

# An Exploration of Humanism in the Writings of Mulk Raj Anand.

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## Abstract:

This study examines the humanist philosophy as portrayed in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, focusing on its implications for social justice and empowerment. Anand's work reflects a deep commitment to humanistic ideals, drawing inspiration from diverse sources such as European Hellenism, Renaissance thought, and Indian philosophical traditions. Through a detailed analysis of his novels, particularly "Untouchable," "Coolie," and "Two Leaves and a Bud," this study explores Anand's advocacy for the underprivileged and marginalized sections of society. The study also investigates Anand's approach to addressing social issues, his portrayal of characters, and the effectiveness of his propagandist agenda in promoting social reform. Additionally, it examines the extent to which Anand's humanism offers solutions to the challenges faced by society.

**Keywords:** Humanism, Social Justice, Marginalized, Social reform, Untouchable .

## Introduction:

Humanism, a guiding philosophy that values human potential and reason, emerged during the Renaissance, challenging outdated beliefs and celebrating the richness of human experience. This movement prioritized human affairs over divine or supernatural matters, advocating for knowledge, virtue, and fulfillment as noble pursuits. Scholars like Erasmus and Petrarch championed Humanist ideals, promoting classical learning and the elevation of human intellect.

Mulk Raj Anand, a renowned novelist, exemplifies Humanism in his works through his profound compassion for the underprivileged. Anand's writings focus on the struggles and hardships faced by society's marginalized, shedding light on issues such as casteism, exploitation, and inequality. Through characters like Bakha in "Untouchable" and Puran Singh in "The Big Heart," Anand emphasizes the inherent dignity and potential of every individual, advocating for social justice and equality.

Anand's Humanism is reflected in his rejection of traditional attitudes and his belief in the power of education and social reform. He echoes the sentiments of Humanist thinkers who emphasized the importance of reason, morality, and the pursuit of happiness. Anand's characters, like Dr. Mohindra and Iqbal, advocate for practical solutions to societal problems, reflecting the Humanist belief in the transformative power of knowledge and action.

Famous Humanists such as Erasmus and Thomas More have left a lasting impact with their writings. Erasmus, in his work "The Praise of Folly," critiques human ignorance and superstition, urging individuals to seek wisdom and self-knowledge. Similarly, Thomas More's "Utopia" envisions an ideal society based on principles of justice, equality, and communal welfare, echoing the Humanist emphasis on ethical ideals and social reform.

Mulk Raj Anand, emphasizes the importance of human potential, reason, and compassion. Anand's writings serve as a powerful reminder of the enduring relevance of Humanist ideals in addressing societal challenges and promoting a more just and equitable world.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To analyze the manifestations of humanist philosophy in Mulk Raj Anand's novels.
2. To explore the themes of social justice, equality, and empowerment in Anand's literary works.
3. To examine Anand's portrayal of characters and their roles in advocating for social reform.

### **Methodology:**

This study employs a qualitative research approach, focusing on textual analysis of Mulk Raj Anand's novels. Primary data will be collected through close reading and interpretation of selected works, with particular attention to themes related to humanism, social justice, and empowerment. Secondary data will be gathered from scholarly articles, books, and critical analyses of Anand's writings.

### **Anand's Philosophy of Humanism in His Novels**

Mulk Raj Anand's philosophy of humanism is evident in several of his works such as "The Apology for Heroism," "Prolegomena to a New Humanism," and "Lines Written to an Indian Air." He doesn't claim to introduce a radically new concept of humanism but rather sees it as a pathway to enlighten and uplift humanity. Anand openly acknowledges his inspiration from European Hellenism but does not endorse traditional Indian attitudes. Despite this, he acknowledges that humanism has deep roots in Indian culture, with figures like Buddha advocating for it in his teachings, particularly denouncing violence in all its forms.

Anand's humanism is a fusion of various philosophical traditions, including Hellenism, Renaissance ideals, and European thought. It incorporates elements such as Buddha's compassion, rejection of casteism, Kabir's belief in the universal brotherhood of humanity, Gandhi's advocacy against untouchability, Nehru's call for peaceful co-existence, and M.N. Roy's concept of "Radical Humanism."

Anand's humanism emphasizes the importance of enlightenment and progress for the betterment of humankind. He believes in drawing from diverse philosophical traditions to cultivate a holistic approach to humanism. For Anand, humanism is not merely an abstract concept but a practical ideology that seeks to address social inequalities and promote harmony among people.

Anand's rejection of traditional Indian attitudes does not imply a rejection of Indian culture altogether. Instead, he seeks to challenge and reform aspects of Indian society that perpetuate injustice and inequality. By blending elements of Eastern and Western thought, Anand offers a nuanced and inclusive vision of humanism that resonates with contemporary concerns.

Through his works, Anand advocates for the values of compassion, equality, and social justice. He uses literature as a tool to critique oppressive social structures and inspire positive change. Anand's humanism is not confined to theoretical discourse but is embodied in his commitment to portraying the struggles and aspirations of ordinary people.

### **Anand: Champion of the Underdog**

Mulk Raj Anand writes with a purpose—to improve the lives of society's underdogs. He believes that true art should address the pressing issues of our time. Anand actively opposes the injustices present in caste-based Hindu society. His writing isn't meant solely for entertainment; instead, he dedicates himself to uplifting the dignity of those marginalized and oppressed in society.

Anand's mission is clear: to shed light on the struggles faced by the underprivileged and to evoke empathy for their plight. He doesn't shy away from addressing the harsh realities of life for those at the bottom of the social ladder. Through his novels, Anand takes a stand against the discrimination and inequality prevalent in society.

For Anand, writing is a form of activism. He uses his pen as a weapon against the injustices that plague society. His stories serve as a powerful medium to amplify the voices of the marginalized and to challenge the status quo. By portraying the struggles of the underdog with honesty and compassion, Anand compels readers to confront uncomfortable truths about societal inequality.

Anand's commitment to social justice extends beyond the pages of his novels. He actively engages with the issues he writes about, advocating for change and pushing for greater equality. His writing serves as a call to action, urging society to recognize and address the systemic injustices that perpetuate suffering and oppression.

Anand's work embodies the principles of compassion, empathy, and social responsibility. Through his writing, he not only sheds light on the struggles of the underprivileged but also inspires readers to work towards a more just and equitable society. Anand's legacy is one of courage and conviction, reminding us of the power of literature to provoke thought, spark change, and give voice to the voiceless.

### **Anand's Compassion for the Underprivileged**

Mulk Raj Anand's novels are brimming with compassion for society's underdogs, particularly evident in works like "Untouchable," "Coolie," and "Two Leaves and a Bud." These novels delve deep into the struggles, hardships, and suffering endured by the impoverished, painting a vivid picture of their relentless pursuit for a better life. Throughout his literary career, Anand consistently shines a spotlight on the plight of the poor and destitute, highlighting their futile attempts to escape the clutches of poverty.

Anand's storytelling is not just about entertainment; it serves as a vehicle for social commentary and advocacy. In "Untouchable," the protagonist Bakha's experiences as a social outcast resonate deeply with readers, offering a

glimpse into the harsh realities faced by those marginalized by society. The novel is a poignant exploration of untouchability and discrimination, shedding light on the indignities suffered by Bakha and others like him.

One of the most gut-wrenching moments in "Untouchable" occurs when Bakha's sister is molested by Pandit Kalinath, only to be condemned for allegedly tempting her attacker. This scene lays bare the cruel injustice of untouchability, leaving Bakha grappling with the limited options before him.

Anand's portrayal of Bakha's dilemma—whether to convert to Christianity, embrace Gandhi's message of universal brotherhood, or advocate for practical solutions like improved sanitation—underscores the complexity of the social issues at hand. Ultimately, Anand's preference for addressing the root cause of the problem, such as advocating for proper drainage systems, reflects his commitment to tangible social reform.

Throughout "Untouchable," Anand weaves together the narratives of various characters, including English missionaries, Gandhi, and poets, to underscore his message of social justice and reform. His yearning to effect change is palpable, permeating every aspect of the novel.

Similarly, in "Coolie" and "Two Leaves and a Bud," Anand continues his exploration of socio-political issues, delving into the struggles of laborers and peasants in colonial India. These novels offer a searing indictment of exploitation and injustice, urging readers to confront uncomfortable truths about the inequities of society.

Anand's compassionate portrayal of the underprivileged serves as a wake-up call, compelling readers to confront their own biases and privilege. His novels are not just stories; they are calls to action, challenging us to strive for a more equitable and compassionate world.

### **Anand's Mission**

Mulk Raj Anand is driven by an unwavering purpose. He refuses to be deterred by any obstacle, as his writing transcends boundaries of caste, creed, and tradition. Anand's pen is a powerful tool that fearlessly confronts injustice and oppression. He sees the world divided simply into two classes: the wealthy and the impoverished. Anand's commitment to humanism compels him to harness his artistic talent for the betterment of humanity. His singular objective is to use his writing to shine a light on societal inequalities and advocate for change.

#### **Anand: A Champion of Social Justice**

Mulk Raj Anand is a writer known for his rational and radical humanist views. He firmly believes in the potential of science and technology to enhance the lives of people. Anand sees knowledge as a powerful force capable of dispelling superstitions and outdated customs. He is a progressive thinker who advocates for the equal treatment of all individuals, regardless of their background. Anand vehemently opposes casteism and any form of exploitation of the disadvantaged.

Throughout his works, Anand propagates his ideology of social justice, equality, and fraternity. He creates characters that represent different facets of society, categorizing them into sufferers, tyrants, and virtuous individuals. In his novels, the protagonists often belong to the suffering class, while those in positions of power, such as high caste Hindus like landlords and priests, are depicted as oppressors. Conversely, characters like doctors, leaders, and social workers are portrayed as virtuous figures who fight for justice and equality.

Anand's characters serve as conduits for his humanistic ideals. For instance, Dr. Mohindra in "The Old Woman and the Cow" emphasizes the importance of medicine, sanitation, and hygiene in rural villages. Similarly, characters like Iqbal in "Untouchable" advocate for the mechanized disposal of waste to eradicate casteism, while Sauda in "Coolie" inspires workers to demand better conditions through strikes. In "The Big Heart," Puran Singh urges the downtrodden not to forget that the English have valuable knowledge in literature, emphasizing the importance of education and enlightenment.

Mulk Raj Anand's role as a propagandist for social justice is evident throughout his body of work. He uses his novels to shed light on the plight of the marginalized and to advocate for a more equitable society. While Anand's passion and commitment to his cause are undeniable, his failure to offer practical solutions highlights the inherent challenges in addressing deeply ingrained social issues. Nonetheless, his contributions to literature and social activism continue to inspire readers and scholars alike.

### **Conclusion:**

Mulk Raj Anand's philosophy of humanism shines through in his novels, where he champions the cause of the underprivileged and advocates for social justice. By blending elements of Eastern and Western thought, Anand offers a nuanced perspective on humanism that resonates with contemporary concerns. Through his characters and themes, Anand inspires readers to confront societal inequalities and strive for a more equitable and compassionate world. While Anand's novels serve as powerful calls to action, his failure to offer practical solutions underscores the complexities of addressing deeply ingrained social issues. Nonetheless, his contributions to literature and social activism continue to inspire readers and scholars alike, leaving a lasting legacy of compassion and advocacy.

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