



## THEME OF COMMUNALISM AND VARIOUS KINDS OF HUMANISM IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S UNTOUCHABLE AND COOLIE-A STUDY

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### **Abstract**

*Mulk Raj Anand was a novelist and short storey writer from India. He was one of the earliest English writers to mix Punjabi and Hindustani idioms. His stories painted a realistic and empathetic picture of India's impoverished. He was the first Indian novelist to make a novel's hero an untouchable. Humanism is one of those realistic philosophies for people who think for themselves. It is the philosophy for those in love with life. Humanists take responsibility for their own lives and relish and adventure of being part of new discoveries seeking new knowledge and exploring new options. It is a way of looking at the world by emphasizing the importance of human beings their nature and place in the universe. It means the love of man with all his weaknesses, instincts and impulses. It may be defined as a system of thought in which human interest; values and dignity are held dominant. This research article is aim on Mulkraj Anand in terms of a critical study on the themes of Communalism and various kinds of Humanism in hi Untouchable and Coolie.*

**Keywords: Humanism, Philosophy, Realistic, Responsibility, and Identity.**

### **Introduction**

Humanism is a philosophical outlook that emphasizes the human being's authority as a dignified rational creature. Human reason, not any external authority, is unquestionably the final court of appeal for humanism. It has a secular, liberal, and tolerant spirit. Humanists express their opposition to sociopolitical and religious establishments through their knowledge and learning. Humanistic values are still significant in current thought, despite the fact that admiration of ancient writers is no longer a major force in literature.

Theme of Communalism and various kinds of Humanism in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable and Coolie,

Although humanism has long since lost its innocence, a certain naiveté regarding its "natural and evident" meanings persists, exacerbated by anthropological hubris. As a result, the tendency is to read humaneness, universal sympathy, and glory into humanism compulsively and exclusively. Human aggressions, as well as violence against (human) beings, are not registered in the process, which has been a source of guilt for humanism since its problematization. In the difficult landscape of Indian literature, grappling with humanism's terrible conscience is an unfulfilled obligation.

This is as true as any cliché can be: literature is a profoundly human artefact. But does this mean that every time you discuss human relationships in a literary work, you're automatically discussing humanism?

### **Mulk Raj Anand the Humanist**

Anand is a humanist who does not believe in the theory of Arts for art's sake but writes for the sake of life. Anand gives an individual stance to his vision of man trapped in a milieu, which is burdened with a part full of stratifications and contradictions.



His insistence on the dignity of man irrespective caste, creed and wealth, his plea for the practice of compassion as a living value, his conception of the whole man, the profound importance he attaches to art and poetry as an instrument for developing whole men, his crusade against superstition, feudalism and imperialism are some of the chief characteristics of Anand's humanism. Like a true humanist, he rejects God, fate, religion, past and future. He believes in the supremacy of man.

Like most other humanists he starts with a declaration of his immense faith in Protagorean dictum, 'Man is the measure of all things'. Anand admires man and believes that man is the maker and breaker of worlds. However, this admiration does not bind him to man's weakness. He does take cognizance of man's greed, lust, selfishness, cruelty and uncertainty. He has a genuine respect for man, love for him and faith in his ability to live a life full of dignity

According to Anand, man can solve his many problems with the help of imagination, reason and advancements of science. The theme of his work is the whole man and the whole gamut of human relationship. To him highest reality in the world is 'the whole man' and not God and the supernatural. Since he believes that man is the master of his destiny, he refuses to believe in fatalism, a malady that has plagued the Indian masses for centuries. Fatalism weakens man's faith in self and insidiously persuades him to become a passive dependent on unseen and non-existent forces. So naturally, fatalism is an essentially non-humanistic concept. According to him, casteism is a heinous crime and a severe blow to the concept of the dignity of man. So, casteism must be rejected.

Anand's humanism recognized the fact that the pain and cruelty are two other serious maladies of the universe. Nevertheless, it is not unavoidable. However, with aid of advancing science and technology, and with practice of love and compassion for the weak and low, it is possible to reduce and even remove misery and unhappiness.

To him, education is a powerful instrument for social reconstruction. In his opinion the conquest of pain should be the supreme goal of all individuals and all nations. He believes that belief in the brotherhood of men is a great virtue, which needs to be sincerely practiced by all. He further says that all people must have freedom-social, economic, political, intellectual and emotional-without any encroachment upon each other's freedom.

### **Taking up the cause of suppressed**

Anand took up the cause of the oppressed early on in his career that to a large extent influenced his creative pursuit. But many in India have considered his work as propaganda. Even the Marxist-oriented All India Progressive Writers Association declared him to be a decadent in 1949 because he found evil and cunning both in the poor as well as in the rich. Although ideologically influenced by the left Anand was concerned about the humanistic values. He believed in man's latent goodness, which must triumph over evil. According to Anand, Socialism alone can provide the right climate for man's total development. Thus, Marxism is the foundation of Anand's humanism and for him an individual's development is at the centre of Marxist thought. In Anand's work there is strong evidence of a close relationship between Marxism and Humanism. Anand wrote extensively on art and maintained that art did reflect life; but could not be taken as life itself. The fact that Anand himself did not belong to the marginalized sections of society provided him the necessary understanding that there was a distance between art and life. Anand's political ideologies therefore have a definite place in the study of his novels. They arise from his concept of literature that reveals life in all its contradictions. To him, a



work of art is first a social event and the duty of a novelist is to create but not to determine. His obligation to his fellow men lies in changing the world, making it a better place for each one of us.

### **Humanism in ‘Untouchable’**

‘Untouchable’, brings to light the sufferings and sorrows that the Hindu caste systems inflict on the untouchables and outcastes through a poor sweeper boy, Bakha. To comment on Bakha, who is the pariah protagonist of the novel, namely “They think we are mere dirt because we clean their dirt” sums up Anand’s understanding of the grim realities of India’s social life.

Anand portrays Bakha as a sensitive outsider introducing him as the most conspicuous man in the out-caste colony. He has a sort of dignity, wonderful wholeness of body and nobility which does quite fit in with his filthy profession. The animal imagery in his description is a device to hint that Bakha is an amoral victim of the society, which treats him just as a butcher might treat a dog sniffing round his shop.

He is a tiger at bay, an enmeshed lion and a wild horse. He is extremely sensitive and his aspiration includes a decent life with a good education. He wants to be treated as a human being.

In spite of his good merits, he is insulted and put beyond the possibility of proper recognition. Several incidents in the novel explain this fact. The high caste priest’s vulgarity, the inhumanity of the crowd delighting in his humiliation and finally the rebuff for his purely selfless act of saving the injured boy, have all made it clear to him that though he is in the society, he is not of it.

There was an inseparable barrier between himself and the crowd, the barrier of caste. Here was a part of consciousness, which he could share and yet not understand. He had been lifted from the gutter, through the barriers of space, to partake of life which was his and yet not his. He was in the midst of a humanity, which included him in its folds and yet debars him from entering into a sentient living, quivering contact with it.

According to Anand, casteism is a heinous crime and it is realistically portrayed in this novel. It is a sociological novel, and it is concerned with the injustices and exploitation to which one large section of the Hindu society is subjected by the other section enjoying a higher status in the social hierarchy. It deals not merely with the life and suffering of one individual, Bakha, but through Bakha, it presents before a gigantic problem of Hindu society.

This untouchable Bakha is almost always a dispossessed man, deprived even of the basic right to live like a human being in freedom, honor and dignity, in utter poverty and isolation, though. The innate creative impulse in him choked his sensitiveness to beauty strangled and his tenderness or love crushed. Yet, the resilience of his spirit cannot be broken; it has remained in fact, despite centuries of oppression, holding out a promise for the future of humanity.

Anand as true humanist, rejected fate or God. In his belief, the root cause for the sufferings for Bakha is not fate, but the cruelties of mankind. They considered him as an inferior to their caste. Instead of creating brotherhood affection to him, they treat him only as an untouchable.

The series of humiliation bakha endures within a span of a day in his life denote and connote Bakha’s life as one of blighted hopes and despair. As insults reach the peak with the shouts of “polluted”



polluted by the high caste Hindu devotees within the precincts of the temple, Bakha's rage-the rage of a lion in a cage not only reflects his pathetic state of helplessness but also the ogriesh nature of jati-system that decimates human worth.

Anand later enhances Bakha's religious stature by placing Bakha in confrontation with Colonel Hutchinson, the chief of the Salvation Army, whose portrait is a masterpiece of satire on Christian missionary activity. He behaves like a clown and his main job was to proselytize the natives into Christianity. We are given a chance to have a glimpse of his sensation-loving wife shouting at the husband and making fun of his missionary work. Bakha showed himself too strong in will for the missionary's manoeuvres. He thought he was happy with the religion of his father who similarly had occasion to resist the missionary in his time thinking that the religion and his fervor of devotion that are placed in contrast to the barbaric treatment he received from the caste Hindu.

As a humanist, he believes that man can solve the problem by universal brotherhood love and compassion. Even though the high caste Hindus considered him only as an untouchable, there are also good fellows' life Havildar Chart Singh, who gives much love and consideration to him. The Tommies also treated him like a human being, while to the caste Hindu, he is untouchable. Prof.S.Laxmana Murthy quotes the words of Anand that, "the tragedy of my hero (Bakha) lay in the fact that he was never allowed to attain anything near the potential of his qualities of manhood".

Bakha's world is much too narrow for his aspirations. So, he longs for a new world. Anand in the conclusion of 'Untouchable' subtly examines the various possible solutions religious conversion, rapid industrialization and the Gandhian way. The emphasis on the Hutchinson's religion is on sin, love and equality of birth where as it is on cleanliness, morality and dignity of work in Gandhi's approach to the problem of the emancipation of the untouchables. Of these, Bakha likes only the idea of cleanliness and equality but he feels flattered by Gandhi's sympathy.

It is only the third solution offered by the poet, IqbalNathSarshar that engages Bakha's attention-the flush system, Anand appears to believe that the rapid industrialization alone would pave a way for secular situation and introduces flush system as a desire image of the change. He is unhappy with Hutchinson's religious program of equality by conversion. He is equally skeptical of the slow regeneration of the traditional Hindu society in the Gandhian way. Bakha's hopes lie in machines. "Perhaps I can find the poet on the way and ask him about the machine".

In 'Untouchable', Anand creates a character who is seeking identity for himself in a world which has for ages suppressed his kind- a degrading social ill against which philosophers, poets and reformers have fought over a thousand years.

Anand's heroes are always living and adjusting with the present and struggling for the future. They do not defy the codes set for them immediately; rather they want the codes to be changed by the oppressors.

### **Humanism in 'Coolie'**

'Coolie' is a proletarian novel depicting the tragic plight of the millions of coolies who are landless and run away from hunger and starvation of villages. Thus, driven by poverty, they become coolies and laborers only to be victimized by the social forces of exploitation, Capitalism and Industrialism and then die somewhere in a corner, unknown and unwept.



'Coolie' is the narrative of life and death of a coolie, Munoo, over a period of two years. In Coolie as in other novels, Anand is not only a realist but a social reformer also. Naturally, he preaches for the betterment of the lot of persons like Munoo. His tragedy is Anand's passionate plea for reform. Humanism is his answer to this problem. This is expressed through typical situations and characters.

'Coolie' expresses his belief in the essential dignity of man whether he belongs to the rich or the poor class. In this novel, he selects a poor boy, Munoo, as the hero, and he dominates this novel from the beginning to the end. To Anand the pain and suffering from universal brotherhood, love and compassion. His life is full of sufferings and in the beginning to the novel itself; we can see how his aunt Gujri ill-treats him.

If his aunt Gujri and his Bibi Uttam Kaur treated him with love and compassion, his tragedy would have been avoided. In his adventure, Munoo meets not only cruel and bad people but also kind and good fellows like Prabha Dayal and his wife in Daulatpur, Chota Babu in Sham Nagar and Ratan in Bombay.

Anand's philosophy of humanism rejected fatalism and it gives importance to man and his ability. According to Anand, Munoo suffers not because of fate but because of society. It is the society, which leads him to his tragic end. Unlike Bakha in "Untouchable", Munoo was of the high caste; because of the poverty, the society did not consider him as a human being. Early in the novel he realized the truth that.

Humanism as a philosophy runs as a red thread throughout 'Coolie'. Compassion for the poor is the major strain in his treatment of his themes. This is his message to the suffering humanity. Munoo's tragedy is universalized and the human element in men of low class is brought out by showing their essential dignity and innocence. It is a novel of social protest. The anger with which he has portrayed Munoo's sufferings and exploitation is a direct expression of love of man, a basic tenet of his humanism.

Although all his novels present him as a humanist, his earlier novels reveal what may be called proletarian humanism. As he observed, "it is true that my humanism seems to be biased in favor of the poor and the oppressed, but, then is there not the example of the man who turned towards the woman taken adultery away from those who sought to condemn her".

## Conclusion

Anand, the defender of the underdog, has always written to underline man's intrinsic dignity and to generate compassion and love in the hearts of his readers for the oppressed and underprivileged. His humanism makes him a novelist on a mission, and his objective is to write for the benefit and upliftment of society's underdogs. A really humanist work, in his opinion, corresponds to the necessities of our day.

His ideology of humanism arose from his intentional desire to assist peasants, coolies, and oppressed elements of society by instilling human dignity and self-awareness in them. He writes for the sake of man, to refine and ennoble him, and to inspire him to take measured actions that would benefit all of humanity.

Anand's fiction revolves around his humanism. He's a novelist of the underdogs, a champion of the downtrodden, and he's almost as good as Charles Dickens. His heroes are the bottom dogs of Indian



society - a sweeper, a coolie, a labourer, a villager - but they are all human. He had grown aware of religious hypocrisy and intolerance in Indian society, as well as his own injustices, which were based on antiquated systems like untouchability, feudalism, and exploitation of the have-nots by the haves. By critiquing these social issues in his writings, he hopes to eliminate them. As a result, he is fundamentally a lower-class novelist, a lyricist of their sorrows and joys. To him, the novel is an instrument of his humanism, of man's enlightenment, and of his betterment.

He also shows his love, sympathy, and compassion for the socially disadvantaged sections through his works. His main goal in all of his books and short stories is to expose the different socioeconomic challenges that face Indian society. His main motivation is to use art to help the underdogs in India.

The main preoccupation of Mulk Raj Anand is social justice. All of his heroes are victims of Indian society's long-standing customs and traditions. The readers' sympathy for them is generated by their quiet suffering. This empathy leads us to consider societal transformation while also ensuring fairness for all members of society. As a result, Anand's concept is fully realised when his hero inspires readers to think about social justice.

The current investigation of Anand's works, with a focus on the themes of Communalism and various types of Humanism on which his books are founded, has led us to a certain conclusion. Anand is possibly the most interested with the minute observation of society and literature of all Indian creative authors writing in English. His thoughts on the subject can be found in a number of essays and publications. His life's mission has become to discover the truth about human relationships.

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