

Chapter 1

Mulk Raj Anand and *Two Leaves and a Bud*

Introduction to the Study

This thesis aims to examine the predicament of the poor Indians in general and the problem of exploitation and dehumanization of an indentured laborer by the white masters and their sycophants in particular. It shows how the indentured laborers of the tea estate are cheated, hoodwinked, exploited and dehumanized by colonial power. The coolies who are homeless, landless and helpless fall victim to the selfish and envious attitude of the corrupted and ruthless white master of Macpherson tea estate in Assam. It shows the bad plight of an indentured underclass protagonist Gangu who was, firstly, exploited in his native place by the landlords and secondly, in the tea estate by the white masters.

Anand was born in Peshawar of India on December 12, 1905. His father, Lal Chand, was a traditional coppersmith in Amritsar who joined the British Indian army for a living, while his mother, Iswar Kaur, came of sturdy peasant family. They had five sons of whom four survived, the novelist being the third. He studied at Khalsa College, Amritsar, and passed his Bachelor of Arts from the Punjab University with Honours in English in 1924. He went to London on a scholarship to obtain a Doctor's degree in 1925 just after his graduation. He was awarded, in 1929, a Doctorate in philosophy by London University.

Mulk Raj Anand, a champion of the poor class in India, has presented social evils in myriad manifestations and has unveiled many different layers of human experience in his novels. His novels abound with the elements of deep human feelings, and large-scale vision. They become instruments for social reform. He exposes social and economic ills of inequality and exploitation in them. He severely

attacks inhuman caste system, exploiting class system, irrationality of education, and the torturing predicament of women. His interest lies in exploring the stresses and strains generated in Indian society as a result of the developing economic structure, expanding commerce and political change which necessarily demand new class arrangements in the society. He rebels against the irrational traditional ways and solemnly starts a crusade against social exploitation. His main contribution to literature has been his realistic depiction of the abject plight of the suffering masses. His thorough knowledge of the masses and their plight gives him an added advantage in painting the peasant life with vividness of description and correctness of detail.

Anand, a socially committed novelist, has produced a good deal of literature. He has written more than a dozen novels, seventy short stories, a host of essays and articles on a number of subjects. His novels fall into two categories, namely social and autobiographical novels. He focuses his attention on the sufferings, misery and wretchedness of the poor. The poor are afflicted with sufferings as a result of the downtrodden class of the Indian society. Common themes in his novels are religious hypocrisy, feudal system, east-west encounter, the place of women in the society, superstitions, poverty, hunger and exploitation. *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, *the Sword and the Sickle* and *The Road* are some of the popular novels of Anand. These novels deal with the issue of exploitation and misery.

In Anand's *Two Leaves and a Bud*, coolies and tea estate workers, like Gangu, his daughter Leila and his wife, are cheated, exploited and subjected to vicious practices. Workers are promised that they would get a high pay if they work in tea estate of Assam. But at the time of receiving weekly wage, the ruthless administrator and white manager give underclass Indian workers of tea estate much lower wage than they deserve. Not only white employers of Macpherson tea estate but

the Indian sycophants also exploit coolies and underclass workers.

With extremely meager wage, those workers of tea estate can hardly maintain their daily bread. To meet the daily household expenditure, the wives of those workers have to work hard too. Their infants are left in negligible conditions. With no nutrition and wholesome food to eat, their babies catch malarial diseases. The tea estate owner does not manage the facilities for treatment of workers' aid. Degrading living conditions, malnutrition, and lack of treatment exert adverse effect in the workers of tea estate.

Workers like Gangu are so impoverished that they do not have money to perform the funeral rites of their wives and children who die of malarial disease. The colonizers and Indian sycophants just extract the labor force but do not think about providing essential needs and necessities. Gangu is exploited by feudal lord in village. In the village, where his ancestral house is, he is cheated by feudal lord. The formidable feudal lord takes away his land forcibly. In Macpherson's tea estate, his labor is exploited treacherously. He is promised that he would get a land in Assam. Upon his arrival in Assam, he gets a small chunk of land where he is required to construct a hellhole for his family. Even the lecherous white boys molest Gangu's daughter sexually. The workers and underclass employees of Macpherson tea estate are beset with indescribable numbers of exploitations and dehumanization.

Literature Review

Anand's novel *Two Leaves and a Bud* is welcomed by a few but criticized by many. Saros Cowasjee is the noted critic of Anand. He notices the elements of supercilious criticism of society. He rightly observes:

Two Leaves and a Bud however quickly cuts its way through supercilious criticism and established for itself a popularity that

remains unrivalled for work of fiction by any Indian author. The novel covers the span from 1930 to 1940 when poverty, slavery and the inhuman exploitation of the masses were at the peak. It was Gandhi who had waged a war against the forces behind these evils. The novel describes how poor coolies are treated as subhuman beings in the place where they are compelled to work for daily bread. (87)

This shows the novel as the novelist's fine piece of work that deals with the social evils of the 1930s when India was in transitional period of political change. It exposes awful scene of the working place where workers are not treated as human beings but subhuman creatures.

Two Leaves and a Bud is concerned with the injustice and atrocities faced by tea plantation workers. They are afflicted with inner conflict of an individual who is caught in the web of treachery of colonial administration. P.K. Rajan notices in this novel, the agony of inner conflict faced by coolies caught in the maelstrom of colonial plundering and treachery. He, in his *Studies in Mulk Raj Anand*, says:

It is individual's quest for justice in a colonial system of ruthless exploitation. Gangu, a poor worker of Punjab, seeks the prospect of wealth and proper settlement in Macpherson tea estate with its unquestionable faith in the infallibility of colonial administration, with its hypocrisy, cruelty, deceit and inhumanity. We see him stand passive and bewildered at the immensity of horror, hoping for a change. (15)

It pictures Gangu's search for better life and the cruel system of colonial power in which his hope for prosperous life is crushed. However, he becomes indifferent to it and shows a dim hope for a change.

Anand shows his concern over the organized evil in the society. This evil is the cause of the miseries of the outcaste downtrodden. This organized evil is the real

enemy of the society. It deliberately denies the basic human rights to the under-privileged class. Caste system kills the human dignity by giving an unfair advantage to a certain class over the others on the basis of their birth. Such a trend damages the homogeneity of the society.

Anand presents the question of colonial exploitation and dehumanization. Gangu is tempted to work in Macpherson tea estate. But the reality of working in the tea estate turns out to be a nightmare. There is no doubt that Mulk Raj Anand has addressed with nuance and subtlety in *Two Leaves and a Bud*. The novel that articulates the abuses of an exploited class is crystal clear. *Two Leaves and a Bud* has a simple but very uncomfortable and depressing plot. The novel's protagonist is Gangu who is beset with deception, dehumanization, exploitation and countless numbers of miseries. This system gave rise to the practice of dehumanization and exploitation that was much prevalent in the Indian society.

Dan Flory reflects on the portrayal of heart-stricken situation of the representative protagonist, Gangu. He does not get money to perform the funeral ritual of his wife who dies of cholera. The misery and deprivation of Gangu does not touch the hard-hearted colonial agents and administration. Flory makes the following remarks:

Anand had narrated the heart stricken situation of a poor worker who is far away from his land with his only family where his wife passed away and left Leila Buddhu and Gangu to suffer more on the land. Gangu's sadness is augmented by the worry that he had no money to buy a red cloth and to make a bamboo hearse. He was in need of money for his wife's funeral. He then recalls what Buta had told him that the manager sahib is a sort of mai-bap, who lends money. So he

approached to Shashi Bhushan to talk on his behalf to the manager sahib. (76)

Gangu does not get even his wage to perform the funeral of his wife. On the contrary, he is scolded for daring to come to the house of cashier. Instead of offering him certain amount of allowance, he orders him never to make appearance to the officer's house. For the fear of being infected by cholera, the colonial administrator of Macpherson tea estate forbids him to come to his house. This is an example of dehumanization. This process of dehumanization harms several coolies and workers who belong to the lowest rung of social ladder.

Jay Ellis claims that he detects the operation of the principle of innate violence in the narrative world of *Two Leaves and a Bud*. Like a tiger that pounces on helpless and powerless animals, white employers in tea estate pounce on helpless and poverty-stricken workers and coolies. Ellis makes the following remarks:

Realistic picture of the utter detachment is of the affluent folk in the hunt scene. The tiger tears off large chunks of flesh from coolie's face but hunt goes on unaffected. And the sahibs get busy taking photographs when the mauled man writhes in agony. As women too have to work, the whole lot of 'the suckling humanity' is put under the torrid sun. Some women leave their babies in their baskets. The mother returning from work finds her child lying in the dust, or a drain, or still worse, dead by the way side. (54)

Another equally appealing picture is that of a mother who is chased to the work spot even while she is feeding her child. Though the birth of a child means 'one more month of feed', the coolies do care for progeny because it also means more hands to earn for the family.

Anand writes realistically in his novels all about the miserable lives of the poor. He, being a novelist of the common man, has profoundly dealt with the villages, with the extreme poverty, with orphans, untouchables and urban laborers. He took upon himself the task of attacking social snobbery and prejudice. J.P. Singh clarifies some facts regarding the literary prodigy of Anand:

The Indian life that he portrays in his novels is that of collies, peasants, and soldiers, the depressed and oppressed ones of the society. Anand has great concern for down-trodden people of India and his novels therefore threw light on the existing pains and predicaments of have-nots. His novels present minute pictures of Indian society, with special focus on the plights of poor people. Anand's early novels deal with the misery and the wretchedness of the crushed and oppressed people and their struggle for a better life. His subsequent novels are almost a variation on the same level. (27)

Anand is basically a champion of down-trodden and under-privileged people. He has always been conscious of the need to help raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies and the other suppressed members of society. Anand, in his narratives, introduces a whole new people, who had seldom entered the realm of literature. Several social issues and aspects are reflected in Anand's *Two Leaves and a Bud*.

The theme of the novel is very realistic. It is a realistic novel of exploited and dehumanized Gangu. It is a slice from a life without any change or modification. The novel begins with a realistic picture of the situations of workers in Macpherson tea state. Pankaj Tiwari makes the following observation:

The dwelling of coolies and workers of tea estate is a group of mud-

walled house that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment, but outside their boundaries and separate from them. This condition is representative of the plight of workers like Gangu in *Two Leaves and Bud*. There lived the scavengers, the leather-workers, the washermen, the barbers, the water carriers, the grass cutters and other outcastes from Hindu society. A brook ran near the lane, once with crystal clear water, now soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it. (11)

This shows the real state of the coolies' dwelling which is not 'livable.' Their dwelling is in a separate colony. Only the coolie people live here.

Tiwari maintains that Anand wants to awaken the exploited, suppressed, oppressed and dehumanized classes of the society. He, therefore, criticizes social maladies, human hypocrisies, and individual idiosyncrasies. He has pointed out social conflicts and ills. He has seen and experienced those vicious practices intimately in his own surroundings. Anand urges for large outlook, more tolerance, more intimate, more self-sacrifice and better understanding.

Most of the characters in *Two Leaves and a Bud* are shocked by the vicissitude of exclusion and disinterestedness of the responsible holders of administrative authority. The blurred social and economic boundaries simply make people confused and confounded. Nigel Hunt contends that characters develop symptoms of abnormality and dementia due to their constant exposure to insurmountable challenges. Nigel rejoins the following view:

Psychological torture of Gangu can lead to serious long-term negative consequences that are often overlooked even by mental health professionals. He is so exposed to challenges that he turns out to be an

oddball. He has to face the danger of being ostracized in the community he lives in. Harassed and hassled by the sequences of exploitation, characters in *Two Leaves and a Bud* fail to see that segregation victims, young and old, organize much of their lives around repetitive patterns of reliving and warding off painful memories, reminders, and affects. (11)

As claimed by Nigel, unbearable experience is a serious stumbling block. It hinders an individual's quest for decency, freedom, and self-esteem. Due to his inability to meet up to the expectation of his employers, Gangu is simply sidetracked. In affirming their pragmatic mode of life, he happens to be a victim of his employer's unpredictable temperament. Rational choices and preferences are overwhelmed by the lingering remnants of trauma caused by caste contamination.

Robert Alter is one of the popular critics of colonial literature produced in India during the colonial rule. He has made several critical remarks about Indian literature. He is fond of taking Anand's literary works remarkable and exemplary works of pre-independent literature. Regarding *Two Leaves and a Bud*, he has put forward the following views:

Two Leaves and a Bud is a dramatic literary piece. The sympathetic attitude of the novelist to the problems of underclass workers is clearly noticeable. In this novel the most fascinating aspect is the representation of the daily troubles and challenges of workers. The prime target of this novel is to make a call to the authority to think about reforming the living condition of the workers. (66)

Implicitly, Alter has given credit to Anand for raising the issues of the underclass workers. Though the criticism of the colonial bourgeois indifference is not explicit, it

can be deduced that Marxist undertone is mild and subtle.

The novel *Two Leaves and a Bud* has been studied from different perspectives by different critics but it has not been studied the socio-economic exploitation from the Marxist perspective. So, I have studied and analyzed it from that perspective.

This thesis has four chapters. The first chapter introduces Mulk Raj Anand and his novel *Two leaves and a Bud*. It also elaborates hypothesis and quotes views of different critics and reviewers. The second chapter deals with Marxism and Marxist protest against capitalistic domination on the working class. The third chapter recounts the exploitation of an indentured laborer by the British masters and their Indian sycophants. The last chapter projects the social and economic equities of social justice.

Chapter 2

Marxism: Protest against Capitalistic Domination on the Working Class

Karl Marx in association with Friedrich Engels invented radical, social and political theories which have been capable of influencing the whole world by furnishing strong ideological basis. He formulated the most revolutionary and scientific theories in the time of the tremendous socio-economic changes resulted from the scientific discoveries and establishment of large scale production industries. His theories explicitly disprove the bourgeois economic, social and political system establishing the philosophy of the proletariat, the lowest stratum of the society. The emancipatory movement initiated by Marxism aims at abolishing the concentration of wealth in the hands of tiny minority by seizing political and legal power of bourgeois class. Marxism, as a political theory, advocates class struggle of the proletariat against the ruling class until the political power is seized and socialist emancipatory society is established.

Marx is a dialectical materialist. He is known widely as the originator of the theory of historical evolution. The conflict between classes regarding to the ownership of productive forces of society paves the way for the evolution of human history. Marx gives us a theory of society. This theory gives an explanation of how society works and how and why history unfolds. This theory is an account of the nature of capitalism. These are of great value for the task of describing what is going on in the world and for understanding the problems and directions of our society today. But Marx also regarded capitalism as extremely unsatisfactory. He was very concerned with getting rid of it, via violent revolution. He is in favor of the establishment of a communist society. Marxism is therefore also about political goals and action. Obviously very few people in western society today accept the idea of violent

revolution.

Some people think capitalism is desirable, some do not want to see it destroyed and some others do not like the idea of revolution or communism. Terry Eagleton throws spotlight upon the doctrine of Marx. Eagleton's view is mentioned in the following way:

Marx argued that the economic situation, the form of the productive system, is the most important determinant of all other aspects of the society. Matter has sovereign role in the determination of consciousness. Matter exerts pressures on the mind. Marx hardly imagines about the transcendental or autonomous consciousness. Hence Marx is said to be a materialist. Marx rebelled against Hegel's philosophy in which ideas were taken to be the important determinants of history. Marx argued that dominant ideas are the result of material or economic conditions. He was therefore strongly opposed to reformers who thought that mere change in ideas can change society.

(54)

This extract shows that the form of productive system determines all other aspects of the society in which matter plays a vital role. According to Marx, matter is the foundation of the world. So, he opposes Hegelian notion which gives priority to ideas.

The main types of society, Marx distinguished, are primitive, slave, feudal and capitalist. In a capitalist society, capitalists own and control the productive resources; workers own only their labor and work for capitalists, who then own the product and sell it at a profit. The key to understanding a society at any point in history is to focus first on the mode of production. In feudal society, land was the crucial productive factor and the feudal lords owned and controlled it. In capitalist

society, capital, machinery, mines, factories etc. are the key productive factors and these are owned and controlled by capitalists.

Marx saw the close relation between forces of production and the relation of production as the main determinant of the type of society existing and of social change. The forces of production may be loosely regarded as the type of productive technology the society has. The relations of production refer to the social organization of production; basically who owns the productive forces, or how they are controlled. For instance, in a slave society masters force slaves to do the work, and in a feudal society serfs are obliged to work for the lord a certain number of days each week. In capitalist society capitalists own society's productive resources and employ workers to operate these for a wage when capitalists think profits can be made.

There is a major contradiction in contemporary capitalist society. Such contradictions have been intrinsic in all class societies. Each has developed its contradictions have become more and more glaring, to the point where they lead to revolutionary change. So the relation between the forces and the social relations of production and the consequences this generates is the major dynamic factor in history, the primary cause of social change.

The social relations of production involve different classes. The basic determinant of one's class is one's relationship to the means of production. In late capitalist society, the two basic classes remaining are the owners of the means of production and those who own only their labor. Inequality in wealth and power was of fundamental moral concern to Marx. Some groups come to dominate others and to win for themselves a disproportionate share of the society's wealth, power and privileges. The ultimate goal Marxists aim at is a classless society which is a society in which all enjoy more or less equal wealth and power.

Marx put forward a theory of history. This historical principle explained the dynamic of history. The basic element in this is the Hegelian idea of a dialectical progression whereby an original situation or idea or thesis exists, an antithesis develops in opposition to this, and the two are resolved into a synthesis, which becomes the new thesis. In any historical era, the inherent contradictions or class conflicts come to a head in some sort of revolution and are resolved when a new social order stabilizes.

History is therefore primarily a function of material or economic conditions. Marx thought his theory of history was a major achievement and one of the two insights which established Marxism as a science. The thesis of capitalism and the antithesis of the proletariat will issue into a synthesis which will eventually see the achievement of a classless society. Because it has been the existence of class conflict which has generated change. In a classless society, the dialectical process will have come to an end. This does not mean there can be no further change or progress but it does seem to mean that there will be no further political change.

Karl Korsch an interpreter of the philosophy of Karl Marx, gives evidences and anecdotes to clarify the complicated concept of Marxist philosophy. In a supportive tone, he illustrates the exploitation of labor force in the following citation:

Capitalists, Marx answered, must enjoy a privileged and powerful position as owners of the means of production and are therefore able to ruthlessly exploit workers. Although the capitalist pays workers the correct wage, somehow—Marx was terribly vague here—the capitalist makes workers work more hours than are needed to create the worker's labor power. If the capitalist pays each worker five dollars per day, he can require workers to work, say, twelve hours per day—a not

uncommon workday during Marx's time. (197)

This shows extreme exploitation of labor force. To some degree, capitalists give correct wages to the workers. Instead, the workers work more hours than they have to work in proportion to their wages.

Although Marx tried to use the labor theory of value against capitalism by stretching it to its limits, he unintentionally demonstrated the weakness of the theory's logic and underlying assumptions. Marx was correct when he claimed that classical economists failed to adequately explain capitalist profits. But Marx failed as well. By the late nineteenth century, the economics profession rejected the labor theory of value. Mainstream economists now believe that capitalists do not earn profits by exploiting workers. Instead, they believe, entrepreneurial capitalists earn profits by forgoing current consumption, by taking risks, and by organizing production.

Marx believed that people, by nature, are free and creative beings who have the potential to totally transform the world. But he observed that the modern, technologically developed world is apparently beyond our full control. Marx condemned the free market, for instance, as being anarchic, or ungoverned. He maintained that the way the market economy is coordinated—through the spontaneous purchase and sale of private property dictated by the laws of supply and demands blocks our ability to take control of our individual and collective destinies. Marx condemned capitalism as a system that alienates the masses.

Rosa Luxemburg is critically attached to the unique concept of alienation propounded by Marx. The disintegration of the chance of identifying with the objects and commodities has created the possibility of alienation. The following citation typifies Rosa's analytical explanation of Marx's philosophy:

Marx's notion of alienation rests on a crucial but shaky assumption. It

assumes that people can successfully abolish an advanced, market-based society and replace it with a democratic, comprehensively planned society. Marx claimed that we are alienated not only because many of us toil in tedious, perhaps even degrading, jobs, or because by competing in the marketplace we tend to place profitability above human need. The issue is not about toil versus happiness. We are alienated, he maintained, because we have not yet designed a society that is fully planned and controlled, a society without competition profits and losses, money, private property. (87)

Marx is no doubt the first philosopher to deal with the idea of alienation caused by capitalist mode of production. According to Marx, the worker under capitalist system labors for someone else. The worker becomes alien to his work, and as well as to himself. He loses touch with his own reality. In capitalist society, labor is organized in such a way that the worker becomes slave for another class. Marx opines that profitability takes place in capitalist market than human need. Human need gets chance in a fully planned and controlled society.

Marx claimed that his criticism of capitalism was based on the latest developments in science. He called his theory scientific socialism to clearly distinguish his approach from that of other socialists. Marx's scientific socialism combined his economics and philosophy—including his theory of value and the concept of alienation—to demonstrate that throughout the course of human history, a profound struggle has developed between the haves and the have-nots. Specifically, Marx claimed that capitalism has ruptured into a war between two classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. He claimed that he discovered the laws of history, laws that expose the contradictions of capitalism and the necessity of the

class struggle.

Marx predicted that competition among capitalists would grow so fierce that, eventually, most capitalists would go bankrupt, leaving only a handful of monopolists controlling nearly all production. This, to Marx, was one of the contradictions of capitalism: competition, instead of creating better products at lower prices for consumers, in the long run creates monopoly, which exploits workers and consumers alike. What happens to the former capitalists? They fall into the ranks of the proletariat, creating a greater supply of labor, a fall in wages, and what Marx called a growing reserve army of the unemployed. Also, thought Marx, the anarchic, and unplanned nature of a complex market economy is prone to economic crisis as supplies and demands become mismatched, causing huge swings in business activity and, ultimately, severe economic depressions.

Marx argues capitalist economy creates contradictions and conflicts.

According to him:

The more advanced the capitalist economy becomes, the greater these contradictions and conflicts. The more capitalism creates wealth, the more it sows the seeds of its own destruction. Ultimately, the proletariat will realize that it has the collective power to overthrow the few remaining capitalists and, with them, the whole system. (54)

This shows fast development of capitalist economy creates the seeds of its own destruction. Finally, it affects the whole system. The entire capitalist system—with its private property, money, market exchange, profit-and-loss accounting, labor markets, and so on—must be abolished, thought Marx, and replaced with a fully planned, self-managed economic system that brings a complete and utter end to exploitation and alienation. A socialist revolution, argued Marx, is inevitable.

Georg Lukacs' theory of totality is of vital importance both to his own thought and to the following development of western Marxism. In his early works which were written before his conversion to Marxism, the craving for totality was already there. In the famous book *History and Class Consciousness*, it is both clearly articulated and taken as the center of the whole book. The conception of totality is revived as the kernel of both Hegel's methodology and that of Marx's. Lukacs himself says that it is necessary to be cautious while dwelling upon the notion of the Marxist sense of revolution. He puts forward his view straightforwardly in the following citation:

And the orthodoxy Marxism is interpreted by him as nothing other than the historical dialectic with the conception of totality as the core. What's more, the craving for totality is never a pure theoretical issue; it means the standpoint of proletariat and the transformation of this reified world. Just because of this, the craving for totality is throughout all the later development of his thought. It is in his later discussion of, for example, realism. (67)

With the adoption of totality in thought, Lukacs explains the orthodoxy Marxism as historical dialectic but the craving of totality is explained as the perspective of the working class and the conversion of the better world.

What is more important, his theory of totality, especially that was articulated in *History and Class Consciousness*, has become the core clue in the history of the development of western Marxism. In the theoretical level, the understanding of it is vital to later western Marxists' interpretation of both the metaphysical tradition and Marx's philosophy. In the practical level, it is innate in both their critique of the modern world and their strivings for the way out of it. In this sense, to understand Georg Lukacs' theory of totality correctly is of great help for us to find the right way

to the whole tradition of western Marxism.

For a long time, it is widely held that Lukacs' theory of totality is Hegelian and that just because of this, *History and Class Consciousness* has opened the way of Hegelian Marxism, which has constituted the main part of western Marxism. There are two important reasons supporting this viewpoint. One is that western Marxism originated from the early western Marxists' reflections on the experience of the defeats of the proletariat revolutions in the early 20th century. The other is that it is clearly stated in *History and Class Consciousness* itself. It is true that the experience of the defeats of the proletariat revolutions in the European world in the 1920s is one important reason for the forming of western Marxism.

Many scholars hold that Lukacs' thought in *History and Class Consciousness*, including his theory of totality, is typical of the logic of the classical German philosophy. Some regard this as positive for it has raised the philosophical level of Marxist studies. At a time when Marxist theory still lagged behind many of its bourgeois counterparts in reflective sophistication, Lukacs almost single-handedly succeeded in raising it to a respectable place in European intellectual life. Some regard this as negative for it leads to the interpretation which still confines Marx's philosophy to the logic of the classical German philosophy. Some scholars even develop this viewpoint further and hold that western Marxist' craving for totality means that they are still in the logic of the old metaphysics and are still occupied by the false problem.

Here, it is important to note that Lukacs, together with other early western Marxists, aims not only to point out the basic mistake of the official Marxism, but to disclose the basic crisis of the modern world and to transform it thoroughly. That is, the reason for those early western Marxists to open the way of western Marxism does

not only lie in their dissatisfaction with the official Marxism, but mainly in their discontentment with the present world. It is just because of the latter that they finally convert to Marxism. Lukacs said this clearly in his 1967 preface to *History and Class Consciousness*, "I have never succumbed to the error that I often noticed in workers and pretty-bourgeois intellectuals who despite everything could never free themselves entirely from their awe of the capitalist world. The hatred and contempt I had felt for life under capitalism ever since my childhood preserved me from that" (81). The key issue is that Lukacs has not only recognized Hegel's hatred to the capitalist world, but has seen clear that classical German philosophy is doomed to be unable to fulfill their mission. This is the basic meaning of the so-called antinomies of bourgeois thought. Thus, classical philosophy finds itself historically in the paradoxical position. It does not manage to do more than provide a complete intellectual copy of bourgeois society. So far, it is quite clear that the relation between Lukacs's thought and Hegel's thought is of tensions. Hegel's philosophy is the most important resources for Lukacs, in its critique of the bourgeois society.

A leading figure in the positivism dispute in German sociology, Adorno was a key player in debates about restructuring German universities and a lightning rod for both student activists and their right-wing critics. These controversies did not prevent him from publishing numerous volumes of music criticism, two more volumes of *Notes to Literature*, books on Hegel and on existential philosophy, and collected essays in sociology and in aesthetics. Long before postmodernism became fashionable, Adorno and Horkheimer wrote one of the most searching critiques of modernity to have emerged among progressive European intellectuals. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is a product of their wartime exile. Their book opens with a grim assessment of the modern West: Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the

advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth radiates under the sign of disaster triumphant. Horkheimer and Adorno believe that society and culture form a historical totality, such that the pursuit of freedom in society is inseparable from the pursuit of enlightenment in culture.

According to Horkheimer and Adorno, the source of today's disaster is a pattern of blind domination, domination in a triple sense: the domination of nature by human beings, the domination of nature within human beings, and, in both of these forms of domination, the domination of some human beings by others. In an unfree society whose culture pursues so-called progress no matter what the cost, that which is "other," whether human or nonhuman, gets shoved aside, exploited, or destroyed. The means of destruction may be more sophisticated in the modern West, and the exploitation may be less direct than outright slavery, but blind, fear-driven domination continues, with ever greater global consequences. The all-consuming engine driving this process is an ever-expanding capitalist economy, fed by scientific research and the latest technologies.

Marxism treats literature as an expression of socio-economic life and judges it on the basis of how far it has fulfilled this function. It strongly stresses that literature should be useful to life. Although Marxism is primarily a theory of society, economic, political, and revolutionary activities, it treats art and literature with special care. We find diverse views regarding the creation and function of art and literature among the Marxists literary theoreticians. Majorities of these theoreticians believe that literature has social and political implications and it must be committed to the cause of people. It should be used for the advancement of society. We find diverse concepts about art and literature among the Marxist critics and theoreticians. Even so, they all agree that

literature can be properly understood within larger framework of social reality.

Anand was greatly influenced by Marxist ideas that emphasize the sociological aspect of work of art. Marxist ideas are appropriate to the proper understanding of his works. His novels, which have become the instruments of social changes and reformation, portray the real life situation of the society he lived. In his novels, he appears as a champion of the poor, the destitute, the under-privileged and the exploited classes of Indian society who are severely exploited and oppressed under the sophisticated webs of capitalism.

Chapter 3

Theme of Exploitation in *Two Leaves and a Bud*

Exploitation and Cruelty

Mulk Raj Anand's outstanding novel *Two Leaves and a Bud* portrays the concept of 'haves' and 'have-nots' and the exploitation of one at the hand of the other in pre-independent India. It is particularly directed towards the evils of class system and British exploitation. The suffering and misery of the workers on the plantation of Assam are dramatized vividly in this work. It really deals with the problem of indentured laborers who have to lead a life of inhuman subjugation. It gives expression to the unending anguish of the tea plantation laborers under extremely selfish and ruthless British masters who treat the laborers as bonded slaves and their women and daughters as objects of sexual gratification.

The novel presents the theme of exploitation of the under-privileged with greater concern. The real theme of the novel however is not the sufferings of the Indians at the hands of British, but the oppression and exploitation of the coolies at the hands of the tea planters. It is a story of crushed humanity of sighs and tears. The workers reach the tea plantation with the hope of better future but soon they have to face scores of humiliations, exploitation and discriminations as a reward in lieu of their honest and hard labor. In this novel, Anand highlights the suffering and pathetic condition of an underclass protagonist, Gangu, who is firstly, exploited in his native place through landlords and secondly, in the tea estate through the capitalists' corrupt outlook.

The title of the novel is taken from the refrain sung by the coolies while they work on the tea plantation:

I will make a sheaf

Plucking, plucking, plucking

Two leaves and a Bud

Two leaves and a Bud. (*Two Leaves and a Bud* 103)

It is most suggestive and appropriate for it deals with the suffering and misery of the workers on the tea plantation. The workers find a tilt and a swing in it; it throws light on the monotonous routine of the work. They sing it for temporary relaxation, but they uncover their drabness. It is also symbolic of the coolies who are also as defenseless as the leaves and a bud that can easily be plucked and crushed. And this defenselessness makes them a prey to the tyranny of power, greed and exploitation under the British colonial rule.

The central character in the novel is Gangu. He is a hapless peasant from a village near Hoshiarpur in Punjab. He starts his journey to Assam. He is lured to the British owned tea plantation in Assam by the false promises of Sardar Buta, the coolie catcher. Gangu hopes for a better life in the estate. So, he leaves his native village. He goes with his life partner Sajani and his children Leila and Buddhu to work on the Macpherson Tea Estate in Assam. Soon he realizes that he has entered a veritable hell. The coolies are almost ever under the threat of dreadful diseases. Gangu comes to Assam to start a new life, but he loses life itself. The laborers are deprived of fundamental freedom and subjected to a cruel militaristic organization. They are overlooked and ruthlessly exploited.

The promise of a piece of land is enough to tempt the impoverished Gangu. He has already fallen a prey to ruthless exploitation and dispossession in his village. Gangu has been deprived to his possession of the ancestral property in his native place. At tea estate in Assam, he and his family are offered a hut. This hut has been constructed without any heed to hygienic requirements of the occupants. Excessive

heat, lack of fresh air in the hut, inadequate food, scarcity of pure drinking water and filthy living condition brought pathological disorder. In addition to this manual labor, constant ragging and brutal behavior resulted in physical, mental and emotional loss to coolies. They were compelled to work in unhygienic condition and thus starved.

The Assam tea estate is a world within a world that projects suspicion, cruelty and exploitation of the poor laborers by the Britishers. It is a world where the innocent have to bend down before cruelty; where the wives and daughters of the workers have to satisfy the lust of the white sahibs; where the guiltless workers have no right to raise their voice against their masters; where the insulted and the injured have to be the victim of pestilence, hunger and poverty; where the man like De la Havre, a sympathetic and ideal protector of the underprivileged, has to lose his job only because of his sympathy for the helpless workers of the tea estate.

The tea estate is, in fact, a hellhole where the voice of pain is brutally suppressed. Narain, a neighbor of Gangu, was brought by the planters' agent to work at Macpherson Tea estate in three years contract basis but he is not allowed to leave even after twelve years. He reveals to Gangu the fate that awaits him when he says:

First water, afterwards mire! This prison has no bars, but it is nevertheless an unbreakable jail. The chowkidars keep guard over the plantation, and they bring you back if you should run The chowkidars go round at night with a lamp and open every door to see if we are all at home. There used to be a roll call every night before I came. (36)

This shows that the world of the tea estate is not a pleasant place but a prison house for coolies. They are forced to lead a hard and hellish life here under rigorous supervision of the chowkidars.

The tea plantation is faraway place where the colonizers need maximum profits, large outputs at the cost of the laborers' blood and sweat. The coolies are employed not directly by the English men, but through Indian agents like Buta Ram. These agents speak the poor men's language so as to win their heart by making sweet promises. Finally, the laborers are caught in their web and suffer under the white sahibs till the end of their life without any resistance. The laborers accept all sorts of humiliations and restrains, so that they can get at least something that fall into their lot for keeping their body and soul together.

The social and economic conditions of the laborers are noticeable in the narrative world of the novel. Very soon Gangu finds himself being trapped in a pandemonium without escape. He has to undergo numerous daily insults at the hands of his plantation masters. Gangu's family believes that he is earning an impressive wage at the new place of employment. Sajani wants to shop for more than what she was accustomed to getting. Leila, his daughter, wants jewelry and clothing similar to what other, high ranking women wear. Buddhu, his son, desires toys that he has seen other children playing with. However, the wages given to Gangu and his family is less than eight annas: three annas for Gangu, two annas for Sajani and Leila each and half of the anna for Buddhu. It is a matter of pain and sorrow for the protagonist because, in his village, he alone used to earn eight annas a day by working on the land of landlords. The shop keepers at the bazaar relentlessly try to exploit Gangu. Their exorbitant prices as well as their indignant and unfair remarks are the indicators of the abuse and maltreatment with which the slightly elevated class besiege the subjugated coolies.

Gangu finds that the total income of his whole family does not suffice to buy even the food items. This makes him think of what a liar Buta has been in all his talk

about high wages, huge savings and about the free gift of land and so on. Gangu recalls the proverb so often repeated in the North, “Never believe a barber or a Brahmin, for the one arranges marriages, and has to describe an ugly girl as a fairy and the other draws horoscopes and must make the evil stars appear the luckiest” (7). This shows Buta’s treacherous behavior towards coolies like Gangu. Gangu feels hoodwinked by his enticing promises. His hope for better life shatters when he gets meager wages than he deserves.

The next catastrophic event Gangu and his family has to confront is that of illness due to the unsanitary conditions in which they live and work. After returning from the bazaar, Gangu and Sajani display symptoms of ill health. The suspected root of the sickness was cholera, an infection of the small intestines caused by exposure to, and consumption of, unsanitary food and water. Indeed this horrible condition strikes its victims causing severe diarrhea and vomiting which in turn leads to acute dehydration and death. The harsh reality of this infection is appreciable when Narain, the neighbor, recalls: “He had been through the [cholera] epidemic last year and having seen two hundred coolies leveled out in less than a month; he dreaded the very name of the disease which brought such certain death” (80). The unhygienic and contaminated conditions in which the coolies are subjected to live and work cause the ruin and death of many.

Gangu’s family suffers much from malaria in the tea estate. The next morning he is all right but the fever which has left him catches Sajani. Soon the news spreads that cholera has visited again. The coolies become panic-stricken. The medical officer of the tea estate, John de la Havre promptly visits Gangu’s hut and checks Sajani. Anand writes:

As he bent down to put the thermometer into Sajani’s mouth, her eyes

glared at him, lusterless and cold. He put his hand to her head, groped for her pulse, sounded her heart. There was no answer. 'Dead', he whispered and stood dumb and listless, exploring for a ray of light to illumine the darkness that enveloped his head. (82-83)

This is a heart stricken situation of a poor worker, who is far away from his land with his only family where his wife Sajani becomes a prey to malaria. She dies in Gangu's arms crying for medicine. This sadistic situation does not touch the greedy and the rapacious colonizers. Sajani leaves Leila, Buddhu and Gangu to suffer more on the land. Gangu's sadness worsens to think that he has no money to buy a red cloth and to make a bamboo hearse.

Gangu tries hard but cannot get a loan for the cremation. Such is the plight of Gangu that he has to run from pillar to post to borrow money for the funeral of his wife. In any case, he does not want to borrow money from the moneylender as that had been the cause of his ruin in his native village. He then recalls what Buta had told him that the manager sahib is a sort of mai-bap, who lends money when the coolies are in need. So, he approaches Shashi Bhushan, the Indian clerk to sanction a small amount of loan for the cremation for his wife from the manager. Since the clerk wants commission for this service, Gangu says, "Babuji, I promise to give you some of the money which the sahib may give me if you talk to him in 'angrezi' and get me the loan I want My wife died last night. And I have been ill. Take pity on me" (105). This reveals Gangu's pathetic plight of his extreme poverty. His condition is really beyond imagination. His life partner is lying dead in her bed but Gangu has no money to perform her last funeral rite. His plea for loan demands commission.

When Gangu approaches Charles Croft Cooke, he is charged for spreading to contagion, and instantly turns out of his office. He is barbarously beaten and kicked

out. Croft-Cooke gets angry with him and shouts, “Get out! Get out! exclaimed Croft-Cooke, turning purple with rage, and kicking at the coolie... you have been spreading infection all over the place ! Didn’t you know that you were under segregation? By whose orders did you come here?” (107). The plea and pleading of Gangu does not evoke any kind of pathos in the heart of the manager. Gangu asks for money to get his dead wife’s funeral performed. But the manager is too heedless and dismissive. The flat refusal offer as well as segregation inflict the deepest sense of wound and injury in Gangu. He has no option other than facing the heart-rending situation.

Gangu leaves the place chagrined and deeply humiliated. The next day he approaches Buta with the request “Can you-can you give a loan of money for the cremation?... I have not a pice and the body has been lying in the house for two days” (110). Buta, the barber-turned Sardar, comes up with all manners of excuses. Since Gangu does not get any help from Buta, desperately he goes to the Bania breaking his vow, and borrows 20 rupees from him at a high rate of interest for performing the last rite of his wife. In order to clear the debt, Gangu pleads with the Doctor Sahib John de la Havre to make a recommendation for him to the Burra Sahib for a strip of land so that he may do some part-time cultivation. At last, he gets a strip of land and he is happy to cultivate. The happiness of Gangu does not last long. When the torrential rain washes away the tender shoots of rice, Gangu becomes helpless all the more.

After experiencing the emotional trauma brought on by Sajani’s death and Gangu’s predicament, the reader is given additional insight into one of the few white characters who is not presented as malicious and malevolent, Dr. de la Havre. Anand intentionally chooses a white man as an advocate for the suppressed. In the bulk of chapter nine of *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Anand uses de la Havre as his mouthpiece to reveal the deficiencies and inadequacies the coolies suffer not only on the tea

plantation in Assam, but throughout the Indian subcontinent. John de la Havre questions: “why these swarming, under-nourished, bleary, worm-eaten millions of India suffer so” (114). In the notes that de la Havre keeps on the plight of the coolies, he writes:

The coolie suffers not only this low level of wages but frequently from indebtedness to his employers in outlandish districts where he is dependent upon the shops provided by the employers for his foodstuffs, fuel, etc. This indebtedness, together with the isolation of the plantation, renders it difficult for him to seek employment elsewhere, and this practically reduces him to a life of economic slavery. His treatment often borders on the inhuman and his chances of justice and redress are chimerical. (117-18)

This shows the miserable plight of the coolies in the tea plantation. As Gangu works on his plot of land, he reflects on his circumstances. He hates Buta for being deceitful. He abhors the fact that he has lost everything he once possessed. He finds it insufferable, the pain he experienced due to the loss of his beloved wife just as he is about to succumb to defeat, Gangu has an epiphany. He becomes conscious of his will to fight, to go on, and to survive. He is still aware, however, of the white sahib who casts his terror across Gangu’s thought.

The coolies, however, are not always complacent victims who do not stand for or defend their basic human rights. After a group plantation, workers are beaten by Reggie Hunt and other Sardars, many become aware of understanding: “For suddenly, through the impact of the hard wood on their bones, they seemed to have realized the hopelessness of their lot, even as the bullocks when beaten too rigorously shiver and snort with a sudden realization” (183). The coolies have been beaten into

understanding. They become aware that they have suffered too long in silence and they become enraged with the fury of retaliation.

The coolies prepare an easy way for the exploiters by their too servile behavior. Neither hunger nor pestilence nor exploitation provokes them to rebel against the exploiters. Dr. Havre condemns the abject submission to the exploitation at the hands of the planter. He writes about the coolies that they are:

Docile, gutless, spineless coolies who never raised their voices except on the day of the holi, who went about the plantation with masks of crass stupidity on their faces, whose habitual submission was never disturbed by any outrage of man or beast, by hunger, pestilence, slow disease, that they should come shouting the tribute of their appreciation for him was uncanny. (185)

This overall submissive psyche is the reason for their victimization.

The coolies on the tea plantation look at the white as their 'mai bap' and expect kind attention from them. But, through their brutal treatment, the white present themselves as frightening masters. Even the appearance of the white sahib creates panic among them. They create queer tensions in the minds of the coolies at the entrance itself so that the coolies can go pale with fear. The white have no love for the Indians. They regard the Indians, particularly laborers, with contempt and scorn. They look at them as lazy, born liars, shocking barbarians in point of intellect and civilization, and the coolies sub-human creatures, contemptible and bare.

The evil atmosphere and arena of conflict and exploitation, treason and injustice, derision and devilry are shown in larger dimensions and with greater intensity in the tea estate. The women peasants are the worst sufferers as they are the victims of vicious appetites of wicked men. The women in the novel are perilously

exposed to any sexual assault by some lustful British people, particularly by Reggie Hunt. Reggie Hunt, the assistant manager of the estate, treats all coolies as inferior human beings and flogs them. He symbolizes lust, cruelty, untamed animality and unmitigated evil. Narain, a coolie, describes him rightly whom he says “He is a very budmas sahib. He is always drunk. And he has no consideration for anyone’s mother or sister. He is openly living with three coolie women” (39). This shows Reggie Hunt’s loose character and his animalistic behavior. He does not say anyone’s mother or sister. He openly keeps sexual relation with them.

When Hunt comes to the work site, he tries to exhibit his boasting personality on the women: “The coolie women shuffled like hens at the arrival of a much dreaded cock” (45). Hunt is always in search of young girls and women. He lives for the sake of fun and frolic, and has an insatiable passion for destruction. He ruins the family of Chambeli and takes her along with him to his house. When he gets fed up with her, she is thrown out. Another victim is Neogi’s wife. Reggie sahib brutally enjoys her and wounds her. Anand tries to vivify Reggie Hunt as he possesses his mistress:

She yielded to him, her body limp and contorted into a silent despair, her eyes agaze at the wild sensual heat in his face, her heart turned inwards at the cold virginity that seemed to freeze her at the contact with him. He made a sudden upcharge, as if he swung her body hard, hard, harder, tearing the flesh of her breasts, biting her cheeks and striking her buttocks till she was red and purple like a mangled corpse, ossified into a complete obedience by the volcanic eruption of his lust. (174)

Hunt is a lust incarnate. He exercises illegal power. He casts his covetous glance on half naked body of the coolie women vaguely covered with tattered clothes. When the

situation favors him, he goes to deflower girls. To get his lecherous desire fulfilled, he is ready to become violent. He does not lag behind to rape any coolie girl and kill her. It is one of the most dreadful natures of Hunt's temperament.

Reggie Hunt, a lust incarnate, succeeds in keeping the wife of Sardar Neogi Gurkha, the supervisor, as his mistress. Instead, he gives the Sardar five acres of land and many other gifts for his wife's generosity towards him. This causes jealousy in the coolie woman Chambeli, the ex-mistress of Reggie Sahib. She quarrels with the wife of Neogi. Hunt arrives on the spot and orders his supervisors to attack the coolies gathered there to watch the show. The supervisors beat the coolies so mercilessly that one of them dies and a number of others get seriously injured. Then the coolies march towards the doctor de la Havre shouting: "Dilawar Sahib, ki jai" (188), and they request him to talk a few words to the manager Sahib and save them from the anger of Reggie Hunt. John de la Havre suggests them to report the incident to Burra Sahib, but he knows that it will be an exercise in futility. Angered and feeling useless, De la Havre goes on a quiet tirade and says: "why do you let them beat you? Why can't you beat back, all of you together?... I am like you, a slave of the planters. I do not suffer from them as you do, because they think I am a sahib. They and their like beat the workers of Vilayat in the same way as they beat you... there is no difference" (187). De la Havre considers himself a victim of the abuse just as the coolies are. His flesh does not receive beatings, but his psyche is mentally punished.

The planters' negligence towards the coolies in the tea plantation is realistically presented in the novel. In the hunt scene, the coolies become scape-goats. One coolie is attacked by a tiger. The tiger tears off large chunks of flesh from the coolie's face dislocating his shoulder but the hunt goes on unaffected. And the sahibs get busy taking photographs of the scene while the mauled man writhes in agony. No

planters' attention goes towards the mauled man as though his agony is nothing for them.

The sad plight of women is also projected in the novel in a lifelike way. The coolie women are compelled to work on the wages less than those of the male coolies. They have to leave their babies in the grass, dust and road. Some women leave their babies in their baskets and cannot offer their breasts to their babies during the working time. The mother returning from work finds her child lying in the dust, or in a drain, or still worse, dead by the wayside. Another equally appealing picture is that of a mother who is chased to work spot even while she is feeding her child. Though the birth of a child means 'one more month of feed,' the coolies do care for progeny because it also means more hands to earn for the family.

Motherhood seems to be a bane because many children die young, because of their poor living conditions, lack of proper nourishment and malnutrition. But they keep on giving birth to the babies in order to increase hands to earn their living. The condition of children in the Assam tea plantation is the microcosm of the condition of poor children all over the world. The golden phase of human life is childhood but a bane here.

Anand presents a pathetic but authentic picture of the infants who suffer negligence because of their mothers' working whole day in the plantations. He says: "And they were really no trouble because they did not have to be left at home. No sooner were they born than they could come with their mother to the bushes and sleep on the way side. A whole gang of suckling humanity lay there under the torrid sun upon the Mother Earth" (176). Anand's words in the above extract "they were really no trouble" are not to be taken literally. They actually present the helplessness of both the mother and the children. 'Mother Earth' too fails to provide the necessary

protection to these angelic creatures. Narain's wife finds her child "lying face downwards in a drain" and still worse, another child has been discovered "lying dead at the foot of a precipice on the south side of the garden" (177). Narain's wife is chased back to work even when she is breast-feeding the child.

The most heart-touching and heart-rending picture occurs in the novel when the woman hunter Reggie Hunt tries to molest Leila. He is fascinated one day to see Leila's "slim young body defined by the narrow girth and the fine stretch of her bodice, her whole demeanor like a bird that would flutter in the hands of shikari" (254). So he asks her to come at his bungalow. But Leila refuses and escapes to her hut. He pursues her and asks her to come out. Buddhu, Leila's brother, gets frightened and shouts "Father, Father!" (257) and rushes towards Narain's hut to inform him about the terrible incident. Reggie tries to run away from the place but he is face to face with Gangu at a distance of two yards. Frustrated and frightened by the situation, Reggie Hunt indiscreetly fires which results in the murder of Gangu. The pathetic death in the incident is followed by a trial and lasts only for three days. In the trial, Mr. Justice Mowberley and a jury of seven European and two Indian members declare a verdict in favour of Reggie Hunt. He is found 'not guilty' by a majority of vote and thus the accused is exonerated from the charge of murder. He is not deemed as culpable homicide. So, he is discharged. This is the picture of pre-independent India and Indian society. People suffer a lot during the British rule in India. The novel itself is the realistic portrayal of the suffering saga of coolie in tea plantation in Assam.

The heart-rending picture of explanation of coolies in the tea plantation in Assam is tragically poignant. The cry of Gangu is heard clearly. Even after Sajani's death, Gangu is not free from chores and tasks:

He still had part of the fine to pay off and the debts he had incurred for

his wife's funeral, on the seed he had bought to sow in his patch of ground of which he would never reap the harvest as it had been washed away, on foodstuffs which he had purchased on credit, and, of course, for the interest on the whole debt at a pice on the rupee which had piled up in the hieroglyphs of the sahuakar's books and on Gangu's heart if not in his head. (243)

The relation of his miserable condition makes Gangu aware of the tragic fate of all the workers. While being on the mouth of death, he questions the existence of worker. He holds the view that life and death fulfilling their purpose through cross purpose. The tragic end of Gangu and his wife's untimely death are two indicators of the extreme exploitation and dehumanization. Along with the exploitation of workers, the problem of dehumanization is equally disturbing.

Gangu becomes the figure of the suffering Indian peasants. The fate of Gangu is in fact the fate of every indentured laborer. The workers in Macpherson tea estate are affected by the long hours of continuous work under rigorous supervision of the British planters and the Indian Sardars. They are prone to very frequent abuses and even beatings at the hands of the owners. They get deducted wages leading to starvation. The cruelty of moneylenders is indescribably horrible. Continuous and complete dedication to their job of plucking 'two leaves and a bud' makes the refrain into the very souls of the laborers. The planters adopt the attitude of nonchalance towards the coolies. Not only nonchalance but also atrocities and frequent beatings are the reward the laborers earn for their sincere efforts. All kinds of humiliations are inflicted on the poverty stricken coolies.

Extreme humiliation, horror of being callously dehumanized and other forms of ruthlessness are the factors that make survival horrible. The following lines

precisely clarify how stigmatizing his living condition is:

Though he has a number of characteristics of a hero Gangu cannot revolt openly against exploitation as a modern hero does. He belongs to the transitional period. Buddha symbolizes the servile attitude of the last generation who cannot even think about the revolt. The feeling of revolt grows in Gangu's consciousness due to the bitter experiences he has. However this urge to dissent could never be materialized as it was practically not possible for a coolie to dissent against the upper class rich Indians who collude with colonizers. (184)

This passivity or helplessness of Gangu is a true reflection of social reality in the then India. The only difference that is found between Gangu and Buddha is that the idea of conformism is taken by them sooner or later. There is at least a ray of hope which is found in Gangu possibly because he is sure to be the martyr to those coolies who are trapped in the cycle of misery.

The absence of the drainage system in the quarter gives out the most offensive smell. Altogether the ramparts of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of this little colony. The ugliness, the squalor and the misery lay within it. It makes them an uncongenial place to live. Tea estate workers live in a cave-like, dingy, dark one-room mud house. They sleep on a faded blue carpet under a worn-out greasy blanket. They have no option other than sleeping on a broken string bed under a patched quilt. The following extract discloses suitable evidences from the text:

Workers and coolies of Macpherson tea estate buy second hand clothes from the rag-seller's shop. Their daughters and wives cannot wear bodice under their muslin shirt. They cannot buy high quality sweets. They can afford to buy only low quality sweets. Even the upper class

rich Indians are responsible for such a poverty stricken plight of the workers. Unfortunately nobody in the colony is aware of their subhuman life. (143)

The poor workers squat in the open outside of the white man's mansions. Their poverty is revealed through the incident of their willingness to conform to everything their owner tells them to do. The rich Indians also exploit lower class workers by siding with white colonizers. Vulnerable and helpless workers are on the lookout for jobs. They are seduced by the false hope. Their lives never get stability and permanent settlement. They hope to get settled in one place permanently, but situation runs counter to their collective dream and aspiration. They have a dream of getting settled in one segment of society. While both Gangu and Buddhu are good workers, they do not get the same justice and regard which decent and painstaking workers should get. Leila calls the men weak, as they were left behind while the others went whoring.

The very nature of the relationship between the tea estate owner and the workers is politically deceitful. Instead of getting interested in the welfare of the coolies and workers, holders of Assam tea estate practice several deceitful and deceptive tricks. Since there is no neutral body to advocate for the rights of the tea estate workers, the workers working in different other sectors of India are likely to be exploited and dispossessed.

Characters like Buddhu, Gangu and several daughters of coolies often know their weaknesses. They are quick to try to cover for them which spell death, disease and destruction. It is a typical bullying situation. Characters' weaknesses make them insecure. So they fight and judge others to avoid having their flaws exposed or exploited. The disasters which bring trouble in Gangu's life are unexpected. Had those troubles come in a natural way, they might have handled them. Out of the

natural world of the tea estate life, unexpected catastrophe looms up tearing the veil of occupational stability.

In the slum area, the living conditions are unimaginatively deplorable. More than seventy thousand slums struggle to live in a space which hardly accommodates ten thousand people. The slum area looms as a hellhole which is unclean, epidemic, amorphous and exasperating. Disease, dysentery, and malnutrition all flourish in the slum area. Slum area is detached totally from the heart of city. Those slums who dwell in it feel neglected and castigated. It can also be deduced that they are utterly ignored by the indifferent on the part of provincial government. The following extract exemplifies how worker's children are subjected to the disease-ridden conditions of living:

It was a place where children did not even know what a bush, a forest or a pond was, where the air was so laden with carbon dioxide and surplus that pollution killed at least one member in every family, a place where men and beasts baked in a furnace for the eight months of summer until the monsoon transformed their alleyways and shacks into lakes of mud and excrement, a place where leprosy, tuberculosis, dysentery and all the malnutrition, diseases, until recently, reduced the average life expectancy to one of the lowest in the world, a place where over eight thousand cows and buffaloes tied up to dung heaps provided milk infected with germs. (146)

Contaminations, disease, pollution, feelings of exhaustion and ostracism are part of the daily life in slum area. Not only slum area, most of the significant parts of the city of Assam is infected with maladies aplenty. It is inconceivable that decent human beings can live. Even slums are not living in such adverse situations. Hardships of life

and exhaustive circumstances inflict stigma in those pitiable dwellers of slum areas.

The entire moment sounds harrowing to workers of Macpherson plantation. The stinking beds and passages of hospital overpower him and at one point he almost lost self-control. Wives of coolies are appalled at the bad odor. Sardars are in alliance with the white sahib. So the Sardars too exploit the coolies. The following lines clarify much point regarding the situation:

As we were coming out of the building we saw two male nurses carrying a body on a stretcher. We recognized our friend. His eyes were open, his cheeks were sunken and grey with stubble. His lips were not closed. It was as if he were trying to say something to us. But for him it was all over. I could not help wondering whether there would be more handcarts for him in his next incarnation or whether he would be Sardarji behind a wheel of a taxi. (155)

This shows the pathetic condition of a coolie who has just attained a 'release' from the veritable hell. This victim of poverty seems to have more information to his fellows. His present condition really startles other fellowmen.

In the midst of sufferings, penury, vicious practices and increasing dehumanization of slums, both the victims of stigmatization and initiators of stigma act in a solvently and mechanical way. They act and react as though they have no consciousness. Only hatred, recklessness and meanness have driven them. Sense of genuine regard for the humanity of human being is terribly absent. Only deception, distance, penury, disdainfulness and indifference are rampant.

Depiction of Working Class People

Anand was never a doctrinaire Marxist, even though, he was greatly influenced by Marxist ideas. His progressive proletarianism and Marxist learning

inspired him to elevate the poor, the underfed, the sweepers, and the workers, to the human dignity denied to them by the rich and the privileged sections of society.

William Walsh, in his work titled *Indian Literature in English*, contends that “Anand became an essentially a nineteen thirties man in thought and sensibility ... politically committed to the left-winged literary movement of the period” (63). The left-wing literary movement referred to by Walsh is Modernist literature. This vein of prose, as well as non-fictional pieces of writing, has as components entities such as disillusionment, general discontent and emancipatory elements. Social problems were considered more important than the individual. God and nature were replaced by economics and politics. Each and every life was to be valued as well as the notion of man as a united brotherhood came to the forefront. This disillusionment affected the scholars tremendously; Anand was not exception for this.

Anand believed that all people, by right of being born human, deserve respect and to live a life of dignity. He believed that man is the center of the universe. So the most appropriate work to describe his character and his philosophy as conveyed to us through his novel is humanism. It is true that Anand did fall under the spell of the Marxist doctrine but he never joined the main stream of Marxism or communism. He had belief that the communists were the only people who were devoted with all sincerity and single-mindedness to the upliftment of the under-privileged and the social outcasts; but at the same time he made it clear that he was not a ‘fellow traveller’ in the technical sense. The thinking was undeniably conditioned by Marxist theories, but he never became a wholly committed Marxist, and he does not appear in that light in his novel either.

Anand has developed a love for some human beings and a sense of solidarity, harmony, and friendship with other people. Whatever the critics might say to this

point, we must refuse to dub Anand as a communist or Marxist, and we must insist on calling him a humanist, meaning by the term of a champion and an advocate of the rights of all human beings to a place under the sun. In his novels, he really appears as a champion of the poor, the destitute, the under-privileged and the exploited classes of Indian society.

In *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Anand projects basically two classes: the British planters and their Indian sycophants on the one hand and the poor, exploited coolies on the other. Regarding the class system, Premila Paul states:

This canker of class system often results in the segregation and subjugation of thousands of people into perpetual misery and eventual extinction. Class has certainly proved more divisive than caste in Indian society because it is able to affect every section of the society at the economic, cultural and political levels. (31)

In the class system, the power-wielding upper class is able to manage, regulate and preside over the lower, poor class who has nothing. The affluent class rule the poor and the poor preside over the impoverished. The delineation between the two classes is extensive, basically insurmountable, and unable to be bridged.

Paul goes on to assert his view that Anand, “with his strong passion for the economic and the subsequent human betterment of the ‘have-nots’, is engaged in highlighting the cancerous effects of this class system” (32), particularly in his novels *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud*. His purpose for authoring these two novels, according to Paul, is to highlight “the different aspects of the problem of exploitation of the helpless laborers by the capitalist. The principal thrust.... being directed towards the unmasking of the ubiquitous class-consciousness operating nefariously at the levels of society, and running all attempts made to realize a just social order” (52).

This shows Anand's inner desire to maintain impartial social order in society by exposing various layers of exploitation by the capitalists over the helpless laborers. He points out class consciousness for this purpose.

The Indian social life is given a new dimension in the novel. The British officials and their Indian subordinates are ranged against the defenseless coolies working in the stifling surroundings. The capitalized forces are symbolized in the novel by the British. Croft-Cooke, Mrs. Croft-Cooke, Reggie Hunt, Barbara, Ralf, Hitchcock, Twitee and other belong to the class of the exploiter but the defenseless coolies like Gangu, Narain, the Gorakhpuri, Sajani, Leila, Buddhu all fall under the class of the exploited. The Englishman who believes in the ideology of Whiteman's burden is pathologically suspicious of all Indians. Every coolie is a potential agitator for the British officials. In the novel, Dr. John de la Havre is Anand's mouthpiece, who pronounces sympathies for the exploited class. Most of his ideologies and comments reveal Anand's own ideological preferences and proletarian bias. Dr. Havre has given up the imperial service and has come to Assam tea-plantations with a mission to serve the poor and the needy.

At Assam tea-plantation, de la Havre sees the sordid side of the tragic existence of the coolies and questions the relentless attitude of the authorities in the following words:

The black coolies clear the forests, plant the fields, toil and garner the harvest, while all the money-grubbing, slave-driving, soulless managers and directors draw their salaries and dividends and build up monopolies... on the one hand, the vast masses, prisoners of so many chains, bearing the physical signs of grief, of lassitude, even of death, and on the other hand, the supercilious rich, wrapped up in their self-

assurance and complacency, never once questioning the ideals of glory and power and wealth. (115)

This reveals the exploitation of the labor class by the affluent class. The laborers work bearing various physical pains. In contrary, the affluent class maximally takes advantage of the laborers' sweat and leads a very comfortable life.

In the novel, the tea planters force the laborers to live and work in filthy and unhygienic surroundings. The segment which is used to house the field workers and their family is lacking basic hygienic provisions such as septic tanks and other sanitary ways of removing human waste. Dr. de la Havre stresses the need of the sanitary system. Croft-Cooke, the manager of the tea estate turns his deaf ears to it. Croft-Cooke explains that the workers do not require sanitary working conditions because "These coolies are subhuman, and do not altogether value the benefits of hygiene" (27). This shows how negligent Croft-Cooke is towards the laborers in Macpherson tea estate. *Two Leaves and a Bud* is the result of Anand's firsthand knowledge of the living conditions of the laborers. His humanitarian protest and his desire to uplift the life of the downtrodden from their degradation was the only goal of Anand. He felt that it was his mission in life. He has risen above sectarian or communal outlook and consistently written and spoken against capitalists and pleaded for the case of the downtrodden. Anand's objective is humanistic but sometimes his approach is vehement and passionate. He does not believe in harrowing conditions with which the laborers live as their fate. He is rational in his approach. He believes that one day the suffering would come to an end but to make the process they have to rise.

The novel projects Anand's humanism, his rejection of the theories of Karma and God and the destructive effects of poverty and fatalism. The events in the novel

are narrated in a well structured manner. The coolies are overworked and under-paid. Their living condition is inhuman. Sajani catches malaria and dies. Gangu approaches Mr. Croft-Cooke for a loan to perform the last rites of his beloved wife. He kicks out Gangu. Gangu leaves the place deeply humiliated. The disappointed Gangu seeks the help of Buta but does not get any help from him. Then he becomes helpless. The laborers are treated with contempt. There is no union among the laborers. They are prevented from conversing with each other. They are forced to live in unhygienic surrounding. The impact of western culture interferes with the traditional pattern of living. Deprived of their roots, the laborers have to suffer much. The coolies are brought from different parts of the country and trapped here. They come with a hope of getting something for their survival. The poor coolies under the stress of penury are silent. Poverty paralyses them. It is ironical to note that while the poor labor class is toiling hard, their masters waste their time over a cup of tea discussing the weather condition oblivious of the living condition of the poor. The Britishers maintain their superiority over the coolies. They carefully guard their polo grounds while the black coolies are let to fend for themselves. The privileged class violates the human rights of the poor.

The novel exposes the stresses and strains of the poor who lead a hellish life in society. The life of the poor is a tale of continuous suffering and struggle with no end in sight. The capitalists are responsible more or less for the misery of the labor class. Dr. de la Havre, in his note recited by Barbara, states the predicament of the coolies in Assam tea estate from economical point of view. He says:

The position of the plantation coolies in India is, in many respects, similar to that of the cotton plantation slaves of the Southern states of North America... The present economic condition of Indian coolies is

worse than was that of the negro slaves in America... The present system of plantation labour is a curse and crime. It is a monstrous crime against humanity. (116)

It shows the real economic condition of the tea plantation laborers. Their economic status is worse than the negro slaves in America. The novelist takes it as a monstrous crime against humanity.

Two Leaves and a Bud is an account of Gangu's misery and sufferings which he faces in every episode of the novel. The poor underclass Gangu accepts all humiliations, exploitations and discriminations. The capitalist does not help him and refuses him in every stage of life. Like other poor and underclass, his faithful companions are poverty, misery, injustice, exploitation, cruelty, humiliation, and hatred, which remain with him till his death. Gangu is an exemplary figure of underclass and his death as the upshot of the evils of capitalism that divides society into numerous sections. Gangu is not only the victim hero but the victim symbol of human suffering. Like Munoo in *Coolie* he moves from pillar to post in search of 'livable place' but simply numb with passivity and indifference, he accepts miseries heaped upon him like most of the victim heroes of Anand's early novels. The process of dehumanization is more horrible in this universe than the cruelty of man to man. Thus, *Two Leaves and a Bud* is a bleak novel with no possible hope of redemptive option left for the individuals.

The affluent class enjoys on the sweat of the working class. In the novel, the planters who are the representative of the wealthy class lead a luxurious life wearing attractive dresses, eating nourishing food, drinking expensive beverage, playing polo, tennis etc. and arranging hunting programs. They live in the houses built like Natural Historical Museum, and compel the coolies like Gangu, Narain and others to live in

tin huts which generate unbearable heat. The planters entertain themselves by constructing tennis courts, polo grounds, gardens and clubs, but they do not provide the coolies with essential amenities. The coolies live in such lanes which are so dirty that hookworms breed and thrive in abundance. The danger of cholera always pervades there. The practice of keeping menial labor housed in unhygienic conditions is definitely inhuman and malicious.

Entertainment for the coolies is far beyond their reach whereas the managers of the tea plantations regularly gather at the club for sport and relaxation. The club is described as being:

Housed in a grand bungalow in the mixed style of the emperor Wu's palace at Peking, and Versailles, with tall rooms, salons opening on one another. It was furnished like an English country pub, with an old piano, dart-boards, faded sports photographs, whiskey calendars, and the inevitable Trophies of the Hunt, and the Instruments of war! Situated in the pit of the valley, its wide veranda overlooked a vast polo ground, tennis-courts, croquet-courts, and gardens, all duly protected against the intrusion of black men, wild animals, hungry goats and cows, by thick hedges and shady trees. (86)

This lavish and comfortable life style was normal and customary for the British who came to dominate the Indian subjects, but was quite uncommon for the native, lower class individuals. They instead were subjected to significantly less relaxed condition.

The racial superiority is also noticeable in the novel. John de la Havre comes with Doctor Chuni Lal in the club. Reggie Hunt, the assistant manager of the tea plantation, insults him being a black doctor and orders the bearer to turn him out. He embodies the racial superiority of the white. Other English officers Ralf, Hitchcock

and Twitee support him. Barbara, the daughter of the planter gets disturbed with their arrogance and pompous behavior.

The whites create queer tension in the minds of the coolies at the entrance itself so that the coolies go pale with fear. The whites look at the coolies as barbarians from the point of view of intellect and culture. They treat them as subhuman creatures. In her chat with John, Mrs. Croft-Cooke expresses her feelings on natives saying “The natives are lazy, and we must not spoil them. They are born liars. And they steal. I caught a coolie woman plucking roses from our garden the other day, and I shoed her off” (22). This shows the outlook of the tea planters towards the coolies in Assam tea estate.

The British masters of the tea plantation treat the coolies as bonded slaves and their women and daughter as objects of sexual gratifications. The condition of coolie women is vulnerable to the clutches of the capitalists. The plantation officers like Reggie Hunt approach the coolie women, observe their body posture and beauty, and take them to their house to quench the thirst of sexual hunger. Their presence makes, “The coolie women bend to their plucking with fear in their hearts and a queer confusion in their heads” (46). Reggie Hunt, according to Paul, “represents the cruelty and carnality of the affluent planter-class. His inexplicable glow of physical health is in proportion to his diabolical wickedness. He lives for the sake of fun and frolic and has an insatiable passion for destruction” (36). Hunt is a lust incarnate because, he is openly living with three coolie women. In the episode of two women’s quarrel, Reggie gets his supervisor to attack the coolies gathered to watch the show. The coolies are mercilessly beaten and one among them dies. The coolies raise their voice for justice but their voice is severely suppressed by using military force. Gangu and some of his friends are found to have been instigators of the situation and they are

required to pay fine. They are also” allowed to enjoy the liberty of being a slave” (223).

Gangu really leads a life of a slave in tea plantation. Poverty grinds him much. His meager wages, the penalty to be paid to the office and persistent demand of money from money-lenders frustrate him extremely. In this stage of utter frustration, Gangu says to his neighbor, Narain:

Money is everything. It is the crux of the world-Gold. Gold is the living soul of man.... Gold has the glitter which no sword has... for it is gold that conquers understanding, and understanding that achieves gold, so that in this wonderful world gold and understanding are but conditions of each other. Every absurdity appears agreeable in a man on whom gold has smiled, even though he look like a dog and think like a donkey. Yes brother, money is everything. (246-47)

Gangu realizes that if he has money, he will be able to have anything he desires; especially happiness and freedom. He, however, modifies his opinion and amends his thought processes. Gangu hallucinates visions of rescue of all the coolie people. He imagines an army to do away with him. He reaches a stage in his existence where he becomes essentially unaffected by life.

Coolies like Gangu and Narain are the victims of poverty and hunger. Narain comes to the tea estate as a victim of famine. Some of his members die of hunger. Narain and his wife survive by eating leaves of trees. They escape from death and come to experience the hell before death. Gangu also faces same destiny. He shows his faith in God’s sincere intention when he recalls his dire poverty. Then he utters the following expression:

Though the earth is bought and sold and confiscated. God never meant

that to happen, for he does not like some persons to have a comfortable living and the others to suffer from dire poverty. He has created land enough to maintain all men, and yet many die of hunger and most live under a heavy burden of poverty all their lives, as if the earth were made for a few and not for all men. (231)

Gangu comes to believe that God does not intend for some of his children to live in poverty while other of His children reside in wealthy circumstances. This sudden intuitive leap is a striking occurrence in Gangu's thought process. It coincides with the arrival of a terrible storm that destroys the plot of land where he has been trying to cultivate. He feels that God is responsible for this deed; however he does not show antipathy towards him for this action. Instead he appears relieved, as though his fear of the inevitable has been purged and an awful weight has been lifted. Like Gangu, the coolies on the Macpherson plantation come to once again accept their servitude as the foundation of their existence.

The tale comes to an end when Reggie Hunt tries to molest Leila and fires his gun killing Gangu. Through his death, Gangu experiences release from the veritable prison where he has been held captive for what seems to be an eternity. Death, according to Paul, is referred to as happy death or release because the social structure in which Gangu is dominated, is so tragically horrifying, and the only way to escape it is through death. Thus Gangu becomes a victim of the selfish, profit-making, cruel and gruesome capitalistic society. He represents the hapless creatures caught in the vicious circle of poverty.

Two Leaves and a Bud is a harsh and disapproving diatribe of the malicious consequences of foreign dominance and capitalism and draws to the exploitation of the natives by the outsiders. The native coolies are beaten and abused. Abusive

languages such as sons of pigs, dogs, deceitful bitches, dirty cheats, crafty bitch etc are used for them. Dr. Gupta says that the planters not only had “no concern for the welfare of the coolies, but they believe in flogging them into a working mood, kicking them out of their attempts of organization, and getting rid of them if need be by shooting them dead” (46). This not only shows the tea planters’ indifference to the welfare of the coolies but also shows their cruel and inhuman behavior towards them.

Premila Paul says that this novel portrays “the yawning hiatus between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’, the exploiter and the exploited and the ruler and the ruled” (32). The capitalist exploitation widens the gap between the rich and the poor. The novel is an example of how the capitalistic exploitation kills the life of the poor laborers on one of the tea plantations in Assam. This novel can be called a proletarian novel as it centers around the predicament of the poor laborers. It can also be called an example of the cancerous effects of the class system and colonial exploitation. This may also be said to be essentially a dramatic novel, and certainly it culminates in a tragic clash of interests and destinies, and what is fine is put out, and what is dark is triumphant.

Social Criticism

Anand’s *Two Leaves and a Bud* is a novel of social criticism. In this novel, he has given a comprehensive view of the pre-independent society. He has concentrated at the seamy side of life, and has shown misery, wretchedness and degradation of the under-privileged people. They are hungry and sick, weak and helpless at all places. They have been reduced to this state by the combined forces of capitalism, colonialism, industrialism, and communalism. The novelist has used ample episodes to make the novel a complete piece of work. The analysis is done with reference to the social and economical realities that are traced artistically. It refers to the *Marxist*

Theory of Literature and examines the text from that perspective. The Marxist philosophy claims that it is man's social being that determines his consciousness and it is that consciousness that determines of his literary works. It also claims that art and literature are part of the super structure and it should serve the base on which it rests. Similarly, the orthodox Marxist theory of art insists that the primary function of art is to serve the working class people representing their feelings, problems and heightening the class struggle. Although, we find diverse views regarding the creation and function of art and literature among the Marxist literary theoreticians themselves.

Georg Lukacs, a prominent Hungarian Marxist philosopher and literary critic, acknowledges the realist view about literature and strongly argues that literature directly corresponds to prevailing social situation and presents "a true more complete, more vivid and dynamic reflection of reality" (Selden 29). He clearly states that this reflection of reality is not photographic. So the picture presented in literature is not mechanical, therefore, not exactly alike to the real situation. It is only the knowledge of reality. In his critical work *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, Lukacs denounces the modernist trend in art and literature. He vigorously argues that the duty of an artist is not only to mirror the surface appearance. The mimetic must be accompanied by the didactic function.

A work of art, as Marxist literary criticism suggests, should be studied keeping the contemporary social situation and the biography of the author on the focal point. Similarly, it is the duty of a critic to examine how the author's real experiences are merged in his literary works. It straight-forwardly claims that the literary interpretations remain incomplete if the social aspects which strongly influence the author's consciousness are ignored. At the same time, such explanation, devoid of social realities, neither helps to perceive the author's intention nor his/her

achievement can be judged appropriately.

In almost all Anand's novels, man is the central figure. The theme of his work is the whole man and the whole gamut of human relationship. All his novels are of responsibility, of involvement, of creative tension and its resolution, of profound humanism and moral values. His main aim is to reveal ideal humanistic vision of life. This profound humanism in Ananda forces him to fight out the pronounced enemies of humanism-inequality and injustice, racial or economic-that reign supreme in society.

He has felt concerned with all those Indians who have been oppressed, suppressed, dispossessed, disinherited, defrauded, downtrodden, discriminated and dehumanized in the name of caste, class, religion, race, etc in all his novels. He stresses the need for a humanistic approach to life. His novels expose the silent passions that burst out into the hearts of the people who are forbidden to rise up and express themselves. His aim is to evoke generosity and compassion in the minds of the privileged sections of society.

Two Leaves and a Bud is a novel of protest in which the novelist protests against the capitalist oppression and exploitation of the under-privileged in Indian society. The contemporary social scene of Macpherson tea estate is realistically presented in the novel. In this way, Marxist approach closely applies in it which examines comparing the social and economic situation of the time. Because of his profound interest in humanism, Anand almost became a Marxist in his belief though he did not actually join the main stream of communism. He fully accepted the Marxist view that it was not the consciousness of men, which determined their existence but that was the social existence of men, which determined their consciousness. In the novel Gangu's consciousness has been arisen because of his social existence in the

capitalistic structure of society.

In *Two Leaves and a Bud*, the characters such as John de la Havre, Narain and Barbara are the social commentators as it is through them that Anand presents his social criticism on the evils of capitalism. These three characters look capitalism from three different angles. John de la Havre exposes with anger the exploitation of the poor Indians by the white class. Narain narrates the story of misery experienced by the victims of capitalism like him. John de la Havre and Barbara are pegs on which Anand openly hangs his criticism of the English. The character Reggie Hunt who represents the exploiters' class is typical. He not only exploits the tea plantation laborers, but also glorifies this exploitation.

Anand's social criticism on the evils of capitalism presented through Narain is free from artificiality and it has no enervating effect on the novel. The novelist portrays Narain convincingly but he does not provide enough flesh and blood to John de la Havre and Barbara. They are robots operated by the novelist. They are given extreme benevolence as if they were to strike a balance with the extreme malevolence given to the British planters. The portraying of English characters in the novel is a sign that he has undermined the credibility of his characterization.

Literature is the expression of human feeling which is largely shaped by the socio-economic situation in the society. Therefore, in order to explore the inner meaning of literary work, it should be put into the social context and examine from various angles. Anand's novels portray the real life situation of the society he lived. Marxist approach that insists on the sociological aspect of a work of art can be very much appropriate to the proper understanding of his works. Literature should not entertain but educate the society too; literature which is the expression of human experience is neither created in vacuum nor received so. Therefore, it cannot be kept apart from the society. It also may add some impulse to the Marxist theoretician's

belief that the study of the work of art, especially the novels, isolating the social realities cannot give true meaning to them. In *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Anand has made a comprehensive study of various kinds of human relationships and has contributed to our understanding of man, the whole man. Anand is the creator of the novel of human centrality, he has imparted realism to the Indian novel in English and introduced a whole set of new characters.

Chapter 4

Ananda's Search for Social Justice

The essence of this thesis is to expose different layers of social and economic exploitation generated by capitalism and imperialism in the pre-independent Indian life and solidify Anand's humanistic philosophy which advocates the equal rights of all human races. His humanism believes that liberty - social, economic and political - is the birthright of all men. So, it denounces capitalism and imperialism as evils which make for the misery of a certain section of people. In Anand's *Two Leaves and a Bud*, realities regarding to the exploitation of workers in Macpherson tea estate are manifested vividly. Factors that contribute to the dehumanization and exploitation of workers of tea estate of Assam are examined extensively in this thesis. Those Indians who collude to the ruthless and selfish interest of British colonizers are the worst enemies of coolies and workers who never see the possibility of climbing social ladder. Male coolies and workers are paid meager wage. Their wives are forced to work neglecting their babies. The daughters of workers of tea state are sexually molested, raped and then killed by the white employers.

Economic exploitation and dehumanization are the common facts in the fiction of Anand. The characters in *Two Leaves and a Bud* are not self-controlled reasonable adults. They are the victims of the exploitations perpetrated by the colonizers and by those sycophant Indians who are in league with white employees in Macpherson's tea estate. In this way the novel includes several areas of human experience and interests, particularly of the poorer social classes in the rural areas. The lower classes are not regarded negatively as mere objects of compassion. They embody a segment of human experience. Anand does not allow it to be lost in the urban civilization of the prosperous.

The novel reflects social realism in the layer on working class exploitation.

Anand's ultimate purpose is to expose social evils and try to uplift the level of the working class. So, he always chooses the subject of the novel which is very real and presents it in the real manners. Anand has delineated the lives and experiences of the millions of people living in an alien and recalcitrant society. He has brought a mellow and creative humanism to bear upon his works.

Anand's novels are thus the novels of responsibility, of involvement, and of workers' dispossession. The novel is the real piece of literature which has major shade of social realism. This is his achievements in fiction which the present study seeks to explore. It focuses attention on the multiple and timeless significances rather than the topical and transitory ones. Representation of the workers' world is the sole concern of the novel. Beggars, slums, migrants, thieves, thugs and several deviated gangs practice their own techniques of survival. Hundreds of thousands of slums and beggars are compelled to go to any extreme for the sake of earning daily bread. Extreme lack of sanitation and the lack of the proper management of wastages and sewerage adversely harmed the lives of dwellers in slum area. In this amorphous mega city, many unimaginable practices have mushroomed. The novel can be said to have stuck deep roots in the soil of the society. The author has sought to explore and interpret the Indian society respectively – class and caste, man-woman relationships, master-servant contract, conflicts and protests, resolution and compromise, suffering and exploitation, compassion and brotherhood with the visualization of social realism.

The most important part of ethical views of social justice is that staunch faith in the comprehensive survival and struggle is instrumental. It is the fountainhead from which all other values of life emerge. Sympathy for the underdog and bitter criticism of social and economic inequities prevalent in Indian life is dramatically visible. Thus, it is clear that totality of the exploitation of underclass laborers, coolies and workers of tea estate in Assam is presented in this novel in a lifelike way.

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