



REALISTIC PORTRAYAL IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S FICTION

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Abstract:

Mulk Raj Anand's novels focus attention on the basic conditions in which man is living. Each one of his novels deals with a social problem. His first novel Untouchable deals with the problem of untouchability and social injustice. The novelist ruthlessly condemns the man made barriers between the caste Hindus and the untouchables. Coolie deals with labour problem of textile mills and pitiable conditions of domestic servants. The problem of the exploitation of indentured laborer in tea plantations, high-handedness and injustice of the white ruling class is discussed in Two Leaves and a Bud.

KEYWORDS:

Realistic, Portrayal, untouchability, tea plantations.

INTRODUCTION:

Fiction is not only a representation of social reality, but also a necessary functional part of social control and also paradoxically an important element in social change. Anand's mind was very much influenced by the British oppression in Jallianwala Bagh. He caricatured Englishmen in his novels, later on he studied at the Khalsa College, Amritsar. It was here that he met Iqbal, the Poet-Philosopher who influenced him. In 1925 he went to London on a Scholarship to obtain a Doctor's degree. Anand started questioning the meaning of life and suffering. His first five novels appeared in the following sequence. Untouchable (1935), Coolie (1936), Two Leaves and a Bud (1937), The Village (1939) and Across The Black Waters (1940). There are however, several novels and collections of short stories to his credit: The Sword and The Sickle, The Barber's Trade Union, The Tractor and The Corn Goddess, Seven Summers, Private Life of an Indian Prince and Morning face. Though a committed novelist, Anand does not believe in sacrificing the formal values of fiction. To him the novel is "A form which has its own integral pattern". Anand's novels are remarkable for their humanism. The theme of his work is "The whole man and the whole gamut of human relationship". His novels focus attention on the basic conditions in which man is living. Each one of his novels deals with a social problem.

UNTOUCHABLE:

It is Anand's first novel which brought to him immense eminence and prestige. It narrates realistically a day in the life of Bakha, a sweeper, the Son of Lakha. He is unlike the traditional sweepers, he struggles hard to lead a better life. He goes to clean the three rows of public latrine situated in the out caste

colony. He has a Sister named Sohini who is sylph-like. Pandit Kalinath, the person incharge of the temple asks her to come to sweep the courtyard of his house in the temple. He wants to molest her but she protests. He then hypo critically cries of pollution. On the other side, Bakha goes to the city to clean the streets on behalf of his father, there he touches a caste Hindu. This starts a series of abuses, humiliation and indignity. Gandhi appears in person to speak on the evil of Untouchability. Gandhiji was the best friend of harijans, the untouchables. Bakha went to the meeting ground, Gandhiji spoke about the untouchables India seeking freedom from the foreign nation. He would not like to be reborn as a Brahmin or a Kshatriya but as an untouchable. He was doing scavenging work in his Ashram.

In untouchable the theme illustrates Anand's social, sociological, literary and commitment to the influence of the Mahathma Gandhi. On the choice of theme of the untouchability is evident from the novel itself. In the novel Bakha suffers so many indignities and humiliations in a single day merely because he is a sweeper. He is slapped, abused and insulted for touching a high caste Hindu. A hypocritical beggar is supposed to be superior to an untouchable. The woman in the lane happily gives bread to the beggar but she abuses Bakha when he demands one. A man's dharma does not degrade him to the level of the thing called untouchable. They cannot be filth and dirt merely because they clean dirt.

In this Anand has realistically portrayed the Indian Hindu Society. The Hindu society suffers from the caste- system and the complex of untouchables. The high caste Hindus treat the poor as untouchables. The social anger of Anand is depicting the inhuman treatment of Bakha at the hands of high caste Hindus is quite unmistakable. The art of the novelist lies in the fact that he paints picture realistically and the story ends as it began leaving the untouchable still an untouchable at the end of the day. There are rumbling of the social change but they are still too far away.

TWO LEAVES AND A BUD:

The novel "Two Leaves and a Bud" is therapeutic in effect, although the effects seem rather contrived, Gangu the hero leaves his native village in the Punjab and journeys to distant Assam to Macpherson Tea Estate owned by English man. He goes to estate with his wife Sajani, his daughter Leila and son Budhoo. Gangu is past middleage. Two Leaves and a Bud describes the pathetic plight of the laborers in Assam tea-plantations. It deals with the problem of indentured laborers who had to lead a life of inhuman subjugation. It describes the ruthlessness and injustice of India's white rulers. Gangu a Punjabi farmer, goes as a laborer to the tea-plantations of Assam. The white tea-planter, Reggie Hunt, is fascinated by Leila's blooming Punjabi beauty. One day he follows her, Leila runs to her hut. Her father comes to rescue her, but he is shot dead by Reggie with bullets. Gangu's wife also dies of a disease. The white jury tries the case and acquits Reggie Hunt.

The novel is poetic, brutal and realistic. It is full of satire against the British capitalism. It present the theme of exploitation of the under-privileged with greater concentration. Gangu is a victim of capitalism. He comes to the plantation to start a new life, but he loses his life. Gangu is one of the most complete and memorable portraits of Indian peasants in Anand's fiction. Gangu is an authentic character since he presents all those bafflingly contrasting strain, which marked the pre-Independence Indian peasant characters.

The real theme of the novel Two leaves and a Bud however is not the sufferings of the Indians at the hands of the British, but the oppression and exploitation of the coolies, at the hands of the Tea Planters of the working class at the hands of the employees. It is a story of crushed humanity of sighs and tears. It touches the inner depths in every civilized mind. The conflict is well worked out and characters bearing slight bias against Englishman are well portrayed.

COOLIE:

Coolie also portrays the class distinction between the rich and the poor. It depicts the sad and pathetic life of Munoo, a young boy from the Kangra hills of Himachal Pradesh. Munoo's uncle took him to shyamnagar where he was employed as a servant by Babu Nathu Ram, Sub-accountant in Imperial Bank. Babu's wife was a sharp tongued shrew. She remained busy in cursing her children and kept the servants always engaged. Munoo was fed up with his life. Shila, daughter of Babu Nathu Ram and her friends were playing. Munoo too joined them and in order to amuse them he performed his monkey dance. Shila tried to drag him away, he bit her. He was mercilessly beaten by her parents. Munoo stealthily ran away from Babu Nathu Ram's house.

He went to the railway station and slept in a train where he met Seth Prabhu Dayal, the owner of Pickles factory in Doulatpur. Seth Prabhu Dayal took Munoo to Daulatpur where he engaged him in his factory. But soon the factory got bankrupt due to quarrels between Prabhu Dayal and another partner

Ganpat. Hence Munoo had to work as a Coolie in the vegetable market in Daulatpur. The work was easy but the competition was tough. After some time Munoo cultivated friendship with a worker in a circus with whom he left Daulatpur for Bombay. In Bombay he got a job at a very low payment in a mill. The foreman, Jimmir was ruthless and dishonest in a mill and took commission out of the worker's wages. Then there was labour trouble and the employers cleverly converted the labour meeting into a communal riot and Munoo ran and ran.

He was over run by a motor car. The car belonged to an Anglo-Indian lady, Mrs. Main waring. She took pity on Munoo and took him in her car to simla. There Munoo worked as a servant in her house and used to pull her rickshaw but soon he got weaker, caught T.B and ultimately died in Simla. Coolie is a "Character Novel", for its extends primarily in space with the hero, the hill-boy Munoo. The novel is remarkable for its humanism, for its indictment against society as a whole. A society that breeds such prejudice and cruelty, for its realism and narration. The plot is episodic in character.

CONCLUSION:

Thus we see that Anand has probed deep into human problems both social and psychological and has artistically realized them in his novels. He does not try to mystify the reader but goes straight to the core of the subject and suggests solutions in simple terms. He has absolutely no mixed mercenary motives behind his creative writing and this noble, fixed motive of artistic interpretation of human problems strengthens the quality of his novels. His passionate recording of the events confirms the authenticity of his fiction. His commitment to human values is deep and abiding. When some works of art inform and others try to reform, Anand's novels aim to transform the very ways and attitudes of the readers.

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