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Mulk Raj Anand: Moving India Forward

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Mulk Raj Anand:
Moving India Forward

By

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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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Abstract

Mulk Raj Anand is an innovator in literature. He is one of the first Indian authors to write in English about the humanitarian dilemmas facing India during the mid-twentieth century. His compassionate objective is to produce an awareness of the cruelty and inhumane practices of untouchability and social class distinctions and to seek the enlightening prospects of progress and modernity. In his three novels Coolie, Two Leaves and a Bud, and Untouchable, Anand explores the lives of the down-trodden. The first chapter of this project defines and discusses the Hindu caste system of India as well as its unfavorable and negative consequences. It also addresses the damaging effects and repercussions of the differentiation of social classes based on wealth and assets. Anand abhors these status structures so completely for their inhumane and cruel results that he sought to eliminate them completely with the hope of making it possible for all Indians to have a chance for equality. The second chapter addresses the rebuilding and reformation of human respectability by taking a down-trodden character and employing him as the hero of the work. Anand is one of the first Indian authors to utilize a societal outcast as his protagonist. The third chapter discusses the clash between traditional and contemporary thoughts and behaviors. Though Anand was educated through the British system of schools, he is aware of the impact Indian traditions had on contemporary Indian life. It is Anand's intention to expose the faults and detrimental aspects of the decomposing Indian ways rather than to maintain and defend the greater fundamental aspects of it. With the implementation of modern ways of thinking, Anand seeks a better world for all of humanity, particularly the residents of India.

Introduction: Experience and Circumstance

“To make man understand himself” --K. K. Sharma

Mulk Raj Anand is considered by many as the father of the Indian novel. This pioneer is credited as one of the first Indian authors, writing in English, to attain global readership. His writing career spanned six decades and fashioned voluminous amounts of work including novels and short stories as well as pieces of art criticism. His background and education granted him the outlet for writing, however it was his life experiences that provided the understanding of the Indian plight of which he wrote. Many of his works address the concerns of colonized as well as postcolonial India including the issues of the collision of the two cultures, the observation of the “other” by the natives, the function of racism and the dilemma presented by the Indian caste system, as well as the quandary of preserving Indian traditions while moving forward with progress. Anand sought to enlighten the worldly public to the predicament of the Indian population.

Anand’s writing career began early in his life. Among incidents that compelled him to write were several family tragedies, the consequences of colonization, and the mistreatment of Indians throughout the country. Anand was decidedly moved when his aunt committed suicide. She took her life as a reaction to being excommunicated for eating with a Muslim friend. Another distressing event in Anand’s life was when his lover was killed by her husband the night before they were due to run away together. He experienced first-hand what it was like to be looked down upon because of his familial occupation as coppersmiths. Unable to comprehend all the opposition, ambiguity, and inconsistency in life, Anand put pen to paper in search of a solution. This spurred an extraordinary career.

Another impact on Anand's life was Mohandas Gandhi. As India's spiritual and political leader, Gandhi and his ideas would have great influence on Mulk Raj Anand's writing. The notion of *satyagraha*, the peaceful resistance to evil and nontruths, was the foundation of Gandhi's theory. The themes addressed by Gandhi included the alleviation of poverty, freedom for women from the socially controlled constraints, unity and harmony among different religious and ethnic groups, the termination of caste discrimination and untouchability, a self-reliant economic structure for sub-continent, and, most importantly, autonomy and sovereignty for all of India. These themes would be ever-present in the writings of Mulk Raj Anand too.

As England's imperialistic presence expanded in India, so did the need for control. According to Laura Mandell, "British rule was justified, in part, by the claims that the Indians required to be civilized, and that British rule would introduce in place of Oriental despotism and anarchy, a reliable system of justice, the rule of law, and the notion of 'fair play'." The British held that their system would invoke an ethic of improvement. England continued to expand its seizure of Indian lands. Once England won formal rule in India, its intentions were to civilize - educate, govern and train - the Indians so that they could become productive. It wasn't until the middle of the twentieth century that India, through its use of peaceful resistance, rebelled against the British Crown which eventually relented and relinquished a portion of India to its original landowners.

The world, particularly England and its colonies, experienced turbulence. This unrest and instability was due, in part, to change. The industrialization and urbanization of England brought about tension. In the West, these conflicts included hostility between the urban and rural aspects of life. The landed (haves) were in discord with the landless (those who had nothing; the have-nots). The landed, modernizing crowd was in disagreement with the middle class that was

just beginning to develop. The industrialist employers were combating the employees. It was capital versus labor. These real-life difficulties found their way into the colonies as well as some of the literature of the time.

Disenchantment, economic depression and unemployment took hold in the English-occupied world of India. Humanity seemed to be decomposing and was in need of rescue and resuscitation. The Progressive Movement was an intellectual response to the elitist and self-serving art of the nineteen twenties. Many intellectuals were so disillusioned by the disintegrating world that they “strove for a commitment that would restore order and save [the] world from the existing chaos. [Writers were] not only absorbing the atmosphere as...participant[s] but also seemed readily inclined to reflect it in [their] writing” (Dhawan 56 – 57). The collision of two very different ways of life found its way into the literature of the time.

P. K. Rajan in his *Studies in Mulk Raj Anand* states that:

Anand’s art became a vehicle to advance [the] cause of democratic revolution led by the bourgeoisie. The characteristic elements of this revolution were: (i) its determination to put an end to imperialistic rule, (ii) its opposition to all forms of feudalist exploitation and oppression, especially evil social practices including casteism and untouchability, (iii) its humanistic craving to uplift the condition of the downtrodden, and (iv) its general acceptance of the leadership of the bourgeoisie.

As an author and raconteur of Indian life, Mulk Raj Anand did not develop his writings joining the effort of just one side, Indian or British. He instead viewed the situation from multiple angles, looking for and hoping for a solution that was indicative of a compromise.

Being that he was an Indian looking to have his work published in English brought about having to deal with issues not previously experienced by writers. As writing from an Indian perspective, Anand could not treat the English too harshly. His works would never have been published if the English were presented in a too severe and unkind light. Also, if he presented the Indians as a whole as victims of the imperialist colonizers, the publishers would again balk at the idea of putting such slanderous and vilifying remarks out there for the world to read. On the other hand, Anand could not be too sympathetic or understanding to the British cause. If he were to be viewed as siding with the English, his Indian readership would not exist and his efforts would have been for naught. Instead Anand was able to stay the middle ground and still seek his objectives: to produce an awareness of the cruelty and inhumane practices of untouchability in hopes of procuring its elimination along with the abolition of the entire caste system; to recognize and eradicate the differentiation of social classes brought on by capitalism; and to seek the enlightening prospects of progress and modernity.

William Walsh, in his work titled *Indian Literature in English* contends that “Anand became an essentially [nineteen] thirties man in thought and sensibility ...politically committed to the left-winged literary movement of the period” (63.) This left-winged literary movement referred to by Walsh is Modernist literature. This vein of prose, as well as non-fictional pieces of writing, had as components entities such as disillusionment, general discontent and emancipatory elements. Social problems were considered more important than the individual. God and nature were replaced by economics and politics. Each and every life was to be valued as well as the notion of man as a united brotherhood came to the forefront. Art, therefore literature, was seen as propagandistic and as a result, able to yield change. The disillusionment affected the scholars tremendously. They sought order among the pandemonium they witnessed.

The critics not only contemplated change, they reflected this commitment in their writings. There was a move away from Romanticism with its pronounced optimism. There was a rejection of the Victorian pessimism. The contemporary literature of the time contained overwhelming feelings brought on by the technological changes of the twentieth century. The literary technique of writing in a *stream of consciousness* manner is also indicative of the Modernist period. Anand's most famous novel, *Untouchable*, was written in this fashion as he recounted the goings on of a single day in the life of the protagonist, Bakha.

Though born into the Kshatriyas caste, Anand witnessed, and to some extent experienced, what it was like to exist in a lower class. Upon his return from England in the early nineteen thirties, Anand resided in Gandhi's ashram where he purposely downgraded his caste ranking and labored as a sweeper. He was subjected to the abuse and mistreatment that members of this lowly caste suffer on a daily basis. He was semi-exposed briefly to the dreadful conditions and deprivation suffered by the untouchables. This experience gave him the familiarity and expertise on which to base and create his novels.

Anand used the novel to portray the 'soul drama', as K. K. Sharma referred to it, of man; he was able to expose the righteousness as well as the evilness in life by portraying the stress endured by human beings caused by all aspects of life; the psychological, intellectual, emotional and corporeal. He used it as a tool that, when criticizing life, would then initiate an awareness of the potential for intellectual growth. The novel could and should be viewed as a journey of social realism with its ultimate purpose being "to make man understand himself, to stir his consciousness, to intensify his emotions and to enable him to experience *Rasa* or the flavor of beauty" (Sharma xi). Anand believed that a purpose of literature was to alleviate the suffering of

human beings. As an author, he met this challenge by bringing to light the plight of the Indian native in his search for humanitarian advancement.

This study seeks to further develop Mulk Raj Anand's impact on literature as well as its sociological achievements, primarily focusing on the struggle of progress (humanitarian as well as technological and knowledge-based progress) versus preserving Indian traditions. The analysis focuses on the three novels *Coolie*, *Two Leaves and a Bud* and *Untouchable*.

This thesis discusses how Anand became a voice of literary modernism. He experimented with new techniques such as writing via stream of consciousness and he expressed freedom of his ideas as well as innovative perceptions and careful reflections on his own thoughts, beliefs, behavior and circumstances. This project illustrates how this vein of prose, particularly for Anand, had as its components factors such as dissatisfaction and disenchantment as well as liberating elements of humanism in the three main categories: caste and class inequality; championing the poor and outcast; and the confrontation of tradition and modernity.

The first chapter defines and discusses the Hindu caste system of India as well as its unfavorable and negative consequences. It also addresses the damaging effects and repercussions of the differentiation of social classes based on wealth and assets. Anand abhorred these status structures so completely for their inhumane and cruel results that he sought to eliminate them completely with the hope of making it possible for all Indians to have a chance for equality. Through his accurate depiction of caste and social class inequality, Anand hoped to publicize the plight of the helpless and vulnerable and gain support in attaining a more egalitarian society.

The second chapter addresses the rebuilding and reformation of human respectability by taking a down-trodden character and employing him as the hero of the work. Anand was one of the first Indian authors to utilize a societal outcast as his protagonist. The contemporary society of his time generally found it to be worthless and futile to create a manuscript depicting the life of such inferior and contemptible people. No one who had the ability to read cared about these lowly subjects, nor did anyone with an education who could write such a piece have intimate enough knowledge to accurately expound on this topic. Anand innovatively opened a door to an unrecognized segment of civilization. He felt that it was his duty to bring to light the aspirations of this populace as well as to recognize and draw attention to their longstanding struggles, and in due course, assist in the establishment of a human-valued world. He also disproved the notion that the less-fortunate were not worthy subjects on which to develop a literary work.

The third chapter discusses the clash between traditional and contemporary thoughts and behaviors. Though Anand was educated through the British system of schools, he was aware of the impact Indian traditions had on contemporary Indian life. It was Anand's intention to expose the faults and detrimental aspects of the decomposing Indian ways rather than to maintain and defend the greater fundamental aspects of it. Anand was familiar with the disadvantages and restrictions of the Indian past and determined that it was critical to rectify these errors rather than to commemorate its triumphs. As an author, Anand hoped to enlighten the public regarding the need to investigate and implement modern ways of thinking to better serve humanity.

As a humanist, Mulk Raj Anand believed that all people deserved to be appreciated and revered. He believed that man is the center of the universe and as such, pleaded for his global development. His objective was to better the world for all of humanity.

Man's Cruelty to Man: Caste and Class Inequality

"A Hive of Prosperity" –Mulk Raj Anand

This chapter discusses the history, misinterpretation, misuse and effects of the caste system and class divisions in India and why Mulk Raj Anand so abhorred these distinctions. It looks at the partial and detrimental concept of dividing society into groups established on religious castes and capitalist-based social classes. The theme of the abolition of these divisions is Anand's main concern in his campaign for the betterment of humanity. This chapter defines and describes the Hindu caste system and untouchability. It examines Anand's mission to educate the public with the hope of eradicating untouchability through his novel *Untouchable*. The chapter then addresses the exploitation of the helpless laborers and the suppression of the poor in Anand's works *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud*.

Traditional Indian society was divided into groups. Those of the Hindu religion were categorized according to the caste into which they were born, based on their inherited occupations. Others were classified and grouped into social classes that were based on wealth and the accumulation of assets and worldly goods. As with any division, particularly involving the groupings of humans into categories, there is discrimination. At one end of the spectrum is the group that seems to be at an advantage and to garner benefits. At the other end is the group that is at a disadvantage and who is impeded, stunted and obstructed in nearly every aspect of their lives. In between these two opposing collections of people are the multitudes of individuals who fall on the spectrum somewhere among these two extremes; some more privileged than the others. The disparity of opportunity among all individuals was unfair and unjust as it favored some while was bigoted and was intolerant of others. Mulk Raj Anand was so disenchanted by

these divisions that he sought to rectify the state of affairs. He addressed the biased and prejudicial concept of dividing society into castes and social classes as well as highlighted the detrimental consequences these divisions had on society as a whole and the individuals among society specifically. The theme of eliminating the caste system and the capitalistic social class divisions was Anand's chief priority in his crusade for the betterment of humanity and humanitarian progress. Anand sought to dismantle the social classes of the world, not in a *socialist* way where everyone owns a bit of everything, in the steps toward a communistic way of life, but rather in a manner that would eliminate the division of the social order based on financial wealth and abolish the religious classification system of caste. Anand desires, according to Primal Paul, to "create in [his] readers an urgent awareness of the dehumanizing social evils, to stir the springs of tenderness in them, and to activize them for the removal of these evils in order that a desirable or a just social order may come into being" (*The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A Thematic Study* 12). Anand wanted mankind, particularly those of Indian descent, to move forward in its thinking and evolve into a culture where basic human rights and egalitarian opportunities were afforded to all. Anand used his gift as an author to reveal to the world these substandard and defective practices in hopes of bringing about their demise.

Untouchability, caste discrimination, and exploitation were where Anand put his greatest efforts in trying to expose, overcome and eliminate their roles in Indian culture. The caste system was a product of the Hindu obsession for mental and physical immaculacy. The function and position of each Hindu person was based solely on his attachment to a specific caste. Interestingly, the caste system was believed by the sincere and unwavering faithful to have been formed with gallant objectives and was to have been kept in accordance with the directives of the Vedas, the sacred writings of the ancient Hindus. This however, was actually in violation of, and

contradicted, these scriptures. Jayaram V, noted author and writer on Hinduism and other related religions, maintains in his article “The Hindu Caste System” from the Hinduwebsite.com that “the Hindu caste system was a clever invention of the later Vedic society. The upper castes found it convenient to retain and perpetuate their social and religious distinction and political and economic advantage.” By maintaining this categorical divide among members, those with the power were able to sustain their prominent positions. The caste system dictated sanctions which cause detriment to certain groups of society by giving unfair advantages to some members over others. R. P. Masani states that the Hindu faithful believe that “the four castes [of the caste system] had emerged from four different limbs of the Creator of the Universe, the underlying idea is not one of detachment but of union” (151). With few exceptions, most of the ancient sects of Hinduism were caste based.

The Hindu caste system consisted of four major segments based on the occupation of the members. These occupations however, were not chosen vocations but rather invoke the trades or professions inherited by birth. These caste criteria were delineated from the dharmashastras, legal books based on religious beliefs, and enforced a stringent code of conduct. The people of the caste system were required to abide by the rigid expectations including to interact with only fellow caste members and also to practice endogamy; to marry within the same caste. This was done to prevent inter-mixing of the castes which was believed to cause the dharma to decline, which was a main reason why the caste system was invented in the first place. Rarely marriages between different castes did occur, and when it did, the couple moved to the lower caste because *marrying up* was not permitted. Women belonged to the caste into which they were born, however they did not possess many rights. A woman instead was considered the property and responsibility of her husband once she was married. Her duties included being her husband’s

servant, his minister in decision making, the mother to his children and his lover in his bed. The highest, priestly caste was the Brahmin.

Brahmins were viewed as the go-betweens for men and gods. According to Jayaram V, “they act as temple priests and invoke the gods on the behalf of others.” He continued by stating that they are “expected to demonstrate exemplary behavior and spend their lives in pursuit of divine knowledge and the preservation of the traditions.” According to Manu, the law maker, a Brahmin was an incarnation of dharma. He belonged to the excellent of the human race, and was endowed with intelligence and knowledge to attain Brahman. He was the highest on earth, the lord of all created beings. Whatever existed in the world was the property of a Brahman and he was entitled to it all.

The second caste, the warrior class, was the Kshatriyas. They were commanded by tradition. It was their duty to protect the people, and offer sacrifices not only to the gods, but also to their ancestors. They must abstain from pleasures of the senses. They were required to study the Vedas and therefore were entrusted to dispense justice. Manu dictated that it was the king’s responsibility to protect his people and his kingdom. “His authority should not be questioned except when he ignored his duties in supporting and protecting the Brahmins...It was the king’s responsibility to protect the caste system and the social order and lavish the priests with generous gifts at every opportunity”(Jayaram V.).

The Vaishyas made up the third caste. The Vaishyas were composed of the merchant and peasant classes. They cultivated the land, tended cattle and worked as bankers lending money. Though they were not permitted to marry women from higher castes therefore allowing them to

improve their caste status, they were allowed to participate in some of the Vedic (religious) rituals.

The fourth-ranking caste was the Shudras. This low-caste group's primary function was to serve the three higher castes. This labor class had few rights. They were not permitted to study the Vedas or observe any of the sacred chants. They were not considered worthy enough to witness these holy proceedings. They were forbidden to marry women of higher castes to try to improve their status. They were also prohibited from eating in the sight of higher caste members as they would pollute and contaminate the food that was going to be put into their body to feed their soul, which was in total discordance with their concept of physical and mental purity.

Though it was stated that there were only four castes in the Hindu practice, there was a lower sub-caste of the Shudras. This deprived and poor group was called the Chandalas and they were thought to be impure. Due to their inherited professions - human waste haulers, butchers, hunters and graveyard personnel - in conjunction with their magical religious practices and their basic lack of hygiene, these uneducated people were not even believed to be human. They were deemed to be untouchable and polluted. Because they were not permitted to interact with any other castes other than to perform their everyday menial and unhygienic jobs, they lived basically on the fringes of society. The term used to identify a person of the lowest possible stature in the Hindustani culture was that of *untouchable*. It was held that if an individual of a higher ranking caste came into physical contact with a person of the untouchable class, the higher-caste Hindu would be despoiled, defiled, besmirched and dishonored. Untouchability among the untouchables was what Iyengar observed when he states that "there are degrees of caste among the 'low-caste' people, there being none low without one being lower still!" This

lowest category of people is measured so near to the ground that it was not considered human. To believe that a human being was so repulsive, filthy and sickening was an inhuman, brutally cruel and mercilessly callous concept. To actually practice this principle was unconscionable and morally unacceptable according to Anand.

Though the Hindu practice of the hierarchical caste system was based in ancient times, the British were able to enforce its colonial policies based on this model, according to Jayaram V. The British, through their respect of the Indian caste system, enacted these guiding principles in the development of governmental policies regarding employment and education as well as their militaristic formulations. The British did not seek to eradicate the caste practice, but rather used it to their benefit. By maintaining the social divisions, the English were able to sustain control of the Indian sub-continent. The mentality here was not so much a divide and conquer technique, but a modus operandi that focused on preventing the various divisions from banding together to overthrow and defeat the imperialistic control. The Indians were able to be kept in subjugation based on their own religious customs.

These ideologies were in direct contrast to what Anand believed. Besides finding the caste system to be a human atrocity, Mulk Raj Anand found it even more demeaning and outrageous for foreigners to exploit the natives based on this ancient custom. Anand so abhorred the caste system, particularly its inhumane treatment of the untouchable caste, that he made it his mission to educate the global public with the hope of eradicating this atrociously cruel custom. His first attempt to bring into worldly light this merciless practice was in his 1935 novel *Untouchable*.

The trials and tribulations Bakha encountered in one day of his life were chronicled in Mulk Raj Anand's novel: "Bakha is given passages and chapters of introspection as he fights his way towards a realization of the implications of 'untouchability'" (Robertson 100). It was the journey to self-awareness that was tragic in Bakha's set of circumstances; the problems Bakha stumbled upon throughout his day had caste inequality and the workings of the untouchability at its root. As the novel opened, the audience was introduced to a determined young man.

Bakha lived in a most unsanitary region of Hindu outcaste society. His tempestuous, mud-walled hut is situated near the putridly reeking marsh that has become the public toilet near where dead animal carcasses were amassed waiting to be converted into fuel. He lived with his younger brother and sister as well as his abusive father, the Jemadar (boss) of the town sweepers. The reader was introduced to Bakha as a seemingly light-hearted young man with an affinity for the white man's life. As he labored in the latrines of the British barracks, Bakha was made aware of life outside the caste system. The residents of the British command post exhibited behaviors and customs that were unfamiliar and unknown to the untouchable. "He stared at [the Tommies (the British soldiers)] with wonder and amazement...and he had soon become possessed with an overwhelming desire to lead their life" (13.) The Tommies revealed to Bakha ways of life where caste was not a factor. They spoke to him, gave him gifts of old, worn garments, and treated him somewhat humanly. The British soldiers were not required to reject his company as the upper-caste Hindus were. Anand looked forward, with optimistic hope, that there would come a time when Bakha would not be shunned because of his caste affiliation and would be considered adequate company among those who now belong to the upper castes.

Bakha awoke this particular morning, though one could assume that it was an ordinary day like all the days before, to the abuse of his tormenting father. His father called him names

like “son of a pig” and said that he was “illegally begotten” - an illegitimate child born of a cheating wife. As Bakha tried to become fully alert, he feigned symptoms of illness, not because he was sick, but rather because he did not want to tend to his occupational responsibilities. Soon there was a call for Bakha to perform his duty; a member of a higher caste wanted a latrine cleaned. As Bakha carried out his task, he encountered Charat Singh, a high-caste Hindu and somewhat famous hockey star. Singh condescended, though not in a pompous manner, to speak to Bakha. He even promised to bestow the gift of a hockey stick upon him. “Charat Singh’s generous promise had called forth that trait of servility in Bakha which he had inherited from his forefathers: the weakness of the downtrodden, the helplessness of the poor and the indigent suddenly receiving help, the passive contentment of the bottom dog suddenly illuminated by the prospect of fulfillment of a secret and long-cherished desire”(20). Bakha’s anticipation and dream of departing this brutal life had been given hope.

As Bakha’s morning progressed, though down-trodden with the work he had to perform and the abuse he had tolerated, he was able to express some light-heartedness. Being in a rather pleasant mood, he decided to visit the bazaar where he made a rather extravagant purchase of cigarettes and candy. Due to his being a filthy sweeper however, Bakha was required to place his money on a table whereas the stall-keeper would douse the coin with water so as to clean away the impurities of Bakha’s touch before he actually accepted the payment. In Hindu caste society, an untouchable himself, as well as anything he had been in contact with, must be decontaminated to rid it of all impurities. Though this was typical and customary behavior that Bakha had been acclimatized to accept, Anand used this channel to convey his message of equality and demonstrate how the obliteration of the caste system would alleviate the idea of human contamination.

All sweepers and Chandalas were required to announce their approach when moving toward anyone of a higher order. As Bakha proceeded through the marketplace, he savored his sweets and visualized the English lessons he was hoping to partake in later that afternoon. With his head in the clouds, Bakha was insolently brought back to reality with the shouts of “Keep to the side of the road, ohe low-caste vermin!...Why don’t you call, you swine, and announce your approach?(52). As an undesirable, Bakha was required to announce his approach to notify and warn other higher-caste people so they could avoid any possibility of accidental or inadvertent contact with him. At that moment, Bakha collided with an unforgiving man. This incident served as the catalyst for a day of never-ending bad luck.

The man whom Bakha brushed against hurled harsh and cruel insults protesting his defilement. Soon a crowd gathered and the aggrieved man disclosed to all who would listen the egregious deed that had just taken place. The threatening mob swarmed Bakha who began to fear for his life. In retaliation for his being touched, the man slapped Bakha knocking his turban and his candy to the ground. It was interestingly paradoxical that the violated man was willing to touch Bakha to invoke pain and punishment by slapping him; however it was not acceptable for Bakha to initiate the contact. This was another example of inequality and disparity among the caste Hindus. Though he was able to escape, Bakha did not leave unscathed. “There was a smoldering rage in his soul. 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”(57). Bakha’s day would grow from bad to worse. Nearly each action he took throughout the day would result in something tragic, or nearly tragic, transpiring. As he tended to his cleaning responsibilities at a temple, Bakha realized that he was present at a religious service that he was forbidden to witness; it was believed that untouchables could

pollute a house of worship from a distance of up to sixty feet. Bakha was cautious not to draw attention to himself as he watched from the periphery. Suddenly a commotion startled Bakha and disrupted the service. Bakha came to realize that his sister had been dishonored and assaulted, however the assailant claimed that it was he who had been violated. A hypocritical priest claimed that he was defiled by the untouchable, but rather it was Bakha's sister who was assaulted when the priest fondled her breasts. Bakha made sure that his sister got home and then carried on with his duties. His daily activities included having to beg for food. Bakha fell asleep near the entranceway to a house. He was awakened by the beratement of the home owner for defiling her home and requiring it to be sanitized. Even the pleasant situation, which began with Bakha receiving the promise of a hockey stick and his optimistically voicing the possibility of his good karma being rewarded, transformed into a terrible state of affairs. But his day had to continue.

Eventually the long-anticipated hockey game got underway. There was a young boy present who wanted to play, but his older brother insisted that it was too unsafe. Bakha made a plea on behalf of the youngster, but to no avail. As a spectator, the little boy was severely injured. Not only was Bakha blamed for the mishap, he was accosted and abused by the mother for touching the child and trying to help.

In reviewing the trials and tribulations of Bakha's day, one most undoubtedly questions whether this was a typical day in his life, or an out-of-the-ordinary day. Was it characteristic or unusual? Was it ordinary or extraordinary? Yes, it was a usual day in the life of an untouchable. And it is not a day through which any human being should have to suffer. Due to his low-caste position in Hindu society, Bakha experienced evil and inhumane treatment. He questioned the treatment he experienced at the hands of others when he said:

Why are we abused? The santry inspector that day abused my father. They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too. That's why I came here. I was tired of working on the latrines every day. That's why they don't touch us, the high-castes. The tonga-wallah was kind. He made me sweep telling me, in that way, to take my things and walk along. But he is a Muhammadan. They don't mind touching us, the Muhammadans and the sahibs. It is only the Hindus, and the outcastes who are not sweepers. For them I am a sweeper, sweeper - untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word! Untouchable! I am an Untouchable!(58).

Untouchability is an atrocity to the human race. Through his day of introspection, Bakha came to realize the implication of untouchability. He was aware that other groups outside of the Hindu religion were not required to shun and avoid dealing with him and the other untouchables. Bakha may not have been able to envision the end of the caste system; however he was able to realize that he would be better off without it. Though beyond Bakha's ability to comprehend or understand, Anand made it obvious to the reader that with the abolishment of the caste hierarchy, no human would have to endure these cruel and heartless actions again. R.T. Robertson states that the caste division, or more notably, untouchability, is paradoxical: "Bakha is both isolated from and bound to his culture; it will not allow him fully to participate in the society and cannot release him from it because of the essential service he performs for it" (101). The cycle of life perpetuates the untouchable's life experiences: Because the untouchable must carry human waste and live near the latrines in addition to the fact that he does not have access to clean water, leaves the untouchable without a way to become clean. This leads to him being further

ostracized by society. This same society however, requires the untouchable's service to clean and make sanitary his living conditions so that he is not exposed to or required to eliminate that which the untouchable does. Without the service of the untouchable, the caste Hindu would need to perform the service that sets him apart from, ranks him higher than, the untouchable. It is an unending sequence that cannot be broken until those involved in its perpetuation decide to put an end to the deplorable cycle. Gupta, in *Mulk Raj Anand: A Study of His Fiction in Humanist Perspective*, defines the caste system as "a satanic devise of man to subject a part of the community to eternal subjugation and humiliation...and to safeguard their self-imposed exalted position" (28-29). In showing both sides of the issue, Anand does not overstate his message nor does he coerce the reader into considering only one side. Anand provides evidence for support that not all upper caste Hindus are evil and corrupt, such as Charat Signh, and he also presents a view that not all untouchables should evoke sympathy from the reader, like Bakha's father. Charat Signh treats Bakha almost humanly as he speaks to him and promises him a gift. Though he requested that Bakha clean a latrine for him, it is Bakha's job and responsibility to do so. Bakha's father however, the jamandar, is presented in a malevolent light. He is not portrayed as caring or compassionate. He accepts and perpetuates heartless and cruel behavior as he continually berates Bakha. Anand's fundamental message, particularly in *Untouchable*, is that segregation by caste is a "cruel evil, the practice of which results in suppression those who are denied their fundamental right to grow into respectable citizens of society" (Gupta 25). With the elimination of the caste system, there would be a chance for equality among all human beings.

Comparable to the wicked and malicious customs of the caste system, is the division of social classes, a way in which Indian society was further segregated. As the feudal distinctions

of rank were declining, new social groups were forming. These groups, which consisted of the capitalists and the new, industrial, working class, were defined primarily in economic terms, either by ownership of the capital or by the dependence on wages. These groups were ordinarily broken into three categories: the upper class, the middle class and the lower class, however it seems more appropriate to label them the powerful and the powerless. Paul states in *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A Thematic Study*, that “This canker of class system often results in the segregation and subjugation of thousands of people into perpetual misery and eventual extinction. Class has certainly proved more divisive than caste in Indian society because it is able to affect every section of the society at the economic, cultural and political levels” (31). India was divided into two classes: the wealthy and the poor. The power-wielding upper class contained class divisions founded on assets and capital possessions. The more they possessed the more influential and commanding they were. The lower, poor class also had striations based on financial holdings. Those who owned or had more were able to manage, regulate and preside over those who had nothing. The wealthy ruled the poor and the poor presided over the impoverished. The delineation between the two classes was extensive, basically insurmountable, and unable to be bridged. Paul goes on to assert his view that Anand, “with his strong passion for the economic and the subsequent human betterment of the ‘have-nots’, is engaged in highlighting the cancerous effects of this class system” (32), particularly in his novels *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud*. His purpose for authoring these two novels, according to Paul, is to highlight “the different aspects of the problem of exploitation of the helpless labourers by the capitalists. The principal thrust...[being] directed towards the unmasking of the ubiquitous class-consciousness operating nefariously at all levels of society, and ruining all attempts made to realize a just social order” (52).

Anand's second novel, *Coolie*, was written in 1935 and shed light onto the wretched condition experienced by the lower class with the rise of the trade union movement. The life of Munoo, the young protagonist, was chronicled in this saga. He was a victim not of caste, but of class. Munoo was a poor hill boy who had no background or training in skilled workmanship. Though he was willing and wanting to work to earn an honest wage, he was continually exploited and taken advantage of due to his lowly place in society. The mistreatment and abuse he experienced was documented throughout his story. Paul says that "*Coolie* is a veritable saga of unending pain, suffering and prolonged struggle punctuated only occasionally by brief moments of relief and hope. It presents various experiences...at the hands of various exploiters...Thus it is only the exploiters that change; the exploited remains the same" (43). Though he was young, Munoo recognized that his despair and distress stemmed from poverty caused by class differences. Paul also states that Munoo's "earnest efforts to earn an honest livelihood and live a tolerably decent life are mercilessly thwarted by the selfish rich who appear to be bent upon promoting no interests but their own" (44). The pursuit of wealth and the growing separation between the "haves" and "have-nots" brought about the downfall of Munoo in particular, and mankind universally.

The novel opened with an introduction to the young orphan Munoo. He resided in the hills with his aunt and uncle where he tended cattle and lived a basically simple life, however it was often difficult and Munoo was occasionally beaten and suffered other abuses. These mistreatments were common, frequent and customary in the lives of the underprivileged. In the novel, Anand writes that "all coolies were, [to the privileged,] a nuisance – rude, uncouth, dirty people to be rebuked, abused or beaten like the donkeys" (127). It was time, this orphan's extended family believed, that Munoo should earn some money. His family was poverty-

stricken and it was necessary for the fourteen year old to begin to supplement the household's income. Though he was not happy to be leaving, Munoo expected that he would go to town where beautiful food, clothes and toys would be found. The journey to his new place of employment was physically grueling, however it was nothing compared to what he would experience in the rest of his short and exploited life.

When Munoo arrived in town, "he felt as if he were walking in a dream, in a land of romance where everything was gilded and grand, so different was this world from the world of the mountains...[however] he could not realize the significance of this world" (9). Munoo knew it was unlike the world he had inhabited his entire life, he just did not understand how or why. When Munoo was introduced to his new bosses, the man and woman he was to serve, he was immediately put into his place; a lesser and second-rate being. His stint as the house servant for the bank clerk was to be a life-lesson in how cruel and unkind other humans can be – based on class difference.

Abuse was rendered at Munoo for various causes and from all directions. Insults were hurled his way because he relieved himself outside the door of the banker's home. He chose this place to defecate because he did not know where to go to evacuate his bowels as he could not identify any latrine in the vicinity. Lower class people from the hills, those who were of the *have-nots*, were not familiar with outhouses or other places used to relieve oneself. He was scolded and reprimanded for trying to enjoy and partake in some of the amusing games which the children played. He was told that he was a servant and that he must not cavort with the children. Munoo was not allowed to use utensils when he ate as he was considered too low in status. He was told what to do and where he belonged; not as a human, but as an inferior being.

Munoo “realized his place in the world. He was to be a slave, a servant who should do the work, all the odd jobs, someone to be abused, even beaten...He felt sad; lonely” (31).

It was while employed at Babu Nathoo Ram’s house that Munoo came to realize his identity and his destiny. He questioned himself: “What am I – Munoo?...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, and why he was a servant and Babu Nathoo Ram his master. His identity he took for granted, and the relationship between [the two was] inevitable, unquestionable” (34). Munoo became conscious of his classification as a low-class, subjugated slave. He realized that he was to be kept under the control by the master. Because he *owned nothing*, he was doomed to be made submissive and subservient to those who *had* things. Anand goes on to describe Munoo as:

Conditioned by the laws and customs of the society in which he had been born, the society whose castes 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...He was condemned by an iniquitous system always to remain small, abject and drab;..an ineffectual ‘pawn on the chessboard of destiny’ such as the village priest had declared all men to be, with perverted ambitions in a world of perverted ideas, and he was to remain a slave until he should come to recognize his instincts. These people were superior. What constituted their superiority, he did not know...He did not search for causes and effects...And thus thoroughly convinced of his inferiority, accept[ed] his position as a slave (35-36).

The cause of Babu Nathoo Ram's feeling of superiority is basically unfounded. He too was considered second-rate, just not as lowly as Munoo. For in class distinction, there was always someone on a lower level than the lowest ranking individual. However, Babu Nathoo Ram had been "hardened into cruelty by his love of money, by the fear of poverty and by the sense of inferiority that his job as a peon in the bank gave him" (48).

Munoo remained the servant in the banker's home, trying to do what was expected of him. It was difficult for him to accept being ruled and not permitted to participate in the fun activities in which the other children took part. At one point, he could resist no longer. Munoo began to entertain the children by dancing like a monkey. The children enjoyed his antics until he unintentionally bit one of the little girl's cheeks. For this deed, Munoo was severely beaten. It was at this point in the account of Munoo's life that Anand asserts his conviction: "A whipped dog hides in a corner, a whipped human seeks escape" (59). Munoo, a human being, not different from any other human being, was separated from and ranked higher in importance above the animal kingdom because of his ability to detect and escape from an intolerable and deplorable situation. He ran away in hopes of finding equality and justness, but instead found himself in a comparable situation with similar circumstances.

The next adventure on which Munoo embarked involved his work at a pickle factory in a feudal city. During his escape from Babu Nathoo Ram's control, he met two friendly men who took him home and fed him well. Munoo believed his state of affairs was improving. His friend, Prabha, introduced him to a means by which he could earn a living. Prosperity would soon be his. He arrived at the factory which "sank like a pit into the bowels of the earth" (55). Though the premonition Munoo felt forewarned him of ruin, he was too naive to understand the hunch. Munoo was introduced to the caustic world of industrialized production. Though he believed it

to be his good fortune that he had stumbled upon work, he also believed it unfortunate that it was managed by such an abusively merciless and malicious man. The harsh and caustic conditions in which he was forced to work were unsafe and unhealthy. As time passed, Munoo found himself to be dejected and despondent. The only comfort he seemed to find was in the unspoken solidarity which was present between him and the other coolies.

An argument between the persons in charge at the factory broke out. The splitting of the partnership had money as a component, but also was attributed to the class difference of the two former associates. Ganpat shouted to his ex-associate: "I am through with such scum as you. You are not my class. You are coolies and belong to the street and there you shall go. I spit on you" (106). Though at one time the coolie may have been under the assumption that he and his partner were on the same level, it was clearly verbalized that this was never the case. Those who have are never equal to those who *don't have*. When the creditors came to claim the money due them from the partners, it was the coolie who was held responsible as he was the lower ranking of the two. Munoo lost his job and was forced to find work elsewhere.

Munoo was prepared to find work immediately. His intention was to work the next day lifting bags of grain. In order to gain this employment, he had to get to the courtyard early. Here he became acquainted with the deplorable conditions in which low class humans were exposed, and settled in any way. Anand described the scene as this:

The smell of stagnant drains, rotten grains, fresh cow-dung and urine, the foul savor of human and animal breath and the pungent fumes of smoldering fuel cakes, all combined to produce an odorous atmosphere in the compound, sickening until you were used to it, or till your attention was turned to keeping

clear of the sprawling naked bodies, glistening with sweat, or sheeted like ghosts in a vain attempt to escape the flies and mosquitoes that hovered like an invisible plague in the darkness (117).

Though the environment in which Munoo found himself was appalling, he never thought about leaving. Munoo was going to be gainfully employed because his desire to earn money possessed his soul, in addition to the ingenuity he used to outsmart others other coolies competing for the same work. Munoo tried to work in the courtyard; however he was too small and too weak to carry the loads. Because there was no work for him there, he decided to go to Bombay where it had been rumored that there was plenty of well-paying jobs.

He arrived in Bombay to be greeted by its inundating splendor. Munoo caught a glimpse of life as he had never perceived it. There were people from many different countries speaking languages Munoo had never heard. There was magnificent architecture that Munoo had never conceived possible. There was the hustle and bustle of city life and Munoo found himself exhausted due to the way it overwhelmed his senses. He was also greeted by the reality that in Bombay, coolies were still coolies and were to be treated as such. He was told to sit on the floor rather than on a stool and was put in his place when he entered an eating establishment and ordered a drink. “He realized that Bombay was no different from Daulatpur or Sham Nagar, only more confusing...and that there [was] no money to be picked up in the streets...because there are poor people here too” (160-161). Bombay, just like the other cities in which Munoo had visited as an eager worker, was affected by discrimination based on class. It was in Bombay that Munoo rescued a young girl from being hit by a car. For his heroic deed, the father of the child took Munoo under his wing and brought him home with his family. Hari would be Munoo’s confidant in this next journey in his life.

Hari and Munoo came to find work in a cotton mill. This industrialized plant was filthy and polluting but also mysterious and grand. The Sahibs who functioned as managers and supervisors earned money through means of extortion in addition to their salaries. The subjugated coolies were required to pay a commission to the boss for the gift of a job. The dominated workers were obliged to pay exorbitant amounts of money for the renting of inferior and unsanitary huts. They were forced to take loans with ridiculously high interest rates on speculation of what their earnings might be just to have food to eat and a place to sleep. These belittled humans were continually taken advantage of and constantly cheated. The managers of the factory loafed around while the peasant workers intensely labored at their tasks. One supervisor admitted his desire for the elimination of the low-life workers. But their wish to obtain and keep money was dependent on the work of these laborers; they were necessary to keep around, for the sake of their livelihood.

The job at the factory proved to be arduous and perilous. The machines that operated in the plant caused the factory environment to be hazardous. The working conditions were poor, in both health and safety components. At one point Munoo nearly lost his life when his shirt became entangled in a machine. He was able to escape basically unharmed and unmaimed, unlike many of the other factory workers. The injuries he suffered were more psychological than physical. Munoo came to believe that he was bad luck and that the world would be better off if he were dead.

Anand brilliantly wrote about a devastating and horrible storm that caused a great deal of damage including ravaging the hut where Munoo, Hari and his family were living. The lowly coolies were rescued by Ratan, who, because of his brave and laudable actions, became a hero to Munoo. Ratan was a powerfully built, somewhat educated young man, backed by the knowledge

of unions, who was willing to stand up to the sahibs and who tried to make sure that the individuals of the low class were not taken advantaged of. Ratan assumed the role of big brother to Munoo. It was Ratan who was largely responsible for the maturation which took place in Munoo. Munoo wanted to grow up and was excited with the prospect of doing so. Maturation is a process however, and Munoo would never complete this lengthy journey.

Soon after taking Munoo to a brothel, Ratan was fired from his job. Though no absolute reason for his termination was given, the reader was to assume that Ratan was released from his duties because he was not able to be kept in check. The persons of higher classes, including the sahibs, knew that they must continue to keep the coolies suppressed so they would continue to labor as directed. Ratan was viewed as a challenge to their authority and their position. When word spread that Ratan had been released from his duties, coolies from from the mill came to commiserate with him. They were a ruined and defeated people. A union official visited the gathering. He profoundly states: "Do not all the insults you people suffer arouse you from the apathy to which you have succumbed? Does not all the misery, all the degradation you suffer rouse you to indignation? I tell you that they have ground you down, they have fleeced and sweated you, they have tortured your lives alone" (219)! It was here that a solution was presented. The sahib told them that they are human beings and have the right to be treated as such. The Englishman suggested that the workers go on strike to reap the benefits they rightly and justly deserved.

As the strike was about to be discussed, the workers were notified that there would be a reduction in the amount of hours to be worked. Shorter days would equal less work which in turn meant a smaller amount of money to be earned. Rather than be put down again by those in a higher social position, the coolies decided to attend the All-Indian Trade Union Federation

meeting hoping to find a resolution to their predicament. It was here that the low class individuals were told that there was an enormous difference between the mill owners who take advantage of them, and them, the exploited. The difference was in the treatment and opportunities they receive, not that they were any different inherently. Again the plausible solution of a strike and a list of demands were discussed. This time the conversation was interrupted with the frantic cry of a kidnapping. Chaos and hysteria ensued and an all-out, race riot was the result. Munoo tried desperately to escape, but was confronted with certain death. Fortunately, he was rescued by agents of the social service. Though Munoo was able to get away with his life, he, for the first time, “realized the hardness of life” (248). He understood that, in order to exist, one must continually fight the things that try to keep you down. As Munoo began to comprehend this, he walked around the beautiful city of Bombay, admiring its exquisiteness. Not paying complete attention to his actions or his surroundings, Munoo was struck by a car. This incident would be another life-altering event.

Munoo was run down by a car owned by Mrs. Mainwaring. She was a Simla resident who was born to English and Indian parents. Due to the class and cultural inequities, Mrs. Mainwaring did all she could to disguise and deny her Indian heritage thereby placing herself with the higher social class. The guilt she felt for injuring Munoo compelled her to bring him to her home and employ him as a servant and rickshaw driver; because she needed, or wanted, another servant, not out of the kindness of her heart. Though Munoo found himself to be the most content there of all his jobs, it was the most humanly demeaning occupation he had undertaken. Dhawan says that “Anand is at his bitterest [when] Munoo, the coolie, is made to carry another human being” (63). It is in this piece of the novel that Anand makes a bold proclamation: Munoo was considered so low and sub-human that he was required to bend over

and physically transport another human being without any effort from the one being hauled about. Even as he began to exhibit symptoms of a serious illness, Munoo was required to carry out his servant duties. It was as the Mainwarings' servant that Munoo succumb to tuberculosis and died at a young age. The lowly, unappreciated coolie was worked to death.

Munoo, a kindly and pathetic boy, always seemed to find someone to outwardly rescue him from darkness and gloom just before he nearly perished. After each incident from which Munoo escaped, he experienced the fear of the unknown and the emotive rousing of hope for a new situation, a new life, he was about to enter. Munoo's life was a veritable struggle from the time he left home. He endured almost constant pain and suffering. Though he was uneducated, he was intelligent enough to realize that his predicament was due to his poverty and low-class status. "Munoo is made aware of the distinct line between the masters and himself which 'must not be crossed from either side.' But his 'impish curiosity' about 'the potencies of civilisation' and his juvenile buoyant spirit often spell trouble for him because he is unaware of the sinister operations of class-consciousness" (Paul 45). It is discrepancies between the classes that have brought separation and molded the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent into a ruthless and mercilessly disconnected and distinctly unrelated population. Paul states that "Money is at the root of all evil and not merely at that of class-consciousness. Money decides human relationships too. It can make masters and monsters of men" (47-48). Invariably, the desire for riches and power can and does turn ordinary men into those who are aggressively engaged, at every opportunity, in the procurement of wealth. Because of their obsession to obtain these funds, they would do whatever it took to attain their goal.

The anguish and mistreatment that Munoo suffered because he was a low-class individual was not restricted to him alone nor to individuals of a specific region of India. This was a

common occurrence that was experienced throughout the country; in both the urban and rural areas. In his third novel, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Anand chose to again focus on the misery afflicted upon the lowest classes of humanity by those of the wealthier class, this time on a plantation.

Two Leaves and a Bud was an account of a poor farming family just looking to make ends meet and dreaming of one day where they could again own outright a plot of land on which they could live and farm. As the tale opened, the reader was introduced to Gangu and his family as they embarked on a journey to a tea plantation in Assam. The family was persuaded to move to Assam where they were to be, what amounted to, indentured servants. Buta Ram convinced the family that rather than be indebted to treacherous money-lenders, they would be able to toil on this tea plantation, and for their hard work, be rewarded with a portion of the land as their own. Gangu, who had until recently owned land, now found himself in debt. His brother passed away owing money and Gangu's property, in accordance with the law, was confiscated in order to pay off the financial obligation incurred by his brother. The practice of taking funds from family members to pay a debt acquired by another family member was not a custom that was observed by all social classes. It was a procedure put into practice to increase the amount of capital the rich possessed and take away any rights and assets the poor had. It was the wealthy fundamentally stealing from the poor to keep them suppressed.

They were coolies, Gangu and his family; "poor, low men, created by God to do all the work" (88). Gangu was suspicious of the proposal set forth by Buta, but he found that he did not have any other viable options. He packed up his family and embarked on a train to the tea plantation where he had been promised a life where he had no debt, would be given a plot of land, the opportunity for the advancement of money if needed, the bonus of having his fare to the

plantation paid, and the chance to earn enough money to be able to send some of it to his relations if he so desired. On the journey to the plantation however, Gangu had the inclination that all which he had been promised may not be exactly what he was to receive. Anand described it as this: “Gangu, though broken and defeated, was a shrewd enough peasant, whose bitter sufferings had inclined him to measure every particle of speech...He knew somehow that he was being deceived. But he loved the land” (6). He was intelligent enough to comprehend the possibility of him having been duped, but the slight prospect of this situation working out was enough for Gangu to move forward with his plan. When the family arrived at the train station, the promised cavalcade was not there to transport them to the plantation. This was not going to be the only disappointment they were to experience based on Buta’s promises.

The plantation was managed by the Croft-Cooke family. They were wealthy, white, English sahibs. Their entire agricultural estate, however, did not reflect their prosperity. The segment which was used to house the field workers and their families was lacking basic, hygienic provisions such as septic tanks and other sanitary ways of removing human waste. Mr. Croft-Cooke explained that the workers did not require sanitary working conditions because “These coolies are sub-human, and do not altogether value the benefits of hygiene” (27). Reggie Hunt was an employee on the Croft-Cooke estate. He was an oppressive tyrant whose duty it was to keep the low-life workers in line “He was full of the pride of the white man...He was involved in an ecstasy of sheer power” (40). He possessed “a belligerent passion for destruction” (42). Contracted to work on the plantation was another sahib, John de la Havre, the farm physician. It was this educated man who worked to procure the betterment of the underprivileged slaves of the tea plantation. De la Harve had “come to regard Indians as human beings and to believe that they had a right not only to rule themselves, but to rule themselves

justly by destroying the inequalities of caste and class and creed” (28). De la Harve, though from a more affluent class, worked to improve the situation of the plantation workers and was the only ally the poor and mistreated coolies had on this particular tea plantation.

The family was given a hut in which to live. Sajani, Gangu’s wife, and the children were in high spirits when they viewed what was to become their shelter. Gangu, on the other hand, was suspicious of its practicality; he envisioned several drawbacks. Gangu made the acquaintance of his neighbor, Narain, another coolie. Gangu learned that Narain had worked on the plantation for twelve years. Narain asked Gangu what blight upon his fortune caused him to come to such a place. Narain revealed to Gangu the fate that awaited him when he said “You can’t escape from here now...You can never go back...This prison has no bars, but it is nevertheless an unbreakable jail” (34-35). Gangu and his family were stuck in a dreadful situation from which there appeared to be no escape (other than through death); a place where the coolies were to be kept down and at a safe distance.

Gangu’s family believed that he was earning an impressive wage at this new place of employment. Sajani wanted to shop for more than what she was accustomed to getting. Leila, his daughter, wanted jewelry and clothing similar to what other, higher-ranking women wore. Buddhu, his son, desired toys that he had seen other children playing with. However, the wages Gangu and his family earned were less than the money he received for his work alone on the farm from which they came. The shop keepers at the bazaar relentlessly tried to exploit Gangu, his family, and the other coolie consumers. Their outrageous prices as well as their indignant and unfair remarks were indicators of the abuse and maltreatment with which the slightly elevated class besieged the subjugated coolies.

The next catastrophic event the family had to confront was that of illness due to the unsanitary conditions in which they lived and worked. After returning from the bazaar, Gangu and Sajani displayed symptoms of ill health. The suspected root of the sickness was cholera, an infection of the small intestines caused by exposure to, and consumption of, unsanitary food and water. Indeed this horrible condition struck its victims causing severe diarrhea and vomiting which in turn led to acute dehydration and frequently, death. The harsh reality of this infection was appreciable when Narain, the neighbor, recalled that “He had been through the [cholera] epidemic last year and [had] seen two hundred coolies leveled out in less than a month. He dreaded the very name of the disease which brought such certain death” (79). The unhygienic and contaminated conditions in which the coolies were subjected to live and work caused the ruin and death of many. Had these deprived humans been afforded the basic means of sanitation provided to the wealthier individuals, incalculable numbers of lives could have been saved. Sajani’s life was taken by a dreadful illness. As medical attention arrived to ascertain and assist with the condition of the ill couple, she was pronounced dead. The response by Mr. Croft-Cooke was that he could not understand why these peasants had not learned the usefulness of hygiene and sanitation; that which he denied them.

Gangu was faced with the dilemma of having to obtain the means by which he could pay the expenses required for Sajani to receive the last rites. He recalled that taking a loan was an option, but Gangu resolved that he would never borrow money because such advancement of money was “the cause of his ruin and every moment of his exile reminded him of the curse of borrowing” (100). He decided however, that a loan was his only option to see that his wife received the proper ceremony for her death so Gangu went to pay a visit to Sahib Bahadur to beg for the favor of a loan. This jaunt required that he pay a bribe to the chaprasi just to get audience

with the sahib. The poor required the even more destitute to pay money that they obviously didn't have. The poor took advantage of the even poorer citizens. Upon finally being granted audience with the sahib, Gangu begs for a loan to pay his wife's funeral expenses. Croft-Cooke realized that Gangu's wife had died from an infection, and drove him out of the office, horrified that he had been exposed to the sickness.

After experiencing the emotional trauma brought on by Sajani's death and Gangu's predicament, the reader was given additional insight into one of the few white characters who was not presented as malicious and malevolent, Dr. de la Havre. It is important to note that Anand intentionally chose a white man as an advocate for the suppressed. He wanted to make sure that the reading public did not view all sahibs as evil and corrupt. In the bulk of chapter nine of *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Anand used De la Harve as his mouthpiece to reveal the deficiencies and inadequacies the coolies suffered not only on the tea plantation in Assam, but throughout the Indian subcontinent. De la Harve questioned as to why "these swarming, under-nourished, bleary, worm-eaten millions of India suffer so" (112)? "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" (113). He believed that the predicament of the plantation coolies of India was analogous to the North American slaves on the cotton plantations. He was of the opinion that plantation labor was "a monstrous crime against humanity" (114). In the notes that De la Harve kept on the plight of the coolies he wrote:

The coolie suffers not only this low level of wages but frequently from indebtedness to his employers in outlandish districts where he is dependent upon the shops provided by the employers for his foodstuffs, fuel, etc. This

indebtedness, together with the isolation of the plantation, renders it difficult for him to seek employment elsewhere, and this practically reduces him to a life of economic slavery. His treatment often borders on the inhuman and his chances of justice and redress are chimerical (115-116).

Anand, through De la Harve, specifically maintained that the coolies were stuck in a situation where, because of their dependence on their employers not only for the opportunity to earn a wage, but also from whom they acquired the necessary staples of life, they would never be able to break away or escape. Due to his sympathy for the loss Gangu suffered specifically, and also the the misery afflicted on all the coolies in general, De la Harve gave Gangu the gift of a plot of land that he could attempt to develop. The land, however, Gangu would come to find, was uncultivable and fruitless.

As Gangu worked his plot of land, he reflected on his circumstances. He hated Buta for being deceitful. He abhorred the fact that he had lost everything he once possessed. He found it insufferable, the pain he experienced due to the loss of his beloved wife. Just as he was about to succumb to defeat, Gangu had an epiphany. He became conscious of his will to fight; to go on; to survive. He was still aware however, of the white sahib who cast his terror across Gangu's thoughts.

The coolies however, were not always complacent victims who did not stand up for or defend their basic, human rights. After a group of plantation workers were beaten by Reggie Hunt and other sardars, many became aware of an understanding: "For suddenly, through the impact of the hard wood on their bones, they seemed to have realized the hopelessness of their

lot, even as the bullocks when beaten too rigorously shiver and snort with a sudden realization” (177). The coolies had been beaten into understanding. They became aware of the fact that they had suffered too long in silence and they became enraged with the fury of retaliation. Paul states that “This offers a telling comment on [the coolies] abject state brought on by capitalist exploitation. Their ‘crass stupidity’ is so firm and deep-rooted that neither hunger nor pestilence nor disease can provoke them to rebellion. ‘Abject submission is almost their second nature.’ It is little wonder therefore that only a great atrocity can shock them out of their servility or abject surrender to their masters” (36). As the group transported the injured victims of the beatings to the office of Dr. De la Havre, they raucously shouted, stomped and bellowed their praise for the doctor. He, they thought, would be their savior. De la Havre realized that something must have happened:

That these docile, gutless spineless coolies who never raised their voices except on the day of the holi, who went about the plantations with masks of crass stupidity on their faces, whose habitual submission was never disturbed by any outrage of man or beast, by hunger, pestilence or slow disease, that they should come shouting their appreciation for him, was uncanny. He was convinced that something terrible must have shocked them out of their humility (179).

After being appraised of the circumstances that led these coolies to his door, De la Havre felt helpless and ineffective. He suggested that they report the incident to the Burra Sahib, but he knew that would be an exercise in futility. Angered and feeling useless, De la Harve went on a quiet tirade where he said: “Why do you let them beat you? Why can’t you beat back, all of you together?..I am like you, a slave of the planters. I do not suffer from them as you do, because they think I am a sahib. They and their like beat the workers of Vilayat in the same way as they

beat you...There is no difference” (181). De la Havre considered himself a victim of the abuse just as the coolies were. His abuse, however, was not of the physical type. His flesh did not receive beatings, but his psyche was mentally punished.

The plantation slaves came to realize that, as in past history, the best way to wage war against their suppressors was to unite and organize. They also were aware that if they did band together and overthrow their tormenters, they would be left with nothing; no job, no home, and no possibility of finding employment any where in the region. The wealthy sahibs became conscious of the possibility that an attempt to overthrow their authority might be developing. Because they believed that their livelihood was in jeopardy, the sahibs called for reinforcements to subvert the coup. The mutiny was thwarted, no lives were lost, and life on the plantation returned to normal. Gangu and some of his friends were found to have been the instigators of the situation and were required to pay fines. They were also “allowed to enjoy the liberty of being a slave” (223). Gangu however, was a changed man.

At one time, Gangu thought of gold and riches as the ultimate channel for contentment and bliss. Gangu said to Narain:

Money is everything...It is the crux of the world...Gold is the living soul of man... Gold has the glitter which no sword has,...for it is gold that conquers understanding, and understanding that achieves gold, so that in this wonderful world gold and understanding are but conditions of each other. Every absurdity appears agreeable in a man on whom gold has smiled, even though he look like a dog and think like a donkey. Yes, brother, money is everything. It is the root of happiness (239-240).

He realized that if he had money, he would be able to have anything he desired; especially happiness and freedom. Gangu however, modified his opinion and amended his thought processes. Gangu hallucinated visions of rescue of all the coolie people. He imagined an army coming to do away with him. He reached a stage in his existence where he became essentially unaffected by life. "He became resigned, neutral and utterly apathetic. He crave[d] for no gold or silver. All that he aspire[d] for [was] a 'handful of rice'" (Paul 36). He arrived at an epiphany when he said:

Though the earth is bought and sold and confiscated, God never meant that to happen, for He does not like some persons to have a comfortable living and the others to suffer from dire poverty. He has created land enough to maintain all men, and yet many die of hunger, and most live under a heavy burden of poverty all their lives, as if the earth were made for a few and not for all men (224-225).

Gangu came to believe that God did not intend for some of His children to live in poverty while other of His children resided in wealthy circumstances. This sudden intuitive leap was a striking occurrence in Gangu's thought process. It coincided with the arrival of a terrible storm that destroyed much of the plantation, and in particular the plot of land which Gangu had been trying to cultivate. He felt that God was responsible for this deed; however he did not show antipathy towards Him for these actions, or in some instances, lack of action. Instead, Gangu appeared relieved, as though his fear of the inevitable had been purged and an awful weight had been lifted. Like Gangu, the coolies on the Macpherson plantation came to once again accept their servitude as the foundation of their existence.

The tale came to an end when Reggie Hunt's extensive desire to have a woman found him stalking Leila at her work and at her home. Reggie Hunt, according to Paul, "represents the cruelty and carnality of the affluent planter-class. His 'inexplicable glow of physical health' is in proportion to his diabolical wickedness. He lives for the sake of fun and frolic and has an insatiable passion for destruction" (36). Because Reggie was regarded as an authority figure, having more money and power than the laborers, he was able to give orders to the lower coolies. His commands were ordinarily abided by the subordinate workers. Leila was obligated to do as Reggie said because he was her superior and also because, as a woman, she had no power or authority over a man. Buddhu found Reggie to be a threatening nuisance and called for his father to return to the family hut. Reggie became so enraged that he fired his gun several times, killing Gangu. Through his death, Gangu experienced release from the the veritable prison where he had been held captive for what seemed to be an eternity. Death, according to Paul, is referred to as 'happy death' or 'release' because the social structure in which Gangu was dominated, was so tragically horrifying, and the only way to escape it was through death. C. D. Narasinhaiah commented that in *Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud* "Death had ceased to frighten these poor – they are all past fright; it is life that is a threat, and death is a release" (126). With death came the end to the subjugation experienced by the living. At Reggie Hunt's trial, the jury, which consisted of seven Europeans and two native Indians, found Hunt to be not guilty of murder and not guilty of culpable homicide. A man of his low stature would never be convicted of murdering a lower standing life form. Reggie Hunt's life as a planter meant little to anyone, but as a dominated coolie, Gangu's life was worth even less. Being that Reggie was considered *more* of a human than Gangu, Reggie was more worthy of life than Gangu.

Anand's comments throughout his account of life on an Assam tea plantation can indeed be conveyed to signify all of India. He seemed to believe that there were no justified grounds on which to force the lower class Indians to serve the needs of anyone in the horrific and horrendous conditions that they did. The British business proprietors on this particular plantation reduced the natives to slaves and perpetuated the cruel and heartless circle of dependence on the educated and wealthier classes for survival. This capitalistic exploitation of the natives further augmented the delineation of social classes and maintained the need for the powerless rank.

Anand's portrayal of the caste and class differences among Indian residents seems to have been developed accurately and without favoritism. He believed the relationship between the master and servant to be "inhuman, unhealthy and meanly submissive. He [did, however, accurately depict] the relationship between equals, and there are none more equal than the poor...Comradeship of man for man exists only among the very poorest of people. With nothing to hope for, their common humanity is all they possess" (Cawasjee, "Coolie: an Appraisal" 71). Paul says that Anand's "novels emphasise the pitilessness and soullessness of the exploiters who include ironically enough both the Whites and natives – a fact that speaks of the sordid character of money-consciousness or profit-motive" (51). Anand did not side with one group or another. He chose to favor the assembly recognized as humanity. He believed that with the elimination of the caste system and social class differentiations, that humankind would be on a more uniform and less biased plane. He hoped to draw attention to the plight of the powerless and gain assistance in procuring a more egalitarian society. Anand was not naive, nor was he of the belief that a utopian-like society could exist. He just wanted fair and impartial consideration for all human beings. If money and its pursuit were not an issue, such divisions of the human race would not exist. There would no longer be individuals considered to be the "haves", and

conversely, there would be no “have-nots”. With equal distribution of wealth, one group would not have an advantage over another. “Money should not rule the mind of man, the possessor of a big purse should possess a correspondingly big heart as well” (Paul 56). Equality in rights and treatment, egalitarianism, was what Anand wanted for all of humankind. He sought to extinguish man’s inhumanity toward man and the annihilation of God-given human rights that stem from the caste and class systems.

The Restoration of Dignity: Champion of the Poor and Outcast

“Surely as the divine powers take note of the dutiful, surely as there is any justice anywhere and a mind recognizing in itself what is right, may the gods bring you your earned rewards” - from The Aeneid, book 1

This chapter addresses Mulk Raj Anand’s belief that as a life commentator, it was his responsibility to illustrate and illuminate the conditions of India’s low class and outcast members of society. He did this by innovatively employing the subjugated and oppressed as protagonists in his works. This chapter examines the characters of Bakha in *Untouchable*, Munoo in *Coolie*, and Harry in *Two Leaves and a Bud* and how Anand was able to expose their dilemma with the hope of gaining recognition of their plight along and improve their situations.

Mulk Raj Anand is known as a champion of the downtrodden. In his humanitarian efforts to not only call attention to, but also alleviate social inadequacies such as the caste system and class divisions brought on by capitalism, Anand introduced the reading public to a novel and ground-breaking practice. He was an innovator in the Indian culture to write in English in favor of the browbeaten and broken underprivileged population. His protagonists consisted of sweepers, coolies and indebted farmers to name a few. Their coat of arms was their common sufferings and their level of poverty. Uncommon to his predecessors, he chose a basically untapped subject; to utilize an outcaste as a protagonist in his work. Choosing to make a low-caste character the hero of a novel was an innovative endeavor, particularly in the nineteen thirties. Naik, in his piece “Infinite Variety: A Study of the Short Stories of Mulk Raj Anand” states that:

First, Indian fiction in most of the Indian languages was then a fiction about middle and higher classes for the middle-classes by middle-class writers.

Secondly, even when low class life did enter it, it could not descend so low as to write about sweepers messing about with excrement. Furthermore, even if the average middleclass Indian writer wanted to write about so ugly a subject, he would have hardly have known the life of his protagonist in intimate detail (28).

Anand was a ground-breaking pioneer in his decision to employ poor and low-caste societal members as his protagonists. In *Apology for Heroism* Anand states that he was unique for introducing “into creative narrative...whole new peoples who have seldom entered the realms of literature in India” (79). His time spent as a sweeper gave him first-hand knowledge and an intimate understanding of the experiences and life of an outcaste.

Anand was one of the first authors to illuminate and illustrate the conditions experienced by India’s low class and outcast societal members. Agnihotri says that “These heroes are small men and common men. They are pursued by the inexorable economic and social forces, which toss them this way and that till they break to pieces. These heroes are not able to fight these forces because they are ignorant and uneducated and they belong to the underprivileged classes” (54). They suffered due to no fault of their own.

It was Anand’s belief that artists, particularly writers, had an obligation to fulfill their responsibility as tellers of tales to compose and plainly show the continual and daily dilemmas suffered by the oppressed citizens of India. It was the duty of the writer to reveal and expose the ambitions and desires of this society as well as to identify the deep-seated difficulties at its root and ultimately aid in the formation of a new, human-centered world order. Anand says in his

essay “Why I Write,” that “Truth alone should matter to a writer...This truth should become imaginative truth without losing sincerity. The novel should interpret the truth of life, from felt experience, and not from books.” It was Anand’s hope that after being introduced to the tragic plight of the underprivileged, the wealthy along with those who were ‘just comfortable’ would take action to alleviate the discrepancies and improve the lot in life of the less fortunate. It was the writer’s duty to furnish a balanced perception of life concerned with truth through this dramatization.

Similar to the literature of the time, Anand’s works did address social and political ideas that were customarily found in the time-honored plays, poems and essays of India created by such renowned and celebrated artists like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore. These works considered ideas such as the the role of women in society, the collision of cultures brought on by the imperialistic invasion of the British, as well as independence and freedom from foreign control. But unlike these works, Anand’s efforts instead focused on the difficult lives of the lowest classes. Dhawan says that “Anand [had] always felt that the less privileged populations in a country like India [had] been deliberately kept at a level of sub-humanity” (59). Anand’s intention was to employ the lowest human forms of society as protagonists and bring into light their predicament with the hope of obtaining recognition of their plight along with improvements in their situations. Anand himself says that he “was conscious of the need to help raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies and the other suppressed members of society, to human dignity and self-awareness in view of the abjectness, apathy and despair in which they are sunk” (*Apology*, 93). Anand’s original idea of utilizing sweepers and coolies as his heroes was not only innovative, it was compelling. Anand’s employment of these underprivileged characters as the protagonists in his novels drew attention to their difficult,

unfortunate and hopeless circumstances. Anand used lowly human protagonists in his novels *Untouchable*, *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud* to demonstrate to the world the predicament of these humble and deprived persons.

Each of these novels written by Mulk Raj Anand made use of distinct characters at different stages in their lives and from diverse life situations, yet they shared a common attribute: each were simple and humble main characters that, besides being deprived of the chance to thrive, they nonetheless continued to search for opportunities to flourish. Each had the ambition of improving their lives; they wanted and felt that they deserved to exist in a better way. Collectively the main characters worked hard and took pride in their efforts. Each protagonist continually met obstacles that hindered his growth and development. These barriers were results of economic deficiencies due to social class and caste discrimination; unfair bigotry. These characters also shared in the fact that none of them were able to overcome the obstacles that impeded their progress. Each faced multiple encumbrances yet they all acknowledged, accepted and endured these impediments. In order for these characters to have succeeded in attaining better lives, they would require assistance from other persons from higher-ranking castes and social classes to intervene on behalf of all the downtrodden. In the three novels mentioned, Anand showcased the plight of these deprived and neglected persons, from the reasons they were in these situations to begin with, to their struggles for a better and more humane life. While providing a greater and more intimate awareness of the lives of these lowly beings, Anand also presented to the public the inhumanity of the barbaric and uncivil treatment and the results of such conduct on these individuals as they tried to elevate their human status. Anand hoped to procure enough compassion and empathy for the helpless and exploited to lend a hand and facilitate an improvement in the lives of these unfortunate people.

Bakha was the central character in *Untouchable*. He was a charming young man who exhibited likable qualities. His quest was not of an individual nature but was instead an adventurous goal for all of humankind. Sinha in his piece “Anand’s Bakha: An Epical Character” maintains that it would be incorrect to treat Bakha as the representative of the exploited untouchable community and that it would be “more proper to look upon him as the champion of human dignity, freedom and growth” (49). Bakha stood for more than just the untouchable population; he was the embodiment of all the abused and neglected outcasts of the world searching for and wanting a just and reasonable existence. His impressive virtue made his character idyllic as he yearned for the discovery of a meaningful life. The tribulations experienced by Bakha were universal in the society of the oppressed. *Untouchable* was written to feature the questionable activities, and the physical and mental anguish, suffered by Bakha; who represented of all of India’s outcasts. His story showcased the terrible mistreatment experienced by these lowly human beings and aroused the compassion of individuals who could react to, respond to, and combat these atrocities. The misfortunes encountered by Bakha in the novel take place in the period from dawn until dusk. As a heroic and nearly omnipotent protagonist, Bakha was dealt blows but was consistently able to recover quickly from these setbacks. Bakha was resilient. “It was a sort of insensitivity created in him by the kind of work he had to do, a tough skin which must be a shield against all the most awful sensations” (20). Bakha was readily able to recover from adversity.

Bakha encountered Charat Singh, an acquaintance from a higher caste yet someone whom Bakha considered to be a friend. Singh was searching for a clean latrine in which to relieve himself. Because one was not readily available, he verbally chastised Bakha as it was his duty to maintain these facilities. He then offered him the gift of a hockey stick. This proposal

was made not as remuneration for the unkind behavior inflicted upon Bakha, but rather as an unrelated, simple and friendly gesture. Both Singh and Bakha viewed the situation as one of duty and responsibility for Bakha to maintain the facilities separate from their untraditional friendship. It also showed how Anand displayed the capability of members of two different castes to connect on a human level not dictated by social ranking.

A second situation presented by Anand to exhibit the lowly Bakha as the lead role in this saga had to do with thirst. Bakha was parched but did not have access to readily available drinking water. The thirst he experienced was the desire for a better life, but it was also a physical need for liquids. Because of the deplorable and unsanitary environments in which Bakha lived and worked, he had the need to quench his thirst. His desire for tea triggered his thoughts on the torment and gloom suffered by the people who work hard. Two points addressed by Anand in this situation include the realization by Bakha that hard work does not reap equal rewards for all; and also that the lowest life forms, the outcastes, had to depend on the willingness and generosity of higher caste individuals to obtain basic necessities such as water which are required to live. "The outcasts were not allowed to mount the platform surrounding the well, because if they were ever to draw water from it, the Hindus of the three upper castes would consider the water polluted. Nor were they allowed access to the near-by brook as their use of it would contaminate the stream" (22-23). When they needed water, they had to wait for a passerby and beg for their assistance in obtaining this essential component of life.

Another way that Anand was able to present Bakha as a *learning* character was through the actions of his father. His father consistently avoided any form of work, yet he insisted that Bakha labor intensely. This put the father on level with hypocrites, oppressors and tyrants. The fact that Bakha nevertheless respected his father's wishes as well as took pride in his work

demonstrated Anand's purpose in giving Bakha unsullied, distinctive qualities. When Bakha was cleaning the latrines, he imagined what an onlooker might have said:

'What a dexterous workman!'...And though his job was dirty he remained comparatively clean. He didn't even soil his sleeves, handling the commodes, sweeping and scrubbing them. 'A bit superior to his job,' they always said, 'not the kind of man who ought to be doing this.' For he looked intelligent, even sensitive, with a sort of dignity that does not belong to the ordinary scavenger, who is as a rule uncouth and unclean (16).

Bakha's naivety and youthful innocence were at the forefront of Anand's intention when he illustrated Bakha's incomprehension to his being considered unclean and polluted when it came to performing his duty as a sweeper as it was his responsibility to make things clean. He said: "Why are we always abused? The sentry inspector and the Sahib that day abused my father. They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too (51-52). He was an outcaste and he realized his place in society but could not fathom the cause of such unfairness and inhumanity. Bakha could not understand why the shopkeeper insisted that he put his payment down in order for the money to be cleansed before he would accept it. Nor was Bakha able to understand how he could have been accused of defiling the temple when he tried to view the deity from a significant distance. How could he have caused those in attendance at the temple to be defiled from such a large expanse? These uncertainties experienced by Bakha demonstrated Anand's idea of simplicity of the youth as well as the ignorance of the underprivileged. He gave the public a glimpse into their world through Bakha's eyes.

The way in which Bakha refused to take discarded and dirty food that had been tossed from a balcony or kept in someone's pocket demonstrated his understanding of and consideration for hygiene and sanitary conditions as well as the demeaning value of accepting someone else's refuse. Though he was famished, Bakha found it too degrading to accept what was considered by some as waste and garbage. He felt that he was above these used and second-hand cast-offs and wanted and deserved better. Bakha's belief in equality among all humans was one of Anand's greatest messages presented to his readers.

During the hockey match, Anand was able to incorporate numerous points where his leading man demonstrated his aptitude for desiring to improve the social condition of the outcastes. Bakha's concern for the young child who wanted to play in the game established Anand's compassion for equality for all. Just because the child was younger than the rest, he should not have been excluded from the match. Because he was not permitted to take part in the entertainment, he was sentenced to the sidelines, away from the activity and was injured as a result. Bakha also sought maternal and medical attention for the wounded boy. Though his actions were humanitarian and compassionate, his efforts were rejected due to his violating caste rules and touching a caste Hindu. Bakha was committed to aiding and improving the situation of the young, injured boy, though he was aware that his actions would be rebuked and he would be scolded and possibly beaten. Shaileshwar Sati Prasad says in his piece *The Insulted and the Injured: Untouchables, Coolies, and Peasants in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand*, that because this hero had the ability to think, act doubt, love and resent, that Anand had given him the human dignity which was denied to him by his people.

In order to be able to obtain betterment for the underprivileged, Anand recognized that the disadvantaged poor needed knowledge to escape their loathsome situations. Through Bakha,

Anand supplied his hero with the desire for wisdom and education. Bakha wished to learn the English alphabet. He longed to learn how to read. He demonstrated his thirst for knowledge which would, in turn, allow for him to better himself as an individual, but more importantly, permit for him to uncover possible solutions to the plight of the deprived.

As the hero of *Untouchable*, Bakha is more than a mere protagonist. He is the main character of the work on whom the author focuses most of the narrative attention; but it goes beyond that interest. Bakha is a true hero, beyond the literary hero, because he is a young man of distinguished courage and fortitude. He is a character who possessed ideals in the face of adversity and can be viewed as a model of integrity. Bakha is different from the typical hero. He did not reside in the high-ranking social segments of society, but rather hailed from the stifled and repressed population. But on the inside, Bakha was a hero. As he playfully dressed in the uniform pieces of the Tommies, he escaped from the tragedy of his everyday life. “It represented a change from the old ossified order and the stagnating conventions of the life to which he was born. He was a pioneer in his own way, although he had never heard the word, and was completely unconscious that it could be applied to him” (78). Sinha contends that it would not be right to look forward to grand gestures and accomplishments from Bakha considering his lot in life; “heroic deeds cannot be expected of a man who has been under the burden of mountainous customs and traditions for ages. His mere rising of soul against such odds [is what] greatly matter[ed]” (54). Bakha was a hero because as Anand’s ambassador, he was made to rise above the situation and tried to make a difference in the world.

Munoo was the central character of Anand’s second novel *Coolie*. Anand used this modest and dispossessed protagonist as a vehicle to enlighten the public regarding the exploitation and ill-treatment of the low-caste coolie population hoping to procure the

elimination of the capitalistically imposed class structure. Anand's concern for the second-rate citizens along with the righteous anger he held for the misuse and mistreatment of the Indian population due to capitalism, industrialization and colonialism were central themes at work in this artistic piece where an unsophisticated orphan, a victim of exploitation, was sadly denied the right to contentment. Munoo was an innocent and naïve young man of fourteen. Because his parents had passed away, he had been sent to live with his aunt and uncle. His family was poverty stricken so it was arranged that Munoo would be apprenticed to the home of Babu Nathoo Ram as a house servant. This was where Munoo's education, though truly universal, in the exploitation and the cruelties of life began.

Due to his ignorance of city life, Munoo erroneously relieved himself near the wall of the home just as he began his stint as the household attendant. He was admonished for this action and viciously condemned. "He now believed that she could always find something to abuse him for, some fault, the slightest detail, the way he places a pot, the manner in which he handled the broom, or the way he held the potatoes when he peeled them" (30)..."He realized finally his position in the world. He was to be a slave, a servant who should do all the work, all the odd jobs, someone to be abused, even beaten..." (31). This was to be the beginning of endless anguish and abuse to be suffered by Munoo for the rest of his tenure at this position as well as the remainder of his short life. Munoo, as a slave, was there to be treated that way. He would always be berated for who he is, not for what he does. During this period of servitude, at the Ram's house, Munoo was badgered, harassed, humiliated, shamed and forced to survive on a pittance of food. He was the victim and recipient of verbal, psychological and economic abuse. But true to Anand's practice of elevating his protagonists to a higher, heroic level, the abuse did not stifle his fortitude. Munoo was able to maintain his composure in spite of the circumstances

and attempted to live his life in a constructive, cheerful and optimistic style. He demonstrated this when he made an attempt to play with the Ram children. He participated in their game and actually experienced some joyful exuberance. But during his period of merriment, Munoo inadvertently injured a small girl by unintentionally biting her cheek. For this infraction, Munoo was lambasted. The lesson he learned was that there were two kinds of people in the world: the powerfully wealthy and the powerless poor; the second was the group to which he belonged. Munoo was depressed and dejected. He rejected this lot in life and decided to move on.

His escape from the tyranny of the situation at the Ram's house led him to the site of a pickle factory. Though Munoo was almost immediately overwhelmed with the alarming prospect of the fear-provoking factory, he was of the optimistic opinion that this place could not be as severe or as brutal as the one from which he had run away. Munoo was almost completely wrong. Here Anand displayed the innocence and ignorance of the coolie population in the face of grave circumstances. Munoo had expectations of improvement in his life's situation. Anand gave him the ability to recognize that the conditions and treatment he had experienced were not fair, reasonable or adequate. He also developed this character with ignorance and inability in that he was not able to understand that this mistreatment was a universal event experienced by the coolies all across the Indian subcontinent. Though Munoo realized that he was unfairly treated because he was a coolie, he didn't quite understand that he was treated in that manner because he *was* a coolie; he took the mistreatment personally, as an attack on something he did individually that should warrant such a reaction rather than seeing it as a customary response to *any* coolie. Those who were in charge, at this factory and elsewhere, were typically ruthless, cruel and full of hate and the working conditions to which they were exposed were hazardously dangerous. The coolie workers were rebuked for their efforts at their jobs. Munoo lived in

continual fear and utter sadness. “The only thing that relieved these fits of depression was the silent comradeship which existed between him and the other coolies” (90). Though he eventually came to feel almost comfortable in the menacing factory, he still longed for more in his life as well as for the childish comforts he had experienced prior to this odyssey. Munoo was able to draw upon his childhood memories and to find consolation and security from them. Munoo employed his buoyant character traits even in this gloomy state of affairs. When the owners of the factory were forced to dissolve their partnership due to accusations of fraudulence and dishonesty (which turned out to be deceit based on class inequality), Munoo looked upon the situation selflessly. Anand crafted his protagonist to act as a truly gallant man; Munoo contemplated a plan in which he would be able to help the indicted boss recuperate and recover from such a devastating blow. In an altruistic and heroic manner, Munoo transcended the boundaries of class divisions and instead viewed the situation from a humanitarian perspective. He desired to help his boss by earning the money needed to pay the debt which he had been blamed for incurring. Chaos ensued and once again it became necessary for Munoo to escape.

In his search for contentment, Munoo arrived in Bombay, with its beauty as a cultural hub. Munoo had expectations of grand splendor, happiness and success. Instead of joy and exhilaration, Anand forced his protagonist to deal with abuse commonly experienced by untouchables and coolies alike. Munoo entered a store, sat on a stool, and ordered a drink to quench his thirst. His actions caused him to be chided and scorned as the patrons insisted that he move to the place on the floor where filthy shoes were set to rest. After belching, Munoo was forced to leave the shop. As a dauntless and determined character, he was angry with himself for tolerating the insults. “I let him put me in my place as a coolie, but I was paying for the soda water and I am not an untouchable. I am a Hindu Kshatriya, a Rajput, a warrior” (157). As a

true hero, Munoo was able to take these negatively charged actions directed at him and spin them with a new focus: The thought of being from the warrior caste gave him strength and permitted his self-respect to rise and his self-dignity to return. Because the laudable Munoo was able to move beyond the affronts he was accorded and quickly disregard the abuse he suffered, his mind was free to observe the frivolities around him. He witnessed a small child trapped in the street between the converging traffic. Munoo, without thinking, swiftly darted into the crowded road and valiantly rescued the young girl. Anand allowed Munoo to be beaten down, but not defeated. His resilience permitted him to not only save the life of a youngster, it also enabled him to rise above the abuse he suffered and progress as a toughened young man. Because of his heroic deed, Munoo was befriended by the family, invited to be their travel companion, and came to be treated as one of the family. His youthful enthusiasm in regard to traveling with this family and the prospect of finding employment was demonstrated when Munoo said “I have made new friends and am going to get a job tomorrow...I [am] a brave lad. I can do things” (165). Anand provided the courageous Munoo with faith in himself and the ability to overcome misfortune.

Munoo and Hari came to try to find work at the George White Cotton Mill. This episode was arguably the most cruel and extensively experienced maltreatment of the novel. In this period of Munoo’s odyssey, Anand illustrated for the reader the harsh and forbidding capitalistic circumstances which the coolies and other laboring individuals were exposed. At the mill, those who were in charge ruled menacingly. The manager acted as the duplicitous recruiter, the swindling landlord, and the treacherous loan officer. He hired the workers, charged them exorbitant rent for squalor-like lodging, and lent them money at excessive fees and interest rates based on inaccurate speculation of what was to be earned causing great debt for the employee

and the potential for large earnings for the manager. The brutality and malice suffered by the coolies at the hands of others was unbearable and inhumane. “The ill-paid, ill-housed, under-nourished and bullied laborer is broken, both in body and mind, as Munoo finds his friend Hari is, though his own youthful vitality saves him from this ultimate fate”(Naik 41). Hari was a broken man, given to accept his lot in life. Munoo, on the other hand, was energetic and vivacious. His mellow and almost lackadaisical outlook was supportive of his naivety, youthfulness and inexperience. He did however, come to learn that things were not easily obtained.

In addition to the abuse from the managers, the workers were subjected to dangerous working conditions where they risked their lives on a daily basis in order to earn a pittance of a salary. Anand showed the world both the deplorable working conditions of an industrial plant, and also the misuse of human labor and the abuse of power. Hari’s youngest child was injured at the unsafe factory. Though he was unable to empathize or identify with Hari’s parental mindset, Munoo knew that this event, which would likely cause Hari to lose his job, was devastating. It was here that Anand put forth his message of injustice. The unfair action of Hari potentially losing his job due to an injury incurred by his son because of the hazardous working conditions in the factory was unreasonable and undeserved yet was a common, expected and accepted practice.

It was at this point Munoo stated that he believed that he was bad luck and that he and the world might be better off if he was dead. Anand’s hero was almost willing to give up and submit to this lot in life by terminating his dream for an improved existence. As he continued to toil at his machine, Munoo contemplated his dreams and desires. He determinedly proclaimed “I want to live, I want to know, I want to work, to work this machine, I shall grow up and be a man,

a strong man” (190). In the face of adversity, Munoo valiantly declared that he was not going to surrender to this unfortunate and wretched life easily. Rather Munoo decided to work hard to overcome and defeat this underdeveloped lifestyle. Anand’s hero did not give up and instead persevered through this difficult situation, survived, and was able to continue moving toward his dream of a better life.

Each and every time, just before his certain demise, Munoo was rescued and swept away to an unknowingly new and more precarious situation. The final chapter in Munoo’s life was to take place after he was run down by a vehicle, narrowly escaping death. When Mrs. Mainwaring’s car struck Munoo, she ordered her chauffeur to load him into the car so as to avoid any repercussions that might have resulted from the accident. She soon decided that she would take him in and engage his services as an employee. During the journey to the Mainwaring’s home, Munoo reflected on all that he had been through. He was emotionally, spiritually and actually overwhelmed and beleaguered by all that had transpired on his two year odyssey. “He was mentally and physically broken. And, as he thought of the conditions under which he had lived, of the intensity of the struggle and the futility of the waves of revolt falling upon the hard rock of privilege and possession, as he thought of Ratan and Hari and Lakshami, and the riots, he felt sad and bitter and defeated, like an old man” (250). Though it was at this point in his life, since his odyssey began, that Munoo felt the most comfortable and humanely treated, it was as a rickshaw driver that he performed the most undignified and degrading job. Anand’s hero was succumbing to defeat. Munoo was no longer able to muster the strength of character or physical strength to overcome another obstacle. As he lay dying, Munoo contemplated the fear of departing this life and the hope of continuing to live. “He felt docile and good and kind towards [Mrs. Mainwaring] and everyone else. It was as if the nerves of his body in their gradual

weakening had begun to accept the humiliation which in the pride of their functioning they had never acknowledged” (218). Munoo no longer had the strength to fight; to persevere; to continue with his life. Munoo perished. The official cause of his death was tuberculosis, however it was the horrible and deplorable conditions in which he worked and lived during his two year journey that brought on the dreadful disease. Prior to his death, Mrs. Mainwaring experienced a slight sense of guilt for her part in his illness. She:

Came down to see him with gifts of fruit and flowers during the first few days and even nursed him with a complacent hypocrisy, buoying up the dejected spirits of the boy with sentiments like, ‘You will get well. You have no disease. You are just run down.’ She was really being kind, as to a point she did suffer qualms of conscience about having ill used the ‘poor dear’. But she was not allowed to be kind and good (281).

She may have felt a bit guilty because Munoo died while in her employment; however she wasn’t ashamed of the part her actions and expectations of him intensified his disease. She may have been oblivious to his physical deterioration and not noticed that his health was declining, however her self-absorption and self-centeredness did indeed play a role in Munoo’s demise.

When Munoo passed away, so did Anand’s hero. Without the help of a strong, staunch and dedicated guide, Anand wanted the world to know that the life of the coolie population would not improve. Though he frequently displayed heroic and gallant qualities, Munoo was not able to triumph over all which oppressed his life in particular and the coolie community in general. Munoo, according to Cawasjee, was a “passive character who did not act, but was acted upon by society” (*The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand*, 67). He never achieved the contentment for

which he searched. He did however, through the story of his life and death, heroically expose the world to the cruelties of the coolie plight due to the capitalistic class structure.

In his third novel *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Anand addressed the harassed members of society, their exploitation and mistreatment at the hands of British plantation owners; however he elected to present his characters in a different way. Though his purpose of enlightening the public to the dilemma of the lowly coolies by utilizing one as the hero of his piece was indeed his intention, he developed the protagonist differently than in his first two novels. He chose not to have a lone, independent, or solo main character. He opted for his chief protagonist to have a family which not only relied on him for advice, inspiration and protection, but also motivated his actions. The familial unit became nearly as important as the main character himself. The experiences of this domestic group were common and far-reaching. Anand also added to his cast of characters secondary heroes who acted as a mentor and counselor as well as a sympathetic sahib. This extended group of people, in addition to the collection of antagonists, would be whom Anand chose to focus the plot of this tale of the troubles faced by the poor and downtrodden.

Anand chose a different character with unique distinctions for his protagonist in this novel. Gangu was the central character who not only engaged the reader's interest; he also garnered the reader's empathy. As a mature man who had lived many years, Gangu was not old, but experienced. He was a veteran of the coolie class who thought he knew what was required to succeed in life and worked all his days trying to attain his goal. As a husband, father, and head of the household, it was Gangu's responsibility to support and provide for his family. Through the background information given in the early pages of the story, the audience was able to ascertain that they lived as a modest coolie family. They had a home and a field they cultivated

which yielded a living; as meager as it was. Anand presented Gangu as a respectable and decent man who was able to adequately provide for his family.

Anand portrayed the character of Gangu as a true coolie when he authentically presented him as mixture of innocence and wisdom. He was taken in by the promises of Buta regarding the ideal conditions of the tea plantation yet he was aware that Buta was exaggerating and dishonest. “Years of misery have made him a meek, passive and abject fatalist; yet he is also capable of a sudden assertion of his will to live...He can make a sudden gesture of defiance “ (Naik, *Mulk Raj Anand* 52-53). Naik explains this further by pointing out that after the riot, with the intention of uniting against the wrongs, Gangu boldly bellowed “We cannot let this pass” (178); however while striding in protest toward the manager’s office with the other coolies, Gangu whined about being “stricken with fear” (183). He was simple and naïve at times, while at other times he was mature and experienced. Anand presented Gangu in an accurate and believable light and made his character genuine.

Gangu was an ordinary human being who lived by the rules. He was a positive role model and an example of how to live admirably; he was stout and laudable. He lost his home and his land because of the iniquitous and unjust laws and practices inflicted upon the lowly persons of the coolie caste; he was obligated to pay a debt incurred by a member of his extended family. Anand showed how Gangu, when faced with adversity, respectfully attempted to fulfill his obligations to the best of his ability, even if it meant giving up everything he had worked for in his life. He tried to persevere.

When confronted with the death of his wife, Gangu was faced with a dilemma: Should he bury his wife without the proper funeral rites or should he ask for a loan and be in debt in

order to provide the compulsory service? There seemed to be greater concern for the dead than the living. The dead have paid the price with their life and their suffering has ended. The living, meanwhile, will continue to suffer. It is in death that the misery ends, and this escape is something to be celebrated. Gangu chose to act in the humane way; he opted to ask for a loan in order to provide a proper service for his beloved wife. Gangu chose to demonstrate courage in his choice to do the morally right thing when faced with a no-win situation. Anand showed the public how this lowly and hurt individual chose to put the love and responsibility for his family before his financial situation.

Gangu was a forgiving man. He explained to Narain that as humans, they had the responsibility to forgive wrong-doings perpetrated against them. Gangu said that “forgiveness did not mean that they should cease to strive against wrong. Indeed, true forgiveness was a hard battle, than which only one other battle was harder: to be humble, and not proud in forgiveness” (156). Anand provided his protagonist with the gallant ability to excuse and absolve the wrongs committed against him and humanity.

Reggie Hunt, a manager on the estate, desired to physically have Gangu’s daughter, Leila, in a sexual way. Rather than let this cruel man sexually abuse his daughter, Gangu made a choice to fight against this sin. As a responsible, loyal and faithful father, Gangu reacted with anger and rage and went to confront Reggie’s demand. Though he was shot and killed at the onset of the confrontation, Gangu was able to save Leila, at least for the time being. Leila was spared from Reggie’s violent acts at this moment. In surrendering his life so that his daughter would remain unscathed, inviolated and unharmed, Gangu became the embodiment of an honorable hero. Though he may not have intentionally chosen to give his life in order to save his daughter, he did prevent her from being abused in this instance because of his protective actions.

However, what was to become of Leila and Buddhu now that Gangu was no longer there to protect them? Anand constructed Gangu as a hero; at least in his life.

The secondary character of Narain played an unusual and almost obscure role as a wise, intuitive, and nearly clairvoyant individual whose function was to bring a realistic outlook to the actions of the novel. He dispensed wisdom and knowledge and, through his placement in life as a coolie, lifted their status as he demonstrated that they were not all inadequate and inept persons destined to repeatedly fail and remain deprived, destitute, and disadvantaged.

When Gangu and his family first arrived at the tea plantation, it was Narain who explained to Gangu that no one would choose of his own free will to come to a place such as this; that there was no escape; and that one could never go back to where they had come. Narain referred to the tea plantation as a permanent jail which had no bars. It was Narain who tried to give rational and reasonable explanations for strange occurrences. He believed that it was a curse that whomever walked on a certain piece of land at the plantation died because it used to contain a shrine. Anand described Narain to be “good-humoured, bluff, effusive and garrulous, well-intentioned, and sensitive in the extreme” (153). It was Narain whom Gangu searched out for human contact; a human connection. It was Narain who explained to Gangu the reasons why the coolies were unable to organize, unite and overthrow the brutal and vicious sahibs that were in charge of the plantation. When the peasants considered an overthrow, it was Narain who was held responsible for the possible uprising. Anand’s use of the character Narain in the novel demonstrated his talent for raising a lowly character to the height of a wise and experienced man.

In *Two Leaves and a Bud*, the entire cast of white characters, with the exception of one, was presented in a disapproving and negative manner. They were abusive, obnoxious, cruel,

offensive, and for the most part, self-serving. The anomaly in this case was Dr. De la Harve. Anand's inclusion of De la Harve in his work was two-fold. First, it provided for a non-antagonistic white figure, giving the work authenticity and believability. Secondly, it supplied the under dog population with an ally, friend, and supporter to aid in their crusade for progress and prosperity. Anand showed that not all the white people on the plantation, and in India, were ruthless and hardnosed miscreants.

Anand used the character of Dr. De la Harve as a way of presenting an altruistic and selfless figure who acted as a benefactor to the helpless and oppressed population. De la Harve had revealed to his girlfriend Barbara that the coolies were human beings just like her, though she resented them because he seemed to care more about them than her. It was de la Harve who gave Gangu a plot of land to cultivate, not because he pitied the man, but because it was Gangu's dream to once again own and cultivate a prosperous piece of land. In an outraged rant, De la Harve questioned why "these swarming, under-nourished, bleary, worm-eaten millions of India suffer so" (112). De la Harve believed that the predicament of the coolies in India was parallel to the situation of the African slaves on the plantations in the United States. In a report on the labor situations in India, he had jotted down notes reflecting his own, personal perspective. The notations included opinions such as "The present system of plantation labour is a curse and a crime. It is a monstrous crime against humanity" (114). The report itself stated:

The coolie suffers not only this low level of wages but frequently from indebtedness to his employers in outlandish districts where he is dependent upon the shops provided by the employers for his foodstuffs, fuel, etc. This indebtedness, together with the isolation of the plantation, renders it difficult for him to seek employment elsewhere, and this practically reduces him to a life of

economic slavery. His treatment often borders on the inhuman and his chances of justice and redress are chimerical (115-116).

Anand's voice was heard, via the report, implying that the labor situation of the coolie was a vicious cycle. The coolie was dependent on his employer for the necessities of life. In order to earn the money required to pay for these items, the coolie was also dependent on his employer for a job. Without a job, he could not purchase the basic necessities. Without the basic necessities, the coolie could not survive. No matter what, the coolie was dependent on his boss. This dependence however, was not reciprocal. The coolies were not necessary; there were too many lurking in the background waiting to take the place of one if he should fall, die or escape. De la Harve voiced his opinion when he commented to Barbara that "Man is selfish, man is evil, there is nothing more horrible in this universe than the cruelty of man to man" (117). De la Harve was a man who was able to view the ill-treated coolies as human beings. He did not view them strictly as instruments of profit. He was compassionate, helpful, aiding and caring. Portraying a white character in this unique and distinctive manner, Anand was able to display the inconsistencies and internal conflicts suffered in real life. He demonstrated that a white man was also able to be a hero because of his concern for the helpless and the subservient. Not all of the foreigners living in India were callous and cruel. It was important for Anand to portray an Englishman in a positive manner both for believability and accuracy, but, maybe more importantly, for credibility. If all the white characters were portrayed in an unconstructive and disapproving manner, critics and publishers may have balked at this novel and it may never have been published.

In two of these novels, Anand purposely chose youthful and idealistic main characters that were viewed as luckless victims in his works. For the third novel, he selected an

experienced and veteran protagonist who was also a hapless sufferer. By consciously making such a choice, Anand was able to engage the sympathies of the reading public. Bakha and Munoo were young and naive. They had not yet developed the cognitive ability necessary to perceive and process information fully. They had not had enough life experiences to have developed an intuition nor had they cultivated a mental faculty capable of having knowledge or understanding. Gangu, on the other hand, was experienced. He was an older man who had developed intellectually and emotionally. He was able to see a situation, assess it, and make decisions based on his ability to reason. By choosing to use such diverse characters in comparable situations, Anand demonstrated that these exploitations occurred to low class members universally, regardless of age, knowledge and experience. It was Anand's intention to not only gain empathy for the protagonists of his works, but more importantly to bring about an understanding of and compassion for those involved in such a predicament. He elevated their status by uplifting their actions and raising them to heroic levels. These protagonists were more than main characters, they were individuals who inspired and enriched the lives they touched. Gupta, in *Mulk Raj Anand: A Study of His Fiction in Humanist Perspective*, contends that:

While by choosing as his heroes men from common folk Anand insists on the necessity of restoring dignity to the lowly and the lost, he paints their miserable lot in glaring colours and vivid detail, and pleads that they deserve compassionate treatment, despite the fact that they are not without weaknesses. By directing our attention to the varieties of evils that plague the society – poverty, unemployment, disease, selfishness, cruelty, exploitation, harassment, and several other inhuman practices – he pleads for the removal of the great inequalities that exist between the two marked classes of people, the rich and the poor (51).

The characters which Anand chose to draw attention to were based primarily on people with whom he had been acquainted and also experiences he had witnessed first hand. Anand was fixated on the abuse and tragedies suffered by the downtrodden people of India. His main characters were centered on real people he had known at one time or another in his life. He felt it was his duty as a writer to interpret the truthfulness from the realities in life. He brought out the misery and pity of his characters who, according to Agnihotri, were:

The poor, socially, economically and politically exploited, illiterate, ignorant and superstitious-ridden people of the lowest rung of Indian society. These heroes are touched by the spirit of modern discontent and they try to revolt against the existing order. They smart under the dead weight of useless conventions and outmoded traditions. But when they try to throw off this weight, they find themselves breaking down under it, bringing to the surface all the anguish and agony of their life and expressing the fury of the novelist against the unjust social, economic, political and religious order of the day (20).

Anand is the champion of the poor and outcastes. He spoke out against exploiting members of the human race. His compassion and understanding for the oppressed was a new and innovative idea of the time. He wrote to raise awareness of the dregs of Indian society hoping to bring recognition and resolution to their situations. Without such heroic interjections, it seemed as though the Indian outcastes would be fated to stagnation and continual affirmation of their insignificance in society and in life. These heroes exerted great effort to overcome their inevitable and unfortunate fate. They were not content with accepting their doom; they fought against it. "By raising an ordinary wretched creature to the level of a hero, perhaps for the first

time in Indo-Anglican literature, Anand prove[d] that the struggles of a waif could be as good a subject for a work of art as the Trojan War itself” (Paul 43).

Harbinger of Progress: Confrontation Between Tradition and Modernity

“...There is a double burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European tradition and the Himalaya of my Indian past.”—Mulk Raj Anand

This chapter deals with a collision of beliefs. It begins with minor background information on Anand including what he believed to be the responsibilities of the writer. It goes on to explain how, through his work, Anand hoped to fuse the past with the contemporary mindset and technical knowledge and integrate them to secure a humanitarian India. This chapter looks at the differences in home-life circumstances and hygiene. It investigates the double-standard present among Indian residents. It also evaluates the conflict of a modernized, industrial way of life versus an agricultural course. It addresses progress at both the humanitarian and technical levels.

Societies of all civilizations have retained traditions passed down through numerous generations. These long-established and inherited ways of thinking and behaving are patterns which allow for the perpetuation of cultural beliefs and practices. Often considered in contrast to traditional customs are ideas that are regarded as modern. In mid-twentieth century India, including the latter time of its occupation and post-independence, there was tension concerning conflicting ideas; a number that were considered time-honored versus those which were new and unusual. Mulk Raj Anand was impacted by this collision of beliefs.

Anand was raised as a child in India, but spent his impressionable and malleable young adult years in England where he was educated and exposed to Western thoughts and ideologies. He acknowledged that during his school years at the British Indian schools he attended, he was taught everything English: ideas, history, philosophy, etc. Indian history and traditions were

thought of as inferior and Anand developed “a bias against all indigenous customs and grew up hating everything Indian” (*Apology* 13). Anand never really felt a deep and passionate attachment to ancient Indian beliefs and traditions; he did not feel as if they were a part of his essence. He was, however, cognizant of the denigration of some of these time-honored and customary traditions and ways of life and the impact they had on citizens of India. Some reflected shame on the country and Anand believed that they needed to be eliminated or corrected. Naik says, in *Mulk Raj Anand*, that “His upbringing and his intellectual development, have, however, led him on the whole, to place greater emphasis on the need to revolt against decayed aspects of the Indian tradition than on the acceptance and upholding of the finer elements in it” (23). Anand recognized the limitations of the Indian past and found it crucial and essential to correct these wrongs rather than to celebrate its achievements.

As a philosophy student, Anand showed a preference toward the concreteness and provability of the sciences over romantic attitudes. This caused him to question the base of Indian wisdom and some philosophies that he considered faulty. It also impacted his works as a writer as he held definite cavalier and ambitious goals and expectations for all wordsmiths. M. K. Naik says that:

Anand placed the writer on a very high pedestal, glorifying him as ‘precisely the man who can encompass the the whole of life.’...The writer ‘is uniquely fitted to aspire to be a whole man, to attain, as far as possible, a more balanced perspective of life and to reach the apogee of human development;’ he can lead men ‘to a universal awareness of life, thereby possessing them with the will to renew it and to change it’ (15).

Anand felt that it was the responsibility of the writer to illustrate the entirety of man's existence in an objective manner, compelling him to act in accordance with his point of view whether he maintained it or changed it. He came to the conclusion that contemporary Indian authors "would have to look at the whole of the European and Asiatic traditions, compare and contrast them, try to achieve some kind of synthesis even through the welter of confusion, and get to work to build the new India" (*Apology* 50). Anand believed that the archetypal Indian author must analyze all the influential societies; evaluate them for their achievements as well as consider their defects, then present the findings to the Indian world. This would affect the Indians and so stir their emotions that they would seek to act in favor of the total human experience and modify their attitudes and adjust their beliefs to change any shortcomings and to establish a supreme and unsurpassed way of life. The preeminent Indian author, Anand hoped, would be the vehicle of progress that would make a case for the traditional ways of life; citing its limitations and its strengths. The enlightened author would address the out-of-date political and social attitudes while presenting more current and acceptable points of view. The finest author would speak to the theme of modernity while focusing on the impact that modernity would have on the long-established and accepted ways of life. An astute author would, through the amalgamation of India's rich history and traditions and contemporary ways of thinking, provide India with the tenets necessary to evolve into a progressive and contemporary culture.

Modern India, the India of the mid twentieth century of which Anand wrote, seemed to be impeded by age-old traditions. C. J. George says, in *Mulk Raj Anand: His Art and Concerns*, that "social life in India is traditionally controlled by man and the customary laws that we have been following for ages is framed by man to suit his selfish end" (22). These antiquated customs consistently clashed with progressive thoughts which led to a prevalent theme in Anand's fiction:

the theme of tradition versus modernity. His novels *Untouchable*, *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud* displayed numerous instances where long-established and accepted behaviors clashed with modern thought. It was Anand's hope that through his work, India would be able to meld the past with the current mindset and technologies and incorporate them to find a new, advanced and enhanced, superior, human-centered India.

Frequently a collision of principles occurred because of the rankings of the various castes of the Hindu religion. The Hindu people, as a whole, were clean and sanitary. They bathed regularly, kept their homes fresh, and demanded that their communal toilets be unsoiled. These expectations however, often contrasted with what they felt others were entitled to or deserved. In *Untouchable*, the accommodations of the outcastes were markedly different from the residences of the caste Hindus. The dwellings of the untouchables consisted of mud-walled huts near where a brook was located. Anand described the scene as this:

A brook ran near the lane, once with crystal-clear water, now soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it, the odour of the hides and skins of dead carcasses left to dry on its banks, the dung of donkeys, sheep, horses, cows and buffaloes heaped up to be made into fuel cakes, and the biting, choking, pungent fumes that oozed from its sides. The absence of a drainage system had, through the rains of various seasons, made of the quarter a marsh which gave out the most offensive stink. And altogether the ramparts of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of this little colony, and the ugliness, the squalor and the misery which lay within it, made it an 'uncongenial' place to live in (9).

The higher ranking society members however, lived in homes with walls, furniture, rooms, doors and kitchens. The incongruity of the quality of life and the home situation of the two groups were based on religious customs. The ancient Hindu tradition of ostracizing the outcastes and untouchables and forcing them to live in unspeakably horrific and ghastly circumstances conflicted with modern thought. Shaileshwar Sati Prasad, in *The Insulted and the Injured*, says the adversity of the outcastes' colony "is not conveyed as being felt by the novelist but ironically the uncongeniality is the personal response of the hero which makes us aware of his ability to think and doubt the old order" (34). Bakha understood the injustice in this archaic type of thinking; dividing the human race into social groups based on birth, rank and position. Through Bakha, Anand was able to illustrate these wrongs and display the effects these injurious behaviors have on those of the lowest rungs. Contemporary philosophies denounced such practices as morally wrong and wicked. Anand worked to expose and eliminate these discrepancies seeking a modern Indian view of the total, evenly balanced, human being.

Munoo, in *Coolie*, was subjected to several dehumanizing circumstances where he was forced to lay his head on the temporary, inadequate and deficient space 'home'. He spent sleepless nights trying to rest outdoors on the concrete continually pestered by mosquitoes and other insects. He spent many nights in a tenement which was bordered by pools of noisy, reeking sewers and mounds of decaying garbage. One hut that measured six feet tall and five feet across was intended to house Munoo and Hari's family. It had straw mats hung from cracked beams to form the roof.

The mud floor was at a lower level than the pathway outside, overgrown with grass which was nourished by the inflow of rain water. The cottage boasted not a window nor a chimney to let in the air and light and to eject the smoke. But then,

had it not the advantage of a sound sackcloth curtain as its door, when most of the huts in the neighbourhood had torn and tattered jute bags, or broken cane chinks, old rags, bent tins and washing and what not, to guard them against the world (176)?

The circumstances which these beings were forced to live in were not safe, secure, comfortable, or even mediocre. The lack of a chimney meant that the inhabitants would be forced to breathe in dangerously poisonous and smoke-filled air. The rainwater that rushed through carried disease and sewage. The makeshift roof did not preclude the elements from entering. These conditions were abominable, atrocious and substandard for any human and should not have been meant for human habitation. Anand wanted these people to be afforded the same conditions as the rest of the *ordinary* or *true* Indian residents: adequate shelter; fresh air to breathe; and to not have their food, drinking water or residence coalesce with raw sewage. He wanted the archaic thought patterns of discrimination, particularly those due to social class and caste, abolished and replaced with a new, compassionate, human-centered theory. Anand felt that all members of the human race deserved to live in homes that were safe, sanitary and protective. Low class and outcaste members were entitled to, and worthy of, the same and just accommodations that were afforded to the wealthier and higher caste members.

One of the greatest discrepancies found in building structures among people at various social class levels was demonstrated in *Two Leaves and a Bud*. The affluent Croft-Cooke family of the McPherson tea plantation, wealthy when compared to the workers of the agricultural estate, enjoyed living conditions that were markedly different and definitely superior to that of the laborers. The estate contained numerous buildings which housed the plantation physician, his office and laboratory, the veritable mansion where the Croft-Cooke family resided, and the

Club. The managers of the tea plantations regularly gathered at the Club for sport and relaxation.

The Club was described as being:

Housed in a grand bungalow in the mixed style of the Emperor Wu's palace at Peking, and Versailles, with tall rooms, salons opening on one another. It was furnished like an English country pub, with an old piano, dart boards, faded sports photographs, whiskey calendars, and the inevitable Trophies of the Hunt, and the Instruments of War! Situated in the pit of the valley, its wide veranda overlooked a vast polo ground, tennis-courts, croquet-courts, and gardens, all duly protected against the intrusion of black men, wild animals, hungry goats and cows, by thick hedges and shady trees (84).

This lavish and comfortable life-style was normal and customary for the British who came to dominate the Indian subjects, but was quite uncommon for the native, lower class individuals. They instead were subjected to significantly less relaxed conditions. Gangu's family hut was small in size but made of brick. It had a corrugated iron roof so it was referred to as a tin box; it would be too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. It was one among many in a row, and because of the way these huts were situated, during the spring month of their arrival, the roofs radiated such intense heat that the area felt like it was a furnace. The ancient practice of keeping menial labor housed in such brutish conditions was inhuman and malicious. In addition to elucidating and therefore eliminating this type of situation, Anand hoped to evolve the thinking process to a modern day consideration of the value of each human life: Each human, regardless of wealth or situation, must be afforded fair and civilized living conditions.

Anand also addressed the difference in expectations in the realm of hygiene. In *Coolie*, Munoo would wake each morning, when living in the hills, run to the field, relieve himself and then bathe. At the banker's home however, Munoo was unsure what to do when he had to evacuate his bowels so he ran to a wall outside the house to do his business. The response he received was: "Vay, you shameless, shameless, vulgar, stupid hillboy!...May you die!...Why didn't you ask me where to go?..We didn't know we were taking on an animal in our employ, an utter brute, a savage" (17). Munoo was beyond humiliated. He wanted to shrink into oblivion; "for the first time in his life he felt ashamed to be seen relieving himself in the open" (17). Circumstances were different for the underprivileged; those who came from the hills. They were used to relieving themselves where ever they felt the urge. This was a common and customary practice for them however it was unacceptable and offensive for the members of higher social standing. Elevated social classes had specific areas designated for the relieving of oneself. Later, when Lakshami, Hari's wife, brought the children to the pond, they experienced disgusting and horrific conditions: "As they reached the edges of the pond they dispersed to relieve themselves among the other men and women who sat answering the call of nature, little distances apart...They arose and finished their toilet, sprinkling first their bottom and then their faces with palmfuls of water from under the thick crusts of scum on the surface of the pond" (182). In *Untouchable*, men were seen crouched on their heels in open view relieving themselves. This uncouth act earned insults from the British soldiers who were viewed as *proper* and models of correct and suitable behavior. Anand optimistically wished that someday the modern opportunities afforded the more affluent classes, such as a privy, would be provided to the less fortunate. He also hoped that it would be recognized that there were advancements in technology available, like the flush system for instance, that would eliminate this type of shame.

With the implementation of a modern flush and sewer system, the need for the untouchable caste would cease to exist. The sweepers would no longer be needed to manually remove human waste. They would no longer have to touch human excrement; therefore they would no longer need to be considered polluted and contaminated. The progression to a modern toilet system would result in the alleviation of the out-dated and inhuman caste idea of untouchability. The fact that Anand addressed this particular concept in so many of his works demonstrates the magnitude and enormity of this state of affairs. He sought to bring this situation to the attention of the westerners so they would realize how essential these basic human facts, which can be largely ignored in England, are to this society that he is educating them about.

Saros Cowasjee, in his piece “Mulk Raj Anand’s “Untouchable”: An Appraisal” states that irony is implicit in the theme of tradition versus modernity. It is ironic because as opposites, tradition and modernity are contradictory and yet they work together to draw attention to the incongruity and irrationality of the two opposing ideas. Many times this perplexing situation is also hypocritical. The customary and time-honored traditions which profess high standards and dignified beliefs are contrary to the actual behaviors exhibited; they often denigrate and criticize human conduct. He said:

The Hindus who pride themselves on their cleanliness gargle and spit in the stream and pollute the water while a person incomparably cleaner than themselves is treated like dirt. There are Muhammadans walking about with their hands in their pyjamas, purifying themselves in the ritualistic manner preparatory to their visit to a mosque, but infuriated when asked what they are doing; ...the rich Hindu businessmen overfeeding idle priests but grudging dry bread to those who sweat for them; betel-leaf shops where lithographs of Hindu deities contend for

space with those of European women; the petty merchant-cum-money lender whose prices go up for the poor, and the sweetmeat-seller who deftly manipulates the scales to cheat the outcastes. There are orthodox Hindus who worship a bull emitting foul smells but will not touch a human being; there are temples whose doors are closed to those who keep its grounds clean; we see the queer Hindu notion of “pollution by touch” and “pollution by touch at a distance”; and the hypocrisy of Hindu women who treat the sweepers as pariahs but want to be called “mother” by them (33).

The double standard here was beyond ironic; it was hypocritical. The Hindus who claimed to possess admirable principles and beliefs actually demonstrated the opposite; their actions were quite contrary to their statements and convictions. Mulk Raj Anand was greatly disappointed and utterly discontent with the discrepancies between the outcasts and the the upper classes. He sought a higher standard in Indian life. The social progress Anand strove for was the advancement of human society, particularly the Indian social order, toward a place of greater civilization. He also desired advancement in innovation for the subjugated beings. He yearned for technological development toward a modernistic India for the betterment of the entire subcontinent.

India, particularly in the time just prior to its independence from Britain, was faced with the notion that with freedom, infinitely numerous decisions would need to be made. The politicians, philosophers and academicians had divided opinions on how modern India should progress. Some were in favor of an agriculturally based economy with an emphasis on farming and cultivating the land while others preferred an industrial based economy which would focus on the production of goods. Still different from these two perspectives were the persons who

were more moderate and preferred an intermediate position. They acknowledged and appreciated the magnitude and significance of the technological advancements possible with the machine, however they were not extreme in their view nor did they want to have excessive or unreasonable expectations of what this technological development could do for India's economic expansion. In his introduction to *Mulk Raj Anand: His Art and Concerns*, C. J. George says that the gifted thinkers:

Were aware that the sudden all-out industrialization [could] expose Indian society to the plague of utilitarianism and laissez faire as was experienced by the industrialization of England. Mulk Raj Anand...believe[d] in the machine as a powerful tool of prosperity for mankind...and the need for controlled industrialization...[because] uncontrolled industrialization causes tremendous problems to the accepted social values (22).

Anand accepted as true the opinion that India needed to adapt to the industrial methods of production and manufacturing in conjunction with all the accompanying social changes. He also was of the opinion that these progressive changes needed to be made in a careful and cautious mode and not in a hasty or rushed manner as moving too abruptly may have complicated rather than assisted with the evolution of India into a dynamic society benefitting all the citizens, not just *some* of them. Anand offered, as a plausible solution to untouchability and its resulting consequences as well as a resolution to the money-less and land-less, the idea of industrialization and the employment of the machine. Anand, however, also indicated that simply by changing the labor process from human to machine that success and prosperity were not guaranteed. He cautioned that the poverty-stricken and indigent population would most likely remain under-privileged because only those who had enough money to acquire such machinery would be able

to enjoy the benefits which would inevitably lead to further social distinctions and status groupings. In his short story, "The Cobbler and the Machine", Anand portrayed the image of industrial progress as it stagnated, and even added to, the deficiency of the less fortunate and impoverished people.

Anand chose to utilize a child as the narrator of this story. Being young, he possessed the simple qualities of innocence, purity and wantonness. The immature narrator did not have enough life experiences from which to draw upon, including the life-lesson that progress comes with a cost. He also had not developed the ability to comprehend the impact that steps forward may have on those left behind. In the story, the boy convinced his older cobbler friend that by acquiring the latest advancement in shoe making, a sewing machine, that he would be able to produce more shoes at a faster rate and therefore not have to work as hard as he had been. But when the cobbler purchased the machine, he had to labor more intensely and for additional hours to pay for the piece of machinery. The cobbler worked himself to death and the young narrator blamed himself for the man's demise. It was an example of how people did not recognize or were not aware of the toll of industrialized progress or the hardships that come with it. Edgell Rickword, in "Three Views on *Coolie*" says that the machine, properly controlled by men, could be the prime benefactor of mankind. However, Dr. Gupta mentioned that for Anand, it was not enough for the machine to be accepted in India. It was mandatory that man master the machine and not become a slave to it.

In *Untouchable*, Anand presented three means of improvement, possible solutions, to the obstacle of untouchability. Anand offered these resolutions to Bakha and Bakha made an effort to *try* them. He listened to them and then pondered and considered them. He was however, unable to act upon them. Because of his deprived life, Bakha was divest of the wisdom and

capability to fully or effectively understand the solutions therefore he was incapable and powerless to execute any of the possibilities presented to him. Anand illustrated to Bakha, and more particularly the reading public, that an alternative to the deplorable life of an untouchable would be to convert to Christianity. By putting his faith into God and accepting that Jesus died for all the sins of mankind, Bakha would come to know that all humans were equal in God's eyes as they were all created of Him. Forsaking Hinduism and converting to Christianity would do away with the religious constraint of the caste system.

The second alternative offered by Anand, which he gave the greatest amount of discourse, was the way of Gandhi. After his meeting with the Colonel, Bakha found himself among a flock of Gandhian supporters who had gathered to hear the message directly from the deity himself. Gandhi too preached that all Indians were equal. He conveyed an account where a member of the Brahmin caste performed the duty of a low-caste sweeper. Though Bakha could understand some of Gandhi's message, he did not grasp a sufficient amount. He realized that what he had witnessed was profoundly important and that it had the potential to change his life for the better. Bakha however, did not understand how.

Bakha also recognized that he did not share some of the same opinions on a few matters. "He seems to realize that by insisting that untouchables have 'evil habits,' Gandhi is aligning himself with the Hindu tradition that equates untouchables with the jobs they do" (Hubel 173). Though Bakha had no idea, the reader became aware of Gandhi's part, though possibly unknowingly, in substantiating and continuing the untouchable stereotype. With his suggestion that the untouchables lead a cleaner life, Gandhi perpetuated the prejudice that they were somehow, contaminated.

This second option presented by Anand was based on Gandhi's work of trying to alleviate the untouchable caste. Gandhi would eventually be successful in convincing "the devoutly Hindu population that untouchability, once thought to have been ordained by God, was an ethically wrong and socially backward custom, which had to be eradicated for the good of the nation and the religion" (Hubel 151). Though Bakha felt that Gandhi's message was of great significance, he was incapable of comprehending it. It was not a viable option for Bakha personally. Bakha would need the assistance of other, more sophisticated and knowledgeable people, to not only explain Gandhi's aim, but he would also have to rely on them to act on his behalf. Hubel also pointed out a flaw in Gandhi's explanation when she said that "'Gandhism' can offer no hope to the untouchables because it does not represent a radical enough departure from the very institution, Hinduism, which is responsible for the oppression of its outcastes" (149). Hubel felt, as did Anand, that the only way to completely and totally eliminate the untouchable caste would be to remove the caste-defining entity; Hinduism. If Hinduism did not exist, neither would their religious-based castes.

The last alternative Anand presented in *Untouchable* came from the voice of a poet. And as many poets are considered artistic dreamers, it is apropos that a philosopher of this type be the one to imagine and give forth the final, and most reasonable solution to Bakha's plight as an untouchable. The poet stated that: "Essentially, that is to say humanly, all men are equal...We must destroy caste, we must destroy the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations. We must recognise an equality of rights, privileges and opportunities for everyone" (155). The poet's explanation of how to attain this idea is:

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 of the stigma of untouchability and assume the dignity of status that is their right as useful members of a casteless and classless society (155).

The final and most plausible solution offered by Anand through his intellectual character was that of a machine. With the implementation of the technology to transport human waste through a system of pipes without any human needing to touch it in any way will alleviate the untouchable caste. When this society no longer required the service of sweepers, the sweepers will be able to discover other, less hideous occupations. The untouchable caste will cease to exist. Of course all of humanity would need to embrace this way of thinking in order for caste discrimination to be abolished completely.

Technical progress was a theme which Anand addressed in several of his works; one was *Untouchable*. And as he dealt with this subject, he did so guardedly. For Anand, progress meant advancement; growth and development for the improvement of all aspects of human lives. For Bakha, it meant equality. The poet-intellectual spoke of the reason why he believed so many in India lived in poverty and how, by alleviating the untouchable caste, Bakha would be able to realize his goal – fairness and uniformity in the treatment of all individuals. The poet felt that though India was rich with an abundance of natural resources, its preference to continue as an agricultural society without the aid and use of ‘the machine’ was its downfall. He retorted with: “Only [India] has chosen to remain agricultural and has suffered for not accepting the machine. I loathe it. But I shall go against Gandhi there and accept it. And I am sure in time all will learn to love it. And we shall beat our enslavers at their own game” (152). Anand recognized that progress and technology were necessary. He further accepted that progress and technology were

forthcoming. He acknowledged that in order for India to enjoy any worldly influence, she must make advancements. Through the voice of his poet, however, Anand articulated that progress, the machine, must be thoughtfully considered. Though change is often difficult, after a while, the benefits would be recognized and better lives would result. With careful and cautious acceptance of technology, those who were suppressed would be given the opportunity to flourish and become more successful than those who kept them down.

In *Coolie*, Munoo was attracted to the fascinating machines and realized, on a naïve and unsophisticated level, that they somehow were a solution to his problem of being a disadvantaged, money-less, living being. Before he left on his odyssey, Anand informed the audience that Munoo was interested in machines and that he “was ready to learn to make machines himself” (3). Much later in his journey, Munoo commented: “I want to work, work this machine” (190). Munoo believed that if he learned how to work the machine successfully, that he would be paid handsomely. With his earnings, Munoo would purchase all he desired and ultimately, he would be happy. Nath says, in “The Element of Protest in Anand’s Fiction” that the “Love of money, which is a natural corollary of industrial life, has dehumanized man” (135). The desire to acquire money, amass wealth, is a normal consequence to industrialization. This yearning for financial prosperity has caused society to be divest in individuality and succumb to the common goal: the drive for wealth. In response to his wish for financial security, Munoo experienced a sense of enticement and intrigue when it came to the cutting-edge machinery he observed. At his first glimpse of transportation without the aid of horses, Munoo:

Stared wide-eyed and open-mouthed at the marvels of different carriages, two-wheeled, box-like bamboo carts and tongas, four-wheeled phaetons and landaus, and huge, rubber-wheeled black-bodied phat-phaties which seemed to him curious

as they ran without horses on the main road. And, wonder of all wonders, he saw a black iron vehicle with two round humps like the humps of a desert camel, with hosts of little brown houses studded with glass indows behind it, rushing along furiously, puffing out a foul black smoke and shrieking hysterically. It blew a shrill whistle and made his heart leap to his throat (6).

Munoo saw, for the first time, automobiles and trains; they mesmerized him. He was also awestruck when he considered the expanse of land that could be traveled in a much shorter period of time. He commented that “The railway is indeed a wonderful thing. If there hadn’t been engines which pulled trains I could never have escaped from Sham Nagar to Daulatapur, and I certainly should never be going to Bombay, because one could not walk all that way” (148). In this comment, Anand was obvious in stating his conviction that knowledge, skill, and the development and application of devices and machines – technology, would indeed be a channel for escape.

Upon seeing the machine in the cotton mill, Munoo was enthralled. “The first impact was fascinating. Then the bold gesticulation of a hundred knobs and shafts of the engine deafened him with its uproar...Soon, however, they gave him the feeling of being shut in a cage” (185). His initial response to this machine was amazement and wonderment. Quickly his reaction turned to one of maddening annoyance. Anand indicated that the machine should be used as a means of progress, but he also cautioned that, if not introduced into society properly, the machine could also be used to keep the unskilled laborers enslaved; a situation from which they wanted to break free. The workers of this factory did use the technology of the machine. They were able to perform their duties at a faster rate than they would have been able to do manually. These workers however, were not able to reap the material and financial benefits from

the introduction of the machine. They instead suffered from its destructive aspects. These factory workers learned to toil at the the machine, but they risked their lives in doing so. The machines were dangerous and the conditions in which they were required to work were hazardous and sometimes deadly. Munoo got caught in the machine and believed for a second that he might die. Hari's son was injured by a machine in the factory. Many workers returned to the factory maimed and disfigured from their labor at a machine. These employees were frequently forced to perform their jobs for long hours and for many days without a break. They were kept like animals in cages. If they were to complain about the working conditions or the wages they were paid, they would lose their jobs and other willing individuals would take their place. The greedy drive for financial wealth did not cease or lessen with the introduction of the machine. Instead, it may have increased and caused the unskilled, low class population to become further subjugated and disenfranchised.

For Munoo, the machines were attractive and captivating. They also were a source of danger. He was intrigued at the sight of the chota Babu shaving himself.

Of all the most marvelous, the most mysterious things he had seen since he came to town yesterday, the little machine with the teeth seemed the most marvelous, the most wonderful. In his village the barber shaved the beards of men with a long, sharp razor. This machine had never been seen. 'It cannot be very dangerous,' he thought, 'if the Babu is rubbing it on his face, so quickly, up and down, down and up' (27).

Munoo did not realize that a man could indeed harm himself when shaving. He could cut himself and cause his face to bleed or become irritated. At the cotton mill, Munoo's shirt got

caught in a machine trapping him and shredding his shirt. Hari's young son was injured at the factory and needed medical attention. There were countless individuals working at the factory and mill who were maimed, scarred and disfigured, and it was implied that these imperfections were due to work-related accidents with machinery. When Munoo rescued the little child from nearly being run over by a car, the child's father said, "That little witch would have been killed if you had not run to save her. These machines are like devils" (158). Munoo himself was run down by a car. Anand's message about technical progress was apparent: Technical development, as essential as it was, must be approached with caution. It was dangerous and must be undertaken guardedly and with caution. Progress must make gradual advancements that can be monitored to ensure that the greatest rewards are reaped while at the same time making certain the least harm was suffered by all. This would, therefore, formulate a general progression of human society and industry over time toward a greater civilization. Proceeding without caution could cause greater harm than what was being experienced prior to the innovative progress. Prasad says, in *The Insulted and the Injured*, that:

Munoo's journey brings him face to face with machines and, with a child-like naïve curiosity, he tries to follow through to the end the consequences of the introduction of machinery as a means of production and gives up the ghost before he is able to tackle (or even understand) the problem fully. His tragedy is the tragedy of an individual as well as the tragedy of a class exploited by an inhuman profit oriented social machine...(80).

The formidable solutions offered by Anand were all plausible except for one significant detail: The Untouchables and low class society were incapable of organizing and banding together to force these resolutions into being. They had to rely on the upper-caste members to

act on their behalf. It required, according to Hubel, “the elite to lead the despised and the downtrodden out of their subjugation” (151). She continued this remark later when she stated “The untouchables seem doomed to the status of followers. They must rely on an educated community member...to end their subjection” (161). The untouchables were not capable of procuring change on their own. They required the assistance from the upper castes. The dredges of society did not have the knowledge, ability or fortitude to united and rebel in opposition to the wrongs committed against them. They would need help, support, backing and guidance from those who possessed the wisdom to combat and overthrow this subjugation; they would need to be led out of their suppressed ways of life. By illuminating the predicaments of the outcasts, Anand hope to inspire those who *could* make a difference, *to* make a difference. In recognizing and acknowledging the needless and unjustifiable suppression of certain categories of humans, he optimistically anticipated leadership and direction toward change from those who could provide the necessary guidance.

Anand believed in the concept of art for the sake of growth. “Anand asserted that ‘Art is for life’s sake’, for the sake of man’s progress. Literature should be used as a means of alleviating the sufferings of fellow human beings” (Sharma, *Perspectives on Mulk Raj Anand* xiv). Modern India was impeded by age-old traditions and thought processes. In order for India to advance into twentieth century thinking, theories including philosophical as well as scientific and industrial ideologies had to be investigated, evaluated and attempted. As a champion of the underprivileged, Anand wanted all objects that repress and restrain the evolution of a nation to be eliminated, and all means utilized, particularly in the realm of scientific and technological improvements, to bring about modern progress. Premila Paul, in *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand; A Thematic Study* says:

While shedding the fatalistic acceptance for the good, the mind must be susceptible to absorb the new, modern elements. India should not lag behind but try to keep pace with the fast developing countries of the world. It should accept the advanced use of machinery which has changed the very way of life in other countries. Gandhi himself admitted, 'Machinery has its place : it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour.' (135).

If India was going to compete at a global level economically, she must acknowledge and allow for forward thinking and progress. This would include technological advancement and agreeing to recognize the improvements possible with the aid of machines. However, it is more important that the human aspect of industrialization be given the ample and thorough consideration when moving forward with these changes.

Mulk Raj Anand was confronted with the dilemma of attaining harmony through melding the discord between the traditions of the past and the possibilities that modern thinking proposed. Although Anand sought to bring India into a fresh, modernistic and contemporary mindset, he did not want to abandon all of India's cultural conventions. He wanted to interfuse the outstanding and valuable qualities of the past with the prospect of enlightened thinking and see to it that India employed the most advanced level of knowledge and technology currently available to ensure its place as an eventual world power.

A Conclusion: Humanism

"I believe in man!" --Mulk Raj Anand

Mulk Raj Anand believed that all people, by right of being born human, deserve respect and to live a life of dignity. He believed that man is the center of the universe. By virtue of this egocentric thought, it is then man's responsibility to develop further through individual growth, therefore engaging and inspiring the entire human race to mature in a positive and humanistic manner. This mental expansion must recognize, according to Anand's humanistic philosophy, that man is indeed the hub of all experience; it must be acknowledged therefore that all men – human beings – are morally and justly equal. He believed in the autonomy of human reason and denied any power or moral value superior to that of humanity. He had faith in the advancement of humanity by its own efforts and was committed to the betterment of the entire human race. Dr. G. S. Balarama Gupta says that "Humanism is perhaps the theory of the whole man which forms the key-stone in the arch of [Anand's] comprehensive historical humanism. He pleads for the all-round growth of man, for the development of all his faculties, and this must be geared up to serve the cause of the total development of other individuals in society" (*Mulk Raj Anand: A Study of His Fiction in Humanist Perspective* 16). He so cherished and appreciated all of humanity that he sought to eliminate sources of anguish. As a humanist, Anand felt that much of humanity's problems would be solved with the acceptance of human egalitarianism.

The function of the writer, Anand believed, was as a crusader for humanity. The compassion, affection and sensitivity he felt for the human race inspired him, according to Dr. Gupta, "into action calculated to achieve the well-being of the mankind as a whole." He continued by saying that "The ultimate purpose of the novel is to make man understand himself, to stir his consciousness, to intensify his emotions and to enable him to experience *Rasa* or the

flavor of beauty” (*Towards A Closer Understanding of Anand* 10). Anand was successful in producing works which genuinely and passionately depicted his basic life experiences but they also represented universal experiences. He wrote “to reveal man to himself so that he can discover his potentialities as well as limitations, and in this awareness, make life a dedicated struggle aimed at the realization of happiness and prosperity for mankind as a whole” (Gupta, *Mulk Raj Anand* 132). Anand proclaimed an uprising, an artistic mêlée, to bring about a fresh social order. While in pursuit of maintaining Indian conventions that support an egalitarian perspective of being, Anand predominantly concentrated on promoting expansion in the realms of thoughts and ideologies dealing with progress of humanistic and technological varieties. According to Gillian Packman in her piece “Mulk Raj Anand and the Thirties Movement in England”, Anand’s work was:

Primarily a literature of protest...Anand shows sympathy in writing of the working classes...He describes the daily life of the oppressed and provides glimpses of the oppressors...[The] work is a form of social realism which concentrates on the description of human misery without suggesting the possibility of a better future or describing the dynamics of change which develops from man’s own actions. However, Anand did better. His novels mirror a society in transition...He treats the isolation of the modern revolutionary from the social collectivity. He shows his characters learning to take control of their own destiny and coming to accept the value of brotherly love (57).

It was Anand’s life experiences that led directly to the development of his philosophy of humanism which addressed all of mankind, but particularly the ordinary, everyday man. Dr. G.

S. Balarama Gupta summarized, in *Mulk Raj Anand: A Study of His Fiction in Humanist Perspective*, the principle tenets of Mulk Raj Anand's humanism as this:

- (1) Anand's humanism believes in the equality of all men. So it upholds the dignity of man, and denounces the system of caste, which undermines human dignity.
- (2) Anand's humanism believes in the happiness of man in the context of his earthly existence. So it decries such social evils as poverty and cruelty, pain and misery, and pleads for tenderness and compassion in human relations.
- (3) Anand's humanism believes that liberty – social, economic and political – is the birthright of all men. So, it denounces capitalism and imperialism as evils which make for the misery of a certain section of society.
- (4) Anand's humanism does not approve of superstition and obsolete tradition, orthodoxy and religiosity, since these blind beliefs impede man's progress.
- (5) Anand's humanism is an inveterate adversary of war, since it believes in international harmony and world peace.
- (6) Anand's humanism believes in the Machine as a powerful tool to bring about prosperity for mankind as a whole.
- (7) Anand's humanism disapproves of feudal values and condemns nawabs [rulers or deputies, like governors] and maharajas [great kings or ruling princes in India], since they make for so much misery in the world.
- (8) Anand's humanism decries the system of modern education, since it generally fails to make man happy.

- (9) Anand's humanism pleads that woman in India needs to be treated on an equal footing with man.

In his three major works addressed in this project, *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, and *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Anand employed his humanistic philosophy and substantiated his claim for the necessity of a human-centered world.

Having chosen such inferior and obsequious characters as the protagonists of his works, Anand challenged the collective view of his contemporaries as well as the opinions of the established writers that felt that that segment of society was discordant, irrelevant and inappropriate as a theme for writing. It demonstrated his definite and solid belief in the essence of all humanity, regardless of caste and social standing. Through the character of Bakha, Anand was able to express his theory of honor in work. Bakha did not have an aversion to working; he disliked the reaction he received from others due to his profession. In fact, Bakha was actually quite proficient in his skills as a sweeper and latrine keeper. He was a strong young man, adept at his job, and uncommonly clean despite the details of his occupation. Still however, Bakha was the recipient of continual rudeness and abuses inflicted upon him by society and prevented from developing to his full potential. In response to the reaction Bakha received for his accidental touching of a caste Hindu, he commented: "They would ill-treat us even if we shouted. They think we are mere dirt because we clean their dirt" (*Untouchable* 79). No matter what he desired or what his aspirations entailed, Bakha was doomed to struggle and never allowed to flourish because he was an untouchable.

Classifying casteism as a forbidding and vicious abomination was the most significant principle in Anand's humanistic theory. This outrageous practice resulted in the destruction of

the untouchables' moral fairness and fundamental right to mature into productive and well thought-of societal members. Anand found "the stratification of society on the basis of caste abominable. Though people may claim that the intention behind it is noble, it should never be tolerated as it causes untold suffering to the under-privileged" (Paul 127). As a worker, Bakha did earn a small pittance for the jobs he performed. With his earnings, he, on two occasions, wanted to make a purchase. Bakha put his anna on the counter when he wanted to buy some cigarettes. "The betel-leaf-seller dashed some water over it from the jug with which he sprinkled the betel leaves now and again. Having thus purified it he picked up the nickel piece and threw it on the counter. 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" (*Untouchable* 42). The money needed to be purified from the infectivity of an untouchable's contact. When Bakha purchased jilebis from another shopkeeper, he too sprinkled the coins with water and pitched the snack to Bakha to avoid any contamination from his touch. When the young child was injured at the hockey match and Bakha ran to his aid, he received harsh treatment for his efforts.

"Why should the boy's mother abuse him when he had tried to to be kind?..'Of course, [said Bakha] I polluted the child. I couldn't help doing so. I knew my touch would pollute. But it was impossible not to pick him up. He was dazed, the poor little thing. And she abused me. I only get abuse and derision wherever I go. Pollution, pollution, I do nothing else but pollute people. They all say that: Polluted, polluted!'" (116).

The insults hurled in his direction demonstrated that the child's mother was more concerned about her child being contaminated than about the injuries he suffered. The man whom Bakha bumped into on the street proclaimed his pollution from their minor collision. The vicious slap

Bakha received for this infringement symbolized the brutality and unkindness suffered by the outcastes in particular, but also of the mistreatment of all the neglected and deprived persons worldwide.

‘Man is the master of his own destiny’ is another facet of Anand’s humanistic philosophy. Gupta says that “Anand suggests that man’s fate in the contemporary world is controlled and shaped by society and men rather than by God” (*Mulk Raj Anand* 29). Bakha was an untouchable by virtue of his birth, not a consequence due to a choice he made. He was not responsible for his classification as an untouchable; this label was attached to him because of the duties he performed. His profession however, was not his chosen occupation. It was his job to be a sweeper because it was his inherited duty; his father was a sweeper and latrine keeper, and so was his father before that. The caste system provided that the members of the various castes were born into their specific category and that they were not permitted to elevate their status. A person born into a lowly status remained there because the members of the more noble castes forbid the improvement or elevation of status in order to keep their position of exaltation intact.

Munoo and Hari, in *Coolie* and Gangu and his family, in *Two Leaves and a Bud*, on the other hand, were not victims of caste discrimination like Bakha; instead they suffered due to class inequity brought on by the capitalistic drive for wealth. Dr. Gupta states that “Central to *Coolie* is Anand’s humanistic faith that this class-consciousness born out of money or social status can have crushing effects on those that are on the lower rungs” (*Mulk Raj Anand* 38). Munoo and Gangu were like Bakha in that they were hard working individuals who were caring and responsible, but they were also similar to Bakha in that they too were bullied by a society that did not care for the lowest members. Both Munoo and Gangu came to understand that their abject poverty and deprivation were responsible for their predicaments, not the evils of the caste

system. Munoo said, in *Coolie*: “‘Money is everything...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...” (55). He continued in this vein when he said: “I am a Kshatriya and I am poor, and Varma, a Brahmin, is a servant boy, a menial, because he is poor. No, caste does not matter. The Babus are like the Sahiblogs, and all servants look alike. There must be only two kinds of people in the world: the rich and the poor” (55-56). According to Suresh Nath:

The introduction of the machine increased production but it gave birth to the problems of employment, slum areas, lust for wealth, colonial imperialism, and above all, the conflicts between the labor and the mill-owners, followed by strikes and lock-outs, trade unionism, psychological complexes and emotional sterility...The sharks, bulls and bears of the industrial world exploit the coolies’ lack of resistance, wit and courage...Love of money, which is a natural corollary of industrial life, has dehumanized man. It has robbed him of his passions and given him the numbness of iron (135).

It was not caste that set these people apart, it was the capitalistic greed that formed and polarized the class system that exploited the penniless laborers.

Earning the greatest profit possible was the main objective of the factory and plantation owners in Anand’s works. These egotistical and greedy individuals had no benevolent or altruistic intentions, and that greatly concerned Anand as it was contrary to his humanistic theory. The employers and proprietors of these businesses did not care about the well-being of the employees nor were they concerned with the conditions in which they worked. Their greatest

interest was in how much money they could earn. In *Two Leaves and a Bud* it was stated: “The British had never done anything for anybody without seeing to what they could get out of it” (89). De la Harve, the British physician employed on the plantation, pointed out that it was the black coolies who “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” (118). The coolies were the ones who performed the hard labor and risked their lives for the work, but it was the managers and owners of the plantations and factories who reaped the financial benefits.

The conditions in which these exploited employees were forced to perform their drudgery were usually unsafe and unpleasant and not humane. Munoo was beaten as a servant in the banker’s home. He was burned when he sifted the ashes from the cinders at the factory and came to know this industrial plant as the:

Dark underworld, full of the intense heat of blazing furnaces and the dense malodorous smells of brewing essences, spices and treacle, of dust and ashes and mud, which became kneaded into a sticky layer on the earth of the passage with the overflow of water from the barrels of soaking fruit, and plastered the bare toes of the labourers...They worked long hours, from dawn to past midnight...Only the sweat trickled down their bodies and irritated them into an awareness that they were engaged in a strenuous physical occupation (*Coolie* 92).

Munoo nearly lost his life as he toiled at the cotton factory when his shirt became entangled in the machine he was working. And it was due to the challenging and arduous labor at his last place of employment as a rickshaw carrier that he lost his life. The rigorous demands of carrying

another person as well as the poor and unsanitary conditions in which he had worked for the past two years took their toll on Munoo's health and he succumbed to tuberculosis. These lowly and undervalued humans were only considered in the equation of profitability and not on any human level which was contrary to Anand's belief in humanism.

Two Leaves and a Bud was a harsh and disapproving diatribe of the malicious consequences of foreign dominance and of capitalism and drew attention to the exploitation of the natives by the outsiders. The native coolies were beaten and abused. Dr. Gupta says that the planters not only had "no concern for the welfare of the coolies, but they believe in flogging them into a working mood, kicking them out of their attempts of organization, and getting rid of them if need be by shooting them dead" (*Mulk Raj Anand* 46). They were forced to live in unsanitary conditions where they were exposed to horrible diseases such as malaria and cholera. The selfish actions of not taking proper health precautions confirmed the parsimonious and avaricious mindset of the managers and plantation owners. Anand demonstrated how the drive and desire for wealth created a way of life where scores of humans were made to suffer inhumane treatment. This was in direct opposition to his belief in the ethical theory of humanism.

The lack of sensitivity and compassion and the basic taking advantage of other human beings infuriated Anand and also conflicted with his philosophy of humanism. The majority of the coolies, specifically on the Assam plantation but also across the subcontinent, were enticed to travel there to work on the promise of being given land to cultivate and therefore procure their independence. During his rant about the unfairness of the treatment which the Indians received, de la Harve bellowed:

The Indians who have got a share in industry wear top-hats, though they keep their wives enslaved in purdah. But the poor, bloody coolies sweat their guts out, working for four farthings a day, to the tune of Reggie Hunt's whip. Hurrah for the Britons who never, never shall be slaves. Three cheers for the man who imprisons old Gangu on the plantation by false pretenses, keeps him well guarded and refuses to give him a strip of land which he promised by contract. But what's a contract with a slave? Less than a scrap of paper! And that's your system (128)!

Gangu and all the coolies were taken advantage of. Gangu learned of the corrupt ways of the natives who exploited the situation of the poor. He came to know the dangers of borrowing money from the devious and corrupt financiers who took advantage of the destitute. Gangu said that he "would never again borrow money from a Sahukar: they had been the cause of his ruin and every moment of his exile reminded him of the curse of borrowing" (100). Gangu and his family had been forced to surrender their land to pay off a debt incurred by his dead brother. The brutal mistreatment of the poor workers initiated by a small faction of elite and self-serving British plantation owners formed the theme of *Two Leaves and a Bud*. The sadistic cruelty suffered by these low class members of society was in complete opposition to Anand's belief in charitable and humanitarian treatment for all human beings, and Anand sought to bring these cruelties into light.

Dr. Gupta says that "Anand directs our attention to the vital need of restoring among men compassion...as a living value" (*Mulk Raj Anand* 39). Anand showed kindness and consideration for the native Indians from an English outsider in *Two Leaves and a Bud* through the character of Dr. de la Harve. He illustrated this concern through de la Harve's feeling that he

“Had really come to regard Indians as human beings and to believe that they had a right not only to rule themselves, but to rule themselves justly by destroying the inequalities of caste and class and creed” (*Two Leaves and a Bud* 28). De la Harve commented that his conviction lies in his belief that there was nothing more horrible than man’s cruelty to man. He experienced a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for those who were stricken with the misfortune of being poor. He also had a strong desire to alleviate and ease the suffering of the underprivileged. These feelings were in complete alignment with Anand’s humanistic principles.

Anand did not just reveal the problems of inhumanity suffered by so many in India. He also suggested several solutions to the dilemmas facing so many individuals. Suresh Nath, in “The Element of Protest in Anand’s Fiction” writes that Anand:

Abhorred all sort of distinction of caste, creed, class, status, the outworn and outdated traditions and conventions. Realising the importance of his role and responsibility at a turning point of India’s history, he was determined to become ‘the fiery voice of the people, who, through his own torments, urges and exaltations, by realizing the pains, frustrations and aspirations of others, and by cultivating his incipient powers of expression, transmutes in art all feelings, all thought, all experience...’” (130).

Anand maintained that the origin of human torment is man’s inhumanity toward man. Paul says, in *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand: A Thematic Study* that “Anand is certain that there is no use looking to anything outside of man for help. Man must turn inwards and find a way out from human misery” (130). The most basic and easily recognized solution for the abuses suffered under the caste system would be to eliminate it altogether. With the introduction of a flush

system, there would no longer be the need to have latrine keepers and other human forms of waste removal. With the elimination of this line of work, the untouchable class would cease to exist. These individuals would no longer be considered polluted and impure and would therefore be able to join the ranks of the human race. Anand believed that the downtrodden must rise up and rebel against the tyrannical powers of society. Ratan, of *Coolie*, was the embodiment of rebellion. He was a character who would have been able to muster enough strength and courage to go up against the abuses suffered. Anand believed that if the lowest of the social classes banded together and stood up for their rights that they could reap the benefits of controlling their future. A component to Anand's idea of eliminating these abuses was to remove the social classes brought on by capitalism. If the community collectively controlled the means of production, distribution and exchange of goods, and produced what it needed rather than based on its profitability, the shared wealth would be equally distributed among all the members of the community therefore eliminating the social class divisions. It was only through organization, struggle and revolt that these lowly people would have an aspiration to rescue themselves. Anand also felt that by accepting modernity and the machine that man would be able to progress into a human-centered society. He believed that the world could be transformed by human intervention and would therefore be able to liberate mankind from ignorance and irrationality. He felt that the present was discontinuous with the past, and that through a process of social and cultural change, life would be different than in the past. His greatest desire would be for an egalitarian society that would remove all economic inequalities and emphasize the equality of all people socially, politically, and economically. Equality and human rights were the cornerstones of Anand's humanistic ideology that would solve India's humanitarian problems.

As a humanist, Anand subscribed to Protagoras's pronouncement that 'man is the measure of all things.' According to Dr. Gupta, he believed that:

Men must realize and accept the profound importance of man – of man as such, shorn of all considerations of class, caste, creed, race, religion, and wealth. The most vital need of our troubled times is to engender among men a genuine respect for man, love for him, and faith in his ability to live a life full of dignity. Anand believes that man can solve his many problems with the help of imagination, reason, and the scientific method (*Mulk Raj Anand* 15 – 16).

His philosophy of humanism demonstrated support for the second rate citizens: It condemned the caste system; criticized destitution and poverty; expressed disapproval of dehumanizing shortcomings such as greed and vanity, corruption and selfishness, censure of feudal values and practices, and demonstrated admiration for women through courage and the power of endurance; emphasized the love of the machine; and contained an insight into the psychology of children. He believed that sympathy for the suffering of others included a desire to help. While he blamed the advantaged and fortunate community of their heartlessness, he also held the oppressed people responsible because of their tolerance and acceptance of such cruel treatment. He denounced fatalism and its attitude of resignation and passivity that resulted from the belief that people are powerless against fate and believed that man had control of his life to make decisions and choices that could change his life. He believed that man was indeed the center of the universe and that morally, all men are equal. He believed that with the acceptance of modern technology in combination with compassion, it was possible to lessen the anguish and cruelty suffered by man.

As a humanist, Anand acknowledged the need for the forgotten and forsaken to be lifted to a level of human dignity. He said:

I believe, first and foremost, in human beings, in Man, in the whole man...and in his ability to adapt himself to the highest point in the evolutionary process and to a better dispensation....He can master himself and the universe, create new values and transcend, through imagination, memory and will, all his own highest and deepest awareness, all his past works and struggle to attain the newest and most vital life (*Apology* 93-94).

Anand had confidence, faith and trust in the human race. He hoped and believed that as an entity, humanity would prevail and triumph over all that impeded its progress. He wanted humanity to succeed in its plan to prove its superiority over everything else in the world. He wanted the entire world to understand the importance of man; love man, respect man, and have faith in him. He believed that man had the ability to raise himself to remarkable apexes of distinction and redeem the world from its wretchedness and suffering. He believed that by “extending the range of our sympathies to all human beings and by concentrating on all that exalts them that we can rescue the disinherited from the morass of superstition and poverty in which they are steeped” (*Apology for Heroism* 97). He suggested that it was necessary to combine ideas and actions so that wisdom was not simply intelligence but determination and motivation, so that what a man acknowledged, he played a part, thus becoming a model to others. Anand said that “A new condition of life is respect for man, not necessarily as a unique individual, but as a man, and the encouragement in him of all the qualities which go to make him a living, kicking, vital human being, devoted, sincere, creative, an *example*, in so far as he

acts on his ideas” (*Apology for Heroism* 102). Man should be dedicated and service other human beings because this type of progress will be measured via the growth of the heart.

Anand’s humanistic philosophy was human-centered. Gupta said in his piece “Towards a Closer Understanding of Anand” that “It is this love – not for oneself or one’s own, but for the entire mankind, transcending all constricting limitations of caste, creed, and economic or social status, and all geographical boundaries of nations, all of which are manmade – that is at the root of Anand’s philosophy which animates all his activities, including his prolific writing” (9).

Anand wrote not about one principle, law, standard, or practice, but rather about *all* things that have to do with the human race; its treatment, its actions, its consequences and its conduct. He harkened back to the Greek philosophers’ ideologies when he “declared Society to be greater than the State,...and that free men were better than slaves” (*Apology for Heroism* 52). His writing sought to attain resolutions to the multitude of dilemmas facing humanity in the heartbreaking times and places which he called home. Anand himself said in *Apology for Heroism* that “I sought to be sincere, to practice kindness in my relations with others, to be good, to perfect myself, to search after truth, to know, to realize all that there was to understand in the world and feel all that there was to feel” (18-19). He was an advocate of humankind and possessed absolute faith and trust in man. He felt that all faculties and systems, including literature, were nothing if they did not exist for the sole purpose of serving mankind. Gupta said further that: “It has been one of Anand’s deep-rooted convictions that literature, far from being for its own sake, is for the sake of man, for refining and ennobling him, for stirring up the dormant stores of tenderness in him for his fellow human beings and for inspiring him into action calculated to achieve the well-being of the mankind as a whole” (10). Anand was able to use his fiction as an instrument of defense of human-centered thought, though he was vigilant to discern

in its pursuit of the interests of humankind, that it always maintained its artistic truthfulness. He wrote to stress the fundamental respect of man, regardless of his flaws, and to produce tenderheartedness and empathy for the less fortunate. He wrote to focus attention on the torment and agony of the destitute and the poverty-stricken caused by the abuse and manipulation of the capitalists on the long-established and time-honored agricultural community. He wrote to arouse the social conscience while at the same time to alleviate the misery of fellow members of the human race. He yearned for his works to have such influence that they would insight knowledge and understanding and direct these thoughts into actions. He wrote out of “necessity for the recognition of the world of human values, as including facts rather than as opposed to them, as the cornerstone of humanism” (*Apology for Heroism* 133). He believed that among the primary principles, the dignity of man was of utmost importance.

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