



RESEARCH PAPER

Ideology and State Apparatuses (ISAs and RSAs): A Marxist Study of A Case of Exploding Mangoes by Mohammad Hanif

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ABSTRACT

This research paper demonstrates the dominant power of ideology having a material existence, which leads people to become conformist of a state where the social and religious institutions used as tools to construct the subjects. It seeks to investigate one of the most notorious novels, A Case of Exploding Mangoes (2008) by Muhammad Hanif, under the theoretical underpinnings of Louis Althusser's ideas of ideology, ideological state apparatuses (ISAs), repressive state apparatuses (RSAs), interpellation, and, most significantly, the subject model. The use of repressive state apparatuses (RSAs) in General Zia-ul-Haq's regime has been highlighted through the qualitative mode of inquiry. Catherine Belsey's textual analysis method has been used to analyse the selected novel. The research pays close attention to General Zia-ul-Haq's administration and the ways in which Pakistanis were subjugated by ideological state apparatuses. This paper analyzes how Muhammad Hanif, deconstructs the social myths about General Zia and history in Pakistan.

KEYWORDS Exploding Mangoes, Identity, Ideology, Islamization, Nationalism, Subject

Introduction

Muhammad Hanif, a journalist and writer from Pakistan who was born in 1964, is well-known for his highly-read book A Case of Exploding Mangoes (2008). For The New York Times, he also publishes editorial and critical commentary. A Case of Exploding Mangoes is Hanif's extraordinary masterpiece, making the Booker Prize longlist, the Guardian First Book Award shortlist, and the Commonwealth Prize for Best Book. His novel, Our Lady of Alice Bhatti, was the 2011 recipient of the Welcome Book Prize.

A Case of Exploding Mangoes (2008) is a humorous account of cynical characters weaving together many conspiracy theories in the political atmosphere of one of Pakistan's most prominent military regimes, which culminated in the killing of General Zia, the Chief Martial Law Administrator at the time. It puts into context a made-up narrative around the actual plane accident that claimed the life of General Zia, the president of Pakistan from 1977 until 1988, and gave rise to several conspiracy theories. After viewing a tank demonstration in Bahawalpur, Pakistan, on August 17, 1988, the president, top army officials, and US Ambassador to Pakistan, Arnold Raphael, were fired in the air. Col. Quli Shihigri, the main character of Lazy, Irreverent Ali Shigri's novel, purportedly died by suicide, but Ali learns that Major Kiyani, a renegade ISI agent, assassinated his father under Zia's orders. Set in the months preceding the plane crash, the story centers on Ali's schemes for revenge and his first-hand recollections of Zia's life. Together with his roommate

Marxism was first publicly formulated in the form of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), by Karl Heinrich Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), a renowned German philosopher. It lays out the theory of class struggle and revolution, which further focuses on the criticism of capitalism introduced by Marx in *Das Kapital* (1867). Louis Althusser, a renowned French philosopher and professor of philosophy, kicked off his concept of ideology. According to Althusser (1971), ideology "represents" the "imaginary relationship of individuals" to the real world; the thing ideology (mis)represents is itself already at one remove from the real (p. 333).

By following this, Althusser stays true to the Lacanian understanding of the imaginary order, which is different from the Lacanian Real itself. Put another way, since we rely on language to tell us what "reality" is, people are naturally steeped in ideas; diverse ideologies are only representations of our socially constructed and imagined "reality," not true portrayals of truth. Althusser (1971) further contends that ideology has a material existence because "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (p. 334). Ideology always manifests itself through actions, which are "inserted into practices". In fact, Althusser even adopts Pascal's prescription for faith, which states, "Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe."

According to Althusser, however, the state serves as a "machine" of repression that aids the bourgeois class and the "class" of wealthy landowners in the nineteenth century in continuing to rule over the working class. This makes it possible for the former to use the state apparatus against the latter, a kind of capitalist exploitation known as surplus-value extortion (p. 14).

Literature Review

There have been a number of studies conducted on Muhammad Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, as it is the most notorious fictional narrative of the real-life incidents, which unmasks a number of myths about Zia's regime as a hero of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The novel has been praised and won a number of awards in world literature; however, at the same time, it has been rejected and discouraged by the military lovers in Pakistan. Though there are conspiracy theories that can be practiced in Hanif's fictional narratives, it is a masterpiece that has been glorified internationally under a number of schools of thought. Hanif's use of black humor, irony, and a nonlinear plot has led the novel to be esteemed on a global level as it challenges the status quo of military dictators.

Mubashir Iltaf (2019), a lecturer in English at the University of Sargodha, has analyzed the novel under the title *A Barthesian Critique of Mohammad Hanif's Novel: A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. He foregrounds how Muhammad Hanif has deconstructed the social myths about General Zia and history in Pakistan, as people believe that Zia was the hero of Islam who saved the state from the corruption of the political leaders. He explores the novel through the lenses of poststructuralism and convinces the readers to think against the romantic myths regarding Zia as a hero but as an exploiter, an opportunist, and a deceiver. Iltaf further unmasks and breaks up the fabricated beliefs of people about the history of Pakistan. The politicized narratives regarding Zia's justice, Islamization, morality, protection, and integrity have been foregrounded. He mentions in his article that:

"Hanif proves that Zia was not concerned with the safety of his nation and military men, but he had an only concern to collect money and prolong his tenure of the regime. Even, people in the regime of Zia felt insecure. They often used to hide their identities. Hanif makes it easy for understanding that how General Secretary, a prisoner in jail, gets afraid of Ali when Ali tells him that "I am from the Armed Forces" (p. 163) General

Secretary hesitates to tell his name. Yet, he keeps his name secret from Ali because he misunderstands that Ali is also one of Zia's spies." (p. 04)

Mubashar Iltaf is very much concerned about the exploration of the corrupt dictatorial regime of Zia, which has been brilliantly contextualized by Muhammad Hanif in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. He focuses on how society suffered during Zia's government; however, this paper focuses on the ideological and repressive tools that were used to allure society to accept the illegitimate government of a dictator.

Muhammad Yar Tanvir (2014), in his research article entitled *Praetorianism in A Case of Exploding Mangoes: A Critical Analysis*, foreshadows the social and political circumstances of Pakistan when the illegitimate government was tried to be justified. He explores pragmatism, which is the control of a society by force or fraud, especially when exercised through titular officials and by a powerful minority. This idea is very much in line with the repressive state apparatuses of Althusser's concept of marginalization in a society. The proposed paper investigates ISAs and RSAs, which is not too much about the excessive or abusive political influence of the Armed Forces in a country, as we find in Pratorianism. He states:

"Praetorianism, lacking popular support, tends to strengthen coercive arms of the State. Zia brought to the army the required modernization, courtesy of support from the conservative Gulf Cooperation Council. Indulging in blandishment of Saudi Arabia and declaring any attack on it as an attack on Pakistan, Zia won Saudi sympathy and finances to pay for the F-16 fighter jets. In 1981 and 1987, America promised Pakistan 3.2 billion and 4.2 billion dollars respectively as military and economic aid. The American money went a long way in strengthening the army and consolidating the Zia regime. Not all that money was judiciously used for then stipulated purpose. Behind his regular protestations of Islamic piety, he and his close companion, Genera Akhtar Abdur Rehman, a former ISI (Inter Services Intelligence) boss and CJCS (Chairman Joint Chief of Staff) managed to accumulate the most ill-gained wealth of all. The stories of corruption by the higher military bureaucracy surfaced in the international media as *The Times* published the "World's Richest Generals" and "Leakage in the Arms Pipeline" (p. 06).

In the paper, *Silencing the Subaltern in Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, Abroo Nazar (2016) foreshadows the representation of women in Pakistani literature in English under the lights of the postcolonial school of thought. She explores Hanif's notions regarding women's marginalization and victimization in the patriarchal and racial society of Pakistan. She explores females as the victims of religious, cultural, and social violence in these works. Abroo finds out the stagnant stereotyping strategies used to represent Pakistani women. It helps us to think through the lenses of the neo-oriental consciousness of Third World writers as they portray stereotypical images of society in order to be glorified by the First World (p. 05).

Fatima Hassan (2016), in her paper, *The Empire Writing Back: A Contemporary Pakistani Novel in English*, foreshadows the post-colonial nations through their writers attempts to forge and present their perspective to the world. She foregrounds how the language of colonial masters is being used to gain fame while exploring the domestic issues of the post-colonial countries of the Third World. It has been foregrounded that Third World writers re-write and re-imagine history with vivid but fictionalized descriptions. According to her, Hanif is "a contemporary Pakistani writer whose writing in English has given it a distinct Pakistani flavor and has molded it to suit his purposes". (p. 06).

In the current paper, the research focuses on the ideological and repressive tools that were used to justify the illegitimate government of Zia, portrayed by Muhammad Hanif in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. The researchers have found the research gap as a number of studies have been conducted on the notorious novel under certain schools of thought, but the researchers felt the need to accentuate the state apparatuses used by Zia to justify his illegitimate government. The Marxist study of the novel under the lenses of Althusser's ideology and state apparatuses has yet to be explored.

Material and Methods

The research has used a qualitative mode of inquiry for the proposed study, in which he has used Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and ideological state apparatuses, which have been developed under the influence of Marxists' concepts of ideology, state, and interpellation. The researcher, however, has used an interpretive approach to find the final consequences. The article deals with a thorough analysis of the novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) under the Marxist school of thought. There are a number of capitalist regimes in which the ideological state apparatus has been practiced for centuries, through which the individuals of the state are interpellated into subjects under the influence of different ideologies like nationalism and patriotism. There are a number of ISAs, like the family, the religious, the education, the legal, the political, the cultural, and the communication ISAs. Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) are used as tools to construct desired conformists in society, etc. (p. 5).

The prime concerns of the research are to explore ideological state apparatuses and repressive state apparatuses that were used to construct conformist subjects during Zia's regime, which have been contextualized by Muhammad Hanif in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008). According to Tyson (2006), "For Marxism, getting and keeping economic power is the motive behind all social and political activities, including education, philosophy, religion, government, the arts, science, technology, the media, and so on" (p. 53). Bressler remarks about Marxism: "Marxism has flourished as a pragmatic view of history" (p. 166). The Marxist school of thought has been further explored by a number of philosophers and thinkers. Louis Althusser, a French Marxist theorist, coined the theory of "ideological state apparatuses (ISAs)", repressive state apparatuses, and "ideological interpellation," which foregrounds the idea of a "mutual relationship between the subject and ideology." (p. 142)

In his essay, Althusser defines the concept of ideological interpellation as "all ideology hails or interpolates concrete individuals as concrete subjects by functioning of the category of subjects". He further defines the function of interpellation as "I shall then suggest that ideology "acts" or "function" in such a way that it "recruits" subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all) or "transforms" the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpretation or hailing."(p. 143).

The lower class of society often feels that they are "free agents," but they are interpellated by the very concept of ideology. Althusser mentions that education is the "*dominant (apparatus) or the number one ideological state apparatus*". Thus, education takes a pivotal position to teach people a way of thinking or ideology, since they obtain their knowledge and perspective through it" (p. 153).

Results and Discussion

Muhammad Hanif's notorious novel, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008), explores the real-life history of the most controversial president of Pakistan, the four-star general Zia-ul-Haq. He installed himself through the use of repressive state apparatuses against Bhutto and ruled the country for eleven years until his planned crash incident. In the novel, to control the democratic political system and justify his illegal government, Zia made it his aim to Islamize the state system. He uses Islam as an ideology, under the spell of which he constructs the subjects for the desired state. In order to achieve his goal as a ruler and to repress the political parties' rage against his illegitimate government, he uses violent repression, which was once named by Althusser, the Repressive State Apparatuses. We find in the novel how the dual-faced nature of Zia works to control society and to internalize Zia's image as a true hero, not only for Pakistan but for the whole Ummah. So religion has been used as a tool. The Imam-Masjid of the Mosque in GHQ is one of the most obedient subjects of the state and prefers to accentuate the selected verses and their interpretations according to the desires of the masters.

Primarily, religion has been used as an ideology. The falsified version of Islam is imposed, which is totally self-interpreted and far from the true teaching of Islamic monotheism. Louis Althusser states that *ideology* does not "reflect" the real world but "represents" the "imaginary relationship of individuals" to the real world; the thing ideology (mis)represents is itself already at one with the real. Indeed, Althusser (1969-1971) follows Lacanian ideas and understanding of the imaginary order, which is itself one step removed from the Lacanian real. In other words, we are always within ideology because of our reliance on language to establish our "reality." Different ideologies are just different representations of our social and imaginary "reality," not a representation of the real itself. (p. 15). So, the Islamization imposed by the dictators in the history of Pakistan, especially during Zia's regime, This is the mask on the face of General Zia, a religious bent of mind, being the Mullah in the General's uniform, but actually he was a "wolf in sheep's clothing," as explored by Muhammad Hanif that

"The generals who had called Zia a mullah behind his back felt ashamed at having underestimated him: not only was he a mullah, he was a mullah whose understanding of religion didn't go beyond parroting what he had heard from the next mullah. A mullah without a beard, a mullah in a four-star general's uniform, a mullah with the instincts of a corrupt tax inspector." (p. 32)

It shows how the ideology of Islam is being used as a political strategy to gain fame and the interest of society in ruling them. Being a praetor, Zia was not the first ruler to have declared Islam and Pakistan synonymous, but Pakistan's drift from official Islam to Islamism This Islam is not the "real" one; it has been removed from the very teachings of monotheism in order to serve the masters of the First World. The leader of the Third World, General Zia, caters to the needs of First World War managers through the teaching of Holy Jihad according to Islam. For this, he does not use only the land; he internalizes the concept of Jihad and intensifies individuals willingness to take part in Jihad against the Soviet Union. The common individuals are constructed as subjects through the use of ideological state apparatuses. The individuals from Pakistan and Afghanistan, under the ideological flag of Islam, turn into one group that shows the *imaginary relationship of individuals* to the real world of Islamic monotheism, where this ideology (mis)represents and has been removed from the real.

Secondly, the individual is directed to think about India, an atomic technology holder neighbor, as a great threat to their land and lives. It has been explored by

Muhammad Hanif how this threat has been internalized in the minds of the people so that the dictatorship can be justified. The dictators can be accepted as the saviors and heroes of the nation. The Kashmir issue has been turned into a hegemonic, politicized discourse that must be taken seriously on the basis of logic and reason. Apart from the Kargil War, the 1948, 1965, and 1971 wars are quoted as examples, and innocent lives (martyrs) are glorified romantically.

The "Indian threat" has been crafted, which shapes Pakistan's doctrine of "strategic depth," which got it embroiled for 28 years in wars in Afghanistan. Unsurprisingly, this "insecurity state" soon became a militarized state. The Pakistani military, a volunteer force, grew from an estimated 215,000 men on independence to the world's seventh largest armed forces, with about 620,000 personnel in 2007. At the same time, the defense budget jumped from 600 million Pakistani rupees to 276 billion in 2007 (4.5% of the country's GDP and half of the country's export revenue). With defense spending swallowing up about 70% of total public expenditure in 1947 and still more than 20% today, the military exerts undeniable financial pressure on Pakistan's feeble economy. Thus, both the states and their masters have no interest in the lives of common people, the labor class, and the uneducated community in the non-developed rulers' areas of Pakistan and India. It is the choice of their masters, the First World capitalists, to internalize the threats. Under the gloomy shadows of war, both countries try their level best to spend billions of dollars to buy advanced weapons in order to kill humanity and war equipment (webbing) to save lives. Muhammad Hanif thus unmask the true face of global politics and the trades of capitalist advanced countries. The impact of the global tug of war has a great impact on Third World countries, which has been highlighted in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, allegorically, as Baby'O says:

"I, the imperialist Eagle, swooped down on Obaid's Third World Dove; he fought back, and for the finale sat on my chest drawing blood from my neck with his cardboard beak" (p. 17).

The same third World Dove, Zia-ul-Haq, was drawing blood from the necks of his public on one hand and from the Afghani's on the other, just to cater to the demands of his masters under the ideology of Islam and Jihad. Althusser contends that ideology has a material existence because "an ideology always exists in an apparatus and its practice" (p. 112). Ideology always manifests itself through actions, which are "inserted into practices" (p. 114). The whole society of Pakistan is a witness to the practice of material existence. In this context, so many conspiracy theories were being concocted about the military rule of the country, which was later overturned by the Divine Power after eleven years as a tragic consequence of Zia's accident.

Althusser states that "the reproduction of labor power requires not only a reproduction of its skills but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e., a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'" (p. 6).

In the novel, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, Hanif explores how the trainees are educated and how the ideas of the masters are internalized in their minds. Ali Shigri and his other buddies are trained to salute their higher authorities. The people who are supposed to be 'highly intelligent' are selected not only on the basis of reproduction of their skills but also, at the same time, 'a reproduction of their submission to the rules of the established order, i.e., a reproduction of their submission to the ruling ideology for the

workers'. It is the ideological concept that all the decisions taken by the military rulers in the army and in the country's politics are always for the future of the nation. Ali Shigri knows well that his father did not commit suicide, but he was killed by their own authorities' orders directed by the supreme master. Muhammad Hanif mocks the tricks used by the military to have a great influence. Shigri, though, knows well about the hypocritical nature of the forces, as these snakes can eat their own offspring in times of need, but he is still willing to be part of that silent drill parade under the influence of the notion that, "There is nothing that impresses civilians more than a silent drill display" (p. 9).

Hanif explores Zia who possesses a staunch believer in the Islamic constitution as is devised in the Holy Quran. But this interpretation under the desired result of which Zainab has been sentenced to death. She is accused to be a married treacherous prostitute and sentenced to be stoned in front of public as an example. However, she is a victim of men's beastliness who has been used inhumanly. In the patriarchal society she has been declared sinner and punished, accordingly. The teaching of Islamic Monotheism against adultery has been misinterpreted and Zainab is one the examples of these desired interpretation. In Zia's scheme of things, women were the ornament of home and their evidence was half as good as that of a man under the Law of Evidence which has been contextualized by Hanif in the shape of Zainab. He foreshadows how Zia is cruel to his wife who has been treated brutally and victimized by a mullah while wearing uniform of glory and duel-nature mask of Islam. During Zia's regimen in the history of Pakistan, Women Action Forum, a body of urban-educated women protested against these laws and generated worldwide concern. To avert any possibility of court intervention, Zia muzzled the courts further by promulgating the Provisional Constitutional Order (1980, 1981) and retired the recalcitrant Supreme Court judges like Justice Durab Patel and F.G. Ibrahim. This shows how Repressive State Apparatuses are used not only to control the society but also to construct the subjects for the State. The holy verses of Quran have been used as their own interest and individual subjects think that this is what the true meaning and purpose of Pakistan where the laws of Islam can be practiced openly. Islamization of the country is only one of the many masks which he wore on his face to elongate his rule. We find Hanif's claim as, "Between making a decision and implementing it, General Zia sometimes liked to seek divine opinion. And although changing into uniform before or after morning prayers wasn't likely to affect the destiny of his one hundred and thirty million subjects," (p. 25).

It shows Althusser's notion regarding the state as the state is 'a machine' of repression, which enables the ruling classes (in the nineteenth century, the bourgeois class and the 'class' of big landowners) to ensure their dominance over the working class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value extortion (i.e., capitalist exploitation). the state apparatus.

Zia agrees to fight the proxy American war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Pakistan was declared to be a front-line state that took part in the war for global peace. Zia was highly admired by American officials and the National Security Advisor in the Carter Administration, Mr. Brzezinski. The authoritative language used by the military officers in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* shows the violent use of repression to construct subjects. These subjects are lulled by the dollar. Islam has been used as a tool to repress individuals, and those who rage against hypocritical dictators are labeled as atheists and liberals. Zia's administration shows its power. Ali Shigri and Baby O are the characters who have been tortured brutally by ISI officials. People are underground, and no one knows where they are going. Even their dead bodies are impossible to remove. In the novel, the following statement shows the violent use of force against the

nonconformists, as he argues that "some people insist on digging their own grave." The 2nd OIC snatches the Quran from my hand and puts it back on the shelf." (p. 39).

Conclusion

Consequently, we can say that this research has been planned to investigate the state apparatuses used by Zia to justify his illegitimate rule over Pakistan and to construct the individual subjects of the state under the spell of ideology, which has been contextualized by Muhammad Hanif in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008). The historical myths have been deconstructed by Hanif, as Zia is supposed to be the savior and the leader of Islam. The findings of the present paper explore the dominant power of ideology, which leads people to become conformist subjects of a state. It highlights the social and religious institutions used as tools to construct the subjects of individuals in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. It illustrates the recruitment of individuals by the material existence of ideology as a revelatory dominant force imposed by the higher authorities. This paper foregrounds the falsified version of justice under the self-made rules imposed by higher authorities in the name of Islam as an ideology of the state. It highlights how Muhammad Hanif substantiated ideological state apparatuses and repressive state apparatuses in the construction of the desired society in Pakistan. Zia's slogans of Islamization, morality, justice, fortification, the imposition of the Hudood Ordinance, and the practice of laws against adultery are basically self-made, desired regulations. These are the ideological and repressive state apparatuses used by Zia to control and justify his illegitimate government.

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