



Study on a pioneer and a role model within the field of Indian fiction in English at Mulk Raj Anand

Dr. Harshita Dwivedi

Guest Lecturer, Department of English, Govt. College, Naigarhi, Distt. Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, India

Abstract

Even in an exceedingly random reading of Anand's novels the reader becomes forthwith attentive to such problems because the tyranny of the class structure, its injustice, and its social, ethical and economic consequences, category conflicts, exploitation of assorted varieties of the poor by the wealthy, non secular dogmatism and hypocrisy, the social basis of evil, persistent fashionable superstitions, confrontation between tradition and currency, pursue identity, explore for freedom, east-west encounter, etc. These and other related themes surface themselves and become conspicuous, because they appear again and again in his novels. Anand as a writer has continually sensitively versed them instead of to metaphysical and philosophical problems that fascinate a writer like Raja Rao. For him the impulse to put in writing springs from the terribly compelling urgency of those problems and their human consequences felt by him. Naturally they become the thematic centres of his novels and supply the premises underlying his fictional structures. Therefore the perennial themes of Anand have attracted attention for critical appraisal and comment, and notice a distinguished place in each vital study of his novels. The current study aims at examining Anand's handling of the theme of social discrimination in his novels. In reality it's a cluster of connected themes. It's necessary to clarify in what sense 'social discrimination' is known and applied here to Anand's novels.

Keywords: pioneer, role model, Indian fiction, Mulk Raj Anand

1. Introduction

Mulk Raj Anand was an Indian writer, short-story author. He was among the primary writers to include Punjabi and Hindustan idioms into English. Mulk Raj Anand's stories pictured a practical and sympathetic portrait of the poor in Asian country. Anand was born on December twelve, 1905 in city. He graduated with honors from religion school, Amritsar in 1924. Mulk Raj Anand visited European country and studied at University school London and Cambridge University. He completed his Ph.D. in 1929. Mulk Raj Anand additionally studied and later lectured -at League of states college of Intellectual Cooperation in Geneva. Between 1932 and 1945 he lectured intermittently at staff academic Association in London.

A pioneer and a model within the field of Indian fiction in English. He's one in every of the foremost vital Indian novelists in English. A author of extraordinary stamina and vitality, except for concerning twenty novels and many short stories in English, he has additionally written on an surprisingly big variety of subjects that embody art, painting, dance, education, culture, philosophy, cooking arts, aesthetics and literary criticism. yet, his most bold mode of expression has been fiction, and befittingly he has been within the field for nearly six decades. Anand may be a writer of pressing social issues and preoccupations, and therefore the social impulse is at the center of the writings. All his novels are involved with the social reality of Bharat, as perceived by him. In the words of Saros Cowasjee, they are all "sociologically or historically oriented"^[1]. They are written, as S.C. Harrex points out, "primarily in response to recent Indian history and socio-political problems, with emphasis on the human immediacy of the crises confronting the modern Indian". Anand writes in a realistic and naturalistic mode, introducing his own modifications into it. In all this, it is obvious, he is very different from the other

two major Indian novelists of his generation, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, whose literary career too began more or less about the same time as his. Anand places great weight on the social significance of the novel, and through his novels has earnestly tried to convey his deepest concern for the predicament of man, in India in particular. Human suffering caused by a combination of social, religious, economic and political factors, engage his attention.

For instance, Premila Paul in her *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A Thematic Study* (New urban center: Sterling Publishers, 1983) has sensitively examined "caste system, category system, religion, education and therefore the standing of women" as "the principal foci of thematic significance" in Anand's novels. More recently Ambuj Kumar Sharma has devoted attention exclusively to the theme of exploitation in his *The Theme of Exploitation in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1990). The present endeavour is additionally a thematic study^[2]. It seeks to look at in some details Anand's handling of the theme of social discrimination in his novels, that is one among his most perennial in addition as necessary themes.

Before defining the nature, scope and limits of the present inquiry, it would be in place to draw attention to some of the distinctions of Anand as a novelist. He happens to be the very first Indian novelist in English to choose as the staple raw material of his fiction the lives and experiences of outcastes and Untouchables, coolies, factory workers, landless labourers, artisans, peasants and all such people who have been oppressed, repressed, dispossessed, and downtrodden (some of them for centuries), who have been experiencing degrading and dehumanizing poverty, exposed to the iniquities and indignities of discrimination and exploitation. Most of Anand's protagonists are drawn from among these social marginals and non-entities of Indian

society. Such people had seldom appeared in traditional Indian literature. Anand was perhaps the very first to introduce them selfconsciously and deliberately into the Indian novel and represent them realistically, thereby marking a major and a radical departure from established practice and convention. This daring step of his has proved very profitable to the Indian novel as it opened up a vast area of Indian life for fictional treatment.

It is additionally to be noted that Anand is probably the primary Indian writer to aim to bring out “the beauty, terror, and tenderness within the lives of these neglected those that kind the majority of his characters. It might be natural if one were to raise however may Anand who was, in his own words, relatively comfortable, develop a compassionate interest in and concern for the unloved, the weak and also the unfortunate. Without going into the details of his biography, it may be noted that the circumstances of his early life, his upbringing, and the environment in which he spent his impressional years and grew up, made him exceptionally sensitive to human suffering caused by human beings to one another. Some events of his childhood and youth sharpened his consciousness of the humiliating discrimination of people in the name of caste, class, religion and race ^[3]. His participation in the civil disobedience campaign of the twenties taught him that the alien imperial authority constricted our lives. But his hatred of imperialism did not blind him to “the cruelty and hypocrisy of Indian feudal life, with its castes, creeds, dead habits and customs, and its restrictive religious rites and practices”. Along with alternative young men of his generation he too began “to question everything in our background, to appear removed from the large homes and to feel the misery of the inert, disease-ridden, underfed, illiterate folks concerning us”.

Anand’s development as a novelist was further influenced by his close contact with the West, which is, according to Harrex, “one of the major influences in his career as a writer”. His theory of fiction was influenced by his exposure to Western ideas. During his long stay in England from 1929 onwards, he came under several influences literary, social and political. His philosophical studies in the older British Universities, his close contact with left-wing writers of the thirties, his chance involvement in the Spanish Civil War, his association with movements and causes popular in Europe which demanded the liberation of the human spirit, all these had their profound impact on the thinking and imagination of Anand. While they certainly broadened his outlook, brought him conceptual clarity, and set him on a quest for universally meaningful values, they all contributed to the sharpness and urgency with which he reacted to the problems of his country and his society, even though he had been generally resident in England.

The word ‘social’ implies primarily the relationship between an individual and the group or community to which he belongs and amidst which he lives. The Random House Dictionary of The English Language (Reprint 1975) explains that the word ‘social’ as an adjective means, among other things, “of pertaining to the life, welfare, and relations of human beings in a community”. The phrase ‘relations of human beings’ in this explanation is so comprehensive that it encompasses virtually all possible relations among human beings, personal, political, economic, religious, cultural etc. ^[4]. This interpretation appears most relevant to the context of Anand’s novels. The same Dictionary explains that the verb ‘discriminate’ means, “to make a distinction in favour

of or against a person or thing on a categorical basis rather than according to actual merit”. Put together then, ‘social discrimination’ can be taken to mean, “distinctions made in a society against groups or individuals categorically and without any reference to actual merit, in all possible human relations, personal, social, political, economic, religious, racial etc.”.

It is common place that in human society, Indian society in particular, individuals and groups have been discriminated against in the name of caste, community sect, religion, race, sex, custom and tradition, economical status, political ideology, profession, language, region etc. Obviously social discrimination is hydraheaded, and it can assume several forms, the motives underlying which can be many and complex. Sometimes the actual causes for discrimination cannot be known or identified ^[5]. For, it may very well be a mere matter of prejudice or ego. There is hardly a human society, past or present, open or closed, in which such discrimination has not been practiced. Only the forms of its manifestation vary from society to society. But it becomes a matter of serious concern and alarm, as it often happens, when discrimination leads to or results in oppression, misery, suffering, exploitation, and tyranny to those who are discriminated against. It may be said that many a social conflict, tension, or exploitation has its seeds in and stems from some form of discrimination that necessarily precedes it. For these reasons in this study of Anand’s novels social discrimination is viewed as an inclusive notion.

Anand is concerned with a good many forms of discrimination in Indian society. Appropriately it finds a place, though with varying degrees of emphasis, in several of his novels and short stories. There is considerable variety in his exploration of the theme. In every instance he directs attention on the human consequences of the particular form of discrimination. To keep this study within manageable limits, nine of his novels. *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, *The Village*, *Across the Black Waters*, *The Sword and the Sickle*, *The Big Heart*, *The Road*, and *Gauri*, have been selected for analysis with reference to the chosen theme. Written approximately over a period of three decades, these novels are fairly representative of Anand’s art and achievement as a novelist, and also reveal his insight into social discrimination in Indian society.

In any study of a novelist’s themes, one may be tempted to divorce them from their fictional contents and consider them in the abstract. If that were to happen, the novels would be reduced to the sum of their themes and lose their essential identity as novels, and as works of fiction ^[6]. Therefore it is necessary to bear in mind that Anand the novelist is concerned with human beings as individuals as much as he is concerned with pressing social issues. His endeavour in his novels is to explore imaginatively the problems which compel his attention rather than view them by themselves in the abstract. He is well aware of the possibility of a social problem in a literary work getting the better of the human individuals in it. Referring to the literary situation in the ‘thirties, when several poets and novelists particularly in the West were exercised over the compelling socio-economic issues of the day, as a result of which there was “a spate of revolutionary and socially critical writing in Europe, America and Asia”.

It is pertinent to recall here Anand’s significant reply to Mahatma Gandhi’s question to him, ‘Why write a novel? Why not a tract on untouchability?’ Anand records: I

answered that a novel was more human and could reproduce contrary emotions and shades of feeling, whereas a tract could become biased, and that I liked the 'concrete' as against the 'general' statement". It hardly needs to be pointed out that Anand's ambition is write novels rather than tracts.

Unlike the author of tracts the author explores his chosen theme or themes in them of the story and plot of his invention, and specially through character, conflict and event. It's by a deft handling of those parts along, he makes his themes actual to the reader for his response and originative participation, and therefore mediate his vital meanings to him. Despite his obvious sociological concern and ideological interests, Anand is basically a novelist of character as it is shaped by the individual will as well as environment^[7]. Therefore, any study of his themes, social discrimination in the present instance, involves in the main a close study of his characters, especially his protagonists. It is they who spring to the reader's mind when he thinks of Anand's novels: Bakhe in *Untouchable*, Munoo in *Coolie*, Gangu in *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Lalu in the three novels *The Village*, *Across the Black Waters* and *The Sword* and the *Sickle* which together recreate the vicissitudes of his life, Ananta in *The Big Heart*, Bhiku in *The Road*, and *Gauri* in *Gauri*. And hence in the present study the bias is towards Anand's imaginative apprehension and recreation of social discrimination in terms of character, conflict and event, in short in terms of the art of fiction. Its guiding assumption is that Anand's novels have to be compelled to be viewed and evaluated finally as novels, as contribution to the art of fiction, in spite of the actual fact that Anand will intend in novel once novel to sensitise his readers to the various varieties of discriminations dogging in Indian society. However, as this can be primarily a study of a selected theme, aspects of Anand's art and technique are going to be observed for temporary comment solely as and once necessary whereas considering specific novels.

In another essay of his Anand asks rhetorically, "what may be a author if he's not the fiery voice of the people?"¹⁷ In yet one more place he asserts unconditionally. "All art is info. The art of Ajanta is info for Buddhism. The art of Ellora is info for Hinduism. The art of the Western novel is info for humanity against the bourgeois---". To cite only one a lot of statement of Anand's he concludes his self revelatory essay "Why I Write?", with the sentence,---"I have continuously thought of literature and art because the instruments of humanism".

2. Conclusion

Concluded the different utterances of Anand, the extraliterary nature of his intentions as a writer is express. In his novels, a number of the characters, UN agency appear to function spokesmen for his or her creator, categorical views and uphold concepts expensive to him. The steel and also the edge tool provides a decent representative example for it. Thus Anand has been regarded by a number of his criticals as a propagandist and a committed writer. Actually a lot of essential statement on him has involved itself with the vexed and vexing question of his commitment, some viewing it favorably *et al.* expressing reservations regarding him on this score. The nature of his commitment too has been discussed and debated. Some find in him a consciously committed Marxist, wedded to espousing Marxian ideas, while others have seen in him a committed humanist

upholding humanist values. Anand's interest in Marx dates back to his undergraduate days. But the real and full impact of Marxian ideas on him began only after he chanced to read Marx's letters on India published in the New York Herald Tribune of 1853. Those ideas strong any the already gift powerful social impulse in him, and provided him with a way and some extent of read from that he may scan and interpret human history. However with time Anand seems to possess to return to take "humanism, the read of the complete man, because the a lot of comprehensive ideology".

3. References

1. Saros Cowasjee. Preface, *So Many Freedoms: A Study of the Major Fiction of Mulk Raj Anand*.
2. Srinivasa Iyengar KR. *Indian Writing in English* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1983, pp. 333-34.
3. Mulk Raj Anand. *Why I Write?* *Kakatiya Journal of English Studies*. 1977; 2(1):253.
4. Mulk Raj Anand. *Apology for Heroism* New Delhi: Arnold – Heinemann, 1975, p. 116.
5. Mulk Raj Anand. *The Story of My Experiment with a White Lie*, *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*, eds. M.K. Naik, S.K. Desai, G. S. Amur Madras: Macmillan, 1977, p. 11.
6. Anand. *Why I Write*, *Kakatiya Journal of English Studies*, Vol. 2, p. 255.
7. Meenakshi Mukharjee. *Beyond the Village*, *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*, p. 23.