

Tribhuvan University

Commodification of Human Subjectivity in Jin's *Under the Red Flag*

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Letter of Approval

This is to certify that this thesis entitled “Commodification of Human Subjectivity in Ha Jin's *Under the Red Flag*” submitted to the Department of English, RatnaRajyalaxmiCampus, by RameshDevkota has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research examines Ha Jin's *Under the Red Flag* in the light of Marxism. Most of the characters of *Under the Red Flag* are denied access to social justice, equality and genuine treatment as human beings. Workers who are involved in different entrepreneurial sectors are deprived of equal pay, leisure and securities. In the working places, women are hardly guaranteed even a short period of time to look after their kids. They are always rebuked and intimidated to the extent of inhumanity. Workers are so bullied, exploited and dominated. Their subjectivities are robbed and then appear as the victims of ruthless system of capitalism. Li is introduced as being a wealthy man but very cheap and always haggling with sales folk. Because of this, all the townspeople hate him. He also never lets anyone borrow his things. Later on in the story Li is accused of mutiny for dropping their leader's button. Never giving Li a chance to explain himself the community yells at him and taunts him.

This thesis has been divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics' views regarding to the text. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the departure also. In the second chapter, the researcher discusses about the theory of Marxism thoroughly. In the third chapter the researcher makes a thorough analysis of the text by applying the theory of Marxism. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

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Chapter I

Ha Jin's *Under the Red Flag* and Its Social Context

This research examines the problem of the poor, suffering and marginalized people. The poor peasants suffer not because of their destiny but because of the bourgeois reduction of human values to the level of object. The human subjectivity ceases to exist. Then, just for surviving, the poor are ready to tolerate any sort of torture and exploitation. In the feudalistic and capitalistic system, the poor and marginalized people are bitterly exploited where they are obliged to work for in low wages. The working class people are not treated as the human being but just as the commodity and their desires and aspirations are crossed down. Due to the massive trend to calculate human worth in terms of monetary value, the practice of reification has taken a rapid momentum.

The human values and sensibilities are not realized but merely taken as the commodity. Consequently, a hierarchy is created in the name of social, economic, political and religious basis. In the same way, at the time of extreme capitalization, a feeling of grouping and self-interest becomes primary factor and human values and feelings are forgotten. The poor and innocent people are troubled by the capitalists and rich men.

The human beings are treated badly that they are taken as the commodity and even forced to death. This case is applicable in the context of *Under the Red Flag*, a novel by Ha Jin. This project focuses on Ha Jin's *Under the Red Flag*, a true story of workers in China. It contains acclaimed stories; Ha Jin vividly depicts the harsh and bitter realities of marginalized, oppressed, tortured and dominated Chinese people. How those discriminated people are tortured by so called powerful and dictator regime has been dramatized in the stories.

As Marxism's concerns for such people Ha Jin becomes the advocate of proletarians in his stories. The powerless have been deprived of history by the powerful. This story contains the undercurrent of cynicism in the face of authority. This thesis aims at representing the marginalized people as proletarians. Jin's *Under the Red Flag* is a book of short stories set in China during the Cultural Revolution.

The twelve short stories collected in *Under the Red Flag* won author Ha Jin the Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction in 1997. It provides the reader with extraordinary insight to living conditions and mentality of the people of rural Northeast China. This is the area where author Ha Jin grew up during the brutal times of the Cultural Revolution. In this time, the Communists tried to disrupt traditional society, often replacing ancient customs of repression with a savagery of their own. Ha Jin's stories show people living without privacy. In addition to private jealousies and gossip, they are beset by Communists who often misuse their power to further private acts of vengeance or aggression.

"Broad Daylight" shows the public humiliation and near-lynching of a sexually frustrated woman turned occasional prostitute. Because she beat one of the juvenile Red Guards for failing to pay her, his comrades descend upon her under the mantle of party authority. Living conditions are often grim and many characters out rightly selfish. *Under the Red Flag* also shows the common people's will to endure and survive. The young boys of the stories have to cope with vicious neighborhood bullies, or even their own jealous fathers; yet most of them survive with their spirits intact. Ha Jin also reveals the random nature of life under Communist repression. *Under the Red Flag* is a thoroughly enjoyable and fascinating collection which takes the American reader on an insider's tour of a harsh place.

A unifying theme appears to concern how individuals negotiate between two worlds, the old and the new, and how these worlds come into conflict. Set in the small town of Dismount Fort or in surrounding rural villages, the stories are full of compelling action and wonderfully drawn characters. Some of these characters are peasants, members of street gangs, village bureaucrats, military officials, and the occasional professional. "The Richest Man" preserves the protagonist Li Wan materializing everything, even the norms of Mao. "Emperor" is the presentation of commodification of labour value.

In "New Arrival" Jia Cheng reduces the female value of Ning as commodity. "Fortune" promotes the utilitarianism by depicting the miserable condition of Tang Hu. "The Richest Man", "New Arrival", "Fortune" and "Emperor" in *Under the Red Flag* are the representatives of the Marxist voice of Ha Jin to find which thee research uses the modality of Karl Marx's notion of how the proletarians have to undergo the series of subjugation at the hands of bourgeoisie class.

Under the Red Flag comprises twelve stories which are mention in the novel itself takes place during China's Cultural Revolution. The abiding tensions of peasant life prove themselves again and again to be deeper when the females are taken as the objects as in "New Arrival". "Fortune" unearths the dialectics between high and low to present how the proletarians are commodified. "Emperor" is the replica of the subjugation upon the labors by the authority.

The depiction of the marginalized people of the Chinese society in the text of Ha Jin finds its correspondence with the dimensions of Marxism. "The Richest Man" chronicles the history of a selfish man who is habituated to survive exploiting others. The problem in his short stories is the subjugation of the common class by the so-called upper strata of the society. The characters from the upper class society in the

selected stories of Ha Jin tend to see labor in material values. They reduce the value of women to production value, promote utilitarianism which can be explained as the reflection of commodification of human subjectivity.

The Problem of Commodification

Marx's materialism puts ideas back into the heads of living people. In this interaction, social conditions and behavior are found to have a greater effect on the character and development of people's ideas than these ideas do on social conditions and behavior. Lukacs contends that "Marx's specific theories are best understood as answers to his pointed questions about the nature and development of capitalism. In the theory of alienation, Marx gives us his answer to this question. Workers in capitalist society do not own the means—machines, raw materials, factories"(37). These are owned by the capitalists to whom the workers must sell their labor power or ability to do work, in return for a wage.

This system of labor displays four relations that lie at the core of Marx's theory of alienation. The worker is alienated (or cut off) from his or her productive activity. The capitalist also sets the conditions and speed of work and even decides if the worker is to be allowed to work or not. According to Marx, "The worker is alienated from the product of that activity, having no control over what is made or what happens to it. The worker is alienated from other human beings, with competition and mutual indifference replacing most forms of cooperation" (213). This applies not only to relations with the capitalists but also to relations between individuals inside each class as everyone tries to survive as best he can.

The worker is alienated from the distinctive potential for creativity and community. Through labor which alienates them from their activity, workers gradually lose their ability to develop the finer qualities. Terry Eagleton says that

“workers pass from one hand to another, changing form and names along the way—value, commodity, capital, interest, rent wage—depending chiefly on who has them and how they are used”(*The Reflection on Marxism* 141). The worker has constructed the necessary conditions for reproducing his own alienation. The world that the worker has made and lost in alienated labor reappears as someone else's private property. Marx's main examples of alienation are drawn from the life of workers. Other classes are also alienated to the degree that they share or are directly affected by these relations.

Concerning how Marxist critics apply the perspective of Marxism in order to interpret literary text, Lois Tyson says “Marx thought that the system of production was the most basic fact in social life. Workers created the value of manufactured goods, but owners of the factories reaped most of the economic rewards. In order to justify and rationalize this inequity, a system of understandings or ideology was created”(85). Capitalists justified their taking the lion's share of the rewards by presenting themselves as better people.

Since literature is consumed the most part, by the middle classes, it tends to support capitalist ideology. Marxist critics interpret literature in terms of ideology. Writers who sympathize with the working classes and their struggle are regarded favorably. Writers who support the ideology of the dominant classes are condemned. Theorists of the Marxist school differ in breadth and sympathy the way other critics do. Some Marxist interpretations are more subtle than others.

Various writers have commented about the works of Ha Jin. The context in *Under the Red Flag* has also got several acclaims from the critics. Many critics commented it as a work which has lost its mainstream tradition from the Chinese literary tradition and some have commented as being selective while choosing the

subject matter. Ha Jin is the prominent author of the contemporary China. The bulk of his literary accomplishment is so magnificent that he received accolades and acclamations. Ha Jin is largely considered as the novelist with vigorous longing for politico-cultural realism. He has criticized several social and ideological bigotries. He always stands for the progressive transformation of Chinese society. *Under the Red Flag* is the special work of Ha Jin. Yiyun Li makes the following remarks about the *Under the Red Flag*:

In *Under the Red Flag*, Ha Jin personalizes the political and social changes in his country over the past few decades in this novella disguised as autobiography—or vice-versa. Unlike most historical narratives from China, which are pegged to political events, *Under the Red Flag* is a representative of people's history, a bottom-up rather than top-down view of a country in flux. By moving back and forth in time and focusing on small events and everyday people, Ha Jin breathes life into history by describing the effects of larger-than-life events on the average citizen. (12)

According to Li, socio-cultural issues are merged and modified in *Under the Red Flag*. In a sense, Ha Jin tends to reflect upon the history of modern China. Modern China has come a long way since the last few decades. Yet it still has to face countless number of challenges and troubles. Ha Jin is of the opinion that contemplation upon history gives profound insight to those who want to alter the course of history of modern China.

Under the Red Flag, a collection of stories, has received several criticisms since the time of publication. Different critics have criticized this collection of stories from the different perspectives. It is perhaps even more brutal in the truth it

reveals about China and human nature. There are some mixed opinions on Ha Jin's literary style. Peter Bricklebank is disappointed with *Under the Red Flag* for its lack of politeness and depth he claims:

Unfortunately, these sorts of political exigencies seem awfully familiar, especially when used in the service of well-worn themes. And Ha Jin's narrative style isn't much of a help. As plain and stiffly serviceable as a Mao uniform, it lacks expressive elegance and leaves the reader wishing for greater psychological richness for colors other than red. (14)

Thus, the critic analyses how Ha Jin's stories lack the expressive nature that is necessary for the readers. Ha Jin, however, excels in the psychology of the characters rather being pragmatic in nature.

Howard Goldblatt is another critic of Ha Jin. He is critically aware of Ha Jin's limitations as a novelist. He enumerates how Ha Jin has injected his own private experience to portrayal of village. Goldblatt argues thus:

One cannot say that Ha Jin has not criticized China in his portrayal of the village. Rather than exploring the darker undercurrents of society or the depths of the characters, he seems to make it his goal to stay on the surface. Much of the energy of the novel is spent on long and sensuous descriptions of butchering, cooking, eating and other bodily functions. There are too many episodes when the reader has to witness this or that character urinating, and to endure long descriptions of the urine. (27)

Whether Ha Jin has been successful in portraying the characters in their organic form or not, it is not clear. But one thing is undoubtedly clear that daily activities are

described in a vivid and vigorous way. The real charm of Ha Jin's literary oeuvre is that he is skillful in describing the common incidents of life.

Joanne Arnot looks Ha Jin's literary representation from the western eyes. She maintains that *Under the Red Flag* is a fine and fantastic novel. She reveals the following quality in the novel:

Under the Red Flag is barely a work of fiction. This is essentially a memoir. In contrast to Ha Jin's often expensive novel, *Under the Red Flag* is also a very slim volume barely over a hundred pages. But it describes events spanning four decades from 1969 to 2009. While amounting to a memoir, Ha Jin is selective in what he presents. Much of the focus is on the transitional years after Mao's death in the late 1970. (37)

By writing this novel in the form of memoir, Ha Jin launches frontal attack on the transitional politics of China. The constantly shifting scenario of China has affected the common pattern of villagers. The modernization of China is both subversive and uplifting as well. Both the rosy and seamy side of modernizing China is brought to the focal point.

East-West dualism exists at the hot of Ha Jin's *Under the Red Flag*. Through the interpenetration of eastern and western value, the dualism gets the proper momentum. To some extent, Ha Jin addresses this sort of public issue in *Under the Red Flag*. Huo Jianqi concentrates upon this issue as follows:

Under the Red Flag projects the decisive distinction between the western literary taste and the literary taste of China. While literature in the West enjoyed steady growth with multiple voices, in China its progress followed a roundabout course. Having a long history,

traditional Chinese literature was known for its maturity, richness, and sophistication; hence, it had for many years been rather self-centered and self-sufficient, showing no interest in or any need for interaction with the literature of other countries. At the turn of the twentieth century, however, with the introduction of foreign cultures and the translation of foreign literary works. (37)

Chinese literature is to some extent totalitarian, according to Huo. To this view of Huo, Ha Jin also agrees with. The literature of China hardly makes room for creative inspiration external to it. It is simply seduced by its own literary parochialism and perfidy. The first target of Ha Jin is to demolish this sort of literary egocentrism and eccentricity. To tell the truth, Ha Jin is successful in his mission fairly.

Maureen Freely locates the similarity between Ha Jin's modernist liberalism and the literary modernism of Jack Kerouac and Franz Kafka. He makes the following observation about Ha Jin's *Under the Red Flag*:

Ha Jin's stream of consciousness writing style is reminiscent of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. His agitated; phantasmagorical prose style has been compared to Franz Kafka's body of work, too. The plot centers on a young narrator who joins people's liberation army and achieves moderate level of progress. The narrator is attracted by the likelihood that he will get promoted once he joins the liberation army. The narrator brings his own anecdotic experiences in his narrative account.

(14)

The main motto of Maureen is that Ha Jin's modernism is not wholly genuine and pure. It is derivative. Whatever brand of modernism represents it is derivative. It appears to have been inspired and induced by the works of Kerouac and Kafka. The

darker modernist vision of Ha Jin is related to the dwindling prospect of Chinese Culture. The clash between emerging secularism and the nativism of China lays the foundation of Ha Jin's democratic sensibility.

Marshal Berman is wholly appreciative of the power of Ha Jin in blending the eastern and western literary heritage. He explores the cultural and religious intersection between the east and the west. He makes the following argument regarding to the unifying power of Ha Jin:

The unique position of China, located on the geographical and cultural border between Europe and Asia, provides the context for Ha Jin's fictions, which draw from both Eastern and Western cultural and religious traditions. *Under the Red Flag* is often viewed as lyrical allegories, portraying a modern China caught between the push to become a secular, westernized state and the pull of socialistic movements. Ha Jin is also known for utilizing self-conscious, experimental narrative forms. (17)

Berman contends that Ha Jin depicts the complex pull between the fresh longing of China to shape itself into the cultural mould of the west and the regressive passion of indigenous people of China to remain loyal to one party rule. In depicting the complexities, Ha Jin has succeeded in maintaining the position of neutrality.

Guneli Gunn is the popular critic of Ha Jin. Her criticism of Ha Jin is highly insightful. Ha Jin is in her view comprehensive in handling the complex and equally delicate issue. Gunn's view is quoted below:

With its fusion of literary elegance and incisive political commentary, *Under the Red Flag* drew comparisons to the works of Salman Rushdie and Don DeLillo. Here, he confirms that talent, brilliantly chronicling

his hapless hero's search for love, revenge and life beyond the postmodern novel. The narrator's brother, a university student in Nankin, lays a spell on the reader with the opening words. Like a liberating enchantment, the social reform opens doors in his mind that allow him to glimpse both international attention and the possibility of solidarity. (27)

There is the fusion between practical and incisive textual commentary in Ha Jin's *Under the Red Flag*. The use of magical realism and subversive ethos of literary experimentation are the distinguishing features of Ha Jin. Guneli Gunn furthermore argues that Ha Jin has unique talent to project his political commentary in the veil of subtlety and sarcasm. The persistent use of magical realism and surrealistic technique bring Ha Jin to the same footing of Salman Rushdie and other postcolonial giants.

Jeruen Dery is interested in analyzing the changing social outlook of characters. No matter what be the feature and format of this novel, one thing is certain that it contains the unique and crucial themes. Dery's view is presented below so as to reinforce the proposed issue of this research work:

Examples detailing the horrific experiences of imprisonment in concentration camps are provided to reinforce this theme. The notion that individuals have the individual freedom to determine their thoughts and feelings is fundamental to the philosophy of Ha Jin's writing. He emphasizes that psychological reactions are not determined for people by any stimuli, no matter how powerful or devastating. (32)

The major character possesses the inner ability to reflect positively on the things they have accomplished in their lifetime. In this respect, individuals' psychological reactions are proven more than a mere expression of physical and sociological

conditions. The psychological dynamism is of immense importance to those who are on the way to understanding the core content of this novel. Dery's view is primarily based upon the fact that slow-revelation has really harmed the major theme which makes sporadic outburst of passions.

D. M. Thomas is adept in exploring in-depth insight by comparing two different novels written by two different novelists. In the last phase of his career, Ha Jin's literary innovation is highly derivative. Thomas makes the following revelation concerning *Under the Red Flag*:

Wen Li and Zhang go on a surreal journey, seeking change, and, in a violent scene reminiscent of the bloodshed. Moments before, Zhang had been gazing frustrated at the expansion of transportation. After the social revolution, he becomes aware of "the most magical coincidence or impeccable fortune: the TV screen over the driver's seat was still intact and the lovers on the video were finally in each other's arms.

(37)

Thomas detects the elements of surrealism and magical realism in *Under the Red Flag*. This literary newness has the functional purpose. To reflect the double brand of realities pertaining to the hybrid culture of China, Ha Jin has depicted the shifting landscape which is puzzling to the readers. Whether the main character's journey is metaphysical or surrealistic, it is very confounding to explore this issue. But Thomas assumes that HaJin's *Under the Red Flag* is really guiding light to the world of China, which is lost on the crossroad of cultural schizophrenia.

Although all these critics and reviewers examined *Under Red Flag* from different points of view and then arrived at several findings and conclusions, none of them notice the issue of how commodified subjectivity is portrayed in *Under the Red*

Flag. In the society where commercialization and industrialization have gained massive foothold, the fate and future of workers remain bleak. Proletarians are hired to work in different shift. Several other employees work in mechanical way. They are so compelled to work in the different work places that they are mentally exhausted. In a fit of exhaustion and lassitude, they take wrong decisions. They are paid such a meager salary that they have to think about doing other jobs as well. Wage is so low that they have to think about doing other chores to supplement their incomes. Their ambitions are thwarted and unfulfilled. The impact of low pay, job dissatisfaction, exploitation and various other evils of mercantile capitalism has spoiled the emotional strength and vitality of characters. Proletarians are treated as those who stand outside the mainstream of capitalistic status quo. Since, the topic of proletarians as others is untouched and unexplored; the researcher claims that it is the fresh, new and original topic.

The researcher makes use of the theory of Marxism to probe into the issue of proletarians as others. Marxism has had its main influence among workers and intellectuals in capitalist countries. In the Western countries, even non-Marxist intellectuals, particularly sociologists and historians, have drawn considerable insights from Marx's writings. In the Third World, Marxism—considerably modified to deal with their special mixture of primitive and advanced capitalist conditions—has clarified the nature of the enemy for many liberation movements. Terry Eagleton says that “Marx’s dialectical approach to it insures that his fuller subject is always capitalist society. The actual changes that occur in history are seen here as the outcome of opposing tendencies, or contradictions”(54). Marx's dialectic is materialist. Marx was primarily concerned with capitalism as lived rather than as thought about, but people's lives also involve consciousness.

Chapter II

Marxism and Its Implication

The researcher makes use of the theory of Marxism as the major theoretical perspective. On this methodological basis this research has been conducted. Marx, Lukacs, Adorno, and other leading Marxist theorists are quoted in the course of expounding upon the theory. The researcher assumes that the theory of Marxism is pertinent for this research because even the text, *Under the Red Flag*, deals with the problems of economic deprivation and exploitation. Since the novel is fraught with the issues of economic exploitation, dispossession and other forms of injustice, the theoretical perspective of Marxism is highly applicable.

Marx 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 and class. 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 this second set of ideas. Most seem to think capitalism is desirable; most do not want to see it destroyed and most 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)

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 relation between these two factors 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. David Riazanov is the ardent supporter of Marxism. He makes the following utterances about Marx's doctrine of social progress and historical evolution:

Marx stressed the great increase in human welfare that economic growth under capitalism had brought. However as time goes on the situation becomes less and less beneficial. The new social relations of production begin to hinder the full development and application of the new forces of production. For example in the late feudal era it was not in the interests of the lords to allow land to be sold or laborers to sell their labor freely to any employer. These practices were inhibited although they eventually became essential in the capitalist mode of production and therefore in the increase in production and benefits that capitalism brought. That is, the relations of production take a form in which control over the application of productive forces is in the hands of capitalists. (65)

This 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. So in any historical period dominant and subservient classes can be identified. 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. Johann George Eccarius strives to explain Marx's theory of historical materialism. According to Eccarius, Marx's analysis of history sound more pragmatic. He delivers the following view about Marx's objective analysis of history and historical development:

Marx said history is basically about the struggle between classes for dominance. The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. In other words the most important questions to ask about a society are to do with what groups in society dominate or gain most benefit from the status quo, or whose interests does the situation or policy or proposal serve most? In capitalist society the capitalist class benefits most. Capitalists are those who own and control the means of production receive a disproportionate share of wealth, power, privileges and status. (98)

It can be seen from the foregoing that 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.

Labor power is the worker's capacity to produce goods and services. Marx, using principles of classical economics, explained that the value of labor power must depend on the number of labor hours it takes society, on average, to feed, clothe, and shelter a worker so that he or she has the capacity to work. In other words, the long-run wage workers receive will depend on the number of labor hours it takes to produce a person who is fit for work. Marx then asked an apparently devastating question: if all goods and services in a capitalist society tend to be sold at prices (and wages) that reflect their true value (measured by labor hours), how can it be that capitalists enjoy profit even if only in the short run? How do capitalists manage to squeeze out a residual between total revenue and total costs?

Karl Korsch is the interpreter of the philosophy of Karl Marx. He gives evidences and anecdotes to clarify the complicated concept of Marxist philosophy. In a supportive tone, he illustrates the crucial view of Marx 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)

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, 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. His reasoning was as follows: although workers produce things for the market, market forces, not workers, control things. People are required to work for capitalists who have full control over the means of production and maintain power in the workplace. Work, he

said, becomes degrading, monotonous, and suitable for machines rather than for free, creative people. In the end, people themselves become objects—robot like mechanisms that have lost touch with human nature, that make decisions based on cold profit-and-loss considerations, with little concern for human worth and need. Marx concluded that capitalism blocks our capacity to create our own humane society.

Roja 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 Roja'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 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. Marx claimed that he had 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, unplanned nature of a complex market economy is prone to economic crises as supplies and demands become mismatched, causing huge swings in business activity and, ultimately, severe economic depressions.

“The more advanced the capitalist economy becomes”, in *The German Ideology*, Marx argued, “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). 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.

Lukacs' Version of Marxism

George Lukacs' theory of totality is of vital importance both to his own thought and to the following development of western Marxism. By the theory of totality, Lukacs means that a work of art should reflect all the total aspects of socio-politico-cultural realities. 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)

What is more important, his theory of totality, especially that 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 George

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 regards 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 regards 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)

It is interesting that hatred and contempt for the life under capitalism is also true of Hegel and other classical German philosophers. Just because of this, Lukacs said that “for all its romantic anti-capitalist overtones, the ethical idealism I took from Hegel made a number of real contributions to the picture of the world that emerged after this crisis (87). 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 that it was concerned to find a philosophy that would mean the end of bourgeois society, and to resurrect in thought humanity destroyed in that society and by it. In

Adorno’s Marxism

Superstructure is supposed to play an important part in shaping the consciousness of people. Conflict and consolidation marked the last decade of Adorno's life. 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. 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. What motivates such triple domination is an irrational fear of the unknown: "Humans believe themselves free of fear when there is no longer anything unknown. This has determined the path of demythologization.

Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized (11). In an unfriendly 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.

Contrary to some interpretations, Horkheimer and Adorno do not reject the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Nor do they provide a negative meta-narrative of universal historical decline. Rather, through a highly unusual combination of philosophical argument, sociological reflection, and literary and cultural commentary, they construct a “double perspective” on the modern West as a historical formation (Jarvis 23). They summarize this double perspective in two interlinked theses: “Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology” (*Dialectics of Enlightenment* 32). The first thesis allows them to suggest that, despite being declared mythical and outmoded by the forces of secularization, older rituals, religions, and philosophies may have contributed to the process of enlightenment and may still have something worthwhile to contribute. The second thesis allows them to expose ideological and destructive tendencies within modern forces of secularization, but without denying either that these forces are progressive and enlightening or that the older conceptions they displace were themselves ideological and destructive.

Dialectic of Enlightenment presupposes a critical social theory indebted to Karl Marx. Adorno reads Marx as a Hegelian materialist whose critique of capitalism unavoidably includes a critique of the ideologies that capitalism sustains and requires. Adorno says that fetishism is one of the most important concepts invented by Marx. Adorno’s view is listed below to reinforce the debilitating impact of commodification:

The most important of these is what Marx called the fetishism of commodities. Marx aimed his critique of commodity fetishism against

bourgeois social scientists that simply describe the capitalist economy but, in so doing, simultaneously distorts it and prescribe a false social vision. According to Marx, bourgeois economists necessarily ignore the exploitation intrinsic to capitalist production. They fail to understand that capitalist production, for all its surface freedom and fairness, must extract surplus value from the labor of the working class. (77)

Marx, by contrast, argues that whatever makes a product a commodity goes back to human needs, desires, and practices. The commodity would not have “use value” if it did not satisfy human wants. It would not have exchange value if no one wished to exchange it for something else. And its exchange value could not be calculated if the commodity did not share with other commodities a value created by the expenditure of human labor power and measured by the average labor time socially necessary to produce commodities of various sorts.

Adorno's social theory attempts to make Marx's central insights applicable to late capitalism. Although in agreement with Marx's analysis of the commodity, Adorno thinks his critique of commodity fetishism does not go far enough. Significant changes have occurred in the structure of capitalism since Marx's day. This requires revisions on a number of topics: the dialectic between forces of production and relations of production; the relationship between state and economy; the sociology of classes and class consciousness; the nature and function of ideology; and the role of expert cultures, such as modern art and social theory, in criticizing capitalism and calling for the transformation of society as a whole.

Fredrick Jameson's Postmodern Rendering of Marxist Concept

Jameson argues that Sartre's disorienting style represents in literary form the alienation. The disconnected condition from the outer reality of society leads to the inception of alienation. Jameson's style is notoriously difficult and dense, as he attempts to embed many nuances of discussion and responses to potential criticism within sentences; and studded with a dazzling array of allusions to world high art and popular culture. Jameson discovers that "Marxism-not so much from reading Sartre's overtly Marxist works, but from encountering frequent references in Sartre to Marxist terminology and points of view" (87), which Sartre took for granted that his readers would understand.

Jameson has been repeatedly attacked for trying to devise a totalizing theory of interpretation. It is said that he contradicts himself with this project, for he has also argued that all systems of interpretation, relying as they must upon a code or key by which they translate experience, are themselves products of experience and not transcendent as they may claim to be. Jameson counters, however, by emphatically denying that his theory makes any transcendent claims. It is openly ideological. It bases its claim to superiority over all other theories on its comprehensiveness, that is, its ability to account for more aspects of experience than any other theory can do. At the same time, this comprehensiveness is what saves Jameson's theory from appearing transcendent.

Chapter III

Commodification of Human Subjectivity in Ha Jin's *Under the Red Flag*

This research examines the plight and predicament of underclass workers who are under the oppressive grip of the trend of commodification. The entire narrative of *Under the Red Flag* is dominated by the commodification of human values either of males or females. The working class people are presented in such a way that matters much with money than their subjectivity and self. The human values of the proletariats are seized in such a way that they are not able to find it out. So, through the voice of Ha Jin, the research explores how the working class proliferates are commodified for the benefit of their masters. For this, "The Richest Man" preserves the protagonist Li Wan materializing everything, even the norms of Mao. "Emperor" is the presentation of commodification of labour value. In "New Arrival" Jia Cheng reduces the female value of Ning as commodity. "Fortune" promotes the utilitarianism by depicting the miserable condition of Tang Hu. "The Richest Man", "In Broad Daylight", "New Arrival", "Fortune" and "Emperor".

The bourgeois arrogance commodifies and objectifies the poor simply because the poor cannot resist against them. Taking the benefit of poverty, the bourgeois rule according to their choice as they think that there is no another power to threaten their decision. The women are also obliged to involve in prostitution in order to make their living possible. In "The Richest Man", Meng's wife involves herself in prostitution merely for sustaining her life. The so called bourgeois also charge her of prostitution as:

"I don't know. He told me he was a big officer."

"Did you take money from him?"

"Yes."

"How much for each time?"

"Twenty yuan."

"How much altogether?In Broad Daylight "

"Probably five hundred. (111)

The poor people are in one or another way trapped by the bourgeois. Either the poor is victimized for not possessing wealth or if he/she makes an attempt to earn, it counts as vile conduct. It is her obligation to perform such work in one hand and on the other her life sustains because of her profession. If she does not earn money, then she has to die. It is the capitalist society that creates a situation in which a poor is obliged to do anything in order to survive.

The capitalists who are concerned with the surplus do not hesitate to commodify the poor peasants. The most interesting thing that the researcher notes is Meng's wife is punished by the society. The society formulates the rule that prostitution is not good, but the same people go there in order to celebrate the physicality. Ha Jin explores the commodification of women in capitalist society as, "Take this, you Fox Spirit!" A stout young fellow struck her on the side with a fist like a sledgehammer. The heavy blow silenced her at once. She takes her sides with both hands, gasping for breath" (8). The heavy blow suggests that she is silent with the force or power. It also proves that since money takes the central position, the human values are largely ignored. The physical as well as mental tortures are common in a capitalist society.

When the women refuse to have physical relationship with other men, the husband becomes furious. The husband merely wants money and for that, he decides to use his wife as a means to earn money. The woman is obliged to earn money by selling her body. Jin asserts how a husband commodifies the females' dignity as:

"Do it to her! Teach her a good lesson," her husband yelled. They grabbed her and carried her onto the brick bed. She struggled and even tried to kick and hit them, but like a tied sheep she couldn't move her legs and arms. Daiheng pinched her thigh as Ming was rubbing her breasts. "Not bad," Ming said, "not flabby at all." (26)

The other people who are rich want to buy female bodies so that they can play with them. The physicality of women is considered as an income source for males. The enforcement also suggests that it is obligatory for women to sell their bodies not for their own benefit but for the benefit of males. We can also observe how a woman is exploited sexually. The grabbing, holding and pinching are some of the evidences which suggest the use of force by males in order to play with the body of females. The question of dignity, respect and privacy and all other human values are messed up while commodifying the human values.

Bargain takes place most of the time when the issue of buying or selling comes. The capitalist society commodifies the human values so as to eke out the cheapest one with bargain. The language that is used for the commodification of the human values is generally harsh and touching. The poor are in one or another way obliged to respect the rich not because it is their wish rather; it is their obligation for they are not worthy of good price. Ha Zin asserts:

Just for all those, humph? Why didn't you come here in the first place?" Liao's cheeks turned red. "Forgive me just this once, all right? Next time I'll come to you first." Leng paused, and then added, "But to be fair, I'll pay you better. How about fifteen yuan a mating? You know, five yuan more. You can buy two bottles of sorghum liquor for that money. (32)

The subjectivity of the poor people counts with money. When the money becomes much important than human value, dignity and privacy, we can trace the possible danger of commodification. Leng tries to persuade saying that he pays five yuan more for mating. He even tempts that a poor can buy two bottles of sorghum liquor with that money. If we observe from the humanist point of view, we can trace the most inhuman elements in the text. The commodification of women goes nearly to the point of prostitution. A woman is likely to be a means of income generation. Her status is lowered to the level of machine for a husband counts money not her suffering, her dignity and loyalty.

The dignity, privacy and ritual significance of marriage is commofied by the capitalists. Those who hold money think that they can even make different weddings in each week. It gives the idea that women are none other than animals. Their status is lowered to the status of pig as Ha Zin explores, "I arrange weddings for you every week, aren't you grateful? You ought to be. You happy pig, your children are spread everywhere. You should work harder for me, shouldn't you?"(34). the physical pleasure becomes Centre of all for rich and money for the poor. The capitalist tries to persuade saying that he is arranging weeding every week suggest that he comes to suck a woman's breast every week for his physical satisfaction and gives some money in replace. The denunciation of females to the status of pig suggests how women are judged by the society. Karl Marx comes with the notion of bourgeois that compares a worker with animal. He writes:

The life of the species, both in man and in animals, consists physically in the fact that man (like the animal) lives on inorganic nature; and the more universal man is compared with an animal, the more universal is the sphere of inorganic nature on which he lives. Just as plants,

animals, stones, the air, light etc. constitute a part of human consciousness in the realm of theory (Marx 75)

Actually, proletariats are chained like birds; they are bound inside the pigeon. They do not get chance to fly even when they are in critical situation. In the same way, the reference of dog shows that how proliferates are obliged to bear the load given by bourgeois.

The rich men do not understand the inner feelings of the poor to whom they commodify. The birth of a baby is also not taken into consideration for its value. The sexual exploitation of women obliges them to bear child not once, twice or thrice but for several times. The males also stress women for working hard in order to satisfy their physical hunger. "The burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time" (479). It suggests that since bourgeois are concerned with the accumulation of wealth; the proletariats should work hard or work for extra hours. This very idea applies when the narrator explores the motif of working hard for his master.

The food scarcity becomes the everyday problem of proletariats whereas the bourgeois celebrate everyday with the syrup of wine. The commodity or wealth becomes the determining cause for one's social and religious status. Those who hold money are considered to be lucky not for celebrating their richness but the poorness of the proletariats. The word of command of bourgeois becomes the respectable due to his wealth. We can observe how Jia comes to commodify Lei, "Every day he drank a cup and soon became Jia's wine buddy. Jia would smile and say, "Little Lei, you're lucky, Uncle have money and can buy you wine" (85). Here, the prosperity is compared with the luck. Money in the capitalist society has greater power over people as Uncle has money he can easily exercise his power over Lei. Jia cajoles Lei that his

Uncle owns money that can serve good to him. The existence of a man depends on the accumulation of wealth, as Lei's uncle owns money he exists otherwise his existence is not possible.

The overload of work for the poor is common in the capitalist society.

Readers can observe the burden of overload to Ning as:

His wife put the child on his back. She had bound feet, and the vegetables were heavy enough for her. Together they were walking back. On the way home they never stopped talking to the child, asking him questions and teaching him to name things. Ning remembered that her husband and she had not walked together on the street for at least nine or ten years. (89)

We can trace how Ning's husband is obliged to put his child on his back and she is bound to carry vegetables which is heavy for her. The overload is not the new since they are practicing the same thing from nine years now. Marx also regards the subjugation of preliterate as, "The more man subjugated nature by his labour and the more the miracles of the gods were rendered superfluous by the miracles of industry, the more man were to renounce the joy of production and enjoyment of the produce in favour of these powers" (78). The poor people are obliged to the assigned tasks. The bourgeois enjoy their living whereas the poor remain always victimized. The habitual workload also suggests that these people are enjoying their work. They are subjugated in service of their masters.

The relationship of human being depends on the money matter. When the Grandson does something wrong or he does not make income, than he gets kicked by his own grandfather. We can observe how the rich ones treat the poor as Zu treats his own grandson, "Immediately we rushed to the windows to watch" Take this. I'm going

to break your legs too. Zu kicked Grandson in the hips and stomach. Don't kick me!" (100). The Grandson is begging with his father for lessening the punishment as he request his grandfather not to kick him. The cruel treatment of Zu to his own grandson is also suggested by his kicking on hips and stomach. This reveals that there is no sense of mercy in bourgeois mind. Their mind is occupied by the materials and wealth. That is why, the grandfather neglects his grandson. It proves that for grandfather his grandson is not a useful object than his money or wealth. The extreme form of exploitation and punishment suggests that poor people are ruthlessly beaten up by the bourgeois power. The commodity, for them, is the most important of all. The feeling of humanism is absent in the capitalist society.

Even the Grandson of Zu is obliged to sign on the paper. It is by coercion the capitalist do everything on their favor. They do not concern with the humanistic side rather; try to accumulate wealth by hook or crook. We can take on how Grandson yells back, he asks for help but not one dares to help him until Zu is present:

"Ouch!" Grandson dropped to the floor, holding his sides and yelling,

"Help! They're killing me."

"Shut up!" Zu ordered, and pulled him to his feet. "Now tell me, did you do it or not?"

Grandson nodded. "Sign your name here then." Zu took him to a desk and pointed at a sheet of paper.(101)

It becomes clear from the above extract that even Grandfather shows no mercy on his own grandson. Zu stands for the bourgeois as he flogs his own grandson; it seems human feeling absent in him.

We can also observe proliferates watch their capitalist bastard picking apples. The Grandson here stands against his own Grandfather for he is much selfish. The

selfishness of Zu is nothing more than for his desire of accumulating wealth. He asserts, "Enjoy picking apples at Willow Village, you bastard of a capitalist-backer," Grandson shouted at Benli (105). It clarifies that bourgeois always show their interest to accumulate wealth at any cost. They do not bear the humanist feeling; cruelty rules their mind and heart. Due to this reason, the Grandson gets whipped by Zu. We can take support from Karl Marx regarding the norms, values and systems of society which revolve around the power and politics of bourgeois which is generated through product i.e. money. Here, Marx also regards the relationship of bourgeois and proletarian as, "It defines the relationship of wages to profit" (Marx 70). It reveals that the human relationship is judged according to the accumulation of money, wealth or profit.

It is the extreme domination and exploitation of poor by the bourgeois like Zu, which creates hatred in the mind of proletarians. When the proletarians cannot tolerate the extremities of bourgeois, they try their best to revolt against their master. We can observe the revolt arising from the proletarians as: "you son of a black-hearted rich peasant, don't stand in my way, or else we'll smash your old man's head next time he's paraded through our village" (109). The poor proletarians who are commodified by the bourgeois, raise their voice against the authority. Though they cannot reveal in front, they try to gather in one flock and go against their master. They curse their master as black-hearted. Due to the intolerable pain given by the bourgeois, the proletarians desire for immolation. Their desire gets accelerated by the collective voice.

Even the grandson revolts against his grandpa. He even assigns bum to his grandpa. Due to the cruelty of Grandpa, the proletarians cannot get their profit. The accumulation of power and wealth by his grandpa makes the villager suffer more. Here we can observe the revenging motif of grandson against his own grandpa, "Get

up, you bum." He clutched his collar and pulled him up on his knees. "Today you met your grandpas. You must kowtow to everybody here and call us Grandpa, or you won't be able to go home tonight" (110). It is the mass which makes possible to raise their voice against their masters. The grandson takes help of the villagers who were exploited by his grandfather. Then, they tackle in mass with the Zu.

The grandson ordered his grandpa to eat some of the horse droppings. It is evidently clear how the proletariats treat with bourgeois when they cannot tolerate the extremities:

"All right, if you don't, you must eat one of these." He pointed to the horse droppings a few paces away.

"No!"

"Eat the dung," Grandson ordered, and whacked Big Hat on the back with the fork. (111)

We see the revenge of proletariat against the bourgeois like Zu. Zu, who is the representative of capitalist authority, gets punished. The proletariats treat Zu as he used to treat them earlier. One of the proletariats reveals how he was mistreated by the bourgeois as, "Once I was caught by Big Hat's men at the millhouse and was forced to meow for them. How we missed our old glorious days! As time went by, we left, one after another, to serve different emperors" (113). It reveals that proletariats are supposed to do whatever the capitalist wants. The capitalists like Zu do everything on behalf of him not the proletariat. Karl Mark asserts, "The laborer lives merely to increase capital, and is allowed to live only in so far as the interest of the ruling class requires it" (485). The laborers in capitalist society concern on increasing the capital whereas the surplus is taken by their masters. The laborers get very little amount of

surplus. The unequal distribution of surplus creates hierarchy in society. It is because the bourgeois are guided by the motif of wealth and commodity.

The social scenario also revolves around the theme of commodification of human values. When a human is considered inferior to the commodities or wealth, then the human value reduces. Da Long is judged according to his material possession as: "See, you're forty-three now. At your age lots of men have already made their fame and wealth, but you're still a cart driver, commanding only a couple of scabby horses" (116). Da Long's life is considered not valuable since he has made no fame and wealth it is not because he is not a loyal. The human value when compared with the fame and wealth ceases to exist. Though Da Long works hard, he is considered as inferior according to his material possession.

The value of a man in capitalist society is judged according to their wealth. The comparison of man with 'beast' suggests the valueless existence of man. The extreme form of exploitation by the capitalists is explored as:

Why so many men? Men are beasts, have to stamp each other, bully each other, kill each other, and eat each other. All the village leaders suck our marrow and drink our blood, don't they? The share of fortune is basically the same for everyone. Some people are better off because they've stolen others' shares. (122)

Men are given the animalist qualities. The capitalists are drinking the marrow and drink of blood of the poor. Due to the unequal distribution of shares or wealth, there arises the conflict. It also reveals that since wealth became the center of everything, some exploited the others. The miserable existence of poor people is the result of some better people who stole the shares of other.

The whole town hates Li because of his misdeeds and exploiting motif. The poor are always exploited by Li which makes their lives unbearable. Ha Jin asserts, "The whole town hated Li, whose stinginess and extravagance made people's lives unbearable" (69). It suggests that Li stands for the bourgeois power who dominates his people. Li commodifies the human labor; he time and again exploits the poor. It is not an uncommon to exploit the poor in capitalist society since money becomes the center of everything. The physicality of the poor is served to the bourgeois as, "My wife had to take care of him day and night. He allowed nobody in the house to have a good sleep. A selfish brat from the beginning.(118)Tang reveals how he asks his wife to serve the master whole day and night. The master leaves no one to sleep patiently. Tang also curses him as 'a selfish brat'. Zhen, the wife of Tang, serves her master at night which suggests her devotion towards the master.

Tang reveals how his master treated him from the very beginning. He explores his pain with Bea. The misbehavior of the master makes him ashamed of himself. Since Tang is older than his master, he comments that it is almost same as a son has sat on father's neck.

He sat on my neck. I never carried him again. Everybody in the village laughed at me. A son shat on his dad's neck. Son of a rabbit, he's been shitting on me all these years! My fortune is going down day by day, while his fortune is growing like grass. (118)

Tang explores his pain for being a poor while he sees his master's fortune growing. The degradation of his fortune suggests that he is a poor fellow. It is due to the extreme exploitation by his master, Tang is obliged to life is miserable life. He is commodified by his master and the surplus goes for his master not to him.

Despite of Tang's devotion to his master, the master does not count his service. The master is guided by the idea of accumulating wealth and does not think of doing something on Tang's favor. It is not uncommon to notice his master behaving him rudely because in capitalist society, objectification and commodification of human values are common. The behavior of the master makes Tang unhappy. That is why, he explodes with his dissatisfaction.

Ha Jin's short story "The Richest Man" materializes the human values. Li Wan, the main character of the story counts everything and everyone on the basis of material prosperity that is how his inner instinct is materialistic. His ill treatment to his family members proves that nothing is important for him than wealth. His formulation of rules to his wife also extends the virtue that no one is allowed to spend more than he wants. The observation on the following extract provides the initial motif of Li Wan towards his wife, "He made a rule for his wife that she must not put in more than four tiny dried shrimps when she cooked noodles; instead of buying a packet, he always bought four or five cigarettes at a time; he stored a lot of corn husks at home as toilet paper" (68). Li Wan's expectation is nothing more than his utilitarian concept.

For Wan, his wife is importantly only if she makes use of food according to his rule and choice. She is not allowed to make more than four tiny dried shrimps when she cooks noodles. Here, his wife's subjectivity and will does not work. According to the Marxist criticism, the proletariats are obliged to follow whatever the rule master creates. So, her will does not count before the bourgeois power. Wan's cunningness also provides a basis for exploring the bourgeois intention since he buys four or five cigarettes at a time but hides a lot of corn husks at home. His unwillingness to share the corn also extends his superior feeling.

Regarding the dominating motif of bourgeois, the prominent Marxist critic, Lois Tyson argues, “dominating the consciousness of exploited groups and classes which at the same time justifies and perpetuates their exploitation” for the sole purpose of “promoting the interests of those in power” (Tyson 58). Tyson relates how the utilitarian concept operates bourgeois and creates obligation for the proliferates to dominate their consciousness.

His Jin's story "The Richest Man" corresponds with Tyson's "promotion of interest of those in power" as Li Wan presents himself as an utilitarian bourgeois letting his wife do according to his rule and desire and for his personal benefit in a full-fledged way. They are not treating the human beings as human but just as the object where even the common human values and feelings are neglected. The brutal treatment from the bourgeois to the proletariats like Ha Jin results in sacrifice. His suffering due to the crime of following Mao suggests that he does not like to be commodified merely for the sake of bourgeois.

The bourgeois rule and treatment becomes clear from the following extract as Hou addresses the crowd, "See, how he used the words?" Hou said to the crowd. "He's blaming Chairman Mao. He started because he loved Chairman Mao. If he hadn't loved him, he wouldn't have starved." People remained silent, their faces showing confusion" (74). The revolutionary voice of Ha Jin is swept by the sudden blow of Hou's words. The truth-speaking Jin is made mere puppet because of the reasons of poverty. His starving suggests that, money has become the center and if he needs money, he has to leave his argument, he shall not raise voice against the suppressors. Mao, on the other hand stands for the revolutionary instinct inside him which makes him suffer more.

While he is guided by reasons, he cannot convert himself into utilitarian. The confusion and silence of the crowd suggests that they are also suffering from the same kind of problem but their heart-pounding voices are suppressed due to the fear of starving. Thus, commodity becomes the center. The commodification of human minds and bodies vividly explore the fact that for subsistence the females are obliged to sell their bodies. Their subjectivity, will and reason do not count in front of the bourgeois arrogance. The following quotation explores how the women are obliged to sleep and sell their body for the wish-fulfillment of the bourgeois, "How many men has she met then? A hundred? For things to eat and wear and for money?" (82). In the extreme form of capitalism, the selling and buying of human bodies makes no difference in human and animal.

The commercialization of human bodies to the level of commodity reflects the inhuman and crisis of humanity. This form of exploitation according to Marx is shameless, direct, substituted naked and brutal exploitation. Karl Marx points as, "In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation" (475). We come to know how the human bodies are in one or another way rejoiced by proletariats. The strategy of bourgeois is not to exploit directly rather making a proletariats obliged. The obligation of the female bodies is that they simply sell their bodies for things to wear and eat and money.

The commodification of human bodies replaces the 'self' and 'subjectivity' of the humans since their value is no more than an animal. The central role of commodity in defining a human body is extreme form of exploitation as well as over-commodification to the level of prick. Universal norms and values of human beings

are merely taken as commodity. Actually, in the capitalist and feudalistic system, human beings are treated as the commodity.

The dominance of drought of food haunts the poor ones. The extreme form of exploitation and subjugation of the virtue, self and dignity appears in its peak. This is how we can observe the defeat of proletariats' dignity as the boy is obliged to the level of taking peanut and butter spat by some bourgeois. Nig, here stands for bourgeois rule and exploiter whereas the boy surrenders before Nig and waits until she spits on his waiting tongue. The following quotation makes the fact clear "In a few seconds she spat out a lump of peanut butter and placed it on the boy's pointed, waiting tongue. He swallowed the peanut butter and raised his eyes to look at Ning" (83). The waiting tongue for the lump of peanut stands for extreme form of poverty whereas Ning's status as she is spiting on the boy's tongue makes the boy forget his dignity and commodify himself.

There is no difference between the dustbin and the boy's tongue as Ning's intention was to spit for proving herself as superior to the boy. The subjugation of proletariats' will, power and intellect for the sake of a bread and cloth takes the extreme form of exploitation by the hands of bourgeois regime and power. The poor and the women are more commodified than males. Male treats women as a commodity, as a thing that can be purchased from the market. Thus, the importance of female is compared to commodity. The poor is considered to be serving the masters, if he makes mistake, then there is no mercy for him.

Ha Jin asserts, "Please don't take her away. It's my fault. I haven't disciplined her well. Please give her a chance to be a new person. I promise she won't do it again" (5). It is the poor who gets victimized by the hand of capitalists. The poor man has to beg in front of the master for mercy. Meng becomes helpless in front of the capitalist

bourgeois. The interesting thing is that poor are obliged to act according to their status. The following remark makes it clear that a poor is obliged to obey the rich one. The poor is merely commodified and ignored for not having enough wealth. Ha Jin again asserts: "What's your class status?" a square-faced young woman asked in a sharp voice. "Poor Peasant," Meng said, his small eyes tearful and his cupped ears twitching a little. "Please let her go, sister. Have mercy on us! I'm kneeling down to you if you let her go" (5). It can be observed how the justice is provided to general people by the bourgeois who hold power for they hold the greater wealth. He begs with the bourgeois representative to his mother go but he cannot receive mercy.

Thus, it can reiterate that the extreme form of exploitation and punishment help them to deal with the bourgeois power. The power is only possible by the joint task. The peasants have to unite themselves in order to make their voices heard. When the peasants unite they feel their power and punish the bourgeois for their earlier deeds and misdeeds, the exploitation and brutal treatment. Jin's portrayal of the then society of China at the time of communism stands as a milestone for understanding the relations between the bourgeois and proletariats.

Chapter IV

Ha Jin's Concern for Social Justice

The core finding of this research is that the conditions of employees in various manufacturing and entrepreneurial sectors are not satisfactory. Those underclass workers are subjected to mind-numbing jobs. They are denied proper rest, relief and relaxation. Throughout the night, they are required to work because occupations demands constant involvement of workers. Workers like Tang, Li, Meng's wife and others are all afflicted with the irritating jobs. Ha Jin's novel *Under the Red Flag* covers the wide range of possible thematic ideologies one of which is objectification. The human beings and their work values and dignity are reduced to mere object. This very object is nothing than the commodity itself. There is also some hierarchy while objectifying the human beings as they were already divided into bourgeois and proletariats. The thorough study reveals that poor proletariats are reduced to the level of animal. They are considered as a pig. The human values along with this are concerned with the objects of celebration, physical pleasure and beauty which generally concerns with females than in concerns with males. The females in the novel are objectified as an object of pleasure for a man, definitely a rich man—a bourgeois.

For subsistence the females are obliged to sell their bodies. Their bodies are objectified and taken as materials that one can purchase with money. The dominance of drought of food haunts the poor ones. The extreme form of exploitation and subjugation of the virtue, self and dignity appears in its peak. Women are obliged to sell their bodies and men too are obliged to obey what the master want. The poor and the women are more objectified than males. Male treats women as a commodity, as a

thing that can be purchased from the market. Thus, the importance of female is compared to commodity.

It also proves that since money takes the central position, the human values are largely objectified. The physical as well as mental tortures are common in a capitalist society. The physicality of women is considered as an income source for males. The enforcement also suggests that it is obligatory for women to sell their bodies not for their own benefit but for the benefit of males. We can observe how Li Wan obliges his wife to have physical relation for money. It is also noticeable that Ning is also obliged to put his child on his back and bound to carry vegetables which is heavy for her. The overload is not the new since they are practicing the same thing from nine years now.

The sense of helplessness of the peasants due to the over-emphasized objectification and commodification by the bourgeois is heart-rending. The objectification of human values ranges from the minute details of physical exploitation to the internal hegemonic power operating the peasants' minds. The researcher traces the overwork of peasants and laborers which significantly contribute in order to build the masters' wealth whereas the peasants remain the same. The dissatisfaction of the master creates a big problem for them to tackle with. So, they have to obey whatever the master commands. The use of simple language in Jin's stories carries the pathetic tone resulting from the poor peasants' voices whereas the harsh and commanding voice of the bourgeois idols or capitalists dominates the others.

The condition of misery has been presented with the sense of imminent doom. This pathetic plight is projected as the characters are in the flux of the emotion and politics. The characters do not abide by any rules and restrictions. Every character in

the novel is in the pursuit of the minimum level of access to food and subsistence.

They all represent how the complex the life becomes in the age of industrial capitalism. In the age of the ruthless expansion of capitalism, there is the question of survival. The individuals in the novel are in the attempt of surviving in the life of industrialism.

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