence". Ultimately, she reaches Louisville back after slowly dying for four years in Alabama. Once again, she continues her school and, in the afternoons, does what she has learnt at Vivian's shop- doing hair. She opens an account and her life seems "pretty normal". She also dreams of Drew who has got basketball scholarship to Indiana University but that seems a "distant dream" now (*DFBC* 285).

To Sylvia's great disgust, Uncle Charles comes for her to Louisville and seems more of a mad man. The police take him away but not before Sylvia's going into

unconsciousness in the haphazard situation with Uncle Charles who fires to kill her. In the hospital, being unconscious, she speaks out her sub-conscious in a dream like situation where her mother takes her to;

She led me to an ottoman I had not seen at first. She sat down on the ottoman and pulled me to a sitting position in front of her. Then she brushed my hair. I looked all around, and I realized we were in our house. The walls gleamed with a fresh coat of paint. The ottoman was green and the other furniture started to appear one piece at a time like a rainbow come alive. (*DFBC* 277)

This is what Sylvia wants in real life. The dominant thinking in the form of capitalist ideology speaks through her. For her the unconsciousness is like the “false consciousness” of reality. When she gets her consciousness back, she finds her mother no more in reality and “so was the house” (*DFBC* 278). Sylvia is now biologically trapped as a “little baby” is “growing inside” her “belly” (*DFBC* 290). Both the mother and the daughter go around and then come around. Like rolling stones they gather no mass. The writer leaves the novel with an incomplete ending. Leaving it for the readers to speculate that the way the life of the mother ended in a pathetic situation despite her desperate attempts. In the same way the life of the daughter is to end in misery as she is having the same thinking and condition- having a bun in the oven.

## CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* not only draws the real lines of battle between the haves and the have nots, but it also implicitly critiques the dominant thinking in the form of capitalist ideology. The dominant thinking hails the protagonist of the novel, Sylvia, through the subtle action of interpellation. This results not only in

her ignorance in the form of her not knowing the oppression and economic disparity present in the economic system, but the dominant mode of thinking circumscribes her actions as well. For example, the mother and the daughter live gloomily from hand to mouth in a rundown house. The dominant thinking in the form of capitalist ideology hails the mother who then wants to become a doctor and live happily like the white folks. It is the imposed thinking that speaks through her and restricts her actions. Besides, this shows not only the role of educational system (ISA) as an apparatus in promoting the capitalist ideology, but it also hints at the role of family which is also an ideological state apparatus. The mother, while saying so, injects the ideology in her daughter without her being aware of. Then the daughter dreams of a golden life by studying medicine and marrying Drew who is going to win a huge scholarship. The motive behind her actions is to achieve a golden life. Her mother also marries Hank Butler, a rich but black man from Alabama, to achieve the same. The imposed thinking recruits them through the subtle operation of interpellation and then they accept their subjection freely. Not only they accept their subjection freely, but they also become a source/cause to promote capitalist mode of thinking. They both think that they are free in their choices which is not the case. Their thinking directs or controls their approach and hence results in the limited range of actions. The dominant thinking manifests through their actions, practises, likes and dislikes. Manifesting the imaginary relationship, ideology makes the mother and the daughter blind towards the economic disparity and oppression present in the economic system. In next chapter, I analyse critically H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy*.

## CHAPTER 5

# FREEDOM OR BONDAGE: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF NAQVI'S *HOME BOY*

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the multi-faceted debut novel *Home Boy* (2010) written by H. M Naqvi who is a Pakistani-American novelist. Though the novel deals in many contemporary issues in the wake of September 11 attacks, but my main focus is largely to show that America/capitalist ideology has a kind of fascination and pull for people all over the world which seem so natural to them and that this fascination has already hailed/interpellated them.

Successful ideology is the one that is thought as a natural way of looking at things in the world as is the case with capitalist ideology. After the disintegration of Soviet Union, the bipolar world transmogrified into a unipolar world and America, as a result, not only emerged as a super power of the world, but its huge economic power offered irresistible temptation for the rest of the people to leave their homes for the host country. The main motive behind such desperate journeys is the capitalist notion that one can chase his/her American dream and so can roll in money in the United States of America.

Even before World War II, the U.S. had “highly competitive industrial sector” and was considered “the world’s leading economy” (Bertens 185). The effect of the war not only changed the nation into a “formidable military machine”, but the economic gap between America and the rival European countries also increased dramatically- thirty percent of the U.S.S.R economy came from America. As far as the citizens of America are concerned, their wages doubled between 1945 and 1960 and there was record low unemployment. The then affluence and prosperity of America were surpassed by none. And so, the land of opportunities and bounties attracted as much foreigners as possible. The capitalist notion enticed and became the cause of such desperate journeys as is seen in the world of *Home Boy*.

On the one hand, Nazi ideology was blood thirsty to eliminate the “inferior races” and dreaming the safe future of Aryan race which the Nazis believed they belonged to. On the other, there was this superficial belief of conformity in the United States which was given the name of “free” world. Against this divisive strategy of the Nazis, the Americans were determined to create an environment of cooperation and unity. The essence of which was seen in the formation of United Nations- Franklin D. Roosevelt coined it in 1945 and it came into being in 1948. In this way more and more people came to America while dreaming of a better and peaceful world.

After the 1980, we see multiculturalism not only in America, but in its literature as well. There are many reasons responsible for the multiculturalism. Among them the salient ones are; firstly, it is the tallest stature of American economy flourished after the destructive World War II which attracted people all over the world. Secondly, we see the termination of slavery, though not completely, and the different emancipation movements. Thirdly, there is this Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 which led to the huge immigration. The last but not the least one is in the form of hopes and

aspirations given by multiculturalism which means “equal opportunity” and “political correctness”. This has been the official policy of America during the 1980s. So, there is a kind of attraction in contemporary America like that of capitalist fascination. At the same time, the megalomania of American leaders and the islamophobia and xenophobia of American citizens make the lives of immigrants miserable. This is all H. M. Naqvi’s *Home Boy* is about.

But my argument is that the dominant thinking, after hailing, restricts the actions of the main characters in the novel, especially those of the protagonist, Chuck. These characters think, after migration, that they live freely in the “free” world but, in fact, they are not free in their choices as a certain kind of dominant thinking is imposed upon them. Their thinking controls/restricts their approach and actions. America supports capitalism and considers communism one of its enemies. The fascination of American dream hails and recruit individuals from the rest of the world which results not only in brain drain but helps keep the kingly status of America.

Though H. M Naqvi was born in London, but he had his early schooling in Islamabad. He also spent some of his childhood in Algeria and the US. Like the novelist J D Salinger, he attended the same New York school. He did his graduation in the US from New York State University and worked in the financial services industry for almost a decade. He quit in 2003 and pursued his first novel and MFA in creative writing from Boston University. He lives presently in Karachi. In the novel *Home Boy*, the writer takes us from Karachi to New York through the main character Chuck who leaves his homeland to study English literature at New York State University. After completing his graduation in three years instead of four, he works in a bank and does long hours duty to earn more and more. So, there is an autobiographical tone in the novel and this is what H. M Naqvi says to BBC Asian Network reporter Shabnam



Mahmood on 16 December 2010 that “I think all novels, especially debut novels, are autobiographical” (published on BBC site).

The novel is narrated from the protagonist’s point of view and it can be divided into two parts- the part before and after the terrible 9/11 attacks. My critical focus is largely on the first part to show the connection and motive of the desperate journey from “Homeland to Hopeland” which vindicates the mobility of the characters from their homeland to the western destinations to achieve financial stability and social security. The protagonist shows no nostalgia and gets fully assimilated in the first part but the unfortunate 9/11 drops over on the way. I will also show what is the reaction of the main character towards the misshape. Is the reaction because of his obstruction from chasing his American dream?

Part of my small argument will also examine the role of the author by employing Anthony Appiah’s “Comprador Intelligentsia” whether the writer takes a pro-west stance and mediates between his culture and the Euro-American world as the voice of the author lies in the protagonist and the novelist tells the story from his perspective. Anthony Appiah in his article, “Is the post- in Postmodernism the post- in Postcolonial” states that;

Post coloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a *comprador intelligentsia*: a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. (Appiah 348)

Above all is the question that how America/capitalism hails the protagonist and the other characters of the novel which results in the circumcision of their actions though they think they are not only free in their choice but “free” in the “free” world as

well. I will examine how they think they are free but in fact they are not. I open to question the inescapable influence of the dominant thinking/capitalist ideology on the main characters in the novel by invoking Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and the concept of interpellation.

## **5.2 “In this country you gotta make the money first”: Leaving homeland for the hope land and the already interpellation**

H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy* revolves around three Pakistanis in the US- Ali Chaudhry or AC, Jamshed Khan or Jimbo and Aka Shehzad or Chuck- who consider themselves men of the city (New York) after spending some time in the US. Mini Auntie, AC's sister, works at pediatric ward at Beth Israel on East 87<sup>th</sup> and has “enjoyed spectacular success” after she has emigrated in 1981 (*HB* 2). She has chased her American dream successfully and after ten years she sponsors “AC's green card” to achieve what she has. AC is the only immigrant among the trio. Mini Auntie shares her ideas about America with Chuck that one does not feel British after spending a decade in Britain whereas after spending only “ten months in New York” one becomes a “New Yorker, an original settler” (*HB* 15).

The prevalent and dominant thinking that America is land of opportunities has pervaded through the Pakistani community in the US. It has hailed AC's sister, she comes to America and chases her American dream successfully. After achieving what is inculcated to her either through family (ISA) or any other ideological state apparatus, she becomes a subject (source/cause) to promote the dominant thinking to her brother by sponsoring him a green card. As a result, AC arrives in America and his arrival shows that the fascination of American dream has not only hailed him, but he, like his sister, has come to the US because of the inculcation of the dominant thinking.

Unlike AC, Chuck comes to America as an emigrant to attend the college. Attending college in the US proves a walk in the park for Chuck who completes it in three years swimmingly. When he spends some years in New York and gets a job in a bank, he considers himself a New Yorker and thinks that like him, the city has “claimed” him too. Same is the case with Changez, the protagonist in Mohsin Hamid’s *Reluctant Fundamentalist*, when he gets a job at Underwood Samsung, the business forum, he also feels himself a New Yorker, “I was immediately a New Yorker” (Hamid 20). This spirit of assimilation implies that home, for Chuck, is a place where his heart is. His ambition gets fulfilled and as a result he is surrounded by satisfaction.

Chuck’s father deals in chartered accountancy and his parents want him to become a banker. We see the role of family and educational system as ideological state apparatuses as his parents want him to get a banking job. Despite, he majores in literature but gets a job as a banker. This is what his mother tells him to do;

In the bright fall of a giddy year, I became a banker, an investment banker, not because I was swept by the spirit of the age, by bullish sentiment, by the great Bull Run, but because my mother told me so. A woman of the world, Ma was cognizant that banking and ‘aiytee’ had displaced medicine and engineering in the last decade as coveted careers for able young Pakistani men (and we both knew that I never quite had the aptitude for the sciences). The pursuit of happiness for us was material. (HB 28)

The above lines not only show how the actions are restricted because of the dominant thinking, but they also help us to understand how a certain kind of thinking is imposed upon Chuck by his parents. After securing a job, Chucks calls his mother to inform her about his job at Wall Street who becomes very happy like her husband and

informs her friends and relatives regarding the success of her son. She adds while telling them that those having a job in America as a banker “make millions” (*HB* 28). Now Chuck sends money to his family on monthly basis and his next plan is to sponsor his mother the way Mini Auntie sponsored his brother, AC. He plans;

And the grand plan was that after the bank sponsored my green card, a process that in those days took about three, four years. I would sponsor Ma’s. Then we’d live happily ever like a happy, all American family, minus father figure. Ma had gushed, ‘Oh, your father would have been so happy, ’though there wasn’t much evidence to support the claim. Although my father was a chartered accountant by trade... I suspected he would have rather pursued photography, his childhood hobby. (*HB* 28)

Besides, the above-mentioned characters who have come to America having a preconceived capitalist notion, there are two other characters in the form of Jimbo and Shaman or Muhammad Shah. Jimbo, Like Chuck, considers himself an American. In the aftermaths of 9/11 when things are tense, the migrants/immigrants face antagonistic reaction from Americans. In such a situation, there happens a fight in the bar between two Americans and the three Pakistanis- AC, Jimbo and Chuck. Jimbo draws the line of demarcation by not considering him a Pakistani-American; rather he says, “I’m from Jersey, dude!” (*HB* 24). The superiority is because of America and it is important “where you’re at” than “where you’re from” (*HB* 15).

This sense of pride, being an American, has transferred from his father, Old Man Khan, who settles in New Jersey in 1971 and considers his home “his castle” though it is simple. He feels more than happy and satisfied as he has reached ‘the land of opportunities’ and has played his role positively. He earns and supports his “Begum

through a bachelor's and a master's in psychology" whose career culminates in teaching at Hudson County Community College when she dies of cancer (*HB* 50). Shaman is another Pakistani-American and as far as his success is concerned, he is a source of inspiration for his community. Chuck who is narrator of the story as well, describes him as "a drifter, a grifter, and American success" (*HB* 21).

The last but not the least Pakistani-American is AC who tries his level best to have a kind of ground-breaking research and works on his Ph. D dissertation till 6 am. His sister sponsors him to the US after she achieved her own American success. For the time being, he works as a substitute teacher at Bronx middle school. The idea to leave one's homeland for America and achieve success in the form of accumulating wealth by chasing American dream is a preconceived and prevalent notion among the Pakistani-Americans. So, in the light of the above discussion it may be concluded that the dominant capitalist notion has already interpellated the characters who have come to America. The idea to earn money drives them to leave their homeland for the hopeland- America.

### **5.3 "The pursuit of happiness for us was material": A desperate journey and the subject position**

The capitalist notion that 'America is land of opportunities' has already hailed the Pakistani-American community in the world of the novel, *Home Boy*. The fascination of America and the resultant notion of success regarding American dream attract them to achieve what they have already thought. The preconceived capitalist thinking directs their approach and actions which in return define their roles and subject positions.

The protagonist of the novel, Chuck, completes his graduation swimmingly. His cognizant Ma inculcates him the notion of banking which is capitalist in nature as

banking and IT have excelled medical and engineering recently in earning. The dominant thinking has resulted in the circumcision of his actions and he cannot think beyond the enforced thinking. After completion of his graduation, Chuck decides to start a job in America despite he belongs to a well-off family back in Karachi. In order to give a practical shape to the preconceived dominant thinking, he scatters his resumes, attends interviews, makes phone calls and ultimately secures a job “at a big bank” (*HB* 28). He is good at literature but is pursuing banking as a career just because banking enables him to earn more and more as compared to other careers.

When the mother comes to know about her son’s job, her happiness is to the roof. She boasts of her son’s job to her relatives and friends that people on Wall Street “make millions” (*HB* 28). Keeping in mind the life and struggle in America, Chuck says that “the pursuit of happiness for us was material” (*HB* 28). That is why he does long hours duty as a banker and dreams of a happy “all-American family” (*HB* 28). Chuck seems a hard worker while chasing his American dream;

In any event, banking seemed grand at the time, and I looked and played the part: I worked fourteen, fifteen-hour days, including most weekends, ‘crunching numbers’ and assembling’ pitch books’ for multimillion-dollar mergers, acquisitions, and debt and equity issues. When I had downtime, I played Tetris glazy-eyed or chain smoked while pacing around the block, counting the concrete squares beneath my feet. (*HB* 29)

The above lines show that Chuck’s main objective is to earn as much as possible. American dream has hailed him which is another corner stone of capitalism giving him the impression that one has the room to become a self-invented and self-made man through hard work. Like democracy, it also masks a lot of things. American

dream, like capitalist ideology, not only injects the capitalist notion to go ahead in life, but it also enables Chuck not to notice the economic disparity present in the economic system. Chuck thinks that through hard work he may be in a position to earn more and more and be an “all-American family”, but his earnings can never be equal to the overall capital of the bank in which he works.

Besides, he cannot see his exploitation and attain the position of the bank if he works hard for the whole of his life. This is the function of ideology which “distorts our view of the true conditions of existence” (Bertens 85). During the job, Chuck tries his level best to win the favour of his VP. He does as he is directed and figures out, “who ain’t a slave” (*HB* 29). Being too much busy, Chuck is always on the run and the semi-annual review goes in favour of Chuck and delineates him as someone who is;

Dependable. Conscientious. Sees project through with min. supervision. Thinks about problems. Writes very well. Although it was a fine assessment of a lit major turned banker by the exacting standards of Wall Street, I was by no means a Big Swinging Dick. The review went on to delineate KEY AREAS OF IMPROOVENT: ‘Needs to improve multitasking, attention to detail, grasp of financial concepts.’ (*HB* 30)

Keeping in mind his future dreams and the present review, Chuck is determined to achieve and chase his dreams with flying colours. He says that he has “time” and “will” to “get there” (*HB* 30). He is regardless of the insecurity of his job in future though he figures out who is a slave who is not. He thinks he lives freely in the “free world” though he works like a slave- working fourteen or fifteen hours a day including most weekends. Preoccupied with the affairs of the bank, he does his duty like an indentured servant does. There is a difference between being physically free and

freedom of the mind. Neither is Chuck physically free as he has to do self-imposed long hours duty as a banker nor has he freedom of thought. He is a prisoner in the book. The fascination of capitalist notion has possessed him.

At last, the never unexpected news comes for Chuck and he is fired. His VP tells him that it is not something personal, but at the same time refers to the “Invisible Hand” and his being helpless regarding his dismissal from the job, “My hands were tied” (*HB* 30). When he is fired, Chuck cuts his expenditures by cutting cable and other cellular services. He starts investing in “lottery tickets” which gives him false hopes the way capitalist ideology does. He is pushed from happiness into gloomy days. There were days when they would listen to Nusrat and Nina in rapture but now he finds himself in “profound funk” (*HB* 31). To his great disgust, his hopes are dashed to the ground. In such a dejected situation, AC motivates him that they “will carry on” (*HB* 32). Chuck thinks that things are not in his favour and he is in search of a way out. He wants a job on war basis. In the adversity of time and being far away from his mother, he only considers prolonging his stay in America to achieve the targets for which he has come. He thinks that soon things will click for him.

The accidental meeting with the cab driver, Abdul Karim, proves an epiphany for Chuck in which, on the dining table, he lets the cab driver know that “he wants to become a cab driver” (*HB* 34). Abdul Karim offers him “a job and his hand” and he considers himself “a bonafide New York City cabbie” (*HB* 35). He goes for the driving license and gets it with flying colours. The driving license is more than a “the green card lottery” for him. (*HB* 39) The way one feels happy when he/she wins a green card lottery, in the same way Chuck feels happy when he gets a driving license. This is because, it will not only help him to prolong his stay in the US that he wants desperately, but it makes him able to drive and earn in America.



So, before the mishap of 9/11 Chuck seems as someone who chases his American dream desperately. Arriving in the US, completing his graduation swimmingly and then not deciding to go back to Pakistan show that it has been his choice to reach America and then strive for what is there in his mind. For some time, while working in the big bank, it seemed that he is getting ahead successfully and chasing his American dream though that seemed far away as it would take the bank “about three, four years” to sponsor his “green card” (*HB 28*). Despite the long waiting and the insecurity of his job, Chuck seems determined and has “time” and “will” to fulfil the preconceived capitalist notions of success. When he is fired, he wants another job on war basis and soon becomes a cabby. The actions of Chuck define his subjectivity as a Pakistani who has come to America with a preconceived capitalist notion, does long hours duty and desperately wants to chase his American dream.

## **5.5 “Everything’s changed, Ma, everything’s changed for the worse”:**

### **Post 9/11 scenario and the obstructions**

The mishap of September-11 is a tragedy in a broader sense like the fall of Adam from Elysium. All the sufferings here and the unnecessary waiting in the hereafter are because of the fall of Adam after tasting that forbidden fruit whereas the deadly 9/11 attacks not only legitimised the war and attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, but its aftershocks are still felt individually as well as collectively across the world.

Naqvi’s *Home Boy* discusses the tragedy and its effects on the lives of Pakistani-Americans in the wake of 9/11, apart from expounding many other contemporary issues. America is a different country altogether before the attacks, but post-9/11 America poses threats to different immigrants/migrants when her citizens become reactionary. AC, Jimbo and Chuck visit bars frequently and on one such occasion when

they are in the bar after 9/11, two Americans get provoked and first assault them verbally and then come to blows physically. One of the Brawlers asks them “whatchugonnafuckup?” and soon after Brawler No. 1 calls them “A-rabs” in a fit of furry. (*HB* 23)

In the world of the novel, pre-9/11 America is unlike the post-9/11 America for most of the Pakistani-Americans. America “was something else” but suddenly, it is “a changed America” (*HB* 112). Overall things are not in their favour and they get tensed as time goes on. It is not only a matter of islamophobia and xenophobia for Chuck and his friends; rather it is more a question of the disruption of chasing their dreams for which they have come to the US. Besides, there is a huge difference between the life which they had in Pakistan and which they have in America. That is why AC bursts out when his friends talk about the blue and green colours of the rainbow and the beauty of the city which is a sign that people talk of petty things in hard times;

I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE FUCKING COLOUR SPECTRUM, CHUM! I care about the Shaman! I care about this city. His thick, wavy locks kept falling over his eyes, and he kept pulling them back. Those bastards,' he continued, 'they've fucked up *my* city! THEY'VE FUCKED UP EVERYTHING!'. (*HB* 23)

In an environment of suspicion when things get tense and tenser, the trio want to know the whereabouts of Muhammad Shah or the Shaman who is missing after the twin tower attacks on World Trade Centre. They take a reluctant start towards Connecticut to find the Shaman in his grand “slanted, triangle-shaped house” where he used to throw parties full of rapture for his Pakistani friends (*HB* 82). The last time they had a barbecue night with almost two to three hundred people at the Shaman’s house.

The Shaman is “an American success story” and an inspiration for the rest of the Pakistani-American community apart from Mini Auntie (*HB* 21). They find his doors locked, the lights off and the house deserted having no human beings. They ring the doorbell but get no response. Anyhow, they manage to enter the house and in the absence of Shaman, they do not feel to be at the Shaman’s house likewise. The desolateness makes it hard for them to while away plus it is two at night and raining. The absence of Shaman and his desolate house signify the loss of American dream for the trio.

No one knows what happens in the near future, but the way things are going and the unknown fears haunting them, it seems they are in for trouble. A crackdown against Muslims on CNN shows that they are in hot water and watching the news has fed up Chuck and AC. As they turn off the TV, to their great disgust they find two FBI agents- Agent Trig and Agent Holt- “stood in the porch like totems” (*HB* 99). Soon the question-answer series starts and though AC and Chuck retaliate boldly, but it is the might is right formula that always prevails. The three are taken, with heads covered, hands tied back and Chuck “sandwiched between” the other two, to the Metropolitan Detention Centre where “worst abuses” in post-9/11 America “took place” (*HB* 105).

In the prison, the trio is tortured to the full. Chuck and Jimbo are set free unlike AC, but the reminiscence of being in the jail is like drinking from a bitter cup which results in so many psychological problems and phobias. For the time being, the dreams and hopes of Chuck are dashed to the ground and it seems his world has come to an end. The prison is a kind of setback for him and despair devours him. He says, “The world has stopped making sense” (*HB* 127). It is because what he wanted to achieve has utterly failed. In spite of the hardships and the bitter taste of the prison, Chuck tries to bounce back in life by finding another job.

## CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that *Home Boy* is an unusual and disruptive life narrative of a trio who belong to Pakistan on many accounts. Like many other post-9/11 novels, it questions a lot of prevalent and widespread notions in the wake of September 11. But I have analysed the novel from another angle and have pointed out that how the dominant forces in the form of ideologies have interpellated the Pakistani-American community in general and the main character in particular. The protagonist of the novel, Chuck, have gone to the United States to chase his American dream. First, he succeeds and is interpellated by the dominant capitalist ideology. He does long hours duty as a banker to be what he has hailed him. To chose banking is not the choice of his mother but it is also a pressing job that has excelled medicine and IT in the race of earning. Unfortunately, 9/11 drops over in the way between him and his American dream. The mishap triggers hardships and it is really difficult to get along in a changed America. Chuck willy-nilly wants to be in America to have his American dream achieved. In short, the dominant capitalist ideology has interpellated him.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION: UNDOING CONVENTIONAL THINKING

In order to wrap up this present research project, I would like to review my argument by reverting to the basic premises and objectives of my research. I would also like to hark back to the controlling research questions and show why it was necessary to analyze the primary texts the way I have done. I have examined my primary texts through interpretive and explorative analysis. The research is qualitative in its nature having non-experimental method for analysis and hence cannot be generalized. By using Textual Analysis as a research method, I have analyzed Angela Jackson-Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* and H. M Naqvi's *Home Boy* by invoking Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and his concept of interpellation.

I started off with my main argument that ideology hails individuals even before their birth, enforce certain kind of thinking and as a result they are not free in their choices; rather things are imposed on them. After hailing, the dominant thinking not only directs their actions, but circumscribe them as well which in return define the very imposed thinking in the form of ideology. Besides, the very ideology distorts the "real conditions of existence" through "imaginary relationship" which has nothing to do with reality. I have narrowed down my argument to the exploring of capitalist ideology in the primary texts.

Like an analgesic, capitalist ideology enables individuals not to notice the oppression done to them and the economic disparity present in the economic system. Instead, after being hailed, it drives them mad and they are busy in pursuing the imposed dominant thinking desperately. In the form of myths, concepts and stories the dominant thinking creates a kind of false consciousness and furthers them from understanding real conditions of existence. Between individuals and their “real conditions of existence” there stands an imaginary version known as capitalist ideology which reproduces itself with time like the reproduction of things and hence its success.

I have employed Althusser’s theory of ideology and his concept of interpellation that open to question the inescapable and inevitable influence of the dominant capitalist ideology on the main characters of *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* and *Home Boy*. The influence of ideology cannot be put aside in the life of the main characters of my primary texts which justifies my main argument that why I approached the primary texts the way I have done. During the examination and exploration of the selected texts through critical analysis, I have come to know that the present research projects meets and supports the thesis statement and answers the controlling research questions.

As I have said that Althusser’s theory of ideology and his concept of interpellation have unsettled the influence the ideology in the lives of people which I have addressed through the controlling research questions by analyzing the primary texts. Sylvia’s Mama Rose in *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* lives from hand to mouth and she desperately wants to put an end to her present miserable condition. They have a small “rundown” house with several missing bricks and broken window glasses. She puts some stuff in the holes to keep the cold wind out in winter. Keeping the miseries in mind and after being hailed, she first wants to become a nurse and then a doctor to

live happily like the “white folks” in the east side of the town which is the abode of wealthy people.

Either the family or the educational system which are ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) has inculcated and so injected the dominant capitalist notion in Mama Rose that if she studies medicine and accumulates as much wealth as possible, she will be in a position to be qualified for the wealthy Alabamian society. In other words, the capitalist thinking has hailed her without her being aware of and resulted in the circumcision of her actions. She thinks that it is her choice which she has accepted freely, but in fact, it is the dominant thinking that has imposed the very thinking upon her. The dominant thinking manifests through her likes and dislikes, choice, habits, and actions. That is why Althusser says that ideology has material shape which the actions define.

When her hopes are dashed to the ground, she collapses psychologically and suffers a lot which culminate in her committing of suicide. The capitalist ideology makes her blind to the economic disparity and oppression present in the economic system. She remains engaged from dawn to dusk to work hard and does her homework wholeheartedly to fulfill her dreams which are full of capitalist notions, but all in vain. She inspires her daughter, Sylvia, by saying that if once her Mama finishes her school and becomes a doctor, they will live happily like the “white folks” and so inculcates the dominant capitalist thinking to her daughter without her being aware of.

The novel is a dichotomy between the haves and the have nots and it draws the real battle lines between the poor and the rich by juxtaposing Louisville, the abode of poor people, and Alabama, the place where there are mostly rich people having healthy lifestyle. After the death of her mother, Sylvia goes to Alabama with her father, Hank

Butler, in which her mother failed. Her mother marries him just because he is rich and belongs to Alabama. Sylvia feels the difference and her mother comes to her mind at times when she finds herself stable by having a family which her mother failed to achieve.

After the death of her father, she is left with none and keeps the “nasty things” going with Uncle Charles as she needs somebody to be loved apart from losing her stability in life. As she meets Drew, her boyfriend at school, she dreams of an exalted and high position like her mother which results that the capitalist ideology has driven her mad. She dreams that she will study medicine and Drew will earn a huge scholarship and as result they will have “a golden life”. The same ideology hails her and restricts her actions which in return define the dominant thinking. Both the mother and the daughter go around and then come around and like rolling stones gather no mass. The dominant capitalist notion works like an analgesic for them. They make myths, dreams and capitalist concepts which has nothing to do with their real conditions.

The novel *Home Boy* by Naqvi depicts the lives of a trio- AC, Chuck and Jimbo- in the US whom the capitalist notion hails that America is the land of opportunities. Chuck, the protagonist of the novel, completes her graduation swimmingly from NYU and starts banking over there as it has excelled medicine and IT recently in earning more. He does long hours duty as a banker and has his own dream. He wants to sponsor his mother and it will take the bank three or four years to sponsor Chuck’s green card. After that he intends to sponsor his mother to the US. He wants to live like a ever happy American family. Her mother’s class fellows are almost there in America having achieved their American success.



It is true that the prevalent thinking, to go to America and chase his/her American dream the way most of the Pakistani-Americans have achieved like Muhammad Shah and Mini Auntie in the world of the novel, has hailed the Pakistani-Americans. After achieving the American dream, they want to sponsor their near and dear ones to achieve what they have already achieved. Chuck cannot see things beyond what has hailed him. When he gets a job in a big bank, he calls and informs his mother who boasts of her son's job and tells her relatives and friends that people in Wall Street earn in millions. Soon Chuck starts sending money to his mother and works up to the mark to achieve his American dream.

To work as a banker is his mother's choice who has promoted/inculcated the dominant thinking to her son without her being aware of. Capitalist ideology is a successful ideology as it seems so natural to those who are being hailed. The idea to earn as much as possible and build a house on one's own land is a capitalist notion, and everybody wants to achieve the enforced thinking. The mother imposes the prevalent thinking and then it hails the son which drives him mad as his main target is to get a green card and then sponsor his mother and live happily ever like a happy American family. This circumscribe the actions of Chuck who works fourteen to fifteen hours duty. Even he does his duty on weekends as he has his target/dream in his mind which he desperately wants to achieve.

Chuck belongs to a middle-class family back at home and has their own car. Despite this, he starts working in America after the completion of his graduation. First things are going in his favour, but as soon as the mishap of 9/11 happens, things start going against him. He is fired from his job and as result cuts his expenses and does not share the news of his dismissal from the job with his mother. In a tense environment, when the trio takes a reluctant start to Connecticut to know about the Shaman who is

missing after the twin towers attack. The Shaman is a source of inspiration for the trio as far as the American success is concerned.

On that unfortunate night, the FBI agents take the trio to a detention center where prisoners are abused in post-9/11 America. Even after being released from the prison, Chuck tries his level best to keep going in America. This time he becomes a cab driver. He just wants to prolong his stay in America for the sake of getting a green card and then giving a practical shape to his American dream. When his visa is going to be expired, he wants a job so desperately as between him and his American dream there is need of a job which can extend his stay in the US. When he is called for another job, he comes to life again and shares the good news with his mother. At last he comes back to Pakistan without having achieved his American dream.

So, it may be concluded with the words that the dominant thinking defines the actions of Chuck which are restricted. He thinks that he is free in “a free world” which means America, but in fact the dominant thinking imposes things upon him. Family and education system (ISAs) play a significant role in the inculcation of capitalist ideology.

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