

Vol II Issue V Nov 2012

Impact Factor : 0.1870

ISSN No :2231-5063

Monthly Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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HUMANISM IN MULKRAJ ANAND'S 'COOLIE' AND 'TWO LEAVES AND A BUD'

VISHNU SHELKE

Abstract:

Mulk Raj Anand was born in 1905 in Peshawar in present-day Pakistan. A pioneer of Indian writing in English, he gained an international following early in his life. His novels Coolie and Untouchable set an entire generation of educated Indians thinking about India's social evils that were perpetuated in the name of religion and tradition. These and other early novels and short stories brought into sharp focus the dehumanizing contradictions within colonized Indian society. Through his writings he revealed that in addition to the foreign colonialism of Britain there existed layers of colonialism within Indian society.

KEYWORDS:

Humanism, Society, Transition, Organization.

INTRODUCTION

This internal colonialism stood in the way of India's transition to a modern civil society. While exposing the overarching divide between the British and a colonized India, he reveals an Indian society creating its own layers of colonizers and colonized thereby rendering the fledgling Indian nationalism an extremely problematic concept. Mulk Raj Anand was a founding member of Progressive Writers Association, a national level organization that wielded considerable influence during India's freedom struggle and beyond. An incredibly prolific writer, Mulk Raj Anand's creative career spanning a period of more than seventy-five years has been inextricably intertwined with the search for a just, equitable, and forward-looking India. He has written extensively in areas as variegated and diverse as art and sculpture, politics, Indian literature and history of ideas. He kept in constant touch with literary giants from across the globe, among them E.M. Forster who wrote a foreword to his novel, "Untouchable". Mulk Raj Anand received the International Peace Prize from World Peace Council, Sahitya Akademi Award, "Padma Bhushan" and Leverhulme Fellowship are some of the awards and accolades during his long literary career. The Library of Congress has more than one hundred and fifty publications by and on him in its collection.

OBJECTIVE :-

To focus humanism in Mulkraj Anand's novels.(Coolie and Two Leaves And A Bud)

CONCEPT OF HUMANISM-

The word "Humanism" has a number of meanings and because authors and speakers do not clarify which meaning, they intend. There are different types of Humanism -- Literary Humanism, Renaissance Humanism, Cultural Humanism, Philosophical Humanism, Christian Humanism, Modern Humanism, Secular Humanism, Religious Humanism etc.

Humanism is one of those philosophies for people who think for themselves. There is no area of

thought that a humanist is afraid to challenge and explore. It's a philosophy focused upon human means for comprehending reality. It's a philosophy of reason and science in pursuit of knowledge. Therefore when it comes to the question of the most valid means for acquiring knowledge of the world. Humanists reject arbitrary faith, authority, revelation and altered state of consciousness. It is regarded as a philosophy of imagination, compassion etc.

Humanism is a realistic philosophy. Humanism is the philosophy for those in love with life. Humanists take responsibility for their own lives and relish the adventure of being part of new discoveries seeking new knowledge and exploring new options.

Anand's humanism may be defined as, "A system of thought in which human interest, values and dignity are held dominant. Humanism implies devotion to the concerns of mankind, it is an attitude that concentrates on the activities of man rather than on the super natural world, the world of nature or so called animal kingdom". Historically humanism is a Renaissance doctrine, which stresses the essential worth, dignity and the greatness of man as contrasted with an older view that man is wicked, worthless and doomed to destruction both in his life and in that come. Anand's humanism makes him use his arts for the service of humanity.

Anand has often expressed himself in favour of humanism. The nature of Anand's humanism, it must be admitted, derives its strength from both eastern and western thought. Prof.Kantak opines that the most common form of the new morality might take is the kind of Western type humanism, which is seen at its best in Anand. But Anand time and again has stated that he rejected all kinds of system and categories of philosophy that are the basis of Western humanism.

HUMANISM IN COOLIE :-

Coolie like Untouchable expresses some basic trends of Anand's humanism. This novel expresses a belief in the essential dignity of man whether he belong to the rich or the poor class, to low or higher class. Thousands like Munoo suffer in India. In Coolie, therefore, Anand shows that suffering and pain and erode suffering and pain are inevitable features of human existence but man can control pain and erode suffering by universal brotherhood ,love,compassion and equality. Had Bibi Amrit Kaur treated Munoo with a little compassion and kindness, his tragedy might have been avoided. In his adventures Munoo meets not only cruel and bad people but kind and good fellow too. Chota Babu in Shyam Nagar, Prabhu Dayal and his wife in Daulatpur, the elephant driver of the circus, and Ratan in Bombay show kindness to him. Had Munoo met more persons like these, his lot would have been definitely better.

Anand rejects Fate or God. Munoo suffers not because of Fate or chance. He is a victim of circumstances, of the cruelty of man. Anand is "a humanist, because he rightly thinks that, since most of our problems have been created by man, they can also be solved by man. Since man is the reason for the miseries of mankind, he should now become the power- house for processing his own salvation, superstition, bigotry,caste,class,capitalism exploitation ,over-population, tyranny, colonialism, fascism, atomic stock- piling, war, genocide- since man is responsible for all these, man can now fight and undo them too, if he has the vision doubled with the requisite will. And through Anand's writings, his preachings and the example of his own life, he has been trying to awaken man's slumbering conscience so that he may acquire the true vision and develop necessary will to engage in the tasks of reconstructing humanity in India and the world.

In Coolie the concept of Karma is also rejected. Munoo does not grudge any odd job, yet all in vain. He is not treated as a human being but as a beast of burden. He is a victim of exploitation. The novel invokes pity of the coolies for they too are human beings and deserve a much better treatment than hitherto given to them in India.

HUMANISM IN TWO LEAVES AND A BUD -

According to William Walsh, "Mulk Raj Anand is passionately concerned with the villages, with the ferocious poverty and the cruelties of caste, with orphans, untouchables and urban labourers. He writes in an angry reformist way like a less humorous Dickens and a more emotional Wells, of the personal suffering induced by economics- really economics, one feels, even when he is writing of caste. His sharpest, best organized novel is Untouchable (1935) which was very highly thought of by E.M.Forster. It is an interesting combination of hard material, narrow specific theme, and throbbing Shelleyan manner. The action, occupying a single day, is precipitated by a great 'catastrophe', an accidental 'touching' in the morning. Everything that follows is affected by it, even the innocent and vividly realized Hockey Match. Of the three solutions hinted at to the problems of the untouchable- Christ , Gandhi, and Main Drainage- it is the last which is most favoured by Anand. He is committed artist, and what he is committed to is indicated

by Bashir's mockery in *Untouchable* : ' Greater efficiency, better salesmanship, more mass- production, standardization, dictatorship of the sweepers, Marxian materialism, and all that'. 'Yes,yes', is the reply, 'all that, but no catch- words and cheap phrases, the change will be organic and not mechanical,' ('India and the Novel', *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*, ed. Boris Ford, B. The Present, 983, pp. 248-49). Indeed, Mulk Raj Anand is a Marxist humanist who writes novels in order to bring to light the brutal exploitation of the poor by the rich in organized society and thus to pave the way for the establishment of an egalitarian social order in which all men and women may live together by destroying the differences of caste,class and creed.

Some General characters of Anand's Humanism :-

1. The highest potential of man is his own sanction, not God.
2. Man is the master of his destiny ; so fatalism is rejected.
3. Casteism is a heinous crime and a severe blow to the concept of the dignity of man; so it must be rejected.
4. Pain is a fundamental evil of the universe. But it is not unavoidable. It should be rooted out through the practice of exercising tenderness and compassion for the failings of the less- privileged.
5. Capitalism,imperialism,feudalism, and fascism are forces which divide men into fractions and classes; so they must be eschewed.
6. Belief the brotherhood of men is a great virtue which needs to be sincerely practiced by all.
7. All peoples must have liberty and equality. International disputes must be settled through peaceful negotiations.
8. War is a deadly evil. It must be avoided if mankind is to survive at all.
9. All nations must get together for the creation of world Government and promotion of peaceful co-existence.
10. Art and science are complementary faculties. They should together endeavour to make man happier and nobler
11. Education is a powerful instrument for social reconstruction.
12. Women must have equal rights with men.They are not merely childbreeding machines. A nation which keeps its women enslaved is not a free nation.
13. There is no God and there is nothing supernatural.
14. The theories of heaven and hell and the life in the world of the hereafter are mere myths, for there is no conscious survival after death.
15. Religion is a matter which needs to be left to the private conscience of the individual. and should not be ossified into empty rituals and meaningless customs.

CONCLUSION :-

Anand's novels are remarkable for their humanism. " Deep down in him there is the faith that man is by nature lovely and that all his errors and signs and failures are but dust and mud- sticking on the outside; they may be shaken off in a moment and man reinstated in his native glory." (Kazi Abdul Wadud: *Contemporary Indian Literature*,p.25) In his novels Dr. anand combines Tagore's humanism, Bankim's romanticism, Prem Chand's sympathy for the poor and afflicted, and Sharat Chandra's boundless human sympathy. The theme of his work is "the whole man and the whole gamut of human relationship." Mulk Raj believes that man is the master of his destiny. So he rejects fatalism. That is why he condemns all obstacles which come in the way of man's happiness and comfort such as fascism, feudalism, imperialism, caste and creed, exploitation and poverty. He says that all people must have liberty and equality.

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