



Research Paper

Humanity in Mulk Raj Anand's Novel

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Abstract

Mulk Raj Anand is extremely outstanding as an Indian novelist, reformer, recognized essayist, craftsmanship commentator, editorial manager, a short story author, columnist, and political lobbyist. A writer's views and attitudes are determined by a number of influences which work upon him since childhood till the funeral and Mulk Raj Anand is no exception to it at all. His cultural, social, academic heritage altogether shapes his art and personality as well. Anand's novels better reveal this fact. We see a deep awareness of both the strength and the limitations of the traditional Indian way of life and a rich understanding of the impact of modernity on it. The locale for most of his stories is India. In exposing the limitations of tradition, Anand's mood is in turn ruthless, resentful, ironical and satirical, as the subject and the condition demand.

Religious bigotry, hypocrisy, feudal system, East-West encounter, the place of woman in the society, superstitions, poverty, sufferings, misery, hunger and exploitation are his common themes. Mulk Raj Anand is a novelist whose province is human nature. His novels embrace human experiences and convey a sense of life and character like a coloured glass. He has literally immersed into the flowing, vibrant core of humanity and he feels its grief to the very marrow of his bones. Being a humanist, Anand has skillfully depicted the Indian society which is hostile and callous to the lots of the low-born. Anand sees humanism as service for the greater good of all humanity using methods of reason, logic and rationality. For Anand humanism is not a philosophy but a way of thinking and doing. In short it is about how to lead a life which aims at the useful and productive.

Keywords

Humanism, humanitarian compassion, Untouchability, Indian caste system, Religion, Rationality, courage, pursuit of happiness, reason

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ARTICLE

Mulk Raj Anand was an Indian writer in English, notable for his depiction of the lives of the poorer castes in traditional Indian society. One of the pioneers of Indo-Anglian fiction, he, together with R. K. Narayan, Ahmad Ali and Raja Rao, was one of the first India-based writers in English to gain an international readership. Mulk Raj Anand, a socially engaged writer, has produced much literature and he has written more than a dozen novels and about seventy novels, as well as numerous essays and articles on a variety of topics. His novels fall into two categories, namely social and autobiographical novels. He focused on the suffering, misery, and misery of the poor resulting from the exploitation of the oppressed class of Indian society.

Anand is admired for his novels and short stories, which have acquired the status of being classic works of modern Indian English literature, noted for their perceptive insight into the lives of the oppressed and their analyses of impoverishment, exploitation and misfortune. Anand's literary career was launched by family tragedy, instigated by the rigidity of the caste system. His first prose essay was a response to the suicide of an aunt, who had been excommunicated by her family for sharing a meal with a Muslim woman. His first main novel, *Untouchable*, published in 1935, was a chilling expose of the day-to-day life of a member of India's untouchable caste. It is the story of a single day in the life of Bakha, a toilet-cleaner, who accidentally bumps into a member of a higher caste. This simple book, which captured the puissance of the Punjabi and Hindi idiom in English, was widely acclaimed and Anand won the reputation of being India's Charles Dickens.

Untouchable, Mulk Raj Anand's first novel, is a highly charged intellectual discourse on the karmic illusion of work and untouchability. In *Untouchable* the discourse recapitulates between the young moderate poet Iqbal Nath Sarshar and the lawyer R.N. Bashir Western and Gandhian Ideologies of Social and Moral Progress. *Untouchables*, the first novel and the great work of Mulk Raj Anand is a unique novel. In Joycean's "Stream of Consciousness" technique, he describes the events of a single day in the life of Bakha, the protagonist of the novel, in the city of Balushah. Bakha, an untouchable boy, is a victim of society surrounded by castes. The second and third novel by Mulk Raj Anand, *Coolie*, *Two Leaves and a Bud* are mainly devoted to the evils of the class system. These novels show that the class is a bigger evil than the caste system.

Coolie is a humanist talk about human work. *Coolie*, is a heartbreaking story of human suffering. The events and suffering of Munoo are important indicators of the man's sadistic pleasure in torturing domestic children. Munoo represents these countless children whose childhood is lost through endless physical work. Love, care and money are strange words to her. Mulk Raj Anand keeps revisiting the topic of human suffering. Anand says that a bit more sympathy and a little more tenderness from the company could have made Munoo a happy person and avoided his tragic end. Many Indian writers who write in English have dealt with the topic of untouchability and segregation. But nobody could approach Mulk Raj Anand. There are many writers in Indian Writing in English who have dealt with the theme of untouchability and segregation. But nobody has been able even to come near Mulk Raj Anand. With his literary power and perspectives he has tried his best to spring up the healthy human values and radical social transformation in our human society in which the haves and have not both can enjoy happily the bliss of human life on the same footings and fraternity peace, love and justice. In the novel *Coolie*, Anand tries to depict the social reality of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless. The novel shows the unbridgeable gap between the exploiters and the exploited, the rulers and the ruled. It narrates the life story of a young hill-boy Munoo, who is beaten from, pillar to post in his ill-fated search for liberation.

The third novel *Two Leaves and a Bud* is dedicated to the evils of the British class system and exploitation. The novel speaks of the suffering of Assam tea plantation workers. It gives expression to the unending anguish of the tea plantation laborers under extremely selfish British masters who treat the male fold among the laborers as bonded slaves and their women and daughters as objects of sexual gratification. The central character in the novel Gangu loses his ancestral property is exploited by greedy money-lenders and had been lured to the British owned tea plantation in Assam, by Sardar Buta, the coolie catcher. Gangu hopes for a better future in the estate. But it does not take long for him to realize that he has entered a real hell. The property does not have sanitary facilities and water supply. Coolies are almost always threatened by terrible diseases. Gangu comes to Assam to start a new life, but he loses his life. The workers are deprived of fundamental freedom and are subject to a cruel militaristic organization. They are mercilessly overworked and exploited.

The theme of *Untouchable* (1936) returned to *The Road* 25 years later. Although the decor and characters are modified, the theme of low caste exploitation by the high caste is the same. The street is about a single incident in the life of an untouchable in a small village. The incident that the road was built to facilitate the transport of Govardhan's milk to Gurgaon, a neighboring town, leads to a conflict between the Hindu caste and the weak, inviolate castes. The construction of the road reduces the distance between two places, but increases the gap between the two classes. The novel begins with the conflict between Hindu high-caste boys and bhikhu, the lower caste, untouchable because of the problem of the untouchables entering the temple. The humiliation of his mother makes Bhikhu angry. When a man with a generous heart intervenes, the boys run away mumbling bad insults.

In conclusion we can say that Mulk Raj Anand's main concern is social justice. All his heroes are victims of the age-old customs and traditions in Indian society. Their passive suffering generates sympathy for them in the hearts of the readers. This sympathy compels us to think for a change in society and at the same time guarantee justice to all the sections of people living in this society. Thus the idea of Anand is fully served when his hero compels readers to think for social justice. The present study of Anand's works with special attention to the various themes on which his novels are based has brought us to certain conclusion. Of all Indian creative writers writing in English, Anand is perhaps the most concerned with the minute observation of society and literature. His views on the subject are spread over many essays and articles. To find out the truth of human relations has become the mission of his life.

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