

REFLECTION & REPRESENTATION OF CLASS ACUMEN IN MULKRAJ ANAND'S NOVEL *COOLIE*

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ABSTRACT

Literature and man's social world is always interconnected with each other. Reality is represented through Literature particularly, Novels represents human life. Indian Writing in English is as old as British, American, African and Commonwealth Writings in English. Culture heritage, modernization of values and systems, Indian consciousness and sensibility are the main focus and reflection of the Indian English Literature. However, this gorgeous culture and traditions of India are spoiled by inevitable factors like caste and class. Ancient as well as the modern Indian society is divided on the basis of caste and class. What is meant by 'caste'? When this question is arisen, mostly the answer is the 'upper' class (owners or capitalist), 'middle' class (bourgeois or professional people), and 'lower' class (poor or labours). In the Indian texture, the issues of caste and class are difficult to abolish. The attempts were made by the Indian novelists from traditional period till modern period to find a destination for these social issues. Particularly Mulk Raj Anand who always has a concern for the low classes, reflects the sufferings of this people and how they are suppressed by the rich class. Through his novels he tries to find a solution for these suffers especially his novel *Coolie*, portrays how the protagonist Munoo, a poor boy undergoes sufferings caused by many rich class people at different places. The paper discusses how Mulk Raj Anand embarks climax to the hero of the novel but not the full stop to the events of the society.

A novel is a literary genre and the skill of the artist, it attains shape, idea and expression that is thoroughly Indian, though it bears the stamp of global experience. The ideas of literature and social criticism are the vein of rigid culture and heritage of each and every country. This formulates the foundation of every creation and the creator. The novelist is a one who comprises human life and projects all the graces and aesthetic freedom of art.

Realism implied on the depiction of the truth of life and the social realism was concerned with dynamic interpretations with the purpose of transience of reality. The twentieth century unfolds with few novelist with realist concern and curtains with galaxy of different clans and genial perceptions. The Indo-Anglican writers started thinking about the realistic life and presented some social problems. But the forerunners of the clan finish this ideology with lot of venerable connotations.

The disasters like starvation, disease and unemployment are the factors that decline the growth of a nation. It should be eliminated with a special care otherwise they demolish the wholesome development of a nation. The novel shows the religious, cultural, caste, creed discrimination between the well-to-do and downtrodden people. It hinders the underprivileged people to raise voice for the basic fundamental rights as per the preamble law of India. The economic, political, personal and social freedom of the people is uncared and they long for love, caresses and liberty. The percussion of the instruments strings the working class proletarians in a wedge with all its heroism as well as its inevitable wretchedness has thus gained citizen's right to this isolated clan which proves its existence.

The paper focuses on the class acumen that is revealed in the Indian society from the traditional period till date. Mulk Raj Anand occupies a unique position among the creator of the modern Indian English Novel. He had a soft-corner for the deprived and subjugated class of people. Most of his writings reflected the theme of caste and class which plays a major role in Indian society. Through his novel *Coolie* Mulk Raj Anand contrasts the life of Hindus and Muslims, Indians and British and the melancholy noise of the poor and hurrah of the rich. Yet it is not a novel to fill out a formula, but the most absorbing story of a village youth transplanted from his rural surroundings and goes through a variety of experiences.

Like R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao, Anand is also recognized for the establishment of basic forms and themes of modern Indian literature written in English. The humanist philosophy which includes socio-political and economic elements were the highlights in his novels. Critics argue that his social consciousness works have shed keen insights on Indian affairs and enriched the country's literary heritage.

The magnanimous confrontations of Anand in his novels score him a name of realist. Accounting the possibility of realism in the contemporary age, Anand weaves his novel. The odour of the essence of rigid, coarse, boorish, uncouth of society towards the poor people is the core inertia of his novel. He deploys the vision of endurance and toleration of the under privilege through their sufferings and anguishes; moulting the hindrance of exquisite galore is well explained and exposed in the novels of Anand.

The novel *Coolie* elaborates the theme of social hierarchy between the high and low classes of the contemporary age of Anand. *Coolie* is a great work of art and a number of themes and ideas have been woven into its texture. The novel imprints Anand's career as decorum of maturity in the Literal world and the discerning critics soon recognized him. The melon of theme about the novel is the reality of Indian life. The caste and class discrimination are sound in the nation and it pitches in the veins of orthodox Hindu Society.

The novel narrates a series of adventures in a picturesque manner. It is not difficult to trace archetypal symbolism in the child hero's awakening from innocence into experience and is finally swept away to his doom. He explores the limits of existence before he goes under.

Along with the saying, “individual collides with the society,” Anand brings the suppression of an individual in a class-ridden society. The realistic presentation of the characters mentors the subjugation of the lives of people. The outcome of this conflict is the coronation of the emotional tactics of the novelist upon the downtrodden is illuminated. In *Coolie* the evil is more widespread, and appears as greed, selfishness and inhumanity in their hundred different forms. Yet the root of the matter is poverty: as Munoo realizes, “all servants look alike. There must be only two kinds of people in the world: the rich and the poor.” The poverty is diffused all over India, and like a poison infects all over society and renders its unsocial and inhuman.

The core of the novel extricates the phenomenon of the deployment of Capitalism, Industrialism, Imperialism and Colonialism. The novel relates with the situation of Russian Proletarian Revolution. The overwhelming hands of the rich and abled over the poor and under-privileged seem to be decline soon, but Anand is a ‘non-climax’ writer. He embarks climax to the hero of the novel but not the full stop to the events of the society.

The novel revolves around the protagonist Munoo, a poor, helpless orphan who deprives for his fundamental right to life and happiness; is exploited and made to suffer, till he dies in consumption. Not only Munoo is a victim of such exploitation. Anand presents Munoo as a representative through whom the novelist makes it absolutely evident that such exploitation, denial of life and happiness is the part and parcel of the poor everywhere in India, whether in a village like Bilaspur or a small town like Sham Nagar, or big cities like Daulatpur and Bombay. Whether in rural or urban India, lots of the poor is equally wretched and led a miserable life.

Munoo, an orphan who is fourteen years old is treated badly by his uncle Dayaram and aunt. Despite such harsh treatment he remains happy in his native village of Bilaspur. His uncle Dayaram considers him as a burden and so finds him to be old enough to earn. As a result, he is asked to get ready to go the town to look for a job. A quiver shoots through his belly. Finally the family reaches the town of Sham Nagar, Dayaram contacts BabuNathoo Ram, sub-accountant, Imperial Bank, Sham Nagar, who is in need of a servant. Soon Munoo is appointed as a domestic servant of the sub-accountant at three rupees a month with the understanding that his salary is be paid not to him but to his uncle. The Babu’s wife Bibiji treats Munoo like an animal and always shouts at him. He is treated as a monkey by everyone in the house. But he is treated very kindly by the accountant’s brother, a doctor, whom Munoo calls ChotaBabu.

Munoo realizes the existence in the materialistic world of the marginalized society and also the fact about the tragic survival of the poor people like him in the midst of rich people. Money is indeed, everything, Munoo thought. And his mind dwelt for the first time on the difference between himself, the poor boy, and his masters, the rich people, between all the poor people in his village and Jaysingh’s father, the landlord.

The mischievousness and extra energy, the characteristics of the boys of his age, leave Munoo in trouble and ultimately they compel him to leave the house of Nathoo Ram. Seth PrabhaDayal, the kind hearted partner of a pickle jam manufacturing factory in Daulatapur finds Munoo hurdled under the bench and takes him to his house. Another series of adventures begins in Munoo's life. Munoo gets introduced to a new kind of life as a factory hand. Both Prabha and his wife Parbati like Munoo and life goes peacefully until a certain unexpected occurrences occurred under villainy of Ganpath. Fate again intervenes and Munoo's chance acquaintance with the mahout of a circus company develops into a sort of friendship and the latter promises to smuggle Munoo into the train leaving for Bombay with the circus company. This is a start to another series of adventures in Munoo's life. Munoo has been dreaming of going to Bombay as a coolie in the vegetable market at Daulatapur. Munoo's journey from Daulatapur to Bombay through Delhi and the desert sides of Rajasthan is narrated with an epic grandeur.

The unseen hand of the fate seems to be working much against poor Munoo ever since he left his native Kangra hills. In spite of his being plucked out of his native soil where he enjoys a normal growth, whether it is in Sham Nagar or Daulatapur, or Bombay, after some initial struggle he appears to be setting to some way of normal living, suddenly something goes wrong and he is once again drifted. Munoo's life appears symbolic of the lives of millions of men and women of his social status. With minimum of comments on the situations that Munoo often finds himself in sufferings. The author wins the reader's sympathy for the poor hill boy.

Anand presents Munoo as a sensitive and intelligent proletariat, with enthusiasm and zeal for living. He becomes a waif under the pressure of circumstances. His birth right seems to be the terrible destiny of being a victim of exploitation. The circumstances lead to get hold of the economy of the wretchedness transform Munoo a symbol of pity and fear.

The novel *Coolie*'s action spreads over some years and moves from village to town, from town to city, and city to Bombay, the gateway of India, and from Bombay to Simla, India's summer capital. *Coolie* is verily a cross-section of India, the visible India, which is mixture of the horrible and the holy, the inhuman and the humane, the sordid and the beautiful. The general effect is panoramic, good and evil being thrown together as in actual life; there is no tie for us to pause, to think, to judge, because we are constantly shifted, a new situation engulfs us at every turn, and new cruelties and absurdities whirl round us. Village, Taluka headquarters, district headquarters, presidency capital, the national capital – this a progression indeed, but only spatially, for the human situation hardly alters wherever we may be. Munoo is exploited all the time, one way or the other, by one person or another; and his fate is typical of the fate of millions whose distinguishing badge is patient sufferance.

Coolie has been – and still is – a term of derogation in India and elsewhere. Anand decided that he would humanize the *Coolie*– as in Bakha he humanized the *Untouchable* – and give him feelings, a mind, a heart, a soul, and raise his dignity as a trembling piece of flesh and blood; worthy of commemoration is serious literature. Usually the coolie is just taken for granted, as if he were but a shadow, a cheap and useful machine, and uncomplaining target for abuses and indignities. But Anand would rather ask: “Hath, not a Coolie eyes? Hath not a Coolie hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions, fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, cooled and warmed by the same winter and summer as anybody else is ?” The coolie too is – or could be – the “paragon of animals!” But prejudice has hardened into a custom, and is held up as a natural law. Children can rise above it, saints can rise above it; but average humanity is still a bundle of selfishness and prejudice, and is often capable of sadistic cruelty. Anand’s *Coolie* carries no specific indictment of individuals: the indictment is against society as a whole – a society breeds such prejudice and cupidity and cruelty.

A rich, a privileged class, explodes the poor. Munoo’s experiences in the house of BabuNathoo Ram are a good example of this cadre. The hen pecked and ill- tempered Nathoo Ram and the ever-sharp-tongued Bibiji are the privileged who make Munoo work like a slave. So is Ganpat in the Pickle-Jam factory in Daulatpur. Such a person is a foreman Jimmy Thomas of the Cotton factory. None of these people cares for human dignity and they treat those under them who have come to work for them as mere slaves, or chattel. As employers, Prabha and Mrs. Mainwaring are two exceptions. Prabha is a childless man and he himself has risen up from the humble origin of a coolie. Again in the case of thorough-bred English ladies who are not prepared to accept this Anglo- Indian as one among them for she is only a half-caste to them, in spite of her bleaching herself white in England. Exploitation is not confined only between the rich and the poor. People exploit those who are dependent on them, people like Munoo’s uncle, Raj Bahadur, Sir. Todar Mal, and the Sikh grocer in Bombay. Ganpat who is poor though his father was rich, betrays exploits Prabha. Human nature being such the novelist seems to suggest, the solution lies only in sticking fast to political ideologies. Yet one cannot find overt propaganda in the novel in favour of any particular ideology. The fastening thread of realistic essence cope the novelist to render the thematic essence of naturalism.

Anand overwhelms the fact by giving the labels of downtrodden and low caste people of the society. The reality of the Indian coolie is presented by the novelist through the character of ‘Munoo.’ He is devour and materialize pragmatism, flings in the sharp edge of communal racism and desperate exploitation which reflects the realistic nature of imperialistic India.

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