

Tribhuvan University

A Critique of Capitalistic Exploitation in Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University in
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

by

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March 2016

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “A Critique of Capitalistic Exploitation in Charles Kingsley’s *Alton Locke*” submitted by Sattal Upreti to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Acknowledgements

First of all, I express my sincere gratitude to thesis supervisor Mr. Khem Raj Khanal, for his invaluable guidance and supervision. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my thankfulness to Head of Department Amma Raj Joshi for his cordial guidance. Besides, I extend my thankfulness to all teachers at the Department of English for providing their literary insight and cordial cooperation to me. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my friends for their encouragement and support to me. Finally, I thank my brothers and cousins for their support.

March 2016

Sattal Upreti

Abstract

This research is a study on Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke* (1850), a historical novel that takes us through the journey of the life experience of Locke, the protagonist. In the novel, Kingsley basically depicts the plight of the poor working class in London whose lives are scorched by the flames of discrimination, exploitation and overwork in dilapidated conditions. This thesis work centres on the analysis of repressive and ideological state apparatuses in the novel used in sustaining the capitalistic system of that era when this novel was written. This research basically applies the neo Marxist theories of Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci but is not just limited to them. The novel has been analysed on light of various critical theories from neo Marxism. It has been found that the poor workers are fleeced by repression of the state and more than that by the ruling ideologies widely circulated by the people in power to keep them as poor as ever and help sustain the capitalistic economic system based on exploitation. It has been found to be an important social document of the time when Chartism, the movement that was based on egalitarian spirit demanded equal rights for the poor working class, was at full swing and some people like Crosswaithe and Locke in the novel were beginning to be aware of the exploitation and injustice concealed in the capitalistic economic system that sustained itself by the use of state power and ruling ideologies. Moreover, what makes his work a social document of his time is his careful and minute exposition of capitalistic mechanism of exploiting the poor working class by means of the ruling ideologies interwoven with the repressive state apparatuses that ultimately serves the purpose of the ruling class: the reproduction of the conditions of production.

Contents

	Page No.
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
I. Introduction: Capitalism and Exploitation in Kingsley's <i>Alton Locke</i>	1-13
II. Exploitation by Means of Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses in Charles Kingsley's <i>Alton Locke</i>	14-38
III. Kingsley's Exposition and Critique of Capitalistic Exploitation	39-41
Works cited	

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Letter of Recommendation

Sattal Upreti has completed his thesis entitled “A Critique of Capitalistic Exploitation in Charles Kingsley’s *Alton Locke*” under my supervision. He carried out his research work from June 2015 to March 2016. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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I. Introduction: Capitalism and Exploitation in Kingsley's *Alton Locke*

This project focuses on Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke* (1850), a semi-historical novel that vividly depicts the harsh conditions and exploited lives of the working class people in England. The novel is solidly rooted in the historical events of the 1840s. In 1848, Kingsley had made a tour of Jacobs Island in Bermondsey, one of the worst of London's slums, and had made it the basis of *Alton Locke*. Alton Locke is a poor, cockney (working-class), retail-tradesman's son. His father had invested all his money in a small shop that failed; by contrast, Alton's uncle has prospered and now owns several grocery stores. Desperately poor, Alton's widowed mother asks the uncle to find Alton a position as a tailor's apprentice.

The tailor's establishment is Alton's first experience of the world outside his mother's strict Baptist household. The workroom is closed, stinking, and filthy, and most of the other tailors are gross, vulgar, and irreverent. Alton is, however, drawn to a coworker, John Crossthaite, who is more thoughtful than the others. Locke wants to improve himself by reading. Having exhausted his mother's few narrow Calvinist theological tomes, he discovers a used-book shop. The shop owner, Saunders "Sandy" Mackaye, befriends him, lends him books, and gives him a place to live after his mother evicts him for reading secular books.

One morning, Alton is summoned to his uncle's office for an interview, during which he meets his cousin George, who is about to enter Cambridge University. Together, they visit an art gallery, where Alton sees the beautiful Lillian Winnstay along with her father, Dean Winnstay, and her cousin Eleanor Staunton. Alton instantly falls in love with Lillian and spends the following year looking for her in London and feeling bitter toward the gentlemen who can visit her because of their rank in society. His frustration finds release in poetry. At first, he writes mannered, Byronic trash until, under Sandy's

guidance, he finds his voice in poetry that describes the lives of the poor workers of London.

Meanwhile, Alton's employer, wanting to increase his profit margin, changes his business focus to the so-called show-trade—cheap, flashy, ready-to-wear clothing—and orders his employees to do piecework at home for much lower wages. Crossthwaite organizes a protest, which Locke joins, but they lose their jobs when Jemmy Downes, one of their number, reports them to their employer. Angered at this injustice, and under Crossthwaite's influence, Alton joins the Chartist movement, which advocates the vote for workers. Mackaye thinks that Alton is too young to become involved in politics; he advises him to visit his cousin George in Cambridge, and to ask him for help in finding a publisher for his poetry. Alton's stay at Cambridge is memorable for several reasons: He comes to know his cousin better and is at last introduced to the people he had seen at the gallery so long before. To obtain security, George has decided to become a Church of England priest, despite preparation and having been brought up a Baptist.

Kingsley also drew on his social observations for his description of working conditions among London tailors. The Chartist movement of the 1840's also provides background for the novel. Chartism took its name from the People's Charter, a petition to the British parliament that called for universal suffrage for men, the secret ballot, and other political reforms, all of which would have turned Great Britain into a democracy with working-class participation in government. The Chartist movement ended in a somewhat anticlimactic attempt to deliver the People's Charter to Parliament on April 10, 1848.

Kingsley used real-life characters for *Alton Locke*. Kingsley, in particular, depicts the harsh working conditions for the industrial workers in London and their exploitation by the rich owners of production. Kingsley lays bare the mechanism of capitalistic

exploitation with his vivid depiction of the plight of poor workers like Alton Locke who is a poor London tailor, self-taught poet, and a political radical. Apprenticed to a tailor with the help of his rich uncle, Alton begins questioning both his widowed mother's strict Baptist faith and the political system that oppresses the poor. His coworker John Crossthwaite introduces him to Chartism, a movement to give political rights to the working classes, and Sandy Mackaye, a philosopher and owner of a used book shop, encourages him to write. Through his rich cousin George, Alton meets and falls in love with Lillian Winnstay, whose father helps him publish his poetry. Frustrated because his low social status is a barrier to his love, Alton throws himself into political activism despite the warnings of Sandy Mackaye. When Lillian marries George and the Chartist movement collapses, Alton despairs, but a legacy from Mackaye allows him and Crossthwaite to move to Texas. Alton dies the evening their ship arrives in the New World.

In this novel, Kingsley set out to expose the social injustice suffered by workers in the clothing trade and the trials and tribulations of agricultural labourers. It also gives an insight into the Chartist campaign with which Kingsley was involved in the 1840s. In effect, Charles Kingsley criticizes the capitalist exploitation by exposing such evils of capitalism. Alton Locke is the story of a young tailor-boy who has instincts and aspirations beyond the normal expectations of his working-class background. He is intensely patriotic and has ambitions to be a poet. In the course of the narrative, Alton Locke loves and struggles in vain.

Physically, he is a weak man, but is able to encompass all the best emotions, along with vain longings, wild hopes, and a righteous indignation at the plight of his contemporaries. He joins the Chartist movement because he can find no better vehicle by which to improve the lot of the working class, experiencing a sense of devastation at its

apparent failure. Utterly broken in spirit, Alton Locke sails for America to seek a new life there; however, he barely reaches the shore of the New World before he dies. In the very first chapter, Kingsley exposes the situation of poor cockney people in the contemporary industrialized London. He writes:

I do not complain that I am a Cockney. That, too, is God's gift. He made me one, that I might learn to feel for poor wretches who sit stifled in reeking garrets and workrooms, drinking in disease with every breath, — bound in their prison-house of brick and iron, with their own funeral pall hanging over them, in that canopy of fog and poisonous smoke, from their cradle to their grave. (8)

It clearly exposes the evil of capitalistic economy, the dilapidated condition of the Cockney working class people in contemporary England. The first chapter illustrates how the poor workers were made to risk their lives in industrial works just for the capitalists' motive for profit. This novel particularly depicts the realistic picture of worse working conditions for the workers of those days which sets this novel apart from other propaganda novel of Kingsley's time. One of the instances often quoted can be found in the second chapter as Kingsley mentions:

I stumbled after Mr. Jones up a dark, narrow, iron staircase till we emerged through a trap-door into a garret at the top of the house. I recoiled with disgust at the scene before me; and here I was to work—perhaps through life! A low lean-to room, stifling me with the combined odours of human breath and perspiration, stale beer, the sweet sickly smell of gin, and the sour and hardly less disgusting one of new cloth. (24)

The extract above takes us through the filthy working conditions for the laborers that symbolize the difficulties and hardships in the lives of the poor workers. The room where Alton Locke was ushered was terrible. It was disgusting due to odors of sweat, beer, gin and cloth. It was the place he was supposed to work. He was taken aback by the scene of filthy working environment for the workers. He further adds:

On the floor, thick with dust and dirt, scraps of stuff and ends of thread, sat some dozen haggard, untidy, shoeless men, with a mingled look of care and recklessness that made me shudder. The windows were tight closed to keep out the cold winter air; and the condensed breath ran in streams down the panes, chequering the dreary outlook of chimney-tops and smoke. The conductor handed me over to one of the men. (24)

The suffocative environment in the working room for the tailors is a vivid description of the extent of exploitation in the contemporary society. This leaves enough room for us to bring neo-Marxist thoughts, particularly of Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, into discussion in this project which are mostly concerned with the concept of hegemony and use of ideology in shaping the mentality of the poor workers rendering them helpless and obsessed with hand to mouth concern rather than getting united to fight against such capitalistic exploitation that has enslaved them for long.

Althusser, in his work *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, is mostly concerned with the question of how the reproduction of the conditions of productions in the society takes place. In other words, he examines the ways in which a State controls over its subjects. He posits that the ultimate condition of production is the reproduction of the conditions of production (127). He explains the matter methodically as follows:

To simplify my exposition, and assuming that every social formation arises from a dominant mode of production, I can say that the process of

production sets to work the existing productive forces in and under definite relations of production. It follows that in order to exist, every social formation must reproduce the conditions of production at the same time as it produces, and in order to be able to produce. (127)

He further explains how the reproduction of the means of production and the labor power takes place. His simple answer to how the reproduction of labor power takes place is ‘by wages’ (130). The proletariat is given the minimum wage just for the survival so that he has to work every day in order to sustain his life. Althusser very emphatically points out this phenomenon of the reproduction of the labor power in the capitalist society when he writes that wage system is:

...so indispensable to the reconstitution of the labor power of the wage earner (the wherewithal to pay for housing, food and clothing, in short to enable the wage earner to present himself again at the factory gate the next day and every further day God grants him); and we should add: indispensable for raising and educating the children in whom the proletariat reproduces himself. (131)

He thinks that the reproduction of the labor power in capitalist society takes place by the capitalist education system. Children at school learn the specialized know-how to be fit for the capitalistic mechanism of production. The educational apparatus or simply school is the dominant ideological state apparatus in capitalist formations that secures the reigning ideology. Althusser states that the reproduction of diversified skills of labor are steadily provided for in a capitalist regime by the capitalist education system (132).

Althusser goes one step ahead and claims that for the sustenance of capitalism through the reproduction of labor power, just the reproduction of skills and know-how imparted through the educational state apparatus is not sufficient but it demands the

reproduction of submission as well lest the proletariats revolt against the ruling ideology.

He states:

To put this more scientifically, I shall say 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...the school teaches know-how but in the forms which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its practice. (133)

Moreover, Althusser's concept of State Apparatus is highly relevant and worth discussion regarding the novel. He divides the state apparatuses into two broad categories namely Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). The Repressive State Apparatus functions primarily by violence and is a unified body of ruling powers. It consists of the government, administration, bureaucracy, army, police, court, prisons and so on. It belongs to the public domain (142,143).

In contrast, the Ideological State Apparatus functions primarily by ideology. It is not unified but plural. It consists of a number of apparatuses like the religious ISA, the educational ISA, the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA, the cultural ISA, the media ISA and so on (143). However, to sustain the capitalist regime both the ideologies work together. Althusser invokes Gramsci's concept of hegemony and further explicitly mentions that "To my knowledge, no class can hold State power over a longer period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses" (146).

Althusser devotes much of the lines in his book to the distinction, discussion and explanation of the two kinds of state apparatuses. In particular, among the various Ideological State Apparatuses, he is mostly concerned about the invasive nature of educational state apparatus. He states that the educational State Apparatus is the most

dominant among the ISAs in the current socio-political arena in the world that has even replaced in its functions the previously dominant ISA, the Church. He mentions:

Hence I believe I have good reasons for thinking that behind the scenes of its political Ideological State Apparatus, which occupies the front of the stage, what the bourgeoisie has installed as its number-one, i.e. as its dominant ideological State apparatus, is the educational apparatus, which has in fact replaced in its functions the previously dominant ideological State apparatus, the Church. (153)

All other ISAs are private and non-obligatory while the educational ISA is obligatory and is reigning universally. Every child is most vulnerable and prone to the educational ISA. It injects the sensitive and curious mind of the students with “a certain amount of ‘know-how’ wrapped in the ruling ideology” (155). The educational ISA in fact inculcates the ideology of the ruling class. It ensures “that the relations of production in a capitalist social formation, i.e. the relations of exploited to exploiters and exploited to exploiters, are largely reproduced” (156). The school has become a universally reigning ISA as it is camouflaged as the neutral environment purged of ideology. It has been made to look like natural, useful and even indispensable unit of the society. Schooling has been considered as a must for every human being. The role of church over the centuries has been replaced by school.

Althusser posits a series of hypotheses that he explores to clarify his understanding of ideology. First, he posits that “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (162). Althusser moves one step ahead of classical Marxism and claims that ideology, by contrast, does not reflect the real world but the imaginary relationship of individuals to the real world. The second proposition is

that the ideology has material existence since it “always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices” (165).

Althusser’s third thesis about the nature of ideology is that “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects. According to Althusser, the main purpose of ideology is “in constituting concrete individuals as subjects.” What thus seems to take place outside ideology, in reality takes place in ideology. Ideology never says “I am ideological” (171). Dino Felluga, an Althusser expert, writes:

So pervasive is ideology in its constitution of subjects that it forms our very reality and thus appears to be true or obvious... through interpellation, individuals are turned into subjects (which are always ideological)... the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject. (2)

The final important but paradoxical postulate made by Althusser is that “Individuals are always-already subjects.” It is paradoxical as it indicates “becoming subject” happens even before we are born. In other words, he means that “we are born in ideology.”

However, Althusser states that it is in fact a plain reality and not a paradox at all” (176).

Thus in overview, Althusser takes the Marxist theory as a point of departure and incorporates the neo-Marxist theory of hegemony by Gramsci and takes the theory of Marxism to new height. Therefore, the theory of Althusser is relevant and noteworthy in the analysis and interpretation of this novel.

Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci defines the concept of cultural hegemony in his seminal and vigorous Marxist analysis later collected in Prison Notebooks. Gramsci maintains the original Marxist distinction between the economic base and the cultural superstructure, but replaces the older notion that culture is a disguised "reflection" of the material base with the concept that the relation between the two is one of "reciprocity,"

or interactive influence. Gramsci places special emphasis on the popular, as opposed to the elite elements of culture, ranging from *folklore* and popular music to the cinema.

According to M.H. Abrams,

Gramsci's most widely echoed concept is that of hegemony: that a social class achieves a predominant influence and power, not by direct and overt means, but by succeeding in making its ideological view of society so pervasive that the subordinate classes unwittingly accept and participate in their own oppression. (151)

It can be inferred from the above point that domination is not simply imposed from above but has to be won through the subordinated groups' spontaneous consent to the cultural domination which they believe will serve their interests. Thus the concept of cultural hegemony can be crucial in the analysis of this novel not only for analyzing how certain characters in the novel have been culturally hegemonized but also how the author himself has unwittingly internalized the definitions of reality as presented by the ruling and dominant classes.

The concept of hegemony has shifted over time from simply a domination in classical Marxism to a site of constantly opposing and competing ideologies that is not static but dynamic in nature. Modern media and popular culture scholar John Fiske in his work *Television Culture (1987)* mentions:

Hegemony is a constant struggle against a multitude of resistances to ideological domination, and any balance of forces that it achieves is always precarious, always in need of re-achievement. Hegemony's 'victories' are never final, and any society will evidence numerous points where subordinate groups have resisted the total domination that is hegemony's aim, and have withheld their consent to the system. (41)

The concept of ideology has been central to all Marxist theories. Ideology has classically been defined as the false consciousness. Ideology is considered to be highly pervasive in our society. Lois Tyson in her much appreciated work *Critical Theory Today* attempts to classify and explain some dominant forms of ideology mainly in the American society. According to her so many such ideologies continue to exist and shape our version of the reality about the society we live in. Classism is one example among many such ideologies which makes us to think that the worth of a person is determined by the class he belongs to(59).

The ideologies disguise themselves as ideals and creep into our mind and control our mode of living and perception of ‘reality’ around us. Patriotism, as Tyson mentions is such an ideology that blind the poor people to see themselves as members of a nation, separate from other nations, rather than as members of a worldwide oppressed class opposed to all privileged classes including those from their own country, it prevents the poor from banding together to improve their condition globally (59). She also points out another dominant form if ideology that has infested people’s mind in modern society. It is the ideology of rugged individualism that puts oneself above all others and is a cornerstone of American dream. She elaborates the negative consequence of inculcating such ideology as:

By keeping the focus on “me” instead of on “us,” rugged individualism works against the well-being of society as a whole and of underprivileged people in particular. Rugged individualism also gives us the illusion that we make our own decisions without being significantly influenced by ideology of any sort when, in fact, we’re all influenced by various ideologies all the time, whether we realize it or not. (60)

One of the most dominant ideologies in today's capitalist market economy is consumerism. As Tyson simply puts it "Consumerism is an ideology that says 'I'm only as good as what I buy'" (60). It has affected every facet of our life. Modern gadgets like mobile phones are skyrocketing in their sales and the investors are thriving all because of the consumerist ideology. The minds of modern people has been inculcated with the ideology that one must get the latest and the best product available in market in order to maintain personality. Tyson mentions the ideological purposes behind the propagation of such ideology as:

Thus, it simultaneously fulfils two ideological purposes: it gives me the illusion that I can be "as good as" the wealthy if I can purchase what they purchase or a reasonable facsimile thereof (albeit on credit) and it fills the coffers of the wealthy who manufacture and sell the consumer products I buy and who reap the 15–20 percent interest on my credit-card bills. (60)

Commodification of human being is another phenomenon in modern capitalist economy. Marxism, a commodity's value lies not in what it can do (use value) but in the money or other commodities for which it can be traded (exchange value) or in the social status it confers on its owner (sign-exchange value) (Tyson, 62). Capitalism commodifies a human being by treating a man like an object that is just worth its exchange value. It has a dehumanizing and debilitating effect on human mind. All the oppressed characters in the novel are at some time or the other commodified by the capitalist society and have been treated as a mere object worth market value.

Marxists have always rejected the traditional notion of literature as a timeless and aesthetic realm. Rather, like all cultural manifestations, it is a product of the socioeconomic and hence ideological conditions of the time and place in which it was written, whether or not the author intended it so (Tyson, 66). The focus of this research in

Alton Locke obviously is not an exception in this case. It represents the contesting ideologies of Kingsley's times and his own ideologies have got an outlet in the novel whether he wanted it or not. As Tyson puts: "Because human beings are themselves products of their socioeconomic and ideological environment, it is assumed that authors cannot help but create works that embody ideology in some form" (66).

In the line of these incidents and ideas discussed above, the present research takes on the notion of 'ideologies' and 'hegemony' to expose the impacts of such ideological domination in not only the characters in the novel but also Kingsley himself. The researcher will discuss how the poor working class people in the novel have been ideologically as well as forcefully dominated and hegemonized in order to prevent them from being united for the revolution that threatens to topple the contemporary capitalistic system.

The first chapter, "Introduction: Capitalism and Exploitation in Kingsley's *Alton Locke*" discusses how pervasive and detrimental is ideology and how capitalists manipulate both the RSA and the ISA as tools of domination for their own benefit. Similarly, the second chapter "Exploitation by means of Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses in Kingsley's *Alton Locke*" deals on incidents and references as provided in the novel that depicts how poor working class people are dominated not only by repressive means but also by inculcation of the ruling class ideology in their minds. In addition it examines how far the author has internalized the ruling class ideology and the conflict between the contesting ideologies inside the mind of the author. Finally, the last chapter "Kingsley's Exposition and Critique of Capitalistic Exploitation" will conclude the research.

II. Exploitation by Means of Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses in

Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke*

Published in 1850, this autobiographical novel of the well-known Chartist poet and novelist describes the lives of poor and exploited workers in industrialized England. He depicts the most inhumane treatment of the proletariats in the mid-19th century British society that is largely due to the repressive ideologies inculcated in the minds of the oppressors as well as the oppressed.

It is virtually impossible to exert control over the ruled subject just with repressive apparatuses. Althusser also accepts that “[t]here is no such thing as a purely repressive apparatus” (145). In every society, both repressive and ideological mechanisms are actively at work in favor of the ruling class. In Kingsley's novel the repressed characters are entangled in the mesh of RSA and ISA, thus making them unable and unaware to realize the fact that they are being ruled by the ideologies, the belief systems that serve the purpose of the ruling classes.

Alton Locke, the narrator in the novel, starts his journey of life in great hope but finds failure and depression lurking on his family life. He recalls his father's life story in the second chapter of the novel and describes how he went bankrupt as so many other tradesmen did at the time:

My father saved enough to marry, when of middle age, a woman of his own years, and set up a little shop, where there were far too many such already, in the hope—to him, as to the rest of the world, quite just and innocent—of drawing away as much as possible of his neighbours' custom. He failed, died—as so many small tradesmen do—of bad debts and a broken heart, and left us beggars.(21)

He recollects the hardships and consequences he had to face due to poverty. It makes the poor feel as if they have committed a sort of crime. This ideology makes them feel powerless and even ashamed of their plight. It impedes the unity among the poor workers and in effect benefits the rich who enjoy the vast wealth and supply of all the amenities in the society. This idea has also been reflected in this excerpt from the novel where Locke reveals the bitter truth, which is still relevant today that money determines almost anything in the commercial society:

But in the commercial classes money most truly and fearfully "makes the man." A difference in income, as you go lower, makes more and more difference in the supply of the common necessities of life; and worse—in education and manners, in all which polishes the man, till you may see often, as in my case, one cousin a Cambridge undergraduate, and the other a tailor's journeyman. (21)

In the extract above, Locke clearly describes how the mechanism of capitalism creates and sustains the system itself by creating disparity between the economically poor and the affluent class. In his case, he was brought up in an economically backward family but his cousin had a well to do family. The consequence became clear within a short stretch of time- one became a scholar and the other a tailor. It shows how capitalism leads the impoverished people into the vicious circle of poverty in which each poor generation gets stuck perpetually and very few can escape it. The ideology of “effort brings success” operates in the minds of the poor working class and this very ISA ironically keeps them from succeeding. Moreover, the dreary workroom conditions for the low level workers were terrible at the time the novel was written. It clearly is in line with Althusser’s concept of reproduction of conditions of production. Locke remembers how Sam ironically described the dilapidated working rooms for the tailors:

A cause you get all the other floors' stinks up here as well as your own.
Concentrated essence of man's flesh, is this here as you're a breathing.
Cellar workroom we calls Rheumatic Ward, because of the damp.
Ground-floor's Fever Ward—them as don't get typhus gets dysentery, and
them as don't get dysentery gets typhus... (25)

The poor grammar of Sam indicates the poor level of education of the laymen and it is commensurate with the stinking rooms where the tailors had to work which was shunned by the affluent class who took pride in their correctness of language and by this token they marginalized the language spoken by the poor that culminated into linguistic segregation which added a new chapter to the class domination.

These things, according to Althusser, are regularly reproduced by the capitalistic system and the poor workers hardly ever escape this vicious circle of illiteracy and poverty; lest they be prosperous and turn back against the capitalistic system and shatter it down! Sam continues the bleak description of the health problems these people had to undergo:

First you begins to cough, then you proceeds to expectorate—spittoons, as you see, perwided free gracious for nothing—fined a kivarten if you spits on the floor— Then your cheeks they grows red, and your nose it grows thin, and your bones they stick out, till they comes through your skin. (26)

The capitalists are not unaware of such a pathetic condition of the working class people. However, they turn blind eyes to it as it is a vital component of sustaining the capitalistic system- the reproduction of conditions of production. The inaccessibility of minimal healthcare itself is a form of repression and the government is the keeper of such repressive apparatus in the society. When laymen become literate and get good working conditions, they become aware of the exploitation and their uprising may topple

such a system based on motive for surplus where welfare of the workers is a far cry. Locke laments over the poor people's plight of being deprived of education when he says, "Rich parents, I suppose, say so, when they send their sons to public schools to learn life. We working men have too often no other teacher than our own errors." (31)

Another noteworthy critique of the novel that exposes the evil of capitalism comes from McCausland who discusses the role of sewage and its resultant illnesses in *Alton Locke*. Sewage or excrement is also a metaphor for the waste produced by the rich after they consume all the surplus value created by the toil of the working classes. Sewage is "a sign of the suffering of the poor, all that is left of them after the rich have devoured them; this suffering is a result of the very system which claims to be creating a prosperous and civilized England" (158).

Some critics, on the other hand, like Muller thinks though much of *Alton Locke* reads as a political tract and Alton himself is represented through most of the novel as a dangerous agitator, a dramatic change occurs at the end with Alton renouncing his subversive views and embracing religion as a solution. Kingsley seeing no distinction between the secular and the religious, believed that such desiderata as sanitary reform and social emancipation would come about through spiritual or religious emancipation. *Alton Locke* may be viewed not primarily as a Chartist novel but as an expression of Kingsley's Christian work on behalf of the poorer classes. The novel "is really a Christian novel, written in the spirit of his sermons which never failed to emphasize, on the one hand, the Gospel message of the Kingdom of God, and, on the other, personal salvation or reform" (9).

Whatever the viewpoint be, it can be argued that one of the principal aim of Kingsley was to lay bare the state apparatuses that are actively at work in capitalistic world and move the readers to sympathize with the poor working class people. Though

some critics have dismissed the novel simply as a novel promoting Christian thoughts, we can definitely argue that Kingsley used his Christian socialist view in surfacing the evils of capitalistic exploitation. Since England was primarily a Christian nation, it is obvious that he had profound effect of Biblical teachings and doctrines. Whatever his religious background be, he seems committed to make a difference in the workers' life by making them aware of such exploitation and the mechanisms behind it.

Brantlinger, an analyst on British socialism, analyzes the Christian Socialist theme in *Alton Locke*. He considers that the moral of *Alton Locke* is not that he should adopt such working class features as Chartism and trade unionism and eschew middle class values, nor is it that he should remain fixed in his working class milieu and never seek to improve himself. Rather Kingsley wished to point the moral "that a worker should not be ashamed of his status and that he should do whatever he can within legal and Christian boundaries to help the other members of his class" (140).

In an instance in the novel, we find Locke trying to steal some book pages in order to quench his thirst to read. This is an incident that touches heart of every sensible reader and makes them ponder if poverty itself is a crime and the poor people criminals. If caught, he would be arrested and tried as a criminal but here, Kingsley exposes the vicious circle crafted by capitalism and supported by the pillars of state apparatuses to which the working class falls prey. Of course, superficially, it was a crime as his mother had rightly understood it, but behind the curtains, it was merely a consequence of this invincible capitalistic web that never let the poor grow rich. Who would steal by ripping the pages off the volumes if they could afford it? Locke recalls the incident in grim tone:

In a street through which I used to walk homeward was an old book shop, piled and fringed outside and in with books of every age, size, and colour. And here I at last summoned courage to stop, and timidly and stealthily

taking out some volume whose title attracted me, snatch hastily a few pages and hasten on, half fearful of being called on to purchase, half ashamed of a desire which I fancied everyone else considered as unlawful as my mother did. (31)

The quote above shows the intricate tapestry of RSA and ISA that work together to achieve the purpose of capitalism. The poor first get trapped in the vicious circle of poverty due to restrictive and repressive government policies and later vilified ideologically when they try to cross the boundary set for them. This very concept has been elucidated by Althusser who has emphatically pointed out that for the ruling capitalist class to maintain its status quo, the reproduction of labor power is a must. For the same, it employs the minimal wage mechanism that enables “the wage earner to present himself again at the factory gate the next day” (131). It means the laborer is provided so little wage that he has to work every day to earn his living. The same situation has been depicted in the novel. It has also been reflected in the description of housing of Locke in the novel. His accommodation was terrible without any ventilation and heating. He describes it as:

I slept in a little lean-to garret at the back of the house, some ten feet long by six wide. I could just stand upright against the inner wall, while the roof on the other side ran down to the floor. There was no fireplace in it, or any means of ventilation. No wonder I coughed all night accordingly, and woke about two every morning with choking throat and aching head. (35)

The terrible plight of the working class is simply ignored by the government that dismisses the poor merely as lazy people who never worked hard to make their life successful. This ideology is widely circulated in society to get an excuse for ignoring the

poor. So, we can see the ISA at work here. The most powerful ISA among all, according to Althusser, is the educational apparatus. It has also replaced the past authority of the church. Althusser argues that the child in his most vulnerable years is squeezed between the Family State Apparatus and the Educational State Apparatus (154). The school seems to be a neutral site of learning different useful subjects. However, it is a site for inculcating different ruling ideologies in the young minds of the innocent students. Not only this, schooling sometimes becomes a good enterprise to both fleece and dominate the poor class. Many are cynical about the fruit born by education. Crossthwaite, one of the central and revolutionary character in the novel expresses his disbelief in education that acts as a state apparatus:

Can't you see what comes of education? —that any dolt, provided he be a gentleman, can be doctored up at school and college, enough to make him play his part decently—his mighty part of ruling us, and riding over our heads, and picking our pockets, as parson, doctor, lawyer, member of parliament.(46)

Quality education is not out of reach of poor because they aren't allowed to join the institutions but because they can't afford it. Locke craved for quality education in his life but he was deprived of it simply because of his indigence. He recounts it in the fourth chapter of the novel, "'It sounds very grand," replied I, meekly; "and I should like very much certainly to have a good education. But I can't see whose injustice keeps me out of one if I can't afford to pay for it." (47) The novel depicts the bitter reality of the working class people who are kept away from the quality education and scholarships which were originally established to help the poor study. The affluent class maintain their monopoly over education and keep the prices much higher as Crossthwaite pours out his anger at the contemporary education system:

They've got the monopoly of education in England, and they get their bread by it at their public schools and universities; and of course it's their interest to keep up the price of their commodity, and let no man have a taste of it who can't pay down handsomely. And so those aristocrats of college dons go on rolling in riches, and fellowships, and scholarships, that were bequeathed by the people's friends in old times, just to educate poor scholars like you and me, and give us our rights as free men. (47)

Although the capitalist economy gives the illusion of free competition and equal opportunity for all to rise from the poor to become a millionaire, it is only applicable in a handful of cases and mostly the poor die poor, never getting the privileges as the rich do. There is just one success story trumpeted by the rich to justify the capitalistic economic system in contrast to thousands of true stories of failures of the poor that never make it into headlines. So statistically, it's all fake as a whited grave as Crossthwaite continues:

Ay; but where are the stories of those who have not risen—of all the noble geniuses who have ended in desperation, drunkenness, starvation, suicide, because no one would take the trouble of lifting them up, and enabling them to walk in the path which Nature had marked out for them? Dead men tell no tales; and this old whited sepulchre, society, ain't going to turn informer against itself. (48)

The narrative of the pain and agony felt by the poor working class intensifies at chapter 10. Kingsley suggests his readers to skip this chapter if they just read this novel for amusement. It hints towards the descriptions of the pathetic conditions of the poor people in this chapter which makes this chapter worth more exploration as it is directly related to the issue in this research. In the very first paragraph he describes the misery and sufferings the poor had to face just for the crime of being the poor. Locke advocates their

political awakening and dismisses those who think that they are fighting against the injustice because of merely fanciful ambitions. He describes the slavery and misery faced by the working class as:

...rather barbaric absence of all system, which involves starvation, nakedness, prostitution, and long imprisonment in dungeons worse than the cells of the Inquisition, will be invested with something at least of tragic interest, may, I hope, think it worth their while to learn how the clothes which they wear are made, and listen to a few occasional statistics, which, though they may seem to the wealthy mere lists of dull figures, are to the workmen symbols of terrible physical realities—of hunger, degradation, and despair. (96)

Locke terms the capitalistic exploitation as terrible system that consequently leads the working class to starvation. The moneyed class draw their livelihood out of their starvation. On the surface, this system seems to encourage free competition, common good, and provide chance for self-development, but in reality, it widens the chasm between the rich and the poor and makes their life harder and harder. This situation makes the working class present themselves before the factory gates every day for the nominal wages they receive just enough to keep themselves living. Locke pictures the grim situation delicately in the novel when he mentions:

We shall have to face, as the rest have, ever decreasing prices of labour, ever increasing profits made out of that labour by the contractors who will employ us—arbitrary fines, inflicted at the caprice of hirelings—the competition of women, and children, and starving Irish—our hours of work will increase one-third, our actual pay decrease to less than one-half;

and in all this we shall have no hope, no chance of improvement in wages,
but ever more penury, slavery and misery. (98)

The above extract shows the slums of London where the working class people lived was terribly polluted and diseases like cholera were rampant. Many lost their lives despite their hope that someday they would rise from the ashes and commensurate with the well-to-do class of London. They were so impoverished and deprived of basic things that they barely had time to think of sanitation. Some London poets of the time composed poetry depicting the pollution and diseases in such slums. This terrible situation was culminated by the circulation of ruling ideologies that poor are filthy and are victim of their own lack of sanitation. One of them was Charles Mackay who composed these verses that picture the problem of pollution in London slums:

Dense on the stream the vapours lay,
Thick as wool on the cold highway;
Spungy and dim each lonely lamp
Shone o'er the streets so dull and damp;
The moonbeams could not pierce the cloud
That swathed the city like a shroud;
There stood three shapes on the bridge alone,
Three figures by the coping-stone;
Gaunt and tall and undefined,
Spectres built of mist and wind. (91)

Because of lack of sanitation, people often suffered from infectious diseases and the working class were the most exposed ones to these problems. The rich could easily find a treatment in case they suffer from such diseases but the poor wouldn't find any remedy because of poverty. In a sense, poverty became their crime. The moneyed class is not

unaware of this problem but they turn blind eye to such problems and simply dismiss the poor people's problem as if they were mere crybabies who were reaping the harvest of their own sin, namely poverty. Mackay again satirically depicts the terrible situation in which cholera could wipe out the working class population if the spread gets worse:

Were men as wise as men might be,
They would not work for you, for me,
For him that cometh over the sea;
But they will not hear the warning voice:
The Cholera comes,—Rejoice! rejoice!
He shall be lord of the swarming town!
And mow them down, and mow them down! (91)

Few among the poor like Crosswaithe in the novel were aware of how the capitalistic ideologies instilled in the minds of men and the state apparatuses operated. In the tenth chapter titled "How Folks Turn Chartists" he argues why Chartism is a cause worth taking. Chartism was a movement that aimed for the betterment of working class in England. He was well aware of the consequences of the dead-end life of the poor laborers. He believed that the working class should turn Chartists for the common good of the poor workers and to put an end to severe discrimination they face in the society. He extrapolates the terrible consequences if they turn their blind eyes to the exploitation they were facing:

Our wives will be forced to sit up night and day to help us—our children must labor from the cradle without chance of going to school, hardly of breathing the fresh air of heaven, - our boys, as they grow up, must turn beggars or paupers—our daughters, as thousands do, must eke out their miserable earnings by prostitution.(99)

Crosswaithe presents this grim picture in the midst of ideological state apparatus being manipulated by the rich capitalists to inculcate the laissez-faire ideology in the minds of the working men that government should not intervene the economic establishments and should give them full autonomy to regulate the wages in the job market. This ideology confounds the minds of the illiterate working men with the notion that the laws governing economy of a country is identical to the laws of nature- try to change them and it becomes a disaster. Kingsley here presents the very operation of such ideological apparatus in the contemporary England. Crosswaithe had once been a member of a delegation that went to a member of parliament with the complaints about detrimental conditions of the working class, the philosopher cum politician tries the dismiss their issue by trying to program their mind with this nature-economy ideology. He recalls the moment and laments:

But you can recollect as well as I can, when a deputation of us went up to a member of parliament—one that was reputed a philosopher, and a political economist, and a liberal—and set before him the ever-increasing penury and misery of our trade, and of those connected with it; you recollect his answer—that, however glad he would be to help us, it was impossible—he could not alter the laws of nature—that wages were regulated by the amount of competition among the men themselves, and that it was no business of government, or anyone else, to interfere in contracts between the employer and employed, that those things regulated themselves by the laws of political economy, which it was madness and suicide to oppose. (100)

British working-class movement for parliamentary reform named after the People's Charter, a bill drafted by the London radical William Lovett in May 1838. It contained

six demands: universal manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, vote by ballot, annually elected Parliaments, payment of members of Parliament, and abolition of the property qualifications for membership. Chartism was the first movement both working class in character and national in scope that grew out of the protest against the injustices of the new industrial and political order in Britain. While composed of working people, Chartism was also mobilized around populism as well as clan identity. The government used repressive state apparatuses to smother the raging protests and bring the movement down. However, the movement kept gaining momentum. According to the Britannica Encyclopedia:

The last great burst of Chartism occurred in 1848. Another convention was summoned, and another petition was prepared. Again Parliament did nothing. Thereafter, Chartism lingered another decade in the provinces, but its appeal as a national mass movement was ended. With the onset of the relative prosperity of mid-Victorian Britain, popular militancy lost its edge. Many Chartist leaders, however, schooled in the ideological debates of the 1840s, continued to serve popular causes, and the Chartist spirit outlasted the organization. Five of the six points—all except the annual Parliaments—have since been secured. (1)

Thus the Chartist spirit, in the long run met its demands that were not easy to fulfill for the contemporary aristocrats. There were several instants in the history of Chartist history when physical force was used by both sides- the adherents of Chartism and also the armed force of government. The police opened fires on the protesting crowds several times but it did not deter them. Instead, it spurred them more and more. It was because of

the dire need and exigent situation the poor workers were facing. This rebellious spirit is echoed in the words of Crosswaithe:

But I say this, if neither government nor members of parliament can help us, we must help ourselves. Help yourselves, and heaven will help you. Combination among ourselves is the only chance. One thing we can do—sit still... Better starve than sin. I say, it is a sin to give in to this system. It is a sin to add our weight to the crowd of artizans who are now choking and strangling each other to death. Let those who will turn beasts of prey, and feed upon their fellows; but let us at least keep ourselves pure. It may be the law of political civilization, the law of nature, that the rich should eat up the poor, and the poor eat up each other. Then I here rise up and curse that law, that civilization, that nature. Either I will destroy them, or they shall destroy me. (100)

This very spirit of rebellion would, someday overturn the table of capitalistic exploitation of the poor workers of England and break a new dawn where each worker is provided with voting right, justice in employment, and right to lead a life of dignity.

Chartists believed a radical reform of the political system was the only peaceable way to deal with issues of economic and social injustice that arose in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. Designed to complete the process of reform begun by Magna Carta in 1215, the 1838 Charter made six demands: universal male suffrage; a salary for every MP; no property qualification for MPs; election by secret ballot; equal sizing of constituencies; and annual parliaments. The Chartist movement did not become successful overnight. Many times, the activists on strikes were deceived and were led into deliberate deep pessimism. Kingsley depicts this deceiving nature of authorities through the question of a listener of Crosswaithe's speech:

"Don't you know what came of the strike a few years ago, when this piece-work and sweating first came in? The masters made fine promises, and never kept 'em; and the men who stood out had their places filled up with poor devils who were glad enough to take the work at any price—just as ours will be. There's no use kicking against the pricks. All the rest have come to it, and so must we. We must live somehow, and half aloaf is better than no bread; and even that half loaf will go into other men's mouths, if we don't snap at it at once. Besides, we can't force others to strike. We may strike and starve ourselves, but what's the use of a dozen striking out of 20,000?" (101)

The very pessimism was the success of the ideological state apparatuses manipulated by the ruling class in the novel- the success that was hardly ever possible through the use of repression and brutal force of the police and army. It shows how ideology, at most of the times, can prove more efficient in smothering the voices of the poor and lead them easily into the vicious circle of poverty. However, the use of force from the side of the Chartists always did not produce good results. They were often shunned by the polite middle class in society and at times lost support of even the fellow workers. According to Chartism scholar Malcolm Chase:

Chartism was most potent during three downturns in the trade cycle: 1838-40, 1842 and 1848. In 1838-39 it mobilized significant cross-class support. However, the readiness of many working-class Chartists to resort to direct action when peaceable agitation failed meant Chartism lost 'polite' supporters. In July 1839 MPs rejected, by 235 votes to 46, a motion that the House of Commons should debate the Chartists' national petition, bearing 1.3 million signatures. (3)

The Chartist petition was rejected outright despite over millions of signatures backing it. The movement experienced depressing and near-the-end hiatuses; however, the movement never stopped. The Chartist movement of course, had some limitations but was focused on providing justice to the poor working class. It is evident in the confession made by the major character Alton Locke in the tenth chapter when he hopes for the bright future of the workers when they would be able to devote some time to their personal hobbies:

All this while my mind had been undergoing a strange perturbation. The notion of escaping that infernal workroom, and the company I met there—of taking my work home, and thereby, as I hoped, gaining more time for study—at least, having my books on the spot ready at every odd moment, was most enticing.(101)

The urge to escaping the infernal working life is just a pipedream in pro-exploitation capitalism where the repressive state apparatus comes up with the plans and policies that snatch the fair share of the poor workers and add it to the surplus of the rich. The government is supposed to take care of its citizens, most importantly of the poor working class people. However, in reality the government is run overwhelmingly by the same ruling class that manipulates the policies and decisions of the governing body for the benefit of the ruling class itself. They take the lowest tenders from the suppliers and make the poor suffer consequently with very low wages. The government also represses the voices of the poor by direct repression using the policemen and the armed forces. In addition, it also inculcates the ruling ideologies in the minds of people; for instance, the ideology that the government protects the rights of the people and provides justice to every citizen without bias. At one point in the novel we find Locke himself becomes the victim of such ruling ideology and hopes that the government would put an end to such

exploitation in capitalistic system. He tells Crosswaithe, “Surely, Crossthwaite, if matters were properly represented to the government, they would not, for their own existence' sake, to put conscience out of the question, allow such a system to continue growing.”

(102)Crosswaithe, being aware of such fake ideological apparatus rebukes Locke:

Government—government? You a tailor, and not know that government are the very authors of this system? Not to know that they first set the example, by getting the army and navy clothes made by contractors, and taking the lowest tenders? Not to know that the police clothes, the postmen's clothes, the convicts' clothes, are all contracted for on the same infernal plan, by sweaters, and sweaters' sweaters, and sweaters' sweaters' sweaters, till government work is just the very last, lowest resource to which a poor starved-out wretch betakes himself to keep body and soul together? (102)

In the portion of the text above, Crosswaithe clearly reveals the government as the author of such pro-exploitation capitalistic system. This is in line with Althusser's idea of state apparatuses. He unfolds the sinister secret of governing agency under the veil of uniform. He calls it a tyranny and compares it with the cruelty of the Roman and Norman rulers and hopes that it will be conspicuously exposed to all in future. He rebukes Locke and expresses his surprise at his naïve understanding of the economic system. He thinks it is a great irony when Locke considers appealing to the government about the exploitation. He also exposes the corruption in government agencies with the contractors as the accomplices who hire the poor workers just for a little wage and profit from their sweat and blood. He explains:

Why, the government prices, in almost every department, are half, and less than half, the very lowest living price. I tell you, the careless iniquity

of government about these things will come out some day. It will be known, the whole abomination, and future generations will class it with the tyrannies of the Roman emperors and the Norman barons. Why, it's a fact, that the colonels of the regiments—noblemen, most of them—make their own vile profit out of us tailors—out of the pauperism of the men, the slavery of the children, the prostitution of the women. (103)

Locke's understanding of government as a guardian institution is in line with the concept of 'hegemony' by neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci. Hegemony can be defined as an amalgam of force and consent and the admixture of coercion and approval. The ruling classes are generally successful in dominating the social mass not only by violence and state power but also by the help of ruling ideology that is programmed into the minds of the ruled. Such fake consciousness is regularly inculcated in the minds of the public by the means of the apparatuses like education centers, religious ideas, media (radio, television, internet, newspapers and so on) etc. which ultimately makes the poor people give consent to the ruling group by accepting themselves as inferior. As a result, self-abasement and humiliation is produced in the ruled class which ultimately serves the interests of the ruling classes. According to Gramsci:

The 'normal' exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent. Indeed, the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public opinion—

newspapers and associations—which, therefore, in certain situations, are artificially multiplied. (248)

Thus, it is clear from the poured out thoughts of Locke in the novel that he has been hegemonized by the ruling ideologies inculcated by the ruling class in the minds of the people with the illusion that government represents all people equally, provides justice to the poor, acts a guardian of the society. This sort of false ideology is widely circulated by the ruling class using the media like newspapers which are in fact controlled by the same ruling class that becomes a tool in their hands to hegemonize people. Crosswaithe is a character among the few in the novel who have understood such reality. Thus he vehemently warns Locke against believing in such ruling ideologies. He clarifies the composition and function of government as:

They represent property—and we have none. They represent rank—we have none. Vested interests—we have none. Large capitals—those are just what crush us. Irresponsibility of employers, slavery of the employed, competition among masters, competition among workmen, that is the system they represent—they preach it, they glory in it.—Why, it is the very ogre that is eating us all up. They are chosen by the few, they represent the few, and they make laws for the many—and yet you don't know whether or not the people are represented! (104)

In this way, Alton Locke gets disillusioned with all the ruling ideologies by the influence of Crosswaithe, the revolutionary character in the novel. He finally realizes the futility in embracing such pernicious ruling ideologies. This turning point in the life and thought of the protagonist in the novel is a landmark worth noting. He decides to unravel the harmful effects of such ruling ideologies to the poor fellow workers and becomes an activist. Every person in the society is kept in illusion by such ruling ideologies that

inhibits revolutionary nature of human beings and forestalls any change in the status quo. However, such ideologies aren't invincible. Revolution and movements like Chartism are inevitable particularly in society where capitalistic exploitation is at its extreme.

Kingsley portrays this landmark in the life of Locke as:

From that night I was a Chartist, heart and soul—and so were a million and a half more of the best artisans in England—at least, I had no reason to be ashamed of my company. Yes; I too, like Crossthwaite, took the upper classes at their word; bowed down to the idol of political institutions, and pinned my hopes of salvation on "the possession of one ten thousandth part of a talker in the national palaver." True, I desired the Charter, at first (as I do, indeed, at this moment), as a means to glorious ends—not only because it would give a chance of elevation, a free sphere of action, to lowly worth and talent; but because it was the path to reforms—social, legal, sanitary and educational. (105)

His conversion was not a minor signing up for a group. It was by his heart and soul that he hoped for the betterment of the conditions of the workers whose lives over the decades had been battered by the storm of poverty and seared by the flames of injustice. The poor people could not afford education for their children. Their all subsequent generations would be forced to live in the slums without proper education, sanitation, and connection with the world of finance. Children would become burden to them rather than blessing in such a miasma of exploitation and utter poverty. Crosswaithe, in the tenth chapter, mentions:

Would they be a blessing to me now? No, my lad. Let those bring slaves into the world who will! I will never beget children to swell the numbers of those who are trampling each other down in the struggle for daily

bread, to minister in ever deepening poverty and misery to the rich man's luxury—perhaps his lust. (107)

The extract above reveals how hand to mouth is the major area of problem for the poor as they need to spend large chunk of their income to buy food. Kingsley depicts the terrible situation in the eleventh chapter. He meticulously describes the plight of the contemporary working class people. Even today, most of the income of the poor people goes for providing food to the family members.

Malthusian theory of population growth, struggle and hardship due to scarcely available food applies aptly to the poor working class in every society. The cup of the rich overflows with wine while the dish of the poor remains empty. This serious consequence of capitalistic exploitation was often overlooked by many of the contemporary writers. However, Kingsley exposed it transparently in the novel what truly makes him one of the greatest critics of capitalistic exploitation and an avid Chartist. In the eleventh chapter, after Locke tells how one of the workers had pawned his clothes, as dozens of them did for food, he remarks:

There's many a man who, after working seventeen or eighteen hours a day, Sundays and all, without even time to take off his clothes, finds himself brought in indebt to his tyrant at the week's end. And if he gets no work, the villain won't let him leave the house; he has to stay there starving, on the chance of an hour's job. (121)

Most working people at that time were trapped in this sort of vicious circle of poverty that had contributed greatly to the sustenance of the capitalism and status quo in the society. The workers were trapped in the vicious circle of poverty in such a way that hand to mouth was their only concern and they barely gave second thoughts to revolution

in society. Their accommodations were terrible and starvation and malnutrition among them was widespread. Kingsley depicts this plight of the workers realistically without any exaggeration in sense that it was as severe as he mentions in the novel. He writes:

I tell you, I've known half a dozen men imprisoned in that way, in a little dungeon of a garret, where they had hardly room to stand upright, and only just space to sit and work between their beds, without breathing the fresh air, or seeing God's sun, for months together, with no victuals but a few slices of bread-and-butter, and a little slop of tea, twice a day, till they were starved to the very bone. (122)

Education has always been considered as the key to success or an individual. However, in Kingsley's times, it was a far cry to the working class people. The tuition fees were deliberately set so high that the workers could hardly even dream of getting their children educated with the privilege as the nobles of the time had. In this way they were kept from being educated that could potentially raise their awareness about the ongoing exploitation under the system of capitalism. Consequently, the laborers and their family members always lagged behind in education. Concerning this, Locke remarks:

But are there six labourers' sons educating in the universities at this moment! No! the real reason for our exclusion, churchmen or not, is, because we are poor—because we cannot pay your exorbitant fees, often, as in the case of bachelors of arts, exacted for tuition which is never given, and residence which is not permitted—because we could not support the extravagance which you not only permit, but encourage—because by your own unblushing confession, it insures the university 'the support of the aristocracy. (131)

By this point in the novel Locke realizes how the capitalistic system, that unfortunately emerged along with the industrialization of Britain, sabotaged the spirit of freedom as intended by the culture of nobility in the middle ages. He valorized the middle ages despite the superstitions and many other problems in the sense that modern capitalism has done more harm to the poor workers that they did to the working class. Capitalists and moneyed class misused the same noble culture and institutions and monopolized them via the ruling ideologies that emphasize on aristocratic values and associates freedom and rights with the upper affluent class in the society. Locke's awakening on this matter of capitalistic exploitation and monopolization is an epiphany on his part that is one of the turning points in the novel. Locke's realization finds this profound expression in the novel:

"Noble buildings!" I said to myself, "and noble institutions! given freely to the people, by those who loved the people, and the Savior who died for them. They gave us what they had, those medieval founders: whatsoever narrowness of mind or superstition defiled their gift was not their fault, but the fault of their whole age. The best they knew they imparted freely, and God will reward them for it. To monopolize those institutions for the rich, as is done now, is to violate both the spirit and the letter of the foundations; to restrict their studies to the limits of middle-aged Romanism, their conditions of admission to those fixed at the Reformation, is but a shade less wrongful. The letter is kept—the spirit is thrown away. (130)

The rich of the period not only monopolized the noble institutions meant for freedom of every man but also hoarded resources like never before while the poor were pawning their clothes for food. This novel, in many instances, not only pictures the dilapidated

accommodations of the poor but also frequently depicts the amenities and hobbies of the rich who liked to hoard animal skins and parts to show off their status. In a sense, they had everything for any given particular purpose or hobby that they could indulge in. They also had weird hobbies which they rationalized by the use of ruling ideologies as the characteristic peculiarity to the rich class. Locke once visits Lord Lynedale's house and is surprised by the accommodation of the aristocrats of the time. With the mix of surprise and confusion, he describes the inside of the house in great length. An excerpt of the description goes like this:

The room was choked up with chairs and tables, of all sorts of strange shapes and problematical uses. The floor was strewn with skins of bear, deer, and seal. In a corner lay hunting-whips, and fishing-rods, foils, boxing-gloves, and gun-cases; while over the chimney-piece, an array of rich Turkish pipes, all amber and enamel, contrasted curiously with quaint old swords and daggers—bronze classic casts, upon Gothic oak brackets, and fantastic scraps of continental carving. On the centre table, too, reigned the same rich profusion, or if you will, confusion. (140)

Locke's awakening encapsulates the Chartist awakening of that period in history when the poor, instead of cursing their fate, started to understand the mechanism behind the capitalistic exploitation- the ruling ideologies that operates in parallel to the repressive state apparatuses to serve the purpose of the economic system- to sustain the system by any means, keep the poor as they are and help the rich benefit using the cheap laborers who will perpetually be working for hand to mouth. Locke's transition from an innocent law abiding laborer to much aggressive and rebellious character carries the essence of the historically significant movement that attempted to provide fair and equal opportunities to the poor in their pursuit of prosperity and happiness. He tries to make them see that

their interest, as much as common justice, demanded that “they should have a voice in the councils of the nation, such as would truly proclaim their wants, their rights, their wrongs.” (254) This part of his bold thought as the novel nears the end reflects the transition he underwent and his determination to end the evil of injustice rooted in the capitalistic system:

I went on, more vehement than ever, to show them how all their misery sprung (as I then fancied) from being unrepresented—how the laws were made by the rich for the poor, and not by all for all—how the taxes bit deep into the necessaries of the labourer, and only nibbled at the luxuries of the rich—how the criminal code exclusively attacked the crimes to which the poor were prone, while it dared not interfere with the subtler iniquities of the high-born and wealthy—how poor-rates, as I have just said, were a confession on the part of society that the labourer was not fully remunerated. (254)

In the end we can see that Locke becomes a consummate Chartist and proclaims the aspirations of the movement that was intended to give a fatal blow to the reigning economic system of capitalism. With all his courage, he demands the rights for the poor and raises the voice against the capitalistic exploitation infested with all kinds of injustice and evil. He no longer remains a credulous tailor and a naïve listener to the speeches of Crosswaithe. He now begins to lay bare the ruling ideologies that impeded the social justice and engendered the gulf of economic disparity. He seems truly optimistic about the prospect of reforms that will be brought by the movement and that will dawn first in the cities where almost all the laborers were struggling to survive as he shouts:

It is the cities, John, the cities, where the light dawns first—where man meets man, and spirit quickens spirit, and intercourse breeds knowledge, and knowledge sympathy, and sympathy enthusiasm, combination, power irresistible; while the agriculturists remain ignorant, selfish, weak, because they are isolated from each other. Let the country go. The towns shall win the Charter for England! And then for social reform, sanitary reform, ædile reform, cheap food, interchange of free labour, liberty, equality, and brotherhood forever! (289)

The novel, thus, gives a realistic picture of the mechanism behind the capitalistic exploitation and lays bare the apparatuses that operate to serve the purpose of capitalistic system. It can be taken as a social document of Kingsley's time that vividly captures the brutality and repression of the poor workers in England seared by the heat of violent repression and scorched by the flames of poverty. As mentioned earlier, repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus work together to dominate and exploit the working class people. The state power primarily works through repression and violence. However, Althusser clearly mentions that there is no purely repressive apparatus or purely ideological apparatus. To elucidate this, he mentions:

This is the fact that the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly *by repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology. (There is no such thing as a purely repressive apparatus.) For example, the Army and the Police also function by ideology both to ensure their own cohesion and reproduction, and in the 'values' they propound externally. (145)

Therefore, it is cogent to think that both RSA and ISA work together to exploit and smother the voice of the poor workers and heavily operate under the influence of the harmful ideologies rooted in the mind of both the oppressor and the oppressed. Such detrimental ideologies in the novel act as a shield for the repressive state apparatuses to carry out unjust practices and exploitation.

III. Kingsley's Exposition and Critique of Capitalistic Exploitation

Kingsley's *Alton Locke* is a historical document written in autobiographic style that clearly and minutely exposes and critiques the mechanism of capitalistic exploitation of the poor working class Britons in mid nineteenth century. In the novel Kingsley vividly depicts how the how the poor working class in contemporary Britain are extremely exploited by the means of both ideological state apparatuses and repressive state apparatuses. The functioning together of both the apparatuses results in domination and repression of the poor people in every possible way. It is evident in every workplace depicted in the novel where the workers suffocate in the dingy rooms that resembled the prison houses under the canopy of smog and dust infiltrated further by foul smell. This depiction is not merely a portrait of the time but also the criticism and exposure of the ruling ideologies of the time that were intertwined with the repressive state apparatus which helped reproduce the labor power needed to sustain capitalistic economic system by perpetuating their poverty and making them compelled to present themselves at the factory gate every day.

Kingsley based his setting and characters on London's real slums and terrible life conditions there. Locke is a poor retailer's son brought up by his strictly religious mother. This novel is the story of a tailor-poet who rebels against the ignominy of sweated labour and becomes a leader of the Chartist movement. It is solidly rooted in the historical events of the 1840's. What Kingsley saw in Bermondsey, which was one of the worst of London's slums, became a basis for *Alton Locke*. Kingsley also drew on his social observations for his description of working conditions among London tailors. Before writing *Alton Locke*, he had published an inflammatory and powerful pamphlet, "Cheap Clothes and Nasty" (1850), which describes the tailors' trade in the London sweatshops. Thus, this historical base further strengthens the novel as a sharp critique of

exploitation under capitalism. Kingsley advocated adult education, improved sanitation, and the growth of the cooperative movement, rather than political change, for the amelioration of social problems. These were the very cause for the Chartist movement. Kingsley sympathized with the movement also identified with their demands by writing this novel. Being an ardent advocate of egalitarianism, Kingsley, through the character of Alton Locke in the novel, shows how initially naïve Locke later transformed into a passionate Chartist when he realized how the moneyed class was fleecing the poor both by repression and false ideologies. This indispensable connection of the novel with Chartist movement and its zeitgeist further strengthens the critical position of the novel.

Chartism emerged as a people's movement that called for universal suffrage for men, the secret ballot, and other political reforms, all of which would have turned Great Britain into a democracy with working-class participation in government. However, the movement faced a lot of obstacles and did not become instant success. Many times it was discarded by the British parliament as impractical claim for equality. Kingsley exposes this resistance and the cause behind it and explicitly critiques the mechanism of exploitation of the poor working class. He makes his readers aware that the domination occurs not only by force but the coercive apparatuses are always shielded and immunized by the ideological walls that are difficult to break like in the case of the poor workers who had never realized that they were being duped by the ideologies set by the rulers of the time. They lived filthily, worked at very low wages and in the worst possible workhouses resembling prison houses, spoke with bad grammar, indulged in alcoholism, never got united for fellow workers' rights and never tried to educate themselves. It was mainly due to the ideologies circulated by the ruling class that the poor don't need to educate themselves and it's okay for them to live in that way or contentment is the most important thing in life. But this ideology that operated in the minds of the poor did not

apply to the rich. For them enough was never enough. As we observed in earlier chapter, the rich lords of the time had amassed huge amount of wealth and always wanted more. This ideology was a pivotal tool to reproduce the conditions of production to protect the economic system despite ever deepening and widening gulf between the rich and the poor. Kingsley critiques this through the expressions of the major characters in the novel like Locke and Crosswaithe in which their awakening hints towards the broadening consciousness of such exploitation, disparity and injustice existing in the contemporary capitalistic society which would finally burgeon into an invincible juggernaut that could never be stopped and would one day jeopardize the economic system based on exploitation and propped by the use of such apparatuses.

Thus, *Alton Locke* by Charles Kingsley is a sharp critique of capitalistic mechanism of exploitation which lays bare the combination of ideology and state repression in dominating the poor working class and hence, reproducing the conditions of production in the modern capitalistic society.

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