Colonial / Anti-colonial Ideology in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and Paul Scott's the Raj Quartet

M.A. Thesis

Submitted to

The Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts
Ain-shams University

By
Rasha Ahmed El-Sayed Hassan Zayed

Under the Supervision

Of

Dr. Sara Rashwan & Dr. Sherine Mazloom

2014

Acknowledgments

❧ I would like to thank *Dr. Sara Rashwan and Dr. Sherine Mazloom* for their efforts in guiding me, their encouragement, and for their precious remarks which have helped me to put the research in a better form. I would also like to thank them and express my gratitude for their patience with me, and for never denying me their valuable and precious time.

❧ I would also like to thank *Dr. Sherine Mazloom* for providing me with some valuable references which formed the basis of my research.

❧ *Rasha Ahmed Zayed*

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work for

My family

& thank them for always encouraging and supporting me, and for their belief in me, which is behind my determination

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

Jewel…………..The Jewel in the Crown

Day…………… The Day of the Scorpion

Towers………. The Towers of Silence

Division……… The Division of the Spoils

Passage……..… A Passage to India

Waiting…….… Waiting for the Mahatma

Preface

The thesis aims at examining the colonial and anti-colonial ideologies behind writing both of Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet* and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*. The study adopts Macherey's concept of ideology and its relation to literature. Macherey believes that the literary work is full of contradictions and silences which reflect the presence of ideology. He, therefore, highlights the importance of studying literary works in relation to their historical background, a process that will reveal what is said and what is unsaid in the work, hence, revealing the ideology behind its making.

The thesis is divided into an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The introduction discussed the term ideology and its meaning according to a number of thinkers. It focuses, particularly, on Macherey and his definition of the notion of ideology, and its relation to literature. Ideology is a set of ideas propagated in the society through cultural institutions which play an essential role in the dissemination of certain ideas through a 'hegemonic' process; however, examining literary texts in relation to the conditions behind their production has the ability to expose ideologies at work through analyzing the gaps or contradictions inherent in these texts.

Chapter one entitled "Historical Background" attempts a brief survey of the history of the Indian resistance to British colonialism, as well as the historical events which took place and which led to the decline of British colonialism and instigated the process of decolonization. Indian resistance is closely connected to the emergence of Gandhi and his movements of non-cooperation, non-violence and civil disobedience. The Gandhian whirlwind was not only a political movement, but it was also a social one and it had a massive and great effect on the Indian people and Indian villages. The chapter traces the development of the Gandhian

mass movements since 1920s till the Quite India movement in the 1940s and which led to the Independence of India. The chapter throws light, moreover, on the various sections of the Indian society and the various reactions to Gandhi and his movements. Moreover, the chapter focuses on the time which saw the process of decolonization. It tackles the historical events of the 1940s and after the Second World War, which led to the British relinquishing their empire. Britain found itself facing a dilemma, because while it was involved in the war, it had to encounter, moreover, national resistance in all its colonies, especially in India. Britain, furthermore, faced internal social and economic problems, which made it impossible for her to hold to its colonies. Therefore, a more liberal government was elected which was with giving up its empire and was with the transference of the Indian empire to the Indians and granting them self-rule, much to the consternation and anger of the conservatives who tried to hold to their empire.

The chapter concludes that the novel in particular played an important role in both the process of colonization and decolonization. The English novel had its essential task in propagating for the imperial ideas and thoughts, as well as, the development and the expansion of the British Empire. Likewise, it had its role in developing into the English consciousness the necessity of relinquishing its empire and granting the colonized nations self-rule. The Indian novel, on the other hand, played a similar role in bringing to the consciousness of the Indian people national and political knowledge which motivated them, and provoked them into action against their colonizers.

Chapter two entitled "Challenging Representations" examines the attitude of both Paul Scott and Raja Rao towards British colonialism and British practices in India. Both tend to challenge Western representations in their examination of colonial relations. Paul Scott in *The Raj Quartet* is re-evaluating the colonial enterprise, and the colonial experience in India. Therefore, he focuses more on the British and their attitude towards the Indian people than on the Indians themselves.

The novel focuses on the incident of the rape of an English woman by an Indian native. The rape is discussed in the novel from various points of view, both English and Indian, in order to reveal more about the English, their attitude and their management/mismanagement of the empire. Moreover, it is through this theme of rape that Scott examines colonial relations which involved racial issues/attitudes between the British colonizers and the Indian natives. Racial discrimination has erected barriers between both races, and hindered any communication. Skin colour has become a determining factor in British/ Indian relationships.

On the other hand, Raja Rao in *Kanthapura* challenges Western representation of India and the Indian people by portraying the atrocities of the English people and their exploitation of the Indian and the resources of the country. He, moreover, stresses the Indian identity against the Western culture which worked to suppress and even erode it. He resorts to the revival of Indian culture and tradition through his use of mythological and religious episodes and figures connected to the Indian culture. In spite of Rao's Western education, his Indianness is reflected in his novels through his major concern with Indian issues, problems and struggles. Moreover, his representations reflect his deep attachment to Indian philosophies

Chapter three entitled "Nationalism and Decolonization" discusses the national movements and the act of resisting the colonial rule, as well as the process of British decolonization. Rao tackles the issue of Indian resistance by focusing on Indian national movements that were closely connected to Gandhi and his movements of non-cooperation/non-violence movement. The novel reflects the effect of Gandhi and his thoughts on even the remotest Indian villages. It was through pressing upon the Indian people religious beliefs and traditions that Gandhi's men managed to bring to the consciousness of the Indian people the political issues and Gandhi's thoughts and beliefs, and the necessity to fight against the atrocious attitude and exploitative nature of the British colonial rule. The novel,

furthermore, portrays the distinctive responses of the villagers of Kanthapura to Gandhi's philosophy which was not only political, but was social as well. While there were those who believed in Gandhi and followed him, yet there were others who opposed him and rejected his thoughts.

Paul Scott, in the *Raj Quartet* portrays the British response to the national movements and the process of decolonization. The chapter examined the various attitudes of the English people towards Indian nationalism and resistance. The conservatives were more rigid in their response, as they rejected the fact of having to grant India self-rule and having to leave it to the Indians. There was a sense of sadness and they blamed the Indians for having to revolt against those who had brought them civilization and modernity. They blamed them, as well, for making use of Britain's hard time and dilemma and for rejecting to join them in their fight against the Japanese. However, the Liberals were more inclined to grant the Indian people their freedom, bearing to the fact that internal conditions and affairs within the English society made it a difficult task for the British to hold on to the empire, therefore, it would be better for them to relinquish it. Moreover, the *Raj Quartet*, as an 'elegy', reflects a sense of melancholy over the loss of the 'idea' upon which the whole concept of the empire is based. It is in the colonies that this 'moral' idea is put to the test, and the *Quartet* reflects the failure of the British people to be true to this idea which grant them pride and prestige, in addition to their failure to fulfill their responsibilities. The British regretted the loss of their empire and they blamed themselves for the loss of the values and noble ideas which, in return, brought about their moral decline and, hence, their inability to manage the empire.

It is worthy of mentioning that an ideological reading of Scott's *The Raj Quartet* revealed that Scott never doubted the imperial civilizing mission reflected in the White Man's Burden motto. The *Quartet* revealed that the problem was in the application of the civilizing mission and not in the concept itself. The British failed because they betrayed the humanitarian spirit behind imperialism and risked

instigating the Indian's mistrust and violent attacks. Similarly, an ideological reading of Rao's *Kanthapura* revealed a commitment to Indian roots as represented in the revival of mythical and religious heritage. Tapping into the past has been repeatedly pointed out as a resistance mechanism to colonialism and Rao's novel becomes a celebration of Ghandi's non-violent movement and the spirit of an old India; different but not inferior to the British civilization. However, the reading of the texts also revealed that both British and Indians as individuals failed to communicate and connect on the human level, because of the barriers erected due to colonial realities.

Introduction

This section gives a brief summary of the different uses of the term ideology and focuses specifically on the ideological readings of texts presented by Marxist critics in general and Macherey's work in particular. The aim of this study is to present an ideological reading of two texts that deal with British colonization of India and Ghandian national project of resistance. The first novel *The Raj Quartet* written by Paul Scott laments the decline of British powers in India while the second novel *Kanthapura,* written by Raj Rao, shows the Ghandian project of national resistance. The two writers, one British and the other Indian, offer together a more comprehensive representation of the story of the jewel of the crown.

Ideology is a term that defines the group of ideas and beliefs that are spread in a society at a particular time, and those which formulate the 'intellectual framework' that controls and directs all cultural activities. Martin Gray in his book *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines Ideology as:

> The collection of ideas, opinions, values, beliefs and preconceptions which go to make up the 'mind-set' of a group, that is, the intellectual framework through which they view everything, and which colours all their attitudes and feelings (especially, perhaps, assumptions about power and authority) what we take to be 'reality' is controlled by the ideologies of the era in which we live. (143)

It is believed that "human consciousness is shaped or 'constituted' in this way by ideology" (Gray, 143). In his book *Ideology*, Hawkes defines Ideology as 'false consciousness' because of its tendency to make use of cultural forms and activities in order to help in forming human mind and consciousness. A task achieved by propagating and disseminating particular ideas in a society, that would help to serve the interests of a particular social class. He sees it to be "…a system of thought which propagates systematic falsehood in the selfish interest of the powerful and malign forces dominating a particular historical era" (12).

He states that, for example, in the post modern age and with the economic growth, certain new ideas were needed to be introduced to help in shaping the mind of the people and render it to accept capitalist ideas. Thus, many cultural organizations, whose main interest was to serve capitalist ambitions and to convert people into 'consumers', were made use of to help spread these ideas. Hawkes says:

> This economic development has taken place alongside a corresponding rise to cultural prominence of the technological media of representation. For cinema, radio and television to video, compact discs and the internet, the twentieth century has witnessed an unprecedented explosion in the number and kinds of images to which people are exposed everyday. Since these media are usually run with the aim of making a profit by selling commodities or advertising space, the result has been to bombard the population with incessant injunctions to purchase goods and services. (3)

He, moreover, refers to the mid-seventeenth century English revolution which needed new and fresh ideas to be introduced to the society to help the revolution achieve its goals of political and social reform. Therefore, Milton, who was "the official propagandist for Cromwell's revolutionary government", was asked to come with the "ancient and medieval ideas" and to put them in the service of this political innovation. Milton, eventually, came up with the belief that if the 'commonwealth' got rid of the 'monarchy' and 'prelacy' then "it would be possible to build a reformed society…" (33). Hawks is tracing the attempts made by various thinkers to define ideology and its relationship with society. Destutt De Tracy, a "renegade aristocrat and member of the revolutionary Constituent Assembly" is the one who "invented the term ideology" (54), and he defines it as the 'science of ideas'. He, according to Hawkes, believes that there are no priori or intrinsic ideas, but all ideas come to us through our 'sensations'. He, in addition, points out that external objects form our ideas, and that things exist to us only through the ideas that we have of them: "…there were no innate ideas, all thought being derived from sensation. On the other hand, he also thought that 'Nothing exists for us except by

the ideas we have of it, because our ideas are our whole being, our existence itself'.
…things create ideas…" (Hawkes, 55).

Therefore, Destutt's main tendency is to search for the origins of ideas and trace their sources in the material world, and to examine this method by which the minds form and generate ideas from material external things. He tends to "analyze the process by which our minds translate material things into ideal forms", a process which "was given the name 'Ideologie': the science of ideas" (55). However, this science goes beyond this materialism and rather focuses on the process of the translation of ideas which involves the 'interaction' between the person and his 'material surroundings'. Hawkes says that "Destutt De Tracy's 'ideology', then, traces ideas, through sensations, to their roots in matter. But this science moves beyond…materialism by emphasizing more strongly the movement, the process through which human beings interact with their material surroundings" (56). Desttut's notion of ideology is rejected by Napoleon Bonaparte, who tended to "ascribe a dangerous, radical and destructive tendency" if applied on 'political issues' (55). Napoleon believed that this 'science of ideas' represents a threat to his political ambitions since it tends to trace the origins and sources of all ideas and knowledge. He was able to see and recognize that ideology can question all knowledge, expose and uncover all ideas, whose aim was to spread chaos and help dictators to take over and control:

> Napoleon was also shrewd enough to perceive that 'Ideologie' involved a through going skepticism towards all authoritative knowledge, which must issue in continual chaos and lead to the rule of bloodthirsty men.
>
> …when he attacked Destutt and his followers as 'dreamers' and 'windbags', Napoleon did not suggest that their theories were purely 'ideal', with no bearing on political reality. On the contrary, he knew that their theories were all too relevant to political issues. If they were allowed to pursue their millennial aims, he foresaw a permanent revolution (Hawkes, 57)

Hence, the link between ideology, politics, revolution and the nation has been underlined ever since early ages. This materialist dimension of ideology is given further prominence through Marxist theory.

Marxism, Hawkes says, is believed to be connected to materialism, in the sense that it follows the belief that ideas are formed and determined by the external material circumstances. In fact, Marxists connect materialism with the 'historical process', meaning that both 'objective' realities and 'subjective' ideas "change and develop through history". This change is affected and determined by the 'economic system', which by turn, affects and determines man's consciousness:

> Many Marxists have believed… that ideas are mechanistically determined by the material environment. …they allied this materialism, however, to an emphasis on the historical process… . This led them to assert that both our objective circumstances and our subjective ideas inevitably change and develop through history, and that this process is driven by the material engine of the economy. Tne[sic] kind of economic system under which a person live, and the position that person occupied within that system, were thus held to determine his or her consciousness. (88)

Marxism, according to Hawks, sees "the relationship between ideas and the objective world in more sophisticated terms…" (89), since Marx is against the notion that 'ideas' are 'mere reflections of the material conditions' or that there is an opposition between them (90). He rejects to isolate one aspect as being 'primary' or 'determining' to the other'. Moreover, Marx rejects the 'opposition' and 'divisions' between the 'objective' and the 'subjective', the 'material' and the 'ideal' realms (90), but he rather believes in the 'interpenetration of opposites'. For him, there is a 'unity' between them, as each of them defines the other: "The poles of the opposition create and define each other, and this fact is revealed in human practice, which combines thought and material activity" (90). Therefore, Marx "intends his method to be a synthesis of idealism and materialism", since he