CHAPTER III

Social Environment

So great is the power of environment on the development of personality that it may outweigh inheritance.¹

The results of the development of each individual are not determined by the heredity alone but also by other intrinsic causes. This determinism of heredity is however matched by a corresponding determinism of social environment. The environment is the society itself and endures so long as the society endures, which consists of organization and regulation, the traditions and institutions, repressions and liberations of social life. For every member of the society, this system is just as much a part of the environment as all the other outer conditions of life, except that his adjustment to it is not of the same inexorable character not being imposed by natural law. Nevertheless, social man can not escape its influence for he is trained within it and habituated to it and none of his desires can be fulfilled unless he takes it into account.

Our lives are not predetermined by god or fate but have been conditioned by the surroundings where we reside, and things which can not be predetermined by heredity can also be predetermined by environment. Man’s life is, therefore, possible only within narrow limits of physical and chemical condition and in the main; these limits are fixed by the constitution of nature. Of all animals, man enjoys the most extensive and the most varied environment and its effect upon him is
correspondingly great. Nevertheless man has the longest period of maturity and it is during this period that the play of social environmental stimuli on his development is so effective that it modifies the whole strategy of life but a person who lives in the midst of intellectual, religion, moral and social stimuli which are the potent factors in his development, becomes an heir of all ages as well as in the present through tradition and history. The modifying influences of all these environmental conditions on human are so amazing that sometimes it finally leads him to his destiny thus overstepping the heredity. According to Ulysses “I am a part of all that I have met.” For example, a relatively poor inheritance with excellent environmental conditions often produces better result than a good inheritance with poor conditions. To a large extent our habits, words, thoughts, our aspiration, religion and our lives depend upon the social environment and society that surround us. It can not be doubted that if we had been born and reared in the slums of great cities, we should have been different from what we are now. Therefore, the conditions of social environment in which we spent our early lives always have a great influence upon the minds and morals of man which ultimately shapes our destinies. This social environment is very much essential in the analysis of naturalism. In other words, the naturalist’s ultimate reality is society, and not the individual who is but a typical product of his particular environment. The more the individual’s misery and sordidness, the stronger the proof of the crushing law of determinism and greater the need to reform the society. Thus, the apparent pessimistic note of a naturalistic tragedy finally serves the optimistic purpose of the novelist. Anand’s novels are, therefore, essentially socially optimistic and as Cassirer elucidates the point ‘Man,
like animals submits to the rulers of society, but in addition; he has an active power to change the form of social life.\textsuperscript{3}

Mulk Raj Anand while emphasizing the determinism of social environment in \textit{Coolie (1936)} traverses it in an arch. The protagonist of the novel moves from the village to town, from the town to the city and then up to the mountains and is finally swept away to his doom. He explores the limit of his existence before he goes under. \textit{Coolie (1936)} is a story of Munoo, whose life is determined by the social forces and also a piece of history of Anglo India; which broadly suggests the national, political situation besides documenting proletarian misery and wretchedness. More important is that the writer has been able to achieve a rare harmony between the thematic diffusion and the structural simplicity of his fiction. Schematically, the novel contains five chapters, each one of them signifying the particular scene of action and describing the diverse experiences of the protagonist.

The first chapter introduces Munoo, the hero of the novel against the vast background of the Kangra Hills, with a suggestion that the village boy of Bilaspur shortly leaves his aunt and uncle in order to take up a job at the nearest town of Sham Nagar. Though short and seemingly insignificant, this chapter immediately conveys with dramatic irony, the Arcadian happiness of an orphan-child against whom the malevolent form of society seem to be already in conspiracy. The second chapter relates the actions and reactions of Munoo as the domestic servant in the house of Babu Nathu Ram, Sub Accountant in Imperial Bank at Sham Nagar. The third chapter is concerned with the independent career of Munoo as a privileged worker in
Prabha's pickle factory at Daulatpur. The fourth part however, deals with the most eventful period of his life in Bombay that marks the gradual transition of Munoo from the nonage of innocence to the adolescence of experience under the loving care of Lakshmi, Harry and Rattan. And the last chapter is a study of the pretentious behaviour of the Anglo-Indian community in Simla, notably, Mrs. Mainwaring's unprincipled and immoral existence which finally results in the premature death of Munoo. The structural clarity and simplicity, the shifting of scenes of action, the documentary manner of narration, and the dire law of determinism possibly mark this out as an admirable panoramic prototype of proletarian naturalism. The central problem is the inhuman mechanics of economic determinism; the fatal evil is not caste but class.

Although the protagonist is an innocent victim who neither perpetrates his own downfall nor carries with him a corroding guilt, within this five act pattern of Munoo's life however brightened by transitory moments of better fortune or his zest for life follows a cyclic course of tragic inevitability, beginning with his departure from the hills and ending with his return to them. The concept of fate governing the action is a naturalistic variant of the classical idea of inevitability, for the episodes are linked by a deterministic pattern within a framework, not of supernatural morality, but of heredity, biology and environment.

Running parallel with this naturalist scheme are the themes of exploitation, victimization, thwarted innocence, and unfulfilled potentiality; the motive of a
descent into hell, and an atmosphere of doom. A chronological examination of the narrative reveals the insistent and deep rooted nature of the problem.

Munoo's beginning, Anand suggests, is the characteristic of the underprivileged classes. His parents were ruined by the landlord and usury systems and all Munoo has inherited from them is their victimhood and the memory of his mother's tragic destiny and utter resignation. The terrible destiny of being a victim of exploitation is indeed Munoo's dubious birthright:

He has heard of how the landlord has seized his father's five acres of land because the interest of the mortgage covering the unpaid rent had not been forthcoming when the rains had been scanty and the harvests bad. And he knew how his father had died a slow death of bitterness and disappointment and left his mother a penniless beggar, to support ...... a child in his arm.4

Before he begins his wretched journey Munoo is a sensitive and intelligent boy with full of high spirits:

He was a genius at climbing trees. He would hop on to the trunk like a monkey, climb the bigger branches on all fours, swing himself to the thinner offshoots as if he was dancing on a trapeze, and then diving dangerously into space, he would jump from one tree to another.5

Poverty is the root cause of Munoo's tragedy. His life is severely circumscribed by the adverse circumstances, wherever he goes and whatever his occupation. His own career is varied: almost a domestic slave at Sham Nagar; a boy worker at Daulatpur in a pickle industry; a labourer at the New George Cotton Mills in Bombay; and lastly a rickshaw puller and a page to Mrs. Mainwaring in Simla. He also works as a porter and a coolie at a vegetable market and even as a disciple to a sinful and
lecherous yogi, for his livelihood. He desperately fights for a living and as any other normal boy happily dreams of his future forgetting that he is condemned by an iniquitous system always to remain small, abject and drab. Even in the midst of untold misery and hostile sordidness, he has an instinctive yearning for existence. Clearly, man, not nature is to be blamed for amidst the lavish beauty of the hills, Munoo is naturally joyous and innocent. Original sin is sociological. So is the Fall.

Munoo’s life is tragic in the extreme although his expectations are extremely modest. He is perpetually tortured and ill-treated by his cruel aunt who used to beat him even more than he beats his cattle, Munoo does not want to go to the town:

For inspite of the fact that his aunt was always abusing him, inspite of the fact that she ordered him about, asking him to do this and to do that, inspite of the fact that she beats him more than he beats his cattle, he really did not want to go to the town.

But he is forcibly thrown out of this paradise at the age of fourteen by his bullying uncle who puts him into the service of Nathoo Ram and appropriates his wages. This is the first episode of tragic denial of the protagonist right to happiness:

‘My aunt wants me to begin earning money’, said Munoo. And she says she wants a son of her own. My uncle says I am grown up and must fend for myself. He has got me a job in the house of Babu of the Bank where he works in Sham Nagar.

The second chapter goes a step forward in introducing the drama of exploitation to which the first chapter only served as a prologue and background. Munoo’s strenuous ten mile march with the unsympathetic uncle is just a prelude to his sufferings that are to follow. His life of drudgery from morning to night in Babu’s house is full of violent invectives and insults hurled at him. In fact, Munoo is
exploited and maltreated by the babu and his termagant wife who, as a barren
woman, has no love for Munoo and thus often picks up a quarrel and beats him
worse than the beasts. There in Nathoo Ram’s house he often remembers and
compares his aunt with the Babu’s wife:

   The only quarrel between himself and his aunt, he
   realized, was that she could not have children, and
   people shamed her for her barrenness. Otherwise, he
   remembered how often she had taken him in her arms
   and kissed him and how often he had gone to sleep
   embracing her. But this woman seemed to hate him for
   nothing.\(^6\)

He imagines that he will live in peace and comfort but is soon disillusioned. The
miseries of the past, pale into insignificance in the light of his new experience.
Although, the teen-aged daughter of the house is kind to him, her mother treats
Munoo shabbily:

   He realizes finally his position in the world. He is to be
   a slave, a servant who should do the work, all the odd
   jobs, someone to be abused, even beaten, though as yet
   it had not come to that. He feels sad and lonely.\(^9\)

The ambivalence that torments Bakha in Untouchable (1935), torments Munoo as
well. He resolves henceforth to be a perfect servant, but the path to perfection is not
easy. The world is not his oyster and he wields no sword with which to open it, yet
his only prayer is “I want to live, I want to know, I want to work,........I shall grow
up and be a man....\(^{10}\) The grimness of his experience in this household is starkly
depicted in which Munoo is discovered panic stricken and shamed, defecating
against the back wall because he had not been told where the lavatory was. He
committed a mistake out of total ignorance but he is scolded as a stupid and rustic
oaf. Prof. Saros Cowasjee has observed in his ‘preface’ to the novel:
The first contact with reality shattered his dreams. Arriving in the house of a bank clerk, he falls foul of a shrewish and vindictive house wife, and before he flees from his employer's frenzied rage he was relieved himself near their doorstep and thereby lowered social prestige. He is squarely blamed for the fiasco which takes place during the visit of a senior bank official to the residence of his master. Later, he experiences the trauma of desire for Sheila but is at the same time aware of the vast gulf that exists between them and stifles his passion. Then all of a sudden as they were playing, he bites her on the cheek out of sheer excitement for which Munoo has to face a tornado of abuse and beatings from the master. He fully understands his own position in the social order:

'What am I — Munoo?' He asked himself as he lay wrapped in his blanket, early one morning. 'I am Munoo, Babu Nathoo Ram's servant' the answer came to his mind........ It did not occur to him to ask himself what he was apart from being a servant.

This recognition of his own identity gives the impression that there is perhaps the beginning of a loss of innocence in him. And, unlike Bakha who can not see beyond his limited experience and grasp the basic cause of his predicament, Munoo sees his tragedy as a part of general social condition.

Uprooted from an idyllic milieu where he lived a carefree life as a grazer of cattle, Munoo now finds himself gradually broken in body and spirit. His attempt at being a modest servant seems to make no difference in the treatment meted out to him. For no fault of his own, he is made the victim of ceaseless suffering and humiliation and he reflects thus:
No, caste does not matter. The Babus are like the Sahib—logs, and all servants look alike: there must be only two kinds of people: the rich and the poor.13

This instinctive comprehension of his tragedy as part of an inescapable social situation be tokens a higher level of consciousness in this hill boy who has had the benefit of going to school and who sensitively recalls his past experiences in the village. But, despite this superior comprehension, Munoo, unlike Bakha, shows no inner development. The innocence he seems to begin to lose as a servant in Sham Nagar actually remains with him throughout his tragic career, constantly furbishing his romantic image and accelerating his descent into the hells of suffering. Munoo, while drifting into the abyss of misery, battling against the onslaughts of an outrageous social system, remains a victim through out and these outrages are recalled in the memory; vivid, claiming sympathy. However, it is not long before he is over-obtrusively and unnecessarily burdened by the author’s thesis:

His ego conditioned by the laws and customs of the society in which he had been born, the society whose caste and classes and forms had been determined by the self seeking of the few, of the powerful, sought all the prizes of wealth, power and possession exactly as his superiors sought them... But the stories of his ancestors .... His country ... had all been records of the desire for honour of a few chosen man ... he had been blinded by the glamour of greatness ... into forgetting that he was condemned by an iniquitous system always to remain small, abject and drab.

The biological expedient, however, which made him want to live, was forcing the multi-coloured cells in his body to reach out instinctively.... Even for a breath of the foul air in his master’s dingy little kitchen ... He was vaguely aware of the need of love ... but he was as yet essentially ineffectual ‘pawn on the chessboard of destiny...and he was to remain slave until he should come to recognize his instinct’.14

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The intellectually turgid prose within the framework of inevitability and exploitation of a typical naturalistic picture of the small drab person or ego: and abject victim driven by biological expedient, conditioned by social environment, condemned by an iniquitous system and the powerful few, blinded by the values of an immoral and false materialism yet helplessly strivin in the face of a deterministic destiny to discover love through a recognition of his true instinct. Whichever way we rewrite or concentrate the message, it remains abstract pastiche; life reduced to lecture notes.

Munoo is not merely an individual who is an ineffectual 'pawn on the chessboard of destiny', but a prototypical character with universal dimensions. Anand’s artistic virtuosity is evident in universalizing the individual tragedy of Munoo. What happens to an obscure coolie in India is by no means an isolated example of human suffering and exploitation; man’s inhumanity to man has been an ever recurring theme in literature. But flowing the anthropological dictum that the 'proper study of mankind is man', Anand studies man as a victim of the irrational system and the inhuman cruelties of society. Thus, conflict and tragedy are consequential to the social inequalities, and the economic exploitation of the proletariat by a few egoistic individuals. And Coolie (1936) as a typical novel of his oppressive trend in modern society, becomes multi-dimensional with its philosophy of naturalism and the contemporary national ideas. The Hindu – Muslim communal riots, the Anglo-Indian snobbery, the growing industrialization of the country and the rising trade unionism among the workers are objectively observed by Munoo with a sense of awe and wonderment.
Munoo's dilemma is that he hates his tormentors and yet he does not know how to articulate his hatred and anger. His failure to rebel is rooted in his undeveloped social awareness and not in his meek and unprotested acceptance of injustice and exploitation. He does not display explicit revolt against the cruelty of Nathoo Ram, but this does not mean that he is a coward or enjoys wallowing in self-pity. His running away from Nathoo Ram's clutches is a symbolic act of rebellion and of a better future for himself. He hides under the seat of a train which is described with meaningful prognostication as a 'descent into this inferno' and finds himself bound for Daulatpur where he is employed in a pickle factory by the kind Seth Prabha Dayal and his unscrupulous partner Ganpat. It is in no time before the familiar exploiter-exploitee pattern emerges: the worthless licentious Ganpat defrauds the firm, ruins Prabha, and appropriates his business contacts, while his honest devout innocent victim is preyed upon by creditors and brutally beaten by the police. Cat Killers' Lane itself is a peripheral symbol of exploitation, of the greed of the landlords and usurers. Thus, Prabha's catastrophe has been prepared for naturalistically on the basis of character action, and by such authorial hints as 'for the most part men realized themselves through the force of external necessity'.

The denizen workers in the factory, particularly the old grey-haired, bent and dim-eyed woman and Maharaj and Bonga, the elephantine idiot and the deaf and dumb coolies are reminiscent of Zola's primitivistic portraits. Maharaj and Bonga represent underworld deformity not in moral terms but as examples of nature's victimhood; blighted and grotesque, they provide some of the most effective pathos in the novel. There are moments, such as Ganpat's early morning beating of the
sleep-sodden gross mass of Maharaj, when Anand arouses a kind of disturbing Dickensian pity.

With the collapse of Prabha’s establishment, Munoo is left alone in the world to become a self-employed porter, carrying loads in the streets. He once more experiences the Darwinian struggle for survival at the primal level: this time as a coolie in the city market. He soon developed certain Darwinian traits particularly low cunning. He would secure work, for example, by spreading the rumour that the market was to be closed. There is also a new elaboration of the exploitation theme. Using Munoo as a focus, Anand describes the various injustices which the social system perpetrates upon the poor. One particular adventure illustrates a special kind of hypocritical exploitation. Munoo’s admiration for Prabha’s devoutness and humility, and the promise of free food at the temple prompt him to lead a spiritual life. However, this desire is quickly extinguished when he meets the holy man of the temple. Munoo discovers that the holy man is a voluptuary who achieves through personal intervention, the birth of “sons of god” to the childless wives of the merchant class.

In another incident, Munoo was unable to compete with the other coolies and lift a heavy sack, he stumbled and fell yet instead of sympathy; he only received abuses from the merchants:

‘Ohe, lover of your mother’, shouted the merchant, jumping up from the platform of the shop, where he had settled to do accounts, in an ochre-coloured portfolio. ‘Ohe, illegally begotten, who asked you to lift that sack, you have hardly emerged from your
mother's womb? Run away, little rascal! I did not see you go in to lift the weights or I should have stopped you. Do you want to have me sent to jail for murder? Get away, little wretch.¹⁵

Then again, while trying to adjust himself in the most critical situations, he is further beaten up by the policeman for not having the license of a coolie:

Get out of here! The policeman said, hitting Munoo on the bottom with his baton. Get away from here, lover of your sister! Government orders: No coolies are supposed to work here without a license.¹⁶

Munoo finds himself in the realm of melancholy and at the same time, he protests within his heart against this atrocity. His revolutionary feelings can be seen implicitly just after this incident:

The currents of thought and emotion which had been washed over by the fear of the policeman slowly emerged from the main springs that were welling up in him in defiance of authority, 'who is he that he should turn me out of the station yard? He exclaimed to himself. 'The swine! He fancied himself to be a god because he is putting on a uniform. My uncle is also a servant of the Angrezi Sarkar. He is not the only one. I am not like Prabha, who led himself be beaten. I shall die rather than let him beat me. I shall live upto the name of my race....'¹⁷

Although he has the fits of rebelling against the system, Munoo remains inactive and does not have the courage to stand up to it. He appears a completely hopeless victim through out.

But this Sham Nagar episode is only the first act in the tragic drama of exploitation. It is his stint at the Sir George White Cotton Mill in Bombay that exposes Munoo to the full force of the modern capitalistic machine. It is, in a sense, a place which is a symbol conveying the idea of modern industrial civilization in a
traditional setting. Hence, the murky atmosphere of Bombay resolves the tragedy of Munoo. In Bombay he wants to earn enough money to go beyond the backwaters, and it appears to him at first sight, 'as a confused medley of colours and shape and sizes.' Emerging from Victoria station he finds himself in the city of his dreams - 'strange, hybrid, complex, cosmopolitan Bombay.' Munoo had high hopes of this new place but soon he is amazed by the elephant driver’s witty saying:

‘The bigger the city is the more cruel it is to the sons of Adam’, the elephant driver said, crawling under the buffers of a train. ‘You have to pay even for a breath that you breathe.’

In the new surroundings which are initially promising, he is still restless and resentful. Melancholy and self-distrust overwhelm him. Looking back at his life and experiences so far, he has an acute sense of frustration and failure. He feels dispassionate very often but has a vision of a happier life and it is this pursuit of the dream that makes him leave one place after another. However, despite Munoo’s elevation to the loving status of a son in the Seth’s childless household, the third chapter is a further descent into the inferno and Anand has given a very authentic account of a simple boy’s feelings and the situations in which he has to spend his life.

Chapter four begins with Munoo’s two thousand mile journey under a merciless, malevolent sun to Bombay where he feels completely insignificant and small. Munoo meets the peasant Hari and his family and accompanies them to the cotton mill. The poverty and suffering in the city streets is indicative of what is to
come. The mills are an inferno, a waste land which breeds a dried up, shriveled, flat-footed, hollow-chested, hollow-cheeked and hollow-eyed race of men:

The coolies of the Sir George White Factory crept like ghosts through the waste lands of the mills... that little spark of life which made them moved about willingly had died, and left them a queer race of men, dried up shrivered, hollow-chested, hollow-cheeked, and hollow-eyed. Their wretchedness had passed beyond the confines of suffering and left them careless, resigned.¹⁹

The mills are intended to symbolize the degrading domination and exploitation of the Indian proletariat by British Imperialism. It is a huge octopus with its numerous tentacles clutching the labourers in its deadly grasp, slowly paralyzing and poisoning them. The labourers, including wives and children worked eleven hours a day. Factory conditions are barbaric, facilities and wages are quite inadequate. Sir Reginald White, president of the company, the English foreman, the Pathan doorkeeper practice usury with even more drastic methods. The Sikh merchant with his monopoly as the authorized dealer in the mill workers colony is exploited to its full personal advantage. Not only that, the ill-paid, ill-housed, under-nourished and bullied labourer is broken both in body and mind as Munoo finds in his friend Hari. Anand reinforces the idea of man as a trapped animal living in the shadow of death where the machine casts a black shadow, strangling one at the throat with its powerful and invisible fingers: a grotesque symbol of human enslavement. In this setting Munoo emerges as a typical realist protagonist in his limited, perturbed and frustrated awareness. He asked himself what the separate thing is that exists under his skin apart from the things in his head.

¹But the problem seemed insoluble ... and the minute images in the corner of his soul broke up into even
more microscopic elements, till they sink into the complete emptiness from which they have emerged.\textsuperscript{20}

He is disturbed and mentally dislocated by what he sees as the condition of his friends Hari and Ratan but is unable to rationalize the situation. He can not articulate his position in the face of situation as he is mentally blocked. He does not accept things as he finds them; he questions them but unfortunately does not get out of them:

He murmured something to himself in a sort of whimpering, self pitying voice which smothered the dazed expression on his face. He walks along unconscious, in a sort of delirium. What happened? What happened? He asked himself. And he looked into the street to find an answer. But the street stared back at him, filling his mind with its mind tall fantastic houses leaning like hard rocks on the narrow length of the roadway.\textsuperscript{21}

Sad, bitter and defeated like an old man, Munoo drifts towards death physically and mentally broken. His encounter with Mrs. Mainwaring comes as a turning point in his life. Running away from the communal violence from Bombay he finds himself ended in Simla where he is knocked down by Mrs. Mainwaring’s car. Finally he becomes a rickshaw puller which in turn leads to his untimely doom.

In a dirge like movement, Coolie ends with Munoo’s death as a result medically of consumption and naturalistically, of the ills of society. It is the conventionally tragic ending of the naturalistic novel in which the principle of life is wiped out. Death completes the hero's victimhood. By the end of the chapter, society has become the bedlam and the wasteland the valley of the shadow of death. Marline Fisher says, “Munoo does not build his own life which, on the contrary is built for
him.” He appears completely a hopeless victim of a complex machinery of economic, social and religious oppression. Munoo is never seen trying to change the situation in his favour. The simplicity of his mind in the face of ever-increasing is so strong that he is incapable of dramatizing his experience. Hilla Vakeel comments:

The chronicle of Munoo’s life proceeds to reveal him always as the harassed underdog, the victim of forces against which he is powerless to fight, and which he can neither controlled nor accept. As a worker in the pickle factory, as a coolie at railway station, as a labourer in a cotton mill in Bombay, Munoo is ceaselessly, unfailingly tripped up by Destiny.22

Anand chooses to end the novel with the message, and for this purpose he introduces an improbable alter – ego: the high born English – educated Mohan who is a coolie for a complex of reasons. The dying Munoo’s clutching the hands of Mohan presumably intended to show the victim of the past grasping a potentially regenerate future. As is suggested, by the death of Munoo, the Coolie his suffering and his life is wholly determined by the ruthless forces of society. But beneath this pervasive pessimism, there is an essential under-current of optimism that the protagonist’s death poignantly exposes the rotten state of society and the consciousness of the need for its drastic reform.

In his other novel, Two Leaves and a Bud (1937) which is thematically a sequel to Coolie (1936), Anand takes up where Coolie (1936) ends: the Anglo-Indian community’s apathy and even antipathy in its relations with the Indian community. The racial arrogant and capitalistic exploitation of the British ultimately results in the death of the protagonist Gangu. Although the jealousies and squabbles of the Anglo-Indian officers in the Mac Pherson Tea Plantation in Assam are elaborately
expressed, the central character in this dramatic novel is the coolie, Gangu, who migrates with his wife and children to Assam after the eviction from his small rocky tract of land in the Punjab; his struggle to eke out a livelihood in the Tea Plantation and his eventual death at the hands of the inhuman assistant of the Estate, Reggie Hunt constitute the main action of the novel. It is replete with the atrocities of the English planters as represented by Reggie Hunt, and his boss. The bitter feelings and the violent passions generated by the most abject conditions of the plantation life dominate and decide the collective destiny of the coolies and their masters. The beautiful and the picaresque Tea Gardens becomes the dreadful 'green hell', following Reggie’s ruthless suppression and reckless shooting of the agitated coolies, some of whom want to get away from the prison-house, that is plantation.

There seems to be an obvious thematic nexus between *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), unrelated to the chronological fact of their publication: that is, in both the novels, the protagonists represent the predicament of the proletariat as a class. In the former set in a vast formless and indifferent society, and in the later in a cruel capitalist environment. The mania of racial superiority and superciliousness of the ruling class aggravates the situation. The free moving Munoo of *Coolie* (1936) is virtually enslaved in the Tea Estate in *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) and every attempt to escape is violently put down by the planters. De La Havre, one of the characters, feels that the positions of the coolies in India ..... is, in many respect, similar to that of the cotton plantation slaves of the Southern States of North America, whose condition Harriet Beecher Stowe portrayed in ‘*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*’ (1852).
The very beginning of the novel describes the collective destiny of the coolies at the Tea Plantation that is at stake. The protagonist of the novel Gangu, and his family comprising his wife Sajani, their fourteen year old daughter Sheila and seven year old son Budhu are inveigled into indentured labour under the British Mac Pherson Tea Estate in Assam. Misled by the false promises given by Buta, the cunning agent of the tea planters, they left their village and reached the Estate, only to realize that they have been trapped and that escape from this prison is almost impossible. The pathetic picture is well painted by another coolie, Narain:

'You will soon know, brother' said Narain. 'First water, afterwards mire! This prison has no bars, but it is nevertheless an unbreakable jail. The chowkiders keep guard over the plantation, and they bring you back if you should go. The other day the chowkider beat Balkrishan, the boy who fled to the Santal village, because he thought he could escape to his mother in Oudh. The chowkiders go round at night with a lamp and open every door to see if we are all at home. There used to be a roll call every night before I came."

However, his dream of an honourable peasantry fulfilled through the dignity of labour is soon shattered. The workers are actually indentured deprived of fundamental freedoms and subjected to a vigorous militaristic organization. They are overworked underpaid victims of graft, usury and extortion, ruthlessly exploited by Indian foreman and the assistant manager, Reggie Hunt. Subjected to the most inhuman horrors of colonialist tyranny, they are thrown along a steep course of tragic descent. Their huts are primitive and their colony in sanitary. Living in extremely poor, unhygienic conditions, Sajani dies of cholera following De La Havre’s unsuccessful appeals to the company to provide adequate facilities and implement
measures for the prevention of disease. The sudden death comes as a shock to Gangu:

For a time he moved in a trance, beckoning the despair of bereavement to come and take position of him. But only his lips trembled and his head hung down over his hands, in the muffled indifference of the twilight in his brain. Then, however, as he crouched woodenly by the dead body, he looked at her again.24

Early in the novel when De La Havre is introduced contemplating the infinitesimal cells that mirror destruction with fascinating beauty, his thoughts of death and his scientific reflections turn more succinctly and clearly upon the naturalistic argument which had been asserted in Coolie (1936) and Untouchable (1935):

.... All the chemical disintegration was inherent in nature, he reflected in rather a depressed vein. All the process of change, colouring and unification were complementary to chemical decomposition. All that was true of nature was also true of society.25

From this observation, it is clear that, Anand sees life as a process evolving ambivalences and permutation of nature, society and man: the cells mirror both destruction and beauty of order.

Anand constructs his situations, characters and value judgments largely based upon the above formula. He gets into the novel through De La Havre and shows most of the sociological data and opinion on which his view of life is based, an interesting documentation of some of the intellectual crisis particularly the dismay at society’s moral impotence which have plagued the modern mind.
Malaria, however, is mistaken for cholera, and the news spreads like wild fire through out the estate. After getting over the shock of his wife’s death, Gangu goes to Mr. Croft Cooke, the chief planter and asks for a loan to perform the last rites of his wife. But the manager, afraid of getting infected with the disease, gets terribly angry and kicks him out of his bungalow:

‘Yes, Huzoor. I had fever, and the she had fever and she died’, said Gangu. ‘Get out! Get out! Exclaimed Croft Cooke, turning purple with rage, and starring at the coolie. ‘You bloody fool; get out! Get out! You have been spreading infection all over the place’.

Gangu withdraws himself asking forgiveness and curses himself for his past life. He walked away deeply chagrined and humiliated in his heart:

Twice or thrice he looked up to the heavens as if he expected the fire of Almighty God to scorch him, and he dared, for the briefest moment, to turn his head back to see if the Sahib were not following him with a cane, to execute to the full the punishment which he deserved. For, being in the throes of a suffering, more intense because it has descended upon him with the suddenness of an avalanche, he was prepared to accept any humiliation. It was only one more reward for the misdeeds of his past life, he said to himself, with the resigned indifferent of the Hindu. And it was as nothing compared with the blow which god had struck him yesterday by taking his wife away.

In the hope of getting help for the cremation of his wife, he seeks Buta’s help yet again nothing fruitful comes out of this, except frustrations and humiliations. The tremulous words come out of the depths of a broken hearted Gangu in a simple passage:

‘The Sahib will not give a loan’, Gangu said. ‘I have just been. He beat me for coming out of quarantine. Oh, friend Buta Ram if only I had known things were going to turn out this way, I wouldn’t have come here’. And he took his hand to his eyes to wipe the tears that
welled up in them with the reproach against the Sardar
that he had suppressed into self-pity.

Gangu had to move from pillar to post in the hope of getting money but is promptly
kicked out everywhere and forced to borrow at an exorbitant rate of interest from the
money lender. He is hopelessly embedded in the toils of a system that is throttling
the life out of his fellow coolies. Finally, with the gift given by an idealistic Dr. De
La Havre, he performs the funeral.

Baring the estate doctor, De La Havre, the rest of the Anglo-Indian
community not only hate the native population for their miserable and mean
existence and their black colour, but contemptuously ill-treat them. Barbara the
daughter of the manager, understands the warm and human feelings of De La Havre
but finally, lets him down in an hour of crisis when he is dismissed from service,
following the mutiny of coolies. Neither the manager of the Tea estate, Croft
Cooke, who believes that the coolies are sub human, nor his assistant Reggie Hunt,
the villain of the piece will ever know the potential danger of their actions.

Following a vicious show of force in which Hunt scatters a group of coolies,
the labourers stage a peaceful demonstration and are encouraged by De La Havre to
petition for better conditions. However, this genuine proletarian mission is
misinterpreted as an uprising and the army is flown in to put down the so called
insurrection. And thus, De La Havre is dismissed.
In the course of time, Gangu is given a strip of land, but as ill luck would have it, the torrential rain washes away the tender shoots of rice. Then after the restoration of agitation, a special hunting expedition is organized for the entertainment of Sir Geoffrey, the Governor of Assam who pardons the labourers, accused of instigating riots and disturbances. A tiger hunt is laid on and by this dubious means harmony is temporarily restored.

The death of Sajani, presages the pathetic end of Gangu’s life. Reggie’s brutality borders on the insatiable lust. Unbalanced by a complex, superiority power, lust and the climate, he becomes passionately interested in Gangu’s daughter Leila. Leila escapes his attempt to rape her by rushing into her hut where Reggie is confronted by Gangu and when his attempt is foiled by his timely arrival on the scene, Reggie shoot him dead and then rushes away in a fit of panic and frustration. His trial and the subsequent verdict of not guilty, of either murder or culpable homicide, seems to be the ironical epilogue to this drama of class hatred, violence and racial pride:

After a trial lasting three days, Reginald Charles William Hunt, Assistant of the Mac Pherson Tea Estate, was brought up for judgement on the charge of murder or culpable homicide before Mr. Justice Moberley and a jury of seven European and two Indian members..... An impartial jury has found you “not guilty” on the charge of murder or culpable homicide. ‘I concur with the jury’s view of evidence. You are discharged.’

It becomes clear that Gangu’s life has been put to an end as a result of the cruelty exercised by the English people as well as the Indian. Years of misery have made him a weak, passive and abject fatalist. He is seen as a passive sufferer who is too
weak to raise his protest. De La Havre’s thesis on ‘Man and Environmental Impact’ on him is, in fact, an impressive expression of naturalism, a recording of the basic philosophy of Anand’s novels:

Social development of man ..... a complicated process of action and reaction, of separation and systemization, in so far as an individual existed only in his relation to the community, in so far as he was born and reared, of heredity and of transformation in the atmosphere in and through which he lived and flowered into the lives of other human beings.°

Thus, in this novel the focus has shifted from poverty and class consciousness to the evils of colonial rule which perpetuates its power by suppressing the most basic human rights of the subjected people. Colonialism and Imperialism glorify collaborators; sincerity, honesty and dignity do not figure in their vocabulary. The situation becomes worst when capitalist interests gain an upper hand in the colonial system of administrative as well as the judicial.

However, it needs to be examined how far this novel shows Anand’s attitudes to the changes needed to create an exploitation free society in which human dignity is not measured in terms of money or power. After a close analysis of this novel, it becomes obvious that not much has changed since Untouchable (1935) and Coolie (1936) so far as Anand’s conception of social reality is concerned. Gangu’s first visible innocence and self questioning not only reveal what he has come to feel but also indicate what lies in store for him in future:

Did all the Sahibs who come to own this land get their labourers by letting lies pass for truth, did they make deceit a virtue and exalt the worst to do the best, make every push full talker like Buta, into Sadar, and liberate all the selfishness that any shaitan could use for his
These are the genuine questions which are rooted in Gangu's own experience of indignity and humiliation at the hands of his white masters. Where Gangu fails is, in giving a sense of direction to his questions which could have led him to his intellectual and physical liberation. But Gangu appears unremitting and timorous. The sufferings he has undergone throughout the course of his life made him an inert character. An example of his passivity and timidity is furnished in the novel when Gangu goes to the manager for a loan for the cremation of his wife. The manager does not sympathize but turns him out of the premises of the factory. While this incident reveals Gangu's passivity and static character, its intention was to show more of his suffering that the society inflicted upon him:

'Forgive, Huzoor, forgive', said Gangu withdrawing without showing back to the Sahib, his hands joined abjectly, his face twisted so that hollows of his cheeks trembled with humility.

Gangu like Munoo, does not show any inner development or maturity even when he confronts new situations in the course of time. It is this lack of character development that is responsible for the resigned attitude to his fate. His knowledge of the inevitability of death further unconsciously inclines him to be more fatalistic in life. He shows no interest to go beyond the depth of his suffering. Gangu does not think of avenging the insult inflicted upon him by the manager; instead he thinks it better to forgive, drive the resentment out of his heart:

And so he forgave everyone. But it was a positive and virile enough way of forgiveness, in view of his submission not to them, but to some higher force of fear in himself. He was not finding it easy to discipline his instincts, but he had determined not to let his senses
always be conspiring to wreck the only vengeance open to him through the Rajput code – Murder.\(^3\)

The timorousness which he has is irrational and can be wiped out, but as long as it remains, the effect it has on Gangu, prevents him from identifying his own position.

The fear and frustration have dominated his life which he seems to suppress within himself:

He had hardly gone twenty yards when a vague feeling of apprehension overtook him that the Sahib or the chaprasi might come and catch him abroad and kick him. He looked towards the office and surveyed the plantation. The deep blue sky spread a garish haze across the valley and seemed to have subdued every element by its vast expensive force into an utter stillness, so that Gangu could hear his heart pounding against the turbulent waters of his soul. But the cost was clear. And the immediate feeling of fear rose like a dim mist and mingled with the heavier cloud of sorrow that hovered on the horizon of his being a doom like the invisible element that hold men in thrall with the oppressive weight of shadows incarnated by the dull witted fancies of generation living continually in the presence of death.\(^4\)

Sometimes though, he shows a dim awareness of his social position and those of the rich people. He can not be bold when the situation calls for it. Gangu reacts to the coolie’s death with anger and resentment but does not proceed to translate his anger and indignation into positive action. However, he exposes his fearfulness and the weakness inherent in his character while going to the office of the manager to register the coolie’s protest. His words and action again testify to his inability to cope with the situation. The fact is that, he can not subdue his sense of fear.

A critic D. Riemenschneider observes his fear psychology and says, “we see in him is an absolutely static character who has lost all his vitality and is almost
solely controlled by distrust and fatalism." In fact, Gangu is paralyzed with fear. Colonialism ingrains panic in the colonized so that they cannot protest even for a legitimate cause.

Towards the end of the novel, he seems to understand the root cause of his tragedy when he tells his friend Narain about the role money has played in society. Although this awareness comes from his personal ordeal, it can be taken as momentary responses because patience, suffering, passivity and fear have become the basic features of his character:

And he wandered in the shame of his hopeless life, shrunken by fear, broken and numbed by the hard implements of pain, surging with desire in the subterranean spaces of his being, crowned by a faint elation, tense and tearless. Then he looked again to the heavens, the palled cup on the sky loomed above him, vast and comprehensive and still. He hung his head down in resignation, though it looked as if he waited for something, soothing he knew not what.

In his last days, his fatalistic mentality goes to the extent of accepting humiliation. His self pity and passivity are idealized by means of a veneer of innocence and in the process; he is presented as a totally static character incapable of any development. Anand, instead of providing depth and richness to the character, tends to make him a lifeless figure and inflated symbol.

Gangu in his passivity appears as a representative figure that embodies in himself the teeming peasants of British India, who, being unable to challenge the might of an empire, found solace in their fatalistic philosophy. Saros Cowasjee remarks:
Gangu, instead of drawing attention to himself, makes us think of the millions of his suffering brethren. In his passivity, his tender loyalties, his compassion and depth of suffering, he symbolizes the Indian peasantry. Fate has done its worst to him, and now its little gifts are only anxious burden of life.\(^37\)

Margaret Berry is also of the view that “Gangu’s religion of fatalism leads him to remain silent, to suffer and to stifle the bitterness of his experience.”\(^38\) Similarly, due to his defeated mentality, he can never imagine that he can strive further in his life. Shyam Asnani’s appraisal of Gangu’s passive character further confirms in his words:

Gangu, with his all passivity, his tender loyalty, his compassion and dept of suffering, symbolic of the Indian peasantry, is by now, adept to watch the violent play of god, the storm and the rain washing away the meagre harvest of paddy with an almost imperturbable calm, as if in this moment of his uttermost anguish and despair, he had been purged of his fear of the inevitable. Hopelessly embedded in the toils of a system that can only throttle life, Gangu has learnt to accept his rigours of life with complete resignation and stoical serenity.\(^39\)

When we consider that this novel is the severest indictment of colonial society’s exploitation and that the tragedy unfolds itself through their experience, it seems that the passivity of Gangu has no justification at all. What we see in him is an absolutely static character who had lost all his vitality and is almost solely controlled by his distrust and fatalism. Even in a moment of most intense suffering and humiliation, he faces the situation with the stoical acceptance. But there are moments when he has an inner yearning and desire to live, a sense of defiance against the cruelty that the society inflicted upon him.
Gangu is a victim not a willing ally in his own degradation and misery like his counterparts Bakha, Bhikhu and Munoo. All of them are victim of the oppressed and doomed outcaste proletarian whose fate and destiny is enslaved by the social heredity and environment. These protagonists are neither unaware of the cause of their suffering nor of their potentialities but their creativity is crushed and their spirit of rebellion nipped by their struggle for survival.

A similar victim of sociological environment appears in his trilogy – *The Village* (1939), *Across The Black waters* (1940) and *The Sword and The Sickle* (1942) which is perhaps the most faithful study of the individual in terms of the traditional social values and the new socialist forces. The thematic significance of the trilogy mainly lies in the protagonist’s revolt against the conventional social values which in the end takes a pro-communist turn. The confrontation between the individual and the society decides the destiny of both the individual and society which forms the central pattern of action of the trilogy. *The Village* (1939) mainly reveals the inner conflict of Lalu as a result of the deterministic operation of the conventional environment. *Across the Black waters* (1940) is as much a symbol of Lalu’s spiritual education as it is a truthful tribute to the valour and the military genius of the Indian soldiers abroad during the First World War and finally, *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) is about the return of the native, Lalu Singh, to his own motherland after the war with an eagerness to disseminate the message of the revolution for the upliftment of the Indian peasantry. The moving motive of the whole trilogy is, the sociological determination of the individual’s action as against his own free and natural impulses. However, a brief survey of the three novels will
give a complete picture of conflict between man and society. What it attempts to portray is a dialectical process of man-society relationship which depends on the creative energy of the individual as well as on the potential forces of the social system.

Lal Singh is the youngest son of a peasant of the village Nandpur. A proud but extremely orthodox and superstitious farmer, Nihalu Singh whose nostalgic invocation of the days of his youth, his dogmatic adherence to the practices of the religious superstitions and social specifications are special not only to Nandpur, but typical of any Indian village. Sardar Harnam Singh the unprincipled and powerful landlord, the irreligious Mahant and the extortionate Sahukar and their henchmen complete the vicious circle of the village. Lalu’s indignation against the Mahant is indeed symptomatic of the age of Reformation in view of the hypocritical advocacy of religion with feudalistic loyalties.

Lalu is up against the orthodox social customs and rituals. He breaks the sacred law of his religion, for which he is punished and humiliated. With his modernist propensities and his impatience with the enemies of the peasant, he incurs the wrath of the landlords, the Sahuka and the Mahant the vicious trio of the village society. He is at last forced to leave the village and enlist himself as a sepoy in the British Indian army. Later, he pays a short holiday visit to the village when he sees the shadow of an imminent tragedy spreading everywhere in the village. And as the novel closes, in his camp at Karachi, he prepares to leave for Marseilles, not having fully recovered from the shock of the news of his father’s death. In unfolding this
story of the struggles of Lal Singh, Anand voices his strong resentment against the rural social mechanism of exploitation.

As a powerful indictment of the rural social order, *The Village* (1939) exposes mercilessly the sinister forces of exploitation that wreck the village life. The peasants' fortune is steadily declining through debt and mortgages and the seizure of land by the landlord. The whole village is ruined by this system of exploitation. Harmam Singh, Lalu's uncle, describes the situation of the village to Lalu towards the end of the novel:

"... I am ruined. I have had to mortgage the whole of my land to Chaman Lal. But I am not the only one, almost the whole village is ruined."

Lalu reacts sharply against all the injustices and wrongs which the simple and innocence village folk have to put up with. In his endeavour to bring about a radical change in the socio economic condition of village where education is a boon to the peasant's son, Lalu is dissatisfied with the behaviour of the elders who prohibit their children from playing:

They were always forbidding you to do this and that, these elders always curtailing your liberty. Always frustrating your desires. Always frustrating. You could not even laugh in their presence. You had to join your hands gravely and say, 'I fall at your feet.' And there were ridiculous fools, ugly, uncouth lumps of flesh white-eyed, open-mouthed, simpletons, saying prayers and murmuring the name of God all day, even as they lasciviously eyed the girl passing in the bazaar.

Himself a victim of wrongs, and the ritualistic fears of the village community, he turns into a rebel. He has to pay a heavy price in the bargain, since he can not break
out of the labyrinth of that cruel design. After many a vain battle with the forces of tradition, he makes a final decision and goes into exile.

While living in his ancestral village, Lalu fights against the money lender, the landlord, the rabble and the immemorial way of life which is his legacy. However, his first major break from the tradition comes in the wake of his romantic fascination with Maya, the daughter of the landlord, as a result of the incident at the market place. He feels extremely disgusted and in his growing frustration; he eats at a Muslim eating point, an act which is not easily permitted by his community. Lalu’s revolutionary feelings against the religious fanatics and self-appointed custodians of morality are more explicit in connection with his elder brother Dayal Singh, who is particularly devoted to the Mahant, and Sharm Singh who is tyrannical and jealous. His own mother Gujri is doubtlessly tender and loving but extremely superstitious and ignorant. It is against these old and unwholesome system that Lalu revolt by violating all the sacred cannons of the Sikh Panth, including the cropping of his sacred hair:

I paid a visit to the king George V Hair cutting saloon in the town this morning and left the ponderous weight of my head behind on the floor, answered Lalu with self-conscious bravado, excited by the tension created by his unfortunate exchange of words with his brother.42

This particular step taken by Lal Singh as a mark of protest against traditional mores of Sikhism created a strong sense of resentment and indignation at the hearts of the villagers. When he returns to the village, he is hunted and pursued by the rebel for the supreme act of sacrilege that he has committed. He stands dazed in the welter of
confusion as his pursuers smear his face with black paint, and are eager to parade him on the thorough fare on a donkey's back. Lalu's unorthodoxy is understood by the villagers in their dogmatic loyalty to the past, as an arrogant defiance and his social radicalism is rewarded with a humiliating donkey-ride through the streets of the village:

As the donkey stumbled across the threshold into the lane, there were loud peals of laughter and shouts from the crowd. 'Ohe, look at the black face! Ohe, look, ohe, look', Children cried. 'Yes, look at the lecher! Look at the lecher of his masters! He had forgotten all his religion and had no sense of shame left! Why, he used to wink at us as we came through the lane and stare at us as we sat in undress washing clothes by the pond! He had raised his head to the sky!' the women spoke in a chorus. 'Kill him. Kill the brother in law! The rogue!' Arjan Singh ground his teeth in fury, and lifted his hands to strike. He never had any respect for religion insulting the Mahant at the monastery. He had raised his head so high!

Having been victimized by the social insanity and the family's economic depression Lalu seeks to exile himself from the narrow world of dogma and superstition. The villagers' mulish endurance of the numerous indignities, caused by the particular economic and social circumstances, is exasperating in the extreme. Lalu's vexation with the asininity of the villagers is well expressed in several places in the novel. Dramatically, this conflict reaches a climax when Lalu is falsely accused of theft by the landlord after he has been caught playing with Maya, the daughter of the landlord. Lalu explains:

'I didn't steal anything, sir', he replied in English. 'The landlord of my village has a grudge against my family and he had a warrant issued for my arrest just because I was seen talking to his daughter'. 'oh, a love affair', said Owen, suppressing his astonishment at the idea of an ordinary recruit speaking English while the others
dilated their eyes and turned their ears to hear, excited at the emergence among them of a rustic who could twist his tongue to pronounce the Angrezi speech. ‘It was a frame – up, Sir’, continued Lal Singh. I was a boy scout and Mr. Long, the Deputy Commissioner of Manbad, can bear witness to my good conduct.44

Notwithstanding the Deputy Commission’s patronage, Lalu finds life in his village miserable. His attempt to change the set up of the village community seems to be naïve in the face of the combined forces of evil, spearheaded by Sardar Harnam Singh. Lalu escapes to the nearest city of Manbad where he enlists for recruitment to the army.

Greed and power not only corrupt men but also lead them to oppress the unfortunate and force them into miserable existence. The village elders, his parents and men like Naik Lok Nath, all these try to crush his vivacious spirit. He exclaims:

‘It seems as if I was born to suffer and be sad’. The calves of his legs ached with weakness, and his heart drummed now rapidly, now in a series of protracted beats.45

Lalu wants to lead a free life but unfortunately, he is deprived of it. Undergoing training as a soldier at Ferozpur Cantonment, Lalu feels a little free from the decadent society of his village.

Not long afterwards his eldest brother Sharm Singh, in a moment of moral outrage, kills the landlord’s son because he had seduced Sharm Singh’s wife. Sharm Singh himself is hanged. The family tragedy cripples Lalu’s father. Through this dramatic situation Anand portrays a powerful indictment of anachronistic feudalism, a corrupt landlord system, and the moral anarchy which is a consequence of both.
Lalu’s return to Nandpur to see his dying father and learn about the catastrophe, is for him a ritual agony of the old world. The slow decay and the general decrepitude of the village fills him with a helpless anxiety. His father’s prolonged illness seems to be a living death of an ugly, old and cumbersome relic of the past. It seemed to him the doom of the old world has crept over his soul when he has the perception of the new world that is on the way:

A sense of doom was creeping into him, a sense of fear and abject horror of the dark, unknown forces of this old world that weighed heavily on everything, even on him who had seen the new things and didn’t believe in superstition or in the hosts of dark forces.⁴⁶

Lalu, however, returns to Ferozpur for a speedy departure to France to fight the Germans as the First World War breaks out. And it is symbolically suggestive that Lalu receives at Karachi the news of his father’s death. The death of the old world, against which, Lalu turns his back. *The Village (1939)* therefore, symbolically signifies the individual’s becoming aware of his own personality so long choked with dead conventions and a deadly environment. Thus, in his effort to bring about a transformation, he became a rebel.

Unlike Anand’s other heroes Bakha, Bhikhu, Munoo and Gangu, Lal Singh is defiant by nature who is bold enough to translate his anger into actions and as a man of rebellious spirit having faith in revolutionary class, struggles with determined effort and perseverance. He defies tradition with far reaching consequences and is against all sorts of unreasonable rituals and unscientific practices in the name of religion.
His rebelliousness can be seen in the beginning of the novel, when his father Nihal Singh tells him about their unsettled suit regarding the land. Lalu is immediately outraged by the behaviour of the Vakil who is adept in collecting the fees from his clients and then getting the dates of hearing postponed, thus lengthening the period of litigation because the longer litigation period means more fees. He is furious and asks his father to give him a chance to teach the Vakil a lesson:

‘You should let me go to sell the harvest, Bapu, next time’ said Lalu. ‘I’ll soon get that Vakil into hand if you take me with you to see him.....’ ‘Tact or no tact’, burst Lalu pugnaciously, ‘I will punch their heads and teach them the lesson of their lives. They all take advantage of you, the swine because you are an old man’.

Thereafter, Lalu’s opposition to the traditional concept of social values is revealed through his behaviour towards his sister in-law. He can not accept the age-old practice of treating the woman as slaves and inferior to males. He thinks that husbands do not have any right to treat them as disposable commodities. In the same way, Lalu is against the practice of giving undue importance to the saints or Mahants, who cheat people by invoking the name of Gods and Goddesses. His anger is described in the following words:

Lalu felt a violent revolution against Nandgir now. That the wretch should make it a point to remind the old man about the cheapness of the cloth. And his father had said that the harvests were not fetching much. Why couldn’t the family learn better than to waste money on gifts for these charlatans? Why? The man hadn’t done anything for them for years, but came in at the end of every harvest for his share of the grain and the gift of clothes! The lecher! He ate sumptuous
food, dressed in yellow silks, smoked charas and drank hemp, and, if reports were true, whored and fornicated. And he was kept as a holy man, the Guru of the community!**

His non-conformist sense comes as a threat to his community which looks upon him as a dissenter and perverter of truth. His own family and relatives are against him. Even his mother fails to understand his views but Lalu remains firm in his conviction. He finds the society full of ignorant people who do not have the courage to speak the truth yet he remains unrelenting in his contempt for meaningless religious rituals. He is one of the free spirits who refuses to accept any kind of bigotry and orthodoxy. However, Lalu develops gradual maturity which enables him to perceive their limitations in true perspective. He shows his deep rooted frustration and anger:

‘They are cowards, all of them’, he cried out, ‘and their own dreary lives have burnt them up into dry cinders. They have no life left, no hope, no strength. They are ugly, with their short breathed, coughing, spitting, dribbling, sweating, bearded faces, and they want to make everyone ugly like themselves. And they are hypocrites. They are not half of them as good as pretend to be wrinkled old swine who cursed and reviled me, and those women, with their filthy, shameless abuse.49

This marks the beginning of the process of the self development of the protagonist. Lalu is so annoyed with the decaying social norms that he wants to throw “ashes on the beards of all the elders and on the heads of womenfolk”. He violates all their superstitions and tramples them to the dust, in his attempts to destroy everything that smacks of fatalism or irrationality. He gets agitated when he sees the police havildar coming to arrest him on the charge of theft. Lalu is infuriated and stepped forward towards the threshold with his right arm lifted and said, ‘I am not a thief, I tell you,
and I shall break your head if you utter that word again!" Being headstrong and impetuous by nature, he successfully defends the progressive measures of the government and tries to show his unyielding spirit even during trying times. G.P. Sharma comments:

In reaction, his villagers who are all Sikh, at once swoop down upon him, blacken his face, seat him on the back of a donkey and parade him through the streets of the village. Though the rebellious boy yields thus to a force much stronger than him, his progressive spirit is not thereby subdued or bent.51

His non-conformity is again revealed when he disagrees with the religious views of Maulvi who is not prepared to accept that there is meaning in other religions. He can not contain his anger and contradicts his opinion:

'But each day in life is judgement day', burst Lalu, impatient at the Maulvi's words. 'And surely there is no favouritism shown to men in heaven, if there be such a place, just because men belong to one religion or another.'52

His indignation against the society made him the angry young man, in the words of Saros Cowasjee:

However, Lalu remains the angry young man in the novel, commenting bitingly on the priest's butchery, the money lender's dishonesty, the landlord's greed, the British government's indifference to the lot of the villagers, and the villager's own naivety and stupidity.53

The Village (1939) deals with the aspects of the village life that have retarded its growth and progress, the façade, bigotry and fallacy Lalu he wanted to banish. He therefore, refuses to remain a mute victim of a society.
Similarly, Marlene Fisher is of the view that Lalu became a revolutionary activist right from the beginning of the novel and that by the end, he is presented actively organizing the peasants in a bid for independence:

The tempo of the push towards independence increases as the trilogy progresses, and its growing insistence parallels Lal Singh’s strides towards manhood and freedom of self. It begins, though, quietly and slowly in *The Village*. Here Anand depicts some of the forces that were undermining traditional values and the hypocrisy of some of those values themselves. 

Even when confined to the village, Lalu experiences a kind of war. A war within which involves conflicts inherent in human nature against the root of the village ethos. He realizes his incompatibility with the traditional ways of the stagnant village life which does not give any opportunity for the human sensitivity and freedom. Having been born and brought up in that ethos, he rebels against its constricting values and openly opposes the injustices perpetrated in the name of the history:

He had been in revolt against the limitations of his own nature as well as against the prejudices of religion in Nandpur and he had sought to perfect himself in the face of the evil though he had suffered. He had struggled, and would always go on struggling to remove his own ignorance and all the defects in his own nature.

Though Lalu has his weak moments of wavering judgement, he is divided between the unqualified rejection of the rural ethos and his strong nostalgia for his village. The circumstances force him to abandon it, yet his impatience with the darkness of ignorance enveloping the village remains powerfully alive.

With such a determined man as its hero, *The Village (1939)* marks a significant approach to Anand’s aggressive social criticism. The protagonists of his
earlier novel were primarily victim figures and it was through the delineation of the sufferings, Anand has exposed the hollowness and cruelty of social system which makes their destiny but in *The Village (1939)* social criticism has been organically related to the development of character and as the reader follows the developing contours of the protagonist’s consciousness, the social environment is more significant in the novel.

*Across The Black waters (1940)* is the second novel of the trilogy which deals with the futility of war. It is, however, concerned with the life and achievements of the Indian soldiers in the ‘Vilayat’ during the World War I. Lulu, the self exiled boy of the village Nandpur, is the natural hero as he joins the Indian army, shortly to be engaged in a global war. His whole drama is complete ranging from a tiny and unhealthy village in India to a wholesome hamlet in France where the Indian soldiers are involved in fierce and deadly war with the Germany. In fact, the novel begins with Lal Singh’s regiment disembarking at Marseilles, describes the horror of French warfare and of the battles with the enemy, and ends with the hero being wounded and taken as a prisoner of war by the Germans at Festubert.

As a part of the Naturalistic Trilogy in Indo – Anglian Fiction, the novel seems to convey to the reader more than the mere story of a soldier. On one level of understanding, it elaborately describes the actions of the Indian soldiers, fighting besides the British regiments under the ablest of Anglo – Indian generals. The bonhomie and the minor camaraderie, the little revelries and the minor peccadilloes
that characterized the Indian soldiers in the novel, are imaginatively apprehended as forming the influential environment of sepoy Lal Singh.

The experiences which Lalu had in Europe, becomes for him a sounding board to test, through a process of comparison and contrast the various life problems that agitated him in Nandpur, and their possible solution. His encounter at Franceville reminds him of all his experiences in Nandpur, and invariably they reveal to him the remarkable superiority of European life. But his nostalgic passion for the Indian village seems to conflict with his growing awareness of European superiority. The inner conflict in Lalu between the pull of a tradition and a modernity, intellectually described as ‘the two poles of nature,’ ‘the two anti-types.’ The affinity with the European modernity is given powerful expression in the novel. The European life seems for Lalu full of curiosity. For the first time, he came to know how the European people treat their low caste brethren with a sense of equality in their social activities. He begins to look upon the whites as real men and women rather than as inhabitants of a dream world; as a true Indian peasant, son of the soil, he watches the French farms and the modes of pleasant life with great interest, and this convinces him of the urgent need for effective radical change in his village. He feels that his quarrel with the traditional life of his village was perfectly justified. In a letter to his mother from his camp at Ypres, Lalu gives a detailed account of the French peasant life and expresses a passionate desire to change the life of the rural peasantry of Punjab:

....This country is full of precious things, such as machine ploughs, steel implements, sheep, pigs, cows, chickens, beetroots, potatoes and apple wine. The
Francisis of Franceville and the Flamands are wonderful cultivations. They plough five times as much land in a day with tractor machines as we do in ten days with a wooden land scratcher. And they used manures full of medicines such as the Sarkar ought to invent in Hind.' What a country!' ‘What a country!'

Instinctive reaction gives to mature understanding and his passion for reforming the village receives the necessary tutoring in the very land where his dreams are already a reality. His high reverence and illusions of the white people are shed as he stays on in France. He learns that they too are susceptible to the simple affections and characteristics of all humans. A mature comprehension begins to replace a blind idolization. The voyage across the black water thus becomes at once a spiritual voyage towards a new destination of maturity and wisdom.

But close to this assertion, there is in the novel a projection of the values of the Indian village and the life of the peasantry which is accomplished by recapturing of the peasant qualities of the protagonist and by emphasizing the tragedy of the sepoys in the alien land. Lalu’s experiences in France Ville are thus depicted as extension of his experiences in the village. Every moment in France is for Lalu either a re-enactment of the worst aspects of his past peasant experience or a realization of the need to reform his village which will ensure his own rehabilitation.

The tragedy of the Indian sepoys is shown to be essentially a tragedy of peasant innocence crushed by the brutal mechanism of war. The novel depicts the horrors of trench warfare, the movement of troops, battles with the enemy and death of many soldiers in the midst of fighting. Before being taken as prisoner, Lalu trains
himself as a good soldier and fights the enemy with courage and valour. By showing the cold-blooded violence and cruelty, Anand presents us with a forceful denunciation of war. The death of innocent and honest people in the meaningless war makes Lalu extremely sad and perturbed. To Lalu, war is a holocaust, destroying human beings, property and houses. He fails to understand why the people of the high civilization have to fight in this war. He does not think that the war with the Germans would save the human civilization. It was a shocking revelation to him that the Government of France, England and Germany supposed to be saner and wiser than the ordinary people over whom they ruled could be so callous and blood thirsty.

The dehumanizing impact of war thus set Lalu thinking:

The element of sanity in Lalu persisted in the face of the insanity which had blown off the towers of the churches and he could not believe that ordinary men and women of good sense, and the Government of France, England and people over whom they ruled, could be engaged in a war in which men were being wounded and houses shattered.

The scattered corpses accentuate the reality of death. The soldiers in the novel are churned up in the war machine, in the bogs, mud and slush of France. They are drilled to commit organized violence for Rs. 11.00p a month, plus uniform. The cruelty of war is stressed throughout the novel. The sepoys were treated like yoked bullocks kicked and trashed. They were mere instruments in the war which makes them dull and indifferent. In one of the horrifying scenes, a sepoy named Hanumant Singh suffering from fever was ordered to get up and march. As he refuses to march, he is abused and brutally dealt with:

'I shall deal with him' said Suchet Singh, taking out his revolver. 'If you don't get up while I count three .... one two.....three.' And he shot at Hanumant so that the
The cruelties of the war leave the Indian soldiers dazed and wooden. Though they have admired the shrewdness and wealth of the sahibs, they can not understand why the sahibs are killing each other and making large grave yard of their own land. Most of the sahibs think that they are in war with the Germans to save the cause of civilization but in reality they are the victims. By interweaving the experiences of the peasants and the sepoys with tenderness and compassion, the novelist portrays the tragedy of the poor sepoys as a grim phase of the tragedy of the Indian villages abandoned by the gods.

The tortuous journey into the unknown is a descent from Vilayat first experienced by the soldiers as paradise into the battle field, described as ‘hell’ and ‘netherworld’. The existential theme is announced after the army’s arrival at the front where life is a matter of elemental necessities and ritual-like ordeals by water and fire:

.....the days were the colour of the nights ....and the murky, greenish grey sky was the exact volour of the roof of hell which the sages in India spoke about, when the souls of the sinners were subjected to the ordeals, first of trailing through the mud of marshes, full of slimy, ravenous rats and blood sucking leeches, then through a forest of tangled bushes and thicket of thorns, then to wait in misery, naked and cold and hungry, for the coming of the rain which was to wash them clean of their sins, for the ordeal of fire which was to purge them, and for final judgement before the throne of Brahma ..... They... were now in the stage of waiting in the vast, timeless universe for their doom to fulfill itself as if they had been suddenly transplanted into the world of their ancestors where men struggled against the elements, the Gods and Destiny.
Across The Black waters (1940) thus, on a deeper level, laments the loss of grace of
the Indian village and show the Indian sepoys as victims of a cruel destiny that
makes them fight in distant lands, a war which they do not understand at all. They
were denied even the necessary information required to give them an emotional
involvement and a sense of participation. The sepoys never ask where the war was or
why it was being fought and how it happened because they received no answer to
such questions. They feel absolutely uninterested and detached in this war. With
their peasant background, they are totally ill-equipped to fight a modern war. Lalu is
like a frightened school boy when he confronts the enemy and in his naivety, he
thinks that the whole of the fighting and devastation was accidental, the faults and
mistakes of some officers, who had given the wrong orders. The tragic futility of
participating in a war which has nothing to do with their lives, grip the sepoys' souls
and create a resigned attitude among them:

‘where do they come from,’ one whispered to another.
‘From the war, of course’, the other whispered back.
But no one asked where the war was or why it was
being fought and how it happened that they were going
there. For there had been no answer to such queries in
the past, and now they took it for granted.\(^{60}\)

Poor Indian soldiers were fighting to earn and to pay off their debts. Their only
concern is to save five or six rupees out of eleven and thereby relieve the sufferings
of their families. For them, it was neither a religious war nor did they bear any
enmity to the men they were asked to fight. They fight because they paid for it.
Moreover, in their rank, they were the mercenary soldiers fighting on behalf of the
British Empire without a will of their own. The following passage summarizes why
stoicism and militaristic tepidity has taken hold of the Indian soldiers during the war and created a resigned attitude within themselves.

A passionate people, prone to sudden exaltations and depressions more faithful than any other if they believe, they were neutral in this war, because this was not a war for any of the religions of their inheritance, nor for any ideal which could fire their blood and make their hair stand on end. Ordered about by the Sarkar, they were as ready to thrust their bayonets into the bellies of the Germans as they had been to disembowel the frontier tribesmen, or their own countrymen, for the pound a month which the sahibs paid them. But they were like conscripts, brutalized and willing to fight like trained bulls, but without a will of their own, soulless automatons in the execution of the army code, though in the dark deeps of their nature, unschooled by the Sarkar, there lay the sensitiveness of their own humanity, their hopes, their fears and their doubts.\(^\text{61}\)

The fact is that the British not only exploited the Indian peasants, coolies and labourers but also the Indian soldiers. These soldiers do not join the army out of bubbling patriotism or defending any religious, protecting their inheritance but out of compulsion. Anand further gives the detailed description of the passive attitude of the Indian soldiers:

The response of the sepoys seemed to show as if they had resigned themselves to their Kismet. Covered by their army blankets, like hooded, belt-topped tents, snuggling in the folds of blankets, wrapped in their great coats, strapped and bandaged with an assortment of woolen racks on their legs, their backs, and their faces, their huddled together as they crouched over the warmth of a cigarette tip or the end of a candle, or stood by their rifles, elephantine mounds of flesh, placid and immobile and dumb, who would have to be drugged with liquor into warmth and madness before they could charge the enemy.\(^\text{62}\)

Denunciation of war is the central theme, the key element of social criticism in *Across The Black waters (1940)*. War means violence and cruelty and
the soldiers are compelled to practice it, of which results in utter savagery. For them
the war is the failure of human wisdom. Hence, the savagery of war is painted in the
following lines:

The Germans will be ignorant of our arrival and the
sahibs say that they fear us. They think we are all
Gurkhas with kukhries in our mouths, savages who
will creep upto them, take them by surprise and kill
them. And the Sarkar is treating you as the shock
troops for that reason. Now you show them some of
your savagery. All brave men like hand to hand
fighting. And I have always tried to instill in you the
fact that as brave sepoys, you must charge the enemy
without fear with your bayonet, wherever you find
him, and hit in a vital spot.63

Apart from denunciation of the war, there is the antagonism to the concept of
traditional religion and blind belief in God. Even a tender and sensitive soul like Lalu
finds himself gradually maturing into a sheer brute, capable of ferocious cruelty.
When he kills the first enemy, a German soldier, he has no compunction left in his
heart:

With instantaneous resolution, the boy stooped low
like a lion on the prowl and charged him with his
bayonet, fixing him with such force that the butt of his
rifle resounded back on his chest. The man gnashed his
teeth and groaned as he felled. Lalu groped for his
victim, to finish him, murmuring: ‘Weep and wail ....
rape – mother!’64

The catastrophic events that overtake the soldiers in quick succession, evoked with
great dramatic power, reinforce their essential innocence and the existential terror
that consumed their souls. The devastating experience of death and destruction
upsets Lalu and throws him into a cynical mood. But then, his acquaintance with a
French family and Mary’s kind treatment and tender feelings give him a
haunting happiness amid those ghastly surroundings. Gradually, as the war

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progresses through many pitched battles between the Indian and German armies, Lalu’s comrades, Dhanoo, Lakshman and Rikhiram fall dead in their gallant fight against the advancing forces of international evil. The mutual bickering and jealous rivalries among the Indian ranks claim the life of Lalu’s gentle friend, uncle Kirpu. Lalu fails to understand the meaning of all this. He is bruised and battered:

Instinctively a moan like sob rose from his throat and with a face contorted by terror, he began to sit up, his eyes half closed, his hands lifted in the air. A bullet went through the calf of his left leg and he fell face forward. He hoped he was not dead. Lifting his eyes, shivering, hissing and sobbing, “Oh God, oh my mother.”

But as a man of scientific outlook, he remains steadfast in his conviction that God can not be so foolish as to punish righteous persons simply for the sake of testing them. He does not believe in irrational and unscientific things like other soldiers:

Though obsessed by a sense of guilt about uncle Kirpu’s terrible death, he said to himself reproachfully, ‘why is it that man like Kirpu, Dhanoo and Lachman, who were so good, should have suffered and died when I wretch am alive? Was it because God punished one person for the evil deeds of another? But no God could be so unjust. Except that people said that the righteous suffered because was testing their saintliness through harder trials. If so, God was fool to do that...”

The cumulative effect of all these shocking events is to emphasize the intensity and magnitude of the human tragedy. The beastly and terror of their martyrdom is all the more felt when the sepoys turn to one another with a hearty brotherliness even in the teeth of dangers. Finally, Lalu finds himself caught as a prisoner of war when the attack of his battalion peters out. Though, Lalu sometimes shows weaknesses of his character, he basically remains a man of action and determination. As a man of creative ideas, he considers himself as a capable person who could do many great
things in life. He is conscious of his potentialities. Like the heroes of the previous novels, Lalu does not have any sense of inferiority in him. He thinks himself as a master of his own self, and shows the resourcefulness and ingenuity to be found in any intelligent youth:

He felt he could do wonders if he were allowed to direct the battle, he would device some kind of machine with which he could transport his armies across the enemy’s fire unselected points of the front and take the Germans in the rear; or he would take over hundreds and thousands of soldiers in those airships they talked about; or he would – but the whole thing seemed absurd.  

Although, Lalu is fighting like other soldiers on the side of the British, nonetheless he questions the rationale of all wars. He firmly believes that victory can not arise through acts of butchery. Even if the entire enemy soldier were killed, it could not ensure a lasting victory. Across the Black waters (1940), however, shows on one hand the brutalizing effects of war, and on the other, the increasingly rebellious nature of Lal Singh. The reasons of Lalu’s developing rebellion are related to the defective social environment and the dehumanizing impact of the foreign rule because of which Lalu and his other soldiers had to undergo the hardships. But as a man of strong determination, he does not lose hope for life and remain irrepressibly strong and his will to struggle remains unabated.

The ill-effects of the foreign rule and the tyrannical social set up produced a character whose sensitivity to the sufferings of others and whose anger at degenerative social environment make Lalu unique among the other characters. Man is basically good and noble but it is the social environment as a deterministic factor
which forces him into becoming violent and sometimes destructive. When a static social system combines with political subjection, the result can be horrendous. Saros Cowasjee views in this regard:

What Anand is saying that men are basically good. It is the system under which they lived that dehumanizes them. And there is nothing more dehumanizing than subjection to foreign rule. On the other hand, the Indian officers, with the exception of Lachman Singh and Rikhiram, are dishonest, tyrannous and jealous qualities often fostered in a subject people.68

Lalu's mind is shaped not just by what he sees in his immediate surroundings but by his experiences in far away Europe. His sense of protest is rooted both in the evils of contemporary society and the alien British rule in the country and, he holds definite views in respect of both. In fact, his ire is directed against the British rulers who were using poor and destitute Indians as cannon fodder in the name of saving human civilization from fascism.

The impact of war is so overwhelming that sometime other issues are pushed into insignificance. The hypocrisy and deceitfulness of the British in India as well as the evils of Indian society is well exposed. The various aspect of the protest have been carefully etched and enacted within the narrative structure. Thus, the penetrating social awareness combines with fine artistic control: reality and imagination work in perfect unison. Alastair Niven comments:

In Untouchable, Coolie, The Village and Across The Black Waters he states the problem of modern India, the inadequacy of capitalistic government, the traditional fatalism of the Indian peasants which allows him to accept an inhuman destiny, the apparent inflexibility of the caste system. Lalu is little different in his social position from Bakha the untouchable or
Munoo the coolie, but in writing three novels around this sympathetic character, Anand for the first time shows some possibility of escape from the social prison into which the underdog in India is traditionally born.

Lalu’s role in the novel is that of a true hero who fights not only for his aspirations but also for opening up those arteries of creativity and inventiveness which have been blocked by slavery. His indomitable spirit and his zeal for creativity and freedom and also his willingness to make sacrifices for a noble cause make him a true representative of the Indian peasants.

Anand wrote this novel at a time of crisis when the British, unable to face the might of the Germans, took advantage of their colonial rule by recruiting Indian peasants and workers and sent them in the forefront of the battle. Thus, the Indian soldiers were made to fight to save their own oppressors. The historic irony in this novel is that, the protagonist is aware of all these affairs and his hatred for the British intensifies while he is fighting their battle. It is this intense resentment which drives him towards communism and offers a panacea for social as well as colonial evils. The significance of the novel lies in the fact that, Lalu’s revolutionary view registers more aggressiveness in the course of his socio-political disenchantment. His traumatic experiences of warfare and his encounter with a civilization proved to be of immense help in his growth as a mature person with a superior vision and greater wisdom, which later enables him to assume the new role of leadership.

Perhaps more significant level of understanding in *Across The Black waters* (1940) is that, it touches upon the existential concept. The novel fully establishes the
fact of Lalu’s alienation from the traditional society. First, his physical exile from his ancestral village under compelling social conditions anticipates the following journey across the black waters which symbolizes his complete break with the past, for to journey across the black waters is considered by the orthodox as un-Hindu and therefore, un-holy. Secondly, his intellectual dissociation from the conventional mode of life is final after his career as a soldier.

_Across The Black waters (1940)_ links the first and the last novels of the trilogy which projects the image of world that converts an impulsive and unorthodox man of Nandpur into a dedicated Socialist Revolutionary. The protagonist’s imprisonment in Germany deprives him of his job as a soldier but prepares him for the life of a potential revolutionary leader. The spiritual development of Lalu takes place in relation to both these worlds and provides a clue to the understanding of his further development in _The Sword and the Sickle (1942)._ 

In _The Sword and The Sickle (1942)_ which is the concluding novel of the trilogy, the demobilized sepoy Lal Singh’s domestic life is deftly dovetailed into the main plot in accordance with the familiar naturalistic pattern of the circumstantial determination of the individual’s destiny.

The life of Lalu has been irrevocably conditioned, not by his own will, but by the environmental contingency. If the religious bigotry of the villagers was the cause of his exile from India, the cessation of hostilities between Germany and Britain following the final victory of the allied forces, brings him back to India from the
German POW's camp; and the final catastrophe is caused mainly by the British administrative's dishonesty in betraying the released prisoners of war from Germany.

Lalu's incompatibility with the social world in which he lives, gives him the necessary impetus. Frustrated and agitated, Lalu comes back to his village only to find his once flourishing joint family now ruined. He finds life hard and intractable. He is denied by the British Government the rudimentary benefits accorded to former war conscripts. He was discharged from the army with a paltry pension because he was suspected of having been in contact with the group of seditionists in Germany. Humiliated, he goes to village but finds further shocking news waiting for him. His family is broken and all property is lost. He finds that the peasants have been further impoverished by the disastrous effects of the war. Apart from the war, the draught and famine kills the people in thousands; the evil system of landlordism and the cruel oppression of the peasants are kept under constant threat of forced labour and eviction. Poor peasants are subjected to limitless tyranny of the landlords. Thus, products are usurped, either in the name of rent or debt and thereby forced to live losing their land while the money lenders and landlords rejoiced at their situation. He sees a new spirit of unrest everywhere. S.C. Harrex remarks:

Lalu's return to India is a journey into post-war nightmare through a land of poverty, dispossessed peasant, over-crowded towns, blighted villages, despoiled rural economies, industrial depravity, and brutality, blotted landlordism and government tyranny, Lalu observes that the rich and powerful have got richer and more powerful, while the poor and the enslaved have become proper and more enslaved.
He is thoroughly disillusioned with the society and the state, and it is because of this, that he decides to launch a career as a social revolutionary. He enters into an organization with a Count in UP, actively engaged in fighting the evils of landlordism. Meanwhile, he meets Maya, his boyhood flame, the widowed daughter of the landlord; and he elopes with her to Rajgarh to work under Count Kanwar Rampal Singh, a rich landlord with Bolshevik ideas. The Count has gathered a small but dedicated band of workers that are ready to give up everything for the cause of a Peasant’s Revolution in the country, overthrowing the decadent feudal tyranny under the inspiration of the victorious Russian Revolution. The Count’s confabulations with the Nawab to ameliorate the conditions of the peasants prove abortive. Therefore, Count Rampal Singh and his comrades immediately begin to plan the revolution, but as all the disorganized attempts of Count Rampal Singh end in failure, Comrade Sarshar, the local communist party representative, strongly admonished Rampal to mobilize his resources, aligning himself with like-minded revolutionaries in the country.

Lalu, a man of strong convictions and sincerity, throws himself into the struggle. His meeting with Count Rampal Singh proves to be very significant event in his life. Though eccentric and romantic, Rampal Singh is a sincere person who knows the miserable condition of the peasants. Lalu puts his heart into the job but faces many difficulties due to the peasants’ orthodoxy in the old customs and conventions and lack of proper planning and purpose. The trouble starts with the Nawab’s action of evicting one eyed Sukhua from his land. Though the government agents try to disrupt the meeting of evicted tenants, the Count and his followers
succeed in exposing the tyranny of the landlords by parading the body of a labourer who was beaten to dead. The deceased boy:

Chandra, had refused to get up from the bed, where he lay ill, to go and do forced labour, whereupon he had been fetched before the Manager of the estate, and flogged till he collapsed. But he had been dragged out and forced to cut wood. He had hardly climbed the tree when he had fallen and died.71

Lalu, seeing the brutality, suggests carrying the dead body in a procession to Allahabad, in order to get the support and open the eyes of the National leaders in their struggle. They would not tolerate the landlord’s behavior of treating the poor people like beasts and killing them brutally to fulfill their whims. Lalu wants to teach them a lesson by reporting the matter to the higher authorities:

'We will show him! Said Lalu coldly. We shall take this body about in a procession in the villages and gather the peasants’ ... He paused for a moment and then he continued, almost challengingly: ‘Tiwari Sahib, what if we take the body in a procession to Allahabad, so that we can open the eyes of all those who do not believe that these things happened?’72

Lalu knows that as a lonely boy tends to get lost in the wilderness he decides to pay due recognition to the value of togetherness as a more effective instrument to counter and subsequently defeat an adverse socio-political system. His sense of community is not based on the amorphous notions of caste or religion; instead, it is best on the common lot of suffering. At the same time, Lalu can look back at his own life and denounce himself for his follies. Thus, when he comes back to his village and finds his house and family in complete disaster, he is choked with anger with the society and with himself for joining the army. He realizes that his contribution to the war only helped the Sarkar to make himself safe and strong. Overwhelmed by a sense of
humiliation, Lalu feels that all his courage, bravery and his privations as a prisoner of war have been of no use so far as the personal dignity of his parents and property is concerned:

On my arrival at the depot, I was demobilized without even the mention of a reward, just because I was a prisoner of war in Germany. There was no talk of medals or of the promises of land with which they lured us to make shields of our bodies for the defence of their own lands. I tell you that it was a deception of my comrades. It was a lie for which they died! I came home today and found that my mother is dead, my home broken up and appropriated, and scarcity in the land.73

The above passage shows the shattering moment of truth about his colonial masters and their native collaborators. Indians had been recruited in the British army because they were told to fight against fascism. Lalu realizes that Indian soldiers have been deceived. They shed their blood on an alien soil only to safeguard the interests of the foreign government which had appropriated their valour and sacrifices for its own aggrandizement and for perpetuating its stronghold on them. He knows that “each bold leap had been necessary and inevitable, in the working of his destiny.”74 Not only Lal Singh, even the other characters like Harnam Singh are aware that their miserable plight is due to the deceitfulness of the British government which never hesitated in throwing unsuspecting Indians into the jaws of death. Many families had been deprived of their sole wage earners and were on the verge of starvation. They were forced to abandon their homes and hearths and migrate to the cities in search of subsistence. The whole pathos of their plight is expressed in the following words of Harnam Singh, one of the victims of the war:

You talked of the Sarkar as if they had always remitted your rent, said Harnam Singh. Thieves! They took
away crores of rupees as free gifts and loans from the country to support their war and foodstuffs to help to stem the privations of the members in Villayat. Look, ohe, folk, robbery in daylight! They took our grain, our timber, our tea, why even the skins of our buffaloes and the oil from the poor man's saucer lamp! And there are some people in the villages around here today who hide their nakedness in the clothes discarded by those who have died of plague, while their children go naked! And there are people who have been forced off the fertile lands with the connivance of the Sarkar.$^{75}$

Harnam Singh's cry is not personal but that of a whole class of people who were the victims of colonial exploitation. Continuous exploitation had made these people question the nature of authority because of which a simmering discontent was gradually building up. The silent sufferers in the hands of the colonial system were now aware of the root cause of their suffering:

Still another revelation for Lal Singh, was that, the authorities, the railway officials, the police and the military, were all there, not for the benefit of the crude rustics, with hump of loads on their backs, but to pretest the sacred right of the blissful sleepers by arresting anyone who questioned the privileges of the upper classes.$^{76}$

Lalu's experiences of life gradually make him more discontented with the prevailing system of the society - the conventional system which made the Brahmins furious over the marriage of a young widow in the Arya Samaj. He had to face many consequences but inspite of all these adverse environmental determinants, he acquires a strong sense of confidence in his own capacity to control his destiny, and to help others to do the same.
Lalu undergoes a sea-change as a result of his experience and his contact with the wide world. In his career, he exemplifies the impact of modernity upon tradition. His evocative self-analysis thus present to us:

What was the destiny of man without a sense of right and wrong? ..... He had been in revolt against the limitations of his own nature as well as against the prejudices of his religion in Nandpur, and he had sought to perfect himself a man against evils though he had suffered. He had struggled, and always would go on struggling to remove his own ignorance and the all the defects in his own nature. And since self-perfection was not enough, he would try to cleanse the blurred minds of all the peasants, to open their eyes to the inequities which were practiced on them.

The war and the famine make many people revolutionaries but they are like boats with rudder and thus they eagerly wait for the mahatma to come to their aid. In the meanwhile the mahatma was forming a Kisan Sabha in Allahabad and many people came to him to take a darshan but the mahatma refuses to support their dream for revolution. Lalu and his comrades are against the feudal social system and its compliance with the colonial political structure. Thus they hated the modern saints who turn their back on ordinary people by compromising with the colonial masters. They are not convinced by Gandhi’s version that suffering is an indispensable condition of our being. Lalu does not agree with the perception of Gandhi that suffering is the mark of human race. He experiences suffering and soon realizes that there is a purpose in his suffering: a state of euphoria common to revolutionaries before they become disillusioned:

He felt he could go far, far to the ends of the earth, and in him, his soul was expanding, shouting, bursting..... It almost seemed to him that he could now hope to master his destiny, since he had at least the rudiments
of freedom through which he could choose to do what he liked in this circumscribed universe. Lalu cannot understand the merit of non-violence when he finds that the poor and the weak peasants are not in a position to protect themselves against the continual threats of physical cruelty and material hardships. He does not like Gandhi’s advice that they should not hit back at their enemies. He is particularly perturbed when he hears his preaching that they should be able to withstand the suffering even if they are ill-treated. Though Lalu knows that Gandhi is more experienced in political struggles, because of his own faith in armed liberation, he finds himself out of sympathy with mahatma. Lalu criticizes against Gandhi for the peaceful methods championed by him:

‘The man is talking religion when we want food!’ shouted Lalu, thrusting another dagger into the remoteness of the Mahatma which he had not been able to penetrate during his interview. And then he set about to chop up the Caracas like a butcher. ‘His right hand is much longer than his left; his eyes dip inwards and are blind to what he doesn’t want to see’.

Lalu’s outburst against Mahatma reflects his impatience with the slowing down of the anti-imperialistic struggle. He thinks that Gandhi’s overt religious vocabulary has no relevance in a decisive political struggle. Gandhi’s insistence on keeping the struggle within the bounds of the principles of morality is attacked by Lalu and his comrades. The apparent disenchantment with Gandhi brings them closer to Nehru who seemed to be giving voice to the urges and aspiration of the younger generation at that time. Lalu is deeply influenced by Nehru’s views on colonialism and imperialism. He is filled with inner buoyancy and exaltation such as, he had not felt since his arrival in Rajgarh. His keen desire to achieve his goal can be guessed from
what he feels during the peasants’ movement against the injustices of the landlords and their collusion with the government for the persecution of the poor and the downtrodden:

And Lalu felt a certain impatience for final victory in his wild, and enthusiastic nature; he thought of freedom which was said to be national ideal, and he hoped for Revolution, not knowing precisely what these ideals meant, but enthralled by the sound of the words and the vague things associated with them, the clearing out of the Sarkar and the seizing of land from the landlords by the peasantry... Occasionally the violence and the land-hunger of the peasants in him made the seizing of land by killing the landlords the most exciting vision, the thing, he felt, which would most stir him to action though that also made him feels afraid and guilty.\(^80\)

His emotions are mixed with fear and doubt which often stalk his psyche. He seems to be torn between a nostalgic love for tradition and a violent rejection of tradition, between a revolutionary spirit that makes him a daring activist and an emotional state of guilt, fear and indecisiveness which plunges him into the world but there is an inner urge in him that sweeps away these retarding emotions. With this mental conflict he goes to Rae Bareilly to participate in a protest demonstration against the arrest of the Count:

Inside himself, however, he felt afraid, like an outcaste. He tried to assure himself that he had committed no unforgivable crime, that he was only afraid because he still respects the solid, established laws and conventions of the world, that he was forgetting his own mission. But as he consoled himself, he was sweating; and he felt that the weakness in his nature was taking him to the ignominious end of his appointed and inevitable destiny.\(^81\)

Inspite of some native weaknesses, Lalu remains unabated in his enduring struggle.

He possesses a strong zeal and belief in the bright future of the revolution. Though
he surrenders before the police and is arrested, he does not give up hope for future emancipation. He knows that their failure is the result of their old, narrow and unscientific habits and views. Lalu makes it clear that they have to improve themselves in order to achieve success:

We failed because we had not changed, because our habits, ideas, opinions were narrow and contained within the circle of Kisan Nagar. Because neither our leaders nor we ourselves knew what all our other brothers were doing to those brothers who have ended up from the four corners of India in the mills and factories, escaping from hunger, pestilence and cold into long hours, dirt and disease! We followed the shadow and forgot the substance.... Come, worthy little people, come, we will now make a real Revolution! Come, we shall work day and night and learn how to make a Revolution. 82

Though he knows that all his efforts are directed towards determining his own destiny, he is still rather vague about what actually is meant by this. He is not aware of the fact that all his activity is aimed at satisfying his own pride and the means, he applies to achieve it will never be successful. Lalu realizes that the stimulus for a socialist revolution must come from the people themselves which require “togetherness”. Dr. Riemenshneider is of the same opinion:

Finally, Lalu finds out the truth that the fight for revolution is first of all a fight for self control, for becoming detached from one’s own desires and vanities and to love and really understand others before any action can be started. The mastery over oneself and the creation of a feeling of togetherness are necessary; a togetherness, one could add, which has to begin with the smallest group, that of husband and wife. 83

Ultimately, all the disorganised attempts of Count Rampal Singh, Lalu and their comrades end in failure. The leader of the struggle is more doctrinaire, and impetuous in his approach. Comrade Sarshar, the local Communist party
representative accuses him of being an egoistic megalomaniac because of his independent and single handed efforts to bring about the revolution. Even Prof. Verma leaves Rajgarh having lost faith in the course of the revolution. Lalu of course, is completely won over by Comrade Sarshar’s demagogic eloquence and feels skeptical about the capacity of Rampal Singh. Saros Cowasjee is right when he says:

To help organize the peasants and to educate them becomes his primary occupation. But he is unsure of himself and of the ability of the peasants to act intelligently and he is torn between the methods advocated by the Count and by Sarshar. Though he comes close to accepting Sarshar’s view (Non Violence) he goes beyond SarShar in embodying something he has learnt from his boyhood in Nandpur.

His own role is instrumental. The strange job of helping to bring about a Revolution, to gather the peasants into a union, so that they could defend themselves against the assaults of their enemies, the officials, and the landlords, is fairly well defined his own yearning whatsoever the end of the revolution might mean to others. This anti-congress, anti-governmental and pro-communist revolution is foredoomed to failure is evident from the localize character of the movement; and although the foundation of Kisan Nagar is symbolic of the possible establishment of a Marxist utopia in India, its final demolition and Lalu’s imprisonment at Rae Bareilly signify the greater power of the reactionary forces that counter-the peasants’ Revolt.

Finally, Lalu emerges as a distinct rebel character full of self realization and self actualization in the end. Whatever his weaknesses, there is no doubt that his conversion to a revolutionary takes place when personal tragedy and social tragedy
merge into each other. Although, through his eventful life in Rajgarh, he grows into a young man, emerging as a new spirit, with a firm realization that a single swallow can not make a summer, that a determined collective struggle is the only way to effect a transformation of an obsolete social system to make it responsive to individual dreams and aspiration:

.....The present society was evil, and the task of uprooting it a sacred duty...Only he feared that he was going into the dark night for a future where he might lose the way, the right path.\footnote{85}

Yet, his fight against these social environmental forces becomes futile and in the end, he is left to face a self willed path to his destiny in this fatalistic universe. The trilogy ends not with a sense of historical meaninglessness and despair but with fruitful bewilderment, self-questioning, self-understanding and hope:

.... What is the destiny of man and how can I control it? Why is it that after a long time of struggle.... After all the effort I made to cure the defects of my own nature, going deeper than all my deepest discoveries .... After seeking to grapple with my own destiny... why is it that I have ended up in this reeking hell.... \footnote{86}

Nevertheless, such questions lead Lalu to contemplate his past with detachment and understanding and to envisage the future direction of India’s epic struggle with a symbolic hope for the future.

\textit{The Big Heart (1945)} chronologically comes about a decade after \textit{Untouchable (1935)} but the varied facets of naturalism are essentially the same. The issue is not caste, but the conflict between tradition and modernity, between the community of coppersmiths and the bourgeois capitalists who established a factory,
depriving the majority of the coppersmiths of their traditional craft. The Machine Age has emerged, resulting in the dislocation and dire poverty of the craftsman.

Billiraman or Cat-Killer Lane in Amritsar is swarming with the traditional tharthiars or coppersmiths who are thrown out of employment owing to the establishment of a factory. The machine in the factory, roaring, and squeaking and squealing, symbolizes the Industrial Revolution and the Age of Science and Technology. The tharthiars, or the coppersmiths, are subjected to an existence of utter misery and abject poverty. Their hearts filled with an intense hatred for the machine that usurps their position in the society. Into this explosive situation enters Ananta from Bombay with his revolutionary philosophy and anti-traditional non-conformity. His irreverent unconventionality in living with Janki without marriage is resented by his community though his courage of conviction is greatly admired. The active ignorance and the frayed tempers of the coppersmiths prove fatal, ending in the violent death of Ananta at the hands of Ralia, the frustrated and enraged coppersmith.

The tragedy of sociological environment which was formulated in Untouchable (1935), Coolie (1936), and Two Leaves and a Bud (1937) has taken a stage further in The Big Heart (1945). Tragic brotherhood and, society is crystallized into its pure and primitive terms of Cain – Abel elements. Ananta, the protagonist of the novel is a visionary who has the moral strength and nobility of heart to master the new fate-the machine but he is destroyed by one who channels his socially determined despair into evil carnage. This simply is the tragedy of a moral
intelligence of the heart defeated not by its own flawed nature but by a diseased victim of society who symbolizes humanity's inability to control its environmental fate.

The beginning of the novel presents Ananta's return to his home town Amritsar, his coming back to his native place, after having worked in factories in Bombay and Ahmedabad, turns out to be an important event in his life. He brings with him a young widow named Janki, showing little respect for the tradition. Billiraman in Amritsar was changing with the times not only outwardly but its very economic pattern was fast changing under the impact of industrialism. The establishment of a factory by Seth Gokul Chand belonging to Kasera caste emerges as a big issue when Ananta steps in. the introduction of the machine has thrown the coppersmiths out of their employment:

Altogether, a spirit of unrest broods over Kucha Billiraman, like the doom promise on the judgement day at the end of the 'iron age'. And already the convulsion of the sad lands across the black waters are shaking this old lane with the thunder of the machinery implanted in its midst which is said to be making tools for the greatest war on the earth that is rumoured will be in progress at the end of the horizon.  

Ananta resumes his hereditary profession, but like others of his class, finds it difficult to make a living. Very soon, he realizes that machine has been the main factor which brought starvation among the coppersmiths. But unlike other youths, he knows that it can be useful, if utilized in a human and scientific ways. After having been refused a job in the factory of Seth Gokul Chand, he decides to identify himself with his dispossessed brethren and fight for their economic rehabilitation. He exhorts
the jobless coppersmith to get united so that they could fight for their rights. He tries to convince the tharthiars that they have no alternative but to adapt to the new age and that, if they master the machine they will achieve a new mastery as human beings, a new salvation and freedom for humanity. However, they were still groping in the dark. Though he succeeds in winning Puran Singh, he faces tremendous opposition from Prof. Mejia, Satyapal, Mahasa Hans Ram and other co-employers who are haunted by an uncertain future. The confrontation between the old and the new is not only a feature of the environment of Billiraman; but it is also a factor which seems to govern the lives of all those who lived there. Most of the older inhabitants are still trying to cling to the old values:

Caught in the mouse traps where they are born, most of them are engaged in the bigger cage of Fate and the various indiscernible shadows that hang over their heads.88

They believed that it is the Iron Age, the age of Death, which is to culminate in doomsday. But for Ananta and others it is a boon for human development and they celebrate it in a song:

This is the machine age, sons, this is the machine age.
We are the men who will master it. We are the new men of the earth of all the evil all ages.89

The importance of the machine age in the newly emerged circumstance and the role of the new men in the context of scientific inventions are elaborated in the novel. As he possesses the zeal to change the present social set up, which he finds outdated and rotten, Ananta believes that by constant efforts, he will be successful in achieving a positive result within a short period. Only through struggle, the problems and the
inequities can be solved. His rational thinking is well explained in the following passages:

For the ‘Revolution’ was as yet some distance away and, meanwhile, he had to balance himself almost on his head in the narrow alleyway of Billiraman among the gaping hovels and the half-men before his eyes. So he drank liquor, as well as the blackish blood of his own liver, and supped on the putrid sweat sodden world around him. He lounged about the cook shops, defiant against live, gourmandizing, singing ribald folk songs, throwing his money about, without any respect for God, the Sarkar or the orthodox men of his caste, a crazy rebel except against those who were his presents intoxicatingly rich to their naïve sense of sight and touch.  

Ananta perceives that the tragedy of the Iron Age lies in man’s relinquishment of rational control over his creations and that this social defection from responsibility corresponds to the individual’s failure to achieve self discipline. His own men including Ralia do not understand the root cause of the unemployment problem in the country. Ananta, on the basis of his personal experience, believes that he can unite the unemployed youths and then, they could fight for their rights on their own strength. Ananta’s message to his suffering brethrens to have a right approach to the machine is not acceptable to the other group. He tries to explain further his deep rooted understanding of the problem to the other coppersmiths:

‘I tell you’, he continued, ‘I have seen children sold for a handful of rice by parents too weak to walk. And you could buy a young girl and run a brothel for what you and I still give here for a midday meal. Oh, and as I watch the wailing children who had been separated from their parents, some really abandoned by their folk, I tell you, a fire swept over my body like ripples of scorching flames across a forest. And for days I burnt in myself with a slow anger which would burst into flaming tempers, till I was really running amok, shouting ... If only I could get hold of the illegally
begotten scoundrels who had started this hunger I could gore them with the knife-twinge of conscience.91

Ananta knows how to arouse the feelings of the people as well as to restrain the riots and thus asks his friends like Ralia to control himself while opposing the demerits and harmful aspects of the introduction of machine. He does not believe in the religious conventions and restrictions and as such, expresses his views on the remarriage and other social rituals in the society. He stands distinctively in contrast to his community. But few religious people are worried about his illegal liaison with Janki. Ananta believes that most of the sufferings of the poor and downtrodden are inflicted by those who get pleasure out of it. Referring to such conditions obtaining in his own community, Ananta tells Janki:

I tell you there is famine in this land, and there are wars raging on the edge of the farthest horizons, and yet my friends here will not stop extracting pain out of each other. Pain, pain, pain—there is such an orgy of suffering in the world today! And yet how they torture each other!92

Such pain cruelty and destruction are wanton which grew out of the lack of self-worth on the parts of the coppersmiths. They need courage and faith to conceal their own weaknesses and struggle for a share in the main switchboard. Ananta’s realization of the pain as being a constant undertone of life is so deep that he resolves to devote his entire life to the cause of its removal:

The trouble lay in the many bonds of customs and habit and superstitions which bound them, and in the weakness, fear bred by poverty and the struggle for existence and the pain inevitable to life. What was required was to give them heart and to lift them from the abject, frustrated and terror stricken creatures they were to the courage of manhood.93
In fact, he is so sensitive to the suffering of his people that the very concept of happiness undergoes a complete change and comes to mean, devoted service to mankind. Ananta refuses to give in before the challenges and is prepared to take on any adversary for the larger interest of the community and society. He is clear in his mind that the prevailing socio-economic order is responsible for shaping the creativity and energy of the masses and the need of the hour is a relentless prolonged war against the oppression and indignities built into the system. He believes that fear must give way to courage and hope.

Ananta knows that a radical change in people’s attitude and responses is a must for any meaningful change of the social order which the capitalists of India and England are endeavouring to perpetuate. He also believes in the new brotherhood of trade unions which would help in bringing about a revolution. It is because of his strong faith in the truth of revolution that he advices his community men to be prepared for death. He urges them not to take the risky path of fighting the agents of capitalism. He asks them to raise their voice in protest and tell the capitalists that they have no more monopoly over the resources of the earth and that it should be made open for all irrespective of class or creed:

‘Poor men, brothers,’ said Ananta, ‘have several ways of dying. They can choose to work for the merchants and dealers and die off slowly but surely. I call this way of dying “death by the indifference of the rich.” But men can choose another way of death. And that is when they band together and say: “you have made such a mess of everything because you considered profits as your god; so clear out now and led us rebuild the world to suit everyone and not only for a few of you!” The rich answers this demand either and thus bring about “death by the wars of the profiteers.” Or they shoot
down the workers and thus bring about another kind of death—"death by revolution against the rich." 94

The capitalists will not give up easily. Hence, to achieve the goal one should have all the courage and determination to overcome the difficulties and meet the challenges of the revolutionary struggle and free them from the specter of failure and defeat. Ananta believes that an individual must become a man to fight with the despair which assailed one.

The people of his community needed to be perpetually guarded against those in the village, the Brown Sahibs, who were like their white counterparts. He therefore, urges them to have a clear mind regarding every development in their struggle and not be led by their petty selfish interests which might cloud their futuristic vision.

Puran Singh reveals that Ananta has no faith in the Gandhian myth of the change of heart. There is no alternative in his opinion, to the path of struggle. Inspite of being misunderstood by his own people, Ananta is very much perturbed over the fact that his counseling to the men of his community has not been well received. They can not understand him because of their ignorance. There are times when Ananta feels that there is no God or if he is there at all, he must be heartless and powerless to help him. To him, God seems to have deserted the world. He fails to understand why people keep believing in God, when everywhere there is man made misery and injustice. Ananta expresses his heartfelt agony and anguish over his failure to convince his friends while in conversation with his beloved Janki:
'Perhaps one can never get over the fears which mothers put into our mind,' Ananta said. Perhaps also because we thathiars live in a small world, full of denial and refusal, insults and humiliations, we have began to feel doomed. With one half of me I too feel. I am doomed, and with the other half I feel I could fight, to avert the disaster.  

Saros Cowasjee is of the opinion:  

Ananta is thus a victim of rage and insanity, not of a religious or political creed, and his sacrifice is the sacrifice of the unselfish man for humanity.  

The protagonist often declares with his characteristic bonhomie and buoyancy that one should not talk of money but one must have a big heart. However, his frequent meetings with his own comrades and his hostile encounters with Lala Murali, Seth Gokul Chand and other capitalists bring out the smouldering discontent within the unemployed and poverty stricken coppersmiths, on one hand, and the dangerous indifference and cruel exploitation of the capitalistic upstarts, on the other. Lala Murali and other Seths, who scornfully become more and more class conscious, snap their caste connections with the poor and contemptible coppersmiths. They, with their petty notions of caste and social status, accumulated money by exploiting the poor and the helpless. They are inhumanly callous while the anger and hatred of their victims rises to a violent tempo and finally, Ananta's frantic efforts to organize the workers into a Trade Union are completely foiled by the irresponsible political careerists like Satyapal and Viroo. In a moment of madness and blind fury, the workers break into the factory to destroy the machinery; and Ananta dies a martyr's death, persuading to the very end his co-workers to change with the times by accepting and mastering the machine:
And he viciously lifted and struck Ananta's head on a broken machine with a maniacal fury, till Ananta's head cracked like a pitcher, and a stream of blood shot out in thick spurts.  

Ananta emerges a perfect hero who is also a perfect victim, crushed at the hands of destiny. His only fault is that he is big hearted, humane, and brave. He must die so that the others may live like Lal Singh in the Trilogy, he too, is a complex character but the radical disunities of his being are reconciled in the white radiance of passion. His fidelity to Janki, even when she is consumed by insidious tuberculosis, borders on the sublime. Love among other things, demands courage and Ananta has it in large measure. His attachment is final and complete, although the other mistress-'revolution' claims much of his time and energy.

The world of coppersmiths itself is hopelessly split. The more privileged among them exploit the weaker members of the folk. A life and death struggle ensued between the haves and have-nots. And thus, tension is generated by the class of interests in which ancestral memories, customs and prejudices play an important part. Ananta firmly believes that a new life has to be created, a life in which the machine will not be an object of terror but harbingers of plenty, prosperity and love. Ananta's sacrifice is the ritual necessary to be enacted if this is to become a reality. A. Niven observed:

Ananta loses his life in the struggle for a trade union movement is not entirely pointless. As the poet tearfully explains to Janki, his existence lives on in the consciousness of the coppersmiths who are increasingly realizing Ananta's dictum that it is heart, not mind, men, not machine, which matter.
This novel may be regarded thus, as a significant projection of the image of India in transition: from the old era of caste monopoly of trade into the new age of industrialization, giving rise to a sharp social stratification. The scientific and industrial developments in Europe have greatly affected the traditional values on a global scale, and wisdom lies, as Ananta advocates, in accepting the change and changing with the time: the problem is well exposes by the poet Puran Singh in the novel:

In this country only an overturning of the old social order will bring the healing balm of love among men, only a revolution will complete the reformation and the renaissance that is going on among us and produce the new community with a new morality in which, and through which, men can live creatively.\(^9\)

A forceful advocate of unorthodoxy and revolution, Ananta cautions against headlong haste and needless and untimely violence. Revolution without the organization and mobilization of all the useful forces will be a disastrous flop and disgraceful fiasco.

The novel ends with the tragic death of Ananta, but with the positive hope that his martyrdom will surely inspire the struggle to continue, for Janki the mistress of Ananta, despite her consumption, starts out to fight for the cause of the community of coppersmiths thus holding aloft the torch of a certainly hopeful future:

Presently Janki got up and lit the kerosene oil lamp and the radiance gradually spread to each nook and corner of the room and dispelled the shadows. 'Come, the poet said, we must go to our brothers at the shop...\(^{100}\)

Commenting on the novel, M.K. Naik says:
The Big Heart has perhaps a special niche in the heart of its creator, since it presents an intimate picture of a segment of society to which Anand himself belongs; and its protagonist, Ananta is perhaps the best realized of Anand’s hero. A study of this novel clearly indicates a significant pattern of naturalism. The machine is the key to the respective problems of social segregation and economic exploitations. The fault lies not in the machine but in the system of self-seeking capitalists. It is the interaction between the human beings and the social facts of life which ultimately decides the life of an individual.

Anand’s last novel that deals with the social environment is The Death of a hero (1963) in which the protagonist Maqbool Sherwani, a young man of Kashmir sacrificed his life, fighting the Pakistani invaders during 1947 upheavals. The young Muslim freedom fighter Maqbool flees from Baramula to Srinagar when the Pakistani intruders forcibly occupy the place. He is then asked by the Indian leaders to return to his hometown in order to raise the morale of the people caught in the grip of terror. He re-enters Pakistan secretly but is soon discovered, pursued and arrested. When asked to give up his membership of the Indian Kashmir National Conference and join his Muslim brethren from Pakistan, he refused and ultimately was shot death in cold blood after a ridiculous trial. Death of a hero (1963) is thus, the political martyrdom of a young man, Maqbool Sherwani.

The novel indicates the serious implications in society and the human situation is seen in moral terms. The protagonist is pitted against the system which thrives on injustice and exploitation. Instead of carrying on a crusade of action
against the system, the protagonist of this novel believes in arousing the moral conscience of the perpetrators of injustice and exploitation. He is motivated by his belief that action produces immediate result but the consequence is not lasting whereas effects based on moral transformation have permanence. Love, generosity, accommodativeness and tolerance have the capacity to cleanse the human heart and drive away evil permanently.

In fact, the story of the novel shows that although Sherwani lacks the character of a revolutionary hero, he shows signs of sublime heroism by way of expressing his nationalistic urges and protest against the poverty. He is equally dedicated in his struggle against the religious fanaticism. And he is not prepared to accept the sectarian viewpoint regarding the action of the raiders. It is because of his strong conviction that he stands up firmly against Ahmad Shah and Khurshid Anwar, and goes to the extent of challenging them, and is finally captured by the invaders. He chooses his martyrdom himself because of his unflinching faith in the integrity and freedom of his country. He expresses that it is only through suffering and struggle that human beings move on to mental maturity.

However, the fact remains that in the tradition of the fictional heroes of social realism Sherwani's character has many drawbacks. He is an inveterate romanticist valuing his personal feelings much more than the ground realities of the situation. He fails to have a realistic appraisal of the situation confronting him and then due to his conflicting feelings he is not able to carry his mission to its logical end. His peculiar state of mind is brought out in the beginning of the novel:
He recalled that he had gone through so many emotions during the last three days: the feeling of weakness during the flight from his little hometown after the Pakistani raiders had occupied it, the fear that he might not get to Srinagar the elation of being in that odd room with the others in Amira Kadal the shock of finding out that those who had begun this sudden invasion, with loot, as they have arrived in the villages were the so called ‘Muslim brethren’ the utter frustration of the confusion which prevailed in the city: then the mixed exaltation and fear of being chosen to go back to Baramula to rally the people; and underneath it all, the complete innocence about what would happen to him if the tribesmen were already there….. But there was, below the surface, a feeling he did not wish to acknowledge the sense of chivalry against the tribalism—the genuine human response of pity.102

Though he is instructed to fight against the invaders with full strength, he shows his uneasiness very often. He appears in a fix as to how he should set about his work. He does not feel himself capable enough to perform the revolutionary role of organizing the people’s resistance against the invaders. Thus, there exists from the very beginning of the novel, a great gap between his actual capacity and the role he is supposed to play at that point of time:

Somewhere between the impact of these word and his own uneasiness, lay the fear; somewhere under his skin, in the nerves above the tendons and the sinews of his body, there were uncontrolled tremors, as though taut muscles were his and punished. But to the poet in him, this seemed always to be so, Allah notwithstanding.103

Maqbool on one hand, shows signs of weaknesses and mental uneasiness and on the other, he fails to convince Mahmdoo regarding the urgency of taking part in the fight against the Pakistani aggressors. Maqbool realizes his failure in performing his duty in the desired way. Instead of being able to convince Mahmdoo whom he meets first,
he becomes possessed with the sense of his non failure. His going to Baramula proves to be a futile exercise as he can not rally the people for the cause. He sits silently with bent head. Like a defeatist, he shows himself to the utterly ill-equipped for his mission, even before reaching Baramula. After reaching, Maqbool continued to show his weaknesses. He is all the time worried about the risk of being caught and is confronted also by inner doubts. Different questions come to his mind due to his growing fear. This aspect of his character divulges that he does not deserve to be called a revolutionary hero in a true sense because when he is specially deputed to perform a great task for a great cause, he is overwhelmed by indecision, fear and psychological numbness:

A shiver went down his spine as he realized that he might walk straight into the arms of a Pakistan sentry or be picked off by a bullet from one of the hawk-eyed ones. And again, his body and mind were in the grip of the crisis which had occupied him before he had dozed off in the haystack: Did one grow up just to be ready to be shot? What did it all mean? Where was Allah Mian? These were questions arising from fear. He sensed the tremors inside himself.

Thus Maqbool is a split character. While he displays a strong will to fight the invaders, he realizes that somehow he is not equal to the task which may involve even death. He pins his hope on Nehru and is convinced that ultimately Nehru will send the Indian army to foil the attempts of the invaders. Meanwhile, his own state of mind is in a flux, causing him to remain suspended between alternative choices.

It is due to his failure in overcoming his wavering temperament that Maqbool remains incapable of acquiring heroic dimensions of character. Every time that Maqbool decides to undertake some important actions, the hidden weaknesses of his
character blocks his way. He can not set himself free from questions like the existence of God or the role of fate. While moving towards his home, he continues to face many tormenting questions which cross his mind. It is due to this characteristic weakness that he can not stick to his convictions. He shows this weakness while meeting Murtaib Ali who was gradually leaning towards Pakistan. In replying to Murtaib’s reasons for taking part in the struggle against the invaders, Maqbool tells him that he, too, has mother and sister, but immediately regrets it. He can neither convince himself nor others about the validity of a particular action or decision.

After leaving Murtaib’s house, he heads for the mansion of Ghulam Jilani, but the sense of defeat does not leave him. He comes out of Ghulam Jilani’s house with a feeling that whatever may be the risk, the urge for freedom should not be suppressed. He is encouraged to continue his fight by Begum Mehtab Jilani whom Maqbool regards as his mother. But soon after he shows nervousness and makes a desperate attempt to escape from his captors. Though he knows that less privileged people like him have the easier choice to make for freedom struggle, he, at times, entertains the fear of a rich and elite person. Self sacrifice which every noble mission always involves in something which Maqbool is never able to recognize. The plight and mental agony of Maqbool in the course of his escape from the invaders further shows his lack of revolutionary zeal and enthusiasm:

Allah! Where was Allah? Why was he always against the innocents? There would be no salvation unless religion of fate went by the board and the soul became alive? ... Noor’s face was like a crumpled flower before his forehead-as she lay helpless! ... And his mother’s drawn face, uglied by fear .... at the back of
his head. But his father's face did not appear? Anyhow, how could God punish them so? 

Thus, it is clear that though Maqbool's commitment to the freedom of his country is prompted by his conscience, he, at the same time, shows many frailties and failures which make him a bundle of opposite qualities like being active and passive simultaneously. Finally, Maqbool is captured by the aggressors. Before being shot dead, he is brutally treated. But inspite of his inherent weaknesses, he faces the death calmly in the end. Later, his letter written to his sister reveals his enormous love for poetry. He frankly tells his sister that he is essentially a poet. Though the circumstances cast him in a different mould, he admits being a man of poetry rather than any radical spirit needed for any meaningful and successful revolution. The letter says:

I know that you have always thought of me as somewhat of a hero, Noor. Always there was a light in your big eyes which said so. But, today, I want to write and tell you, so that you can tell everyone that I have never been anything but an aspirant to poetry. All my dreams will remain unfulfilled, because I am going to face death. But here, in our country, the most splendid deeds have been done by people, not because they were great in spirit, but because they could not suffer the tyrant's yoke, and learnt to obey their consciences.

Maqbool fails as a hero, as he faces a new situation for which he is not equipped. He was a born poet, but situation trapped him for a different role. He abhors religious fanaticism and cult of violence. He fails as a man of action and thus disqualifies himself for the status of a conventional hero. But his commitment to certain moral values remains undimmed till the very end. Maqbool is an idealist, only he does not properly managed his idealism and fails to combine it with action when needed. He
is good, honest, sincere and thoughtful but these mental energies are simply wasted by his indecisiveness, his habit of conjuring unreal fears, his continuously wavering mind. And he remains a static figure though slightly enigmatic.

_Death of a hero (1963)_ portrays a character whose potentiality is trapped by the society to become a political martyr, which is a finished product of Indo-Anglian Literary Naturalism. The positive message which the novel gives is that all talk of revolutionary change is wishful and divorced from reality. What matters in the long history of the evolution of human society is the cultivation of humanistic values, which alone can redeem, if at all, the aberrant human experiences and that self-sacrifice will have a cleansing effect on a tyrant’s heart.

Another product of the unfortunate historical and environmental circumstances is the protagonist of Anand’s other novel, _The Private life of An Indian Prince (1953)_ in which an apparent dichotomy of the tradition of Anglo Indian Literary Naturalism seems to manifest as it mainly concerns itself with the problems of a degenerate and debouched Indian Prince in the post-Independence India. The novel recaptures the post-independence period of political turmoil which saw the accession of the princely states to the Indian Union. It presents human drama in the midst of chaotic situation and has at its centre a Prince himself, a central figure in the political transition, whose tragedy is brought about by social as well as personal causes. The decline and fall of monarchy in the state of Sham Pur coincides with the tragic destruction of the Prince himself. It is a powerful impeachment of the
bourgeoisie and the decadent aristocracy that have been historically responsible for sordidness of life in the small principality of Sham Pur.

Victor Edward George Ashok Kumar of Sham Pur, commonly known as Prince Victor, wages a futile battle against the forces of democracy unleashed in post-independence India, but mainly against his own tormented self. He resists the Union Government’s presence to merge his little state into the Indian Union, but ultimately succumbs and signs the instrument of accession at a specially arranged meeting with the Home Minister in New Delhi. His flaw, however, is his romantic infatuation with Ganga Dasi, an illiterate and scheming woman. He oscillates between the contrary pull of love and hatred in relation to her, and the split in his nature is constant. Meanwhile, the affairs of the state are in a virtual mess. Anarchy is let loose as both the feudal landlords and peasants turn against him. The local politician begins to fish in the troubled waters, and strife and intrigue are in the air. To add to the Prince’s discomfiture, his sweet heart Ganga Dasi, takes another lover. With his cup of misery full, he embarks on a mad and fitful venture. Dispossessed of his kingdom, and deserted by his mistress, he proceeds to London. While in London, he somehow manages to get his rival, the lover of Ganga Dasi, murdered at home. The act, however, recoils on him, and he does not get a crumb of comfort. He plunges into the very nadir of despair, drifting into the abyss of nothingness. He ends, ultimately, in a lunatic asylum, totally crazed.

Prince Victor is a dissolute and egoistical ruler, whose sanctions lie in his own whims and fancies rather than in the good of his subjects. As a cruel autocrat of
the post-independent era, a true representative of the decadent feudal order, he
inflicts unbearable hardships on the poor people of his state but is himself a
lecherous weakling who pretends to be a benevolent monarch in the line of the
legendary Rama of Ayodhya. He rages against the people’s participation in the
administration:

“Democracy, democracy.” What is democracy? Where
is it practiced? His highness came to the attack, his
face reddening 'to attain equality with the ignorant
rabble, to reduce everyone to uniformity with stupid
herd: Wah, what barking is this?'

Rightly described as the tyrant of Sham Pur, he has no concern for his people. He
subjects them to all possible kinds of oppressions and cruelties. Beneath all his
indulgences and the pleasures of himself and others in his employ, lie the sweat and
blood of his village peasantry, perpetually harassed and exploited, suppressed and
persecuted. Indulging in his own pleasures, the maharaja is not even aware of the
privation of the public. He neglects his wife and children and resorts to affairs with
several women. His weak, vacillating and impulsive character, with his inability to
concentrate on anything consistently is largely due to the fact that he is brought up in
the wrong environment. Anand says:

…….. I have compassion for the Prince brought up in a
wrong order. He wanted love, but he couldn’t find it,
because the woman he loves was a ‘split
personality…..

The maharaja is viewed as an ill-adjusted personality, an unsettled, incongruous
conglomeration of ill-assorted fantasies and facts. Already in the grip of a nervous
disorder, Victor behaves histrionically and hysterically. His condition is occasioned
mainly by the turmoil of his private life, in particular the overwhelming obsessive
passion for Ganga Dasi. He is caught between the selfish demands and fickle attentions of his nymphomaniac mistress and the justified attempts by his discarded long suffering wife, Indira, to curb his irresponsibility. In Victor princely tradition and modern morality joined forces in a purely destructive sense, generating the libertine megalomania of a complete egocentric. The most barbaric impulses of civilization dominate him.

The Prince allegorizes Indo-European contradiction and the Indian need for a healthy synthesis of the old and the new where his ruthlessness is the malady of a dying society. Shankar’s evaluations are complimented by an image pattern representing a psychotic nightmare. The jungle metaphors suggest that Victor’s condition is a primeval horror. In the human heart, the law of the jungle prevails; beasts prey on beasts; treachery succeeds, nature is diabolical and the most beautiful flower is a botanical Circe. Similarly, disease conveys the carnal sickness and the putrescence of the court. In the first part of the novel doctor Shankar’s analysis of Victor’s character is thus:

I was fascinated by his highness’s recitation, because I could see behind the clumsiness of his outward behaviour, the reasons for his hopelessly ill adjusted personality. For his intelligence seemed to have run riot through the large gaps in his education and experience. And this made him pick up many thing, with which he was trying to form a single thing but which made him a bundle of ill-assorted fantasies and facts, whose incongruous collection into one personality made him a strange, while creature ..... So it was touching to see the clashes between the poetry and prose of his life, the contradictions that arose from his reflections of the feudal, Aristocratic idea that all excellence is inheritance, and the sense of direction which dictates integration through the discovery of
values in the new society. The spirit of his dead ancestors were pulling him towards the old virtues, powers, splendidours, firmness dexterity, generosity, heroism in the battle and the other duties of the high caste, superior, Kshatriya prince, while a number of new demons the fashions of the hour were all shameless schooling through which his childhood in his father's zenana, and his boyhood and youth in the hands of the Angrezi Sarkar, had put him. All the war with each other in his soul and there was no knowing where they would take him, since the will through alone, such power could be harnessed had been sedulously crushed by the Angrezi Sarkar and his own parents a long time ago . . . Except that he had an uncanny gift of perception, an almost convalescent abjectness, which was the opposite of his extra ordinary cruelty, and a violent energy for voicing his fads and fancies, whether they took the form of naïve outbursts, mere flippancy, or the more balanced rationalization of poetry which was always like someone else's confirmation of his own complains. All his scandalous behaviour, therefore, was due to the incongruity of the various strains in him that were trying to unite and become one person, but only made him kind of montage man, a pathetic creature, a spoiled child. ¹⁰⁹

The Prince suffers from psycho-analytic over documentation and many irk some traumas. His gothic imagination thus stimulates diabolical clichés, descriptive flourishes in which emotions like rage are represented tyrannically, eerie evocations of the desolate jaded soul, the rendering of the stage of psychic torment and decay in spectral moody landscapes. Shankar's analysis often leads him beyond psychological naturalism into the melodrama, bathos, sentimentality and grotesquerie of gothic romance. The Prince emerges as a combination of both the Byronic wild creature, and the haunted psychotic of Poe's tales:

I had to close the doors to prevent reverberations of his shrieks from penetrating into the thick night, dense with the sleep of the innocent and the guilty alike. ¹¹⁰
Victor wallows in romantic sensibility and egoism, intoning from Shelley’s famous free love passages. However, the horrific darkness with the passages of sociological and humanistic illumination symbolizes the Nietzschean corruption of power:

I sensed the reality of this power and felt that no human being could escape corruption if such unlimited rights were given to him or acquired by him, because the will to power entails a belief in the superman even in the weakest person.\textsuperscript{111}

Prince Victor’s personality has direct impact of various events, which happened in his contemporary social life. He has been notorious for not giving love and affections to his countrymen and being unaware of their sufferings. With its shameful intrigues and neurotic sexual obsessions, with its unabated corruption and tyrannical violence, the state of Sham Pur emerges as a typical Indian feudal kingdom ruled over by a degenerate Raja. The cruelty and selfishness that rules the state is expressed in jungle imagery in the novel:

‘ ....... life is elemental here’, answered Popat Lal. ‘everything in the jungle preys upon everything else and the survivor is not always the strongest, the bravest and the most Godly. I think that is not only in the jungle but also in the whole kingdom of Sham Pur,’ I said .......\textsuperscript{112}

Doctor G.S. Balarama Gupta has rightly observed Victor’s character when he writes:

The hysterical Prince is notorious for the cruel treatment he metes out to his men. And irresponsible ruler with no thought for the welfare of the ruled, he is known for his maladministration, high handedness, and lust. While he fancifully thinks that his state enjoys the ideal conditions of Ram Raj, he squanders his privy purse as well as state money and forces his people into abysmal poverty and utter degradation.\textsuperscript{113}

Along with this realistic picture of the decadent feudal order, a graphic account of how the people of Sham Pur, out of their seething discontent, revolt against the
feudal tyranny and the struggle for a new democratic order. The soaring pressure of this popular movement creates a compelling situation which makes it impossible for the feudal autocracy to continue. The people of Sham Pur form a Praja Mandal with the moral support of the Indian National Congress, fight against the suppression of civil and national liberties in the state and they force the Prince to promise certain reforms. They demand justice from the inhuman Prince taking inspiration from the text of independence resolution:

We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that in any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them the people have a further right to abolish it.¹¹⁴

When the struggles gathers momentum and the people rise in revolt, unable to stand his excuses, he tries to repress them through violent mass arrests and detention. People strike cease work in protest against the shooting. The villagers were sternly dealt with; people are no longer ready to meekly accept the autocrat and thereby demanded the release of the arrested leaders. Thus, those who had money to pay actually paid and earned a little peace, and those who could not pay had the sword (of Damocles) hanging over their heads, that they might any day be deprived of their ancestral rights and properties. But despite all oppressions, the Indian masses do finally succeed in wiping out the putrescent feudal oligarchy.

Victor’s diplomatic imbecility and political stability became more prominent when he toys with the idea of carving out an independent state from India with constitutional American assistance. His attempts to ingratiate himself into the
confidence of the American envoy are as fatuous as they are in fructuous; and their pathetic parleys end in a fiasco when Sardar Vallabhai Patel, the Bismarck of India, clinches the issue by making him sign the Instrument of Accession.

In his heart he knew that the inevitable Instrument of Accession would have to be signed and he would have to say farewell to the power he had enjoyed in Sham Pur.\textsuperscript{115}

Victor's state has been a sizzling cauldron of distress and discontentment and leads to the overthrow of the Prince which influences the Maharaja that the creation of a democratic Indian State has no place for the Princes. Independence comes and the Indian Government wishes to accede to the Indian Union with all speed. This crisis exacerbates the weakness in the young prince's character and the thus sets off a chain of events leading to his catastrophe. Victor is faced with rebellion from feudal landlords on one hand, and communist led peasants on the other hand.

These political tangles are further complicated by Victor's sensual orgies with his concubine, Gangi, a sadistic nymphomaniac, who ultimately drives him mad. Caught in the wiles of this untamed and libidinous mistress, Victor neglects his duties out of a false sense of freedom from his conjugal ties with his three wives. Although the decline of the princely orders has been depicted as the social phenomena, the tragedy of Victor cannot be taken as a real tragic flaw, producing a cathartic effect, he representing the self negating destructive symptom of modern disorder. His suffering springs from a perverse will and has nothing to do with the spiritual torments. The rent in Victor's soul can be explained only in relation to his consuming passion for Ganga Dasi, a passion without hope of reprieve.
I feel that I have descended into the dark night where the only thing I can see is the light she brought into my life . . . You know when I first had her, I wanted my union with her to last forever and forever and wanted to shut out the whole world from my gaze. I wish to be with her, in an unending life in the living palpitating passion I shared with her, as she came to me, a golden girl, shrieking with desire . . . . and yet I was afraid then that it may not last. And now I think of that moment and am imprisoned in the misery of it, and nothing seems to exist outside.\textsuperscript{116}

His attachment to her is final and irrevocable. He would regain his lost poise, only if she comes back to him. Victor is unable to get away from the trap despite the fact that Gangi's love has no creative sense. As Dr. Shankar analyzes their love affair:

I tried to analyze the couple's actions and reactions, and found that she had no creative sense with which she could associate Victor, except the art of making love, which revenged itself on her through its excesses and wild wooded ness and which destroyed him by enslaving him to her.\textsuperscript{117}

Prince Victor's name spelt imminent horror for the women of his state because he is a notorious seducer of women. Anand has exposed his lustful vision in the novel. Some village women while filling their pitchers with water fled away as they saw Victor because his reputation as a seducer has not been forgotten since the days of his teens when he used to demand any woman who came within the orbit of his lustful vision.

Victor, unable to perform the act of reunification that is indeed, prolongs his nightmarish existence. He lives amid the wreckage of what he once believed in as being the most reliable. He has no option but to face the trailing consequences of passion. His drift towards insanity is inevitable as he abuses:
I shall revenge myself on all of you, he suddenly burst out one day. 'I don't trust any of you! You have destroyed me. You have taken away my state. All of you, all of you are intriguing against me. . . . None of you really like me! Strange, is not it, that I have so many friends, but not one real friend when it came to it. I found that I had not even one friend who would stand by me!' 

The unity of his life having gone with the shock of the murder of Bool Chand, the new lover of Ganga Dasi, which he had ordered, he had left only the yearnings towards sanity, while he was no longer capable of self mastery. He repents for his pitiable condition as he says:

O my fate! Why have you chosen me for a victim? Why is there only humiliation after humiliation for me! Oh, God, how it hurts! This dishonour of being ordered to return home, almost under arrest! What providence contrived to make me such foolish things? Why, oh, why did I have to do this? May my fires of hell devour them all?!

The last phase of Prince's life was full of endless sufferings as his arrest warrant is issued on behalf of the Indian Government, that he be presented in the court on charges of murder. He has to come back but he loses reasoning faculties and is directly admitted to the mental hospital in Poona, where he was dutifully served by his wife, Indira.

While the obsession and the feudal order is subjected to the most severe indictment and the struggle for democracy is passionately upheld, the decadent Raja, who is the symbol of feudal exploitation and an inveterate foe of the democratic order, is presented in the novel, with profound sympathy and understanding. Through its unforgettable picture of cruel, sensual tyrannical Prince as a helpless, pathetic,
anguished human being, struggling hard to retain his self in a terrible situation of inexorable tragedy, the novel pores out its intensely realized personal grief. Bound by marriage to Indira and obsessed Ganga Dasi, and torn between an ancestral life of splendour and a baffling life of new values, Victor feels inescapably trapped, as he repeats in his poignant cries: 'Oh, Hari, I am like a rat in a hole . . . . I shall lose my mind if I don’t get out of this hole!' Inspite of his moral depravity, wild arrogance and the cruelties he perpetrates on the people, he constantly gives the impression that there is an essential goodness in him. He does not accept the Praja Mandal but it is because he too wants a state in which both the Raja and Praja can live as father and sons. He has a genuine love for his people for even during his miserable days in London as a broken man; his heart bleeds for the people of Sham Pur. For he tells Shankar, ‘you don’t know that I felt very tenderly towards the Praja in Sham Pur. My heart bled for them in their difficulties.’ It is indeed the language of the noble heart. As a slave to Ganga Dasi, he ill-treats his wife, but he has nobility that can recognize what is truly great in her. The memories of the early days of his marriage with Indira often caused an ache in his heart, he remembers her as a good Hindu wife, who looked after him well. He is also an affectionate father. During his visit to Indira when his sons run towards him and collapse in his lap, he is visibly moved by the affection for his son and strokes his hair, though he is afraid that this may be reported to Gangi. Again, he never lets down his friends. When, for instance, after the loss of his kingdom, the new Prime Minister Pandit Govind Das criticizes Victor’s royal friend Raghbir Singh and his indiscipline army, he burst out: ‘You are attacking my friends in the state! . . . . I will not have charges made against General Raghbir Singh. . . . '
As the noble side of Victor’s character is thus brought out in fine details, he is portrayed as a helpless human face with a dreadful, hostile reality that envelops him fatally from all sides. A.V. Krishna Rao thus comments:

The tragedy of Victor is the tragedy of an uprooted and unrealistic feudal Prince with mistaken ambitions and misplaced affections.\(^{123}\)

Unhinged by his own maniacal pursuits and by the choking conditions of the renascent national chrysalis, the private life of Victor is a pitiable tragedy. Hence, it may be assumed that the novel amplifies the voice of a fast fading system at two different points in the general flux of an ancient society is thus a finished product of the Indo Anglian Literary Naturalism.

As it is clearly evident in Anand’s study of the blighting effects of environmental factors, every kind of insularity is denounced as also jingoistic nationalism and religious fanaticism. It is a plea for a saner society, for secular ethics, for a truly civil society in which orthodoxy of every kind will be entirely non-existent. What is needed is the faith in the abiding nature of human goodness and dignity in overcoming the petty prejudices of class, caste, community and nationality. A more humane and a more responsive social system is thus required in the transformation of society. Hence, it may be pointed out that Anand’s main emphasis lies beyond naturalism towards hopeful humanism, a shift of focus evident in his novels.
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