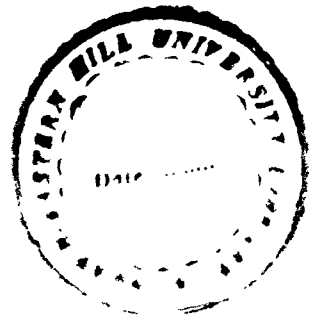


**BEYOND NATURALISM, TOWARDS HOPEFUL
HUMANISM :**

A Selective Study of Mulk Raj Anand's Novels.

Jova C. Marak



AN ABSTRACT

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Supervisor
Dr. Sujata Gurudev,

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
NORTH EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY, TURA CAMPUS
TURA – 794002

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A B S T R A C T

BEYOND NATURALISM TOWARDS HOPEFUL HUMANISM:

A Selective Study of Mulk Raj Anand's Novels.

The main thrust of the thesis: an emphasis on how Anand goes beyond the confines of Literary Naturalism towards hopeful humanism which would remain his final pronouncement on mankind, his credo which he wrote into his novels.

Chapterisation

Chapter I: Introduction to Literary Naturalism in the European, American and the Indian context.

Chapter II: Social heredity: - Textual study of Anand's novels keeping in mind the evils of casteism.

Chapter III: Social environment: study of the under-privileged classes, potentially trapped heroes by religious and traditional conventions which form the social environment.

Chapter IV: Hopeful Humanism: Focuses on humanism in general, Anand's special brand of humanism and Bhakti being the integrating factor relating naturalism and humanism.

Conclusion: The vital importance of Anand in the present day context. The need for a scientific and pragmatic approach. The novels of Mulk Raj Anand being a necessary fore runner to the contemporary Dalit debates and search for cultural identity.

Methodology: (a) Application of the theoretical framework of Literary Naturalism and Humanism to Anand's novels. (b) Case book and textual study of his novels.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

So I struggled to weigh up the double burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European traditions and the Himalayas of my Indian past, all my senses aching to realize the significance of the history of my country....¹

Literary Naturalism claims to present a more accurate picture of life. It implies not only a special selection of subject matter, in a special literary manner; but a mode of fiction that was developed by a school of writers in accordance with a specific philosophical thesis which held that man belongs to the order of nature and does not have any connection with the religious or spiritual world. He is therefore, merely a higher order animal whose character and fortunes are determined by two kinds of natural forces; heredity and environment. He inherits his personal traits and compulsive instincts and is subject to the social and economic forces, the class and milieu into which he is born.

Naturalism in other words, is a scientific and objective representation of contemporary reality and life by using the experimental method. Although the trends initiated by early naturalists continue till today, the form and techniques have undergone some changes and modifications. While Hippolyte Taine had fostered the idea of heredity and environment as vital factors in the development of mentalities, the fountain head of Literary Naturalism can be traced to Emile Zola.

Zola had imbibed the scientific ideas on heredity and environment. His purpose was to show that heredity and environmental influences, gave common characteristics to a family of individuals who appeared apparently dissimilar. Hence naturalism as Zola termed, involves the application to the literature of two scientific principles; determination or the belief that character, temperament and ultimately, behaviour are determined by (a) the forces of heredity and environment, (b) the historical moment, coupled with the experimental method which entails the objective recording of precise data in controlled conditions. Naturalism in America, however, was not subject to the same literary credo as was accepted in other countries; the early documents of the movement in America, by Garland and Edward Howe, were marked by a sense of bitter protest against the desperation of contemporary life in the Middle West but in all these writers native forces mingle with the theories of European naturalism. C.C Walcutt, however, explains that naturalism:

Moves among three patterns of ideas the religion of reason, nature, the attack on the dualist of the past; the recognition and slowly growing fear of natural forces that man might study but could not control. ²

From these definitions mentioned above, certain characteristic features of naturalism became clear, however, Literary Naturalism made a late appearance in the Indian scenario.

The naturalism of Tagore and Premchand was profoundly influenced by their mystic attitude towards the ultimate truths of human existence and destiny. It was left to the younger generation of novelists to make the direct frontal assaults on a reality

which lay rooted in the present and the immediate. The fiction of these younger realists and naturalists inspite of its ephemeral enthusiasms has a raw, unshaped yet a heady power about it. Its force was straight, direct and disturbing and it is to this group of writers, that Mulk Raj Anand's novels must be traced.

Literary Naturalism varies with each individual author, because even though it aims at an objective representation of life, the point of view of the individual novelist differ from each other. For example, in the Indian context:

The novel emerges as a new literary form, not because bourgeoisie, patrician and people as such are different from the nights of chivalrous romance but because the sociological awareness, the totally new factor became the focusing development of the plot. In the simplest possible terms, society is now the destiny of the individual, the horizon under. Which the individual lives in determined by the pressure, power and the control of society.³

Social heredity and environment is thus a major shaping factor in a man's life. Mulk Raj Anand, the pioneer of the Literary Naturalism in the Indian context of the view that man does not suffer due to his tragic flaw as per Aristotlian theory, but because his destiny is controlled and shaped by society, which makes for his social heredity and environment.

Keeping in mind naturalism in the European and the American context, Literary Naturalism in India can be considered as an extreme form of naturalism best exemplified by Anand in his major novels. Naturalism emphasizes the twin forces of:

1. Heredity and Environment.

2. An important aspect of Naturalism is determinism
3. Naturalism emphasizes Natural Man
4. Naturalism flowered in the European context with Zola as its major exponent.
5. Stephen Crane emphasizes the environmental factor in Literary Naturalism in the American context.
6. In the Indian context Anand gave to Naturalism an Indian flavour which he emphasized social heredity or casteism and Environment as eminent factors in individual development.

CHAPTER II

Social Heredity

“What status should be attributed to those who are placed even lower in the social hierarchy? There is no karma considered for them, they must reside away from the other castes in a space....⁴

The characteristic features of all living beings are unalterably fixed by heredity. Our family traits were determined by the heredity constitution of our ancestors and our personal traits by our parents. Race, Sex and mental capacity which we are born are fixed and cannot be changed. In the same way, the social heredity of caste system cannot be altered and thus passes unto their progeny. This caste system is usually characterized by hierarchy whose members has hereditary professions and is segregated strictly by rules restricting social interchange to persons of the same caste. Their social status is based on the complex ritual of purity and impurity. These untouchables have been ascribed not only the maximum but are also seen as permanent pollutants, an assumption which is frequently based on the special nature of their hereditary professions. It is because of this, that the untouchables have been excluded from the social and ritual space of the other castes. The present study will clearly indicate how the social heredity of caste system becomes a great catalyst in the development and shapes the destiny of man. In this respect, Anand transcends naturalism and succeeded in striking a universal note. This is reflected in both, his novels *Untouchable (1935)* and *The Road (1963)* where social heredity and its role in making and unmaking the destiny of man became the core of his fictional writing.

The protagonists of these novels are highly sensitive. Compassion and love, endurance and suffering are the fundamental experiences in their lives but the hereditary stigma which binds them for generations, prevents them from being socially accepted, and suppresses their freedom. The problem of the untouchable is the age-old social evil of the segregation of an individual who follows the hereditary profession of scavenging. The scavenger is an outcaste whose mere touch pollutes the people – a superstition that the three thousand years of racial and caste superiority have endangered. It is against this inhuman system that the protagonist of Anand's novels rebels in silence. *Untouchable (1935)* seems to be unique in the Indian literary experience of Naturalism. The novel encapsulates a single day in the life of the scavenger Bakha, and the whole drama of the misery of untouchability takes place which minutely describes the various humiliations suffered by the hero of the novel, in his regular rounds of cleaning the town. A man brushing past him, abuses and even slaps him; the Brahmin priest tries to molest his sister Sohini and when foiled, cries out 'polluted, polluted' in order to get Bakha beaten up by the public; the woman whom he requests for a loaf of bread throws it down from the upper storey of her house as to a dog and all the mute longings of Bakha for education are never fulfilled. These are the episodes in the drama of his psychological tragedy as determined by his own social status. Feeling strongly sensitive to the humiliations, Bakha made desperate attempts to retaliate but his revolutionary feelings lie buried in his heart. Aware of the limitations of the given social structure, he is unable to translate that protest into action, Saros Cowasjee comments:-

A superb specimen of humanity he seemed whenever he made the high resolve to say something, to go and do something, his fine form rising like a tiger at bay. And yet there was futility written on his face. He could not overstep the barrier which the conventions of his superiors had built up to protect their weakness against him. He could not invade the magic circle which protects a priest from attack by anybody, especially by a low-caste man, so in the highest moment of his strength, the slave in him asserted itself, and he lapsed back, wild with torture, biting his lips, ruminating his grievances.⁵

Bakha encounters a deterministic universe which does not even recognize the identity of individuals. His social cosmos is governed by traditions and taboos imposed on him.

As a sequel to the events of the day, Bakha wanders homeless in the plains when his father turns him out of the house. In the evening when he returns home, there emerged three possible solutions to the problems of untouchability, a social malaise corroding the souls of millions. The conversion to Christianity, but unable to understand who Christ is, Bakha turns to Gandhi; yet again he finds, something mystical about Mahatma's solutions. Ultimately, he accepts the mechanization of the sanitary system as suggested by the poet. He returns to his father, the old world of filth and dirt but with the vision of the future India, free from the shackles of the past. The next novel which deals with the social heredity of the caste system is *The Road (1963)*, which is a reworking of the theme of the untouchable where Anand dramatizes, the destiny of an untouchable Bhikhu, who is a Bakha in a changed situation. Bhikhu unlike Bakha is seen as being more aware of his community status as he walks away at the end of *The Road (1963)* which is

indeed a road to destiny where liberation will become a reality. The quarter of a century that separate the two novels meant a lot of difference but not in the content of social naturalism that shapes the life of man.

The critical analysis which emerges from a textual study of the above novels are as follows:-

- (1) The heroes are aware of the inherited burden of casteism.
- (2) They accept it as an inevitable.
- (3) Though humiliated and broken in spirit they do not retaliate but wait for the system to change.
- (4) Bakha's acceptance of one of the three possible solutions offered.
 - (a) Conversion to Christianity.
 - (b) Gandhi's identifying of himself with the untouchables.
 - (c) The poet's suggestion of rapid industrialization.
- (5) Unlike the heroes of other literary naturalistic novels, Anand's heroes do not share much of the reaction of the "Natural Man".
- (6) While European and American Literary Naturalists have emphasized biological hereditary Anand's characters suffer from the social hereditary of caste system carrying with it divine sanctions and therefore are unable to react.

CHAPTER III

Social Environment

So great is the power of environment in the development of personality that it may outweigh inheritance.⁶

The results of the development of each individual are not determined by the heredity alone but also by a corresponding determinism of social environment itself and as long as it endures, the social man cannot escape its influence for he is trained within it and habituated to it and none of his desires are fulfilled unless he takes it into account.

Mulk Raj Anand while emphasizing the determinism of social environment in *Coolie (1936)* presents the individual's harrowing experiences in a hostile social set up. Munoo, the hero of the novel moves in an arch, from the village to town, from the town to the city and then upto the mountains where he is finally swept away to his doom. He explores the limit of his existence before he goes under. Munoo moves from Khangra Hills, with a suggestion that he shortly leaves his aunt and uncle in order to take up a job at the nearest town of Sham Nagar. This chapter immediately conveys with dramatic irony, the Arcadian happiness of an orphan against whom the malevolent form of society conspire. The second chapter relates the actions and reactions of Munoo as the domestic servant in the house of Babu Nathu Ram, a clerk in the Imperial Bank. The third chapter is concerned with the independent career as a worker in Prabha's pickle factory at Daulatpur. The fourth chapter however deals with the most eventful period of his life in Bombay; it makes the gradual transition of

Munoo from the innocence to the adolescence of experience under the loving care of Lakshmi, Hari and Ratan. And the last chapter is a study of the pretentious parvenus of the Anglo- Indian community in Simla, notably, Mrs. Mainwaring's unprincipled and immoral existence which finally results in the premature death of Munoo. The structural clarity and simplicity, the shifting scenes of action, the documentary manner of narration and the dire law of determinism possibly mark this out as an admirably panoramic prototype of proletarian naturalism. The central problem is the inhuman mechanics of economics determinism, the fatal evil is, not caste, but class. Poverty is the root cause of Munoo's tragedy whose life is severely circumscribed by the adverse circumstances.

In his other novel, *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) which is thematically a sequel to *Coolie* (1936), Anand takes up where *Coolie* (1936) ends: the Anglo - Indian community's apathy and even antipathy in its relation with the Indians. The racial arrogance and the capitalistic exploitation of the British ultimately results in the death of the protagonist Gangu. Although the jealousies and squabbles of the Anglo-Indian officers in the McPherson Tea Plantation in Assam are elaborately expressed, the central character in this dramatic novel is the coolie, Gangu who migrates with his wife and children to Assam after eviction from his small rocky tract of land in the Punjab; his struggle to eke out a livelihood in the Tea Plantation and his eventual death at the hands of the inhuman assistant of the Estate, Reggie Hunt constitute the main action of the novel. It is replete with the atrocities of the English planters as represented by Reggie Hunt and Croft Cooke. The bitter feelings and the violent passions generated by the most object conditions of the plantation

life, dominate and decide the collective destiny of the coolies and their masters. The beautiful and the picaresque Tea Gardens becomes the dreadful 'green hill', following Reggie's ruthless suppression and reckless shooting of the agitated coolies, some of whom want to get away from the prison – house, that is plantation.

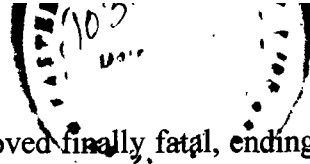
Gangu is a victim not a willing ally in his own degradation and misery like his counter parts Bakha, Bhikhu and Munoo. All of them are the victims of the oppressed and the doomed outcaste's proletariat whose fate and destiny is enslaved by the social heredity and environment.

Another victim of Anand's sociological environment appeared again in his trilogy – *The Village (1939)*, *Across the Black Waters (1940)* and *The Sword and The Sickle (1942)* which is perhaps the most faithful study of the individual in terms of the traditional social values and the new socialist forces. The thematic significance of the trilogy mainly lies in the protagonist's revolt against the conventional social values which in the end takes a pro-communist turn. The confrontation between the individual and the society decides the destiny of both the individual and society which forms the central pattern of action of the trilogy. *The Village (1939)* mainly reveals the inner conflict of Lalu as a result of the deterministic operation of the conventional environment. *Across the Black Waters (1940)* is as much a symbol of Lalu's spiritual education as it is a truthful tribute to the valor and the military genius of the Indian soldiers abroad during the First World War and finally, *The Sword and the Sickle (1942)* is a return of the native, Lalu Singh, to his own motherland after the war with an eagerness to disseminate the message of the revolution for the

upliftment of the Indian peasantry. The moving motive of the whole trilogy is the sociological determination of the individual's action as against his own free and natural impulses. However, a brief survey of the three novels will give a complete picture of conflict between man and society. What it attempts to portray is a dialectical process of man - society relationship which depends on the creative energy of the individual as well as on the potential forces of social system.

The Big Heart (1945) chronologically comes about a decade after *Untouchable (1935)* but the varied facets of naturalism are essentially the same. The issue is not caste, but the conflict between tradition and modernity, between the community of coppersmiths and the bourgeois capitalists who established a factory, depriving the majority of the coppersmiths of their traditional craft. The Machine Age has emerged, resulting in the dislocation and dire poverty of the craftsman.

Billiraman or Cat-Killers lane in Amritsar was swarming with the traditional tharthiars or coppersmiths who are the thrown out of employment owing to the establishment of a factory. The machine in the factory, roaring and squeaking, symbolizes the Industrial Revolution and the Age of Science and Technology. The tharthiars, or the coppersmiths, are subjected to an existence of utter misery and object poverty. Their hearts filled with an intense hatred of the machine that usurps their position in the society. Into this explosive situation enters Ananta from Bombay with his revolutionary philosophy and anti-traditional non-conformity. His irreverent unconventionality in living with Janki without marriage is resented by his community though his courage of conviction is greatly admired. The active



ignorance and the frayed tempers of the coppersmiths proved finally fatal, ending in the violent death of Ananta at the hands of Ralia, the frustrated and enraged coppersmith. The tragedy of sociological environment has taken a stage further in *The Big Heart (1945)*. This simply is the tragedy of a moral intelligence of the heart defeated not by its own flawed nature but by a diseased victim of society who symbolizes humanity's inability to control its environmental fate.

Another product of the unfortunate historical and environmental circumstances is the protagonist of Anand's another novel, *The Private Life of an Indian-Prince (1953)* in which an apparent dichotomy of the tradition of Anglo-Indian Literary Naturalism seems to manifest as it mainly concerns with the problem of a degenerate and debouched Indian prince in the post- Independence era of political turmoil which saw the accession of the princely states to the Indian Union. It presents a human drama in the midst of chaotic situation and has at its centre a prince himself, as a central figure in the political transition, whose tragedy is brought about by social as well as a personal causes. The decline and fall of monarchy in the state of Sham Pur coincides with the tragic destruction of the prince himself. It is a powerful impeachment of the bourgousie and the decadent aristocracy that have been historically responsible for the sordidness of life in the small principality of Sham Pur.

Maharaja Ashok Kumar known as Victor, wages a futile battle the forces of democracy unleashed in post-independence India. He resists the Union Government's pressure to merge his little state into the Indian Union, but ultimately he succumbs to the Instrument's of Accession. His fatal flaw, however, is his

romantic infatuation with Ganga Dasi, an illiterate scheming woman. Meanwhile, the affairs of the state are in a virtual mess. Both the feudal landlords and the peasants turn against him. The local politicians begin to fish in the troubled waters, and strife and intrigue are in the air. To add to the prince's discomfiture, Ganga Dasi takes another lover. Dispossessed of his kingdom and deserted by his mistress, he proceeds to London and somehow manages to get his rival, the lover of Ganga Dasi murdered. The act, however, recoils on him, and he does not get a crumb of comfort. He then plunges into despair, and drifting into the abyss of nothingness, finally ends up in a lunatic asylum.

Anand's last novel that deals with the social environment is *The Death of a Hero (1964)* in which the protagonist Maqbool Sherwani, a young man of Kashmiri sacrificed his life, fighting the Pakistani invaders during 1947 upheavals. The young Muslim freedom fighter Maqbool flees from Baramula to Srinagar when the Pakistani intruders forcibly occupy the place. He is then asked by the Indian leaders to return to his hometown in order to raise morale of the people caught in the grip of the terror. He re-enters Pakistan secretly but is soon discovered, pursued and arrested. When asked to give up his membership of the Indian Kashmiri National Conference and join his Muslim brethren from Pakistan, he refused and ultimately was shot dead in cold blood after a ridiculous trial. *Death of a Hero (1964)* is thus, the practical martyrdom of a young man, Maqbool Sherwani.

The novel indicates the serious implications in the society and the human situation is seen in moral terms. The protagonist is pitted against the system which

thrives on in justice and exploitation. Instead of carrying on a crusade of action against the system, the protagonist of this novel believe in arousing the moral conscience of the perpetrators of injustice and exploitation. He is motivated by his belief that action produces immediate results but the consequence is not lasting whereas effects based on moral transformation have permanence. Love, generosity, an accommodating attitude and tolerance have the capacity to cleanse the human heart and drive away the evil permanently. Being a man of poetry rather than the radical spirit, a meaningful and successful revolution is needed. The circumstances cast him in a different mould that of a poet, ultimately leading to his political martyrdom. Maqbool's letter to his sister says:-

I know that you have always thought of me as somewhat of a hero, Noor. Always there was a light in your big eyes which said so. But, today, I want to write and tell you, so that you can tell everyone that I have never been anything but an aspirant to poetry. All my dreams will remain unfulfilled, because I am going to face death. But here, in our country, the most splendid deeds have been done by people, not because they were great in spirit, but because they could not suffer the tyrant's yoke, and learnt to obey their conscience.⁷

The positive message which the novel, a product of Indo-Anglian Literary Naturalism gives is that, in the long history of the evolution of human society, the cultivation of humanistic values can alone redeem the aberrant human experiences and that self-sacrifice will have a cleansing effect on a tyrant's heart. Hence a more humane and responsive social system is required in the transformation of a society. Thus Anand's emphasis lies beyond naturalism towards hopeful humanism, a shift in focus evident in his novels.

The critical analysis of the eight novels reveals the following:

- (i) The social environmental influences on man is all encompassing, for example Munoo, the protagonist of the novel:-

His ego is conditioned by the laws and customs of the society in which he had been born, the society whose caste and classes and forms had been determined by the self-seeking of the few, of the powerful, sought all the prizes of wealth, power and possession exactly as his superiors sought them.⁸

- (ii) The instinct for rebellion is stifled and thus resignation is aroused.
- (iii) There is however a tentative movement towards understanding:

And he (Gangu) wandered in all the shame of his hopeless life, shrunken by fear, broken and numbed by the hard implements of pain, surging with desire in the subterranean spaces of his being, crowned by a faint elation, tense and tearless. Then he looked again to the heavens: the pallid cup of the sky loomed above him, vast and comprehensive and still. He hung his head down in resignation, though it looked as if he waited for something, something he knew not what.⁹

- (iv) The same pattern is repeated in the Trilogy. Lalu rebels against his own religious conventions, and is punished by society and publicly humiliated and psychologically broken.
- (v) Lalu the hero of the Trilogy's only escape is recruitment in the army. However, he comes back to find his family doomed.
- (vi) The dehumanization of a subject people is the root of social evil. Saros Cowasjee is of the view:

What Anand is saying that men are basically good. It is the system under which they lived that dehumanized them. And there is nothing more dehumanizing than subjection to foreign rule. On the other hand, the Indian Officers, with the exception of Lachman Singh

and Rikkiram, are dishonest, tyrannous and jealous qualities often fostered in a subject people.¹⁰

- (vii) Lalu's standpoint on the issue of freedom is to agitate against the landlords which lead him to his final imprisonment.
- (viii) *The Big Heart*, emphasizes likewise the struggle of the coppersmiths against the mechanization. Ananta, the reformist however, is aware of the potentiality of the Machine but is ultimately killed thereby bringing to an end his reformist zeal.
- (ix) Prince Victor, the degenerated prince in *The Private Life of an Indian Prince*, is responsible for the sordidness of life in his state.
- (x) Unhinged by his own maniacal pursuits and as a result of the instrument of accession of his state to Indian Union, Victor's life is a pitiable tragedy which finally ended up in the asylum.
- (xi) Another idealist who lays down his life in Maqbool Sherwani. Thereby highlighting the view that a hostile environment nips in the bud the potentiality and aspiration of the individual.

CHAPTER IV

Hopeful Humanism

The acceptance of man as the centre of all our thinking, feeling and activity, and the service of man for the greater good of all humanity, in the material world, under the sanctions of imagination, reason and creative democracy... to evolve individuals, potentially equal and free...¹¹

Humanism means love of man, the whole man with all his weaknesses, instincts and impulses. It may be defined as a system of thought in which human interests, values and dignities are held dominant. Humanism implies devotion to the concerns of mankind. It is an attitude of man that concentrates on the activities of man rather than on the supernatural world and the world of nature. Historically, humanism is a Renaissance doctrine which stresses the essential worth, dignity and greatness of man as contrasted with the older view that man was wicked, worthless and doomed to destruction both in this life and the life to come. Renaissance humanism deriving from a study of ancient poets, historians and philosophers came to believe that man is capable of living a life of reason, dignity, morality and even happiness.

India was groaning the imperialistic rule of the Britishers when Anand was born. The people had lost their moorings; old values were crumbling; and new ones were yet to be articulated. Religion had become a matter of meaningless ritual and arid ceremony. Fatalism and superstition dominated the minds of poor masses. Nor did the alien rulers ever think of the necessity of integrating the aspirations of the

natives. The education imparted by the British Indian schools seemed to have no vital links with the genuine needs and interests of the ruled. It failed to enable the Indians either to acquire a clear understanding of his own culture or to get a correct appreciation of the European culture.

Most men lived lives fraught with squalor, poverty and caste-consciousness. Anand knew that the old world was dead and the European Renaissance had become a spent force. The rapid growth of science and the consequent Industrial Revolution had resulted in colonialism and imperialism. Simple values like love and beauty had receded to the background. In the midst of this, Anand came to realize that humanism with its respect for man and the message of 'live and let live' and compassion could restore peace and harmony to the war-torn world.

Mulk Raj Anand radically does not have a new concept of humanism. He admits that his humanism is the mingling of European Hellenism and the Renaissance ideal of all round development; the faith, in the possibility of achieving a better world order through science and international cooperation. He is influenced by oriental ideas and attitudes, however, he discards alike the supernatural and worldliness. He accepts Buddha's advocacy of Karuna; and the brotherhood of men preached by saints like Kabir and Nanak; Gandhi's championship of the untouchables repudiated en mass by society; and finally Nehru's affirmation of peaceful co-existence.

Anand insisted on the dignity of man irrespective of caste, creed and wealth. He stressed upon the practice of compassion as a sole value in his conception of the whole man. He attached great importance to art and poetry for developing the masses, his crusade was against superstition, feudalism and imperialism, an emphasis of his brand of humanism.

He declares his immense faith in the Protogorean dictum "*Man is the measure of all things*" for example the measure of all values and all actions related to the personality and potentiality of human beings. He firmly believes that man is capable of rising from the lower passions to magnificent heights of splendors and that he has in him, enough creative energy and imagination to transform and raise himself to glorious pinnacles of dignity and to rid himself of the unspeakable misery and pain inflicted on him by mankind, through his tireless physical and mental energy. It is to enable man to achieve these conditions which will help the emergence of a new ideal of the role of man in the vast universe that Anand fervently pleads for in his *Apology For Heroism (1946)* and *Prolegomena to a New Humanism (1958)*.

The humanism of Anand, however, does not rest on a divine sanction, as does the mystical humanism of Gandhi. It puts its faith in the creative imagination and unconquerable spirit of man. It can be achieved through socialism, for socialism alone can restore economic and political freedom and thus help the growth of a full man. Anand believes that only his vision of humanism can restore order and decency in the world. His faith in humanism has also made him optimistic about the future of mankind. He is confident that nothing can wipe off or destroy humanity from the

face of the earth. The human heart is bound to survive all the destructive changes.

Purun Singh remarks in *The Big Heart (1945)*:

“Actually, no one can wipe out the whole of humanity. Only certain men can destroy the will of God by piling terror upon terror” Like most of his other humanist friends.¹²

It is the maintenance of this relationship of loving service, which constitutes the wholeness of Anand's ideal man. It is clearly pointed out as Iqbal Nath Sarsar in *Untouchable (1935)*, speaks of mechanizing the mode of the disposal of garbage which will ultimately eradicate caste. Sauda in *Coolie (1936)* exhorts the workers to go on strike for the betterment of their lot and Purun Singh in *The Big Heart (1945)* voices Anand's highest conception of value in human life. The protagonists of Anand often portray in their dedication towards universal compassion and tolerance of bhakti. De La Havre, the English physician of *Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)*, Lall in *The Sword and The Sickle (1942)*, Dr.Shankar in *The Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953)*, and Dhooli Singh, the enlightened landlord in *The Road (1963)* are the portrayals of exalted mankind.

Anand's humanism thus makes him a novelist with a mission and his theory of the novel is naturally in line with his commitment to his creed. His concern for the oppressed and the downtrodden is reflected in all his novels. All his heroes like Bakha, Bhikhu, Munoo, Gangu, Lall and Ananta are unable to fight against the oppression and exploitation mounted against them in an organized manner. All of them passed through miseries, encountered all impediments boldly and emerged essentially unvanquished and hopeful. But Gangu's death, Bakha's return, Ananta's

death, Bhikhu's journey and Lall's turning into communist at the end of the novels do not suggest a pessimistic resignation but rather it paves the way for a hopeful vision of future.

If Anand's naturalism and humanism is viewed properly, then the inevitable third term arises: the relation between the two. For Anand, the third term is the Integrating Factor or what he called is Bhakti, the relation of personal, efficacious love, between the members of the units of society, family, community, nation or the world.

The new religion, a new value system supplanting superstitions, personal devotion to God by rational devotion to man are the values which Anand proposes to his countrymen. The traditional religion, he maintains, made men indifferent to the ills on this earth yet the new religion of bhakti, requires impassioned, practical efforts to remove not only external signs of ill, filth, poverty, pain, disease, hunger and ignorance but also the evils which are deeply rooted in social, political and economic institutions. According to Anand, outside *bhakti* there is no other world, therefore, if men are to find it at all, they must find its happiness here. The condition for human progress implies the fullest possible freedom and equality for all; *bhakti* strives towards such condition.

A chapter analysis would indicate the following:

- (i) Humanism emphasizes the love of mankind.
- (ii) "Man is the measure of all things" – a Protogorean dictum which is the

basic characteristic of Humanism.

- (iii) Anand's brand of humanism – dignity of man irrespective of caste, creed and wealth.
- (iv) In all the novels, there is a character who exemplifies the humanist. For example Iqbal Nath Sarsar in *Untouchable (1935)*, Souda in *Coolie (1936)*, Dr. De La Havre in *Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)*. Again in *The Big Heart (1945)* Purun Singh speaks of the novel of human life, Dr. Shankar in *The Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953)* and Dhooli Singh in *The Road (1963)*.
- (v) On the crucial importance of integrating an individual into humanity

Anand says:

But, if there is no war, from deep within the orbit of the Indian tradition of individualism, shorn of its religious sanctioned, may grow the gradual limitation of power of the state. Except that the old individualism will also have to shed its egoism and concern for personal salvation and take on the bhakti – Yoga, devotion through works which integrates the individual into community.¹³

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the novels of Mulk Raj Anand impress us, as the products of the Indo Anglian Literary Naturalism – a break with the past, denial of religion and respect for science and sympathy for the individual in his conflict with the society. But the artistic exegesis of this philosophy involves a study of certain types of human behaviour in a hostile environment. This naturally results in a tedious stereotyping of the basic attitude of the writer under the thin veneer of diverse situations and different individuals. The final impression is one of the admirations for the solidity of factual details in the extreme precision in his study and presentation of man and the milieu, rather than for the fulfillment of art itself.

However, the achievement of Anand is not merely ‘methodological’; nor do the protagonists of his novels always meet with death. The tragic destinies of the heroes of his novel do indeed suggest the remedy for the social disease, which arrests the healthy growth of the personality of the individual. Thus for example, industrialization or more precisely, mechanization is the remedy for the evils of untouchability. Scientific education and a socialist outlook can effectively put an end to the capitalistic exploitation; and a voluntary and free acceptance of this social reality in an organized way, can rectify the various wrongs of society.

Anand cannot in fact, be charge with pessimism or fatalism; as the ultimate aim of his protagonists is always social upliftment and human betterment. Although mechanistic determination is instrumental in bringing about the eventual catastrophe of the protagonist. The triumph of Anand seems to be in his transcendental comprehension of the social dynamics that determines the destiny of every individual. His imposition of the patterns of his own thought on the fictional papier mache of experience is in complete consonance with the philosophy of naturalism. As such, his novels are living milestones in the tradition of Indo-Anglian literary naturalism.

Despite the tragic notes of the novels, the ideas of scientific humanism are sustaining and pervasive in his novels. In fact, it is his consciousness of the need to raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies and other suppressed members of society, to human dignity and self awareness in view of the abjectness, apathy and despair into which they are sunk, which has made him a naturalistic humanist.

Anand's humanism places man in the center of all things and believes in the ethical equality of all men. He feels that all men are equal and there should be no division of caste, creed, or race, which act as obstacles for human development and dignity. According to him, the conquest of pain should be the supreme goal of all individuals and all nations. He strongly condemns the cruelty and the pain inflicted upon the underprivileged by the higher sections of society and firmly believes that

one of the most urgent needs of mankind today is to infuse love and tenderness into the hearts of all men.

But even today, the solid bedrock of the national culture is being upheld in a fanatical manner in one form or the other. Man's life is determined by the social norms as we have miserably failed to develop a scientific outlook, which is the need of the hour. It is well nigh impossible for us to effectively shape the destiny of the oppressed, to improve the quality of life and to provide the basic necessities of life unless we are steeped in science. For science awakens the urge to inquire and research for the truth. This kind of attitude would probably help bring about a social change from hide bound traditional ties that has kept us in its vicious grip. Many of the social values that were upheld in the ancient times are outworn and irrelevant in the changing times, and are to be discarded once and for all. Therefore, what we need is not the militant revival of a moribund culture but the creation of dynamic contemporary society as envisaged by Mulk Raj Anand.

Mulk Raj Anand's novels can thus be read as a forerunner to the contemporary Dalit debates. The victims, the modern day counterparts of Bakha and Bhikhu, have come a long way in their struggle for cultural identity against divisive political and social forces. However, the hideous face of untouchability will perhaps remain as a painful lesson from our unredeemed past.

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**BEYOND NATURALISM, TOWARDS
HOPEFUL HUMANISM:**

A Selective Study of Mulk Raj Anand's Novels.

By

Jova C. Marak

Department of English



SUBMITTED

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT

FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

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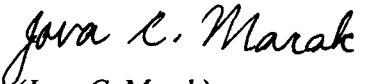
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DECLARATION

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I, Smt. Jova C. Marak, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This being submitted to the North Eastern Hill University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.


(Jova C. Marak)
Research Scholar.


(Sujata Gurudev)
Supervisor & Head
Department of English
North Eastern Hill University
Tura Campus
Head
Dept. of English
NEHU, Tura Campus
Chandernagore

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Jova C. Marak.
(Jova C. Marak)

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C H A P T E R - I

CHAPTER - I

Introduction

Beyond Literary Naturalism

So I Struggled to weigh up the double burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European traditions and the Himalayas of my Indian past, all my senses aching to realize the significance of the history of my country.¹

Literary Naturalism claims to present a more accurate picture of life than realism. It implies not only a special selection of subject matter, in a special literary manner; but a mode of fiction that was developed by a school of writers in accordance with a specific philosophical thesis. This thesis, a product of post – Darwin biology in the mid – nineteenth century, held that man belongs entirely in the order of nature and does not have a soul or any other connection with a religious or spiritual world beyond nature. Man is therefore, merely a higher – order animal whose character and fortunes are determined by two kinds of natural forces, heredity and environment. He inherits his personal traits and his compulsive instincts and is subject to the social and economic forces in the family, the class and the milieu into which he is born. The French novelist Emile Zola, beginning in the 1870s, did much to develop this theory. In *The Naturalist School of Fiction in France (1990)* he affirms:

In a civilized society all things are linked together. When one branch of human thought has been set in motion, other branches follow and general action ensues. This literature, guided by the example of science, turned to the experimental method. The great philosophical movement of the eighteenth century was a colossal enquiry which though often proceeded in a

groping fashion, had for its one constant object, the study and solving of every human problem. In history and criticism, the examination of facts and surroundings replaced the old scholastic method. In purely literary works, nature intervened, and soon began to reign with the school of Jean – Jacques – Rousseau. Forest, rivers and mountains became as it were beings, resuming their places in the world's mechanism. Man was no longer an intellectual abstraction; his environment determined and completed him . . . war was waged upon the worm eater edifices of conventions and arbitrary rules. Magnificent were the stride of the period, colossal was the toil whence present-day society emerged. It was an era, which may be taken as the starting point of the centuries into which mankind is entering, with nature as its basis and method as its tool. It was to this evolution that I gave the name of Naturalism.²

Nevertheless, this evolution in letters as in science, implied a return to nature and humanity, combined with careful scrutiny, exactitude of anatomy and truthful portrayal of whatever existed.

Naturalism in other words, is a scientific and objective representation of contemporary reality and life by using the 'experimental method.' It is an outgrowth of the eighteenth century thought which began in fiction and being militantly insistent upon fact for fact's sake, it became a subject of controversy and was often misunderstood. Nonetheless, many of the trends initiated by eighteenth-century naturalists continue till today even though the form and techniques have undergone some changes and modifications.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the French naturalist Comte-de-Buffon maintained that the variation of animal species depended on the physical

environment. Jean-Baptist-Pierre Antoine de Lamarck suggested that the evolutionary changes in some animal species may take place through the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Such evolutionary theories as that of Auguste Comte, in his *Cours de Philosophie Positive (1855)* published in six volumes, presented an empirical formula of finding truth. Comte conceived society as passing through evolutionary stages, and his main aim was to reform society through scientific means. He classified science according to the degree of complexity and constructed a philosophy which arranged the general laws yielded by different sciences and found a method common to man. Comte found sociology most complex in its positivistic stage; it dealt with the activities of man and his progress, which meant the perfection of man in society. This emphasis laid by positivism on reason and evolutionary stages which led to the perfection of man in society affected the development of naturalistic philosophy. The chief theories of movement was Hippolyte Taine, whose *History of English Literature (1864)* provided another perspective to the new philosophy. He believed that every work is the product of man who works behind it. The moral constitution of the people differs in various ages, and vice and virtue are products like vitriol and sugar. Every complex phenomenon according to Taine, springs from other complex phenomena on which it hangs and when one considers the question of moral perfection it is necessary to consider the whole race. The three different sources which help to produce this moral state is the race, the surroundings and the epoch. History is thus shaped by these three factors. Taine's conception of race centers around the innate and hereditary dispositions which each individual is born with. After his birth, he has to reconcile himself to his surroundings. Man is forced to accommodate himself to circumstances and develops a character

corresponding to them. His characteristics thus acquired are transferred on to his progeny.

The second factor which plays a decisive role in the formation of character is the surroundings in which man lives. Thus the religious, social and geographical background of a man also helps mould his character. The third factor, besides race and surroundings, is the epoch or acquired momentum: it is with people as with a plant; the same sap, under the same temperature, and in the same soil, produces, at different steps of its progressive development, different formations, buds and flowers. The great historical events, such as renaissance, are formed after this law. Any change in these characteristics brings about a corresponding change in the rest, because they are so firmly interconnected.

The novel *Madame Bovary* (1857) of Gustave Flaubert, ushered in a new trend in fiction giving rise to the school of “realistic” fiction. Guy de Maupassant wrote that the appearance of the novel was a revolution in literature. It was a study of human life that was “surprising and complete . . . It was life itself making an appearance. . . .”³ The novel was a reaction against romantic philosophy and ideas. Besides Flaubert, Goncourt brothers (Alphonse and Daudet) also contributed to the rise of the naturalistic novel; but the fountain head of naturalism rests with Emile Zola.

It is against the background of political pessimism in France and hostility to the Republic, literary naturalism was championed by Emile Zola. Its seed had been

sown at the end of the eighteenth century in the “Positivist” age. Within the positivist scientific structure, the biological sciences had come to the fore; thanks to Darwin’s *Origin of Species (1859)*, the theory of evolution was in the air with its themes of struggle for life, survival of the fittest and the permanence of hereditary characteristics of original types. Taine had greatly fostered the idea of heredity and environment as vital factors in the development of mentalities, Claude Bernard, the psychologist, had shown that by following a rigorous scientific method, the hitherto empirical art of medicine could itself become a science.

Zola had imbibed the scientific ideas of his generations, his ideas on hereditary and environment. He believed that the novelist must become a species of scientist, the novel ‘experimental’. Influenced by Taine and on the basis of these twin forces, hereditary and environment; Zola proceeds to build his family genealogy through four generations in his *Rougon Macquart (1871)* series in twenty volumes. His purpose was to show that hereditary and environment influences, gave common characteristics to a family of individuals who appeared apparently dissimilar. He also published his literary manifesto *The Experimental Novel (1893)* in which he built the theory around the ideas expressed by Claude Bernard’s *Introduction to the study of Experimental Medicine (1865)*. Zola distinguished the experimenter from the observer. According to him, the observer is one who applies the simple or complex process of investigation to the study of phenomena which he lives as they are; but the experimenter is one who uses the process of investigation to vary the phenomena, making them appear under circumstances and conditions in which nature does not present them. The novelist is both an observer and the experimentalist. By

observation and experimentation, “you possess the knowledge of man, scientific knowledge of him, in both his individual and social relation ...”⁴

Heredity and social environment influences the individual. The naturalists are not photographers but artist; because even though they start with indestructible facts, the mechanism of these facts can only be shown by modification and direction of phenomena and in this lies the genius of the novelist. Science has proved to us that determinism governs inanimate phenomena. It also, “governs the stone of the roadway and the brain of man.”⁵ Heredity and environment thus influenced this determinism. In fact, the naturalists are experimental novelists because they show, by experiment, in what way passion act in certain social condition. Hence, ‘naturalism’ as Zola termed, involves the application to the literature of two scientific principles; determinism or the belief that character, temperament and ultimately, behaviour are determined by the forces of heredity and environment and the historical moment, and the experimental method which entails the objective recording of precise data in controlled conditions.

In the years following the American Civil War, many important political, economic and social changes took place in the United States, because of which emerged an industrial nation thus bringing a corresponding change in the concept of man’s place in the universe. Efforts were made in literature to reinterpret this change with the help of a new technique. The old traditions and values were disintegrating and literary naturalism with its deterministic view of life, seemed to be the ideal method of representing the disorganized state of crumbling values. Besides the prevailing

social conditions, philosophical controversies also provided an impetus growth of literary naturalism. C. C. Walcutt traces the philosophical tendencies conducive to naturalism as far back as the Renaissance, with the Middle Ages in the background.

Late in the seventeenth century Isaac Newton expounded that the universe was regulated by a set of mechanical laws. He proved that the universe was not a subject to God's laws or any other miraculous interventions; it operated on its own. These ideas, according to Walcutt were entirely 'naturalistic', provided basis for new philosophies stimulated by the scientific thought, Newton's theory if applied to man, would produce mechanistic determinism, one of the bases of naturalism. In the eighteenth century, pre Darwinian theories were developed in the context of biology and these evolutionary theories maintained that progressive evolution operated within the species. Spencer, under the influence of Darwin's theory, believed in the evolution of man from a lesser species and considered sociology to be the end of all science. The doctrine of *laissez-faire* and the survival of the fittest came to be the general strain in Spencer's social philosophy. Besides reshaping certain philosophical concept, Darwinism and its sociological version in the doctrines of Spencer revolutionized the field of psychology. Under its impact, the pioneers of psychology, learnt to study the human mind in relation to external phenomena. Darwin had demonstrated that the aesthetic and moral values of man are subject to variation and natural selection while William James conceives of the mind as capable of adjusting itself to its surroundings maintaining an ever shifting equilibrium or adjustment with its environment. Dewey on his part stressed the individual as part of the community.

In America, the contemporary social and literary trends favoured the growth of naturalism. As Vernon Louis Parrington has observed in his essay, *"The Development of Realism" (1959)*, the phases of realism in America have synchronized closely with the periods of economic depression. He traces these phenomena from Howells to Sherwood Anderson. But in the works of Garland and others who succeeded Howells, the effects of science can be clearly felt. There was a transition from transcendentalism to biology, from biology to physics; "from the doctrine of the innate Godhead to the doctrine of biological perfectibility through evolution and thence to the doctrine of materialistic cosmos"⁶ that takes no account of theological ends. The romantic conception of freedom of 'will' gave way to stark pessimism with an undercurrent of mechanistic determinism. This intellectual background in the nineties saw the emergence of fiction writers who followed Zola's naturalism rather than Howells's realism. Naturalism in America, however, was not the same literary credo as it was in other countries; the early documents of the movement in America by Garland and Edward Howe were marked by a sense of bitter protest against the desperation of contemporary life in the Middle West. Stephen Crane was a naturalist by force of the economic and socio-cultural conditions prevailing in his native region. Frank Norris was, however, more directly stimulated by the theories of naturalism than Garland, Howe and Crane; Jack London's novels are mostly based on the various theories of naturalism. While Theodore Dreiser was an 'experimenter' and 'observer' in the manner of Zola's naturalism, Edith Wharton, sought to portray the social manners of the day in a

naturalistic manner but in all these writers, native forces mingle with the theories of the European Naturalism.

Naturalism as it emerged in American fiction, is distinct from Howells's 'realism' as Lars Ahnebrink clarifies: "Realism is the manner and method of composition by which the author describes normal average life in an accurate and truthful way. Naturalism on the other hand, is a manner and method of composition by which the author portrays life as it is in accordance with the philosophic theory of determinism."⁷ James D. Hart defines American naturalism as a "method of literary composition that aims at a detached scientific objectivity in the treatment of natural man. It is thus, more inclusive and less selective than realism, and holds to the philosophy of determinism. It conceives of man as controlled by his instincts, or his passion, or by his social and economic environment and circumstances."⁸ William K. Frankena too, has defined naturalism as a style of fiction which aims at scientific objectivity with "environment rather than the individual character as the driving force affecting plot development."⁹

The naturalists believed in mechanistic determinism; and influenced by Taine, they tried to show that the forces outside the control of man helped to determine his life and character. They also believed in the omnipotence of the forces outside man's control. C.C. Walcutt, however, explains that naturalism, "moves among three patterns of ideas: the religion of reason – nature the attack on the dualist of the past; the recognition and slowly growing fear of natural forces that men might study but could not control."¹⁰

From these definitions mentioned above, certain characteristic features of naturalism became clear. For example, the subject matter of naturalistic novels had to be ordinary and common place in contemporary reality. Secondly, the life of the lower class people provided the writers with an opportunity to prove the deterministic theories of the effects of race, milieu and the epoch on the individual. Finally, the essential animal qualities of man fascinated the naturalists as such as his external environment. By exposing the man beneath his social conditions and by stripping him from his social norms, they demonstrated the feasibility of Darwin's theory of the origin of man through the process of natural selection. Literary naturalism made a late appearance in the Indian Scenario.

Indian writing in English in the late nineteenth century was romantic. Toru Dutt, Romesh Dutt, Manmohan Ghose are part of a world-wide romantic literary scene. With Toru Dutt and Rabindranath Tagore, the spirit of Indian lyricism seemed to be peculiarly akin to the European romantic literature of the period. Tagore and Manmohan Ghose, among others, were however merely returning the compliment paid to the East by the orientalism and exoticism of romantic writers. Tagore's *Gitanjali (1912)* brought up on the romantic view of India, which the theosophists and mystics had never ceased to praise, a country of spiritual longings and spiritual realities. In fact, his poetry was essentially more Spartan and naturalistic than the picture of India that the romantic writers like Pierre Loti had given. For many Indian critics, Tagore's muse was more western than oriental. Nevertheless, the religious subject-matter and the required oriental flavour to western

palates. Tagore's Bengal took her place side by side with the Persia of Omar Khayyam, and the China of Confucius, Lao-Tse and Li Po and the Japan of Lafcadio Hearn. Gradually India became the most popular of these literary landscapes when Rudyard Kipling's stories burst like a bomb into the literary drawing-rooms in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Tagore's plangent romanticism was accompanied by imagery drawn from observation of the natural scene, an aspect of the real India just as Kipling's romantic imperialism was modified by realistic portrayal of the scene.

After World War I, when nineteenth century romanticism and orientalism began to lose their hold on the western imagination, it was time for India to change her image. The First World War had weakened Europe, England and France, the nominal victors, sapped their morale and started the decay of Europe as a world power. Naturally, European imperialism suffered from the general sapping of self-confidence. The end of British rule in India was forecast. Indians had fought for British victory and supported Britain's war effort in the expectation of freedom. When these hopes were apparently not honoured, there was agitation, followed by repression, bloodshed and reaction. Many Indian nationalists were of the opinion that their cause was handicapped rather than helped by the image of a spiritual life – negating, passive and contemplative India. Such emphasis on an ascetic or metaphysical religious consciousness could be an ally of the foreign rulers in keeping India quiescent. At the same time India like every other country in the nineteen-twenties was shaken by the speed of technical advances and by the communist and

nationalist revolutions in Russia, Turkey, China and Italy. With the demand for political independence went the dream of revolution, of ending the outmoded cast system and of liberating the sluggish Indian masses in the villages and the great sprawling cities. Writers, artists and scholars were all part of the intellectual ferment in post 1918 India. The writers who identified themselves with the nationalists and revolutionary causes were bound to change the image of India and challenged the vision of Tagore, Kipling and the orientalist and mystics.

The vernacular Indian fiction, represented by the works of Tagore and Sarat on one hand, and Premchand and Jaisankar Prasad on the other, had, besides projecting the total consciousness of modern reality under the impact of many sided change, moved in its later day development towards a new creative dimension. Tagore in his *Binodini* (1959) and *Four Chapters* (1950) and Premchand in his *Gaban* (1966), had given the Indian novel a new naturalistic orientation whereby the delineation of character became subsidiary, and the exploration of the deterministic patterns of the milieu and the circumstance became the major purport of fictional art. But, the naturalism of Tagore and Premchand was profoundly influenced by their mystic attitude towards the ultimate truths of human existence and destiny. It was left to the younger generation of novelists to make the direct frontal assaults on a reality which lay rooted in the present and the immediate. Revolutionary ideas and ideals entered into the impulsive radicalism of these writers who, as they matured in art, discovered a deterministic content no less vital in the interpretation of cultural change than the mysticism of the older writers. Life flowed with impetuous rush into their novels dictating and controlling the aesthetic form itself, not withstanding

the barriers of the past and the present. Social awareness in its wider amplitudes of fact, as well as in its deeper locutions of sensibility, became the focus of the plot. A new organic form was coming into being which had no time or patience to achieve leisurely sophistication but in which the compulsions of experience had to strike out the patterns of whatever vision lay underneath. The fiction of these younger realists and naturalists in spite of its ephemeral enthusiasms has a raw, unshaped yet a heady power about it. Its force was straight, direct and disturbing. It is to this group of writers, that Mulk Raj Anand's novels must be traced.

Literary Naturalism varies with each individual author because even though it aims at an objective representation of life, the point of view of the individual novelist differs from each other. For example, in the Indian context, it is not the twin forces of biological heredity and environment which shapes the individual's destiny but the social heredity and environment which moulds a man's life. Albert Solomon in his *Critique on Sociology and the Literary Artist (1957)* says that the novel emerges as a new literary form, not because bourgeoisie, patrician and people as such are different from the knights of chivalrous romance but because the sociological awareness, the totally new factor became the focusing development of the plot. In the simplest possible terms society is now the destiny of the individual, the horizon under which the individual lives is determined by the pressure, power and the control of society. Social heredity and environment is thus a major shaping factor in a man's life. Mulk Raj Anand, the pioneer of the Literary Naturalism in the Indian context, is of the view that man does not suffer due to a tragic flaw as per Aristotelian theory, but because his destiny is controlled and shaped by society,

which makes for his social heredity and environment. According to Anand, human behaviour is thus a result of external forces, not inner character.

The individual in Anand's view is in the process of evolution and the purpose of the novelist is to depict such an evolution. It is a kind of evolutionary dialectic of conflicts that shapes the character. However, Anand gives great significance to the experience of life at various levels, in different situations. The confrontation with reality shapes the individual, and the purpose of the novelist is to depict such a reality. Keeping in mind naturalism in the European and American context, the Literary Naturalism in India can be considered as an extreme form of naturalism best exemplified by Anand in his major novels.

Mulk Raj Anand has established himself as the chief spokesman of the Indo-Anglian 'Literary Naturalism'. All his novels have a strong social meaning; his artistic modus operandi seems to be the mechanistic determinism that implies a minute observation and a comprehensive recording of the life of man as the 'animal rationale', controlled by ineluctable social forces. The Leit-motif of Anand's Novels is Naturalistic projections of social reality, utterly devoid of either any sentimental attachment to the past or any nostalgic longing for effete tradition. Treating literature as an anthropocentric, Mulk Raj Anand makes an objective study of the historically developing national spirit with no fetishistic regard for traditional values. This scientific and pragmatic approach towards the national tradition seems to be quite in conformity with the spirit of the age of Renaissance and Reformation. For, Renaissance does not mean a reactionary revival of the musty manners of the past

but an inspiring rediscovery of the solid bedrock of the national culture for the promotion and progress of the contemporary social values.



In their rebelliousness and objectivity, minute observation and broad documentation and environmental magnification and personalized detail, the novels of Mulk Raj Anand reveal a positive conceptual concentricity with the western naturalistic tradition. The novel, in Anand's opinion, is the "most humane of European forms of creative literature."¹¹ His representation, through space and time, of the internal changes in the lives of characters and his vision shared alike by great naturalist novelists like Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Flaubert and Zola point out the fact that the novel is a powerful vehicle of expressing "an epic sense of reality on many planes, and an intense awareness of the possibility of individual growth, as well as a criticism of life."¹² K. R. S. Iyengar commenting on *Indian writing in English (1999)* says; "none of them cared to produce realistic naturalistic fiction after the manner of a Balzac or a Zola. It was Anand's aim to stray lower still ... And to show to the west that there was more in the orient than could be inferred from Omar Khayyam, Li Po, Tagore or Kipling..."¹³ while A. V. Krishna Rao in *The Indo Anglian Novel and The Changing Tradition (1972)*, pointed out "Mulk Raj Anand has established himself as the chief spokesman of the Indo-Anglian Literary Naturalism with a proletarian bias."¹⁴ Gajendra Kumar in a *Manifesto of Indian Socio-Political Realism (2000)* maintains that "Anand is a great realist and naturalist like Zola, Balzac and Flaubert and exposes the social evils and enigma."¹⁵ Critical acclaim and reviewers thus, placed Anand among the leading Indian naturalist novelist of the times.

However, his achievement is not merely methodological but creatively original in the fictional application of the philosophy of naturalism. The basic attitude that man is the accidental product of heredity and environment and that his behaviour can be explained in terms of these physical factors; changes into a definitive manifesto of the Indian Literary Renaissance and Social Reformation in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand.

The general idea of philosophy of naturalism, a break with the past, denial of religion, respect for science and sympathy for the individual in his conflict with the society, – are all predominant in his novels. But the artistic interpretation of this philosophy involves a study of certain types of human behaviour in hostile environment, characterized by caste, creed and social stigmata.

All his novels are undoubtedly the creation of a great artist who has discovered the effectiveness of novel form and used it to express his passionate love for the suffering people, who after a long struggle managed to get political freedom but not yet, inspite of the continuous struggle, succeeded in getting freedom from caste and class feelings, freedom from religious hypocrisy and superstition, parochialism and fanaticism, freedom from poverty, exploitation and sexual discrimination etc. In fact Anand emphasized social development which is the driving force behind all these writings. It acts as a catalyst to his creative output.

Born in Peshawar, in a Hindu coppersmith family, Anand has narrated the story of his upbringing in the autobiographical *Apology For Heroism (1946)*. “I grew up,” he says, “like most of my contemporaries, a very superficial, ill-educated young man, without any bearings,”¹⁶ since the creation of those days glorified western culture at the expense of the Indian tradition. Two critical illnesses during early years had given him a reflective turn of mind which was counter balanced by his native Punjabi realism and activism. Participating in the Gandhian movement while at college, Anand suffered a brief imprisonment. He went to England to pursue research in philosophy in 1924 where he became interested in the study of Indian art and also came in touch with *avant-garde* movement and left wing politics and even joined International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. On his return home, he founded in 1946, the art magazine *Marg*. Anand was an indefatigable traveler and was actively associated with numerous literary and cultural associations both in India and abroad, besides engaging himself in social works.

Anand’s fiction has been shaped by what he himself calls “the double burden on my shoulder, the Alps of the European traditions and the Himalaya of my Indian past.”¹⁷ To his Indian past, however, Anand’s attitude is ambivalent. On one hand, he is critical of the deadwood of the hoary Indian tradition-its obscurantism and fossilization; on the other, as his lifelong interest in ancient Indian art and the intuitive understanding of the Indian peasant mind in his writing indicate that, he is aware of its finer and enduring aspects as well. It is mainly from the European tradition that Anand acquired his fervent socialist faith and his vision of a modern

egalitarian society. His numerous novels form a fictional chronicle in eclectic humanism and his humanitarian compassion for the underdogs are persistent themes.

Both these themes found ample fictional treatment in his first novel *Untouchable (1935)* which describe and eventful day in the life of Bakha, a young sweeper from the outcaste's colony of North Indian cantonment town. This particular day brings him his daily torments and more but in the end it also suggests three alternative solutions to his problems. A missionary tries to persuade him to embrace Christianity; he listens to Gandhiji, who advocates social reform; and he hears of mechanized sanitation as the only answer which is possible. The novel ends with Bakha "thinking of everything he had heard, though he could not understand it all." Anand's treatment of the theme in this novel is remarkably objective and restrained, which saves the book from the sentimentality which mars some of his later novels. Apart from the long harangue on modern sanitation at the end, the entire narrative is a thing of perfect unity and finish.

In his chronicles of coolies – *Coolie (1936)* and *Two Leaves and A Bud (1937)*, Anand turns to the lot of another class of underprivileged. The range and scope of his fiction widened and expanded, and there is an orchestration of themes. *Coolie (1936)* is the pathetic odyssey of Munoo, an orphaned village boy from Kangra Hills, who sets out in search of a livelihood. His several roles as a domestic servant, a coolie, a factory worker and a rickshaw puller, takes him to various places and ultimately to an untimely death. The novel is an indignant comment on the tragic denial of the fundamental right to Munoo and his fellow coolies who are exploited by

the forces of industrialism, capitalism, communalism and colonialism. With its constantly shifting scenes, its variety of characters from all classes of society and its wealth of eventful incident, *Coolie (1936)* has an almost epic quality. However, humanitarian compassion distorts action and character even more disastrously in *Two Leaves and A Bud (1937)*. The protagonist of the novel Gangu, a poor Punjabi peasant is lured by fabulous promises to go to a tea-plantation in Assam. Compelled to work in an unhygienic condition and starved, Gangu lost his wife and is shot dead by a British officer, who tries to rape his daughter. Anand tries to be objective by showing how the British attitude to the Indian can be both imperialistic as in the case of Reggie Hunt or liberal as in that of Dr. de la Havre, but on the whole, the impression is unavoidable that Gangu is presented as a veritable Indian labourer. The injustice of the British Raj, the exploitation of the colonialists and the misery and suffering of the Indian masses are all exposed in this novel.

Anand in his trilogy- *The Village (1939)*, *Across The Black Waters (1940)* and *The Sword and The Sickle (1942)*, offers a realistic picture of his life in a typical Punjabi village in the early twentieth century. A young man Lal Singh, who is an insider turned outsider, rebelled against all the village mores and finally escapes by running away and ultimately returns home from a German prison only to end up in another prison. Thus, Lal Singh's quest of possible seriousness is deprived. These three novels contain the quintessence of Anand; they illustrate his strength as well as his weakness; they reached his finest achievement and also marked his decline. In an essentially picaresque manner, the trilogy traces the career of Lal Singh through various experiences in India and abroad. *The Village (1939)* deals with Lal Singh's

boyhood in a Punjab village; *Across The Black waters (1940)* takes him to Europe as a soldier in the Great War; *The Sword and The Sickle (1942)* tells of his involvement in the Indian independence movement. Lalu shares most of the characteristics of the other adolescent protagonists of Anand.

The Big Heart (1945), is undoubtedly one of Anand's better efforts, though marred at the end by compulsive preaching. Ananta, the young coppersmith, called 'Big Heart', owing to his generosity, aggressively champions the machine and modernity in a traditional society and finally pays the price with his life. The novel has a special niche in the heart of the author, since it presents an intimate picture of a segment of society to which Anand belongs; and Ananta is perhaps the best realized of Anand's heroes. The entire action takes place on a single day like *Untouchable (1935)* and has a taut structure. *The Big Heart (1945)* is Anand's last novel before independence. Anand with his keen interest in contemporary social and political problems found the immediate post-independence scene an exciting and rewarding artistic challenge. But on his return to India in 1945, Anand has suffered a nervous breakdown as a result of a personal tragedy which made him turn inward and escape into the past rather than confronting the immediate present.

Another attempt to achieve a personal catharsis was *The Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953)*, in which the hero has a nervous breakdown. This controversial novel, admired by few of Anand's critics but attacked by many others; is a pathological study of a neurotic maharaja. The novel deals with the collapse of Princely Indian following independence and the suffering of the Indian Prince

Victor, the Prince has all the vices of royalty – he has wives whom he ignores or ill treats, he has a mistress Gangi, who tyrannizes over him, he has moods and musings and he wallows generally in luxury and sloth. Sadar Patel summons him at last to Delhi, keeps him waiting till he loses his nerve, then he is made to sign the *Instrument of Accession* but the administration of his state continues to be rotten. Victor has fresh troubles, and he goes to the United Kingdom on an enforced holiday. He is soon called back, being implicated in the murder of the rival in love; on returning to India, he becomes mad and enters an asylum where Anand is content to leave him. It is clear that Anand does not know his prince and the prince's milieu as intimately as he knows his Punjabi peasant. The mad Maharaja's excesses are as odious as the contrived plot with its inevitable tiger-hunt, juggler show, and egg-eating contest is theatrical. Above all, it is almost comic to see the champion of the downtrodden weeping over the downfall of a Maharaja.

Fortunately, Anand returns to his peasants in *The Old Woman and The Cow* (1960). The 'cow' is Gauri, a simple peasant girl forsaken by her husband and actually sold to a rich merchant by her mother, whose logic is reminiscent of that of Hardy's peasant. "It was a choice between my Gauri and my cow." Gauri escapes, becomes self-reliant and is transformed into a veritable tigress. This is a neat reversal of the age-old Sita myth in the modern context. Unfortunately, Anand in this novel also, blots his artistic copy-book by resorting to direct statement through his mouthpiece, Dr. Mahindra, Gauri's benefactor.

Anand's next two novels are slight works, showing how he has never been able to sustain his art at a consistently high level. *The Road (1963)*, is a rehearse of the *Untouchable (1935)* theme, adding little that is new by way of thought or insight and *The Death of a Hero (1963)*, a short novel on a Kashmir freedom fighter again reveals how Anand resorts to mere conventionalities when he is cut off from native-Punjab scene. In the seventies, Anand returned to the autobiographical vein, which he first exploited in *Seven Summers (1951)*, *Morning Face (1970)*, *Sahitya Akademy Award (1972)* and *Confession of a Lover (1971)*, which are part of a long fictional volume. *Morning Face (1970)* covers the period of his school days and adolescence, and the story of the growth of Krishnan Chander's mind specially his sharpened political awareness is evocatively narrated. An interesting aspect of the novel is the number of characters and situations from Anand's fiction reappearing in it. Though it lacks the freshness of the much shorter than *Seven Summers (1957)*, *Morning Face (1970)* is an authentic document of the revelation of a mind and its milieu. In *Confession of a Lover (1971)*, Krishan Chander goes to college, has an unsuccessful love affair with a young married Muslim girl, dabbles in poetry, journalism and politics and at the end leaves for England. As one watches Krishan Chander grow up, one feels that his sensitivity, amounting almost to morbidity at times, and his inhibited self – love – qualities rather engaging in the child and adolescent – are increasing less in the youth. The story of Krishan Chander and Yasmin has its tender moments but seems to move dangerously close to the world of romantic conventionalities, especially when the hero indulges in not infrequent rhetoric.

The strength of Anand's fictions lie in its vast range, its wealth of living characters, its relentless realism, its deeply felt indignation at social wrongs, and its strong humanitarian compassion. His style, at its best, is redolent of the Indian sort, as a result of his bold importation into English, words, phrases, expletives, turns of expression and proverbs drawn from his native Punjabi and Hindi. A tendency to slip into easy sentimentality and lose artistic control, a weakness for preaching, and a frequent insensitiveness to the nuances of expressions, which often makes him write in a footloose, frenzied and even slipshod manner, have made his work extremely uneven, though his total fictional achievement with all its limitations, remains impressive enough.

Anand's study and presentation of man and the milieu went well beyond the scope of naturalism to what may be called hopeful humanism. This was greatly augmented by the impact of Gandhi on the Socio-Political life of India. Politically India was in a great turmoil for struggle of freedom. Nationalism was the weapon for getting rid of the British imperialistic colonial regime. The emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as the undisputed leader of the Indian National Congress was a major factor in the freedom struggle of India and had a tremendous impact on the Indian people. In his struggle against racialism in South Africa, he had developed his philosophy of action, Satyagraha. He implemented this in Bihar and Gujarat which brought Gandhi into close touch with the masses who later became the active participants of the movement. The countrywide general hartal against Rowlatt Bills on 6th April.1919 and the massacre of Jhalian Wala Bagh of April 15 added a dimension to the freedom struggle. The Punjab tragedy also brought Gandhi into the forefront of Indian

politics. His arrest on 10 March, 1922 in connection with Khalifat Movement became another burning issue of the time. The electrifying impact of Gandhi's arrival on India's political life has been described in the following words:

he was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breathe, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and allowed us to see clearly at last; like a fierce wind that upset many things, but most of all the working of people's mind. He did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and continually drawing attention to them and their terrible condition. Get off the backs these peasants and workers, he told us, all you who live by their exploitation; get rid of the system that produces this poverty and misery. Political freedom took new shape then and acquired a new content. Much that he said we only partially accepted or sometime did not accept at all. But this was not the real important thing. The essence of his teaching was fearlessness and truth, and action allied to these, always keeping the welfare of the masses in view. We had been told in our ancient books that the greatest gift for an individual or a nation as *Abhaya* (fearlessness), not merely bodily courage but the absence of fear from the mind. Janaka and Yajnavalkya had said, at the dawn of our history, that it was the function of the leaders of a people to make them fearless. But the strongest impulse in India under British rule was that of fear-fear which spread everywhere, which weighed down heavily on every one, and choked everything; fear of the army, the police, the wide-spread secret service; fear of the official class, fear of laws made to keep people down; fear of prison; fear of the landlord's agent; fear of the money lender; fear of unemployment and at starvation, which always threatened. It was against this fear which spread into everything that Gandhi's quiet and determined voice was raised. Be not afraid. Was it so simple as all that? Not quite. And yet fear creates its own ghosts which are more fearsome than reality itself, and reality, when calmly analyzed and its consequences willingly accepted, loses much of its terror.¹⁸

His Dandi march electrified the national consciousness of the people and a fever August 1932, brought a new sense of fear and crisis among the people. Gandhi took the award as a challenge and went on fasting against it and ultimately succeeded in forcing the government to amend it.

However, there was good deal of fresh thinking before the World War II. The socialist trend was visibly forceful in the leadership outside the congress. At the same time, many of the political workers involved in the education and the organization of the rural peasantry, were powerfully stirred by the Marxist ideology which was being pulled forward by the communists and socialists of the time. In the meantime, communal tension took an ugly turn after 1937 due to the British imperial policy of dividing people on communal and caste lines. By then, it became clear to people that “the outstanding feature of British rule was their concentration on everything that went to strengthen their political and economic hold on the country.”¹⁹

When the Second World War broke out, Indian leaders found themselves in a difficult situation. The British government was dragging Indian leaders into the war without consulting the Indian legislature. The Indian congress found the British government completely unrelenting to its demands and finally passed on 8 August, 1942, the famous ‘Quit India’ resolution demanding the withdrawal of the British power from India. A mass struggle was also sanctioned under the leadership of Gandhi, who gave his famous call for non-violent war or ‘ahimsa’. Meanwhile, on the basis of the political settlement reached in 1947 between the British and the

Indian leaders, India was partitioned into two sovereign states on 15 August 1947, despite Gandhi's opposition to the plan. Thus, the pride and joy felt in the achievement of freedom was marred and diluted by the pain and misery of partition. Gandhi, the father of the nation was weeping and treading the solitary path of riot-torn villages of the country, when the people at large were to have the first experience of being citizens of a free and independent country.

The nineteenth thirties were thus, crucial to modern Independent India and the Indo-Anglian novelists of the times were naturally preoccupied with the grim struggles against the alien power as they were witnesses to all the events mentioned above, that happened during the freedom movement. They felt the spirit of the times in their own veins and the result was their writings which reflected the growth of political consciousness. The prospect of national independence and the vision of India after the freedom acted as a stimulating factor for these writers. Hence their novels suggest the trend of political consciousness among various groups of people of that time. The writers were immensely influenced by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi who dealt with the evils of contemporary society and fought for the cause of underprivileged classes, the downtrodden and defenseless. It is around a small group of intellectuals headed by Gandhi, the political strategy for the abolition of untouchability was built up, inseparable from the idea of independence. These personalities modernized revolutionary ideas, which had been stirring in the country, around the revolting nature of untouchability. Their perception of this phenomenon was as a sociological irrationality, and they demanded equal access to the higher reaches of Hindu cult, inspite of strong opposition from the upper castes.

Gandhi is traditionally associated with the ethical awakening of Indian society to the problem of untouchability. His stay in South Africa made him verify the “universality” of the discriminatory behaviour by privileged groups in relation to either the socially or culturally underprivileged. In India too, his progressive contact with untouchables suggested to him the relativity of the criteria of discrimination. The concept of a link between politics and religion determined his attitude towards the untouchables in a very significant way. His mystical awakening, as all his religious itinerary, is characterized by a methodical enquiry into Hinduism, a religion that allows the existence of strongly degraded and humiliated social groups. Gandhi’s aim was social reform, transforming the untouchables into a *Varna* and removing its former stigma, rectifying in this way the original spiritual corruption of Hinduism. The eradication of untouchability would result in a change in the attitude of the other castes that, like them, the untouchables are children of God, *harijan*. This quest compelled him, nevertheless, to the effective inclusion of the subject of untouchability in the Congress Party program, making it inseparable from the project of independence. His idea of eliminating untouchability by a “humanistic” change in the other castes however, jeopardized his political intensions irreparably.

The writers of the Gandhian era began to expose the age old social evils and traditions which were suffocating the lives of the poor and downtrodden masses. The fictions of the Gandhian era have reflected the various incidents and happenings of the life and activities of Mahatma Gandhi in particular and the religious upheavals in general. He gave to the literature as to the world, a new perspective on the problems

of untouchability; he spoke of the dignity of labour and the plight of the harijans. The works of these writers are not simply the collection of historical facts or event; they are highly literary, saturated with poetic grandeur and artistic craftsmanship. A close study of their works clearly reveals the fact that though they portrayed the contemporary movements; they are never devoid of the aesthetic function of a great work of art.

One of the silent features of Gandhian literature is the simplicity and clarity of language. Mahatma Gandhi strongly believed in the dictum - 'simple living and high thinking.' The writers of this age discarded ornateness, artificiality, pedantry and labourious artistry in their language both in English and in the vernaculars. The novelists preferred in theme, the village to the city, the poor to the rich, the cultural heritage of the village to the urban luxury and sophistication. Almost all the protagonists of the novels come from the lower class of society – a society afflicted with British imperialism, economic exploitation, racial discrimination, religious conflict and above all political crisis. Among the authors whose works deal with Gandhian thought and the contemporary freedom struggle - are Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Manohar Malgaonkar and Bhabani Bhattacharya.

Mulk Raj Anand was born in a period of history when socio – political events had a strong impact on the contemporary Indian literature and the Indian English novelists were showing their concern with the changing national scene and the political upsurge. His novels are related to the upheavals and tribulations of the society of his time. Anand took upon himself the task of championing the cause of

the downtrodden section of the society, and thus revolted against those who had oppressed them and kept them under subjugation. He selected significant themes of his time, including the subjects like political independence and social problems. Anand was convinced that a writer should take up contemporary issues, as he himself, was inspired to write due to the compelling historical events of his times. The impact of the political angle could be gauged from what Pramila Garg says:

The twentieth century Indian novelist in English had primarily been concerned with the changing national scene in respect of the political upsurge which compelled the British to withdraw from India. The freedom movement in India was not only a political struggle but an all pervasive national experience for the first few decadesHence, no Indian writer writing in those decades or writing about them could avoid reflecting this national upsurge in his novels.²⁰

On the whole, social, economic and political climate of the time presented such a gloomy picture that Anand's writing could not but remain the true depiction of the social reality of his time. His early days as a writer were very significant because it was during that period that Indian political leaders were showing their heroic attempts to prove India's capacity for self - government. Anand, being the novelist of the Gandhian era also saw how India's old and familiar concepts were challenged by the new ideas introduced due to Indian intellectuals though western through and learning. He had the first – hand experience of the period immediately after the independence during which India faced many problems of serious magnitude in the wake of its emergence as an independent country as the freedom it gained, was in the hour of communal disturbances of unprecedented ferocity and unbelievable bestiality. Millions of people had to leave their homes and properties while fleeing to

escape from the impending death. Thus the freedom, brought with it both the moments of glory as well as the doom.

Anand was drawn into the events of the pre-and the post independent India. The struggle served to restore links between literature and society, between national history and the prized traditions. The Gandhian ideology offered immense possibilities for the creative writers of the time. The struggle for independence impelled the creative writer to discern order in disorder, and a pattern in the seemingly un-patterned muddle of emotions and the rapid gyration of events and historical experience. There are sufficient evidences to suggest that the Indian fiction in English should be studied keeping in mind, the political motif that has been very prominent from the beginning. The Indian novel in English was born before the independence and the politics of the freedom struggle has played an important part in it. There is an intimate connection between the growth of the freedom movements and the rise of the Indian novel in English because most of the pre-independent novels outlined and advocated Indian aspirations for freedom and independence from the Raj as explained by M.K. Naik:

Upto the 1930s there was no Indian novelist who could claim sustain and considerable achievements in fiction originally written in English. Then came a sudden flowering, and it is significant that it came in the 1930s – a period during which the glory that was Gandhi attained perhaps its brightest splendour. The Indian freedom struggle was already more than a generation old, but with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi it was so thoroughly democratized that freedom consciousness percolated for the first time to the very grassroots of Indian society and revitalized it. It is possible to see a connection between the development and the rise of the Indian novel in English; for fiction, of all literary

forms, is most vitally concern with social conditions and values.²¹

Unlike in the post-independence era, novelists of the 1930s were bound to exhibit a certain attitude to the British rule. For them, literature became a valuable and convenient way to dramatize and popularize their cause. After “World War I, the literature of the Indo- Anglian writers became determinedly more realistic, less idealized and a more earthy presentation of India was sought.”²²

Though Indian English writers had started focusing their attention on political and social questions much before the appearance of Gandhi on the national scene, with his arrival; all nationalists; revolutionaries and writers were imbued for the first time with a ray of hope. K.R.S. Iyengar has aptly illustrated the political importance of Gandhi in literature during the early twentieth century in the following words:

The next twenty years saw a further spread of English education, but there were heard of notes dissent and discontent also. Then came Mahatma Gandhi, and from 1920 to 1947 he led a unique revolution against the British bureaucracy in India, with sudden storms and unruly lulls alternating, till the British divided the country and withdraw as a political force on 15 August 1947.²³

As is evident, a number of novelists began to write in English during the 1930s with a view to communicating their feelings through their novels in the context of the Indian people’s suffering at the hands of imperialists. Hayden Moore William has also rightly illustrated the socio-political scene of the time in the following words:

English writing in India from 1920 onwards was considerably modified, naturally, by both nationalism and socialism. The very fact of writing about the Indian problems made the Indo-Anglian writers a

partisan whether willing or not of independent self – assertion. Some writers kept clear of politics – Narayan’s early novels are mainly non-partisan. Others submerged their art in the political struggle or entered into an uneasy alliance of art and propaganda. Raja Rao in *Kanthapura* and Mulk Raj Anand in his novels of the nineteenth thirties (*Coolie*, etc.) were highly conscious of the role of the writer in the political struggles of the Indian people.²⁴

Anand can be comprehensively evaluated by having a genuine understanding of the socio-political history of his time which has a strong bearing on his major novels. His own explanation in the following lines further reveals the reason behind taking his art as a means to the development of the consciousness of the toiling masses with a view to bringing them closer to victory over their oppressors:

The era to which I had been born was, thus, the historic turning point of my country. For, having gone so far through the sheer logic of its own acts of aggression the British bourgeoisie refused to go any further, while the Indian people, growingly conscious of the exploitation of their country, had begun to challenge authority and to demand their right to carry out the social evolution in India to its inevitable conclusion. We wanted to win control of the means of production to abolish the profit system and to undertake large schemes of industrial and social planning with the help of the latest researchers in science and technology, through which alone we could appease the great hunger all over the country and become dignified members of the human family.²⁵

Thus the foregoing analysis of the thirties movement under the leadership of Gandhi brings to the light the socio-historical scene of India. He came to the limelight not only on the pages of history and social sciences but also in literature. Gandhi gave to the world a new doctrine – a new way of giving expression to people’s demands and claims; a new strength and inspiration to unarmed masses. He spiritualized politics by his strict adherence to the doctrine of truth and non-violence. His powerful impact

on the socio-historical background of the 1930s, particularly on the Indo-Anglian literature was immense that Anand could not but be influenced by the contemporary events in India which deeply stirred him and defined his aesthetic principles in close alliance with the forces of history.

India was groaning under the imperialistic rule of the Britishers when Anand was born. The people had lost their moorings; the old values were crumbling. Religion had become a matter of meaningless ritual and arid ceremony. Fatalism and superstition dominated the minds of the poor masses, nor did the alien rulers ever think of the necessity of integrating the aspirations of the natives. The education imparted by the British Indian schools seemed to have no vital links with the genuine needs and interests of the ruled. It failed to enable the Indians either to acquire a clear understanding of his own culture or to get a correct appreciation of the European culture.

Most men lived lives fraught with squalor, poverty and caste consciousness. Anand knew that the old world was dead and the European Renaissance had become a spent force. The rapid growth of science and the consequent Industrial Revolution had resulted in colonialism and imperialism. Simple values like love and beauty had receded to the background. In the midst of this, Anand came to realize that only a new humanism with its respect for man and the message of live and let live and compassion could restore peace and harmony to the war – torn world.

Traditionally humanism implies love of man, the whole man with all his weaknesses, instincts and impulses. It may be defined as a system of thought; in which, human interests, values and dignity are held dominant. Humanism implies devotion to the concerns of mankind. It is an attitude of mind that concentrates on the activities of man rather than on the supernatural world and the world of nature. The history of Western Humanism goes back to the Renaissance and it arose as a result of the study of the ancient classics which emphasized things human, and of this world as contrasted with the medieval preoccupation with the supernatural and life in the other worlds. Historically, humanism is a Renaissance doctrine which stresses the essential worth, dignity, and greatness of man as contrasted with the older view that man was wicked, worthless and doomed to destruction both in this life and the life to come. Renaissance humanist, deriving their belief from the study of ancient poets, historians and philosophers, came to believe that man is capable of living a life of reason, dignity, morality and even happiness.

Anand's insistence on dignity of man irrespective of caste, creed and wealth, his plan for the practice of compassion as a sole value, his conception of the whole of man, the profound importance attached to art and poetry as instrument for developing the masses, his crusade against superstition, feudalism, and imperialism are some of the chief characteristics of his brand of humanism.

The humanism of Anand set forth in detail in *Apology for Heroism (1946)* and *Prolegomana to a New Humanism (1958)* however, does not rest on divine sanction, as does the mystical humanism of Gandhiji. It puts its faith in the creative

imagination and unconquerable spirit of man. It can be possibly achieved through socialism, for socialism alone can restore economic and political freedom and thus, help the growth of a full man. Anand believes that only his new humanism can restore order and decency in the world. His faith in humanism has made him optimistic about the future of mankind. He was confident that nothing could wipe off humanity from the face of the earth. The human heart is bound to survive all the destructive changes.

Like most of his other humanist friends, Anand declares his immense faith in the Protogorean dictum "*man is the measure of all things*" which implies that he believed in measuring all values and all actions in relation to the personality of human beings. He firmly believes that man is potentially capable of rising from the lower passions to magnificent heights of splendour and he has in him enough creative energy and imagination to transform himself and raise to a glorious pinnacle of dignity and to rid mankind of its unspeakable misery and pain, all through his tireless physical and mental energy. It is to enable man to achieve this end that Anand fervently pleads for the emergence of a new conception of the role of man in this vast universe.

Anand's humanism thus makes him a novelist with a mission and his theory of the novel is naturally in line with his commitment to his creed. His concern for the oppressed and the downtrodden is reflected in all his novels. All his heroes like Bakha, Bhikhu, Munoo, Gangu, Lall and Ananta break down, unable to fight against the oppression and exploitation mounted on them in an organized manner. All of

them pass through miseries, encounter all impediments boldly and emerge essentially unvanquished and hopeful. But Gangu's death, Bakha's return, Ananta's death, Bhikhu's journey and Lall's turning into communist at the end of the novels do not suggest a pessimistic resignation but rather it paves the way for a hopeful vision of a future.

If Anand's naturalism and humanism is viewed properly, then the inevitable third term arises: the relation between the two. For Anand, the third term is the Integrating Factor or what he called is Bhakti, the relation of personal, efficacious love, between the members of the units of society, family, community, nation or the world:

But, if there is no war, from deep within the orbit of the Indian tradition of individualism, shorn of its religious sanctions, may grow the gradual limitation of the power of the state. Except that the old individualism will also have to shed its egoism and concern for personal salvation and take on the bhakti – yoga, or devotion through works, which integrates the individual into community.²⁶

It is the maintenance of this relationship of loving service, which constitutes the wholeness of Anand's ideal man. It is indeed clearly pointed out as Iqbal Nath Sarsar in *Untouchable (1935)*, speaks of mechanizing the mode of the disposal of garbage which will ultimately eradicate caste. Sauda in *Coolie (1936)*, exhorts the workers to go on strike for the betterment of their lot and Purun Singh in *The Big Heart (1945)* voices Anand's highest conception of value in human life. The protagonists of Anand often portray the dedicated universal compassion and tolerance of bhakti. De La Havre, the English physician of *Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)*, Lall in *The Sword and the Sickle (1942)*, Dr. Shankar in *The Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953)*,

and Dhooli Singh, the enlightened landlord in *The Road (1963)* are the examples of such a portrayal.

The new religion, a new value system supplanting superstitions, personal devotion to god by rational devotion to man are the values which Anand proposes to his countrymen. The traditional religion, he maintains, made men indifferent to the ills on this earth yet the new religion of bhakti, requires impassioned, practical efforts to remove not only external signs of ill – filth, poverty, pain, disease, hunger and ignorance but also the evils which are deeply rooted in social, political and economic institutions. Outside bhakti there is no other world, according to Anand, therefore, if men are to find it at all, they must find its happiness here. The condition for human progress is the fullest possible freedom and equality for all; Bhakti strives towards such a condition.

In the final analysis, the novels of Mulk Raj Anand expressed us, as the product of the Indo – Anglian Literary Naturalism but the artistic exegesis of his philosophy involves a study of certain types of human behavior in a hostile environment. This naturally results in a tedious stereotyping of the basic attitude of the writer under the thin veneer of diverse situations and different individuals. The final impression is one of admiration for the solidity of factual details in the extreme precision in his study and presentation of man and the milieu, rather than for the fulfillment of art itself.

However, the achievement of Anand is not merely 'methodological', nor do the protagonists of his novels always meet with death. The tragic ends of the heroes of his novels do indeed suggest the remedy for the social disease, which arrest the healthy growth of the personality of the individual. Thus for example, industrialization or more precisely, mechanization is the remedy for the evils of untouchability. Scientific education and socialist outlook can effectively put an end to the capitalistic exploitation; and a voluntary and free acceptance of this social reality is a 'revolution' in an organized way, rectifying the various wrongs of the society.

Anand can not in fact, be charged with pessimism or fatalism; as the ultimate aim of his protagonists is always social upliftment and human betterment. The mechanistic determination is instrumental in bringing about the eventual catastrophe of the protagonist. The triumph of Anand seems to be in his transcendental comprehension of the social dynamics that determines the destiny of every individual. His imposition of the patterns of his own thought on the fictional papier-mâché of experience is in complete consonance with the philosophy of naturalism. As such, his novels are living milestones in the tradition of the Indo-Anglian literary naturalism.

Despite the tragic notes of the novels, the ideas of scientific humanism are sustaining and pervasive in his novels. In fact, it his consciousness of the need to raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies and other suppressed

members of society, to human dignity and self awareness in view of the abjectness, apathy and despair in which they are sunk, made him a naturalistic humanist.

Anand's humanism places man in the centre of all things and believes in the ethical equality of all men. He feels that all men are equal and there is no division of caste, creed, or race, which are obstacles for human development to the full height and dignity. According to him, the conquest of pain should be the supreme goal of all individuals and all nations. He strongly condemns the cruelty and the pain inflicted upon the underprivileged by the higher sections of society and firmly believes that one of the most urgent needs of mankind today is to infuse love and tenderness into the hearts of all men.

But even today, the solid bedrock of the national culture is being upheld in a fanatical manner in one form or the other. Man's life is determined by the social norms as we have miserably failed to develop a scientific outlook, which is the need of the hour. It is well nigh impossible for us to effectively shape the destiny of the oppressed, to improve the quality of life and to provide the basic necessities of life unless we are steeped in science. For science, awakens the urge to inquire and research for the truth and this kind of attitude would probably help bringing about a social change removing from its surface, the mark of traditional ties that has kept us in its vicious grip. Many of the social values that were upheld in the ancient times are outworn and irrelevant in the changing times, and are to be discarded once and for all. Therefore, what we need is not the militant revival of a moribund culture but the creation of a dynamic contemporary society as envisaged by Mulk Raj Anand.

Having indicated the crucial importance of literary naturalism in the European, American and Indian context as contributory factors in the shaping of Anand's literary manifesto, we find in his works a distinct movement beyond naturalism towards hopeful humanism. The following chapter will study this trend as well as document the pattern of social heredity and the role of environment in his major novels.

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C H A P T E R - II

CHAPTER - II

Social Heredity

“What status should be attributed to those who are placed even lower in the social hierarchy? There is no karma considered for them, they must reside away from the other castes in a space, which we will not know whether it be human or savage; at a level on the scale of beings which places them lower than domesticated animals. One of the consequences of the ritual origin of the hierarchy of the beings is that there is no break between humanity and animality.”¹

There can be no doubt that the characteristic feature of all living beings are unalterably fixed by heredity. Our family traits were determined by the hereditary constitutions of our ancestors and our personal traits by our parents. Race, sex and mental capacity into which we are born are fixed and cannot be changed. In the same way, the social heredity of caste system can not be altered and thus passes unto their progeny as a socio-psychological inheritance. This caste system is usually characterized by hierarchies whose members have hereditary professions and are segregated strictly by rules restricting social interchange to persons of the same caste. Their social status is based on a complex ritual of “purity and impurity”, the qualities being ascribed to social categories considered antagonistic and irreducible; the Brahmin priests, ideally the holders of maximum purity, are at the top of the system while the untouchables – the holders of maximum impurity are at the bottom. These untouchables have been ascribed not only the maximum but are also seen as permanent pollutants, an assumption which is frequently based on the special nature of their hereditary professions. The common idea that the above stigma which arises

from the activities traditionally attributed to them, imply regular contact with polluted materials. This assertion is reinforced by the central idea of Hinduism – the relation between Karma and the cycle of reincarnation, according to which the untouchables are the persons condemned to expiate severe transgressions committed in a previous existence. It is because of this, that the untouchables from the time immemorial have been excluded from the social and ritual space of the other castes. The present study will clearly indicate how the social heredity of caste system becomes a great catalyst in the development and shapes the destiny of man.

Mulk Raj Anand, a major novelist of the thirties was concerned with man in society. In his novels he presents us with a picture of great complexity, a reflection of society and the factors determining social change. He looked deep into the human consciousness, the lowly, squalor and ugliness of human life, against a background of a taboo – ridden society and its callous laws. It is in this respect that Anand transcends naturalism and succeeded in striking a universal note. This is reflected in both his novels – *Untouchable (1935)* and *The Road (1963)*. Social heredity and its part in making and unmaking the destiny of man became the core of his fictional writing. In these two novels which are naturalistic studies, he explored the lives of the poor, the outcastes and sought to embrace their tragedy crushed by the relentless immobility of the rigid class structure and imperial feudalism.

The protagonists of these novels are highly sensitive. Compassion and love, endurance and suffering are the fundamental experiences in their lives; but the hereditary stigma which bind them for generations prevent them from being socially

accepted and suppress their freedom. Their low status becomes a handicap preventing them from shaking off the bondage of untouchability. However, having faith in the possibility of controlling nature for the improvement of man's conditions, they also stand out as rebels against the existing social conditions which delimit their freedom of expression. They suffer because they cannot accept and resign themselves to their faith yet often enough they find themselves unequal to the task of putting their ideas as well as desires into practice.

The problem of the first novel *The Untouchable (1935)* is the age-old social evil of the segregation of an individual who follows the hereditary profession of scavenging. The scavenger is an outcaste whose mere touch pollutes the people – a superstition that the 'three thousand years of racial and caste superiority' have engendered. It is, in fact, analogous to the equally hateful attitude of apartheid, shown by the 'whites' in their relation with 'blacks'. This execrable practice is religiously institutionalized in the ineradicable caste system of the Hindu society. It is against this inhuman system that the protagonist of Anand's novel rebels in silence. The novel encapsulates a single day in the scavenger's life, Bakha; and the whole drama of the misery of untouchability takes place which minutely describes the various humiliations suffered by the hero of the novel, in his regular rounds of cleaning the town.

Bakha was treated by the upper castes with condescension bordering on contempt often insulted and humiliated just because he happens to belong to a particular caste. Bakha is a representative of untouchable exemplifying the

predicament of not only the so-called Hindu untouchables but also dispossessed man everywhere. *The Untouchable (1935)* selectively narrates the incident that happened to him and suggests the impact of naturalism on the gradual growth of his personality. It exposes the evils of caste system and deals with the misery and wretchedness of poor and their struggle for a better life. Mulk Raj Anand has produced in Bakha, a strong sense of awareness of his socially low status and the possible way out of the situation in which he was forced to live. He sought an identity for himself in a world which has for years, suppressed all the persons of his kind.

The very beginning of the novel gives us a vivid picture of the outcaste's colony in which all the untouchables live. The colony is dark, damp and uncongenial. The thatched mud houses clustered together in two rows are utterly ill fitted for human habitation. It looks as though all the inhabitations of the colony are sub-human non entities huddled together. The consciousness that surrounds them is that they should be content to live in the gutter like worms only to be crushed by the superior caste:

The outcaste's colony was a group of mud walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment, but outside their boundaries and separate from them. There lived the scavengers, the leather-workers, the washer men, the barbers, the water carriers, the grass-cutters and other outcasts of Hindu society..... The absence of a drainage system had, through the rains of various seasons, made of the quarters a marsh which gave out the most offensive smell. And altogether the ramparts of human and animal refuge that lay on the outskirts of this little colony, and the ugliness, the squalor and the

misery which lay within it, made it an 'un-congenial'
place to live in.²

These unfortunate dwellers are segregated from the rural community, dreaded as lepers and treated most contemptuously inspite of the enormously useful work they do in cleaning up the entire village as well as draining the latrines and urinals of upper castes men. The sweeper is worst off than a slave, for the slave may change his master and may become free from servitude and bondage but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he cannot escape. Unclean himself, he pollutes others with a mere touch. He is excluded from social intercourse and the consolation of his religion. It is his duty to call out and warn the people that he is coming. Nonetheless, society insults him perpetually thereby dwarfing his natural growth and checks his potentialities for proper manifestation. The primary aim of Anand in this novel is to reflect casteism as a cruel evil, which suppress the untouchables who are denied their fundamental rights to grow into respectable men of society. Anand has brought into focus the ups and downs in the drama of Bakha's soul and whole gamut of experiences so as to suggest the deep spiritual crisis that has engulfed the sweeper boy. Like others of community, he was subjected to humiliations and indifferences by high caste Hindus. He was aware of his low position and also conscious of his inability to offer resistance against the inhuman treatment ruthlessly meted out to him. He was born in a sweeper family and as such, never provided the proper upbringing requisite of a civilized man. Mulk Raj Anand himself has amplified the whole idea thus:

I glimpsed the truth that the tragedy of my hero
(Bakha) lay in the fact that he was never allowed
qualities of manhood.³

Bakha does not hesitate in the discharge of his menial duties, despite the fact that he is often insulted and abused both by the Hindus and his own father, Lakha, the jamedar of all the sweepers in the cantonment. He undergoes some bitter and traumatic experiences, encounters many humiliating incidents which psychologically leaves him dissatisfied. Though he is quite tired after his morning round of cleaning latrines, he returns to his hut with the hope of quenching his thirst with a cup of tea. He goes out readily at the disposal of his father, to sweep the market road and the temple courtyard. He feels elated as he moves towards the gate of the town which offers him a gallery of colourful things. Now he stops at a shop to buy a packet of 'Red Lamp' cigarette. He puts an anna on the board. The shopkeeper sprinkle some water over the coin, picks it up and throws it into the counter. Then he throws a packet of cigarette at Bakha. This humiliating incident has been portrayed in the following way:

Then he flung a packet of 'Red Lamp' cigarettes at Bakha, as a butcher might throw a bone to an insistent dog sniffing round the corner of his shop.⁴

This insult annoys the sensitive lad but he goes his way. His instinct tells him that as a sweeper boy he should show himself in people's presence as little as possible. A scavenger to be seen smoking constituted an offence against the God.

A similar incident occurs a little ahead in the main street where Bakha goes again to sweep the market road and temple courtyard. Walking along and watching the shops, Bakha is attracted to a sweet shop. "Standing in a corner, he stole a glance at the shop to see which was the cheapest thing he could buy." Having made up his mind, he orders jellebies "in a low voice as he courageously advanced

his head was bent. He was vaguely ashamed and self conscious at being seen buying sweets.”⁵ He bought four annas worth of cheap sweet-meat, after weighing the consequences of doing so both in philosophic and rational terms. Anand has masterly presented this scene which contains Bakha’s suppressed feelings and emotions before buying sweet-meat:

‘Eight annas in my pocket,’ he said to himself, ‘dare I buy some sweets? If my father comes to know that I spend all my money on sweets,’ he thought and hesitated, ‘but come, I have only one life to live,’ he said to himself, ‘let me taste of the sweets; who knows, tomorrow I may be no more.’⁶

Bakha asked for jellebies worth four annas from a Bengali sweet vendor with a great alacrity which the confectioner throws at him simply because he is an untouchable and Bakha catches it reluctantly:

The alacrity with which he lifted the little string attached to the middle of the rod, balanced the scales for shortest possible space of time and threw the sweets into a piece torn off an old ‘*Daily Mail*,’ was as amazing as it was baffling to poor Bakha, who knew he had been cheated, but dared not complain. He caught the jellebies which the confectioner threw at him like a cricket ball, placed four nickel coins on the shoe – board for the confectioner’s assistant who stood ready to splash some water on them, and walked away, embarrassed yet happy.⁷

Bakha’s annoyance knew no bounds at the contemptuous behaviour of the shop-keeper but he finds unable to raise his voice against this callous behaviour. He fails to show any reaction to the humiliating treatment meted to him which reflects the passivity and timidness inherent in his character. A deep and clear reflection of social heredity prevents him from displaying adequate resentment to the perpetrators of

inhuman acts. Bakha feels severely handicapped to act in a decisive way. R. S. Singh elaborates the factors that bar Bakha from acting effectively:

He was aware of the limitations of the given social structure, and was also ready to acknowledge the rising rebellion within him, but in the absence of any perceptible alternative he was unable to translate that protest into action. That moment came only when he saw three alternatives to the same problem of untouchability.⁸

Another step leading to Bakha's stunning realization of his untouchability is when he faces one more situation of utter ignominy as he was scolded by a passerby for his act of unintentionally touching him. Moving along and enjoying the jellebies, he happens to become absorbed in looking at the woman at a window. In his distraction, he accidentally brushes against another man. The man yells and swears at him in the foulest manner for touching him, thereby polluting him and his fresh clothes. He castigates Bakha for not having limited himself to a side of the street and not announcing his approach. This produces an endless torrent of vulgar abuses from the man. Bakha is utterly stunned by the venomous outpouring of abuses.

Bakha stood amazed, embarrassed. He was deaf and dumb. His senses were paralysed. Only fear gripped his soul, fear and humility and servility. He was used to being spoken to roughly. But he had seldom been taken so unawares. The curious smile of humility which always hovered on his lips in the presence of high-caste men, now became more pronounced. He lifted his face to the man opposite him, though his eyes were bent down. Then he stole a hurried glance at the man. The fellow's eyes were flaming.⁹

Bakha's intention was not to pollute Lallaji. He finally finds his tongue to apologize and asks for forgiveness but in vain.

'Nahi; Lallaji, it is not true that I beat this child, it is not true, Bakha pleaded. I have erred now,' 'I forgot to

call. I beg your forgiveness. It won't happen again. I forgot. I beg your forgiveness. It won't happen again.' But the crowd which pressed round him, starrng, pulling grimaces, jeering and leering, was without a shadow of pity for his remorse.¹⁰

But the crowd stands around him unmoved, taking a sort of sadistic delight in watching him cower and feeling a sense of its power, while Bakha suffers in mental anguish:

To Bakha, every second seemed an endless age of woe and suffering. His whole demeanour was concentrated in humility, and in his heart there was a queer stirring. His legs trembled and shook under him. He felt they would fail him. He was really sorry and tried hard to convey his repentance to his tormentors. But the barrier of space that the crowd had placed between themselves and him seemed to prevent his feeling from getting across.¹¹

Then there gathered a big crowd who continued to scold him mercilessly. In due course of time, encouraged by the people, Lallaji at once gave him a slap for what he has done. After the incident, he stands amazed, embarrassed and mentally paralyzed. Here again, Bakha proves himself to be a disappointing figure as he does not react to this humiliation. Though aware of self respect, he restrains himself from thinking in terms of retaliation or revenge. It is here that he offers a picture of an imprisoned tiger utterly incapable of translating his feelings into reality. He asked forgiveness though he has not committed any sinful act. Dr. G.S. Balarama Gupta has observed:

The climax of the novel, the incident where in Bakha 'touches' Lallaji, is specially significant for the slap dealt on Bakha's face is symbolic not only of all the cruelty to which untouchables are subjected, but of the scornful treatment meted out to the underprivileged all over the world, as, for instance, the Negroes in the USA.¹²

Bakha stood still, his turban fallen on the ground and his poor jellebies scattered in the dust. At this critical juncture, nobody had a kind word for him except a tongawalla who tries to console Bakha. After this serious incident Anand vividly describes Bakha's feeling which emerged in him as a result of utter humiliation:

He stood aghast. Then his whole countenance lit with fire and his hands were no more joined. Tears welled up in his eyes and rolled down his cheeks. The cumulated strength of his giant body glistened in him with the desire for revenge, while horror, rage, indignation swept over his frame... his feelings would rise like spurts of smoke from a half-smothered fire in fitful jerks when the recollection of abuse or rebuke he had suffered kindled a spark in the ashes of remorse inside him.¹³

The scene of the cruelty of the crowd and the man who hit him flashes before his mind. But Bakha immediately realizes his actual position in the world. The burning of excrement is symbolically seen not as an uncomplicated activity but as an avowal of Bakha's un-cleanliness and spiritual degradation, and as a social illustration of his moral identification with filth. There is a vital contrast between Bakha and the so called infallible tradition. In his social cosmos, man is governed by traditions and taboos imposed on him. However, beyond the levels of social superficiality there is a contrast between the human truth and a cosmic life. Bakha's touching of the Hindu merchant is of no consequence when contrasted with and considered within the social hierarchy and religious value system of the Hindu tradition.

The cruel crowd! All of them abused, abused, abused. Why are we always abused? The sentry inspector that day abused my father. They always abuse us because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hated it too. That's why I came here. I was tired of working on the latrines everyday. That's why they don't touch us, the high-castes.¹⁴

The incident, however, proves to be a great turning point in Bakha's life as it brings to him a new realization of his social position. Believing in an amoral world in which man is a mere automaton, the naturalist tries to define man's exact position in the universe. The affirmation of man in a deterministic universe is what the novelist seeks to portray here. He believed that nature was completely indifferent to man's plight and thus man's salvation rested with him. It comes to him as a ray of light piercing through the darkness, and for the first time gives him a painful awareness of his lot which he expresses in the following words:

It is only the Hindus, and the outcastes who are not sweeper. For them I am a sweeper, sweeper-untouchable: untouchable: untouchable: that's the word: untouchable: I am an untouchable. Like a ray of light shooting through the darkness, the recognition of his position, the significance of his lot dawned upon him.¹⁵

With this new realization of his social position he starts reflecting critically over the things that took place earlier. This consciousness is specially reflected after Bakha is hooted out of the temple for his alleged crime of defiling it. It is because of the new understanding that he is fired with anger and revenge when he comes to know about the priest's sinister attempt to seduce his sister. It is a fact that even after the newly acquired intuition; he can not oversteps the barriers of the conventions built to protect a man like priest from attacking by a low-caste. Though he regrets for not killing the Brahmin priest, he is still gripped with fear as reflected below:

A superb specimen of humanity he seemed whenever he made the high resolve to say something, to go and do something, his fine form rising like a tiger at bay. And yet there was a futility written on his face. He could not over-step the barriers which the conventions of his superiors had built up to protect their weakness against him. He could not invade the magic circle

which protects a priest from attack by anybody, especially by a low-caste man. So in the highest moment of his strength, the slave in him asserted itself, and he lapsed back, wild with torture, biting his lips, ruminating his grievances.¹⁶

He encounters a deterministic universe which does not even recognize the identity of individuals. The two incidents – Bakha's touching of the Hindu priest and the attempt of the priest to molest his sister, Sohini are instrumental factors in spoiling subsequent pleasant incident like a hockey match, a country walk and a wedding. Bakha's sense of outrage against such incidents and his inability to react effectively has rightly been analysed by Jane Powers:

Bakha's own fear is overcome by outrage at his sister's harassment by the temple priest. His innate nobility rouses him to protect his sister's honour; he is moved by her silence and subtle modesty and could not think of her being brutalized by anyone. The emotions warring within him result from his outcast status. Full of high resource to speak and act, he can not overstep the barriers.....¹⁷

The validity of Bakha's moral figure, however, lies in the central conflict, in his oscillation between rage and despair. Beyond the horizon is the radiant world of the sun. But the gloom of the present is all about him. He must either cling to the hopes of the future, or else sink into the inert existence which is his destiny. His choice is to live between the sun and the slum. The sun imagery is dexterously built. The sun represents the potentiality of life, and takes on the status of a key symbol:

He looked up at the sun. He caught the full force of its glare, and was dazed. He stood lost for a moment, confused in the simmering rays, feeling as though there were nothing but the sun, the sun, the sun everywhere, in him, on him, before him, and behind him. It was a pleasant sensation in spite of the disconcerting suddenness with which it had engulfed him. He felt

suspended, as it were, in a region of buoyant tenseness.¹⁸

The hero's adventure is mapped out in terms of the sun's progress in the sky. A, places of freedom and release, the field and the sun are the same. The morning sun starts the rhythm of life, the alpha of existence; the afternoon marks its waning, the omega of existence. The sun, thus, becomes the dominant symbol of the nature of human experience.

Though one of the explicit reasons attributed to Bakha's failure to act or retaliate in a dignified manner in his defence is apparently his awareness that over stepping the walls of convention that has been laid upon him by the upper castes was not easy. It can not be overlooked that Anand does not want his protagonist to assert himself in a challenging way. The realism of socio-cultural values of the time and in keeping with the novelist's own scheme of things that Bakha is shown as a weak character even when he knows that he is being victimized by the upper class people. Bakha's inability to fight back is again exposed when he accepts the bread given by the housewife albeit in an insulting way. She scolds him and hurls some chapattis down from the fourth floor of the building. Bakha picks them up and walks off with disgust overwhelming him:

Vay Bakha, take this, here's your bread coming down. And she flung it at him... he picked it up quietly and wrapped it in a duster with the other things he had there. He was too disgusted to clean the drain after this, especially as the little boy sat relieving himself before him. He threw the little broom aside and made off.¹⁹

The last incident which provokes Bakha, happened when a little high-caste child was injured in the match which was being played and Bakha lifts him up in silent

sympathy. Even this act of his is misconstrued by the boy's mother, who blames him for polluting her son. Prof. R. S. Singh has rightly observed here:

They refused to recognize his sentiments and even his acts of kindness. Even when he saved the child from the accident and brought him back to his caste mother, he was not praised for endangering his life to help the child. On the contrary, he was condemned for polluting the child by lifting him in his lap.²⁰

Bakha finds humiliation is neither the result of his poverty nor the dirty work as such, but the utter denial of his humanity and his being reduced to a sub-human creature that can contaminate other humans. The tragedy of Bakha becomes all the more poignant as Anand skillfully makes him 'an expansive hero in a closed world.' His comment is that "the tragedy of my hero (Bakha) lay in the fact that he was never allowed to attain anything near the potentials of his qualities of manhood."²¹ Bakha's world is much too narrow for his aspirations. Feeling quite detached from the human world, Bakha is swamped by the merest sight of the open field that spread before him as the curve of his soul seemed to yearn for the heights. He longs for a new world but could not reach out to it. This causes a profound ache in his soul. Anand comments on this discord:

It was a queer picture of awe and romance, the alternation of his hatred for his own town and the love for the world to which he looked out The mind which has once peeped into the wonderland of the new, contemplated various aspects of it with longing and desire, is shocked and disappointed when living reality pulls in the reins of the wild horse of fancy... he had built up a new world, which was his heaven, if not for nothing else, because it represented a change from the ossified order and the stagnant pools of the lane near which he was born.²²

Bakha is very much aware of the discord between the world he is condemned to inhabit and the new world of his undying aspirations. He tried hard in vain to be in harmony with himself but soon realizes that he is an alien, and outsider who can not belong. He is extra ordinarily sensitive to the fact that he can never go where there is no place for him. He experiences existential angst on the lines of Camus:

It happens that the stage – sets collapse. Rising, tram, four hours in the office or factory, meal, tram, four hours of work, meal, sleep and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, according to the same rhythm – this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day, the ‘why’ arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement. ‘Begins’ – this is important. Weariness comes at the end of the acts of a mechanical life, but at the same time it inaugurates the impulse of consciousness.²³

This birth of a new enlightenment in Bakha results from his touching of a caste Hindu and his being slapped by the latter and subjected to the most inhuman treatment before a crowd of people. It is this fateful accident that opens his eyes for the first times and lets him have vague glimpses into the real meaning of his own self, his own place in society: “For them I am a sweeper, sweeper-untouchable. Untouchable! That’s the word; Untouchable; I am an Untouchable!” It becomes a crucial moment of realization when Bakha fully understands his place in the social order:

Like a ray of light shooting through the darkness, the recognition of his position, the significance of his lot dawned upon him. It illuminated the inner chambers of his mind. Everything that had happened to him traces its course upto this light and got the answer.²⁴

From this moment of self realization, which is testing step towards maturity, begins the ostracized hero’s spiritual voyaged towards a new destination. These are the

episodes in the drama of Bakha's psychological tragedy as determined by social dictates. He can not enjoy a walk, for:

Heredity furrowed no deep groves in his soul where flowers could grow or grass abound. The cumulative influence of careful selection had imprisoned his free will in the shackles of slavery to dreary routine of one occupational environment. He could not reach out from the narrow and limited personality he had inherited to his larger yearning. It was a discord between person and circumstances.²⁵

Bakha's misery reaches its zenith when his father chastises and turns him out of the house. As a sequel to the events of the day, Bakha wanders homeless in the plains.

Later when he returns home in the evening, there emerged three possible solutions to the problem of untouchability, a social malaise corroding the souls of millions like him. The solution is the conversion to Christianity. Hutchinson, the padre of the Salvation Army proposes to baptize Bakha in order to remove the stigma of caste. His meeting with the Salvationist missionary comes as a turning point, who Christ is, defies his understanding. Bakha instinctively turns to Gandhi who identified himself with the untouchable by declaring that he wishes to be reborn as an untouchable but Bakha finds something mystical about Mahatma's solutions. He wants a more comprehensible method, and the poet, Iqbal Nath Sarshar, suggests rapid industrialization of the country which means a definite destruction of the soulless system of castes. With all his orthodoxy, Gandhi recognized the evil when he said:

While we are asking for freedom from the grip of foreign nation, we have, ourselves, for centuries, trampled under-foot millions of human beings without feeling the slightest remorse for our iniquity.²⁶

The novel ends on a note of calm acceptance. Although the conflict in his soul between hope for the future and the present condition is not yet over, Bakha feels soothed for the time being by both Gandhi's deep empathy for the untouchables and the poet's technological solution to their problem. He is willing to wait patiently for his eventual emancipation. Bakha's feelings, however, reflect mainly his own character and experience – his inner suffering, his humanity, his innocence, his hope rather than indicate the certainty of any solution.

Bakha experiences the profound sense of alienation when he is amidst the sea of humanity waiting for Gandhi:

There was an inseparable barrier between himself and the crowd, the barrier of caste. He was part of a consciousness which he could share and yet not understand. He had been lifted from the gutter, through the barriers of space, to partake of a life which was his, and yet not his. He was in the midst of a humanity which included him in its fold, and yet debarred him from entering into a sentient living quivering contact with it.²⁷

The living contact is impossible within his narrow circle. He can not share his views with others not even with his father and thus had to totally suppress his emotions. He finds that he has no way out.

The treatment meted out to Bakha exposes the apex of the humiliation at the hands of the upper castes. But Bakha is unable to react with intense resentment which has not been appreciated by some critics. They fault Anand in terms of his

failure to send the right message of assertive protest in the context of new emergent realities of the thirties.

Bakha's submission and subservience to superior caste people seems something that he has inherited from his forefathers. The extent of servility and passive contentment can be gauged from the sense of his gratitude to Charat Singh after receiving the hockey stick;

He was grateful, grateful, haltingly grateful, flatteringly grateful, stumblingly grateful, so grateful that he did not know how he could walk ten yards to the corner to be out of sight of his benevolent and generous host. The whole atmosphere was charged with embarrassment. He felt uncomfortable as he walked away. Strange! strange! Wonderful kind of man! I did not know he was so kind. I should have known. He always has such a humorous way about him! Kind, Good man! He gave me a new stick, a brand-new stick!²⁸

This kind of gratitude on the part of Bakha shows his habitual submission to the superior caste people who never show any hesitation in insulting him and the vast majority of outcastes. Moreover, Bakha's father boosts his submissiveness by constantly reminding him that there exists a difference between the poor and the rich; and that the people like themselves were not supposed to invade the circle of rich. Bakha's sense of slavery becomes more entrenched when he cannot assert himself even in the greatest moment of his strength because of the traditional restrictions. All his mute longings for education are never fulfilled:

He wept and cried to be allowed to school. But then his father had told him that the schools were meant for the Babus, not for the bhangis. He had not quite understood the reason for that, then later, at the British barracks, he realized why his father had not

sent him to school. He was a sweeper's son and could never be a Babu. Later still, he realized that there was no school which would admit him, because the parents of the other children would not allow their sons to be contaminated by the touch of a sweeper's son.²⁹

The incidents of polluting a passer-by and the attempt by the priest to seduce his sister jolt Bakha's consciousness, yet his new maturity does not lead him to any rebellious behaviour. This becomes obvious when he starts reflecting on and off on the words of Gandhi while returning home after hearing what Gandhi had to say about the untouchables. Instead of showing his resentment to the repressive caste system, he is attracted by the solution offered by the poet who combines Gandhi's compassionate vision and the machine:

The Mahatma had talked of a Brahmin boy who did the scavenging in his ashram. Did he mean, then that I should go on scavenging? Bakha asked himself. 'Yes' came the forceful answer. 'Yes' said Bakha. 'I shall go on doing what Gandhi says.' 'But shall I never be able to leave the latrines?' Came the disturbing thought. But I can. Did not that poet say there is a machine which can do my work? The prospect of never being able to wear clothes that the Sahibs wore, of never being able to become a sahib was horrible. 'But it does not matter,' he said to console himself.³⁰

Bakha is ultimately reconciled to the Gandhian formula as suggested by the poet. His desire to be a sahib, to wear clothes like a gentleman do not materialize. He takes a conciliatory submissive attitude towards not being able to fulfill his desires. However, some critics feel that it is the novelist's who limits his characters within the Gandhian framework. P.K. Rajan analyses thus:

And when the novel closes, it is to the poet that Bakha wants to go to seek his salvation, because the combines Gandhi's compassionate vision with the machine which is symbolic of modernity...The poet advocates modernization through industrialization within the

framework of Gandhian outlook. This indeed is the message or thesis of *Untouchable*, and as William Walsh rightly points out, it is the poet's solution which is most favoured by Anand. Even though Bakha does not understand the poet's words fully, he knows that the poet has been answering the most intimate question in his soul.³¹

The weakness of *The Untouchable (1935)* lies in the fact that in spite of Bakha's many human qualities, and his self awareness, his passive character cripples his reaction to the beastly treatment meted out to him. Though one can feel that the novel ends on a note of hope, for future social change, it does not appear to be very convincing. Bakha's character fails to give any encouragement to the socially deprived people. His timid and submissive attitude is the result of his inherited inferiority shaped by the traditional regulations imposed upon him. He has been moulded by his parents and the society to accept the situation and this bars him to a show of boldness when required. All these instances amply indicate that Bakha has not been able to shake off the sense of servility and meekness that weigh heavily on him which in turn makes his destiny. The social heredity of caste-system prevents him in doing whatever he wants thus making him a victim of naturalism. Whenever he faces a humiliating situation, and thinks in terms of reacting boldly, he is called back and reminded of his inferior position and retracts sheepishly as is shown in the following lines when he is falsely accused of polluting the priest who had made an attempt to molest his sister. Saroj Cowasjee comment:

At such moment he appears, we are told, 'a superb specimen of humanity,' 'his fine form rising as a tiger at bay.' But he is a tiger in a cage, securely imprisoned by the conventions of his superiors have built up to protect themselves against the fury of those whom they exploit. The instinctive anger gives way, and the slave in him asserts itself...³²

All these evidences reveal that Bakha is deeply bound to his low caste status throughout the novel is not capable of recognizing that he has a creative role to play in the amelioration of his condition. He feels strongly sensitive; but when it comes to a concrete action, he seems to lapse into passivity or acquiescence. Though Anand sets out to pillory, Hindu society for its cruelty and insensitivity with great fanfare, the end result is a mere whimper. Bakha is no doubt a victim of circumstances beyond his control because of his own caste heredity, but nothing could stop him in his unwillingness to accept his lot and put up a fight against the social wrongs unjustly heaped on him. However, a sense of protest there might be in Bakha's conscience, it is allowed to peter out.

Bakha is caught between a world which despises him and a will to fight against it to keep himself whole. There is also a firm faith in him that the life he is doomed to live is monstrously unjust. It is obvious, what the novelist trying to convey is that work is what one makes of it. It is not the nature of work, but the spirit in which it was performed that made the difference. What is required is an attitudinal change. This kind of instinctive importance given to work by Bakha is to be promoted in order that the Indian society as a whole may progress since it is through action that one can achieve the value of self-esteem, which he would be otherwise denied to within a system seemingly intent on degrading him. What Anand emphasized is that an untouchable can possibly overcome the injustices inherent in his work through the importance that any indispensable work attaches to itself. Bakha's case exemplifies a situation in which the ethic of work alone can eliminate

social alienation, even social ostracism. The conversion of latrines to the flush system is the third solution proposed by Anand. The absence of drainage system as the root cause for the polluted atmosphere is hinted at even at the beginning of the novel and the solution of the water-closet system is offered in the last part. It draws attention to the fact that by performing the degrading works assigned to him by an oppressive system, the untouchable in India is in a sense perpetuating untouchability. This suggested solution that of flush system could eliminate the need for the performance of such humiliating jobs and that could lead to a change in the status of the workers concerned.

In this novel Anand lays great emphasis on actions rather than on ideas. Since actions are the primary concrete reality. He steers clear of proposing any philosophical or intellectual solution to problems which are primarily those of existence. What is implied by the very dynamics of the novel is the need for promoting an instinctive awareness of the importance of action and perhaps a corresponding distrust of abstract propositions put forward as solutions. Indeed what determines the logic of the narrative in this novel is a belief in ethical socialism which Gandhi himself advocated – a form of socialism which is in tune with India's mystic inheritance so far as the institutional aspect of life is concerned. Though Anand has been dubbed as a Marxist by some critics, his socialist sympathies are attuned to the ethical rather than the political. That is why ethical socialism may be expected to offer a possible solution to the problem of untouchability in India.

The Untouchable (1935) may be regarded as a classic since it brings into sharp focus what has proved debilitating to Indian society in general, and Hindu society in particular encompassing several issues affecting the condition of man not only in India but also elsewhere in the world. The novel explores the possibilities of inter-personal relations between untouchables and high caste Hindus considered in existential terms. What emerges is a kind of message that untouchability cannot possibly be eradicated from India unless the Indians are informed by the philosophy – man with man, since any other ordering of the relationship between the two would prove frustrating. In highlighting the crisis occurring in the course of a day in Bakha's life, Anand's purpose is to analyze the existential structure of the untouchable's predicament. However, Anand does appear to have paid enough attention to one profound aspect of the situation in *The Untouchable(1935)*, that of his having to recourse to a kind of double-consciousness, that is, the sense of the untouchable looking at himself through the eyes of high-caste Hindus of measuring "One's soul by tape of a world that looks on in contempt and pity"³³ which is bound to give rise to a disastrous division within the self. Bakha's predicament would have been all the more meaningful if the growth in his awareness which is sought to be plotted by the novel had been rendered more explicit through an expose of his psyche.

The Untouchable (1935) describes a child of modern India shackled by the age-old tradition and Bakha is a perfect individual whose excellence is flawed by his low-caste for which he is not responsible. All the episodes of humiliation reveal how unjustly the untouchables are treated by the caste-Hindus. Though dissatisfied with

his lot, Bakha made desperate attempts to cope with it but his revolutionary feelings lie buried in his heart. He was aware of his limitations of the given social structure and is also ready to acknowledge the rising rebellion within him but in the absence of any perceptible alternative, he is unable to translate that protest into action. Between the struggle of the individual and society, Bakha is always defeated and his potentiality to register his protest becomes less pronounced. This defeat is a submission to the tradition and the established norms, rather than defeat of his conscience.

Eventually, the end of the novel shows Bakha the protagonist, not only fearful and simple but also totally incapable of the confrontationist spirit needed to survive in a society which is against people like him. Anand has emphasized the process of Bakha's victimization rather than suggesting his creative role in society.

Bakha accepts all humiliations and sufferings with meek submission or without any visible protest. It is due to deeply embedded class-consciousness on the part of the protagonist that the novel ends without any specific solution to the basic problem, and the organically evolved pessimism envelopes Bakha's life. His looking forward to the future in a positive and constructive manner does not hold much water as this factor lacks essential intellectual understanding of the system of thought. Perhaps, one excuse for Bakha's passivity is that the burden of centuries proved too much for him to think of a final and clear cut resolution. This burden, an inherited social heredity stiffs his spirit of rebellion.

Anand in this novel emphasized man alienated in an absurd world, the individual estranged from society, the individual's isolation and his consequent feelings of anxiety and anguish, his assertion of personal freedom. *The Untouchable (1935)* pictures the epic struggle of the individual Bakha to release himself from the communal customs and beliefs which circumvent his destiny. The conflict between social heredity and the individual forces him to experience a type of self-exile. Bakha's alienation is the result of the social ostracism. Mulk Raj Anand has portrayed Bakha as emerging from the old fatalism into a sensitive new world of freedom. Bakha learns the doctrine of struggle which becomes a universal gesture of protest as he is persecuted by the individuals and society. He becomes a mere plaything, a tool in the hands of destiny as he succumbs to the social cosmos governed by traditions and taboos.

In the given circumstances, it is not only expedient but urgently imperative that those inhuman caste-prejudices which had eroded cohesiveness and unity of Indian society are cast off. Gandhi's program of action for the eradication of untouchability was, therefore, an integral part of his larger political struggle. By using the symbol of the machine, he suggested that scientific thinking would change the attitude and practices of the whole society, but keeping in view the ground reality of Indian society, it is only natural to expect that Bakha should have been presented as a man devoid of the ideological knowledge in the absence of which he could not develop a revolutionary spirit. Alastair Niven's comment in this regard seems quite relevant:

He is philosophically placed the unalterable mystic of his society imprisons him, and he knows it. That is why at the end of the novel after he was encountered a Gandhi spokesman, a Christian and a socialist, he can still see no possibility for change. The concept of his society are spiritual ones, not practical and are therefore, infinitely unlikely to be altered.³⁴

The Untouchable (1935) is thus, forthright in its condemnation of a system that kills human dignity and rapes the mind of man. An intellectual aristocracy, based on the conceits of the pundits, caste seems to have a steel framework which throttles the individual by stopping his further progress. Amaury De Reincourt remarks with reference to the rigidity of caste system in India:

Caste was the final mechanization of Hindu life, implying the complete identification of every man with social role and consequently the mutilation of his individual personality.³⁵

Modern technological civilization is effectively antidotal to the poisonous atmosphere created by the traditional caste system. Social heredity constantly casts obstacles in the way of man, who is caught in a web of frustration and indecision. Cosmic determinism may limit man's total freedom, but social determinism in a way, completely abolishes whatever freedom of action he has been granted thus shaping his complete destiny.

The problem of social heredity which involves untouchability is evident when Anand, after twenty six years of publication of *Untouchable (1935)* returns to the same theme; yet again in another novel *The Road (1963)* where he dramatizes the destiny of an untouchable called Bhikhu, who is a new Bakha in a changed

situation. The quarter of a century that separates the two novels meant a lot of difference but not in the content of social naturalism which shapes the life of a man.

Mulk Raj Anand found that even after the British imperialists left India and Indian people achieved self-rule, not much has changed. The heredity of caste system still persists so also the exploitation of the weaker section in a Hindu society still continues. In a letter to Cowasjee Anand explains:

Well it was a kind of shock to me when I went to live in Haryana, twenty miles from Delhi, in a human empire of Jawaharlal Nehru, to find that the outcastes, not only in South India, but in the mixed North were still consigned to the limbo of oblivion. There was something tragi-comic to me in the fact that the caste Hindu would not touch the stone quarried by the untouchables to make the road, because the stones had been touched by the untouchable when I mentioned this to the great Nehru. He did not believe me. He was quite angry at my mentioning this awakening fact. I said I would prove it to him by showing it to him in the "enchanted mirror."³⁶

Anand's writing of this novel on the same theme which he used in his earlier novels during thirties shows that even now he was emotionally involved with this problem of untouchability. He feels that the mere legislating of laws against this social evil is not a viable solution for social change. He felt that complexity of caste heredity or untouchability can be overcome only by appealing to the hearts of the privilege people who are responsible for perpetuating this inhuman crime. He believed that the immoral practice could be eradicated only by educating people. However, he does not go to the extent of advocating an over all revolution of the social problem.

The recurrence of the theme in Anand's work points to its perennial significance especially because it involves a large section of Indian populace to whose condition India's attainment of Independence has made little difference. It is difficult to agree with M.K. Naik's view that Anand has failed to give a memorable picture of a changed Bakha in a changed world since the principle thrust of the novel is to suggest that the changed world has indeed spelled no significant change in an untouchable's condition. What is significant in the novel is that it views Bhikhu's situation is expressive of the chronic malaise with which the Indian society is stricken. The malaise which makes it difficult for him to survive with dignity and with unimpaired self esteem Bhikhu has to contend with the ideology of a power structure which tends to perpetuate itself through the maintenance of the status-quo which is the reason why despite his resentment and attempt to seek expression for his rebellious spirit he finds himself fighting a losing battle. Indeed the road to emancipation from degradation will not be built so long as conditions remain as what they are. Moreover, it implies that the road to freedom is long enough to break his spirit. It needs to be noted that the road becomes the central metaphor of this novel framing the issue of caste-heredity with which the protagonist has to contend.

The creation of Bhikhu as the hero of the novel reveals a basic incongruity which affects the vividness and authenticity of the character-portrayal-an incongruity arising from his growing passivity in the face of a challenging reality. This incongruity, however, is traceable to the author's own basic dichotomy between a highly compassionate comprehension of the reality of the untouchables' tragic plight

and their historically conditioned inability to give a consciously dynamic role to the underdogs themselves. If Bakha of *The Untouchable (1935)* is a passive character, there is at least the justification that his consciousness corresponds to the general consciousness of the Indian untouchables of the 1930s but during the quarter century that follows, there culminates in Bhikhu, a new untouchable, the whole structure of rural reality with its inner dialectic resulting in changed relations and attitudes, new frustration, struggles and hopes. The gradual breakdown of feudalist values with its accompanying sighs and tears; the aspirations raised by a newly won freedom and the frustrations over the fond dreams that gradually melt away. The freedom that a political democracy offers and the ever-expanding awareness of the individual's rights the discovery of new horizons through the spread of education and a new wave of enlightenment and the gradual resurrection of the lowly and the deprived; the struggles against an old myth not yet dead and the pangs of a new myth powerless to be born; the rapid growth of organized movements for a better life in all walks and the resulting tension – all these are deeply ingrained in the new reality with which Bhikhu contends. Obviously, the tremendous complexity of this reality cannot be communicated by means of the same devices as employed for tracing Bakha's awareness of self in *Untouchable (1935)*. Anand is fully conscious of this difference and tries as M.K. Naik points out, "out to shift the focus from the consciousness of the protagonist to the entire village."³⁷ Thus unlike Bakha, Bhikhu is not the central point of interest in the novel; the focal point is in fact the whole village community of untouchables. That is why S.C. Harrex describes the situation in *The Road (1963)* as "the social martyrdom" of the village untouchables. But this

change in focus notwithstanding, it is mainly through Bhikhu as the leader of all untouchables, that the “social martyrdom” unfolds itself in the novel.

The novel begins with the government’s decision to build the road connecting the city to village of Govardhan where plenty of milk and vegetables are produced. Though the road would mean prosperity for the village, the landlord Shaken Singh and his men opposed it as they cannot tolerate the idea of the untouchables like Bhikhu taking part in the construction and drawing wages just like the caste Hindus. Then there emerged two opposing factions: one led by Lambardar Dhooli Singh who, though a Hindu caste himself, is inspired by the teachings of Gandhi regarding the questions of untouchability. The high-caste Hindus complain that low ones sit bloated and yawn and they entertain a sort of fear concerning the possibility of the untouchables being able to buy the status of the ‘the twice – born’ as a result of their new found affluence. As the money wage prevent the direct control of the outcastes by the so-called superiors, the latter bemoan the loss of the so-called togetherness. It is apparent that a sense of insecurity has been generated by the new conditions that prevail as a result of governmental action and the enlargement of avenues of employment for the untouchables, such as road building. In a way it seems welcome because it could perhaps lead to a new awareness on the part of the high-caste Hindus of the implications of the changes occurring in their milieu. In other words the novel stresses the need for shaking the high-caste Hindus out of their complacency in order that they might reorder their attitudes towards the untouchables. Anand employs the absurdities perpetrated the blind prejudices of the

high-castes which is evident when the priest provokes the reactionary element when a democratic government starts taking progressive measures:

“Sarpanch Thakur Singh” began the priest flatteringly, “as the head of the Panchayat; you have to show good sense. These people are condemned by their Karma to work out their doom among the flies and dusts of their huts. The rock of their thatched roofs, and the stifling heat, is punishment enough for them. And, our people are wrong in openly refusing to break the stones touched by the Harijans. It is easier for you to flee out of fire than for them to escape from their bad deeds. Always, they will remain tainted by their past deeds, but you are twice-born ... Now, a purificatory ceremony is necessary. And the shadow of the evils stars that is on your family can only be cured by a special puja.”³⁸

The Landlord gazed at the face of the priest, unable to believe that Suraj Mani could adroitly manipulate such a situation to his advantage by condemning the untouchables.

Compared to the humiliation that Bakha has to meet in the earlier novel the horror that Bhikhu confronts in *The Road (1963)* are much more devastating and cruel. For instance in the beginning of the novel when Bhikhu and his aged mother went to the temple, his mother’s way to the temple is barred by the Landlord Thakur Singh’s son Sajnu and his comrades. Bhikhu appears firm and defiant, but later he gradually loses even the strength of his defiance and become a passive figure gripped by a debilitating sense of futility. When the Chamars build the road to the town, Bhikhu does not understand the anger of the high-caste Hindus. “They had never disallowed him to walk on the village earth even if he could never go into the temple.”³⁹ His soul is subdued and his desires are suppressed within him. The era of

The Road (1945) is not very different from the social milieu of *Untouchable (1935)*. The law of the land has not influenced the attitude of the society. As in *Untouchable (1935)*, in this novel also the caste Hindus ill-treat their caste brethren. They are not allowed to come into physical contact with the 'twice born', or permitted to enter the temple debarring them from coming into contact with the God of all. This is indeed the main thrust of the portrayal of naturalism in *The Road (1963)* where Bhikhu, the protagonist of the novel is deprived of his historical truth on account of the limitations of his caste position.

The horror of the practice of untouchability, the taboo against the untouchables' entry into the temples, the hypocrisy and malice of priests who pretend to be the spiritual fathers, the dominant role of landlordism in the rural social structure, the dangerous prejudices of the high-caste men against the outcastes and their capacity for hatred and cruelty against them. This dramatization of the decadent feudal ethics also shows the egos, fears and anxieties of the upper caste men whose psychic condition is best expressed in the following words of landlord Thakur Singh to Dhooli Singh:

“And now these Chamar boys re earning wages and walking on the heart of our whole caste brotherhood... Do you realize that you will have to marry daughter to a chamar and your son to a sweeper woman – if you persist in this course?”⁴⁰

While this psychic condition incites the high-caste men to resort to brutal atrocities against the untouchable families, the untouchables themselves are in deep hells of their life in death existence from which their escape seems too remote a possibility. *The Road (1963)* portrays with powerful realism of their pathetic state. Utter

dehumanization, and the way they are barred from doing things, the inhuman cruelty with which their huts are burnt down, slavish submission with which they obey the high-caste men and their deep-seated fatalism. When the huts of the chamars are set on fire, Bhikhu enters the flame and brings out the dead goat. The atrocities perpetuated on the lower sections of the society can also be observed from the words of Sajnu:

I supposed you think I am bad, but as you say, those chamars must be taught the lessons of their lives. Both Lachman and I can go, ask their families to leave, since the land on which these huts stand belongs to both our house.⁴¹

The burning of the untouchables' hut, including his own, by Sajnu and Lachman resulting in the total destruction of whatever belongings they have in the world. Even then it does not incite him to retaliation; instead it only reminds him of the suffering that is inescapable for the untouchables.

Strong and sincere but calm, he was too spiritually pure to hate; and had learnt, through long submission, to endure evil and violence from the upper castes, without protest, only hoping that, through work and more work, he would be liberated, somehow, he did not know how.⁴²

Religion has played its role in exploiting the untouchables. As there is an illusion of 'equality before law' and the outcaste has neither the money nor the time to go to a court of law. Bhikhu bereft and confused, broods thoughtlessly on the memories of the other humiliations he had suffered before they had set fire to the houses.

In *The Road* (1963) as in the *Untouchable* (1935), there is a slapping incident which again added to Bhikhu's mounting pressures and humiliation. This

happens when the thirsty Bhikhu accepts a tumbler of water from Rukmani, the beautiful daughter of Thakur Singh. Her brother Sajnu, who hates all the untouchables sees this and rushes towards Bhikhu and slaps him for defiling the tumbler:

There was no one in the hall, as he entered through the big curved doorway. He asked for drinking water. Rukmani gives him water in a brass cup. Sajnu kicked the brass cup from Bhikhu's hand and sent it fleeing. Our whole house will have to be purified.⁴³

Like his prototype Bakha, Bhikhu for a moment thinks of retaliating but common sense warns him of the perilous consequence in which he and the other untouchables struggle even after fourteen years of Indian Independence:

Bhikhu got up, his hands uplifted... He stretched out to his full height again, till the landlord's son covered back. Then he felt he must withdraw before either hand should strike.⁴⁴

He wiped the smear of blood from his torn lips, turned round deliberately, swallowed his spittle and walked out of the hall. Having been humiliated again he changed his direction. He did not go towards home. Instinctively he went in the direction of the road he had helped to build. And in his soul he took the path out of the village, towards Gurgaon, which was the way to Delhi town:

Instinctively he went in the direction of the road he had helped to build. And in his soul he took the direction, out of the village, towards Gurgaon, which was the way to Delhi town, capital of Hinduism, where no one knew who he was and where there would be no castes or outcaste.⁴⁵

The upper castes' intransigent attitude to the changed social situation is evident as Anand ironically brings out prejudices meted against the untouchables. It is proved in their refusing to touch the stones quarried by the untouchables, while enjoying the

yield of the fields tilled by them. Pandit Suraj Mani's plan to carry with him a little earth to avoid treading on what has been soiled by the untouchables sounds highly irrational and absurd. In all such cases it is the hollowness of faith or hypocrisy that is focused on since Suraj Mani readily accepts the mangoes plucked by the untouchables saying, "sweet is the fruit of Lambardar Dhooli Singh's grove." That is why the attempts made to justify the treatment given out to the untouchables by the high-castes appears ridiculous and pathetic. Even Dhooli Singh, who appears as a liberal humanist in the novel, has pre conditional communal feelings as he exhibits a certain timidity when it comes to the question of possibility of his daughter being drawn to an untouchable. Despite his touching confidence, in his daughter that she will not set her affections on the man, he exhibits a certain ambivalence in his attitude towards the untouchables. In their shallowness the high-castes appears to mix up religion, politics and social life in their vehement insistence on pollution by touch, pollution from distance or on the theory of Karma attributing the sufferings of the untouchables to punishment divinely ordained for their bad deeds in their previous births thereby advocated at least theoretically that the lower caste should submit themselves to every blow and kick the upper castes give them at every step of their life with humility for the sake of caste promotion in their next birth.

The Road (1963) is indeed a symbol of Bhikhu's own fulfillment through labour, and, it shows how he discovers that his own alienated being can be overcome through labour. This view of the symbolic ending of *The Road (1963)*, however, seems to be a limited one because the heroes act of attempting a philosophical integration of liberation through labour. Bhikhu is stated as taking the road which

would lead him to Delhi town, India's capital, where he can merge into an anonymity and where there is no caste or outcaste. The implication is that he is leaving his village once and for all and hopes to reach the town of Delhi where liberation will become a reality because he will have to confront no more the oppressive social forces of his erstwhile life. Here Bhikhu's final act becomes almost an act of escape.

Premilla Paul comments:

At a time when modernity that has scant regards for caste distinction is to be ushered into the village, Bhikhu's choice to quit the place and to merge into the anonymity of the city is puzzling.⁴⁶

Yet those critics who consider the road as a symbol of liberation and hope for Bhikhu hold the view that what is likely to happen to him in Delhi is of no relevance, the only point of importance being that so long as the road is there, there is hope for him.

Thus, Jagdish Shivpuri explains:

He (Bhikhu) walks away as a king walks away from his kingdom, but he walks away to fresh fields and pastures new. For he is sure of hand and confident in the heart. He is a man who has seen the dawn from the top of the mountain while the jackals he leaves behind are still in the darkness of the valley of habitual custom. This is the great victory of the novelist and he transforms a failure into a victory.⁴⁷

Even M. K. Naik who is highly critical of *The Road (1963)* is of the view that the road to Delhi which Bhikhu takes at the end of *The Road (1963)* is indeed a road to Destiny. He, however, does not think that the symbolism at the end of the novel has been rendered effectively. He says:

...this finale, which should have come as a fitting symbolic climax to the narrative, loses all its artistic power as the superstructure of this long short story is too flimsy to bear the weight of an effective symbolic finale.⁴⁸

Naik thus attributes the failure of the symbol to the flimsiness of the superstructure of the narrative. Saros Cowasjee dismisses it as an effective symbol since it does not suggest a viable solution. Cowasjee argues that since the novel shows that the Government is utterly indifferent to the conditions of the untouchables “the ‘road to Delhi town, the capital of Hindustan’ can hardly lead to an effective solution. And if it is not an effective solution, it cannot be a major symbol.”⁴⁹ All these critical views, in a nutshell, illustrate the way the finale of the novel has generated opposing opinions regarding its meaning as an artistic device. This is mainly because this symbolic finale is in its essence ambiguous and confusing.

We are kept in the dark as to what is in store for Bhikhu in Delhi. Delhi the seat of the Government that has failed to take the necessary action against incendiarism can not be expected to offer any effective solution. But according to Bhikhu, Delhi is an ideal world that entertains no caste distinctions. Bakha in *Untouchable (1935)* returns home in order to announce the possible hope offered by the modern machine. On the contrary, Bhikhu fails to think in terms of his community or village. In a fit of despair, he seeks salvation for himself and escapes into modernity. The road to Delhi therefore, appears to be the road to freedom from caste oppression. Whether Delhi could fulfill his expectations or not is not what matters because the significance lies in its being able to kindle hope in him. The road that he traverses may not lead him anywhere but so long as the road is there, there is hope for him. Anand is not concerned with offering any solution to what appears to

be an intractable problem: in fact the distinction lies primarily in his being able to define it in all its complexity and relevance to the predicament of Indians.

Significantly, the novel ends with the hero heading for Delhi; which is not only the capital of country, the hub of all the activities, but also the degrading centre for the life of the nation. This ending however makes Anand's views ambiguous. The symbolic end is part of the novelist's own projection of his own desired image. It therefore, follows that in the desired reality of the novelist, Bhikhu's salvation lies not in his remaining in the village in the midst of the jackals, but in going away to the unknown place where there is social harmony and peace. It is as though Bhikhu was leaving for a holy place where at last he could hoped to attain peace. But Bakha of *Untouchable (1935)* with all his confusion returns home in the end to tell his father all about what he had heard. But in the finale of *The Road (1963)*, the presence of a concept of freedom with its internal contradiction – the freedom an individual sought to attain disregarding of the freedom of the community to which the individual belongs. In fact, Bhikhu can achieve his real freedom only through his community of untouchables, but he gets himself severed from these communal aspirations and goes in search of an illusory freedom for himself even when the road is completed. Perhaps the only explanation for this could be that when Bhikhu sees his achievement of the successful construction of the road, instead of appreciation, it elicits only insults, he realizes the futility of his endeavour and infers that real progress is impossible for them without the removal of insidious distinction between the Brahmins and the Bhangis.

It is evident that Bhikhu works out his own salvation with diligence. The road thus stands for the way out of the hell one has built for himself. Bhikhu visualizes a heaven which may not yet be attainable, for custom, superstition, and habit hang like a dead weight, clouding one's vision. The golden dream of a classless and casteless society may remain in the realm of possibility. At least, Bhikhu makes an honest effort to transform a dream into reality. The hero represents the authentic voice of his creator. As the mouthpiece of the creative idea underlying the novel, he stands twice removed, from reality; he has none of the human naturalness that characterizes the hero of *Untouchable (1935)*. Artistically speaking, the symbolic design of the novel interferes with the reality of the characterization. The core of the novel lies elsewhere in the dramatization of the social conflict. There is endless oscillation between servile acceptance and the spirit of rebellion that shapes the soul.

The emphasis now shifts from Marxian revolution to servile submissiveness. The important thing is the self – realization of the sufferer and the consequent revolts which ultimately and subdued under the pressure of circumstances. The chains of caste are too tough to separate, nevertheless conscious dawns upon the sufferer.

The novel begins with presenting Bhikhu as a defiant, protesting figure but as the story progresses; his defiance continues diminishing until finally he quits the scene and submerges himself in the vast anonymity of a metropolis. Bhikhu otherwise has most of the qualities with which Bakha is endowed. He seeks self – expression through labour and his dedication to work is total and complete.

‘Call me, if you need two strong arms!’ Bhikhu calls out as the power welled up in his arms with the welding of the hammer.⁵⁰

He achieves solidarity and self – realization through labour and he has the confidence right from the beginning that the road will be built somehow. Labour becomes for him as a means of liberating himself from his bondage and of overcoming his alienation. Like Bakha he has an enthusiasm for education but unlike Bakha, he can read, sing and write and even compose verses. A worshiper of the poet Kabir, he often mumbles exhortations of the weaver – saint. While Bakha is caught by the spell of Gandhi's words, Bhikhu enthuses his fellow – men to continue their work with the holy phrase of Jawaharlal's name. "Take the name of Jawaharlal and carry on."⁵¹ Bhikhu is the bard, and despite his down to earth realism, he has capacity to get lost in distant visions. For even in the midst of his absorbing work, he sits day-dreaming for a moment:

For a moment, he looked across the sun's thick haze towards Gurgaon, beyond which was Delhi, the land of the red earth, by the Jumna river.⁵²

In the end when he walks in the direction of the road, it is the distant vision of a new world that beckons him. Thus there blend in the character of Bhikhu, the qualities of one who loves work more than anything else, of a visionary, and admirer of, the ideal of Nehru, a bard, a devotee of Kabir one loves his fellow-men and above all one who has the qualities of accepting the fact of caste system.

These are sufficient equipments for an untouchable youth of the fifties and sixties to sensitively react to the hostile forces in his environment but Bhikhu seldom grows equal to his challenge. Given the ferment of an awakening all around him, he should have become instrumental in making a new destiny for his class. But instead,

he remains as passive as Bakha. In fact Bakha in *Untouchable (1935)* develops through his interaction with situations but Bhikhu does not show any development as he remains more or less a static character. For in the beginning of the novel, he seems firm and defiant when he puts up a bold fight with Thakur Singh's son. It happens when Bhikhu's mother Laxmi, is prevented from entering into the temple by caste Hindu; his revolutionary feelings were exacerbated to a great extent:

‘Why should we suffer this humiliation now’ Bhikhu felt, if he had never suffered it before.... And why should his mother suffer because he had quarried the stone for the road. Now he was determined to build the road whether they should help or not.⁵³

Bhikhu is no doubt poor but he is a man of courage and firm determination which is evident from the above quoted lines but he seems reluctant to allow his character to cross a certain border line. Bhikhu's initial protest and defiance is killed by his mother with a view to blocking his anger from taking a form of firm revolt against the social set up. Though he tells his mother that one is a leather worker by profession and not by birth, she tries to persuade him to follow her even in the face of insult by superior caste people:

‘Love them even if they hate you!’ the mother answered proceeding ahead. ‘Love them as Lord Krishna love the whole world.... Love the old and the young.... Love the cattle as Shyam, God of Brinda Ban, love the cows. Love everyone everything.... then through good deeds shall we rise into higher caste ‘Bhikhu, son,’ she said turning round with mellow watery eyes, ‘I want to take the anger out of your heart. Love all God's children and you will get love back.... If not now, in the next life.... Look how Lambardar Dhooli Singh favours you! And, he is of the same caste as the landlord. Look at me! Have I not suffered all my life? First your drunken father then widowhood. And is my love growing less? God's love is my heart....⁵⁴

Laxmi's efforts to persuade her son fails as it does not convince Bhikhu but her sentiments reinforce our belief that in the core of their heart, they have accepted themselves as outcastes and that they have to bow down to whatever the insult and humiliation they are subjected to and which they must endure.

Bhikhu again plays this unconvincing role during the time of the great man – made disaster. He appears helpless and resigned to his fate. Even the burning of the untouchables' huts, including his own by Sajnu and Lachman, does not rouse him to take revenge. Unlike any rebel character, he does not show any sort of resolve and determination to retaliate against the person responsible for perpetrating the crime rather he “stood grim and taciturn, but turned his face away from the tender scene with dimmed eyes and contemplated the smoke above the flames.”⁵⁵ It is incredible that an untouchable of the sixties would react so feebly even to such a gruesome horror as the mass destruction of their huts.

All his desires are kept subdued and unfulfilled within him. Fascinated by Thakur Singh's daughter Rukmani, he knows what he will have to suffer if the half-conscious affection of his love for her were to be expressed. All his desires and excitement are off no avail. He merely feigns courage, aware of his loneliness and the very earth which he loved as a child. It is only an undefined attraction between Rukmani and Bhikhu:

For he realized that mother earth could not feed him even Sajnu and Mahesh and Ram Niwas were going to carry on their vendetta about wages and swoop down upon him from behind the hedges.⁵⁶

The last but not the least incident which shows Bhikhu's passivity and submissiveness is when Sajnu kicked the brass tumbler from his hand for defiling it. Bhikhu, in the true Gandhian fashion does not even react over the insult rather he stands helpless and repentant, unable to retaliate. He said:

As you have never worked in your life, you don't know what it is to be thirsty! He said. And he felt he could hit him but instantly, he remembered that he was a chamar untouchable and controlled himself.⁵⁷

Then again, Bhikhu's decision to go on what appears like a pilgrimage to Delhi at the end, tantamount to a total resignation on his part to this reality and an implicit acceptance of the state of things as they are. Bhikhu's portrayal in this novel is certainly not as artistically successful as it was with Bakha, the protagonist of *Untouchable (1935)* where Anand has established himself as a successful artist and novelist. Saros Cowasjee has justified it thus:

Bhikhu, the representative of the untouchables, remains shadowy, and Anand's endeavour to show in him some of the qualities of Bakha reveals only his insipidity by comparison.⁵⁸

In *Untouchable (1935)*, the protagonist stands in the centre of the novel whereas in *The Road (1963)*, as M. K. Naik points out, Bhikhu stands as "a pale and unrealized figure." He certainly emerges as more "shadowy avatar of Bakha."⁵⁹ The novelist has no fresh insights into the outcaste's psychology to offer while painting a second picture of the untouchable. *The Road (1963)* has neither the unity of *Untouchable*, nor the diversification. G. S. Balarama Gupta is of the view that a significant difference between the two protagonists existed in the achievement of their aim:

It is easy to comprehend this point when see that Bhikhu has traveled much further than that Bakha

along the road of struggle. Whereas Bakha has gained an awareness of his miserable social position and only a vague idea of some possible way out, Bhikhu, in addition to all these, is already treading towards his goal. In fact, he achieves it in a sense: the road is built at last. In this, perhaps, lies the significance of Road.⁶⁰

These critics, while coming to the different conclusions, however, do not see that the incompatibility between the hero's passivity and the dynamic of social reality is an offshoot of the caste heredity which choked the personality of an individual with its deathly conventions and dead environment.

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C H A P T E R - III

CHAPTER III

Social Environment

So great is the power of environment on the development of personality that it may outweigh inheritance.¹

The results of the development of each individual are not determined by the heredity alone but also by other intrinsic causes. This determinism of heredity is however matched by a corresponding determinism of social environment. The environment is the society itself and endures so long as the society endures, which consists of organization and regulation, the traditions and institutions, repressions and liberations of social life. For every member of the society, this system is just as much a part of the environment as all the other outer conditions of life, except that his adjustment to it is not of the same inexorable character not being imposed by natural law. Nevertheless, social man can not escape its influence for he is trained within it and habituated to it and none of his desires can be fulfilled unless he takes it into account.

Our lives are not predetermined by god or fate but have been conditioned by the surroundings where we reside, and things which can not be predetermined by heredity can also be predetermined by environment. Man's life is, therefore, possible only within narrow limits of physical and chemical condition and in the main; these limits are fixed by the constitution of nature. Of all animals, man enjoys the most extensive and the most varied environment and its effect upon him is

correspondingly great. Nevertheless man has the longest period of maturity and it is during this period that the play of social environmental stimuli on his development is so effective that it modifies the whole strategy of life but a person who lives in the midst of intellectual, religion, moral and social stimuli which are the potent factors in his development, becomes an heir of all ages as well as in the present through tradition and history. The modifying influences of all these environmental conditions on human are so amazing that sometimes it finally leads him to his destiny thus overstepping the heredity. According to Ulysses "I am a part of all that I have met."² For example, a relatively poor inheritance with excellent environmental conditions often produces better result than a good inheritance with poor conditions. To a large extent our habits, words, thoughts, our aspiration, religion and our lives depend upon the social environment and society that surround us. It can not be doubted that if we had been born and reared in the slums of great cities, we should have been different from what we are now. Therefore, the conditions of social environment in which we spent our early lives always have a great influence upon the minds and morals of man which ultimately shapes our destinies. This social environment is very much essential in the analysis of naturalism. In other words, the naturalist's ultimate reality is society, and not the individual who is but a typical product of his particular environment. The more the individual's misery and sordidness, the stronger the proof of the crushing law of determinism and greater the need to reform the society. Thus, the apparent pessimistic note of a naturalistic tragedy finally serves the optimistic purpose of the novelist. Anand's novels are, therefore, essentially socially optimistic and as Cassirer elucidates the point 'Man,

like animals submits to the rulers of society, but in addition; he has an active power to change the form of social life.³

Mulk Raj Anand while emphasizing the determinism of social environment in *Coolie (1936)* traverses it in an arch. The protagonist of the novel moves from the village to town, from the town to the city and then up to the mountains and is finally swept away to his doom. He explores the limit of his existence before he goes under. *Coolie (1936)* is a story of Munoo, whose life is determined by the social forces and also a piece of history of Anglo India; which broadly suggests the national, political situation besides documenting proletarian misery and wretchedness. More important is that the writer has been able to achieve a rare harmony between the thematic diffusion and the structural simplicity of his fiction. Schematically, the novel contains five chapters, each one of them signifying the particular scene of action and describing the diverse experiences of the protagonist.

The first chapter introduces Munoo, the hero of the novel against the vast background of the Kangra Hills, with a suggestion that the village boy of Bilaspur shortly leaves his aunt and uncle in order to take up a job at the nearest town of Sham Nagar. Though short and seemingly insignificant, this chapter immediately conveys with dramatic irony, the Arcadian happiness of an orphan-child against whom the malevolent form of society seem to be already in conspiracy. The second chapter relates the actions and reactions of Munoo as the domestic servant in the house of Babu Nathu Ram, Sub Accountant in Imperial Bank at Sham Nagar. The third chapter is concerned with the independent career of Munoo as a privileged worker in

Prabha's pickle factory at Daulatpur. The fourth part however, deals with the most eventful period of his life in Bombay that marks the gradual transition of Munoo from the nonage of innocence to the adolescence of experience under the loving care of Lakshmi, Harry and Rattan. And the last chapter is a study of the pretentious behaviour of the Anglo-Indian community in Simla, notably, Mrs. Mainwaring's unprincipled and immoral existence which finally results in the premature death of Munoo. The structural clarity and simplicity, the shifting of scenes of action, the documentary manner of narration, and the dire law of determinism possibly mark this out as an admirable panoramic prototype of proletarian naturalism. The central problem is the inhuman mechanics of economic determinism; the fatal evil is not caste but class.

Although the protagonist is an innocent victim who neither perpetrates his own downfall nor carries with him a corroding guilt, within this five act pattern of Munoo's life however brightened by transitory moments of better fortune or his zest for life follows a cyclic course of tragic inevitability, beginning with his departure from the hills and ending with his return to them. The concept of fate governing the action is a naturalistic variant of the classical idea of inevitability, for the episodes are linked by a deterministic pattern within a framework, not of supernatural morality, but of heredity, biology and environment.

Running parallel with this naturalist scheme are the themes of exploitation, victimization, thwarted innocence, and unfulfilled potentiality; the motive of a

descent into hell, and an atmosphere of doom. A chronological examination of the narrative reveals the insistent and deep rooted nature of the problem.

Munoo's beginning, Anand suggests, is the characteristic of the underprivileged classes. His parents were ruined by the landlord and usury systems and all Munoo has inherited from them is their victimhood and the memory of his mother's tragic destiny and utter resignation. The terrible destiny of being a victim of exploitation is indeed Munoo's dubious birthright:

He has heard of how the landlord has seized his father's five acres of land because the interest of the mortgage covering the unpaid rent had not been forthcoming when the rains had been scanty and the harvests bad. And he knew how his father had died a slow death of bitterness and disappointment and left his mother a penniless beggar, to support a child in his arm.⁴

Before he begins his wretched journey Munoo is a sensitive and intelligent boy with full of high spirits:

He was a genius at climbing trees. He would hop on to the trunk like a monkey, climb the bigger branches on all fours, swing himself to the thinner offshoots as if he was dancing on a trapeze, and then diving dangerously into space, he would jump from one tree to another.⁵

Poverty is the root cause of Munoo's tragedy. His life is severely circumscribed by the adverse circumstances, wherever he goes and whatever his occupation. His own career is varied: almost a domestic slave at Sham Nagar; a boy worker at Daulatpur in a pickle industry; a labourer at the New George Cotton Mills in Bombay; and lastly a rickshaw puller and a page to Mrs. Mainwaring in Simla. He also works as a porter and a coolie at a vegetable market and even as a disciple to a sinful and

lecherous yogi, for his livelihood. He desperately fights for a living and as any other normal boy happily dreams of his future forgetting that he is condemned by an iniquitous system always to remain small, abject and drab. Even in the midst of untold misery and hostile sordidness, he has an instinctive yearning for existence. Clearly, man, not nature is to be blamed for amidst the lavish beauty of the hills, Munoo is naturally joyous and innocent. Original sin is sociological. So is the Fall.

Munoo's life is tragic in the extreme although his expectations are extremely modest. He is perpetually tortured and ill-treated by his cruel aunt who used to beat him even more than he beats his cattle, Munoo does not want to go to the town:

For inspite of the fact that his aunt was always abusing him, inspite of the fact that she ordered him about, asking him to do this and to do that, inspite of the fact that she beats him more than he beats his cattle, he really did not want to go to the town.⁶

But he is forcibly thrown out of this paradise at the age of fourteen by his bullying uncle who puts him into the service of Nathoo Ram and appropriates his wages. This is the first episode of tragic denial of the protagonist right to happiness:

'My aunt wants me to begin earning money', said Munoo. And she says she wants a son of her own. My uncle says I am grown up and must fend for myself. He has got me a job in the house of Babu of the Bank where he works in Sham Nagar.⁷

The second chapter goes a step forward in introducing the drama of exploitation to which the first chapter only served as a prologue and background. Munoo's strenuous ten mile march with the unsympathetic uncle is just a prelude to his sufferings that are to follow. His life of drudgery from morning to night in Babu's house is full of violent invectives and insults hurled at him. In fact, Munoo is

exploited and maltreated by the babu and his termagant wife who, as a barren woman, has no love for Munoo and thus often picks up a quarrel and beats him worse than the beasts. There in Nathoo Ram's house he often remembers and compares his aunt with the Babu's wife:

The only quarrel between himself and his aunt, he realized, was that she could not have children, and people shamed her for her barrenness. Otherwise, he remembered how often she had taken him in her arms and kissed him and how often he had gone to sleep embracing her. But this woman seemed to hate him for nothing.⁸

He imagines that he will live in peace and comfort but is soon disillusioned. The miseries of the past, pale into insignificance in the light of his new experience. Although, the teen-aged daughter of the house is kind to him, her mother treats Munoo shabbily:

He realizes finally his position in the world. He is to be a slave, a servant who should do the work, all the odd jobs, someone to be abused, even beaten, though as yet it had not come to that. He feels sad and lonely.⁹

The ambivalence that torments Bakha in *Untouchable (1935)*, torments Munoo as well. He resolves henceforth to be a perfect servant, but the path to perfection is not easy. The world is not his oyster and he wields no sword with which to open it, yet his only prayer is "I want to live, I want to know, I want to work,.....I shall grow up and be a man...."¹⁰ The grimness of his experience in this household is starkly depicted in which Munoo is discovered panic stricken and shamed, defecating against the back wall because he had not been told where the lavatory was. He committed a mistake out of total ignorance but he is scolded as a stupid and rustic oaf. Prof. Saros Cowasjee has observed in his 'preface' to the novel:

The first contact with reality shattered his dreams. Arriving in the house of a bank clerk, he falls foul of a shrewish and vindictive house wife, and before he flees from his employer's frenzied rage he was relieved himself near their doorstep and thereby lowered social prestige.¹¹

He is squarely blamed for the fiasco which takes place during the visit of a senior bank official to the residence of his master. Later, he experiences the trauma of desire for Sheila but is at the same time aware of the vast gulf that exists between them and stifles his passion. Then all of a sudden as they were playing, he bites her on the cheek out of sheer excitement for which Munoo has to face a tornado of abuse and beatings from the master. He fully understands his own position in the social order:

'What am I – Munoo?' He asked himself as he lay wrapped in his blanket, early one morning. 'I am Munoo, Babu Nathoo Ram's servant' the answer came to his mind..... It did not occur to him to ask himself what he was apart from being a servant.¹²

This recognition of his own identity gives the impression that there is perhaps the beginning of a loss of innocence in him. And, unlike Bakha who can not see beyond his limited experience and grasp the basic cause of his predicament, Munoo sees his tragedy as a part of general social condition.

Uprooted from an idyllic milieu where he lived a carefree life as a grazer of cattle, Munoo now finds himself gradually broken in body and spirit. His attempt at being a modest servant seems to make no difference in the treatment meted out to him. For no fault of his own, he is made the victim of ceaseless suffering and humiliation and he reflects thus:

No, caste does not matter. The Babus are like the Sahib – logs, and all servants look alike: there must be only two kinds of people: the rich and the poor.¹³

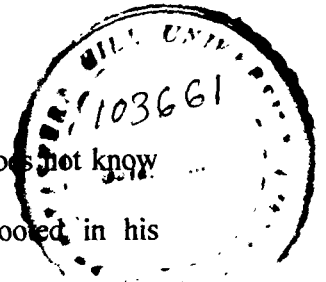
This instinctive comprehension of his tragedy as part of an inescapable social situation betokens a higher level of consciousness in this hill boy who has had the benefit of going to school and who sensitively recalls his past experiences in the village. But, despite this superior comprehension, Munoo, unlike Bakha, shows no inner development. The innocence he seems to begin to lose as a servant in Sham Nagar actually remains with him throughout his tragic career, constantly refurbishing his romantic image and accelerating his descent into the hells of suffering. Munoo, while drifting into the abyss of misery, battling against the onslaughts of an outrageous social system, remains a victim through out and these outrages are recalled in the memory; vivid, claiming sympathy. However, it is not long before he is over-obtrusively and unnecessarily burdened by the author's thesis:

His ego conditioned by the laws and customs of the society in which he had been born, the society whose caste and classes and forms had been determined by the self seeking of the few, of the powerful, sought all the prizes of wealth, power and possession exactly as his superiors sought them... But the stories of his ancestors His country ... had all been records of the desire for honour of a few chosen man ... he had been blinded by the glamour of greatness ... into forgetting that he was condemned by an iniquitous system always to remain small, abject and drab.

The biological expedient, however, which made him want to live, was forcing the multi-coloured cells in his body to reach out instinctively.... Even for a breath of the foul air in his master's dingy little kitchen ... He was vaguely aware of the need of love ... but he was as yet essentially ineffectual 'pawn on the chessboard of destiny...and he was to remain slave until he should come to recognize his instinct'.¹⁴

The intellectually turgid prose within the framework of inevitability and exploitation of a typical naturalistic picture of the small drab person or ego: and abject victim driven by biological expedient, conditioned by social environment, condemned by an iniquitous system and the powerful few, blinded by the values of an immoral and false materialism yet helplessly striving in the face of a deterministic destiny to discover love through a recognition of his true instinct. Whichever way we rewrite or concentrate the message, it remains abstract pastiche; life reduced to lecture notes.

Munoo is not merely an individual who is an ineffectual 'pawn on the chessboard of destiny', but a prototypical character with universal dimensions. Anand's artistic virtuosity is evident in universalizing the individual tragedy of Munoo. What happens to an obscure coolie in India is by no means an isolated example of human suffering and exploitation; man's inhumanity to man has been an ever recurring theme in literature. But flowing the anthropological dictum that the 'proper study of mankind is man', Anand studies man as a victim of the irrational system and the inhuman cruelties of society. Thus, conflict and tragedy are consequential to the social inequalities, and the economic exploitation of the proletariat by a few egoistic individuals. And *Coolie (1936)* as a typical novel of his oppressive trend in modern society, becomes multi-dimensional with its philosophy of naturalism and the contemporary national ideas. The Hindu – Muslim communal riots, the Anglo-Indian snobbery, the growing industrialization of the country and the rising trade unionism among the workers are objectively observed by Munoo with a sense of awe and wonderment.



Munoo's dilemma is that he hates his tormentors and yet he does not know how to articulate his hatred and anger. His failure to rebel is rooted in his undeveloped social awareness and not in his meek and unprotested acceptance of injustice and exploitation. He does not display explicit revolt against the cruelty of Nathoo Ram, but this does not mean that he is a coward or enjoys wallowing in self-pity. His running away from Nathoo Ram's clutches is a symbolic act of rebellion and of a better future for himself. He hides under the seat of a train which is described with meaningful prognostication as a 'descent into this inferno' and finds himself bound for Daulatpur where he is employed in a pickle factory by the kind Seth Prabha Dayal and his unscrupulous partner Ganpat. It is in no time before the familiar exploiter-exploitee pattern emerges: the worthless licentious Ganpat defrauds the firm, ruins Prabha, and appropriates his business contacts, while his honest devout innocent victim is preyed upon by creditors and brutally beaten by the police. Cat Killers' Lane itself is a peripheral symbol of exploitation, of the greed of the landlords and usurers. Thus, Prabha's catastrophe has been prepared for naturalistically on the basis of character action, and by such authorial hints as 'for the most part men realized themselves through the force of external necessity'.

The denizen workers in the factory, particularly the old grey-haired, bent and dim-eyed woman and Maharaj and Bonga, the elephantine idiot and the deaf and dumb coolies are reminiscent of Zola's primitivistic portraits. Maharaj and Bonga represent underworld deformity not in moral terms but as examples of nature's victimhood; blighted and grotesque, they provide some of the most effective pathos in the novel. There are moments, such as Ganpat's early morning beating of the

sleep-sodden gross mass of Maharaj, when Anand arouses a kind of disturbing Dickensian pity.

With the collapse of Prabha's establishment, Munoo is left alone in the world to become a self employed porter, carrying loads in the streets. He once more experiences the Darwinian struggle for survival at the primal level: this time as a coolie in the city market. He soon developed certain Darwinian traits particularly low cunning. He would secure work, for example, by spreading the rumour that the market was to be closed. There is also a new elaboration of the exploitation theme. Using Munoo as a focus, Anand describes the various injustices which the social system perpetrates upon the poor. One particular adventure illustrates a special kind of hypocritical exploitation. Munoo's admiration for Prabha's devoutness and humility, and the promise of free food at the temple prompt him to lead a spiritual life. However, this desire is quickly extinguished when he meets the holy man of the temple. Munoo discovers that the holy man is a voluptuary who achieves through personal intervention, the birth of "sons of god" to the childless wives of the merchant class.

In another incident, Munoo was unable to compete with the other coolies and lift a heavy sack, he stumbled and fell yet instead of sympathy; he only received abuses from the merchants:

'Ohe, lover of your mother', shouted the merchant, jumping up from the platform of the shop, where he had settled to do accounts, in an ochre-coloured portfolio. 'Ohe, illegally begotten, who asked you to lift that sack, you have hardly emerged from your

mother's womb? Run away, little rascal! I did not see you go in to lift the weights or I should have stopped you. Do you want to have me sent to jail for murder? Get away, little wretch'.¹⁵

Then again, while trying to adjust himself in the most critical situations, he is further beaten up by the policeman for not having the license of a coolie:

Get out of here! The policeman said, hitting Munoo on the bottom with his baton. Get away from here, lover of your sister! Government orders: No coolies are supposed to work here without a license.¹⁶

Munoo finds himself in the realm of melancholy and at the same time, he protests within his heart against this atrocity. His revolutionary feelings can be seen implicitly just after this incident:

The currents of thought and emotion which had been washed over by the fear of the policeman slowly emerged from the main springs that were welling up in him in defiance of authority, 'who is he that he should turn me out of the station yard? He exclaimed to himself. 'The swine! He fancied himself to be a god because he is putting on a uniform. My uncle is also a servant of the Angrezi Sarkar. He is not the only one. I am not like Prabha, who led himself be beaten. I shall die rather than let him beat me. I shall live upto the name of my race....'¹⁷

Although he has the fits of rebelling against the system, Munoo remains inactive and does not have the courage to stand up to it. He appears a completely hopeless victim through out.

But this Sham Nagar episode is only the first act in the tragic drama of exploitation. It is his stint at the Sir George White Cotton Mill in Bombay that exposes Munoo to the full force of the modern capitalistic machine. It is, in a sense, a place which is a symbol conveying the idea of modern industrial civilization in a

traditional setting. Hence, the murky atmosphere of Bombay resolves the tragedy of Munoo. In Bombay he wants to earn enough money to go beyond the backwaters, and it appears to him at first sight, 'as a confused medley of colours and shape and sizes.' Emerging from Victoria station he finds himself in the city of his dreams – 'strange, hybrid, complex, cosmopolitan Bombay.' Munoo had high hopes of this new place but soon he is amazed by the elephant driver's witty saying:

'The bigger the city is the more cruel it is to the sons of Adam', the elephant driver said, crawling under the buffers of a train. 'You have to pay even for a breath that you breathe.'¹⁸

In the new surroundings which are initially promising, he is still restless and resentful. Melancholy and self-distrust overwhelm him. Looking back at his life and experiences so far, he has an acute sense of frustration and failure. He feels dispassionate very often but has a vision of a happier life and it is this pursuit of the dream that makes him leave one place after another. However, despite Munoo's elevation to the loving status of a son in the Seth's childless household, the third chapter is a further descent into the inferno and Anand has given a very authentic account of a simple boy's feelings and the situations in which he has to spend his life.

Chapter four begins with Munoo's two thousand mile journey under a merciless, malevolent sun to Bombay where he feels completely insignificant and small. Munoo meets the peasant Hari and his family and accompanies them to the cotton mill. The poverty and suffering in the city streets is indicative of what is to

come. The mills are an inferno, a waste land which breeds a dried up, shriveled, flat footed, hollow-chested, hollow-cheeked and hollow-eyed race of men:

The coolies of the Sir George White Factory crept like ghosts through the waste lands of the mills... that little spark of life which made them moved about willingly had died, and left them a queer race of men, dried up shriveled, hollow-chested, hollow-cheeked, and hollow-eyed. Their wretchedness had passed beyond the confines of suffering and left them careless, resigned.¹⁹

The mills are intended to symbolize the degrading domination and exploitation of the Indian proletariat by British Imperialism. It is a huge octopus with its numerous tentacles clutching the labourers in its deadly grasp, slowly paralyzing and poisoning them. The labourers, including wives and children worked eleven hours a day. Factory conditions are barbaric, facilities and wages are quite inadequate. Sir Reginald White, president of the company, the English foreman, the Pathan doorkeeper practice usury with even more drastic methods. The Sikh merchant with his monopoly as the authorized dealer in the mill workers colony is exploited to its full personal advantage. Not only that, the ill-paid, ill-housed, under-nourished and bullied labourer is broken both in body and mind as Munoo finds in his friend Hari. Anand reinforces the idea of man as a trapped animal living in the shadow of death where the machine casts a black shadow, strangling one at the throat with its powerful and invisible fingers: a grotesque symbol of human enslavement. In this setting Munoo emerges as a typical realist protagonist in his limited, perturbed and frustrated awareness. He asked himself what the separate thing is that exists under his skin apart from the things in his head.

‘But the problem seemed insoluble ... and the minute images in the corner of his soul broke up into even

more microscopic elements, till they sink into the complete emptiness from which they have emerged.²⁰

He is disturbed and mentally dislocated by what he sees as the condition of his friends Hari and Ratan but is unable to rationalize the situation. He can not articulate his position in the face of situation as he is mentally blocked. He does not accept things as he finds them; he questions them but unfortunately does not get out of them:

He murmured something to himself in a sort of whimpering, self pitying voice which smothered the dazed expression on his face. He walks along unconscious, in a sort of delirium. What happened? What happened? He asked himself. And he looked into the street to find an answer. But the street stared back at him, filling his mind with its mind tall fantastic houses leaning like hard rocks on the narrow length of the roadway.²¹

Sad, bitter and defeated like an old man, Munoo drifts towards death physically and mentally broken. His encounter with Mrs. Mainwaring comes as a turning point in his life. Running away from the communal violence from Bombay he finds himself ended in Simla where he is knocked down by Mrs. Mainwaring's car. Finally he becomes a rickshaw puller which in turn leads to his untimely doom.

In a dirge like movement, Coolie ends with Munoo's death as a result medically of consumption and naturalistically, of the ills of society. It is the conventionally tragic ending of the naturalistic novel in which the principle of life is wiped out. Death completes the hero's victimhood. By the end of the chapter, society has become the bedlam and the wasteland the valley of the shadow of death. Marline Fisher says, "Munoo does not build his own life which, on the contrary is built for

him.” He appears completely a hopeless victim of a complex machinery of economic, social and religious oppression. Munoo is never seen trying to change the situation in his favour. The simplicity of his mind in the face of ever-increasing is so strong that he is incapable of dramatizing his experience. Hilla Vakeel comments:

The chronicle of Munoo’s life proceeds to reveal him always as the harassed underdog, the victim of forces against which he is powerless to fight, and which he can neither controlled nor accept. As a worker in the pickle factory, as a coolie at railway station, as a labourer in a cotton mill in Bombay, Munoo is ceaselessly, unfailingly tripped up by Destiny.²²

Anand chooses to end the novel with the message, and for this purpose he introduces an improbable alter – ego: the high born English – educated Mohan who is a coolie for a complex of reasons. The dying Munoo’s clutching the hands of Mohan presumably intended to show the victim of the past grasping a potentially regenerate future. As is suggested, by the death of Munoo, the Coolie his suffering and his life is wholly determined by the ruthless forces of society. But beneath this pervasive pessimism, there is an essential under-current of optimism that the protagonist’s death poignantly exposes the rotten state of society and the consciousness of the need for its drastic reform.

In his other novel, *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) which is thematically a sequel to *Coolie* (1936), Anand takes up where *Coolie* (1936) ends: the Anglo-Indian community’s apathy and even antipathy in its relations with the Indian community. The racial arrogant and capitalistic exploitation of the British ultimately results in the death of the protagonist Gangu. Although the jealousies and squabbles of the Anglo-Indian officers in the Mac Pherson Tea Plantation in Assam are elaborately

expressed, the central character in this dramatic novel is the coolie, Gangu, who migrates with his wife and children to Assam after the eviction from his small rocky tract of land in the Punjab; his struggle to eke out a livelihood in the Tea Plantation and his eventual death at the hands of the inhuman assistant of the Estate, Reggie Hunt constitute the main action of the novel. It is replete with the atrocities of the English planters as represented by Reggie Hunt, and his boss. The bitter feelings and the violent passions generated by the most abject conditions of the plantation life dominate and decide the collective destiny of the coolies and their masters. The beautiful and the picaresque Tea Gardens becomes the dreadful 'green hell', following Reggie's ruthless suppression and reckless shooting of the agitated coolies, some of whom want to get away from the prison-house, that is plantation.

There seems to be an obvious thematic nexus between *Coolie (1936)* and *Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)*, unrelated to the chronological fact of their publication: that is, in both the novels, the protagonists represent the predicament of the proletariat as a class. In the former set in a vast formless and indifferent society, and in the later in a cruel capitalist environment. The mania of racial superiority and superciliousness of the ruling class aggravates the situation. The free moving Munoo of *Coolie (1936)* is virtually enslaved in the Tea Estate in *Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)* and every attempt to escape is violently put down by the planters. De La Havre, one of the characters, feels that the positions of the coolies in India is, in many respect, similar to that of the cotton plantation slaves of the Southern States of North America, whose condition Harriet Beecher Stowe portrayed in '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*' (1852).

The very beginning of the novel describes the collective destiny of the coolies at the Tea Plantation that is at stake. The protagonist of the novel Gangu, and his family comprising his wife Sajani, their fourteen year old daughter Sheila and seven year old son Budhu are inveigled into indentured labour under the British Mac Pherson Tea Estate in Assam. Misled by the false promises given by Buta, the cunning agent of the tea planters, they left their village and reached the Estate, only to realize that they have been trapped and that escape from this prison is almost impossible. The pathetic picture is well painted by another coolie, Narain:

‘You will soon know, brother’ said Narain. ‘First water, afterwards mire! This prison has no bars, but it is nevertheless an unbreakable jail. The chowkiders keep guard over the plantation, and they bring you back if you should go. The other day the chowkider beat Balkrishan, the boy who fled to the Santal village, because he thought he could escape to his mother in Oudh. The chowkiders go round at night with a lamp and open every door to see if we are all at home. There used to be a roll call every night before I came.’²³

However, his dream of an honourable peasantry fulfilled through the dignity of labour is soon shattered. The workers are actually indentured deprived of fundamental freedoms and subjected to a vigorous militaristic organization. They are overworked underpaid victims of graft, usury and extortion, ruthlessly exploited by Indian foreman and the assistant manager, Reggie Hunt. Subjected to the most inhuman horrors of colonialist tyranny, they are thrown along a steep course of tragic descent. Their huts are primitive and their colony in sanitary. Living in extremely poor, unhygienic conditions, Sajani dies of cholera following De La Havre’s unsuccessful appeals to the company to provide adequate facilities and implement

measures for the prevention of disease. The sudden death comes as a shock to

Gangu:

For a time he moved in a trance, beckoning the despair of bereavement to come and take position of him. But only his lips trembled and his head hung down over his hands, in the muffled indifference of the twilight in his brain. Then, however, as he crouched woodenly by the dead body, he looked at her again.²⁴

Early in the novel when De La Havre is introduced contemplating the infinitesimal cells that mirror destruction with fascinating beauty, his thoughts of death and his scientific reflections turn more succinctly and clearly upon the naturalistic argument which had been asserted in *Coolie (1936)* and *Untouchable (1935)*:

.... All the chemical disintegration was inherent in nature, he reflected in rather a depressed vein. All the process of change, colouring and unification were complementary to chemical decomposition. All that was true of nature was also true of society.²⁵

From this observation, it is clear that, Anand sees life as a process evolving ambivalences and permutation of nature, society and man: the cells mirror both destruction and beauty of order.

Anand constructs his situations, characters and value judgments largely based upon the above formula. He gets into the novel through De La Havre and shows most of the sociological data and opinion on which his view of life is based, an interesting documentation of some of the intellectual crisis particularly the dismay at society's moral impotence which have plagued the modern mind.

Malaria, however, is mistaken for cholera, and the news spreads like wild fire through out the estate. After getting over the shock of his wife's death, Gangu goes to Mr. Croft Cooke, the chief planter and asks for a loan to perform the last rites of his wife. But the manager, afraid of getting infected with the disease, gets terribly angry and kicks him out of his bungalow:

‘Yes, Huzoor. I had fever, and she had fever and she died’, said Gangu. ‘Get out! Get out! Exclaimed Croft Cooke, turning purple with rage, and starring at the coolie. ‘You bloody fool; get out! Get out! You have been spreading infection all over the place’²⁶

Gangu withdraws himself asking forgiveness and curses himself for his past life. He walked away deeply chagrined and humiliated in his heart:

Twice or thrice he looked up to the heavens as if he expected the fire of Almighty God to scorch him, and he dared, for the briefest moment, to turn his head back to see if the Sahib were not following him with a cane, to execute to the full the punishment which he deserved. For, being in the throes of a suffering, more intense because it has descended upon him with the suddenness of an avalanche, he was prepared to accept any humiliation. It was only one more reward for the misdeeds of his past life, he said to himself, with the resigned indifferent of the Hindu. And it was as nothing compared with the blow which god had struck him yesterday by taking his wife away.²⁷

In the hope of getting help for the cremation of his wife, he seeks Buta's help yet again nothing fruitful comes out of this, except frustrations and humiliations. The tremulous words come out of the depths of a broken hearted Gangu in a simple passage:

‘The Sahib will not give a loan’, Gangu said. ‘I have just been. He beat me for coming out of quarantine. Oh, friend Buta Ram if only I had known things were going to turn out this way, I wouldn't have come here’. And he took his hand to his eyes to wipe the tears that

welled up in them with the reproach against the Sardar that he had suppressed into self – pity.²⁸

Gangu had to move from pillar to post in the hope of getting money but is promptly kicked out everywhere and forced to borrow at an exorbitant rate of interest from the money lender. He is hopelessly embedded in the toils of a system that is throttling the life out of his fellow coolies. Finally, with the gift given by an idealistic Dr. De La Havre, he performs the funeral.

Baring the estate doctor, De La Havre, the rest of the Anglo-Indian community not only hate the native population for their miserable and mean existence and their black colour, but contemptuously ill-treat them. Barbara the daughter of the manager, understands the warm and human feelings of De La Havre but finally, lets him down in an hour of crisis when he is dismissed from service, following the mutiny of coolies. Neither the manager of the Tea estate, Croft Cooke, who believes that the coolies are sub human, nor his assistant Reggie Hunt, the villain of the piece will ever know the potential danger of their actions.

Following a vicious show of force in which Hunt scatters a group of coolies, the labourers stage a peaceful demonstration and are encouraged by De La Havre to petition for better conditions. However, this genuine proletarian mission is misinterpreted as an uprising and the army is flown in to put down the so called insurrection. And thus, De La Havre is dismissed.

In the course of time, Gangu is given a strip of land, but as ill luck would have it, the torrential rain washes away the tender shoots of rice. Then after the restoration of agitation, a special hunting expedition is organized for the entertainment of Sir Geoffrey, the Governor of Assam who pardons the labourers, accused of instigating riots and disturbances. A tiger hunt is laid on and by this dubious means harmony is temporarily restored.

The death of Sajani, presages the pathetic end of Gangu's life. Reggie's brutality borders on the insatiable lust. Unbalanced by a complex, superiority power, lust and the climate, he becomes passionately interested in Gangu's daughter Leila. Leila escapes his attempt to rape her by rushing into her hut where Reggie is confronted by Gangu and when his attempt is foiled by his timely arrival on the scene, Reggie shoot him dead and then rushes away in a fit of panic and frustration. His trial and the subsequent verdict of not guilty, of either murder or culpable homicide, seems to be the ironical epilogue to this drama of class hatred, violence and racial pride:

After a trial lasting three days, Reginald Charles William Hunt, Assistant of the Mac Pherson Tea Estate, was brought up for judgement on the charge of murder or culpable homicide before Mr. Justice Moberley and a jury of seven European and two Indian members..... An impartial jury has found you "not guilty" on the charge of murder or culpable homicide. 'I concur with the jury's view of evidence. You are discharged.'²⁹

It becomes clear that Gangu's life has been put to an end as a result of the cruelty exercised by the English people as well as the Indian. Years of misery have made him a weak, passive and abject fatalist. He is seen as a passive sufferer who is too

weak to raise his protest. De La Havre's thesis on 'Man and Environmental Impact' on him is, in fact, an impressive expression of naturalism, a recording of the basic philosophy of Anand's novels:

Social development of man a complicated process of action and reaction, of separation and systemization, in so far as an individual existed only in his relation to the community, in so far as he was born and reared, of heredity and of transformation in the atmosphere in and through which he lived and flowered into the lives of other human beings.³⁰

Thus, in this novel the focus has shifted from poverty and class consciousness to the evils of colonial rule which perpetuates its power by suppressing the most basic human rights of the subjected people. Colonialism and Imperialism glorify collaborators; sincerity, honesty and dignity do not figure in their vocabulary. The situation becomes worst when capitalist interests gain an upper hand in the colonial system of administrative as well as the judicial.

However, it needs to be examined how far this novel shows Anand's attitudes to the changes needed to create an exploitation free society in which human dignity is not measured in terms of money or power. After a close analysis of this novel, it becomes obvious that not much has changed since *Untouchable (1935)* and *Coolie (1936)* so far as Anand's conception of social reality is concerned. Gangu's first visible innocence and self questioning not only reveal what he has come to feel but also indicate what lies in store for him in future:

Did all the Sahibs who come to own this land get their labourers by letting lies pass for truth, did they make deceit a virtue and exalt the worst to do the best, make every push full talker like Buta, into Sadar, and liberate all the selfishness that any shaitan could use for his

own purpose? Do all good men die here and others live on?³¹

These are the genuine questions which are rooted in Gangu's own experience of indignity and humiliation at the hands of his white masters. Where Gangu fails is, in giving a sense of direction to his questions which could have led him to his intellectual and physical liberation. But Gangu appears unresisting and timorous. The sufferings he has undergone through out of his life made him an inert character. An example of his passivity and timidity is furnished in the novel when Gangu goes to the manager for a loan for the cremation of his wife. The manger does not sympathize but turns him out of the premises of the factory. While this incident reveals Gangu's passivity and static character, its intention was to show more of his suffering that the society inflicted upon him:

'Forgive, Huzoor, forgive', said Gangu withdrawing without showing back to the Sahib, his hands joined abjectly, his face twisted so that hollows of his cheeks trembled with humility.³²

Gangu like Munoo, does not show any inner development or maturity even when he confronts new situations in the course of time. It is this lack of character development that is responsible for the resigned attitude to his fate. His knowledge of the inevitability of death further unconsciously inclines him to be more fatalistic in life. He shows no interest to go beyond the depth of his suffering. Gangu does not think of avenging the insult inflicted upon him by the manager; instead he thinks it better to forgive, drive the resentment out of his heart:

And so he forgave everyone. But it was a positive and virile enough way of forgiveness, in view of his submission not to them, but to some higher force of fear in himself. He was not finding it easy to discipline his instincts, but he had determined not to let his senses

always be conspiring to wreck the only vengeance open to him through the Rajput code – Murder.³³

The timorousness which he has is irrational and can be wiped out, but as long as it remains, the effect it has on Gangu, prevents him from identifying his own position. The fear and frustration have dominated his life which he seems to suppress within himself:

He had hardly gone twenty yards when a vague feeling of apprehension overtook him that the Sahib or the chaprasi might come and catch him abroad and kick him. He looked towards the office and surveyed the plantation. The deep blue sky spread a garish haze across the valley and seemed to have subdued every element by its vast expensive force into an utter stillness, so that Gangu could hear his heart pounding against the turbulent waters of his soul. But the cost was clear. And the immediate feeling of fear rose like a dim mist and mingled with the heavier cloud of sorrow that hovered on the horizon of his being a doom like the invisible element that hold men in thrall with the oppressive weight of shadows incarnated by the dull witted fancies of generation living continually in the presence of death.³⁴

Sometimes though, he shows a dim awareness of his social position and those of the rich people. He can not be bold when the situation calls for it. Gangu reacts to the coolie's death with anger and resentment but does not proceed to translate his anger and indignation into positive action. However, he exposes his fearfulness and the weakness inherent in his character while going to the office of the manager to register the coolie's protest. His words and action again testify to his inability to cope with the situation. The fact is that, he can not subdue his sense of fear.

A critic D. Riemenschneider observes his fear psychology and says, "we see in him is an absolutely static character who has lost all his vitality and is almost

solely controlled by distrust and fatalism.”³⁵ In fact, Gangu is paralyzed with fear. Colonialism ingrains panic in the colonized so that they cannot protest even for a legitimate cause.

Towards the end of the novel, he seems to understand the root cause of his tragedy when he tells his friend Narain about the role money has played in society. Although this awareness comes from his personal ordeal, it can be taken as momentary responses because patience, suffering, passivity and fear have become the basic features of his character:

And he wandered in the shame of his hopeless life, shrunken by fear, broken and numbed by the hard implements of pain, surging with desire in the subterranean spaces of his being, crowned by a faint elation, tense and tearless. Then he looked again to the heavens, the palled cup on the sky loomed above him, vast and comprehensive and still. He hung his head down in resignation, though it looked as if he waited for something, soothing he knew not what.³⁶

In his last days, his fatalistic mentality goes to the extent of accepting humiliation. His self pity and passivity are idealized by means of a veneer of innocence and in the process; he is presented as a totally static character incapable of any development. Anand, instead of providing depth and richness to the character, tends to make him a lifeless figure and inflated symbol.

Gangu in his passivity appears as a representative figure that embodies in himself the teeming peasants of British India, who, being unable to challenge the might of an empire, found solace in their fatalistic philosophy. Saros Cowasjee remarks:

Gangu, instead of drawing attention to himself, makes us think of the millions of his suffering brethren. In his passivity, his tender loyalties, his compassion and depth of suffering, he symbolizes the Indian peasantry. Fate has done its worst to him, and now its little gifts are only anxious burden of life.³⁷

Margaret Berry is also of the view that “Gangu’s religion of fatalism leads him to remain silent, to suffer and to stifle the bitterness of his experience.”³⁸ Similarly, due to his defeated mentality, he can never imagine that he can strive further in his life. Shyam Asnani’s appraisal of Gangu’s passive character further confirms in his words:

Gangu, with his all passivity, his tender loyalty, his compassion and dept of suffering, symbolic of the Indian peasantry, is by now, adept to watch the violent play of god, the storm and the rain washing away the meagre harvest of paddy with an almost imperturbable calm, as if in this moment of his uttermost anguish and despair, he had been purged of his fear of the inevitable. Hopelessly embedded in the toils of a system that can only throttle life, Gangu has learnt to accept his rigours of life with complete resignation and stoical serenity.³⁹

When we consider that this novel is the severest indictment of colonial society’s exploitation and that the tragedy unfolds itself through their experience, it seems that the passivity of Gangu has no justification at all. What we see in him is an absolutely static character who had lost all his vitality and is almost solely controlled by his distrust and fatalism. Even in a moment of most intense suffering and humiliation, he faces the situation with the stoical acceptance. But there are moments when he has an inner yearning and desire to live, a sense of defiance against the cruelty that the society inflicted upon him.

Gangu is a victim not a willing ally in his own degradation and misery like his counterparts Bakha, Bhikhu and Munoo. All of them are victim of the oppressed and doomed outcaste proletariat whose fate and destiny is enslaved by the social heredity and environment. These protagonists are neither unaware of the cause of their suffering nor of their potentialities but their creativity is crushed and their spirit of rebellion nipped by their struggle for survival.

A similar victim of sociological environment appears in his trilogy – *The Village (1939)*, *Across The Black waters (1940)* and *The Sword and The Sickle (1942)* which is perhaps the most faithful study of the individual in terms of the traditional social values and the new socialist forces. The thematic significance of the trilogy mainly lies in the protagonist's revolt against the conventional social values which in the end takes a pro-communist turn. The confrontation between the individual and the society decides the destiny of both the individual and society which forms the central pattern of action of the trilogy. *The Village (1939)* mainly reveals the inner conflict of Lalu as a result of the deterministic operation of the conventional environment. *Across the Black waters (1940)* is as much a symbol of Lalu's spiritual education as it is a truthful tribute to the valour and the military genius of the Indian soldiers abroad during the First World War and finally, *The Sword and the Sickle (1942)* is about the return of the native, Lalu Singh, to his own motherland after the war with an eagerness to disseminate the message of the revolution for the upliftment of the Indian peasantry. The moving motive of the whole trilogy is, the sociological determination of the individual's action as against his own free and natural impulses. However, a brief survey of the three novels will

give a complete picture of conflict between man and society. What it attempts to portray is a dialectical process of man-society relationship which depends on the creative energy of the individual as well as on the potential forces of the social system.

Lal Singh is the youngest son of a peasant of the village Nandpur. A proud but extremely orthodox and superstitious farmer, Nihal Singh whose nostalgic invocation of the days of his youth, his dogmatic adherence to the practices of the religious superstitions and social specifications are special not only to Nandpur, but typical of any Indian village. Sardar Harnam Singh the unprincipled and powerful landlord, the irreligious Mahant and the extortionate Sahukar and their henchmen complete the vicious circle of the village. Lal's indignation against the Mahant is indeed symptomatic of the age of Reformation in view of the hypocritical advocacy of religion with feudalistic loyalties.

Lal is up against the orthodox social customs and rituals. He breaks the sacred law of his religion, for which he is punished and humiliated. With his modernist propensities and his impatience with the enemies of the peasant, he incurs the wrath of the landlords, the Sahuka and the Mahant the vicious trio of the village society. He is at last forced to leave the village and enlist himself as a sepoy in the British Indian army. Later, he pays a short holiday visit to the village when he sees the shadow of an imminent tragedy spreading everywhere in the village. And as the novel closes, in his camp at Karachi, he prepares to leave for Marseilles, not having fully recovered from the shock of the news of his father's death. In unfolding this

story of the struggles of Lal Singh, Anand voices his strong resentment against the rural social mechanism of exploitation.

As a powerful indictment of the rural social order, *The Village (1939)* exposes mercilessly the sinister forces of exploitation that wreck the village life. The peasants' fortune is steadily declining through debt and mortgages and the seizure of land by the landlord. The whole village is ruined by this system of exploitation. Harnam Singh, Lalu's uncle, describes the situation of the village to Lalu towards the end of the novel:

“ I am ruined. I have had to mortgaged the whole of my land to Chaman Lal. But I am not the only one, almost the whole village is ruined.⁴⁰

Lalu reacts sharply against all the injustices and wrongs which the simple and innocence village folk have to put up with. In his endeavour to bring about a radical change in the socio economic condition of village where education is a boon to the peasant's son, Lalu is dissatisfied with the behaviour of the elders who prohibit their children from playing:

They were always forbidding you to do this and that, these elders always curtailing your liberty. Always frustrating your desires. Always frustrating. You could not even laugh in their presence. You had to join your hands gravely and say, 'I fall at your feet.' And there were ridiculous fools, ugly, uncouth lumps of flesh white-eyed, open-mouthed, simpletons, saying prayers and murmuring the name of God all day, even as they lasciviously eyed the girl passing in the bazaar.⁴¹

Himself a victim of wrongs, and the ritualistic fears of the village community, he turns into a rebel. He has to pay a heavy price in the bargain, since he can not break

out of the labyrinth of that cruel design. After many a vain battle with the forces of tradition, he makes a final decision and goes into exile.

While living in his ancestral village, Lalu fights against the money lender, the landlord, the rabble and the immemorial way of life which is his legacy. However, his first major break from the tradition comes in the wake of his romantic fascination with Maya, the daughter of the landlord, as a result of the incident at the market place. He feels extremely disgusted and in his growing frustration; he eats at a Muslim eating point, an act which is not easily permitted by his community. Lalu's revolutionary feelings against the religious fanatics and self-appointed custodians of morality are more explicit in connection with his elder brother Dayal Singh, who is particularly devoted to the Mahant, and Sharm Singh who is tyrannical and jealous. His own mother Gujri is doubtlessly tender and loving but extremely superstitious and ignorant. It is against these old and unwholesome system that Lalu revolt by violating all the sacred cannons of the Sikh Panth, including the cropping of his sacred hair:

I paid a visit to the king George V Hair cutting saloon in the town this morning and left the ponderous weight of my head behind on the floor, answered Lalu with self-conscious bravado, excited by the tension created by his unfortunate exchange of words with his brother.⁴²

This particular step taken by Lal Singh as a mark of protest against traditional mores of Sikhism created a strong sense of resentment and indignation at the hearts of the villagers. When he returns to the village, he is hunted and pursued by the rebel for the supreme act of sacrilege that he has committed. He stands dazed in the welter of

confusion as his pursuers smear his face with black paint, and are eager to parade him on the thorough fare on a donkey's back. Lalu's unorthodoxy is understood by the villagers in their dogmatic loyalty to the past, as an arrogant defiance and his social radicalism is rewarded with a humiliating donkey-ride through the streets of the village:

As the donkey stumbled across the threshold into the lane, there were loud peals of laughter and shouts from the crowd. 'Ohe, look at the black face! Ohe, look, ohe, look', Children cried. 'Yes, look at the lecher! Look at the lecher of his masters! He had forgotten all his religion and had no sense of shame left! Why, he used to wink at us as we came through the lane and stare at us as we sat in undress washing clothes by the pond! He had raised his head to the sky!' the women spoke in a chorus. 'Kill him. Kill the brother in law! The rogue!' Arjan Singh ground his teeth in fury, and lifted his hands to strike. He never had any respect for religion insulting the Mahant at the monastery. He had raised his head so high!⁴³

Having been victimized by the social insanity and the family's economic depression Lalu seeks to exile himself from the narrow world of dogma and superstition. The villagers' mulish endurance of the numerous indignities, caused by the particular economic and social circumstances, is exasperating in the extreme. Lalu's vexation with the asininity of the villagers is well expressed in several places in the novel. Dramatically, this conflict reaches a climax when Lalu is falsely accused of theft by the landlord after he has been caught playing with Maya, the daughter of the landlord. Lalu explains:

'I didn't steal anything, sir', he replied in English. 'The landlord of my village has a grudge against my family and he had a warrant issued for my arrest just because I was seen talking to his daughter'.... 'oh, a love affair', said Owen, suppressing his astonishment at the idea of an ordinary recruit speaking English while the others

dilated their eyes and turned their ears to hear, excited at the emergence among them of a rustic who could twist his tongue to pronounce the Angrezi speech. 'It was a frame – up, Sir', continued Lal Singh. I was a boy scout and Mr. Long, the Deputy Commissioner of Manbad, can bear witness to my good conduct.⁴⁴

Notwithstanding the Deputy Commission's patronage, Lalu finds life in his village miserable. His attempt to change the set up of the village community seems to be naïve in the face of the combined forces of evil, spearheaded by Sardar Harnam Singh. Lalu escapes to the nearest city of Manbad where he enlists for recruitment to the army.

Greed and power not only corrupt men but also lead them to oppress the unfortunate and force them into miserable existence. The village elders, his parents and men like Naik Lok Nath, all these try to crush his vivacious spirit. He exclaims:

'It seems as if I was born to suffer and be sad'. The calves of his legs ached with weakness, and his heart drummed now rapidly, now in a series of protracted beats.⁴⁵

Lalu wants to lead a free life but unfortunately, he is deprived of it. Undergoing training as a soldier at Ferozpur Cantonment, Lalu feels a little free from the decadent society of his village.

Not long afterwards his eldest brother Sharm Singh, in a moment of moral outrage, kills the landlord's son because he had seduced Sharm Singh's wife. Sharm Singh himself is hanged. The family tragedy cripples Lalu's father. Through this dramatic situation Anand portrays a powerful indictment of anachronistic feudalism, a corrupt landlord system, and the moral anarchy which is a consequence of both.

Lalu's return to Nandpur to see his dying father and learn about the catastrophe, is for him a ritual agony of the old world. The slow decay and the general decrepitude of the village fills him with a helpless anxiety. His father's prolonged illness seems to be a living death of an ugly, old and cumbersome relic of the past. It seemed to him the doom of the old world has crept over his soul when he has the perception of the new world that is on the way:

A sense of doom was creeping into him, a sense of fear and abject horror of the dark, unknown forces of this old world that weighed heavily on everything, even on him who had seen the new things and didn't believe in superstition or in the hosts of dark forces....⁴⁶

Lalu, however, returns to Ferozpur for a speedy departure to France to fight the Germans as the First World War breaks out. And it is symbolically suggestive that Lulu receives at Karachi the news of his fathers' death. The death of the old world, against which, Lulu turns his back. *The Village (1939)* therefore, symbolically signifies the individual's becoming aware of his own personality so long choked with dead conventions and a deadly environment. Thus, in his effort to bring about a transformation, he became a rebel.

Unlike Anand's other heroes Bakha, Bhikhu, Munoo and Gangu, Lal Singh is defiant by nature who is bold enough to translate his anger into actions and as a man of rebellious spirit having faith in revolutionary class, struggles with determined effort and perseverance. He defies tradition with far reaching consequences and is against all sorts of unreasonable rituals and unscientific practices in the name of religion.

His rebelliousness can be seen in the beginning of the novel, when his father Nihal Singh tells him about their unsettled suit regarding the land. Lalu is immediately outraged by the behaviour of the Vakil who is adept in collecting the fees from his clients and then getting the dates of hearing postponed, thus lengthening the period of litigation because the longer litigation period means more fees. He is furious and asks his father to give him a chance to teach the Vakil a lesson:

‘You should let me go to sell the harvest, Bapu, next time’ said Lalu. ‘I’ll soon get that Vakil into hand if you take me with you to see him.....’ ‘Tact or no tact’, burst Lalu pugnaciously, ‘I will punch their heads and teach them the lesson of their lives. They all take advantage of you, the swine because you are an old man’.⁴⁷

Thereafter, Lalu’s opposition to the traditional concept of social values is revealed through his behaviour towards his sister in-law. He can not accept the age-old practice of treating the woman as slaves and inferior to males. He thinks that husbands do not have any right to treat them as disposable commodities. In the same way, Lalu is against the practice of giving undue importance to the saints or Mahants, who cheat people by invoking the name of Gods and Goddesses. His anger is described in the following words:

Lalu felt a violent revolution against Nandgir now. That the wretch should make it a point to remind the old man about the cheapness of the cloth. And his father had said that the harvests were not fetching much. Why couldn’t the family learn better than to waste money on gifts for these charlatans? Why? The man hadn’t done anything for them for years, but came in at the end of every harvest for his share of the grain and the gift of clothes! The lecher! He ate sumptuous

food, dressed in yellow silks, smoked charas and drank hemp, and, if reports were true, whored and fornicated. And he was kept as a holy man, the Guru of the community!⁴⁸

His non-conformist sense comes as a threat to his community which looks upon him as a dissenter and perverter of truth. His own family and relatives are against him. Even his mother fails to understand his views but Lalu remains firm in his conviction. He finds the society full of ignorant people who do not have the courage to speak the truth yet he remains unrelenting in his contempt for meaningless religious rituals. He is one of the free spirits who refuses to accept any kind of bigotry and orthodoxy. However, Lalu develops gradual maturity which enables him to perceive their limitations in true perspective. He shows his deep rooted frustration and anger:

‘They are cowards, all of them’, he cried out, ‘and their own dreary lives have burnt them up into dry cinders. They have no life left, no hope, no strength. They are ugly, with their short breasted, coughing, spitting, dribbling, sweating, bearded faces, and they want to make everyone ugly like themselves. And they are hypocrites. They are not half of them as good as pretend to be wrinkled old swine who cursed and reviled me, and those women, with their filthy, shameless abuse.’⁴⁹

This marks the beginning of the process of the self development of the protagonist. Lalu is so annoyed with the decaying social norms that he wants to throw “ashes on the beards of all the elders and on the heads of womenfolk”. He violates all their superstitions and tramples them to the dust, in his attempts to destroy everything that smacks of fatalism or irrationality. He gets agitated when he sees the police havildar coming to arrest him on the charge of theft. Lalu is infuriated and stepped forward towards the threshold with his right arm lifted and said, ‘I am not a thief, I tell you,

and I shall break your head if you utter that word again!’⁵⁰ Being headstrong and impetuous by nature, he successfully defends the progressive measures of the government and tries to show his unyielding spirit even during trying times. G.P.

Sharma comments:

In reaction, his villagers who are all Sikh, at once swoop down upon him, blacken his face, seat him on the back of a donkey and parade him through the streets of the village. Though the rebellious boy yields thus to a force much stronger than him, his progressive spirit is not thereby subdued or bent.⁵¹

His non conformity is again revealed when he disagrees with the religious views of Maulvi who is not prepared to accept that there is meaning in other religions. He can not contain his anger and contradicts his opinion:

‘But each day in life is judgement day’, burst Lalu, impatient at the Maulvi’s words. ‘And surely there is no favouritism shown to men in heaven, if there be such a place, just because men belong to one religion or another.’⁵²

His indignation against the society made him the angry young man, in the words of Saros Cowasjee:

However, Lalu remains the angry young man in the novel, commenting bitingly on the priest’s butchery, the money lender’s dishonesty, the landlord’s greed, the British government’s indifference to the lot of the villagers, and the villager’s own naivety and stupidity.⁵³

The Village (1939) deals with the aspects of the village life that have retarded its growth and progress, the façade, bigotry and fallacy Lalu he wanted to banish. He therefore, refuses to remain a mute victim of a society.

Similarly, Marlene Fisher is of the view that Lalu became a revolutionary activist right from the beginning of the novel and that by the end, he is presented actively organizing the peasants in a bid for independence:

The tempo of the push towards independence increases as the trilogy progresses, and its growing insistence parallels Lal Singh's strides towards manhood and freedom of self. It begins, though, quietly and slowly in *The Village*. Here Anand depicts some of the forces that were undermining traditional values and the hypocrisy of some of those values themselves.⁵⁴

Even when confined to the village, Lalu experiences a kind of war. A war within which involves conflicts inherent in human nature against the root of the village ethos. He realizes his incompatibility with the traditional ways of the stagnant village life which does not give any opportunity for the human sensitivity and freedom. Having been born and brought up in that ethos, he rebels against its constricting values and openly opposes the injustices perpetrated in the name of the history:

He had been in revolt against the limitations of his own nature as well as against the prejudices of religion in Nandpur and he had sought to perfect himself in the face of the evil though he had suffered. He had struggled, and would always go on struggling to remove his own ignorance and all the defects in his own nature.⁵⁵

Though Lalu has his weak moments of wavering judgement, he is divided between the unqualified rejection of the rural ethos and his strong nostalgia for his village. The circumstances force him to abandon it, yet his impatience with the darkness of ignorance enveloping the village remains powerfully alive.

With such a determined man as its hero, *The Village (1939)* marks a significant approach to Anand's aggressive social criticism. The protagonists of his

earlier novel were primarily victim figures and it was through the delineation of the sufferings, Anand has exposed the hollowness and cruelty of social system which makes their destiny but in *The Village (1939)* social criticism has been organically related to the development of character and as the reader follows the developing contours of the protagonist's consciousness, the social environment is more significant in the novel.

Across The Black waters (1940) is the second novel of the trilogy which deals with the futility of war. It is, however, concerned with the life and achievements of the Indian soldiers in the 'Vilayat' during the World War I. Lulu, the self exiled boy of the village Nandpur, is the natural hero as he joins the Indian army, shortly to be engaged in a global war. His whole drama is complete ranging from a tiny and unhealthy village in India to a wholesome hamlet in France where the Indian soldiers are involved in fierce and deadly war with the Germany. In fact, the novel begins with Lal Singh's regiment disembarking at Marseilles, describes the horror of French warfare and of the battles with the enemy, and ends with the hero being wounded and taken as a prisoner of war by the Germans at Festubert.

As a part of the Naturalistic Trilogy in Indo – Anglian Fiction, the novel seems to convey to the reader more than the mere story of a soldier. On one level of understanding, it elaborately describes the actions of the Indian soldiers, fighting besides the British regiments under the ablest of Anglo – Indian generals. The bonhomie and the minor camaraderie, the little revelries and the minor peccadilloes

that characterized the Indian soldiers in the novel, are imaginatively apprehended as forming the influential environment of sepoy Lal Singh.

The experiences which Lalu had in Europe, becomes for him a sounding board to test, through a process of comparison and contrast the various life problems that agitated him in Nandpur, and their possible solution. His encounter at Franceville reminds him of all his experiences in Nandpur, and invariably they reveal to him the remarkable superiority of European life. But his nostalgic passion for the Indian village seems to conflict with his growing awareness of European superiority. The inner conflict in Lalu between the pull of a tradition and a modernity, intellectually described as 'the two poles of nature,' 'the two anti-types.' The affinity with the European modernity is given powerful expression in the novel. The European life seems for Lalu full of curiosity. For the first time, he came to know how the European people treat their low caste brethren with a sense of equality in their social activities. He begins to look upon the whites as real men and women rather than as inhabitants of a dream world; as a true Indian peasant, son of the soil, he watches the French farms and the modes of pleasant life with great interest, and this convinces him of the urgent need for effective radical change in his village. He feels that his quarrel with the traditional life of his village was perfectly justified. In a letter to his mother from his camp at Ypres, Lalu gives a detailed account of the French peasant life and expresses a passionate desire to change the life of the rural peasantry of Punjab:

...This country is full of precious things, such as machine ploughs, steel implements, sheep, pigs, cows, chickens, beetroots, potatoes and apple wine. The

Francis of Franceville and the Flamands are wonderful cultivations. They plough five times as much land in a day with tractor machines as we do in ten days with a wooden land scratcher. And they used manures full of medicines such as the Sarkar ought to invent in Hind.' What a country!' 'What a country!' ⁵⁶

Instinctive reaction gives to mature understanding and his passion for reforming the village receives the necessary tutoring in the very land where his dreams are already a reality. His high reverence and illusions of the white people are shed as he stays on in France. He learns that they too are susceptible to the simple affections and characteristics of all humans. A mature comprehension begins to replace a blind idolization. The voyage across the black water thus becomes at once a spiritual voyage towards a new destination of maturity and wisdom.

But close to this assertion, there is in the novel a projection of the values of the Indian village and the life of the peasantry which is accomplished by recapturing of the peasant qualities of the protagonist and by emphasizing the tragedy of the sepoys in the alien land. Lalu's experiences in France Ville are thus depicted as extension of his experiences in the village. Every moment in France is for Lalu either a re-enactment of the worst aspects of his past peasant experience or a realization of the need to reform his village which will ensure his own rehabilitation.

The tragedy of the Indian sepoys is shown to be essentially a tragedy of peasant innocence crushed by the brutal mechanism of war. The novel depicts the horrors of trench warfare, the movement of troops, battles with the enemy and death of many soldiers in the midst of fighting. Before being taken as prisoner, Lalu trains

himself as a good soldier and fights the enemy with courage and valour. By showing the cold-blooded violence and cruelty, Anand presents us with a forceful denunciation of war. The death of innocent and honest people in the meaningless war makes Lalu extremely sad and perturbed. To Lalu, war is a holocaust, destroying human beings, property and houses. He fails to understand why the people of the high civilization have to fight in this war. He does not think that the war with the Germans would save the human civilization. It was a shocking revelation to him that the Government of France, England and Germany supposed to be saner and wiser than the ordinary people over whom they ruled could be so callous and blood thirsty. The dehumanizing impact of war thus set Lalu thinking:

The element of sanity in Lalu persisted in the face of the insanity which had blown off the towers of the churches and he could not believe that ordinary men and women of good sense, and the Government of France, England and people over whom they ruled, could be engaged in a war in which men were being wounded and houses shattered.⁵⁷

The scattered corpses accentuate the reality of death. The soldiers in the novel are churned up in the war machine, in the bogs, mud and slush of France. They are drilled to commit organized violence for Rs. 11.00p a month, plus uniform. The cruelty of war is stressed through out the novel. The sepoy were treated like yoked bullocks kicked and trashed. They were mere instruments in the war which makes them dull and indifferent. In one of the horrifying scene, a sepoy named Hanumant Singh suffering from fever was ordered to get up and march. As he refuses to march, he is abused and brutally dealt with:

‘I shall deal with him’ said Suchet Singh, taking out his revolver. ‘If you don’t get up while I count three one two.....three.’ And he shot at Hanumant so that the

sepoys shrieked and doubled over with a 'Hai, hai, oh my ...'⁵⁸

The cruelties of the war leave the Indian soldiers dazed and wooden. Though they have admired the shrewdness and wealth of the sahibs, they can not understand why the sahibs are killing each other and making large grave yard of their own land. Most of the sahibs think that they are in war with the Germans to save the cause of civilization but in reality they are the victims. By interweaving the experiences of the peasants and the sepoy with tenderness and compassion, the novelist portrays the tragedy of the poor sepoy as a grim phase of the tragedy of the Indian villages abandoned by the gods.

The tortuous journey into the unknown is a descent from Vilayat first experienced by the soldiers as paradise into the battle field, described as 'hell' and 'netherworld'. The existential theme is announced after the army's arrival at the front where life is a matter of elemental necessities and ritual-like ordeals by water and fire:

.....the days were the colour of the nightsand the murky, greenish grey sky was the exact colour of the roof of hell which the sages in India spoke about, when the souls of the sinners were subjected to the ordeals, first of trailing through the mud of marshes, full of slimy, ravenous rats and blood sucking leeches, then through a forest of tangled bushes and thicket of thorns, then to wait in misery, naked and cold and hungry, for the coming of the rain which was to wash them clean of their sins, for the ordeal of fire which was to purge them, and for final judgement before the throne of Brahma They... were now in the stage of waiting in the vast, timeless universe for their doom to fulfill itself as if they had been suddenly transplanted into the world of their ancestors where men struggled against the elements, the Gods and Destiny.⁵⁹

Across The Black waters (1940) thus, on a deeper level, laments the loss of grace of the Indian village and show the Indian sepoy as victims of a cruel destiny that makes them fight in distant lands, a war which they do not understand at all. They were denied even the necessary information required to give them an emotional involvement and a sense of participation. The sepoy never ask where the war was or why it was being fought and how it happened because they received no answer to such questions. They feel absolutely uninterested and detached in this war. With their peasant background, they are totally ill-equipped to fight a modern war. Like a frightened school boy when he confronts the enemy and in his naivety, he thinks that the whole of the fighting and devastation was accidental, the faults and mistakes of some officers, who had given the wrong orders. The tragic futility of participating in a war which has nothing to do with their lives, grip the sepoy's souls and create a resigned attitude among them:

‘where do they come from,’ one whispered to another.
‘From the war, of course’, the other whispered back.
But no one asked where the war was or why it was
being fought and how it happened that they were going
there. For there had been no answer to such queries in
the past, and now they took it for granted.⁶⁰

Poor Indian soldiers were fighting to earn and to pay off their debts. Their only concern is to save five or six rupees out of eleven and thereby relieve the sufferings of their families. For them, it was neither a religious war nor did they bear any enmity to the men they were asked to fight. They fight because they paid for it. Moreover, in their rank, they were the mercenary soldiers fighting on behalf of the British Empire without a will of their own. The following passage summarizes why

stoicism and militaristic tepidity has taken hold of the Indian soldiers during the war and created a resigned attitude within themselves.

A passionate people, prone to sudden exaltations and depressions more faithful than any other if they believe, they were neutral in this war, because this was not a war for any of the religions of their inheritance, nor for any ideal which could fire their blood and make their hair stand on end. Ordered about by the Sarkar, they were as ready to thrust their bayonets into the bellies of the Germans as they had been to disembowel the frontier tribesmen, or their own countrymen, for the pound a month which the sahibs paid them. But they were like conscripts, brutalized and willing to fight like trained bulls, but without a will of their own, soulless automatons in the execution of the army code, though in the dark deeps of their nature, unschooled by the Sarkar, there lay the sensitiveness of their own humanity, their hopes, their fears and their doubts.⁶¹

The fact is that the British not only exploited the Indian peasants, coolies and labourers but also the Indian soldiers. These soldiers do not join the army out of bubbling patriotism or defending any religious, protecting their inheritance but out of compulsion. Anand further gives the detailed description of the passive attitude of the Indian soldiers:

The response of the sepoy seemed to show as if they had resigned themselves to their Kismet. Covered by their army blankets, like – hooded, belt-topped tents, snuggling in the folds of blankets, wrapped in their great coats, strapped and bandaged with an assortment of woolen racks on their legs, their backs, and their faces, their huddled together as they crouched over the warmth of a cigarette tip or the end of a candle, or stood by their rifles, elephantine mounds of flesh, placid and immobile and dumb, who would have to be drugged with liquor into warmth and madness before they could charge the enemy.⁶²

Denunciation of war is the central theme, the key element of social criticism in *Across The Black waters (1940)*. War means violence and cruelty and

the soldiers are compelled to practice it, of which results in utter savagery. For them the war is the failure of human wisdom. Hence, the savagery of war is painted in the following lines:

The Germans will be ignorant of our arrival and the sahibs say that they fear us. They think we are all Gurkhas with kukhries in our mouths, savages who will creep upto them, take them by surprise and kill them. And the Sarkar is treating you as the shock troops for that reason. Now you show them some of your savagery. All brave men like hand to hand fighting. And I have always tried to instill in you the fact that as brave sepoy, you must charge the enemy without fear with your bayonet, wherever you find him, and hit in a vital spot.⁶³

Apart from denunciation of the war, there is the antagonism to the concept of traditional religion and blind belief in God. Even a tender and sensitive soul like Lalu finds himself gradually maturing into a sheer brute, capable of ferocious cruelty. When he kills the first enemy, a German soldier, he has no compunction left in his heart:

With instantaneous resolution, the boy stooped low like a lion on the prowl and charged him with his bayonet, fixing him with such force that the butt of his rifle resounded back on his chest. The man gnashed his teeth and groaned as he felled. Lalu groped for his victim, to finish him, murmuring: 'Weep and wail rape – mother !'⁶⁴

The catastrophic events that overtake the soldiers in quick succession, evoked with great dramatic power, reinforce their essential innocence and the existential terror that consumed their souls. The devastating experience of death and destruction upsets Lalu and throws him into a cynical mood. But then, his acquaintance with a French family and Mary's kind treatment and tender feelings give him a haunting happiness amid those ghastly surroundings. Gradually, as the war

progresses through many pitched battles between the Indian and German armies, Lalu's comrades, Dhanoo, Lakshman and Rikhiram fall dead in their gallant fight against the advancing forces of international evil. The mutual bickering and jealous rivalries among the Indian ranks claim the life of Lalu's gentle friend, uncle Kirpu. Lalu fails to understand the meaning of all this. He is bruised and battered:

Instinctively a moan like sob rose from his throat and with a face contorted by terror, he began to sit up, his eyes half closed, his hands lifted in the air. A bullet went through the calf of his left leg and he fell face forward. He hoped he was not dead. Lifting his eyes, shivering, hissing and sobbing, "Oh God, oh my mother."⁶⁵

But as a man of scientific outlook, he remains steadfast in his conviction that God can not be so foolish as to punish righteous persons simply for the sake of testing them. He does not believe in irrational and unscientific things like other soldiers:

Though obsessed by a sense of guilt about uncle Kirpu's terrible death, he said to himself reproachfully, 'why is it that man like Kirpu, Dhanoo and Lachman, who were so good, should have suffered and died when I wretch am alive? Was it because God punished one person for the evil deeds of another? But no God could be so unjust. Except that people said that the righteous suffered because was testing their saintliness through harder trials. If so, God was fool to do that....'⁶⁶

The cumulative effect of all these shocking events is to emphasize the intensity and magnitude of the human tragedy. The beastly and terror of their martyrdom is all the more felt when the sepoys turn to one another with a hearty brotherliness even in the teeth of dangers. Finally, Lalu finds himself caught as a prisoner of war when the attack of his battalion peters out. Though, Lalu sometimes shows weaknesses of his character, he basically remains a man of action and determination. As a man of creative ideas, he considers himself as a capable person who could do many great

things in life. He is conscious of his potentialities. Like the heroes of the previous novels, Lalu does not have any sense of inferiority in him. He thinks himself as a master of his own self, and shows the resourcefulness and ingenuity to be found in any intelligent youth:

He felt he could do wonders if he were allowed to direct the battle. he would device some kind of machine with which he could transport his armies across the enemy's fire unselected points of the front and take the Germans in the rear; or he would take over hundreds and thousands of soldiers in those airships they talked about; or he would – but the whole thing seemed absurd.⁶⁷

Although, Lalu is fighting like other soldiers on the side of the British, nonetheless he questions the rationale of all wars. He firmly believes that victory can not arise through acts of butchery. Even if the entire enemy soldier were killed, it could not ensure a lasting victory. *Across the Black waters (1940)*, however, shows on one hand the brutalizing effects of war, and on the other, the increasingly rebellious nature of Lal Singh. The reasons of Lalu's developing rebellion are related to the defective social environment and the dehumanizing impact of the foreign rule because of which Lalu and his other soldiers had to undergo the hardships. But as a man of strong determination, he does not lose hope for life and remain irrepressibly strong and his will to struggle remains unabated.

The ill-effects of the foreign rule and the tyrannical social set up produced a character whose sensitivity to the sufferings of others and whose anger at degenerative social environment make Lalu unique among the other characters. Man is basically good and noble but it is the social environment as a deterministic factor

which forces him into becoming violent and sometimes destructive. When a static social system combines with political subjection, the result can be horrendous. Saros Cowasjee views in this regard:

What Anand is saying that men are basically good. It is the system under which they lived that dehumanizes them. And there is nothing more dehumanizing than subjection to foreign rule. On the other hand, the Indian officers, with the exception of Lachman Singh and Rikhiram, are dishonest, tyrannous and jealous qualities often fostered in a subject people.⁶⁸

Lalu's mind is shaped not just by what he sees in his immediate surroundings but by his experiences in far away Europe. His sense of protest is rooted both in the evils of contemporary society and the alien British rule in the country and, he holds definite views in respect of both. In fact, his ire is directed against the British rulers who were using poor and destitute Indians as cannon fodder in the name of saving human civilization from fascism.

The impact of war is so overwhelming that sometime other issues are pushed into insignificance. The hypocrisy and deceitfulness of the British in India as well as the evils of Indian society is well exposed. The various aspect of the protest have been carefully etched and enacted within the narrative structure. Thus, the penetrating social awareness combines with fine artistic control: reality and imagination work in perfect unison. Alastair Niven comments:

In *Untouchable, Coolie, The Village and Across The Black Waters* he states the problem of modern India, the inadequacy of capitalistic government, the traditional fatalism of the Indian peasants which allows him to accept an inhuman destiny, the apparent inflexibility of the caste system. Lalu is little different in his social position from Bakha the untouchable or

Munoo the coolie, but in writing three novels around this sympathetic character, Anand for the first time shows some possibility of escape from the social prison into which the underdog in India is traditionally born.⁶⁹

Lalu's role in the novel is that of a true hero who fights not only for his aspirations but also for opening up those arteries of creativity and inventiveness which have been blocked by slavery. His indomitable spirit and his zeal for creativity and freedom and also his willingness to make sacrifices for a noble cause make him a true representative of the Indian peasants.

Anand wrote this novel at a time of crisis when the British, unable to face the might of the Germans, took advantage of their colonial rule by recruiting Indian peasants and workers and sent them in the forefront of the battle. Thus, the Indian soldiers were made to fight to save their own oppressors. The historic irony in this novel is that, the protagonist is aware of all these affairs and his hatred for the British intensifies while he is fighting their battle. It is this intense resentment which drives him towards communism and offers a panacea for social as well as colonial evils. The significance of the novel lies in the fact that, Lalu's revolutionary view registers more aggressiveness in the course of his socio-political disenchantment. His traumatic experiences of warfare and his encounter with a civilization proved to be of immense help in his growth as a mature person with a superior vision and greater wisdom, which later enables him to assume the new role of leadership.

Perhaps more significant level of understanding in *Across The Black waters* (1940) is that, it touches upon the existential concept. The novel fully establishes the

fact of Lalu's alienation from the traditional society. First, his physical exile from his ancestral village under compelling social conditions anticipates the following journey across the black waters which symbolizes his complete break with the past, for to journey across the black waters is considered by the orthodox as un-Hindu and therefore, un-holy. Secondly, his intellectual dissociation from the conventional mode of life is final after his career as a soldier.

Across The Black waters (1940) links the first and the last novels of the trilogy which projects the image of world that converts an impulsive and unorthodox man of Nandpur into a dedicated Socialist Revolutionary. The protagonist's imprisonment in Germany deprives him of his job as a soldier but prepares him for the life of a potential revolutionary leader. The spiritual development of Lalu takes place in relation to both these worlds and provides a clue to the understanding of his further development in *The Sword and the Sickle (1942)*.

In *The Sword and The Sickle (1942)* which is the concluding novel of the trilogy, the demobilized sepoy Lal Singh's domestic life is deftly dovetailed into the main plot in accordance with the familiar naturalistic pattern of the circumstantial determination of the individual's destiny.

The life of Lalu has been irrevocably conditioned, not by his own will, but by the environmental contingency. If the religious bigotry of the villagers was the cause of his exile from India, the cessation of hostilities between Germany and Britain following the final victory of the allied forces, brings him back to India from the

German POW's camp; and the final catastrophe is caused mainly by the British administrative's dishonesty in betraying the released prisoners of war from Germany.

Lalu's incompatibility with the social world in which he lives, gives him the necessary impetus. Frustrated and agitated, Lahu comes back to his village only to find his once flourishing joint family now ruined. He finds life hard and intractable. He is denied by the British Government the rudimentary benefits accorded to former war conscripts. He was discharged from the army with a paltry pension because he was suspected of having been in contact with the group of seditionists in Germany. Humiliated, he goes to village but finds further shocking news waiting for him. His family is broken and all property is lost. He finds that the peasants have been further impoverished by the disastrous effects of the war. Apart from the war, the draught and famine kills the people in thousands; the evil system of landlordism and the cruel oppression of the peasants are kept under constant threat of forced labour and eviction. Poor peasants are subjected to limitless tyranny of the landlords. Thus, products are usurped, either in the name of rent or debt and thereby forced to live losing their land while the money lenders and landlords rejoiced at their situation. He sees a new spirit of unrest everywhere. S.C. Harrex remarks:

Lalu's return to India is a journey into post-war nightmare through a land of poverty, dispossessed peasant, over-crowded towns, blighted villages, despoiled rural economies, industrial depravity, and brutality, blotted landlordism and government tyranny, Lahu observes that the rich and powerful have got richer and more powerful, while the poor and the enslaved have become poorer and more enslaved.⁷⁰

He is thoroughly disillusioned with the society and the state, and it is because of this, that he decides to launch a career as a social revolutionary. He enters into an organization with a Count in UP, actively engaged in fighting the evils of landlordism. Meanwhile, he meets Maya, his boyhood flame, the widowed daughter of the landlord; and he elopes with her to Rajgarh to work under Count Kanwar Rampal Singh, a rich landlord with Bolshevik ideas. The Count has gathered a small but dedicated band of workers that are ready to give up everything for the cause of a Peasant's Revolution in the country, overthrowing the decadent feudal tyranny under the inspiration of the victorious Russian Revolution. The Count's confabulations with the Nawab to ameliorate the conditions of the peasants prove abortive. Therefore, Count Rampal Singh and his comrades immediately begin to plan the revolution, but as all the disorganized attempts of Count Rampal Singh end in failure, Comrade Sarshar, the local communist party representative, strongly admonished Rampal to mobilize his resources, aligning himself with like-minded revolutionaries in the country.

Lalu, a man of strong convictions and sincerity, throws himself into the struggle. His meeting with Count Rampal Singh proves to be very significant event in his life. Though eccentric and romantic, Rampal Singh is a sincere person who knows the miserable condition of the peasants. Lalu puts his heart into the job but faces many difficulties due to the peasants' orthodoxy in the old customs and conventions and lack of proper planning and purpose. The trouble starts with the Nawab's action of evicting one eyed Sukhua from his land. Though the government agents try to disrupt the meeting of evicted tenants, the Count and his followers

succeed in exposing the tyranny of the landlords by parading the body of a labourer who was beaten to dead. The deceased boy:

Chandra, had refused to get up from the bed, where he lay ill, to go and do forced labour, whereupon he had been fetched before the Manager of the estate, and flogged till he collapsed. But he had been dragged out and forced to cut wood. He had hardly climbed the tree when he had fallen and died.⁷¹

Lalu, seeing the brutality, suggests carrying the dead body in a procession to Allahabad, in order to get the support and open the eyes of the National leaders in their struggle. They would not tolerate the landlord's behavior of treating the poor people like beasts and killing them brutally to fulfill their whims. Lulu wants to teach them a lesson by reporting the matter to the higher authorities:

'We will show him! Said Lulu coldly. We shall take this body about in a procession in the villages and gather the peasants' ... He paused for a moment and then he continued, almost challengingly: 'Tiwari Sahib, what if we take the body in a procession to Allahabad, so that we can open the eyes of all those who do not believe that these things happened?''⁷²

Lalu knows that as a lonely boy tends to get lost in the wilderness he decides to pay due recognition to the value of togetherness as a more effective instrument to counter and subsequently defeat an adverse socio-political system. His sense of community is not based on the amorphous notions of caste or religion; instead, it is best on the common lot of suffering. At the same time, Lulu can look back at his own life and denounce himself for his follies. Thus, when he comes back to his village and finds his house and family in complete disaster, he is choked with anger with the society and with himself for joining the army. He realizes that his contribution to the war only helped the Sarkar to make himself safe and strong. Overwhelmed by a sense of

humiliation, Lalu feels that all his courage, bravery and his privations as a prisoner of war have been of no use so far as the personal dignity of his parents and property is concerned:

On my arrival at the depot, I was demobilized without even the mention of a reward, just because I was a prisoner of war in Germany. There was no talk of medals or of the promises of land with which they lured us to make shields of our bodies for the defence of their own lands. I tell you that it was a deception of my comrades. It was a lie for which they died! I came home today and found that my mother is dead, my home broken up and appropriated, and scarcity in the land.⁷³

The above passage shows the shattering moment of truth about his colonial masters and their native collaborators. Indians had been recruited in the British army because they were told to fight against fascism. Lalu realizes that Indian soldiers have been deceived. They shed their blood on an alien soil only to safeguard the interests of the foreign government which had appropriated their valour and sacrifices for its own aggrandizement and for perpetuating its stronghold on them. He knows that “each bold leap had been necessary and inevitable, in the working of his destiny.”⁷⁴ Not only Lal Singh, even the other characters like Harnam Singh are aware that their miserable plight is due to the deceitfulness of the British government which never hesitated in throwing unsuspecting Indians into the jaws of death. Many families had been deprived of their sole wage earners and were on the verge of starvation. They were forced to abandon their homes and hearths and migrate to the cities in search of subsistence. The whole pathos of their plight is expressed in the following words of Harnam Singh, one of the victims of the war:

You talked of the Sarkar as if they had always remitted your rent, said Harnam Singh. Thieves! They took

away crores of rupees as free gifts and loans from the country to support their war and foodstuffs to help stem the privations of the memnies in Villayat. Look, ohe, folk, robbery in daylight! They took our grain, our timber, our tea, why even the skins of our buffaloes and the oil from the poor man's saucer lamp! And there are some people in the villages around here today who hide their nakedness in the clothes discarded by those who have died of plague, while their children go naked! And there are people who have been forced off the fertile lands with the connivance of the Sarkar.⁷⁵

Harnam Singh's cry is not personal but that of a whole class of people who were the victims of colonial exploitation. Continuous exploitation had made these people question the nature of authority because of which a simmering discontent was gradually building up. The silent sufferers in the hands of the colonial system were now aware of the root cause of their suffering:

Still another revelation for Lal Singh, was that, the authorities, the railway officials, the police and the military, were all there, not for the benefit of the crude rustics, with hump of loads on their backs, but to pretest the sacred right of the blissful sleepers by arresting anyone who questioned the privileges of the upper classes.⁷⁶

Lalu's experiences of life gradually make him more discontented with the prevailing system of the society - the conventional system which made the Brahmins furious over the marriage of a young widow in the Arya Samaj. He had to face many consequences but inspite of all these adverse environmental determinants, he acquires a strong sense of confidence in his own capacity to control his destiny, and to help others to do the same.

Lalu undergoes a sea-change as a result of his experience and his contact with the wide world. In his career, he exemplifies the impact of modernity upon tradition.

His evocative self-analysis thus present to us:

What was the destiny of man without a sense of right and wrong? He had been in revolt against the limitations of his own nature as well as against the prejudices of his religion in Nandpur, and he had sought to perfect himself a man against evils though he had suffered. He had struggled, and always would go on struggling to remove his own ignorance and the all the defects in his own nature. And since self-perfection was not enough, he would try to cleanse the blurred minds of all the peasants, to open their eyes to the inequities which were practiced on them.⁷⁷

The war and the famine make many people revolutionaries but they are like boats with rudder and thus they eagerly wait for the mahatma to come to their aid. In the meanwhile the mahatma was forming a Kisan Sabha in Allahabad and many people came to him to take a darshan but the mahatma refuses to support their dream for revolution. Lalu and his comrades are against the feudal social system and its compliance with the colonial political structure. Thus they hated the modern saints who turn their back on ordinary people by compromising with the colonial masters. They are not convinced by Gandhi's version that suffering is an indispensable condition of our being. Lalu does not agree with the perception of Gandhi that suffering is the mark of human race. He experiences suffering and soon realizes that there is a purpose in his suffering: a state of euphoria common to revolutionaries before they become disillusioned:

He felt he could go far, far to the ends of the earth, and in him, his soul was expanding, shouting, bursting..... It almost seemed to him that he could now hope to master his destiny, since he had at least the rudiments

of freedom through which he could choose to do what he liked in this circumscribed universe.⁷⁸

Lalu can not understand the merit of non-violence when he finds that the poor and the weak peasants are not in a position to protect themselves against the continual threats of physical cruelty and material hardships. He does not like Gandhi's advice that they should not hit back at their enemies. He is particularly perturbed when he hears his preaching that they should be able to withstand the suffering even if they are ill-treated. Though Lalu knows that Gandhi is more experienced in political struggles, because of his own faith in armed liberation, he finds himself out of sympathy with mahatma. Lalu criticizes against Gandhi for the peaceful methods championed by him:

'The man is talking religion when we want food!' shouted Lalu, thrusting another dagger into the remoteness of the Mahatma which he had not been able to penetrate during his interview. And then he set about to chop up the Caracas like a butcher. 'His right hand is much longer than his left; his eyes dip inwards and are blind to what he doesn't want to see'.⁷⁹

Lalu's outburst against Mahatma reflects his impatience with the slowing down of the anti-imperialistic struggle. He thinks that Gandhi's overt religious vocabulary has no relevance in a decisive political struggle. Gandhi's insistence on keeping the struggle within the bounds of the principles of morality is attacked by Lalu and his comrades. The apparent disenchantment with Gandhi brings them closer to Nehru who seemed to be giving voice to the urges and aspiration of the younger generation at that time. Lalu is deeply influenced by Nehru's views on colonialism and imperialism. He is filled with inner buoyancy and exaltation such as, he had not felt since his arrival in Rajgarh. His keen desire to achieve his goal can be guessed from

what he feels during the peasants' movement against the injustices of the landlords and their collusion with the government for the persecution of the poor and the downtrodden:

And Lalu felt a certain impatience for final victory in his wild, and enthusiastic nature; he thought of freedom which was said to be national ideal, and he hoped for Revolution, not knowing precisely what these ideals meant, but enthralled by the sound of the words and the vague things associated with them, the clearing out of the Sarkar and the seizing of land from the landlords by the peasantry... Occasionally the violence and the land-hunger of the peasants in him made the seizing of land by killing the landlords the most exciting vision, the thing, he felt, which would most stir him to action though that also made him feel afraid and guilty.⁸⁰

His emotions are mixed with fear and doubt which often stalk his psyche. He seems to be torn between a nostalgic love for tradition and a violent rejection of tradition, between a revolutionary spirit that makes him a daring activist and an emotional state of guilt, fear and indecisiveness which plunges him into the world but there is an inner urge in him that sweeps away these retarding emotions. With this mental conflict he goes to Rae Bareilly to participate in a protest demonstration against the arrest of the Count:

Inside himself, however, he felt afraid, like an outcaste. He tried to assure himself that he had committed no unforgivable crime, that he was only afraid because he still respects the solid, established laws and conventions of the world, that he was forgetting his own mission. But as he consoled himself, he was sweating; and he felt that the weakness in his nature was taking him to the ignominious end of his appointed and inevitable destiny.⁸¹

In spite of some native weaknesses, Lalu remains unabated in his enduring struggle. He possesses a strong zeal and belief in the bright future of the revolution. Though

he surrenders before the police and is arrested, he does not give up hope for future emancipation. He knows that their failure is the result of their old, narrow and unscientific habits and views. Lalu makes it clear that they have to improve themselves in order to achieve success:

We failed because we had not changed, because our habits, ideas, opinions were narrow and contained within the circle of Kisan Nagar. Because neither our leaders nor we ourselves knew what all our other brothers were doing to those brothers who have ended up from the four corners of India in the mills and factories, escaping from hunger, pestilence and cold into long hours, dirt and disease! We followed the shadow and forgot the substance.... Come, worthy little people, come, we will now make a real Revolution! Come, we shall work day and night and learn how to make a Revolution.⁸²

Though he knows that all his efforts are directed towards determining his own destiny, he is still rather vague about what actually is meant by this. He is not aware of the fact that all his activity is aimed at satisfying his own pride and the means, he applies to achieve it will never be successful. Lalu realizes that the stimulus for a socialist revolution must come from the people themselves which require “togetherness”. Dr. Riemenshneider is of the same opinion:

Finally, Lalu finds out the truth that the fight for revolution is first of all a fight for self control, for becoming detached from one’s own desires and vanities and to love and really understand others before any action can be started. The mastery over oneself and the creation of a feeling of togetherness are necessary; a togetherness, one could add, which has to begin with the smallest group, that of husband and wife.⁸³

Ultimately, all the disorganised attempts of Count Rampal Singh, Lalu and their comrades end in failure. The leader of the struggle is more doctrinaire, and impetuous in his approach. Comrade Sarshar, the local Communist party

representative accuses him of being an egoistic megalomaniac because of his independent and single handed efforts to bring about the revolution. Even Prof. Verma leaves Rajgarh having lost faith in the course of the revolution. Lalu of course, is completely won over by Comrade Sarshar's demagogic eloquence and feels skeptical about the capacity of Rampal Singh. Saros Cowasjee is right when he says:

To help organize the peasants and to educate them becomes his primary occupation. But he is unsure of himself and of the ability of the peasants to act intelligently and he is torn between the methods advocated by the Count and by Sarshar. Though he comes close to accepting Sarshar's view (Non Violence) he goes beyond Sarshar in embodying something he has learnt from his boyhood in Nandpur.⁸⁴

His own role is instrumental. The strange job of helping to bring about a Revolution, to gather the peasants into a union, so that they could defend themselves against the assaults of their enemies, the officials, and the landlords, is fairly well defined his own yearning whatsoever the end of the revolution might mean to others. This anti-congress, anti-governmental and pro-communist revolution is foredoomed to failure is evident from the localize character of the movement; and although the foundation of Kisan Nagar is symbolic of the possible establishment of a Marxist utopia in India, its final demolition and Lalu's imprisonment at Rae Bareilly signify the greater power of the reactionary forces that counter-the peasants' Revolt.

Finally, Lalu emerges as a distinct rebel character full of self realization and self actualization in the end. Whatever his weaknesses, there is no doubt that his conversion to a revolutionary takes place when personal tragedy and social tragedy

merge into each other. Although, through his eventful life in Rajgarh, he grows into a young man, emerging as a new spirit, with a firm realization that a single swallow can not make a summer, that a determined collective struggle is the only way to effect a transformation of an obsolete social system to make it responsive to individual dreams and aspiration:

....The present society was evil, and the task of uprooting it a sacred duty...Only he feared that he was going into the dark night for a future where he might lose the way, the right path.⁸⁵

Yet, his fight against these social environmental forces becomes futile and in the end, he is left to face a self willed path to his destiny in this fatalistic universe. The trilogy ends not with a sense of historical meaninglessness and despair but with fruitful bewilderment, self-questioning, self-understanding and hope:

.... What is the destiny of man and how can I control it? Why is it that after a long time of struggle.... After all the effort I made to cure the defects of my own nature, going deeper than all my deepest discoveries After seeking to grapple with my own destiny... why is it that I have ended up in this reeking hell....⁸⁶

Nevertheless, such questions lead Lalu to contemplate his past with detachment and understanding and to envisage the future direction of India's epic struggle with a symbolic hope for the future.

The Big Heart (1945) chronologically comes about a decade after *Untouchable (1935)* but the varied facets of naturalism are essentially the same. The issue is not caste, but the conflict between tradition and modernity, between the community of coppersmiths and the bourgeois capitalists who established a factory,

depriving the majority of the coppersmiths of their traditional craft. The Machine Age has emerged, resulting in the dislocation and dire poverty of the craftsman.

Billiraman or Cat-Killer Lane in Amritsar is swarming with the traditional tharthiars or coppersmiths who are thrown out of employment owing to the establishment of a factory. The machine in the factory, roaring, and squeaking and squealing, symbolizes the Industrial Revolution and the Age of Science and Technology. The tharthiars, or the coppersmiths, are subjected to an existence of utter misery and abject poverty. Their hearts filled with an intense hatred for the machine that usurps their position in the society. Into this explosive situation enters Ananta from Bombay with his revolutionary philosophy and anti-traditional non – conformity. His irreverent unconventionality in living with Janki without marriage is resented by his community though his courage of conviction is greatly admired. The active ignorance and the frayed tempers of the coppersmiths prove fatal, ending in the violent death of Ananta at the hands of Ralia, the frustrated and enraged coppersmith.

The tragedy of sociological environment which was formulated in *Untouchable (1935)*, *Coolie (1936)*, and *Two Leaves and a Bud(1937)* has taken a stage further in *The Big Heart (1945)*. Tragic brotherhood and, society is crystallized into its pure and primitive terms of Cain – Abel elements. Ananta, the protagonist of the novel is a visionary who has the moral strength and nobility of heart to master the new fate-the machine but he is destroyed by one who channels his socially determined despair into evil carnage. This simply is the tragedy of a moral

intelligence of the heart defeated not by its own flawed nature but by a diseased victim of society who symbolizes humanity's inability to control its environmental fate.

The beginning of the novel presents Ananta's return to his home town Amritsar, his coming back to his native place, after having worked in factories in Bombay and Ahmedabad, turns out to be an important event in his life. He brings with him a young widow named Janki, showing little respect for the tradition. Billiraman in Amritsar was changing with the times not only outwardly but its very economic pattern was fast changing under the impact of industrialism. The establishment of a factory by Seth Gokul Chand belonging to Kasera caste emerges as a big issue when Ananta steps in. the introduction of the machine has thrown the coppersmiths out of their employment:

Altogether, a spirit of unrest broods over Kucha Billiraman, like the doom promise on the judgement day at the end of the 'iron age'. And already the convulsion of the sad lands across the black waters are shaking this old lane with the thunder of the machinery implanted in its midst which is said to be making tools for the greatest war on the earth that is rumoured will be in progress at the end of the horizon.⁸⁷

Ananta resumes his hereditary profession, but like others of his class, finds it difficult to make a living. Very soon, he realizes that machine has been the main factor which brought starvation among the coppersmiths. But unlike other youths, he knows that it can be useful, if utilized in a human and scientific ways. After having been refused a job in the factory of Seth Gokul Chand, he decides to identify himself with his dispossessed brethren and fight for their economic rehabilitation. He exhorts

the jobless coppersmith to get united so that they could fight for their rights. He tries to convince the tharthians that they have no alternative but to adapt to the new age and that, if they master the machine they will achieve a new mastery as human beings, a new salvation and freedom for humanity. However, they were still groping in the dark. Though he succeeds in winning Puran Singh, he faces tremendous opposition from Prof. Mejia, Satyapal, Mahasa Hans Ram and other co-employers who are haunted by an uncertain future. The confrontation between the old and the new is not only a feature of the environment of Billiraman; but it is also a factor which seems to govern the lives of all those who lived there. Most of the older inhabitants are still trying to cling to the old values:

Caught in the mouse traps where they are born, most of them are engaged in the bigger cage of Fate and the various indiscernible shadows that hang over their heads.⁸⁸

They believed that it is the Iron Age, the age of Death, which is to culminate in doomsday. But for Ananta and others it is a boon for human development and they celebrate it in a song:

This is the machine age, sons, this is the machine age.
We are the men who will master it. We are the new
men of the earth of all the evil all ages.⁸⁹

The importance of the machine age in the newly emerged circumstance and the role of the new men in the context of scientific inventions are elaborated in the novel. As he possesses the zeal to change the present social set up, which he finds outdated and rotten, Ananta believes that by constant efforts, he will be successful in achieving a positive result within a short period. Only through struggle, the problems and the

inequities can be solved. His rational thinking is well explained in the following passages:

For the 'Revolution' was as yet some distance away and, meanwhile, he had to balance himself almost on his head in the narrow alleyway of Billiraman among the gaping hovels and the half-men before his eyes. So he drank liquor, as well as the blackish blood of his own liver, and supped on the putrid sweat sodden world around him. He lounged about the cook shops, defiant against live, gourmandizing, singing ribald folk songs, throwing his money about, without any respect for God, the Sarkar or the orthodox men of his caste, a crazy rebel except against those who were his presents intoxicatingly rich to their naïve sense of sight and touch.⁹⁰

Ananta perceives that the tragedy of the Iron Age lies in man's relinquishment of rational control over his creations and that this social defection from responsibility corresponds to the individual's failure to achieve self discipline. His own men including Ralia do not understand the root cause of the unemployment problem in the country. Ananta, on the basis of his personal experience, believes that he can unite the unemployed youths and then, they could fight for their rights on their own strength. Ananta's message to his suffering brethrens to have a right approach to the machine is not acceptable to the other group. He tries to explain further his deep rooted understanding of the problem to the other coppersmiths:

'I tell you', he continued, 'I have seen children sold for a handful of rice by parents too weak to walk. And you could buy a young girl and run a brothel for what you and I still give here for a midday meal. Oh, and as I watch the wailing children who had been separated from their parents, some really abandoned by their folk , I tell you, a fire swept over my body like ripples of scorching flames across a forest. And for days I burnt in myself with a slow anger which would burst into flaming tempers, till I was really running amok, shouting ... If only I could get hold of the illegally

begotten scoundrels who had started this hunger I could gore them with the knife-twing of conscience.⁹¹

Ananta knows how to arouse the feelings of the people as well as to restrain the riots and thus asks his friends like Ralia to control himself while opposing the demerits and harmful aspects of the introduction of machine. He does not believe in the religious conventions and restrictions and as such, expresses his views on the remarriage and other social rituals in the society. He stands distinctively in contrast to his community. But few religious people are worried about his illegal liaison with Janki. Ananta believes that most of the sufferings of the poor and downtrodden are inflicted by those who get pleasure out of it. Referring to such conditions obtaining in his own community, Ananta tells Janki:

I tell you there is famine in this land, and there are wars raging on the edge of the farthest horizons, and yet my friends here will not stop extracting pain out of each other. Pain, pain, pain-there is such an orgy of suffering in the world today! And yet how they torture each other!⁹²

Such pain cruelty and destruction are wanton which grew out of the lack of self-worth on the parts of the coppersmiths. They need courage and faith to conceal their own weaknesses and struggle for a share in the main switchboard. Ananta's realization of the pain as being a constant undertone of life is so deep that he resolves to devote his entire life to the cause of its removal:

The trouble lay in the many bonds of customs and habit and superstitions which bound them, and in the weakness, fear bred by poverty and the struggle for existence and the pain inevitable to life. What was required was to give them heart and to lift them from the abject, frustrated and terror stricken creatures they were to the courage of manhood.⁹³

In fact, he is so sensitive to the suffering of his people that the very concept of happiness undergoes a complete change and comes to mean, devoted service to mankind. Ananta refuses to give in before the challenges and is prepared to take on any adversary for the larger interest of the community and society. He is clear in his mind that the prevailing socio-economic order is responsible for shaping the creativity and energy of the masses and the need of the hour is a relentless prolonged war against the oppression and indignities built into the system. He believes that fear must give way to courage and hope.

Ananta knows that a radical change in people's attitude and responses is a must for any meaningful change of the social order which the capitalists of India and England are endeavouring to perpetuate. He also believes in the new brotherhood of trade unions which would help in bringing about a revolution. It is because of his strong faith in the truth of revolution that he advises his community men to be prepared for death. He urges them not to take the risky path of fighting the agents of capitalism. He asks them to raise their voice in protest and tell the capitalists that they have no more monopoly over the resources of the earth and that it should be made open for all irrespective of class or creed:

'Poor men, brothers,' said Ananta, 'have several ways of dying. They can choose to work for the merchants and dealers and die off slowly but surely. I call this way of dying "death by the indifference of the rich." But men can choose another way of death. And that is when they band together and say: "you have made such a mess of everything because you considered profits as your god; so clear out now and led us rebuild the world to suit everyone and not only for a few of you!" The rich answers this demand either and thus bring about "death by the wars of the profiteers." Or they shoot

down the workers and thus bring about another kind of death-“death by revolution against the rich.”⁹⁴

The capitalists will not give up easily. Hence, to achieve the goal one should have all the courage and determination to overcome the difficulties and meet the challenges of the revolutionary struggle and free them from the specter of failure and defeat. Ananta believes that an individual must become a man to fight with the despairs which assailed one.

The people of his community needed to be perpetually guarded against those in the village, the Brown Sahibs, who were like their white counterparts. He therefore, urges them to have a clear mind regarding every development in their struggle and not be led by their petty selfish interests which might cloud their futuristic vision.

Puran Singh reveals that Ananta has no faith in the Gandhian myth of the change of heart. There is no alternative in his opinion, to the path of struggle. In spite of being misunderstood by his own people, Ananta is very much perturbed over the fact that his counseling to the men of his community has not been well received. They can not understand him because of their ignorance. There are times when Ananta feels that there is no God or if he is there at all, he must be heartless and powerless to help him. To him, God seems to have deserted the world. He fails to understand why people keep believing in God, when everywhere there is man made misery and injustice. Ananta expresses his heartfelt agony and anguish over his failure to convince his friends while in conversation with his beloved Janki:

‘Perhaps one can never get over the fears which mothers put into our mind,’ Ananta said. Perhaps also because we thatiars live in a small world, full of denial and refusal, insults and humiliations, we have begun to feel doomed. With one half of me I too feel. I am doomed, and with the other half I feel I could fight, to avert the disaster.⁹⁵

Saros Cowasjee is of the opinion:

Ananta is thus a victim of rage and insanity, not of a religious or political creed, and his sacrifice is the sacrifice of the unselfish man for humanity.⁹⁶

The protagonist often declares with his characteristic bonhomie and buoyancy that one should not talk of money but one must have a big heart. However, his frequent meetings with his own comrades and his hostile encounters with Lala Murali, Seth Gokul Chand and other capitalists bring out the smouldering discontent within the unemployed and poverty stricken coppersmiths, on one hand, and the dangerous indifference and cruel exploitation of the capitalistic upstarts, on the other. Lala Murali and other Seths, who scornfully become more and more class conscious, snap their caste connections with the poor and contemptible coppersmiths. They, with their petty notions of caste and social status, accumulated money by exploiting the poor and the helpless. They are inhumanly callous while the anger and hatred of their victims rises to a violent tempo and finally, Ananta’s frantic efforts to organize the workers into a Trade Union are completely foiled by the irresponsible political careerists like Satyapal and Viroo. In a moment of madness and blind fury, the workers break into the factory to destroy the machinery; and Ananta dies a martyr’s death, persuading to the very end his co-workers to change with the times by accepting and mastering the machine:

And he viciously lifted and struck Ananta's head on a broken machine with a maniacal fury, till Ananta's head cracked like a pitcher, and a stream of blood shot out in thick spurts.⁹⁷

Ananta emerges a perfect hero who is also a perfect victim, crushed at the hands of destiny. His only fault is that he is big hearted, humane, and brave. He must die so that the others may live like Lal Singh in the Trilogy, he too, is a complex character but the radical disunities of his being are reconciled in the white radiance of passion. His fidelity to Janki, even when she is consumed by insidious tuberculosis, borders on the sublime. Love among other things, demands courage and Ananta has it in large measure. His attachment is final and complete, although the other mistress- 'revolution' claims much of his time and energy.

The world of coppersmiths itself is hopelessly split. The more privileged among them exploit the weaker members of the folk. A life and death struggle ensued between the haves and have-nots. And thus, tension is generated by the class of interests in which ancestral memories, customs and prejudices play an important part. Ananta firmly believes that a new life has to be created, a life in which the machine will not be an object of terror but harbingers of plenty, prosperity and love. Ananta's sacrifice is the ritual necessary to be enacted if this is to become a reality.

A. Niven observed:

Ananta loses his life in the struggle for a trade union movement is not entirely pointless. As the poet tearfully explains to Janki, his existence lives on in the consciousness of the coppersmiths who are increasingly realizing Ananta's dictum that it is heart, not mind, men, not machine, which matter.⁹⁸

This novel may be regarded thus, as a significant projection of the image of India in transition: from the old era of caste monopoly of trade into the new age of industrialization, giving rise to a sharp social stratification. The scientific and industrial developments in Europe have greatly affected the traditional values on a global scale, and wisdom lies, as Ananta advocates, in accepting the change and changing with the time: the problem is well exposed by the poet Puran Singh in the novel:

In this country only an overturning of the old social order will bring the healing balm of love among men, only a revolution will complete the reformation and the renaissance that is going on among us and produce the new community with a new morality in which, and through which, men can live creatively.⁹⁹

A forceful advocate of unorthodoxy and revolution, Ananta cautions against headlong haste and needless and untimely violence. Revolution without the organization and mobilization of all the useful forces will be a disastrous flop and disgraceful fiasco.

The novel ends with the tragic death of Ananta, but with the positive hope that his martyrdom will surely inspire the struggle to continue, for Janki the mistress of Ananta, despite her consumption, starts out to fight for the cause of the community of coppersmiths thus holding aloft the torch of a certainly hopeful future:

Presently Janki got up and lit the kerosene oil lamp and the radiance gradually spread to each nook and corner of the room and dispelled the shadows. 'Come, the poet said, we must go to our brothers at the shop...'¹⁰⁰

Commenting on the novel, M.K. Naik says:

The Big Heart has perhaps a special niche in the heart of its creator, since it presents an intimate picture of a segment of society to which Anand himself belongs; and its protagonist, Ananta is perhaps the best realized of Anand's hero.¹⁰¹

A study of this novel clearly indicates a significant pattern of naturalism. The machine is the key to the respective problems of social segregation and economic exploitations. The fault lies not in the machine but in the system of self-seeking capitalists. It is the interaction between the human beings and the social facts of life which ultimately decides the life of an individual.

Anand's last novel that deals with the social environment is *The Death of a hero (1963)* in which the protagonist Maqbool Sherwani, a young man of Kashmir sacrificed his life, fighting the Pakistani invaders during 1947 upheavals. The young Muslim freedom fighter Maqbool flees from Baramula to Srinagar when the Pakistani intruders forcibly occupy the place. He is then asked by the Indian leaders to return to his hometown in order to raise the morale of the people caught in the grip of terror. He re-enters Pakistan secretly but is soon discovered, pursued and arrested. When asked to give up his membership of the Indian Kashmir National Conference and join his Muslim brethren from Pakistan, he refused and ultimately was shot death in cold blood after a ridiculous trial. *Death of a hero (1963)* is thus, the political martyrdom of a young man, Maqbool Sherwani.

The novel indicates the serious implications in society and the human situation is seen in moral terms. The protagonist is pitted against the system which thrives on injustice and exploitation. Instead of carrying on a crusade of action

against the system, the protagonist of this novel believes in arousing the moral conscience of the perpetrators of injustice and exploitation. He is motivated by his belief that action produces immediate result but the consequence is not lasting where as effects based on moral transformation have permanence. Love, generosity, accommodativeness and tolerance have the capacity to cleanse the human heart and drive away evil permanently.

In fact, the story of the novel shows that although Sherwani lacks the character of a revolutionary hero, he shows signs of sublime heroism by way of expressing his nationalistic urges and protest against the poverty. He is equally dedicated in his struggle against the religious fanaticism. And he is not prepared to accept the sectarian view point regarding the action of the raiders. It is because of his strong conviction that he stands up firmly against Ahmad Shah and Khurshid Anwar, and goes to the extent of challenging them, and is finally captured by the invaders. He chooses his martyrdom himself because of his unflinching faith in the integrity and freedom of his country. He expresses that it is only through suffering and struggle that human beings move on to mental maturity.

However, the fact remains that in the tradition of the fictional heroes of social realism Sherwani's character has many drawbacks. He is an inveterate romanticist valuing his personal feelings much more than the ground realities of the situation. He fails to have a realistic appraisal of the situation confronting him and then due to his conflicting feelings he is not able to carry his mission to its logical end. His peculiar state of mind is brought out in the beginning of the novel:

He recalled that he had gone through so many emotions during the last three days: the feeling of weakness during the flight from his little hometown after the Pakistani raiders had occupied it, the fear that he might not get to Srinagar the elation of being in that odd room with the others in Amira Kadal the shock of finding out that those who had begun this sudden invasion, with loot, as they have arrived in the villages were the so called 'Muslim brethren' the utter frustration of the confusion which prevailed in the city: then the mixed exaltation and fear of being chosen to go back to Baramula to rally the people; and underneath it all, the complete innocence about what would happen to him if the tribesmen were already there.... But there was, below the surface, a feeling he did not wish to acknowledge the sense of chivalry against the tribalism-the genuine human response of pity.¹⁰²

Though he is instructed to fight against the invaders with full strength, he shows his uneasiness very often. He appears in a fix as to how he should set about his work. He does not feel himself capable enough to perform the revolutionary role of organizing the people's resistance against the invaders. Thus, there exists from the very beginning of the novel, a great gap between his actual capacity and the role he is supposed to play at that point of time:

Somewhere between the impact of these word and his own uneasiness, lay the fear; somewhere under his skin, in the nerves above the tendons and the sinews of his body, there were uncontrolled tremors, as though taut muscles were his and punished. But to the poet in him, this seemed always to be so, Allah notwithstanding.¹⁰³

Maqbool on one hand, shows signs of weaknesses and mental uneasiness and on the other, he fails to convince Mahmood regarding the urgency of taking part in the fight against the Pakistani aggressors. Maqbool realizes his failure in performing his duty in the desired way. Instead of being able to convince Mahmood whom he meets first,

he becomes possessed with the sense of his non failure. His going to Baramula proves to be a futile exercise as he can not rally the people for the cause. He sits silently with bent head. Like a defeatist, he shows himself to be utterly ill-equipped for his mission, even before reaching Baramula. After reaching, Maqbool continued to show his weaknesses. He is all the time worried about the risk of being caught and is confronted also by inner doubts. Different questions come to his mind due to his growing fear. This aspect of his character divulges that he does not deserve to be called a revolutionary hero in a true sense because when he is specially deputed to perform a great task for a great cause, he is overwhelmed by indecision, fear and psychological numbness:

A shiver went down his spine as he realized that he might walk straight into the arms of a Pakistan sentry or be picked off by a bullet from one of the hawk-eyed ones. And again, his body and mind were in the grip of the crisis which had occupied him before he had dozed off in the haystack: Did one grow up just to be ready to be shot? What did it all mean? Where was Allah Mian? These were questions arising from fear. He sensed the tremors inside himself.¹⁰⁴

Thus Maqbool is a split character. While he displays a strong will to fight the invaders, he realizes that somehow he is not equal to the task which may involve even death. He pins his hope on Nehru and is convinced that ultimately Nehru will send the Indian army to foil the attempts of the invaders. Meanwhile, his own state of mind is in a flux, causing him to remain suspended between alternative choices.

It is due to his failure in overcoming his wavering temperament that Maqbool remains incapable of acquiring heroic dimensions of character. Every time that Maqbool decides to undertake some important actions, the hidden weaknesses of his

character blocks his way. He can not set himself free from questions like the existence of God or the role of fate. While moving towards his home, he continues to face many tormenting questions which cross his mind. It is due to this characteristic weakness that he can not stick to his convictions. He shows this weakness while meeting Murtaib Ali who was gradually leaning towards Pakistan. In replying to Murtaib's reasons for taking part in the struggle against the invaders, Maqbool tells him that he, too, has mother and sister, but immediately regrets it. He can neither convince himself nor others about the validity of a particular action or decision.

After leaving Murtaib's house, he heads for the mansion of Ghulam Jilani, but the sense of defeat does not leave him. He comes out of Ghulam Jilani's house with a feeling that whatever may be the risk, the urge for freedom should not be suppressed. He is encouraged to continue his fight by Begum Mehtab Jilani whom Maqbool regards as his mother. But soon after he shows nervousness and makes a desperate attempt to escape from his captors. Though he knows that less privileged people like him have the easier choice to make for freedom struggle, he, at times, entertains the fear of a rich and elite person. Self sacrifice which every noble mission always involves in something which Maqbool is never able to recognize. The plight and mental agony of Maqbool in the course of his escape from the invaders further shows his lack of revolutionary zeal and enthusiasm:

Allah! Where was Allah? Why was he always against the innocents? There would be no salvation unless religion of fate went by the board and the soul became alive? ... Noor's face was like a crumpled flower before his forehead-as she lay helpless! ... And his mother's drawn face, uglified by fear at the back of

his head. But his father's face did not appear? Anyhow,
how could God punish them so? ¹⁰⁵

Thus, it is clear that though Maqbool's commitment to the freedom of his country is prompted by his conscience, he, at the same time, shows many frailties and failures which make him a bundle of opposite qualities like being active and passive simultaneously. Finally, Maqbool is captured by the aggressors. Before being shot dead, he is brutally treated. But in spite of his inherent weaknesses, he faces the death calmly in the end. Later, his letter written to his sister reveals his enormous love for poetry. He frankly tells his sister that he is essentially a poet. Though the circumstances cast him in a different mould, he admits being a man of poetry rather than any radical spirit needed for any meaningful and successful revolution. The letter says:

I know that you have always thought of me as somewhat of a hero, Noor. Always there was a light in your big eyes which said so. But, today, I want to write and tell you, so that you can tell everyone that I have never been anything but an aspirant to poetry. All my dreams will remain unfulfilled, because I am going to face death. But here, in our country, the most splendid deeds have been done by people, not because they were great in spirit, but because they could not suffer the tyrant's yoke, and learnt to obey their consciences.
¹⁰⁶

Maqbool fails as a hero, as he faces a new situation for which he is not equipped. He was a born poet, but situation trapped him for a different role. He abhors religious fanaticism and cult of violence. He fails as a man of action and thus disqualifies himself for the status of a conventional hero. But his commitment to certain moral values remains undimmed till the very end. Maqbool is an idealist, only he does not properly manage his idealism and fails to combine it with action when needed. He

is good, honest, sincere and thoughtful but these mental energies are simply wasted by his indecisiveness, his habit of conjuring unreal fears, his continuously wavering mind. And he remains a static figure though slightly enigmatic.

Death of a hero (1963) portrays a character whose potentiality is trapped by the society to become a political martyr, which is a finished product of Indo-Anglian Literary Naturalism. The positive message which the novel gives is that all talk of revolutionary change is wishful and divorced from reality. What matters in the long history of the evolution of human society is the cultivation of humanistic values, which alone can redeem, if at all, the aberrant human experiences and that self-sacrifice will have a cleansing effect on a tyrant's heart.

Another product of the unfortunate historical and environmental circumstances is the protagonist of Anand's other novel, *The Private life of An Indian Prince (1953)* in which an apparent dichotomy of the tradition of Anglo Indian Literary Naturalism seems to manifest as it mainly concerns itself with the problems of a degenerate and debouched Indian Prince in the post –Independence India. The novel recaptures the post-independence period of political turmoil which saw the accession of the princely states to the Indian Union. It presents human drama in the midst of chaotic situation and has at its centre a Prince himself, a central figure in the political transition, whose tragedy is brought about by social as well as personal causes. The decline and fall of monarchy in the state of Sham Pur coincides with the tragic destruction of the Prince himself. It is a powerful impeachment of the

bourgeoisie and the decadent aristocracy that have been historically responsible for sordidness of life in the small principality of Sham Pur.

Victor Edward George Ashok Kumar of Sham Pur, commonly known as Prince Victor, wages a futile battle against the forces of democracy unleashed in post-independence India, but mainly against his own tormented self. He resists the Union Government's presence to merge his little state into the Indian Union, but ultimately succumbs and signs the instrument of accession at a specially arranged meeting with the Home Minister in New Delhi. His flaw, however, is his romantic infatuation with Ganga Dasi, an illiterate and scheming woman. He oscillates between the contrary pull of love and hatred in relation to her, and the split in his nature is constant. Meanwhile, the affairs of the state are in a virtual mess. Anarchy is let loose as both the feudal landlords and peasants turn against him. The local politician begins to fish in the troubled waters, and strife and intrigue are in the air. To add to the Prince's discomfiture, his sweet heart Ganga Dasi, takes another lover. With his cup of misery full, he embarks on a mad and fitful venture. Dispossessed of his kingdom, and deserted by his mistress, he proceeds to London. While in London, he somehow manages to get his rival, the lover of Ganga Dasi, murdered at home. The act, however, recoils on him, and he does not get a crumb of comfort. He plunges into the very nadir of despair, drifting into the abyss of nothingness. He ends, ultimately, in a lunatic asylum, totally crazed.

Prince Victor is a dissolute and egoistical ruler, whose sanctions lie in his own whims and fancies rather than in the good of his subjects. As a cruel autocrat of

the post – independent era, a true representative of the decadent feudal order, he inflicts unbearable hardships on the poor people of his state but is himself a lecherous weakling who pretends to be a benevolent monarch in the line of the legendary Rama of Ayodhya. He rages against the people's participation in the administration:

“Democracy, democracy.” What is democracy? Where is it practiced? His highness came to the attack, his face reddening ‘to attain equality with the ignorant rabble, to reduce everyone to uniformity with stupid herd: Wah, what barking is this?’¹⁰⁷

Rightly described as the tyrant of Sham Pur, he has no concern for his people. He subjects them to all possible kinds of oppressions and cruelties. Beneath all his indulgences and the pleasures of himself and others in his employ, lie the sweat and blood of his village peasantry, perpetually harassed and exploited, suppressed and persecuted. Indulging in his own pleasures, the maharaja is not even aware of the privation of the public. He neglects his wife and children and resorts to affairs with several women. His weak, vacillating and impulsive character, with his inability to concentrate on anything consistently is largely due to the fact that he is brought up in the wrong environment. Anand says:

..... I have compassion for the Prince brought up in a wrong order. He wanted love, but he couldn't find it, because the woman he loves was a 'split personality.....'¹⁰⁸

The maharaja is viewed as an ill-adjusted personality, an unsettled, incongruous conglomeration of ill-assorted fantasies and facts. Already in the grip of a nervous disorder, Victor behaves histrionically and hysterically. His condition is occasioned mainly by the turmoil of his private life, in particular the overwhelming obsessive

passion for Ganga Dasi. He is caught between the selfish demands and fickle attentions of his nymphomaniac mistress and the justified attempts by his discarded long suffering wife, Indira, to curb his irresponsibility. In Victor princely tradition and modern morality joined forces in a purely destructive sense, generating the libertine megalomania of a complete egocentric. The most barbaric impulses of civilization dominate him.

The Prince allegorizes Indo-European contradiction and the Indian need for a healthy synthesis of the old and the new where his ruthlessness is the malady of a dying society. Shankar's evaluations are complimented by an image pattern representing a psychotic nightmare. The jungle metaphors suggest that Victor's condition is a primeval horror. In the human heart, the law of the jungle prevails; beasts prey on beasts; treachery succeeds, nature is diabolical and the most beautiful flower is a botanical Circe. Similarly, disease conveys the carnal sickness and the putrescence of the court. In the first part of the novel doctor Shankar's analysis of Victor's character is thus:

I was fascinated by his highness's recitation, because I could see behind the clumsiness of his outward behaviour, the reasons for his hopelessly ill adjusted personality. For his intelligence seemed to have run riot through the large gaps in his education and experience. And this made him pick up many thing, with which he was trying to form a single thing but which made him a bundle of ill-assorted fantasies and facts, whose incongruous collection into one personality made him a strange, while creature So it was touching to see the clashes between the poetry and prose of his life, the contradictions that arose from his reflections of the feudal, Aristocratic idea that all excellence is inheritance, and the sense of direction which dictates integration through the discovery of

values in the new society. The spirit of his dead ancestors were pulling him towards the old virtues, powers, splendours, firmness dexterity, generosity, heroism in the battle and the other duties of the high caste, superior, Kshatriya prince, while a number of new demons the fashions of the hour were all shameless schooling through which his childhood in his father's zenana, and his boyhood and youth in the hands of the Angrezi Sarkar, had put him. All the war with each other in his soul and there was no knowing where they would take him, since the will through alone, such power could be harnessed had been sedulously crushed by the Angrezi Sarkar and his own parents a long time ago . . . Except that he had an uncanny gift of perception, an almost convalescent abjectness, which was the opposite of his extraordinary cruelty, and a violent energy for voicing his fads and fancies, whether they took the form of naïve outbursts, mere flippancy, or the more balanced rationalization of poetry which was always like someone else's confirmation of his own complains. All his scandalous behaviour, therefore, was due to the incongruity of the various strains in him that were trying to unite and become one person, but only made him kind of montage man, a pathetic creature, a spoiled child.¹⁰⁹

The Prince suffers from psycho - analytic over documentation and many irk some traumas. His gothic imagination thus stimulates diabolical clichés, descriptive flourishes in which emotions like rage are represented tyrannically, eerie evocations of the desolate jaded soul, the rendering of the stage of psychic torment and decay in spectral moody landscapes. Shankar's analysis often leads him beyond psychological naturalism into the melodrama, bathos, sentimentality and grotesquerie of gothic romance. The Prince emerges as a combination of both the Byronic wild creature, and the haunted psychotic of Poe's tales:

I had to close the doors to prevent reverberations of his shrieks from penetrating into the thick night, dense with the sleep of the innocent and the guilty alike.¹¹⁰

Victor wallows in romantic sensibility and egoism, intoning from Shelley's famous free love passages. However, the horrific darkness with the passages of sociological and humanistic illumination symbolizes the Nietzschean corruption of power:

I sensed the reality of this power and felt that no human being could escape corruption if such unlimited rights were given to him or acquired by him, because the will to power entails a belief in the superman even in the weakest person.¹¹¹

Prince Victor's personality has direct impact of various events, which happened in his contemporary social life. He has been notorious for not giving love and affections to his countrymen and being unaware of their sufferings. With its shameful intrigues and neurotic sexual obsessions, with its unabated corruption and tyrannical violence, the state of Sham Pur emerges as a typical Indian feudal kingdom ruled over by a degenerate Raja. The cruelty and selfishness that rules the state is expressed in jungle imagery in the novel:

' life is elemental here', answered Popat Lal. 'everything in the jungle preys upon everything else and the survivor is not always the strongest, the bravest and the most Godly. I think that is not only in the jungle but also in the whole kingdom of Sham Pur,' I said¹¹²

Doctor G.S. Balarama Gupta has rightly observed Victor's character when he writes:

The hysterical Prince is notorious for the cruel treatment he metes out to his men. And irresponsible ruler with no thought for the welfare of the ruled, he is known for his maladministration, high handedness, and lust. While he fancifully thinks that his state enjoys the ideal conditions of Ram Raj, he squanders his privy purse as well as state money and forces his people into abysmal poverty and utter degradation.¹¹³

Along with this realistic picture of the decadent feudal order, a graphic account of how the people of Sham Pur, out of their seething discontent, revolt against the

feudal tyranny and the struggle for a new democratic order. The soaring pressure of this popular movement creates a compelling situation which makes it impossible for the feudal autocracy to continue. The people of Sham Pur form a Praja Mandal with the moral support of the Indian National Congress, fight against the suppression of civil and national liberties in the state and they force the Prince to promise certain reforms. They demand justice from the inhuman Prince taking inspiration from the text of independence resolution:

We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that in any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them the people have a further right to abolish it.¹¹⁴

When the struggles gathers momentum and the people rise in revolt, unable to stand his excuses, he tries to repress them through violent mass arrests and detention. People strike cease work in protest against the shooting. The villagers were sternly dealt with; people are no longer ready to meekly accept the autocrat and thereby demanded the release of the arrested leaders. Thus, those who had money to pay actually paid and earned a little peace, and those who could not pay had the sword (of Damocles) hanging over their heads, that they might any day be deprived of their ancestral rights and properties. But despite all oppressions, the Indian masses do finally succeed in wiping out the putrescent feudal oligarchy.

Victor's diplomatic imbecility and political stability became more prominent when he toys with the idea of carving out an independent state from India with constitutional American assistance. His attempts to ingratiate himself into the

confidence of the American envoy are as fatuous as they are in fructuous; and their pathetic parleys end in a fiasco when Sardar Vallabhai Patel, the Bismarck of India, clinches the issue by making him sign the Instrument of Accession.

In his heart he knew that the inevitable Instrument of Accession would have to be signed and he would have to say farewell to the power he had enjoyed in Sham Pur.¹¹⁵

Victor's state has been a sizzling cauldron of distress and discontentment and leads to the overthrow of the Prince which influences the Maharaja that the creation of a democratic Indian State has no place for the Princes. Independence comes and the Indian Government wishes to accede to the Indian Union with all speed. This crisis exacerbates the weakness in the young prince's character and the thus sets off a chain of events leading to his catastrophe. Victor is faced with rebellion from feudal landlords on one hand, and communist led peasants on the other hand.

These political tangles are further complicated by Victor's sensual orgies with his concubine, Gangi, a sadistic nymphomaniac, who ultimately drives him mad. Caught in the wiles of this untamed and libidinous mistress, Victor neglects his duties out of a false sense of freedom from his conjugal ties with his three wives. Although the decline of the princely orders has been depicted as the social phenomena, the tragedy of Victor cannot be taken as a real tragic flaw, producing a cathartic effect, he representing the self negating destructive symptom of modern disorder. His suffering springs from a perverse will and has nothing to do with the spiritual torments. The rent in Victor's soul can be explained only in relation to his consuming passion for Ganga Dasi, a passion without hope of reprieve.

I feel that I have descended into the dark night where the only thing I can see is the light she brought into my life . . . You know when I first had her, I wanted my union with her to last forever and forever and wanted to shut out the whole world from my gaze. I wish to be with her, in an unending life in the living palpitating passion I shared with her, as she came to me, a golden girl, shrieking with desire and yet I was afraid then that it may not last. And now I think of that moment and am imprisoned in the misery of it, and nothing seems to exist outside.¹¹⁶

His attachment to her is final and irrevocable. He would regain his lost poise, only if she comes back to him. Victor is unable to get away from the trap despite the fact that Gangi's love has no creative sense. As Dr. Shankar analyzes their love affair:

I tried to analyze the couple's actions and reactions, and found that she had no creative sense with which she could associate Victor, except the art of making love, which revenged itself on her through its excesses and wild wooded ness and which destroyed him by enslaving him to her.¹¹⁷

Prince Victor's name spelt imminent horror for the women of his state because he is a notorious seducer of women. Anand has exposed his lustful vision in the novel. Some village women while filling their pitchers with water fled away as they saw Victor because his reputation as a seducer has not been forgotten since the days of his teens when he used to demand any woman who came within the orbit of his lustful vision.

Victor, unable to perform the act of reunification that is indeed, prolongs his nightmarish existence. He lives amid the wreckage of what he once believed in as being the most reliable. He has no option but to face the trailing consequences of passion. His drift towards insanity is inevitable as he abuses:

I shall revenge myself on all of you, he suddenly burst out one day. 'I don't trust any of you! You have destroyed me. You have taken away my state. All of you, all of you are intriguing against me. . . . None of you really like me! Strange, is not it, that I have so many friends, but not one real friend when it came to it. I found that I had not even one friend who would stand by me!'¹¹⁸

The unity of his life having gone with the shock of the murder of Bool Chand, the new lover of Ganga Dasi, which he had ordered, he had left only the yearnings towards sanity, while he was no longer capable of self mastery. He repents for his pitiable condition as he says:

O my fate! Why have you chosen me for a victim?
Why is there only humiliation after humiliation for me!
Oh, God, how it hurts! This dishonour of being ordered
to return home, almost under arrest! What providence
contrived to make me such foolish things? Why, oh,
why did I have to do this? May my fires of hell devour
them all!¹¹⁹

The last phase of Prince's life was full of endless sufferings as his arrest warrant is issued on behalf of the Indian Government, that he be presented in the court on charges of murder. He has to come back but he loses reasoning faculties and is directly admitted to the mental hospital in Poona, where he was dutifully served by his wife, Indira.

While the obsession and the feudal order is subjected to the most severe indictment and the struggle for democracy is passionately upheld, the decadent Raja, who is the symbol of feudal exploitation and an inveterate foe of the democratic order, is presented in the novel, with profound sympathy and understanding. Through its unforgettable picture of cruel, sensual tyrannical Prince as a helpless, pathetic,

anguished human being, struggling hard to retain his self in a terrible situation of inexorable tragedy, the novel pores out its intensely realized personal grief. Bound by marriage to Indira and obsessed Ganga Dasi, and torn between an ancestral life of splendour and a baffling life of new values, Victor feels inescapably trapped, as he repeats in his poignant cries: 'Oh, Hari, I am like a rat in a hole I shall lose my mind if I don't get out of this hole!'¹²⁰ In spite of his moral depravity, wild arrogance and the cruelties he perpetrates on the people, he constantly gives the impression that there is an essential goodness in him. He does not accept the Praja Mandal but it is because he too wants a state in which both the Raja and Praja can live as father and sons. He has a genuine love for his people for even during his miserable days in London as a broken man; his heart bleeds for the people of Sham Pur. For he tells Shankar, 'you don't know that I felt very tenderly towards the Praja in Sham Pur. My heart bled for them in their difficulties.'¹²¹ It is indeed the language of the noble heart. As a slave to Ganga Dasi, he ill-treats his wife, but he has nobility that can recognize what is truly great in her. The memories of the early days of his marriage with Indira often caused an ache in his heart, he remembers her as a good Hindu wife, who looked after him well. He is also an affectionate father. During his visit to Indira when his sons run towards him and collapse in his lap, he is visibly moved by the affection for his son and strokes his hair, though he is afraid that this may be reported to Gangi. Again, he never lets down his friends. When, for instance, after the loss of his kingdom, the new Prime Minister Pandit Govind Das criticizes Victor's royal friend Raghbir Singh and his indiscipline army, he burst out: 'You are attacking my friends in the state! I will not have charges made against General Raghbir Singh. . . .'¹²²

As the noble side of Victor's character is thus brought out in fine details, he is portrayed as a helpless human face with a dreadful, hostile reality that envelops him fatally from all sides. A.V. Krishna Rao thus comments:

The tragedy of Victor is the tragedy of an uprooted and unrealistic feudal Prince with mistaken ambitions and misplaced affections.¹²³

Unhinged by his own maniacal pursuits and by the choking conditions of the renascent national chrysalis, the private life of Victor is a pitiable tragedy. Hence, it may be assumed that the novel amplifies the voice of a fast fading system at two different points in the general flux of an ancient society is thus a finished product of the Indo Anglian Literary Naturalism.

As it is clearly evident in Anand's study of the blighting effects of environmental factors, every kind of insularity is denounced as also jingoistic nationalism and religious fanaticism. It is a plea for a saner society, for secular ethics, for a truly civil society in which orthodoxy of every kind will be entirely non-existent. What is needed is the faith in the abiding nature of human goodness and dignity in overcoming the petty prejudices of class, caste, community and nationality. A more humane and a more responsive social system is thus required in the transformation of society. Hence, it may be pointed out that Anand's main emphasis lies beyond naturalism towards hopeful humanism, a shift of focus evident in his novels.

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C H A P T E R - I V

CHAPTER IV

Hopeful Humanism

The acceptance of man as the centre of our thinking, feeling and activity, and the service of man for the greater good of all humanity, in the material world, under the sanctions of imagination, reason and creative democracy ... to evolve individual's potentially equal and free¹

Humanism is the Renaissance doctrine which means love of man, the whole man with all his weaknesses, instincts and impulses. A revival of Greek and Roman thought, it may be defined as the system of movement in which human interests, values and dignities are held dominant thus implying devotion to the concerns of mankind. It is also an attitude of mind attaching prime importance to the human beings that concentrates on the activities of man rather than on the supernatural world and the world of nature which was often regarded as the central theme of Renaissance civilization. The word humanism has been applied to a variety of beliefs, methods and philosophies that place central emphasis on the human realm. It derives from the 15th century *studia humanitatis* which is based on the Latin *humanitas* – an educational and political ideal which was the intellectual basis of the entire movement. Having taken a firm root in the early Middle Ages and given a new vigour in the 12th century, it has remained a vital ingredient of Western thought. But in the 18th century Enlightenment, Humanist Rationalism, Individualism and Secularism were given a new dimension by their association with political and scientific outlook. Not until the late 19th and 20th centuries, in response to the

dominant role of science and in reaction against the growth of naturalism did humanism reappear as an articulate movement.

Subject to a wide publicity of expression, humanism is basically a philosophical outlook centered on the autonomy of the human being as a dignified, rational being, possessing the source of truth and right. A European phenomenon, which was more secular and anthropocentric that sought to dignify and enable man, and thereby stressing the essential worth, and greatness of man as contrasted with the older view that man was wicked, worthless and doomed to destruction both in this life and the life to come. Renaissance humanists came to believe that man is capable of living a life of reason, dignity, morality and even happiness. In their extreme forms, the humanistic attitudes regarded man as the crown of creation. Arthur Hazard Dakin, speaking about the Greek Philosopher Protagoras in *Man The Measure: An Essay on Humanism as Religion (1939)* states that “ for sophists generally, as for protagoras in particular, the proper study of mankind was man – the measure of all things, in the sense that anything beyond his immediate concern and common grasp was a matter of indifference.”² it also refers to a set of attitudes that accompanied the end of the middle ages and was represented at different periods by the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution and the struggle for Democracy. These include “release from the ecclesiastical authority, the liberation of the intellect, faith in progress, and the belief that man himself can improve his own conditions without supernatural help and, indeed has a duty to do so.”³ Humanism helped to civilize man, to make him realize his potential powers and gifts, and to reduce discrepancy between potentiality and attainment.

Placing 'Man as the measure of all things', as the keynote of humanism, the humanists has faith in man's intellectual and spiritual resources to bring knowledge and understanding to the world. Thus in its wider connotation, the philosophy of humanism has influenced the Indian thought specially the famous Indo Anglian novelist of the 1970s. Mulk Raj Anand, who was a representative of the Renaissance tradition, is basically a humanist writer. He upholds humanism as his philosophy of life and considers his fictional creations as instruments of humanism. India was under the British imperialistic rule when Anand was born. There was chaos and people had lost their moorings; old values were crumbling and new ones were yet to be articulated. Religion had become a matter of meaningless ritual and arid ceremony. Fatalism and superstition dominated the minds of the poor masses. Neither the alien rulers thought of the necessity of integrating the aspirations of the natives nor did the education imparted in the British Indian schools have vital links with the genuine needs and interests of the ruled. In fact, it failed to enable the Indians either to acquire a clear understanding of his own culture or to get a correct appreciation of the European culture. Poverty, cruelty and hypocrisy of the Indian feudal life with its caste, creed and practices engulfed every aspect of life and people lived in a labyrinth of fear, despair and distrust.

Anand knew that the old world was dead and the European Renaissance had become a spent force. The rapid growth of science and the consequent Industrial Revolution had resulted in colonialism and imperialism. Simple values like love and beauty had receded to the background. He found the postulates of religion and the discoveries of science fundamentally antagonistic, and lost faith in organized

religion. In the midst of these tribulations, Anand came to realize that humanism with its respect for man and the message of 'live and let live' and compassion could restore peace and harmony to the war torn world. For he believed that:

..... behind the weakest of the weak, the poorest of the poor, in the wretchedness beyond the wretchedness, there is the human being who retains some part of his primeval innocence and wishes to evolve a higher consciousness.⁴

Mulk Raj Anand does not have a radically new concept of humanism. His humanism is characterized by the basic ambivalence of his creative mind. He admits that his humanism is the mingling of European Hellenism and the Renaissance ideals of all round development; the faith, in the possibility of achieving a better world order through science and international integration. The unresolved dialectic of the East and the West, which remains integral to his intellectual and aesthetic make up, as tends to create an inner dualism in his humanist view of life which manifests itself in a variety of ways. Referring to his Oriental and Occidental influences, Anand writes:

I am conscious that much of my insistence on the role of man in this universe derives from European Hellenism - for, the traditional attitude of India in this regard is essentially none-human, superhuman. This Atman (the vital essence in Man) is the same in the ant, the same in the gnat, the same in the elephant, the same in these three words..... the same in the whole universe.⁵

To examine the social disintegration of contemporary India and to discover the causes of the mental and material chaos in the world, Anand enquires into the meaning and the role of man and compares the European tradition and the culture with the Indian inhumane attitudes. He made the assertion that in human beings, and in the whole of mankind of humanism, man is the most important factor. In

conceiving man as the centre of the universe, assigning great importance to reason, laying faith in the capacity of man to decide his destiny as well as the world's and rejecting the ecclesiastical interpretation of life, Anand's humanism appears fundamentally akin to the western conception. He himself testifies to the European basis of his humanism in *Apology for Heroism (1946)*, when he points out that:

The humanism which I prefer does not rests on a Devine Sanction, as does the mystical humanism of Gandhi or Tagore, for instance, but puts its faith in the creative imagination of man, in his capacity to transform himself, in the tireless mental and physical energy with which he can, often in the face of great odds, raise himself to the tremendous heights of dignity and redeem the world from its misery and pain, taking man towards the universal man.⁶

Nevertheless, this assertion of the non-Indian basis of his humanism cannot preclude the fact that he relies considerably on the parameters of Indian humanist values too. For instance, in *Is There A Contemporary Indian Civilization (1963)*, Anand identifies a distinct Indian humanist tradition, the surviving values of which according to him, are 'Universalism', 'Intolerant-tolerance' and 'Compassion' in the light of India's past and present.

While basing himself in the European humanist tradition of scientific materialism, Anand confessed that he is influenced by the Oriental ideas and attitudes and attempts to extend and redefine his own concept by discarding the supernatural and worldliness and by means of accepting various Asiatic traditions as represented by the teachings of Buddha, the message of human brotherhood of Islam, the teachings of medieval Hindu Saints and the anti – caste, anti-sectarian teachings of Guru Nanak and the religion of Sikhism. He also accepts the

Renaissance thinking of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the later Renaissance leaders of Indian enlightenment and the radical humanism of M. N. Roy which based on Gandhi's championship of the Untouchables repudiated en-mass by society and finally Nehru's affirmation of peaceful co-existence.

Anand insisted on the dignity of man irrespective of caste, creed and wealth. He stressed upon the practice of compassion as a sole value in his conception of the whole man. He attached great importance to art and poetry for developing the masses, his crusade was against superstition, feudalism and imperialism; and emphasis of his brand of humanism. For:

He firmly believes in a new conception of the role of man, an emphasis on the importance of a human being as such, a profound respect for man, love for him and faith in his capacity to straighten his back and look at the stars.⁷

He declares his immense faith in the protogorean dictum "Man is the measure of all things", for example the measure of all values and all actions related to the personality and potentiality of human beings. He firmly believes that man is capable of rising from the lower passions to magnificent heights of splendors and that he has in him, enough creative energy and imagination to transform and raise himself to glorious pinnacles of dignity and to rid himself of the unspeakable misery and pain inflicted on him by mankind, through his tireless physical and mental energy. It is to enable man to achieve these conditions which will help the emergence of a new ideal of the role of man in the vast universe that Anand fervently pleads for in his *Apology for Heroism (1946)* and *Prolegomena to A New Humanism (1958)*.

The main task of this humanism is to present as consistent and intelligible a doctrine comprising some of the implications of a possible Indian scientific socialism and to make the synthesis of reality and aspiration in the minds and actions of living men. The final chapter of *Contemporary Indian Civilization (1963)* lists the chief tenets of Anand's humanistic creed in detail:

Anand's humanism places man in the centre of all things and it struggles against all those forces of class, caste and race, which stands in the way of the emergence of human beings in their full dignity.

Matter proceeds in mind in any metaphysical attitudes towards the universe. All forms of supernatural thoughts are myths and legends woven to justify the aspiration of man in the face of the nature gods. The whole of nature presents the reality of being and this cosmos is a constantly changing and intricate system of relations of matter and energy, which have existed long before human consciousness arose. Man has to achieve harmony with nature rather than merely fight it in every direction. Man is, and becomes, what he wants by transforming nature.

This humanism believes that man is an evolutionary product of the matter of which he is a part. The discoveries of human genius, with its many laws and facts, have revealed that mind is indivisibly conjoined with the functioning of the body. And that the unity of body and personality is indivisible, having no conscious survival after death.

Humanism puts man in the centre of the universe, and believes that human beings possess the potential power to understand through imagination, reason and scientific method his problems, if he has the courage to face the truth without pride and prejudice.

In opposition to all the theories of fatalistic acceptance of God, predestination and determinism, human beings, conditioned by man's history, possess genuine freedom of creative choice and action within certain limits, set by objective circumstances.

The highest human ethic is the conquest of pain and the realization of social and economic freedom, and mental and emotional awareness in order to gain wholeness. This is the highest goal of mankind, irrespective of nation, race or creed.

The individual attains full manhood by integrating his personal satisfactions and creative self development through significant creative work which contributes to man's renewal, to the welfare of the community and express the love of life, the awareness of death and thus, balance the essentially unstable and the maladjusted human personality, involved in the inevitable conflicts of existence in this universe.

The widest and deepest possible development of creative art and the awareness of beauty is the humanism which considers the transformation of nature, through the human imagination, to be the core of aesthetic experience and it places poetry and creative art as a pervasive reality in the lives of men, in order to help the emergence of integrated personalities through the experience of words, colour, sound and sensitive realization of the undertones of inner worlds of faculty and experience.

The humanism believes in the brotherhood of man through the affirmations of love. The achievement of peace through the settlement of disputes by discussion and negotiation becomes the most important ideal of our time. The application of new creative techniques to achieve a basic standard of living will be the instrument for a future economic order, both national and international as against the self indulgence and ease of the rich. And genuine democracy will be realized by the 'withering away of the state', gradually and progressively, at the time when men have learnt to rule themselves and grown to the status of integrated individuals.

Humanism believes in the application of imagination, reason and scientific method in all human undertakings, making room for the understanding of different instincts and emotions. It encourages the democratic procedure, including full freedom of expression and civil liberty, in all political, economic and cultural life.

There should be a constant questioning of the basic assumptions and convictions of inventive science, employing, through out, human tests based on moral values. In this sense, this humanism does not wish to be dogmatic by asserting reason on the one extreme and postulating intuition on the other extreme. Instead, this humanism remains a developing philosophy; open to experiment and testing its thesis in the light of newly discovered facts, fresh insights and greater understanding.

It should connect itself to international humanism, so that, inspite of differences, a comprehensive universalist outlook may prevail on the basic issues common to mankind, and co-existence may be established and compassion for the failings of men engendered.⁸

This humanism of Anand does not promise anything in this super natural world but it does make room for the various aspects of human nature and seeks to restore love as a living value among men. It puts its faith in the creative imagination and unconquerable spirit of man which can be achieve through socialism, for socialism alone can restore economic and political freedom and thus help the growth of a full man. He suggests:

.... the deepest socialism is the only basis for perfecting the deepest human personality that the two should be mutually inclusive, and that it is only by combining the two that a richer and more stable civilization will arise for socialism alone can restore dignity and a real freedom to every man, because it ensures him economic freedom, i.e. real democracy.⁹

Anand believes that only his vision of humanism can restore order and decency in the world and that, his faith in it made him optimistic about the future of mankind. Nevertheless, it sets up an imagination and reason as a final arbiter of value in human life, and gives hope for the emotional and institutional side of man by insisting on the creative art as the method for achieving the truth, goodness and beauty.

Keeping the humanistic prospective in mind, Anand in most of his novels set up a character whose role is to be the repository of 'wisdom' for which the novel is a vehicle. They are the episodes of the heart in the sense that through them, Anand's philosophy of humanism can be seen taking its final shape as it relates to the compassionate potentialities of man giving hope to the future of mankind. Although reason most oftenly follows the emotion and lends itself to egoism but it can be humanized if both emotion and reason are made to serve altruistic ends. It is this concept which claims to maintain the relationship of loving service and constitutes the wholeness of Anand's ideal man.

It is clearly pointed out, in *The Untouchable (1935)* while the cumulative effects of successive humiliating events made Bakha feel homeless and lonely, the frustration of being untouchability seems to have reached a breaking point. Towards the end of the novel, as Bakha stood with three alternatives proposed to his problem, none of the events including the Gandhi's rally and Mahatma's speech open up the possibilities for Bakha's deliverance. But with the arrival of the poet, the spokesman figure, Bakha's fatalistic view point is almost eclipsed as the poet talks about mechanizing the mode of the disposal of garbage which will ultimately eradicate caste.

Iqbal Nath Sarsar, a young poet and a man of progressive views and the editor of *Nau Jawan*, has a vision of the future which is, however, inspired by the impulse which tries to create a new harmony among the people based on the

propositions that Indians have a genius to accept things; that their six thousand years old race consciousness enable them to see life wholly and know its secret flow.

The poet, locked in a conversation with an anglicized Barrister, lectures on the meaning of Gandhism and reverses Gandhi 'as the greatest liberating force of our age.' He also said that the heredity and environment changed the people though they are born in different castes with different potentialities but among these millions of people; there is only one saint:

'The heredity and environment of different people varies', 'some of us born with big heads, some with small, some with more potential physical strength, some with less. There is one saint to a hundred million people, perhaps one great man to a whole lot of mediocrities.'¹⁰

While talking about the equality among men, he continues to speak that caste does not depend on the philosophical idea of Karma which means that birth and rebirth in this universe is governed by good or bad deeds in the past life but it is an intellectual aristocracy based on the conceits of the pundits. He said that the high caste judge eats freely with the coolie of his caste, and this inequality can easily be destroyed. The old mechanical and stereotyped system of lives should give place to a dynamic formula because man's greatness is baulked particularly at this juncture of the world's history by such adverse circumstances which emphasize the need for a reverend attitude towards the last members of the society, towards the weak and the fallen and the underprivileged everywhere.

Notwithstanding the caste barrier, he speaks again of untouchability that is rooted in a caste system and it is very much essential to remove it. Hence, he suggests that untouchability can be eradicated completely if only India chooses to adopt the machine that cleans the dung – the flush system and help to remove the stigma of untouchability:

‘Well, we must destroy caste; we must destroy the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations. We must recognize an equality of rights, privileges and opportunities for everyone. The Mahatma didn’t say so, but the legal and social basis of castes having been broken down by the British Indian penal code, which recognizes the rights of every man before a court. Caste is now mainly governed by profession. When the sweepers change their profession, they will no longer remain untouchables. And they can do that soon, for the first thing we will do when we accept the machine will be to introduce the machine which clears dung without anyone having to handle it – the flush system. Then the sweepers can be free from the stigma of untouchability and assume the dignity of status that is their right as useful members of a casteless and classless society.’¹¹

Though the narratives suggest only a choice of possibilities, the end of the novel shows a clear thesis, a distinct prophecy which is projected through the spokesman figure. The novel thus ends with the intimation of a new enlightenment. While the tragedy and hopelessness pervades in the life, the note of hope and triumph is inducted at the end. Both these emanate from the humanist vision of Anand - a compassionate spirit that comprehends tragedy in its essence as well as an idealistic zeal to reform which has the nature of a poetic dream. Bakha began to move thinking of everything he had heard though he could not understand the meaning of the lectures given by Gandhi and the poet. Walking along with the conflict in his soul,

torn between his enthusiasm for Gandhi and the poet he precedes homeward thinking whether he shall ever be able to leave the latrines.

Humanism, with its compassionate understanding, finds the mode of liberating the untouchables in *The Road (1963)*. The liberation is brought not through the initiative and creative dynamism but through a radical reorientation of the attitudes and approaches of the upper castes. Premilla Paul in *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A Thematic Study (1983)* writes:

.... the novel stresses the need for shaking the high castes out of their complacency in order that they might reorder their attitudes towards the untouchables.¹²

The novel examines the ways by which the untouchables achieve emancipation. Lambardar Dhooli Singh, an upper caste becomes the vanguard of liberation in the novel. The role played by him acquires a pronounced significance because of his being caste in the mould of a social reformer. Dhooli Singh, however, appears convincing as a real human being. Though he is a rebel against the immemorial pattern of life of all its shams and conventions, his rebellion calls for extreme sacrifices and fearlessness for it is Dhooli Singh who made a strong intervention on behalf of Bhikhu when Sajnu and his comrades attack him for the simple fault of trying to gain an entry into the temple with his mother. Again as he sees the brutal act of burning down the huts of the untouchables and their consequent sufferings, it is Dhooli Singh again who gives them shelter and clothes in his house. It is to his credit that he unhesitatingly identifies himself with the untouchables and makes the laudable gesture of offering to pay indemnity for the loss sustained in the fire:

‘Come then’, he said, suddenly impetuously, ‘Come into the house’ come. The woman of God is gone to her proper place, the temple! And I shall be an outcaste for ever so the house is yours. Come, my sons and daughters’.¹³

In fraternizing with the outcastes and in compensating the loss suffered by them, Dhooli Singh appears as a liberal humanist undaunted by sneering attitude of the fellow members of the high castes. Thus embodying his own humanist compassion for the untouchables and insistence on the need for a radical change, he becomes a ‘declassed’ Lambardar. His largeness of the heart on the part of the high caste is therefore, the real key to the liberation of the untouchables. Dhooli Singh, however, emphasizes again that: empty hands always make brave gestures, but hands with the hammers break up the whole mountains. Hence working on the road for fewer wages is a test for them which is not of a mere physical strength but one of a moral strength to hurl aside the hurdles laid by the orthodox caste Hindus and paved the way for modernity. While talking about the economic condition, he clarifies that the improvement of the economic situation of the place depends solely on the road that links the village with the modern world because “it is only roads, and roads and more roads and electricity that will bring prosperity”.¹⁴ No one can enter a small door sitting on a camel likewise; one cannot become simply wafted into the realm of modernity for orthodoxy has grown to ridiculous heights and that one has to come down and endeavor to progress. One can not simply expect for the salvation to descend on him rather he has to work hard to achieve it.

The novel thus draws an attention to Dhooli Singh being able to overcome the reservations as exemplified by his concern with his daughter’s marriage as a result of

Lachman's puerile incendiarism. It may be regarded as a kind of shattering seizure which he experiences – an experience which confronts him with an agonizing existential choice. Such a drastic incident is essential to disentangle completely from the shackles of orthodoxy. These episodes, however, appear sensational as the road to progress puts an end to the isolation of the village and bring it to the main stream of national life. It also becomes meaningful only with the true emancipation of the untouchables since the deprivation and dispossession of a large section of society cannot co-exist with the emancipation of the whole society that is sought to be realized.

While *Untouchable (1935)* and *The Road (1963)* ends with the hope of emancipation through machine and the road, humanity reveals the remarkable potentiality of man in *Coolie (1936)*. Anand stressed that mechanization is not the only ultimate solution to the existing problems of a man but human tenderness is the key to panacea for these problems. It is man who should cease to regard coolie as a cheap and useful machine, an uncomplaining target for abuses and indignities. The man made barriers is to be pulled down to promote love and good will among men.

Though casteism has lost its prominence, evil still exists in various forms like caste, class, communalism and racism. At this juncture, man must cultivate genuine concern for others and should possess a big heart that cherishes equality, human tenderness and religious tolerance:

‘No, no trouble at all’, began the old man. ‘I wouldn’t be my mother’s son if I didn’t offer hospitality to you. I have lived forty years, and I know that if you can’t do

a good deed by which people may remember you, you
haven't lived'.¹⁵

Behind every egoism, there is an altruistic end and behind every problem, there is a hope of a new future which can be achieved through humanism.

The motto of every man should be thus to change the inhuman pattern of society. The introduction of Mohan is therefore, a didactic device through whom Anand announces and declares the thesis of the novel. Mohan does not merely elaborate Anand's solution but demonstrates it too. Though high born English educated and hails from a high class family, he comes down to the level of the working class people and understand their needs and requirements. Mohan became a coolie to escape the rude Sarkar, to promote the revolution and to become a man among men. To the dispossess coolies he suggests:

Then come with me, and we shall kill the landlord one day, and get you your land, It is my object to make you people realizes that if you work, you should have a share in the things that you produce with the sweat of your brow.¹⁶

Mohan's conversation with Munoo and the other coolies reveals the culture of the Britishers living in India. He points out that the English have a more rigid caste system than the Indians. Any woman whose husband earns more will not leave his cart at the house of a woman whose husband earns less and they amuse themselves spending the money over the meetings with different people. The rich and the high class never socialize with each other. The women sweat wearing fur clothes and the men wear uncomfortable tight trousers and flirt around with other men's wives. They feel good and elated if they can get to drink tea at Davico's while the coolies starve.

He then carries on with his speech saying that the British dance is a kind of love game in which the genuine love does not exist. It only keeps them warm as they go on kissing and tittering in the corner of a place and go to bed together. But the Indians need not dance to go to bed with a woman. In this sense, though the coolies are driving the rickshaws of the colonels and generals, the Indians are more superior to the British.

Mohan's lifting of the sick Munoo, carrying him back to bungalow and looking after him in the hour of the need when Munoo is put in a segregated room, comes from his tenderness of the heart. Thus at the end of the novel, clutching the hands of Mohan by the dying Munoo suggests a message of hope of a new humanistic future which Anand endorses in his novels:

..... helpless, clinging to him as if the mere touch of his friend's body would give him life Munoo clutched at Mohan's hand and felt the warm blood in his veins like a tide reach out to distances to which it had never gone before.¹⁷

Yet again in another novel *Two Leaves and A Bud (1937)*, Anand fares better with De La Havre, through whom the philosophy of brotherhood and revolution is articulated more fully than Mohan, Iqbal Nath Sarsar and Dhooli Singh. Intellectual and well qualified, he does most of the theorizing while the peasants experience most of the suffering. De La Havre's brooding sensitivity and intellectual anguish his inexpedient attempt to rally the coolies and his sacrifices of personal happiness are indicative of the suffering and failure attendant upon the putting into practice the philosophy of human betterment. He is a different Englishman presented as a

compassionate revolutionary who teaches the coolies to shed their fatalistic passivity and get ready for revolutionary action taking the lead in the march of the coolies, De La Havre made theoretical speeches:

‘..... take courage, all of you’, he said. ‘Get together and go and tell the Burra Sahib the story. And tell him you wouldn’t work till he gives you justice. And tell him I sent you. I will talk to him myself later’.¹⁸

He has a clear and scientific understanding of the depravity caused by imperialism on all fronts and summarizes the dehumanizing role of the British in India. Through De La Havre’s journal, one gets into most of the sociological data and opinion on which the view of life of the peasants in the plantation is based. He says:

The black coolies clear the forests, plant the fields, toil and garner the harvest while all the money grubbing, slave driving, soulless managers and directors draw their salaries and dividends and build up monopolies. There lies the necessity of revolution in this country. On the one hand, the vast masses, prisoners of so many chains, bearing the physical signs of grief, of lassitude, even of death, and on the other hand, the supercilious rich, wrapped up in their self – assurance and complacency, never once questioning the ideals of glory and power and wealth.¹⁹

He made an interesting documentation of some of the intellectual crisis particularly the dismay at society’s moral impotence which plague the modern mind. It is thus his programme of sympathy in human relations and a simple Marxist humanitarian which offers a solution to the problem of India. India is a country an old decayed civilization where the sordid side of tragic existence is all too evident and fate has conspired with the seasons to obliterate everything capriciously. A country retarded by a poor education system and a narrow professional vision where people are

reduced to economic slavery and where their chance of justice and redresses are non-existent.

In this impolite, hypocritical, secretive and insidious society, De La Havre's humanistic sympathies and altruism is indeed a noble exception. He is not a merely compassionate doctor who helped Gangu during the cremation of his wife but a spokesman of the whole coolies, a person who puts Christian compassion into practice. He, however, reaches out for a humanist belief in the whole man which have a close affinity with Anand's humanism. Thus, the contemplation of the cells by De La Havre, when compared to Anand's *Apology For Heroism (1946)*, attempts to justify Marx with scientific premises:

..... admit the fact of the transformation of energy, the organic cell and evolution, and then the Marxian hypothesis makes things fairly easy to understand.

For, if reality be material, evolutionary and incomplete; if man and the mind of man be the products of this reality; if there be a constant interaction between the mind and the reality of which it forms a part, resulting in knowledge; if, further, this knowledge be achieved through action; and if, finally, ever new aspects of reality be always brought within the range of human action and human knowledge, then the range of knowledge inevitable to the socio-historical process is limitless and the fallibility of man as an indubitable fact.²⁰

With the poetic temperament that verges on the romantic idealism, De La Havre does indeed present a contrast to the other Britishers. His distinction lies in his capacity to manifest a humanitarian attitude towards the coolies which implies a vision of hope in the midst of inhuman imperialism when the men who toil has been degraded to slavery and parasitism of an iniquitous political and economic system. There is hope

in him to pitch the moral strength of the coolies against the social forces of darkness. There is hope in the integrity of the peasants and also in the ultimate triumph of human understanding.

Anand further attempts to present the way of Marxist liberation of the peasants in *The Sword and The Sickle (1942)*. Indeed Lal Singh of the last book of the trilogy becomes an increasingly confident as man, a world spokesman. He makes frequent references to war experiences in order to demonstrate that an understanding of the historical interconnections between Europe and India must make Indians more revolutionary conscious.

Lalu's return to a land of poverty, overcrowded and blighted villages to a place of depravity, class conflict, brutality, bloated landlordism and government tyranny is like a nightmare journey. He observes that the rich and powerful enslave the underprivileged and the poor. With these feelings within his soul, he senses a vague kind of dialectical necessity. He sees the need for a new social direction while being unsure of the objective and the means of reaching it. However, the objective turns out to be revolution and the means Marxist humanism:

And Lalu felt a certain impatient for final victory in his wild, enthusiastic nature; he thought of freedom which was said to be the national ideal, and he hoped for Revolution, not knowing precisely what these ideals meant, but enthralled by the sound of the words and the vague things associated with them, the clearing out of the Sarkar and the seizing of land from the landlords by the peasantry Occasionally the violence and the land hunger of the peasants in him made the seizing of land by killing Mulk Raj Anand the landlords the most exciting vision, the thing, he felt,

which would most stare him to action, though that also made him feel afraid and guilty.²¹

Lalu throbs with compassion for the common men in his suffering and identifies himself with the invigorating upsurge among the peasantry of a rebelliousness which is gradually replacing former taciturnity and fatalism. In his help to organize the peasantry is often abortive and results in bloody clashes with the authorities.

Nevertheless, it leads Lahu to 'a new ideal of thought and beauty' which gives him an exalted sense of mission whereby he will help to banish all the lies of religion and to break the narrow wall which separate man from man. *The Sword And The Sickle (1942)* is concerned with real problem and the achievement of real liberties. Thus the lesson that Anand seems bent on teaching Lahu from the practical experience is that the achievement of freedom, self-mastery and human dignity depend on man's capacity to evolve the perfection of oneself and of the universe in which one lives through deepest socialism. Anand himself says in *Apology for Heroism (1946)*:

Since it short life that man lives, life becomes the dearest possession of man, the most sacred thing, a gift not to be wasted so that the perfection of oneself and of the universe in which one lives, becomes the highest value: the greatest achievement of man consisting in his capacity to say to himself at the end of his career, in the words of a great philosopher of the new world, 'All my life and all my strength were given to the finest cause in the world – the liberation of mankind.'²²

What Lahu seems to be looking for, is not the totalitarian control of equalitarian man, but a system, based on economic and social justice which ensures the moral development of the whole man. This seems to be borne out in the light of Lahu's new

state of mind where the main emphasis is on Reason instead of the irrational. He seems to have evolved from self-love to social love. It is this enlargement of his imagination, the widening of his sympathies, the ability to merge the personal into the larger social self that makes Lalu a memorable character.

Indeed, from the dark night of the soul in *Across The Black waters (1940)* to the awakening of the noble ideal of Revolution in *The Sword And The Sickle (1942)*, marks a considerable transition in Lal Singh's character, and he merges as a fully fledged modern protagonist on the threshold of selfhood, an isolated modern mind tortuously finding its way out of hell towards a reconciliation of inner truth and outer purposes. From the beginning, he acts and thinks from the instincts and the heart and his progress towards maturity is a series of initiatives into the mysteries of the god of Reason until at the end he has begun to master his destiny, to acquire self-discipline, and to comprehend the Revolution as a rational order in which the whole man can express himself as a being in whom reason, emotion and imagination are harmoniously integrated. This represents a development from animal to perfected man. His brave words at the end show this feeling:

Now is the time to learn the ways of struggle, my love
now is the time to live in and through the struggle
. . . Now is the time to change the world, to fight for
life and happiness; now is the time to sing, comrade,
brave songs of struggle.²³

The development of Lalu's character is thus intended to signify the way to salvation of a modern man. Thus, towards the end of trilogy, Lalu realizes that the struggle is based on conscious control of the irrational human order of love in helping to

achieve an impersonal social order of love and that one must learn to sacrifice for the brotherhood of all.

Finally, the trilogy ends not with a sense of historical meaninglessness and despair but with fruitful understanding and hope. Lalu learns to contemplate his past with detachment and self-understanding and to envisage the future direction of India's epic struggle; and it is the birth of a son to Lalu which signifies that the struggle will continue with a glow of hope and a future dream of liberation.

The Private Live of an Indian Prince (1953), as a powerful indictment of a feudal order provides, through its narrator Dr. Hari Shankar, the Maharaja's personal physician, a true picture of the ruthless exploitation and oppression that has become the order of the day under Victor's reign. In the beginning of the novel, Shankar narrates that things are rotten in the state of Shampur and that, under the formidable influences of his mistress Ganga Dasi, who is the real power behind the throne, Victor is resorting to illegal extortion from the poor peasants. There are revolts in several parts of the state in consequence, but oppression becomes stronger when the resistance grows stronger and Victor, a typical feudal autocrat, lets loose oppression against the people in all possible ways. Even the army maneuvers arranged by the Raja to demonstrate the might of the independent state becomes a curse to the peasants. The peasants are requisitioned to do forced labour and are mercilessly exploited:

Apart from this, he began to extort money from the people of the state by various illegal means in order to build up a fortune for her. The Diwan Chaudhri Ramji

Das tried to dissuade His Highness from adopting such methods of obtaining money. But it was Ganga Dasi who was the real power behind the throne, and the illegal exactions continued. There were revolts in several parts of the state in consequence. These were suppressed by the State police with bloody violence and through a series of mass asserts and detentions.²⁴

The Palace of the Maharaja is an incredible nauseating seat of moral depravity and degeneration. Knowing Ganga Dasi's infidelity, Victor has constant quarrels with her which makes him to go to a number of women, and the outcome is not a single rupee was safe in his realm during his period. The situation takes a turn for the worst as time passes by until at last the Prince ends up as a perfect lunatic in the asylum.

The narrator Dr. Shankar is a well qualified, Prince's physician who embodies a loyalty to the Maharaja and a loyalty to the democratic struggles waged against the feudal order. In fact, Dr. Shankar embodies the antithetical loyalties in his humanism – his humanist rejection of the feudal order and endorsement of a new life, on the one hand, and his compassion for the feudal Raja as a man, on the other. Therefore, Dr. Shankar is to be considered as the rational side of the author analyzing the irrational side as seen in the Prince. He does not merely portray the private life of a person fairly remote from ordinary experiences but also gives an account of the various stages of Victor's interior derangement as the Prince confides in him, seeks his views and makes him the repository of his confession.

Shankar has a clearly defined objective, compassionate and Freudian role both as a character and narrator; thus, when the doctor refers to the Prince as 'an important case history for my files', he is speaking as a physician and narrator

simultaneously. Anand allows Shankar considerable liberty to make observations, report, and comment and explicate. Shankar's credentials of intimacy are expressive as he is always in Victor's company, except when the Prince is in bed with his mistress, Ganga Dasi. He is an embarrassed but adept eaves dropper. In part one, Shankar provides important background information about the Prince through colloquy and synopsis. And he is at all times free to interrupt the story to provide the reader with data relevant to an understanding of the situation or person under discussion, or to respond to the action by way of expiation or mental peregrination. Through the narrative analysis, Victor's condition can be simplified in two basic categories of observations: Clinical or Freudian, and sociological and humanistic. Clinically, Shankar dwells on the unconscious, instinctual, biological, sexual and oedipal origins of Victor's neurosis. He encourages his patient in the psycho-analytic procedural of tracking the surface emotions to the ultimate motivation. Thus, the narrative reads at times like a psychiatric text-book, though Shankar feels a little ridiculous when he speaks such jargon as the uncoiling of the ego from the libido and mortido tensions. Sociologically Shankar diagnoses Victor as the victim of unfortunate historical and environmental circumstances.

Shankar as a kind of Poe narrator who is the custodian of another soul and witnesses to its Empedoclean destruction; in whom there is something of the secret sharer intimacy of the Conradian narrator. However, it is Anand's intention to balance his horrific darkness with the passage of humanistic illumination. Shankar's fragmentary discourses fill the narrative vacuum at the end of the novel. He advocates Anand's doctrine of humanistic vitalism and revolution conceived as a

product of historical necessity and as a therapeutic solution to Victor's and society's afflictions. Shankar defines the modern humanist as a new kind of human being who is like a point of life and a universalist in his vision, and is saved by his positive approach to life from the schizophrenia that affects Victor, similarly, Shankar's criticism of non attachment and mysticism, his dismissal of the crude distinction between a spiritual East and the materialistic West, his plea for the recognition of over responsibilities, his belief in man as a homogeneity and as the final fact of the universe are all attitudes which are exactly parallel in Anand's humanism.

Shankar, the embodied voice of reason and sanity, in the novel is also a divided man, with conflicting allegiances. His inner dualism seems to operate between a loyalty to the Raja and a loyalty to the anti-feudal struggle between an awareness of the need for Revolution and reluctance to be involved in any form of action. Like Lalu and Ananta, he too is tormented by his own doubts, fears and regrets, which binds him inseparably to the Prince and keeps him away from any positive action:

For a moment, I sought to be kind to myself with that natural kindness for oneself that always makes one accept one's own bad smells more easily than those of others. I told myself for the thousandth times that I had no reason to feel guilty because I had owed money to the Maharaja and had to work off my debt by service. But then I realized that I could have walked off from the court at one stage or another when I felt intense revulsions against continuing, without any moral scruples about the debt which had ultimately come from money derived from the dumb peasants, and that I could have gone and serve the state as a doctor more usefully in some village dispensary and thus appeased my conscience about what I owed to Victor. And I decided that if I did not feel guilty, I ought to feel

guilty. I wanted to rebel, to rage and to fight against the whole system which had enveloped me in its poisonous, fungus growth and kept me rooted in the shadowy, bestial world of tyranny, cowardice, ennui and sloth.²⁵

Haunted by a gnawing sense of guilty and remorse, he feels that he should have left the Prince earlier and begun to lead a purposeful life. And like Lal, he realizes at the end of the novel that true heroism resides in a life of service for others which shows his idea of revolution and decides to start a dispensary in a small village in Sham Pur:

I began vaguely to feel that I must do something to help these people which might make me a little more useful than I had been to them while I was in the pay of the Maharaja. Only in healing the poor could I live an intrinsic life, which had been dead in me which I had been living only for the gratification of my five senses. Something for myself but also something for other people, as they said. I would go and start a dispensary in a small village in Sham Pur state. I had a little money saved up and I would start just like that, simply.²⁶

Echoing the novelist human leftism, Shankar speaks of the past independent democratic rulers opening up the backward areas to investments by the big monopolists, of the American Imperialist's military designs in Sham Pur, of the corrupt social system, that spreads neurosis everywhere of the exploited peasants, loaded with all the burden of debts and disease, of the bourgeois society that ignores the creative aspect of man-woman relationship in marriage, of India as a kind of lunatic asylum and of western civilization in decay. At the same time, he projects the novelist's universal historical humanism, by emphasizing the Hellenistic view of man, irrespective of class or creed, as supreme among all creation. This dualism in Shankar's words and behaviour fits in well with the basic dualism of the novel. The

conviction which he is going to make for the sake of his people against the deeds he has done before, gives a meaningful bright future for the people of Sham Pur:

..... . . thus I may come through the portals of dread to real life for my people. And to hope for them and myself. There was still tenderness in me and faith in the search for an ideal, inspite of all the clogging shortcomings. And, being a seeking human, I would return again and again to the sources of strength in this tenderness.²⁷

A deep humanistic yearning for revolutionary social change, but a constant hesitation about positive revolutionary action; a didactically motivated affirmation of revolutionary struggles, but a continual retreat from all purposeful action: this pattern of Contraries marks the development of Anand's revolutionary hero and reaches its consummation in Ananta, the protagonist of *The Big Heart (1945)*, Ananta marks the culmination of Anand's fictional representations of the revolutionary hero and becomes a typical creation by embodying the author's ambivalent humanism.

As a veritable incarnation of Anand's humanism, Ananta embodies the profound compassion and his passion for the renewal of a dead culture through the acceptance of western modernity,. He is indeed a true proponent of the mature attitude to the problems of life and emerges as a spokesman of modernity through humanism. Ananta who has the nobility of the heart and the moral strength of overcome the new fate is destroyed by the person who channelizes the evil carnage. His noble stature derives mainly from the qualities of the heart and Anand thus allegorizes the need for what he refers to in *Apology For Heroism (1946)*:

So what is needed is the big heartedness, the understanding, the generous, the wise heart, informed by passion and schooled by a knowledge born of love.²⁸

Ananta is a rebel who does not believe in God but he combines fury with the dignity and exudes warmth, generous manner, the open, frank and hearty speech which endeared him to those whose impulses were yet free from all restraint. He is an innocent roguish Adam whose generous character is evident in his favorite saying: "There is no lack of money, brother: one must have a big heart."²⁹ Ananta is a crusader against all sorts of inequalities, injustice, superstitious and empty rituals prevailing in the society. He emerges as a man of scientific outlook and asks his community men to develop a big heart, so "the young man who know him to be a man of heart, inspite of all the rogueries and deviltries attributed to him, echo after him."³⁰

The poet however, sees in Ananta the real foundation of the new man and it is the poet himself who articulates the humanism which the hero enacts:

I believe in the restoration of man if he is to control machinery at the present time. I believe, in fact, if we can have any religious faith, morality or code at all today, it must arise from the reassertion of man's dignity, a pure love for man in all his strength and weakness. Limitless compassion for man, unbounded love, especially for the poor and the downtrodden; so that, those who have been left to rot on the dusty road can be raised and given the izzat which is theirs by the miracle of their birth in this world.³¹

Thus Ananta embodies those qualities of the heart and create a new Adam of Anand's new society. Despite the poet's passionate faith and his belief that evil people will drown in the whirlpools of their own devilish intrigues, it can not be

claimed that *The Big Heart (1945)* resolves in a new way the fundamental problem of evil. On the one hand, the poet acknowledges the deep grooves that were cut in one soul by the hardness, the cruelty of Satan's hooves, the marks of the beast from which people never recovered; yet on the other hand, he dismisses original sin both from the Christian and Hindu standpoint:

. men were not born evil, as the followers of Yessuh Messih say, or as say those in our country who believe that men earn a higher or a lower caste for their good or bad deed in the previous life.³²

Nevertheless, his metaphysical inconsistency apart, the poet's faith that the dignity of man can be achieved through reason, forgiveness and love commands respect.

Ananta stands for the new life, for modernity and progress. He is aware of the magnitude of harm the new factor has done to the men of his community. As he sees how the factory has ruthlessly deprived most of his people of their traditional employment, his compassion knew no bounds. His heart bleeds for the poverty and misery of the people. He feels that the modernity which is being ushered can be used to their best advantage, provided they learn to master the machines and the only way to tackle the problems is that they should unite into a powerful trade union to safeguard their interests, that togetherness is a condition for revolutionary action and that true heroism inevitably entails self surrender. He is a man with a blending of love and nobility, of conviction and dedication, of compassion and fortitude that when he dies in the end in the hands of the Ralia it comes down to the people with a tremendous force. The poet gives expression to the significance of Ananta's martyrdom in his words of consolation to Janki:

Perhaps the life of Ananta – I mean the way he lived – may be a greater example for them than any words he could have spoken.... For what can be more persuasive than the death of a man who love them.³³

The author's ambivalence again expresses itself in his attempt to bring together the potentialities of the heart and the materialist concepts of social change. Himself an epitome of love, fellow feeling, compassion, devotion and faith, Ananta can not conceive a Revolution divorced from moral values. In fact, the flowering of a love of Revolution, within him was due to the disgust he felt for the selfishness of his youth. He calls upon the tharthiars to unite because, without togetherness, there is no possibility of any meaningful Revolution, particularly in the Machine Age in which each man is for himself, till he learns to unite with the others. And Revolution is not just mass struggle fought randomly but it requires devotion and thought. Ananta says that it is only by suffering that one is purified and learns anything in the world. Hence, he tells his fellowmen that Revolution will aim to create love and to keep faith because it is the truth that triumphs at last. This view of Revolution which seeks to lay emphasis on both the world of action and the world of values, the world of material struggles, and the world of spiritual attainments, points to Anand's simultaneous allegiance to the materialist and spiritual values of life and his concept of the 'Destination Man' who is to emerge through the struggle for illumination, exercised through the will.

In fact, the tendentious passion that emanates from the will of the heart shapes and decides the fable content of the narrative which tends to provide a significant turn to the tragedy through a romantic projection of hope at the end and

the finale of the novel which presents the martyrdom of Ananta thus emphasizes Anand's own optimism that the struggle will continue.

Another embodiment of Anand's humanism is Maqbool Sherwani of *Death of a hero (1963)* who becomes a scarlet symbol of the concept of heroism. A young Kashmiri poet, faced with a potentially tragic and dangerous situation that develops in the wake of the hostilities between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Following the forcible occupation of Baramula by the Pathan invaders, Maqbool flees to Srinagar but ordered by his leaders to return to hometown to rally the people. Braving the perils and risking his own life, he returns to Baramula, where he finds that he can not convince any of his friends. Finally, in the course of his escapade, he is betrayed, pursued by the aggressor, captured and executed. Thus through his act of self-sacrifice for the cause of freedom, Maqbool became a martyr. The situation in the novel provoke a strong sense of moral passion and produces a hero of the big generous heart who, in both vision and practice, opposes evil and inhumanity and love his fellowmen.

His heroism becomes a sublime expression of his national urges, his protest against poverty and fatalism, his struggle against religious fanaticism, his love of his fellowmen and his capacity for suffering. His return to Baramula to organize the people, regardless of the risks involved, is itself a kind of protest against the occupation of Baramula by the raiders. He is not prepared to accept the religious view point that the action by the raiders is an 'act of God', but he rather thinks it a planned brutality to cow people down to submit, and resistance to it was the only

virtue. Himself an atheist, he does not believe in the existence of Allah, but he has respect for Christ because he was the real person and suffered for mankind. Maqbool accepts the reality of Christ for the very human attributes he represents not his divinity. As against this, there is false religiosity of the barbarians who have no qualms of conscience in killing the innocent and in perpetuating fresh act of carnal outrage and plunder. Their prayer before the Almighty with automatic gestures and nuances has absolutely no meaning. His convictions are so ardent and strong that he stands up firmly against Ahmed Shah and Khurshid Anwar and challenges them in their face. In the midst of the heated conversation in Ghulam Jilani's house, when Khurshid Anwar tries to cow him down, he shows his real mettle by challenging him for which he has to pay dearly and eventually he becomes a martyr. In this sense, Maqbool knows that his death is certain, and he walks to it as a hero; his inner urge for freedom makes him accept death. Hence he tells Begum Mehtab Jilani :

. when death is opposed to his life then must
oppose death I know there will be much
bloodshed, and ruin in this way, but the urge for
freedom can not be suppressed³⁴

He has a clear comprehension of what precisely ails the society in Kashmir. He not only opposes the hard, communal line with all the resources at his command; but also asserts his burning patriotism. He know that the freedom is basically a question of faith: "It is a question of faith, or belief in ourselves and in the struggle" ³⁵ The struggle therefore, will have to continue which means suffering and keeps on saying that we all will all have to suffer to become mature and to become man among men. Thus, in his convictions, words and attitudes, Maqbool shows himself to be a true exponent of Anand's own basic position as a humanist.

Through his martyrdom, which is the culmination of his heroism, Maqbool emerges as a Christ figure; his self sacrifice is raised to a symbolic act of universal significance, reminiscent of martyrdom of Christ. The letter addressed to his sister, Noor, which the Indian soldiers discovered in his pocket, is a passionate document that reveals his humanist fervour and the glittering essence of his heroism.

Maqbool writes:

. I have never been anything but an aspirant to poetry. All my dreams will remain unfulfilled, because I am going to face death. But here, in our country, the most splendid deeds have been done by people, not because they were great in spirit, but because they could not suffer the tyrant's yoke and they learn to obey their conscience. And conscience, howsoever dim, is a great force, and is a real source of poetry. For, from the obedience to one's conscience, to pity, is but a small step. And poetry is poetry and poetry is pity
.....³⁶

Maqbool's heroism with its aspiration to poetry, its adherence to the voice of conscience and its identification of poetry with pity and pity with poetry, reflects Anand's heroism. The martyrdom of the poet-hero is thus dramatized with haunting inwardness and evoked with universal significance which touches the level of the sublime. His heroic death has a political and metaphysical meaning. Politically, it denotes the glorious culmination of his struggle waged out of nationalist and secularist aspirations. At the same time, it embodies a metaphysical view of death itself – death as a source of renewal of life. Maqbool, in his letter addressed to Noor written in the face of death, thinks that “with the certainty of death before me, I can renew my faith in life” and he hopes that his sister's child “will grow up and work

for our lovely land, and through him or her, my spirit will be working for the new life in our country.”³⁷

If Anand’s naturalism and humanism is viewed properly, then the evitable third term arises: the relation between the two. For Anand, the third term is the Integrating Factor or what he calls it *Bhakti*., the relation of personal, efficacious love, between the members of the units of society, family, community, nation or the world. He suggest in his *Contemporary Indian Civilization (1963)*:

But if there is no war, from deep within the orbit of the Indian tradition of individualism, shown of its religious sanction, may grow the gradual limitation of power of the state. Except that the old individualism will also have to shed its egoism and concern for personal salvation and take on the *Bhakti-yoga*, devotion through works which integrates the individual into community.³⁸

The new religion, the new system supplanting superstition, personal devotion to God by rational devotion to man are the values which Anand proposes to his countrymen. The traditional religion, he maintains, made men indifferent to the ills on this earth yet the new religion of *Bhakti*, required impassioned, practical efforts to remove not only external signs of ill, filth, poverty, pain, disease, hunger and ignorance but also the evils which are deeply rooted in social, political and economic institutions.

Humanism is, then is Anand’s faith with India as its proposed laboratory and hope; democratic socialism, as its political context while *Bhakti-Yoga* is its characteristic which is dynamic and excellence. According to Swami Vivekananda *Bhakti – Yoga* implies Divine Love experienced through the sublimation of energies

and Vinoba Bhave while attributing compassion to the *Bhakti* or Devotional school of Hinduism favours the term sarvodaya to Bhakti but Anand's Bhakti is centered on the Aitereya *Brahmana*, traditionally means personal devotion to God in a context of philanthropic benevolence and of ministration to holy men. This concept well exemplified the lives and works of Kabir, Nanak and Tukaram. He then defines the term a 'personal selfless devotion and service to all human beings.'

Whatever the terminology, 19th and 20th century Indian social reformers associate religious devotion with social service. Thus, Vivekananda exhorts that suffering be the object of worship, "the illiterate mass be the object of reverential service to man and pray to Lord Vishnu for selfless love for all things." Gandhi, on the other hand stressed that man should endeavor to see God through service of humanity, for God was neither in heaven nor down below, but everywhere. Vinoba Bhave declared that service of the people takes the place of idol worship. One should look upon all men and women as so many images of God, because, God and man indeed fuse in popular notions of *Dardyanarayan* - lower castes as the lowest incarnations of God and *harijans* - outcastes as the sons of God. Devotion and *Bhakti* towards such persons is seen as the equivalent of direct service to God.

Anand traces his first interest in *Bhakti* to his Sikh maternal grandfather. He said that he did not take to mysticism but *Bhakti*, which was personal devotion to human beings – a doctrine which has been emphasized by all our medieval saints from Nanak, Kabir and Tukaram to Gandhi. The second influence, however, comes from B. R. Puri, a philosopher lecturer in Amritsar. Puri's absorption in religious

mysticism under a Sikh guru impressed Anand less than his doctrine of *Bhakti*, devotional worship and the service to others as a way of living. Then in the Christian emphasis on development of personality through unselfish service, Anand saw a confirmation of the Hindu doctrine of *Bhakti*, devotion through works. In *Contemporary Indian Civilization (1963)* Anand discussed three traditional Hindu values which is related to the practice of *Bhakti*: universalism, tolerance, and compassion:

they are not operative values in the completest sense. But because of the great weight of the past on the Indian conscience, they play some part in moulding our people, especially the vast illiterate population, which has inherited the past in the form of customs and conventions.³⁹

Of all the wise characters, in Anand's novel, it is Purun Singh, the poet of *The Big Heart (1945)*, who clearly voices Anand's most mature conception of value in human life. Bhakti dedicated personal service of the individual and society, a doctrine and a way of action that the past called a religion.

Having been a yogi myself, I believe that some faith is necessary. If man trust in themselves and in the other men with whom they live together, and they are dedicated to building and creating something by breaking down dead habits and evil customs and shams, I think that there are can emerge a new kind of brotherhood, a new sense of devotion, like the Bhakti which our saint Kabir preached and practiced. I have seen glimpses of this religion already in my travels.⁴⁰

Purun's dedication is chiefly carried out in the dharamsala Sant Harnam Das, a charity house overlooking Amritsar Golden Temple. The conversation and speeches made between Ananta and Purun Singh develops Anand's conception of *Bhakti*, an ideal lived out unto death by Ananta. Bhakti is in fact, the keystone of Anand's

socialist and humanist views. It is concerned with personal, individual happiness and fulfillment and with the building up of more satisfactory social institutions. Purun Singh deplores the loss of compassion for individual man and insists that the new community of socialism must be achieved with dignified individuals as its base. Even the murderous deeds of infuriated workers, denounced by the widowed Janki, only emit from his compassionate forgiveness. Purun's tolerance again extends even to love of the English people, though he deplores their tyrannical Sarkar. The dedicated, universal compassion and tolerance of the *Bhakti*, at the cost of personal renunciation and sacrifice, is seen in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand.

Though Lal, Dhooli Singh, Janki and Shankar review the futility of their past careers and seek redemption in dedicated, personal service to others – especially in the conquest of pain in nursing and medical careers, the best executed of Anand's *Bhakti* character is Ananta in his martyrdom, and his devotion inspires Janki to live wholly for others. That is the only way in which we shall learn to become new men and women for according to Anand, outside *Bhakti* there is no other world, and if men are to find it at all, they must find its happiness here. The condition for human progress implies the fullest possible freedom and equality for all; *Bhakti* strives towards such condition is the touchstone of Mulk Raj Anand's brand of humanism.

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C H A P T E R - V

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Forget your troubles.
Let your heart sing.
Fly to your dreams
On silver wings.

Bobette Bryan.

The foregoing analysis of the selective novels of Mulk Raj Anand unfolds a definitive pattern of shifting Beyond Naturalism towards Hopeful Humanism but not withstanding this concern for the plight of the oppressed and the downtrodden remained strong in most of his novels. Projecting as a platform for victims of social heredity and environment, the novels have a more philosophical tone which probes the ills of society.

The basic philosophy of Literary Naturalism derives mainly from a biological model. It owes its origin to Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution which draws heavily upon his theory of natural selection. Darwin established a link that made naturalism with its emphasis upon theories of heredity and environment; a convincing way to explain the nature of reality for the late nineteenth century. But before Darwin's ideas were available in literary form, it was Auguste Comte who brought up the idea which was later transformed by Emily Zola – the theory of heredity and environment became a basis for literature.

Zola believed that the literary imagination could make use of the ideas as long as the novelist functioned like a scientist, observing nature and social data, rejecting supernatural and trans-historical explanations of the physical world, rejecting absolute standards of morality and free will, and depicting nature and human experience as a deterministic and mechanistic process. All reality can be explained by a biological understanding of matter, subject to natural laws, available in scientific terms. Controlled by heredity and environment, man was the product of his temperament in a social context. But it has been remarked that literary naturalism occurred earlier in Europe, then in America with a different credo.

A product of the socio-economic, literary and philosophical tendencies, the naturalistic fictions in America adopted the scientific methods in varying degrees and recognized the immense influence of heredity and environment on the natural man and his destiny. Hence, literary naturalism as exemplified by the American naturalists is neither pessimistic nor optimistic. It is a vision of an entirely amoral universe in which man's struggle for survival could be successful only by adapting to circumstances and the environment. This gives man the feeling of a harsh and inexorable destiny facing him. The individual never gains complete happiness because he is always striving for what can not be attained. Man is seen merely as a variable factor controlled by heredity and environment and perpetually adapting for survival. Man's actions have been analyzed and his place in the universe closely examined. Society, together with its flaws, has been operating on the individual as an environmental factor.

The trend of Indian literary naturalism is however, uniquely different from that of Europe and America. Tagore, Premchand, Toru Dutt and others whose works are found to be ambiguous and mystical, left a legacy to the later generation. It was Mulk Raj Anand, the novelist of the 1930s who made an improvement in a more forceful Indian version. According to him, it is not the biological forces which control the destiny of man but the social heredity and environment have a complete control over the life of an individual. Anand believes that man does not suffer from his own flaws but the social heredity of caste system and sociological environment limits the life of a person. Although Darwin's theory of evolution does manifest in it, the conflicts of these evolutionary dialectic shapes the character of a man.

Unlike the genetically inherited features or traits, the social heredity of caste system retards the healthy growth of a person and stifles his main potentials to become a 'man' in the society. Thus the question of recovery of self remained obsessively in Anand's mind. Though many philosophers began with this question, they forgot about the original impulses and began with his question rationalizing the whole world into comprehensive order in the spirit of utopianism. Therefore, Anand made a revolutionary breakaway from the inherited systems and came back to the question of self. How a poor insignificant Indian could survive and grow, mature into a human being in the conditions of servitude to dead habits, conventions, rituals and the restrictive impact of foreign rule in a country, where millions of people had no opportunity to think beyond survival and went from the womb to the grave, unaware of the poignant awareness of life, with its small joys and many miseries, destined to extinction on the small planet, one of the smallest among the millions of galaxies.

The works of Mulk Raj Anand discuss not only the impressive core of the Indo Anglian fiction but also sums up the impact of the naturalism in the life of an individual. It is natural that the Indo Anglian novel, on account of its peculiar originating impulse should have through out a dialectical quality generalized into its wider cultural connotations in terms of tradition and change. The Indian tradition as it has been rooted in the country's institutions, its values, its attitudes and its final life goals have always been a living tradition, inspite of certain inherent tendencies that have made for social stratification, political disorganization and intellectual stultification. The life giving quality in the Indian tradition has always been its capacity to absorb change and transform historical stimulus into cultural adjustment. Anand conforms to the Indian tradition in the sense that he achieved for his protagonist an identity commensurate with or sanctified by the cultural individuality of the Indian tradition. He exposes the disease and the decadent part of the Indian tradition and makes strident protests against the forces of naturalism within the old structure of society.

The Indo Anglian novel reveals two significant patterns in the contemporary writer's approach to the problem of cultural change. Some writers have made a vigorous delineation of the truth of contemporary life by observing in microscopic detail the very facts of change to which the outer reality of the Indian tradition has been subjected. Mulk Raj Anand surveyed the contemporary Indian scene both with a faithful realism and with forceful naturalism. The key to reality in his works is to be found not in the submerged currents of traditional metaphysic, but in the disturbed focuses of the outer reality itself. Political dependence, economic exploitation, social

stratification and natural disaster, all these superficial phenomena that have disturbed the Indian identity and have transformed it beyond recognition are the central themes of his novels. Even the symbols which he projects of the transitional environment in his novels are more directly related to the supremacy of physical, fact over life. Untouchability, the tyranny of a plantation economy, the paramouncy of the British and cultural conformity and social destitution which figure in Anand's novels are essentially a manifestation of some cancerous growth within the outer structure of the Indian tradition - the famine, plutocratic vulgarity and bourgeoisie pettiness in his novels. The individual in the works of his novels is a helpless victim, hunted down, trapped and completely arrested in his growth by the overpowering influence of the outer reality. Reform, revolt and racial action became the implicit or the overt philosophy but he does not concern himself effectively with the mechanisms of change within the individual himself, who alone can, shape the world to his desire.

Anand did not agree with the Gandhian philosophy of compassion and love as a tool for the amelioration of the plight of the poor and the downtrodden. At the same time he was deeply impressed by the left-wing radicalism and had only scorn for Gandhi's doctrine of trusteeship of the poor by the rich. With the rise of egalitarianism in the post war Europe and the proclamation of India as a socialist republic wedded to the Gandhian principle of peaceful social evolution, Anand's position in society underwent a significant change.

He gives a great significance to the experience of life at various levels, in different situations. The confrontations of reality however, bring the ultimate disaster

to the human beings. In fact, Mulk Raj Anand in his novels portrays the 'soul drama' of man in which it deals with the crisis of man in every human situation caused by the forces of determinism. The novels of Mulk Raj Anand are the products of the Indo-Anglian Literary Naturalism with his philosophy of break away with the past, rejection of religious orthodoxy and respect for science and sympathy for an individual in his conflict with the social surroundings. But this philosophy requires a certain study of the human mind who is allowed to live in a limited environment.

The protagonists drawn from the oppressed classes are simple, innocent, intellectually undeveloped though only faintly aware of the nature of the social forces working against them. Probing into the minds of the characters, Anand brings out what is essentially human in them, fusing the inner psychological problem with the outer reality. In *Untouchable (1935)*, he finds the stratification of society on the basis of caste, filth, poverty, disease and degradation of the sweepers of excrement in a country where the humanity is little known and excretion performed everywhere. Eighteen year old Bakha with his boyish innocence, zest for life and essential goodness which highlights his undeserved despair thereby underlines the cruelty of the society. When *The Road (1963)* opens, Bhikhu has the knowledge that the road is the only way to salvation and building should be his main concern but he does not have the slightest idea of the miseries that lies ahead in the process. Once the road is completed, the villagers could have business transactions with the other villages, towns and have better lives yet there is no gratitude and the problem arises as the chamars were engaged in the construction. Finally, after the accomplishment of Bhikhu's endeavour, he is made to feel that he is basically a chamar, an untouchable.

He then voluntarily leaves home and walks along the newly built road towards Delhi, the capital city, with its cosmopolitan atmosphere where he will not be known as a chamar but merely as a human being.

The heroes of Anand in these two novels confront the heredity of caste system and its social hierarchy which existed from time immemorial till today but they accept the given situations without any significant protest. Though these characters are seen trying to improve their lot, they can not succeed in life due to the lack of social awareness and their inability to analyze and grasp the social organization and its dominance by upper caste people.

While social heredity is an entirely indigenous phenomenon in our country, the social environment has universal dimensions that cover a wide range of novels. *Coolie (1936)* and *Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)* depict the lives of waifs, disinherited coolies. Munoo's enthusiasm is suppressed every time he tries to come up in life but all the same he emerges resilient. He is tossed from pillar to post till he is engulfed by death. His growing awareness and initiation into adult life are traced in the novel which runs parallel to the gradual tightening of the society's grip on him and as the class system has greater victimizing power, Munoo dies in the end. Gangu in *Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)* also suffers and becomes a passive victim of social exploitation. He endures all sufferings without a murmur but it is only when the atrocities of the capitalists reached the level of brutality that he raises his voice yet it does not help to solve his problem. Soon afterwards he is shot dead and Reggie Hunt is declared "not guilty".

Lalu in *The Village (1939)*, *Across the Black waters (1940)* and *The Sword and the Sickle (1942)* is more mature and shows clear signs of class consciousness or position in the socio-economic set up. Anand in these novels gives the impression that breaking the existing social code means many traumas in the life that lies ahead but a meaningful change could be acquired in the present social structure by accepting the theory of revolutionary violence. Lalu becomes a rebel without knowing more than his own deep indignation. In trying to break the code of orthodox Hinduism, he becomes an outcaste and a part of the Count's conspiratorial system and gets involved in a long, confused, exciting attempt to rouse the peasantry to action. He wanted to use the peasants' ingrained sense of brotherhood as a weapon of spontaneous revolt but it is only later that Lalu realizes, that Bhakti of the peasants can truly become a political force, overthrow the existing social system, and beget a free, unified India. In *The Big Heart (1945)*, Ananta also assures his people that they could win bread not separately but together with trust and holding onto each other; he could form a union and help them out of their problems. The problems of the two evils that co-exist and coalesce in society, the inhuman elements in society victimize the low-born as well as the reformers who venture to alter the social pattern. Ananta fervently advocates the use of machine as the new basis of production and make the factory system one of mutual benefit through which they can express their talent and receive just wages for their labour. The days event, moving through disquiet, hope, counsel, sectarian intrigue to destruction, gather tragic momentum and culminate in Ralia's maniacal destruction of the factory machines and the murder of Ananta who had intervened and subdued him.

Communal and personal conflict, then, provides the raw material to literary naturalism.

In *Death of a hero (1963)*, there is a graphic description of the various atrocities that result from religious chauvinism. Maqbool Sherwani faced with a potentially tragic situation and through his self sacrifice becomes a martyr. A born poet, he took to becoming a soldier to fight for his people yet could not accomplish his dreams as the sociological environment weighed heavily on him thus bringing on the final failure of his life. Maqbool's crusade against religious fanaticism ends in a fiasco for want of planning and organization.

Despite the tragic notes, the ideas of scientific optimism are sustaining and pervasive in his novels with perhaps the solitary exception of *The Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953)*. This last novel certainly indicates a disturbing ambivalence in relation to the rest of the singularly consistent naturalistic fiction of Anand. The protagonist Prince Victor is presented as a diseased individual owing to his own temperamental quirk and the socio-political conditions. Patel's frontal attack with the Instrument of Accession as much unnerves him as the voluptuous guiles of Gangi, his concubine. The cynical bitterness and political frustration of the Prince reduced him to a caricature when he attempts to rage against the National Government of India. In his obsession of his mistress, the Prince becomes hysterical and ultimately ends up in an asylum with the deterioration of his relation with her and the complete decline of his political power. Despite the Prince's moral and political corruption, the major emphasis of the novel lies not in the tyrannical abominations of a Marxian

ogre but in the pathetic anguish of a fallen autocrat. Compared with Bakha, Bhikhu, Munoo, Gangu, Lall and Maqbool, Victor represent victimhood at the opposite scale but the main emphasis is subjective. 'We all have been sunk in the morass of our own subjectivism' declares the narrator, that everything outside seemed to be contracting, withering and darkening.

The grievances of these victimized characters presented in his novels testify to his deep insight into the evils of society. They are often aligned or opposed in a morally meaningful way, a technique which is not to be confused with the ideological over-simplification or exaggeration which turns some characters into crudely manipulated symbols of the caste and class struggle. The achievement of Mulk Raj Anand is however, not merely methodological; nor do the protagonists of his novels always meet with death. They do have a tragic ending and fail apparently but except Bakha and Bhikhu. The others like Munoo, Gangu and Maqbool faced death in the end while Ananta and Lall land up in jail and Victor in an asylum. But their failures are only apparent and all the novels end on an optimistic note. Failures are bound to be there for the sake of literary naturalism but these failures invariably throw a ray of hope. Strife is essential to achieve the goal but the achievement is often indicated rather than illustrated because material success is not always within easy reach. The tragic destinies of the heroes of his novels do indeed suggest the remedy for the social disease, which arrests the healthy growth of the personality of the individual. Thus for example, industrialization or more precisely, mechanization is the remedy for the evils of untouchability. Scientific education and the socialist outlook can effectively put an end to the capitalistic exploitation; and a voluntary and

free acceptance of this social reality in an organized way, can rectify the wrongs of the society.

Traditional India has been rooted in its ideas and ideals, in its creed and religions and in its metaphysics. Change has manifested in many forms and disguised in the myriad impulses of contemporary history: the impact of the west, the arrival of machine, the city and the industry; the struggle for independence woven out of the fabric of the Renaissance and Reformation, the enlightenment and the counter – enlightenment, radicalism and liberalism, violence and non violence; and above all, the climactic symbolism of the Gandhian mythology. The study of the novels of Mulk Raj Anand has borne out the fact that the Indo Anglian writer is not only deeply aware of these various interacting forces, but also has successfully built for himself a system of aesthetic responses which could sensitively transfer the stuff of life from the plane of reality to that of creative imagination.

Anand is aware that poetic justice is not always meted out in life. However, he is not pessimistic but has firm faith in human goodness. Notwithstanding the absence of Marxian dialectics, he has vividly depicted the varied experiences and a lucid grasp of the current situation. The human virtues like love, understanding, co-operation, compassion and spirit of brotherhood depicted in his novels are regarded as essential qualities in maintaining a healthy, congenial and harmonious social life in the thick of moral decadence and growing disappearance of the age-old values. He attacks the ossified systems of traditional life with the hostility of an iconoclast and at the same time presents modernity as an alternative to traditional way of life.

Though a Marxist, he always looks forward to the democratic ideals enshrined in Indian Renaissance, as a liberal democrat, he always turns towards Marxism to seek fulfillment for his humanistic aspirations. Thus the sociological drama presented in his novels embodies, inevitably, the search for a new frame of values, which is characterized by its underlying spiritual, psychological and mythopoeic motifs.

Anand cannot in fact, be charged with pessimism or fatalism; as the ultimate aim of his protagonists is always social upliftment and human betterment. Although mechanistic determination is instrumental in bringing about the eventual catastrophe of the protagonist, the triumph of Anand seems to be in his transcendental comprehension of the social dynamics that determines the destiny of every individual. His imposition of the patterns of his own thought on the fictional papier mache of experience is in complete consonance with the philosophy of naturalism. As such, his novels are living milestones in the tradition of Indo-Anglian literary naturalism.

Despite the tragic notes of the novels, the ideas of scientific humanism are sustaining and pervasive in his novels. In fact, it is his consciousness of the need to raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies and other suppressed members of society, to human dignity and self awareness in view of the abjectness, apathy and despair into which they are sunk, which has made him a naturalistic humanist.

Anand's humanism places man in the center of all things and believes in the ethical equality of all men. He feels that all men are equal and there should be no division of caste, creed, or race, which act as obstacles for human development and dignity. According to him, the conquest of pain should be the supreme goal of all individuals and all nations. He strongly condemns the cruelty and the pain inflicted upon the underprivileged by the higher sections of society and firmly believes that one of the most urgent needs of mankind today is to infuse love and tenderness into the hearts of all men.

Anand shows his contempt for all kinds of exploitation and corruption in the modern society, which had made human mind immune to the nobler values of life and believes that the wisdom of the heart encourages insights in all kinds of human beings and thus, man's latent goodness which ultimately triumphs over evil. He believes in the Bhakti-Yoga, the integration of an individual with the society. It is a search for a center, a principle of unity which has found in the virtue of charity. Anand held that there was a sense of oneness in the country throughout the best periods of our known history. Keeping in mind this Bhakti, he introduced some idealistic characters who practice the qualities of the 'Big heart'. With their influence on the people they proved that the best are the men who lived upto their creeds. Iqbal Nath Sarshar and Mohan presents Bhakti at different angle while De La Havre is the embodiment of goodness who even with the limited equipment provided to him, tries his best to improve the conditions of the coolies. Lall of *The Village (1939)* realizes how the *Bhakti* of the peasants can truly become liberation. Ananta perceives best and reflects the true complexity of the situation while Dr. Shankar steadily improves

growing more conscious that the people are to be pitied more than the Prince, determining at last to begin a life of Bhakti. Anand acquired a positive faith in, what he calls himself socialist humanism. He believes in an ideological strategy to avoid violence with an emphasis on the moral cleansing of human heart rather than on the inevitability of violent social change.

But even today, the solid bedrock of the national culture is being upheld in a fanatical manner in one form or the other. Man's life is determined by the social norms as we have miserably failed to develop a scientific outlook, which is the need of the hour. It is well nigh impossible for us to effectively shape the destiny of the oppressed, to improve the quality of life and to provide the basic necessities of life unless we are steeped in science. For science awakens the urge to inquire and research for the truth. This kind of attitude would probably help bring about a social change from hide bound traditional ties that has kept us in its vicious grip. Many of the social values that were upheld in the ancient times are outworn and irrelevant in the changing times, and are to be discarded once and for all. Therefore, what we need is not the militant revival of a moribund culture but the creation of dynamic contemporary society as envisaged by Mulk Raj Anand.

Mulk Raj Anand's novels can thus be read as a forerunner to the contemporary Dalit debates. The victims, the modern day counterparts of Bakha and Bhikhu, have come a long way in their struggle for cultural identity against decisive political and social forces. However, the hideous face of untouchability will perhaps remain as a painful lesson from our unredeemed past. This peculiar social condition

of Dalit's life is prevalent till today and they still have to struggle for their survival. They are still facing the injustices that were meted out to them thousand years ago but the Dalits themselves were no longer prepared to be silent bearers of the atrocities and occupants of the liminal space to which they have been confined for centuries. Leaders like Phule and Ambedkar used the full force of their erudition to take apart the procedures Brahmanism had used to maintain the casteist social order but now there are many Dalit activists and leaders working for Dalit concerns. Dalits are waging their own struggle and they no longer depend on the progressive people to work on their issues because now they have their own independent organizations. The discussions of the literary and cultural representations of the marginalized and dispossessed people such as untouchable and aboriginal communities has been based on the writings of upper caste writers, such as Mulk Raj Anand, Mahasweta Devi and Premchand are in the context of a discourse of sympathy and compassion yet they failed to fill a gap. Dalits were still not speaking subjects; they were not people with self pride and always represented as objects of pity rather than as authors of their own. Critics are of the view that these writers do not show Dalits as they are, but as helpless and child-like people who can not make their own decision or take action. For example, Bakha in *Untouchable (1935)*, instead of opting for radical solution, submits to Gandhi's pacifism and is thus contained. Sardesai suggests, Dalits charted their own cause of action. Though consigned to the margins of society, and to the same tasks that kept the upper caste society pure and pollution free, they became a visible presence and their voices began to break through the boundaries that had kept them apart. They have created their own distinct identity. The non-Dalit

critic, the non-Dalit publisher and the non-Dalit reader have played a major role in creating this identity enabling Dalit literature to emerge.

With the rise of Dalit literature, Dalit's sorrows, the struggles for their rights could be witnessed and thus encountered the real human being, the new being. Because today one individual is not destroyed, but the whole community is murdered and when there is a fire in the heart of one individual, the heart of all community is aflame. Such is the battle between the upper caste and the untouchable. The fight that is rooted in history, the fight that is going on now, is a fight to become one – to build a new society.

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BIODATA

- 1. Name:** Jova C. Marak
- 2. Gender:** Female
- 3. Date of Birth:** 28th February 1964
- 4. Permanent Address:** Bonepa Atilla, P.O. Chandmary
Tura, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya
PIN Code: 794002
Phone No. (+91) 94361 07507 (mobile)
- 5. Address for Correspondence:** Department of English
North Eastern Hill University (NEHU)
Tura Campus, Tura 794002
- 6. Educational Qualification:** MA (English)

7. Work Experience:

- **Aug 2006 till date:** Guest Lecturer in the Department of English, NEHU, Tura Campus, Tura.
- **Oct-Nov 2006:** Press Coordinator for the National Seminar on “Profiling Social Changes through Literature in Translation” held at NEHU, Tura Campus on the 1-2 November 2006.
- **Sept 2006 till date:** Coordinator for the journal *Protocol* being published by NEHU, Tura Campus.

8. Seminars/Workshops Attended:

Sl.	Seminar/Workshop	Venue	Date	Organisers	Funding Agency	Nature of Participation
1.	Workshop on Research Methodology	NEHU, Tura Campus	April 2006	Education Deptt. NEHU, Tura Campus	ICSSR, Shillong	Delegate
2.	National Seminar on Profiling Social Changes through Literature in Translation	NEHU, Tura Campus	1-2 Nov 2006	English Deptt., NEHU, Tura Campus	ICSSR, New Delhi	Member Organising Committee & Presented Paper

P.T.O

9. Publications:

Presented Paper on "Translation of Folk Tales: A Human Communication" at the National Seminar on "Profiling Social Changes through Literature in Translation" held at NEHU, Tura Campus on the 1-2 November 2006.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the above information given by me is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Dated: Tura the 13th November 2006

Jova C. Marak.
(Jova C. Marak)
Department of English
NEHU, Tura Campus

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