

"Crime, Prison, and the Administration of Justice in the Novels of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand"

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Abstract

One of the major social issues loosely found in literature is crime and justice, with this being found in those that attempt to deal with the social-economic phenomena and structures. For Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand, crime is not just a personal and moral fault, but a product of such social inequalities as poverty, exploitation and neglect of institutions. Both writers make use of literary realism to highlight the cruelties of the societies they reveal and to illustrate how in both cases, inequitable economic and social structures allow crime, and simultaneously keep the marginalized people from getting justice. In portraying criminality, corrupt institutions and faulty legal systems, Dickens and Anand show a strong link between power, inequality and social disorder.

In the broadest sense crime may be defined as a violation of social and/or legal norms for which there is a prescribed punishment. The social conditions, motives and institutional reactions upon which crime depends, however are also part of criminality. In the novels studied, crime is a social issue related with deprivation, exclusion and exploitation and not just with wickedness. Justice, in the ideal sense of fairness and equal treatment under the law, is repeatedly demonstrated to be perverted by class, wealth and political control . This was compounded by the institutional corruption of legal systems, prisons and administrative bodies which allow them to function to the detriment of the impoverished and vulnerable, and in line with the interests of the dominant.

Keywords: Crime, Prison, Administration, Justice, Marxism and class struggle

Introduction

Dickens and Anand have many different forms of crime, such as kidnapping, killing, stealing, drinking, gambling and violence. The London underworld is vividly illustrated in Dickens' Oliver Twist, as children are forced into the world of organised crime by poverty and neglect Fagin's gang of little pickpockets. The characters like Bill Sikes, too, represent brutality, thereby reinforcing the moral degeneration wrought by the urbs temnorum. In the same way, in Anand's works, exploitation and oppression is shown as systematic violence. Coolie and Untouchable portray how the marginalized poor are caught up in systems of labour exploitation, caste discrimination, and colonial rule, and lacking dignity and basic human rights.

The paper discusses the issues of drinking and gambling as symbols of moral and social decay. Often, these activities are not just treated as personal addictions but also as reactions to economic uncertainty, psychological depression or social unrest. We're drinking alcohol and gambling tools used by some to hide from the reality of the situation, leading to an even more immoral and social situation. These actions show the undermining of moral norms in societies that are marked by exploitation and inequality.

A second big issue (also discussed in this chapter) is a corrupt and inefficient legal system. Dickens and Anand reveal the shortcomings of the judicial, correctional and administrative machinery and the inadequacy of their contribution to justice. The prisons are not seen as places of reform, but as places of punishment, humiliation and institutional control. The justice system seems both impersonal and unjust; a justice that is cold, unmoved, and unwilling to help the general public. For Dickens' Victorian England, the laws that apply have all been characterised as being slow, corrupt and classist and for Anand colonialism's overall legal system is an instrument of control employed by the imperial power to exercise social and economic control over the lower classes and lesser-known communities.

These matters can be better appreciated in the light of a Marxist analysis which sees the law and justice as an ideological medium in the interests of the ruling class. As per the theory of Marxists, law is not a neutral entity, but one that serves/defends private property, the economic structure, or social hierarchy. Thus, crimes are seen as manifestations of inequality, and punishment as tools of control, which were utilized by the rich over the poor. In this context the prison could be a regulating system that disciplines what someone does, creates a selection of obedience. Power relations actually stencil justice, for which the fairness is vastly dependent on the social position and the economic status.

Dickens's legal world in his novels is characteristic of Victorian society: it's defined by poverty and crime, contraposed to wealth and established power. His novels reveal how poverty in cities, neglect of children, the lack of social care and government inefficiency puts such a society there in which the poor are criminalized and the rich often escape the reproach of the impoverished. When viewed under the prism of colonial India, the system is not the same but equally oppressive – caste hierarchy and the imperial system further play their part in the social injustice (Díaz-Llabrés and Jiménez-Rodríguez 35). The functioning of colonial institutions is to uphold domination not to safeguard human rights, and labourers and lower-caste are easy targets for exploitation and humiliation.

So, in the work of Dickens and Anand, crime and justice are closely knitted with the socio-economic structures they function in. Their works are evidence of the ways inequality creates criminality, systems are rooted in oppression, and justice is distorted by power and privilege. This chapter examines the interconnections between crime, social injustice and the inefficacy of the judiciary system which Dickens and Anand present in the paper.

Concept of Crime and Justice in Socio-economic Context

In the novels of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand, the knowledge of crime mainly goes beyond the formal definition of transgression of law and also captures the impact of social and

economic in human behaviors. Crime is not just seen as an individual choice but criminality as the result of poverty, marginalisation, deprivation and the structural disparities. Both writers go against moralist arguments about the causes of crime and how oppressive systems create contexts where criminal behaviour is closely associated with the processes of survival and social exclusion.

One issue, which is important to Dickens' fiction, is poverty-induced crime. *Oliver Twist* depicts the grim, poverty-stricken conditions of life in the city that force vulnerable kids into gangs of criminals. Education, the sense of family and an opportunity to work are lacking and it is an environment where a person needs to steal, pick-pocket, etc. for sustenance, not to be bad. Fagin's use of homeless boys exemplifies how poverty provides the organized crime community an opportunity to thrive. This suggests to Dickens, therefore, that it is society that may play a role in criminality by ignoring the poor and denying them conditions in which to live.

In a similar manner, Anand's creations depict criminality as a means of expressing the exploitation of the Anglo as well as the oppressive caste system. In *Coolie*, Munoo is not suffering because of criminal instincts; his situation is suffering due to the systemic exploitation, which lacks stability and dignity and takes away his opportunities. Conceptualizing structural violence as acts of economic exploitation, social humiliation and institutional discrimination, Anand sees it as a crime carried out by the society itself against the poor (Elise van and Dixit 175). *Untouchable* highlights that by being a member of a particular caste, the lower caste can be treated as if he is a criminal, indicating how the social systems are destructive in nature and criminalise life itself.

Marginalisation plays a large role in the explanation of criminality as well. Those who are left out of economic, education and social recognition are more susceptible to deviance and exploitation. With both Dickens and Anand, crime is a result of situations where "survival over the law" takes precedence. So crime has as much to do with social inequality as with personal immorality.

Marxist Theory of Crime

Marxist theory serves as an important context in which to view the crime/law relationship in the selected novels in relation to socio-economic power. Marxist theory states that the purpose of the law and its other systems and institutions is basically to guard the interests of the ruling class. Laws are designed and enforced in such a way as to maintain existing economic structures and continue to preserve class hierarchy. Thus, crime was perceived as a poor man's game and exploitation and corruption of the rich as a normal accepted phenomenon or one which is not punished.

For Dickens, the poor are often the ones who are criminals in Victorian England. Social threats such as homeless persons, unemployed persons and street children are regarded as victims instead of people of inequality. The poor are disciplined and controlled in institutions like workhouses and prisons. But oftentimes neither the rich nor the women of the rich class are included, because they may be involved in an immoral or an exploiting act.

Anand's plays also bring into focus the mechanism of the administration of justice and its connection to an authority based on colonialism and caste oppression. Colonial Legal

apparatus is a non-neutral one and is brazenly pro-imperial and upholding social hierarchy. There is a systematic discrimination of individuals of lower castes and against labourers, and those in positions of authority can exercise their powers with little accountability. Thus, economic injustice and oppression by castes result in a society in which the nature of deviance is connected with the demands for life and in which justice is not based on fairness or equality but on the social strata. In the Marxist understanding, it is thus with crime and punishment that we have to do with a purely economic mechanism. The criminality is manifested on the manifestation of inequality and law is manifested as an instrument of social control.

Prison and Justice as Institutions of Power

In both Dickens and Anand, the penal system and the judicial system are perceived not so much as a mechanism that ensures justice and reform but as one that disciplines, supervises, and controls. These institutions are expressions of power structures in society and play a role in sustaining inequalities.

The prison is not only a place that subjects people to rules, punishment and humiliation, but is also a disciplinarian institution. Prisons, in Dickens's oeuvre, symbolize terror, degradation and social stigma. They not only don't rehabilitate the offenders, they harden criminal identity and social exclusion. Prisoners are brutally treated and this cruelty of the prison system is a reflection of society's punitive approach to poverty and deviance.

Anand shows the same development at the institutional level within the colonies: Punishment becomes a means of asserting control over labourers, over lower-castes. The over-arching theme of these systems is fear and coercion to make sure people comply and do not challenge. Justice is thus linked to power and it is used in a manner that would benefit the powerful groups while leaving vulnerable groups worse off (Elo et al. 14).

This control is further reinforced through surveillance, and institutional discipline. Observation of behaviour, limitation of freedom of movement and control of social life guarantees that individuals stay subordinate to authority. As such, mechanisms show that the prison and the court cannot be considered as a neutral space but as an ideological structure for maintaining social order and hierarchy.

Thus, Dickens and Anand present the idea of crime and justice in their works as a reflection of the general socio-economic conditions and not as an issue of morality alone. Both writers expose the unequal nature of the legal systems in their respective societies, showing how poverty, exclusion and institutional power are all influential in the nature of crime, and what the courts actually do.

Crime and Criminality in Dickens Theft, Kidnapping, and Urban Crime

Oliver Twist is a novel of Victorian crime which Dickens has vividly depicted. The characters in the novel paint a picture of a London polarised between the rich and the poor, and the city teems with criminal networks in slums populated with neglected neighbourhoods. Urban crime

is not just depicted as deviant behavior; it is also framed as a social phenomenon, created by social inequalities and a lack of institutional functions. Dickens portrays through Fagin and his band of child pickpockets, the way poverty and abandonment can lead to organised criminality. Fagin's criminal group serves as a perversely used alternative for the family/social unit. Children that are homeless and orphaned, without learning and safeguards, are easy targets to be exploited. Fagin teaches them how to pickpocket and steal, making their way of life a crime. The inadequacy of the opportunities and security offered to poor children is exposed by this system of exploitation and the general failure of Victorian society. Dickens thus implies that the society itself is a cause for crime, because it ignores, neglects, and abandons society's weakest citizens.

Kidnapping also contributes to the overall sense of insecurity and exploitation in urbanization. Tricksters engage in criminality and give Oliver various excuses to shift out of it yet try their best to hold him in place for their monetary gain. The people who commit a crime use innocence for their own gain, giving us a glimpse into the ruthlessness of capitalism with regard to human relations (Emme 6). In this sense, kidnapping equals enclosures of freedom of the individual under the socio-economic conditions of oppression.

Pickpocketing in *Oliver Twist* is important for its connotations of survival crime too. The little boys that Fagin is training aren't thieves for the sake of another boy's leisure, or for prestige or profit, but because there is no other way to make a living. Dickens does not make them wicked individuals, but rather emphasizes social circumstances which drives them to criminality. This reflects a more liberal view for the time that refused to accept the usual Victorian view that crime was the fault of the individual and of their personal moral failings.

The urban itself plays an important role in the induction of criminality. Dickens drew our attention to the awful condition of the slums and the awful idea of social neglect leading to desperation and violence among those in the slums and beyond. Criminal networks run amok, unaffected by the anonymity and chaos that prevails in the city, and even the institutions are unusable or impassive. In this way, the urban crimes in Dickens's fiction mirror the shortcomings of industrial society in delivering people "agrym" (humanely humane) environments for workers.

Murder and Violence

Violence is an integral part of Dickens' portrayal of criminality as in the case of *Oliver Twist*. Bill Sikes is a manifestation of the harshness and degradation of slum living and poverty in the city. But although Fagin's criminality is more a product of his manipulation and exploitation, Sikes is more of an example of raw, physical violence and unchecked aggression. His actions are a manifestation of psychological consequences that are cases of a challenging and uneven culture where survival is often determined by dominance and intimidation.

The murder of Nancy is another most horrific scene in the novel and an example to the social and moral decay. Although Nancy was involved with the criminal underworld, she has emotional and moral qualities. Her act of saving Oliver doesn't just signify an attempt to save him, but is also evidence of a desire for redemption, a sense of humanity in a repressive environment. But Sikes's violent reaction is an expression of the unabated brutality accepted in the world birthed, shaped and sustained by poverty and criminal exploitation.

The murder is not just a case of personal tragedy, but also the result of society's inability to care

and moral decay. Dickens implies that places of lack, exploitation and fear are the places that give rise to aggression and emotional instability. Violence turns into an individual and social tragedy which is an example of the psychological injury caused by inequality.

Moreover, Dickens portrays violence to be intimately related to masculine power and control. A figure like Sikes thrives on fear and intimidation, and the larger culture of dominance in poor (and poorish) urban areas. The violence described in the novel isn't, accordingly, confined to its isolated details, but set in the social institutions that foster competitiveness, insecurity and exploitation in society.

Dickens also portrays violence to reveal the lack of order and morality in the institutions charged with their concentration. It seems that the police are more reactive than proactive, and they do not seem to be able to solve the problem of crime's root causes. Eclac's resolution proves how ineffective legal systems are in resolving violence in urban society if they do not try to take a stance to the socio-economic conditions that cause criminality.

Crime as Result of Poverty

One of the main motifs of Dickens' fiction is that in itself poverty begets crime. Deprivation and criminality go hand in hand and are cited continually as a consequence of unemployment, lack of education, and social exclusion. The slums of Victorian England are depicted as a world that is withheld from people in terms of dignity, security and opportunity, and that makes an almost inevitable lifestyle of crime.

Perhaps the workhouse system is an example of institutional neglect, as shown in *Oliver Twist*. They do not help poor people; they humiliate them, they discipline them and they create a vicious circle of deprivation. A baby who has developed in these circumstances experiences a lack of emotional support and has no means to avail of legitimate economic opportunities. An irrational society breeds rational delinquent reactions.

Throughout the novel, Dickens highlights that social neglect leads to offenders as it leaves them unsupervised during an important time in their lives. Lack of schooling and family stability makes vulnerable populations vulnerable to exploitation by criminal networks. Fagin's band is one that would prosper just fine—if it weren't for all the options available for poor children in society.

The corruption that exists in the slums is another example of the connection between crime and poverty. Poor conditions such as overcrowding, lack of jobs and insecurity lead to despair and frustration, frequently expressed in thievery, violence and alcoholism. Dickens does not condone crime, but it is the responsibility of society to produce the environment in which crime thrives, Dickens argues.

This attitude is congruent with other criticisms of industrial capitalism in society. The economic system generates enormous wealth for the privileged class and the bulk of the population in abject poverty. In this way crime becomes a personal behaviour and a social sign of failure and inequality in the institutions.

Moral Corruption of Society

Dickens shows fault in those among the poor considering the misdeeds of those in respectable society. One of the most important features of his social comment, is that the criminality is not

just in slums and in the prisons, but is also in elite and in institutional structures.

Corruption, dishonesty, avarice and hypocrisy figure among the upper classes, and this shows that it is prevalent in every class of society.

Compeyson is the prototype of the very highest category of criminals in *Great Expectations*.

Compeyson doesn't seem like one of the slash-and-slash gangsters of the slums - he is outwardly respectable, socially polished. Through his manipulation and fraud one can see how other kinds of criminality might be overlooked through class privilege, or socially accepted.

Dickens then is commenting on a society that, instead of relying on individuals' moral values, values them primarily by their outward appearance and class (Fulford 24).

Likewise, *Bleak House* shows corruption in the legal profession in itself. The delay and inefficiency of the Court of Chancery represent the decline of the court and the injustice of bureaucracy. Instead of justice, the legal profession becomes caught up in "self-interest and prolixity". Dickens implies that institutions that seek to claim moral authority are very tainted.

Respectable society's hypocrisy relates to the way they treat the poor. The so-called elites may label the street crime, or deviance in lower class segments as bad moral quality, but they have an inability to see the structural inequalities and exploitative practices that give rise to such phenomena. Criminal acts such as economic exploitation, political indifference and institutional corruption are shown as socially acceptable although they have destructive consequences.

This general moral rot is a comment on the Victorian capitalism and social structure Dickens was attacking. Seeking money and standing makes people act in selfish ways, be "emotionless", and exploit others. Thus, criminality is not only endemic in the underclass, but is built into respectable society itself.

Crime and Social Oppression in Anand Colonial Violence as Crime

The most important part of Anand's critique is to convey the very idea of colonization as a form of organised violence. Colonialism is not just characterized as political control, but an entire structure of enslavement of workers, an exploitation of resources, and the oppression of human dignity. This violence is not just actual physical violence, but extends into dependency, racial discrimination and institutional power. Anand suggests for colonial oppression to be deemed as a criminal structure since it takes away the freedom, equality and basic human rights of people.

Two Leaves and a Bud expose the colonial violence in the exploitation of plantation labourers in a vivid way. Conditions are extremely difficult for workers with insufficient pay, substandard housing and constant surveillance. The plantation system is an economic "institution" which tries to squeeze a maximum out of the labourer, treating him as a disposable means of production for the benefit of the colonial authorities. The exploitation of the labouring classes, the labourer's pain and suffering is seen as less vital, less important than the economic interest of the ruling class, the dehumanizing nature of colonial capitalism.

This representation is concerned with structural oppression. Structural oppression is more than one-off violence; it is an ongoing phenomenon by means of institutions and systems that ensure inequality. The colonial authorities, plantation owners and bosses are in power by

means of fear and economic and social hierarchy. Such violence against labourers is accordingly neither accidental nor incidental, but structural, and is part of the economic system. Anand also touches on the impact of colonial rule on psychology. Being constantly humiliated and not being on your own as a worker leads to helplessness, alienation. Colonial violence, therefore, not only affects the physical aspect of well-being, it also affects the emotional and psychological context of stability. Anand further widens the definition of crime by acknowledging that crime not only entails the exploitation of individual organizations but of an entire community as well.

Labour exploitation is another means by which the structures of colonial power are strengthened. Labourers are paid unfair wages and have no protection at work and no prospects for promotion, therefore keeping them dependent on employers. Anand depicts this exploitative nature of economics as a social crime because there is an assault upon the human person and they become profit-making means. A criminality thus cannot be divorced from colonialism; they function in a system that has been normalised to the suffering and inequalities.

Economic Exploitation

Anand's commentaries on the nature of crime and oppression in the society feature the phenomenon of economic exploitation in an important and central way, especially in *Coolie*. Based on the life of a young labourer named Munoo, the novel is an account of the cruel exploitation of the poor in the capitalist system in colonial India. Munoo's suffering is due to no one individual, but rather to a socio-economic system that treats labour as a commodity and human dignity is either unimportant or is up for sale.

Munoo is forced into abusive working conditions and is continually being moved around the novel. His inability to stand up for himself makes him a victim of the employers, who make too much profit from his work with few benefits or responsibilities for him. He cannot fight too effectively against the exploitation as he is not educated, has no social status and no economic resources (Ganguly and Singh 756). Anand in this way illustrates how poverty and inequality become a vicious circle of labour exploitation and oppression.

Long hours, unhealthy working conditions, and emotional cruelties abound in *Coolie's* working environments. The laborer is regarded as a replaceable commodity and not as a person who has rights and aspirations. This commodification is symptomatic of the general capitalist logic working within colonial society, and prioritizes profit over welfare. Exploitation in the eyes of Anand can be termed a form of institutional crime as it systematically debased all sorts of personal autonomy, emotional stability and physical health.

An important aspect of the novel regarding forced labour conditions. The workers have been neither enslaved legally nor morally, yet economically they are forced to accept the unsatisfactory conditions. When there is no alternative, which is a situation we are in, then labour becomes a coercion. Having no other way of earning a living highlights how poverty too becomes a tool of control, foreclosing choice and perpetuating inequality, as is evidenced by Munoo's lack of alternatives to exploitation.

Anand also focuses upon the emotional aspects of economic exploitation. The continuous

humiliation, fatigue and insecurity of her life leads to a loss of identity and belonging for Munoo. His sad death is emblematic of the deadly consequences of a system that puts economic output ahead of human life. So economic exploitation is not only an economic problem as seen by Gandhi; it is a sinful and socially evil occurrence as seen in Anand's writings.

Social Humiliation and Injustice

In *Untouchable*, Anand makes an attempt to tackle the social oppression through the experience of caste discrimination which in the film is just a form of not to be touched. The novel shows us how life in the lowest castes is criminalised in a highly caste-ridden society. The protagonist Bakha, who does not seem to be at fault in any way, is discriminated against because the 'caste system' becomes a part of his social identity.

Bakha is constantly and systemically humiliated. He is restricted from using in public places, he is insulted and doing degrading works. These experiences give an insight into how caste discrimination can act as a tool of enforcing exclusion and hierarchy in the form of social control. Anand equates this discrimination to a social crime as it denies being human, equal and dignified to people.

The criminalisation of lower-caste life is most apparent in the way that society has generally treated untouchables as the "enemy" of purity and order. Bakha's presence alone is a reason for being punished and humiliated. This is an irrational and cruel treatment since it is a system that discriminates and is socially recognised.

In caste society, there is also a hypocrisy in social morality and it is exposed by Anand. People who feel like they are morally or religiously superior engage in behaviours that prescribe suffering and inequalities. This is the gulf between morality and social behavior which deepens the character of caste hierarchy as extremely oppressive.

There are also psychological consequences of being humiliated. Bakha is a reflection of the internalisation of feeling inferior and shameful, showing the impact of oppression on personal identity and self-worth. Anand thus demonstrates that injustice can manifest itself not just physically, but emotionally and psychologically as well.

Prison as an Institution of Control Prison in Dickens

Dickens' image of Victorian society shows prisons as a reflection of the cruel realities of the Victorian legal system, which was based on class and industrial capitalism. Prisons in particular are not depicted as places of reform, but as places that enhance suffering, and enhance social exclusion. The state in which these schools have been delivered up, is a mark of the inhumanity of a system which thinks more of discipline and punishment than of rehabilitation.

Victorian prisons used in Dickens' stories were overcrowded, hygienic conditions were poor, emotional isolation was experienced and physical hardship prevailed. Those locked up in these institutions are deprived of their dignity, treated as objects to be controlled by administration. The punishment comes to the centre of the experience of jail and opportunities

for true reform are few. Dickens continually alludes to the fact that prisons do nothing to solve the social problems that cause people to turn to crime, for example lack of education, poverty and unemployment.

The punitive and reformatory aspects of this opposition are of special importance in Dickens's attack on the justice system. Prisons, officially, are supposed to reform criminals and restore the moral balance – but Dickens shows that they have the potential to be breeding grounds for more criminals. Former prisoners find it difficult to re-integrate in the society, the society humiliates, rejects and treats them harshly. Thus incarceration is a part of the process of marginalisation and deviance and not a response to crime prevention.

Dickens also attacks the degree of moral hypocrisy implicit in systems of punishment. Society punishes the wrongdoers and does not really comprehend the disparities in financial growth and malfunctioning systems that create criminal conduct. The prison is therefore a trope of social contradictions because the poor are the ones who are being punished for a system which has brought about that situation.

The depravity of the Victorian prison conditions is indicative of a fear of crime and disorder in an industrial society at large. Authorities try to rule the masses that flock to cities through methods of control and discipline, including jail cells to ensure that the working class obey the law. Dickens' depiction is more than about the individual plight, then; it's about the ideology behind institutional punishment.

Prison and Fear

Punishment is an important mechanism that operates at the core of mechanisms of fear in Dickens' texts. The prison is not only a place to isolate the offenders but also to induce psychological terror which prevents resistance and deviance. The culture of fear goes beyond prison walls as criminal stigma, public punishment and social exclusion creates a culture of fear in the justice system.

An important side effect of jail is developing a criminal identity. Arrested people are often deprived of opportunities for reintegration and respectability once designated as 'criminals'. The stigma is still very much associated with former prisoners, and this social disintegration contributes to the marginalisation and to former prisoners' difficulties to get out of poverty or exploitation. Dickens shows that the system of justice will often hold a person captive – either as criminal or as reformed criminal – without their choice.

This stigma also is an expression of class prejudice. The poor are more likely to be criminalised, and even receive harsh criminal treatment, and the richer are likely to be not so treated even if they are doing morally bad things. The idea of criminal identity can thus be associated with ideas of social status and the inequities of justice in Victorian society come to light.

Fearedness is also a means of social control. People in the general public know what things are like in prison and they know what punishment is, so they are obedient - they know the result if they don't do what they are expected to do (Gayen 52). But the prison also serves as a symbol and a symbolic place, a manifestation of the power of the state towards more susceptible populations.

Dickens further demonstrates that fear is a factor in psychological suffering. Inmates are alienated, hopeless and depressed, both emotionally and socially, by being locked up. These

conditions may sink in, and foster resentment or emotional instability, but do not work to shift morals. This turns the prison, therefore, into an institution that perpetuates suffering and exclusion instead of a place of correction.

There is a relation between imprisonment and fear which shows a wider relation of punishment to unequal societies. Intimidation and exclusion are ways that behaviour is managed in institutions—where the power of the dominant groups is strengthened, the power of those who have been marginalised is curtailed.

Colonial Punishment in Anand

The operation of punishment in Anand's works is contextualized in the power structure of colonialism and caste-ism. Prisons are not necessarily iconic physical spaces, but rather the system of colonial control is a prison, one that regulates labourers, stifles dissent, promotes economic exploitation. Constructs of punishment become a part of everyday living through fear, surveillance, and institutional authority.

The punishment meted out by the colonists in Anand is a punishing kind of authority that is expressed in terms of intimidation and coercion. The opportunity for humiliation, violence and administration is always at the doorsteps of labourers and others of less bol. The labourers and the others of less bol were always subject to be humiliated, to be beaten, to be administrated.

Colonial State: Order is not established by means of justice, equality, but by fear and submission. Bodies, like the police force, or employers or colonial administrators have a collusive quality, that they all serve to police marginalised peoples.

Two Leaves and a Bud and Coolie are themselves metaphorical prisons, with labour systems in a host of characters. They use to restrict the freedom of workers, to exploit them and constantly monitor them. The inducement of economic dependence coerces them into submission and rebellion is punished or rejected. Anand thus exposes colonial capitalism as a system of institutional imprisonment of the labourers by poverty and authority.

This depiction is all about the repression of labourers. Distant governments preferred wealth and empire to the well-being of people. This takes away the autonomy of the workers and positions them to be dealt with like a means only, hence their status in the colonial chain of command. Thus, punishment goes beyond the imprisonment in law but enhances the deprivation of economic means, the humiliation and the control in a social point of view, and the psychological control.

The film reveals the fourteen-year-old Anand's role in the process of criminalisation of resistance to colonial rule. Any hope of dismantling the existing power structure is seen as a threat to order and thus, legitimizing coercion and repression. The colonial system therefore exists as an institutional device to maintain supremacy and not justice.

Corruption in Courts and Legal Systems

Judicial Corruption in Dickens

Charles Dickens provides one of the most important appraisals of the Victorian legal system in Bleak house which depicts the Court of Chancery as an institution in decay and a court in disfavour. Dickens shows the machinery of law to be bogged down in cases, and in time, the case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce. Over justice is constantly delayed and people are

emotionally, financially and psychologically destroyed.

Speed is the life of justice in Bleak House and where it is not found the purpose of legal institutions cannot be achieved. Cases drag on for years and years to no resolution, wasting lives and resources. The Legal System only adds to the confusion and suffering, and does not defend rights or solve issues. Dickens characterizes bureaucracy as a system that is in and of itself, more concerned with following procedure than fairness. Formal procedures are used to showcase complexity and to maintain institutional authority and control.

Such corruption in the bureaucracy is especially detrimental for the poor and vulnerable. In the end, rich people have more assets at their disposal to make it through a lengthy and ongoing legal process, while working people badly end up exhausted financially and emotionally worn down. Justice becomes unequal and is available to people of the privileged class only based on social and economic factors. Dickens thus condemns a legal system that determines legal verdicts based not so much on truth, or morality, but on class position.

The Court of Chancery also represents the literal lack of moral development of the Victorian institutions. Dickens portrays legal offices as lifeless, dusty and stagnant spaces, embodying a system that was unconcerned with human requirements and reality (Gunja, 2025). The ongoing pain of endlessly litigating is an example of the institutional violence that can be wrought by the bureaucracy.

Bleak House is his proof that corruption in the judiciary is not simply a matter of a few bad apples. Legal systems turn into self-serving institutions that show little respect for justice or morality, but rather inequalities are perpetrated.

Lawyers and Legal Hypocrisy

An additional key part of Dickens' critique has to do with the legal profession by itself. In the public view, a lawyer, clerk, legal official is a solely self-serving type that profits from the miseries of others. However, many lawyers and lawmakers tirelessly work for a corrupted system and are focused more on profit, status and control of procedure rather than pursuing a positive focus on justice.

Within the complexity, delays and workings of the Court of Chancery, lawyers excel in Bleak House. As long as cases can be continued, money and influence are absorbed, and there is little motivation to be efficient in settling cases. Thus it would seem that Dickens acts as a true believer in the hypocrisy of the law, which is most rudimentary and institutionalised.

Attorneys, in public at least and in private, have been declared the guardians of justice, and inefficiency and confusion reap the profits.

This is hypocrisy leading to other contradictions in Victorian society. They're respectable, purporting to be better people, but they also play a role in systems that exploit vulnerable people. Dickens implies that there can be corruption behind the appearance of respectability, and institutional injustice can be especially harmful, as it seems socially legitimate.

The legal exploitation is also to reinforce the class inequality. Poor litigants suffer because they don't have the money or the knowledge to deal with the legal bureaucracy; and they have to rely upon the litigation professionals who may manipulate and may exploit them. The concept of equality before the law is thus negatively challenged as access to justice is closely related with wealth and education.

Also, Tennyson critiques emotionless or rather unfeeling legal officials. Often, attorneys don't seem to care about the suffering people endure as a result of the legal process, allowing it to be part of the mundane daily routine. This is a lack of empathy which parallels the dehumanising effects of the bureaucratic process where process trumps justice.

This hypocrisy in the legal system unmasked the moral ambivalences in the capitalist society. So, in order to protect a right, a system is created which in turn legitimises some privileges and exclusions; a process of institutional corruption within structures of power.

Colonial Legal System in Anand

Though Dickens exposes the incompetence of the bureaucrats in his Victorian England, the emphasis at the hands of Mulk Raj Anand has been laid on the oppressive nature of the colonial legislations in India. Anand's novels depict the legal system as an agency of domination of colonial and social nature, instead of a neutral body of law. Any laws or administrative practice is built to serve the interests of elites and preserve political power and political rule, and not necessarily toward the citizens' interest in obtaining justice.

The colonial legal system is always in favor of landlords, employers, administration and upper caste groups. The laborers and other lower caste people are practically unprotected by law and often not given fair play. Law is in the name of Anand a highly dynamic, complex phenomenon and blamefully linked with the system of economic exploitation and caste hierarchy that merely serves to reinforce the existing inequality.

Untouchable is a tale in which social discrimination takes place as though it were set in stone. Humiliation and exclusion of lower castes: Humiliation and exclusion of lower castes has not been offered real protection by the legal system. Their plight is understood as normal, in terms of the social and administrative system, and the legal system indirectly helps to sustain caste oppression (Gupta 745). Experiences of injustice are due to institutions which are themselves discriminatory.

In Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud, colonial officials, in much the same way, place emphasis on economic efficiency and social stability above human welfare. Lack of accountability for labour exploitation, poor working conditions and abusive treatment; because institutions are in the interest of colonial power. Employers and administrators are appearing to be protected by the law and exploited workers are left in the margins.

Anand also speaks about the psychological consequences of these inequalities in Law. A lack of experience with institutions that listen to their pain or silence created that sense and built distrust in the poor. This distrust that they feel is a factor of the lack of legitimacy of colonial governance over oppressed populations.

The colonial legal system, then, is a means of control – not of justice. It is a system that tolerates neither opposition nor dissent, and serves to justify class and economic oppression. The critique by Anand shows that injustice in colonial society is not a byproduct, but that of an institutional character.

Moral Decay: Drinking, Gambling, and Violence

Drinking Culture

For the social worlds depicted by Dickens and Anand both drink and to drink are significant.

Drinking is often depicted as a way to cope with economic struggles, emotional pain and hardship. No longer is it out of enjoyment but to cope with the harsh realities. That much of Dickens' urban environments that hope is scarce, there is unemployment and there is overcrowding creates a situation where alcoholism is rife among the working class. Particularly victims of poverty and hopelessness drink alcoholic fluids as a way of coping.

But Dickens also makes the link between too much drink and moral decay and social unrest. Alcohol can be a major factor in both aggression and irresponsibility and the breakdown of families. In the context of slum culture, the drinking culture is the psychological impact of deprivation, with a loss of control and hope in face of the continuous pressure from the economy. Alcoholism thus becomes another symptom of, and contributes to social decay. Likewise, Anand portrays drinking as a free space from labour exploitation and humiliation. Marginalised people and colonial working-class people drink alcohol to alleviate suffering for the short term. This relief is, however, an unsound one, fateful, destructive, throttling the emotional stability and social cohesion. Anand clearly shows how self-destructive behaviour can be normalised within an oppressed population within an exploitative system.

Gambling and Greed

Gambling is a metaphor in both Dickens and Anand for the desperation, greed and moral turbulence in unequal societies. Risky behavior is induced by economic insecurity, with a hope for a quick economic turnaround. Gambling is thus a personalized form of desperation and of the insecurities created by exploitation-plagued economic systems.

In Dickensian world, gambling often is defined with greed and moral corruption. People seek wealth and promotion in society; they do not pay attention to their reckless behavior and manipulation. The character becomes driven, self-absorbed and obsessed with money – capitalistic values. Gambling therefore represents the general mindset of Victorian England of competition and economic insecurity.

Gambling is a theme in Anand's portrayal of poverty in colonial times and the exploitation of labour. Economic uncertainty and lack of opportunity fosters an environment where the people are compelled to find a ready and uncertain way out of the hardship. Gambling is a reflection of insecurity's psychological effect as hope is gambled on the odds too, instead of true social mobility (Holden 1590).

Both writers imply that gambling leads to a moral degeneration because it raises selfishness, irresponsibility and exploitation. When people become economically desperate, moral restraint ceases to exist and systems of inequality create social unrest and greed. Gambling thus becomes another form of moral injury, which results from socio-economic inequality.

Comparative Analysis

In both Charles Dickens's and Mulki Raj Anand's work you find strong condemnations of crimes, injustices, and institutional oppression in their respective societies. However, similar by virtue of their geographical, cultural and historical divide, both writers are committed to social realism and a desire for humanitarian concern. When they represent criminality the criminal can be seen to be linked to the socio-economic inequalities and institutions of power - not just

individual immorality. Dickens and Anand in their literary depictions illustrate how poverty, exploitation and social exclusion can result in an environment of injustice being normalised.

Perhaps the most significant likeness between the two authors is that they both view crime as something that is a product of society. Both writers are opposed to simplistic moral interpretations of criminal behavior; and both focus on poverty and deprivation as contributors to criminality (Hosein 70). In Dickens's novels the poverty, overcrowding and lack of care that engender the poverty-stricken into stealing, violently or committing acts of survival crime. Likewise, Anand illustrates the situation of labour exploitation, caste oppression, colonial domination as a structural push of marginalised people into suffering and social debacle. They also share the same concern – neglect of the social. Twice and again institutions to whom it falls to tend to the welfare and justice of the poor class, constantly fail. Dickens reveals the inefficacy and insensitivity of the Victorian institutions, like a work house, a court and a prison; and Anand challenges the processes of the colonial government system and the caste hierarchy for their instigation of exploitation and exclusion. In both traditions of literature, the poor people are a victim of economics as well as of the institutions that are supposed to rule the society.

Another distinguishing theme is that of the corruption of the judiciary. Dickens, like Anand, sees courts and prisons, and the legal system generally, as simply implementing the interests of dominant groups, rather than making things fair. The injustice of law in capitalist and colonial societies is manifested in delayed justice, inefficiency of bureaucracy, bias of the colonizers and hypocrisy of the institution. Legal systems are repressive and not safeguarding for the poor and the socially marginalised.

Conclusion

The paper has given a critical analysis of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand's novel depiction of all three aspects of crime, prison, and administration of justice. In both cases the realistic depictions of social life expose the fact that crime is not solely an issue of individual moral failings, but requires analysis in terms of socio-economic inequality and institutional oppression.

The paper has shown that poverty, marginalisation and social neglect can be seen as integral to the generation of criminal actions. Dickens's treatments of urban slums, child exploitation and poverty in money transactions lead to thieving, brutality, and corruption. Criminality is a by-product of industrial capitalism that reproduces coloniality as a system of disparity and relation to the wealthy and the poor, and is not able to create a "human being" condition for the class of workers. Likewise, for Anand the nature of crime is a direct product of colonialist and casteist oppression; indeed, the structural inequality itself can be seen as a form of violence against marginalised groups.

It has also been analysed that the systems that are ostensibly justice-oriented have failed when it comes to prison institutions and the judiciary. Dickens and Anand's depictions of prisons, courts, legal authorities are all vitriolically corrupt, an inefficient and class partial system. These institutions often become a catalyst for inequality and are also in the service of

the powerful. The poor, the labourers, and the members of the lower castes become victims of not only the social conditions but also of the system itself that is set up to bring about safety and justice.

The paper has also discussed the related subjects of drinking, gambling and violence as symptoms of moral and social decay. Such acts are proved to stem from a psychological despair, an economic insecurity and moral values lost within the so called 'exploitative socio-economic systems'. Significantly, both two writers reveal the hypocrisy of elite classes and institutions and prove that this corruption and immorality are not confined in the limited sphere of the poor, but it is also in the sphere of the elite classes and institutions of power.

Roots of a comparative approach to Dickens and Anand lie in their common allegiance to "social realism" and "humanitarian criticism. But their emphasis varies with the differences in their historical settings. Dickens' work is largely focused on criticizing industrial capitalism and its attendant inequalities in Victorian England, while Anand focuses on the structures of colonial domination, caste discrimination and labour exploitation in India. All in all, inequalities, criminogenic power, and crime are closely interconnected within both authors.

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