



Down -Trodden in the two Novels of Mulk Raj Anand 'Untouchable' and 'Coolie'

Research Paper—English

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Mulk Raj Anand, as an Indo Anglian Novelist, had approached Novels with missionary zeal to portray the sufferings of the down-trodden at the hands of the native rich people and colonial rulers. Anand's novels chronicled the social maladies in India and he felt that they would be eradicated by following the footsteps of the great leaders like Gandhiji, as we remember the lines somewhere written-

“Lives of great men all remind us,/We can make our lives sublime,/And departing leave behind us,/Foot prints on the sands of Time”.

Mulk Raj Anand is one of the few prolific Indian Writers in English, his stories and novels are admired all over the world. As a humanist he hates superstitions, bigotry, Caste, class capitalism, exploitation, over population, tyranny, colonialism, fascism, war and genocide. His subject is man, he proclaims, “If you ask me why I write so many novels, I say its because I love”. The major poineery novelists of this period are Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. Before Mulk Raj Anand ; Sarat Chandra Portrayed the tears and toils of the lower-middle classes and have-nots. Tagore also identified himself with the hurts and pangs of the people, but he was mainly concerned with the upper - laded gentry of Bengal and the middle sections of Calcutta Society and agonies of Cruel real life. On the other hand, Mulk Raj associated himself with the socio-political problems and pains of people in the typical Indian Scenario. Besides, the humanitarian influence of Nehru and Gandhi, the influence of Benkim Chandra Chatterjee, Premchand, and Ravinder Nath Tagore is central to Anand's growth and development as a novelist.

In P.P. Mehta's words; ‘Bankim's romanticism, Tagore's humanizing breath, Premchand sympathy for the suffering people and Sarat Chandra's understanding of the human hearts influenced the artistic make-up of Mulk Raj Anand'. Anand's works include the novels, Untouchable (1935), Coolie (1936), Two Leaves and a Bud (1937), The village (1939), Lament on the Death of a Master of Art (1939), Across the Black Waters (1940), The Sword and the Sickle (1942), The Big heart (1945), Seven Summers (1951), Private life of an Indian Prince (1953), The Old Woman and the Cow (1960), The Road (1961), Death of a Hero (1963), and a collection of stories, The lost child & other stones 1944 and the Golden Breath (1935) etc. Anand was awarded International peace prize by the world peace council in (1952) and was awarded Padma Bhusan in 1962. He was awarded Sahitya Academy Award in 1972 for his novel Morning Face.

Anand started writing this novel 'Untouchable' in 1928 and it was published in 1935. He got an impetus to write this novel from the ruthless suppressed. Untouchable was revised and Indianized during Anand's stay at Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram. It was Anand's reading of a simple narrative article in 'Young India by Gandhiji,' describing how he met 'Uka', a Sweeper boy and finding him with torn clothes and hungry, took him into his Ashram', that he hurried to visit the old man at Sabarmati Ashram. His features one handsome but sometimes ugly. His bones are stiff and his flesh numb with cold. On the positive side, Bakha is in stature dignified. The novel shows how the untouchable at the time the novel was written lived in inhuman conditions and were

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subjected to worst kinds of humiliation, sometimes on trifles and sometimes without any Cause whatsoever. But though the novel begins as a note of despair, it ends on a note of hope, with echoes from Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind' and 'Euganean Hills'.

E.M. Forster summarises Bakha's distinctive physical features and his pleasing demeanor thus:—Bakha is a real individual, Loveable, thwart, sometimes his grand, something weak, and thoroughly Indian. Even his physique is distinctive; we can recognize his broad intelligent face, graceful torso and heavy buttock, as he does his nasty jobs, or stumps out in artillery boots in hopes of pleasant walk through the city with a paper of cheap sweets in his hand. To Bakha work was worship and duty came first of all. He worked away earnestly, quickly, without loss of effort. Brisk, yet steady, his capacity for active application to the task he ahead in hand seemed to flow like constant water from a natural spring.... What a dexterous workman! the onlooker would have said. And though his job was dirty, he remained comparatively clean 'A bit superior to his Job', one would have said, not the kind of man who ought to be doing this: For he looked intelligent, even sensitive with a sort of dignity that dogs not belong to the ordinary scavenger, who is as a rule uncouth and unclean. Havildar Charat Singh, is impressed when he happens to see Bakha', "Here was a Low-Caste man who seemed clean." Bakha realises his position in the society. Bakha's religious homage to Gods is answered with the cries of "Polluted! Polluted! Polluted! Casteism in Indian giving rise to discrimination and social Segregation in Society has always verged on barbarism. Anand has proved himself an energetic

artist in the use of Language. The copious use of slang, swear words, Jargon of abuse, epitaph of low life and verbal Coinages take him nearer to his avowed purpose of evolving a language into an appropriate medium for propagating then cult of the underdog in his novel. The recurrence of the keynotes through plain narration as well as images and symbols reminds us of the methods used by Henry James, D.H. Lawrence and E.M. Forster. After *Untouchable*, *Coolie* is Anand's next successful effort to widen the horizon of his haunting theme of the underdog. Mulk Raj Anand's 'Collie', a novel of deep social anger against the plight of the poor in India. The story of Munoo finds all too familiar replays' in the present. Munoo's endearing qualities, innocence and tenderness, friendliness and cheerfulness, sympathy and helpfulness make us recall Dickens Juveniles, David Copperfield and Pip, Victor Hugo's *Garvorche* and Mark Twains *Huck Finn*. The novel opens with the real racers of the present Speech, Munoo's aunt call him thus; Munoo Ohe Munaoa Oh Mundul!" and them Munoo ohe Munoo Oh Mundu! where "have you died? Where have you drifted of the evil star"? Where have you died? where have gone ominous orphan". Come back and begone". While *Untouchable* is the microcosm of society, *coolie* is the macrocosm. While in *Untouchables*, Anand's vision is limited to a small section of society i.e., *Untouchable* and the theme is related to the gross torture and inhumanity perpetrated on his segregated section of society in *Coolie*, far from being limited to a small section, the theme has widened in thematic perspective and outlook space and time, action and multifarious variety of character. Thus, Mulk Raj Anand arises the question of the relevance of literature to life and to Society.

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