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## **Humanism in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable***

**Monika Raghuwanshi\* & Dr. Kranti Vats\*\***

*\*Research Scholar, Department of Language, B.U. Bhopal, M.P. (India)*

*\*\*Research Guide, Department of Language, B.U. Bhopal, M.P. (India)*

### **ABSTRACT:**

Dr. Mulk Raj Anand exposes his message of humanism, socialism, brotherhood, economics, freedom and equality in his novel *Untouchable*. In this present paper he gives message of Humanism. In *Untouchable* he is expressing his central philosophy of it through the vehicle of fiction. In this novel he expresses artistically some of the basic idea of his variety of humanism. He establishes the dignity and humanity of common men like sweepers as essential human beings when they are seen in their true colours and not as the down-trodden and dehumanised. Bakha is a superb specimen of humanity. The cruel inhuman treatment meted out to him on the basis of his caste has damaged him. Anand express his sympathy with the social outcastes who are also human beings and hence they should be treated as such.

Humanism is the philosophy of man. It reaffirms faith in man as man who was relegated to a damned creature by the concept of original sin. Man is the basic and central concern of Humanism. It means belief in the dignity of man, his happiness here and now and his individuality. It has a profound sense of optimism and a positive belief in human values. It arises from the love of man. For his happiness man should not turn towards God, religion and fate. He himself is a storehouse of the potentialities for good and his happiness. It rejects caste, creed, karma, hell and Heaven.

Anand's philosophy of humanism will facilitate a better understanding of his works. Anand is a significant humanist; he champions the cause of the lowly and the down-trodden. For him it is the solution for all the evils on earth. As a man he restored the basic identity of man irrespective of his low caste, poverty and lack of education. It is through the tragic stories of his low characters that he expresses his message of hope. His novels are profoundly permeated by his passionate love for man. He comes to fiction through philosophy and it has given it depth and deep-rooted purposiveness. It reveals man's vital dignity and nobility. According to his approach to man, man is a creative source of infinite possibilities. Anand's novels are an expression on this thinking. He is a humanist who reveals the essential dignity of the victims of Indian society. This Humanism is central to Anand's novels as is central to it the essential man. The charge of propaganda is discarded by an artistic pervasiveness of it which peeps out of characters and situations which Anand favours personally. *Untouchable* show this great quality. Bakha is innocent, dignified and lovable inspite of the conscious humiliation heaped on them. Anand relieves the lot of men by bestowing dignity on the victim. His Humanism shows that Man is men, be he a sweeper, a prince or a coolie. Prof. Iyengar pays a compliment to his humanism: "It is this marvellous capacity to bring out the essentially human element in such a variety of characters that makes Anand the laureate of

humanity, and his fiction cumulatively the comedie humaine of twentieth century India” (Gupta ix).

The humanistic ideas of love, equality, brotherhood, compassion and pity have been glorified in his novels. Anand was interested in man as a man individual and he had the disliking for all system, religion and philosophy but in the wisdom of the heart and seeks to defend human dignity. In all his novels humanism is borne. His fiction shows how the large group of Indian feel like aliens in their own land. Anand was shackled at this situation and in his fiction he attempts to express his hatred and to explore the importance and dignity of every individual.

In *Untouchable* Anand is showing his adoring love of mankind. It is deeply coloured by his philosophy of humanism. One cannot help but notice Anand’s love for man as man irrespective of his caste, creed and profession. Bakh’s character underlines this belief in the dignity of man. He expressed universal brotherhood and love through the characters of Charat Singh and the woman in the lane. Mulk Raj Anand’s novels are characterised by humanism but here the idea of it becomes the very base of his fictional experiment. It raises a basic issue regarding human existence. One can go on reading this novel without being bored because it is picture of man in modern society moth-eaten by value of hypocrisy and lack of socialism and humanism.

Bakha belongs to the lowest dregs of humanity. The selection of a hero for a novel is a revolutionary step taken by Mulk Raj Anand. But he is not a symbol of the suffering of his class. He is an individual. E. M. Forster says, “...but his hero is no suffering abstraction. Bakha is a real individual, lovable, thwarted, sometimes grand, sometimes weak, and thoroughly Indian. Even his physique is distinctive; we can recognise his broad intelligent face, graceful torso, and heavy buttocks, as he does his nasty jobs, or stumps out in artillery boots in hopes of cheap sweets in his hand” (7). Bakha is neither a hero nor a victim but just a human being with whom the novelist has his sympathies.

*Untouchable* is the most important element of Anand’s humanism. He views casteism as a social crime against humanity because it has evil effects on human mind. The tradition of untouchability on the basis of the caste-system retracts the idea of progress. In the novel Bakha suffer so many indignities and humiliations in a single day merely because he is a sweeper. He is insulted abused and finally slapped for touching a high caste Hindu. In *Untouchable* Anand who as a humanist does not believe in God, hell and heaven rejecting the doctrine of karma and karmaphala. Mokhya or the act of justice as trite and bogas, no longer fits for the awaking of masses. The element of fate of ‘karma’ is presented in his novel but only to be rejected and savagely criticism. The theme of man’s inhumanity to man is the most important stream of thought in the novel. This has been depicted in the form of caste hatred or untouchability.

The main focuses of Anand’s novels are deeply related to inhumanity, discrimination and injustice to man by man. In the large range of his novels, Mulk Raj Anand has become successful to get out almost all the real and important aspect of human life. He observes: “man excels in his creative imagination, in his capacity to transform himself, in the energy with which he can raise himself to tremendous height of dignity and redeem the world from its misery and pain” (Apology for Heroism 91).

Anand comes forward as a humanist not only in the select of the theme of untouchability but also in the selection of his protagonist, a sweeper by, Bakha. The novel deals with events and experience of a single day in Bakha's life which serves a mirror to the pathetic conditions of untouchables who from not only the lowest stratum of society but also the bottom of moral scale. The novel really, represents Anand's effort at reform a whole range of postulates of Hindu culture.

Bakha is as much a representative figure as he is an individual. He differs the common run of sweeper in that he is clean, is a champion at all games, his principles and a sense of duty. But in his physical inability to revolt, his obedience, his habitual subservience to superiors who either insult or patronize him he is one with the vast majority of the outcaste. After heredity and two thousand year of suppression have had their impact on him, there are few resources left in him. He goes about his job wearing the smile of humility customary among his kind.

As a writer of fiction Anand writings have acute sense of reality. This writings demand the confirmation of wellbeing to the society. He has a mastermind in painting the miseries, disabilities, humiliation and various types of exploitation which have been the lot of the poor, suppressed and exploited sections of Indian society. He dealt with the simple life of villagers, whose poverty and caste feeling touched him deeply. The orphans, untouchables and urban labourers as deeply rooted in our culture.

Anand had a great love respect for early Indian culture, which played subsequently a remarkable rate in the formation of his philosophy of life. He observes: "so that the kind of humanism, on which I believe the kind of world I hope for... is yet integral to the Indian tradition in which I grew up" (Written from Indian Air 2).

Anand created several idealistic works besides works of fiction, in which he depicted mainly the problems of humanism. He says "This human philosophy for India today as the acceptance of man as a centre of all our thinking, feeling and activity and the service for the greater good of all humanity" (Is there a Contemporary Indian Civilization 156).

In the novel of Anand we find that the relationship of man and his surrounding is conceived of an antagonistic a confrontation of two forces opposing each other. In his novels the protagonist is an only character confronting either another individual or a group of people who represents a distinct social group a class or a caste. Anand's novel represent and advocate the opposite with the writer insisting on man's capacity and self determination to work out this destiny of himself.

Anand shows his wide observing power of humanity in describing his characters. He selects his characters among the common people. He tries to represent those characters when he knew from early childhood. He shows his novels that characters are not the product of circumstances. He knows the nature and sentiments of his characters. They are the true representative of their respective creed. He does not give the sentimental portraits of his characters. His characters include waifs, untouchable and labourers. They are indicating of the people of the real world. It has an interesting variety of characters not in terms of colourful humanity but in term of the class to which they belong.

Anand is the champion of truth. He has exposed all that he has experienced about the realities of human life. It is true that he has seen life very closely and felt deeply, he interprets the problems of man and society and comes out with adult views of life with his fixed belief in the appropriateness of man. His devotion seems to be to man and his integrity by determining and concentrating on their feeling to overcome with all obstacles, which lie in their path. Anand is a novelist with work and his work exposes his writing for the betterment of downtrodden whom he wanted to take up at the highest place, so that they will be honoured by the members of the Indian society, as free human being and no longer as slaves.

The base of his humanism is his love and comparison for mankind, a love transcending all constricting limitation of caste, creeds and economics and social barriers and geographical boundaries of nation, all the barriers which are manmade and separate man from man. Man makes or unmakes himself. Thus the subject, the cause, the solution everything is man or is found in man. That is why Anand in many of his articles, repeats with religious zeal. "I believe in man!" Man makes himself, controls his own destiny and can perfect himself into the great individual liberating himself and other with him into an ever new, expanding universe" (Roots and Flowers 5).

In *Untouchable* Anand not only presents artistically the problem of untouchability through Bakha but also exposes ruthlessly the injustice, the inhuman treatment, the degrading humiliation and cruelty which stem from it. The novel is a powerful comment of the caste-system. Here Anand treats untouchability as a social crime against human dignity by showing the perversion in Hindu society. Untouchability destroys human dignity.

In this paper we analysed Anand work is carefully considered philosophic attitude of comprehensive humanism which springs from the objects he treat of Indian life and tradition and which owns its own integral system of value. Now we can say that Anand is the champion of truth. He has shown all that he has experienced about the realities of human life. In *Untouchable* he focus the problem of Humanism. Thus, all such creative fiction with bulk quality, realism, humanism and social protest has been brought alive in Mulk Raj Anand novels.

### Works Cited

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