



EXPLOITATION, INJUSTICE AND THE CORRUPTION IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S *TWO LEAVES AND A BUD*

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we want to deal with the novel Two Leaves and a Bud with regard to the sufferings and misery of the workers of tea plantations of Assam. This novel can be considered as a dramatic novel. The exploitation of the poor Indians and the injustice to them are common feature in most of his novels. He also exposes the pain, plight and the misery of these poor people who cannot do anything about it. The condition of women in the pre-independence era has also been described by Anand in this novel. The women in the novel are mostly working women at the tea-plantations. Most of them are the sex-objects for the masters. This novel has everything which makes it a great novel. Anand tries to include the elements of social criticism as the exploitation of the poor working class is very innocent and it can be fooled by anyone Thus, the elements of exploitation injustice and corruption are beautifully discussed by Anand in this novel.

Key words: *Exploitation, Injustice, Corruption, Tea-plantation workers, Working women, Assam.*

INTRODUCTION

The name of Mulk Raj Anand has always been taken respectfully as far as Indian English literature is concerned as he has so many classical novels under his belt like 'Untouchables', 'Coolie', 'Morning Face' etc but in this paper, we want to deal with the novel 'Two Leaves and a Bud' with regard to the sufferings and misery of the workers of tea plantations of Assam. This novel can be considered as a dramatic novel unlike 'Coolie' and 'Untouchable'

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which are known as epic novels. This novel has been quite popular for its interests that arise from a clash of characters and interests. The title of the novel is appropriate as well as suggestive because it is the reflection of the reality that has been faced by the tea-plantation workers. The workers here in Assam have to pluck, 'Two Leaves and a Bud' day in the day out. However, the suffering of poor people has been the issue here like many of his novels. Mulk Raj Anand has been famous for these kinds of themes that he explores with utmost care and by these poor being he satirises society in the most unique way. However, this novel too is a wonderful example of the greatness of the novelist who is certainly one of the best novelists Indian Literature has ever got. The novel starts with the beautiful song of the workers picking leaves,

*I will make a good Sheaf
plucking, plucking, plucking
Two leaves and a bud
Two leaves and a bud (Two Leaves and a Bud, 1)*

The song introduces the title of the novel. This novel is published in the year 1937 and it covers 26 chapters. The title of the novel is full of significance as the novelist put three things together i.e. two leaves and a bud. However, the novel observes the life from the third angle. King priest and the man are all put together as symbols. However the novel has been filled with such symbolisms.

The protagonist of the novel Gangu like Munno is a character who is larger than life as he acts like a hero of the film. He is middle aged farmer in the nearby village of Hoshiarpur in Punjab as he works in his farms. However, he has been tempted by the offer and the false promises made by a tout. He in order to earn more money and leaves his village and goes to work on the Macpherson Tea Estate in Assam long with his wife Sajani and his two children Leila and Buddha. He goes there and he comes to know that the promises made to there are all false as he does not get anything he was promises. He feels that the work of a tea-plantation is like a prison house as he says,

"I suppose it was in our kismet. But at home it was like a prison and here it is slightly worse... 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..." (P, 34)

However, the condition gets worse and worse as the Masaria breaks out and Sajani dies because of it. Soon the situation for all the workers along with Gangu realize that plantation life is nothing but a progression from today's world's had condition volume and one day it actually gets breaks into the open. Two loose women quarrel, Reggie, the Assistant manager,

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behaves like brute and some coolie are injured. However an appeal in terms of this has been made to croft-cook the owner, without avail. The workers of the plantation have decided to demonstrate, and as a result the workers have been split into two groups with a few dissidents in both of them. Consequently, the aerial help is rushed to planters, and workers have used force in order to show their demonstration. The situation gets worse Dr De La Havre on account of his pronounced sympathies with the coolies but is summarily dismissed.

Afterward the tiger-hunt for the visiting Governor has been arranged as Reggie is still upset within. He is discounted and feeling regard inside. He is hated by the workers. When Lela has been plucking the tea leaves he out of lust approaches her. She denies the offer and runs away from him. Reggie follows her to her house. He goes there and is quite mad because of the rejection. His frustration takes control of him as he shoots blindly in front of him in fear and in doing so he kills Gangu. He then runs away from there. Nonetheless, a trial has been arranged which includes Justice Mowberley and a jury consisting seven Europeans and two Indians. Obviously the jury finds Reggie not guilty of the charges are also removed from him. Thus, this is the kind of injustice during the British Raj that Mulk Raj Anand explores in this novel. The exploitation of the poor Indians and the injustice to them are common feature in most of his novels. He also exposes the pain, plight and the misery of these poor people who cannot do anything about it. Anand himself has said that “it is perhaps better written, and technically, it is more complex than my other novels like untouchables and coolie”. However this novel is also one of the greatest works of Anand. The irony of the novel lies in the fact that the people like Gangu are exploited and are deceived by false promises. He comes all the way to Assam in hope of a new life but life but he meets his abrupt death in the hands of the bastard who ultimately gets away from the charges of murder because he is more powerful and white person.

The condition of women in the pre-independence era has also been described by Anand in this novel. The women in the novel are mostly working women at the tea-plantations. These working women cannot even feed their hungry babies and they even cannot offer their breasts to the most youngest one and they also have to leave these sucking babies in the grass or on the road or under the tree Where the place is full of dust and insects. They cannot come close to them during working hours. Among these working women, the ones who are beautiful, attractive or younger may be hoodwinked or taken away forcefully by the masters to quench their physical thirst as was done to the wife of Neogi. The other thing is that the no men are offered rings or other ornament and their husband have to give land to the masters. This kind of exploitation is visible throughout the book. Those who do not surrender are beaten cruelly and are put before the guns. This kind of cruelty is seen in the case of Neogi’s wife whom Reggie wants brutally and after enjoying her body, wounds her in cruel manner. He too destroys the family of Chameli as he takes her with him to his house in order to enjoy her body. He makes full use of her and when he gets bored of her he throws for out of the house.

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He is the one who openly does crime but never gets any kind of trouble legally. He lives with three working woman and there for it is said that no woman is safe in the tea plantation. Thus the condition of the women is miserable at that time and this has been clearly stated by Mulk Raj Anand in this novel.

Thus, this novel has everything which makes it a great novel. Anand tries to include the elements of social criticism as the exploitation of the poor working class is very innocent and it can be fooled by anyone that is what the case with Gangu and his family which finally meets with the injustice because Reggie is found not guilty for the murder of Gangu which is primarily happened because of corruption. Thus, the elements of exploitation injustice and corruption are beautifully discussed by Anand in this novel.

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