

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Interpellation of Individual as Subject in Malamud's *The Fixer*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

in the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

Bishweshwar Prasad Lamichhane

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

June 2011

1

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

This thesis entitled “Interpellation of Individual as Subject in Malamud's The Fixer” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Bishweshwar Prasad Lamichhane has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Bishweshwar Prasad Lamichhane has completed his thesis entitled “Interpellation of Individual as Subject in Malamud's *The Fixer*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from December, 2010 to June, 2011 A.D. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

Mr. Badri Prasad Acharya

Supervisor

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere acknowledgement and hearty gratitude to Mr. Badri Prasad Acharya, lecturer of the Central Department of English for helping me to accomplish this present research with all his promptness of intellectual and philosophical guidance. Without his initial encouragement this research would never have seen the light of day.

I am also indebted to Dr. Ammaraj Joshi, the head of Central Department of English, for his invaluable comments and constant intellectual guidance. Mr. Hemlal Pandey and Mr. Raju Baral who helped me during the submission of my thesis proposal. Likewise, I would like to express my gratitude to all the teachers of the English Department for providing me scholarly guidance and imparting their invaluable assistance and knowledge time and again to mould my academic career and encouraging me to accomplish this research.

In addition, I am very much thankful to the generous support of my parents, Mr. Purna Dev Lamichanne and Mrs. Naina Kala Lamichhane as they have always been encouraging in my academic pursuit. And thanks to my friends Mr. Sunil Limbu (Labunge Lion), Ram Krishna Bhandari, Bipin Pokhrel, Jharendra Luitel and my brothers Mr. Rajan Lamichanne, Bidur, Pralahd and Prakash Bhanja for providing me many valuable comments on the prefinal draft.

Bishweswar Prasad Lamichhane

June 2011

Abstract

The present research attempts to analyze the novel *The Fixer* by Malamud from the perspective of Neo-Marxism. It brings into light the situation in which an individual gets interpellated by ideological and material condition of the society. Yakov Bok, the protagonist of the novel, becomes victim of different realms of ideology erected by the bourgeois class which kicks him off from the pillar to post by assigning him in multiple roles and thus dissolving his real existence as a normal human. The ideological state apparatuses, which work as a legitimized discrete body in sanctioning the views and interest of the ruling class people, i.e. Tsar, evaporate Bok's plea for justice and freedom. His voice for a sound verdict is ignored and liquidated in the capitalist society. The dominant ideology in forms of family, religious, judicial and educational ISAs repress Bok's advocacy for recognition and self-affirmation. The extreme tortures which Bok a bear at the hands of Tsars makes him revolutionary which is no different than the voice of protest emerging from the proletarians. Bok's advocacy for equality, freedom, and justice signals the resistive force and new forms of awareness on the part of the hitherto marginalized people.

Contents

	Page No.
Letter of Recommendation	
Letter of Approval	
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
I. Introduction to Malamud's <i>The Fixer</i> as a social criticism	1-14
II. Interpellation of Individual as Subject in Malamud's <i>The Fixer</i>	15-45
Capitalist ISAs in <i>The Fixer</i>	15-24
Family ISAs in <i>The Fixer</i>	25-28
Religious ISAs in <i>The Fixer</i>	28-34
Judicial Ideological Apparatus	34-36
Repressive State Apparatus	36-38
Resistance to Capitalism: Alternative Ideology to Capitalism	38-45
Conclusion	46-47
Works Cited	48-49

I. Introduction to Malamud's *The Fixer* as a social criticism

The present research has been undertaken to show the vicious influence of an ideology in recreating the imaginary existence of the characters, especially Yakov Bok, the protagonist of the novel. Throughout the novel, he entails himself as an active agent responding time and again to the situation created by the capitalist society. His actions are set against the ensurement of his existence as a social being and as a natural man endowed with all pursuits. Though he undergoes several tortures as a result of economic and social forces, he acts with all his sense of being to manage and harmonize the identity diluted by the ideological and the social apparatuses like clubs, governmental institutions, religion and others. The perversion of his real existence (as an ordinary Jew) starts at a particular point when Bok moves from Shtetl to Kiev so as to make his dreams true and his life worth-living. But when he is convicted of murdering a young Russian boy, his quest to the economic and social comes at stake. It is in the custody where he starts fantasizing of being a free and revolutionary man. However, his dream to be an economically secure man is checked by the ideology that is pervasive in the society. And Bok's failure to actualize his dream is the result of hegemony that scrutinized and sanctioned each individual as a commodity and as a profitable being. Yakov Bok is doomed to practice the same ideological rituals that give a person the image illusionary existence rather than the real one.

Bernard Malamud is a Jewish American novelist, born in Brooklyn, New York. Also known as a short story writer, his novels focus Jewish experiences in

America and other European countries. Psychologically his heroes (characters) are confined to ghetto life. Moreover, they are born to a moralistic life and learning conscience, responsibility, mercy, love and delayed gratification. In other words, liberty is the characteristic feature of his characters and the major theme of his novels. Malamud expects his heroes to take instructions in cooperation and humility in a world in which other values like narcissism, self-interest etc are likely to be more appropriate. He punishes his characters for keeping evil attitudes and implicit desires.

Bernard's novels comprise the version of ethical responsibility fused with the accountability of the Jewishness. He writes about sexual transactions. Malamudian story contains the theme – sex denied and denial moralized. His tales of encouraging unhealthy sexual curiosity and responsibility are derived from their underlying sense of dead lock. Malamud is reluctant to serve up happy endings due to moral realism of his sort, the evaluation that life is tough, especially for a Jew and moral compromise is the essence of maturity.

Malamud's heroes who suffer from the overruling forms and functions of the society pass their lives in erotic quest that lead them to their own destruction. He also specializes in ambivalence (showing mixed feelings about a particular objects, persons or situation) and his conflicting cultural perspectives lead to the creation of the world that is different from the world expected by the readers. Basically his novels deal with his intuitions about the unfulfilled and stressed life of the characters followed by epiphanies of disappointment and loss. He uses the language of poignancy to explore the foreboding plight of his characters.

As a Jewish American writer Malamud explores the universal problems that inflict every Jews living in American and European countries. He is the recorder of

the Jewish experience with all its despair, possibility and hope for economic and political redemption. As we go through the novel *The Fixer*, it can be said that Malamud brings Jewishness to the center of analysis and chronicles how a Jew, inflicted by poverty and circumstances, starts living under the ideological reign of ruling class in the society. Malamud makes his protagonist, Yakov Bok, a sound character and explores how he suffers “for no better reason than he was born a Jew” (206). Jewishness becomes the prime cause of his suffering, torture and guilt.

Malamud often captures the immigrant experience of the Jews and creates in his novels and stories the unique worlds. Most often his character is an individual carrying burden of the whole Jews. His characters are disappointed because they desire which they cannot attain and the failure to actualize their dream draws them to the bitter end. Malamudian characters are exposed with their Jewish faith entailed by their duty and major responsibility. Leonard Unges seems to accept this idea as he states, “Malamud generally uses acceptance of one Jewishness for the responsibility of the human conditions” (401). If he denies his Jewishness, the situation comes out to be that he is rejecting the ethical center and questioning his own cultural root.

His first novel *The Natural* (1952) reworks on the legend of Holy Grail as an allegorical fantasy about a star baseball player. Of baseball, the most typical North American sport, Malamud reveals not only its most hidden squalor and sweating bottoms, but also its mythical space, wherein ancient rituals are renewed. His second novel *The Assistant* (1957) is concerned with Jewish themes and reflects the sad impoverished Brooklyn scenes of his childhood. This novel also dramatizes the complication a Jew has to undergo in the society outnumbered by the people with anti-Semitic thoughts. This novel also articulates the dilemma under which a Jew

lived for a long time. This novel shows glimpse on both the rising Jews in America and the problems which they face in their everyday lives. The story of this novel ends at a particular point when the protagonist is circumcised and comes up with a modest sense of being a Jew.

His next novel *The Tenants* is the narrative of the cultural identity of Jews mixed with the tone often of pity, mercy and hatred towards all types of cruelties upon them. His best novel *The Fixer* (1966) is based on a true story of the suffering of a Russian Jewish workman sentenced unjustly to prison – it demonstrates how human beings can come through suffering to an affirmative view of life.

Malamud as an author concerns with the plight of one ethnic group, the Jews which is put under the category of Jewish rituals, history and difficulties created by economic circumstances. He uses symbol to depict the tragic experience of an individual who suffers more when s/he craves for Jewish identity and economic betterment. Frederick Karl in his book *American Fictions* writes, “Malamud’s novels define unique world: Post Holocaust ethics, Jews and Gentiles intermingling in universal suffering, guilt and penance, that consciousness of miracle which derives from faith in something beyond the self: the despair that precedes a deepening of ethical belief” (240). This shows that Malamud is a Jewish writer who explores the problems and conditions faced by Jews in an environment that is hostile, abusive and authoritative.

Malamud’s *The Fixer* is a novel important from historical, political and cultural view point. Set against the backdrop of pre-revolutionary Russia (before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917) and after the revolution of 1905, the novel explores on the circulation of ideological forces which valorized the interest of people in power

and reduced the ordinary people to nonentity. In *The Fixer*, it is task of Yakov Bok to finally see beyond, outside the myth of Jewishness of Jewish suffering. His task is to see himself not only as a Jew, sustained in his ordeal by his sense of the role of the Jewish people in an alien world, but also to see himself as a man acting against the controlling forces of the ruling class society and acting in the stream of events that is history. Bok is brought to this insight as he thinks:

Once you leave you're out in the open, it rains and snow. It snows history, which means, what happens to somebody starts in a web of events outside the personal. It starts of course before he gets there. We're all in history, that's sure, but some are more than others, Jews more than some. (6)

The central character of the novel, Bok appears to be a scapegoat of the political puzzle of the contemporary Russia with the reactionary government which wanted the extinction of Jewish race.

The Fixer is a story of a Jewish handyman or a fixer who leaves his birthplace seeking an assured future with golden opportunities for a new life in Kiev. He sneaks out from his birthplace so that he would be secured economically and live comfortable life in this city. But it is a sad and ironical fact that instead of getting a new life in the city, Kiev, he becomes the victim in the dirty political games of Black Hundreds, the member of anti-Semitic movement interested in political unrest and creating the worst condition for the Jews. When he is falsely accused of murdering a Russian boy, his quest for economic prosperity and successful life is questioned. As he is imprisoned by Czars, he bears the tortures of vast magnitude which he never experienced. Despite this, he refuses to surrender his faith. Instead, he acquires a

revolutionary Jewishness taking him into the Bolsevick Revolution as he cries in the novel with exclamation, “uphold the law and destroy the Tsar with a thunderbolt” (203).

In the prison he is extremely tortured to the extent that he thinks of committing suicide but he does not do so thinking that it will ultimately help the oppressive social authority. Then he starts dreaming time and again about his pat life in Shtetl and thinks how his life was different and easygoing in Shtetl than it has been in the disgusting environment of Kiev, a city where Jews were not well received. He also comes to know how his dream to be an economically secured person has been battered by the overruling social apparatuses, religion and class hierarchy. His excessive desire for material pursuit makes him leave his wife, Raisel and his father-in-law, Shmuel. When Shmuel inquires what there is in Kiev which is not in Shtetl, Bok answers delinquently: “Since I can’t be a professional on account of lack of education I wouldn’t mind being wealthy. As the saying goes, I’d sell my last shirt to be a millionaire. My be, by luck, I’ll make my fortune in the outside world” (12).

Bok’s promptness to examine his fate in the outside world i.e. Kiev gets hindered as he is accused of murdering a Russian boy. He is not able to fulfill his dream because he has been circumcised by the social forces which would not let him act and think freely. As he comes under the servitude of Lebedev, the owner of brick factory who gives Bok the post of manager, he realizes that the time has come to actualize his dream. But Bok fails to manage the order of his assigned job simply because his new identity which is formed by the ruling class of the society is merely an illusion. Bok is manipulated by the state apparatuses which have formed an ideology of its interest either by repressing the demands and necessities of common

people or by forming a discourse that would seemingly address the working class people.

Bok tries to maintain his true sense of being at the cost of overthrowing the powerful gaze of the religion that dominated other social forms and function. By questioning the forms and hypocrisies of the Christianity, he questions the illusive identity which state conforms to an individual in the name of religion. When his father-in-law asks him to keep faith in God, he rejects saying that he is a free thinker and realizes that his freedom depends on the freedom of all impoverished Jews community. Bok comes to this stage of realization when he knows how his sense of free being is constrained by the illusive identity that state sanctions upon the individual. He realizes how his existence in Kiev has been imaginary and how he has been manipulated by the ideological forces of the society. He tries to make himself a revolutionary and even thinks of killing Tsar and shouts, “Death to the anti-Semites! Long live revolution! Long live liberty! (335)

The Fixer has been able to draw the attention of many critics since its publication in 1966. Different critics have interpreted the text differently and have opened many new ways of approach commenting on *The Fixer*. Some critics have taken Malamud as a pure Jewish writer whose concern is mainly to capture the grim experience of the Jews. Mc Michael calls him “a recorder of the Jewish experience with all its despair, possibility and hope for redemption” (202). So, for him *The Fixer* is a record of Jewish experience both with the sense of despair and hope for a better life.

In *American Literature to 1900*, Marcus Cunliff associates the different ideas together and expresses his view: “The hero of the novel *The Fixer* is the Jewish victim

of a Czarist pogrom. This historical fiction recreates an actual case of Russian persecution and Malamud presents a tour de force of anxiety and hope destroyed” (296). For Cunliff, Yakov Bok is a Jewish victim at the hands of People sustaining the Czarist pogrom and manipulating common people by formulating different ideological apparatuses which would reduce them to nonentity.

Robert Gerham Davis sees the interplay of ideology, science, custom and religion in the novel and associates them with the political and historical sensibilities of the time. In *Invaded Selves*, he comments:

The interest of the Beiliss case was in the Russian politics which created and sustained it, and in the active involvement of so many distinct minds and temperaments, some of them unimaginable to us. To all this Yakov Bok’s musings and final hysteria can hardly do justice. It is a world in which a strange complex of customs, science, greed ideology, overpopulation and historical chance destarve, whom we should be polite to and whom we should kill, determines when something written on paper can carry man in luxury through a dozen countries. (665)

Davis sees in the novel the historical and ideological sensibilities of the time and analyses how these forces pervade not only a single but many countries.

Warren French compares the dialogic structure of *The Fixer* with Frenz Kafka’s *The Trial* and takes Yakov Bok as a hero:

I have read this book no fewer than ten times [. . .] and every time I cry this book was at one time banned because it was thought too anti-

Semitic. It think it's quite possible. It reminds me of the quote from Dante "the hottest place in the hell is reserved for their who are neutral in times of moral crisis." This could be the theme of this book. Try as you might to remain neutral but when the world is faced with injustice its just impossible. (13)

So, Warren French takes the novel as the battlefield reserved for different tussles between justice and injustice, repression and retaliation.

Although the novel is about the Jewish experience in the anti-Semitic world of pre-Soviet Russia, the hero's predicaments will response with the readers of all background. Yakov Bok is desperate poor man without faith in God. He calls himself a free thinker and is inspired by the works of Spinoza. He sets off for Kiev, hoping for better life but comes under the powerful grip of Tsarist injustice which reduces him to the man of nowhere.

Similarly, another critic, Richard Wooward takes the story of the novel as a universal one and regards, "This novel is about the feeling of complete helplessness experienced when one realizes that all the institutions that are supposed to be there to protect and defend the citizen-courts, defense attorneys, laws etc. are in fact doing exactly the opposite" (27). So, Wooward interprets the hollowness of the social institutions and their frailty and failure in giving the ordinary people a sound justice.

Plight of the Jewish hero draws the attention of Kathryn Vanspanckeren. Commenting on the novel, she says, "As in many of his writings Malamud underscores the suffering of the hero, Yakov Bok, and the struggle against all odds to endure" (101). However, it is Mark Shechner who comes up with a different view. He states:

Whenever Malamud's alienated hero finds himself in Kiev, Rome, Brooklyn – he is still in Ghetto, psychologically bound to whatever he had sought to flee and learning to settle for a modified improvement and a course in the requirements of civilized life: conscience, responsibility and mercy, love and delayed gratification. He learns in other words to be liberal. (206-207)

Here, Shechner exposes the gradual psychological improvement of the hero and his growing attitudes towards himself.

Leonard Linger talks about the radical change in the hero after he undergoes a series of hardships and torments under the oppressive regime of the Tsarist Society. Commenting on the theme of the novel, he says: "*The Fixer's* ensuing conclusion: injustice inevitably politicizes its victims and forces upon them the imperatives of trying to change history through the attempt to overthrow an unjust government by force" (447). Here, Linger focuses on the idea that suppression ultimately breeds revolution. Yakov Bok valorizes the idea of revolution by reacting against any forms of suppression. He questions the prevailing ideology of his time by dissociating himself from the surveillance to God and barring codes and conducts of the policy makers.

The Fixer is the story of a poor Jew who tries to aspire his life through struggle and hard perseverance but yet faces tortures and exploitation at the hands of authority. The hostile power is represented by an authority which assigns Bok the image of illusive existence and robs away from him every sense of responsibility towards himself and others. The point which the novel makes is that the repression

cannot sustain longer and that there must be an end to every start. In this connection Sachs Shepark in *Redclayambler: Excellent Novel about anti-Semitism, Politics* puts:

It's a fast book, but a very painful and somewhat depressing one. It deals heavily with anti-Semitism. Some of the anti-Semitic passages are almost breathtaking in their ferocity. It becomes very painful at times almost but (not quite) tragic-comic. In particular, a lengthy sermon given by priest that basically likens the Jews to vampires. (9)

Yakov Bok becomes the victim of anti-Semitic movement popularly known as 'pogrom'. Throughout the novel, his actions appear as a response which he gives to the social pattern of the time and thinks that only revolution can lead to the path of liberty.

The Fixer is a novel in which the protagonist Yakov Bok takes an ambitious journey in the way to freedom and social equality. He comes to realize that communal freedom is not possible unless there is persistent questioning to the class in authority. Bok's determination to preserve his real self in the grating and abusive social structure is a challenge to the dominant ideology sanctioned by the governmental institution holding power and money. However, the novel shows social biasness and injustice to the Jews and their miserable life during pre-Bolsevic revolution in Russia. Besides, it also dramatizes the psychological clash which an ordinary man had to undergo because of the suffocating environment created by the controlling forces. Bok suffers the brutality of the Tsarist regime as it constructed the prevailing ideology empowered by the set of discourses which reduced a Jew to the place of being a Christ killer and the polluter of whole humanity. As Bok dwindles between his real existence and the imaginary one, it is worth studying how his pendulum-like life is

affected by a set of social apparatuses and political bodies. Studying the text from the ideological perspective helps in the better understanding of the characters and their conditions. So, this research focuses on the impact of ideological forces in hegemonizing the voices of the repressed. While doing this, the researcher has substantiated the claim by drawing the theoretical concept developed by neo-Marxists like Louis Althusser, Gramsci and Terry Eagleton.

Neo-Marxism is a term applied to any social theory or sociological analysis which draws the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, but amends or extends these, usually by incorporating elements from other intellectual traditions. Neo-Marxists view class division under capitalism as more important than gender/sex or the issue of gender roles. Neo-Marxism encompasses a group of beliefs that have in common the rejection of economic or class determinism and a belief in at least the semiautonomy of social sphere. They also claim that most social science, history, and the literary analysis works from within capitalist categories and say neo-Marxism is based on the total political-economic cultural system.

In neo-Marxist usage, ideology is what causes an individual to misrepresent the world to himself or herself. Ideology distorts reality in one way or another and falsely presents as natural and harmonious what is artificial and contradictory – the class differences that we find under capitalism. If an individual succumbs to ideology he or she lives in illusionary world, in what in Marxism has often been described as a state of false consciousness. The first thesis regarding ideology is: ‘Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real condition of existence’ (Althusser18). For Althusser, ideology works through so-called

‘ideological state apparatuses’ which although they may have their own sub-ideology, are all subject to the ruling ideology.

Althusser states, “The state exerts its power outside such institutions as the army, the courts, the police and the government and so on, that is to say in culture and society generally” (qtd. in Bennet and Royle 162). The central claim which Althusser makes is that ‘man is an ideological animal by nature’ it means people define themselves as human through ideology. He further elaborates:

The category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time [. . .] the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects. To put it simply, subjects – people make their own ideology at the same time as ideology makes the subject. (qtd. in Bennet and Royle 162).

Althusser talks on about how the ideology conforms the subjectivity or identity of an individual and how in turn the subject enters in the relationship of both affinity and antagonism.

Another neo-Marxist critic and writer, Terry Eagleton in *Ideology: An Introduction* opines, “By ideology roughly, the ways in which we say and believe connects with the power – structure and power-relations of the society we live in” (90). He argues that ideology is always motivated towards power and every apparatuses of the society is influenced by it. He further elaborates:

We have here, then, the outline of materialist theory of ideology which does not simply reduce it to a ‘reflex’ of the economic ‘base’, but

grants the materiality of the word, and the discursive context in which it is cut up, their proper due [. . .] A particular social sign is pulled in this way and that by competing social interests, inscribed from within with a multiplicity of ideological ‘accents’, and it is in this way that it sustains its dynamism and vitality. (195)

Eagleton assumes that materialist definition of ideology not only provides the economic base to the word but also creates the context for discursivity. This play of ideology thus, sustains and gives dynamism to the structure of the society.

The researcher throws spotlight on Bok’s interpellation as a subject in capitalist society through discrete series of apparatus like ideology which works primarily through hegemonic strategies and politics of repression. The play of ideological forces assigns Bok an imaginary existence as he dwindle between what he seems and what he really is. In a capitalist society, where money and power are the means of influence, Bok becomes a miserable victim who undergoes both psychological and physical tortures in the overruling presence of the state holding authority. The present research also dramatizes how Bok is assigned multiple identities by family, religious, judicial and army ISAs which are in fact the legitimized bodies working under the capitalist ideology. The second section of this research brings to the fore the tussle between the ideological state apparatus and the emergence of new revolutionary consciousness in Yakov Bok.

II. Interpellation of Individual as Subject in Malamud's *The Fixer*

Capitalist ISAs in *The Fixer*

Bernard Malamud's *The Fixer* (1966) is set during pre-Bolshevik Russian revolution of 1917 as it dramatizes the great economic fluctuation showing clear distinction between the people belonging to higher and lower class. *The Fixer* presents the contemporary situation of the people living under the materialistic society with its depiction of the play ideological fantasy in which most of the characters are enthralled. The protagonist of the novel Yakov Bok becomes the victim of capitalist ideology which forces him move back to the material reality. Yakov Bok is portrayed as cold, moody and ambitious character who runs away from his filial duties and responsibilities toward his wife and undertakes a much torturous journey for material pursuit. He knows that his quest for money and secured life is just an illusion but he fails to know how this illusion has structured his reality, his social activity.

Though he knows that this illusion is taking him away from the social forms and functions, from the people, he still continues his journey for material security. This overlooked unconscious illusion is said to be the ideological fantasy that is prevalent in capitalist society. Yakov Bok has carried his own assumption about life, success, necessities, fate and truth. He takes pleasure occupying himself in the capitalist ideological world:

The truth of it is I'm a man full of wants. I'll never satisfy, at least nor here. It's time to get out and take a chance. Change your place change your luck, people say. Those that can't sleep and keep me awake for

pang. I've told you what wants: a full stomach now and then. A job that pays rubles, not noodles; even some education if I can get it, and I don't mean men studying Torah after hours. I've had my share of that.

What I want to know is what's going on in the world. (12)

Bok desires for wealth and material success that would change his fate and ascertain his fortune. To become a man of wealth and success is a matter of chance for him. He takes chance as a means that would secure his tormented past and wearied tomorrow. However, his faith in 'chance' itself is the product of his escapist mentality which is conditioned by the capitalist ideology.

The term 'ideology' carries a variety of meanings that are connected with power, identity, social relations, class, and ideas. An ideology is never simple reflection of a ruling class's idea but it is a complex phenomenon consisting of uncertain, formless and paradoxical views of the world. In this connection, Louis Althusser in his concept of ideology in the essay, *Marxism and Humanism* opines, "In a class society ideology is the relay, whereby, and the elements in which, the relation between men and their conditions of existence is settled to the profit of the ruling class" (141). He further argues:

Ideology is a necessary element of sociality itself; a structure essential to the historical life of societies [. . .] indispensable in any society if men are to be formed, transformed and equipped to respond to the demands of their conditions of existence. (312)

In the passage above, Althusser explores the circulation of ideology in the classless society and argues how this circulation of ideology expresses determination, hope and nostalgia rather than explaining reality as a whole.

Man is always a subject in the society ruled out by the capitalist ideology. Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion but a fantasy construction that serves as a support to one's reality itself. The function of ideology is not to offer an individual a point of escape from his or her reality, but to offer him the social reality itself as an escape from some traumatic identity. In the novel, Malamud has presented Yakov Bok as a man desperately searching for a job so that he could earn and live comfortably. His move from poor living in shtetl to Kiev is encouraged by his ambitious notion of earning more money by getting a pretty job over there. Bok is disaffected by the kind suggestions given by Shmuel, Bok's father-in-law. But he responds:

Since I can't be a professional on account of lack of education I wouldn't mind being wealthy. As the saying goes, I'd sell my last shirt to be a millionaire. May be, by luck, I'll make my fortune in the outside world. The Tsar does not want poor Jews all over his land, and Stolypin, may his lings collapse, urges him on. (12)

The only objective of Bok to go to Kiev is to earn and become wealthy. The passage above also shows how much he is affected by his desire for material pursuit. However, this desire for profit is, in fact, imprinted on him by the prevalent capitalist ideology which assigns on an individual the notion that money brings comfort, solace and happiness. Though he sees materialistic ideology prevalent in the society and its illusive nature, he craves for the same and thus subjects himself as an active agent affected by its influence. He avoids the idea of spiritual nurturing and growth which Shmuel offers him throughout the novel. In fact, Yakov Bok and Shmuel represent the two worlds that are drastically different from one another. If Bok goes for material success as a way to solace, Shmuel goes for the spiritual awakening as a source of

eternal happiness. These two characters carry their own views about the world as they have their own ideals.

Bok is a Jew by birth and culture but he is ready to question his own root simply because it does not offer him the way to success. He thinks that Jewish identity makes him a man of nowhere and that he must go beyond this identity to get what he needs. Thus, his decision to examine his fate by going out of shtetl is prompted by his need to ensure his identity by earning more money and popularity. Bok is living in the ideological illusion. He knows his living in Kiev would be tough and suffocating. Despite this, he is determined to go over there to examine his destiny. He is fleeing away from his parental responsibilities, from his own cultural root and is succumbing to the material gain. This is because of the 'false consciousness' which ruling class ideology puts upon an individual. Hans Bertens, in his *Literary Theory: The Basics*, states, "For Marxist, ideology is not so much a set of beliefs or assumptions that we are aware of, but it is that which makes us experience our life in a certain way, and makes us believe that way of seeing ourselves and the world is natural" (84). He further puts:

Ideology distorts reality in one way or another level and falsely presents as natural and harmonious what is artificial and contradictory the class differences that we find under capitalism [. . .] if we succumb to ideology we live in an illusory world, in what in Marxism has often been described as a state of false consciousness. (84-85)

The form of ideology that dominates the society gives the reflection of the society as coherent, absolute and harmonious. But what it depicts is just an illusion because it implants a state of false consciousness on the part of an individual.

Bok wants to discover for himself the purpose of human existence and true path for material success. He becomes extremely concerned with finding a way out to the problem that has inflicted the whole Jewish community, i.e. poverty, recklessness and insecurity. His determination to find the solution of this problem leads him to Kiev, a place where Jews are barely well received. This search for success is Bok's ideological fantasy which subverts the condition of his real existence. Althusser argues that many of our roles and activities are given to us by social practices. This action which Bok is so determined to undertake is in fact the pressure given by the economic condition of his society where the ideology constructed by the capitalist society is prevalent. The anti-Semitic thought harbored by Russian people, especially in Kiev, is the result of dominant capitalist ideology which sanctioned these notions through various levels of apparatuses: religion, practices, economy and discourse. The death of a Russian boy in the novel exemplifies how the discourses were created to stimulate anti-Semitic thought against the Jews. Malamud narrates:

Their emblem, the Imperial double-headed eagle, was imprinted on the cover, and under it: SAVE RUSSIA FROM THE JEWS. In his room that night, Yakov, in fascination, read that the boy had been bled to death for religious purposes so that the Jews could collect his blood and deliver it to the synagogue for the making of Passover matzos. (4)

Different propagandas stimulating hatred against the Jews are seen being promulgated through a series of apparatuses.

As Althusser argues that ideology has a material base and interpellates concrete individuals as subject, Yakov Bok, when he comes under the material influence of Lebedev in brick factory, is interpellated as subject by ruling class

ideology. This influence of capitalist ideology assigns Yakov an imaginary existence that does not tally with the real condition of his existence. Regarding this Althusser puts:

By contrast, 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 once removed from the real. [. . .] An ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. It always manifests itself through actions which have inserted into practices. (*Lenin* 144)

Yakov Bok sees shtetl as a prison where no change is possible. In fact, shtetl is a place outnumbered by Jewish people practising their own native culture and language.

Because of the prevalent capitalist ideology, Bok is not willing to stay in this place. By sneaking out of this place, he wants to bring material change in his life:

The shtetl is a prison, no change from the days of Khmel'nitsky. It moulders and the Jews moulder in it. Here we're prisoners, I don't have to tell you, so it's time to try elsewhere. I have finally decided. I want to make a living. I want to get acquainted with a bit of the world.

(11)

Bok is unable to realize his real existence which is now battered by his ideological fantasy. He dreams of earning more money at the cost of questioning his own existence, his root and at most his familial duties and responsibilities. This, in fact, is because of the capitalist ideology that has interpellated him as a concrete subject and has robbed away from him his real sense of being. The ideology of ruling class has

defines him as a profitable agent capable of reproducing the products in the market economy.

Bok's interpellation as a concrete subject becomes evident when he finds a job in Kiev. Lebedev, the owner of the brick factory, is always ready to exploit Bok because he is the representative character of capitalism. Lebedev counts Bok's labor in matter and convinces him to run his business by promising him to offer any amount of money he demands. Lebedev's activities are guided by capitalist ideology as he has no social conscience towards the labor generated by his workers in the factory. Capitalist ideology does not care about working class people. Their demands and dreams are ignored to utter bitterness. In Kiev story of the novel, Lebedev is practicing and employing the strategies and skills of capitalism. He is from higher social class of Russia holding authorial power over the working class people. A man occupied with salient schemes to earn profit, Lebedev acts no different than a state in authority which rules over individual by sanctioning capitalist hegemony. He sincerely appreciates Bok's craftsmanship so that he could employ him and bring him under his hegemonic scheme:

If you should care to go on working for me, though in another, and may I say, advanced capacity, I would be more than happy to employ you. The truth of the matter is that I am the owner of a small brickworks nearby, although in a contiguous district. I inherited it from my elder brother, a lifelong bachelor who went to his final reward half a year ago after suffering from an incurable disease. I tried to see the factory but the offers were so disgraceful that, although, I confess, barely profitably. (46)

The employer of Yakov Bok acts as a state generalizing various schemes of manipulation and motivation. And it is the tenet of capitalist hegemony that does not permit any individual to go against its concept. Lebedev wants Bok to work for him only until he works for his profit. Capitalists are never ready to give clear identification of the working class people. The individuals are identified not by their actual names but by their ranks, profession as well as cast and race. It mocks and defames all those ideas and concepts that are against the welfare of the capitalist ideology.

In this connection, Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle in *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, write, “Ideology is a false representation of reality and as the idea of false reality; it is as the appeal to fears, anxieties and nostalgia” (160). So, this would mean that ideology is shaped by images and fantasies. They further put:

The word, ‘ideology’ has something a bad name; the ‘crude’ Marxist notion of ideology is as ‘false consciousness’, ‘the system of ideas and representation which dominate the mind of a man or ‘a social group’, as contrasted with the underlying reality of economic and class relations. (161)

The ideology sustained by capitalist society is always the ideology of ruling class people who aim at commodifying each individual as a profitable being. The way ideology addresses an individual creates subject position for him or her. It makes an individual feel that he is whole and real. How pervasive the ideology is becomes clear when Yakov Bok, a Jew by birth, changes his name as Yakov Ivanovitch Dulogushev to earn the sense of familiarity among Russian Tsars. Bok’s act of changing his

Jewish name into the Russian one also exemplifies the hegemonic role played by the dominant classes. By changing his name he wants to be one with the dominant ideology of the time and unknowingly subjects himself as a part of it.

Capitalists are never ready to give free sense of individuality to the working class people. The dominant ideology sanctions the various schemes of suppression and domination by expanding its overruling influence in economy, social relations and jurisdictions. Lebedev is professionally a businessman owning brick factory, but he is acting as an active agent in producing the capitalist world. When Yakov Bok gets a job given by Lebedev, he dramatically comes under the capitalist sphere where his wage is accounted as per the labor he spares in his work. It is Lebedev who persuades Bok to work in his factory by offering him forty five rubles each month. Capitalist ideology robs away the individuality of common people not only in terms of economy but also in terms of sexuality. After Bok gets a job in brick factory, he not only faces the economic pull of the capitalist society but also faces the sexual harass at the hands of Zinaida (Lebedev's daughter) who stands for the supreme product of capitalist ideology. Though he duly ignores her sexual proposal saying "But you are unclean" (52), he is deeply affected mentally and psychologically for a long period of time. Zina talks with Bok in a manner no different than the owner does to the owned:

Do you love me – just a little, Yakov Ivanovitch? I've sometimes notices you looking at me as though you might. For instance, you smiled at me quite delightfully a few minutes ago, and it warmed my heart. I dare ask because you yourself are very modest and tend to be conscious – over conscious, I would say – that we are from different classes, though I believe alike as people. (50)

Lebedev and his daughter Zinaida are the representatives of capitalist ideology but they seem unwilling to admit their influence over others more directly. Plainly, they never say they are capitalists simply because ideology never says, “I am ideological” (Althusser 18).

In the novel, Malamud portrays the capitalist society where have nots are like objects that can be bought in the market economy with the help of money. The lives of the characters are determined by the material conditions that follow from their place in the system of production relations. Their places in the production relations of the capitalist society in which they live do not determine who they are. The real existence of the characters is blurred by the ‘ideological state apparatus that has assigned them the imaginary existence rather than the real one. Althusser claims that the ‘State apparatus in fact consists of two overlapping but distinct sets of institutions – the Repressive institution on the one hand and Ideological State apparatus on the other. He further argues:

The State Apparatus (SA) contains: the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the courts, the prisons, etc. which constitute the Repressive State apparatus. Repressive suggests that the State apparatus in question ‘functions by violence’ – at least ultimately (since repression, e.g. administrative repression, many take non physical forms). (85)

Apart from State apparatus, Althusser argues that the State also consists of what he calls the ‘Ideological State apparatuses (ISAs). Family ISAs, Religious ISAs, Judicial or Legal ISAs are apparently distinct and specialized institutions which play a great role in influencing the lives of each individual.

Family ISAs in *The Fixer*

Since Ideological State apparatus functions massively and predominantly by ideology, its pervasiveness is realized not only in the personal life of an individual but also in his or her family. The family ISA has to do with the question of how the State generates the policies of maintaining and legitimizing ideological discourses to sustain economic and social dominance of ruling class over others – especially over the families belonging to working class.

Yakov Bok is a Jew from lower social class. He has a wife, Raisel from whom he fathered no any child and it is Shmuel who constantly suggests him to be serious about his Jew religion. The relationship of these family members seems sound and tranquil at the beginning of the story but when Bok desperately wants a child from his wife, the apparent harmony at once comes to an end. Bok's reactions to his wife are no different than an anarchist would to his people. He often falls in dispute with Shmuel regarding the child birth. This is because the dominant ideology demands an active agent capable of reproducing the means of production. And the authority does not have any regard on an individual if he or she is not physically capable. Here, Bok acts as a State holding authority over his wife and Shmuel. While demanding child, he reacts Shmuel:

After a long run-around which started when I met her, I married your daughter, who could not get pregnant in five and half years. She bore me no children so who could I look in the eye? And now she runs off with some stranger she met at the Inn – a goy I'm positive. So that's enough – who needs more? . . . All I have to my name after thirty years

in this graveyard is sixteen rubles that I got from selling everything I own. . . Your daughter deserves nothing. (7)

Bok regards his marriage with Raisel as a means of owning his dominance over her. Marriage, thus, becomes a means of exploiting women in capitalist society as it directly affects the familial structure of the people living in that society. In family ideological State apparatus, marriage is a legalization of domestic prostitution because it robs away from women their assertion of self and subjectivity and reduces them as an object to be used and thrown away.

For Althusser, "The family ideological state apparatus plays a considerable in commenting its role in capitalist social formation" (115). Family ISAs also works a discrete social body generating the fundamental principles and legacies of the dominant ideology. Besides, it is safe to say that the dominant ideological discourse sustains patriarchy and ritualizes the superiority of male over female. Bok's one sided assertion of his own object of interest is an example of typical male arrogance thriving to legalize the principles of capitalist ideology. Capitalist ideology reduces women to nonentity and puts them in the lowest rung of economic ladder. It sets ideological discourses more directly in familial, social and cultural spectrum by constructing abstract ideas and thus dissolves any form of integration and affinity. The familial harmony of Yakov Bok gets disintegrated as he assumes his superiority over his wife. This is because he has been interpellated as an active agent of capitalism which is sanctioning the male dominance over female.

Bok is unable to father any child from Raisel for more than five years. He wants to be productive and desires to be an active agent in the society which is ruled

out by capitalist ideology. His dispute with his wife is the result of the problem caused by his necessity to assume his power over her:

You stinking whore, what did you do to me? It wasn't enough we were poor as dirt and childless. On top of that you had to be a whore . . . once we were married you should have been faithful. A contract is a contract. A wife is a wife. Married is married. If I married you the world would change, everyday a rainbow. Then you get me in the woods that day. (285)

Bok's assumed dominance over his wife not only shows how capitalist ideology sustains and nurtures patriarchy but it also shows how an individual becomes one small part in the dynamic structure of dominant ideology. Bok works as an active agent under the ideological gaze and his extreme preoccupation in the capitalist domination robs away the tranquility of his family. In capitalist society, family ISAs work as a distinct and specialized institution performing their social function and at the same time maintaining the economic dominance of the ruling class or class alliance through ideological discourses. But the ideological discourses produced interpret only men as an active agent in capitalist society. Thus, the social patterns are constructed as per their interests and motives of the rulers over others. Put it other way, the voice of women is always ignored and their subject position is marginalized in the ideological structure of capitalist society. Capitalist society expects an individual to be submissive and productive just as Bok expects his wife to be fertile and productive. Thus, it is women who become victims not only of male arrogance but also of dominant ideological forces constituted by capitalism in forms of family, cultural practices, religion, legislature, and so on. The concept of double

marginalization of women in capitalist society becomes crystal clear while analyzing the pang which Raisel has to carry. First, she is marginalized as a woman by patriarchy and second, she has been marginalized by the powerful influence of dominant capitalist ideology which is continuously nurturing and prolonging patriarchy.

Religious ISAs in *The Fixer*

Although the ISAs are an apparently disparate body of institutions, Althusser writes they are unified by the ideologies through which they function. In this context, the religious institutions also play an important role in legitimizing dominant discourses and prevailing ideologies of the time. In religious institutions or a school, for example, a person is taught to think and act in certain specific ways. Nevertheless, if he refuses to think and act within the limits tolerated by the institution, he can be given low grades, excluded from prestigious groups, have his grievances ignored, acquire a reputation as a trouble maker, and ultimately be banned from the institution altogether. The religious ISAs work in various forms to maintain the functions of the State. In his novel, *The Fixer*, Malamud explores the sights of domination which the State puts upon an individual in the name of the religion. Bok is advised by Shmuel to have faith in his Jewish cultural root, religion and to follow ideals constructed by the Jewish community. Responding Shmuel's suggestions, Bok frankly says that he has no faith in God and that he has constructed his own ideals of life by using his rational power. Malamud also depicts the domination of another overruling religious institution, i.e. Christianity in robbing away individual's assertion of self and identity. The religious institutions maintain the politics of control and conduct chiefly by hegemonizing individuals and by bringing them under its influence.

In the story, though Bok ignores the ideals set by the dominant religious institutions, his resistance ultimately turns out to be functional to capitalism. Regarding this, Paul Willis hails out that without a person's creativity and inventions, no counter-hegemonic could be successful. One of the reasons Bok is unable to fully articulate hegemony set against the religious dogmatism is because he is not simply a dominated class, but also a dominator when seen through the prism of gender and sexuality. The tragedy of his situation is that his forms of resistance are limited and twisted back on himself by the widespread influence form of a patriarchal domination and sexism within working class culture itself.

The position of God in religious institutions is always exaggerated and taken to the top. The discourses are created and truth is constructed. In the society ruled out by the supremacy of religion, God is supposed to preserve and protect human beings by guarantying the happiness and solace. The ideologically ruled people in such society pray God to fulfill their desires and think that God helps them at the time of need. Religious ISAs in the capitalist society fosters the interests of ruling class people so as to rule over lower class with apparent approval. In this sense, the ideals set out by these institutions become the ideals of people in power. In such society, religion turns out to be one handy tool through which the interest and motives of the higher class people get generated.

Yakov Bok feels strangled by the religious advices given by Shmuel. One of the reasons he leaves Shtetl is to exclude himself from the theological propaganda of his Jewish community. When he is about to leave Shtetl, his father-in-law suggests him not to forget God. Then out of his anger Bok replies, "Who forgets who? What do I get from him but a bang on the head and a stream of piss in my face. So what's there

to be worshipful about?” (17) Shmuel has complicated feelings with the view of Bok and again requests him not to talk like Meshummed. Bok responds:

A Meshummed gives up one God for another. I don't want either. We live in a world where the clock ticks fast while he's in his timeless mountain staring in space. He does not see us and does not care. Today I want my piece of bread, not in paradise . . . I guess it's my nature. I incline toward the philosophical although I don't know much about anything. (17)

Bok does not believe in God simply because he never helps the people in trouble. The faith in God becomes an object of anathema to him. Bok appears to be a man holding opposite thought and assuming a form of resistance against the prevalent ideology of the time. However, it is never possible for him to exclude fully from the faith carried out by his heritage because he is himself one of the components of the dominant ideology.

When Bok is convicted of a murder of twelve years old boy, arrested and taken to the prison, he dramatically comes under the tussle with the most orthodoxical major religion, i.e. Christianity. With the battle against this dominant form of religion, the ordeal of Bok begins. The orthodoxical religion makes it a big issue and forces him to accept to be a Jew. As the people in authority ask why he tells that he is a Jew by birth and nationality, he answers: “What I meant by that is I'm not a religious man. I was when I was young but lost my belief” (74). Bok's unwillingness to admit himself to the dominant religion makes him suffer a lot at the hands of people in religious position. This also shows how religious ISAs construct the politics of excluding and essentializing the individuals as subjects and set abstract notions like

that of God, salvation, transcendental world, heaven, hell and so on. Bok believes on the religion determined by human actions and not by so-called God. Bernard envisions the skeptic notion of Bok for God saying: "He thought of himself pursuing his enemies with God at his side, but when he looked at God all he saw or heard as loud Ha Ha" (175).

In the society dominated by religious ISAs, priests come forth to prove themselves the harbinger of true freedom and the messenger of God. They become the active agent in nourishing the prevalent ideologies and in bringing common people under their tutelage. The religious institutions like church, temples and monasteries do nothing new other than addressing the sentiments of common people and motivating them by multiplying their effect. In this connection Althusser argues:

The dominant Christian religious ideology says something like this . . . I address myself to you, a human individual called in the passive tense, in order to tell you that God existed and that you are answerable to him. It adds: God addresses himself to you through my voice (scripture . . . papal infallibility. . .) It says: this is who you are: you are: this is your origin, you were created by God for all eternity. This is your place in the world. This is what you must do! By these means, if you observe the law of love you will be saved, and will become part of the glorious body of Christ! Etc. . . " (98)

These institutions also produce such discourses that pertain their interests and legitimize these interests as per their needs. Bok also suffers the cruelties at extreme by the orthodoxical religious institution of his time. When he is imprisoned for the murder of a Russian boy, a Christian priest, who comes to meet Bok, reveals his anti-

Semitic thought as he sees in Bok no hints of changing his views about his religion and God. Quite desperately, the priest retorts:

My dear children, if the bowels of the earth were to open to reveal the population of human dead since the beginning of the world, you would be astonished to see how many innocent Christian children among them have been tortured to death by Christ-hating Jews. Throughout the ages, as described in their holy books and various commentaries, the voice of Semitic blood directs them to desecrations, unspeakable horrors – for example, the Talamud, which likens blood to water and mild, and preaches hatred of gentiles, who are characterized as being not human, no more than animals. (130)

The religious institutions produce the discourses that empower the dominant ideologies of the time. In pre-Bolshevik revolution in Russia, Christian churches were holding power and sustaining the ideology assumed by the people belonging to the higher class. Since there were propagandas motivating anti-Semitic thought in the Russian society, the minority Jews became the victim of such reactionary movement. Discourses sustaining the interests of ruling class people were created in forms of religion, profession, economy, and so on. Church was holding power and generating reactionary views against Jews by sentimentally motivating the common people and by making them realize that what they were being told was true. Desirable were addressed and other were ignored.

Bok is the representative of such Jew who suffers the extremity of dominant religious institution. Bok's self assertion of free individuality, irreligious ideals and his profit-motivated actions come at stake when he has to bear the pang of being a

Jew. In religious ISAs, the dominant group holding power always undervalues the minority group by politicizing the schemes of essentializing and othering. They motivate those who desire to come under their influence and exclude those who reacts against them. Several discourses are created to build up one single truth and this truth is nourished within the power relationship. Althusser argues that the dominant ideology has a material base because it exists in the human practices and social functions. Furthermore, he also says that ideology has a structure as it is constituted by language. A set of language creates a discourse and discourse constructs the truth. Thus, the ideology of such society is in one way or another is the ideology of the people who are holding the economic dominance over others.

The language used by the Priest in the novel serves to build up a discourse that ritualizes the vitality of Christianity over Jewish culture:

The murder of Christian children and the distribution of their blood among Jews are a token of their eternal enmity against Christendom, for in murdering the innocent Christian child, they repeat the martyrdom of Christ. Zhenia Golov, in the loss of his own warm blood, symbolizes to us our Lord's loss of his precious lifeblood, drop by cruel drop, as he hung in pain on the wooden cross to which the anti-Christ had nailed him. (131)

The passage above highlights how religious institutions were exaggerating the real existence of individual by subjecting them in the theological milieu. The priest addresses his people with the tone that carries despiseful views against Jews. He sees Jews as Christ killers and the polluters of whole human race. By doing this, he assumes his power position but ultimately becomes one constitutive part of the

prevalent dominant ideology. This shows how the agent also becomes the patient and how the hunter himself is hunted while politicizing the rules of imposition on others. The ruling classes cynically peddle in order to deceive the exploited classes. Althusser calls this the ‘Priest and Despot’s theory of ideology’, according to which: “Priests and Despots . . . ‘forged’ the Beautiful lies so that, in the belief that they were obeying God, men would in fact obey the priests and despots, who are usually in alliance in their imposture” (80).

Bok is interpellated by the abstract ideologies of the church. He is told that God exists, that he created them, and how to behave in order to please him. It is in terms like these that Christians understand themselves and act. In this way, Christian ideology interpellates individuals as subjects. In this connection, Althusser argues:

All this ‘procedure’ to set up Christian religious subjects is dominated by a strange phenomenon: the fact that there can only be such a multitude of possible religious subjects on the absolute condition that there is a Unique, Absolute, Other subject, i.e. God. (50)

The ideology constructed by the religious institutions interpellates individuals as subjects positing another subject – the concept of God. Thus, this is the feature of ideology that it assigns the individuals the imaginary existence by featuring such things as Unique, Absolute and God.

Judicial Ideological Apparatus

Bok becomes victim not only of religious institutions but also of the dominant ISA which is Judicial system. The legislative body, i.e. court confirms Bok as a murderer of a Russian boy and assumes its authority upon an innocent. This is how an

individual gets interpellated in the society ruled by people holding jurisdiction. These institutions have specific forms of organization and practices and they seem to mediate between the ruling group and its intended audience. While these institutions become the essential tools of power, they typically produce a set of values and beliefs that are negotiated through their own circumstances and traditions. In any society, the legislative body stands as the most dominant institution having authorial control over others. In capitalist society, State expands its role erasing the boundary between it and commerce and thus the ideology it sets turns out to draw the interests of people holding economic leadership. The economic circulation in such State also affects the way laws and orders are made and applied.

The laws in such society legitimize the most dominant ideology of the time, thereby neglect any voice coming from the margin. The resistance which Bok draws against the court is liquidated and he is made suffer for the thing he never did. The Kiev-prison story in the novel dramatizes the burden which Bok has to carry without any clear reasons. But at the same time, there is also an ample example where Bok dramatically comes to know how he has been made a puppet by the legislative body. He becomes resistive to the force drawn against him and this resistance turns out to be counter-hegemonic. When he is accused of a ritual murder of a Russian boy to prepare *matzos*, a ritual cake, he is arrested.

Although Bok is not really identified, people suspect him a Jew. He could have escaped the forthcoming misery telling a lie but he tells them that he is a Jew: “The fixer readily confessed he was a Jew. Otherwise he was innocent” (61). He tells the truth thinking that he would be given a sound verdict but he is not. In the prison, his friends scold him as the Christ-killer, stinking Jew, and mother fucking Zhid.

These are the images which the authority in power assigns to the powerless person like Bok. Inside the prison, he is forced to confess the crime but he chooses not to confess. Grubeshov, the prosecuting attorney says that none of the Jews is to be left out of his sight because it is the most important case. Later, awkward by the pigheadedness of Bok in resisting the charge of murder, he tries to persuade him:

Tell me the honest truth, Yakov Bok, didn't the Jewish Nation put you up to this crime? You seem like a serious person – perhaps you were unwilling to do it but they urged it on you, made threats as promises of certain sorts, and you reluctantly carried out the murder for them? [. . .] Wasn't it their idea rather than yours? If you'll admit that, I'll tell you frankly – your life would be easier. (141)

Bok boldly rejects any blasphemy put upon Jews and exerts resistive views against Grubeshov retorting: “How could I do such a thing. Why should I blame it on innocent people?” (119). Bok's rejection of the authorial power forms a counter-hegemonic stance and gives rise to the voice of protest. His resistance to the jurisdiction is a clear response to the dominant ideology. And by protesting the authority he assumes his own ideals. The prosecuting attorney, Grubeshov believes his own ideology as strongly as the proletariat, Bok. Thus, the relationship they assume turns out to be the relationship of power that is mutually transferred.

Repressive State Apparatus

The protagonist of the novel, Yakov Bok, is also interpellated by the ‘repressive authority of the State apparatus’. He undergoes a series of physical and mental tortures at the hands of Russian Tsars who are holding a supreme position in the society. Bok becomes the victim of the cruelties in the prison. He is beaten

severely in the custody by the police officers and his voice is repressed and liquidated. The police, the prisons, and the army are the agents of repression in the State apparatus. These repressive institutions are the recognized part of State apparatus and the forms through which the ruling class enforces its rules as such. This is what Althusser calls the 'Repressive State Apparatus'. The Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), according to him, functions primarily 'by violence'. Althusser further states:

The (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology. . . For their part, the Ideological State Apparatus function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if only ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic. (84)

The RSA performs its social function chiefly by maintaining the economic dominance of the ruling class or class alliance, through force or the immediate threat of force. It is also a fundamental means by which a society's ruling ideology is transmitted and applied.

Bok is physically tortured by the police officials after he is convicted of the murder. He has to stay in a damp and smelly prison cell full of live and bugs and is treated even not equally as other prisoners. He is forcefully accused, "chained and manacled" (103). Everybody blames him, scolds him and shows a bitter hatred. He is forced to confess the crime but as he denies it, he is treated worse. The only reason behind Bok's inhuman treatment is that he is a Jew. And being a Jew is his guilt. He is

not accepted by the authority and other people as an innocent person because of his cultural root.

The repressive orthodoxical Tsarist regime casts Bok off. His condition is like rubbish to be thrown. He is ill-treated and as he belongs to the Jewish community, he is thought to be “the born criminal” (202). The police officials are under the influence of the ideology of Tsarian society that is constantly generating reactionary views against the Jews. The mistreatment of the officials in power makes Bok suffer a lot. Fear of death haunts him, “All night the fixer sat huddled in the corner of the cell filled with dread of dying. If he slept a minute, his sleep was steeped in the taste, smell, horror of dying” (149). When he denies to be a murderer, he is terribly kicked and beaten as Malamud narrates:

Though he whirled, ducked, and struck out with his fists, Potseikin hit him with a knee in the back, as Akimytch struck him on the neck with both fists. The fixer went down, his mind darkened in pain. He lay motionless as they kicked him savagely, and felt as he passed out, a terrible rage. (107)

The repression of the power holding State degrades the personal freedom of Bok and constructs the image of being a murderer. His identity has been fixed as a ‘Christ-killer’ by the Tsarist regime. He is fixed in the cell and is rarely given the chance to meet his relatives. The authority holding power fixes his identity by reducing him to the position of nonentity. So, Yakov Bok bears excessive suffering because of his religion and because of the repressive laws made by the institutions that is sanctioning its functions as just and immediate.

Resistance to Capitalism: Alternative Ideology to Capitalism

Althusser points that although a society's ideology consists primarily of the ideology of its dominant classes, nevertheless the dominated classes also produce ideologies, which express their protest against this domination. Here, Althusser speaks of proletarian ideology that stands against bourgeois ideology. He writes:

Within ideology in general, we . . . observe the existence of different ideological tendencies that express representations of the different social classes. Even the protests of the proletariat tend to be expressed in terms of bourgeois ideology, because of the dominant ideology, these are the terms in which every class 'spontaneously' thinks and speaks. (80)

The legislative body which brings Bok under its hegemonic sphere is in fact empowered by the ideology dominant in that society. With the use of power, Bok is imprisoned and is made guilty of the crime which he did not commit. The dominant institution in power interpellates Bok's identity from pillar to the post. It assigns him multiple identities and therefore makes his existence 'imaginary'. First, he is assigned in the role of 'husband' by family ISAs, 'laborer' by capitalist ISAs, and finally a 'murderer' by Judicial ISAs. Thus, by subjecting the individuals in multiple roles and identities, capitalist ideology dissolves the real existence of the people through various bodies: family, religion, jurisdiction, army, police, and so on.

The ideology legitimized by these institutions enlarges capitalism's sway, creating new types of individual and civilization through the operation of various social and cultural bodies. Such capitalist corporations fail to establish any emotional resonance with the individuals like Bok and therefore appear cold and remote. The scene of Bok being reduced to the nonentity symbolically serves the way a person's

identity is stripped away in capitalist society. For capitalism to succeed, it must bottle up any sight of resistance and it must exclude any ethics of commitment and honesty. However, the dominant ideology of the society sanctioned by ruling class people does not always last long. There comes a point when it starts being questioned and then is finally repudiated.

Bok's voice of protest against the jury and his continuous affirmation of being an innocent person forms a counterpoint to the dominant forms and functions. The standpoint through which he advocates the essentiality of his subject also symbolizes a new form of 'consciousness' of the marginalized group. This 'consciousness' enables him to interpret the situation in a new way and to whirl up all the power of resistance against all the orthodoxical social forms. This awareness on the part of Bok makes him bold enough to retaliate the accusation put upon him by the jury. With all the sense of being, he retorts:

I swear I'm innocent of this crime you say I did, not you personally, your reverence, but some of the officials here. I'm not a Hasid and I'm not a Tzadik. I'm a fixer by trade, it's a poorer trade than most, and formerly for a short time I was a soldier in the Imperial Army. In fact, to tell the whole truth, I'm not a religious man. I'm a free thinker.

(134).

Bok confirms himself to be an innocent person by resisting the pang put upon him. He remains starved for more than five days. Making himself starved, he launches the voice of protest against the dominant ideology. When jury forces him to confess his supposed guilt, he responds: "I have nothing to confess. What can I confess to you? I can only confess my miseries. I can't confess the murder of Zhenia Golov" (24). By

revolting against the dominant legislative body and by assuming his own standpoint, Bok becomes the prototype of all emerging groups who have hitherto been marginalized.

Althusser advances the thesis that in developed capitalist social formations, the dominant ISA is the education system. This system affects the culture and politics of the State. The education distributing anti-Semitic views is dominant in the novel. The educational system is seen manufacturing such discourses that stimulated the feeling of hatred against the minority Jew group. But Bok carries his own views about the way an individual is educated. He believes on such education that promotes the free exercise of mind. That's why he says time and again, "I am a free thinker" (134). Bok does not believe in the educational system of the State. Rather he prefers reading the works of Spinoza and wants to evaluate everything in rational way. Thus, by rejuvenating his self-knowledge and by educating himself with rational power, Bok questions the old dominant ideological State apparatus. In this connection, Althusser argues:

The ideological State apparatus which has been installed in the dominant position in mature capitalist social formations as a result of a violent political and ideological class struggle against the old dominant ideological State apparatus is the educational ideological apparatus.

(85)

The educational institution is the most sensitive body of the State which is thought to be the prime in dissipating the knowledge and constructing discourses. It is also instrumental in forming certain social and political views about something or somebody.

In the story, Bok challenges the authority assumed by this institution because he does not see it helping a person to cultivate self-knowledge. He believes in what he has studied and his actions are guided by his philosophy about the life. While interacting with Shmuel he frankly says:

On my own I studied different subjects, and even before I was taken into the army I taught myself a decent Russian, much better than we pick up from the peasants. What little I know I learned on my own – some history and geography, a little the science, the arithmetic, and about two of Spinoza's. Not much but better than nothing. (7)

Bok's faith in self-education is a kind of response he gives to the educational system of the time. Since the State is biased in the views about the Jews, he is not ready to tolerate any propaganda that reduces one to nonentity.

The suffering which Bok undergoes brings in Bok a deep insight not only of him but also of the whole Jewish race. His suffering becomes the means of the regeneration of 'new consciousness'. Now the death is not such a terrifying thing for him. He becomes revolutionary for the sake of truth and justice. He becomes conscious of the fact that one cannot stand still and see himself destroyed. This change is ultimately the result coming out from extreme torture by unjust orthodoxical Tsarist government. By advocating the voice of protest against dictatorship of the Tsarist regime, Bok not only reverses the power but also questions the set of ideological discourses at work. Thus, the RSAs, which work by the politics of repression, are not only the fundamental means by which a society's ruling ideology is generated. They are also a site in which oppositional ideologies – the ideologies of

the exploited classes are articulated. Hence, at the level of the discourses of repression, the RSAs are a site of class struggle. Regarding this, Althusser argues:

The class (or class alliance) in power cannot lay down the law in the ISAs as easily as it can in the (repressive) State Apparatus, not only because the former ruling classes are able to retain strong positions there for a long time, but also because the resistance of the exploited classes is able to find means and occasions to express itself, either by the utilization of their contradictions, or by conquering combat positions in them in the struggle. (85)

The voice of the resistance of the working class comes at once when exploitation becomes extreme and when people become conscious of the contradictions. Wherever there is repression, there is resistance and wherever there is resistance, there is rejuvenation.

Yakov Bok suffers at extreme but his suffering gives him the power, the consciousness to resist. He comes to understand that this personal justice depends on the justice of the whole Jews. With all his boldness, he speaks of destroying the reign of Tsar and free himself and his people from the unseen prison, "Pointing the gun at the Tsar's heart, Yakov pressed the trigger" (275). Bok finally comes to know how his material quest in anti-Semitic Russian society was just an illusion. He learns how his real existence was checked time and again by the powerful ideological influence of the State with power and money. Thus, to maintain and keep the things alright, he thinks revolution is a must and urgent for all Jewish race. At the end, Bok expresses his revolutionary thought in this way:

Where there is no fight, there is no freedom. Being a communal hero he protests the existing system of Tsarist regime. What is it Spinoza says? If the State acts in ways, that are abhorrent to human nature, it's the lesser evil to destroy it. Death to the anti-Semites! Long live revolution! Long live liberty. (335)

Bok is the representative of all hitherto marginalized groups. He becomes the communal hero advocating the voice of freedom and justice. This advocacy of revolution in fact is the advocacy of new awareness – an awareness emerging from the repressed group.

Bok's realization of his real place in the capitalist society makes him revolutionary. His advocacy of revolution comes out of his need to assume his real identity which, till now, is liquidated by the State apparatus. No freedom is possible without revolution and no achievement without resistance. Bok's awareness at the end of the novel signals the awareness of new emerging groups which is already on the way to freedom, equality and justice.

Bok's act of shooting at one of the Tsar in the prison compartment illustrates the physical resistance of common people against the authority. The Tsar in the prison treats Bok no better than the dictator does to the dictated. He ignores Bok's plea for justice by reducing him to non-entity. This Tsar becomes the representative of capitalist society who is actively involving in capitalist ideological structure and sanctioning the views and interest of the ruling class people. The mistreatment which he does to Bok in prison is an illustration of the way ruling class people does to the ruled in capitalist social structure. This is how the ideology of the dominant class gets circulated through different bodies and different agents. Though Bok is physically

fixed in the prison his quest for justice and his revolutionary vision have already shuddered the entire regime of Tsarian society. This power to resist is necessary and immediate for actualizing the dreams of common people. Bok is duly addressed at a point when he happens to shoot the Tsar. This scene also shows how he has already entitle himself as the revolutionary figure and how his quest to justice is colored with the light of hope. Furthermore, Bok's quest to justice and freedom is entailed by a new form of awareness symbolizing the emergence of 'consciousness' on the part of proletariat. This 'consciousness' has enabled Bok to make sense of who he is and where he belongs.

Conclusion

The Fixer by Bernard Malamud chronicles the story of despair and suffering in the life of the Jew, Yakov Bok. From the beginning of the story, Bok tries his best to come out of his impoverished situation but ultimately becomes the victim of state authority. He dreams of insuring and making his life prosperous by moving to Kiev. To actualize his aspiration, he moves away from his parental responsibilities and indulges in what we call day dreaming. The capitalist ideology which favors only these who are capable of producing means of production robs away from Bok his awareness towards his own situation. It makes him disgraceful and a person of nowhere.

In the society dominated by the ideology of ruling class, Bok is made to roam in the imaginary world which conforms him multiple identities and makes his identities illusive. These ideological forces are apparent in the discrete series of legitimized bodies like family religious, judicial and educational ISAs. Each of these bodies provides Bok an identity that is seen shifting from husband, laborer, to a murderer. Moreover, the powerful gaze of authority, i.e. the Tsarist regime, makes Bok man of nonentity as it continuously question his freedom seeking nature and represses his voice for justice.

The family ISAs expect Bok to be an active male agent that would sustain patriarchy by having authority over the female voices. Under this ideological gaze, he is supposed to become the part of mainstream controlling ideology that confirms what typical husband is expected to do while running family affairs. This ideology subjects him as a dominant male who is contemporary generating the views and conduct popular in capitalist regime.

The religious ISAs question the rational thought of Bok and expect him to follow the path of God. In this connection the religious institution like church suggests Bok to pray God for mercy as he is convicted of murdering a boy. He is offered different schemes of achieving salvation so that he could maintain the sanctity of human heart. This institution confirms Bok's identity as a man in desperate need for redeeming his sin. However, Bok rescues himself from these forces by occupying himself in the books written by Spinoza and other writers.

The judicial and army ISAs regard Bok as a murderer of a boy and is put in the most tedious physical and psychological inquiry. Here, Bok's voice for justice and freedom is ignored and is treated no better than animal. These institutions, which are in fact the representatives of state apparatus, shatter Bok's dreams of making successful and prosperous life. But at extreme it also enhances Bok's revolutionary nature. The mistreatment at the hands of authority in power enables him to be courageous and revolutionary. His consciousness towards his own situation gives him the power to revolt and strength to create his identity as per his own choice. He comes to know that his freedom lies not only in individual level, but in the freedom of whole Jewish race. And he thinks that his freedom is not possible unless there is revolution.

The capitalist ideology assigns Bok multiple roles and thus dissolves his identity. It reduces him to nonentity and makes him a person of nowhere. The adverse effect of dominant ideology liquidates Bok's individuality and robs away from him his true sense of being. The representation of his identity by the ideological forces makes his existence imaginary.

Works Cited

- Althusser, Louis. 'The Crisis of Marxism.' trans. G. Lock, *Marxism Today*, July 1978.
- Althusser, Louis. *Marxism and Humanism*. New York: Verso, 1994.
- Bennett, Andrew and Nicholas Royle, eds, *Literature, criticism and Theory*. London: Longman and Pearson, 2004.
- Bertens, Hans. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. New Delhi: Foundation Books, 2001.
- Cunliffe, Marcus, ed. *American Literature to 1900*. Vol. 8 London: Penguin Books, 1987.
- David Gerham Davis. *Invaded Selves*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992.
- Eagleton, Terry. "Discourse and Ideology." *Ideology: An Introduction*. London: Verso, 1991.
- French, Warren, ed. *Jewish American Fiction (1917-1987)*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992.
- Karl, Fredrick R. *American Fiction 1940-1980*. New York: Harper and Row publisher, 1983.
- Linger, Leonard, ed. *American Writers: A Collection of Literary Biographies*. 3rd ed. Vol. 1. New York: Scribnes Sons, 1974.
- Malamud, Bernard. *The Fixer*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1966.
- Mc Michael, George, ed. *Concise Anthology of American Literature*. New York: Macmillan, 1985.
- Shechner, Mark. "Jewish Writers." *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American writing*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. (191-239).
- Shepark, Sachs. *Redclayambler: Excellent Novel about anti-Semitism, Politics*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Vanspanckeren, Kathryn. *American Literature*. The New York: United States
Department of State, 1994.

